

OPINION 6
NEED TO REVAMP,
ENFORCE ARMS LAW

WORLD 8
OVERSEAS TRAVEL BAN
ON RAJAPAKSA LIFTED

MONEY 10
LIC SHARES SINK 40% IN
FIRST YEAR OF LISTING

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY MAY 18, 2023; PAGES 12 & 3



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**BANGALORE TO
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IN IPL TODAY**
12 SPORT

CAPSULE

MANIPUR VIOLENCE: SC CASTIGATES HC JUDGE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down heavily on Manipur High Court judge Justice MV Muralidaran, saying despite being granted an opportunity he did not correct his judgement on grant of quota to majority Meiteis in the strife-torn State.

HINDUJA GRP CHAIRMAN SP HINDUJA DIES AT 87

New Delhi: Srichand Parmanand Hinduja, the eldest of the four Hinduja brothers and chairman of Hinduja Group, died in London on Wednesday. He was unwell for some time. He was 87.

AAP MLA SENTENCED 'TILL THE RISING OF COURT'

New Delhi: A city court on Wednesday sentenced AAP MLA Akhilesh Pati Tripathi 'till rising of the court' for causing hurt to a student in 2020, saying he was "not a threat to the society". Special Judge Geetanilji Goel passed the order observing that the convict was "not a threat to the society".

ROOH AFZA OLD BRAND: SC UPHOLDS DELHI HC ORDER

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea challenging the Delhi High Court order that restrained the manufacture and sale of sweet beverage concentrate 'Sharbat Dil Afza' during the pendency of a lawsuit by Hamdard Dawakhana which sells 'Rooh Afza' for alleged trademark infringement. **P10**

2008 JAIPUR BLASTS: CAN'T STAY HC ORDER, SAYS SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the Rajasthan High Court order acquitting four men who were handed down death penalty by the trial court in the 2008 Jaipur serial blast case.

Cong parleys fail to end K'taka CM pick impasse



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar during separate meetings at his residence in New Delhi on Wednesday **PTI**

Announcement in 48-72 hours, says Surjewala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Even after several rounds of discussion for the fourth consecutive day on Wednesday, the crisis within the Congress regarding the selection of the Chief Minister for Karnataka has continued.

After several meetings on Monday and Tuesday, including with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge separately, Wednesday started with both former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Karnataka PCC chief DK Shivakumar meeting Rahul Gandhi separately at 10 Janpath in the morning. Shivakumar is also learnt to have talked on the phone to former party chief

Sonia Gandhi, who is learnt to have told him to meet Kharge.

However, in the evening, all the Congress could inform the media was to wait for 48-72 hours for the party to announce the CM name along with full cabinet. Earlier the party had said the CM name shall be announced by Kharge in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

AICC general secretary in-charge for Karnataka Randeep Surjewala said, "It (the decision to name the CM) is a matter of today and tomorrow and we will have a leader of the legislature party. Within the next 48 to 72 hours, we will have a new cabinet in Karnataka and in the first cabinet meeting, we will implement the five Congress guarantees and begin the work of building grand Karnataka."

Surjewala also mentioned that all Congress leaders have been advised not to issue statements on the leadership matter. "Any out of turn remarks made from here onwards will

be treated as indiscipline and action taken accordingly," Surjewala said.

The Karnataka PCC chief then met Kharge again and spent a good half an hour with him for the second day in a row. Surjewala was present at Kharge's residence at the time.

A section of the top Congress leadership feels Siddaramaiah's popularity among several sections, including the poor, OBCs and minorities, can get votes for the party in the Lok Sabha polls.

Surjewala said the party chief has been authorised to appoint the leader of the legislature party and that is why deliberations are underway. "The Congress president believes in three principles — consensus, unanimity and unity. Mallikarjun Kharge, who has been authorised by the legislature party, will announce (the name of the leader) after holding due deliberations."

Urging the media not to resort to speculation, he said, "I am here to quash multiple rumours and hearsay... That is being played on multiple news channels. Stop listening to rumours being planted by the BJP which is frustrated by the decisive defeat in Karnataka."

"The Congress is committed to the welfare of each Kannadiga, the Congress is committed to fulfilling its five guarantees, and the Congress is committed to implementing its agenda. The Congress is committed to giving a clean, transparent and responsible government."

Delay in naming CM reflects Cong's internal conflict, says Bommai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing political tug of war between Siddaramaiah and DK Shiva Kumar and delay in the announcement of a new Chief Minister by the Congress prompted caretaker Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday to say that "inability" to decide despite it having a clear majority in the Assembly reflects the internal situation in the Congress.

"People have voted for the Congress party hoping that a change of Government will bring a lot of prosperity to the State as well as the people. They are yet to finalise their CM candidate. It is their internal matter, I don't want to discuss much on that," he said in response to a question in Bengaluru.

He asked the Congress to settle the issue of Government formation soon.

The "inability" to choose a CM early is a reflection on the party, Bommai claimed.

"Despite having a complete majority, the party is unable to decide its leader. This shows the internal situation of the party."

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Quad meet in Japan as Biden calls off Oz trip

PM Modi's tour schedule intact

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/MELBOURNE/WASHINGTON

With US President Joe Biden calling off his visit to Australia for the Quad summit there next week, the high-profile event may take place in Hiroshima, Japan, this weekend. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and President Biden will review the situation in the Indo-Pacific against the backdrop of Chinese aggressive stance there. The Quad grouping includes India, the US, Australia, and Japan.

Prime Minister Modi will travel to Japan to attend the G-7 meet where the Quad meeting between the leaders of Australia, Japan, US and India is likely to be held on coming Saturday or Sunday.

Modi will then attend the Indo-Pacific Forum meeting in Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea followed by a visit to Australia. He will hold a bilateral meeting with Albanese besides taking part in a conference of business leaders.



The Indian diaspora will hold a reception for the Prime Minister in Sydney on May 23. Biden is also expected to meet Modi on the side-lines of the G-7 summit.

Giving details of Modi's three-nation tour, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said on Tuesday he will visit Hiroshima on May 19-21 for the G-7 summit. He will speak at G-7 sessions with partner countries on subjects such as peace, stability and prosperity of a sustainable planet, food, fertiliser and energy security, health, gender equality, climate change and environment, resilient infrastructure, and development cooperation.

Modi will hold a bilateral meeting with Kishida. He will

also hold bilateral meetings with some of the other participating leaders on the side-lines of the Summit.

The Prime Minister will then travel to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, where he will host the 3rd Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation jointly with the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea on May 22.

Launched in 2014, FIPIC involves India and 14 Pacific Island Countries, namely, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Samoa, Vanuatu, Niue, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, Palau, Nauru and Solomon Islands. **Continued on Page 2**

SC sets Aug 14 deadline for Sebi to finish Adani probe



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted Sebi time till August 14 to complete its probe into the allegations of stock price manipulation by the Adani group and asked the market regulator to place on record an updated status report of the probe. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud also directed that copies of the report submitted before it by the apex court-appointed Justice (ret'd) AM Sapre expert committee be made available to the parties to enable them to assist it in further deliberations in the matter.

When Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for SEBI, requested the top court to consider extending the deadline till September end, the bench said, "We are not granting an indefinite extension of time. If there is some genuine difficulty, you let us know."

Continued on Page 2

India's growth expected to remain strong despite regional challenges: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMY

India's economy is expected to grow by 6.7 per cent in the calendar year 2024, supported by resilient domestic demand, according to a UN report which said higher interest rates and weaker external demand will continue to weigh on investment and exports this year for the country.

The World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2023 released on Tuesday said India's economy, the largest in the South Asian region, is expected to expand by 5.8 per cent in 2023 and 6.7 per cent in 2024 (calendar year basis), supported by resilient domestic demand.

However, higher interest rates and weaker external demand will continue to weigh on investment and exports in 2023, it said.

Inflation in India is expected to decelerate to 5.5 per cent in 2023 as global commodity prices moderate and slower currency depreciation reduces imported inflation.

The estimates for India's economic growth in the mid-year assessment remained unchanged from the projections made in the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2023 report launched

in January this year. The flagship report issued in January had said that India's GDP is projected to moderate to 5.8 per cent in 2023 as higher interest rates and global economic slowdown weigh on investment and exports.

India's economic growth is expected to remain "strong" even as prospects for other South Asian nations "are more challenging." India is projected to grow at 6.7 per cent in 2024, the fastest-growing major economy in the world, the flagship report had said.

Chief of the Global Economic Monitoring Branch, Economic Analysis and Policy Division, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Hamid Rashid had said at a press conference that India is a "bright spot" in the world economy.

In response to a question by PTI on the trajectory of the Indian economy, Rashid said on Tuesday "India remains a bright spot."

Continued on Page 2

Army's plan to pullout put off as terror export from Pak unabated in Jammu

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

In view of unabated terror attacks being orchestrated from across the border, the planned phased withdrawal of the Army from certain areas of the Jammu region has been shelved "indefinitely".

Officials said the Government had planned to reduce the footprints of Rashtriya Rifles, a counter-insurgency force of the Army, in the Jammu region and hand over the security to the Jammu & Kashmir Police and paramilitary forces.

The Army has three Counter-Insurgent Forces (CIF) in the Jammu region — Delta Force (which looks after the Doda region), Romeo Force (looking after Rajouri and Poonch areas) and Uniform Force (looking after Udhampur and Banihal areas).

Some units of the Army had planned to gradually hand over the security and law and order management to the local police and paramilitary units in



South of Pir Panjal (Jammu region), the officials said.

However, keeping the situation in mind, especially the killings by terrorists this year, it has been decided to shelve the proposal "indefinitely", the officials said.

The areas in the Jammu region have seen 17 killings by terrorists, including that of 10 Army personnel.

Seven civilians were killed in Dhangri village of Rajouri on January 1 this year. Of them, five civilians were killed in a

terrorist firing on January 1 evening while two minors lost their lives when an IED, left behind by the terrorists before fleeing, exploded the next day.

Five Army personnel were killed in cold blood when terrorists attacked their vehicle at Bhatta Durrian in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district on April 20.

The Army personnel were on their way to distribute 'iftar' material to a nearby village during Ramzan. **Continued on Page 2**

Narco-terror-gangster nexus: NIA raids 324 places in 9 States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a massive multi-State operation, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), in coordination with Punjab Police and Haryana Police, on Wednesday raided 324 locations and seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition, besides other incriminating materials, in the notorious narco-terror-gangster-drug smugglers nexus cases.

"Several suspects were detained during the raids, conducted as part of 'Operation Dhvasi' in nine States, namely Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Chandigarh and Madhya Pradesh," the NIA said in a statement.

While the NIA covered 129 premises, Punjab Police launched searches at 143 places in 17 districts and Haryana Police raided 52 locations in 10 districts simultaneously begin-



ning at 5.30 am, it said.

The day-long searches were aimed at breaking the terror nexus of Arsh Datta, a designated terrorist, apart from dreaded gangsters such as Lawrence Bishnoi, Chhenu Pehalwan, Deepak Teetar, Bhupi Rana, Vikash Lagarpuriya, Ashish Choudhary, Gurpreet Sekhon, Dilpreet Baba, Harsimrat Simma, and Anuradha among others.

Continued on Page 2

Famed convener of Babri Action panel Zafaryab Jilani no more

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) secretary and senior advocate Zafaryab Jilani (74) died here on Wednesday after a protracted illness. He is survived by his wife, two sons, and a daughter.

Jilani continued to be a significant figure in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi issue as convener of the Babri Masjid Action Committee. During the Akhilesh Yadav-led Government, he was appointed as additional advocate general of Uttar Pradesh. **Continued on Page 2**

Next five years to be hottest ever, says WMO

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has predicted that global temperatures are likely to surge to record levels in the next five years, fuelled by heat-trapping greenhouse gases and a naturally occurring El Niño event.

In its latest update, the WMO said that there is a 98 per cent likelihood that at least one of the next five years, and the five-year period as a whole, will be the warmest on record.

Meanwhile, a study by World Weather Attribution too has emphasised that the region's high vulnerability, known as a heatwave hotspot, exacerbated the impacts of the heatwave. "There was a 66 per cent chance that annual global sur-

face temperatures will exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels for at least one of the years 2023-2027, with a range of 1.1 degrees Celsius to 1.8 degrees Celsius forecasted for each of those five years," the WMO said.

The WMO last year stated that there was a 50:50 chance of the annual average global temperature temporarily reaching 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level for at least one of the next five years — and the likelihood is increasing with time.

"This report does not mean that we will permanently exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius level specified in the Paris Agreement which refers to long-term warming over many years. However, WMO is



sounding the alarm that we will breach the 1.5 degrees Celsius level on a temporary basis with increasing frequency," said WMO Secretary-General Prof Petteri Taalas.

The years from 2015 to 2022 were the hottest ever recorded, with 2016 being the warmest. But temperatures are forecast to rise further as climate change intensifies. The

global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 average. The cooling influence of La Niña conditions over much of the past three years temporarily reined in the longer-term warming trend. But La Niña ended in March 2023 and an El Niño is forecast to develop in the coming months. Typically, El Niño increases global tem-

peratures in the year after it develops — in this case this would be 2024.

There is only a 32 per cent chance that the five-year mean will exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold, according to the Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update produced by the United Kingdom's Met Office, the WMO lead centre for such predictions.

The chance of temporarily exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius has risen steadily since 2015, when it was close to zero. For the years between 2017 and 2021, there was a 10 per cent chance of exceedance.

