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ARMY'S MISTRUST IN IMRAN RUNS DEEP

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TRUMP DIGS IN ON ELECTION LIES, INSULTS ACCUSER DURING CNN TOWN HALL EVENT

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ONGC DISCOVERS OIL, GAS IN ARABIAN SEA BLOCKS

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Shinde to stay Maha CM but Guv action wrong: SC

Apex court says Uddhav can't be restored as CM as he resigned without facing floor test

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday held the Maharashtra Governor was not justified in calling upon then Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to prove majority in the Assembly on June 30 last year but refused to order status quo ante, saying he resigned before the floor test. However, the unanimous judgment by the five-judge Constitution Bench said since Thackeray had resigned without facing the floor test, the Governor was justified in inviting Eknath Shinde to form the Government at the behest of the BJP which was the largest political party in the House. The Constitution Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud held that House Speaker's decision to appoint Bharat Gogawale of the Shinde faction as the whip of the Shiv Sena was "illegal". The top court also referred the 2016 Nabam Rebia verdict by a five-judge Constitution Bench, which relates to the power of Speaker on disqualification of MLAs, to a larger Bench of seven judges. The Bench which also comprised



Justices MR Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha, also pulled up former Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and said he did not have reasons based on objective material before him to arrive at the conclusion that then Chief Minister Thackeray had lost the confidence of House. "However, the status quo ante can't be restored because Thackeray did not face floor

BJP has lost legally, morally, politically, says Congress

New Delhi: Opposition parties on Thursday described the Supreme Court's verdict on the Maharashtra political row as a victory for the State and the Constitution. Welcoming the Supreme Court judgment on Maharashtra, the Congress said it is "seminal and path-breaking". The party said the BJP had lost legally, morally, politically and ethically. NCP president Sharad Pawar said the BJP and morality are contradictory to each other and asserted the SC verdict

test and tendered his resignation. The Governor was, therefore, justified in inviting Shinde to form the Government at the behest of the BJP which was the largest political party in the house," it said. The judgment added that Governor ought to apply his mind to communication (or any other material) before him to assess whether a Government has lost the confidence of the House. **Continued on Page 2**

Thackeray seeks Shinde's resignation; Fadnavis says our Govt is legal

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After the Supreme Court ruled in its favour in the Shiv Sena crisis case but said that it could not reinstate Uddhav Thackeray as the Chief Minister now as he resigned from his post without facing the floor test, a vindicated Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) demanded that Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis resign from their posts on moral grounds. As Shinde and Fadnavis dismissed the Opposition's demand for their resignation by saying that the Supreme Court had declared that their Government was "legal and Constitutional", Maharashtra's former Chief Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray led the Opposition in demanding that the current Chief Minister and his deputy step down from their positions on "moral grounds" as Thackeray had done so in the past. Given that the apex court has asked him to decide on the disqualification of 16 Shinde MLAs, the spotlight has turned onto current Speaker Rahul Narvekar. **Continued on Page 2 (See edit: Need to talk)**

SC rules in favour of Delhi Govt in services imbroglio

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a major win for the AAP Government, the Supreme Court on Thursday in a unanimous verdict ruled that the Delhi Government has legislative and executive powers over administration of services except for public order, police and land. The Supreme Court ruled that the Lieutenant Governor is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers of National Capital Territory of Delhi in matters within the legislative scope of the national Capital.

A five-judge constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said the L-G cannot have administrative supervision over all issues relating to Union Territory of Delhi and the term "administration" cannot be understood as the entire administration of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), otherwise, the purpose of giving powers to a constitutionally recognised, democratically elected Government would be diluted. Asserting that an elected Government needs to have control over the administration, the bench said the Union Territory of Delhi has "sui generis (unique) character" and refused to agree with the 2019 judgement of Justice Ashok Bhushan that the Delhi Government has no power over the issue of services. The constitution bench tackled the question of who has administrative control over transfers and postings of bureaucrats in the Capital. "The NCTD, hav-



AAP leaders and supporters celebrate outside the Delhi Secretariat after the Supreme Court's ruling on the regulation of services matters in New Delhi on Thursday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

ing a sui generis federal model, must be allowed to function in the domain charted for it by the Constitution. The Union and NCTD share a unique federal relationship. It does not mean that NCTD is subsumed in the unit of the Union merely because it is not a 'State', the Supreme Court ruled in a 105-page judgement.

The bench - also comprising Justices MR Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli, and PS Narasimha - said the executive power of NCTD is co-extensive with its legislative power, that is, it shall extend to all matters with respect to which it has the power to legislate. The bench said, "NCTD has legislative and executive power over 'Services', that is, Entry 41 of List II of the Seventh Schedule because: (I) The definition of State under Section 3(58) of the General Clauses Act 1897 applies to the term 'State' in Part XIV of the Constitution. Thus,

Part XIV is applicable to Union territories; and (II) The exercise of rule-making power under the proviso to Article 309 does not oust the legislative power of appropriate authority to make laws over Entry 41 of State List." **Continued on Page 2**

Hours after SC order, Govt axes Services Secy

Staff Reporter: Hours after the Supreme Court verdict on Centre-Delhi services matter, the Arvind Kejriwal Government on Thursday removed the Delhi Government's secretary (services) Ashish More from his post. Former Delhi Jal Board CEO AK Singh, a 1995-batch (AGMUT cadre) IAS officer, will replace More. **Continued on Page 2**

CM Kejriwal calls verdict 'victory of democracy'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Thursday termed the Supreme Court's verdict on the Centre-Delhi services row a "tight slap" on the mission to topple Governments through "unconstitutional ways" while the AAP convener and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal termed the verdict a "victory of democracy". The L-G will have no power over the officers to stop the work of the people of Delhi, the party said.

Welcoming the verdict, the AAP said in a tweet in Hindi, "The elected Government will have the power of transfer-posting of officers. Officers will work only through the elected Government." Delhi Minister and State unit convener Gopal Rai said at a Press conference, "This is a tight slap on the Modi Government and its mission to topple elected Governments through unconstitutional methods. The Modi Government had done the work of usurping powers of Delhi Government through the L-G and the Ministry of Home Affairs. **Contd on Page 2**

'Thrilled if Pawar leads Opp'

Nitish meets NCP chief, Uddhav in efforts to forge 2024 Opp-alliance

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and JD (U) President Nitish Kumar said here Thursday that he would be more than delighted if NCP chief Sharad Pawar became the main face of the grand Opposition alliance to take on the ruling BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. On a day when Nitish-accompanied by his deputy and Rashtriya Janata Dal founder Lalu Prasad Yadav's son Tejashwi Yadav - called on the NCP chief and Maharashtra's former Chief Minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray, Nitish threw his weight behind Pawar over the choice of the Opposition's grand alliance's face for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Queried if he saw the Opposition alliance's face in



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar meets NCP chief Sharad Pawar in Mumbai, on Thursday. PTI

Pawar, Nitish said: "There will be nothing more delightful than that. I have told him that he has to work with more vigour not only for his party but for the entire country." However, Pawar refrained from saying anything on Nitish's remark. "We have to work together... face will be decided later," he said. "To save democracy, it is important for us to work together. After looking at the state of affairs in the country, it seems that if we work together, we will be looked upon as the credible alternative to the BJP," Pawar said. "In the polls held in

Karnataka yesterday, I have strong reason to believe that people there will oust BJP and elect a secular Government," Pawar said. After his meeting with Uddhav, Nitish said: "Our purpose is to ensure that more and more parties come together (against the BJP) in the interest of the country." Earlier, showing keen interest taken by Nitish to forge a grand alliance of all non-BJP parties across the country, Uddhav had said: "Democracy is being murdered in the country. We should not allow that to happen." **Continued on Page 2**

BJD to go it alone in 2024 polls: Naveen

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

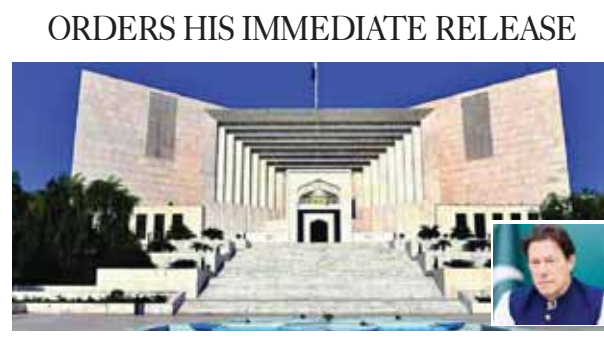
The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will go solo in next year's Lok Sabha polls as it has always done, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said on Thursday, days after JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar met him amid efforts to forge a united Opposition. Patnaik, who met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here earlier in the day to discuss developmental issues related to his State, reiterated the BJD's position of remaining equidistant from both the Congress and the BJP. He also described Bihar Chief Minister Nitish visiting him in Bhubaneswar as a "courtesy call". Patnaik has been at the helm in Odisha since 2000 and his BJD is among some regional parties that have maintained a neutral stand on issues involving clashes between ruling BJP and Opposition.

Pak top court declares Imran's arrest illegal

You will have to accept HC's decision, court tells PTI boss

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

In a major relief for embattled Imran Khan, Pakistan's Supreme Court on Thursday declared the former Prime Minister's arrest "illegal" and ordered his immediate release after he was produced before a Bench on its orders. Khan, 70, was arrested on Tuesday from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and an accountability court Wednesday handed him over to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for eight days' remand in connection with the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case. His arrest sparked widespread protests across Pakistan,



prompting the Government to deploy the army in the national capital as well as in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. The violent protests left at least eight people dead. On Thursday, a three-member apex court Bench, comprising Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Minallah, ordered his immediate release. The Bench, while hearing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman's plea against his arrest, expressed anger at the way he was taken into custody by paramilitary Rangers and ordered the NAB to produce him before it. Khan, who was ousted from power in April last year, was brought to the court amid heavy security. As he entered the courtroom, it was closed, and subsequently, the Bench resumed the hearing of the case. "It is good to see you," Chief Justice Bandial told Khan. **Continued on Page 2**

SC reserves verdict on pleas seeking same-sex marriage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas seeking legal validation for the same-sex marriage. A five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud reserved its judgment after a 10-day hearing in the matter. The bench, also comprising Justices S K Kaul, SR Bhat, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha, heard the rejoinder arguments advanced by senior advocates, including AM Singhvi, Raju Ramachandran, KV Viswanathan, Anand Grover and Saurabh Kirpal, who represented the petitioners. During the hearing on Wednesday, the Centre told the apex court that any Constitutional declaration made by it on pleas seeking legal validation for same-sex marriage may not be a "correct course of action" as the court will not be able to foresee, envisage, comprehend and deal with its fallout. **Contd on Page 2**

CAPSULE

TN GOVT'S FINANCE HONCHO SHIFTED
Chennai: The high profile Tamil Nadu Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan was on Thursday shifted out of the key portfolio of Finance and Human Resources Management. P5

DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST EX-CJI GOGOI
Guwahati: A Rs 1 crore defamation case and a petition seeking an injunction to restrain his autobiography has been filed against Rajya Sabha MP and former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi by Assam Public Works chief Aabhijeet Sharma.

FIR AGAINST ASHNEER HIS WIFE, FAMILY
New Delhi: The EOW has filed an FIR against BharatPe co-founder Ashneer Grover, his wife Madhuri and kin for a Rs 81 crore fraud after a complaint by the fintech unicorn. P10

Pilot's indiscipline not 'laughable' for Cong anymore in Rajasthan

Party calls meet to discuss issue as former Dy CM begins his 'Jan Sangharsh Yatra'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAIPUR/NEW DELHI



Congress leader Sachin Pilot during his Jan Sangharsh Yatra in Ajmer, on Thursday. PTI

Minister Sachin Pilot who embarked on his Statewide 'Jan Sangharsh Yatra' on Thursday. AICC general secretary incharge of Rajasthan, Sukhwinder Singh Randhawa, has called all the senior leaders of the party including PCC chief Dotsara from the desert State for a meeting in Delhi and further discussions with the central leadership including Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge. **Continued on Page 2**

Tech dev tool, not about power: PM

₹5K cr scientific projects founded on anniversary of Pokhran N tests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Hailing the 1998 nuclear tests on May 11 in Pokhran during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee regime, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said it was one of the most glorious days in India's history. He also asserted that technology for the country is not about showing its dominance but a tool to speed up its development. On this occasion, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone and dedicated to the



File photo of Pokhran site

nation multiple projects related to scientific and technological advancement in the country worth more than Rs 5,800 crore. He also released a commemorative stamp and coin to mark the 25th National Technology Day. "I can never forget the day when Atal ji made the announcement of India's successful nuclear testing," the Prime Minister

remarked. He stated that the Pokhran nuclear test not only helped India prove its scientific capabilities but also gave a boost to the global stature of the nation. "In Atal ji's words," the Prime Minister said, "We have never stopped on our journey and never surrendered to any challenge that has come our way." He inaugurated the pro-

gramme marking National Technology Day 2023 at Pragati Maidan here. The programme also marked the commencement of the celebration of the 25th year of National Technology Day being held from May 11-14. Minister of Science and Technology Jitendra Singh and top scientists were present on the occasion. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who was present on the occasion, said the nuclear tests sent a message to the world that India may be a peace-loving nation but will not tolerate any step taken against its self-respect. Addressing the event on the National Technology Day, which marks the anniversary of Pokhran tests, Modi said his Government has used technology as a source of empowerment and to ensure social justice. **Continued on Page 2**

Kerala to issue ordinance for safety of docs, nurses

High Court terms doctor's killing a 'systemic failure'

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/KOCHI/KOTTAYAM

In the wake of widespread protests by doctors over the killing of a young doctor a day ago, the Kerala government on Thursday decided to issue an ordinance to ensure the safety of healthcare professionals in hospitals.

protection law. The ordinance to amend the Kerala Healthcare Service Persons and Healthcare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage to Property) Act, 2012 would be introduced in the next cabinet meeting, a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

the young medical professional had been an outcome of "systemic failure". Dr Vandana Das, a native of Kaduthuruthy area of Kottayam district and the only child of her parents, was a house surgeon at Azezia Medical College Hospital, who was working at the Kottarakkara taluk hospital as part of her training. She was stabbed several times, and later succumbed to her injuries.

'If Uddhav Sena's chief whip continues then 16-rebel Sena MLAs stand disqualified'

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Giving a new dimension to the politics that will play out in the coming days after the Supreme Court's verdict in the Shiv Sena rebellion case, Sena (UBT) spokesperson and MP Sanjay Raut said here on Thursday that if Sunil Prabhu of the Uddhav Sena continued as the party's official whip, then chief minister Eknath Shinde and 15 other rebel Sena MLAs will stand disqualified.

Legislature Secretariat cancelled the appointments of Sunil Prabhu as the Shiv Sena's Chief Whip Sunil Prabhu. In Prabhu's place, the Legislature Secretariat had accorded recognition to the Sena rebel leader - now Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, as the SSLP and the rebel group's nominee Bharat Gogawale as the Chief Whip. On their part, Prabhu and Gogawale had issue d separate whips to the Sena MLAs participating in the confidence vote sought by the then chief minister Eknath Shinde.

ED arrests hotelier in Raipur liquor scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested hotelier Nitesh Purohit and liquor businessman Trilok Singh Dhillon under PMLA in the ongoing money laundering investigation in the 'Liquor scam' of Chhattisgarh.

liquor licence holders, the ED said. Bribe was collected from the distillers per case basis of liquor procured from the distillers by the CSMCL (State body for purchase and sale of liquor), the agency said. Another modus operandi was sale of unaccounted kacha off-in-the-books country liquor. In this case, not even one rupee reached the State exchequer, and all the sale proceeds were pocketed by the Syndicate. The illegal liquor was sold from State-run shops only, the agency said.

Pak...

From Page 1 After a brief hearing, the court declared that Khan's arrest was "illegal" and of no consequence and ordered that he should be set free. The court also directed him to go to the IHC on Friday and seek further legal recourse. "You will have to accept whatever the High Court decides," the top judge said.

SC holds Maha...

From Page 1 "We use the term 'opinion' to mean satisfaction based on objective criteria as to whether he possessed relevant material, and not to mean the subjective satisfaction of the Governor. Once a Government is democratically elected in accordance with law, there is a presumption that it enjoys the confidence of the House. There must exist, some objective material to dislodge this presumption," the court said.

It added that the MLAs did not express their desire to withdraw support from the MVA Government in the resolution dated June 21, 2022 and even if it is assumed that they had implied that they intended to exit from the Government, they only constituted a faction of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party (SSLP) and were, at the most, indicating their dissatisfaction with the course of action adopted by their party.

Cong: BJP had lost legally, morally...

From Page 1 The Congress said, although the Supreme Court had not restored the status quo ante by not restoring the Government of Udhav Thackeray, it had clearly castigated the actions of the then Maharashtra Governor and the Speaker of the Assembly.

ic and ugly nature of the BJP's underbelly and back-belly has been exposed", senior Congress spokesperson of Ahishekh Manu Singhvi said at a press conference.

who had flouted the official party whip. He asked, what are the options left with the Speaker if he does not delay, prevaricate or circumvent the process, other than disqualifying the legislators who flouted the party whip.

left to be played by those who have no shame is the game of delay. The Congress said that the court had also held the Governor's action of calling the floor test as illegal.

Pilot's indiscipline...

From Page 1 Pilot began the 125-km foot march from Ajmer to Jaipur challenging Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and the party's top brass as Assembly elections in Rajasthan approach. A month back, he defied a warning from the party to hold a daylong fast targeting Gehlot on "inaction" over alleged corruption when the BJP was previously in power.

talks about a "Congress-mukt India". In a veiled attack on his former deputy over his yatra, Gehlot said that those who create factions ("Thari-Mhari karte hai") can never become successful and never be loyal to the party.

'Thrilled if Pawar leads Opp'

From Page 1 Uddhav and his son Aaditya and Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut welcomed Nitish when he arrived at "Matoshri" for a luncheon meeting with the Sena (UBT) president.

Thackeray seeks Shinde resignation...

From Page 1 In his first reaction, Narvekar said: "The apex court has said that the Speaker will decide on the disqualification of 16 MLAs. Earlier, there was no clarity whether a political party or legislature party can decide on the Whip. Now that the honourable Supreme Court has given a clear interpretation, I will accordingly decide".

Deputy Chief Minister should put in their papers forthwith on moral grounds," he said. Alluding to the strictures passed by the apex court against then Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari that led to the fall of his Government, Uddhav said: "The Supreme Court has said that the manner in which the then Governor conducted himself was wrong.

give his ruling on his party's plea for disqualification of 16 "rebel" Shiv Sena MLAs belonging to the Shinde camp. NCP chief Sharad Pawar said that the Supreme Court had strongly disapproved of the Governor's conduct during the political crisis witnessed in June last year.

Hours after SC...

From Page 1 Prior to the verdict of the court, the Services Department was under the control of Delhi's Lieutenant Governor. Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel also hinted that bureaucrats not appearing before House Committees will now have to "fall in line" and asserted that works stopped on the Lieutenant Governor's directions will be resumed.

Before starting the 125-km-long five-day yatra on Thursday, Pilot addressed a public gathering on Jaipur Highway in Ajmer and raised the issue of question papers for recruitment in different Government posts being leaked. The 'Jan Sangharsh Yatra' posters, displayed on some vehicles, had a picture of Pilot as well as photos of Sonia Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल पर्यावास भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर, अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.)

