

OPINION 6

IMRAN: THE PIED PIPER OF PAKISTAN

WORLD 8

OPPOSITION WINS BIG IN THAILAND

MONEY 10

SENSEX, NIFTY CLIMB TO 5-MONTH HIGH

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MUMBAI TO FACE LUCKNOW IN IPL TODAY
12 SPORT

CAPSULE

MANOJ SONI TO TAKE OATH AS UPSC CHAIRMAN TODAY

New Delhi: Educationist Manoj Soni will take oath as the chairman of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Tuesday, an official said.

AAP GOVT HIKES POWER RATE AFTER BYPOLL WIN

Chandigarh: Just two days after winning the Jalandhar Lok Sabha bypoll with focus mainly on its people-centric schemes, including free electricity of 300 units every household, the AAP Government in Punjab on Monday announced the new electricity tariff with a per unit increase ranging from 25 to 89 paise for domestic and commercial consumers.

BENGAL VARSITIES LOSE SAY IN VCs' SELECTION

Kolkata: The West Bengal Government has made changes in the formation of search committees for the appointment of Vice Chancellors in State universities. According to the ordinance, the State university, for which a VC will be appointed, will not have any representative in the search committee.

RAISE MATERNITY LEAVE TO 9 MONTHS: PAUL

New Delhi: NITI Aayog member VK Paul on Monday said that both the private and public sectors should consider enhancing the maternity leave for women workers from six months to nine months.

ERDOGAN FACES RUNOFF AFTER MISSING TURKISH

Ankara: Conservative Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces a runoff with his main rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu in two weeks that will decide who leads a country struggling with sky-high inflation and hosting Syrian refugees as it plays a key role in the Middle East and in NATO expansion.

K'taka CM chair tug of war puts Cong in a fix

Siddaramaiah in Delhi; DKS to arrive in Capital today, day after deferring visit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

After a thumping victory of the Congress in the May 10 Assembly polls in Karnataka (135 seats in the 224-member Assembly), the party faces an uphill task of naming the Chief Minister from the two rivals — former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar.

Although the Congress is working on a "formula" to keep its flock together, the power play for the CM chair has kept the Congress leadership busy dousing the fire-fighting.

Following which Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were called to Delhi for further discussion on the Government formation.

While, Siddaramaiah arrived on Monday afternoon in the national Capital, Shivakumar cancelled his visit hours after confirming he would be flying to Delhi, fuelling speculation that the factional fighting in Karnataka Congress had reared its head again. Shivakumar cited health reasons for the change in his travel plans.



Karnataka Congress president DK Shivakumar addresses the media at his residence in Bengaluru on Monday

"I have some problem in the stomach. Doctor is coming in ten minutes. It's burning. It looks like some infection and I have a fever.... Please let me be free...." he told reporters. Sources close to him confirmed he is not going to Delhi on Monday.

However, late on Monday night, Shivakumar said he shall visit Delhi on Tuesday.

Amid speculation about the number of MLAs supporting him and Siddaramaiah for the CM's post, Shivakumar earlier on Monday said his strength is 135 (the number of MLAs the Congress has won), as under his presidency in the State the party had won the seats.

The move by Shivakumar, seen by many as a "pressure tactic" to assert his claim on the top post, indicated that the leadership war in the southern State is far from over.

Sources close to Shivakumar said he had conveyed to the leadership that in case the party decides for a rational CM, then there should be a written commitment for entry and exit.

According to sources, Shivakumar came to know that the high command was considering the Lingayat leader as the next CM. Though the party did not announce the name till late on Monday as it was informed that the final call has to be taken by the party's first family members — Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi.

The deliberations in Delhi were preceded by intensive consultations, one-on-one interaction with MLAs and even a "secret ballot" in Bengaluru during and after the meeting of the Congress Legislature Party.

Continued on Page 2

55% MLAs in Karnataka face criminal cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Karnataka has been witnessing a worrying trend over past decade — an increasing number of winning candidates in the State Assembly elections have criminal cases against them. The percentage of winners with criminal cases rose from 35 per cent in 2018 to 55 per cent in 2023.

According to data, 122 of 221 winning candidates have criminal cases against them as compared to 77 in 2018. In 2013, there were 74 (34 per cent) MLAs had declared criminal cases against themselves.

One winner has a case related to murder against him, and three have declared cases of attempt to murder. Seven new MLAs have declared cases related to crimes against women; one of them has declared case related to rape.

According to the Association for Democratic Reforms report, 78 (58 per cent) of 134 winning candidates from Congress, 34 (52 per cent) out of 66 winning candidates from BJP, 9 (47 per cent) out of 19 winning candidates from JD(S) and 1 (100 per cent) Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha winning candidate have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

Continued on Page 2

Pilot sets deadline for Gehlot to act on graft

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

The Rajasthan political crisis deepened as dissident Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Monday threatened a massive movement in the desert State if action on his demands is not taken by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot by the month-end.

"If action is not taken by this month-end on these three demands, an agitation will be launched across the State. I will serve people till my last breath, nothing scares me," Pilot said at a rally in Jaipur to mark the completion of his five-day "Jan Sangharsh Yatra" foot march from Ajmer to Jaipur over "inaction" by the Gehlot Government on "corruption" during the previous BJP term in the State.

So far the Congress has termed Pilot's move anti-party activity and in this regard three separate meetings were held by the national and State leadership and the final call will be taken after the Karnataka political issue is settled.

Flanked by at least 14 other Congress MLAs at a rally here on Monday, the former Deputy CM who has not been on good terms with his party's heavy-weight Gehlot served notice to the CM to either agree to their



Congress leader Sachin Pilot with supporters during his 'Jan Sangharsh Yatra' in Jaipur on Monday

demands by the month-end or face a State-wide agitation.

Rajasthan Forest Minister Hemaram Choudhary, Sainik Kalyan Minister Rajendra Gudha and SC/ST Commission chairman Khiladi Lal Bairwa were among the Congress legislators on the dais, indicating support for the leader who headed a rebellion against Gehlot in 2020.

Deependra Singh Shekhawat, Harish Meena, Giriraj Malinga, Rakesh Pareek, Ramniwas Gawriya, Indraj

Gurjar, Virendra Choudhary, Suresh Modi, Vedprakash Solanki, GR Khatana, Mukesh Bhakar too were present. The show of strength by Pilot comes just months before the Assembly polls when the party hopes to return to power in Rajasthan.

The intensification of the Gehlot-Pilot tussle came on a day when the party's central leadership is struggling to pick a CM in Karnataka after winning the Assembly polls a couple of days earlier.

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WPI inflation plunges into negative 1st time in 3 yrs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATTA/MUMBAI



New Delhi: Wholesale prices in India fell for the first time in almost three years in April, as softening global commodity prices brought down food, fuel, and other input costs for producers.

WPI inflation has been on a declining trend for the last 11 months and came in at (-) 0.92 per cent in April.

This is the lowest level of wholesale price index (WPI) since June 2020, when inflation was at (-) 1.81 per cent.

A negative WPI inflation, technically termed as deflation, means that overall wholesale prices have been falling year-on-year.

Detailed report on P10

Will back Cong in its strongholds: Mamata

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATTA/MUMBAI

The Opposition unity received a shot in the arm as Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that her party would support the Congress wherever the grand old party is strong. On the other hand, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar remarked that Congress big win in Karnataka proves that the BJP can be defeated when the parties contest and go to people with a public-oriented agenda.

This is the first time that Mamata cleared the air on TMC's stand on a possible strategy for Opposition unity in the 2024 electoral battle.

"Wherever the Congress is strong, let them fight. We will give them support, there is nothing wrong (in that). But they have to support other political parties also," Mamata told reporters at the State secretariat.

The TMC supremo also made it clear that she expected the seat-sharing formula to give priority to the regional players in areas where they are strong. "Strong regional parties must be given priority," she said.

Mamata had earlier saluted the people of Karnataka after the BJP lost power there while avoiding mention of the grand old party with which



TMC has had run-ins in the past.

Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar has already initiated the unification of Opposition parties and held meetings with Mamata, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and a couple of rounds of meetings with Congress leadership.

In all his meetings Nitish was accompanied by his deputy and RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav and has urged the Congress to take the lead and start working. Nitish last week met Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren hinted that the meeting of Opposition parties may take place in Patna after the Karnataka Assembly elections to chalk out plans for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Pawar on his part said that the Congress has alone given an alternative to the BJP and indicated that the Karnataka template needs to be implemented in other States, and for that, like-minded parties will have to work on a common minimum programme (CMP).

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Make laws strong; inefficient drafting invites judicial overstepping: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said inefficient legislative drafting system can weaken laws and democracy and the more grey area left during the drafting process, the more scope for judicial interpretations.

Inaugurating a training programme on legislative drafting for State and Central Government officials, Shah also said it will be easier to educate people about the law with minimal chances of errors by the executive if the drafting is better. "The more simple and clear the drafting of the laws, the easier it is to implement a law. Clear drafting also keeps the possibility of judicial overstepping at bay. The more grey area left during the drafting process, the more scope for judicial interpretations," he said.

Shah said India is not only the biggest democracy, but the idea of democracy also emerged from India. From the



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addresses during the inauguration of a training program on legislative drafting for State and Central Government officials, in New Delhi on Monday. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi and Arjun Ram Meghwal are also seen

days of the Mahabharata to the Mauryan era and again to the Gupta empire, democracy was one of the alternatives to Government systems.

"The Indian Constitution borrows heavily from our democratic heritage while remaining guided by modern principles and practices of democracy," he said.

The Home Minister said the legislature is

not a body of legal experts but that of public representatives who are aware of the problems and aspirations of the people.

They make the laws in accordance with them but moulding these laws according to the letter and spirit of the Constitution is a heavy responsibility that lies on the legislative department.

Continued on Page 2

Woman shot dead for boozing in gurdwara

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/PATIALA

A woman was shot dead for allegedly consuming liquor on the premises of a gurdwara in Patiala, police said on Monday.

Nirmaljit Singh Saini, a regular visitor to the gurdwara, opened indiscriminate firing on Parwinder Kaur, in her late 30s, for consuming liquor near the 'sarovar' (holy pond) of Dukhniwaran Sahib gurdwara on Sunday evening, said Patiala Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Varun Sharma.

"Saini fired five rounds at the woman with his 32-bore licensed revolver," police said in an official statement.

The SSP said three bullets hit Kaur and she died on the spot. Kaur was undergoing treatment for alcohol addiction.

The accused, who has been arrested, said he committed the act in a fit of anger as his religious sentiments were hurt, they said. Saini, a property dealer with no previous criminal records, told gurdwara officials that he was upset over the incidents of sacrilege.

The accused was produced before a court here that sent him to 14-day judicial custody. "Parwinder Kaur was having liquor near the 'sarovar' of gurdwara Dukhniwaran Sahib. When the sangat noticed this, they decided to take her to the manager's office," Patiala SSP Sharma said.

As Kaur emerged from the manager's room accompanied by police, she was fired at by Saini, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) officials said.

Meanwhile, members of various Sikh bodies reached the court complex where Saini was produced by police and greeted him by showering flower petals when he was later escorted out by police after being remanded in judicial custody.

"...If exemplary action is taken against the accused, no one will dare to commit such acts. If the government fulfils its due responsibilities, then such conspiratorial incidents will not happen," said SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami, in a statement issued in Amritsar.

Kharge gets ₹100 cr notice for likening Bajrang Dal to PFI

PNS ■ SANGRUR (PB)

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge received a ₹100-crore defamation notice after a case was filed against him for "defamatory" remarks against the Bajrang Dal and comparing it to the outlawed PFI in his party's Karnataka poll manifesto.

The notice was issued by the court on May 12 on a petition filed by Hindu Suraksha Parishad national president Hitesh Bhardwaj.

The date for filing of reply to the notice has been fixed for July 10.

"That the respondent issued an election manifesto before the State of Karnataka



for the elections.

"In the said manifesto, at para number 10, the defendant issued defamatory statements against the Bajrang Dal, a unit of the Hindu Suraksha Parishad, by declaring to ban the organisation and comparing it to outlawed organisations like the Popular Front of India (PFI)..." the petitioner has submitted.

AAP Govt seizes power of babu probing CM house case

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has called for withdrawing all work from Special Secretary (Vigilance) YVJ Rajsheshkar, who is probing the alleged corruption in the renovation of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's bungalow at 6 Flag Staff Road, Civil Lines, in which it was alleged that the AAP Government in Delhi spent over ₹45 crore on the rebuilding and renovation.

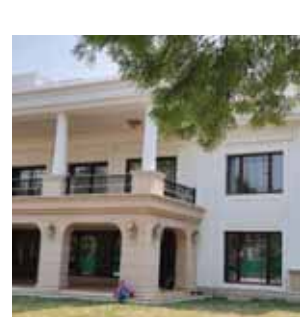
Rajsheshkar was also holding the charge of Special Secretary (Services).

This comes after the Delhi Services Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj issued a show-cause notice to IAS officer and services department secretary Ashish More and threatened

disciplinary action against him for allegedly not complying with a direction for his transfer and going into communication.

Citing complaints against Rajsheshkar for "running an extortion racket and demanding protection money", Bharadwaj on May 13 ordered withdrawing all work assigned to the officer with immediate effect.

Rajsheshkar was also probing the demolition of a heritage monument by the then CEO of Delhi Jal Board, Udit Prakash, to construct a sprawling bungalow for himself, siphoning off gold running into several kg and irregularities in the Delhi Construction Board and relief disbursement to workers. He had probed the alleged Delhi Excise policy scam.



In a reply to his superiors, Rajsheshkar said he was being "prevented from performing his duties" and apprehended "serious threat and diversion of records" pertaining to sensitive matters like the excise policy and the Chief Minister's residence renovation. He also requested that the matter be taken to the High Court for a

stay.

As per the note sent by the Bharadwaj, "There are complaints that Rajsheshkar is running an extortion racket and demanding protection money. This allegation is quite serious which needs to be examined in detail... Therefore, all work assigned to Rajsheshkar is hereby withdrawn. The same may be distributed amongst ADs and ADs will directly report to Secretary (Vigilance). The ADs should directly put up the files to Secretary (Vigilance). This is for immediate compliance till further orders."

Bharadwaj also distributed Rajsheshkar's work among the assistant directors (ADs) in the vigilance department with specific directions to the ADs to report and put up files

directly to the secretary (Vigilance). Sources said Bharadwaj had also directed that records from the senior IAS officer's room be seized.

In his reply to his superior, Rajsheshkar said he is a "Member of IAS and protected under Rule 311 of the Constitution of India and also protected under Rule 7 of IAS (Cadre Rules 1954)".

"One cannot deny the rights which are accrued to a civil servant/public servant under the rule which he is entitled to," he said in his reply.

Stressing that he must be allowed to perform his duties objectively and dispassionately as per rule of law and documents and records that are available on the file, Rajsheshkar underlined that vigilance

inquiries are done as per the set protocols and manuals prepared by the Central Vigilance Commission (VGC).

"It is just like mathematics and there is no scope for subjectivity while dealing with such cases as this case is filtered through due process as established by Law. The undersigned is being prevented from performing the duties and I apprehend serious threat and diversions of records pertaining to sensitive matters like Excise matter, 6 Flag Staff Road, Civil Lines, DIP etc. It is requested that this matter may be brought to the notice of the High Court to stay the order issued by the minister (Vigilance) vide his note dated 13.05.2023," he said.

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UBT plea for call on 16 MLAs' disqualification

By RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Fresh from its partial success at the Supreme Court which passed severe strictures against then Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari over the questionable conduct in the intra-party crisis witnessed last year, the Shiv Sena (UBT) on Monday mounted pressure on Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narvekar to decide on its plea seeking disqualification of 16 Sena MLAs, including chief minister Eknath Shinde.

In the absence of Narvekar who is reportedly away in London for some personal work, a high-level Sena (UBT) delegation called on Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal and submitted a memorandum to him seeking an early decision over their demand for disqualification of 16 MLAs. Along with their memorandum, the Sena (UBT) delegation handed over a copy of the

verdict given by the Supreme Court last week over the Shiv Sena crisis witnessed in June last year. Among other things, the apex court had held that while "it cannot restore the MVA Government led by Uddhav Thackeray" as he resigned without facing a floor test in June last year, it asked the Speaker to decide on the disqualification of 16 MLAs within a "reasonable period".

Sena (UBT)'s chief whip Sunil Prabhu, who led the delegation, said that the delegation met the deputy speaker as the Speaker was away from Mumbai.

"During our meeting with deputy speaker Narhari Zirwal, we reiterated our party's stand that the Speaker must take his decision in the matter at the earliest possible. We told the deputy Speaker that on his return from abroad, Narvekar should take a decision on the disqualification

issue as soon as possible," Prabhu said. The Sena (UBT) delegation comprised party legislators Prabhu, Ramesh Korgaonkar, Sunil Raut, Anil Parab, Dr. Manisha Kayande, Sachin Aher, Vilas Potnis, Sunil Shinde and Rutuja Latke.

Apart from asking the Speaker to take a decision on the disqualification of 16 rebel Sena MLAs, including Shinde, the Supreme Court had said that the decision of the Speaker to appoint Bharat Gogawale of the Shinde faction as the whip of the Shiv Sena in the Assembly was contrary to law.

"The governor was not justified in calling upon Mr Thackeray to prove his majority on the floor of the House because he did not have reasons based on objective material before him to reach the conclusion that Mr Thackeray had lost the confidence of the House," the court had said on Koshyari's role in the crisis.

ED arrests CSMCL MD in Chhattisgarh liquor case

By ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it has arrested Indian Telecom Service officer and Managing Director of Chhattisgarh State Marketing Corporation Limited (CSMCL), Arun Pati Tripathi in connection with a liquor scam in the State.

Tripathi who is also holding the charge of Special Secretary, Excise Department, Chhattisgarh was arrested on May 12 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Tripathi is from Indian Telecom Services and is working in Chhattisgarh for the last seven years.

ED is conducting investigation in the liquor scam which ran between 2019 to 2022 in which corruption was done in multiple ways like collection of bribe from the distillers as per each case of liquor procurement by the CSMCL and sale of unaccounted kacha off-the-books Country Liquor, bribes taken from distillers to allow them to make a cartel and have

fixed market share, the ED said. Commission was also taken from FL-10A License Holders which were introduced to earn in foreign liquor segment also, it said.

"ED investigation has revealed that Tripathi through his direct actions at the insistence of Anwar Dhebar, corrupted the entire liquor system of Chhattisgarh to maximize corruption in the department. He made policy changes in conspiracy with his other colleagues and gave tenders to associates of Anwar Dhebar so that maximum benefits could be taken...," it said.

Despite being a senior ITS officer and MD of CSMCL, he went against the ethos of the functioning of any State Excise Department and used the State run shops to sell unaccounted kacha liquor. "His complicit actions resulted in massive loss to the State Exchequer and filled the pockets of the beneficiaries of the Liquor Syndicate with more than Rs 2,000 crore illegal

proceeds of crime," it said. He also received a substantial share in this loot. Thus, the very objective of CSMCL to increase the State's revenue and to provide quality controlled liquor to citizens was violated by him for his personal illegal gains, it said.

He was produced before PMLA Special Court Raipur and three days of ED custody was granted to ED for interrogation and the same has been extended further up to May 19. ED also produced Anwar Dhebar, Nitesh Purohit and Trilok Singh Dhillon before the PMLA Special Court and their ED custody has also been extended up to May 19.

ED has conducted consequential search operations at locations in Raipur, Bhilai and Mumbai, and the searches have resulted in discovery of a 53 acres of land in Naya Raipur (having book value of Rs 21.60 crore) acquired by Anwar Dhebar by using 'proceeds of crime' in the name of a joint venture.

G'gram admin asks Chintels Paradiso residents to vacate flats within 15 days

By ■ GURUGRAM

Deputy Commissioner and District Disaster Management Authority Chairman Nishant Kumar Yadav on Monday imposed section 144 and has issued an advisory to the residents of Chintels Paradiso Group Housing Society to vacate their flats within 15 days from date of issue of order and hand over the vacant possession of the same to Chintels India Pvt.

The orders stated that IIT Delhi declared Towers E and F unsafe for habitation as per the structural audit report on January 29th, 2023, of Housing Society located in Sector-109. Based on the report, the District Town Planner (enforcement) had on February 15 directed Chintels India Pvt

Ltd to vacate the above towers. In this regard, Chintels management informed the administration on April 28 that some flat holders have not vacated the flat even after repeated intimations.

In view of the imminent danger to the life and property of the residents of Towers E and F, the Collector invoked Section 34 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 read with the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to prevent danger to human life, health and safety. Based on section 144, the remaining residents have been ordered to evacuate immediately. DTP (E) Gurugram has been appointed as nodal officer and duty magistrate to monitor orders. It has also been said in the orders that help of the police force can also be taken to comply with orders.

Author, scribe ML Manchanda remembered



Gurugram: Eminent journalist and writer Madan Lal Manchanda's 99th birth anniversary was celebrated by his family, friends and admirers here on Monday.

He was famous for writing in three languages — English, Urdu and Hindi. He contributed to a number of publications, including *The Pioneer*.

Manchanda, who breathed his last on May 1, 2021, wrote for over seven decades on various aspects of life.

Born in a village Mator, Rawalpindi district, he got a BA (Hons) degree in Urdu from Punjab University and MA (English) Language and Literature from Nagpur University.

K'taka CM chair...

From Page 1

The CLP had on Sunday passed a resolution authorising party president Mallikarjun Kharge to decide on the chief ministerial nominee. Both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar have never hid their CM ambitions. Supporters of both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar had raised slogans projecting them as the next chief minister outside the meeting of the Congress Legislature Party on Sunday evening.

A poster war by supporters of both leaders also erupted soon after the party won the election. While Siddaramaiah is a leader with mass appeal, is popular among all sections and has the experience of running a Government of a full five-year term from 2013-18, Shivakumar has strong organisational capabilities, is considered resourceful and Congress' troubleshooter during tough times and has the backing of the dominant Vokkaliga community, its influential seers and leaders.

Congress MP Naseer Hussain told reporters that both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are senior Congress leaders and have fought together against the BJP.

"Both led this fight from the front, both did their best to strengthen the party. Both have contributed to the victory of the Congress, but only one can become the Karnataka chief minister. Let us see what is the opinion of the members of the CLP," he told reporters outside Kharge's residence.

The meeting of the Congress legislators on Sunday evening amidst heavy sloganeering by party workers for their favourable choice had authorized Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge to decide on the name of the next Chief Minister of Karnataka for which several rounds of meeting were conducted till late Monday evening yet remained inconclusive as signs of uneasiness flowed during the day.

The CLP meeting was attended by leaders like Siddaramaiah, DK Shivakumar, AICC General Secretaries KC Venugopal, and Jairam Ramesh while Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and party leaders Jitendra Singh and Deepak Babaria were present as observers in the meeting. The observers submitted their report to Kharge in Delhi and later a separate meeting was held between him and Siddaramaiah.

Shivakumar was locked in an intense power struggle with Siddaramaiah after Congress stormed to power in Karnataka. Amid speculations about the number of MLAs supporting him and Siddaramaiah for the CM's post, Shivakumar said his strength is 135, as under his presidency, the party won the said number of Assembly segments.