The WMO said that the annual mean global near-surface temperature for each year between 2023 and 2027 is predicted to be between 1.1

degrees Celsius and 1.8 degrees Celsius higher than the 1850-1900 average. This is used as a baseline because it was before the emission of greenhouse gases from human and industrial activities. There is a 98 per cent chance of at least one in the next five years beating the temperature record set in 2016, when there was an exceptionally strong El Niño. The chance of the five-year mean for 2023-2027 being higher than the last five years is also 98 per cent.

Arctic warming is disproportionately high. Compared to the 1991-2020 average, the temperature anomaly is predicted to be more than three times as large as the global mean anomaly when averaged over the next five northern hemisphere extended winters.

New Parl all set to open on May 28

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The "New" Parliament is all set to be inaugurated on May 28 as part of the grand celebrations of Modi-2 anniversary. Sources in the Government said preparations for the inauguration of the new Parliament are in full swing and all the Parliamentarians are being sent a missive to make themselves available in the national Capital during the last week of this month the reasons for which has been cited a probable "function". **Continued on Page 2**

NCR PULSE

NOIDA AGNELITES EXCEL IN CBSE BOARD EXAMS

Noida: At least 44 students of the total of 218 candidates of Fr Agnel School (FAS), Noida, who appeared for the Class 12 CBSE Board examinations this year, have scored more than 90 per cent while 91 students are within the bracket of 75-89 per cent hence registering a passing percentage of 98.62 per cent in the just declared CBSE Board results. The feather in the cap was 100s by students each in English, Political Science and Painting. While Abhas Agarwal secured 97 per cent overall, Aarushi Bayana came out with flying colors at 98.40 aggregate percentage. The commerce stream topper of the class 12 got 95.40 aggregate percentage. Further, in the class 10th CBSE results, the school recorded a 100 per cent passing percentage with 89 students securing over 90 per cent while 189 secured between 75-89 per cent. A record 38 class 10th students secured full 100 per cent marks in various subjects. Among Bhardwaj emerged as the topper with 99.60 per cent followed by Anant Vyom Sharma at 98.60 per cent and Avika Srivastava at 98.40 per cent as third topper. FAS Director Father. JA Canvalho congratulated the students as well the teachers and entire school staff and also appreciated CBSE for smooth conduct of the entire school examinations process.

SOLAR VEHICLE FOR AGRICULTURAL USE DEVELOPED



Noida: A path-breaking innovation, christened "SO-APT", which is a unique solar-operated Agro Vehicle, has been developed by a student of Amity International School, Pushp Vihar, in the national Capital. Suhani Chauhan, a student of Class XI, has developed this eco-friendly vehicle for agricultural use, highly beneficial for the farmers, and can be used to operate fodder cutting machine, centrifugal pumps, fans, lights and mobile charging. With a distance covering capacity of 60 kms, with fully a charged battery and special features such as load carrying capacity of 400 kg and low and high-speed regulation, the vehicle can be used for seed-sowing, spraying, irrigation, etc. Suhani said showcasing her innovation during the National Technology Week-2023 was a "dream come true."

Divested Vigilance Secy trashes forgery, corruption allegations

RAJESH KUMAR/RAKESH KUMAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI



Special Secretary (Vigilance) S Y Rajasekhar, who has been divested of his charge by the Delhi Government, has trashed the allegations of "forgery and corruption" leveled against him by officials against whom he had taken action and advised disciplinary action.

The AAP dispensation has alleged that the IAS officer faces charges of "forgery and corruption", including the alleged CNG fitness scam.

The 2012-batch IAS officer is apparently facing the heat as he was overseeing various sensitive cases related to the alleged excise policy case, renovation of Chief Minister's official bungalow and razing of a heritage structure for construction of a house for then Delhi Jal Board Chief Executive Officer among others.

Rajasekhar was divested of his duties on the directive of the Delhi Services Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on May 13.

Bharadwaj had said that several written complaints against Rajasekhar have been received alleging his involvement in forgery and corruption. The Delhi Government will look into all these com-

plaints seriously and impartially, he had said in a statement earlier this week.

Trashing all allegations against him, Rajasekhar said he has submitted a 157-page report to Delhi L-G VK Saxena with documentary evidence, including clearance from the Central Vigilance Commission and the Union Home Ministry. *The Pioneer* is in possession of this report.

"I have come across statements in newspapers about certain allegations against the undersigned. In this context, it is to mention here that the job profile of the undersigned was always in the Enforcement and Regulatory Department. As a result, faced counter complaints from officers against whom the undersigned had taken action and recommended disciplinary action," the IAS officer said in his report.

"All the allegations fall

under this category and the same were already inquired and investigated by Highest Vigilance Authority of the country, that is, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)", Rajasekhar stated, but-tressing further that the reports have been further investigated and finally accepted by the Union Home Ministry.

"On the contrary, the MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) directed to assess threat perspective and directed to take action against false complainants," reads the report.

Bharadwaj had taken the step citing complaints that Rajasekhar was "running an extortion racket and demanding protection money from officers".

Through a legal notice to the Delhi Government, NGO Abhinav Manch had demanded action against the officer over charges of "corruption, forgery and harassment".

It claimed that Rajasekhar has been accused of "planting fabricated documents" during his earlier stint at the Vigilance Directorate to save accused senior officers involved in the CNG fitness scam.

In the report, the officer asserted the MHA had given a clean chit to him. He further

pointed out the fact that the allegation is being levelled as if he was the author of the CNG kit scam, when in actuality, he was never posted in the transport department.

It has also been alleged that he "harassed and threatened" a woman officer at the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) where he was earlier posted as Director (Estates). During his tenure in NDMC, many colleagues had submitted complaints against Rajasekhar. It included over 60 complaints by one person to the CVC accusing the IAS officer of "bribery and having benami properties", the notice said. In this connection, the Central Vigilance Officer in his 2018 report, pointed out that the allegations were being made "to create confusion in the system to tarnish the image of YVJ Rajasekhar".

The Delhi Government has also claimed to have received a complaint against the officer, claiming that he was "deliberately" brought from Goa before his tenure in the coastal State ended and "planted" in the Delhi Government's Services and Vigilance departments for "executing specific political agenda", according to sources.

Replace Services Secy More with A Singh: Govt to LG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Arvind Kejriwal Government on Wednesday sent a proposal to the L-G, VK Saxena, to replace incumbent Services Selection Board (SSB) on Wednesday. The meeting chaired by the chief secretary was also attended by additional chief secretary P K Gupta and Services secretary More, officials said.

The CSB was originally scheduled to meet earlier on Tuesday, but it could not due to preoccupation of the chief secretary.

More was removed by the Delhi government from his post on May 11, hours after the Supreme Court order placed the control of bureaucrats working with the Delhi government (excluding those related to police, public order, and land) under the elected government.