// सर्व संबंधित को सूचना // सर्वसंबंधितों को सूचित किया जाता है कि भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, द्वारा मेसर्स अशेना छत्तीसगढ़ पॉवर लिमिटेड, ग्राम-सिंधीतराई, बेनिपाली, ओडेकरा एवं निमोही, तहसील- उमरा, जिला-सक्ती के कोल बेस्ड थर्मल पावर प्लांट (2x600 मेगावाट) क्षमता - 1200 मेगावाट, कुल एरिया - 400.77 हेक्टेयर को पत्र दिनांक 04/06/2010 द्वारा पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति प्रदान की गई थी। तत्पश्चात् पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति में संशोधन एवं दिनांक 03/06/2017 तक वैधता वृद्धि पत्र दिनांक 22/03/2016 द्वारा प्रदान की गई। पुनः पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति में दिनांक 03/06/2020 तक वैधता वृद्धि पत्र दिनांक 28/11/2017 द्वारा प्रदान की गई है। मंत्रालय के अधिसूचना एफओ 221 (ई) दिनांक 18/01/2021 के प्रावधानों के अनुसार इस पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति की वैधता दिनांक 03/06/2021 तक थी।

SC rules in favour...

From Page 1 "The Lieutenant Governor, who represents the Centre in Delhi, is bound by the elected Government's decision on services, the bench ruled. The L-G is also bound by the aid and advice of the council of ministers," it said.

asserting its control over services, holding the National Capital Territory administration is unlike other Union Territories and has been "accorded a 'sui generis' (unique) status by the Constitution. Against the backdrop of frequent run-ins between the AAP Government and the Lieutenant Governor, the Supreme Court asserted an elected Government needs to have control over bureaucrats, failing which the principle of collective responsibility will be adversely affected.

ing the administrative directions of the elected Government. The court held the executive power of the Delhi Government is "co-extensive with its legislative power" and it also covers all matters with respect to which it has the power to legislate.

Officials said the order to remove More was not as per the law and there are several loopholes in the way the officer was removed. After the Supreme Court verdict, the whole bureaucratic set-up is the most worried and fearing a backlash of the judgment. Since the Kejriwal Government came to power, there was a fight going on between the L-G Secretariat and the elected Government of Delhi. Now, this judgment will further intensify the tussle and bureaucrats feel that now they have to bear the brunt.

Delhi CM calls verdict 'victory of democracy'

From Page 1 Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hailed the verdict and said the speed of work in the national Capital will increase manifold following the Supreme Court verdict on administration of services as his hands were earlier tied and also announced that the officers who "obstructed" the work of the people will soon "face the music".

With this decision, the pace of development of Delhi will increase manifold. Democracy won." Hours after the verdict, Kejriwal went to the Delhi Secretariat for the first time in many months and met his Cabinet colleagues.

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

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

Tech dev tool... SC reserves...

From Page 1 "Be it JAM trinity, CoWIN portal or digital market for farmers, our Government has used technology as an agent of inclusion", he said, adding that there is some technological solution available at every stage of life right from one's birth.

direction which is needed to be a tech leader, he said. Modi also said his Government has worked to make an inclusive ecosystem to promote innovation and cited India's big jump on the global innovation index.

From Page 1 The bench had observed that everyone was presuming that the declaration would be in the form of a writ. "We are all presuming that the declaration will be in the form of a writ that grants this or grants that. This is what we are accustomed to. What I was hinting was that as a Constitutional court, we recognise only a state of affairs and draw the limit there..." Justice Bhat had said.

SC order on LG-CM power struggle victory for Kejriwal

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday handed a major victory to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in his bitter power tussle with the Lieutenant Governor over who will control the services department.

The question of the regulation of services was a major part of the overall dispute between the elected government in Delhi and the Lieutenant Governor (LG) nominated by the Centre. The Kejriwal government has repeatedly accused Vinai Kumar Saxena of meddling in the day-to-day affairs of the Delhi government. The tussle between Lieutenant Governor and the Kejriwal government started soon after he assumed the charge of the chief minister of Delhi.

The tussle between the Arvind Kejriwal government and Delhi Lieutenant Governor over the division of authority in the national capital took an ugly turn in the past few months.

Kejriwal described the LG as a "headmaster" and said that "even my teachers have not checked my homework the way the LG does. He keeps sitting on files as though the handwriting is not good, the spellings are incorrect..."

Frustrated with his government's lack of control over the civil services, Chief Minister



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses the media at the Delhi Secretariat after the Supreme Court's ruling on the regulation of services matter in New Delhi on Thursday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Arvind Kejriwal said in the Assembly on January 17: "I am an elected Chief Minister... Who is LG? Where has he come from? Why is he sitting on Delhi government's head?"

In his one of his tweet, Kejriwal said, "Delhi does not need tyranny but the Constitution and democracy. Our struggle for people's rights will continue." He led a protest march against the Lieutenant Governor's alleged interference in the government's functioning. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also recently stated that the LG was bypassing the elected government by issuing prosecution sanctions.

Recently, there have been a

few flashpoints.

The AAP moved the Supreme Court seeking timely election of the mayor and the deputy mayor for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) as well as a direction to restrain the councillors nominated to the House by the LG from voting.

Their strained relationship led to frequent confrontations between them over a range of issues, including the excise policy, training of teachers in Finland, free yoga classes, mohalla clinics, transfer of bureaucrats, sanctioning of funds, control over the Anti-Corruption Branch, and the extension of power subsidy to

consumers.

The Lieutenant Governor office also restricted the duties of Jasmine Shah, former vice-chairperson of a Delhi government think tank, over allegations of misusing his office for political purposes.

The ties came to a head when the LG recommended that the CBI investigate the irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, leading to the arrest of former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia and the summoning of Kejriwal.

The Delhi government accused the LG of delaying the implementation of several schemes, including 'Red Light On Gaadi Off', which aimed to curb vehicular pollution, and the extension of power subsidy.

The AAP alleged the non-cooperation of the bureaucracy at the behest of the LG delayed several projects, including those of the Delhi Jal Board to augment water supply and clean the Yamuna.

It also alleged the LG appointed a BJP councillor to preside over mayoral polls, bypassing the tradition of nominating the senior-most councillor, and nominated 10 aldermen with political links to the BJP, giving them voting rights in the mayoral polls, which is prohibited under the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957.

L-G bound by advice of Council of Ministers: SC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the Lieutenant Governor is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers of National Capital Territory of Delhi in matters within the legislative scope of the national capital.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said the term "administration" with regard to powers of the lieutenant governor cannot be understood as the entire administration of Delhi.

Delineating the boundary of powers of the LG, the bench, which also comprised Justices M R Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli and P S Narasimha, said he may act in his discretion only in two classes of matters.

"Firstly, where the matter deals with issues which are beyond the powers of the Legislative Assembly and where the President has delegated the powers and functions to the

Lieutenant Governor in relation to such matter; and secondly, matters which by law require him to act in his discretion or where he is exercising judicial or quasi-judicial functions," the bench said.

The top court said executive administration by the lieutenant governor, in his discretion, can only extend to matters which fall outside the purview of the powers conferred on the Legislative Assembly. "The term 'administration' cannot be understood as the entire administration of GNCTD. Otherwise, the purpose of giving powers to a constitutionally recognised and democratically elected government would be diluted," the bench said.

"We reiterate that in light of Article 239AA (which deals with the special status of Delhi as UT) and the 2018 Constitution Bench judgment, the Lieutenant Governor is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers of NCTD in relation to matters within the legislative scope of NCTD.

Verdict on services matter triggers flood of memes online



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court's verdict on the services matter has triggered a flood of memes on social media with several netizens sharing posters, video clips, and images from popular films like 'Lagaan' and 'Nayak' along with humourous captions eliciting mirth and chuckles.

An hour after the verdict, the AAP's Twitter handle shared a video clip of a scene from the climax of the 2001 Aamir Khan-starrer film 'Lagaan' wherein the main protagonist 'Bhuvan' takes a ragtag team of natives to victory in a cricket match against British players. "Finally, 'hum jee gaye'," the Kejriwal-led party tweeted along with the clip, echoing the line from the movie.

The party also ran a hashtag '#KejriwalJeetGaya' and shared video snippets of his old speeches. In one clip, the chief minister says in the Delhi Assembly, "This country runs through democracy and not bureaucracy."

A considerable number of Twitter users churned out memes based on the 2001 Anil Kapoor-starrer 'Nayak' as they drew parallels between Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the central character of the film Shivaji Rao Gaekwad who takes on corrupt politicians and bureaucrats after becoming the CM for a day.

Some users shared clips from the movie and hailed Kejriwal as a "real life 'nayak' (hero)".

Twitter user @Rahultahiliani9 shared a still image from 'Nayak' with the caption, "You are suspended... Don't come to work from tomorrow #Kejriwal", indicating that those causing hindrances for the AAP have been put in their place.

By evening, 'DelhiSarkar' and 'CJI DY Chandrachud' and other related hashtags were trending on Twitter with several netizens sharing posters, video clips, and images from other

Twitter user @preetiagr123 shared a video showing a boy grooving to a folk song, with the caption, "Aapians today Nonstop #KejriwalJeetGaya". Another Twitter user @ethicalsid shared a video clip from the 2003 movie 'Gangaajal' wherein a senior cop reprimands a junior for dereliction of duty.

The tweet captioned — "Scenes from Delhi Secretariat" — asserted that Kejriwal was the in-charge of the national capital. Several others shared posters hailing Kejriwal with the slogan 'Kejriwal Jeet Gaya'. "Democracy won the constitution won common man won Delhi won truth won Kejriwal has won! #KejriwalJeetGaya," @PoeticShivam tweeted in Hindi.

Party respects SC's order: BJP Delhi chief Sachdeva

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva on Thursday said the party respects the Supreme Court verdict that gave the AAP Government legislative and executive powers over the administration of services, and claimed that a transfer-posting industry will come up in the city. Citing the verdict, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has stated there would be large-scale transfer of officers in the Delhi Government now, the BJP leader alleged.

"We respect the Supreme Court verdict. Kejriwal has obtained what he was desperately looking for. He said that a transfer-posting industry will come up in Delhi," Sachdeva said in a statement.

Officers in the Delhi government will now be given postings based not on their capabilities but on how obedient they are to the chief minister, the BJP leader charged. Sachdeva also claimed that officers in the Delhi government will now be pressured to do the bidding of the Aam Aadmi Party. This is the reason why the ruling party in Delhi is claiming the Supreme Court verdict as its victory, he added.

Sachdeva also questioned what the Kejriwal government would do in matters of land, police and public order, where it had no say.

"I fear there could be incidents of misbehavior with officers and they will be pressured as the power will be in the hands of the government," the BJP leader further claimed.

AAP workers dance to dhol beats, burst firecrackers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP supporters danced to dhol beats, burst firecrackers and distributed sweets at the party office and the Delhi secretariat here on Thursday to celebrate the Supreme Court ruling in favour of the city government in a power tussle with the Centre.

In a unanimous verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the Delhi government has legislative and executive powers over services except for public order, police and land.

Welcoming the verdict, the AAP said in a tweet in Hindi, "The elected government will have the power of transfer-posting of officers. Officers will work only through the elected government."



The Lieutenant Governor will have no power over the officers to stop the work of the people of Delhi, it said. At the AAP office on DDU Marg, workers smeared each others' faces with 'gulaal' and distributed laddoos. Cabinet Ministers Gopal Rai, Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj also joined the celebrations after addressing a press conference at the party office.

Photo: Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

playing the drum along with Adil Ahmad Khan, chairman of one of the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees. Ministers Kai, Atishi and Imran Hussain garlanded Kejriwal when he reached the Delhi Secretariat, while their Cabinet colleague Kailash Gahlot fed the chief minister sweets.

Asserting that an elected government needs to have control over the administration, a five-judge constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, said the Union Territory of Delhi has "sui generis (unique) character" and refused to agree with the 2019 judgement of Justice Ashok Bhushan that the Delhi government has no power over the issue of services.

JNU-NESF lends helping hand to those displaced by Manipur violence

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students hailing from Northeast states including those belonging to Meitei and Kuki communities have joined hands to help people displaced by the recent violence in Manipur. The students under the banner of North East Students' Forum (NESF) of the JNU are working round-the-clock in a bid to help people from the State by conducting donation drives on the campus.

The students, who believe "humanity comes above everything", have already sent Rs 30,000 collected during the collection drives in the past three days to relief camps, the forum said. "The NESF of JNU conducted a donation drive to collect funds to send to relief camps in Manipur for the victims of the violence," a PhD student from Arunachal Pradesh, who is part of the forum, said.

Violent clashes broke out in Manipur after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the 10 hill districts on May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status. Since



May 4 itself, the NESF sprung into action and hosted a meeting to figure out the ways to help the displaced people.

A student belonging to the Meitei community, who is pursuing PhD at the varsity, is of the view that this is not the time to blame anyone but to come forward and help people. "We cannot say who are men and women behind the violence. We don't want to enter the blame game. What now require is to restore peace there. We can have our differences. Here are students from different communities in Manipur.

"Instead of referring to ourselves by the name of communities, we refer to ourselves as people of Manipur. We are working together to collect fund. We don't want to

divide us due to the name. As a student community, we represent our state and Northeast India," said Yumkham Santosh, Convener of NESF, who is a Meitei from Manipur. The students set up small donation stations across the JNU with posters taped on cardboard. The posters had photos of evacuation, relief camps and the UPI bar code.

One of the posters read "The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention". The students have worked relentlessly for several days in a bid to help the people stuck there. At the stations, the students at regular intervals were seen asking for donations using a mic.

One of the volunteers at one of the donation stations said: "This is a donation drive. We are gathered here for the people of Manipur who are affected by the current violence that happened in the state. So we appeal to everybody to come forward and donate for the cause." In the recently conducted drive, students in the university came forward and donated money. In addition to the donation drive, the students are holding meetings to discuss the matter of Manipur.

NSUI protests at DU, seeks withdrawal of notice to Rahul

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Students Union of India (NSUI) on Thursday protested outside the Delhi University's PG men's hostel, demanding withdrawal of a notice to Rahul Gandhi over his last week visit to the boarding facility.

Raising slogans, the NSUI burnt an effigy of the hostel's provost, KP Singh, who had sent the notice to the Congress leader on Wednesday following his "sudden" visit.

The notice said that "such conduct from a leader of a national party who has Z-plus security is beyond dignity".

Rahul had visited the Post-Graduate (PG) Men's Hostel on Friday, interacted with some students and had lunch with them.

The students' union warned that if its demand is not met, its members will take to



the streets.

"When 'Mann Ki Baat' and other unwanted programmes are forced on students then it is not a matter of security and even (former prime minister) Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a frequent visitor to meet and eat with college students," NSUI president Kunal Sherawat said. The 'Mann Ki Baat' is Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's monthly radio broadcast programme.

NSUI national secretary Lokesh Chugh said that "any outsider can visit the PG men's hostel to have lunch". "Moreover, Rahul ji is an alumna of the university and he was called by the students of the hostel. If the university does not take its notice back, we will have to take to the roads as the

university does not belong to BJP and its machinery," he said.

The provost had said Gandhi's "unexpected entry" into the premises along with three vehicles violated the prescribed rules of the hostel. In the notice, the university official had mentioned rule 15.13 of the Handbook of Information and Rules of the Hostel.

KOZHIKODE TRAIN ARSON CASE

NIA searches 10 locations in Shaheen Bagh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday conducted searches at 10 locations in and around the Shaheen Bagh area of New Delhi, in connection with the Kozhikode train arson case in which three passengers were killed and nine others injured.

NIA searches covered the properties of accused Shahrulk Saifi and various suspects.

A resident of Shaheen Bagh, Shahrulk was arrested on April 6, 2023 for the arson committed four days earlier, on April 2. He was charged for setting on fire D1 coach of Alleppey Kannur Executive Express, leading to the tragic death of a child and two others.

The original FIR (No. 38/2023) was registered in the case at Kozhikode Railway



Police Station, Kerala. On April 17, the NIA took over the investigations.

"NIA's probe so far has revealed that Saifi was a follower of various radical Islamic preachers, including Zakir Naik, Pakistan-based Tariq Jamil, Israr Ahmed and Taimoor Ahmed," the NIA said in a statement.

Thursday's searches led to the seizure of a number of digital devices, including mobile phones, laptop and hard disk, along with other documents. Further investigations in the case are continuing, it added.

99 Tihar staffers transferred after gangster Tillu killing

More transfers likely: Official

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 90 jail officials here were transferred on Thursday, days after gangster Tillu Tajpuriya was killed inside Tihar jail allegedly by members of a rival gang, officials said.

Director General (Prisons) Sanjay Beniwal ordered the transfer of 99 officials including assistant superintendents, deputy superintendents, head wardens and warders, an officer said, adding more transfers

could take place in the next few days, including from the jail headquarters.

According to a senior official, the Tajpuriya murder was viewed seriously by the authorities which prompted a streamlining of things and also necessitated the need for ground level changes.

The step has been taken with a view to send out a strong message that laxity in duties will not be tolerated, the officer added.

CCTV footage showed Tajpuriya was assaulted with improvised weapons allegedly by four members of the Gogi gang inside the high-security



prison last week.

A footage that surfaced days later purportedly showed Tajpuriya being attacked in front of security personnel as well when they were carrying him away after he was stabbed.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Prisons Department will write to the AAP government, seeking an amendment to law to be able to shift under-trial prisoners from city's jails to other states.

They said this will allow them to break the nexus among prisoners and also help decongest the jails. The prisons in Delhi presently house 20,558 inmates against a sanctioned

capacity of 10,026 inmates.

"We are going to write to the government to take up the matter of amending the Transfer of Prisoners Act with competent authority to include under-trial prisoners in it in order to shift them from city jails to other states which will help in breaking their nexus here," a senior prisons department official said.

The official said there are several inmates who have multiple criminal cases registered against them outside Delhi but they deliberately get themselves arrested in Delhi for petty crimes to get into Tihar jail.

'PM's first State visit to US historic'

It's good for world, says India's Ambassador to US

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES
NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

As ties between the two countries are robust and ever expanding, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US next month is "historic" and will underscore that the partnership between the two nations is people-centric, people-driven, and is good for the world at large, India's ambassador to Washington Taranjit Singh Sandhu has said.



President Biden will host Prime Minister Modi for an Official State Visit to the United States, which will include a state dinner, on June 22.

It will be Modi's first state visit to the US since he assumed office in 2014. His previous visits to the US to meet then Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump at the White House were not classified as state visits. The last official state visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the US was undertaken by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in November 2009.

State visits are rated to be the highest expression of friendly bilateral relations and are replete with official public ceremonies. In the US, these ceremonies include a flight line ceremony (where the visiting head of state is greeted at the tarmac after landing), a 21-gun salute White House arrival ceremony, a White House dinner, exchange of diplomatic gifts, an

invitation to stay at the Blair House (US President's guesthouse across the Pennsylvania Avenue), and flag street-lining.

Meanwhile, newly designated US envoy to New Delhi Eric Garcetti on Thursday presented his credential to President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi. Envoy of Qatar Mohammed Hassan Jabir Al-Jabir and Didier Gamberdinger, Ambassador of the Principality of Monaco, also presented their credentials to the President, a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

On Modi's visit, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said "the upcoming visit will affirm the deep and close partnership between the US and India and the warm bonds of family and friendship that link Americans and

Indians together." India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu told PTI that Modi's forthcoming official state visit to the US, at the invitation of President Biden, is "historic."

"Prime Minister and President Biden have together imparted significantly new vigour and momentum to our bilateral ties. The visit will be an opportunity for the two leaders to spend time together, take stock of the progress achieved and provide guidance on the future limitless possibilities," he said.

"The visit will also underscore that India-US partnership is people-centric and people-driven, and that it is not just for the two countries, but for the world at large," Sandhu said.

White House Press Secretary Jean-Pierre said late Wednesday the visit will strengthen the two countries' shared commitment to a free, open, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific and shared resolve to elevate the strategic technology partnership, including in defence, clean energy, and space.

The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military manoeuvring in the resource-rich region.

"The leaders will discuss ways to further expand our educational exchanges and people-to-people ties, as well as our

work together to confront common challenges from climate change to workforce development and health security," Jean-Pierre said.