Responding to discussions about him being adamant about the CM post, Shivakumar said, "Let whoever discuss whatever they want. I don't bother. I won't answer you or anyone else's discussion. I have a sense of time, patience, and courage to fight." About Siddaramaiah's alleged claims that maximum MLAs are supporting him in the CM's race, Shivakumar said he doesn't know about the secret ballot and the opinion of the MLAs.

Pilot sets deadline for Gehlot to act on graft

From Page 1

Apart from a call for a high-level probe into corruption, Pilot spelled out two other demands - disbanding the Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) and its reconstitution, and compensation for those affected by the cancellation of Government recruitment exams after paper leaks.

"So far I have done 'anshan' and taken out a 'yatra'. If action is not taken in the interest of the youth on these three demands, I will launch an agitation in the entire state. We will walk on foot with people in villages and hamlets, and get them justice," he added, as the crowd of several thousand people shouted in support, Pilot said, adding that nothing will cow him down.

Pilot said his agitation was not against anyone but against corruption and for the youth. But Gehlot, who became the Chief Minister after the party ignored his own claim to the post in 2018, was clearly the main target.

At the Jaipur rally, Pilot also referred to the boycott by the CM loyalists of a Congress Legislature Party meeting in September last year, called amid speculation that Pilot will be made the Chief Minister and Gehlot the party's national president.

Pilot said whoever talks about factionalism and betrayal of the party should introspect over their own "betrayal" and the "insult" to party leader Sonia Gandhi last year. They should think over "whether we or they broke discipline," he added.

"We remained in public even after being abused and worked to strengthen the organisation, and you are abusing and maligning us after devouring the cream ('malai')," he said in an apparent reference to the Gehlot camp. "This will not do," he added.

He also recalled a recent remark by the CM in which he credited BJP leaders Vasundhara Raje and Kailash Meghwal for "saving" his Government in 2020 - when Pilot and 18 other Congress MLAs rebelled. "What kind of policy is this that you malign the image of your own party leaders and praise others?" Pilot asked.

Will back...

From Page 1

"The Karnataka Assembly elections have given a message. We need to work on creating a situation like Karnataka in other States. The Congress alone gave an alternative to the BJP in Karnataka, but in other States, like-minded parties will have to work on a common minimum programme (CMP)," Sharad Pawar said. Both Pawar and Mamata were part of the Manmohan Singh led UPA Governments and during the last couple of years the latter had resented the very existence of the UPA of which Sonia Gandhi is the chairperson.

After a meeting between both the leaders in Mumbai, Mamata had said there are no such things as the UPA of which Congress is a major partner, and recently she had joined the chorus with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh for a non-Congress

55% MLAs in Karnataka face criminal cases

From Page 1

As for serious criminal cases, 40 (30 per cent) out of 134 winning candidates from INC, 23 (35 per cent) out of 66 winning candidates from BJP, 7 (37 per cent) out of 19 winning candidates from JD(S) and 1 (100%) Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha winning candidates have declared serious criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

About 45 per cent of the Congress, BJP and JD(S) candidates contesting the Karnataka elections face criminal cases, with nearly 30 per cent of them accused of serious offences, including rape and murder, the ADR said. According to report, there are 217 crorepati in the 224-member House, the Association for Democratic Reforms report also said. The number was at 221 in 2018.

According to the report, there has been no change from the situation in 2018 — 97 per cent of the newly elected candidates are crorepati. The average assets per winning candidate amount to Rs 64.39 crore, as compared to Rs 34.59 crore in 2018. Around 81 per cent of the candidates own assets worth more than Rs 5 crore.

The Congress has yet again churned out the richest candidates, with the average assets of a newly elected Congress MLA amounting to Rs 67.13 crore. The party has eight candidates in the list of top 10 richest winners, and has claimed the top three spots as well. Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president DK Shivakumar, who is one of the likely choices for the chief minister's post is the wealthiest candidate, with assets worth more than Rs 1,413 crore.

Make laws strong; inefficient drafting invites judicial...

From Page 1

Shah reiterated that there should be special emphasis on not leaving a grey area. For example, while drafting the Constitution, it was clearly written in the index that Article 370 was a temporary provision. "Had it not been written, what would have happened then?" he asked.

"So I clearly maintain that it is of utmost importance to understand the aspiration of the legislature while drafting any law. The smooth functioning of Governments also depends on legislative drafting," Shah said.

The Minister said several factors — the Constitution, the welfare of the people, culture, historical legacy, the structure of governance, the nature of the society, the economic and social development status, international treaties and responsibilities — are to be kept in mind while drafting legislation. He maintained that legislative drafting is neither an art nor science rather it is a skill that has to be practiced while remaining in touch with the spirit of the Constitution. If there is no debate about the law for 25 years and the judiciary does not have to step in to interpret it, it will be seen as the flawlessness of the skill of the drafting official.

"To upgrade the skills of drafting law, one has to read the laws which have attracted lesser debates because of their clarity. Moreover, if time permits, also read the debates of the Constituent Assemblies," he said. Shah said having a grip on the language is also necessary as sometimes the spirit of the law is lost in translation. Mere translation will not help rather the spirit of the law should be translated, he added.

Since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, his Government has rescinded nearly 2,000 irrelevant laws, Shah said. "We have freed society, the lawyers and the judiciary from a jungle of laws. The Government also has not shied away from making new laws whenever necessary," he said.

Delhi Govt seizes power of babu probing CM house...

From Page 1

Rajshankar also urged that permission may be accorded to engage Sanjay Jain, ASG, before the High Court along with Yoginder Handoo as Special Counsel/Briefing Counsel and if need be, the matter may also be brought before the notice of Supreme Court wherein permission may be accorded to engage Harish Salve, senior counsel in the Supreme Court.

He also noted that this kind of restraint to perform the duties amounts to indirectly transferring the undersigned from this Department which is nothing but subverting the decision of the Supreme Court dated 31.10.2013 wherein the officer can be transferred only through deliberation of the Civil Services Board.

"One cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly. The officer is also entitled for rights that are provided to him under the All India Services Cadre Rules i.e. Rule 7," Rajshankar added in its reply to the seniors.

Public Notice

NOTICE is hereby given that Vimal Makkar claims to be owner & in possession of Entire Second Floor without Roof Rights of Prop. No. C/31, H.N. Nagar, New Delhi (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of two sale deeds dated 05.07.2018 & 28.05.2018, said Vimal Makkar has conveyed that entire chain link original documents are misplaced (i.e. Doc. No. 15386 Dated 24.11.1996, Doc. No. 5761 Dated 15.05.1972, Will Dated 08.06.1961, Doc. No. 3270 Dated 24.04.1997, Doc. No. 3271 Dated 24.04.1997, Doc. No. 4444, 05.07.1999 & Doc. No. 05.07.1999) of the said/entire property & have lodged an FIR in respect of loss of documents with Crime Branch, Delhi on 05.05.2023 vide LR No. 411069/2023 and said Vimal Makkar has agreed to sell the said Property to Manoj Garg & said Manoj Garg has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients Axis Bank Ltd., Janak Puri Branch, any person/s in possession of Original documents and/or having any knowledge of original documents & having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable, registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 10 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
H. No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi-19
Mobile No. 9818399999

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, BHOPAL
Water Work Department
Municipal Corporation Rest House, Shyamla Hills, Bhopal
Ph. No. 0755-2701669
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Online tenders are being invited for the following work from the appropriated firm that Registration in the office of Madhya Pradesh (Central Registration Cell). The tender documents can be obtained online on the website <https://mptenders.gov.in> as per Key Dates in the Notice published on the above website and detailed information can also be seen on website <https://mptenders.gov.in>.

Corrigendum for this NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers. Corrigendum regarding correction can be seen on the website: <https://mptenders.gov.in>

S. No.	NIT No./Call No.	Tender ID.	Details of Work	Estimated Cost (INR)	Earnest Money (EMD)	Bid Submission End Date
1.	07/T.S./EE/N.P.D. No. 2/BMC/2023-24	2023_UAD_275980_1	Manning for Operation and Maintenance of 185 MLD Narmada Water supply project comprising Hirani pumping station, Khatpura 132KV pumping station, Ahmampur pumping station, 6.6KV line from Khatpura to Hirani 6.6KV line from Khatpura to BPT, 33kv Substation.	1,45,33,992/-	72,670/-	26.05.2023

Executive Engineer (H)
Municipal Corporation, Bhopal
T.N. 273/023/024

M.P. HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE DEV. BOARD
NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO. 328/29.03.23 (IIND CALL)

Online Percentage Rate Bids for the following work is/are invited from Registered Contractors and Firms of Repute fulfilling Registration criteria:-

System Tender No.	Name of Work	Probable Amount of Contract	Amount of E.M.		Completion period (Months)	Date of Submission of Tenders (Last Date)	Date of Opening Tender
			Rs.	Cost of Bid Form Including @18% GST			
2023_MPHID_275974	Construction of 40 NOS. 3 BHK (HIG) and 40 NOS. 2 BHK (MIG) Flats, Lav Kush Heights (02 Podium Parking + 10 Storey) Including Development Work At Rajeev Nagar, Ayodhya Bypass, Bhopal.	Rs. 2606.68 Lakhs	Rs. 13,03,500/-	Rs. 59,000/-	24 Months Including Rainy Season	02.06.23 17:00 Hrs.	Mandatory Submission Envelop-A 05.06.23 (15:00 Hrs.) Technical Bid Envelop-B 06.06.23 (15:00 Hrs.) Financial Bid, Envelop-C Will be opened after Technical Evaluation from H.O.

1) Interested bidders can view the detailed NIT on website www.mphousing.in and <https://www.mpeproc.gov.in>.

2) The bid documents can be purchased online only as per schedule 16.05.23 to 31.05.23 up to 17:00 Hrs.

3) Amendments to NIT if any would be published on website only.

(Paul Ekka, E.E.)
Dn.-5, Bhopal
(Mob): 9425007813

E-mail- eedn5hbpl@mp.gov.in
M.P. Madhyam/109876/2023

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform general public that Mr. Faizan has acquired the House No. 100 Area Measuring 60 Sq. Yds. Out Of Kharsa No.32/11, 22, 19/2, 20/11, 22/1, Viasa Naga Fatehpur Chandia (Friends Colony), Dist. Fardabad, Haryana Above Sale Deed dated 17.07.2020, Doc. No. 1548. Above said owner has misplaced the Original Sale Deed dated 15.12.2004 Doc. No. 10425, and Sale Deed dated 08.08.2006 Doc. No. 9896 and Sale Deed dated 11.05.2009 Doc. No. 3987, SRO. Fardabad. Anyone who find the above said documents shall handover the same to the Manager of Incred Financial Services Limited. Above said owner is availing loan on above said property from Incred Financial Services Limited. Having Office at 408, 4th Floor, Competent House Middle Circle, 2 Block, Connaught Place, New Delhi 110 001 & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Chawani Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Vertas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Noida, Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9666707172/9818228636 (M).

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

1.ASHOK LEY AL 1214
UP37AT2456-YOM 2019
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE -503863.11

UNDER HYPOTHECACTION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 30.05.2023 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).

KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P.) UP-201313 OR CONTACT : GUNJAN SINGH KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT : 918510032426 EMAIL-gunjan.singhi@kotak.com

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Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
H. No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi-19
Mobile No. 9818399999

PUBLIC NOTICE
Transfer of ownership in respect of Flat No.2002 Tower No.7 (seven), Phase-3, Project Green Parc Crescent Parc, Sector-92, Gurgaon consequent upon the death of one of the allottee Late Manmohan Tandon, who expired on 06/09/2021 without making any WILL and left behind his legal heirs Smt. Suman Tandon (wife), Dhruv Tandon (Son) and Karan Tandon (Son) R/o Flat no. 582, DDA SFS Flats, Pocket -I, Sector-22, Phase-I, Dwarka, New Delhi-110077. Legal Heirs Dhruv Tandon and Karan Tandon have no objection for transfer of said property in favour of their mother Smt. Suman Tandon. If any other person has any objection against the transfer of the flat in favour of Smt. Suman Tandon then he/she can right to the state officer HUDA Gurgaon-1 along with supporting documents within 30 days from the date of this Public Notice, otherwise the State Officer may accord to transfer/re-allotment of the said property as per HUDA policy Suman Tandon, Dhruv Tandon & Karan Tandon Legal Heirs On behalf of Estate Officer

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Delhi Govt seizes power of babu probing CM house...

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Order's non-compliance: After Govt show-cause notice to More, CSB calls meeting

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI
Amid the ongoing tussle with removal of Secretary (Services) Ashish More who was accused of switching off his mobile phone and making himself "unreachable" the Arvind Kejriwal Government has issued a show cause notice to him for not complying with its direction to replace him with a new officer and asked him to explain the reason for his "unauthorised absence."

Constitution Bench Judgment of the Supreme Court, the Chief Secretary has convened a meeting Civil Services Board (CSB) to consider the same on May 16. This will be the first meeting of the CSB after the recent judgement of the Supreme Court.
More had been asked to move a file regarding his transfer from the post of secretary (services), but had gone incommunicado after not following instructions to this effect from Delhi Services Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj. The Delhi government is planning to initiate disciplinary action against

Ashish More for not "complying with the Supreme Court order."
More was removed by the Delhi government from his post on Thursday last week, hours after the Supreme Court gave the AAP dispensation control over the transfer and posting of officers in the state. Bharadwaj in a memo to More had sought his reply within 24 hours after the receipt of the show cause notice. More was unavailable for his comments on the development related to his transfer. Former Delhi Jal Board CEO A K Singh, a 1995-batch (AGMUT cadre) IAS

officer, will replace More.
"Why your unauthorised absence should not be treated as dies non and break in services, as you were absent from the office without taking leave and without informing competent authority? Why disciplinary proceedings under AIS (D&A) Rules 1969 should not be initiated against him for violation of AIS (Conduct) Rules 1968 Rule 3(1), 3(1)(A)(ii), and 3 subrule 2B (i), (viii), (x), (xi) & (xiii)? Why displeasure of the GNCTD should not be placed into his Performance Appraisal Dossier? Why in his APAR "Attitude to work"

should not be recorded as "obstructive" & "dubious", why the "decision making ability" should not be recorded as "biased", & "disrespectful for law" and why "Pen picture" should not reflect that Ashish Madhavrao More, Secretary (Services) has a mindset of disregarding the rules and obstructs others in discharging their responsibility, and he is not fit for holding position where he may be required to maintain professional integrity," reads the show cause notice dated May 13.
The notice further said that the conduct of Ashish

More Secretary (Services) has revealed that his conduct is highly unbecoming of an IAS officer of the rank Secretary to the GNCTD, he is not politically neutral; he has deliberately denied to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and democratic values. And, he has refused to maintain discipline by aforesaid conduct under extraneous considerations and failed to show professionalism and dedication.
"...it is apparent that after knowing about intention of the Government of NCTD to transfer him from the post of Secretary Services, he has been

trying through illegal means to continue upon the said post for attaining some ulterior objectives. By aforesaid conduct he also intends to sabotage and delay the implementation of the judgment of constitution bench of the Supreme Court. It also appears to be a malafide attempt to obstruct the exercise of lawful powers by an elected Government," reads the notice.
"More has caused Special Secretary (Services) to issue a note on May 11, in which the directions issued by the minister were refused to be complied," said the memo from Bhardwaj. More was called by

the minister, informed about the SC judgment and was directed to put up a file for his transfer and posting another suitable officer in his place. It was assured by More that the relevant file will be put up to the minister before 3 pm, it claimed.
"Instead of putting up the file, More left the Secretariat without informing the minister or his office."
The minister and his office kept trying to reach More on his office phone and his mobile phone number, but he did not respond to the calls," claimed the memo.

DELHI EXCISE CASE PROBE

CBI arrests IAN commercial head

For transfer of ₹17 crore to firm handling AAP publicity campaign

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The CBI has arrested the commercial head and production controller of India Ahead News in connection with a probe into the Delhi excise case.
The agency arrested Arvind Kumar Singh, the news channel's commercial head and production controller for the alleged transfer of ₹17 crore to a company, Chariot Media, handling the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) publicity campaign during the Goa elections through hawala channels, officials said.
They said during the probe, the CBI found WhatsApp chats and records of hawala operators, which showed that Singh was allegedly instrumental in the hawala transfers of ₹17 crore between June 2021 and January 2022 to Chariot Media which was handling the outdoor advertisement campaign for the AAP during the Goa elections.



The Assembly polls in Goa were held on February 14, 2022.
The Owner of Chariot Media, Rajesh Joshi, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on February 8 and was given bail by a special court here on May 6.
The court had noted that evidence produced by the ED shows that Chariot Media made some payments to vendors for election work of the AAP but there was nothing to

It is alleged that the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 to grant licences to liquor traders favoured certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it. The policy was later scrapped.
"It was further alleged that irregularities were committed, including modifications in the excise policy, extending undue favours to the licensees, waiver/reduction in licence fee, the extension of L-1 license without approval etc. It was also alleged that illegal gains on the count of these acts were diverted to concerned public servants by private parties by making false entries in their books of accounts," the CBI had said after the FIR was filed on August 17 last year.
In its FIR, the CBI has alleged that kickbacks of around ₹90-100 crore were paid in advance to some politicians of the ruling AAP in Delhi and the other public servants by some persons in liquor business from South

India through co-accused Vijay Nair, Abhishek Boinpally and Dinesh Arora.
The CBI has also alleged that these kickbacks are found to have been returned to them subsequently out of the profit margins of wholesalers holding L-1 licenses through different modes, like issuance of excess credit notes, bank transfers and outstanding amounts left in accounts of the companies controlled by some conspirators from South lobby.
The CBI has alleged a cartel was formed between three components of the said policy — liquor manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers — by violating provisions and against the spirit of the policy and all the conspirators played active roles to achieve illegal objectives of the said criminal conspiracy and it resulted in huge losses to the exchequer and undue pecuniary benefits to the public servants and other accused involved in the conspiracy, the court had noted.

the Constitution Bench, which is highly undesirable and contemptuous in nature," the note added.
The top court's verdict is immediately applicable and the council of ministers must start discharging its responsibilities with respect to Services with immediate effect, the note stated.
"The decision of the Regular Bench will have to be in conformity with the decision of the Constitution Bench. The regular bench is bound by the decision of the Constitution Bench," it said. After the Supreme Court verdict, the Lt Governor cannot exercise executive control over Services anymore, the note further said.
If the council of ministers waits for the Regular Bench decision to discharge its responsibilities with respect to the Services matter, transfer and postings will not be executed and there will be a "vacuum" in governance, it pointed out.

SC VERDICT ON SERVICE MATTERS

Officers not complying with SC order will be liable for contempt, says Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court verdict giving the Delhi Government control over Services matters has come into force with "immediate effect" and any officer not complying with it will be held liable for contempt of court, the city Government has said. The city Government's Services department had sought the opinion of the Law department after the top court's verdict last week.
"The judgment of the Constitution Bench has come into force with immediate effect. Any officer not giving effect to the judgment of the Constitution Bench shall be held liable for contempt," said a note signed by Law Minister Kailash Gahlot.
Gahlot also said the opinion of the Law department's principal secretary was read by him and it "appeared to be more of a practical advice rather than a strict legal opinion. His opinion also suffers



from inherent contradictions". The Services department had also sought the opinion of the Delhi government's standing counsel (civil) on the implementation of the verdict.
The Supreme Court said the Delhi government has legislative powers over Services matters and the Lt Governor is bound by the aid and advice of the council of ministers, the note stated. The judgment has retrospective effect, it added.
"...Not complying with any direction of the Government of Delhi for the reason of awaiting judgment of a regular three (judge) bench is nothing but defiance of the order passed by the Constitution Bench and is an attempt to undermine the authority of not only the Government of Delhi but also

Govt orders CSB to prepare first draft of babus' transfers, postings

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
The Delhi Government on Monday ordered the preparation of the first draft of transfer-posting of officials by the Civil Services Board which is to be held on Tuesday. Minister (Services) of the Delhi Government Saurabh Bharadwaj on Monday in an order said the CSB consists of two secretaries and is chaired by the Chief Secretary.
The two secretaries are junior to the Chief Secretary and are unable to express their views fearlessly in a physical meeting. In view of this, views of CSB members shall taken after preparing the first draft,



Secretary (Services) shall then send the file to the other member who will note down his comments. He will then send the file to the Chief Secretary.
The Chief Secretary will put down his comments, if needed. The Chief Secretary

will not try to influence the preparation of the first draft or influence the other two members of the CSB in any manner.
The Chief Secretary will then present the file to the Minister-in Charge who then take a final decision. Following the directions of the Minister (Services) to transfer the officers and in compliance with the Constitution Bench Judgment of the Supreme Court, the Chief Secretary has convened a meeting of Civil Services Board (CSB) to consider the same on Tuesday.
This will be the first meeting of the CSB after the recent judgment of the Supreme Court.

DBSE results for class 10, 12 declared

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
Delhi Education Minister Atishi on Monday announced the first results of the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE) examination for classes 10 and 12. Out of the 1,594 students in Class 10, 1,582 appeared in both term-end assessments, and eight of them could not achieve the qualifying grade point 3, the minister said.
Those who remained below the qualifying grade will be given another opportunity to improve it through a supplementary assessment after a month, she said. A total of 672 students registered for Class 12 Board exams and 667 of them appeared in both term-end assessments, Atishi said.

Five students who could not achieve the qualifying grade point 3 will also be given another opportunity to improve it through supplementary assessment. The DBSE was established in 2021. The same year, 20 schools of specialised excellence across four domains — STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), Humanities, Performing and Visual Arts and High-End 21st Century Skills — were established by the Delhi government to encourage specialised education in secondary and senior secondary classes.
Students were enrolled in Class 9 across all domains and in Class 11 in the STEM domain in the DBSE-affiliated schools through an aptitude



test.
The DBSE Secondary Certificate Assessment (SCA) was conducted in two terms. The second term-end assessments were held between March 10 and 29 this year. The DBSE Senior Secondary Certificate Assessment (SSCA) was also conducted in two terms. The second term-end assessment were conducted between March 10 and 27.
Addressing a press conference, Atishi said this is a landmark moment. "Today, those

nations are called developed that gave world-class education to their children. We worked on education for the last eight years. Every year, 25 per cent of Delhi's budget is allocated to education.
"In the last eight years, due to this budget, the quality of textbooks and uniforms has seen a huge change. In the last three years, many students have moved from private schools to government schools," she said.
Currently, the minister said, 20 schools of specialised excellence (SOSE) are affiliated with the DBSE and in the coming year, 50 city government-run schools will also be affiliated with the board. "We will also welcome private schools on board," she added.

Govt holds round-table meeting to improve Delhi's air quality

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
The Delhi Government on Monday said it held a roundtable conference to discuss the findings of a real-time source apportionment study on air pollution and develop a strategy to further improve air quality in the city and the National Capital Region.
The "Save Environment Roundtable Conference" took place at the Delhi Secretariat on Monday and was attended by representatives from Commission for Air Quality Management, Central Pollution Control Board, SAFAR, United Nations Environment Programme, India Meteorological Department, World Bank, Centre for Science and Environment, The Energy and Resources Institute, and NCR states.
"We shared the data collected during the source apportionment study over the past six months with the participants, sought their suggestions and prepared a strategy to further reduce air pollution in Delhi-NCR," Rai said.
The ultimate goal is to devise policies at local and regional levels to enhance the air quality in Delhi, he said.
Real-time source apportionment (RTSA) studies help



identify factors responsible for an increase in air pollution at any spot, such as vehicles, dust, biomass burning, and emissions from industries, so that preventive measures can be taken accordingly.
Rai said orders have been issued to install mobile air quality monitoring vans at 13 air pollution hotspots in Delhi to ascertain the contribution of different pollution sources in real time. "Thanks to the RTSA study, air quality can now be assessed and analysed on a daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal basis, enabling the government to promptly address sudden increases in pollution levels. The monitoring of pollutants such as PM2.5, NO2, NOx, CO, SO2, ozone, secondary inorganic and organic aerosols has become more streamlined and precise," the minister said.

