OPINION 6

ATTACK TERROR ON ITS

ROOTS THROUGH QUAD

WORLD 9

CHINA APPOINTS US-SANCTIONED

GENERAL AS DEFENCE MINISTER

NEW DELHI, MONDAY MARCH 13, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3

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India's democratic ethos Stray dogs kill 2 kids intact, Modi slams Rahul

Some people are maligning India's name abroad: PM

DEEPAK K UPRETI NEW DELHI

Firing a broadside at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a veiled attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said it was "unfortunate" that questions were being raised by some "people in London on Indian democracy" and urged the people of Karnataka to "steer clear of such people".

Launching a slew of infrastructure projects in Mandya and Hubballi-Dharwad in pollbound Karnataka, Modi attacked the Congress for indulging in corruption and keeping Karnataka backward.

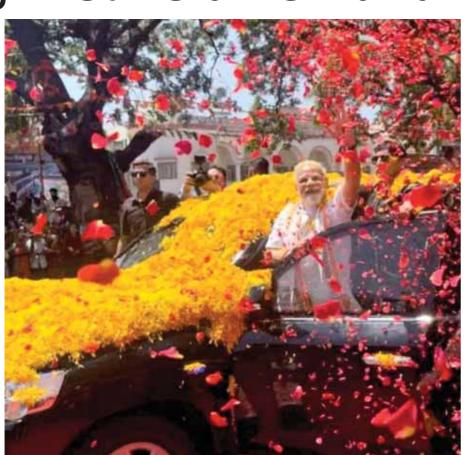
Addressing a public rally in Hubballi-Dharwad, the Prime Minister said while he unveiled "Bhagwan statue Basaveshwara" (a saint of Karnataka), in London and some people "raised questions on Indian democracy".

"Statue of lord Basaveshwar is in London (also), but it is unfortunate that in the same London, questions were raised on India's democracy. The roots of India's democracy have been nurtured by centuries of our history. No power in this world can harm India's democratic traditions. Despite this, some are constantly making it stand in the dock... India is not only the largest democracy but is the mother of democracy...it's unfortunate that in London questions were raised about India's democracy..." Modi said in an obvious swipe at Rahul.

Addressing a public meeting in Maddur in Mandya district, he accused the Congress

RSS meet pays

tribute to MSY



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed by supporters during a roadshow in Mandya district on Sunday

and its allies of being busy in digging his grave, while he was busy working for the development of the country and the welfare of the poor, as he said that blessing of the people is his biggest protection shield.

"Congress is busy digging the grave of Modi, while Modi is busy building Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway. Congress people don't know that the blessings of crores of mothers, sisters, daughters, and people is the biggest protection shield for

Modi," he added. Modi's indirect criticism of Rahul came hot on the heels of a series of lectures last week delivered by Rahul in London where he claimed that "democracy is in danger in India".

Karnataka is set to elect a new Assembly before May. This is the sixth visit of Modi to the State this year.

The PM picked up the shower petals which got piled up on the bonnet of his car and was seen hurling them back at the crowd. He also got down from his car and greeted folk artistes who staged a performance to welcome him

Hubballi gets world's longest rly platform

Dharwad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dedicated to the nation the "longest railway platform in the world" at Shree Siddharoodha Swamiji Hubballi Station.

The record has been recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records recently, officials said.

Continued on Page 2

Two brothers aged seven and five were mauled to

death by stray dogs in a forest area in Ruchi Vihar, in Southwest Delhi's Vasant Kunj.

According to police, the children were attacked in separate incidents, two days apart, and succumbed to injuries. The deceased identified as Anand, 7, and Aditya, 5, used to reside at a jhuggi near the forest area.

In the first incident, the seven year-old boy went missing on March 10 and his body was recovered later with animal bite-like injuries. Police said around 3 pm on Friday, the older sibling, Anand, went missing from his home in Sindhi Basti, which is near the



staff accompanied the mother to search for him. "After two hours, we found the child's body near a wall inside a secluded/vacant plot. There were multiple injuries on the body," said the police.

"The injuries looked like animal bites. When we ques-tioned neighbours and locals, it came to light that there are many stray dogs inside the jungle area which often attack goats and pigs. The spot was inspected by the FSL team and the crime team," said a police

According to police, the second incident took place on Sunday, when the five-year-old boy was attacked while he went to attend nature's call. "On Sunday around 8 am,

Anand's younger brother Aditya went with his cousin Chandan to the same jungle area to urinate. Chandan was at some distance from Aditya. After some time, when Chandan returned to the place where he had left Aditya, he found the boy surrounded by stray dogs. He was badly injured," said police. A Sub Inspector of Vasant

Vihar police station, who was in the area in connection with Anand's probe, heard the screams of the boy and found that the dogs had attacked Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

LANDING AFTER GLITCH Jodhpur: An IAF helicopter with 20 airmen on board made an emergency landing in Lohawat area of Jodhpur on Sunday afternoon due to some technical alitch. The helicopter had taken

MADHURI'S MOTHER SNEHALATA NO MORE

off from Jodhpur airbase for

Phalodi airbase.

Mumbai: Hindi film star Madhuri Dixit's mother Snehalata Dikshit died here on Sunday. She was 90. The Bollywood actor shared the news in a statement issued to

RUSSIANS ADVANCE IN BAKHMUT HALTED

Kyiv: Russia's advance seems to have stalled in Moscow's campaign to capture the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, a leading think tank said.

CEC: EC subjected to 'Agni Pariksha' despite people's trust in poll results PTI BENGALURU

India has stabilised its social, Apolitical and linguistic issues peacefully in 70 years through dialogue mainly because of established democracy which was possible as people trust election results but still the Election Commission has to undergo "Agni pariskha" after every poll, said Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar.

He made these remarks at a press conference on Saturday while responding to a question on whether the people of Karnataka can trust the poll panel for free and fair elections in the State.

He said with the conclusion of polls in Tripura, Nagaland and Meghalaya, the Election Commission has completed the 400th State Assembly election.

Continued on Page 2



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar chairs an all-party meeting before the second part of the Budget Session at VP House in

Budget session resumes today: Opp, Govt poised to slug it out

The second part of the Budget session from Monday is likely to witness the continuation of disruptions over a range of issues, particularly the war of words between the ruling party and the Congress-led Opposition over the remarks of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in London that "democracy is in danger in India".

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi targeted the former Congress chief for his remarks on democracy in India, Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said that it was shocking to learn that the people sitting at higher level as guardians of the Constitution are making political remarks at events.

A senior Congress leader said the issue will certainly be taken up in Parliament ques-tioning the role of high Constitution offices. He was Continued on Page 2 | referring to Rajya Sabha

Kohli back in Virat form

comment against Rahul.

While the Government asserts that its priority will be to pass the Finance Bill, the Opposition is planning ways to attack the BJP-led Centre in Parliament on a range of issues, like the alleged misuse of Central agencies against the BJP's political rivals, besides price rise, unemployment, and allegations against the Adani group. Continuous protests by the Opposition on the Hindenburg-Adani issue overshadowed most of the first half of the Budget session.

Minister of State for

Parliamentary Affairs Arjunram Meghwal said the top-most priority for the Government is the passage of the Financial Bill. He said discussions will be held on demands for grants of Ministries, including railways, panchayati raj, tourism, culture and health.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will later apply the guil-

standing demands for grants, whether discussed or not, will

be put to vote and passed.
"Then we will get the
Finance Bill passed. After that
we'll look into the demands of the Opposition... The first responsibility of the Government is to get the Finance Bill passed. Then we will hold discussions on issues the Opposition's demands," he

The Opposition leaders are expected to meet at Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge's office in the Parliament complex around 10 am, sources said. The Congress MPs will gather at the Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson's office shortly thereafter to deliberate on the

party's strategy, they said.
Congress whip in the Lok
Sabha Manickam Tagore has
asserted that the Congress would strongly raise the issue

of "misuse" of agencies.

Continued on Page 2

DEEPAK K UPRETI **NEW DELH**

The three-day meeting of Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha, the highest decisionmaking body of the RSS, commenced at Samalkha in Haryana on Sunday with tributes to many prominent public figures, including Samajwadi Party (SP) founder and former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh late Mulayam Singh Yadav whom the Centre had posthumously conferred the secondhighest civilian award Padma

Vibhushan in January year. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, among other prominent leaders, were present on the first day of the RSS meet which is taking place ahead of a slew of State Assembly polls, including in Karnataka, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

In the meet, the RSS leaders are also to deliberate

expanding the role of women in the Sangh Parivar and increasing their numbers in major cities. Population control is another subject which would be taken up for the discussion, sources said. Sangh paying tributes to Mulayam is significant as the

BJP and VHP cadre had held his then UP Government in 1990 responsible for opening fire on "kar sevaks" in Ayodhya during the Ram Mandir move-

Mulayam's critics in the saf-fron family had then also given him the title of "Maulana Mulayam" for his alleged 'appeasement" of minorities. The importance accorded

to Mulayam is seen in contest of the BJP-RSS trying to extend its OBC turf in UP with the Lok Sabha polls barely 15 months away. The State sends 80 Lok Sabhas thus playing a key role in the Government formation

Continued on Page 2

Changing tack: Same-sex marriage will cause havoc to societal values, Centre tells SC

PNS NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he Centre has opposed a}}_{\text{series of petitions seeking legal validation of same-sex}}$ marriage, saying it would cause a complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws and accepted societal values. In and accepted societal values. In an affidavit before the Supreme Court which is scheduled to hear the matter on Monday, the Government said that despite the decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, the petitioners cannot claim a fundamental right for same-sex marriage to be recognised under the laws of the

The Government in its affidavit also said that recognition to heterosexual relationships, there may be other



forms of marriages or unions or personal understandings of relationships between individuals in a society and these "are not unlawful" It said western decisions

sans any basis in Indian constitutional law jurisprudence cannot be imported in this context, while asserting that granting recognition to human relations is a legislative function and can never be a subject of judicial adjudication.

"Marriage, as an institution in law, has many statutory and other consequences under var-

ious legislative enactments. Therefore, any formal recognition of such a human relationship cannot be regarded as just a privacy issue between two adults," it said. The Centre said the institution of marriage between two individuals of the same gender is neither recognised nor accepted in any uncodified personal laws or any codified statutory laws.

The Centre said at the outset the notion of marriage itself necessarily and inevitably presupposes a union between two persons of the opposite sex and this definition is socially, culturally and legally ingrained into the very idea and concept of marriage and ought not to be disturbed or diluted by judicial interpretation.

Satish Kaushik's death: Farmhouse owner's wife says hubby killed actor

In a development in actor-director Satish Kaushik's death case, the Delhi Police on Sunday said it will question the estranged wife of the owner of the farmhouse, where actor-filmmaker Satish Kaushik

attended a party a day before his death, following her alle-gation that her husband "was planning to get rid" of him. The Delhi Police on Sunday reached the farmhouse where Kaushik attended a Holi party. The staff members are also being questioned, said

sources, adding that the entry register with the security guard is also being checked. written all over his face. Kohli Detailed report on P3 kissed his wedding ring tied

India's batting mainstay

ends 40-month drought to hit his 28th Test ton

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Virat Kohli had a disarming V smile at the end of it all. He had just dispatched a Nathan Lyon delivery towards midwicket for a single.

The 40-month wait is over and Kohli has finally got his

28th Test hundred. There were no clenched

fists, no imaginary upper-cut like a pro boxer, and no giant leap in celebration. There wasn't any customary cuss word Instead, there was just relief

Virat Kohli celebrates after scoring a century during the 4th day of the fourth test cricket match between India and Australia at

to his necklace and acknowledged the crowd, unlike when he had completed a half-

During those 40 long months, Test runs dried up and average dipped to a lowly 25. There was criticism all around and his legion of fans were kept waiting for the day when he would play a special knock to warm their hearts. warm their hearts. Great players have the

knack of conquering the odds, and on Sunday Kohli crossed a major hurdle with the fighting spirit of a champion.

It wasn't Kohli the fire-fighter who hit a spectacular straight six against Pakistan's Haris Rauf at the MCG during the T20 World Cup last year. It was the scrappy Kohli, who was only looking at the three-figure mark at any cost.

Continued on Page 2

Former Andhra

CM Kiran Reddy

Cong hits back at Modi for his attack on Rahul

The Congress on Sunday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his attack on Rahul Gandhi over his remarks in the UK, asking since when did the criticism of the PM's policies become the criticism of the country.

The Opposition party also alleged that it is the prime minister "who attacks democracy" and that is why discussions are held on it.

In an apparent reference to Gandhi's remarks made in London, Modi, while speaking in poll-bound Karnataka, termed it an insult to 12th censocial reformer Basaveshwara, the people of Karnataka, India's great traditions and its citizens.

"Statue of Lord Basaveshwara is in London, but it is unfortunate that in the same London questions were raised on India's democracy. The roots of India's democracv have been nurtured by centuries of our history.

harm India's democratic traditions. Despite this some are constantly making it stand in the dock," Modi said in an obvious swipe at Gandhi. Reacting to the prime minister's remarks, Congress media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said the prime minister "wasted" nine years in "abusing" the elders and ancestors of this

'You (PM) insult three generations when you say nothing happened in the last 70 years, then you do not bother about the image of the country. You pat yourself on the back in Parliament saying 'ek akela sab par bhari, the world sees it and also laughs at it," Khera said in a video statement in Hindi posted on his Twitter account.

"When you show red eyes to the media in the country and raid foreign media, then you do not bother about the image of the country," Khera asked. Khera claimed that the prime minister in his remarks abroad

unfortunate to be born in India, and asked if he was not worried of what he was doing to the country's image.

"Mr. Prime Minister, you attack democracy and that is why discussions are held on it. If challenges to democracy are being discussed in front of Cambridge University students then that is an effort to strengthen democracy," the Congress leader said.

You have some misgivings about yourself. You are just the PM, you are not God, you are not the creator, you don't make the sun rise...Do away with these misgivings about yourself," he said. Later in a tweet in Hindi, Khera said, "Since when did the criticism of your policies become the criticism of the country? You are just a prime minister, you are neither the country, nor

focus, however, is on the

alleged misuse of probe agen-

cies with RJD chief Lalu Prasad

and his family facing heat from

central agencies in the alleged

land-for-jobs scam. Parties

such as the Samajwadi Party,

the Left parties and the DMK

have also lodged their strong

protests against the alleged

attack on the federal structure

and the misuse of institutions.

on January 31, is likely to con-

clude on April 6. Parliament is

meeting after a month-long

recess which allows various

Parliamentary panels to scru-

tinise allocations made in the

Union Budget for different

On Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

will present Supplementary

Demands for Grants - Second Batch for 2022-23. She will

also table the budget for the

Kashmir for the year 2023-24 in

Lok Sabha. The UT is at present

under central rule. The two

items are listed in the order

Ministries.

The session, which began

God nor the creator." Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate also hit back at Modi, saying he must speak like the

Indore gets soaked in colours on Rang Panchami as procession draws huge crowd

Thousands of people, many from abroad, took part in the famous procession taken out on account of Rang Panchami, the festival of colours, in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. The tradition of taking out a procession on the day of Rang Panchami in Indore is nearly 300 years old which was started by the Holkars - a dynasty of Maratha Confederacy of India. The Holkars were generals Maratha

under Peshwa Baji Rao I, and later became Maharajas of Indore as an independent member of the Maratha Empire until 1818. During this procession that covered the distance of four km, the revellers danced and sprayed colours at

This year, the local authorities got the all monuments of archeological importance covered so that wet or dry colours do not affect them. The procession started from Rajwada (palace), located in the heart of



Revellers dance and play with colours during a procession taken out on the occasion of Rang Panchami festival in Bhopal on

the city. After passing through Malharganj and Khajuri, Gopal Mandir, Sarafa, Narsingh Bazar and Itwariya areas, it ended at the point from where it had started. Talking to PTI, Shekhar Giri, the coordinator of this procession, locally known as 'gair', said 20 female bouncers were deployed this year for the security of women as well as the foreigners that

had specially arrived at Indore for the revelry. For the first time, the Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) also took part in this age-old tradition as 10 vehicles of the civic body sprayed colours on the participants. A special police control room was set up at Rajwada, where about a dozen officers and their subordinates remained glued to the CCTV

screens to ensure that no untoward incident or anti-social activity takes place. A large number of police personnel were deployed for the procession. Also, about 100 police constables, including the women staff, were positioned along the entire route in plain clothes for keeping eyes on the people and maintaining law resigns from Congress New Delhi: Former Andhra

Pradesh chief minister Kiran Kumar Reddy has resigned from the Congress. Reacting to Reddy's resignation, Congress leader and Lok Sabha MP Manickam Tagore on Sunday said that those who got everything from the party and fin-ished the Andhra Pradesh Congress now leave for the

Reddy was the last chief minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh. In a letter dated March 11 and addressed to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Reddy wrote, "Please accept this letter as my resignation from the primary membership of the Indian National

Reddy had earlier resigned from the Congress in 2014 over the then UPA government's decision to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh and carve out Telangana. He had floated his own political outfit Jai Samaikyandhra Party but returned to Congress in 2018.

Budget session's 2nd part: bedlam in Parl...

The focus, however, is on the alleged misuse of probe agencies with RJD chief Lalu Prasad and his family facing heat from central agencies in the alleged land-for-jobs scam. Parties such as the Samajwadi Party, the Left parties and the DMK have also lodged their strong protests against the alleged attack on the federal structure and the misuse of institutions.

The session, which began on January 31, is likely to conclude on April 6. Parliament is meeting after a month-long recess which allows various Parliamentary panels to scrutinise allocations made in the Union Budget for different Ministries.

On Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present Supplementary Demands for Grants - Second Batch for 2022-23. She will also table the budget for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for the year 2023-24 sent under central rule. The two items are listed in the order paper of Lok Sabha for

Congress President Kharge

accused the Modi Government Sabha Manickam Tagore has of making "sinister attempts to kill democracy" by misusing probe agencies against opposition leaders, as he slammed the Centre over the ED searches on the premises of former Bihar Chief Minister Yadav's family. The Samajwadi Party, the Left and the DMK were among those who protested against the alleged attack on the federal structure and the "misuse" of

The Trinamool Congress will raise in Parliament issues such as the LIC and SBI's risk exposure, price rise of essential commodities, unemployment and "misuse" of central agencies during the second phase of the session, its Rajya Sabha floor leader Derek O'Brien had recently said. He said LIC's risk exposure and price rise affect the lives of the common man and their savings and should be highlighted.

The TMC will also raise the issue of "political vendetta" against non-BJP ruled states in the Union government on "holding back of funds for schemes such as MNREGA", O'Brien said.

Congress whip in Lok paper of Lok Sabha for Monday.

₹15,700 cr disbursed to more than one lakh divyang so far: Min asserted that the Congress would strongly raise the issue of "misuse" of agencies. The

Union minister Virendra Kumar on Sunday said 52 banks in the country have disbursed Rs 15,700 crore to more than one lakh 'divyangs' (differently-abled persons) so far. The Minister for Social

Justice and Empowerment was speaking at the third 10-day Divya Kala Mela that was opened by Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel at the Bhopal Haat here.

"Till date, 52 banks in the country have disbursed Rs 15,700 crore to over one lakh beneficiaries. We view divyangjan as a significant human resource and Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays importance to the concerns of divyangjan in the national development agenda," he was quoted as saying in an official statement.

The minister, however, did not specify during which period the amount was disbursed. 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas aur Sabka

"Our government is aiming to achieve holistic and allaround development so that the differently-abled can participate equally in this process. The four finance corporations under the ministry, NHFDC, through various channel partners such as NBCFDC, NSFDC and NSKDFC, provide financial assistance to artisans and other skilled beneficiaries through term loan schemes and microfinance schemes,"

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Pratima Bhowmik said the involvement of sections of the society is vital for the country's over-

all growth.
"We should all work together for the welfare of the disabled. We need to strive for the development of the weaker sections of the society to make the country a developed nation," she said.

At this fair, goods brought from different parts of the country, including food items, 100 divyang artisans, artists and entrepreneurs from 19 states and Union Territories are displaying their products and abilities, she said.

Hubballi gets world's longest rly platform

From Page 1

They said that the 1,507 m long platform has been built at a cost of about Rs 20 crore. Modi at an event here, also dedicated the electrification of dedicated the electrification of Hosapete - Hubballi -Tinaighat section and the upgradation of Hosapete station, for boosting connectivity Developed at a cost of over

Rs 530 crore, the electrification project establishes seamless train operation on electric traction. The redeveloped Hosapete station will provide convenient and modern facilities to travellers. It has been designed to resemble Hampi monuments, officials said. The PM also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various projects of Hubballi-Dharwad smart city. The total estimated cost of these projects is about Rs 520 crores.

He also laid the foundation stone of the Jayadeva Hospital and Research Centre, which will be developed at a cost of about Rs. 250 crores and will provide tertiary cardiac care to people of region, and for Dharwad Multi Village Water Supply Scheme, which will be developed at a cost of over Rs 1,040 crores.

stone for Tupparihalla Flood Damage Control Project, which will be developed at a cost of about Rs 150 crores, officials

DA stir: Agitators urge Bengal Guv to act as mediator with Mamata

West Bengal state govern-ment employees, agitating to press for their demand for a hike in dearness allowance (DA), on Sunday urged Governor CV Ananda Bose to act as a mediator in the matter and arrange for a meeting with Chief Minister Mamata

The agitators stated they would withdraw their hunger strike only after getting assurance from the state government regarding their demand. Following the governor's request to sit together to find a way out of the imbroglio, representatives of the agitating employees met him at Raj Bhavan.

"The governor requested us to withdraw our hunger strike. We promised him that we will surely do that but only after getting assurance from the state government. We are yet to get anything from them.

"We want the governor to for a meeting with the chief minister," one of the agitating employees present at the meeting told PTI. Noting that they want an honourable solution,

he asserted that the state government will have to sit with them for a meeting in this regard, while lamenting that not a single minister or bureaucrat came to meet them.

Following the meeting, which lasted for around 20 minutes, Bose said, "I appealed to those on hunger strike to kindly withdraw it because human life is precious. Every complex problem has a solution and we should try for it with an open mind."

Bose had on Saturday urged the agitators to withdraw their stir as it entered the fourth week. Protesting who have been demanding that their DA be raised to the level of central government staffers, had called for a total

Same-sex marriage will cause havoc...

From Page 1

"It must be kept in mind that granting recognition and conferring rights recognising human relation which has its consequences in law, and privileges, is in essence a legislative function and can never be the subject matter of judicial adjudication.

The prayer made by the petitioner before this court, is, therefore. wholly unsustainable, untenable and misplaced," said the affidavit, opposing the demand for legalization of same sex marriages.

The Centre said, "It is submitted that despite the decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, the petitioners cannot claim a fundamental right for same-sex marriage to be recognised under the laws of the country." It said that even if such right is claimed under Article 21 of the Constitution, such right can be curtailed by competent legislature on permissible Constitutional grounds including legitimate state interest.