The White House's announcement on Biden's invitation to Modi has been widely welcomed. "I am delighted that the White House has invited the Prime Minister for a state visit which will help strengthen the strategic partnership between our nations," Indian American Congressman Ro Khanna said. He is the Co-Chair of the Congressional India Caucus, the largest country-specific caucus in the House of Representatives.

Mukesh Aghi, president of US India Strategic and Partnership Forum, said Modi's visit in June will be a wonderful opportunity to elevate the bilateral partnership to the next level.

"President Biden and Prime Minister Modi will be meeting in a few weeks' time at the Quad Leader's Summit in Australia and later this year at the G20 in India. Both leaders have used multilaterals such as the Quad, I2U2, and the G20 summits to work on common goals," Aghi said.

"However, the state visit will provide a valuable opportunity for both countries to strengthen the edifice of this strategic partnership and work on enhancing commercial ties, building resilient supply chains, and creating new synergies in the critical and emerging technology domain," he said.

Focus on pushing India, US ties to new heights: Garcetti

US Ambassador to India says both sides will work on 'issues of time'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI



US Ambassador to New Delhi Eric Garcetti said here on Thursday he will focus on raising the bilateral partnership between India and the US to "new heights" with both sides working together on "defining issues" of the time. He made these remarks shortly after presenting his credentials to President Droupadi Murmu. The envoy studied Hindi and Indian culture in Columbia University, US.

Garcetti's presentation of credentials came a day after the White House announced that President Joe Biden will host Prime Minister Narendra Modi for an official state visit to the US, which will include a state dinner on June 22.

The US embassy in India

"Thank you to the Government of India for your close and fruitful partnership with the United States. I'm excited to deepen #USIndia ties as we work together on defining issues of our time," he said. The US embassy said Garcetti will make his first official trip next week to Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

Garcetti, considered a close aide of Biden, received the confirmation to the post from the US Senate in March. The former Los Angeles mayor was nominated to the high-profile post of the ambassador to India more than two years ago.

But the nomination was not confirmed by the Senate earlier following concerns by some lawmakers that Garcetti, as the then Los Angeles mayor, had not adequately handled allegations of sexual assault and harassment against one of his aides.

Garcetti is known as a committed public servant, educator and diplomat. He was confirmed in a bipartisan vote as the 25th United States Ambassador to India on March 15.

'Sonia's unity & sovereignty remark during Karnataka election campaign was distorted'

Congress urges Speaker to send matter to privileges panel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI



Congress Lok Sabha MP Manickam Tagore has accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of a breach of parliamentary privilege for referring to Sonia Gandhi's remark to Sonia Gandhi and urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to send the matter to the privileges committee of Parliament.

In a letter to the Speaker, the Congress whip in Lok Sabha claimed that PM Modi has disseminated "sensitive false information" among the public.

The Virudhunagar MP alleged that Prime Minister Modi, during his election cam-

paign in Karnataka, indulged in an act of breach of Parliamentary Privileges under Rule 222 of the Lok Sabha Rule of Procedures.

"The Prime Minister as the representative of the BJP party in the Karnataka election has raised false accusations against the Congress against their commitment to protecting the unity and sovereignty of the State of Karnataka if wins the election.

"The remarks of the Prime Minister misrepresent the statement of Sonia Gandhi, chairperson of the Congress Party, that the meaning of protecting sovereignty as meant by the Congress is the plan to separate the State from India," he said in

his letter to Birla. Tagore said that such a "vehement statement from the Prime Minister is highly obnoxious which would be a wrong precedence for the people who acquire high positions in this country either now or in the future. In precise the Prime Minister has informed that 'Congress indicates that Congress considers Karnataka separate from India'."

"Therefore, it is pertinent that the Speaker refer the issue to the Committee of Parliamentary Privileges under Rule 222 and allow the same for discussion in the next Lok Sabha session as well as the House should rebuke the state of the prime minister seeking an explanation from him," Tagore said.

The Congress MP said that keeping in view the seriousness of such "false representation with a mischievous attitude, I request you to take appropriate action to refer the same to the Privileges Committee."

Buzz grows on possible Cabinet expansion with eye on Bihar, Maha

MANISH ANAND ■ NEW DELHI

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance government is set to complete nine years in office in the next few days, the buzz is now at its peak of a possible Cabinet expansion or reshuffle with eye on Bihar and Maharashtra.

The buzz has also gained strength from the Supreme Court on Thursday almost removing Damodas's sword over the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra and also the former Union Minister RCP Singh joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP poll machinery has already moved into top gear for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in response to the Opposition parties holding parleys to find a common ground. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is now in the last leg of his outreach to the Opposition leaders. The BJP wants to turn heat on the Bihar

chief minister in his backyard.

"Cabinet reshuffle has been talked about for months. But now the time may be ripe. The exercise is principally aimed to get the BJP-led NDA poll ready for 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and Bihar and Maharashtra are the focus states. The BJP is without the right social engineering in Bihar after the exit of the JD (U), and the Shinde-led Shiv Sena needs representation in the council of ministers," said a senior BJP functionary.

RCP Singh had quit the JD (U) almost nine months ago, and the BJP has been courting him to make an inroad into the Kurmi caste group, which is the core electoral constituency of the Bihar chief minister. Upendra Kushwaha, who hails from the Kurmi caste group, had quit the JD (U) a few months ago. Kurmi-Koeri combination is popularly known in Bihar as Luv-Kush alliance, which has been the principal vote catchment constituency of Nitish

Kumar. "The BJP will surely like to give prominence to a few faces from Kurmi-Koeri group in Bihar at the national stage with an eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha election," said another senior BJP functionary. By appointing Samrat Choudhary as the Bihar unit chief of the BJP, the saffron outfit has already dropped hints of making inroads into the non-Yadav backward castes.

Bihar and Maharashtra together account for 88 Lok Sabha seats. Both the states are posing political challenges to the BJP on account of the existing formidable regional parties. "The BJP will further like to work its presence in the Maratha constituency to cut into the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress vote bases. With Shinde-led Shiv Sena getting representation in the Central government, the BJP will find comfort in the Maharashtra politics," added the BJP functionary.

Jaishankar to visit Bangladesh, Sweden, Belgium

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit three countries including Bangladesh, Sweden and Belgium starting Thursday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here. The Bangladesh visit will be from May 11-12, Sweden (13-15 May) and Belgium (15-16 May 2022), it said.

Jaishankar will visit Dhaka to participate in the 6th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference. From Bangladesh, the external affairs minister will be travelling to Sweden. This will be his first visit as the external affairs minister.

In Sweden, Jaishankar will participate in joint EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum (EIPMF). He will hold bilater-

al meetings with Foreign Ministers of several countries on the margins of EIPMF.

During his stay, the minister will call on leadership in Sweden and meet with key Ministers. He will also participate in the inaugural session of the India Trilateral Forum (India, Europe and US) with his Swedish counterpart.

In the last leg of the visit, Jaishankar will be visiting Brussels for bilateral engagements with Belgian and EU officials. He will also attending the first Ministerial Meeting of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC).

Arms, papers in Dawood's terror syndicate's fake currency racket found: NIA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday recovered several incriminating materials during searches at half a dozen locations in Mumbai in the 2021 Naupada case relating to seizure of high quality fake Indian currency notes (FICN) from the Dawood Ibrahim terror syndicate.

"The recovery included sharp-edged weapons, digital devices and documents, which is a strong corroboration of NIA's earlier investigational findings establishing a direct connection with the D-Company in the fake currency racket. Thus the role of the D-Company has been prima facie established in the circulation of FICN in India during the NIA investigation into the case," the NIA said in a statement.

The case related to the seizure of counterfeit Indian currency notes of Rs. 2000 denomination. Two persons were arrested in the case, originally registered at the Naupada police station, Thane City, Maharashtra on November 18, 2021, under relevant sections of the

Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The accused, identified as Riyaz and Nasir, both residents of Mumbai, are currently in judicial custody.

The Thane Police had carried out searches and also chargesheeted the accused in the high-profile case, which was taken over by the NIA and re-registered on February 7, 2023.

On Wednesday, the NIA raided several properties of the accused and suspects, mostly houses and offices, as part of its continuing investigations in the case, the agency added.



Jel terror funding: NIA raids spots in Baramulla, Budgam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing with its crackdown on terror funding in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday searched multiple locations in Budgam and Baramulla districts of Kashmir in the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) Terror Funding case.

The NIA has, in recent days, been tightening the noose around terror funding activities by groups involved in anti-India activities, while strengthening the security apparatus in the Valley, the NIA said in a statement.

A total of 11 locations came under NIA's scanner in Thursday's searches in the case in which the JeI is accused of engaging in separatist and secessionist activities even after being declared an unlawful association under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act since its proscription on February 28, 2019.

The NIA had earlier chargesheeted four persons in this case.

The searches, conducted at the premises of the members and sympathisers of

Jel, Jammu and Kashmir, led the agency to the recovery of several digital devices and incriminating material, the agency said.

"Investigations so far by the NIA, which had suo moto registered the case on February 5, 2021, have revealed that Jel (J&K) has been collecting money ostensibly for charitable purposes, such as promotion of health and education. It has instead been using the collected funds for carrying out unlawful activities," it said.

The NIA has further found that Jel members have been collecting money, both within and outside India, through donations particularly in the form of Zakat, Mowda and Bait-ul-Mal. They have been using the funds used for carrying out violent and secessionist activities, and also channeling them to proscribed terrorist organisations, such as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and others through well organised networks of Jel cadres, it said.

Jel has also been motivating Kashmiri youth and recruiting new members (rukuns) in Jammu and Kashmir to join its terrorist and secessionist movement against India, it added.

CBI seizes papers of bank accounts, FDs at premises of ex-WAPCOS chief

90 bank accounts, fixed deposits unearthed in probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The CBI has unearthed documents relating to 90 bank and fixed deposit accounts from the premises of former WAPCOS CMD RK Gupta, who was arrested after more than ₹38.70 crore cash was recovered from his premises.

The value of the fixed deposits is around ₹5.5 crore and details of the other accounts are being investigated. The scrutiny of the staggering wealth and property documents recovered from Gupta's premises is continuing at the Central Bureau of Investigation, officials said.

The probe so far has revealed documents of at least 15 properties, including a farmhouse, which are pegged at approximately ₹12 crore as per

current market value, they said. Three high-end luxury cars, jewellery and 17 gold coins and bars worth crores were also found by the agency during its searches, they said.

The agency had conducted the searches on May 2 in connection with a ₹7.91 crore disproportionate assets case against Gupta during which they found bundles of ₹2,000 and ₹500 currency notes neatly stacked in suitcases kept in almirahs and bedrooms of Gupta's residences.

The agency arrested Gupta, former Chairman and Managing Director of WAPCOS, and his son Gaurav after it recovered more than ₹38.70 crore cash from their premises, making it the biggest seizure

of cash by the agency in its history.

The agency teams found the bulk of the cash from Gupta's three properties, ₹13 crore each from homes in Pitampura and Gurugram while ₹11 crore was found at son Gaurav Singla's residence in Chandigarh, the officials said.

Singal works at a leading car manufacturing company while Gupta headed WAPCOS from 2010-20, they said.

Water and Power Consultancy Services (India) Limited (WAPCOS) is a central public sector enterprise wholly owned by the government and is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The CBI had registered the FIR against Gupta, his wife Reema Singal, son Gaurav, and daughter-in-law Komal Singal for allegedly amassing illicit wealth to the tune of ₹7.91 crore during Gupta's tenure as CMD from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2019, officials added.

INS Garuda celebrates 70-yrs of naval service

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI



INS Garuda, the premier Inaval air station of the Southern Naval Command celebrated 70 years of glorious service to the Indian Navy on Thursday, the Navy said here.

Commissioned on May 11, 1953, it is the oldest naval air station which has been associated with the beginning of Naval aviation. Home to the first amphibious aircraft of the Indian Navy, the Sealanders, it has grown into a full-fledged

air base operating some of the finest air assets of the Indian Navy. Also known as the 'Cradle of Naval Aviation', it has the unique distinction of operating the oldest as well as the latest aircraft available in the inventory of the Indian Navy.

Former JD(U) president joins BJP, calls Nitish 'palti maar'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Janata Dal (United) president RCP Singh joined the BJP here on Thursday in the presence of Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan and instantly hit-out at Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, once his mentor, by delecting him a "palti maar" (one adept at taking U-turns) who he said has compromised with crime and corruption in his pursuit of "kursi" (chair).

Singh who was a JDU's nominee in the Modi-cabinet had a fallout with Kumar last year after he was seen by the JD(U) to be moving closer to the BJP as differences between the two parties grew. The two outfits subsequently severed their alliance. Singh lost his portfolio after the JDU refused to renew his Rajya Sabha membership and was later accused of corruption by his erstwhile party.



Former JD(U) leader Ramchandra Prasad joins Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the presence of Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at the BJP HQ in New Delhi on Thursday

and lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his work for the poor and overall leadership of the country.

The former IAS from the UP cadre mocked Kumar as a "PM", explaining that it stood for "palti maar" (one who keeps taking U-turns).

"Nitish babu used to say that he was against crime and corruption. Today, he is sitting in the lap of those against whom he once struggled. He is in love with the letter 'C' because 'C' stands for chair also. Everything he does is for the chair only," Singh charged.

"Nitish babu was a PM, he is a PM and will remain a PM. Here the letter 'P' stands for 'palti' and 'M' stands for 'maar'. He has betrayed (people) several times," he added.

Singh asked if no work was happening in the country, how did India become the fifth largest economy.

He also took potshots at Kumar for his efforts to forge unity among the opposition ranks. "What kind of opposition unity you will forge? Who is the leader? Is it possible to forge an opposition unity without a leader?" he asked.

Bihar Govt moves SC against Patna HC stay on caste survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Bihar government has moved the Supreme Court challenging a Patna High Court order granting a stay on the caste survey it was conducting, contending "huge loss" would be caused if the exercise is stopped.

In an appeal filed before the top court against the May 4 order of the high court, the state government said the stay will adversely affect the entire exercise.

The state government said the collection of caste-based data is a constitutional mandate under Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution.

Article 15 of the Constitution says the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, while Article 16 states there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.



"The State has already completed more than 80 per cent of the survey work in some districts and less than 10 per cent of work is pending. The entire machinery is working at ground level. There shall be no harm in completing the exercise subject to final adjudication of the dispute.

"The time gap to complete the survey would adversely affect the survey since this would not be contemporaneous data. The stay of collection of data itself would cause a huge loss to the

State since, if finally the action of the State is upheld, the State would be required to put logistic in place with additional expenditure and burden on public exchequer," the plea said.

Hearing a clutch of petitions, the high court had directed the state government to immediately stop the caste-based survey, and ensure that the data already collected are secured and not shared with anybody till final orders are passed.

The high court has fixed July 3 as the next date for the

hearing.

"Prima facie, we are of the opinion that the state has no power to carry out a caste-based survey, in the manner in which it is fashioned now, which would amount to a census, thus impinging upon the legislative power of the Union Parliament," the HC had said.

Expressing concern, the court noted the government's intention was to share data from the survey with leaders of different parties in the state assembly.

There definitely arises the larger question of the right to privacy, which the Supreme Court has held to be a facet of right to life, it had said.

"The state cannot attempt to carry out a caste census in the garb of a survey, especially when the state has absolutely no legislative competence and, in that circumstance, neither can an executive order be sustained under Article 162 of the Constitution of India," the court said.

Heatwave sweeps parts of Gujarat

Patan hottest at 45.4 degrees Celsius

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Several parts of Gujarat are reeling under heatwave conditions, with Patan city in the northern region recording 45.4 degrees Celsius on Thursday, said officials of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here.

Some respite from the condition is expected after May 13, they said.

As per a weather warning issued by the IMD, "heat wave" prevailed at isolated pockets in Anand, Surat, Botad, Porbandar, Surendranagar and Kutch during the day and it is likely to continue in these areas on Friday as well.

In an advisory, the IMD said people should avoid direct exposure to sunlight and wear light-coloured cotton clothes to save themselves from the heat wave conditions.

While Patan city was the hottest with the mercury touching 45.4 degrees Celsius, at least 12 other places in the state recorded maximum tem-



temperatures above 43 degrees on Thursday.

Places where temperature rose above 43 degrees include Patan (45.4), Junagadh (44.6), Amreli (44.0), Rajkot (43.8), Vadodra (43.8), Ahmedabad (43.7), Deesa (43.7), Chhotaudepur (43.7), Panchmahal KVK (43.5), Porbandar (43.5), Surat KVK (43.5), Gandhinagar (43.5) and Bhuj (43.4).

Also, Odisha is reeling under intense heat, with half of the state recording temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday.

Banning of 'The Kerala Story' upsets Bengali intelligentsia

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The decision to ban the screening of the film 'The Kerala Story' has not gone down well with a large section of the Bengali intelligentsia, including some ardent supporters of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Among Mamata's diehard backers who have disapproved of her decision to stop screening of the controversial movie are director and Trinamool Congress MLA Raj Chakraborty and veteran painter Suvapasanna.

In a major embarrassment for the Chief Minister who banned the screening of the film on account of its alleged communally sensitive nature Chakraborty rued, "it is very unfortunate that often the film industry becomes victim of political considerations which should be the case."

Though the TMC Legislature would not take the Chief Minister's name he said that such decisions should be an exception and not a rule



considering the labour and money that go into making films. Suvapasanna who had been through the thick and thin of Banerjee's land movements in Singur and Nandigram gram too criticised her decision stopping short of naming her though. "I have come to know that this is a good film and the decision to ban it defeats the cause of freedom of expression... Which is a right that artists should enjoy," the veteran painter said alleging, "the coteries (advisers of the Chief Minister) may have a hand behind this decision which is not prudent."

While TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh discounted the statements of Chakraborty and Suvapasanna, saying those were their personal opinions a senior minister of the State said that the decision was taken considering law and order issues.

Whereabouts of Pak ultras still unknown

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The whereabouts of Pakistan sponsored terrorists, behind the 'gruesome' terror strikes on Indian army personnel in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch since April 20, remain untraceable even as searches continue without any break. A total number of 10 Indian soldiers, including five elite para commandos have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

Meanwhile, a fresh advisory has been issued to several army schools located within the well fortified campuses to shut down their regular class work and run online classes for children till May 25 across several districts of Jammu region.

At the same time, following fresh intelligence inputs from various central and local intelligence agencies about the possible strike on any vital securi-



ty installations the security has been beefed up across the Union Territory and especially in and around the venues of the G-20 Tourism Group meeting being held in Kashmir valley between May 22-24.

A senior officer citing recent intelligence inputs confirmed to The Pioneer, the diktat was issued to the various army school authorities spread across Kathua, Samba, Jammu, Udhampur, Rajouri and

Poonch districts of Jammu region as a precautionary measure to run online classes till May 25.

However, no such direction has been issued by the UT administration for other private and government schools in the region. On ground zero the joint teams of security forces have been regularly conducting search operations and also interrogating suspected over-ground workers to extract

some clues in order to track down the footprints of these terrorists.

Official sources told The Pioneer, despite conducting intense search operations in the forest areas of Rajouri and Poonch the whereabouts of these terrorists remain unknown.

In Srinagar, Marine Commandos of the Indian Navy and Commandos of the National Security Guard are expected to guard the venues of the G20 group meeting.

On Thursday, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha addressed Y20 Consultation on 'Climate Change & Disaster Risk Reduction: Making Sustainability a Way of Life' at University of Kashmir.

He said the massive participation in this Y20 Consultation Conference signals the encouraging prospect of a new energy in a global partnership on environment,

development and our collective effort to ensure equity, global prosperity and better quality of life for all.

The Lt Governor while welcoming the national and international delegates said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it clear to the global family that climate change cannot be fought from conference tables alone. It has to be fought from the dinner tables in every home.

By adopting 'Green Growth' as one of the seven key priorities (Saptarshi), the Prime Minister has shown the world that India stands firm on its resolve to achieve the goal of Zero Carbon Emission by 2070, he added.