IGIA-Dhaura Kuan stretch beautified ahead of G-20

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
In a bid to attract foreign dignitaries for the upcoming G-20 Summit, the statues of lions, elephants and fountains have been installed on the 8.5 km stretch from the Indira Gandhi International Airport to Dhaura Kuan to give the road a unique look. Besides, a statue of five horses family being installed at the roundabout of Akbar Road near Vice-President House. The installation work is in progress and will be completed by May 30.
According to officials of Raj Niwas, this has come up with consistent efforts on part of Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena over the past several months are taking the National Capital towards becoming a city of beautifully carved, aesthetically pleasing and strategically placed sculptures and statues, like one witnesses in world's leading cities like Paris, Rome and London, that are known for their sculptures and architecture.
"One can see such installations spread across the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) area and the plan is to further install them throughout the city," official



said.
According to official, altogether, apart from the IGI Airport-Dhaura Kuan stretch, 04 marble statues of elephants, 01 big marble statue of lion, 01 statue of 5-horse family & 01 black marble statue of Polo Horse, etc. have been installed in the NDMC area at prominent locations like Akbar Road, Shershah Road, Ashoka Road among others. Similarly, 25 stone fountains including the wall-fountains are being installed at strategic locations so as to give a major aesthetic upgrade to the city and offer its residents and visitors a pleasing sight.
The exercise, initiated by the L-G, essentially aims at creating permanent assets in the national capital so as to make Delhi forever ready to host any major national or international events.

Discrepancies in appointment to reserved teaching posts in IP College: Teachers write to VC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
Delhi University (DU) teachers have written to the vice chancellor citing "discrepancies" in the allocation of teaching positions under reserved categories at the Indraprastha College for Women, alleging that the roster has been twisted in such a way that three ST positions have "lapsed" in different departments.
According to teachers, there was only a single vacancy for the Scheduled Tribes

MACT orders police chief to install CCTVs in city's accident-prone locations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
A Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) has directed Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora to meet with civic agencies for the installation of CCTV cameras at accident-prone places and make "sincere efforts" in installing high-resolution cameras at the locations. The court also sought a detailed report on traffic management from the Delhi top cop in light of numerous road accidents resulting in deaths or injuries.
The accident-prone areas noted by the court include NH-8, Ring Road and Dhaura Kuan.
Presiding Officer of Motor Accident Claims Tribunal Shefali Barnala Tandon was hearing an application by Vipin Kumar, an inspector, seeking directions to civic agencies for the installation of CCTV cameras at NH-8, Ring Road and Dhaura Kuan.

Launch of 'Partition' museum at Dara Shikoh library on May 18



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
The library building is located in Delhi's Kashmere Gate area. The museum will tell the story of the 1947 tragedy through interactive media. On February 17, the then Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia visited the museum site and inspected the progress of the project.
The Deputy Chief Minister's office had earlier said in a statement that the building of the historic library, built in 1637, was being converted into a 1947 Partition Museum by the Delhi government under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.
"The second such museum in India, it will have seven galleries to explain the events leading up to the Partition, and Independence, migration, refugees, rebuilding homes, art, relationships and will also have a gallery of hope and courage," it said.

'None of Adani group cos probed since 2016'

SEBI files affidavit in SC contradicting FM statement in House

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Monday told the Supreme Court that it has not been probing any companies of the Adani Group since 2016, as was earlier contended. The market regulator's affidavit is in stark contradiction to the Finance Ministry's reply in 2021 in Parliament that SEBI and DRI had probed the companies of Adani Group. The SEBI sought additional time to investigate the dealings of the conglomerate, reasoning that they were "highly complex".

The affidavit filed before a Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala states that allegations that SEBI has been investigating Adani Group companies since 2016 is factually baseless. The apex court is scheduled to hear SEBI's

demand on Tuesday. The Supreme Court is seized of four petitions concerning the recent report published by short-seller Hindenburg Research alleging fraud on the part of the conglomerate by inflating share prices.

"The application for extension of time filed by SEBI is meant to ensure carriage of justice keeping in mind the interest of investors and the securities market since any incorrect or premature conclusion of the case arrived at without full facts material on record would not serve the ends of justice and hence would be legally untenable," the affidavit reads.

According to the SEBI, an investigation relating to the twelve transactions referred to in the Hindenburg Report had many sub-transactions across numerous jurisdictions. It adds that a rigorous investigation of these transactions would require the collation of data from various sources along with supporting documents. Following this, an analysis would be conducted before conclusive findings can be arrived at. SEBI sought an extension of six months.

Was Parl misled, asks Cong; stand by statement in LS, retorts Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With SEBI telling the Supreme Court that it was not investigating the Adani Group since 2016, the Congress on Monday cited a Union Minister's reply in the Lok Sabha to challenge the claim and asked whether Parliament was misled or the market regulator was "fast asleep" as investors were "duped".

Reacting to the development, the Finance Ministry said it stands by its July 2021 written reply in Parliament that had stated that the stock market regulator was investigating some Adani Group companies. "The government stands by its reply in Lok Sabha on 19th July 2021 to Q.No. 72, which was based on due diligence and inputs from all concerned agencies," the Finance Ministry tweeted in response to the Congress' earlier tweet.

'Warfare getting hi-tech so we must evolve'

Def Min urges research institutes to speed up technologies to tackle emerging threats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/PUNE

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday urged the research institutes to speed up activities in advanced technology and achieve progress to make India fully capable of dealing with emerging threats related to cyber and space.

Addressing the 12th convocation ceremony of Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT), Pune, he also shared insights on the continuously changing political and economic equations among nations in the current global scenario.

The Defence Minister said science and technology and methods of warfare are evolving at a rapid pace and there is a need to make fast progress in advanced technology to deal with non-kinetic or contactless warfare, which the world today is witnessing, in addition to the conventional methods.

"If our adversary possesses more advanced technologies, it can be a cause of concern for us in the future. There is an urgent need to move fast towards technological advancements in line with the changing times. This responsibility lies with our institutions.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh speaks during the 12th convocation ceremony of Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT), in Pune on Monday

Defence sector is not a stagnant lake, but a flowing river. Just as a river, we need to keep surging ahead overcoming obstacles," he said.

Highlighting the deep connection between cutting edge technologies and defence research, Rajnath also called upon the institutions such as DIAT to come up with new innovations which are not only useful to the defence sector, but equally effective for civilians.

He emphasised that dependence on import of defence equipment can become a hindrance to India's strategic autonomy, which is the main reason the Government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is making all-out efforts to achieve self-reliance in the

sector. In addition, fourth positive indigenisation lists for DPSUs have been issued, comprising a total of 4,666 strategically important Line Replacement Units/Sub-systems/Spares and Components.

He termed these steps as a testament to the steadfast commitment of the Government to attain 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence. He added that defence exports have increased manifold in recent years to approximately ₹16,000 crore in Financial Year 2022-23 from ₹900 crore in 2014. India is exporting defence equipment to many countries, with many showing interest and faith in the country's manufacturing capabilities, he said.

iDEX inks first Mission DefSpace contract

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to boost participation of start-ups in innovation in the defence sector, the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the flagship initiative of the Defence Ministry on Monday reached a milestone with the signing of its 250th contract — first under Mission DefSpace — and 100th SPRINT (Navy) contract in New Delhi. The contracts were signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramam and other senior civil and military officials.

The first iDEX contract of Mission DefSpace was exchanged between Additional Secretary (Defence Production) and CEO Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) T Natarajan and CEO, Inspecity Arindrajit Chowdhary, one of the winners of the challenge 'Micropropulsion system for cubesats'. This challenge is being led by the Defence Space Agency, defence ministry offi-

cial said here. Cubesats are a class of smallsats, which are modular; low-cost; easy to manufacture, integrate, and launch; and form a critical component for launch-on-demand capabilities. For imagery/Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance/communication purposes, cubesats need to be precisely aligned, hence there is a requirement of a compact micropropulsion system for precise manoeuvring and orbit correction, they said.

Inspecity is developing a gas-based system for this purpose. This technology, once developed, can be integrated with other satellites, including the cubesat swarm being developed under Mission DefSpace. Recognising the strategic significance of the space domain, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched Mission DefSpace with 75 Defence Space Challenges to be addressed by the private sector during DefExpo at Gandhinagar in October 2022.

Those opposed to UNSC reforms fear for their status: Jaishankar

EAM on 3-day Sweden visit for bilateral talks with EU, EIPMF highlights India's transformation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/STOCKHOLM

Backing India's appeal for reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has taken a dig at those opposing the proposed changes, saying those who are beneficiaries of the old system are resistant to that change as they feel it would "dilute" their positions of privilege.

Jaishankar, who is on a three-day visit to Sweden, interacted with the Indian community in Stockholm late Sunday and highlighted the transformations underway in India during his visit there for bilateral talks and the European Union (EU) Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum (EIPMF).

Meanwhile, he conducted a series of high-level discussions including at the India Trilateral Forum on Monday as part of his first visit to Sweden, which currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Along with his Swedish counterpart Tobias Billstrom, Jaishankar covered a wide range of issues during the inaugural session of the Trilateral Forum which includes India, Europe and the US.

"Jointly participated in the India Trilateral Forum with FM @TobiasBillstrom in Stockholm this morning," tweeted Jaishankar. "An energetic conversation on a wide-range of contemporary issues," he said.

Earlier, during a meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Ulf

Kristersson, the minister said he conveyed the personal greetings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Value his commitment towards strengthening the India-Sweden relationship," he said.

Jaishankar also tweeted after a "good discussion" with Henrik Landerholm, the National Security Advisor of Sweden, during which the duo exchanged strategic assessments of Europe and Indo-Pacific. This followed a meetings with Andreas Norlén, Speaker of the Riksdag of Sweden on Monday morning, during which Jaishankar said he welcomed contacts between "our two Parliamentary democracies; also exchanged perspectives on our respective regions".

On Sunday, Jaishankar held wide ranging discussions with his Swedish counterpart and exchanged views on Indo-Pacific, European strategic situation and de-risking the global economy.

"Wide ranging discussions with FM @TobiasBillstrom as India and Sweden mark 75 years of diplomatic ties. Committed to taking bilateral cooperation to a higher level. Exchanged views on Indo-Pacific, European strategic situation and de-risking the global economy," he tweeted.

He also met Sweden's Defence Minister Pal Jonson and the two leaders had "useful exchange of views on regional and global security".

From Sweden, Jaishankar will head to Brussels for the first meeting of the India-EU Trade and



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar meets Prime Minister of Sweden Ulf Kristersson, on Monday

Technology Council, where he will be joined by Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food and Public Distribution and Textiles Piyush Goyal and Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav.

Responding to a question if he sees any potential for India to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), Jaishankar said during his interaction with the Indian diaspora in Stockholm the effectiveness of the United Nations has come under question with each passing year and for the good, it should be reformed.

India has been at the forefront of the UN to push for an urgent

long-pending reform of the Security Council. India has emphasised that it rightly deserves a place at the UN high table as a permanent member.

The five permanent members are Russia, the UK, China, France and the United States and these countries can veto any substantive resolution. There are also 10 elected non-permanent members who serve two-year terms. India completed its tenure as a non-permanent member of the Council in December last year.

"Now, the problem today is like any, any institution, those who are previous beneficiaries are resistant to that change, which they feel would in some way, dilute the positions of privilege. Now, some

of them may be more so some of them less so I think the wiser ones will say okay, life is changing. Let me change with it," he said.

The minister said during the reform process, some countries will say it is useful for them to have a country like India, and there would be others who may not oppose the country openly but through their actions and policy would try to ensure that the status quo is maintained.

He said reforming an organisation which has more than 190 nations as members is very hard. "So even sitting in the room to discuss it itself is a challenge," he said.

Aapke munh mein ghee shakkar, says Jaishankar over India's global image rising remark in Sweden

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/STOCKHOLM

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a three-day visit to Sweden, regaled the audience there when he quoted the Hindi idiom "aap ke munh mein ghee shakkar." He reportedly made this remark when members of the audience said India's stature in the world is rising.

The minister was interacting with the Indian diaspora late Sunday in Stockholm where he made these remarks.

Rlys to get uniform signage at stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Railways on Monday announced for a new pattern of signages at railway premises including the stations across India to give a uniform standardised look on the basis of colour, font and use of pictograms for the ease of passengers similar to the ones at airports.

Releasing a booklet containing details of the project, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said Indian Railways, which is redeveloping 1,275 stations across India under the 'Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme', will seek to have uniform signages across stations to make it convenient for passengers.

"As you all know, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Indian Railways has been working tirelessly to enhance passenger experience at railway stations. It was felt to issue standard guidelines on signages at stations that will be consistent and adequate. Today, I am delighted to release the booklet on Standard Signages at Stations on Indian Railways. The Indian Railways will adopt modern, standard signages, which are 'divyang (differently-abled) friendly,' Vaishnav said.

The Railways network has the largest number of stations in the world. It is important that every passenger should have easy access to facilities by having standard signage, he said.

The booklet on Standard Signages at Stations on Indian Railways prioritises simple language, clear font, easy-to-see colours and intuitive pictograms. It is made keeping in mind the requirements of all passengers, including the elderly, women, children and 'divyang-



jan', etc, a railway ministry statement said.

It said the colours of signages, type and size of fonts have been standardised. The concept of grouping of signages has been introduced for faster way-finding. New tertiary boards displaying station names with tricolour backgrounds have been introduced.

Emphasis has been laid on providing intuitive wayfinding and availability of signages on key decision-making points. While there is emphasis on standardisation of signages, the need for flexibility in case of stations with strong architectural vocabulary has also been recognised.

Docs not prescribing generic meds warned of action by Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Flooded by the complaints that doctors at Central Government-run hospitals and CGHS wellness centres are not prescribing generic medicines as per norms, the Centre has issued warning to such defaulters saying that failing to comply with norms will invite strict action.

According to an office order, the doctors at central government hospitals, Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) wellness centres and polyclinics have been instructed time and again to only prescribe generic medicines. "Despite this, it has been observed that doctors (including residents) in some instances continue to prescribe branded medicines.

This has been viewed strictly by the competent authority," Director General of Health Services Dr Atul Goel said in an office order issued on May 12. This may be noted by all heads of institutions, and they may ensure strict compliance by the doctors working under them, the order said. It has



threatened to take action in cases of non-compliance, the order further stated.

Further, the order asked them to ensure that visits of medical representatives to hospital premises are completely curtailed. Any information about a new launch may be communicated by way of e-mail only.

The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA), a national level association for the welfare of resident doctors across India, had recently alleged that many Pharmacy and Janaushadhi/Amrit Kendras set up in the premises of the Government hospitals were selling medicines not only at hefty costs but some of them were reporting shortage of generic medicines. As a result, the patients end up shelling out more on purchasing the drugs from private sector run chemists' shops, said Dr Aviral Mathur from Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi and President FORDA India.

In a first, CDSCO OK's manufacturing, sale of Cannabidiol-based products

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time ever, a Cannabidiol-based product has been approved in India delivering a unique therapy option for those with neurological disorders. The product is being manufactured at USFDA and EU approved state-of-the-art facilities in Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, said Hyderabad-based Biophore India Pharmaceuticals on Monday.

It announced that it has received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)



product, Cannabidiol Oral Solution 100mg/ml for use in neurological disorders. Cannabidiol or CBD, is the active ingredient in the cannabis or hemp plant, and some form of CBD is used for therapeutic purposes for certain medical conditions. This is the first time ever that a Cannabidiol-based product has been approved in India delivering a unique therapy option, it said.

The approval currently received is for the treatment of seizures associated with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, Dravet syndrome or tuberous sclerosis complex in patients 1 year of age or older.

Doctors will now need unique ID to practise in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

All medical practitioners will now get a unique identification number to practice in the country, prior to which they have to register with the National Medical Commission (NMC) besides state medical councils.

According to a recent notification, the data will be updated

ed in the National Medical Register which will be made available to the public and displayed on the NMC's website.

Any person who obtains a primary medical qualification recognised under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019 and qualifies the National Exit Test held under section 15 of the Act, shall be entitled for grant of registration in NMR, it said.

Those who obtain a foreign medical qualification and qualify the National Exit Test held under section 15 of the Act, shall also be entitled for grant of registration in NMR, subject to fulfilment of conditions specified in the Foreign Medical Graduates Regulation, 2021, it said.

The UID shall be generated centrally by the Ethics and Medical Registration Board



(EMRB), National Medical Commission (NMC) and grant the practitioner registration in NMR and eligibility to practice medicine in India.

"All existing medical practitioner enrolled in the Indian Medical Register or the State Medical Register, not having the registration number as per these regulation shall update in the web portal of the Ethics and Medical Registration Board

within a period of three months of publishing of these Regulation and obtain the registration number as a one time measure and the licence so generated shall be valid for a period of five years from the date of issuance," the notification said.

No fees shall be charged by the EMRB, NMC for updating the licence of a medical practitioner.

Avoid non-sugar sweeteners for weight-loss, diabetes, warns WHO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Non-sugar sweeteners like stevia should not be taken for weight control or to reduce the risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, according to a new guideline released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Monday.

Non-sugar or non-nutritive sweeteners are often used as sugar substitutes in diet and zero-calorie drinks and snacks. There are currently eight of these non-sugar sweeteners approved for use by the FDA. They include aspartame, acesulfame potassium, Luo Han Guo (monk) fruit extract, neo-



tame, saccharin, stevia, sucralose, and advantame (via Cleveland Clinic).

The recommendation applies to all people, except individuals with pre-existing diabetes, and "includes all synthetic and naturally occurring or modified non-nutritive sweeteners that are not classified as sugars found in manufactured foods and beverages, or sold on their own to be added to foods and beverages by consumers".

The advise, however, does

not apply to personal care and hygiene products containing NSS, such as toothpaste, skin cream, and medications, or to low-calorie sugars and sugar alcohols (polyols), which are sugars or sugar derivatives containing calories and are therefore not considered NSS, the global health body said.

"Replacing free sugars with NSS does not help with weight control in the long term. People need to consider other ways to reduce free sugars intake, such as consuming food with naturally occurring sugars, like fruit, or unsweetened food and beverages," said Francesco Branca, WHO Director for Nutrition and Food Safety, in a statement.

DA stir: Schism between Bengal Govt, employees

Minister threatens cuts in salary of protesters ceasing work

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In a statement that could widen the divide between the Bengal Government employees agitating for the past several months for increased Dearness Allowance (DA) and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) Government, senior State Minister Akhil Giri on Monday said that the employees who were staging dharna and resorting to cease work should be prepared for salary cuts and breakages in service.

"What is this rule about taking a salary without working ... if you do not work for days and months on end ... hold dharnas in the streets in Kolkata and Delhi and yet you will take your salary ... this is not done ... if you do not come

to work then you should be prepared for salary cuts," Giri who had earlier courted controversy by using unparliamentary words about President Droupadi Murmu said.

Giri's statement came close on the heels of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee saying that the Government staff should ask the Centre to clear the State's dues. "I have given a cumulative 126 percent DA ... I cannot give more ... the employees should now go to the Centre and ask it to release the State's Rs 1 lakh crore that it has withheld," Banerjee said.

Meanwhile, the state government employees on Monday threatened a prolonged dharna in front of the residence of Giri. They have also threatened to go on an



indefinite cease work should their demand of 33 per cent DA hike not be met by the State Government.

Both the State Administrative Tribunal and the Calcutta High Court have ruled in favour of the government employees say, DA was not a gratuitous grant from the employer but a matter of right. Presently an SLP filed by the State Government is lying pending in the Supreme Court.

Calcutta HC allows edu board to challenge 36K appointments' cancellation

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Monday granted permission to the West Bengal Board of Primary Education to file an appeal against an order that cancelled the appointment of around 36,000 primary teachers in state government-sponsored and -aided schools.

The board's lawyer Lakshmi Gupta mentioned the matter before a division bench presided over by Justice Subrata Talukdar seeking leave of the court to challenge the May 12 order of the single bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay.

The division bench, also comprising Justice Supratim Bhattacharya, allowed the board to file the appeal. Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay on Friday ordered the cancellation of the appointment of around 36,000 candidates who were untrained at the time of their recruitment as primary teachers in West Bengal government-sponsored and -aided schools, as due procedure was not followed in the appointment process. Passing the order, Justice Gangopadhyay observed that "corruption of this magnitude" was never known in West Bengal.

The single bench, however, directed that those teachers who got employment following the recommendation of the board in respect of the 2016 selection process will be allowed to work for four months from May 12 at a remuneration equal to a para teacher of a primary school.

The court had also directed the board to arrange for a recruitment exercise within three months only for the candidates who participated in the 2016 appointment process. Candidates who have obtained training qualifications in the meantime will also be included in the exercise.

Bomma, RSS brass mull BJP revamp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Caretaker Chief Minister Bommai, a front-runner for the post of the Leader of the Opposition in the newly-elected Karnataka Assembly, on Monday met RSS leaders and discussed with them the ways to reorganise and revamp the party organisation following the electoral setback on May 13. He said State President Nalin Kumar Kateel and other state leaders would also hold discussion on the poll defeat. Central leadership would be taking a call to revamp the organisation in Karnataka with a sharp eye on the Lok Sabha poll which are only 10-11 months away. BJP had won 25 out of 28 Lok Sabha seats from Karnataka in 2019 Lok Sabha poll and contributed substantially to its overall tally. This was Bommai's first visit to the BJP's ideological parent organisation's state headquarters 'Keshava Krupa' in Bengaluru after the poll results on last

Saturday.

"We have discussed the overall poll results. We have also discussed how to organise the party in the days to come with the guidance (of RSS). Our state President (Nalin Kumar Kateel) and leadership will also hold discussions, and after that we will discuss on how to organise the party in the days to come," Bommai told r newsmen as he emerged from the RSS office in the State Capital. Bommai said on Sunday that the Karnataka BJP has decided to do a detailed analysis of the overall poll results and also constituency-wise statistics, to find out the reasons for the party's poll debacle.

Refuting the Congress's claim that it is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's defeat, he said multiple factors have contributed to the party's performance and they will all be analysed; a meeting of all newly-elected members and candidates will be held soon in this regard.

Aryan case: Wankhede's foreign jaunts under CBI radar



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign visits undertaken by former NCB officer Sameer Wankhede, booked by the CBI over an alleged Rs 25-crore bribe demand from superstar Shah Rukh Khan's family to spare his son in a drugs case, will be under the scanner of the agency, officials said.

A Narcotics Control Bureau's Special Enquiry Team (SET) had red-flagged alleged improper explanations and apparent misdeclaration of "the expenditure" given by then NCB Zonal Director Wankhede on his foreign visits. These findings were referred by the Centre to the CBI which had registered an FIR against the officer and four others on May 11.

"He has also not declared the source of his foreign visits properly. It was also found that Wankhede has indulged himself in sale and purchase of expensive wrist watches with a private entity, Viral Rajan, without intimating the department (present or parent)," the SET said in the findings which are now part of the FIR.