"It is submitted that there cannot be an untrammelled right under Article 21 and cannot override other constitutional principles," the Government said, adding that Parliament has designed and framed marriage laws, which are governed by personal laws/codified laws relatable to customs of various religious

communities, to recognise only the union of a man and a woman to be capable of legal sanction, and thereby claim legal and statutory rights and consequences."It is submitted that any interference with the same would cause a complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws in the country and in accepted societal values," it said.

The Centre said that while there may be various other forms of marriages or unions or personal understandings of relationships between individuals in a society, the State limits the recognition to the heterosexual form. "The State does not recog-

nise these other forms of mar-

riages or unions or personal

understandings of relation-

ships between individuals in a

society but the same are not unlawful," it said. The Government said that the registration of marriage of same sex persons also results in violation of existing personal as well as codified law provisions such as "degrees of prohibited relationship", "conditions of marriage" and "ceremonial and ritual require-

governing the individuals. It said marriage between a biological man and a biological woman takes place either under the personal laws or codified laws namely, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955,

ments" under personal laws

the Christian Marriage Act 1872, the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936 or the Special Marriage Act, 1954 or the Foreign Marriage Act,

"Family issues are far beyond mere recognition and registration of marriage between persons belonging to the same gender. Living together as partners

and having sexual relationship by same sex individuals (which is decriminalised now) is not comparable with the Indian family unit concept of a husband, a wife and children which necessarily presuppose a biological man as a "husband", a biological woman as a "wife" and the children born out of the union between the two - who are reared by the biological man as father and the biological woman as moth-

The Centre said that by and large the institution of marriage has a sanctity attached to it and in major parts of the country, it is regarded as a sacrament, a

holy union and a "sanskar". The Government said that all these indicate that in India, marriage is a bond between a biological man and a biological woman only and that is the legislative policy of the legislature and the petitioners cannot pray for a mandamus of the court to change the legislative policy.

Changing tack: RSS meet pays tribute...

From Page 1

It is understood that apart from Mulayam, tributes were paid to former JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav, senior lawyer Shanti Bhushan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hiraben, former Union Minister Yoginder Alagh, former Governors Omprakash Kohli and Keshari Nath Tripathi, architect Balkrishna Doshi, and singers Vani Jayaram, Bhupinder Singh and

Shivamogga Subbanna. Sources said the RSS meeting picked up current domestic issues including Sikh radicalism in Punjab, unemployment, caste question in light of the 'Ramcharitmanas' controversy in UP, friction between the Sangh and the DMK Government in Tamil Nadu.

According to sources, new ways to better connect the RSS with people and cultivating positive public image are also to be discussed in the conclave. Close to 1,400 leaders and

are attending the meeting. Briefing the media on a proposed resolution for the meeting, RSS joint general secretary Manmohan Vaidya said "There will also be a statement on the 2550th mahaparinirvan of Mahavir Jain. The 200th birth anniversary of Dayanand Saraswati is also coming this year. His contribution and his message will be remembered.

Stray dogs kill 2 kids

From Page 1

"He rushed the child to the Indian Spinal Injury Centre in his car, but the boy died during treatment. A case has been registered and investigation is on," police said.

The post-mortem of both children has been done at Safdarjung hospital and further action will be taken based on the post-mortem report. In 2021, the residents of Saraswati

and Narmada apartments in D6-Block of Vasant Kunj had complained about the stray dog menace getting out of control in their locality.

Dog bite cases are becoming frequent and the population of canines has been rising continuously. While the issue has persisted for 4-5 years, it has become alarming in the past couple of years, said resi-

CEC: EC subjected...

From Page 1 There have been 17 Lok

Sabha polls and 16 presidential and vice presidential elections, he noted."Results are accepted election after election and the transition of power each time has been smoothly done by ballot. This is in stark comparison to what has been recently happening even in many developed countries," he said. "In the last 70 years, India has stabilised its social, cultural, political, geographical, economic, linguistic issues peacefully and through dialogue mainly

because of established democracy which is possible only because people trust election results. Still, ECI gives 'Agnipariskha' (trial by fire) every time after each election," he said.

Replying to another question, Kumar said fake narratives and inducements pose a big challenge. The poll panel was in Karnataka to assess the poll preparedness. The term of the state assembly ends on May 24 and a new assembly has to be formed before that by holding polls.

Kohli back in Virat.

From Page 1

On Sunday, Kolhi looked less like himself and more like Sachin Tendulkar, the man who didn't hit a cover drive till he had scored 200 against the Brett Lee-led Australian attack at Sydney in 2004.

In terms of joy and specworkers of the Sangh Parivar tacle that Kohli's centuries are meant to be, the one in Ahmedabad would come lower down the pecking order -perhaps not even among his his top-20 Test hundreds.

A look at Kohli's wagon wheel till he completed his 100 would look eerily similar to Tendulkar's wagon wheel in 2004. Kohli stopped reaching out for deliveries outside off-

stump. The cover drive hardly came out of the closet and he was only willing to whip deliveries outside off-stump in the arc between square leg and deep mid-wicket. Sample this little statistical nugget: Kohli hit the fifth boundary of his innings off the 89th delivery he faced, and the sixth boundary came off the 251st delivery.

There were 162 deliveries (27 overs) in the interim, including one full session between fourth day's morning session that he faced and didn't hit a single four. From his individual score of 60 till he reached the century mark, there were only singles and doubles. It was arguably one of his slowest hundreds and came off 241 balls. It wasn't as if he didn't play through the off-side but it was more close to the body and just trying to tap it for singles, save one off Matt Kuhnemann on the third evening, which he hit for a boundary. Once the monkey was off

his back, the customary Kohli panache was back and the boundaries flowed. He stopped reaching for

deliveries even when Mitchell Starc angled one across or when Cameron Green bowled in the fourth or fifth stump channel. The first expansive cover drive came when he was on 145. Kohli reached out to a

wide half-volley from Green to get a boundary through extra cover. The next delivery was a signature Kohli on-drive, which took him to 150. The celebrations were even more muted compared to when he had reached his hundred.

This time, he didn't even take off his helmet. The testimony to Kohli's fitness was running a three with Axar Patel when he was in his 160s.

Motera, over the years, has seen some major milestones, with Sunil Gavaskar's 10,000th run and Kapil Dev's then world record 432nd Test wicket, being a few of them. Kohli's knock on Sunday will certainly join that

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Capital to add

100 e-buses

to DTC fleet by

April first week

The Delhi Transport Corporation is likely to

add 100 more electric buses to its fleet by March-end or the

first week of April, officials said

The new additions will take the Delhi Transport Corporation's (DTC) electric bus fleet to 400.

Commissioner Ashish Kundra

recently visited Tata Motors'

Lucknow plant to inspect the buses. Last month, DTC MD

Shilpa Shinde visited Karnataka

to oversee the prototype mod-

"We will get 100 electric buses by March-end or the first

week of April. After that, 200-

250 buses will arrive every

Karnataka to see the prototype.

It has been cleared and now we

have come to the manufactur-

ing plant in Lucknow for a for-

mal inspection of the buses,"

Equipped with security features such as CCTV cameras

and panic buttons, these buses

will hit the national capital's

roads in the next three to four

said an official.

"A DTC team had gone to

Transport

on Sunday.

Delhi

Farmhouse owner under police lens ———

Hubby killed Kaushik over ₹15 cr loan: Wife

Cops reach farmhouse, say will also quiz woman

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

n a new development in actor-**⊥**director Satish Kaushik's death case, the Delhi Police on Sunday said it will question the estranged wife of the owner of the farmhouse, where actorfilmmaker Satish Kaushik attended a party a day before his death, following her allegation that her husband "was planning to get rid" of him.

The Delhi Police on Sunday reached the farmhouse where Kaushik attended a Holi party. The staff members are also being questioned, said sources, adding that the entry register with the security guard is also being checked.

Earlier, in a complaint addressed to the Delhi Police Commissioner, Sanvi Malu, the wife of the owner of the farm-



house who accused her husband Kuber Group's director Vikas Malu of being involved in the actor's death, alleged that her husband had borrowed ₹15 crore from Kaushik and did not

Sanvi wrote in the letter that it is likely that Vikas may have administered some drugs to Kaushik in order to kill him

She also shared a photo of the businessman and Kaushik, taken at a party in Dubai. The woman alleged that the son of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim was also present at the

party.
The Delhi Police issued a statement saying an enquiry has been initiated into the allegations of foul play levelled by the woman. "An inspector-level

This comes a day after police denied any foul play in the actor's death. According to them, the post-mortem report stated the preliminary cause of death was cardiac arrest caused by coronary artery blockage associated with coronary artery disease and that the manner of

officer from the South West dis-

trict has been asked to probe the

matter. The woman will be

called for questioning and her

statement will be recorded," it

death appears to be natural. The woman claimed that she was introduced to Kaushik by her husband and added that on August 23, 2022, the actor visited them in Dubai and her husband.

"I was present in the drawing room where both Kaushik and my husband got involved in an argument... My husband promised Kaushik that he would repay the money soon. When I asked my husband, he claimed that he lost Kaushik's money during the Covid pandemic. My husband also said he was planning to get rid of Kaushik," ne said in her complaint.

Kaushik (66) died after suffering a heart attack while he was on his way to a Gurugram hospital in the early hours of Thursday. He felt dizzy late on Wednesday night and was taken to the Fortis Hospital in Gurugram, where he was declared "brought dead on arrival".

An inquiry has revealed that Kaushik, along with his manager Santosh Rai, came to Delhi on Wednesday around 10 am and stayed at the residence of his friend at Bijwasan, Additional Commissioner of Police (southwest) Rajeev Kumar said on

Chirag Delhi flyover repair work likely to cause gridlock for 25 days

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Traffic will be affected on certain routes in south Delhi as one of the carriageways of the Chirag Delhi flyover on Outer Ring Road will remain closed for 25 days from Sunday due to repair work being carried out by the public works department, officials

With the opening of the Ashram flyover on March 6, there was some relief for commuters, but it seems to be short-lived as the Chirag Delhi flyover is being shut and they will have to brace themselves for traffic snarls again.

The repair work of the Chirag Delhi flyover began from Sunday and the work on each carriageway will take 25 days. One carriageway will be closed for traffic while the other will remain operational, the Delhi Traffic Police said.

According to an advisory issued by the traffic police, the repair work of the carriageway from Nehru Place to the IIT flyover will be taken up first and the work on the other carriageway from the IIT flyover to Nehru Place will be taken up thereafter.

Due to the repair work on the flyover, commuters on routes towards all major south Delhi areas, including Malviya Nagar, Panchsheel Park and



Traffic iam due to repair work of the Chirag Delhi flyover on the outer ring road in New Delhi on Sunday

Vasant Kunj, are likely to face traffic snarls.

However, the traffic police has suggested necessary diversions to avoid any inconvenience to commuters.

The closure of the carriageway may increase the volume of traffic on the road and cause inconvenience to the general public.

The commuters heading to railway stations, airport, hospitals etc. Are advised to plan their departure in advance and take alternative routes to avoid

delays.
"The commuters heading towards Dhaula Kuan, AIIMŠ, Defence Colony etc. Are advised to take a right turn under the Nehru Place flyover and follow Lala Lajpat Rai Marg towards the Moolchand Hospital flyover for their destination," the advisory read.

Commuters heading towards Greater Kailash and Nehru Place from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) on Outer Ring Road are advised to take a left turn from the Panchsheel flyover towards August Kranti Marg to go to Ring Road and take a right turn under the Moolchand flyover towards Lala Lajpat Rai Marg to reach their destinations, it

"Commuters heading towards Greater Kailash and Nehru Place from IIT Delhi on Outer Ring Road are advised to take a left turn from the IIT flyover towards Aurobindo Marg to go to Ring Road and take a right turn under the Moolchand flyover towards Lala Lajpat Rai Marg to reach their destinations," it added.

The movement of heavy and commercial vehicles on Outer Ring Road towards the Chirag Delhi flyover may be restricted as and when required to ensure a smooth flow of traffic on the stretch, the advisory

weeks following the configuration and registration process, The 100 new electric buses will be the first of 1,500 that will be inducted into the Transport department's fleet by the end of 2023, taking their total number

While flagging off the electric buses in January, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said 80 per cent of Delhi's total fleet will be electric by the end of

Sharing a roadmap for the procurement of electric buses, he had said that the government would buy 1,500 such vehicles in 2023. By 2025, 6,380 electric buses will be procured.

There are nearly 7,200 buses plying on the city roads
— the DTC runs 3,900 buses

Kejriwal Govt's inaction reason for water shortage: BJP ple of Delhi have been facing an irregular and short supply of

The BJP on Sunday alleged the Arvind Kejriwal government's "inaction" was the reason for the water shortage and supply of dirty water in The BJP made the allega-

tion a day after Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, flagging the "miser-able hygiene and sanitary conditions" at the Wazirabad Water Treatment Plant which supplies drinking water to large parts of the national capital. Reacting to the letter, Delhi



Water Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj accused the L-G of "playing dirty politics over the sensitive issue of water supply' and claimed that illegal sand

But be it Delhi Jal Board or the city government, they

blame the Haryana government for every situation despite the state giving its fixed raw water quota to the national capital, the party claimed. "Despite the BJP's repeat-

water as well as a supply of dirty

ed demands, the Kejriwal government never convened an allparty meeting on the city's water crisis or the corruption and inaction of the Delĥi Jal

"The water minister con-

responsibility by making political statements. But now Lt. Governor Delhi Vinai Kumar Saxena's status report of the visit to the Wazirabad water plant and reservoir has exposed the negligence and inaction of the Kejriwal government," said Delhi BJP working president Virendra Sachdeva.

"The status report makes it clear that the Kejriwal government's negligence in not cleaning the reservoir is the reason why thousands of people are becoming prey to water-borne diseases in Delhi every year," he

City logs 34.1 deg C, hottest day of season

Delhi's maximum temperature on Sunday settled at 34.1 degrees Celsius, five notches above the season's average, making it the hottest day of the season so far, the India Meteorological Department

According to an IMD official, the summer season starts from March 1 and stays till May

Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist at the IMD said with 34.1 recorded its hottest day of the "Today is the 12th day of

this season which started on March 1 and today, the maximum temperature in the national capital settled at 34.1 degrees, which is the hottest day of the season so far," he said.

On March 30, 2021, Delhi recorded the maximum temperature of 40.1 degrees Celsius which was the hottest day of the season then, the IMD official

and the cluster runs 3,300. At the same time, 2,600 buses will go off the roads in the next oneand-a-half years.

Atishi launches video series on Govt's Happiness Curriculum

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Education Minister Atishi Con Sunday launched a 36episode video series on the Delhi government's Happiness Curriculum and said it will enable educators across the world help their students learn to live a happy and purposeful Through this initiative,

people will learn to serve humanity in the truest sense, she said.

The Happiness Curriculum was launched in 2018 with a vision to strengthen the foundation of happiness and wellbeing of students through a 35minute class conducted every day from kindergarten to Class 8 across 1,030 government schools in the national capital.

Development of selfawareness, expression, empathy and understanding of relationships are the key objectives



mining in Haryana was block-

ing the supply of Yamuna water

The BJP on Sunday said

towards the national capital.

that for the last decade, the peo-

car mechanic was shot Adead allegedly by two bikeborne assailants in the Aman Vihar area here, police said on

The deceased, Yogesh, was a resident of Begumpur, they The incident took place on

Saturday, police said. A preliminary enquiry has

revealed that Yogesh was shot dead by two bike-borne assailants in the Aman Vihar area, a senior police officer said.

He sustained bullet injuries and was taken to the Agrasen Hospital for treatment but was declared "brought dead on arrival" by the doctors on duty, the officer said.

A case under sections 302 (murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered on basis of the statement of an eyewitness, police said.



Visitors click selfie at the NDMC G20 flower festival at Connaught place Central park in New Delhi on Sunday

DDA to plant 1 lakh trees at Shastri Park

of the curriculum.

The video series is avail-

able with subtitles which will

help the Delhi government

spread the philosophy of the

Happiness Curriculum to a

larger public. This is a very sig-

nificant initiative through

which we can bring positive changes in our lives," Atishi

The series by the Delhi government's Education

Department is an initiative to

share the "purpose of life" and

the role of education in achiev-

ing that purpose, she said.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development ▲ Authority will plant one lakh trees in Shastri Park area as part of plans to rejuvenate the Yamuna floodplains, a statement from Lieutenant Governor's office said on Sunday.

The statement comes a day after the Lt Governor inspected the Shastri Park-Bela Farm-Garhi Mandu area of the flood plains in northeast Delhi and directed officials to clean, restore and rejuvenate the 11 km-long stretch.

Even as the DDA was instructed to immediately ensure plantation of 1 lakh trees at the Shastri Park site, the entire 11 km stretch on the eastern bank, upstream from



Shastri park to Garhi Mandu will undergo a thorough make over, it said

The DDA will plant one lakh trees at Shastri Park apart from different species of riverine grass, bamboo and other flowering/fruit-bearing trees to rejuvenate the floodplains, it

"The LG took an on-site

stock of the situation and instructed officials to immediately ensure steps to clean, restore and rejuvenate the degraded flood plains," the statement said.

"Once rejuvenated by the DDA, this site will develop as a one of its kind public green in the locality, which has been suffering the most due to unplanned urbanization and degradation. The area adjoins localities like Seelampur, Shastri Park and Shahdara etc,

The main components of the rejuvenation work includes physical cleaning of the banks and flood plains by removing garbage, dumped construction and demolition waste, animal waste and encroachments, it

Class VIII girl abducted, raped by 3 youngsters STAFF REPORTER ■

GURUGRAM

Class 8 girl student was A class 8 girl student was allegedly gang raped by three youths who abducted her from her school in a vilage in Sohna area during a sports programme, police said on Sunday.

The three also made an objectionable video of her and uploaded it on social media.

Police are conducting raids to nab the accused and a medical examination of the girl has been done, said DCP, South, Upasana.

According to the com-plaint filed by the father of the 14-year-old girl, on December 18 last year her daughter was abducted from her school by three youths — Mayank, Gauray, and Harish — during a sports programme. They



turns to rape her. They also threatened to kill her if she told about the incident to anyone.

"My daughter kept it to herself till I got to know about the video on Saturday. I asked her about it and she told me the entire incident," the father

wrote in his complaint.
Following the complaint,
an FIR was registered against three accused under sections 363 (abduction) and 376-D A (gang rape on a woman under sixteen years of age) of the IPC and section 13/6 of POCSO Act at Sohna Sadar Police Station

2 Nigerians held for duping women on pretext of marriage

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

wo Nigerian nationals were ing women by proposing marriage and then taking money on the pretext of getting Customs clearance for expen-



sive gifts, police said on Sunday. Alex (30) and 45-year-Íbeh

allegedly

approached women on matrimonial sites and introduced themselves as marine engineers based in the UK, they said.

The matter came to light in February when a 24-year-old resident of the President's Estate, Rashtrapati Bhawan, lodged a police complaint.

Crackdown on illegal ads

PARVESH SHARMA **GURUGRAM**

 $\begin{array}{ccc} F^{ollowing \ a \ direction \ given} \\ F_{by \ the \ Municipal} \\ Corporation \ of \ Gurugram \end{array}$ (MCG) chief, PC Meena, the advisement wing of the department has launched a special campaign against unauthorised unipoles and illegal advertising material installed at various places in MCG limits in Gurugram.

During the drive, the wing uprooted 19 illegal unipoles of which 12 were from Southern Peripheral Road (SPR) and 7 from the Dwarka Expressway

on Sunday.

The MCG officials said advertisements of various firms were displayed on these unipoles unofficially by different advertising agencies. The team uprooted 19 unipoles with the help of a hydra machine and dismantle them.

"A special campaign being run by the corporation against unauthorized advertisements, unipoles, hoarding boards, pamphlets and other types of advertising material without approval will continue. Action will be taken against those dis-

the advertisement fee would also be recovered from the concerned advertising agency and advertiser. Under this, the concerned amount will be linked to the NDC portal by attaching it to his property tax

playing unauthorized advertisements under the Haryana

Municipal Corporation Act

and Haryana Prevention of

Defacement of Property Act,"

incurred in removing the unau-

thorized advertisement and

He said that the expenses

The commissioner also directed that the to check unipoles of the advertising agencies which have not applied for permission to place advertisements under the advertisement rules should be removed. "If the advertising agencies,

wants to display advertise-ments, they should apply for approval at the earliest. Along with taking action on the advertisement sites of the agencies which did not apply, instructions were given to the firms whose advertisements were installed illegally," he



LS Speaker for reforms in UNSC

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Lon Sunday said there should be reforms in UN Security Council, considering the rapid changes across the world and there should not be further delays on brining reforms. Birla said that there should be serious discussions in brining reforms in the Security Council. He was speaking at the Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union in

Birla said that in global institutions like the UN Security Council, there is a broad consensus among many nations to bring about reforms to reflect the realities of a rapidly changing world order. Observing that this important matter requires serious dis-



cussions, Lok Sabha Speaker stressed that reform in the UN Security Council cannot be delayed any further.

He said that it is crucial that the subject is included in future global agendas so that we could contribute more and more in addressing challenges such as climate change, sustainable development, poverty, gender equality and terrorism, said the statement issued by Lok Sabha Secretariat here.

Observing that India has

always given the message of peace and harmony to the entire world, Birla reiterated India's belief that building inclusive and tolerant society is only possible through peaceful coexistence, mutual discussions and dialogue.

He mentioned that our Parliaments have a decisive role to play in this regard. He exhorted the world community to come together to build a better future for the human-

Modi shares anecdote narrated to him by Oz Min

PM bats for rich cultural connect between India and Australia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday shared an anecdote that was narrated to him by Australian trade minister Don Farrell about how one of his teachers had migrated from Goa, and said that it underlines the rich cultural connect between India and Australia.

Farrell had accompanied Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese who was in India last week on an official

In a series of tweets, Modi said, "During the lunch in honour of my friend PM Albanese, the Australian Trade and Tourism Minister Don



Farrell shared something interesting... he was taught by one Mrs. Ebert in Grade 1 who left a deep impact on his life and credits her for his educational

grounding."

"Mrs. Ebert, her husband and her daughter Leonie migrated from Goa in India to Adelaide in the 1950s and started teaching at a school in Adelaide, Australia," Modi said. Ebert's daughter Leonie

went on to be the president of the South Australian Institute of Teachers, he said.

"I was happy to hear this anecdote, which underlines the rich cultural connect between India and Australia. It is equally heartening to hear when someone refers to his or her teacher fondly," Modi said.

Indian, French navies carry out maritime exercise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

With the objective of fur-ther enhancing defence ties between the two countries, the Indian and French navies carried out a maritime partnership exercise for two days in the Arabian Sea.

Giving details of the drill, navy officials said here on Sunday, the

Indian Navy's indigenously built guided missile frigate, INS Sahyadri particular ipated in a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) with French Navy (FN) ships FS Dixmude, a Mistral Class Amphibious Assault Ship and FS La Fayette, a La Fayette Class Frigate, in the Arabian Sea on March 10 – 11 March.