At the Y20 Consultation, the Lt Governor called upon youth to ensure ideas to create productive harmony between nature and human are translated into action and it contributes to a better world.

Didi bats for 3-year diploma in medicine

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A decision that was promptly rejected by the State medical fraternity, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday proposed a 3-year diploma course for the aspiring doctors.

"Considering the paucity of doctors, rising population, increased hospital beds we require more doctors... So I ask the Health Secretary to ponder over the idea of introducing Diploma course to get more and more doctors to serve in primary health centres," Banerjee said.

She also advised appointment of nurses with 15-days basic training.

"What is the big deal in nursing... You don't have to do surgery... I think a 15-day training can suffice to produce nurses who can administer

injections, saline, monitor other minor things," Banerjee said.

"I will suggest formation of a committee to do a feasibility study," she said adding, "this policy would ensure more jobs for the youth.

The idea of Diploma Doctors was conceived and then rejected in 2009 when the Left was in power.

Reacting sharply to her proposal, a senior functionary of doctor' association Dr Manas Gumta said, "whatever be the political consideration behind this proposal... This is untenable because this will not only produce below quality doctors and create a divide in the medical fraternity but also it will directly affect the poorer people of the State... You cannot play with my lives of the people... They are not guinea pigs."

Covid-19 may induce lasting pain, finds study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Thousands of genes affected by a bout of Covid-19 mediate the disease even after the viral infection had been cleared, leading to long Covid and pain associated with it, revealed a study published in the journal Science Signaling. The study may help in understanding the pathophysiology and help validate novel therapies for the prevention and treatment of Covid.

These genes were associated with neurodegeneration and pain-related pathways, suggesting lasting damage to dorsal root ganglia (spinal nerves that carry sensory messages from various receptors) that may underlie symptoms of Post-COVID Conditions also known as Long COVID. "Several studies have found



that a high proportion of long COVID patients suffer from abnormal perception of touch, pressure, temperature, pain or tingling throughout the body," said corresponding author Venetia Zachariou, chair of pharmacology, physiology and biophysics at Boston University.

"Our work suggests that SARS-CoV-2 might induce lasting pain in a rather unique way, emphasising the need for therapeutics that target molecular pathways specific to this virus," Zachariou added.

COVID-19, the disease resulting from SARS-CoV-2 infection, is associated with

highly variable clinical outcomes that range from asymptomatic disease to death.

For those with milder infections, COVID-19 can produce respiratory infection symptoms (cough, congestion, fever) and sensory phenotypes such as headache and loss of sense of smell. In more severe cases, SARS-CoV-2 infection can affect nearly every organ and result in strokes from vascular occlusion, cardiovascular damage and acute renal failure.

A substantial number of actively infected patients suffering from both mild and severe infections experience sensory-related symptoms, such as headache, visceral pain, Guillain-Barre syndrome, nerve pain and inflammation. In most patients these symptoms subside after the infection ends, but, for other patients, they can persist.

NHRC issues notice to Sports Ministry over absence of body for sexual harassment complaints

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking cognizance of the reports that there are no panels in many sports federations including Wrestling Federations of India (WFI) to address sexual harassment complaints, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Thursday issued a notice to the Union Sports Ministry to reply in the matter within 4 weeks.

The move comes at a time when a section of wrestlers of international repute are staging protest at the Jantar Mantar in the national capital alleging that they have been victim of sexual harassment at the workplace.

As per the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, 2013, sports federations are mandated to have Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)



in the sports federations. However as per reports the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) as well as at least 15 of the 30 National Sports Federations do not meet this mandatory requirement.

"If the contents of the media reports, found to be true, it amounts to a violation of a law. And this is a matter of concern as it may impact the legal right and dignity of the sports persons," said the NHRC in its statement issued here.

Notices have been issued to the Secretary, Department of Sports, Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the

Sports Authority of India, SAI, the Board of Control For Cricket In India, BCCI, Wrestling Federation of India, and all the 15 other National Sports Federations of Handball, Volleyball, Basketball, Weightlifting, Yachting, Gymnastics, Table Tennis, Billiards & Snooker, Kayaking & Canoeing, Judo, Squash, Triathlon, Kabaddi, Badminton, Archery which either do not have even an ICC or properly functional ICCs as required in the law.

As per reports, five Federations, including the Wrestling Federation, do not even have an ICC. Four Federations do not have the stipulated number of members and another six Federations lacked the mandatory external members. It is also stated that one Federation had two panels but neither had an independent member.

Many pharmacies overcharge, don't stock generic medicines: FORDA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA), a national level association for the welfare of resident doctors across India, has alleged that many Pharmacy and Janaushadhi/Amrit Kendras set up in the Government hospitals has not only been selling medicines at hefty costs but also do not keep generic medicines. As a result, the patients end up shelling out more on purchasing the drugs from private sector run chemists' shops.

"Access to healthcare is a basic right and it's unacceptable that poor patients have to pay for medicines in govt hospitals. Most hospitals don't have necessary medicines in their Pharmacy and Janaushadhi/Amrit Kendras charge a lot from the needy

patients, while using the land of hospital premises. They also don't always keep generic medicines, adding to the plight of patients," said Dr Aviral Mathur from Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi and President FORDA. Dr Sarvesh Pandey, Orthopedician at RML Hospital, Delhi and National General Secretary of the FORDA added that the Union Health Ministry must act to make hospitals free of such exploitation. Let's prioritize the health of our citizens."

He said that the scheme of setting up the Jan Aushadhi centre is a boon for the poor people but many discrepancies are creeping in their functioning which must be weeded out by the appropriate authorities. "If the medicines can be delivered on time and quality is ensured, it would cut down out of pocket expenditure for many," he said.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Need to talk

The Supreme Court's decisions on Maharashtra and Delhi Govt's powers raise a few questions

The Supreme Court's two big decisions on Thursday must have evoked mixed feelings among Bharatiya Janata Party leaders. Eknath Shinde will continue as Maharashtra Chief Minister, even though the apex court did not approve of the then governor's decision to install him. Censuring former Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, it said that he had "erred" in concluding that the then chief minister Uddhav Thackeray had lost the majority support of MLAs. It was categorical about Koshiyari's error: "The governor did not have any objective material and the exercise of discretion of the governor in this case was not in accordance with the law." Unsurprisingly, the Uddhav Shiv Sena has commented on this. Thackeray said, "Eknath Shinde won after murdering democracy. He should resign as Chief Minister as I did." His confidant Sanjay Raut called it a "moral victory." Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis were quick to remind Uddhav Thackeray that he should not speak about morality because he fought the election in alliance with the BJP, but later joined hands with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party to become chief minister. In reality, given the machinations that we all saw in Maharashtra, there is hardly any party or leader who could claim a moral high ground. It has all been about realpolitik, not moralpolitik. The SC pointed out that it cannot disqualify Shinde and the 15 other rebelling MLAs, as that power is with the Speaker until a larger panel of judges rules on it. It is interesting to note how both sides have claimed that the SC ruling has been in their favour.



In another judgment, the Supreme Court vindicated the Delhi Government regarding power over services, except law and order and land. Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party boss Arvind Kejriwal hailed the verdict. Expressing his "heartfelt thanks" to the Supreme Court, he called the verdict a "victory of democracy." Other AAP leaders were equally jubilant, but the saffron party was cryptic in its response. "Supreme Court decision on power of Union Territories will have long-term ramifications not only confined to Delhi but also to J&K in future," said BJP national spokesperson RP Singh. The best thing that can be said about political parties' response is that they accept the Supreme Court's decisions with humility—as they should. But they must also realise that it is not very wise to take their political disputes all the time to the judiciary. Why can't they play by the rules that they themselves have made? Why shouldn't they decide the fate of a government on the floor of the House? In the case of the SC decision on the Delhi Government's powers too, these were quite evident till the matter was brought to the Delhi High Court. On top of that, politicians also have the bad habit of grumbling about judicial overreach. It is time our leaders augmented interparty communication, so that issues could be addressed before taking the legal recourse.

PICTALK



Royal Bengal tigers on the first day of their public viewing at Byculla zoo, in Mumbai

Army's mistrust in Imran runs deep



BHOPINDER SINGH

The Pakistani 'establishment' shows signs of desperation, fissures and hamhanded actions as Imran Khan pays for overestimating his strength

If there was any doubt on who the real 'McCoy' is in Pakistan, then the reality just played out. Folks who ostensibly swear by 'Iman, taqwa, jihad fi sabilillah' (A follower of none but Allah. Fear of Allah, Jihad for Allah) are seemingly fearful of a man they 'selected' in 2018, but 'ejected' in 2022 i.e., Imran Khan. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan had been baiting the Pakistani Army (establishment) since the time he was booted out and with the handover of the baton of Pakistani Army Chief from General Qamar Bajwa (Imran's original nemesis) to the relatively low-key, General Asim Munir, Imran's tirade was expected to cool down. It didn't, and Imran kept poking and provoking the 'establishment' with barbs on its self-claimed 'neutrality'. Everyone knows that the 'establishment' was anything but neutral, but none expected the General Munir-led 'establishment' to show its incorrigible instincts, so soon.

The first thing that the optics of Imran Khan getting bumped off in a personnel carrier of the Punjab Rangers confirms is that the change of baton to General Munir has not resulted in any change of sensibilities, but a continuation of the infamous maxim that 'States have an Army, but Pakistani Army has a State'. General Asim Munir, a Hafize-Quran (completely memorized the Quran) is a chip-of-the-old-block who has taken over his predecessor General Qamar Bajwa's battle with Imran Khan, in earnest. The 'Sword of Honour' from Officers Training School in Mangla joined the Pakistani Army in the dark days of a fellow officer, General Zia-ul-Haq, who perhaps more than any Military dictator in Pakistan has contributed to the politicisation (even 'Shariatization') of the Pakistani Army.

In an eerie similarity of dodgy charges, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had been arrested by the 'establishment' on charges of authorising the murder of a political opponent – now, Imran Khan has been arrested in a case that alleges that Imran and his wife obtained billions from a real estate firm! Not too many were



convinced with the neutrality of the Pakistani Army in 1977, and seemingly a lot remain unconvinced of the Pakistani Army's innocence, in 2023!

'Establishments' murky ways can be gauged by the trigger for the recent escalation i.e., one Maj Gen Faisal Naseer DG (C) of ISI, infamous as 'Dirty Harry'. As the second-in-command to DG-ISI, and one who handles internal security and counterintelligence-related matters, he has been directly accused along with the retired General Bajwa and current DG-ISI, Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum.

Imran's allegation of Maj Gen Faisal Naseer attempting to assassinate him are presumably more political and theatrical than realistic as if it were to be true, the cold brutality of the ISI would have knocked him off, long back. 'Establishment' knows from history that a 'live' enemy instead of a 'dead' one is a better bet – a deposed and exiled Iskander Mirza (coup in 1958) and similarly banished Nawaz Sharif (coup in 1999) was less difficult to handle than the memory of a dead Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (hanged in 1978)! With Imran Khan ranting, railing and eventually getting under the skin of the 'establishment', irretrievably – the accompanying claims of the assassination attempt, were only par for the course.



THE JUDICIARY (ESPECIALLY THE CJI) HAS BEEN ON THE BACK FOOT FOR OTHER REASONS, SO HE TOO MIGHT NOT ATTEMPT TO BE TOO BRAVE

Ongoing socio-economic morass has already discredited the civilian Pakistani dispensation beyond repair, and it was only left to the 'establishment' to blunt Imran Khan's mounting challenge, and it did so in an old-school way. But the 'establishment' which has usually benefitted from doubt in flexing its strong-arm tactics against the various civilian governments in the past, may have just overplayed its hands, this time. For once, the public mood is not just deeply divided, but even more worryingly for Pakistan, so is the rank and file of the 'establishment', seemingly.

Unchecked rampage of the property of the 'establishment' is suggestive of divides, within. Finally, the cost of politicizing the apolitical realm of the Armed Forces is coming home to roost, as the 'establishment' shows signs of desperation, fissures, and hamhanded actions. For a nuclear-armed state, such a display of kneejerk and impulsive instinct is fraught with incalculable risks.

However, what works in favour of the 'establishment' is the invisible but sure hand of Washington DC, for they too, would rather deal with over-entitled though consistent Generals than with a temperamental and highly untrustworthy 'Taliban Khan', a sobriquet

earned by Imran Khan. The Chinese don't have a preference, though they would be wary of anarchy given the investment made in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Similarly, Arab Sheikhdoms too would prefer the Pakistan Military given their historic ties. This leaves Imran with the only option of igniting domestic passions and therefore for the 'establishment' to go to any extent to douse the same, even if it means arresting him in an unwarranted manner.

The judiciary (especially the CJI) has been on the back foot for other reasons, so he too might not attempt to be too brave. This will leave Pakistan tense with multiple one-upmanship and showmanship between various stakeholders, but the 'establishment' has made the first move and history suggests, may not be the last move. The 'establishment' simply cannot afford to step down and lower the ante, and so it will go to any extent to clamp down dissonance against it hereinafter, even if it means stepping in formally. Imran had over-baited and the 'establishment' bit back.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

E-CANVASSING SAVES MONEY

Sir — E Meetings, E Canvassing/ E Campaigning and E Ballot can save huge money for the exchequer of the government ... in thousands of crores rupees. This can be used for the welfare of the poor and the middle class.

Also saved are precious (productive) time, fuel, trees (from cutting to become ballot paper and pamphlets), healthy atmosphere from fuel pollution and noise pollution. Many other non-productive expenses too are saved.

Please use the latest IT technology. Save money, productive time etc. ... including in India, where, almost every month, some or the other election keeps happening (local bodies, state assembly, by election etc.). Mahatma Gandhi said, "A rupee saved is a rupee earned".

Madhu Nivriti PS | Secunderabad

KARNATAKA ELECTIONS

Sir — PM Modi addressed 21 rallies in poll-bound Karnataka. PM Modi is known for saving BJP in elections even when the party is on the verge of losing and the Modi magic will work in Karnataka. A strong campaign led by PM Modi, primarily using the development card along with the Hindutva card was witnessed in the final stages of the canvassing. The PM even used the film The Kerala Story and brought up the conspiracy of terrorism linked to Congress. They even brought Lord Hanuman in this election when Congress hinted at banning Bajrang Dal. Let us see if Congress will get a setback if the BJP manages the anti-incumbency in Karnataka with its Hindutva card.

Congress in their Manifesto included a ban on organizations like Bajrang dal, restoring a 4% quota to Muslims. BJP promised implementation of the Uniform Civil Code, implementation of NRC and three free cooking gas cylinders and half-litre milk to BPL families.

Most poll surveys predicted a clear win for Congress. BJP wants to win the elections by hook or crook as the Karnataka elections are the doorway to BJP in the

Humiliation at NEET centres!



Ever since the NEET exam came into vogue, students are subjected to innumerable problems, including humiliation of frisking, particularly women students. While almost all the medical aspirants are in their teens and are naive and remain much tensed before sitting for NEET which most of them term draconian, the atrocities committed on them in the name of security check by frisking them bodily, asking them to remove their dress, directing women students

open their underwear and even go bra-less before entering the exam hall not only tells on their self-respect but also increases their tension.

How can a student, after being subjected to such inhuman torture and losing his / her composure, write the test in peace and without tension? How can we expect even a brilliant student who has been pushed into such a psychological mental agony, to do his / her best in the NEET exam and score a deserving rank? All is not well with this unwarranted Exam and the National Testing Agency which conducts the test that has never bothered about the agony meted out to the innocent students in the name of security check. One wonders in what way this test is so sacrosanct and superior compared to the other entrance exams to impose such inhuman methodologies, making the students feel humiliated, uncomfortable and frustrated before taking the test!

It is high time the state governments came to the rescue of the students and seek abolition of the NEET test lest we see many students even rushing to take extreme steps, unable to bear their humiliation at the hands of those inhuman friskers.

Tharcius S Fernando | Chennai

South. People in Karnataka are calling the BJP 40 % sarkar. The Lingayats are about 17 % of Karnataka's population and they vote for matters. Let us see who will win David's or Goliath's.

Zeeshaan | Kazipet

PAK'S ARMY MOVE STUNS IMRAN

Sir — Imran Khan's arrest comes a day after the military's media wing issued a rare public rebuke of the former premier for repeated accusations against a senior military official of attempting to assassinate him and the military's former chief of being behind the move to remove him from power.

A year and a month after Imran Khan was ousted as the prime minister of Pakistan after he lost a no-confidence vote, he has been arrested in a corruption case

by the paramilitary Rangers from outside the Islamabad High Court. In these 13 months, Khan turned from a beleaguered leader of a wobbly country into a mass hero of sorts, so much so that violent hordes of his supporter's foiled bids by the police to arrest him in various cases for which he is facing trial in the court. Imran Khan's in-swingers and out-swingers must have fetched him a good number of wickets during his playing days but politics is a different cup of tea altogether. He was cutting a sorry figure in front of the political wigs of the World and now the forces forced him to be confined to the four walls of the prison.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Getting ready for that jump into the abyss

A fresher's guide to experiencing the thrills of bungee jumping without giving in to panic attacks

The adventure sports industry including bungee jumping has gained tremendous heights in the post-pandemic era and thanks to digitalization there is a bundle of pages and celebrity influencers sharing their personal experience for beginners to experience the adrenaline rush beautifully. According to research by Business Insider, the adventure sports industry has 490 million participants across the globe and produces USD 200 billion every year. However, going for an extreme adventure sport like bungee jumping for the first time can raise countless doubts about the risks, precautions and things to follow for an adventurous experience. To experience the thrill of a bold and daring way of life amidst breathtaking landscapes, you need not worry about how to get started and what is needed to get started. We are covering that for you through these tips so you can push yourself to take the leap of faith and have the best first bungee jumping experience.



country years ago, tables have turned in a spectacular manner. These days there are many platforms in various cities. You need to select the one which is trustworthy & follows professional safety standards and has inspiring testimonials from adventure junkies. Increasing trends in advertising and marketing are often used by companies to enhance their image and grab customers. Find the one that is authentic and does not make your first jump troublesome. Check their staff, license, jump masters' qualifications, overall review, location and even associations. For example, many companies are associated with the government of India. Such firms can be trusted for their collaborations and credible names supporting them.

ney will leave you out of many challenges. Adventure sports cannot be done throughout the year. Research the location you are about to visit and what are the supportive climatic conditions for experiencing the best time of your life. In case the weather is stormy or rainy there are high chances your adventure activity will be cancelled.

And while you are planning, do pack wisely. Comfort is the key to adventure sports. Pack clothes and footwear that don't need adjusting before, during and after the jump. Check the medical requirements: You cannot proceed if you are suffering from heart issues, back pain, asthma and other conditions.

Be mentally and physically prepared: Before a month of jumping, start by doing routine exercises and stretching. Maintain your diet and maintain your mental health as well. Don't just go for it because it is cool. Extreme adventure sports are not cool and unless you have made up your mind, it cannot be a memorable experience. Being nervous before going for the thrill is okay but panicking is not! A chaotic mind before

jumping is not at all cheerful.

Tips for the jump: Do not go empty stomach or overeat right before the jump. Don't carry valuables and go barefoot instead of something uncomfortable. Lead from the front so your nervousness does not increase looking at other jumpers. Instead, you can look straight and prepare your mind for the once-in-a-lifetime experience. You have to trust the jump instructors. They go through rigorous and in-depth training and are trained as per international standards.