The details of FIR made public on Monday show that independent witness K P Gosavi and one Prabhakar Sail, now deceased, were included by the NCB in the Cordelia cruise ship drug raid on October 2, 2021 on the directions of Wankhede.

Gosavi in conspiracy with his aide Sanvile D'Souza and others had entered into the conspiracy to "extort an amount" of Rs 25 crore from the family members of Aryan, son of Shah Rukh Khan, by "threatening them of the accusation of offences of possession of Narcotics substances".

Manipur CM rejects demand for separate admin for Kuki areas

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Monday rejected a demand made by 10 MLAs, including seven from the ruling BJP, for a separate administration for the Kuki-dominated districts of the northeastern state, stating, "the territorial integrity of Manipur will be protected".

The Chief Minister, who had made an air-dash to Delhi on Sunday to confer with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, said measures are being taken to ensure that militants, who had signed a peace pact dubbed 'Suspension of Operations', return to their designated camps.

Singh also appealed to people not to hold 'dharnas' or rallies in view of the sensitive phase the state has been witnessing since race riots between the majority Meiteis and the Kukis earlier this month. He also said no force would be used to break the blockades imposed by some groups in the wake of the rioting, and instead "efforts would be made to reason with these demonstrators".

The Chief Minister, who was speaking to reporters at a press conference here, said, "I assure the people that the territorial integrity of Manipur will be protected at all costs".

"Measures are being undertaken with the supervision of Union Home Minister Amit Shah to make the SoO (Suspension of Operations) groups return to their camps and strengthen efforts to bring normalcy back to the state," he said. Singh said that he and his ministers, who had travelled to Delhi with him, had briefed Shah about the prevailing situation in the state and "conveyed to him the sentiments of the people of Manipur on the situation" as also intelligence "on the involvement of armed militants in the recent violence". Asked about the demand made by 10 MLAs for a separate administration for Kuki areas of the state, he said, "There is no threat to the integrity of Manipur". Ten tribal MLAs belonging to the Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi group in Manipur have urged the Centre to give their region a "separate administration" in the wake of recent violent clashes between the Meiteis and tribals.

Replying to a query about the involvement of Kuki militants in the violence, Singh said, "Army and other security personnel are visiting designated camps of Kuki militants, who are part of the 'Suspension of Operation' pact and checking whether they are present there or not."

"Several innocent people died and properties have been damaged. We are focusing on rehabilitation and resettlement of affected people," he said. The Chief Minister also said the priority of his government is to restore peace and normalcy in the state.

He also asked deputy commissioners and police chiefs of various districts to ensure that the properties of those who fled homes due to the violence are not looted.



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ED raids Santiago Martin, attaches assets worth ₹457 cr under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it has attached assets worth Rs 457 crore on money laundering charges after it carried out searches in Coimbatore and Chennai against "lottery king" Santiago Martin in a case linked to alleged loss of over Rs 900 crore to the Sikkim government by fraudulent sale of the state lottery in Kerala.

During the searches, several investments of the group concerns were identified and orders were issued under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to freeze movable properties worth Rs 157.7 crore which includes fixed deposits and mutual funds and immovable property documents worth Rs 299.16 crore, the ED said in a



statement. "Properties worth Rs 457 crore were unearthed as a result of search operations carried out, and the same have been seized/frozen as Proceeds of Crime," it said.

The agency carried out fresh raids against Martin and his family members at residential premises in Coimbatore and business premises as well as residential properties in

Chennai, and the official premises of 'Future Gaming Solutions India Private Limited' in Coimbatore on May 11 and 12. Future Gaming Solutions India Pvt Ltd is the master distributor of Sikkim lotteries and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is investigating Martin, known as "lottery king" in Tamil Nadu since 2019.

The money laundering case stems from a CBI charge sheet filed against Martin and others for alleged offences relating to sale of lotteries of the Sikkim government in Kerala.

"Martin and his associate companies and entities made unlawful gains with a corresponding loss to the government of Sikkim to the extent of Rs 910 crore on account of inflating the prize winning tickets claim for the period from 01.04.2009 to 31.08.2010," the agency added.

NIA files supplementary chargesheet against TRF

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday filed a supplementary chargesheet against one accused in the case involving the activities of The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the proscribed terrorist outfit, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

The NIA has charged Faisal Muneer alias Ali Bhai, a resident of Talab Khatikan area under police station Peer Mitha, Jammu for conspiring with Pakistan-based operatives of LeT/TRF for transportation of firearms and explosives for carrying out terrorist acts in India, the NIA said in a statement.

"He had entered into a conspiracy with his handlers based across-the-border to deliver the consignments of weapons and explosives to active terrorist commanders and operatives of these outfits for commission of terror acts in India, as per NIA investigations," the NIA said. The agency further said, "As part

of the conspiracy hatched with other co-accused and handlers/operatives of LeT/TRF, Faisal had actively worked for LeT/TRF and had received funds from operatives of LeT, with the intent to further its terrorist activities."

Faizal is the fourth person to be chargesheeted in the case registered suo moto by NIA on November 18, 2021. The NIA had earlier filed a chargesheet against the accused Arsalan Feroz alias Arsalan Soub, Muzamil Mushtaq Bhat alias Hamza and Mudasar Ahmed Dard respectively on June 18, November 9 and December 17, 2022.

The three accused, found to be working at the behest of LeT/TRF operatives, as Over Ground Workers (OGWs), were charged under various sections of the law like the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Arms Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. PNS

NIA raids against terrorist outfits in J&K

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted a series of raids in various districts against terrorist outfits and their offshoots/affiliates operating in the Kashmir valley to disrupt peace and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir by spreading terror, violence and subversion. The agency conducted the searches in Anantnag, Srinagar, Pulwama, Shopian and Budgam districts of Kashmir, and seized

incriminating materials/documents. The NIA launched extensive searches at 13 locations of sympathizers/cadres, hybrid terrorists and Over Ground Workers (OGWs) linked with the newly-formed offshoots and affiliates of several proscribed Pak-backed terror organisations, including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Al-Badr and Al-Qaeda among others. The raids were

part of the ongoing investigations of NIA in the terror conspiracy case, involving the activities of OGWs and cadres in support of various newly-launched outfits, such as The Resistance Front (TRF), United Liberation Front Jammu & Kashmir (ULFJ&K), Mujahideen Gazwat-ul-Hind (MGH), Jammu & Kashmir Freedom Fighters (JKFF), Kashmir Tigers, PAAF, among others, the agency said. "Besides

terrorist and violent activities, these cadres and workers had been found involved in collection and distribution of sticky bombs/magnetic bombs, IEDs, funds, narcotics and arms/ammunition," it said.

NIA investigations had further revealed that Pak-based operatives were involved in delivery of arms/ammunition, explosives and narcotics to these cadres and workers in Kashmir valley via drones. PNS

ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110007

PUBLIC NOTICE: Builder Cancellation

This is to bring to your notice that **SANTANU BANERJEE/ GARGI BHATTACHARJEE** (borrowers/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number **LBDEL0002272956** located at **FLAT NO 303, VRINDAVAN GREENS NARMADA TOWER, MATHURA, UTTAR PRADESH**. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement.

The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated **May 08, 2023**, informing that **AASTHA INFRAPROJECTS** has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication.

Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.

Dated: May 16, 2023 For ICICI Bank Limited
Place: Delhi/NCR Sd-

Outlawed Garo army regrouping in western Meghalaya: Officials

PTI ■ SHILLONG

Banned Garo National Liberation Army is "regrouping" and trying to send young people from the western Garo Hills region of Meghalaya to Myanmar for basic guerrilla warfare training, officials said on Monday.

The state administration has already taken measures to thwart such attempts and is monitoring activities of surrendered cadres of the outlawed organisation, they said.

"We have inputs that the GNLA is regrouping. The information is internal and actions have been taken," a senior home department official told PTI.

Some youths have been "recruited", and "attempts have been made to send them to Myanmar to pursue basic guerrilla warfare training", he said. In a wireless message 10 days

ago, a special branch deputy SP had urged officers in all police stations in Meghalaya to strengthen the intelligence network to monitor movements of former members of the outfit, he said.

"Monitor closely the movements and activities of surrendered/arrested cadres of the outfit, known overground workers/harbours as well as businessmen known to have links to the organisation," the message read.

The state police have been directed to carry out counter-insurgency operations and raids to deny the outfit its area of operation in the Garo Hills, a senior officer said. He also said meetings have been held in Shahlang, Jaidi and Nongalibira areas to mobilise young people to join the banned organisation. In 2018, the GNLA disbanded and its cadres surrendered in batches.

5 students hurt after scuffle over 'The Kerala story' in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Five undergraduate medical students were injured after a scuffle broke out between a group of students over 'The Kerala Story' inside a boys' hostel in Government Medical College and Hospital, Jammu late Sunday night.

A FIR NO 66/2023 has been registered by the police authorities against the culprits who reportedly instigated the

scuffle between the group of students. According to preliminary reports, a first year student of GMC, Jammu had shared a link of The Kerala Story in the official group of first-year students, which was objected to by one of his batchmates, stating that the group is meant for academic purposes only. Before the situation took an ugly turn GMC Principal Dr Shashi Sudan along with senior faculty members visited the hostel premises to contain the

situation. Dr Shashi Sudan told the media that five students were injured in the clashes, with four of them sustaining minor injuries. "Four injured medical students have been discharged from the hospital, and the fifth has received stitches. He is expected to be discharged soon, the Principal added. Referring to the action taken against the culprits, Dr Sudan said, an outsider who was a former medical student allegedly provoked the students."

Study: Lack of sleep can cause stroke, Alzheimer's

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

If you are suffering with sleep apnea and spending less time in deep sleep, then you have an increased risk of stroke, Alzheimer's disease and cognitive decline, according to a study that looked at sleep factors and biomarkers measuring the health of the brain's white matter, which is important to connect different parts of the brain. One of the biomarkers, white matter hyperintensities, are tiny lesions visible on brain scans. White matter hyperintensities become more common with age or with uncontrolled high blood pressure.

The other biomarker measures the integrity of the axons, which form the nerve fibers that connect nerve cells. "These biomarkers are sensitive signs of early cerebrovascular disease," said study author Diego Z. Carvalho, of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and a member of the American Academy of Neurology.

"Finding that severe sleep apnea and a reduction in slow-wave sleep are associated with these biomarkers is important since there is no treatment for these changes in the brain, so we need to find ways to prevent them from happening or getting worse,"

said Carvalho. The researchers studied 140 people with obstructive sleep apnea with an average age of 73 who had a brain scan and also an overnight study in a sleep lab. The participants did not have cognitive issues at the start of the study and had not developed dementia by the end of the study, they said. A total of 34 per cent had mild, 32 per cent had moderate and 34 per cent had severe sleep apnea. The sleep study examined the time people spent in slow-wave sleep, which is also called non-REM stage 3, or deep sleep, and considered one of the best markers of sleep quality.

BSES Yamuna Power Limited, Delhi
... A joint venture with Govt. of NCT of Delhi

TENDER NOTICE Date: 16.05.2023

Sealed tenders under two Bid Systems (Unpriced & Priced) are invited for the following job from all bidders

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BY/23-24/RS/S/S/VK/11	LAYING OF SEWERLINE AT BSES COLONY, DELHI	6.30 Crs.	6.30 Lakhs	05.06.2023 14:00 Hrs	05.06.2023 15:30 Hrs
CMC/BY/23-24/RS/Sk/S/SV/12	SUPPLY OF LV PANELS INCLUDING INTEGRATION WITH SCADA SYSTEM AS PER THE SPECIFICATION	3.95 Crore	7.90 Lakh	05.06.2023 14:00 Hrs	05.06.2023 16:00 Hrs

Cost of Tender Document: ₹ 1180/-

For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submitment of tender documents etc. please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com →Tenders→BSES YAMUNA POWER LIMITED Open Tenders. Head (Contracts)

Regd.Off: BSES Yamuna Power Ltd, Shakti Kiran Building, Karkardooma, Delhi-110032 | CIN: U40109DL2001PLC111525
TEL: 011-41247111 | Fax:011-4124 7787 | Website: www.bsesdelhi.com

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Abhishek Sharma/ Kanika Sharma/ LBGUR00005834391/ LBGUR00005878699	Plot No. E -17, Block E, Sector 89, Situated In "The Retreat", Village Riawazpur, Tehsil & Distt. Faridabad (Admeasuring an area of 299 Sq Yrds/ 09 May, 2023	January 02, 2023 Rs. 9,027,685/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Amarendra Kumar/ Chandra Mukhi/ LBDEL00001104826	Flat No. D01/044/4, First Floor, Dilshad Colony Ext.- 2 at Village Brahmputra Alias Bhopra Tehsil And Distt., Ghaziabad (U.P.) (Admeasuring an area of 750 Sq Feet/ 10 May, 2023	November 30, 2022 Rs. 5,42,449/-	Delhi/ NCR
3.	Pratap Chandra Khilari/ Monika Rout/ LBGUR00002973642	Flat No. 907, Tower-D, 9th Floor, Rof Aalayas Tower, Sec-102, Gurgaon Haryana. (Admeasuring an Area of 535 Square Feet/ 08 May, 2023	November 30, 2022 Rs. 21,30,730/-	Delhi/ NCR

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

Date : May 16, 2023 Authorized Officer
Place : Delhi/NCR ICICI Bank Limited



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Karnataka aftermath

Politics is as much about winning elections as it is about running Government

The Bharatiya Janata Party's humiliating defeat in Karnataka boosted the morale of the Opposition, especially of Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra. It has decided to join hands with small parties and fight jointly against the saffron party in the 2024 general election. Top leaders of all three MVA constituents, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Congress, and Shiv Sena (Uddav Balasaheb Thackeray) met at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's residence in Mumbai on Sunday. Something like the Karnataka victory Opposition leaders were eagerly waiting and hoping for; it is not just about the BJP's loss in one big state; it is also about learning lessons from the poll result. Many of them feel that, with proper planning and strategy, similar outcomes from the forthcoming State and general elections could be realistically expected. But politics is not just about winning elections; it is also about running government. The Congress will soon realize where the shoe pinches. In its desperation to win the Karnataka election, the grand old party tried to compete with, if not outdo, the Aam Aadmi Party. It has promised a scheme aims to provide Rs 2,000 a month to every woman heading a household, Rs 3,000 to unemployed graduates and Rs 1,500 to unemployed diploma holders every month for two years, 10 kg of rice per person per month to below poverty line or BPL families, 200 units of free electricity for every single household, and free bus tickets for women to travel around in the State.



These promises are estimated to cost Rs 62,000 crore a year to Karnataka. This amount is more than the deficit of Rs 60,581 crore for 2022-23. That was a deficit of 2.6 per cent of the gross state domestic product (GSDP). If the Congress Government in the State decides to redeem its pledges, the fiscal deficit is likely to cross 5 per cent, which would be above the 4 per cent cap the Finance Commission has imposed. This would reverse a good trend. In the last fiscal, the BJP government had managed to bring down the fiscal deficit by Rs 8,703, as compared with 2021-22, leading to a revision of the fiscal deficit to 2.8 per cent of GSDP for FY23 against Budget estimates of 2.82 per cent. This is likely to adversely affect the investment scenario in the State, with all the attendant ills, some of which may become evident within 12 months—that is, till the next general election. At any rate, infusion of more populism in the political economy is not a sustainable solution to counter the BJP. The problem with the Opposition is that it is focused only on defeating the BJP; they have hardly any viable alternative to offer to the electorate. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the other hand, offers growth and progress, and it is evident in infrastructure development. The Opposition must think beyond populism.

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PICTALK



Hindu devotees offer prayers at Bhadrakali temple, in Amritsar

Imran: The pied piper of Pakistan



RAVI SHANKER KAPOOR

He is the embodiment of Pakistan, exhibiting all pathologies the country is afflicted with, and yet prominent Pakistanis are supporting him

There is something about Imran Khan. He is a charmer—in every possible sense of the word. In his younger days, he became a national hero because of his cricketer prowess—and also a playboy. Today, he has become the pied piper of Pakistan, striving to charm the entire nation to doom.

Pakistan's former prime minister has many skills, including the talent to abuse and misuse language. For instance, in an address broadcast on YouTube Saturday night, he said, "Freedom does not come easily. You have to snatch it. You have to sacrifice for it." This might look like a quote from one of the patriots who fought against the British for American Independence. But we must remember that it is 'freedom with Pakistani or Islamic characteristics.'

Imran's utopia is not in the future but in seventh-century Arabia. In a newspaper article in January last year, he described his ideal, Riyasat-i-Madina: "In Islamic civilization, the manifestation of our spiritual principles happened in the Prophet's (SAW) Madina. Besides many other important principles, there were five very important guiding principles upon which the state of Madina was built." He listed the five guiding principles as: unity; justice and the rule of law leading to meritocracy; strong moral and ethical foundation; inclusion of all humans in progress and prosperity; and, finally, the quest for knowledge.

"The first principle which laid the foundation for Riyasat-i-Madina was of unity," Imran wrote. "The idea of unity (Tawhid) comes from the Quran and in a sense, the entire religion is based on that. From unity of God to unity of mankind, it is the most fundamental principle of Islam... Besides Muslims, there were Christians, Jews, Sabians and other groups who were all woven into a unitary communal whole under the state of Madina."

These are nice words, but unfortunately, the reality was not as nice. Encyclopaedia Britannica, quoting the Islamic tradition, says that the Jewish tribe of Qurayzah suffered heavily as "all adult males are executed, and the



women and children are enslaved."

Imran Khan wants Pakistan to be modelled on a 7th-century arrangement. When he was prime minister, he did succeed to some extent, as his regime was nightmarish for religious minorities and heretics. In the first two years of Khan's administration, according to the online news magazine The Diplomat, 31 members of religious minorities were killed, 58 were injured, and 25 were targeted by blasphemy cases.

Terrorists are Imran's heroes, the most prominent of them being Osama bin Laden, whom he glorified as a martyr.

On women, his views are as regressive as that of any other medievalist. He held women responsible for rape as they wear "very few clothes." This is from the Oxford-educated former playboy cricketer! But then just as a cannibal with impeccable table manners is still a cannibal, an Islamist speaking flawless English is still an Islamist.

He is Pakistan's national hero (widely expected to win elections if held today). In a way, he is the embodiment of Pakistan, exhibiting all pathologies the country is afflicted with.

Much of Pakistan's pathologies are a product and func-



IMRAN HELD WOMEN RESPONSIBLE FOR RAPE AS THEY WEAR 'VERY FEW CLOTHES.' THIS IS FROM THE OXFORD-EDUCATED CRICKETER! BUT THEN JUST AS A CANNIBAL WITH IMPECCABLE TABLE MANNERS IS STILL A CANNIBAL, AN ISLAMIST SPEAKING FLAWLESS ENGLISH IS STILL AN ISLAMIST

tion of its unique character: it is perhaps the only country in the world that has imported both its faith and its language. While there are dozens of countries with imported religions, our western neighbour is the only one that also got its national language, Urdu, from another country and that too from its mortal enemy—India (That is, a mortal enemy from its own perspective, not India's). Much of its faith too comes from India—the Bareilvi and Deobandi versions of Islam.

Come to think of it, Bangladesh, which was East Pakistan for 24 years, also separated from India on the basis of religion. When it seceded from Pakistan, it decided to continue as a separate nation, and yet it is not a creator and exporter of jihadist terror. Perhaps because it has not tried to import language and culture.

Pakistan began as a trust with Islam. Downplaying its own roots, culture, and languages—Punjabi and Sindhi have been systematically slighted—and distorting its history for decades, Pakistan ended up with a covenant with Islamism. Ruler after ruler—military or civil—has strengthened the scope and scale of Islamisation. But its heartbreak is the

condescending attitude of Arabs and Turks to it. Prominent Pakistani journalist Hassan Nisar points out that Arabs and Turks despise Pakistanis as being lesser Muslims, and yet his compatriots identify themselves with Arabs and Turks. "Our biggest crisis is identity crisis," Nisar says.

It is the search for a national identity, for its soul—which they can't find in the land they are born in—that propels them to look outwards, look askance at the Arabs and Turks despite the latter's un concealed contempt for Pakistanis.

And yet prominent Pakistanis like Nisar and Aftab Iqbal, another refined and erudite broadcaster, are supporting Imran, the embodiment of Pakistan's pathologies. But then there were also many among Germany's intellectual elite who supported Hitler and the Nazis. Martin Heidegger, one of the most important philosophers of the last century, was one of them. There were also Nobel Prize-winning scientists Philipp Lenard and Johannes Stark who supported Hitler. Imran is following in the footsteps of Hitler.

(The writer is Resident Editor, The Pioneer, Delhi. He is the author of There Is No Such Thing As Hate Speech, Bloomsbury, 2017)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BAJRANG BALI AND ALI

Sir — Congress Party deserves congratulations for its spectacular win in the Karnataka assembly elections. The BJP all efforts in Karnataka came to an end as it was decimated to only 65 seats and its efforts failed to retain its foothold in South India. Karnataka voters have sent a clear signal of change and defeated BJP and supported the Congress party which only talked about developing Karnataka. It is said that one party has opened the shop of love and one party has opened the market of hate and Karnataka people have shown wisdom by choosing love instead of hate. BJP communal rhetoric polarization failed and Congress has scored a stupendous victory and ousted BJP from its lone southern citadel with a comfortable majority. The main factor for the win of Congress was Rahul Gandhi's Bharath Jodo Yatra which played a key role. Another factor that worked for Congress was the systematic campaign targeting the corruption of the BJP in the state. Another factor was Hindus and Muslims unitedly voted for Congress and proved that nobody can divide Bajrang Balis and Alis. Now the BJP Party should learn a lesson that it should stop the strategy of polarization to win the elections.

Zeeshaan | Kazipet

MOTHERS DAY

Sir — A mother is the most important person in everyone's life. She sacrifices her happiness for her child. No one else can care for their kids the way a mother does. First of all, mother is a word that fills everyone with emotions. A mother is certainly the most important human being in everyone's life. A mother's love for her child certainly cannot be compared with anything. Her level of forgiveness is unmatched. Mothers share a deep connection with their children. This connection certainly cannot be matched by anyone else.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

NEP FOCUSES ON SKILL-BASED EDUCATION

Sir — The NEP emphasizes the holistic

Kudos to the Karnataka voters



Kudos to the Karnataka voter, those who gave a tight slap in the face of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi who in his (11 days) 19 rallies, sloganeering and 6 roadshows didn't talk anything about local issues nor they spoke a single word about Karnataka's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governments achievement as a 40 per cent corruption government! Instead, he focussed on Hindu Muslim issues, the Kerala story (but the voter told him The Karnataka Story), Bajrangbali etc., but remained silent on the issue of wrestlers' protests and the Manipur riot. It's shameful for a National Party like BJP to lose 40 seats even after PM Modi canvassing and holding rally after rally. It's more pity for Modi that no PM in the past campaigned like this. Modi's magic is waning fast and he too is defeatable. Nothing is permanent. There is no place for hatred in Karnataka. Voters did not want Congress mukt Bharat but voted for

BJP mukt Karnataka. I'm sure if the opposition remains strict in its unity, then what BJP thinks to be an easy victory for the 2024 Lok Sabha election, will be a tough fight for its survival. Hope from this defeat of the BJP, PM Modi should understand the mode of the public. Only due to his taking sides with Adani and others the neutral voters who otherwise support him and BJP will vote against them. PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah may be very experienced politicians but they are not so experienced to see how and why neutral voters' minds swing suddenly.