The exercise witnessed a wide spectrum of evolutions at sea which included cross deck landings, boarding exercises and seamanship evolu-



interoperability and high level of cooperation between the

The INS Sahyadri is fitted with state-of -the art weapons and sensors, which makes her capable of detecting and neutralising air, surface and sub-surface threats.

The ship is a part of Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam, under operational control of

Complete sensitivity towards dignity and safety of women in news, ads expected: Murmu

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday said it is expected that the media would have "complete sensitivity" towards the dignity and safety of women in their advertisements, news and programmes.

In a video message while flagging off an All Women Bike Rally, organised by the Navbharat Times, the president said that according to the Constitution, it is the duty of every citizen of India to give up such practices which are against the dignity of women.

"To perform this fundamental duty, it is necessary that the thinking of every citizen should be respectful towards women. The foundation of respectful conduct towards women can be laid in the family itself," she said.

Mothers and sisters should inculcate in their sons and brothers the values of giving respect to women and also asked teachers to strengthen the culture of respect and sen-



sitivity towards women among

the students, Murmu said. "The president said that it is expected from the media that they would have complete sensitivity towards the dignity and safety of women in their advertisements, news and programmes," according to a statement from the Rashtrapati

Murmu said the nature has given women the ability to become mothers; and the one who has the capability of moth-

erhood, the capability of lead-ership naturally exists in her. She said that despite all the limitations and challenges, women have set new records of success on the strength of their indomitable courage and skill. from Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

CBI brings back kidnapping, murder accused from Saudi Arabia

The CBI has brought back a kidnapping-and-murder accused wanted by the Kerala Police through extradition from Saudi Arabia, the 33rd fugitive extradited under "Operation Trishul" on Sunday. The Operation Trishul was

Mohammed Haneefa Makkata, a fugitive with an Interpol Red Corner Notice (RCÑ) issued against him, was wanted by the Kerala Police in

connection with the abduction

and killing of one Karim in

2006, a case that was probed by

launched last year, officials

the Kunnamangalam police station in Kozhikode, they said. He was located in Saudi Arabia on the basis of the RCN. The Interpol unit of Saudi Arabia informed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) about Makkata's location

back to India, they said. The CBI passed on the information to the Kerala Police, which brought the

and sought a team to take him



Makkata is the 33rd fugitive brought back to India since January 2022. The federal agency has brought back 27 fugitives in 2022 and six so far this year, the officials said. Under the Operation

Trishul, criminals and 'proceeds of crime' are traced in foreign countries with the help of the Interpol and brought back, the officials said.

The agency locates a fugi-tive through the Interpol and seeks deportation or extradi-tion from the member country where he is holed up. The agency also mobilises Interpol mechanisms — StAR Global Focal Point Network, Financial

PNS NEW DELHI

Province (ISKP) case.

Khan at Seoni, in the Islamic

This case was initially reg-

Cell after the arrest of a

Kashmiri couple Jahanzaib

Sami Wani and his wife Hina

Bashir Beigh from Okhla,

statement.

Crimes Analysis Files and other channels - to identify dispersal of proceeds of crime by financial criminals so that subsequent steps may be initiated through formal channels to recover such proceeds of crime.

Despite the Operation, over 30 high-profile criminals accused of committing financial frauds in India, including Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, Nitin Sandesara and Jatin Mehta, have found sanctuaries

Indian agencies are looking for 276 fugitives globally through RCNs, including some high-profile economic offenders, According to the Interpol.

US citizen caught smoking in bathroom on AI flight

In yet another incident of disruption in an airliner, a passenger, identified as 37-year-old Ramakant, a US citizen, was caught smoking in the bathroom and misbehaving with other passengers on Air India London-Mumbai flight on

A case has been registered against him at Sahar police station in Mumbai under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 336 (whoever does any act so rashly or negligently as to endanger human life or the personal safety of others) and Aircraft Act 1937, 22 (refuse to follow a lawful instruction given by the Pilot-in-Command), 23 (Assault and other acts endangering safety or jeopardizing good order and discipline) and 25 (for smoking). His samples were sent for examination to confirm if he was in an inebriated condition or was mentally disturbed.

According to Air India, the incident has been reported to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

As per reports, the flight crew informed that the man tried to open the door of the flight. The passenger then said he was carrying some medicine but no such object was recovered upon

inspection of his luggage.

In its statement, Air India said the accused also behaved "in an unruly and aggressive manner". "A passenger on our flight AI130, operating London-Mumbai on 10th March 2023, was found smoking in the lavatory. Subsequently he behaved in an unruly and aggressive manner, despite repeated warnings," Air India said in the



dent. We are extending all cooperation in the on going investigations," the airline owned by Tata Group said. Air India added that it follows a "zero tolerance policy" for any behaviour that compromises the safety and security of passengers and staff.

In similar news, a passenger was caught smoking inside the lavatory of a Kolkata-New Delhi Air India flight on March 4. As the man lit a cigarette inside the washroom, smoke emanated setting off the alarm and alerting the crew. The passenger was handed over to the Delhi police upon landing. The passenger was identified as Anil Meena. In January 2023, a passenger on board an Indigo flight to Mumbai from Nagpur was booked by the Mumbai airport police after he allegedly attempted to open the emergency door of the flight just before its landing at the Chhatrapati Shivaji airport.

Coast Gaurd conducts Maritime Law & Operations Course for officers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

In an effort to have better understanding of laws and operations in the maritime domain, the Indian Coast Guard conducted nearly a month-long Maritime Law and Operations Course for Officers from Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs) from February 13 to March 10.

Giving details of the extensive course. Coast Guard officials said here on Sunday, the training capsule was conducted at the Coast Guard Training Centre (CGTC), Kochi. The Maritime Law and Operations Course is conducted under the aegis of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme which is a leading capacity building platform of the Ministry of



External Affairs. The four weeks professional course witnessed one of the highest ever participation from the Friendly Foreign Countries wherein a total of 26 Officers participated. This batch of International Trainee comprised Officers from Bangladesh, Togo, Myanmar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Vietnam, Guinea

Mauritius and Tanzania. The CGTC (Kochi) is the

only training centre of the Indian Coast Guard where training on the Maritime subjects such as Search and Rescue (SAR), Marine Pollution Response (MPR) and Maritime Law are imparted to the Officers and Personnel Below Officers Rank (PBOR) from the Coast Guard and other Maritime Agencies of the FFCs



The NIA teams conducted searches on Saturday at four locations in Seoni (Madhya The couple was found to be Pradesh) and one location in affiliated with ISKP. During Pune (Maharashtra). investigation, the role of anoth-"Following-up on investigational leads, NIA teams er accused, Abdullah Basith emerged, who was already lodged in Tihar Jail in another searched houses of suspects, Talha Khan at Pune and Akram case being investigated by the

On the same day, NIA car-State- Khorasan Province (ISKP) case," the NIA said in a ried out searches at three other locations in Seoni in the Shivamogga Islamic State istered by Delhi Police Special Conspiracy case, it said.

The places searched included the residential and commercial premises of suspects Abdul Aziz Salafi and Shoeb Khan.

In the Shivamogga case, as part of a conspiracy hatched rom abroad, the accused persons Mohamed Shariq, Maaz Muneer Khan, Yasin and others, based on instructions of their handler based abroad, targeted public and private properties, such as warehouses, liquor shops, hardware shops, vehicles and other properties belonging to members of a particular community and committed over 25 incidents of arson and sabotage, the agency

The suspects even carried out a mock IED blast. They were being funded through crypto-currencies by their online handler.

As part of the larger conspiracy, accused Mohamed Shariq planned to carry out an IED blast at Kadri temple, Mangalore on November 19,

However, the IED had exploded prematurely through an accident, when the perpetrator was enroute to the target

Aged 40, Abdul Salafi is a Maulana at the Seoni Jamia Masjid and Shoeb, who is only 26 and impressionable, sells automobile spare parts.

Salafi, along with his accomplice Shoeb, were found actively propagating pernicious ideas, such as, 'voting in elections is sinful for Muslims'.

"The group led by Maulana Aziz Salafi was in the process of radicalizing gullible Muslim youth of MP, Maharashtra and many southern States through provocative and inflammatory speeches on YouTube," the NIÁ

They were also trying to bring together such radicalized individuals in Seoni district. From the material seized during the searches, it has come to light that this group was actively collecting information about ongoing activities and events in different Jihadi theatres, including Afghanistan.

"Initial examination of the suspects have brought out the fact that they are radically motivated individuals, who totally abhor the idea of democracy in India, and were preparing for carrying out Jihad against the people who

believe otherwise," it said. They were using social media platforms for dissemination of such false propaganda to impressionable youth. In furtherance of such efforts, Aziz Salafi was also in contact with the arrested accused Maaz Muneer Ahmed of Karnataka. who had procured the explo-

sive materials for the trial blast. Maaz was arrested by the NIA in November 2022. Further investigations into the connections of these accused in the spread of IS ideology in India by NIA are being continued to unearth the whole conspiracy, it added.

'MPs have unhindered rights to express views in Parliament'

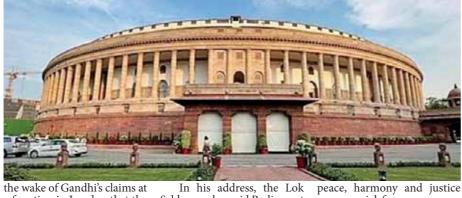
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Lon Sunday said all lawmakers enjoy the "unhindered right" to express their views in Parliament, making a strong rebuttal of Rahul Gandhi's recent claims that the opposition was not allowed to speak in the House.

Birla was addressing the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in

Manama, Bahrain. "In India, we have a robust participatory democracy and a vibrant multi-party system where hopes and aspirations of citizens find expression through the elected representatives. All members enjoy the freedom to express their views and thoughts in Lok Sabha," he

Birla's remarks come in



Sabha speaker said Parliament a function in London that the voice of opposition leaders was of India has always held extenstifled in Parliament. Gandhi sive and meaningful debate made the comment during an and deliberations on contemevent organised by veteran Indian-origin Opposition as climate change, gender Labour Party MP Virendra equality, sustainable develop-Sharma in the Grand ment and the Covid-19 pan-Committee Room within the demic. He emphasized that House of Commons complex. global institutions propagating

were crucial for peace, prosperity, sustainability and a just world order. porary global challenges such

In this context, Birla said there was a broad consensus among many nations to bring about reforms in the UN Security Council to reflect the realities of a rapidly changing

"Reform of the UN Security Council cannot be delayed any further," the Speaker added.

He said it was crucial that the subject was included in future global agendas so that "we could contribute more and more in addressing challenges such as climate change, sustainable development, poverty, gender equality and terror-

Highlighting the country's readiness to fulfil its global obligations, Birla said India carried out the world's largest vaccination programme against Covid-19 for its citizens.

At the same time, India also helped other nations in their respective fights against the pandemic by providing medical equipment and vaccines under 'Vaccine Maitri', he

All-party meet: V-P flags 'free fall of info' in name of freedom of speech

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $R_{\text{Jagdeep Dhankhar sought}}^{\text{ajya Sabha Chairperson}}$ views of leaders of various political parties on ways to curb disruptions in the House at a meeting held on Sunday on the eve of the start of the second phase of the Budget session.

Opposition members raised the issue of alleged misuse of central agencies against non-BJP governments and the move to appoint Dhankhar's personal staff on parliamentary committees.

Sources said that during his interaction with floor leaders, Vice-President Dhankhar mainly flagged the issue of whether disruptions can be allowed and if members can have a "free fall of information"



the House as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution.

The article deals with freedom of speech in Parliament with certain conditions. The first phase of the

Budget session was overshadowed by the Adani-Hindenburg issue as the Opposition disrupted proceedings demanding a JPC

Dhankhar had been criti-

cised by opposition parties over his decision to delete some portions of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's speech from official records in Rajya Sabha. "I cannot allow Rajya Sabha to be an 'akhara' (wrestling arena) for free fall of

information or allegations against anyone. Make a statement, you are entitled to do it, but authenticate it, be responsible about it," the vice president had said at an event in Bengaluru early this month. Leader of House Piyush

Goyal, Congress' Jairam Ramesh, DMK's M Shanmugam, AAP's Sanjay Singh and Samajwadi Party's Ramgopal Yadav were among those present at the Sunday meeting here.

Shah sounds LS poll bugle in Kerala

HM targets CM Vijayan on graft

PTI ■ THRISSUR

Taking on Keralas CPI(M)-led Left government on alleged corruption in the Life Mission project, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday urged Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to shed his silence on the matter.

Shah, while addressing a BJP rally here, also alleged that Communists were keeping mum on the alleged gold smuggling scam and said they will be forced to answer the public in 2024 Parliamentary

The communists are immersed in the Life Mission corruption. The Chief Ministers former Principal Secretary, M Sivasankar, was arrested in this case. I urge the chief minister to answer the people on that matter, Shah

Referring to the government action against Popular Front of Indi (PFI), the Union Home Minister said outfit has been completely banned in the country and thus helped Kerala to get rid of violence. This step was not welcomed by either Congress or by the Communists, he said.

Modis zero-tolerance policy against terrorism will continue, says HM

Noting that the Centre has successfully tackled several internal security challenges in the last nine years, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday stressed that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi governments policy of zero-tolerance towards terrorism would

Speaking at the 54th Raising Day celebrations of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) here, he said separatism, terrorism and anti-national activities in any part of the country will be dealt with firmly.

Highlighting the role of CAPFs (Central Armed Police Forces) and state police in the fight against terror, Shah termed it significant and said it has been demonstrated in the last nine years.

Speaking of the security situation in parts of the country, he affirmed that violence in Kashmir, insurgency in Northeast and Left Wing Extremismaffected areas is coming down, while peoples confidence is increasing.

The number of people involved in

terror related activities is on the decline, many are giving up arms and returning to mainstream, he said.

Averring that any country can make progress only if the security of its airports, ports and industrial estab-



Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah attends the 54th Raising Day celebrations of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in Hyderabad on Sunday

lishments is assured, Shah said CISFs history of 53 years shows that it has immensely contributed to the economic progress of the nation.

The security of airports, ports and other establishments of national importance is very important if the target of five trillion dollar economy set by PM Modi is to be realized, he pointed out, expressing confidence that CISF will prepare itself to meet all the future chal-

Shah further said the Union Home

Ministry would leave no stone unturned to equip the CISF with the modern technologies to face the challenges of the future. In this context, he said the Home Ministry has already drawn up an action plan. In the next 10 years, several opportunities would be available to CISF for the development.

In the contemporary digital age, CISF has provided security to its stakeholders, he said adding that the security protocol has been made impenetrable by equipping it with state-of-the-

art technologies like robotics, artificial intelligence. On the hybrid model adopted by CISF, the Union Home Minister said it is going to enhance the forces role in the times to come.

The model would pave way for its use in advisory and many other roles in private companies as well.

In the coming decades, the central force would be able to safeguard even the private companies from security threats related to drones and modern technology. Observing that India has become a fast-growing economy today, Shah said it is our responsibility to keep the countrys institutions, mines, ports, and airports safe.

The Union Home Minister further said there are several challenges facing the country today, such as counterfeit currency trade, infiltration and narcotics, and with a bright history, CISF has secured the country.

Later, Shah paid homage to the CISF personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty since its incep-

CISF Director General (DG) Sheel Vardhan Singh spoke on the occasion. For the first time, the CISF held its annual Raising Day celebrations out of Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) at the CISF National Industrial Security Academy (NISA) at Hakimpet here.

Assam shifts foreigners from 6 detention centres to dedicated transit camp

The Assam government on Sunday completed a process of shifting declared foreigners to a newly built dedicated detention centre, now renamed as transit camp, in Goalpara district, a senior official said.

Assam Inspector General of Prisons Pubali Gohain told PTI that the last batch of 87 inmates from Silchar detention centre was taken to the dedicated Matia transit camp.
The inmates started their

journey from Silchar on Saturday and reached Goalpara today. With this, the process of shifting all declared foreigner inmates lodged in the six transit camps has been completed, she said. Of the 87 declared foreigners, 64 are from Myanmar, 22 from Bangladesh and one from Senegal, another senior official said.

The process of shifting the inmates to the Matia camp began on January 27 with transferring of 68 declared for-eigners from the Goalpara detention centre. As the shifting process completes, the six detention centres will no longer exist, Gohain said.

Altogether 217 declared foreigners are lodged at the new



transit camp in Matia at this moment, Goalpara Deputy Commissioner Khanindra Choudhury said.

This figure changes very frequently with court verdicts and the deportation of foreigners. Just three days ago, three Bangladeshis were sent back to their country from the Matia camp, he told PTI.

The Matia dedicated transit camp is monitored and controlled by the Goalpara district administration.

Prior to the new facility at Matia, Assam had six transit camps, which were created by using a part of the existing jails in Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Jorhat, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Tezpur.

The government con-structed the first dedicated centre at Matia in Goalpara district to lodge the suspected and declared foreigners found in Assam. The new camp can accommodate 3,000 inmates, including 400 females.

EC completely

ARREST SUVENDU

TMC for Adhikaris grilling in SSC scam case in WB

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Under intense attack from the Opposition after a number of Trinamool Congress leaders relatives — including a niece of Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee — lost their jobs following a Calcutta High Court order in the multi-crore school level recruitment scam the TMC on Sunday hit back at the BJP demanding Opposition leader Suvendu Adhikaris custodial interrogation alleging 55 people including his close aide Sanjeev Shukul who had allegedly been recommended by Adhikari too had lost their jobs in the same scam and following the same court order.

Suvendu Adhikari had been presenting himself as a has come to light how he had recommended 150 people out of whom 55 have lost their jobs one of them is Sanjeev Shukul his close aide ... this means that he too had influenced the appointment process .. hence the TMC demands his immediate arrest and custodial interrogation, Ghosh said adding all the 55 people who had allegedly obtained

their jobs through Adhikari



should be interrogated along with the Opposition Leader. In the latest round of termination orders issued by the School Service Commission following a High Court order 842 people lost their jobs for having obtained them through questionable means like manipulation of Optical Mark

In earlier orders more than 3,642 people including teachers and Group C and D staff have already lost their jobs for adopting unfair means and the fate of many more thousands still hang in balance.

Sources in the SSC say that more than 20,000 people may lose their jobs in subsequent months. Ghoshs attack came — as the BJP upped the ante against the ruling outfithours after close kin of TMC leaders including Brishti Mukherjee a distant niece of Chief Minister lost their jobs. Among TMC notables who

lost their jobs were Binata Mondal daughter of TMC MLA Usharani Mondal; Sudip Haldar, son of TMC legislator Joydev Haldar; Khokon Mahato, brother of MLA Srikanta Mahato; Amit Saha, party councillor from Harbour Diamond Municipality; Dolon Biswas, former party councillor from Barasat, and Tumpa Meta, a Hooghly district board member. Incidentally daughter of a BJP leader and former MLA

Dulal Bar too has lost her job. Bengal minister Firhad Hakim too hit out at Adhikari even as he said at one level he is crying hoarse about SSC recruitment scam and at the same time it is seen that he himself is involved in it ... it is seen that he himself had recommended names in the job

The TMC leadership also hit out at BJP leadership for using central agencies against opposition parties and sparing their own men.

Its insulting to call adivasis vanvasis, NCP chief raps BJP

PTI MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday targeted the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying that it was insulting to call tribals or adivasis as vanvasis, and those who use that term show their ignorance. He was speaking at a function

Some people prefer to call tribals vanvasis as in those who live in forests. It will not be an exaggeration if I say that it is an insult to call tribals as vanvasis. They are adivasi, the former Union minister said without naming anyone. They are the true owners of jal, jungle and zameen (water, jungle

The people who use such terms (vanvasi) show their ignorance towards adivasis as well as their efforts in preserving the jungles in this country. The credit (of preserving forests) is theirs (tribals), he said. Yashwantrao Chavan Pratisthan, an organisation headed by Pawar on Sunday started its Tribal Welfare Centre.

Congress leader Rahul



Gandhi has been targeting the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that they have been using a derogatory term vanvasi (forest dweller) to refer to adivasis. During a rally in Madhya Pradesh in November last year, Gandhi had said the BJP should apologise with folded hands for disrespecting tribals

A few days back, I heard a beech of PM Narendra Modi in which he used a new word, vanvasi, for adivasis. It means adivasis are not the first owners of the country and that they only live in forests, the former Congress president had said. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) backs an organisation named Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram that works for the welfare of tribals.

Ambaji temple prasad row: Congress accuses BJP of trying to change tradition

Ahmedabad: Amid controversy over replacing a traditional prasad offering at the famous Ambaji temple in Banaskantha district of Gujarat with chikki, State Congress chief Jagdish Thakor on Sunday offered mohanthal sweet at a temple here and alleged an attempt was being made to tamper with the tradition by supporters of ruling BJP to make money.

Claiming the mohanthal,

(a sweet made from gram flour, ghee and sugar) has been a traditional offering at the Ambaji temple since time immemorial, Thakor said a state-wide agitation will be launched if mohanthal is not reintroduced.

Meanwhile, defending the move to replace mohanthal groundnut and jaggery), Gujarat minister and government spokesperson Rushikesh Patel said chikki comes with a longer shelf life and it could also be bought online by devotees living far away.

On Friday, Congress MLAs were expelled from the Gujarat Assembly after they demanded a discussion on the change in the prasad being distributed at the Ambaji temple, and



protested in the House.

The mohanthal prasad has been associated with traditions and faith for years. It is a part of the traditions at the Ambaji temple since the time of ancient kingdoms. But it has been replaced with chikki by supporters of BJP to make money at the cost of the tradition, Thakor alleged while speaking to reporters.

the issue which is central to the faith of lakhs of devotees, the BJP government was threatening that mohanthal will not be brought back as an offering.

Talking to reporters in Gandhinagar on Saturday, minister Patel had said the chikki being used as prasad at the temple is made from special nuts and care is taken for its

compromised, alleges Aaditya PTI MUMBAI Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray on

Sunday alleged the Election Commission is completely compromised and said its decision to recognise the faction led by Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde as the Shiv Sena and allot it the bow and arrow symbol was dangerous for democracy.

He said the acronym CM of Maharashtra currently stands for a corrupt man, and that the illegal and unconstitutional chief minister will

surely go.

Addressing a meeting of the party workers in North Mumbai, Thackeray said the flaming torch (Mashaal) symbol allotted to Shiv Sena (UBT) is the only light that will brighten the darkness caused by the

He said the rebel MLAs led by Shinde had done the dirty work of toppling a government which had done good work of tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviating hardships of farmers affected by the cyclone and unseasonably rains when in power. The Maha Vikas Aghadi government was leading Maharashtra to a golden period, the former minister

Kochi waste dumping yard blaze: Many hospitalised

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

r⊓he Queen of Arabian Sea has turned out to be the epicentre of poisonous gases as hundreds of residents have been admitted to various hospitals because of the massive fire that has engulfed the 70 acre waste dumping yard near

While the Central Pollution Control Board in its report says all safety norms have been violated by the authorities concerned, dumping of toxic waste continued without interruption. The citys intelligentsia, all affiliated to CPI-M, came out in open questioning the indifference of local body as well district administration in taking any action to douse the flames.