The bottom line: Getting started with any of the extreme adventure sports just needs observation and motivation. Once you are mentally prepared and have done enough R&D, the rest depends on you! First-time jumpers have many questions and we have covered most. However, you can get in touch with the provider to understand their rules, regulations and medical conditions that have to be met. We hope you have a stunning experience! (The writer is the Director of Business Development at Jumpin Heights)



NIHARIKA NIGAM

FIRST COLUMN

CLIPPING CHINA'S WINGS IN THE GULF

The US, UAE, Saudi Arabia and India provide seamless connectivity there



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A readout from US NSA Jake Sullivan's meeting on regional integration in Saudi Arabia, broadly laid out the framework for greater cooperation amongst these four economies. The statement read "National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met with Saudi Prime Minister and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, UAE National Security Advisor Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval on May 7 in Saudi Arabia to advance their shared vision of a more secure and prosperous Middle East region interconnected with India and the world. Mr Sullivan also held bilateral meetings with the Crown Prince, Sheikh Tahnoon, and Mr Doval to discuss bilateral and regional matters." Mr Sullivan and Ait Doval also agreed to meet on the sidelines of the Quad summit, scheduled for later in the month in Australia.

According to media reports, it appears that the four nations particularly want to, invest in large strategic infrastructure projects in the Gulf, middle east, with backward linkages to India. It could result in joint infra projects, such as railway lines and backend shipping routes linking India. It may be worth noting that India, the US, Israel and UAE are engaged on a separate platform called I2U2, with the stated aim "to harness the vibrancy of our societies and entrepreneurial spirit to tackle some of the greatest challenges confronting our world, with a particular focus on joint investments and new initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.



We intend to mobilise private sector capital and expertise to modernise infrastructure, advance low carbon development pathways for our industries, improve public health and access to vaccines, advance physical connectivity between countries in the Middle East region, jointly create new solutions for waste treatment, explore joint financing opportunities, connect our startups to I2U2 investments, and promote the development of critical emerging and green technologies, all while ensuring near- and long-term food and energy security."

Israel, a partner country on the I2U2 has floated the idea of the railway line connecting the Gulf region, with its technical expertise, and India's capability to execute such large projects. These are strategic infrastructure projects which upon completion, would be able to arrest China's influence in the region and would be an alternative to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI, as most Arab nations would vouch for, has pushed many nations into a debt trap, and is an equal concern for India, given its frosty relationship with China. A few days back China agreed to extend its BRI into sanctions hit Afghanistan, thus making itself relevant for the war-torn nation. Last week, the Chinese foreign minister and his Pakistani counterpart met in Islamabad, almost immediately, after they flew out of India, where they were attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisations' meeting. The ministers agreed to continue supporting Afghanistan and pledged to extend the China Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan. Afghanistan is facing huge economic challenges after the hasty and chaotic retreat of US forces two years back. A Taliban spokesperson had mentioned that the country needs nearly \$ 5 billion to pull out a vast majority of its populations pushed and stuck in extreme poverty. Now, China, with its all-weather friend Pakistan has formally decided to set up critical infrastructure projects in Afghanistan, as well as consider investments into nearly \$1 trillion worth of natural resources in Afghanistan.

This shrinks the space for India to have any meaningful dialogue with the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan and also dents US's influence in the region. The purposeful dialogue between the US, UAE, Saudi Arabia and India on joint infrastructure projects providing seamless connectivity within the Gulf region, sets to plug the shrinking influence.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

Groundwater scene in India looks good

Our steps for sustainable groundwater management are in the right direction and these are bringing a paradigm shift towards positive change



SUBODH YADAV



"Even as life cannot sustain without water, virtue too depends ultimately on the rain"-Tiruvalluvar. Rain, when infiltrates the earth's surface and reaches the water table, becomes groundwater. Anthropogenic activities coupled with climate change had resulted in unabated exploitation and rapid decline in groundwater levels in some parts of the country over the past few decades. It led to the realisation of the need to effectively quantify and manage this finite & invisible natural resource.

In 1982, the Government of India constituted the 'Ground Water Estimation Committee' (GEC) drawing members from various States / Central organizations engaged in hydrogeological studies and groundwater development. The Committee submitted its recommendations in the year 1984 and suggested a methodology for the assessment of dynamic groundwater resources, which is commonly referred to as GEC 1984. The methodology underwent comprehensive revisions in 1997 and 2015. GEC 2015 is being followed for the assessment of groundwater resources from 2017 onwards. Assessment exercise is done at periodical intervals jointly by State Ground Water Departments and Central Ground Water Board under the guidance of the respective State Level Committee on Ground Water Assessment.

In the year 2017, 24.21 lakh sq km mappable area was assessed for groundwater. The total area was divided into 6,881 assessment units. Annual groundwater recharge was estimated to be 431.86 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) while the extractable groundwater resource, after accounting for base flow, was 392.70 BCM. Annual groundwater extraction stood at 248.69 BCM. The stage of groundwater extraction (percentage annual groundwater extraction to annual extractable groundwater resource) was 63.33%. Although the stage of groundwater extraction was within the safe limit (<70%), there were high spatial variations. 4,310 (62.64%) assessment units were in the safe category while 1,186 (17.24%) assessment units were in the overexploited category, extracting annual groundwater

resources more than the annual groundwater recharge and with declining water level trends.

In this scenario, the Hon'ble Prime Minister decided to form the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019 by amalgamating the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation for better coordination, regulation and management of water resources of the country. Special focus was accorded to the groundwater sector. Government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKSY)-Per Drop More Crop component focused on enhancing water use efficiency in irrigation. Under the Har Khet Ko Pani component of PMKSY, the Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of water bodies was focused. The government of India launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan-I in 256 water-stressed districts of the country in 2019. Under the Jal Shakti Abhiyan senior officers, groundwater experts and scientists of the Government of India worked with State and district officials to promote water conservation and water resource management by focusing on accelerated implementation of five target interventions, viz., water conservation and rainwater harvesting, renovation of traditional and other water bodies/ tanks, reuse and recharge of bore wells, watershed development and intensive afforestation.

Atal Bhujal Yojana, a Central Sector Scheme, for sustainable groundwater management, with a focus on community participation, demand-side interventions and convergence with ongoing schemes, is being implemented in 8,221 water-stressed Gram Panchayats in 80 Districts of seven States - Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The National Water Mission had started a campaign 'SahiFaal' to nudge farmers

in favour of crops that consume less water and use water more efficiently. To regulate and control groundwater extraction for commercial/ industrial purposes, The Jal Shakti Ministry has issued guidelines with pan-India applicability. The commercial entity, extracting groundwater, has to get the NOC from the Central Ground Water Authority.

Since water is a State subject, various State governments have also formulated and implemented their schemes to augment, conserve and utilize groundwater resources. Neeru Chettu-Andhra Pradesh, Jal Jeevan Hariyali Abhiyan-Bihar, Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan-Gujrat, Mera Pani Meri Virasat Scheme-Hariyana, Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan-Maharashtra, Paani Bachao Paisa Kamao Scheme-Punjab, Kudimaramathu Scheme-Tamilnadu and Mission Kakatiya-Telangana are few notable examples in this regard. To regulate the over-exploitation and consequent depletion of groundwater level, the Jal Shakti Ministry has circulated a Model Bill to all the States/UTs to enable them to enact suitable groundwater legislation, which includes the provision of rainwater harvesting. As of now, 36 States/UTs have adopted the rainwater harvesting provisions.

The results of active Government interventions and public participation started to reflect in the year 2020 and 2022 groundwater assessments. The total number of assessment units increased to 7,089 in 2022 from 6,881 in 2017. Annual groundwater recharge increased by 5.58 BCM to 437.44 BCM. The annual recharge from Tanks, Ponds and water conservation structures increased from 13.63 BCM in 2017 to 23.00 BCM in 2022. While annual extractable groundwater resources increased by 5.38 BCM to 398.08 BCM, annual extraction of groundwater declined by 9.53 BCM

to 239.16 BCM. It shows that supply-side as well as demand-side interventions have started to improve groundwater scenarios in the country. In 2017, approximately 89% of groundwater extraction was for irrigation purposes which declined to 87% in 2022. The stage of groundwater extraction has improved to 60.08% from 63.33% in 2017. The number of safe assessment units increased to 4,780 (67.43%) from 4,310 (62.64%) while Over exploited assessment units declined to 1006 (14.19%) from 1,186 (17.24%) in 2017.

The groundwater resource assessment of 2022 was nearly completed in a record time of nearly 5 months (against 2-3 years) due to the introduction of innovative technology in the form of a software/ web-based application "India-Groundwater Resource Estimation System (IN-GRES)". IN-GRES helped in the faster assessment of groundwater resources by automation and digital data analysis. Further, it has been decided by the Jal Shakti Ministry to make groundwater resource assessment as an annual exercise from the year 2023 which used to take place once in 3 years. A new Groundwater Estimation Committee has been formed to revise and update the methodology deployed in groundwater assessment.

The groundwater resource assessment reports of the years 2020 and 2022 have confirmed that our steps for sustainable groundwater management are in the right direction and bringing a paradigm shift towards positive change. These reports and results are the outcomes of cooperative federalism as enunciated by the Constitution of India. Source sustainability has emerged as complementary to water availability. We are committed to the UN SDG Goal - ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water for all.



SINCE WATER IS A STATE SUBJECT, VARIOUS STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE ALSO FORMULATED AND IMPLEMENTED THEIR SCHEMES TO AUGMENT, CONSERVE AND UTILISE GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

(The author is Joint Secretary, Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India)

BP: Anti-hypertensive medication compliance is imperative

Community health programmes can play a vital role in raising awareness about hypertension and the importance of medication adherence

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a common condition that affects millions of people worldwide. Clinically, it has been defined as systolic blood pressure of 140 mmHg or higher and diastolic blood pressure of 90 mmHg or higher.

People with very high blood pressure (usually 180/120 or higher) can experience symptoms, including severe headaches, chest pain, dizziness, difficulty breathing, nausea, vomiting, blurred vision or other vision changes, anxiety, confusion, buzzing in the ears, nosebleeds, and abnormal heart rhythm. Hypertension, if left untreated, can lead to serious health problems such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure.



PANKAJ BHARDWAJ

ure, making it a significant public health concern. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the adverse outcome of the disease was observed mostly in those patients who were having a history of chronic illness, including Hypertension.

From a clinical perspective, it is a complex condition that involves factors including genetics, lifestyle choices, and other underlying medical conditions. In many cases, hypertension is asymptomatic, until the condition has progressed to a more severe stage.

When I was a medical student more than two decades back, my professors used to tell us we need to screen a patient for hypertension too if s/he is more than 40 years of age.

Now, the scenario has

completely changed. The risk factors for Hypertension are emerging a decade earlier. The major determinants of hypertension are an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, stress, and consumption of tobacco and alcohol.

So, as per the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases & Stroke (NPCDCS), MoHFW, Government of India, the screening should start at the age of 30 years or more and not only in people engaged in white collar jobs but also in rural as well as urban slums.

But the worst part in addressing this issue is that those screened positive, do not follow the management protocol compliantly result-

ing in uncontrolled hypertension.

As per available data in India, there are an estimated 20 crore adults with hypertension, of whom approximately only 2 crores have it under control. The Government of India has adopted the "25 by 25" goal, which aims to reduce premature mortality due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 25% by 2025. One of the nine voluntary targets includes reducing the prevalence of high BP by 25% by 2025. In order to achieve this, India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) has been launched. IHCI is a 5-year initiative involving the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO-India.

The diagnosis of hypertension is typically made by measuring blood pressure at rest on two separate occasions. Depending on the severity of hypertension, further diagnostic tests may be necessary to identify underlying medical conditions that may be contributing to high blood pressure. Regular monitoring of blood pressure plays an important role in managing and controlling hypertension, as it allows for adjustments to the treatment plan as needed. Patients should monitor their blood pressure at home regularly, to keep a check on their numbers.

The treatment of hypertension involves a combination of lifestyle modifications. This includes dietary changes in the form of adopt-

ing a DASH diet. DASH is an acronym for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, which includes menus with low salt. The other step is adopting a schedule of regular exercise. One should get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity and do strength-building exercises for 2 or more days each week. Besides adopting a healthy work plan and sound sleep, stress reduction is very important.

Now, the most important part is medication. Medicines that are commonly used to treat hypertension include diuretics, ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, calcium channel blockers,

and beta-blockers. While lifestyle changes can help lower blood pressure, they may not be enough for everyone. Hypertension being a chronic condition requires ongoing treatment and noncompliance with medications can have threatening consequences. Hypertension medications are an important and effective way to manage high blood pressure and prevent its complications. While there are some concerns about their use, such as side effects, cost, and long-term effects, the benefits of taking hypertension medications usually outweigh the risks. If you have hypertension, talk to your healthcare provider about the best treatment plan for you, which may include medication as well as lifestyle changes.

UK supplies cruise missiles to Ukraine

AP ■ LONDON

The UK government on Thursday confirmed that it is supplying long-range cruise missiles to Ukraine in support of its counter-offensive in the conflict with Russia.

The Storm Shadow missiles being "donated" to Ukraine are described as having conventional precision strike capability and complement the long-range systems provided by international partners such as the US. The UK said the supply will help Ukraine push back Russian forces from its territories. "Today, I can confirm that the UK has donated Storm Shadow missiles to Ukraine. Storm Shadow is a long-range conventional precision strike capability," UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said in a statement to the House of Commons.

"The donation of these weapon systems gives Ukraine the best chance to defend themselves against Russia's continued brutality. Especially, the deliberate targeting of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, which is against international law.

'Counteroffensive needs more time'

Kyiv (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says his country's military needs more time to prepare an anticipated counter-offensive aimed at pushing back Russian occupying forces and opening a new chapter in the war more than 14 months after the Kremlin's full-scale invasion. Zelenskyy said in an interview broadcast Thursday by the BBC that it would be "unacceptable" to launch the assault now because too many lives would be lost.

"With (what we have) we can go forward and be successful," Zelenskyy said in the interview, according to the BBC. "But we'd lose a lot of people. I think that's unacceptable," he was quoted as saying. The interview was reportedly carried out in Kyiv with public service broadcasters who are members of Eurovision News, including the BBC.

"So we need to wait. We still need a bit more time," Zelenskyy was quoted as saying. A Ukrainian fightback against Russia's invasion has been expected for weeks. Ukraine is receiving advanced Western weapons, including tanks and air defences, and Western training for its troops as it gears up for an expected assault. While a counter-punch is possible as the weather in Ukraine improves, there has been no word on when it might happen. Zelenskyy's remarks could be a red herring to keep the Russians guessing, and ammunition supply difficulties faced by both sides have added more uncertainty.

A claim by the Ukrainian military on Wednesday that it had advanced up to two kilometres (1.2 miles) around the hotly contested eastern city of Bakhmut brought speculation that the counter-offensive was already underway.

But Serhii Cherevatyi, spokesman for Ukraine's Operational Command East, told The Associated Press that the attack was not the "grand counteroffensive, but it's a harbinger showing that there will be more such attacks in the future."

Wallace told Parliament that British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak took the decision because Russia has continued down a "dark path" of deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure. "This year, Russia's leadership has continued to systematically target civilians and civilian infrastructure with bombs, missiles and drones. More medical facilities were targeted in January than in the previous six months combined," said Wallace.

Wallace said he wrote to his Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu, in December last year to warn that further attacks could result in the UK donating more capable weapons. He said the missiles marked a move that is "calibrated and proportionate to Russia's escalations."

"None of this would have been necessary had Russia not invaded," he said.

"The UK stands for values of freedom, the rule of law, human rights, and the protection of civilians. We will stand side by side with Ukraine, we will continue to support them in defence of their sovereign country," he added.

Storm Shadows, a conventionally-armed deep-strike weapon with a range of more than 250 kilometres, have been used previously in the Gulf, Iraq and Libya and can be fired by aircraft.

Volodymyr Zelensky has been calling for such weapons for a long time since the country's conflict with Russia broke out last year, but international supporters have been hesitant to supply them in case it leads to an escalation of hostilities. But Ukraine has a right to be able to defend itself against this. Their use of Storm Shadow will allow Ukraine to push back Russian forces based within Ukrainian Sovereign Territory," he said.

Ukrainian President

Israel kills another militant commander in Gaza

AP ■ GAZA CITY

Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip killed a fourth militant commander on Thursday, the army said, as the Palestinian death toll from the latest burst of fighting rose to 26.

Rocket fire toward southern Israel continued even as Egypt pressed on with attempts to broker a cease-fire.

It has been the worst bout of fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza in months, and among the dead were also women and children.

The conflagration comes at a time of soaring tensions and spiking violence over the past year in the occupied West Bank. Early on Thursday, the Israeli military carried out strikes against the Islamic Jihad militant group and said a senior commander in charge of the group's rocket launching force, Ali Ghali, was killed when his apartment was hit.

Later in the day, Israel said it killed another Islamic Jihad commander who was meant to replace Ghali in southern Gaza,



Palestinians inspect the rubble of Islamic Jihad member Anas Al Massri's house after it was hit by an Israeli airstrike last night in Beit Lahya, northern Gaza Strip, Thursday, May 11, 2023. AP/PTI

though the claim could not immediately be verified.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said 26 people have been killed since the fighting erupted. Military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari told Israeli Army Radio that two other militants were also killed in the early morning strike, although no group immediately claimed them as members, and that the rest of the building remained intact.

"The apartment was targeted in a very precise way," Hagari said. "I hope this leads to a reduction, a blow and a disruption of the Islamic Jihad rocket abilities."

The strikes targeted the top floor of a building in a residential, Qatari-built complex in southern Gaza Strip. The pre-dawn airstrike in the city of Khan Younis caused damage to three surrounding buildings.

12 hurt in blast at building in Germany

Berlin (AP): German police have detained a suspect in connection with an explosion at a residential building that injured at least a dozen people Thursday, some of them seriously, a senior security official said.

The interior minister of North Rhine-Westphalia state, Herbert Reul, said 10 firefighters and two police officers were injured in the blast at a high-rise building in the town of Ratingen. A body was also recovered from the building, he said. The identity of the person and the circumstances of their death weren't immediately known.

Firefighters and police were called to the building in the morning after concerns were raised about two residents. Following the explosion, heavily armed officers took up positions around the site, with television footage showing police snipers positioned on a balcony across the road from the building as smoke poured out of a top-floor apartment.

Debt standoff unthinkable: Janet Yellen

AP ■ NIIGATA (JAPAN)

The financial leaders of the Group of Seven wealthy nations meet in Japan beginning Thursday as a standoff over the US debt ceiling and potential default looms as one of the biggest potential threats to the global economy.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said one of her priorities in Niigata, a port city on the Japan Sea coast, would be to emphasize the importance of resolving the standoff over the national debt in the world's largest economy.

"A default is frankly unthinkable," she told reporters before the broader meetings began. "America should never default. It would rank as a catastrophe," she said.

The impasse over spending risks leaving the government unable to pay for teachers in classrooms, medical care for veterans and vital benefits to many Americans, she said. It also is undermining U.S. economic leadership.

While in Japan, Yellen also is bound to be seeking to reassure her counterparts over recent bank failures that have



US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, right, talks with Indonesia's Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati during their bilateral talks on the sideline of the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting, in Niigata, Japan, on Thursday

raised worries over risks for the global financial system.

The finance ministers and central bank governors are meeting for three days ahead of a G-7 summit later this month in Hiroshima.

President Joe Biden said Wednesday that he and congressional leaders had a "productive" meeting Tuesday on trying to raise the nation's debt limit. They will meet again Friday to try to avert the

but not likely" that he would need to postpone his trip to Japan, Australia and Papua New Guinea later this month.

Yellen said in remarks prepared ahead of Thursday's meetings that strengthening the global financial system is a key G-7 priority. So is a renewed show of support for Ukraine as a coalition of over 30 countries seeks to impose heavy economic costs on Russia for its war.

She said Biden's "historic" investments in modernizing US infrastructure were a step toward improving the resilience of an economy whose reliance on global supply chains was sorely tested during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are taking a broad range of individual and joint actions to bring down inflation, sustain growth, and help mitigate the impact of external shocks, including to developing countries," she said.

But she added that, "even as we face downside risks, I believe that the global economy remains in a better place than many predicted six months ago."

Australian Trade Minister visits China as part of joint efforts to repair ties

Beijing (AP): Australian Trade and Tourism Minister Don Farrell visited China on Thursday as part of a joint effort to repair ties scarred by political rifts over the past decade.