Besides directing More's removal, Bharadwaj had ordered that he be replaced by IAS officer AK Singh. The Delhi government had also approached the Supreme Court alleging the Centre was not implementing its decision to remove More.

Council of Ministers of National Capital Territory of Delhi in matters within the legislative scope of the national Capital. The issue was discussed in a meeting of Services Selection Board (SSB) on Wednesday. The meeting chaired by the chief secretary was also attended by additional chief secretary P K Gupta and Services secretary More, officials said.

The CSB was originally scheduled to meet earlier on Tuesday, but it could not due to preoccupation of the chief secretary.

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AAP MLA sentenced till rising of court for hurting student

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Wednesday sentenced AAP MLA Akhilesh Pati Tripathi to till rising of the court for causing hurt to a student in 2020, saying he was "not a threat to the society".

Special Judge Geetanji Goel passed the order observing that the convict has "deep roots in the society" and that he was "not a threat to the society".

"Rising of the court" is a nominal sentence awarded to a guilty person who is not allowed to leave the court till it concludes. The judge also imposed a fine of Rs 30,000 on Tripathi, out of which Rs 6,500 would be deposited as cost of proceedings towards the cost incurred by the prosecution and the remaining amount would be paid to victim Sanjeev Kumar as compensation. "The convict has deep roots in the society and the convict is not a threat to the society... Considering the facts and circumstances of the case and to meet the ends of justice, it would be reasonable if convict Akhilesh Pati Tripathi is sentenced to TRC," the judge said.

The court had on March 25 convicted Tripathi, saying the prosecution was able to prove the guilt of the accused "beyond reasonable doubt" for the offence under Section 323 of IPC.

SC wonders if nomination of aldermen to MCD is of much concern to Centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Giving the Lieutenant Governor the power to nominate aldermen to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi will mean he can destabilise an elected civic body, the Supreme Court observed on Wednesday and wondered whether these nominations were of so much concern to the Centre. A Bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala made this observation while reserving its verdict on the plea of the Delhi Government challenging the LG's power to nominate aldermen.

In December last year, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) defeated the BJP in the civic elections, winning 134 wards and ending the saffron party's 15-year run at the helm of the MCD. The BJP won 104 seats and the Congress finished a distant third with nine.

"Is the nomination of 12 specialised people in MCD of that much concern to the Centre? Actually, giving this power to the LG would effectively mean that he can destabilise the democratically elected Municipal Committees because they (aldermen) will have voting powers also," the Bench said.



Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, appearing for the LG's office said in the context of Delhi, it is pertinent to note that the 69th amendment came and GNCTD Act was notified, which collectively contain mechanism for governance of Delhi.

The 69th Amendment Act of 1991 accorded a special status to the Union Territory of Delhi by designing it as the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

The Bench told Jain his submission means that MCD is an institution of self-governance and that the role of LG here is distinct from the role of administrator when he acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers under Article 239AA.

Referring to the Act, Jain said there are some powers which are entrusted to administrators and some others are given to the government. Justice Narasimha asked Jain whether he means the power

conferred upon the administrator is independent of the state and cannot be given to the state government.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Delhi government, said no separate powers have been accorded to the state government to nominate people to the MCD, and for the past 30 years, the practice of the LG nominating aldermen on the aid and advice of the city government has been followed.

"LG never appoints aldermen in his own right," he said, adding the nominations are always made by the President but on the aid and advice of the Union government.

Referring to the provisions, Singhvi said where a file is marked to the state government, it stops at its door, but where it is marked to the LG, he has to act on the aid and advice of the state government. Jain interjected saying just because a practice has been followed for 30 years does not mean it is correct.

Singhvi submitted if Jain's argument is accepted, then LG after LG was wrong in following this practice. The bench said giving the LG the power to nominate aldermen will effectively mean that he can destabilise a democratically elected MCD because these aldermen get appointed to the standing committees and have voting power.

GGSIU Assistant Prof arrested for impersonating LG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested Rohit Singh, Assistant Professor at the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIU), who had impersonated the Lt. Governor, VK Saxena and made calls on his behalf in September, 2022. He was arrested on May 15, at the IGI Airport upon his arrival from UK.

Following preliminary questioning by Police, the accused has admitted that he called the Vice-Chancellor of IP University twice over the land-line phone impersonating as the LG. In the first instance, he got his leave sanctioned and in the second instance on 30th September, 2022, he called the VC impersonating as LG to get his sister selected as Faculty in the English Department of the GGSIU.

The Delhi Police had registered an FIR and begun investigations after a complaint in this matter, which relates to a call made to Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. Mahesh Verma on 30.09.2022, by an unidentified person impersonating as the Lt. Governor, who asked for the appointment of a particular candidate in the English Department of the University, in a since cancelled Recruitment Exercise. He was produced before the court



which granted his police custody. On expiry on his police custody, he was produced before the court, which remanded him into judicial custody. A Look Out Circular was pending against him.

The Lt. Governor had taken an extremely serious view in this matter of impersonation and emphasized that it has never been his style of functioning to make calls or entertain any request whatsoever, that involved out of turn favors, benefits or unethical practices. He has also cautioned all concerned to strictly check with his Secretariat in case of any such calls/messages received by them, from someone impersonating him or using his name.

To ascertain the veracity of the call, the Vice Chancellor had contacted the LG's Secretariat, which denied having made any such call and asked for the matter to be reported to Police immediately. Accordingly, an FIR under Section 419 (IPC) for impersonation was registered at PS Dwarka, North on 02.10.2022.

Kejriwal orders desilting of all trunk sewer lines

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday ordered desilting of all trunk sewer lines of the national capital, cleaning at least 20 per cent of sewer lines every year so that the whole 9000-km-long network is cleaned up in five years. This will provide immediate relief to the residents of Delhi from sewer line overflows, enhance the cleanliness of the Yamuna river, and effectively tackle the persistent issue of waterlogging on roads. This is the first time that the government has decided to clean the all trunk sewer lines in the capital. Initially, the plan is to desilt 45 kilometres of these sewer lines, with completion targeted for March 2024.

The chief minister said in a statement this is the first time any government has decided to desilt and clean the entire sewer system of Delhi. It will be adopted as a regular exercise, he said. The desilting of sewer system will "radically" aid the cause of Yamuna cleaning, he said. At least 20 per cent sewer lines will be cleaned up each year and within five years, the whole system will be completely cleaned, he said.

This extensive cleaning process will be executed in five phases, ensuring that every sewer line within Delhi

is meticulously cleaned within a span of five years. In addition to the physical cleaning operations, the chief minister has instructed authorities to establish proper waste disposal systems for the silt removed, it said. The cleaning process will remove the risk of sanitation-related hazards, prevent water contamination in the Yamuna and mitigate the problem of waterlogging on roads during monsoon seasons, it said.