Victory for democracy. Hope to see a rejuvenated Congress Party, which won 136 seats, the biggest win for any party in the state since 1989. Despite its many failings, Congress stormed to a recent record-breaking majority banking on a strong anti-corruption plank and a host of social welfare promises. Whether it's Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo route at Karnataka (wins 37 against 51 contested), or felled 46 Lingayats, 37 won. The result also shows how voters rightly threw out 10 of 17 defectors who brought down the Congress-JD(S) government in 2019. Finally, congratulations to the Congress leaders and workers, and hope the new government will deliver the best for good governance, social justice, communal harmony and welfare programmes.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Shivakumar leads from the front

The architect of Karnataka victory is none other than Shivakumar who single-handedly led Congress to victory



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

The Karnataka electorate has delivered the State on a platter to the Indian National Congress. The fact that the people gave a befitting victory cutting down to size all communal, casteist and corrupt elements despite the "double-engine growth" slogan is a rebuff to the party that was in power for the last four years. The BJP Government in the State has degenerated the administration into the embodiment of corruption and the common man started describing it as a 40 per cent Government. Karnataka has never seen corruption of this magnitude anytime in its history since the days of Tipu Sultan and his father Hyder Ali.

The credit for carving out this win should go to D K Shivakumar, who led the party's campaign across the State in spite of the central agencies troubling him on a host of issues. He assured the Congress High Command that he would deliver victory and he presented them with a garden blooming with roses instead of a rose flower. Shivakumar masterminded the campaign pulverizing the efforts of extra-constitution-



al authorities like B L Santhosh of the BJP who had dreamt of reaching the Vidhana Soudha through the back door and playing the communal cards. The master stroke which floored the Deve Gowda family would remain etched in the memory of people's minds as the Dhritrashtra of Karnataka politics had hoped to anoint his son H DH Kumaraswamy as chief minister in the hope of a hung assembly.

Though the result of the assembly election was declared by Saturday noon, the Congress High Command is

yet to choose the chief minister candidate from the 135 members of the legislative assembly. There was no confusion in the party at any stage of the election process about who would be the chief minister candidate. It was Shivakumar all the way. You ask anybody in the street who their preferred leader was and Pat came the reply "DKS". Except for a cameo appearance by the trio of the Gandhi family, it was Shivakumar who masterminded the campaign undertaking a physically challenging journey through the scorching summer sun.

The chief minister of Karnataka should be elected not in New Delhi but in Bengaluru. The voters wanted a change and they should get a refreshing and reassuring face as their leader. Siddaramaiah had his time and proved that he is a spent force during the last term itself. Shivakumar was the one who held together the MLAs from further poaching by the BJP. While the Brahmin Mafia led by Santhosh and Prahlad Joshy went to the extent of communalising the hearts, Shivakumar and the

Congress reached out to the voters with an impressive mandate and hitherto unasked questions.

It was a David versus Goliath show and the voters in the State would not take it lying down if the winner was picked up by persons who never campaigned or contested this election. It was Shivakumar's show, a leader in the mould of vintage Congress leaders like Nijaliggappa, Devaraj Urs and Hanumanthaiah. Their tenures are known as the Golden Days of the Congress. The Karnataka victory is a reminder to Congress that they would remain with the party if the leadership plays the game in the spirit of the game. The architect of Karnataka's victory is none other than Shivakumar whose masterly strokes brought to mind that wonderful man Gundappa Ranganath Viswanath who perfected India's victories in many Test matches with his beautiful footwork and stylish square cuts.

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

ests, and engage in experiential learning. This will foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, leading to advancements in various fields.

The implementation of the NEP requires collaborative efforts from the government, educational institutions, teachers, students, and all stakeholders involved. By embracing the principles and goals of the NEP, India can transform its education system into a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready one, preparing students for success in the 21st century.

Rajpal Singh Chouhan | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

Being grateful will make an individual healthier and happier



SAKSHI SETHI

Every time a person says a sincere thank you to someone or thinks about a time when someone helped them in crisis or listened to them when they were feeling low or gives them a shoulder to cry on forms a part of gratitude. The term gratitude is the act of recognizing and acknowledging the good things that happen, resulting in a state of appreciation. It is one of the sweet shortcuts to finding peace of mind and happiness inside and is synonymous with appreciation, acknowledgement and respect. Gratitude is one of the most powerful forms of energy generated by a person. It is like magic. No matter how the day is going, simple acts of gratitude can bring thoughts, feelings, and energy in an instant, thereby shifting the perspective and helping make ordinary moments turn extraordinary.

It is a tool for life. There are several benefits of practicing gratitude such as it reduces stress; enhances relationships; improves self-care, eases depression, improves sleep; enhances empathy; boosts dopamine and serotonin; elevates the mood and many more. Research shows that gratitude increases positivity, helps sleep better, improves self-esteem and reduces stress. It is like a magnet for abundance as it aligns with the energy of abundance. Gratitude is strongly related to well-being.

Gratitude is like a short, light-hearted poem accompanied by animation. Being grateful will make an individual healthier and happier. It can be expressed in multiple ways. Sometimes a smile or a handshake, instead of a thank you for acknowledging the junior at work for taking the initiative to ease one's workload or being thankful to teachers and mentors for their support and guidance or being grateful to ourselves for being financially independent and many more can do the trick.



Gratitude is the key to a happy life and should be practiced daily. It is a perspective – a choice. People feel and express gratitude in multiple ways. It helps people refocus on what they have instead of what they lack. And, although it may feel contrived at first, this mental state grows stronger with use and practice.

Practising gratitude and appreciation keeps an individual mentally strong. It assists people in feeling more positive in emotions, appreciating good experiences, improvising their health, dealing with adversity and developing stronger relationships. Gratitude allows people to refocus on what they have rather than what they lack. And while it may appear contrived at first, this mental state strengthens with time and practice. Being grateful and appreciating one's own life as it is, is necessary for truly enjoying it. Gratitude and appreciation can help to fortify a person in times of adversity and strengthen their relationships. Being grateful for the situation even if the person doesn't like everything about it, allows them to be thankful for the opportunity to learn something new.

Remember, to always make a point to appreciate life. Doing this makes an individual already on the way to success. It takes a deep sense of self to realize the place in the world without simply going through the motions. One can spend hours at work or while away time at home. But if one can take a moment to appreciate everything one has, one can approach life with a positive mindset and be successful and that is the mantra to success.

(The writer is an educator)

The implications of Pakistan's implosion



DEEPAK SINHA

Much like in Pakistan, religion and ethnicity are increasingly seen as tools to spread divisiveness aimed at fulfilling political agendas



As we watch Pakistan crash and burn on live television, it is too early to say if we are witnessing the beginning of the end or just the end of the beginning. Even in this age of misinformation and deep fakes what can be said with certainty is that, much in the manner of Humpty Dumpty, Pakistan has had a great fall and all the Imrans, Shariefs, Bhutto's and Asims put together, can never make Pakistan whole again.

Of course, none of this was unexpected. We have seen Pakistan slowly go bankrupt, with inflation soaring and its currency collapsing as the impact of climate change, the pandemic, endemic corruption and sheer mismanagement have taken their toll, leaving its economy in tatters. While always known for its rather rumbustious politics, with opposition parties at each other's throats and the military always looming over their shoulders, this time things seem a bit different.

For one, the Army's image has been badly scorched with public accusations of corruption against the top brass, which has lost much of its public support and created cracks within its ranks. Now, as per unconfirmed reports, dissensions at the very top, have adversely impacted its cohesion. Add to that increasing terror attacks by the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), radicalisation within and troubles in the provinces, especially Balochistan. All in all, it has been lashed by a perfect storm for some time now, and something had to give. So, it did, with Imran Khan's arrest becoming the hair that broke the proverbial Camels back.



PAKISTAN TEHREEK-E-INSAAF (PTI) IS EXTREMELY POPULAR. IT IS TAKING ON THE ARMY PUBLICLY AND SHOWING UP ITS VULNERABILITIES

From our point of view, Imran Khan's arrest is not a bad thing. The charming, affable fun-loving cricketer of yore is long gone. Replaced by a born-again religious zealot who sees India as fair game and the stepping stone to fulfilling his ambitions of leading Pakistan once again. While he and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are extremely popular, taking on the Army publicly and showing its vulnerabilities is bound to end with a loss for all parties. In the circumstances, we obviously must err on the side of caution and be on the alert, as a terror strike against us to divert attention cannot be ruled out.

Apart from the childish desire to gloat at the situation Pakistan finds itself in, some issues of consequence emerge which we would do well to give serious thought to. Some worry, and rightfully so, that instability and the emergence of a failed state with nuclear weapons on our doorstep places us in a very tenuous security situation. Unfortunately, there is little we can do about that except guard our borders with even more care and leave it to those who have influence there, the United States and China, to neutralise the nuclear issue, as not only were they both complicit in Pakistan turning nuclear but are also not safe from what may occur there if that country becomes unmanageable.

The emergence of Bangladesh ushered in the death knell of the "two nation theory" which we believed had been formulated and promoted by Jinnah and had resulted in Partition, the prime reason for all our troubles since then. Nothing could be further from the truth and Jinnah was, in fact, only a cat's paw for the British. As Narendra Sarila, former diplomat and author of *The Shadow of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India's Partition*, puts it,

Partition was only just a means to an end for the British and Americans to pursue and protect their strategic interests in the region. As Prof. Antony Copley's review of the book states: "With imperial control of the subcontinent clearly at an end (even if Linlithgow doubted this and Churchill even more so) Britain's primary consideration became one of defence of her strategic interests in Persia and the Middle East together with meeting any post-war threat from the Soviet Union and China.

The Post-Hostilities Planning Staff of the Cabinet alerted Churchill to this need on 19 May 1945, it was echoed by the British Chiefs of Staff on 18 April 1946, and all were endorsed by Wavell and Auchinleck. Pakistan and partition were seen to be the answer and Atlee merely followed suit. Possibly Congress's

betrayal in 1942 pointed to Pakistan as the best prospect for Britain's strategic defence needs though it was hoped these would be strengthened were India to be persuaded to join the Commonwealth. Here was indeed the future of the Baghdad pact and CENTO." This British strategy, in retrospect, badly backfired, putting themselves at greater risk and now adding to Pakistan's irrelevance.

Finally, what is most pertinent for us from these events in Pakistan is that they can well become a precursor of what we are likely to face in the not-too-distant future. Sadly, our developmental models since Independence have been quite similar little emphasis or attention given to education or health. Much like in Pakistan, religion and ethnicity are increasingly seen as tools to spread divisiveness and exclusion aimed only at fulfilling political agendas with little thought for our future. Clearly, without changes we are heading down that same road and it will be our future generations who will confront the same ignominy and shame that stare Pakistanis in the face today.

(The author, a military veteran is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and a Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)

AI is no substitute for human intellect, it lacks human touch

Writing is an art that requires creativity, human experience, and emotions; all of these are absent in AI argues Reva Malhotra

Can ChatGPT replace PR professionals? I asked ChatGPT itself. Here is what it returned:

"As an AI language model, I can assist in certain tasks that PR professionals perform but cannot replace them. PR professionals perform an array of tasks that require human expertise, judgment, and interpersonal skills... This involves complex human interactions, nuanced decision-making, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, which are difficult for AI models to replicate."

Summarised beautifully in just a few lines by ChatGPT, the above lines are not the words of a platform too modest to toot its own horn but the measured assessment of a chatbot in its most succinct form. The AI platform and

even human experts and industry professionals believe that ChatGPT can be an excellent co-worker but isn't likely to replace human resources.

Since its launch in November 2022, experts worldwide have tested the AI chatbot in various scenarios only to reach one conclusion — the platform performs best with human intervention. There is almost a unanimous opinion that ChatGPT can churn out very-well written text. Still, its inability to understand the context and intent (like humans) reduces the platform to a tool that can only augment a human's work and reduce the turnaround time but not emerge as the replacement.

Human supremacy Ideation: The major limitation

that holds back the AI platform is its inability to scout topics that could generate excitement around a business. ChatGPT can't match the human skill of developing story ideas that connect a business and its product to its customers. Often, PR professionals don't just make the company's pitch relatable for its clients and customers but come up with a story for it.

Finding the USP of a brand and weaving it into an interesting story for the target audience is a nuanced job that requires reading between the lines. Unlike human sensibilities, the AI brain isn't cultivated enough to gauge the selling point of a brand and think of story ideas just by reading the company's background and vision. This inability

to comprehend the sub-text makes the platform subservient to human intelligence.

Profiling: Another crucial part of a PR professional's job is to take the story of the founder/CEO to the people in a way that invokes interest in the brand and its products/services.

The profile is meticulously drafted to help the founder/CEO win the trust of customers, clients, and investors. The humane milestones of the person's journey are given as much space as other remarkable achievements of the individual. The idea is to present the head of the company as someone who not only has the skill and vision to lead and has the best interests of clientele and investors. **Communication is**



the key: Yet another aspect where humans take the front seat is the ability to communicate and take feedback. PR professionals and businesses hold extensive discussions to develop narratives, campaigns, write-ups, and social media posts that capture media atten-

tion and, through them, the attention of the consumers at large. This process comes full circle when final tweaks (if any) are made following the client's feedback. While ChatGPT is an interactive platform, feeding in all the pointers to get the perfect write-up accommodating all client inclinations isn't viable without human intervention.

IQ without EQ: ChatGPT boasts impressive abilities like language translation, writing songs, answering research questions, and even generating computer code, but despite its aptitude, the platform lags behind humans for the lack of emotional intelligence. The limitations in understanding context make its content sound unnatural and machine-generated.

By its nature, the PR content is drafted not just to express but also to impress. Hence, the emotional quotient is as important as the intelligence quotient for those drafting PR strategies and write-ups. While the formal nature of text generated by ChatGPT fails to touch readers, a write-up penned by PR professionals syncs with the brand image and is peppered with emotional anecdotes and subtle humour. Therefore, a piece of content created with human intervention has more chance of striking a chord with the readers.

Pen vs Software Some centuries ago, the world's intelligentsia argued that the pen is mightier than the sword. It was a radical idea at a time when swords and ammunition

were frequently used to usurp land and dispose of governments. However, the passage of time proved that the pen was mightier than the sword. We are witnessing a similar battle between the pen and the software. While there is definite merit to the argument that technology has advanced dramatically, it should also not be ignored that writing is not just about generating text. It's an art that requires creativity, human experience, and emotions — all of which are tough for a machine to follow.

(The writer is a marketing communications consultant. Her expertise includes advocacy, B2C PR, media messaging and positioning, content strategy and multi-channel marketing. Views expressed are personal)

Sunak welcomes Ukrainian Prez



PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday laid out a warm welcome for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on a surprise visit to the UK and reiterated his support for the war-torn European nation by offering further military support, including air defence missiles and armed drones.

Downing Street said Zelenskyy updated Sunak on his meetings with European leaders over the weekend as Ukraine prepares for an intensified period of military activity.

The visit also comes ahead of the Council of Europe Summit in Iceland, which Sunak is due to travel for this week ahead of a visit to Tokyo for the G7 Summit in Japan.

"This is a crucial moment in Ukraine's resistance to a terrible war of aggression they did not choose or provoke. They need the sustained support of the international community to defend against the barrage of unrelenting and indiscriminate attacks that have been their daily reality for over a year," said Sunak.

"We must not let them down. The frontlines of [Russian President] Putin's war of aggression may be in Ukraine but the fault lines stretch all over the world. It is in all our interest to ensure Ukraine succeeds and Putin's barbarism is not rewarded," he said. The British Indian leader said the UK is sustaining its support to Ukraine with tanks, training, ammunition and armoured vehicles.

"And this message of solidarity will ring loud in all my meetings with fellow world leaders in the days ahead," he added. Downing Street said Sunak will use his tour of Iceland and Japan to continue to push for sus-

tained international support for Ukraine, both in terms of military aid and long-term security assurances.

Last week, the UK confirmed that it had provided Storm Shadow precision missiles to Ukraine. This is the first long-range cruise missile in Ukraine's arsenal and will be critical in helping the country defend against the relentless bombardment of their critical national infrastructure.

On Monday, Sunak confirmed the further UK provision of hundreds of air defence missiles and further unmanned aerial systems including hundreds of new long-range attack drones with a range of over 200km. These will all be delivered over the coming months as Ukraine prepares to intensify its resistance against Russia, Downing Street said.

During their meeting, both leaders discussed what support Ukraine needs from the international community, in terms of immediate military equipment and long-term defences.

Zelenskyy held talks with Sunak at his countryside retreat of Chequers, marking the first world leader the British Prime Minister has hosted at the residence. "The Prime Minister outlined the new package of support the UK has announced today, including further air defence missiles and drones. This builds on the confirmation last week that the UK has become the first country to provide long-range cruise missiles to Ukraine," Downing Street said in a readout of their meeting. Sunak is said to have reiterated that the UK will continue its support to ensure Ukraine secures a "just and lasting peace", which includes both immediate military support and providing long-term security assistance to guarantee Ukraine's ability to deter aggression.

Poland receives first US-made HIMARS rocket

Warsaw (AP): Poland has received its first shipment of US-made HIMARS rocket launchers as part of a defense upgrade amid security concerns due to the war in neighbouring Ukraine.

Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak and military officials attended an acquisition ceremony at a Warsaw air base on Monday.

Blaszczak said that combat in Ukraine had proven the value of the HIMARS and that NATO member Poland was seeking to procure additional launchers, with a goal of acquiring some 500 units.

"We are watching the developments in Ukraine, and we know that artillery has a key role in the war, in repelling the Russian invasion," he said.

Under a 2019 contract, Poland is spending some USD 414 million (380 million euros) to buy 18 advanced combat HIMARS launchers and two HIMARS training launchers, with ammunition and related equipment.

The deal includes logistics and training. The launchers will go to the 1st Artillery Brigade in northeastern Poland, Blaszczak said.

"Their task will be to deter (an) aggressor and strengthen Poland's armed forces on the nation's and NATO eastern flank," the minister said. A HIMARS academy is to be launched in the city of Torun to provide logistics, servicing and training, including for troops from other NATO countries that have or plan to get the launchers.

China sentences 78-yr old US citizen to life in prison

AP ■ BEIJING

China sentenced a 78-year-old United States citizen to life in prison Monday on spying charges, in a case that reflects the deterioration in ties between Beijing and Washington over recent years.

Details of the charges against John Shing-Wan Leung, who holds permanent residency in Hong Kong, have not been publicly released.

Leung was detained April 15, 2021, by the local bureau of China's counterintelligence agency in the southeastern city of Suzhou, according to a news release posted by the city's intermediate court on its social media site.

His detention came after China had closed its borders and imposed tight domestic travel restrictions and social controls to fight the spread of COVID-19.

Such investigations and trials are held behind closed doors and little information is released other than vague

accusations of infiltration, gathering secrets and threatening state security.

Relations between Washington and Beijing are at their lowest in decades amid disputes over trade, technology, human rights and China's increasingly aggressive approach toward its territorial claims involving self-governing Taiwan and the South China Sea. High-level government visits have been on hold and US companies are delaying major investments amid mixed messaging from Beijing.

The sentencing comes as President Joe Biden is travelling to Hiroshima, Japan, for the Group of Seven major industrial nations summit, followed by a visit to Papua New Guinea, a Pacific island nation in a region where China has sought to increase its economic, military and diplomatic influence.

After Beijing's gains in the area, the US and its Asia-Pacific partners stepped up their regional presence, offering investments and financial

support rivaling those furnished by China.

Now the world's second-largest economy, China is expanding its footprint in ports, railways and other infrastructure from Europe to Southeast Asia and beyond.

While the Suzhou court offered no indication of a tie to overall China-US relations, spying charges are highly selective and evidence backing them up is not released. That is standard practice among most countries, who wish to secure their personal connections, networks and access to information.

However, China's authoritarian political system and the ruling Communist Party's absolute control over legal matters, civil society and freedom of information forestalls demands for further information, as well as court appeals.

The US Embassy in Beijing said it was aware of the case, but could not comment further due to privacy concerns.

Talks on raising debt limit in US today

Rehoboth Beach (US): US President Joe Biden and congressional leaders will likely resume talks on Tuesday at the White House over the debt limit, the president said on Sunday, as the nation continues to edge closer to its legal borrowing authority with no agreement in sight.

The meeting was initially supposed to be on Friday, but was abruptly postponed so staff-level talks could continue before Biden and the four congressional leaders huddled for a second time. Administration and congressional officials said on Sunday that a meeting has not been finalised, although Tuesday was the likeliest option as Biden returns to Washington on Monday and is scheduled to leave for the Group of 7 summit in Japan on Wednesday.

Biden did not detail much progress in the talks, but said he remained hopeful that an agreement could be reached with Republicans to avoid what would be an unprecedented debt default, which could trigger a financial catastrophe.

"I remain optimistic because I am a congenial optimist," Biden told reporters while out for a bike ride in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. "But I really think there is a desire on their part as well as ours to reach an agreement. I think we will be able to do it."

Aides said talks had continued throughout the weekend. But at least publicly, there was little indication that either the White House or House Republicans had budged from their initial positions. Biden has called on lawmakers to lift the debt limit without preconditions, warning that the nation's borrowing authority should not be used to impose deep spending cuts and other conservative policy demands.

"We have not reached the crunch point yet," Biden told reporters on Saturday before flying to his beach home for the weekend. "There is real discussion about some changes we all could make. We are not there yet." On Sunday, senior administration officials said the talks among staff had so far been productive after Biden and the leaders ended their first meeting last Tuesday without a breakthrough. AP

Opp wins big in Thailand

AP ■ BANGKOK

Ballots tallied Monday showed voters in Thailand wanted change after nine years under a former general who took power in a coup, with the main opposition parties easily besting other contenders in the general election. The opposition Move Forward Party outperformed even optimistic projections and appeared poised to capture almost all 33 House seats in the capital Bangkok. Along with the Pheu Thai Party, the favored opposition group, Move Forward campaigned for reform of the military and the monarchy.

Move Forward put those issues closer to the heart of its platform, earning a more radical reputation. Its outspoken support for minor reforms of the monarchy, while winning younger voters, antagonized conservatives committed to the royal institution. Incumbent Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who came to power in a 2014 coup, was blamed for a stuttering economy, pandemic response shortcomings and thwarting democratic reforms — a particular sore point with younger voters.

"This is people saying that we want change," said Saowanee T. Alexander, a professor at Ubon Ratchathani University in northeastern Thailand. "They are saying that they could no longer take it. The people are very frustrated. They want change, and they could achieve it." With more than 99% of ballots counted early Monday, Move Forward appeared to have a small edge over Pheu



The Move Forward Party leader and prime ministerial candidate, Pita Limjaroenrat, waves to the crowd during the General Election in Bangkok, Thailand, on Saturday.

Thai, whose leaders conceded Sunday they might not finish on top following voter turnout of about 39 million, or 75% of registered voters. Move Forward leader Pita Limjaroenrat tweeted that he is ready to bring about change should he be the country's 30th prime minister. "Whether you agree or disagree with me, I will be your prime minister. Whether you have voted for me or not, I will serve you," he wrote. Sunday's winner is not assured the right to form the new government. A joint session of the 500-seat House of Representatives will be held with the 250-member Senate in July to select the prime minister, a process widely seen as undemocratic because the military appointed the Senators, who will vote along with elected lawmakers.