In a statement issued by his office, Farrell said he would be "advocating strongly for the full resumption of unimpeded Australian exports to China."

China is Australia's biggest trading partner, with two-way exchanges totaling \$287 billion in 2022.

China recently resumed imports of coal, cotton and copper from Australia after a lengthy unannounced trade embargo.

Farrell said he would push for a review of tariffs on Australian barley and represent "the interests of Australian exporters and producers."

China blocked such exports in retaliation for government actions targeting Beijing's alleged interference in

Australian elections, civic life and the large Australian-Chinese community.

Despite improvements in economic relations, ties between the two remain tense.

In April, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said bilateral relations were unlikely to return to the level of the early 2000s, when trade was separated from political and strategic priorities.

Since then, Australia has expanded security cooperation with the United States, China's main rival for influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

Beijing has strongly criticized Australia's participation in the so-called AUKUS partnership, linking it with the United States and Britain to create an Australian fleet of eight submarines powered by US nuclear technology, largely in response to China's growing military assertiveness in the South China Sea, the South Pacific and the East China Sea.

US Green Card country quota to be eliminated

Washington (PTI): The ruling Democratic party has introduced a Citizenship Act, which among other things, seeks to eliminate the country-quota for green cards and make changes in the much sought-after H-1B visa system.

The US Citizenship Act 2023 introduced by Congresswoman Linda Sanchez creates an earned roadmap to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants, providing Dreamers, TPS holders, and some farmworkers with an immediate path to citizenship.

It also stands to provide the undocumented immigrants who pass background checks and pay taxes with a five-year path to citizenship without fear of deportation.

It proposes to make changes to the employment-based immigration system by eliminating per-country caps.

The Act seeks to make it easier for STEM advanced degree holders from US universities to stay, improving access to green cards for workers in lower-wage industries, giving dependents of H-1B holders work authorization, and preventing children of H-1B holders from ageing out of the system.

The much-sought-after H-1B visas are issued for three years at a time.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries such as India and China.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently.

The bill also creates a pilot programme to stimulate regional economic development and incentivises higher wages for non-immigrant, high-skilled visas to shield them from unfair competition with American workers.

'I am so excited about my new role: Neera Tanden

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian-American public policy expert Neera Tanden, who would soon succeed Susan Rice as the White House domestic policy advisor, has said that she is "excited" about her new role in the administration.

Tanden, 52, is the first Asian-American to have been named to hold this powerful position in the White House. She is currently the senior advisor and staff secretary to President Joe Biden.

"I am so excited for my new role at the White House, and I am thrilled to be part of an administration that has so many AANHPI (Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders) leaders, so many AANHPI women leaders, ... so many leaders who represent the great diversity of our community," Tanden said in her address to the AANHPI Women's Celebration organised by the AAPI Victory Fund on Wednesday.



Addressing a packed Kennedy Center auditorium, composed of eminent AANHPI leaders, including Indian Americans, Tanden, a Democrat, said when she worked at the White House during the Clinton Administration there were only a handful of AANHPI people.

Twenty-five years later under the Biden Administration, there is hardly any branch of the government where there are no AANHPI at eminent positions, she said.

"We have leaders in every

agency. And I am incredibly proud that we have three AANHPI leaders leading policy councils in the White House. And that is a historic accomplishment for our community," Tanden said.

Tanden has served in both the Obama and Clinton administrations, as well as presidential campaigns and think tanks. Most recently, she was the President and CEO of the Center for American Progress and the Center for American Progress Action Fund.

In her address, Tanden also hinted at current times when a lot of undiscussed matters are being taken up.

"But it is also a bit of a paradox because at this moment when our voices are heard at every table in Washington, it is also the case that our politics have grown uglier. And that in many ways our country is debating issues that we haven't really debated. We weren't debating this 25 years ago," she said.

Van carrying oxygen tanks explodes in Milan, 1 hurt

Milan (AP): A van that was transporting oxygen tanks to a nearby medical facility exploded in the centre of the Italian city of Milan on Thursday, forcing the evacuation of a school and residential apartment buildings. The driver suffered minor injuries.

Images on Sky TG24 show a plume of dark smoke rising from a narrow street near Porta Romana, where flames scorched nearby cars and motorcycles and exploded windows in adjacent buildings, including the school.

Firefighters quickly brought the flames under control. The driver of the van suffered an injury to his hand when he tried to douse the flames, firefighter Carlo Cardinali told reporters at the scene. The driver was treated at the scene and transported to a hospital.

Han Zheng visits Netherlands

AP ■ THE HAGUE

China continues its diplomatic push in Europe on Thursday with a high-level visit to the Netherlands where Vice President Han Zheng will be meeting the king and the prime minister — and facing questions about its relations with Russia and the European Union. The 27-nation EU increasingly sees Beijing as a systemic rival on the global stage instead of an ally and economic partner.

Dutch King Willem Alexander received Han early on Thursday before Prime Minister Mark Rutte has political talks with the vice president in the afternoon. Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang has also travelled through Western Europe this week, meeting with his German and French counterparts.

On Wednesday, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that Berlin wants to work in partnership with China "everywhere it's possible" but that it would be naive to ignore the risk of end-



Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng, left, poses with Dutch King Willem-Alexander prior to a meeting in The Hague, Netherlands on Thursday

ing up in a position of reliance, including on security issues. It is a view increasingly shared in the West.

The European Union is not specifically advocating decoupling from the economic and geopolitical giant but is proposing "de-risking" its relations to avoid becoming too dependent on China.

The EU, of which the Netherlands is a founding member, also wants Beijing to be more forceful in addressing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The visit comes amid diplomatic tensions around proposed new EU trade measures against countries that help the Kremlin to circumvent the bloc's sanctions against Russia.

Trump digs in on election lies, insults accuser during CNN town hall event

AP ■ WASHINGTON

During a contentious CNN town hall Wednesday night, former President Donald Trump dug in on his lies about the 2020 election, downplayed the violence on January 6, 2021, and repeatedly insulted the woman whom a civil jury this week found him liable of sexually abusing and defaming.

Trump, returning to the network after years of acrimony, also refused to say whether he wants Ukraine to win the war against Russian aggression and said the U.S. "might as well" default on its debt obligation, despite the potentially devastating economic consequences.

The live, televised event — held in early-voting New Hampshire — underscored the

challenges of fact-checking Trump in real time. The former president was cheered on and applauded by an audience of Republican and unaffiliated voters who plan to vote in the GOP primary, as moderator Kaitlan Collins sometimes struggled to correct the record as Trump steamrolled with untrue statements. "You are a nasty person," he snapped at one point.

The event also highlighted what is perhaps Trump's most fundamental challenge as he emerged as the undisputed frontrunner for the Republican nomination to take on President Joe Biden again.

While Trump's tone and divisive statements often thrill Republican primary crowds, he has so far done little to

expand his appeal among the moderates and independents who soured on him in 2020 and will be crucial to winning the general election.

Indeed, Trump on Wednesday repeatedly doubled down on his lies that the 2020 election had been "rigged," even though state and federal election officials, his own campaign and White House aides, and dozens of courts, including Republican judges, have said there is no evidence to support his claims.

He also displayed no remorse for what happened on Jan. 6, when a mob of his supporters violently stormed the Capitol in a bid to halt the certification of Biden's win. He excused his delayed response that day — he was silent for



People protest outside a building on the campus of Saint Anselm College where a CNN televised town hall gathering with former President Donald Trump will be held, Wednesday in Manchester. AP/PTI

more than three hours as the carnage unfolded — pulling out a printout of his tweeted timeline as a form of defense.

Instead, he lashed out at the Black police officer who shot and killed rioter Ashli Babbitt, calling him a "thug" despite a Justice Department finding that the shooting was justified. And he said he is inclined to pardon "a large portion" of the rioters charged in the attack.

More than 670 people have been convicted of crimes related to that day, including some found guilty of seditious conspiracy or assaulting police officers.

Trump also rejected a suggestion that he apologize to his former vice president, Mike Pence, who was targeted by the mob after Trump wrongly

insisted that Pence had the power to overturn the election results. "I don't feel he was in any danger," he said. In fact, Trump said, Pence was the one who "did something wrong."

He would not commit to accepting the results of the next election, either, saying he would do so only if he feels "it's an honest election" — as he said before the 2020 election.

The primetime forum — the first major television event of the 2024 presidential campaign and Trump's first interview appearance on CNN since before he was elected president in 2016 — drew suspicion from both sides of the political divide as soon as it was announced.

Democrats questioned whether a man who continues to spread lies about his 2020

election loss should be given the airtime. Conservatives wondered why Trump would appear on — and potentially give a ratings bump to — a network he has continually disparaged. The stakes were raised considerably Tuesday after jurors in New York found Trump had sexually abused and defamed advice columnist E. Jean Carroll nearly three decades ago, though they rejected her claim that he raped her. The jury awarded her \$5 million in damages.

Trump, at Wednesday's event, called the case "fake news" and insisted he didn't know Carroll, even as he attacked her in deeply personal terms. "She's a wack job," he said, drawing laughs from the crowd.

Alvi shocked over Pak's current situation

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD
Pakistan President Arif Alvi on Thursday expressed distress over the political turmoil and unrest in the country following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan and urged all concerned to look for political solutions, rather than coercion and arrests.
Khan, 70, was arrested in a corruption case on Tuesday on the orders of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) by paramilitary Rangers, who barged into a room of the Islamabad High Court where the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was present for biometrics before the hearing of a corruption case.
Alvi, who was a member of Khan's PTI party before he became Pakistan President in 2018, in a long Twitter statement said that he was "alarmed, shocked & deeply disturbed over the current situation in the country."
The violent protests have left at least eight people dead and nearly 300 others injured in clashes between protesters and law enforcement agencies and prompted the authorities to deploy the army in the

country's capital Islamabad, as well as in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces to maintain law and order. According to reports, Lahore and Peshawar faced the worst situation with incidents of arson and firings.
"The loss of human lives as an aftermath is heart-wrenching, regrettable, unfortunate & highly condemnable," Alvi's tweet read. Acknowledging protests to be every citizen's constitutional right, he said that it should "always remain within the bounds of the law."
"The way some miscreants have damaged public property, particularly government and military buildings, is condemnable. We must re-think & look for political solutions, rather than coercion & arrests. I have conveyed my concerns to the political & military leadership & am hopeful that the situation can improve," the tweet added.
"I strongly appeal to all citizens of the country to remain peaceful," the tweet concluded. Pakistan's former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, a close aide of ousted prime minister Imran Khan was also arrested on Thursday.



People look at a car burnt in Wednesday's clashes between police and the supporters of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan, at a road, in Peshawar, Pakistan on Thursday. AP/PTI

USD hits Rs 300-barrier amidst protests in cash-trapped Pak

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD
For the first time in Pakistan's history, the US dollar on Thursday hit the 300 rupees barrier against the local currency in the interbank as well as the open market as the cash-strapped country faced political turmoil following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan.
The Pakistani rupee has taken a big hit since Tuesday as violent protests broke out in different parts of the country following the arrest of Khan in a corruption case.
The Karachi Stock Exchange and the currency market both showed clear signs of the unstable political situation in the country with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers protesting in many parts of the country.

According to currency dealers, the US dollar was selling at 301 rupees at one point in the open market before trading ended for the day while in the interbank it had hit 299 rupees in mid-afternoon.
"This is the first time the dollar has crossed the 300 rupees market in our history and just shows how much impact the ongoing violent protests are having on the economy," Zafar Bostan of the Pakistan Forex Exchange Association said.
On Wednesday, the dollar had risen by eight rupees or 1.8 per cent and was available at 292 rupees and when the markets opened on Thursday the downside continued with the rupee rapidly losing more value to the dollar. Paracha currency exchange accused the banks of again using the deepening political crisis to make money "unlawfully".
The central bank in the past has also said that the banking market was responsible for artificially increasing the dollar rates to earn profits, and it had announced that it would penalise these banks.
Financial analysts said the worsening economic situation had only got worse after the arrest of PTI chairman Khan.
The violent protests following the arrest of the cricket-turned-politician have left at least eight people dead and nearly 300 others injured in clashes between protesters and law enforcement agencies and prompted the authorities to deploy the army in the country's capital Islamabad, as well as in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan provinces to maintain law and order.

Imran Khan's party denies involvement in clashes

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD
Pakistan's main opposition party on Thursday denied any involvement in the violent protests that erupted after the arrest of its chief Imran Khan, describing the army's terse statement as "contrary to facts" and "based on a poor understanding of ground realities."
In a statement shared on Twitter, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said it believes in achieving its goals by remaining peaceful, non-violent and adhering to the Constitution.
"PTI has always discouraged deviance from the Constitution and law. The public reaction after the arrest of Imran Khan is connected to many factors," it said.
"The statement is a sad collection of hatred and revenge-based narratives against the most reliable, popular and largest political party of Pakistan," the party said.
It said the statement issued on Wednesday by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Army's media wing, was "contrary to facts" and "based on a poor understanding of ground realities," the Dawn newspaper reported.
PTI's rebuttal comes a day

after the Pakistan Army on Wednesday warned former prime minister Khan's supporters of "severe retaliation" in the wake of attacks on its installations.
Enraged over the arrest of their leader in a corruption case on Tuesday, the supporters of the PTI chief stormed the General Headquarters of the Army. They set the residence of the Lahore Corps Commander on fire while attacking military vehicles and installations.
"We will not allow anyone to take the law into their hands," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Army's media wing said in a terse statement. The ISPR said that on the one hand, these miscreants evoke the nation's emotions for achieving their "limited and selfish objectives" and on the other hand, they deceive people, continuing to highlight the army's importance.
"This is an example of hypocrisy," it stated. The military's media wing said that "this group wearing a political cloak" has done what enemies could not do in 75 years, all "in the lust for power."
May 9 will be remembered as a "black chapter" in history

UN rights chief urges restraint

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS
The UN Human Rights chief has called on protesters in Pakistan to refrain from violence and urged restraint by security forces, saying the rule of law is key to resolving political conflicts as anti-government protests engulfed the country following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan.
Violent protests following the arrest of the chief of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party in a corruption case have left at least eight people dead and nearly 300 others injured in clashes between protesters and law enforcement agencies.
Guterres urged authorities in Pakistan to respect due process and the rule of law in proceedings brought against the country's former prime minister, a statement issued by Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, said on Wednesday.
The statement said that Guterres "takes note" of the ongoing protests that have erupted following Khan's arrest on Tuesday in Islamabad High Court premises. Guterres calls "for all parties to refrain from violence. He stresses the need to respect the right to peaceful assembly".



to respect due process and calling for all parties to refrain from violence.
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Attack on Chinese nationals averted at Pak shipyard

Karachi (PTI): A suspected suicide bomber was killed and a deadly attack on the Chinese nationals working in a shipyard in the port city of Pakistan's Karachi was foiled by the security forces, police said on Thursday.
The incident happened on Wednesday when security officials discovered that a suspect was planning to carry out a suicide attack on the Chinese nationals at the shipyard in Karachi's Port Qasim.
Senior Superintendent Police Hasan Sardar said they killed a suspected terrorist who was planning to carry out a suicide attack against Chinese nationals working at the shipyard in Port Qasim.
"The terrorist was shot dead after the police increased the security for the foreign workers after an intelligence tipoff that a banned outfit had planned a terror attack on Tuesday," he said.
He said that the suspected terrorist was shot dead after he had retaliated with fire following a confrontation with security forces when he was seen approaching the shipyard.

IMF staff in Sri Lanka check progress on bailout programme

PTI ■ COLOMBO
The IMF, which extended a USD 3 billion bailout facility to debt-ridden Sri Lanka, is currently on a consultation mission here to check on the country's progress of the programme ahead of the expected formal review in September.
The State Minister for Finance Shehan Semsinghe said the IMF senior team members— Peter Breuer, the IMF chief for Sri Lanka and Sarwat Jahan, the IMF representative in Sri Lanka— met President Ranil Wickremesinghe in his capacity as the Finance Minister on Thursday.
The Washington-based global lender's staff team is currently on a visit to Sri Lanka from May 11 to May 23.
"They are on a consultation mission ahead of the September review meeting. We discussed the progress so far in order to ensure that everything falls in line," Semsinghe said.
President Wickremesinghe has expressed the government's commitment to fulfilling all reforms outlined by the Washington-based global lender. The IMF bailout, the

24 injured in Finland bridge collapse

Helsinki (AP): Two dozen people, many of them schoolchildren, were injured when a temporary pedestrian bridge collapsed in the southern Finnish city of Espoo on Thursday, police and media said.
Police said the bridge crossing a construction site in Espoo's Tapiola region collapsed mid-morning.
No one was killed, but 24 people were injured, 10 of them seriously. Espoo is a neighboring city of the capital, Helsinki.
"Several people fell a few meters when the bridge collapsed.
The situation is being investigated," police said in a statement.
Helsinki University Hospital said it received 15 of those injured.
"The injuries are mostly extremity fractures," the hospital said in a statement, adding that the injured belonged to a school group.

Turkish presidential candidate withdraws in boost to Erdogan's main challenger

AP ■ ANKARA
A candidate in Turkey's presidential election announced his withdrawal from the race on Thursday, a move that's likely to benefit President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main challenger.
The candidate who pulled out, Muharrem Ince, is the leader of the center-left Homeland Party. He was one of four contenders running in Sunday's presidential election. Turkey holds a parliamentary election the same day.
Ince had faced criticism for potentially ciphering support from the six-party Nation Alliance, which has united behind the candidacy of opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, and thereby forcing the presidential contest into a second-round.
"I am withdrawing from the race," Ince told reporters in front of his party's headquarters, following weeks of resisting calls to step down. "I am doing this for my country."
Erdogan, who has led Turkey as prime minister and president since 2003, is facing the most challenging election of his 20-year rule.
Polls have given Kilicdaroglu a slight lead over Erdogan, although neither candidate was expected to garner the more than 50% of the vote required to be elected in the first round.
Ince had polled at around 8 per cent of the vote when his candidacy was first announced, but his popularity had since dropped to around 2 per cent,

according to opinion surveys.
The firebrand politician didn't throw his support behind another candidate, but analysts said his withdrawal was likely to boost Kilicdaroglu's chances.
Nation Alliance members welcomed Ince's decision to step down, expressing hope for a first-round victory Sunday. Kilicdaroglu called on Ince to join the opposition coalition.
"Let's leave old resentments, old grievances behind," Kilicdaroglu wrote on Twitter.
Erdogan meanwhile, said he regretted Ince's decision.
"Of course, it is impossible to understand why he withdrew. Honestly, I was saddened," Erdogan said during an election rally in Ankara.
"Now, we will continue (this race) with the remaining candidates. What matters is the decision of my people."
Ince said the Homeland Party, which he formed in 2021, would still participate in the parliamentary election, and he called for votes for the party "from each household."