The chief minister issued clear instructions to the Delhi Jal Board regarding the comprehensive cleaning of all trunk sewer lines in Delhi and to document the desilting process through video recordings.

According to the officials, the total length of sewer lines in Delhi is approximately 9,000 kilometres. Currently, cleaning operations are underway for approximately 90 kilometres of these crucial sewer lines across various locations. Desilting operations for 36.87 kilometres of trunk and peripheral sewer lines have been successfully completed thus far. The remaining cleaning work for these trunk sewer lines is expected to be finalised by the end of May-June 2023, it said.

A survey of an additional 110 kilometres of sewer lines for future desilting is underway.

Upgrade WTPs, find solution to contaminants: CM to DJB

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday instructed Delhi Jal Board (DJB) officials to modernise the city's four water treatment plants (WTPs) and find a "permanent solution" to remove contaminants. For this, he said, authorities should develop a time-bound comprehensive plan, according to an official statement issued after a review meeting chaired by the Chief Minister.

He also stressed upon officials that the "presence of dirty water in any part of Delhi should be completely eradicated", it said. In the meeting, which was attended by Water Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, DJB vice chairperson Somnath Bharti and senior officials of the Board, Kejriwal expressing concern over the issue of contamination of supply water, reiterated that a "permanent solution" to the problem should be found.

Stressing on the need for modernisation of the treatment plants, he directed officials to take immediate action to upgrade filters to ensure clean water to people. These plants currently suffer from excessive turbidity and their



upgrade is crucial to meet quality standards, he noted.

"If ammonia is identified as the source of contamination, swift measures will be taken to eliminate it, including thorough pipeline inspections," the chief minister said. Contamination of water because of pipelines must be "promptly addressed, and if necessary, replacement should be undertaken", Kejriwal said during the meeting.

The chief minister noted that there were complaints about ammonia contamination in several tube wells and said resolving these issues has to be a priority, the statement said. He instructed the DJB to tackle localised ammonia contamination concerns through comprehensive measures and a detailed action plan, it said.

"Furthermore, areas experiencing nitrate-related com-

plaints should get nitrate removal systems to ensure safe drinking water," Kejriwal said. He said ammonia removal plants are being installed to effectively tackle contamination and added that four non-operational plants would be working within the next two to two and a half months.

In the meeting, officials informed the chief minister that necessary permissions have been obtained for installing tube wells at 400 locations. On the tube wells project, the statement said in the first phase, the installation of 450 tube wells will result in a 70 million gallons per day (MGD) increase in water capacity within the next six months. Following the installation of these tube wells, the total water capacity of Delhi will rise to 1,060 MGD, it said.

8-member panel to decide routes of mohalla buses, operational characteristics



Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot inaugurates New Route Map installed at ITO Bus Stop. Ranjan Dimri | The Pioneer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has constituted an eight-member expert technical committee for deciding routes and operational characteristics of the 'mohalla' bus scheme, according to an official order issued by the transport department.

The committee has been constituted by Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, DTC MD Shilpa Shinde, who also holds the charge of Special Commissioner (Cluster) said in the order issued on May 16.

The committee is led by CK Goyal, senior VP (RT), Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System Limited (DIMTS), and has a member

each from DTC, DMRC, International Council on Clean Transport (ICCT), two members from WRI, a representative from MammyIndia and a fellow from the transport department.

The expert technical committee will submit its recommendations to the transport department within three weeks from the date of the constitution of the committee, the order said.

"The scope of work of the expert technical committee has inter-alia included nature of Mohalla bus services, pervasive branding, route length, fare, frequency and any other aspect deemed appropriate to the committee to recommend," it said.

Police issue traffic advisory due to heavy footfall around C-Hexagon

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of heavy footfall around C-Hexagon since the inauguration of Kartavya Path, Delhi Traffic Police on Wednesday issued an advisory, guiding visitors about the roads, location of various utilities and their access points. Police have advised people to use public transport to reach the erstwhile Rajpath (King's Way) — the two-kilometre stretch between Rashtrapati Bhavan and India Gate via public transport.

The advisory was issued after the Delhi Traffic Police observed that since the inauguration of Kartavya Path in September last year, there has been a heavy footfall of visitors to the vicinity of C-Hexagon, officials said.

The changed landscape and ongoing construction projects have highlighted the need for public awareness regarding the location of various utilities and their access points, they said.

According to the advisory, visitors can reach India Gate using any one of the 10 specified roads — Tilak Marg, Purana Quila Road, Shershah Road, Dr. Zakir Hussain Marg, Pandara Road, Shahjahan



Road, Akbar Road, Ashoka Road, K.G Marg and Copernicus Marg. Shahjahan Radial and K.G Marg Radial, the advisory stated.

People planning a visit India Gate should make maximum use of public transport. They have also been advised to avail metro services till Supreme Court metro station, Khan Market metro station, Mandi House metro station or ITO metro station and further walk or use public transport to reach India Gate.

"Visitors can also reach India Gate by using city bus services having bus stops along C Hexagon near Baroda House, National Stadium and National Art Gallery," it said. Commuters using auto rickshaws, cabs and private vehicles should alight and board vehicles from designated pick-up and drop points along C-Hexagon at Tilak Marg Radial, near National War Memorial Gate, Dr. Zakir Hussain Radial,

"Drivers are advised not to block the carriageway by halting their vehicles or waiting in their vehicles along C-Hexagon. Any violation in this regard is liable to prosecution," the advisory said. "People travelling in their personal vehicles should avail paid parking facilities and not park their vehicles on roads. Improperly parked vehicles are liable to towing and fine," it added.

"Due to heavy volume of vehicular traffic on C-Hexagon, pedestrians are advised not to cross C-Hexagon carriageway except via zebra crossings which are located at Tilak Marg, Dr. Zakir Hussain Marg, Shahjahan Road and K.G Marg. Pedestrians should walk on the left side of the footpath along the perimeter of C-Hexagon," it said.

Russian oil spat: EAM tells EU Foreign Policy chief to read rules

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BRUSSELS

As European Union (EU) Foreign Policy chief Josep Borrell called for action against India for procuring Russian oil in the backdrop of ongoing Ukraine conflict, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar urged him to go through the EU regulations.

This sharp reaction came late Tuesday in Brussels after Borrell's remarks seeking action against Indian refined products from Russian crude.

Clarifying India's position, Jaishankar said "Look at EU Council regulations, Russian crude is substantially transformed in the third country and not treated as Russian anymore. I would urge you to look at Council's Regulation 833/2014."

This comes after the bloc's chief diplomat earlier said the EU should crack down on India reselling Russian oil as refined fuels including diesel into Europe as Western nations move to tighten sanctions on



Moscow's energy sector.

"India buys Russian oil, it's normal..." said EU's Foreign policy chief Borrell but wants the bloc to act on refined products coming from India-made Russian crude in an interview with Financial Times.