Sudan's military chief freezes bank accounts of rival group amid truce attempts

Cairo (AP): Sudan's military chief has ordered the freezing of all bank accounts belonging to a rival paramilitary force. The two sides have battled for weeks across Sudan, pushing the troubled country to the brink of all-out war.

The decree, issued on Sunday by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, will target the official accounts of the Rapid Support Forces in Sudanese bank, as well as the accounts of all companies belonging to the group, the state news agency SUNA reported.

It remains unclear what immediate effect the freezing would have on the RSF and how Burhan's orders are to be enforced.

Over the past decade, the paramilitary force has amassed great wealth through the gradual acquisition of Sudanese financial institutions and gold reserves. Burhan on Sunday replaced Sudan's Central Bank governor and on Monday, he

removed the country's police chief and sacked two ambassadors at the Foreign Ministry. The military chief did not elaborate on his moves.

Since mid-April, the Sudanese army, led by Burhan, and the RSF, commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, have been locked in a power struggle that has forced thousands to flee to neighboring countries.

Chaos has taken over much of the country since the conflict broke out. The capital, Khartoum, has been reduced to an urban battlefield and the western Darfur region is rocked by deadly tribal clashes. The violence has also killed over 600 people, including civilians, according to the WHO.

A two-day outbreak of fighting in Gineena, the capital of West Darfur province, killed scores of people last week, said the Sudan Doctors Syndicate, a group that tracks civilian casualties.

'Girl wounded in school shooting dies'

Belgrade (AP): A girl who was gravely wounded in a mass shooting in a school in Belgrade earlier this month has died, bringing the death toll to 10, authorities said on Monday. The girl died on Monday morning at a children's clinic in Belgrade, Serbia's health ministry said, according to official media. The girl had been in critical condition with head injuries following the May 3 attack, said a statement.

The shooting happened in the Vladislav Ribnikar elementary school in central Belgrade when a 13-year-old boy took his father's gun and opened fire, initially killing eight children and a school guard, and wounding six students and a teacher. The first ever school shooting in Serbia stunned the Balkan country. A day later a 20-year-old randomly fired from two villages south of Belgrade, killing eight people and wounding 14.

Slovakia gets technocratic caretaker government until early poll in Sept

AP ■ BRATISLAVA (SLOVAKIA)

Slovakia's President Zuzana Caputova swore in on Monday a government of technocrats to lead the country to snap elections in September amid a political crisis.

Ludovit Odor, the former deputy governor of the central bank and a respected economist, will head the 15-member Cabinet. Career diplomat Miroslav Wlachovsky becomes the foreign minister, with Martin Sklenar, a former senior defence ministry official, as the defence minister.

Odor, who comes from Slovakia's Hungarian minority, is not affiliated with any political party. No member of his government will run in the forthcoming election.

"We won't work miracles but you can expect us to ensure the proper functioning of the state," Odor said.

Slovakia has been without a proper government since



December 15, when the coalition government led by Prime Minister Eduard Heger lost a vote of no confidence in parliament called by the opposition, following months of political crisis.

Caputova initially asked Heger to lead a caretaker government until early elections could take place. However, after four members of the caretaker administration gradually left their posts, Heger offered

his resignation and Caputova opted for a government of technocrats. Odor's government has to face a confidence vote in Parliament within 30 days. Caputova said that in its limited time, the new government should focus on stabilising the current situation in the country, preparing next year's budget, and lead Slovakia to the early elections set for September 30.

UN migration agency elects American as 1st woman director

AP ■ GENEVA

The UN migration agency says Amy Pope of the United States has been elected as its next director general.

She will be the first woman to head the International Organization for Migration.

Pope currently serves as the deputy of Director General Antonio Vitorino, a former Portuguese government minister, and ran against him in Monday's election. The IOM said member states elected Pope to lead the Geneva-based agency at a special session. She will start her five-year term on October 1. IOM has 175 member countries.

Earlier, as the two candidates left a cavernous conference hall in Geneva one after the other to let member countries vote, Pope and Vitorino didn't speak to each other — but she



expressed confidence to a handful of reporters as she passed by.

"Gonna be a great day!" she mused, tapping a journalist on the arm and replying "yes" when asked if she had enough votes to win. The Portuguese diplomatic mission in Geneva tweeted that the Community of Portuguese

Language Countries, which counts nine members, was backing Vitorino, and the European Union — of which Portugal is a member — in recent days announced that he's the 27-member bloc's candidate.

Guest nations at G-7 reflect worries over China, Russia

AP ■ TOKYO

This week's summit of the Group of Seven wealthy democracies in Hiroshima will include eight other guest nations, part of a complicated, high-stakes diplomatic gambit meant to settle the world's most serious crises.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has invited South Korea, Australia, India, Brazil, Vietnam, Indonesia, Comoros and the Cook Islands.

Kishida hopes this mix of countries will help efforts to stand up to China's assertiveness and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to analysts. He also wants stronger ties with US allies and with developing nations and to make progress on working toward a nuclear-free world, something that looks increasingly difficult amid North Korean and Russian nuclear threats. Here's a look at what to expect as the rich world leaders welcome these guest countries:

PUSHBACK ON CHINA, RUSSIA

As their top diplomats did last month in a meeting in Nagano, Japan, the leaders of the G-7 nations — the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Italy and the European Union — will try to form a unified front against Chinese threats to Taiwan and Russia's war on Ukraine.

"The G-7 is committed to upholding the international order, and most of its members are in Europe, so supporting Ukraine against Russia's invasion is a top priority," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"As the pillar of the G-7 in Asia, Japan is particularly focused on updating the international order to cope with the rise of China," Easley said. "The

Kishida government's agenda and special invitations for the Hiroshima summit reflect an effort not to contain China but to expand the international coalition defending standards for state behaviour."

The eight guest nations have complex political and economic ties with China and Russia.

India is part of the Quad group of four Indo-Pacific nations, which also includes the United States, Japan and Australia. China has accused that group of representing an "Asian NATO". On the Russia-Ukraine war, India has abstained several times from voting on UN resolutions against Moscow, though it has stressed the need for diplomacy on ending the war. It has boosted its imports of Russian oil. Brazil is a member of the so-called BRICS group of developing nations, including China, Russia and India. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva recently visited China to strengthen ties with its biggest trade market. He has also irritated Ukraine and some in the West with his position on the war, recently suggesting that Ukraine cede Crimea to forge peace.

Japan is courting Vietnam because it also has territorial disputes with China, according to Kim Yeol Soo, an expert at South Korea's Korea Institute for Military Affairs.

GLOBAL SOUTH' NATIONS

Kishida has said his list of guest nations reflects the importance of the so-called "Global South" countries. That is a term used for developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The G-7 nations account for about 40 per cent of the world's economic activity, a decrease from an estimated 80 per cent of global gross domestic product in the 1970s.

We need to prepare for public safety hazards posed by AI

AGENCIES ■ TORONTO

For the most part, the focus of contemporary emergency management has been on natural, technological and human-made hazards such as flooding, earthquakes, tornadoes, industrial accidents, extreme weather events and cyber attacks.

However, with the increase in the availability and capabilities of artificial intelligence, we may soon see emerging public safety hazards related to these technologies that we will need to mitigate and prepare for.

Over the past 20 years, my colleagues and I — along with many other researchers — have been leveraging AI to develop models and applications that can identify, assess, predict, monitor and detect

hazards to inform emergency response operations and decision-making.

AI AND HAZARD CLASSIFICATION

AI hazards can be classified into two types: intentional and unintentional. Unintentional hazards are those caused by human errors or technological failures.

As the use of AI increases, there will be more adverse events caused by human error in AI models or technological failures in AI based technologies. These events can occur in all kinds of industries including transportation (like drones, trains or self-driving cars), electricity, oil and gas, finance and banking, agriculture, health and mining. Intentional AI hazards are potential threats



that are caused by using AI to harm people and properties. AI can also be used to gain unlawful benefits by compromising security and safety systems. In my view, this simple intentional and unintentional classification may not be sufficient in case of AI. Here, we need to add a new class of

emerging threats — the possibility of AI overtaking human control and decision-making. This may be triggered intentionally or unintentionally.

Many AI experts have already warned against such potential threats. A recent open letter by researchers, scientists and others involved in the development of AI called for a moratorium on its further development.

PUBLIC SAFETY RISKS

Public safety and emergency management experts use risk matrices to assess and compare risks. Using this method, hazards are qualitatively or quantitatively assessed based on their frequency and consequence, and their impacts are classified as low, medium or high. Hazards that

have low frequency and low consequence or impact are considered low risk and no additional actions are required to manage them. Hazards that have medium consequence and medium frequency are considered medium risk. These risks need to be closely monitored.

AI RISK ASSESSMENT

AI technologies are becoming more widely used by institutions, organizations and companies in different sectors, and hazards associated with the AI are starting to emerge.

In 2018, the accounting firm KPMG developed an "AI Risk and Controls Matrix." It highlights the risks of using AI by businesses and urges them to recognize these new emerging risks. The report warned that AI

Turkish presidential polls going to runoff

Erdogan narrowly misses outright win

AP ■ ANKARA

Conservative Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces a runoff with his main rival in two weeks that will decide who leads a country struggling with sky-high inflation and hosting Syrian refugees as it plays a key role in the Middle East and in NATO expansion.

Election officials said on Monday that the May 28 second round will allow Turks to decide if their nation remains under the increasingly authoritarian president's firm grip for a third decade, or if it can embark on the more democratic course promised by Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

The vote shows how Turkey has become extremely polarised, some voters commented.

"I am not happy at all," voter

Suzan Devletsah said. "I worry about the future of Turkey."

Erdogan faced electoral headwinds due to a cost-of-living crisis and criticism over the government's response to a devastating February earthquake.

The nationalists' retreat was still less marked than predicted. But with his alliance retaining its hold on the parliament, he is now in a good position to win in the second round.

"On May 28, God willing, if Tayyip Erdogan fulfills expectations, he will win," Erdogan voter Engin Duran said.

As in previous years, Erdogan led a highly divisive campaign.

He portrayed Kilicdaroglu, who had received the backing of the country's pro-Kurdish party, of colluding with "terrorists" and of supporting what he called "deviant" LGBTQ rights.

In a bid to woo voters hit hard by inflation, he increased



Supporters of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wave flags outside the party headquarters in Ankara, Turkey, Sunday. Erdogan, who has ruled his country with an increasingly firm grip for 20 years, was locked in a tight election race Sunday, with a make-or-break runoff against his chief challenger possible as the final votes were counted. AP/PTI

wages and pensions and subsidized electricity and gas bills, while showcasing Turkey's homegrown defense industry and infrastructure projects.

Kilicdaroglu campaigned on promises to reverse crackdowns on free speech and other forms of democratic backslid-

ing, as well as to repair an economy battered by high inflation and currency devaluation.

But as the results came in, it appeared those elements didn't shake up the electorate as expected. Turkey's conservative heartland overwhelmingly voted for the ruling party, with

Kilicdaroglu's main opposition winning most of the coastal provinces in the west and south. The pro-Kurdish Green Left Party, YSP, won the predominantly Kurdish provinces in the southeast. The uncertainty drove the main Turkish stock exchange BIST-100 more than

6 per cent lower at the open Monday, prompting a temporary halt in trading. Though shares recovered briefly during the day, the index was back to the initial lows near closing time.

Western nations and foreign investors were particularly interested in the outcome because of Erdogan's unorthodox leadership of the economy and often mercurial but successful efforts to put the country that spans Europe and Asia at the center of many major diplomatic negotiations.

Preliminary results showed that Erdogan won 49.5 per cent of the vote on Sunday, while Kilicdaroglu grabbed 44.9 per cent, and the third candidate, Sinan Ogan, received 5.2 per cent, according to Ahmet Yener, the head of Supreme Electoral Board.

The remaining uncounted votes were not enough to tip Erdogan into outright victory, even if they all broke for him, Yener said. In the last presidential election in 2018, Erdogan won in the first round, with more than 52 per cent of the vote.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif demands resignation of Pak Chief Justice

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

PML-N chief organiser Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday demanded the resignation of Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and blamed him for the "anarchy" and "crisis" in the country as she joined the ruling coalition's sit-in outside the Supreme Court to protest some of the recent rulings which she said provided blanket relief to former prime minister Imran Khan.

Addressing a gathering of protesters outside the Supreme Court here, Maryam, the daughter of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party supremo Nawaz Sharif, accused the Supreme Court of imposing a "judicial martial law" in Pakistan.

She said that "free and fair elections are not possible until Umar Ata Bandial remains the country's top judge" and that polls will be held at its scheduled time "after you (Bandial) step down".

Accompanied by Pakistan

Democratic Movement (PDM) President Maulana Fazlur Rehman and other leaders of the multi-party alliance, the 49-year-old PML-N leader said: "All of you should be aware that the anarchy [...] and crisis that has taken over the country today, the place of its genesis was not Zaman Park as much as Umar Ata Bandial's post."

"Today, when the army is standing with the democracy and Constitution of Pakistan... the fifth martial law in Pakistan... judicial martial law has been imposed from this building," she said, apparently referring to some of the rulings from the apex court. Maryam accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan of doing what "terrorists or Pakistan's enemies could not do".

"He and his wife stole the public's money and then bought plots from this money," Maryam Nawaz said, adding that Khan, 70, "trained" his "minions" at Zaman Park and set fire to the Jinnah House.

Pak NA okays formation of panel to file case against CJ

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's National Assembly on Monday unanimously adopted a motion seeking the formation of a special committee to file a case against Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial in the Supreme Judicial Council for his "misconduct and deviating from oath", escalating the tension between the government and the top judiciary.

The motion - moved by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Dr Shazia Sobia - was unanimously adopted by the house, the Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Speaking in the National Assembly, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that the time has come for Parliament to play its constitutional role in this situation.

Asif demanded the formation of a parliamentary committee to probe the judiciary's undue support to former prime minister Imran Khan as well as sending a reference to the Supreme Judicial Council under Article 209 of the Constitution on the matter.



"In the 75-year history of the country's judiciary, there had been incidents that have had a profound impact on the country, but recently a group in the judiciary started supporting a political group," he said.

"The time has come for Parliament to send a reference of misconduct to the Supreme Judicial Council, under the authority and law given to it by the Constitution," Asif added.

On the attacks on the Corps Commander's house in Lahore, a Rangers post in Karachi, the Army's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi and the PAF Base at Mianwali, he said that protection was being provided to

those who desecrate the "memorials of martyrs."

He said that Khan's violent supporters on the direction of their leadership had attacked Jinnah house, which was a shameful act as the building was a national heritage of the country.

The development comes as the PML-N party's Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday demanded the resignation of Chief Justice Bandial and blamed him for the "anarchy" and "crisis" in the country as she joined the ruling coalition's sit-in outside the Supreme Court to protest some of the recent rulings which they said provided blanket relief to former prime minister Khan.

Khan was on Friday granted bail by a three-member Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Bandial after the National Accountability Bureau arrested him on charges of accepting millions of dollars worth of property in exchange for providing benefits to a real estate tycoon.

'Pak military plans to keep me in jail for 10 years'

AP ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan claimed on Monday that the country's powerful military establishment has planned to keep him in jail for the next 10 years under sedition charges and vowed to fight against the "assortments of crooks" till the last drop of his blood.

Khan is likely to appear before the Lahore High Court in connection with the cases registered against him for torching the house of the Corps Commander here and other incidents of violence erupted after his arrest in a corruption case last week.

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) had granted 70-year-old Khan bail, barring the authorities from arresting him in all the cases registered beyond May 9 and asked him to approach the Lahore High Court for further relief on May 15.

In a series of tweets in the early hours of Monday, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief said: "So now the complete London plan is out. Using the pretext of violence while I was inside the jail, they assumed the role of judge, jury and executioner. The plan now is to humiliate me by



Security escort a vehicle carrying Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi after their court appearance, in Lahore on Monday. AP/PTI

putting Bushra begum (Khan's wife) in jail, and using some sedition law to keep me inside for the next ten years."

The tweets came after Khan held a meeting of PTI leaders at his Lahore residence.

Khan, who has been on bail in more than 100 cases, further said: "To ensure that there is no public reaction, they have done two things - first deliberate terror is unleashed

not just on PTI workers but on common citizens as well. Second, the media is totally controlled and muzzled."

The Army remains Pakistan's most powerful institution, having ruled it directly for close to half its 75-year history through three coups.

"This is a deliberate attempt to instil so much fear in people that when they come to arrest me tomorrow, people won't come out.

Lahore HC grants bail to Khan's wife till May 23

Lahore (PTI): Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan on Monday appeared before the Lahore High Court, which fixed his bail hearing on Tuesday in the terrorism cases registered against him following his arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case that sparked violent protests by his supporters. Khan was accompanied by his wife Bushra Bibi, who was granted pre-arrest bail till May 23 by the high court in the Al-Qadir Trust case. "The LHC granted pre-arrest bail to Bushra Bibi till May 23 in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The court, however, fixed Khan's bail plea for Tuesday in the terrorism cases registered against him after May 9 violence. The LHC Registrar's Office has raised an objection for not attaching the arrested copies of Supreme Court orders," a court official told PTI.

Pak SC urges govt & opp to hold talks on Punjab polls

Islamabad: Pakistan's Supreme Court on Monday urged the federal government and the opposition to resume dialogue for restoring peace in the country as the apex court adjourned for one week the hearing on the election commission's plea on the impasse over holding elections in Punjab province.

The apex court had previously ordered the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold elections in the politically crucial province on May 14.

A three-judge bench, led by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Jazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar, heard the matter on Monday as the May 14 deadline for holding the polls expired on Sunday. The chief justice noted that the election commission's stance was that it would conduct elections if given the resources. PTI

'Rapid migration is unsustainable'

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's Indian-origin Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, on Monday, issued a stark warning shot against "unsustainable" mass and rapid migration into the country and called for action to cut growing migrant numbers.

In a speech at the National Conservatism Conference in London, which was interrupted twice by protesters who shouted about migration, the 43-year-old London-born Tory MP called on her governing Conservative Party to renew its commitment to bring down immigration.

The Brexit-backing Cabinet minister said it was time for the UK to train more workers within the country to reduce reliance on foreign workers.

"It's not xenophobic to say that mass and rapid migration is unsustainable in terms of housing supply, public services and community relations," said Braverman.

"While illegal migration is rightly our priority given the acute challenges we face in the [English] Channel, we must not lose sight of

the importance of controlling legal migration too," she said.

Braverman, of Goan and Tamil heritage, referenced her parents as having come to the UK through "legal and controlled migration" to stress that there was nothing wrong about someone from an ethnic minority background making such arguments.

"They spoke the language. They threw themselves into the community, embraced British values. When they arrived, they signed up to be part of our shared project because the UK meant something distinct. Integration was part of the quid pro quo," she noted.

"The unexamined drive towards multiculturalism as an end in itself, combined with identity politics, is a recipe for communal disaster. We cannot have immigration without integration," she said.

Braverman declared that she had "voted and campaigned for" Brexit because she wanted Britain to control migration and have a say on what works for the country.

"High-skilled workers support economic growth. And where the labour market has acute or structural

shortages, as with the NHS, it is of course right that we should have an immigration system agile enough to plug those shortages. But we need to get overall immigration numbers down," she said, calling for training enough truck drivers, butchers, builders and fruit pickers within the country to reduce reliance on migrant workers.

The speech is being seen in many quarters as piling pressure on her boss, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, to focus on cutting soaring net migration numbers, which has been above the half-a-million-a-year mark since Brexit.

Sunak's "Stop the Boats" pledge to curb illegal migration is among the key priorities for his premiership ahead of an expected general election in the second half of next year.

The government's Illegal Migration Bill, which aims to ensure that people arriving in the UK without permission will be detained and swiftly removed either to their home country or to a third country such as Rwanda, is currently in Parliament even as it faces criticism from many for some of its controversial provisions.

'Sri Lanka's debt restructuring likely to get complete by this September'

Colombo (PTI): The IMF has expressed hope that Sri Lanka's debt restructuring process would be completed by September, which is also the time for the global lender's formal review of the bailout facility it extended to the cash-strapped nation, a senior IMF executive said on

Monday. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently extended a nearly USD 3 billion bailout facility to debt-ridden Sri Lanka that would help stabilise the country's economy after it was jolted by a devastating economic crisis last year. "The IMF is hopeful that Sri Lanka's debt restructuring process would be completed by September which is the time for the first review," Krishna Srinivasan, the IMF's director for Asia Pacific, told reporters. A team of the IMF is currently in the country assessing the progress made since the agreement reached on March 20 for a nearly

USD 3 billion bail-out facility over a period of 4 years. "The expectation is that restructuring is completed by the time of the first review. To that end, the government is making a good faith effort in negotiating with all creditors, official and private," Srinivasan said.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mr. Devi Chand Jain and Mr. Rakesh Kumar Jain are the owners of Built up First Floor, without roof rights Part of Property bearing No. 38, Portion of House No. 104/1244-A, area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., out of Khara No. 254, Situated in the area of Village Mubarakabad, Delhi State abaid known as Shanti Nagar, Tri Nagar, Delhi, Vice: G.P.A. Will and A.TS dated 17.11.1978. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property to a person who intends to obtain loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner of the said floor, its sale/mortgage/lienation, and any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that my client named Mrs. Sunita Devi Kasana W/o Mr. Mahavir Singh Kasana, is owner of the Residential Plot, size measuring 150 Sq. Yds., out of Khata No. 00038, Khara No. 59 situated in the area of Village Hebatpur, Pargana & Tensi Dadr, District Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P., and enjoying the peaceful possession since 06.09.2019, vide Sale Deed dated 06.09.2019, regd at doc. No. 5245, and the same is to be financed & mortgaged with UGRD Capital Ltd. Who so ever believes and finds any claim or interest, directly or indirectly over the aforesaid property than he/she may raise the objection within 14 days from the date of this publication at the below mentioned address, failing which, it shall be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghav Tiwari, Advocate
C-530, Patalia House Courts,
New Delhi - 110001. Mob. :- +91-9078189329

Government of Punjab
Tender Notice Reference No. PIDB/Projects/2023/3
The Department of Housing & Urban Development, Punjab through PIDB invites online bids for the following:

Open Tender
Formulation of GIS Based Master Plan-Cum- Zonal Development Plan of 49 Towns of Punjab

Closing Date & Time: 06.06.2023 at 01.00 P.M.
For details log into: eproc.punjab.gov.in & pidb.org

Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.

Managing Director, PIDB

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
Department of Housing & Urban Development
Punjab Infrastructure Development Board

DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTRES AT AMRITSAR AND MOHALI ON PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) BASIS

Dated: 16th May 2023

Punjab Infrastructure Development Board (PIDB) on behalf of Department of Housing and Urban Development (DoHUD), Govt. of Punjab invites Expression of Interest from eligible applicants for Development and Operation & Maintenance of Hotel and Convention Centres at Amritsar and Mohali on Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis.

EOI Availability: Expression of Interest (EOI) can be downloaded from e-procurement portal <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 16th May 2023 onwards.