Anil Kumar, the Mayor of Kochi, said he was not responsible for situation thereby passing buck to partys State leadership amidst allegations by Opposition leaders that waste processing contract was issued to company owned by the son-in-law of a top CPI-M leader.

We had cancelled contract given to controversial company when it was proved that this company was a fake entity, said Mayor of Kannur.

Azad powerless as electricity cut over non-payment of dues

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL) has started acting tough against the chronic defaulters including several top politicians as they have been shying away from paying their regular power bills.

During the special drive conducted in some areas of Jammu on Saturday the power corporation snapped several power connections including those of politicians namely Ghulam Nabi Azad, Chairman of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party and others.

According to official sources, a power bill of around 4 lakhs was served at the offi-

cial residence of Ghulam Nabi Azad in Jammu. After several reminders when the same was not cleared by the concerned, the power lines were snapped on Saturday.

contacted, pokesman of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party Salman Nizami told The Pioneer, as leader of the opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad seldom stayed at the official residence in Jammu. He was always accommodated in the official guest house as per his protocol. Nizami said,during Covid-19 pandemic, he was camping in New Delhi.

After receiving a hefty bill of over 4 lakhs we have intimated to the concerned officials to verify the same. Nizami claimed, Chairman of the newly launched political outfit has been occasionally camping in the house for only a few days since September 2022. During the said period he was on tour most of the time and met a few delegations in the lawn where no power devices were put to use. We will follow it up with the concerned authorities and resolve the issue at hand as

soon as possible. According to official sources, power engineers had also snapped illegal power connections supplying power to the room of the security guard posted at the residence of J&K BJP Chief Ravinder Raina on

Former JD(U) MP joins BJP

Patna: The BJP in Bihar on Sunday claimed to have received a shot in the arm with the induction of former JD(U) MP Meena Singh. Singh, who had represented Arrah Lok Sabha seat from 2009 to 2014, joined the BJP along with her son Vishal in presence of state president Sanjay Jaiswal and Union minister Nityanand Rai, among others.

Both Jaiswal and Rai asserted that Singhs exit marked the JD(U)s terminal decline and indicated that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the partys supremo, was losing trust of his own people.

The ex-MP had quit the JD(U) earlier this month, expressing anguish over Kumar aligning with arch rival Lalu

Unemployed man held for hoax bomb call in TN

PTI ■ ERODE (TN)

34-year-old unemployed Aman from Coimbatore was arrested on Sunday for making a hoax bomb threat a few days ago that explosions would take place at the railway station and main bus stand in Erode,

Upon his arrest, the man

had apparently told the police that he was struggling to make ends meet and rang up the authorities with a plan that he would get regular food once put behind bars for the crime.

According to police, they had received a phone call a couple of days back at the Police Control Room, Chennai which in turn alerted the Erode police

to tighten security measures at the main bus stand, railway station and the shopping markets in the town. The Erode police conduct-

ed thorough checking at Erode railway station, Erode Municipal Corporation Bus stand and the bazaar area but found nothing and termed it as only a hoax threat. Upon verifying the call records, police found the caller was one Santhosh Kumar, a resident of Mettupalayam in Coimbatore

On Saturday night, Erode police arrested Kumar and interrogated him.

Police said the man had made the call as he is unemployed and struggling in life.

Law College honours 36 alumni — judicial officers

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Government College Awhich produced 36 judicial officers since its inception in 1990 has earned encomiums from all over Kerala. Government Law College, Thrissur, established in 1991 by the UDF Government led by K Karunakaran held a unique even on Saturday by honoring the 36 judicial officers passed out of the precincts of the College during the last 30 years and serving Keralas judicial department in various capaci-

ties including district judges. Though the College has many shortcomings like the absence of a playground or smart classrooms, the faculty members and the non-teaching staff are always at our beck and call and that makes a lot of difference, said Antony M George, a final year LLB student said about the event.

The alumni who had gathered for the felicitation attributed their success to the watchful eyes and ears of the faculty. Some of us had scored only average grades in the University examination. But that did not deter us from the process of learning. Even after passing out of the college, we consider ourselves as students and that



could be the reason behind our success, said one of the alumni members. The seniors reminded the upcoming law graduates that failure in the semester examinations and arrears of topic should not weaken them in their pursuit. Many among us had arrears to complete and we faced the task with courage. But whatever we learnt, we did it with dedication, said one of the seven district judges.

Saturday saw the inauguration of the Research Centre for the University of Calicut. Ours is the youngest of the four law colleges owned by the Government and the fact that we have contributed this many judges to the State over the last three decades in an achievement. But we are not going to sit and relax over it. Despite the shortcomings, we will work together to make GLC the

excellence, said Dr Sonia Das, principal-in-charge. Last year saw two of the faculty members, Dr A A Kadeejabi and Dr Lini Priya Vasavan completing their PhD in innovative topics. While Dr Kadeejabis the-

sis was on application of modern technology in crime detection, Dr Vasavans study was on the viability of the civil nuclear deal between India and US, in the backdrop of the high pitched debate over the responsibility in the eventuality of a nuclear reactor disaster.

For young students like Vishnupriya and Nirmal Mary, Saturday turned out to be a day of rededication to topic of law. The interaction with alumni was an experience which we will never forget, said both of them. Who said Government Colleges fare poorly compared to private colleges?

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PAPER WITH PASSION-

No big idea

Opposition slams Govt for action against Lalu family and Kavitha but doesn't offer an alternative narrative

elangana Chief Minister and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) boss K Chandrashekar Rao's idea of a third front may be taking shape, but its efficacy against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party remains in question. He seems to have succeeded in bringing eight parties within the fold of an embryonic coalition of anti-BJP parties. The ostensible purpose is a political struggle for the enactment and implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill, but what really binds together these parties is their unease with action by the Central agencies, especially the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), against graft cases. KCR, whose daughter K Kavitha is being questioned by the ED in the Delhi liquor case, is among the more vocal Opposition leaders. He is making all efforts to tell the country that the Centre is using the agencies to maximise political gains. For instance, he ensured that Home Minister Amit Shah,



who was in the city on Sunday for the 54th CISF Raising Day parade, was greeted with a poster which is a spoof on the famous 'Washing Powder Nirma' girl. The message was that the BJP is like the washing powder that washes the alleged misdeeds of politicians like Himanta Biswa Sarma, Narayan Rane, Suvendu Adhikari, Sujana Chowdhary, and Eshwarappa; KCR's assertion is that all of them, who joined the saffron party after having faced charges, are not being troubled by the lawenforcement agencies.

Those in the camp of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who believes that the Congress should be part of the anti-BJP coalition, are also facing accusations of corruption. There is the land-for-jobs case, dating

back to the time when Lalu Yadav was Railways minister. The ED, which is grilling his family members, has claimed that the current market value of land allegedly acquired in the case is Rs 200 crore. Disputing the ED's claim, Tejashwi Yadav challenged the agency to release the "seizure list" that contains all names. The BJP, on the other hand, has said that Opposition leaders are playing the victim card. Such allegations and counterallegations have become part and parcel of Indian politics. Whatever may be the veracity of the statements made by leaders of different parties, the point is that none of them are saying or doing anything that would improve the system. Opposition leaders accuse the BJP Government of misusing Central agencies; when the BJP was not in power, it used to say the same thing. No Opposition leader, however, has said anything about bringing in institutional changes so that such abuse could be stopped. Why do they refrain from suggesting systemic reforms? What they are all interested in is somehow cobbling together an alliance and ousting the BJP from office; even if some of them succeed in doing so, it would be a marriage of convenience—with attendant perils. The glue that can bring major Opposition parties together would be some big idea, some narrative, not fortuitous circumstances.



Women warm up before taking part in the Women's Day Saree Run 2023, in Chandigarh

Attack terror on its roots through Quad



Wiping out terrorism is impossible without invoking a social and political solution

permanent solution to the problem of terrorism would require multilayered policydriven initiatives based on carrot and stick policy. The Quad can be very effective in tackling the increasing tentacles of terror on the diplomatic front through coordination and dialogue, and conflict resolution methods but history bears testimony to the fact that these methods alone are not sufficient. On the other hand, there is gradually a growing frustration over the inability to control the rising tide of militancy which brought about opposition in myriad forms, increasing pressure on the government to take stringent steps. The rigmarole the security forces have to undergo after conducting any anti-terrorist operation is mind-boggling. Some kind of Popular Mobilization Force on the pattern of Iraq (PMF of Iraq against ISIS) can build solid public opinion against insurgency and militancy in the region.

Wiping out terrorism is the top priority for any nation to survive, but terrorism cannot be done away with unless there is a social and political solution. There is a need for a deep penchant and will to solve the problems that generate terrorism. The states affected by terrorism should open the avenues for a negotiated settlement of disputes and exhibit a genuine willingness to resolve long-festering problems. This threat can be encountered by training and development of a new mechanism bolstered by a multidimensional and multi-layered approach based on checks and balances.

Certain pertinent questions need to be answered immediatey: these are - What are the new terrorist challenges across the globe and particularly faced by India. Why are terrorists successful in their mission?and what is the role of religion in motivating

In this regard, a careful analysis of the causes of a suicidal squad of terrorism could be of reat use, we need to analyze now recent years' terror attacks such as one in France, Germany, the UK and India could have been avoided and what are Legal and con-

stitutional provisions are available to deal with terrorists?

After carefully examining the widening gap between the various governments to formulate a common strategy for the suppression of terrorism some strategic measures ought to be looked into for formulating an international strategy to counter this menace. In this regard, comprehensive coordination between various nations can be of immense use. We need to work on the strategic methods which the security forces and the intelligence agencies ought to be preparing for to encounter new forms of sporadic attacks on markets, trains, shopping centres, cinema halls, hotels and other public places. Quad Group countries know pretty well that international terrorism is multi-dimensional and requires a fresh perspective. Unless we hit the roots of the evil disease it will keep haunting us. The anti-terrorist campaign should also covers the following major issues along with pure security strategy:

Reasons for the rising tide of terrorism in the region and its linkages.; level of possible potentialities and impediments in the war against terror and thereby having an immediate contingency plan worked out. The environment Security Agenda through multiple lay-

between the local powerful syndicates, outsiders and drug There ought to be a high-ly clinical and consciously

passionate approach to address the hidden problem of the region which is entangled in the game plan sponsored from across the border and the petty interest of a few players to remain at the helm of The entire process needs

ers of security and nexus

to address the issue of meritorious policy analysis with an objective approach to provide an innovative urge to solve the existing gap between theory and practice by the regional political parties in the region. More integrated programs

and services that provide supplemental support to both army and local police make it more efficient in the present circumstances of dealing with the worst form of propaganda terror. Growth and enrichment of the region, both inside and outside through community development exercises within the member countries of Quad. In an increasingly globalized world, the matrices of power at times turn on the imbalanced and not so egalitarian structure of the interna tional economy and as such inter-relations between socioeconomic conditions in different parts of the world are

becoming more and more obvious day by day and leading to the problem of terrorism gives a psychological food for thought and strength to non-state actors in IR. Therefore, there is a need to combat the concept of Post Truth and ill ideology manufacturing agents.

Besides, the process

requires constant talent transfer and specialists trained in countering terrorism. A think tank specialized in encountering tactics can be immensely useful. The secretive mission of the intruders and creating cognitive dissonance through relentless application of the latest information on changing strategies with feedback from those deployed and constant interactive communication with various branches dealing with law-and-order maintenance on a daily basis. Therefore, there is an urgent need for integrated programmes and services which support both Army and local police making them more efficient in the present circumstances of dealing with the worst form of propaganda ter-

(Writer is a Recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award ana is a Projessor oj Politica Science and Strategic Affairs Expert. This is the second part of a two-part series on QUAD. Concluded)



THERE OUGHT TO

BE A HIGHLY CLINICAL AND CONSCIOUSLY **PASSIONATE** APPROACH TO ADDRESSING THE HIDDEN PROBLEM OF THE REGION WHICH IS **ENTANGLED IN** THE GAME PLAN **SPONSORED** FROM ACROSS THE BORDER

THE EDITOR

Display technologies on the fast lane



Display industry got a boost during pandemic when screen time increased significantly. It is is now touching new heights

ne of the biggest fallouts of the Corona pandemic and the lockdowns have been the change in the habit patterns and a push to the digital domains. This has opened up new possibilities of working and learning from remote locations. One of the most prominent industries that has enabled this transition has been the display industry. The growth of LED screen business in India has been phenomenal in recent years, with the technology gaining widespread acceptance.

One of the key factors driving the growth of the LED screen business in India is the increasing adoption of digital technology. With the rise of e-commerce, digital marketing, and online entertainment, businesses are increasingly turning to LED screens as a way to engage customers and promote their brands. LED screens are also being used in education, healthcare, and government services, where they can enhance communication, improve productivity, and provide a more immersive user experience. "The display technology mar-



past decade, with the rise of technologies such as 4K and HDR leading to more advanced and immersive viewing experiences. We will continue to see a focus on technologies that offer better color accuracy, brightness, and contrast, as well as innovations in areas like curved and flexible displays." Says Rajeev Singh, MD BenQ India, the company that has been at the forefront of the

LED screen business in India. Another factor contributing to the growth of the display business in India is the availability of affordable and high-quality LED screens. Advances in technology have made LED screens more affordable and accessible, allowing businesses of all sizes to take advantage of this technology. "There is a grow-

ing demand for displays that are environmentally friendly, and I expect to see more manufacturers focusing on developing products that are energy-efficient and sustainable." Says Rajeev Singh, MD BenQ India display one of the largest manufacturers of display screens in India.

But this is not just the size of the market but also the innovations that are finding a place in the display segment. For instance, BenQ, a multinational is promoting green energy on display. It is the third largest display manufacturer in the world. "As a group we hold around 15% share in the world-wide display market. And we have multiple patents and this place is becoming exciting as the research is demand driven, Now new innovations are coming in everyday" Says

Besides, the display technology is now going Indian, giving a boost to the 'make in India pitch of the Prime Minister. Most display panels have manufacturing lines in China or Taiwan or Vietnam but that is changing fast.

BenQ has also pushed 'make in India' drive. Its interactive flat panels are now getting Indianised. "We are expecting to sell at least 15,000 Plus 'made in India' interactive flat panels in India with international standards. we are launching a completely new model which is being launched at the same time in India as well as in other countries." Says Rajeev Singh. The company is getting it done through a third party manufacturing company in India which is not only generating employment but also indirectly helping the growth of ancillary industry in India.

No wonder this is one exciting segment for manufacturers, users and also investors. Display Market size was valued at USD 131.49 Billion in 2021 and is projected to reach USD 182.90 Billion by 2030.

> (The writer is a senior journalist)

GUINNESS RECORD FOR BIRSA MUNDA

Sir — It is a proud moment for Indians as the Guinness Book of World Records recognised Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium, Rourkela, as the world's largest fully hockey stadium with a capacity of 20,011. It was built in record time of 15 months. We are glad India's national sport and our pride- Hockey is gaining recognition and popularity. Government's initiative will inspire more youth and coaches to bring glory to India. Hockey is the key to India's medals tally.

TS Karthik | Chennai

FEAR OF ARREST

Sir — When the possible involvement of Manish Sisodia started snowballing, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal started expressing his apprehension that Sisodia would be arrested. This expression of apprehension was intended to convey to the people that the NDA government has indulged in witch hunt. For many months Sisodia was not arrested after Kejriwal expressed his view that Sisodia would be arrested.

When he was not arrested top from Kejriwal down to the spokespersons in media channel, there was jubilant mood in AAP that nothing has been found in the enquiry against Sisodia.

Investigating agencies do not arrest anyone without solid evidence. If they arrest anyone without solid evidence, the court pulls up investigating agencies. After the arrest of Sisodia, AAP started swan song "arrested out of political vendetta". Now Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao has been saying that his daughter Kavitha would be arrested. This abundantly shows that KCR's daughter is also involved.

How can any government take any action against any person from opposition parties unless there is an iota of suspicion in the involvement in any scam? Who are shouting at ruling dispensation of witch hunt will do the same when they come to

Fear of recession



s the world once again entering the recession after the global financial crisis of 2008? Big finance and economy experts were already predicting that between 2023 and 2024, the cycle of economic slowdown could start all over the world. Which will be led by America only. It has started in America on Friday 10 March. Silicon Valley Bank, the nation's 16th largest, failed this

week after depositors rushed to withdraw money amid concerns about the bank's health. It was the second biggest bank failure in US history after the collapse of Washington Mutual in

The California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation said on Friday that it has taken over the Silicon Valley bank. The reason, it said, was "inadequate liquidity and bankruptcy". When the news spread in India, banks were closed that day. Saturday and Sunday are bank holidays in India. If we open up, will the effect of the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank be seen in the stock markets there as well? Certainly it will have an impact and will be far-reaching. You cannot keep the effect of economic bankruptcv and recession within the borderline of a coun-

Jang Bahadur Singh I Jamshedpur

party occupies the place of opposition, they will also dawn the same role which the present-day opposition has been doing.

The only remedy is to move a constitutional amendment to make the opposition party members immune from enquiry, prosecution and punishment. If such an amendment is moved probably all the parties crossing across party line vote for the amendment. Then political field would be more lucrative place for aspirants of polit-

K V Seetharamaiah Bengaluru

RESOLUTE ACTION

Sir — Apropos your editorial 'New India' (March, 11), during the decade long UPA rule, after every terror strike in India, the only response that we had from the then PM and others powers that be were 'strong condemnation of the cowardly and dastardly attacks'.

Alas, such colourful language did little to assuage the pain and loss of the surviving family members of those killed and injured in the attacks. What was bewildering was power. Again, when the present ruling that after some terror strikes there were

belonging to the Congress and other parties cautioning the security forces 'not to harass members of a community in the name of investigations'! Disgustingly, even on such occasions, there was the clumsy attempt at vote bank politics.

even statements issued by some politicians

Modi's approach, in contrast, has been radically different. There has not been a single sensational terror attack against civilians, since 2014.

After the Phulwama attack against the Indian army, he ordered the Balakot air strikes against terrorist training camps inside Pakistan and after the Galwan clashes, he took resolute action against the Chinese economic interests.

One reason for the BJP's popularity is such decisive leadership. The public is fed up with mere statements of non-violence, peace, panchsheel and secularism every time India is attacked by enemies of the nation, whether internal or external!

V Jayaraman | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

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FIRST COLUMN BUZZ OF GLOBAL INVESTMENT MEETS

Conversion of MOUs into the investment remains an issue



n past years, India has been a host to various Global Investment Meet/Summits (GIM/S) towards inviting foreign equity at the national corridors. The majority of the states like Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have concluded such global meets promising to be a potential booster dose for economic revival and succeeding to the target of being a 5 trillion economy by the year 2047. However, it is noteworthy to reflect on the aftermath of these global events catering to the targets of Indian Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). As of the year 2022, India ranks itself among the top 10 countries in respect of the FDI and its main partner countries have been Singapore, the USA and Mauritius encapsulating the lion's share in this regard. Sector wise focus of FDI has been towards electronics (24.6%), service (12.1%), automobiles (12%), trading (8%) and construction activities 5.5%). Progressive states like Karnataka, Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu have been successful in attracting FDI. The liberal policy framework announced in the union budget 2023 is also providing a hint towards Indian ambition for facilitating foreign investment towards boosting the economy.



Investment Meets by various states. To quote, recently, Karnataka could attract an investment of around Rs. 10 lakhs crores to uplift its various sectors. Similarly, Uttar Pradesh could also attract an investment worthy of the amount of Rs. 35 lakh crores to signify the efforts on achieving the goal of a \$ 1 trillion economy in 3 days Summit of Global Investors. Similar events are already in pipeline for a couple of states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The question here is whether the investments which are promised under the MoUs are also turning around or if it is just a numbers game. In past experiences of Karnataka, decades ago, a similar event could result in 14 percent of the conversion rate while for Tamil Nadu rate was 25 percent for the global investor's meet held during the year 2015. These experiences should be eve-openers and just a mere gathering of stakeholders and a budget announcement should not be taken for granted. There should be a suitable framework to avoid the turmoil in the conversion rate and sustainable investments should be facilitated with the sheer responsibility of the stakeholders.

Another common approach these investment meets have observed is that very few Indian investors could pave their way either to offset the home business or to prioritize the foreigners. As evident in the Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh GIS, only a handful of Indian players like Adani, Reliance group etc., could have invested which is partly low in proportion to the foreign investors. This also relates to the fact quoted in the World Bank report that the share of the private sector towards urban infrastructural development is only 5 per cent.

Considering the global paradigms on the economy, and intra-national tensions, the aftermath of the pandemic overall various nations are not in a healthy economic state. Food, fuel and finance are also the hinterland components with such shifts. Considering the happy FDI inflow in India, the track seems to be progressive, however, it should also consider the global concerns and the slowing condition of the world may not indicate the ideal conditions to grow. One question underlies here is whether such investments are enough and whether we are on the right track. Well, to achieve holistic development, India should have set priorities in terms of sectoral growth. Infrastructural inefficiencies are already pushing the sub-sectors like clean water, efficient power supply and safe transport. Therefore, a sector-focused approach that can also be benchmarked with state-level priorities would be a key to pacing the Indian quest of being a

(Writer is Assistant Professor, School of Agribusiness and Rural Management, Dr Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University, Pusa, Samastipur, Bihar)

Prachanda falls prey to Oli's tactics



The chances of a pro-India government in Nepal are bright as Prachanda has lost the support he enjoyed so far



t this juncture, as a shrewd politician, EX PM, Oli had fished in the troubled water and offered the post of prime minister to Prachanda who fell prey to this temptation. But it did not last long as Oli reportedly started arm-twisting and tried to push the Prachanda government into China's lap which was unacceptable as the prime minister preferred to have equidistance with India and Dragon. It was a final nail in the coffin of Oli when he tried to supersede prime minister, Prachanda to have his loyalist as a presidential candidate which led to a revival of five parties' pre-poll alliance including the NC, CPN-Maoist Centre, CPN-Unified Socialist, Loktantrik Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya

Prachanda and Oli are having a history of mistrust as the former was ditched by the latter when they were part of undivided CPN-UML which had come to power. Oli's CPN-UML and Maoists Centre headed by Prachanda had forged a pre-poll alliance and contested the 2017 elections thereby winning 121 and 53 seats respectively. They had merged their factions but it was set aside by the supreme court in March 2018 which led to the dissolution of the parliament by Oli which was restored by the supreme court. It was responsible for Prachanda's decision to part ways which resulted in the defeat of Oli during vote trust and the Nepali Congress-led coalition came to power.