While Borrell met Jaishankar at the trade technology talks in Brussels, he was not present at the press conference that followed.

In his place, EU Executive Vice President on Competition, Margrethe Vestager said there was "no doubt about the legal

basis of the sanctions", and that the EU and India would have the discussion as "friends... with an extended hand and of course, not a pointed finger."

Along with Jaishankar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and Union Minister of State for Entrepreneurship, Skill Development, Electronics and Technology Rajevee Chandrasekhar were also in the meeting.

Jaishankar on Monday arrived in Brussels for the last leg of his three-nation visit covering Bangladesh, Sweden and

Belgium.

Jaishankar has all along defended India's imports from Russia and indirectly criticized the West for pressuring New Delhi to minimise its trade with Russia.

He wondered how Europe could make choices to prioritise its own energy needs and at the same time ask India to do something else.

"Our trade with Russia is at a very small level- USD 12-13 billion, in comparison to European countries. We've also given the Russians a set of products... I don't think people should read more into it other than the legitimate expectations of any trading country to increase its trade," Jaishankar said earlier in December while addressing a joint press conference with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock.

"I would urge you to look at these figures. There is a website called 'Russia Fossil Fuel Tracker' that would give you country-by-country data of who is really importing what and I suspect that might be very very helpful," he added.

India, EU keen to deepen ties to accelerate growth, deployment of advanced tech

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BRUSSELS/LONDON

Given a volatile global, economic and security scenario, India and the European Union (EU) have said they share fundamental values and have a common interest in ensuring security, prosperity and sustainable development in a multi-polar world. The two sides also said they are committed to deepening their partnership to accelerate the growth and deployment of advanced digital technologies that will benefit both societies. These were the major takeaways from the first meeting of the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) late Tuesday. In a joint statement issued later, the two sides said they also face a challenging and volatile global political, economic and security landscape.



"In that context, both sides emphasised the importance of the rules-based international order and full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, transparency, and peaceful resolution of disputes," the statement said.

The meeting, which concluded in Brussels Tuesday evening, was co-chaired by Executive Vice-Presidents Margrethe Vestager and Valdis

Dombrovskis on the EU side, and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, and Rajevee Chandrasekhar, Minister for Skill Development and IT on the Indian side. The joint statement also called for annual TTC meeting alternating between the EU and India, with the next meeting planned for early 2024 in India.

The two sides said the

rapid changes in the world's geopolitical environment highlight the need for an even deeper strategic partnership between India and the European Union.

"As vibrant democracies, open market economies and pluralistic societies India and the European Union share fundamental values and have a common interest in ensuring security, prosperity and sustainable development in a multi-polar world," it said.

"India and the European Union are committed to deepening their partnership and leveraging their respective strengths to accelerate the development and deployment of advanced digital technologies that will benefit both societies and promote global progress in line with our common values," it said.

Leh airport resumes operation after runway cleared of C-17 plane

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Operations resumed at the Leh airport on Wednesday after it was shut on Tuesday as an IAF C-17 Globemaster heavy-lift transport blocked the runway there following a technical glitch.

The closure forced the diversion of two and cancellation of eight flights on Tuesday. "With the continuous efforts of concerned agencies, it is informed that..(the airport) is now available for operations...Hence, all commercial flights will be operating on 17.05.2023 (Wednesday) as per schedule. Wishing you all a very happy journey, the airport authorities said in a tweet on Wednesday morning.

The Leh airport is a military one that is also used for passenger flights. The IAF uses the airport to support the military's high-altitude deployments in Ladakh. The IAF operates 11 C-17 planes.

The airport authorities on Tuesday said almost all flights in and out of the airport were cancelled due to "unavoid-



able circumstances." IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet,

and Vistara operate 20 non-stop flights in and out of Leh.

Sources had said on Tuesday the technical glitch was not serious and the runway was likely to be operational by Wednesday. The C-17 was on a routine air maintenance sortie when it landed at Leh on Tuesday morning.

7 passengers suffer sprains as A-I flight encounters severe turbulence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As many as seven passengers reported minor sprain injuries Delhi-Sydney Air India flight encountered severe turbulence mid-air leaving several passengers injured on Tuesday. There were 224 passengers onboard the aircraft.

The injured passengers received medical assistance on arrival at Sydney airport, however, no passenger was hospitalised. The Air India flight (AI 302) had taken off from Delhi at 2.43 pm on Tuesday and

landed in Sydney at 7.10 am Wednesday after an almost 12-hour flight (all timings local), which had encountered severe turbulence mid air.

"During flight seven passengers reported minor sprain. Cabin crew provided the first aid with the assistance of a doctor and a Nurse travelling as passengers, using an onboard first aid kit," the official said.

A senior officer of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said that these passengers complained of minor sprain and no hospitalisation was required.

CBI searches premises of J&K ex-Guv's aide in insurance case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday conducted searches at premises of the then aide of former Jammu & Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik, and 11 other locations in the alleged insurance scam case.

The CBI conducted searches at the residence of Malik's then aide Saunak Bali, Chartered Accountant Sanjay Narang, Virender Singh Rana and Kanwar Singh Rana, Priyanka Chowdhary and Anita in Delhi and Rajasthan, officials said.

The searches were spread across 10 places in Delhi and two districts in Rajasthan.

The move comes within a month of questioning Malik on April 28.

The searches were initiated after the analysis of financial documents, digital evidence and statements of the accused and other persons in the case, the officials said.

In October, the CBI had recorded Malik's statement after he concluded his gubernatorial responsibilities in Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Goa, and Meghalaya.



Malik had claimed he was offered Rs 300-crore bribe for clearing two files during his tenure as the Jammu and Kashmir Governor between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019.

Subsequently, the CBI booked Reliance General Insurance and Trinity Re-Insurance Brokers Limited as accused in its FIR related to a controversial health insurance scheme for Jammu and Kashmir government employees reportedly cleared by Malik in the state administrative council meeting on August 31, 2018 which was later scrapped.

"...Unknown officials of Finance Department of Government of Jammu and Kashmir by abusing their official position in conspiracy and connivance with Trinity Reinsurance Brokers Ltd, Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd and other unknown public servants and private persons have committed the offences of criminal conspiracy and criminal misconduct," the FIR has alleged.

The CBI registered two FIRs in connection with the corruption allegations levelled by Malik in the award of contracts for a group medical insurance scheme for government employees, and civil works worth Rs 2,200 crore related to the Kiru hydro-electric power project in Jammu and Kashmir.

Malik had claimed he was offered Rs 300-crore bribe for clearing two files during his tenure as the Jammu and Kashmir Governor between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019.

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SC gives interim relief to IYC chief from arrest in ex-woman leader case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to Indian Youth Congress president BV Srinivas, the Supreme Court on Wednesday granted him interim protection from arrest in a case lodged by an expelled woman leader of the party from Assam accusing him of causing mental agony. Srinivas had challenged a Gauhati High Court order rejecting his anticipatory bail plea.