Proposal Due Date: 12th June 2023 upto 1500 hours

The interested applicants shall have to get themselves registered at the website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> and obtain the mandatory Digital Signature as per the requirement for e-tendering. For clarifications on e-tendering, please contact E-procurement helpdesk or PIDB. For any subsequent corrigendums, addendums and clarifications, please refer to the websites <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> / www.pidb.org.

PIDB reserves the right to accept or reject any application and to annul the selection process at any time, without incurring any liability and without assigning any reason thereof.

Managing Director,
Punjab Infrastructure Development Board (PIDB),
SCO No. 33-34-35, Sector: 34-A
Chandigarh - 160 022
Phone No.: +91 172 2665410
Email: mdpib@gmail.com,
pidbprojects@gmail.com

Senior Consultant,
Almondz Global Securities Ltd.
F-33/3, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II,
New Delhi - 110020
Phone No.: 011-43500700 / 800
Mobile No.: 9888889555;
Email: projectsinpunjab@gmail.com

Cyclone Mocha wrecks Myanmar, 700 injured

PTI ■ DHAKA

Rescuers early Monday evacuated about 1,000 people trapped by seawater 3.6 meters (12 feet) deep along western Myanmar's coast after a powerful cyclone injured hundreds and cut off communications. Damage and six deaths have been reported, but the true impact was not yet clear in one of Asia's least developed countries.

Strong winds injured more than 700 of about 20,000 people who were sheltering in sturdier buildings on the highlands of Sittwe township such as monasteries, pagodas and schools, according to a leader of the Rakhine Youths Philanthropic Association in Sittwe. He asked not to be named due to fear of reprisals from the authorities in the military-run country.

Seawater raced into more than 10 low-lying wards near the shore as Cyclone Mocha made landfall in Rakhine state Sunday afternoon, he said. Residents moved to roofs and higher floors, while the wind and storm surge prevented immediate rescue.

"After 4 p.m on Sunday, the storm weakened a bit, but the water did not fall back. Most of them sat on the

roof and at the high places of their houses the whole night. The wind blew all night," the rescue group leader said. Water was still about 1.5 meters (5 feet) high in flooded areas later Monday, but rescues were being made as the wind calmed and the sun rose in the sky. He asked civil society organizations and authorities to send aid and help evacuate residents.

Six deaths were reported by Myanmar media and rescue groups. Several injuries were reported in neighbouring Bangladesh, which was spared the predicted direct hit.

Mocha made landfall near Sittwe township with winds blowing up to 209 kilometers (130 miles) per hour, Myanmar's Meteorological Department said. By midday Monday, it had weakened to a tropical depression, according to the India Meteorological Department.

The State Administration Council issued disaster declarations for 17 townships in Rakhine state.

High winds crumpled cell phone towers, but in videos collected by local media before communications were lost, deep water raced through streets and wind blew off roofs.

UPSIDA कार्यालय प्रधान महाप्रबन्धक (अभियन्त्रण)-आर उ.प्र. राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण, ए-1/4 लखनपुर, कानपुर

ई-निविदा सूचना
एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जगहों में विद्युत औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों के विद्युत अनुसंधान एवं रख-रखाव कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/परिचर्या/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत एवं अर्ह "ए" श्रेणी में विद्युत लाईसेन्सी एवं अनुभवी ठेकेदारों/फर्मों से ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है जो दिनांक 18.05.2023 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 05.06.2023 को अपरह्न 5:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। निविदा को दिनांक 05.06.2023 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे खोला जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा राशय पत्रों की मूल प्रतियां दिनांक 09.06.2023 को साथ 5:00 बजे तक कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है। ई-निविदा के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाने वाली निविदा सम्बन्धी विवरण निम्नवत् है :-

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत रु. (लाख में)
1.	Upgradation and AMC of electrical system of street light under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at I.A. Bijauli and G.C. Jhansi.	167.49
2.	Upgradation of electrical system of street light under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at I.A. Foundry Nagar, EPIP, Sikandra ABC, Staff Colony Agra.	143.54

नोट- 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में समस्त कर एवं जी.एस.टी. सहित वरदे अंकित करें। अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्यों हेतु निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग" उ.प्र. शासन, लखनऊ से श्रेणी "क" अनुभवीता लाइसेन्स अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी प्राधिकरण की website: www.onlineupsida.com पर स्थित है-ई-सिक एवं यूपीएसटी की website: <http://tender.up.nic.in> पर स्थित है।

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
Department of Housing & Urban Development
Punjab Infrastructure Development Board

DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTRES AT AMRITSAR AND MOHALI ON PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) BASIS

Dated: 16th May 2023

Punjab Infrastructure Development Board (PIDB) on behalf of Department of Housing and Urban Development (DoHUD), Govt. of Punjab invites Expression of Interest from eligible applicants for Development and Operation & Maintenance of Hotel and Convention Centres at Amritsar and Mohali on Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis.

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Managing Director,
Punjab Infrastructure Development Board (PIDB),
SCO No. 33-34-35, Sector: 34-A
Chandigarh - 160 022
Phone No.: +91 172 2665410
Email: mdpib@gmail.com,
pidbprojects@gmail.com

Senior Consultant,
Almondz Global Securities Ltd.
F-33/3, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II,
New Delhi - 110020
Phone No.: 011-43500700 / 800
Mobile No.: 9888889555;
Email: projectsinpunjab@gmail.com

WPI inflation at (-) 0.92% in April, lowest in 34 months

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wholesale prices in India fell for the first time in almost three years in April, as softening global commodity prices brought down food, fuel, and other input costs for producers.

WPI inflation has been on a declining trend for the last 11 months and came in at (-) 0.92 per cent in April.

This is the lowest level of wholesale price index (WPI) since June 2020, when inflation was at (-) 1.81 per cent.

A negative WPI inflation, technically termed as deflation, means that overall wholesale prices have been falling year-on-year.

The high base at 15.38 per cent in April 2022, also contributed to the decline in wholesale inflation in April this year.

"Decline in the rate of inflation in April, 2023 is primarily contributed by fall in prices of basic metals, food products, mineral oils, textiles, non-food articles, chemical & chemical products, rubber & plastic products and paper & paper products," the commerce and industry ministry said on Monday.

WPI inflation was at 1.34 per cent in March. April also saw easing in prices across commodities — food, non-food, fuel and power, and manufactured items.

Inflation in food articles eased to 3.54 per cent in April, against 5.48 per cent in March.



In the food articles category, prices of cereals, wheat, fruits, milk and egg, meat and fish declined over the previous month.

Inflation in vegetables was (-) 1.50 per cent, potato (-) 18.66 per cent, onion (-) 18.41 per cent and wheat was at 7.27 per cent in April 2023.

Fuel and power basket inflation eased to 0.93 per cent in April from 8.96 per cent in March. In manufactured products, inflation was (-) 2.42 per cent, as against 0.77 per cent in March.

The deceleration in WPI comes in line with the easing of April retail inflation which came in at an 18-month low of 4.70 per cent.

Barclays in a research note said it expects WPI inflation to continue to moderate as easing commodity prices drive input costs lower.

"We think the moderation in retail inflation (which we expect to continue) suggests a pause is likely in the next Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting in August. Easing wholesale price pressures indicate that input price inflation is also easing," Barclays said.

Last month, the RBI paused its interest rate hike, holding the benchmark rate at 6.50 per cent. It projected retail inflation to average 5.2 per cent in current fiscal year.

The next three-day meeting of RBI's monetary policy committee is scheduled on June 6-8.

CareEdge Ratings Chief Economist Rajani Sinha said the deflationary trend is expected to continue for the next 2-3 months with the full-year WPI inflation averaging in the range of 1-2 per cent.

"A lower WPI print could help in pulling retail inflation down with its lagged impact on the core CPI inflation," Sinha said.

Ladderup Wealth Management MD Raghendra Nath said the fall in WPI is likely to have a positive impact on retail prices as well in terms of cooling them down.

Sensex, Nifty climb to 5-month high on FII inflows, gains in FMCG shares

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty gained around half a per cent to close at nearly five-month high levels on Monday following continuous foreign fund inflows and firm trends in Asian and European markets.

Rising for the second straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 317.81 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 62,345.71, the highest closing level since December 14. During the day, it rallied 534.77 points or 0.86 per cent to 62,562.67.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 84.05 points or 0.46 per cent to end at 18,398.85 points, a level not seen since December 20, 2022.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Motors jumped nearly 3 per cent after announcing its quarterly earnings. ITC, Tech Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, Tata Steel and Mahindra & Mahindra were the other biggest gainers.

Fuelled by rising domestic demand, pricing actions and easing supply chain issues, Tata Motors reported a consolidated



net profit of Rs 5,408 crore for the March quarter and aims to improve the profit margins this fiscal despite headwinds.

Maruti, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finserv and Nestle were the laggards.

"Domestic benchmark indices are marching ahead driven by favourable developments such as declining inflation levels, steady foreign inflows, and in anticipation of robust earnings growth on a QoQ basis next quarter, due to drop in global commodity prices," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. The domestic

CPI inflation came in better than expected at 4.7 per cent, and the WPI inflation decreased, reaffirming RBI's decision to hold rate hikes, Nair added.

"The rotational buying in heavyweights from the key sectors viz. Banking, financial, auto and FMCG is helping the indices maintain a positive tone despite mixed global cues. And, indications are in favour of the prevailing trend to continue," Ajit Mishra, VP — Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.49 per cent and midcap index gained 0.47 per cent.



NuRe Bharat, Raitel tie up for PIPOnet passenger services app on revenue share basis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

3i Infotech-led consortium NuRe Bharat Network and Raitel on Monday unveiled PIPOnet mobile app which aims to provide all services, including e-ticketing, travel, stay reservations, and entertainment apps, for railway passengers.

NuRe Bharat Network CEO Sax Krishna said that the app will become available on Android Play Store in the next two weeks.

"We have integrated Netflix, Uber, Ola with the app. Through PIPOnet, passengers will be able to book e-ticket, platform tickets, porters, stay, food and many other things. It will have space for advertisers who want to reach out to passengers. The scope is huge. We expect to generate revenue of Rs 1,000 crore in the next five years," Krishna said.

He said that PIPOnet will allow the advertisers to connect deeply with the people of Bharat across Tier 1, 2, 3 and 4 towns of India. NuRe Bharat Network will share 40 per cent of the revenue earned from the services or minimum of Rs 14 crore per year with Raitel, Raitel Corporation, Director, Project, Operations and Maintenance, Manoj Tandon said.

"Around 1.7 million people daily log into our wifi network. Our estimate shows that around 1 lakh villages fall within 5 kilometre of Indian Railways radius. With innovative digital technology, our partners can attract a large number of advertisers. They can take several other initiatives on the platform," Raitel, Chairman and Managing Director, Sanjay Kumar said.

Raitel Corporation, Director for Project, Operations and Maintenance, Manoj Tandon said that Raitel has entered into exclusive partnership with NuRe Bharat Network, which is a joint venture consortium between 3i Infotech, FISST and Yellow inc, for a period of five years.

Go First insolvency: NCLAT to pass order on aircraft lessors' petitions on May 22

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal will pass its order on May 22 on petitions filed by three aircraft lessors against Go First's voluntary insolvency resolution proceedings.

A two-member bench headed by Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan on Monday reserved its order after completing the hearing on the three petitions.

The bench also asked the parties to submit additional documents, if any, in the next 48 hours.

The appellate tribunal was hearing a batch of petitions filed by SMBC Aviation Capital Ltd, GY Aviation and SFV Aircraft Holdings.

All three lessors have leased out around 21 aircraft to



Go First.

During the proceedings, senior advocate Arun Kathpalia representing SMBC Aviation submitted it has terminated the lease prior to the commencement of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) of Go First.

"Their right on lease has

gone," he said, adding that as per the Cape Town Conventions, there is a protocol for DGCA to cancel the lease in five working days.

India is also a signatory and it has to be done by DGCA without taking consent from Go First.

"They cannot fly and oper-

ate it," he said.

Kathpalia also added there was a difference between the lease of Jet Airways and Go First. One was on a financial lease model, while the other had an operational lease.

"Court can not prevent our right which was pre-CIRP," he added.

Senior advocate Krishnendu Datta, appearing for another lessor, said the CIRP was a smoke screen for Go First.

It was a well-planned move. There was no financial default and by suspending the flight operations, an urgency was created by the Wadia group firm.

Senior Advocate Ramji Srinivasan, representing the Interim Resolution Professional, said the notice of termination of lease by the

lessors was a way to defeat the insolvency proceedings as they should not have taken that step once the case was before the NCLT.

Senior Advocate Maninder Singh, representing Go First, said the airline was having a tough time and it was compelled to voluntarily file for insolvency.

So far this month, several lessors have approached aviation regulator DGCA for deregistration and repossession of Go First's 45 planes.

Go First stopped flying from May 3.

Last week the Delhi-based principal bench of the NCLT appointed an interim resolution professional to look after the affairs of Go First and also suspended its board as part of the insolvency resolution process.

Rupee falls 15 paise to close at 82.33 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee fell 15 paise to close at 82.33 (provisional) against the US currency on Monday, weighed down by the strength of the American currency in the overseas market.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 82.22 against the dollar and settled for the day at 82.33 (provisional), down 15 paise from its previous close.

During the day, the rupee witnessed a high of 82.18 and a low of 82.37 against the greenback. On Friday, the rupee settled at 82.18 against the dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.11 per cent to 102.56.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.24 per cent to USD 74.35 per barrel.

"The Indian rupee started



the week on a sour note following strength in the US dollar after Friday's economic data," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

On the domestic macro-economic front, India's WPI contracted for the first time in almost three years and CPI eased to the slowest pace since October 2021.

According to official data, India's WPI inflation has been on a declining trend for the last 11 months and came in at (-) 0.92 per cent in April. Retail inflation came in at an 18-month low of 4.70 per cent.



Exports fall for 3rd consecutive month by 12.7% in April; trade deficit at 20-month low

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's exports contracted by 12.7 per cent, third month in a row, to USD 34.66 billion in April even as the trade deficit reduced to a 20-month low of USD 15.24 billion, the government data showed on Monday.

The decline in exports is mainly on account of poor demand in India's key destinations — the Europe and the US — and it may take some more months for the situation to improve. The demand scenario is "not looking very good as far as Europe is concerned, and the US also we have seen a decline in demand. For the next 2-3 months, I think the demand scenario does not look very optimistic," DGFT (Director General of Foreign Trade) Santosh Kumar Sarangi told reporters here.

However, he expressed hope that things would change from September onwards. "There is a possibility that opening up of Chinese economy combined with some boost in demand in the Europe and the US economy from August-September onwards might give a boost to global exports," he said.

Imports too declined by about 14 per cent, fifth month in a row, to USD 49.9 billion as against USD 58.06 billion recorded in the same month last year, the data showed.

Trade deficit in April last year stood at USD 18.36 billion. The previous lowest level was recorded in August 2021, when the deficit stood at USD 13.81 billion.

On imports, Sarangi said that the decline is because of cooling down of commodity prices and reduced demand for products which are considered as discretionary like gems and jewellery.

He suggested to diversify into products which have higher export demand, such as electronic goods, oil meals, oil seeds, and agricultural goods.

He added that export sectors which may get impacted in the coming months include gems and jewellery, apparel and garments, and some engineering products. In April, export sectors which recorded negative growth included petroleum products, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, chemicals and ready-made garments of all textiles.

However, electronic goods, pharma, rice and oil meals registered positive growth.

The shipments of electronic goods increased by 26.49 per cent to USD 2.11 billion in the month under review.

Under merchandise exports, only 11 of the 30 key sectors exhibited positive growth in April and at imports front, 23 out of 30 key sectors recorded negative growth.

77% companies predict 2023-24 to have both replacements, new position hirings: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Around 77 per cent of Indian companies interviewed expect hiring to include both replacements as well as new positions in 2023-24, a report said on Monday. According to a report by Kolkata-headquartered HR solutions provider Genius Consultants, southern and western regions will predictively have maximum hiring ratios in this financial year, as specified by 33.30 per cent of participants, said the report.

The prime focus for experience levels during hiring is agreed by 36.06 per cent to be



four to seven years on average, it said. Merely 9 per cent of individuals deem that employees with 13 years and above experience are top candidates while hiring, it added.

The report is based on an online survey of 2,100 company executives and HR professionals from March 12 till April

15, across sectors including banking and finance, construction and engineering, education/teaching/training, FMCG, hospitality, HR solutions, IT, ITES and BPO, logistics, manufacturing, media, oil and gas, pharma and medical, power and energy, real estate, retail, telecom, auto and ancillary.

Further, the report revealed that a maximum of respondents said job portals will be the most prioritised candidate sourcing avenue for hiring this year followed by AI (artificial intelligence) technology-based apps and websites, campus hiring and consultants.

Apax Funds buys \$450 million minority stake in travel tech company IBS Software

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Global travel and logistics SaaS company IBS Software on Monday said Apax Funds will buy a minority stake in the company for USD 450 million.

Post the latest transaction, IBS Software's Founder and Executive Chairman V K Mathews will remain the majority shareholder.

"Funds advised by Apax Partners LLP (Apax) announced today that they have reached a definitive agreement to invest approximately USD 450 million to acquire a significant minority stake in IBS Software, a leading provider of modern software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions to the global travel and logistics industry, from Blackstone, the world's largest alternative asset manager," a company press release here said.



Founded in 1997 in Thiruvananthapuram, IBS Software provides SaaS solutions that power operations in aviation, tour and cruise, hospitality and logistics companies across the globe, with a team of 4,000 professionals.

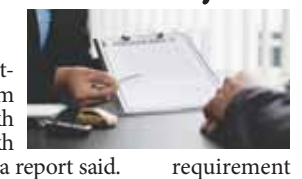
Apax Partners LLP is a leading global private equity advisory firm, which for 50 years has raised and advised funds with aggregate commitments of more than USD 65 billion. Apax Funds invests in Internet/Consumer, Tech, Services, and Healthcare companies.

Insurance industry's gross direct premium to cross ₹3 lakh crore by FY25: ICRA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The insurance industry is expected to net gross direct premium income (GDPI) of about Rs 3 lakh crore by FY25 as against Rs 2.4 lakh crore at the end of March 2023, a report said.

Private insurers' combined ratio is likely to improve and Return of Equity (RoE) is expected at 11.2-12.8 per cent in FY2024 and 12.5-13.9 per cent in FY2025, ICRA said in a report.



Most PSU insurers are expected to witness high combined ratio resulting in net losses, though it will be lower compared to last few years, it said.

Moreover, it said, the capital requirement of three PSU general insurers (excluding New India) is estimated at a sizeable Rs 172-175 billion to meet solvency of 1.50 times as of March 2024, assuming 100 per cent forbearance from the regulator.

NSE launches WTI crude oil and natural gas futures contracts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Monday launched rupee denominated futures contracts on underlying NYMEX WTI crude oil and natural gas in its commodity derivatives segment. This came after the exchange, in March, received approval from markets regula-

tor Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to launch these contracts.

The addition of these contracts has expanded NSE's product offering in the energy basket as well as its overall commodity segment. The launch of these contracts will provide effective trading and hedging opportunities to the market

participants, with the availability of key energy products on a single trading platform.

"It gives us immense pleasure to inform the market participants that NSE has launched the NYMEX WTI crude oil and natural gas futures contracts today," Sriram Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer, NSE said.

Mumbai climbs to 6th rank from 38th in annual housing price appreciation across 46 cities globally: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai ranks 6th among 46 cities globally in terms of annual price growth of high-end residential properties with appreciation of 5.5 per cent, according to Knight Frank.

Real estate consultant Knight Frank India in its report 'Prime Global Cities Index Q1 2023' said that Mumbai, Bengaluru and New Delhi have registered an increase in average annual prices in January-March 2023.

"Mumbai moved up from the 38th rank in Q1 2022 to the 6th rank in Q1 2023 based on the annual growth in high-end or prime properties," the consultant said in a statement.



Gold climbs ₹370; silver zooms ₹750 amid strong global trends

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 370 to Rs 61,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid a global rally in the precious metal, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had ended at Rs 60,980 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also zoomed by Rs 750 to Rs 74,350 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at Rs 61,350 per 10 grams, up Rs 370 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

BARCA'S WAIT IS OVER

Barcelona seal first La Liga title in four years with Espanyol rout



AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona won La Liga for the first time since 2019 by thrashing Espanyol 4-2 on Sunday, wresting the title back from rivals Real Madrid. The Catalan giants clinched their 27th Spanish championship at the home of their neighbours, with scenes turning ugly at full time as celebrating Barcelona players were chased from the field by pitch invaders. Robert Lewandowski struck twice for Barcelona, along with goals for Alejandro Balde and Jules Kounde, while Javi Puado and Joselu pulled two back late on for the hosts. Barcelona have endured a

troubled period on and off the pitch in recent years but their triumph signals significant improvement, with coach Xavi Hernandez winning his first major trophy since taking over in November 2021. President Joan Laporta's rebuild was widely criticised last summer in light of the club's perilous financial situation. Early Champions League elimination was a blow, but the club won the Spanish Super Cup in January, before sealing La Liga glory with four games to spare. "It was a very emotional moment, a moment very hard not to celebrate after so many months of work," said Xavi.

"We didn't celebrate just because it was Espanyol's stadium." The coach said that the victory was proof that the club was heading in the right direction. "It brings a lot of calm, a lot of hope for the future," said Xavi. "I am very happy. We did a great job, a league won with four games remaining, that's to the absolute merit of the team." Xavi did not spring any surprises with his line-up and Barcelona's first team took to the pitch with one goal firmly in mind, the end finally in sight. They conjured an electric display, one of their finest this season, to seal their triumph and leave their city rivals 19th, four

points from safety with four matches remaining. Barcelona took the lead through Lewandowski, finishing from close range after a fine Alejandro Balde assist. The left-back scored the second himself, with Pedri scooping a cross to the back post for him to pounce. Barca grabbed the third before half-time when Raphinha put the ball on a plate for Lewandowski to roll home. The Polish striker's arrival from Bayern Munich was a key part of last summer's rebuild and despite a dip in the second half of the season, has paid the Catalans back in goals. Raphinha, who joined from

Leeds, played superbly against Espanyol and has been an important figure in the second half of the season with Ousmane Dembele sidelined for a long stretch. "I am very happy and not just for myself, the whole team worked so hard," said Raphinha. "Only a few of us had won the league, it's the first for a lot of players, it's special. We worked so hard for this."

ANGRY FANS

Kounde headed home the fourth early in the second half from Frenkie de Jong's perfect chipped pass as Espanyol's defence crumbled yet again. Some Espanyol fans headed for the exits early while others demanded the board resign, including aiming one unsavoury chant at the club's Chinese owners. Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen denied Puado when through on goal, determined to earn a La Liga record-equalling 26th clean sheet of the season in the top flight. However moments later the Espanyol forward found himself through on goal once more and this time scored with a sublime lob — small consolation in the face of Espanyol's defeat and Barcelona's glory. Joselu pulled another goal back in stoppage time, but it was too little, too late. Xavi's side celebrated at full-time, to the anger of Espanyol fans, who invaded the pitch, with Barcelona players sprinting down the tunnel to escape. "I haven't seen the images, I always go in at the end of a game and from what I've been told, it's something that should not happen and should be condemned," said Espanyol coach Luis Garcia. "Measures were in place to avoid it, but it was not possible."