Prachanda's decision to join hands with Nepali Congress and seven parties was responsible for the withdrawal of the support by Oli's CPN(UML) which has reduced the government to a minority but



THE CHINESE **EMBASSY IN** KATHMANDU HAD OPENLY LOBBIED WITH COMMUNIST FACTIONS AND **PRESSURED** THEM TO REMAIN UNITED

is bound to survive as a new combination will be in a position to mobilize the required strength of 138 MPs. Prachanda, Sher Bahadur Deuba, the Nepali congress president and CPN (Unified Socialist) of Madhav Nepal have agreed to share the power on a rotation basis for the rest of the tenure of the government which will ensure stability in Nepal in

CHINA TRIED TO INTER-FERE Contrary to it eight parties including Nepali Congress vill elect Poudel as a new presi dent who is destined to play a crucial role in the preservation of norms of the constitution to strengthen the roots of democracy in Nepal. As per Nepali congress leaders, China's embassy in Kathmandu had interfered in the country's politics and tried to unite two factions of communists but in vain.

Former PM, Oli had openly favoured China and opted for confrontation with India which may end after the formation of a new five-party alliance government in near future. Owing to China's ambition to wean away Nepal from India to establish its supremacy in Asia, besides Oli's CPN-UML having a Pro Dragon stance, it has been adding fuel to the fire and hence openly supported President Bhandari who had blocked the citizenship bill.

Experts say that Bhandari had

dissolved the parliament arbitrarily and acted in an artisan manner on Dec 20, 2020, and subsequently refused to allow Deuba to form an alternate government. At this juncture, the supreme court had to rescue Democracy and directed her to follow the constitution. The Chinese embassy in Kathmandu had openly lobbied with communist factions and pressured them to remain united to create hurdles in the formation of

the coalition government led by the Nepali Congress which is considered Pro-India. In contravention of the conditional obligations, Bhandari also attended a virtual meeting of the Chinese Global Security Initiative despite the strong reservations of the govern-

PRESIDENT BHANDARI'S **CONTROVERSIAL DECI-SIONS**

President Bidya Devi Bhandari will be remembered for her controversial decisions. Owing to China's ambition to wean away Nepal from India to establish its supremacy in Asia, besides Oli's CPN-UML having a Pro Dragon stance, it has been adding fuel to the fire and hence openly supported President Bhandari who had blocked the citizenship bill.

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Analysts opine that the victory of the Nepali Congress candidate indicates that the five-party alliance will have no problem in forming a new government which will be set back to China but a relief to India as former PM, Oli had completely tilted towards China hence ties with India were at the lowest ebb. It will also ensure the implementation of the Agniveer project of recruitment of 25,000 Nepali youth in the Indian army which was kept in abeyance due to the negativity of Oli towards

((Writer is a political analyst who covered Nepal for six years. This is the second part of a twopart series on Nepal. The views expressed are personal.

cancer in women is a Pap

smear test, which detects

Monitoring of health is vital for women over 30

Women above 30 must consider these health tests to monitor their health as these tests could detect and even predict the diseases

We have all heard that age doesn't matter if your heart is full of life", while it may be true in some sense, one needs to be attentive about their age and address the complexities it brings into life. As women move into their 30s, the body instantly starts experiencing the turbulence of hormonal changes. They become more susceptible to a multitude of diseases waiting at this stretch of the age group. To stay healthy and avoid the varied form of diseases, women above 30 years of age must undergo the following tests:

• Heart screening through blood tests: Your heart can skip a beat and you might not even get to know it. Many times women tend to experience racing heartbeats,



(The writer is Obstetrician

Apollo 24 7)

chronic fatigue and high levels of anxiety but ignore all the symptoms of cardiovascular problems very easily. Most of the time they assume that a heavy workload is causing this trouble. Little do they know that these can be the warning signs about their heart condition. What to do then? Simple. Start with the basics. Book your blood tests either via online diagnostic platforms or simply from the one near you. These tests must include a hs-CRP (highsensitivity C-reactive protein) test along with blood pressure, cholesterol tests, blood glucose tests, and BMI measurements to check obesity. The hs-CRP tests indicate the risk of heart

and Gynecologist, at Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad & • Regular Diabetes **Screening:** Diabetes is a major

concern for populations worldwide. Since diabetes can cause major health complications among women such as kidney issues, cardiovascular problems and other diseases, women above 30 must keep a thorough and regular check on their blood glucose levels. Diabetes can be screened through a variety of tests such as fasting plasma glucose test (FPG), HA1C test (determine average blood glucose), random plasma glucose test and oral glucose tolerance test. Regular thyroid testing is very

• Thyroid Function Test: essential for women above 30 as with age, the risk of developing thyroid disorders increases. Doing the thyroid function test can help women

take control of their health and

ensure they receive the care

thyroid function. Many bodily functions including temperature regulation, metabolism and energy production are regulated by hormones produced by the thyroid gland. And, when the thyroid gland stops functioning normally, a wide range of symptoms can start occurring in the body including sudden weight gain or loss, mood swings, fatigue and many more. To counteract this, women above the age of 30 must get their thyroid levels checked regularly. A simple thyroid profile test through blood samples can measure the levels of thyroidstimulating hormone (TSH) in the blood and determine whether the thyroid gland is functioning normally.

they need to maintain optimal Mammography: As you reach your 30s don't shy away from knowing your breasts in and out. Having an in-depth evaluation of your breasts via mammography tests can ease your life. Doing so will not only minimize the chances of complexities ahead but also will uncover your 'might-have fear. Mammography is one of the most crucial aspects that women above 30 should highly consider. This test comprises screening of your breasts through an X-ray image to investigate symptoms or unusual findings like lumps in them. It is an important tool to rule out whether a woman suffers from breast cancer or not. In India, clinical examination is suggested to women of age 30-40 years every 6 • Check your breasts via months by an oncologist as

per the general guidelines followed in the country. For women of age between 41-55 years, clinicians advise annual mammography tests along with examinations by the oncologist. And women who have crossed the age of 55 are suggested to go for a mammogram once in 2 years. Present times are very vulnerable for women to develop breast cancer. However, critical issues can be avoided with attentive and preventive measures.

• Cervical Cancer evaluation via Pap smear test: As the incidence of cervical cancer in women is increasing rapidly, it has become all the more important for women above 30 to take significant measures about it. One of the vital tools that helps in evaluating cervical

abnormal cells in the cervix before they turn cancerous. The rule of thumb says that women above 30 should undergo a Pap smear test minimum of once every 3 years. The bottom line is that women shouldn't neglect the warning signs and adopt more preventive care in their lifestyle. With continuous monitoring and evaluation by specialized doctors, many critical illnesses can be detected early, treated and even prevented. One credible diagnostic service-providing App on your phone is enough to keep your health in check. Remember women, age can be just a number if you are taking up routine essential tests.

'Russian advance in Bakhmut halted' Israeli forces kill three

 $R^{\hbox{ussia's advance seems to}}_{\hbox{have stalled in Moscow's}}$ campaign to capture the eastern Ükrainian city of Bakhmut, a leading think tank said in an assessment of the longest ground battle of the war.

The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said there were no confirmed advances by Russian forces in Bakhmut.

Russian forces and units from the Kremlin-controlled paramilitary Wagner Group continued to launch ground attacks in the city, but there was no evidence that they were able to make any progress, ISW said late on Saturday.

The report cited the spokesperson of the Ukrainian Armed Forces' Eastern Group, Serhii Cherevaty, who said that fighting in the Bakhmut area had been more intense this week than the previous one. According to Cherevaty, there were 23 clashes in the city over the previous 24 hours.

following claims of Russian progress earlier this week. The UK Defence Ministry said on Saturday that paramilitary units from the Kremlin-controlled Wagner Group had seized most of eastern Bakhmut, with a river flowing through the city now marking the front line of the fighting.

The assessment highlighted that Russia's assault will be difficult to sustain without more significant personnel

The mining city of Bakhmut is located in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, one of four regions of Ukraine that Russian President Vladimir Putin illegally annexed last

Russia's military opened the campaign to take control of Bakhmut in August, and both sides have experienced staggering casualties. Ukrainian Volodymyr Zelenskyy has vowed not to

In its latest report Sunday,

on Sunday that the impact of the heavy casualties Russia is continuing to suffer in Ukraine varies dramatically across the

The ministry's intelligence update said that the major cities of Moscow and St Petersburg remain "relatively unscathed," particularly among members of Russia's elite.

In contrast, in many of Russia's eastern regions, the death rate as a percentage of the population is "30-40 times higher than in Moscow."

The report highlighted that ethnic minorities often take the biggest hit. In the southern Astrakhan region, for example, about "75 per cent of casualties come from the minority Kazakh and Tartar popula-

Russi's mounting casualties are reflected in a loss of government control over the country's information sphere, ISW said.

The think tank said that Russian Foreign Ministry

Local officials in the southern Kherson province confirmed that Russian forces fired 29 times on Ukrainian-controlled territory in the region on Saturday, with residential areas of the regional capital, Kherson, coming under fire three times.

Three people died in the province and a further three were wounded.

In Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv province, the Kharkiv, Chuhuiv and Kupiansk districts came under fire, but no civilian casualties were reported. The head of Ukraine's

southern Mykolaiv province Gov Vitali Kim said on Sunday morning that the town of Ochakiv, set at the mouth of the Dnieper River, came under artillery fire in the early hours of Sunday.

Cars were set ablaze, while private houses and high-rise buildings sustained damage. No casualties were reported.

and one in the village of Tonenke. Four further civilians Palestinian gunmen

Tsraeli forces shot and killed Lthree Palestinian gunmen Sunday who opened fire on troops in the occupied West Bank, the military said, the latest bloodshed in a year-long wave of violence in the region.

The military said one gunman turned himself in and was arrested. The Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed three people were killed near the city of Nablus. It did not immediately disclose their identities.

The deaths Sunday bring to

80 the number of Palestinians killed since the start of the year, as Israel has stepped up arrest raids in the West Bank. A spasm of Palestinian attacks has killed 14 people in 2023.

The fresh violence follows an Israeli military raid last week on the West Bank village of Jaba, where three Palestinian militants were killed. Hours later, a Palestinian gunman opened fire on a busy Tel Aviv thoroughfare at the start of the Israeli weekend, wounding three people before being shot and killed.

The current round of violence is one of the worst between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank in years. It began last spring after a series of Palestinian attacks against Israelis that triggered near-nightly Israeli raids in the West Bank. Nearly 150 Palestinians

were killed in the West Bank and east Jerusalem in 2022, making it the deadliest year in those areas since 2004, according to the leading Israeli rights group B'Tselem. Palestinian attacks against Israelis during that same time killed 30 people. The military says most of the Palestinians killed were militants. But stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in confrontations have also been killed. Israel says the

Israeli soldiers operate in village of Sarra near the Palestinians West Bank city of Israel fires missiles

at Syrian city

siles targeted a western Syrian city on Sunday wounding three Syrian soldiers, Syrian

state media reported.

The official news agency SANA, citing a military source, said the missiles were fired at Masyaf in Hama province at dawn. Syria's air defences shot several of them down. No deaths were reported. Photos from SANA show that the missiles may have landed on farmland.

There was no immediate comment from Israel, which has staged hundreds of strikes on targets in Syria over the years. However, it rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

raids are essential to dismantle militant networks and prevent future attacks. But attacks appear to be intensifying rather

raids as a tightening by Israel

of its 55-year, open-ended

than slowing down. The Palestinians view the

Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories for their future independent state.

It says it targets bases of

Iran-allied militias, notably

Lebanon's militant Hezbollah

group. Hezbollah has fighters

deployed in Syria and fighting

on the side of Syrian President

Bashar Assad's government

forces. Israel also says it targets

arms shipments believed to be

Masyaf in May and August

2022 killing five people and

based opposition war monitor Syrian Observatory for

Human Rights, the attacks

targeted weapons depots

belonging to Iran's paramili-

tary Revolutionary Guard and

occupation of lands they seek

Iran-backed militias.

for their future state.

Israel previously attacked

According to the Britain-

bound for the militias.

wounding two.

Pence: Trump endangered my tamily on Jan 6

 $F^{
m ormer\ Vice\ President\ Mike\ Pence\ on}_{
m Saturday\ harshly\ criticised\ former}$ President Donald Trump for his role in the January 6 riot at the US Capitol, widening the rift between the two men as they prepare to battle over the Republican nomination in next year's

"President Trump was wrong," Pence said during remarks at the annual white-tie Gridiron Dinner attended by politicians and journalists.

"I had no right to overturn the election. And his reckless words endangered my family and everyone at the Capitol that day, and I know history will hold Donald Trump accountable.

Pence's remarks were the sharpest condemnation yet from the once-loyal lieutenant who has often shied away from confronting his former boss. Trump has already declared his candidacy. Pence has not, but he's been laying the groundwork to run.

In the days leading up to January 6,



2021, Trump pressured Pence to overturn President Joe Biden's election victory as he presided over the ceremonial certification of the results.

Pence refused, and when rioters stormed the Capitol, some chanted that they wanted to "hang Mike Pence."

The House committee that investi-

that "the President of the United States had riled up a mob that hunted his own Vice President."

Zakharova confirmed "infight-

ing in the Kremlin inner circle"

and that the Kremlin has effec-

tively ceded control over the

country's information space,

with Putin unable to readily

comments, made at a forum on

the "practical and technologi-

cal aspects of information and

cognitive warfare in modern

realities" in Moscow, as "note-

worthy" and in line with the

think tank's long standing assessments about the deteri-

orating Kremlin regime and

information space control

Russian attacks over the previ-

ous day killed at least five peo-

ple and wounded another

seven across Ukraine's Donetsk

and Kherson regions, local

Ukrainian authorities reported

Kyrylenko said that two people

were killed in the region, one

in the city of Kostyantynivka

Donetsk Gov Pavlo

on Sunday morning.

Elsewhere in Ukraine,

The ISW sees Zakharova's

regain control.

dynamics."

With his remarks, Pence solidified his place in a broader debate within the Republican Party over how to view the attack. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, for example, recently provided Tucker Carlson with an archive of security camera footage from January 6, which the Fox News host has used to downplay the day's events and promote conspiracy

"Make no mistake about it, what happened that day was a disgrace," Pence said in his Gridiron Dinner remarks. "And it mocks decency to portray it any other way." Trump, meanwhile, has continued

to spread lies about his election loss. He's even spoken in support of the rioters and said he would consider pardoning them if he was reelected.

Speeches at the Gridiron Dinner are usually humorous affairs, where politicians poke fun at each other, and Pence did plenty of that as well.

He joked that Trump's ego was so fragile, he wanted his vice president to sing "Wind Beneath My Wings" — one of the lines is "did you ever know that you're my hero?" — during their weeklv lunches.

He took another shot at Trump over classified documents.

"I read that some of those classified documents they found at Mar-a-Lago were actually stuck in the president's Bible," Pence said. "Which proves he had absolutely no idea they were there." Even before the dinner was over,

Pence was facing criticism for his jokes about Transportation Secretary Buttigieg, the first openly gay Cabinet member in US history. Pence mentioned that, despite trav-

el problems that were plaguing Americans, Buttigieg took "maternity leave" after he and his husband adopted newborn twins.

"Pete is the only person in human history to have a child and everyone else gets post-partum depression," Pence

US agencies debunk surgeon | US Congman highlights Pakistan's rights, free speech violations general's vaccine claims

AP ■ ORLANDO

Us health agencies have sent a letter to Florida's surgeon general, warning him that his claims about COVID-19 vaccine risks are harmful to the public.

The letter from the US Food and Drug Administration and and Prevention was sent on Friday to Florida Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo. It was a response to a letter Ladapo had written the agencies last month, expressing concerns about what he described as adverse effects from mRNA COVID-19 vac-

Ladapo was appointed by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in 2021 and has attracted national scrutiny over his close alignment with the governor in opposing COVID-19 vaccine mandates and other health policies embraced by the federal

government. Ladapo last year released guidance recommending against COVID-19 vaccinations for healthy children, contradicting federal public health leaders

whose advice says all kids should get the shots. He also has recommended against men ages 18 to 39 getting the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, claiming that an analysis by the Florida Department of Health showed an 84 per cent increase in cardiac-related deaths.

agencies debunked the analysis' conclusion, saying that cardiovascular experts who studied the concern had concluded that the risk of strokes and heart attacks was lower in people who had been vaccinated, not higher. More than 13 billion doses

of COVID-19 vaccines have been given around the world with little evidence of adverse effects, the federal health agencies said.

"It is the job of public health officials around the country to protect the lives of the populations they serve, particularly the vulnerable. Fueling vaccine hesitancy undermines this effort," said the letter signed by FDA Commissioner Robert Califf and CDC Director Rochelle Walensky

PTI ISLAMABAD

An influential US Congressman has raised concerns over the continuous violation of human rights and democracy in Pakistan and asked the government to ensure freedom of speech and the application of rule of law in the country.

There is concern over the increasing incidents of violence in Pakistan," tweeted Congressman Brad Sherman, House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In a video statement, shared by a leader of ousted prime minister Imran Khan's party, Sherman reminded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government about its obligation to take action against those who violate human rights.

"We will not hesitate from raising our voice against human rights viola tions," said Sherman, a Democrat representing California's 32nd congressional district.

Earlier, he tweeted that he spoke over the phone with Imran Khan and met Asif Mehmood, a Pakistani philanthropist and Democratic candidate running against Young Kim in the state's 40th congressional district, Dawn newspaper reported.

"Ties between the US and Pakistan date back to the early 1940s, and over the years the two countries had worked

Pak plans to procure Russian crude oil at USD 50 per barrel

ash-strapped Pakistan is making Concerted efforts to procure Russian crude oil at USD 50 per barrel, at least USD 10 per barrel less countries due to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, media reports said on

Crude oil is currently being sold globally at USD 82.78 per barrel.

Pakistan, which is currently grappling with high external debt and a weak local currency, is desperate to purchase cheap crude at discounted rates from Russia. Moscow will respond to Pakistan's request for discounted crude oil only after it completes formalities such as mode of payment, shipping cost with premium and insurance, according to The News. The first consignment of crude oil from Moscow is scheduled to arrive in Pakistan by the end of next month, paving the way for a bigger deal in the future, the paper said.

The shipping of crude oil from

Russian ports will take 30 days, which would mean an increase of

USD 10-15 per barrel due to the transportation costs, it added.

Russia was initially concerned "over the seriousness of Pakistan to mature the oil deal," but in a recent meeting between officials from the Islamabad to import "one oil cargo" as a test case to bridge the trust deficit, according to The Express

Tribune newspaper.
Pakistan will first import one Russian crude oil ship to test landed cost, The News reported.

Since Pakistan is facing a US dol lar liquidity crunch, it would pay Russia in the currencies of friendly countries that include China, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, it said.

In December last year, Russia refused to provide Pakistan with a 30 per cent discount on its crude oil after the Pakistani delegation asked for a reduction in price.

Energy accounts for the biggest share of Pakistan's imports, and cheaper oil from Russia will help Pakistan in containing the balloon ing trade deficit and balance-ofpayments crisis.

together on several global and regional issues," Sherman said in a video message in which he was standing alongside Mehmood.

"America must support democracy and human rights around the world and particularly in Pakistan," he pointed out.

"It is not the role of the United States to involve itself in Pakistan's internal governmental matters with respect to Pakistan's constitutional not shy away from raising our voices for human rights and democracy in Pakistan or anywhere else," he said.

Commenting on the politics of Khan, the American politician said: "I have no interest in supporting Imran Khan or any political party, and have disagreements with him on many issues.

Sherman - who has been fulfilling responsibilities in the foreign affairs committee for 26 years - further said that Pakistan should allow its citizens to express themselves and hold peaceful protests. The congressman stated that everyone wanted to see a "calm, orderly, democratic and prosperous Pakistan where Pakistanis can have the freedom to have an open and political dialogue".

He went on to say that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with whom the country is in talks for

a long-delayed loan programme also wanted to see a stable Pakistan that followed the rule of law.

Sherman highlighted that the country was facing a host of internal and external challenges, saying that growing extremism, intolerance, and dissent were threatening Pakistan's prospects for social cohesion.

Since the ceasefire agreement between the Tehreek-e-Taliban (Pakistan) TTP and the government rorists have stepped up attacks on security forces and installations and even on mosques and markets in different parts of the country but Karachi has for some time now not witnessed

any major incident. "The inability of state institutions to reliably provide peaceful ways to resolve grievances is the vacuum which is being exploited by extremism." He also criticised the cases and media bans on former prime minister

"I am not here to support any political office in Pakistan, I am not here to support Imran... in fact, I disagree with him on a number of international issues nor is it my role to wade into Pakistan politics. Rather I am advocating for the freedom of speech, due process and the even application of the rule of law in Pakistan," Sherman

Storm prompts thousands to evacuate in California

Northern California agri-Acultural community famous for its strawberry crop was forced to evacuate early Saturday after the Pajaro River's levee was breached by flooding from a new atmospheric river that pummeled the state.

Ācross the Central Coast's Monterey County, more than 8,500 people were under evacuation orders and warnings Saturday, including roughly 1,700 residents — many of them Latino farmworkers from the unincorporated community of Pajaro.

Officials said the Pajaro River's levee breach is about 100 feet (30.48 meters) wide. Crews had gone door to door on Friday afternoon to urge residents to leave before the rains came but some stayed and had to be pulled from floodwaters early on Saturday.

First responders and the California National Guard rescued more than 50 people overnight. One video showed a member of the Guard helping a driver out of a car trapped by



water up to their waists. "We were hoping to avoid and prevent this situation, but the worst case scenario has arrived with the Pajaro River overtopping and levee breaching at about midnight," wrote Luis Alejo, chair of the Monterey County Board of

Supervisors, on Twitter. Alejo called the flooding "massive," saying the damage will take months to repair. The Pajaro River separates

might be contaminated with chemicals, officials said, and residents were told not to drink or cook with tap water for fear of illness. Officials had been working along the levee in the hopes of shoring it up when it was

the counties of Santa Cruz and

Monterey in the area that

flooded Saturday. Floodwaters

that got into the region's wells

breached around midnight

Friday into Saturday. Crews

began working to fix the levee around daybreak Saturday as residents slept in evacuation

Oliver Gonzalez, 12, told The Associated Press that he, his mother and his aunt were rescued around 5 a.m. on Saturday in Parajo. He grabbed his laptop, cellphone and some important documents but so much was left behind in their rush to leave.

"I'm kinda scared," he said several hours later from an evacuation center in nearby Watsonville. "My mom's car was left in the water."

Anais Rodriguez, 37, said first responders knocked on her home's door shortly after midnight. Her family packed about four days' worth of clothing and drove out to safety. She and her two children, her husband and her parents — along with their dog, Mila — arrived at the shelter about an hour later with few answers about what this would mean for their community going forward.

Gov Gavin Newsom's office on Saturday said it was monitoring the situation in Pajaro.

"Our thoughts are with everyone impacted and the state has mobilized to support the community," the governor's office wrote on Twitter.

The Pajaro Valley is a coastal agricultural area known for growing strawberries, apples, cauliflower, broccoli and artichokes. National Driscoll's brands like Strawberries and Martinelli's are headquartered in the

In 1995, the Pajaro River' s levees broke, submerging 2,500 acres (1,011 hectares) of farmland and the community of Pajaro. Two peopled died and the flooding caused nearly \$100 million in damage. A state law, passed last year, advanced state funds for a levee project. It was scheduled to start construction in 2024.