On May 5, the Gauhati High Court had rejected the anticipatory bail plea of Srinivas in a case lodged by Angkita Dutta, the expelled chief of Assam Youth Congress, accusing him of causing mental agony to her. A bench of Supreme Court Justices B R Gavai and Sanjay Karol issued notices to the Assam Government and others, seeking their replies in the matter by July 10.

"We have perused the

(CrPC section) 164 statement which has been so graciously placed before us by the prosecution. We do not wish to say anything against the state at this stage. Taking into consideration the one-month delay in lodging FIR, the petitioner is entitled to interim protection. We direct that in the event of arrest, the petitioner shall be released on anticipatory bail on furnishing sureties to the sum of Rs 50,000," the bench said.

The top court directed Srinivas to cooperate in the investigation and appear before the police on May 22. It also directed him to cooperate in the inquiry being carried out with the National Commission for Women. Srinivas's counsel senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi submitted that the complainant raised the grievance of discrimination being faced in the party in the tweets before lodging the complaint.

Public servants must be thick skinned, HC tells Gambhir in defamation suit against daily

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that people in public service should be thick skinned, the Delhi High Court Wednesday refused to pass an interim order "at this stage" on a plea by BJP MP Gautam Gambhir seeking directions against Punnjab Kesari media group to withdraw the alleged defamatory reports. The High Court, however, said prima facie it was satisfied that

the matter requires consideration and summons must be issued to the media house's editor and three reporters.

Cricketer-turned-politician Gambhir claimed in his suit the defendants were publishing "false and malicious" reports against him and sought the court's direction to them to tender unconditional apology which shall be published in all newspapers brought out and circulated by the media house. Justice Chandra Dhari Singh issued notice and summons to the media house and four others on the main suit. The court also issued notice to them on the application for interim relief and listed the matter for further hearing in October.

"You are a public servant, you need not to be so sensitive. Any public person should be thick skinned. Otherwise social media etc... Nowadays judges should also be thick skinned," the judge said. As an interim relief, Gambhir sought a court order to the newspaper to immediately withdraw the alleged defamatory publications targeting him and to restrain it from making similar allegations during the pendency of the suit.

CBI arrests journalist, ex-Navy Commander for spying

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday said it has arrested freelance journalist Vivek Raghuvanshi and former Navy Commander Ashish Pathak for allegedly collecting sensitive information on Defence matters and passing them on to foreign Intelligence agencies.

The agency produced Raghuvanshi and Pathak before a special CBI court which granted six-day CBI custody of the duo.

"It was also alleged that the accused and his associate (ex-Navy commander Pathak), presently working with a (private) firm, were in possession of classified secret documents related to Indian defence establishments," the CBI said in a statement.

On Tuesday, the CBI conducted searches at around 15 locations in the National Capital Region (NCR) and at Jaipur. CBI has seized 48 electronic devices including laptops, tablets, mobile phones, hard disks and pen drives belonging to the FIR-named accused and others associated



with the said accused, during searches," the CBI said.

"Besides, a number of incriminating documents relating to Indian defence establishments, have also been seized. The data stored in cloud based accounts / emails / social media accounts belonging to the accused/ others have also been recovered by digital forensic experts of CBI," it said.

The agency further said, "The scrutiny of devices recovered so far from the possession of accused also revealed that the accused was allegedly collecting confidential information related to India's Defence procurement from different sources and was in contact with several foreign Entities / Agents

by the Special Cell suggested that a journalist was illegally collecting "sensitive details" about "future procurement of armed forces which reveal the strategic preparedness of our country's classified communications/information related to national security, and details of strategic and diplomatic talks of India with our friendly countries, which can spoil the bilateral relations of India with them..." reads the FIR.

According to the Special Cell's FIR, Raghuvanshi allegedly procured and supplied such information to Intelligence agencies of foreign countries.

The CBI took over the case on December 9 last year and re-registered the FIR against Raghuvanshi on a directive from the Union Home Ministry.

After a detailed background check and maintaining surveillance, the CBI on Tuesday carried out the searches on multiple locations on Tuesday.

A number of incriminating documents relating to Indian defence establishments have

also been seized, officials said. Raghuvanshi, who is listed as India correspondent of a US-based portal on defence and strategic affairs on its website, was then taken into custody along with Pathak.

In its FIR registered on December 9, the CBI had booked Raghuvanshi under Section 3 (spying) of the Official Secrets Act and under Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The CBI had booked Raghuvanshi on the allegations that he was involved in the illegal collection of sensitive information including the minute details of the DRDO defence projects and their progress, sensitive details about the future procurement of Indian armed forces which reveal the strategic preparedness of country's classified communications/information relating to national security, details of the strategic and diplomatic talks of India with our friendly countries and sharing such classified information with intelligence agencies of foreign countries.

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Road to 2024: BJP's growing worry to counter Cong's 5 guarantees

MANISH ANAND ■ NEW DELHI

Jolted by rude shock in the Karnataka Assembly election, the Bharatiya Janata Party led state governments are mulling ways to counter Congress' entitlement guarantees, which are seen to be hurting the saffron outfit in states where there are almost direct contests.

"The five guarantees of the Congress in the Karnataka Assembly election proved to have tilted the scale against the BJP. Now, this is becoming a trend, as the Congress had made similar guarantees in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly



election as well. The BJP-ruled states will need to find a counter narrative sooner," said a senior BJP functionary.

Congress' five guarantees in the Karnataka Assembly election were 200 free electricity units, Rs 2000 to women per month, Anna Bhagya scheme under which people in the

team has concluded that the BJP lost the Assembly election because of the Congress' entitlement guarantees, besides a few other political factors, including some of the decisions of the party which backfired," sources said. One of the option on the table for the BJP is to ask the state governments headed by the BJP to further broaden the ambit of the subsidized food scheme, said a senior BJP leader, who added that the party is growing wary of the Opposition parties going aggressive with welfare measures, which the party dub as freebies, in the Assembly elections.

The BJP leaders claim that the party had also reaped rich dividends from the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna (PMGKAY) in Uttar Pradesh and other state Assembly elections. The scheme was merged with the National Food Security Act in December last year.

"The BJP-ruled states which are in financially better positions can create a new category of beneficiaries for the subsidized food scheme. Haryana is mulling to add a new category of beneficiaries in the annual income range of Rs 1.80 lakh to Rs 3 lakh per family in which the state govern-

ment will bear half the cost of the benefits, which will come to Rs 1500 a month. This can be replicated by other BJP-ruled states," added the BJP functionary.

The BJP-ruled states are also being asked to go aggressive to expanding the reach of their existing schemes to find either employments or bank credits to those who wish to start their own business activities, sources said, who added that the party will deliberate deeply on ways to counter the Congress' entitlement guarantees without entering into the competitive politics over freebies.