FC Barcelona will 'do everything possible' to sign Messi: Laporta

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona president Joan Laporta said on Monday the club will "do everything possible" to bring Argentine superstar Lionel Messi back in the close season. The Paris Saint-Germain forward is set to leave in the summer when his contract expires and new La Liga champions Barcelona are hoping to lure their all-time top goalscorer back, despite strong interest

from Saudi Arabia. Messi has had two lacklustre seasons in Paris after a glorious era at Barcelona where he won four Champions League and 10 La Liga titles, and is still worshipped by the fans there. Laporta said he has spoken with Messi to try and rebuild the relationship between them, which was damaged when he left in 2021. Messi wanted to stay at Barcelona but the club could not afford to keep him because

of debt of over one billion euros (\$1.1 billion). "I have spoken to Leo to somehow redirect a situation that occurred, in which I had to put the club ahead of everything, even him, who is the best player in the world," Laporta told Catalan regional public television station TV3. "The truth is that it was a very affectionate conversation, very pleasant, and we have also been sending each other messages lately — I congratulated him on the World Cup."



In the early hours of Monday morning, Laporta said on Twitter that "we will do everything possible" to sign Messi. However, speaking on TV3, he was more cautious. "He is a Paris Saint-Germain player and what we will do is improve the team in all areas, we have already worked on that," said Laporta. "I think it would do me a disservice to talk about these questions about Leo, because he belongs to a team like Paris Saint-Germain, and we have to wait until the end of the season, until it is over and then we can talk more calmly about this." It was reported last week that it was a "done deal" that Messi would move to Saudi Arabia next season. However, Laporta said that despite the money on offer in the Middle East — a reported 400 million dollars a year — Barcelona could compete for Messi's signature. "With all due respect to Saudi Arabia, Barca is Barca, and it is his home," added Laporta. "We can compete with everyone. History backs us, the feelings are too strong, we have 400 million fans around the world too."

INTER EYE PLACE IN CL FINAL

AP ■ MILAN

Romelu Lukaku's return to sparkling form has given Inter Milan an extra weapon ahead of Tuesday's Champions League semi-final decider with AC Milan. Out for much of the season with injuries and with a damaged reputation following a disastrous World Cup, Lukaku has slowly worked his way back to his best. The Belgium striker has scored five times and set up three more in his last six matches and his double in Saturday's 4-2 win over Sassuolo highlighted his new-found confidence. Lukaku celebrated his 30th birthday by beginning and ending the scoring at the San Siro, spinning and lashing home the opener from the edge of the box shortly before half-time and drilling in his eighth league goal of the season just before the end. A striker in his sort of form should probably expect to be starting such a huge match on Tuesday, where Inter defend a 2-0 first leg lead in a bid to reach their first Champions League final since the last time they won it under Jose Mourinho 13 years ago. However it will likely be veteran Edin Dzeko who partners Lautaro Martinez up front for the second of two huge derbies with Milan, with Lukaku set to come on as an impact substitute. "Of course every player wants to start, but the coach has to make his choices for the



team," said Lukaku. "As I have always said, the most important thing is Inter and that's why I give my all for the team." Inter CEO Beppe Marotta said on Saturday that there was a chance of loanee Lukaku staying at Inter next season but with parent club Chelsea yet to announce their new manager his future remains uncertain. What is sure is that the San Siro will again be a riot of colour and noise as two of Italy's standard bearers recreate the days when they were among Europe's elite. Inter fans have good reason to be confident about their

side's chances, as they have a healthy lead from the first leg and are bang in form. Simone Inzaghi's side have won seven matches in a row, scoring 20 goals in the process and playing with a confidence which has been lacking for most of an odd league season in which they have lost 11 times, more than any other team in Serie A's European places. Milan meanwhile come into Tuesday's match in disarray after an embarrassing defeat at lowly Spezia which ended with team and coach Stefano Pioli having a post-match discussion with their away support.

Djokovic hoping 'uneven' Rome courts improve

AP ■ ROME

Novak Djokovic said on Sunday that he hopes the clay courts at the Italian Open improve with use after what the tennis icon describes as an 'uneven' experience in the first two matches of his title defence. The 22-time Grand Slam champion battled his way past Grigor Dimitrov to reach the last 16 in Rome, a tournament he has frequently described as one

of his favourites. However he expressed disappointment with the state of the centre court surface which he described as having "uneven, irregular bounces". "What is interesting would be to understand how much tennis they're playing on the court actually before the tournament starts," Djokovic told reporters. "If you don't use the court, and you have a clay court... the



court breaks. You have many holes. You have an uneven surface, really bad bounces, a lot of clay. In Rome, it has been happening for quite a few years. "Now there's really not much you can do. It's just kind of covering the holes here and there... Hopefully as the days pass and the tournament progresses, the court will get better." Djokovic will face either Cameron Norrie or Marton Fucsovics in the fourth round.

Marseille win, Troyes relegated in Ligue 1

AP ■ PARIS

Marseille won and Troyes' relegation fate was sealed in Ligue 1 on Sunday as Rennes paid tribute to former youth player Arman Soldin, the AFP video reporter killed in Ukraine. Marseille came from behind at home to beat bottom club Angers 3-1 to move to within two points of second-placed Lens. Goals from Alexis Sanchez, Dimitri Payet and Jordan Veretout's penalty proved the perfect riposte to last week's defeat to Lens after Abdallah Sima's goal had given the visitors early hope of an upset at the Velodrome. Earlier, Clermont also came from a goal down to beat Lyon 2-1. Alexandre Lacazette



gave Lyon the lead after 22 minutes but Grejohn Kyei levelled from the penalty spot three minutes later. Kyei netted his second after 65 minutes to lift Clermont up to eighth, just three points behind Lyon whose hopes of European football next season appear to be over. "It's a big disappointment," said Lyon coach Laurent Blanc. "As for Europe, it's all over." At Rennes there was an emotional homage to Soldin, who was killed covering the Ukraine war for AFP on Tuesday. Soldin's mother and brother live in the western city and Rennes held the tribute to his memory before the Breton club's home match with Troyes.



FIH Pro League: India name 24-member squad for Europe leg

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ice drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will lead the Indian men's hockey team in the next leg of the FIH Hockey Pro League in Europe, which will be newly-appointed coach Craig Fulton's first assignment. In their previous outing in the prestigious League matches at home, India remained unbeaten against reigning World Champions Germany and Australia which helped them top the points table. In Europe, they will hope to continue their winning momentum as they take on the formidable Belgium and Great Britain in London followed by matches against the Netherlands and Argentina in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. The 24-member team, announced on Monday, features goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak. He returns to the squad after missing the home matches due to his wedding. He will be joined by PR Sreejesh under bar while defenders list includes five penalty corner specialists in Harmanpreet, Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Sanjay and Mandeep Singh. Manpreet Singh, who was the cynosure of India's midfield will be seen in a new role, playing in India's back-line along

with Sumit and Gurinder Singh have also been named in the backline. The midfield will be led by vice-captain Hardik Singh along with Dilpreet Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Shamsher Singh, Akashdeep Singh and Vivek Sagar Prasad. India's forward line sees the return of Simranjeet Singh who last played for India at the Asia Cup Jakarta but had to return home midway due to injury issues. He will be joined by a good mix of experienced and young set of strikers like Abhishek, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, S Karthi, Gurjant Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Raj Kumar Pal and Mandeep Singh. **SQUAD:** Goalkeepers: Krishan Bahadur Pathak, PR Sreejesh. Defenders: Harmanpreet Singh (C), Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh, Manpreet Singh, Sumit, Sanjay, Mandeep Mor, Gurinder Singh. Midfielders: Hardik Singh (VC), Dilpreet Singh, Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh, Shamsher Singh, Akashdeep Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad. Forwards: Abhishek, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, S Karthi, Gurjant Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Raj Kumar Pal, Mandeep Singh, Simranjeet Singh.

INDIA KNOCKED OUT OF SUDIRMAN CUP

PTI ■ SUZHOU

Star stutters Kidambi Srikanth and PV Sindhu suffered contrasting defeats as India were knocked out of the Sudirman Cup badminton tournament after suffering an embarrassing 0-5 loss to Malaysia in their second Group C match here on Monday. A day after losing 1-4 to Chinese Taipei, India produced yet another listless show against Commonwealth Games champions Malaysia to bow out of the world mixed team championships at the group stage for the second successive time. In the last edition at Vantaa, Finland, India also couldn't make it to the knockout stage. While Srikanth was too erratic in men's singles contest, Sindhu showed great fightback in the decider after squandering an opening game advantage only to go down in the end to world No. 30 Goh Jin Wei. It was always going to be a tough ask for Dhruv Kapila and Ashwini Ponnappa

to outwit the world no. 8 pair of Goh Soon Huat and Lai Shevon Jemie but the Indian combination tried their heart out before losing 16-21, 17-21 in 35 minutes. An error-prone Srikanth then couldn't get India's campaign back on track, going down 16-21, 11-21 to world No. 8 Lee Zii Jia in a lop-sided men's singles contest. World No. 12 Sindhu then erased a 2-11 deficit in the third game but failed to go the distance, losing 21-14, 10-21, 20-22 to Goh in women's singles as India conceded a 0-3 lead to Malaysia in the five-match tie. "It is a bit disappointing. In the third game, I was trailing by 8 points but I came back. Coming so close and losing those two points was very disappointing," Sindhu said. "The momentum was not there in the second game. I was making mistakes, whatever I was playing, it was going to the net or out. In the third game, I should have maintained a lead from start but I gave her a huge lead. There were unforced errors and it made a huge dif-



ference." Sindhu said she "came into rhythm after few points" in the decider. "At 20-20, I felt there should have been a bit more rallies. My strokes hit my frame and went mid court and she finished it off. "After 20-all, it was anybody's game because you can make mistakes, there are a lot of pressure, you are nervous, you want to keep the shuttle in the court, you want to score a point, there are a lot of mixed emotions. In the last two matches, world No. 5 Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy lost 18-21, 19-21 to Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in men's doubles, while Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly went down 15-21, 13-21 as India drew a blank. Following the loss, India finished at third spot in the group with Chinese Taipei and Malaysia ending as the top two teams to qualify for the quarterfinals. India will take on Australia in their final Group C match on Wednesday.

GT IN PLAYOFFS, SRH OUT

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Shubman Gill hit his maiden IPL century as Gujarat Titans became the first team to seal a place in the play-offs of the ongoing edition with a convincing 34-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Monday.

Gill slammed 101 off just 58 balls with the help of 13 fours and one six, and added 147 runs for the second wicket with Sai Sudharsan (47 off 36 balls), to power GT to 188 for nine despite a late comeback by Sunrisers Hyderabad's Bhuvneshwar Kumar (5/30).

With the bat, SRH were never in the hunt as they kept losing wickets at regular intervals to be restricted to 154 for nine.

Heinrich Klaasen (66 off 44) played a lone hand for SRH, while Mohammed Shami (4/21) and Mohit Sharma (4/28) picked up four wickets apiece to shine with the ball for GT.

SRH were off to a disastrous start, losing the wickets of Anmolpreet Singh, Abhishek Sharma and Rahul Tripathi inside the third over, with the scoreboard reading just 12.

It became worse for SRH in their must-win game as Shami picked up his third wicket in the form of rival skipper Aiden Markram an over later, and then, Mohit dismissed Sanvir Singh and Abdul Samad in the seventh over to reduce the visitors to 49 for six.

This season's campaign was as good as over for SRH as Marco Jansen became Mohit's third victim in the ninth over.

Reeling at 59 for seven, SRH finally managed a partnership through Klaasen and Bhuvneshwar (27), the duo adding 68 runs for the eighth wicket.

Earlier, sent into bat GT suffered an early blow as they lost Wriddhiman Saha for a duck in the third ball of the innings, nicking



one to Abhishek Sharma at second slip.

After a sedate start, GT broke the shackles in the third over with Gill and Sudharsan hitting Bhuvneshwar for three exquisite boundaries to pick up 15 runs.

Having found his touch, the in-form Gill pulled, drove and flicked to collect four consecutive boundaries off Fazalhaq Farooqi.

Both Sudharsan and Gill dealt in boundaries to take GT to 65 for one in six overs.

Gill, in particular, was at his attacking best as he continued his onslaught and pulled SRH skipper Markram for two consecutive fours in the seventh over and then struck Mayank Markande for two more boundaries.

At the end of the 10th over, GT were 103 for one.

It was mayhem thereafter with Gill and Sudharsan going hammer and tongs to maintain a healthy run rate of over 10 till 14 overs.

Sudharsan finally departed in the 15th over, caught by T Natarajan at backward point off the bowling of Marco Jansen.

GT skipper Hardik Pandya didn't last long, giving a straightforward catch to Rahul Tripathi at point, handing Bhuvneshwar his second scalp of the day.

David Miller perished in the next over while attempting a big hit. Rahul Tewatia was the next to depart as SRH picked up four wickets in four overs.

Gill, however, went about his business and brought up his century in 56 balls with a single to long-off in the 19th over. But soon after raising his ton, Gill perished in the opening ball of the final over, caught by Samad off Bhuvneshwar.

Rashid Khan got a thick edge in the next ball and Noor Ahmad also departed during an excellent final over by Bhuvneshwar.



Lucknow look to halt Mumbai's momentum

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Mumbai Indians are on a roll in the business end of the tournament and Lucknow Super Giants will be aiming to halt their momentum on a tricky pitch in the IPL here on Tuesday.

Mumbai Indians are third on the points table with 14 points and with a point less from same the number of games, LSG are holding on to the fourth spot.

Both teams will be looking to get out of the danger zone as eight teams remain in the play-off contention.

Suryakumar Yadav is back to his breathtaking best and played a huge role in Mumbai's wins in the previous two games.

Short of runs in the tournament, Rohit Sharma too found some rhythm against Gujarat Giants and will be looking to play a substantial knock at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Cricket Stadium.

In Tilak Varma's absence, Mumbai have found an able replacement in Nehal Wadhwa, who seems to be getting better with every opportunity on the big stage.

On the bowling front, veteran spinner Piyush Chawla continues to make life tough for the batters while rookie Akash Badhwal has given the pace attack a much-needed boost.

Death bowling remains a concern with Jofra Archer's replacement Chris Jordan leaking runs in the last two games.

It is expected to be another low-scoring game here and the spinners on either side could decide the fate of the game.

Leggie Ravi Bishnoi has been the leading wicket taker for LSG and stand in captain Krunal Pandya too showed what he could do with his left-arm spin against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Veteran spinner Amit Mishra is also expected to come into play considering the conditions. The pacers have proved to be a tad expensive especially Avesh Khan, who has an economy rate of 9.75 after nine games.

The batting looks formidable despite the absence of injured K L Rahul. Quinton de Kock has made instant impact as Rahul's replacement at the top while Kyle Mayers is LSG's leading run getter in the competition.

ICC Cricket Committee scraps 'soft Signal' by on-field umpires

PTI ■ DUBAI

The ICC has decided to do away with the contentious 'soft signal' by on-field officials, which had often been criticised by experts as it is believed to have created more confusion for TV umpires after a decision was referred upstairs.

The 'soft signal' was used to determine the validity of catches taken inches off the ground, which couldn't necessarily be confirmed through naked eye.

According to ICC rules, a 'soft signal' is the visual communication by the bowler's end umpire to the third umpire (accompanied by additional information via two-way radio where necessary) of his/her initial on-field decision prior to initiating an Umpire Review.

Till now the on-field umpire

would either signal 'out' or 'not out' based on their gut feeling. And the third umpire was compelled to go by 'soft signal' as most of the footages proved to be inconclusive. The ICC announced changes to the 'playing conditions' after the CEC approved the recommendations from the men's cricket committee led by Sourav Ganguly and the women's cricket committee.

"The major change involved the soft signal being scrapped, with umpires no longer required to give a soft signal when referring decisions to the TV umpire. The on-field umpires will consult with the TV umpire before any decisions are taken," the ICC said. Former India captain Ganguly said: "Soft signals have been discussed at previous cricket committee meetings over the last couple of years. The com-



mittee deliberated this at length and concluded that soft signals were unnecessary and at times confusing since referrals of catches may seem inconclusive in replays."

The other big announcement involved making helmets

"We also discussed player safety, which is very important for us," Ganguly said. "The committee decided that it was best to make the use of helmets mandatory in certain positions to ensure the safety of players."

There was also a minor addition to the free hit rule with any runs scored off a free hit when the ball hits the stumps will be counted as runs scored from now. This would mean that batters can now be bowled off a free hit and attempt a run for the same. The changes will come into effect on June 1, 2023 with the Lord's Test between England and Ireland, a four-day one-off match.

The following World Test Championship final between India and Australia, starting June 7, will also follow these new playing conditions.

Keep Rohit and Kohli fresh for Tests & ODIs, try Tilak, Jaiswal, Jitesh in T20s now: Shastri

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri feels that it is time for stalwarts Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma to concentrate on Tests and ODIs letting young IPL performers like Tilak Verma, Jitesh Sharma and flavour of the season Yashasvi Jaiswal play T20s.

"Players like Rohit, Virat Kohli, they are proven, you know what they are all about. I would go in that (good performers in the IPL) direction so that they get the opportunities, they get the exposure, whilst you keep the Virats and the Rohits fresh for one-day cricket and Test cricket," Shastri told ESPN Cricinfo.

"Your focus there with that kind of experience should move to Test cricket, red-ball cricket for the future World Test Championship, and they stay fresh [so that] there is not too much of cricket where there is an overkill," Shastri advised on how to phase out senior players for shortest format in international cricket.

The likes of Jaiswal, Jitesh, Tilak and Rinku Singh have all done well in the IPL and would be pushing for regular slots under Hardik Pandya's captaincy.

"First T20 series that comes up (West Indies), play these guys (the youngsters), expose these guys. They [the selectors] should start bleeding them right now."

In fact, Shastri wants their current form to be utilised rather than waiting.

"One year is a long time. Players can be in form, the form can disappear. You will pick the best guys at the time,



and then, of course, the experience will count, fitness will count. Who is hot at the moment, who is consistent, who has got the runs and where he has got the runs."

He also doesn't want a top-order guy for his franchise to be played in middle order for the country, something Rahul Dravid had done with Venkatesh Iyer, post Shastri's exit.

"It should be the right man for the right job," Shastri said. "It shouldn't be a guy who bats at three or four for his franchise, and suddenly you make him bat at six or open the innings when it comes to picking a team for India."

"I would like the mix of left-

hand-right-hand batting combination. Just like you look for a left-armer with the ball, I would like to see left-handers there. You see this IPL, teams that have done well, look at the mix that they have."

He has full faith in Pandya's ability to tap right talent.

"Oh, you will get that right with Hardik. He'll get that right where he will want his six bowlers including himself and players for the right numbers," Shastri said.

"Just seeing the way he has captained Gujarat Titans, you can see there is a player for a number and there is a role which he will take forward to the Indian team."



Australian Test summer to start later than usual

AP ■ SYDNEY

Perth Stadium will host Australia's first Test of the 2023-24 summer in mid-December against Pakistan in one of the latest starts to their home season in decades, the schedule unveiled Monday showed.

Pat Cummins' team will play Babar Azam's side in three Tests starting in Western Australia on December 14, followed by the traditional Boxing Day clash in Melbourne and then Sydney to kick off a new cycle of the World Test Championship.

They then meet the West Indies — for the second time in as many summers — in Adelaide from January 17 before Brisbane's Gabba hosts the Caribbean side in the only day-night Test from January 25.

Brisbane and Adelaide usually host Tests in November-December. According to Cricket Australia, it will be the latest start to a men's Test summer of five or more matches since the Ashes that began at the Sydney Cricket

Ground on December 19, 1924.

The new-look schedule is down to Australia remaining in India for a bilateral white-ball series after the one-day World Cup in October-November.

Following the Tests, they will meet the West Indies in three one-dayers and three T20s throughout February, with Canberra and Hobart among the venues.

"Cricket provides the sights and sounds of the summer and brings Australians together like no other sport and we can't wait to welcome fans to watch world class cricket next season," Cricket Australia chief Nick Hockley said.

Australia's world champion women's team, led by Meg Lanning, will bookend the international season, starting with a T20 and ODI series against the West Indies in October.

This will be followed by a multi-format series against South Africa, including their first-ever Test from February 15-18 at the WACA Ground in Perth.

Dhoni's CSK does a lap of honour at Chepauk

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Led by their talisman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Chennai Super Kings did a special lap of honour around the Chepauk to thank the home crowd after their Indian Premier League match against Kolkata Knight Riders here on Sunday.

Even as the spectators went berserk at seeing their favourite player leading their team out after the game, batting great Sunil Gavaskar ran up to the two-time World Cup-winning captain for an autograph.

Probably playing in his last IPL, Dhoni, holding a racquet in one hand, was also seen hitting some balls into the crowd before tossing a few jerseys in that direction.

The policemen at the venue also had their moments as they shook hands with Dhoni before getting his autographs.

The game, however, did not turn out the way CSK would have liked as they lost by six wickets.

Dhoni said the conditions, including dew, had



a big impact on the match.

"The dew made a big difference in the second innings. We can't really blame any of our bowlers. Just that the conditions had a big impact on the game," Dhoni, who waved to the crowd, said at the post-match presentation.

"When we bowled the first ball in the second innings, we knew we needed 180. But there was no way we could have got 180 on that pitch."

Mustafizur and Hasan bowl B'desh to Ireland series win

AP ■ LONDON

Mustafizur Rahman took four wickets before Hasan Mahmud held his nerve as Bangladesh beat Ireland by just five runs in the third ODI at Chelmsford on Sunday.

Victory gave Bangladesh a 2-0 win, with one washout, in the three-match series.

Mustafizur, a 27-year-old left-arm quick, finished with fine figures of 4-44 from 10 overs, including several top-order batsman, as Ireland were held to 269-9 in reply to Bangladesh's 274 all out.

Ireland needed 10 off the final over only for Hasan to take two wickets.

Then, with six required off the last ball, Hasan's fine yorker hit tailender Craig Young on the boot to the delight of the Tigers' vocal fans at the headquarters of English county Essex.

Ireland were well-placed when needing 51 off nine overs with seven wickets in hand.

But Najmul Hossain, who hit a maiden ODI century in Bangladesh's three-wicket win on Friday, took his first wicket at this level to remove Harry Tector.

The in-form Tector, fresh from a career-best 140 on Friday, had made a brisk 45 when he pulled part-time bowler Najmul only for Liton Das to take a stunning diving catch low down as he

ran in from wide of long-on.

"If I tell you we had the belief we'd win, I'd be lying," Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal, who top-scored for the Tigers with 69, told ESPN Cricinfo.

"But cricket is a funny game, wickets fall and scoreboard pressure is bad to have. When 'The Fizz' got two wickets (Curtis Campher and George Dockrell), we thought we had a chance."

Ireland paceman Mark Adair took 4-40 to leave his side chasing a gettable target of 275 off 50 overs.

But despite opener Paul Stirling, captain Andrew Balbirnie and Lorcan Tucker all making fifties, no batsman was able to

produce the match-winning innings Ireland needed.

Tuesday's washout, something Ireland hoped to avoid by moving the series to England, denied the Irish the 3-0 clean sweep they needed to secure automatic entry into this year's World Cup in India. Balbirnie was left to rue Ireland's collapse on Sunday, saying: "We've played a lot of games in these atmospheres, we just need to be harsh on ourselves. One of us had to stay in and score a hundred."

Ireland, having missed out on a top-eight finish in the Super League, will now compete in the June 18-July 9 qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe.