State Sen. John Laird, who spearheaded the law and represents the area, said the project is fully funded now but it just came down to bad timing with this year's rains.

"It's tragic, we were so close to getting this done before any storms," he said.

Stalker kills woman, husband

AP ■ REDMOND

 $A^{\text{longhaul truck driver from}}_{\text{Texas who became}}$ obsessed with a software engineer in Washington state after meeting her through a social media chatroom app killed her, her husband and himself after stalking them for months, police said. Zohreh Sadeghi, 33, and

her husband, Mohammad Milad Naseri, 35, were shot to death in their suburban Seattle home Ramin Khodakaramrezaei, 38, according to Redmond Police Chief Darrell Lowe. He said officers spent a week trying to serve a protection order on Khodakaramrezaei but had not been able to find him before the

This is the absolute worst outcome for a stalking case," Lowe said at a media briefing Friday afternoon. "This is every victim, every detective, every police chief's worst nightmare.'

In a written statement, the police department said Friday that the suspect began communicating with Sadeghi after lis-



Police gather at NE 89th Street in Redmond, Washington on Friday

tening to her podcasts. Lowe clarified that the two became acquainted because he heard her in an audio chatroom on the app Clubhouse, where he said she facilitated a discussion for Farsi speakers seeking work in the tech industry.

Sadeghi's mother called police around 1:45 a.m. Friday after escaping the home and running to a neighbor's house.

Arriving officers saw Naseri collapse in the doorway of the home and pulled him outside, discovering he had been shot, Lowe said. They performed CPR, but he died at the scene. Inside the home, officers

dead. Khodakaramrezaei befriended Sadeghi in the online chat room in late 2021.

found Sadeghi and the suspect

Lowe said the two met up in person last summer before the contacts escalated into harassing phone calls and threats in the fall. At one point he showed up at their home unwanted with flowers, Lowe said. As the stalker's behavior

intensified, Redmond Police filed a complaint against him for stalking and telephone harassment on March 2, and Sadeghi and Naseri obtained a protection order the next day.

UK records spike in Indians crossing over illegally in small boats

 $B_{\text{in Indians crossing over}}^{\text{ritain has recorded a spike}}$ illegally into the country across the English Channel last year, when a total of 683 largely Indian men were reported to have landed on its shores via small boats.

This figure, according to the latest UK Home Office "Irregular Migration to the UK" statistics for the year ending December 2022, shows a progressive rise from the 67

have crossed over in small boats in 2021, 64 in 2020 and none in 2019 and 2018.

The UK has a returns agreement with India under the Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP), something which was referred to by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in Parliament last week.

'We have returns agreements with India, Pakistan, Serbia, Nigeria and — crucially — now with Albania, where

people," Sunak told the Commons during Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs).

"Our position is clear: if you arrive here illegally you will not be able to claim asylum here, you will not be able to access the modern slavery system and you will not be able to make spurious human rights claims. That is the right thing to do," said the British Indian leader.

It came during the week in ly — now with Albania, where which he struck a new we are returning hundreds of enhanced agreement with

neighbouring France to crack down on small boats illegal migration via the route used by people smugglers, from the French port of Calais to the English port of Dover.

Under the agreement, the UK will deploy funds towards a new migrant detention centre on the French border and additional officers, drones and surveillance technology to clamp down on criminals facilitating unsafe small boat jour-

According to the Home

tion, there were also over 400 Indian nationals who fell under the category of "inadequately documented air arrivals" into the UK in 2022.

The majority of the "irregular arrivals" from India on small boats were made up of men between the ages of 25 and 40, out of a total of 45,755 in 2022 – largely dominated by nationals from Albania and Afghanistan, followed by Iran, Iraq and Syria. Other South Asian nationalities recorded Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis.

It is believed that traffickers charge thousands of pounds to transport people illegally on small and often unsafe boats in the hope of claiming asylum in the UK. Several deaths have occurred over the years as a result of such journeys but the number of migrants undertaking these treacherous journeys has continued to spike mani-

Sunak has made "Stop the Boats" one of his government's top priorities, with Home Secretary Suella Braverman introducing a new Illegal Migration Bill in Parliament. The Bill would see anyone arriving illegally on "small

boats" either returned to their home country or another "safe third country". Additionally, anyone found to have entered the country illegally will be blocked from returning or claiming British citizenship in

> "It has to stop. By bringing in new laws, I am making it

absolutely clear that the only route to the UK is a safe and legal route. If you come here illegally, you won't be able to claim asylum or build a life here," Braverman told the Commons earlier this week.

"You will not be allowed to stay. You will be returned home if safe, or to a safe third country like Rwanda. It's the only way to prevent people risking their lives and paying criminals thousands of pounds to get here," the Indian-origin minis-

China appoints US-sanctioned General as defence minister

Elevates foreign minister to state councillor rank

PTI ■ BEIJING

hina on Sunday appointed —a US-sanctioned army general as its new Defence Minister, displaying scant regard for Washington's ban on its military personnel. Gen Li Shangfu, a Chinese

aerospace engineer and General of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), was sanctioned by the US in 2018 for the purchase of Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 surface-to-air missiles by China's Equipment Development Department (EDD) in violation of the US sanctions on Russia.

The US sanctioned both the EDD and its then director Gen Li.

On Sunday, Gen Li was confirmed as the new Defence Minister by China's rubberstamp parliament, the National People's Congress (CPC). He will succeed Gen Wei Fenghe.

Gen Li was appointed along with a new set of cabinet ministers for various ministries as part of change of the Chinese



government officials every 10 vears. On Saturday, Gen Li was appointed as a member of the Central Military Commission (CMC) - the high command of the Chinese military headed by President Xi Jinping.

The US Department of Defence's 2022 China Military Report described Gen Li as the general officer who offers "technical expertise on military modernisation on space issues" "Li's rise reflects the

unprecedented development of China's space enterprise since Xi Jinping took power in 2012," according to the Diplomat magazine.

"It also signals to the world

that, against the backdrop of increasingly intensified China-US technological competition, China will continue to prioritize aerospace in its defence modernisation agenda during Xi's third term and beyond," it

"General Li Shangfu's appointment represents more consistency in the PLA senior leadership than change. Like Wei Fenghe, who also rose within the PLA under Xi's tenure, Li will continue to be a steward of China's defence modernisation programs, which have received sustained and continuous support of Chinese leaders from Jiang Zemin to Xi Jinping. Moreover, as the highest-ranking state councilor and a CMC member, Li will enjoy direct access to Xi and serve as his key military advisor," it said.

Meanwhile, Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang has been elevated to the rank of State Councillor, which will put him in line for his likely appointment for the post of China's Special Representative for India-China boundary talks, a high-level mechanism to discuss the boundary issue and improvement of ties between the two countries.

The National People's Congress (NPC), the Chinese Parliament, which is holding its annual session on Sunday endorsed Qin's appointment as Foreign Minister and elevated him to the status of State Councillor, a high-ranking position within the State Council or the central cabinet, the executive organ of the Chinese government.

Qin, 56, was appointed as the Foreign Minister in December succeeding Wang Yi who was elected to the Political Bureau of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), a key policy body of the party in the once-in-a-fiveyear congress of the party in October last year.

Qin's elevation to the rank of state councillor will put him in line for his appointment as the special representative (SR) of the India-China boundary

'Asian-Americans now cause of victory in US politics'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

sian-Americans, which includes the Indian A sian-Americans, which includes the main.

Acommunity as well, are now the "cause of victory" in US politics and just no longer the "margin of victory", according to an Indian-American

About the Asian-American community, it is normally believed that "we are the margin of victory, which means that in a close race this vote by swinging 10 points one way or the other, can make the difference in an election," said Shekhar Narasimhan, an Indian-American entrepreneur, community leader and political activist.

"I've completely refuted that. Now I think we are the cause of victory," Narasimhan told PTI, citing the example of the recent victory of Senator Raphael Warnock from the Democratic Party in Atlanta.

İn the Warnock race in Senate, of the 99,000 votes, he finally won the runoff with 34,000 votes from the AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islanders) community that weren't cast during the midterms said Narasimhan, who heads the AAPI Victory Fund - a Political Action Committee that focus es on mobilising AAPI eligible voters and supports Democrat AAPI candidates.

'We (AAPI Victory Fund) had a lot to do with delivering those votes...A swing of 68,000 votes in that election could have changed the dynamic of that election completely. It wasn't just the overwhelming black vote and the strong vote he got from the Atlanta suburbs. It was the Asian-American vote. They agree. I don't think he could have won without us," Narasimhan said, adding that this is the case when the community is four per cent of the voting population in

Lankan EC asks President to release funds for civic polls

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's election commission on Sunday wrote to President Ranil Wickremesinghe requesting him to release the necessary funds to conduct the much-delayed local council elections in the debt-ridden country next

The local body polls, which was earlier scheduled for March 9, got postponed to April 25, due to a plethora of reasons linked to the country's current economic crisis.

Chairman of the Election Commission Attorney-at-Law Nimal G Punchihewa said he has written to President Wickremesinghe, who is also the finance minister, urging him to release the necessary funds to hold the local body polls on the scheduled

The move comes after officials in the Treasury told the election commission last month that funds for the local body polls have not been disbursed by the finance ministry. Earlier this month, the govern-

ment's printer Gangani Liyanage made written requests to the Treasury Secretary and police chief to hold the much-delayed local council elections. Liyanage's office said the inability

to print the ballot papers to conduct the postal voting from February 21 to 24 made the Elections Commission post-

Sri Lanka's Supreme Court issued

duct of the polls should not be hindered. Following the court order, the election date was fixed for April 25 with postal voting to be conducted between

President Wickremesinghe, who is currently spearheading negotiations with the IMF for a bailout package, has maintained that the government cannot afford to hold local elections at a time when the state's expenditure was prioritised to pay for essentials to run the country.

Opposition parties, however, accuse Wickremesinghe of being scared to hold the elections and subverting democracy to gain political mileage. The ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna won the majority of councils in the last election held in 2018. It has suffered major splits since the economic crisis. The election to appoint new administrations to 340 local councils for a four-year term was postponed since March last year due to the ongoing economic crisis.

The election was the subject of several court cases with parties filing for and against the holding of it.

Sri Lanka was hit by an unprecedented financial crisis in 2022, the worst since its independence from Britain in 1948, due to a severe paucity of foreign exchange reserves, sparking political turmoil in the country which led to the ouster of the all-powerful Rajapaksa family.

6 killed, 29 injured in Nepal bus accident

Kathmandu (PTI): At least six people, including two women and a child, were killed and 29 others injured on Sunday when a bus they were travelling in crashed into a hillside in Nepal's Sindhuli district,

The bus carrying 34 passengers from Okhaldhunga to Kathmandu met with the accident in Phikkal Rural Municipality-4 along the Mid-Hill Highway.

Three men, two women and a child died on the spot police said.

According to the preliminary investigation, the accident occurred when the bus crashed into the hillside after the driver lost control of the vehicle, said Deputy Superintendent of Police Chiranjeevi Dahal.

The injured passengers have been shifted to Khurkot Hospital.

Five of the seriously injured passengers will be airlifted to Kathmandu for treatment, said Superintendent of Police Rai Kumar Silwal.

The bus driver is on the run, police said.

Four astronauts return home

AP CAPE CANAVERAL

Four space station astronauts returned to Earth late on Saturday after a quick SpaceX flight home. Their capsule splashed

down in the Gulf of Mexico just off the Florida coast near The US-Russian-Japanese crew spent five months at the International Space Station,

Besides dodging space junk, the astronauts had to deal with a pair of leaking Russian capsules docked to the orbiting outpost and the urgent delivery of a replacement craft for the station's other crew members.

Led by NASA's Nicole Mann, the first Native American woman to fly in space, the astronauts checked out of the station early on Saturday morning. Less than 19 hours later, their Dragon capsule was bobbing in the sea as they awaited pickup.

Earlier in the week, high wind and waves in the splashdown zones kept them at the station a few extra days. Their replacements arrived more than a week ago.

That was one heck of a ride," Mann radioed moments after splashdown. "We're happy to be home."



From left to right, Roscosmos cosmonaut Anna Kikina, NASA astronauts Josh Cassada and Nicole Mann, and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) astronaut Koichi Wakata smile inside the SpaceX Dragon Endurance spacecraf onboard a recovery ship shortly after having landed in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Tampa, Fla., following a five-month mission on the International Space Station on Saturday night

Emirates.

Mann, a member of Northern California's Wailacki of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, said she couldn't wait to feel the wind on her face, smell fresh grass and enjoy some delicious Earth food.

Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata craved sushi, while Russian cosmonaut Anna Kikina yearned to drink hot tea "from real cup, not from plastic bag.

NASA astronaut Josh Cassada's to-do list included getting a rescue dog for his family. "Please don't tell our two cats," he joked before departing the space station.

Remaining behind at the space station are three Americans, three Russians and one from the United Arab

Wakata, Japan's spaceflight champion, now has logged more than 500 days in space over five missions dating back to NASA's shuttle era.

3D-PRINTED ROCKET STILL GROUNDED AFTER **LAUNCH ABORTS**

A rocket made almost completely of 3D-printed parts came within a half-second of blasting off on Saturday on its debut flight, but remained

grounded after back-to-back launch aborts.

The engines ignited, but abruptly shut down, leaving Relativity Space's rocket, named Terran, standing on its pad.

Launch controllers reset the countdown clocks and aimed for the last possible moment of the three-hour window at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. But once again, on-board flight computers haltwith 45 seconds remaining.

Relativity Space blamed the afternoon's first problem on automation software and the second on low fuel pressure. The first launch attempt,

on Wednesday, was aborted at the one-minute mark because of a bad valve. There was no immediate

word on when the company might try again. At 110 feet (33 meters), the

rocket is relatively small. Relativity Space said 85% of the rocket, including its engines, came out of its huge 3D printers at company headquarters in Long Beach, California.

Ğiven this is a test flight, all that is aboard the rocket is the company's first 3D metal print. The company aims to put the souvenir, along with the second stage, into a low, short-lived

Hawaii's Kilauea not erupting

Honolulu (AP): Hawaii's second-largest volcano is not erupting, scientists said in an update to a previous warning.
The US Geological Survey

said in a statement late Saturday that seismic activity beneath the summit of Kilauea "has returned to background levels, ground deformation has stabilised, and no lava has been observed at the surface."

"another intrusion or resumption may occur in the near future with little or no warning." The agency previously said a shallow earthquake storm signalled "resumption of eruptive activity at Kilauea summit is likely imminent."

Scientists said Tuesday that lava had stopped flowing after 61 days of volcanic activity.

Kilauea, one of the world's most active volcanos, erupted from September 2021 to last December. A 2018 Kilauea eruption

destroyed more than 700 residences. For about two weeks last December, Hawaii's biggest volcano, Mauna Loa, also was erupting on Hawaii's Big Island.

The dual eruptions of Hawaii's biggest volcanos provided a temporary boost to tourism during the slow sea-

Prisoner swap near with US: Iran's top diplomat

Tran's top diplomat claimed on $oldsymbol{1}$ Sunda $\hat{ ext{y}}$ that a prisoner swap was near with the US, though he offered no evidence to support his assertion. American officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment about his remarks.

Hossein Amirabdollahian has made similar comments in the past about possible deals with the US on frozen assets abroad and other issues that never came to fruition. Some of those remarks have

appeared aimed at shoring up domestic support amid the mass protests challenging Iran's theocracy and supporting the country's troubled rial currency. However, in an interview on Sunday with Iranian state television, Amirabdollahian claimed that Iran had "reached an agreement in recent days regarding the exchange of prisoners between Iran and the United States.

"If everything goes well on the American's side, I think we will see the exchange of prisoners in the short term," he added. He alleged a document between Iran and the US laying out the exchange had been "indirectly signed and approved" since March 2022. The US State Department

and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment Sunday from The Associated Press. Iran long has taken prison-

ers with Western passports or

to use in neg foreign nations. As of right now, there are at least four American citizens known to be held in Iranian pris-

ons on widely disputed espionage charges. The evidence against them has never been made public. The detainees all have dual US-Iranian citizenship, something Tehran does not recognize. In recent days, however, long-

time Iranian-American detainee Siamak Namazi was allowed to conduct an interview with CNN from Tehran's notorious Evin prison - something that would not have happened without the acquiescence of security forces.

Meanwhile, Ali Bagheri Kani, a deputy Iranian foreign minister who has handled nuclear talks with world powers. made a trip Sunday to Oman, a longtime interlocutor between Tehran and Washington.

Prostate cancer treatment can wait for most men: Study

AP WASHINGTON

 $R^{ ext{esearchers}}$ have found long-term evidence that actively monitoring localized prostate cancer is a safe alternative to immediate surgery or radiation.

The results, released Saturday, are encouraging for men who want to avoid treatment-related sexual and incontinence problems, said Dr Stacy Loeb, a prostate cancer specialist at NYU Langone Health who was not involved in the research. The study directly compared the three approaches - surgery to remove tumors, radiation treatment and monitoring. Most prostate cancer grows slowly, so it takes many years to look at the disease's outcomes.
"There was no difference in

prostate cancer mortality at 15 years between the groups," Loeb said. And prostate cancer

survival for all three groups was than 1,600 U.K. men who high — 97 per cent regardless of treatment approach.

"That's also very good

The results were published Saturday in the New England Journal of Medicine and presented at a European Association of Urology conference in Milan, Italy. Britain's National Institute for Health and Care Research paid for the research. Men diagnosed with localized prostate cancer shouldn't panic or rush treatment decisions, said lead author Dr Freddie Hamdy of the University of Oxford. Instead, they should "consider carefully the possible benefits and harms caused by the treatment options."

A small number of men with high-risk or more advanced disease do need urgent treatments, he added. Researchers followed more

agreed to be randomly assigned to get surgery, radiation or active monitoring. The patients' cancer was confined to the prostate, a walnut-sized gland that's part of the reproductive system. Men in the monitoring

> Death from prostate cancer occurred in 3.1 per cent of the active-monitoring group, 2.2 per cent in the surgery group, and 2.9 per cent in the radia tion group, differences considered statistically insignificant.

> group had regular blood tests

and some went on to have

surgery or radiation.

At 15 years, cancer had spread in 9.4 per cent of the active-monitoring group, 4.7 per cent of the surgery group and 5 per cent of the radiation group. The study was started in 1999, and experts said today's monitoring practices are better, with MRI imaging and gene tests guiding decisions.

Astronomers find comet brighter than stars

THE CONVERSATION TOOWOOMBA

Hot on the heels of the disappointing Green Comet, astronomers have just discovered a new comet with the potential to be next year's big story - C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS).

Although it is still more than 18 months from its closest approach to Earth and the Sun, comet Tsuchinshan-ATLAS already has social media buzzing, with optimistic articles being written about how it could be a spectacular sight. What's the full story on this new icy wanderer? Introducing comet C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS)

Every year, a few dozen new comets are discovered - dirty snowballs moving on highly elongated paths around the Sun. The vast majority are far too faint to see with

the unaided eye. Perhaps one comet per year will

approach the edge of naked-eye visibility. Occasionally, however, a much brighter comet will come along. Because comets are things of ephemeral and transient beauty, the discovery of a comet with potential always leads

certainly fits the bill. Discovered independent-

Comet C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS)

ly by astronomers at Purple Mountain Observatory in China and the Asteroid Terrestrical-impact Last Alert System, ATLAS, the comet is currently between the orbits of Jupiter and Saturn, a billion kilometres from It is falling inwards, moving on an orbit that

will bring it to within 59 million kilometres of the Sun in September 2024. The fact the comet was found while it's so

far away is part of the reason for astronomers' excitement. Although currently some 60,000 times too

faint to see with the naked eye, the comet is

bright for something so far from the Sun.

And observations suggest it's following an orbit that could allow it to become truly spectacular. A recipe for comet greatness It's all down to a combination of the comet's path through the Solar System, and the potential size of its nucleus - the solid centre.

As comets swing closer to the Sun, they heat up, and their surface ices sublime (turn from a solid to a gas). Erupting from the comet's surface, this gas carries along dust, shrouding the nucleus in what's called a coma - a giant cloud



≠ Face

Eyes

Languages known

DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS KATHUA E mail :- sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in.

Fax/Phone No :- 01922-234010 = LOOK OUT NOTICE =

On 06.03.2023, one Sammy Lal S/o Harbans Lal R/o Kundey Chack Tehsil Marhec District Kathua lodged a written report at P/S Rajbagh stating therein that on 02.03.2023

everywhere but no any clue could be struck out. On this, missing report vide DDR No. 1 ated 06.03.2023 has been entered at P/S Rajbagh.

During the course of investigation, best efforts were made to locate missing individual whereas she is still un-traced.

As such Description Roll/Photograph of said missing individual is being shared with the appeal that anybody having clue/information about her whereabouts may inform ccordingly. The informer will be rewarded suitably:-DESCRIPTION ROLL

▼PHOTOGRAPH**▼** Barsha Devi Husband Sammy Lal Vill. Kundey Chack Permanent Address Present Address Vill. Kundey Chack Marheen Rajbagh Height 05 Feet Complexio Wheatish Built Average



lowing Contacts:-DPO Kathua- 01922-234010 (Phone/Fax)

PCR Kathua- 01922-234311(Phone/Fax)

Round

Dogri,

Sr. Superintendent of Polic

No:- DIP/J-16533/22

Tax mop-up likely to fall short of revised estimate: Official

The Government may not achieve a revised L tax collection target of ₹30.43 lakh crore for

the current financial year, a top official said. Revised estimate was raised steeply by over 10 per cent from the budget estimate in the FY24 Budget presented last month, the official said.

The revised estimates (RE) for the current fiscal pegged gross tax revenues at ₹30.43 lakh crore, higher than the budget estimates of ₹27.57

On the direct tax side, the official said, "The RE was quite steep. We are expecting a shortfall. The net collections could be between ₹15-

In the current fiscal (2022-23), the revenues from direct tax (which includes income and corporate taxes) are projected to grow by over 17 per cent at ₹16.50 lakh crore compared to 2021-22 fiscal when the collection was ₹14.20 lakh

In the current fiscal, the revenue from corporate tax is expected to come in at ₹8.35 lakh crore. This is projected to rise by 10.4 per cent to over ₹9.22 lakh crore in the next fiscal.

Personal income tax collections this fiscal are estimated at ₹8.15 lakh crore and are projected to rise by 10.4 per cent to over ₹9 lakh crore next year.

Collections from customs duty are expected to rise by 11 per cent to ₹2.33 lakh crore, from ₹2.10 lakh crore in the revised estimates.