Hong Kong newspaper to stop publishing cartoonist Zunzi

AP ■ HONG KONG
A Hong Kong newspaper will stop publishing works by the city's most prominent political cartoonist after his drawings drew government complaints, in another example of hushed speech and media voices after a Beijing-led crackdown.
Chinese-language newspaper Ming Pao did not elaborate on why it would end its 40-year partnership with Wong Kei-kwan on Sunday in its announcement.
Wong, better known by his pen name Zunzi, told The Associated Press the decision was made through mutual consultation.
"Everyone knows why publication has to be halted, but no one will confirm the reason," he said in a text message Thursday to the AP with two emojis showing a laughing face.
His comic drawings caricatured Hong Kong society's frustrations since before the then-British colony was returned to Chinese rule in 1997.
The newspaper and the government departments that complained about Wong's drawings have not responded to requests for comment.
Wong said he feels the city's freedoms of speech and expression are shrinking but that he will continue to create as long as he is able to. He will try to find other channels to publish his future cartoons, he added.
"Honestly, I appreciate very much that Ming Pao let my cartoons be published until now. If it had been other platforms, the halting of publication would have happened way earlier," Wong said.
After Beijing imposed a national security law following massive pro-democracy protests in 2019, the city's art and media communities have learned to be wary of crossing vaguely defined red lines in producing art and other content that might be perceived as challenging Communist Party control.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all by these present, that the name of my client in his Passport No. A5380827 is mentioned as Harish Chander Malhotra, but his correct name is Harish Malhotra. That Harish Malhotra and Harish Chander Malhotra S/o. Shri Roshan Lal Malhotra R/o. B-402, Fakhrudin Memorial CGHS Ltd, Plot NO. 18, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi -110075 is the one and same person.
PREM PAKASH (ADVOCATE)
207, PLOT NO.1, CENTRAL MARKET, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-75 (M) 9871288395

PUBLIC NOTICE
Subject: Transfer of ownership in respect of the Flat no. KM-09-902 Jaypee Kosmos Sec.134 Noida (UP). I, Asha Arora jointly owned the above said flat with my husband Sh. Subhash Chander Arora D.O.B-10/05/1956 who expired on 19/04/2021. I declare that there is no legal heir except Asha Arora (wife) Saurabh Chugh (son) and Himansh (son). If any person has any objection he/she can submit their objections in writing with Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority along with supporting documents.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Following share certificates of Jagan Nath Vasudeva (J. N. Vasudeva) and Sita Rani Vasudeva (Sita Rani) individually or jointly lost/misplaced. Oswal Greentech Folio No: 520070, Oswal Greentech Folio No: 517428 Oswal Greentech Folio No: 520081, Oswal Greentech Folio No: 520079 Oswal Greentech Folio No: 520069, ABB Folio No: J001143 GE Power Folio No: J0010715 Hitachi Energy Folio No: AP50154802 Kanpur Plastipacks Ltd Folio No: 13043 Finolex Industries Folio No: FIL 0000J0032256 Aditya Birla Capital Folio No: ABC0279257 Aditya Birla Capital Folio No: ABC0279263 Tata Coffee Folio No:CES0020470, SAB Industries Folio No: 549 UTI Mutual Fund Folio No: 50248130035, UTI MutualFund Folio No: 50248130046 UTI Leadership Equity Fund Folio No: 50244063953 Finder please contact Sanjay Vasudeva, C-2 (Ground Floor) Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Tender Notice Reference No. GNDU/Gen/06/2023
The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following:-

Sr. No.	Item	Quantity
1	Stationery, Crockery and Misc items	52 items

Closing date & time: 22-05-2023 at 11:00 a.m.
For details log onto www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.

Asstt. Registrar (General)
Guru Nanak Dev University,
Amritsar

NA/12/6210/2023/23735 Dated CHD- 5/11/2023

APPENDIX IV A
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]
Sale Notice for sale of Immovable property

E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on 31.05.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. for recovery of Rs. 26.24,105/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakh Twenty Four Thousand One Hundred Five only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLNOI00415390, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 09.05.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 10.05.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from SOURENDRA BANDYOPADHYAY and PAPIA BANDYOPADHYAY.
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 36,00,000/- (Rupees Thirty Six Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 3,60,000/- (Rupees Three Lakh Sixty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
ENTIRE FIRST FLOOR, PLOT NO. -334, SECTOR - II B, VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201010.
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionsecured.in
Date : 09.05.2023
Place : GHAZIABAD
Authorized Officer
INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

No progress toward ending Myanmar's civil strife: ASEAN leader

AP ■ LABUAN BAJO
Indonesian President Joko Widodo somberly acknowledged to fellow Southeast Asian leaders on Thursday that no progress has been made to end the civil strife gripping Myanmar and renewed a call for an end to the violence, including a recent airstrike a rights group called an "apparent war crime."
"I have to be honest," Widodo told fellow leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the final day of their two-day summit in the Indonesian harbour town of Labuan Bajo.
"There has been no significant progress in the implementation of the five-point consensus."



From left to right, Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai, Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Indonesia's President Joko Widodo, Laotian Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone, Brunei's Sultan Hassanali Bolkiah, Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and East Timor's Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak hold hands for a family photo ahead of the retreat session at the 42nd ASEAN Summit in Labuan Bajo, East Nusa Tenggara province, Indonesia ONThursday. AP/PTI

envoy. Myanmar's military-led government refused to take steps to enforce the plan, prompting ASEAN leaders to exclude the country's ruling generals and their appointees from the bloc's summit meetings.
The generals have protested ASEAN's move, which they said strayed from the group's bedrock policy of non-intervention in each other's domestic affairs and deciding by consensus. Widodo called for unity, a seemingly futile call as he spoke with fellow heads of state in a bay-side hotel conference room with the chair reserved for Myanmar's leader empty. Called a "retreat," the closed-door meeting traditionally takes up any controversial issue any leader would like to raise.

Widodo said Myanmar's crisis was at the top of the agenda.
Founded in 1967 as a diverse club of authoritarian regimes, monarchs and nascent democracies, ASEAN has come under international pressure to take tougher steps to address the crisis in Myanmar.
But ASEAN members appeared to be divided, with some recommending an easing of punitive actions aimed at isolating Myanmar's generals and allowing its top diplomat and officials back to attend the summit meetings. "The time for isolation has served its purpose," an internal ASEAN report obtained by The Associated Press cited "some member states" as saying in a meeting of the bloc's top diplomats ahead of the leaders' summit.

ASEAN's chairperson this year, Widodo was referring to a peace plan forged by the 10-nation bloc with Myanmar's top general in 2021 that called for an immediate end to the violence and dialogue among competing parties to be brokered through an ASEAN special

ONGC discovers oil, gas in Arabian Sea blocks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has discovered crude oil and natural gas in two blocks in Mumbai offshore, the company said on Thursday without giving details of reserves found.



The discoveries, which have been named 'Amrit' and 'Moonga', were made in the blocks that the company won in recent open acreage licensing rounds.

In a statement, the firm said it "has made discoveries of oil and gas in MBS171HAA-1 (Amrit) in OALP (Open Acreage Licensing Policy) block MB-OSHP-2017/1 in Mumbai Offshore (SW) on the Arabian Sea."

"There is another remarkable discovery in MBS182HDA-A named 'Moonga' in OALP exploration Block in Mumbai Offshore," ONGC said a detailed assessment of the discoveries

EOW files FIR against BharatPe co-founder Ashneer, kin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing of the Delhi Police has filed an FIR against BharatPe co-founder Ashneer Grover, his wife Madhuri Jain Grover and family members Deepak Gupta, Suresh Jain and Shwetank Jain for an alleged Rs 81 crore fraud after a complaint by the fintech unicorn.



The FIR, a copy of which has been seen by PTI, was filed on Wednesday under eight sections of the Indian Penal Code.

pendent professionals in this regard. Several irregularities and illegalities have come to the attention of the company, which give rise to the present complaint.

The case has been registered under sections 406 (punishment for criminal breach of trust), 408 (criminal breach of trust by clerk or servant), 409 (criminal breach of trust by a public servant, or by banker, merchant or agent), 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), 467 (forgery of valuable security, will, etc.), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using as genuine a forged) and 120B (punishment of criminal conspiracy).

EOW now has the power to arrest all the accused. BharatPe welcomed the registration of FIR saying, "For the last 15 months, the company has been facing a vicious and malicious campaign run by Grover against the company, the board and its employees."

According to the FIR, the company undertook an internal reconciliation of transactions and was assisted by inde-

pendent professionals in this regard. Several irregularities and illegalities have come to the attention of the company, which give rise to the present complaint.

If convicted, Grover, Madhuri and others can face up to anything between 10

optimistic that this case will reach its logical conclusion. We will continue to extend all possible cooperation to the authorities," it added.

In December 2022, BharatPe filed a criminal complaint against Grover and his family with the EOW of Delhi Police, alleging fraud of Rs 81.28 crore, criminal breach of trust, conspiracy, cheating, forgery and destruction of evidence. The same month, it also filed a civil suit with the Delhi High Court against its former MD and co-founder Grover and his family, seeking up to Rs 88.67 crore in damages for alleged cheating and embezzlement of funds.

The suit, running into 2,800 pages, alleges that Grover, his wife Madhuri Jain and other family members created fake bills, enlisted fictitious vendors to provide services to the company and overcharged the company for recruitment.

Madhuri Jain was the head of controls at BharatPe and was fired earlier in 2022 after a forensic audit revealed several irregularities. Subsequently, Ashneer Grover resigned as CEO in March 2022.

BharatPe, last year, hit the headlines when Grover was accused of using inappropriate language and threatening a Kotak Group employee for failing to secure an allotment and funding for the Nykaa IPO for himself and his wife Madhuri Jain Grover.

Thereafter, BharatPe appointed Alvarez and Marsal, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas and PwC to conduct a corporate governance review and determine whether Grover had committed willful misconduct.

This led to the ouster of Jain and Grover from the company and its board in March.

On May 10, 2022, BharatPe said that after the detailed review, the company had decided to take steps against employees involved in misconduct and claw back Ashneer Grover's restricted shares.

"The complaint was received at EOW and enquiry has been conducted into the allegations levelled against alleged persons. From the contents of the complaint and enquiry conducted so far, prima-facie offences punishable under Sections 406/408/409/420/467/468/471/120B IPC (Indian penal code) are made out," the FIR copy reads.

Govt may bring e-commerce policy, rules under consumer protection Act on same page: Official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is working on a proposal to bring out the policy for online retailers and e-commerce rules under the consumer protection Act on the same page to protect consumers, a top official said on Thursday.

Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Rajesh Kumar Singh said that once the e-commerce policy will be finalised, it will be put up in the public domain for views.

"We are holding discussions to harmonise e-commerce policy and e-commerce rules under the consumer protection act...While doing so, we will try to ensure that whether a regulator or some other way...Rules that will ensure that the customer is the king," Singh told reporters here.



He added that the talks are at an advanced stage.

"So the e-commerce policy and e-commerce rules under the consumer protection act both will be brought on the same page...Kind of congruent with each other. That is the idea and we are working on that," he said.

Talking about the government-promoted Open

Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), the secretary said that it would help democratise the e-commerce sector in the country.

He said that "no funding and no tailor-made policies" would be there specifically to promote the network.

He said this while replying

to a question whether there is any plan to extend incentives like UPI to ONDC.

"We want all e-commerce players to be part of this network," Singh said.

ONDC CEO T Koshy said that an online system is there for grievance redressal.

So far, there are 46 network participants on the ONDC and the number is expected to at least double this year, Koshy said adding there are 17 cities where 100 merchants are on-boarded the network and about 5-6 cities, where over 1,000 have joined.

Out of 46, seven are logistics partners and 12 are from

selling side. A total of over 36,000 merchants have joined the network and at present over 35,000 transactions are happening on a daily basis, which is expected to go up to one lakh by the end of 2023.

By the end of this year, over 75,000 merchants are likely to be on board. Koshy said that ONDC provides hand-holding support to the network participants to build a threshold like provide trained manpower to get merchants on-boarded. ONDC is a network enabler and not a platform, and therefore it has systematically worked towards adding more network participants,

merchants, cities and transactions (orders per day) to the network.

It has also added mobility in Kochi, in January and in Bengaluru in April, which has seen a jump to over 35,000 rides a day from these two cities. At the same time, other domains like fashion, beauty and personal care, electronics and appliances were added since January this year, and are gradually expanding.

Most of these orders have been intercity, with major logistics providers like ShipRocket, Delhivery, Loadshare being live as part of the network.

New network participants on the buyer side include PhonePe's Pincode and Airpay, while leading enterprises such as HUL and ITC, as well as promising startups, have gone live on the seller side. Incorporated on December 31, 2021, ONDC is a Section 8 company.

It is an initiative of the DPIIT to create a facilitative model to help small retailers take advantage of digital commerce. It is not an application, platform, intermediary, or software but a set of specifications designed to foster open, unbundled, and interoperable open networks.

CAI reduces cotton crop estimate further to 298.35 lakh bales for 2022-23 season

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cotton Association of India (CAI) on Thursday continued to reduce its cotton crop estimate for the 2022-23 season, beginning from October 1, 2022, to 298.35 lakh bales as production is expected to decline in Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Odisha.



The cotton crop is expected to reduce in Maharashtra and Telangana by 2 lakh bales each, in Tamil Nadu by 0.50 lakh bales and Odisha by 0.15 lakh bales, CAI said in a statement.

lakh bales, which consists of the arrivals of 224.17 lakh bales, imports of 7 lakh bales and the opening stock at 31.89 lakh bales at the beginning of the season.

Overall cotton production during the previous season is estimated at 307.05 lakh bales, the statement added.

Further, the CAI has estimated cotton consumption from October 2022 to April 2023 at 179 lakh bales while the export shipments up to April 30, are estimated at 12

The total cotton supply for October 2022 to April 2023 is estimated at 263.06 lakh

Nexus Select Trust REIT IPO subscribed 5.45 times on last day of offer

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The initial public offering (IPO) of Nexus Select Trust, the first REIT backed by rent-yielding retail real estate assets, was subscribed 5.45 times on the last day of subscription on Thursday.



The Rs 3,200-crore share sale received bids for 101.03 crore units against 18.52 crore units on offer, according to an update available with the NSE.

Walk, across 14 major cities covering a 9.8 million square feet area. It operates two hotels with 354 keys, and also office spaces as part of mixed-use development.

The portion for non-institutional investors received 6.23 times subscriptions while Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) part got subscribed 4.81 times.

Post-IPO, the shareholding of Blackstone in Nexus Select Trust will come down to 43 per cent from 60 per cent. Select City Walk promoters' stake will reduce slightly to 24.3 per cent from 25 per cent

On Monday, Nexus Select Trust raised Rs 1,440 crore from anchor investors.

The Real Estate Investment Trust is sponsored

Integrate AI, drones with farm sector to increase farmers' income: Dhanuka Chairman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dhanuka Group chairman DRG Agarwal made a strong pitch for the integration of technological advancements, such as drones and artificial intelligence, with the agriculture sector to enhance crop yield, reduce costs, and ultimately improve the income of farmers.



The Dhanuka Group is a prominent player in the agrochemical industry, with a mission to empower farmers by providing them with innovative solutions. Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Agarwal said drones and artificial intelligence are two of the most promising technologies that can revolutionize the agriculture industry.

used in the agriculture sector for spraying pesticides and other activities, but they can be promoted on a larger scale through public-private partnerships. We are also supplying the first drones approved by DGCA for use in agriculture as well as spray services, he said.

He said the implementation of advanced technologies like drones and artificial intelligence will enable farmers to compete more effectively in the global market while improving the efficiency of their farming operations.

Sebi's SCORES platform resolves 2,071 complaints in April

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 2,071 complaints against companies and market intermediaries have been disposed of through Sebi's SCORES platform in April, according to data released by Sebi on Thursday.



At the beginning of April, as many as 2,030 complaints were pending and 3,037 fresh complaints were received during the month.

The markets watchdog also noted that as of April 2023, 24

related to investment advisers, research analysts, corporate governance, minimum public shareholding, venture capital funds, transfer/ dividend/ rights/ redemption and takeover/ restructuring.



The average resolution time for a complaint was 25 days, it added.

In a separate public notice, Sebi mentioned 14 entities against whom complaints have been for more than three months on SCORES as on April 2023.

deliberate on the next steps for resilient supply chains.

Attended by Indian and Singaporean business communities, the conference aimed to

Sitharaman invites Japanese investors

PTI ■ TOKYO/NEW DELHI

India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday invited Japanese investors and business leaders to explore investment opportunities in the country, saying that New Delhi is easing a lot of restrictions and ensuring overall ease of doing business in its walk towards Amrit Kaal.



Indian government describes 'Amrit Kaal', as the 25-year period culminating in the centenary of the country's independence.

Sitharaman is on a two-day official visit to Niigata, Japan, to attend a G7 meeting. India is an invitee to G 7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting.

leaders on the theme of 'Rising Investment Opportunities: Destination India', Sitharaman talked about the initiatives of the Indian government towards building India in 'Amrit Kaal'.

She further said the Union Budget presented by her in February was prepared keeping in mind the needs of the next 25 years to help India become a developed nation by 2047.

Singapore, India looking at new growth drivers to propel ties for the next decade: Indian High Commissioner

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and Singapore are looking at new growth drivers to propel their relationship for the next decade, Indian High Commissioner to Singapore P Kumaran said on Thursday, asserting that the two countries have an "active calendar" of more than 20 bilateral mechanisms, dialogues and exercises being planned.

partner for India and the relationship between the two countries is growing.

"Singapore is a very special partner for India, and it is evident from the fact that this year, under its G20 Presidency, India has invited Singapore to be a guest country at the forum," he said.

"We have an active calendar of more than 20 bilateral mechanisms, dialogues, and exercises. We are now looking at new growth drivers to propel the relationship for the next decade or more," he said in a keynote address at the con-



ference.

deliberate on the next steps for resilient supply chains.

the 6th largest trade partner (2020-21) globally, with a share of 3.2 per cent of India's overall trade. It is now directly connected to 15 Indian cities by eight airlines with more than 500 weekly flights both ways.

Kumaran pointed out that when the ministers of the two countries met last year at the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMIR) in New Delhi, they identified digital connectivity, Fintech, renewable energy, green economy, skill development and food security as significant areas of opportunity for collaboration

in the coming years.

Stressing the importance of forging resilient supply chains and global cooperation, Kumaran underlined that the current scenario is one of an "ever-changing trade landscape and external shocks, like geopolitical upheavals, pandemics, global economic slowdowns, fluctuating valuations of foreign currencies, and abrupt changes in policies by importing countries."

ment group of G20, and it is natural to expect that the recommendations arising out of it will be given utmost consideration by the G20 leadership."

India sees Global Value Chains (GVCs) as one of the key drivers for an economy's sustainable growth and development, the High Commissioner said.

"I am happy to note that B20, under India's Presidency, has identified inclusive global value chains for resilient global trade and investment as a priority area for deliberations," he said. Emphasising that a resilient supply chain can withstand disruptions and adapt to changing circumstances, Kumaran said, therefore, these chains "prioritise flexibility, redundancy, and diversification to mitigate risks and ensure continuity, as opposed to regular ones that have traditionally focused mainly on efficiency and cost."

He stressed that these new attributes are critical in today's globalised economy, as disruptions to supply chains can cause unacceptable delays, higher costs, and lost revenue for businesses.

INTER SEE OFF MILAN IN 1ST LEG

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan have one foot in the Champions League final after an impressive 2-0 win over AC Milan in Wednesday's pulsating last-four derby.

Inter have the upper hand ahead of Tuesday's second leg of the biggest Milan derby of a generation thanks to strikes in the first 11 minutes from Edin Dzeko and Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

Inter could have won by a wider margin as Hakan Calhanoglu smashed a shot off the post and Dzeko wasted a great chance early in the second half, but they are still heavy favourites to reach the final of Europe's top club competition for the first time since they last won it 13 years ago.

"Sometimes I don't score goals and that's all anyone talks about, but I also give something else," Dzeko told Prime Video after his third goal since January.

"Today I worked for the team and that was what was needed in such a big match."

Reaching the final would be extra sweet for Inter as it would avenge semi and quarter-final eliminations at the hands of Milan in 2003 and 2005.

The winners of the tie will face holders Real Madrid or Manchester City in the June 10 showpiece in Istanbul. The first leg of that semi-final finished 1-1 in Spain on Tuesday.

Milan, who also struck the woodwork through Sandro Tonali, have their work cut out if they want to have a chance at being crowned European champions for the eighth time and will hope Rafael Leao is available for next week's decisive clash.

The absence of star man Leao left Milan without their key attacking threat and allowed Inter to play more on the front foot knowing their opponents didn't have the Portugal winger's pace in their armoury.

"We conceded two quick goals, and against Inter that's difficult to come back from," Milan defender Fikayo Tomori told Prime Video.