In indirect tax side, another official said, "we

to come down

over the year'

INFLATION

norm in India.

this period of major adverse external supply shocks," she told PTI in a telephonic inter-

She was asked whether

"Since nominal policy rates

high inflation become the

rise with inflation to maintain

an expected real positive rate

under inflation targeting this

prevents demand over-heat-

ing and anchors inflation

been cut steeply during the

pandemic, so they had to be

raised fast after recovery was

India's chemical demand likely

to jump to \$1K billion by 2040

Goyal said policy rates had

expectations," she noted.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Inflation is expected

to come down over

the year, RBI Monetary

Policy Committee

Ashima Goyal said on

member

Sunday, asserting that the gov-

ernment's supply-side action coordinated with a flexible

inflation-targeting regime has

kept the rate of price rise lower

successfully dealt with 'pluri-

shocks' over the past three

years, showing considerable

ed to come down over the year.

action coordinated with a flex-

ible inflation targeting regime

has kept Indian inflation rates

lower than other countries and

India is likely to account for more than a fifth of incre-

mental global consumption for

chemicals over the next two

decades as domestic demand is

projected to rise to \$1,000 bil-

lion by 2040, McKinsey said in

a report.

In the report titled 'India:

The next chemicals manufac-

turing hub', McKinsey said the

country's chemical industry

has been a global outperformer

in demand growth and share-

holder wealth creation over

play an increasingly dominant

role across both consumption

and manufacturing in the glob-

"It now stands poised to

the last decade.

al arena," it said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

resilience.

Goyal said that India has

"Inflation rates are expect-

"Government supply-side

than that in other countries.



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Collection

are expecting shortfall on the customs side."

There was reduction in the mop-up from

GST collections are projected to grow by 12

A third official said GST revenues too look

per cent in the next fiscal to ₹9.56 lakh crore.

in the current fiscal, the revised estimates pegged

quite high with asking rate for Central GST and

compensation cess combined at ₹86,000 crore

in March. Revenue from CGST and cess com-

bined usually comes around ₹60,000-63,000

gross tax collection is expected to grow by 10.45

per cent to ₹33.61 lakh crore in 2023-24. In the

current fiscal, the revised estimate pegs gross tax

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Taking both direct and indirect taxes, the

'Inflation expected Global cues, inflation trends likely to

 $D_{ ext{are likely to keep a close}}^{ ext{omestic equity investors}}$

watch on global cues, especially

the fallout of the US-based

Silicon Valley Bank failure,

inflation trends and foreign

fund flows in the coming week

after days of volatile trading

ened trading sessions this week

that saw the benchmark Sensex

declining more than 1 per

cent, analysts opined that

investors will be waiting for the

consumer price inflation data

for February to be released on

major contributors to the weak-

ness in the Indian equity mar-

kets, and they will continue to

Santosh Meena, Head of

Swastika

be significant next week,

Research at

Investmart Ltd, said.

"Poor global cues were

Monday.

After the holiday-short-

GST collection at ₹8.54 lakh crore.

crore every month

revenue at ₹30.43 lakh crore

customs in the latest Budget as target was

reduced to ₹2.10 lakh crore from ₹2.13 lakh

crore estimated earlier for the financial year end-

 $T^{\text{he Government may have}}_{\text{to infuse more capital in the}}$ three public sector general insurance companies to improve their financial health, a senior government official

The Government last year provided ₹5,000 crore capital to three insurers — National Insurance Company Limited, Oriental Insurance Company Limited and United India Insurance Company.

Based on the performance in the FY23, the finance ministry would take a call as to how much capital they would require to meet regulatory requirement, the official said.

They are not in good financial health and fund would be infused in these entities to augment their solvency margin, the official added.

The solvency margin is the extra capital the companies must hold over and above the claim amounts they are likely to incur. It acts as a financial backup in extreme situations, enabling the company to settle all claims.

As per the regulator IRDAI's mandate, the mini-

drive domestic equity market: Analysts

Valley Bank, a key funding

source for startups in the tech-

nology space, has sparked con-

cerns regarding the overall health of the global financial

system amid central banks

raising interest rates to tackle

"The global market has fallen back into the grip of

uncertainty following the US

Federal Reserve chief's com-

ment that signalled the possi-

bility of a prolonged and faster

rate hike, contradicting a

dovish comment made by

inflation.

mum solvency ratio insurance companies must maintain is 1.5 to lower risks. In terms of solvency margin, the required value is 150 per cent.

The Budget 2023-24 has not provided for the capital infusion for insurance companies but the funds can be sought through supplementary demand, the official said.

During 2020-21, ₹9,950 crore was infused in three public sector general insurers by the government, out of which ₹3,605 crore was infused in United India Insurance, ₹3,175 crore in National Insurance and ₹3,170 crore in Oriental

Besides the capital infusion, an external consultant has also suggested a host of reforms to be undertaken by these companies.

Some of the suggestions have been incorporated and others are at the different phases of implementation, the official added.

Of the four state-run general insurance companies only New India Assurance Company is listed on the stock exchanges; the remaining three are wholly owned by the gov-

at Geojit Financial Services,

said. On Friday, the 30-share

BSE Sensex tanked 671.15

points or 1.12 per cent to set-

tle at 59,135.13 points amid weak global cues and foreign

institutional investors offload-

Chinese IIP (industrial index

production) numbers and insti-

tutional fund flows will be

crucial as Foreign Institutional

Investors (FIIs) are still in the

selling mode if certain block

8 of top 10 firms lose ₹1.03 L cr in

According to Meena,

ing shares.

Govt to infuse more capital Mutual fund industry being vilified baselessly, says Amfi

Amfi, while in serious ones,

explanations are sought with-

in a specified time limit (nor-

mally a week and Sebi seeks it

within three days from the

Amfi) and then the matter is

referred to Amfi's ARN (appli-

cation reference number) com-

mittee, recommending appro-

priate action, including sus-

pension of commission/sus-

pension or termination of ARN

Reeling out official data from April 2017 through

September 2022, the banker-

turned-mutual funds expert,

who took over the mantle in

October 2017, told PTI that the

number of complaints received

etc, Venkatesh noted.

ssociation of Mutual Funds Ain India (Amfi) has said the industry is being vilified baselessly as the segment has the lowest customer complaints in the entire financial market space, as it follows the most transparent and disclosure-

based reporting.

The global funds tracking body Morningstar ranks India on top of 26 countries, when it comes to regular monthly fund disclosures, according to Amfi chief executive NS Venkatesh.

Amfi gets complaints from investors as well as distributors directly and also through the regulator Sebi, he added.

On the basis of the type and nature of complaints, these are broadly classified into routine and serious complaints, he said. Routine complaints include non-receipt of dividends, non-receipt of account statement, non-receipt of commission and non-updating of record. Serious complaints are manipulation in application forms, malpractices followed in marketing units, funds and serious deficiencies in services provided by distributors, among others.

Routine complaints are forwarded to the mutual fund/ distributors concerned with a

Simpliwork to

to expand flex

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

invest ₹750 crore

workspace portfolio

 $M_{
m provider}^{
m anaged\,flexible\,workspace}$

Offices is planning to invest ₹750 crore next fiscal to expand

its portfolio and raise up to

₹2,800 crore in equity and

debt for future growth.

Founded in 2018,
Bengaluru-based Simpliwork

Offices currently has an office

portfolio of around 4.2 million

square feet, roughly 50,000

desks, across major 8

the leading real estate firms in

the country, with a large pres-

ence in the office market, has

a 50 per cent stake in

and CEO of Simpliwork, along

with some other investors,

Kunal Walia, the founder

Tata Consultancy Services'

Infosys's valuation declined

₹3,555.83 crore to

crore

(TCS) valuation slumped by

Hindustan Unilever fell by

₹1,621.22 crore to ₹5,78,739.57

its valuation to ₹4,31,230.51

₹12,18,848.31 crore.

Simpliwork Offices.

Salarpuria Sattva, one of

request to look into the same by Amfi during this period was and redress it under advice to only 5,330.

The period also saw industry AUM doubling to about Rs 40 lakh crore and a manifold

increase in folios. If we look at other financial markets like banking, including credit cards, insurance and stocks, the number is much

larger, Venkatesh said. In the banking sector, the volume of complaints received under the ombudsman schemes/consumer education and protection cells in FY22 rose 9.39 per cent year-on-year to 4,18,184 against 3,82,292 complaints in FY21, according to the annual report of the ombudsman schemes released by the Reserve Bank.

BUSINESS BRIEF

'ARZOOO' TIES UP TO OFFER SMART HOME APPLIANCES New Delhi: India's leading consumer durable marketplace Arzooo has partnered with leading electronic manufacturing firms to offer smart range of home appliances. Arzooo is foraying into the consumer durables category offering next generation products that will come with new age technology, superior quality and designs, said a company statement. Arzooo has partnered with prominent players in electronic manufacturing like Dixon, Amber Group and others to introduce an expansive line up of innovative products such as smart electronics and home appliances to customers across Tier 1, 2, and 3 cities.Khushnud Khan, Co-Founder & CEO of Arzooo said although the consumer durables CAGR hovers in double digit, its current household penetration is far below par compared to any developing economy. "Our product thinking is to solve these core problems and we are delighted to partner with leading manufacturers like Dixon, Amber Group and more. These strategic collaborations will enable us to bring to market the best-in-class range with product expertise

Bank of Maharashtra cuts home loan rate to 8.4%

combined with our reach," he said

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ctate-owned Bank of Sunday announced a reduction in the interest rate on home loans to 8.4 per cent from the existing 8.6 per cent.

The new rate is effective from March 13, 2023, BoM said in a statement.

The home loan at 8.4 per cent makes it one of the lowest

in the banking sector. Besides, it said, the bank has also a special rate of interest (ROI) for defence personnel, including paramilitary

forces, benefiting salaried and

₹6,19,155.97 crore, and that of BoM has already waived processing fees for its gold, home and car loans under the crore. However, Bharti Airtel added ₹5,071.99 crore, taking festive offer, the lender said.

By introducing this offer, it said, BoM is offering the most lucrative ROI with added benefits on its array of products benefiting customers availing

Last week, public sector lender Bank of Baroda slashed its home loan interest rates by 40 basis points (bps) to 8.5 per

'Hybrid energy project likely to start by 2024'



he 300 MW hybrid project 📘 in partnership with ReNew is expected to commence operation in the next 18 months, Jindal Stainless Managing Director Abhyuday Jindal has

In December 2022, Jindal pensioner categories for home Stainless Ltd (JSL) partnered with ReNew to develop the proposed 300 MW hybrid energy project.
When asked about the

timeline of the project, Jindal told PTI, "We (JSL and ReNew) are on track on the pact. That project is 300 MW. Land acquisition has already been completed for the project". The project will start in the next one and a half years' time, he said. On the company's hydrogen project, the MD said it is expected to start in July this year.

Nandus Foods revenue set to rise nearly 80% to ₹120 cr in FY'23 on better demand for meat products

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nandus Foods, which sells fish, chicken and meat through retail outlets and online in Bengaluru and Hyderabad, is set to achieve nearly 80 per cent growth in revenue this fiscal year to ₹120 crore on better demand, its founder and CEO Narendra Pasuparthy said.

The company had posted a turnover of ₹67 crore in the previous fiscal year.

"Our turnover has already crossed ₹100 crore and we will close between ₹115-120 crore by end of this fiscal year," Pasuparthy told PTI.



grow at 11-12 per cent during 2021-27 and 7-10 per cent during 2027-40 — tripling its

global market share by 2040. "India is expected to account for more than 20 per cent of incremental global consumption for chemicals over the next two decades. Domestic consumption and demand is expected to rise from \$170-180 billion in 2021 to \$850-1000

He said the company has

The company also sells its

'We are focusing more on

52 retail outlets in Bengaluru

products online through plat-

forms like Swiggy and Zomato.

profitability than revenue.

Operationally, we are already

profitable and by May we will

be profitable at EBIDTA level,"

Pasuparthy said.

and six in Hyderabad.

Chemicals find wide usage in human lives — from detergents to clothing and fragrances, from insecticides to paints, and telecommunication to music and media.

McKinsey said the growing demand for biofriendly prod-ucts globally could benefit India, as it is among the leading producers of many chemicals that are used in such products.

Triggered by the evolving geopolitical scenario and the trend to diversify from the existing core manufacturing markets; firms are seeking to make their supply-chains more resilient. With its strong value proposition, India could be a preferred destination," it said.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI $E_{\rm firms\ faced\ a\ combined}^{\rm ight\ of\ the\ top\ 10\ valued}$ erosion of ₹1,03,732.39 crore

in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries and ICICI Bank taking the biggest hit amid an overall weak trend in equities.

During the holiday-shortened week, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 673.84 points or 1.12 per cent amid concerns over the quantum of the next interest rate hike by the US Federal Reserve.

Barring Bharti Airtel and ITC, eight firms suffered erosion from their market capitalisation (mcap).

The market valuation of Reliance Industries plummet-



among the top 10 firms.

The mcap of ICICI Bank tumbled ₹18,134.73 crore to ₹5,88,379.98 crore. The valuation of HDFC

Bank tanked by ₹15,007.38 crore to ₹8,86,300.20 crore, and that of State Bank of India eroded by ₹12,360.59 crore to ₹4,88,399.39 crore.

HDFC's market valuation diminished by ₹6,893.18 crore Airtel.

VA Tech WABAG's MRPL desalination

PTI CHENNAI

The sea water reverse osmo-I sis plant built by water treatment player VA Tech WABAG for Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd has bagged the 'Desalination Project of the Year' award recently, the cityheadquartered company

The state-of-the-art plant built by VA Tech WABAG Ltd is located on the banks of Arabian Sea in Mangaluru and it has been a reliable and sustainable source of water, ensuring uninterrupted operation

'Indian soft drink market expected to see significant growth'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian soft arink market is expected to see "signature." nificant growth" as consumption is anticipated to increase steadily, which will deliver sustainable and healthy volume growth across all product categories, said Varun Beverages Ltd (VBL), PepsiCo's largest franchise bottler.

This would be driven by factors such as shifting population demographics, the rising spending power of young consumers, accelerated urbanisation, and growing rural con-

The company is in the

process of further expanding its

capacities to meet the higher demand expectations, said VBL in its latest annual report. Its distribution model and

on-the-ground end-to-end infrastructure facilities continue to be the key growth drivers and VBL remains committed to extending it to newer areas and under-penetrated regions to further boost its market presence," it added.

Yes Bank stocks may face mass selling as 3-yr RBI-mandated lock-in ends

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Chares of Yes Bank may face Selling pressure as the Reserve Bank-mandated threeyear lock-in period for individual investors and exchangetraded funds is ending on Monday, according to analysts.

The analysts expect distress on the bank counter on Monday as they expect investors, primarily the nine banks led by State Bank, which picked up almost 49 per cent of its stocks in March 2020 for its stocks in March 2020 for ₹10 per share — at a premium of ₹8 on the face value as part of the RBI bailout, making an exit. Exchange-traded funds are also likely to press the exit

Together, as much as 1.35

BANK billion shares are with individ-

ual investors — including retail, HNIs and NRIs — under the lock-in and another 67 million with exchange-traded funds, and all these are likely to exit if not at one go over the next few weeks, according to ana-

As of December 2022, SBI

held 26.14 per cent or 6,050 million shares of Yes Bank; HDFC & HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank held 1,000 million shares each; Axis Bank 600 million; Kotak Mahindra Bank 500 million; Federal Bank and Bandhan Bank 300 million each and IDFC First Bank held 250 million shares before it went belly up on March 5,

These eight banks held originally almost 11 billion shares in the bank. That apart, SBI AMC holds

23.67 million of Yes Bank shares in its Nifty 50 ETF, Kotak AMC holds 11.99 million, Nippon India has 10.56 million, SBI ETF of Bank Nifty has another 6.72 million and UTI AMC holds 5.89 million.

plant honoured

of the refinery.

The mcap of ITC surged ₹4,036.2 crore to ₹4,81,922.33 crore. Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm. followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India, ITC, HDFC and Bharti

ed by ₹41,878.37 crore to ₹15,71,724.26 crore, the most

Chelsea win again, Liverpool lose

helsea might finally be finding its stride under Graham Potter while Liverpool's upand-down season took another nosedive in the English Premier League on Saturday.

Chelsea made it three straight

wins in all competitions for the first time since October by beating Leicester 3-1 away, another sign that the expensively assembled team is starting to gel under Potter. Liverpool, though, followed its

record 7-0 win over archrival Manchester United by losing 1-0 at relegation-threatened Bournemouth - a team it beat 9-0 at home in August.

Manchester City again looked far from its best but still kept the pressure on leader Arsenal by beating Crystal Palace 1-0 away thanks to a second-half penalty by Erling Haaland. That cut Arsenal's lead to two points ahead of its visit to Fulham on Sunday.

Liverpool's surprising loss threw away much of the momentum it had generated recently after a woeful first half of the season, and Jurgen Klopp's team is six points behind fourth-placed Tottenham in the fight for the final Champions League place, albeit with a game in

"This game was a massive knock," Klopp said. "You know how it is with knocks, you have to take them and see how big the scars are and go from there."

Tottenham beat Nottingham Forest 3-1 at home after Harry Kane scored twice in the first half.

Bournemouth began the day in last place but climbed up to 17th, with Everton also leaving the relegation zone after Dwight McNeil scored just 35 seconds into a 1-0 win



Leeds fell to 19th place despite rallying for a 2-2 home draw against

The battle against the drop is exceedingly tight, though, with only four points separating Leeds from 12th-placed Crystal Palace.

Manchester City visited Palace in the late game trying to keep up the pressure on leader Arsenal, which plays at Fulham on Sunday. Chelsea thriving, Liverpool

stumble After knocking out Borussia Dortmund from the Champions League to reach the quarterfinals,

Chelsea followed with a first away win in the league since Oct. 16.

"It's been a really good week," said Potter, whose job looks a lot more secure than it did last week-

Kai Havertz netted one of the best goals of the day to make it 2-1 just before halftime by volleying in a delicate lob over the goalkeeper after being teed up in the area by another lofted ball from record signing Enzo Fernandez.

Ben Chilwell put Chelsea ahead in the 11th minute after meeting a high cross into the area with a low first-time shot from a difficult angle. Patson Daka equalized in the 39th. Mateo Kovacic added the third for Chelsea in the 78th.

Chelsea remained in 10th place but just five points behind fifthplaced Liverpool after Klopp's side showed their inconsistency once

Philip Billing scored the only goal in the 28th minute after being teed up in the box by Dango Ouattara and Bournemouth managed to contain a Liverpool attack that was rampant against United last weekend. Mohamed Salah summed up a frustrating afternoon for the Reds when he missed a penalty in

the first time he has missed the target from the spot in the Premier

Haaland scores again

For 77 minutes at Selhurst Park, it looked like Palace manager Patrick Vieira could have a big say in the title race between his two former clubs and tilt the balance further in Arsenal's favour by taking points off City. But after defending resolutely for so long, Palace came undone at a corner and gave away a cheap penalty when Michael Olise clumsily clattered into Ilkay Gundogan in the

Haaland made no mistake from the spot, sending the goalkeeper the wrong way for his 28th league goal to make up for having missed a stellar chance in the first half.

Palace's lack of attacking threat at the other end was evident once again. Vieira's team has not won a single game in 2023, and this was the third league match in a row when it didn't manage a sin-

Linekar off air, in the stands Taken off the air, Gary Lineker went into the stands.

Lineker attended the Leicester-Chelsea game amid a growing crisis at the BBC after the popular presenter of the highlights show "Match of the Day" was suspended by the broadcaster for comments criticizing the British government's new asylum policy.Lineker, the former England captain who began his professional playing career at Leicester, watched his former team in the stands and posed for photos with fans while the BBC scrambled to stem the fallout from the decision to take him off the air.

PSG striker Mbappe nets late goal as Brest beaten 2-1

 $P^{aris\ Saint-Germain\ refocused}_{on\ its\ last\ shot\ at\ silverware\ this}$ season in the French league and beat Brest 2-1 with a late Kylian Mbappe goal on Saturday.

Mbappe beat the offside trap to collect a throughball from Lionel Messi in the 90th minute and rounded goalkeeper Marco Bizot to slot into an empty net.

The France striker was lucky to still be on the pitch after kicking Haris Belkebla, who was on the ground in the 85th.

"We're not saying that we lost because of that, but I'd like to know whether all the players would get the same treatment if they did that," Brest midfielder Pierre Lees-Melou said. "I asked the referee for an explanation. He said that it was tame. So, I'd like to see what's a real kick."

Mbappe initially fouled Belkebla from behind. Belkebla fell to the ground and held onto Mbappe's leg. In an act of petulance, Mbappe kicked Belkebla in the stomach. The referee showed only yellow cards to Mbappe and Belkebla for that inci-

PSG was knocked out of the Champions League by Bayern Munich on Wednesday and is left with winning Ligue 1. PSG leads second-placed Marseille by 11 points.

"Of course, there is this disappointment, but we have to go and get this title, and there is unity. And have no doubt about this unity," PSG coach Chistophe Galtier said.

Midfielder Carlos Soler slammed in a rebound in the 37th after Bizot parried a swerving longrange strike from Mbappe. The Spain international was the most threatening PSG player in the first



half. He curled a shot that Bizot diverted onto the post in the 11th. Soler also fed Mbappe, who missed the target from a tight angle in the

Bizot frustrated PSG in the second half, palming away Messi's effort from the edge of the box in the 65th and saving a close-range attempt from Nuno Mendes in the

Brest had very little possession but managed to expose the fragility of the PSG defense. The host capitalized on a counterattack to level in the 44th. Franck Honorat made a run in behind Sergio Ramos to chase a long ball from Romain Del Castillo and held off Timothee Pembele to shoot high past goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

PSG has kept just two clean sheets in the league since the World

Also, Rennes missed an opportunity to make up ground in the race for Champions League spots by drawing with struggling Auxerre 0-0. Rennes was lackluster, waiting until the 55th minute to test Auxerre goalkeeper Ionut Radu.

Auxerre stretched its unbeaten run in the league to six games to move out of the relegation zone, level on points with Brest. Rennes stayed in fifth place, four points outside the



Real Madrid beat Espanyol 3-1, eye Liverpool and Clasico

AP BARCELONA

V Madrid's 3-1 comeback win over Espanyol in the Spanish league on Saturday, keeping leader Barcelona within reach before the rivals meet next weekend

Joselu Mato put Espanyol ahead at the Santiago Bernabeu in the eighth minute. But Vinícius equalized in the 22nd and Éder Militão headed Madrid in front for good minutes before halftime.

Substitute Marco Asensio added a third goal in stoppage time as Madrid ended a threegame winless run across the league and the Copa del Rey.

Carlo Ancelotti's team reduced Barcelona's lead to six points before the front-runner visits Athletic Bilbao on Sunday Karim Benzema missed

the game as he rested to recover from an ankle problem. Before the game, Ancelotti said he expected his striker to be ready to face Liverpool in the Champions League on Wednesday. Madrid holds a 52 advantage from the first leg of the round of 16.

Barcelona on March 19 in a clásico that will likely weigh heavily on the title fight.

"It was a game we had to face it with good momentum."

Ancelotti insisted his play-

Merciless Madrid

But when Madrid's Vinícius got going, Madrid never gave Espanyol much of a chance to pull off the upset.

win at any cost," Ancelotti said. This week is important with the Champions League and the clásico, and now we can

ers quickly turn their focus on Liverpool. Even though his team has a three-goal cushion, the coach said the rematch of last season's European final could be a game "full of traps."

Espanyol, which was left in 13th place, took the lead when Joselu scored with a fine touch of his left boot. Joselu became the league's second-leading scorer, along with Getafe's Enes Unal, with 12. Only Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski has more

Napoli returns to Champions League set for historic season **AP** ■ LONDON

 $N_{\text{Champions League action}}^{\text{apoli}}$ this week well on track to have the standout season in European soccer and in the club's entire history.

The quarterfinals of Europe's marquee club competition finally beckon for Napoli, which has a 2-0 lead from the first leg before hosting Eintracht Frankfurt in the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona on Wednesday.

Only three of the 12 teams left in the competition top their domestic leagues — Napoli, Bayern Munich and Benfica — and the 18-point lead in Serie A is by far the most dominant.

Real Madrid hosting Liverpool with a 5-2 lead is the glamor game of the four second legs remaining in the round of 16, though only Madrid of that storied pair has so much as a chance of a domestic league title. Napoli is a lock to be Italian champion for just the third time in its history, the first since 1990, and the first time without having Maradona in the team.Still, even with the Argentina icon, Napoli twice failed to get past the second round of the old European Cup after those 1987 and 1990 titles in Serie A.

Napoli also never advanced past the round of 16 stage in the Champions League era that began in 1992. That looks set to change Wednesday.



It is also a big step for Napoli's veteran coach Luciano Spalletti, who has not taken a team to the Champions League quarterfinals since 2008 with Roma. This is Spalletti's seventh try since then, though his first with Napoli after falling anced game Tuesday.

short with Roma, Zenit St. Petersburg and Inter Milan.

Inter, which has not been to the quarterfinals since going out at that stage as the defending champion in 2011, takes a 1-0 lead to Porto in a finely bal-

on Tuesday with the teams tied

Manchester City host Leipzig

NAPOLI RESTED A uniquely congested

European season split in two by a break for the World Cup promised surprises and Napoli perhaps has benefited from having star players rested. Prolific strikers Victor

Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia were not involved in Qatar because their national teams Nigeria and Georgia,

respectively, did not qualify.
Eintracht's star striker
Randal Kolo Muani did go to the World Cup, almost winning the final for France with a lastminute chance, but will not play this week. Kolo Muani is card tackle in the first leg. Also missing in Naples could be the German club's fans who local authorities want to ban from the city following clashes in Frankfurt three weeks ago. Eintracht won a court

suspended because of his red-

injunction Saturday against the ban though further legal action is expected before Wednesday.

MADRID FAVORED

The defending champion surely will not waste a threegoal lead against Liverpool in its own stadium. It is unlikely, though Madrid was eliminated as the title holder four years ago when taking a three-goal beating in the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in the round

Swiatek dominates at BNP Paribas Open; Murray advances

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek routed Claire Liu in 65 minutes to win her opening match at the BNP Paribas Open on Saturday.

Swiatek, the defending champion who took over the No. 1 ranking nearly a year ago, won 6-0, 6-1. She lost just seven points in the first set. Tactically and tennis-wise,

everything was on point," she said. "I had so many matches that were going my way in last couple of weeks that I know what to do." Taylor Fritz, the defending men's champion, rallied past

on Ben Shelton, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3. Shelton's biggest serve reached 147 mph.

former NCAA singles champi-

out serving bombs, playing well," Fritz said. "I was ready for it, I just had to regroup, just find a way and problem solve. He's an incredible player and it was an extremely tough

play, so I'm happy to get through it."

Andy Murray beat Radu Albot, 6-4, 6-3 in his first straight-set victory of the year to set up a third-round match "I expected him to come first match to come out and with Jack Draper. Murray had

Albot, and never faced a break point on his serve while firing

"Hopefully I can keep pushing myself up the rankings, keep building that confidence, and maybe get a few more straightforward draws, as well," Murray said.

Jannik Sinner defeated Richard Gasquet, 6-3, 7-6 (2). The 21-year-old Sinner fired 20 forehand winners against the 36-year-old veteran.

"Obviously it was a tough match today, especially in the beginning I was a little bit tight," Sinner said on court.

Another 21-year-old, Draper, beat No. 24 Dan Evans, 6-4, 6-2. Draper has lost just eight games through his first two matches of his Indian Wells debut.



Modest finish for Avani, Nishna as Eila wins WAAP by five shots

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Avani Prashanth and Nishna Patel, the two Indians who made the cut at the Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship (WAAP), ended the event on a rather subdued note with 3-over 75 each on the

Avani, the Queen Sirikit Cup's individual champion, shot rounds of 73-71-74-75 to total 5-over 289 and finished tied 24th, while Nishna Patel, playing the WAAP for the third time, also carded 75, and with rounds of 71-72-77-75, totalled 7-over 291 to finish tied 35th.

The other four Indians --Anika Varma, Vidhatri Urs, Mannat Brar and Lavanya Jadon -- missed the cut.

Eila Galitsky, a Canadian who holds Thailand's citizenship, finished on top with a 4under 68 card in the final round. She had finished tied 35th during last year's edition of the WAĂP.

It completed a commanding five-shot win over Korea's Kim Minsol (70) and helped Eila pick the biggest prize purse of her fledgling career.

was to do even better but could only manage to equal her previous best score. Avani, starting from the 10th, had two birdies against

five bogeys as she found the

greens difficult to handle.

Nishna had one birdie against

14-under, confessed her target

While Avani flies off to the United States to play the prestigious Sage Valley Invitational, Nishna will return home to play in the domestic Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour as an amateur entry.

Yeji Park (70), Hong Kong's Sophie Han (71), New Zealand's Fiona Xu (71) and Japan's Yuna Araki (72) were all tied for third at six-under 282. The 16-year-old Eila's par-

9-under, while another Korean

Kim Minsol was second at

ents were crying with joy on the sidelines of the 18th green as their daughter rounded off an amazing win. Eila, who started playing at

the age of eight, said she never really understood what a 'Major' meant until she was 10. "For us, a Major meant when we went to Bangkok to play against top-ranked players,

IOA wants top athletes to participate as it looks to build National Games brand value medallists like Neeraj Chopra cuss this with the NSFs and we

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) wants the country's top athletes to take part in the National Games so that a brand value can be created around the multi-sport event to attract

sponsorship money.

Hosting the multi-discipline games, a biennial event, has become a messy affair in recent times due to multiple delays, and only one National Games -- in Gujarat last year -- have been held since the 35th edition in Kerala in 2015.

"IOA's main property is the National Games. If top players do not participate in the National Games, what is the

(top athletes) take part, television revenue from the National Games will go up, people will watch players of calibre," IOA joint secretary and acting Chief Executive Officer Kalyan Chaubey told PTI on Sunday. Goa has been confirmed

during IOA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday as host of the 37th edition in November. IOA president P T Usha

told PTI on Saturday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be requested to inaugurate the games in Goa in November. The state was to hold the event in 2016 but there were multiple delays, mainly due to infrastructure-related problems.



Since Goa was facing probin Gujarat in Septemberlems, the 36th edition was held October last year, but Olympic either due to injuries or their scheduled training abroad. "We want the NSFs (National Sports Federations)

and PV Sindhu missed out

to send their top-class athletes to take part in National Games. Sometimes, the NSFs send their second-tier and third-tier athletes because they think their first tier will play only in the Asian Games and Olympics," Chaubey said. If the top athletes play in

to do better. So, we want to dis-

for 2019-20 and 2020-21 have not been sent for auditing again. "It (account) was passed National Games, it will create on conditional statement and value for the Games, other notes that since it was the balathletes can also learn from ance sheet of the previous them. They will be inspired to regime, if there were any finanperform better, that will procial irregularities, the current

by the earlier regime.

want their co-operation."

The IOA AGM on

Saturday also passed the audit-

ed statements of accounts for

2019-20 and 2020-21 on the

condition that the current dis-

pensation under Usha will not

be liable for wrongdoing, if any,

that the statements of accounts

Chaubey, however, said

mote the second tier of players body will not be liable for

Eila, who finished first at

Australia trail India by 88 runs after Virat Kohli makes a magnificent 186

¬alismanic batter Virat Kohli showed impeccable grit, discipline and concentration to make a magnifi-cent 186 as India took a 91-run lead over Australia after being bowled out for 571 in their first innings during the fourth Test at Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday.

At stumps, Australia reached 3/0 in six overs of their second innings and trail India by 88 runs with one day left in the match. Travis Head made all the runs, as he and makeshift opener Matthew Kuhnemann, in place of an injured Usman Khawaja, negotiated the tricky six overs from Ravichandran Ravindra Jadeja Mohammed Shami.

If Shubman Gill was the talk of the town with his sparkling 128 on Saturday, it was Kohli's turn to be in the spotlight on Sunday to break his drought for a Test century which lasted 1025 days, 41 innings and more than three

His determined 364-ball stay at the crease was Kohli simply at his grittiest best, hit-ting 15 boundaries, running hard for his ones and twos while enthralling a sizeable Sunday crowd.

He was also supported by a nice 44 from KS Bharat and



an excellent 79 from Axar Patel. For Australia, Nathan Lyon and Todd Murphy took three wickets each while Mitchell Starc and Matthew Kuhnemann took a scalp each.

All partnerships for the first six wickets by India ran for more than 50 runs. In the first session on Sunday, Kohli didn't hit a single boundary. But from the second session onwards, he stroked wonderful boundaries to give India a sizeable lead, especially with Shreyas Iyer unavailable due to a lower back complaint and had

to be sent for scans.

The day began with Ravindra Jadeja cutting uppishly against Murphy past slip for four. After taking another four through mid-off against Murphy, Jadeja mistimed to mid-on, but it went for a single. But when he tried to repeat the shot in the final ball of 107th over, which came a little quicker, Jadeja lofted straight into mid-on's hands off Murphy, ending a knock where he was patient for a major chunk of it.

Bharat came out to bat only 29 runs to his overnight

on a no-ball.

His fine cameo came to an end on 44 when he came forward to defend off Nathan Lyon. But the off-spinner got turn and bounce, taking inside edge to short leg. His wicket also meant Lyon went past Derek Underwood for the most Test wickets in India by a vis-

Post lunch, Australia began

with a short-ball ploy from

their pacers. But Bharat took on

Cameron Green with succes-

sive pulled sixes, followed by an elegant cut through deep point

iting bowler. When Kohli reached 99, there was anticipation bubbling in the air as spectators brought out their mobiles to capture the century moment. It arrived on the second ball of 139th over, as Kohli came forward against Lyon and played a flick through square leg for

international century. A sedate Kohli took off his helmet and raised the bat to acknowledge the applause from the crowd before kissing his wedding ring and looking to the skies in subdued celebrations on reaching the three-figure mark in Tests.

With pitch still not looking treacherous, Kohli brought out off-drive and glance through backward square leg off Starc for a brace of boundaries. He took the attack to spinners,

ward square leg and short fine leg while driving on the up against Lyon for another boundary.

Axar also joined the party with some boundaries, including an effortless loft over a leaping long-off for six off Murphy, resulting in Khawaja limping off the field. He then cut off Kuhnemann through cover for boundary to put India on the verge of taking the lead in the match.

In the final session, after 3.3 overs, Axar got India in the lead by cutting Murphy through backward point for four. When Green was brought back in the attack, Kohli was quick to unfurl a cover-drive to an outside off-stump delivery.

On the very next ball, which was angled into pads, Kohli shuffled across to flick through mid-wicket and go single to bring up his 75th past 150. When Green bowled a high full toss, Kohli got a thick edge past keeper for four, before taking a brace of boundaries off Lyon - a delightful pull was followed by a drive through mid-off.

Axar reached his fifty in 95 balls with a single off Murphy and then attacked Kuhnemann with a big swipe over midwicket for six. He then moved across to sweep Murphy through mid-wicket for four, before slog-sweeping twice off Kuhnemann for sixes.



Saika Ishaque's 3/33 helps MI restrict UP Warriorz to 159/6 in WPL

PTI MUMBAI

Saika Ishaque (3/33) once again led Mumbai Indians' bowling charge as they restricted UP Warriorz to 159 for 6 in their Women's Premier League (WPL) match here on Sunday.

UP Warriorz looked set for a challenging total at the Brabourne Stadium with an 82run stand for the third wicket between captain Alyssa Healy (58) and Tahlia McGrath (50), but WPL's highest wicket-taker Ishaque dismissed both the set batters in the 17th over to help her side bounce back.

In the process, Ishaque took her wickets tally to 12 in four matches, once again emerging as Mumbai Indians' go-to weapon in the competi-

Ishaque provided the first breakthrough early on, trapping Devika Vaidya (6) to take her wickets tally in WPL into double-digit figures (10).

However, after an early blow and sedate start, Healy got into the act and hit four boundaries against Ishaque in the fourth over to make her intentions clear.

At the end of the powerplay, UP Warriorz had raced to 48 for 1 with Healy doing the bulk of scoring.

Kiran Navgire also displayed aggressive intentions by hitting Amelia Kerr for a four and a towering six, but she was soon dismissed by the Kiwi spinner, caught by Yastika Bhatia for 17.

Healy and Navgire added 50 runs for the second wicket from only 28 balls to lay a strong platform, and the UP Warriorz captain found

McGrath, at No. 4, began with a flurry of boundaries as the UP Warriorz continued to attack the Mumbai bowlers, putting them under real pressure for the first time in the tournament. McGrath played some

exquisite strokes on the off side with immaculate timing and placement to get her runs, and when Mumbai spinners tried to dry up the runs, she found gaps at will to keep rotating the Ishaque, off whom the UP

Warriorz batters hit a total of 10 fours, finally broke the third-wicket stand by dismissing Healy leg-before with the batter missing to connect on a reverse sweep.

The left-arm Mumbai bowler indeed did well upon her return in the 17th over, as after removing Healy, Ishaque claimed the big wicket of McGrath. The lanky Australian all-rounder was stumped by Yastika Bhatia as Mumbai Indians managed to pull things back. Healy and McGrath faced 61 balls to add 82 runs.

Another key bowler for Mumbai, all-rounder Hayley Matthews played her part well by giving away only 27 runs from her four overs while tak-ing the wicket of Sophie Ecclestone (1).

Amelia Kerr took 2/33 from her four overs, also accounting for Deepti Sharma (7) in the final over.

Mumbai Indians replaced the injured right-arm India pacer Pooja Vastrakar with Dhara Gujjar while UP Warriorz replaced Grace Harris with veteran South African

'Reduce ODI World Cup to 40-overs-a-side contest'

With the ODI World Cup in India less than seven months away, former India chief coach Ravi Shastri has raised the pitch for future editions of the ICC tournament to be 40-overs-a-side affair to give it a fresh lease of life. "For One-day cricket to

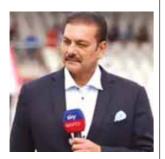
survive, I think it should be reduced to 40-over game in future," said the former India captain on day four of the fourth India-Australia Test here on Sunday. Shastri said the game should address the diminishing attention span of spectators and pointed out that when the Kapil Dev-led India won the ODI World Cup in 1983, it was a 60-over-a-side tournament before it was reduced to a 50-over affair.

"The reason I say this is

Virat got decent batting track and

showed how to do

it really: Alex Carey



attention span of the people diminished and it became a 50over game. I think the time has come for it to become now a 40-over game. Evolve with the times. Reduce the format," added Shastri.

While Shastri's logic about attention span is justified but once the World Cup moved to the sub-continent in 1987, it wasn't possible to hold matches over 120-over duration with his nerve. World Cup in 1983, it was a 60- it happened during first three ers — Liton Das and Rony as part of his 16-ball 20. over (a side) game. Then the editions in England

AP DHAKA

 $B_{\text{three-match T20 series}}^{\text{angladesh wrapped up the}}$ against England with a game to spare as Mehidy Hasan claimed a career-best 4-12 and added a crucial 20-run knock to secure a four-wicket victory over the tourists on Sunday. Bangladesh held England

to a lowly 117 in 20 overs, before knocking off the target with seven balls to spare, reaching 120-6.

Najmul Hossain, who was instrumental in the six-wicket victory in the first match with a 30-ball 51, was not out on 46, helping the home side stay in the contest despite England bowlers making inroads at regular intervals.

Fast bowler Jofra Archer gave England a flicker of hope, claiming 3-13 but Najmul held



Bangladesh secures T20 series with win over England

Talukdar — while chasing the moderate target for just 27

and got going with a superb

slog-sweep going for six off

Lyon. There was some turn

available for Lyon, Murphy

and Kuhnemann, as Australia

operated with 7-2 leg-side

fields, and spinners bowling

tidy spells, like operating on off

and outside off-stump lines, to

dry up runs for Kohli and

bad ball, it was hit for bound-

ary. Like, Bharat cracked a cut

off backfoot when Nathan Lyon

dropped short, as Kohli added

But whenever there was a

Later, Najmul held one end with confidence but the chase didn't get going in earnest

Archer removed him with slower delivery and then delivered a ball that clocked 92 mph to rattle the stump of Afif

was left at 100-6 in the 18th England appeared to be on

course to save the game, sensing an unlikely victory, but Najmul and Taskin Ahmed hit three boundaries off Chris Jordan's first over of the day to close out the contest. Taskin who hit the winning

boundary was not out on 8.

Earlier, he got the Bangladesh attack off the mark, removing Dawid Malan after England was put into bat first. Shakib got the better of Phil Salt who started well

before his progress was halted, having reached a 19-ball 25. But the crucial break-

through came when pacer Hasan Mahmud bowled skipper Jos Buttler (4) with a searing delivery.

Mehidy got into the act to end Ben Duckett's resistance. In between, Moeen Ali Duckett reached a team-high Shakib Al Hasan as Bangladesh England's middle order.

WPL 2023: I looked to pounce on any delivery in my strength area:

PTI AHMEDABAD

Virat Kohli is not someone who would miss a chance to score a 'daddy hundred' on a decent batting track and, on Sunday, he showed how to do it, said Australia wicket-keeper Alex Carey.
Kohli scored 186 in India's 571 as the

fourth Test entered the fifth day and Australia need to bat out two sessions well to eke out a draw.

"No surprise, he (Kohli) got in a decent batting track and went big and showed how to do it really. He's a class player and he didn't give us a chance really," Carey said at the end of the fourth day's

play.
"We knew it was going to be tough bowling to Virat. We were able to contain him as much as we could and try to take wickets around him," Carey added.

The keeper said that expecting the spectators present to rally behind Kohli is a known thing and he was ready for the

noise decibel levels to go up.
"Anytime you come to India and Virat's next in or batting, you know it's going to be noisy and he played really well today. But I thought we hung in really well."

India beat Australia 5-4 in FIH Pro League in rare win

PTI ROURKELA

Captain Harmanpreet Singh got his mojo back as he scored a hat-trick, all from penalty corners, to lead India to a rare 5-4 win over Australia in a ninegoal thriller in the FIH Pro-League hockey here on Sunday.

Harmanpreet found the target in the 13th, 14th and 55th minutes after Australia had taken an early lead in the second minute through a field goal from Joshua Beltz, as the home side were 2-1 ahead at the end of the first quarter.

The Indian domination continued with Jugraj Singh converting a penalty stroke in the 17th minute before Selvam Karthi scored a field goal in the 25th minute to give his side a 4-1 lead

India did not score any goal in the third quarter but Australia did through Ky Willott in the 42nd minute at the Birsa Munda



Stadium. The visitors scored two

from penalty corners, through the 52nd and 56 minutes respecgoals in the fourth period, both Ben Staines and Aran Zalewski in tively.

The action-packed fourth quarter produced three goals, including that of Harmanpreet from a PC in the 55th minute, which was his hat-trick goal.

Both sides earned 10 PCs each from which India converted three while Australia scored twice. Australia had come here with several players who were not part of their squad that featured in the World Cup here and in Bhubaneswar in January. Eight out of the 20 players in the current squad have made 10 international appearances or less.

Australia had finished fourth in the World Cup.

India were also without eight players from the World Cup squad, including senior players Akashdeep Singh, Mandeep Singh and Nilakanta Sharma, after their pre-quarterfinal exit from the showpiece.

India face Germany in their second leg match on Monday before taking on Australia again on Wednesday.

Shafali Verma

IANS MUMBAI

With Marizanne Kapp hitting an exceptional haul of 5/15 and a blistering unbeaten 76 by India opener Shafali Verma helped Delhi Capitals bounce back into form with a 10-wicket victory over Gujarat in the Giants Women's Premier

League 2023. Marizanne Kapp came up with a sensa-

tional effort with the ball as the Delhi franchise restricted the Giants to 105/9 before Shafali Verma stole the show with blistering innings of 76* not out off 28 balls as the Capitals chased down

their target in just 7.1 overs. Shafali, who struck 10 boundaries and 5 sixes during her innings, said, "Our plan was to play our natural game and I looked to pounce on any delivery that was bowled in my strength area. Meg wasn't getting a chance to face balls regularly and I didn't know what to do (laughs). But it's really nice to bat with her as she helps me

The 19-year-old also said that she focussed on playing straight, "I looked to play the ball straight during a few knocking sessions after our game against Mumbai Indians. And a batter gets better when she looks to play straight. Everyone is enjoying each other's company in the DC camp. And this camaraderie is helping us on the ground."

Meanwhile, the Delhi Capitals' captain

Meg Lanning, who enjoyed Shafali's innings from the other end, said, "I loved watching Shafali bat. She played some incredible shots. It was a show and I was happy to watch it unfold. She's an amazing player. I love to watch how she takes

Brenda rallies to beat Ankita, clinches ITF Women's Open title **PTI** BENGALURU hardly a match for Brenda in the

Top seed Brenda Fruhvirtova of the Czech Republic gave a fine demonstration of fighting skills on way to beating India's Ankita Raina 0-6, 6-4, 6-0 to clinch the ITF Women's Open sin-

gles title here on Sunday. Brenda, world No. 163, did not look sharp in the first set against the fourth seed India in the USD 40,000 event. She had four double faults and committed several unforced errors as Ankita did not



A break in the fifth game proved to be the turning point as Brenda soon levelled the score at 3-3 and then converted a break point in the ninth game to take a 5-4 lead

put a foot wrong and converted all three break points. The second set began in sim-

ilar fashion with Raina building a 3-0 lead, and a quick end to the match loomed.

But a break in the fifth game proved to be the turning point as Brenda soon levelled the score at 3-3 and then converted a break point in the ninth game to take a 5-4 lead. The Czech player served out the game and took the match to the decider.

A visibly shaken Ankita was

third set, though the Indian had a chance to break serve in the fourth game. But Brenda raised her game just in time to hold serve.

Brenda ended the two-hour-19-minute contest with a crushing forehand. "I didn't feel good in anything in the first set and it was like I was fighting with myself. I had to shut out the opening set because she (Ankita) was playing well at that point. But once I won the second set, things became easier from there," said Brenda.