"We're disappointed, we could have done better, especially at the beginning, but we need to believe if we're going to reach the final."



ONE TEAM IN IT

A colourful San Siro was nearly full an hour before kick-off, with both sets of fans exchanging chants and insults before the huge displays traditional to the fixture were unfurled as the teams came out.

But once the match was underway there was really only one team on the pitch, with nominal away side Inter looking the more settled and dynamic off the back of five straight wins and the recent hot form of their attack.

It didn't take long for the away side to open the scoring and it was a fabulous Dzeko goal which did it in the eighth minute.

The Bosnia striker held off Davide Calabria and met Calhanoglu's inswinging corner with a perfect volley which left Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan with no chance.

With their tails up and their fans falling over each other with joy in the Curva Nord, Inter went for Milan and three minutes later Mkhitaryan doubled their lead.

Federico Dimarco was set scampering down the left flank and his low cut-back was first left by Lautaro Martinez and then collected by Armenian midfielder Mkhitaryan, who smashed in his fifth goal of the season.

Milan escaped being three goals down after just a quarter of an hour when Calhanoglu nearly silenced the boos of his former supporters with a long-range drive which crashed off the post.

And Martinez then won a penalty which was rightly overturned by referee Jesus Gil Manzano following a look at the pitch-side monitor.

Dzeko should have all but sealed the tie when one-on-one with Maignan in the 53rd minute and not long after, while Milan's fans unleashed a volley of flares and explosives, Tonali held his head in despair after striking the bottom of the post.

However that was the last major chance of the game for Milan as Inter comfortably held off their rivals for the final half an hour and then bathed in the applause of their supporters who are dreaming of a trip to Turkey.

'One small step' left for Inzaghi's CL final dream

AP ■ MILAN

Simone Inzaghi can already see his Inter Milan team in next month's Champions League final after an impressive 2-0 win over local rivals AC Milan in the last four on Wednesday.

Inzaghi was in confident mood after watching his team dominate the first leg, missing several chances to make the scoreline humiliating for their cross-town rivals. "We played a brilliant first half, but it's a tight scoreline for what we did out there," Inzaghi told reporters.

"Then in the second half we managed the game well. Apart from (Sandro) Tonali's shot (which hit the post) the boys did great in covering the whole pitch. It's a hugely positive night which gives us a lot of satisfaction but we're missing one more piece to attain a dream that we believed in since August.

"There are still seven days left. We know we've got one more small step to go."

Milan could have star man Rafael Leao back for Tuesday's second leg after the Portugal winger missed Wednesday's match with a thigh injury.

Leao is crucial to Milan's attack and his absence made Inter's job that much easier, but Inzaghi isn't worried about the 23-year-old's potential return next week. "We have played loads of derbies with Leao playing and without him playing," said Inzaghi.

"He's a great player who is very important for them but it won't change our plan for the match."

Milan coach Stefano Pioli said that his team still believe that they can turn the result around on Tuesday despite the two-goal deficit and having to play as the nominal away side at the San Siro.

"I know my players, I know we can do better... next week's match will be psychologically very difficult for both teams because we have the chance to reach the final," Pioli told reporters.

"We have the chance to score some goals, put them under pressure and set right what's happened. It's difficult, it won't be a walk in the park. It will be difficult but we have to believe because football has taught us that you can overcome all sorts of obstacles."

India clubbed with Uzbekistan, Australia, Syria in AFC Asian Cup



PTI ■ DOHA

India were on Thursday drawn in a tough Group B of the 2023 AFC Asian Cup alongside the continent's heavyweights Australia, Syria and Uzbekistan here. The draw was conducted at the Qatar Opera House in the Qatari capital.

The Blue Tigers, who are placed at 101 in the FIFA rankings, will be playing the Asian Cup for the fifth time. India's opponents in the tournament proper, Australia are ranked 29th in the world, Uzbekistan are 74th, and Syria occupy the 90th position.

All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Kalyan Chaubey, senior men's national team head coach Igor Stimac, and women's side coach Maymol Rocky were present at the venue for the official draw ceremony.

Beginning from Pot 4, India

were the first team to be drawn into Group B, gaining B4, after which they were placed alongside Syria (B3), Uzbekistan (B2) and Australia (B1), respectively.

In other groups, tournament hosts and defending champions Qatar are the top seeded team in Group A with their title defence to begin against two-time runners-up China, followed by matches against Tajikistan and Lebanon.

Three-time winners Iran, 1996 runners-up United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, China and Palestine will vie for the knockout stage spots in Group C while record four-time winners Japan, Indonesia, 2007 champions Iraq and Vietnam were drawn in Group D.

Twice champions South Korea, the top seeded team in Group E, will have Malaysia, Jordan and Bahrain to contend with while Group F will have three-time winners Saudi

Arabia, Thailand, Kyrgyz Republic and Oman fighting for the knockout stage spots.

The top two teams from each group will directly qualify for the Round of 16, while the four best third-placed teams will join them in the knockouts to make up the numbers.

India were eliminated in the groups stage in the last edition in the UAE, despite kicking off their campaign with a convincing win against Thailand.

GROUPINGS:

Group A: Qatar, China PR, Tajikistan, Lebanon
Group B: Australia, Uzbekistan, Syria, India
Group C: IR Iran, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Palestine
Group D: Japan, Indonesia, Iraq, Vietnam
Group E: Korea Republic, Malaysia, Jordan, Bahrain
Group F: Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Kyrgyz Republic, Oman.



Srikanth hires Indonesian coach with Olympics in mind

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Keeping the Paris Olympics in mind, star Indian shooter Kidambi Srikanth has hired an Indonesian coach to help him ramp up his game in the run-up to next year's showpiece.

The qualification period for the 2024 Olympics began from May 1 and Srikanth, who has been struggling with form, has availed the services of Wiempie Mahardi to help him train.

"I have been trying to get a coach since December 2021, when Agus left. Now I have an Indonesian coach Wiempie Nahardi. I met him when I went to Indonesia to train for three weeks. He came to India in last week of April," former world number one Srikanth said.

India are yet to appoint a foreign coach for men's singles players since the abrupt departure of Indonesia's Agus Dwi Santoso in December 2021. After PV Sindhu parted ways with Park Tae Sang in February, the Korean has been helping out the men's singles players.

"I was trying to get a coach through TOPS but somehow, it

didn't work out. In January, I had sent SAI the proposal and since then it has been on hold. Since the Olympic qualification period was also starting in May, I couldn't hold any longer, so I decided to do it myself," Srikanth said.

A former world top 25 player, Mahardi has more than 10 years of coaching experience, having trained players in different clubs across countries.

Srikanth achieved unprecedented success in 2017 when Indonesian coach Mulyo Handoyo had taken over the training responsibilities. The Indian went on to win four titles that season. Another Indonesian coach, Agus Dwi Santoso, had an impact on him when he joined the Indian set-up in 2020.

"I don't think it (a personal coach) will work for everyone but it worked for me in the past. When Mulyo was there, I did really well, and Agus was there I did well. So this Indonesian style works for me, that's why I needed a coach."

"It is not easy to play without a coach, I mean that is the minimum requirement for a player," said the player.

Divya & Sarabjot win mixed team pistol gold at Baku WC



PTI ■ BAKU

India's Divya TS and Sarabjot Singh emerged third-time lucky as a pair, winning gold in the 10m air pistol mixed team event of the ISSF World Cup here on Thursday.

Shooting on competition day two, the Indian pair who had finished fifth in two earlier World Cup stages in Cairo and Bhopal respectively, broke through with a fine 581 to top the 55-team qualification, assuring them of a medal and a spot in the gold medal match.

Up against Serbian legends Damir Mikec and Zorana Arunovic in the most important match, the Indians held their own to pull off a nerve-wracking 16-14 win and finish top of the podium. It was a second ISSF World Cup gold for Sarabjot in back-to-back tournaments, having won the individual air pistol in Bhopal in March, while for Divya it was a first senior medal at this level. Ismail Keles and Simal Yilmaz of Turkey won bronze.



Deepak, Hussamuddin & Nishant eye final berth

PTI ■ TASHKENT

The task, however, is easier said than done. All three of them have tough opponents standing in their path to the final.

Deepak (51kg) has in his way two-time World Championships medallist Bilala Bennama. The Frenchman, who is also the 2022 European champion, will be eager to change the shade of his two bronze medals.

Hussamuddin (57kg), on the other hand, will go up against Cuba's Saidel Horta, who knocked out Worlds and Asian Championships silver medallist top seed Serik Temirzhanov of Kazakhstan in the quarterfinals.

Nishant (71kg) will face 2022 Asian Champion and 2018 Asian Games silver medallist Aslanbek Shymbergenov of Kazakhstan. It is a chance for Deepak to either replicate or better the silver-winning feat of former world number one Panghal, who has been the first choice in this weight category for long.

Fognini defeats Murray in Rome battle of tennis dads

AP ■ MADRID

Fabio Fognini edged out Andy Murray in a battle of veteran tennis dads to reach the Italian Open second round on Wednesday.

Fognini, ranked outside of the top 100 for the first time in 14 years, came through 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 against his fellow 35-year-old.

Former number seven Fognini delighted his home crowd with a controlled final set serving display in which he conceded just three points. It was his fifth win in nine career meetings with Murray but just his third on the tour in 2023.

The Italian maverick, like Murray a father of three, fired 46 winners past the former world number one and three-time major winner in a first round tie which stretched to almost three hours.

"For sure I'm happy because coming back from injury is never easy, especially at our age. But winning here in Rome against a really big player like Andy," said Fognini, who has been troubled by a foot injury.

"Now it's important to recover. It's going to be tricky and a nice question to my mind if I will recover well. But I just want to enjoy this night and going home with this victory."

Next up for Fognini is a clash with Miomir Kecmanovic while 42nd-ranked Murray, the 2016 champion in Rome, licks his wounds after celebrating his first title since 2019 at the Aix-en-Provence Challenger on Sunday.

Novak Djokovic will begin his bid to retain the Italian Open title against Tomas Etcheverry after the 61st-ranked Argentine beat Luca

Van Assche of France in the first round 7-6 (9/7), 6-3.

Djokovic comes into the tournament he has won six times recovering from an elbow injury and set to lose top spot in the world rankings to Carlos Alcaraz.

Alcaraz just needs to play a match in the Italian capital to return to the world number one ranking ahead of the French Open which starts later this month.

Djokovic won his record-equalling 22nd Grand Slam at the Australian Open in January.

However, he missed the American hard-court swing in March due to his refusal to be vaccinated.

The 35-year-old has endured a tough start to the European clay-court season, being eliminated in the last 16 at the Monte Carlo Masters,



in the quarter-finals at Banja Luka and then pulling out of Madrid.

WAWRINKA ADVANCES

Veteran Stan Wawrinka will face 26th seed Grigor Dimitrov in the last 64, the three-time Grand Slam winner easing past Ilya Ivashka 6-4, 6-2.

Wawrinka, 38, and playing in the Italian capital for the 18th time, hit 26 winners and saved the one break point he faced.

"I was ready for it. I am playing well. It was a good first match and I am really happy to get through again," said Wawrinka, who was runner-up to Djokovic in Rome in 2008.

The former world number three now down at 84 in the rankings added: "I have been working hard to get to this level. This year I am playing much better, but I need to win

more matches." In the women's event, Lesia Tsurenko won an all-Ukrainian clash, beating Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-3.

The 28-year-old Svitolina, returning to the tour from maternity leave, says the Russian invasion of her country means her career now has greater significance than in her pre-motherhood days when she was number three in the world and swept up 16 titles.

"I want to make sure Ukraine is still in the news," said 540th-ranked Svitolina who is married to French tennis star Gael Monfils.

"Playing tournaments, trying to organise events on the side, connecting with people around the events — that's really important."

"The war continues, so we need to continue helping people."



Yashasvi takes RR to 3rd spot

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Yashasvi Jaiswal continued his sensational run in the IPL by smashing the fastest fifty in tournament history as Rajasthan Royals cruised to a nine-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders to resurrect their playoff hopes here on Thursday.

Records tumbled at the Eden Gardens as Yuzvendra Chahal became IPL's leading wicket-taker before completing a brilliant 4/25 to restrict KKR to a below-par 149/8.

On a day KKR batters struggled to time the ball, 21-year-old Jaiswal showed the way by bringing up fastest fifty in the history of IPL in just 13 balls, bettering the previous record held by KL Rahul and Pat Cummins (14 balls each).

Jaiswal remained two runs shy of a century (98 from 47 balls), a knock studded with 12 fours and five sixes as RR cantered to victory 13.1 overs.

Samson gave fine support to the southpaw with a 48 not out from 29 balls as the duo shared an unbroken match-winning partnership of 121 runs off just 69 balls.

The win with 41 balls to spare also took them to third spot (12 points from 12 matches), giving a massive boost to their net run-rate (0.0633) as the play-off race heats up.

It is all but over for KKR who slipped to seventh place (10 points, 12 matches). Jaiswal made his intention clear in the first over itself when KKR skipper Nitish Rana made a bold move to bowl himself.

Wasting no time, Jaiswal seized on the opportunity and smashed Rana for two sixes and two fours in a row in a 26-run over.

He hit Shardul Thakur with a hat-trick of fours to race to his fifty in the third over itself as RR virtually sealed the issue scoring 78/1 inside powerplay.

To pile on the KKR misery, Sunil Narine dropped an easy catch when Samson was on 16.

The skipper then came on his own



when he smoked Jharkhand leftarm spinner Anukul Roy for three sixes in a 20-run over.

On a day RR dished out an eye-grabbing fielding display, Chahal (187 wickets) eclipsed Dwayne Bravo (183) to become the all-time leading wicket-taker of the IPL when he struck off his second ball to dismiss KKR skipper Rana (22; 17b) in the 11th over.

Chahal's breakthrough came just when KKR looked to step up after a pathetic start when two astonishing catches of Shimron Hetmyer and Sandeep Sharma set the tone.

Both came in Trent Boult's successive overs as the Kiwi leftarm pacer returned with 2/15 from his three overs on his return.

After an expensive second over when he leaked 15 runs, Chahal came back in the death overs and dismissed KKR topscorer Venkatesh Iyer (57; 42b) and Shardul Thakur (1) in four balls.

He ended his spell dismissing the latest KKR sensation Rinku Singh (16) in the penultimate over to also become the leading wicket-taker this season (21).

Put in on a dry Eden wicket, KKR frontline batters came a cropper, as Venkatesh held the fort and returned to form with a fighting fifty.

From being two off 12 balls, Venkatesh paced his innings well and raced to a 39-ball fifty. But he slashed a wide delivery from Chahal to be brilliantly caught by Boult.

Andre Russell (10) failed to make it big after he was promoted to No 5 and fell to KM Asif (1/34).

KKR, who were 58/2 after nine overs, looked to seize the momentum after taking a strategic time out in the 10th over.

Venkatesh finally broke free smashing Ashwin for back-to-back sixes, while Rana ended the over with an elegant four through extra-cover to take them to 76/2 at the midway mark.

KKR looked on course for a decent total before Chahal triggered a mid-innings collapse.

MI eye revenge against GT

PTI ■ MUMBAI

An upbeat Mumbai Indians are likely to be tested to the hilt by table-toppers and defending champions Gujarat Titans in a vital Indian Premier League match here on Friday.

For the first time in this IPL, five-time winners MI have looked promising as they rose to the third spot in the points table with a six-wicket thumping of Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Tuesday.

The manner in which MI thrashed RCB — chasing 200 inside 17 overs — highlighted once again how successful their batting has been, even though for the second consecutive game they reshuffled the order in a bid to push their net run rate.

Despite their best batter and captain Rohit Sharma enduring a lean patch with five single-digit scores on the trot, MI's batting has been nearly unstoppable here at the Wankhede Stadium as they successfully chased a target of 200 or above twice in three attempts.

Even against Punjab Kings, MI replied with 201 for 6 while chasing 215. However, the issue for MI this year is not restricted to Rohit's form or the absence of Jasprit Bumrah or Jofra Archer, but their bowling which has conceded four consecutive totals above 200, and nearly did so versus RCB again.

In the last three games here, opposition sides have raked up 214/8, 212/7 and 199/6, making the most of a flat wicket and perfect batting conditions — something that GT would also like to target.

MI's bowling did well against RCB to stop their charge in the middle-overs, but GT are not grappling with the issue of not having in-form batters lower



MI vs GT
Live from 7:30 pm IST
JioCinema

in the order like RCB.

Suryakumar Yadav's 35-ball 83 and Nehal Wadhwa's second fifty of the season handed MI a commanding win over RCB, but the hosts would know that they cannot afford any slip up against the mighty GT, who are sitting pretty at the top, largely unchallenged.

Suryakumar's return to form is the biggest positive for MI, for whom the likes of Ishan Kishan, Cameron Green, Tim David and Tilak Varma have done the bulk of scoring. It remains to be seen if Varma is fit for the contest on Friday.

The contest could, however, depend a lot on how MI's free-flowing batters go against eight overs of spin from Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmad, who has thrived in the company of the senior Afghan.

With eight wins in 11 matches, GT are on the brink of making it to the playoffs and be the first team to do so.

The highlight for GT is that they have not lost any of their away games and all three losses have so far come at their home ground in Ahmedabad.

The opening pair of Shubman Gill and Wriddhiman Saha poses a lot of threat, and GT have a long list of batters who can up the ante in their bid to get to big totals.

Hardik and David Miller are firing with the bat, and the dangerous Rahul Tewatia's presence adds more woes for the opposition.

In fact, GT are coming off a huge 56-run win over Lucknow Super Giants, having recorded their highest-ever IPL total of 227 for two.



India slips to 3rd spot in ODI rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India dropped to third position behind Pakistan and three points adrift of world number one Australia in the latest ICC ODI men's Team rankings announced on Thursday.

Five-time world champions Australia improved their rating from 113 to 118 following the annual update, maintaining a slender lead over Pakistan (116 points) and India (115 points).

According to the ICC release, "Prior to the annual rankings update, Australia were at the top with 113 points with India behind them on decimal count."

"Pakistan were ranked third, with 112 points and briefly went to the top of the charts after their victory in the fourth ODI against New Zealand this month."

Pakistan could have stayed at the top position had they managed to complete a 5-0 clean sweep against New Zealand.

With only three rating points now separating the top three teams, an interesting battle at the top of the rankings is imminent in the year of the World Cup.

The ICC's annual rankings considered all ODI series completed since May 2020 "with series completed before May 2022 weighted at 50 percent and all subsequent series weighted at 100 percent."

"This means that Pakistan have now pipped India in the second spot, with their 4-0 away series defeat in England no longer being counted. Their 3-0 series loss in England in 2021 also has a reduced weightage, helping them leapfrog India in the charts," the ICC said.

India have been heavily impacted by their 2-1 series loss at home against Australia this year.

Among other teams, New Zealand are placed fourth with 104 points followed by England, who have 'witnessed a massive 10-point drop in their rating' as at fifth with 101 points.

While Afghanistan made a big jump to move to the eighth spot and get ahead of Sri Lanka (ninth) and the West Indies (tenth), South Africa were ranked sixth and Bangladesh seventh.

Govt. of Haryana

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

G20 INDIA 2023

“International Day of the Nurse is a special day to express gratitude to the phenomenal nurses working round the clock to keep our planet healthy.”

- Narendra Modi

Heartiest Greetings on the occasion of International Nurses Day

May 12, 2023

Remarkable initiatives of Haryana Government in Nursing Sector

14 Government nursing colleges & schools are running in the state

Construction work of 9 nursing colleges, one each in Kaithal, Kurukshetra, Rewari, Panchkula, Bhiwani, Jind, Narnaul & 2 in Faridabad, is in progress

Nursing colleges and paramedical colleges along with new medical colleges will be started in 11 districts

Decision to provide insurance cover of up to Rs.50 lakh to all Government and Private doctors, nurses, paramedical staff and class-IV employees working in the care of Covid-19 patients

Government Nursing College to be constructed in Palwal

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