Centre clears ₹17,000 cr IT Hardware PLI Scheme

₹38K cr subsidy for P&K fertilisers for Kharif season also approved

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the Production Linked Incentive Scheme 2.0 for IT Hardware with a budgetary outlay of ₹17,000 crore. Electronics manufacturing in India has witnessed consistent growth with a 17 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in the last 8 years to cross a major benchmark in production — \$105 billion (about ₹9 lakh crore) — this year.

“For IT PLI, the budgetary outlay is ₹17,000 crore. The tenure of the programme is 6 years,” Union Minister for IT and Telecom Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters after the cabinet meeting. PLI Scheme 2.0 for IT hardware covers laptops, tablets, all-in-one PCs, servers and ultra-small form factor devices. The minister said the scheme is expected to lead to incremen-

tal production of ₹3.35 lakh crore, incremental investment of ₹2,430 crore and create incremental direct employment for 75,000 people during the scheme period. The government in February 2021 approved the PLI scheme for IT hardware, covering the production of laptops, tablets, All-in-One PCs and servers with an outlay of ₹7,350 crore.

The Cabinet also approved a subsidy of ₹38,000 crore for Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilisers, taking the total outlay for fertiliser subsidies to ₹1.08 lakh crore for the ongoing Kharif season in order to provide affordable soil nutrients to farmers.

The total amount includes ₹70,000 crore earmarked for subsidy on urea in the 2023-24 Union Budget. While announcing the ₹38,000 crore subsidy, the government also said there will be no change in the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of fertilisers. The Kharif season is from April-September. The government's subsidy burden on P&K fertilisers has come down for the ongoing Kharif season due to cooling down of global prices in the last few months. For the entire 2023-24 fiscal, the fertiliser bill could reach up to ₹2.25 lakh crore. Briefing

media, Fertiliser Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the Cabinet has approved Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for P&K fertilisers for the 2023-24 Kharif season.

The Cabinet has given it a nod for a subsidy of ₹76 per kg for Nitrogen (N), ₹41 per kg for Phosphorus (P), ₹15 per kg for Potash (K) and ₹2.8 per kg for Sulphur (S), he said. The Cabinet also approved signing of a pact between the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and the Egyptian Competition Authority (ECA). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two regulators is aimed at promoting and strengthening of co-operation in competition law and policy through exchange of information, sharing of best practices as well as through various capacity building initiatives, an official release said.

According to the release, the MoU also aims to develop and strengthen linkages between CCI and ECA as well as learn and emulate from each other's experiences in the enforcement of competition law. Ultimately, the resultant outcomes will benefit consumers at large and promote equity and inclusiveness, it added.

Kerala Govt ordinance gives security to health workers

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The LDF Government in Kerala on Wednesday approved an ordinance that provides for stringent punishment, including imprisonment of up to seven years and a maximum fine of Rs 5 lakh for those found guilty of causing grievous bodily harm to doctors, medical students, and others working in the health services sector in the state.

The decision, taken in a cabinet meeting chaired by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, came in the wake of the brutal killing of Dr Vandana Das by a patient at a taluk hospital in Kollam district of the state last week.

Under the Kerala Healthcare Service Workers and Healthcare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage to Property) Act of 2012, any act of violence against a healthcare service person or damage to property of a medical institution carried a punishment of a maximum three years imprisonment and a fine upto Rs 50,000.

Besides the enhancement of punishment, the ordinance states that the trials in cases lodged under the Act have to be completed in a timely manner, and that special courts will be designated in each district to ensure speedy adjudication, the statement said.

The ordinance also states that anyone who commits or attempts to commit or incites or inspires an act of violence against healthcare workers or those working in healthcare institutions shall be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than 6 months and



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

up to 5 years and with a fine between Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh, it said.

Before the amendment, under the Kerala Healthcare Service Workers and Healthcare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage to Property) Act of 2012, any act of violence against a healthcare service person or damage to property of a medical institution carried a punishment of a maximum three years imprisonment and a fine upto Rs 50,000.

Besides the enhancement of punishment, the ordinance states that the trials in cases lodged under the Act have to be completed in a timely manner, and that special courts will be designated in each district to ensure speedy adjudication, the statement said.

The ordinance also states that cases registered under the Act have to be investigated by a police officer not below the rank of Inspector and the probe has to be completed within 60 days of registration of the FIR, it said.

But civil society upset with failure to declare solatium to doc's kin

was brought to the hospital in the wee hours of the day to get his injured leg plastered. Though he was brought under police escort to the hospital, the cops attending to him were the first ones running helter-skelter as the murderer got violent and started stabbing the hapless doctor with a scalpel.

Even after ten days the Government of Kerala has not taken any decision regarding the solatium to be paid to the family of Dr Das. The medical fraternity in the State was also shocked by the statement made by Veena George, the news reader-turned health minister of Kerala. “It was due to her incompetency and inexperience that she had to face a situation,” said George after the incident.

Later, she courted further controversy when the minister burst into tears at the residence of the deceased doctor. “Veena George was seen applying glycerin in her eyes to ensure that there would be uncontrolled flow of tears from her eyes,” said Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, former minister of home and veteran Congress leader. The indeci-

siveness of the Pinarayi Vijayan Government is in stark contrast to what it did during the boat tragedy at Malappuram last week. “Even before the tally was disclosed, the chief minister declared that the government would pay cash compensation of Rs 10 lakh to each of the 22 victims who met a watery end following the capsizing of a fishing boat-turned-sailing boat.

We suspect a kind of discrimination by the Government even in the payment of solatium,” said Kevin Peter, general secretary, Christian Alliance for Social Action (CASA). According to Kevin Peter, the Muslims always get preferred treatment while people belonging to other communities are given a raw deal.

“The population in the State is communally divided because of this appeasement policy. All people should be given equal preference,” said Prof Stanly Sebastian, academician and edupreneur. Kevin Peter pointed out the lynching of Manjhi at Malappuram as yet another proof of this kind of appeasement.

MAMATA BANERJEE FAILED TO DISCHARGE HER DUTY AS HOME MINISTER OF WEST BENGAL: SUVENDU

BJP demands Didi's resignation over loss of lives

PNS ■ KOLKATA

A day after nine people were killed in a cracker factory blast in East Midnapore, Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Wednesday demanded Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's resignation for having failed to stop loss of lives in such incidents.

Saying that Banerjee — who also retains the police portfolio — was a “failed Home Minister” Adhikari said that “she has no right to continue on her post after having failed to prevent loss of lives in such large numbers owing to blasts throughout the State.” Alleging that the TMC was in collusion with the bomb manufacturers



because the panchayat elections were drawing closer Adhikari who also hails from East Midnapore said, “bombs were manufactured in this illegal factory... (because) Panchayat elections are near... TMC and the factory owner Bhanu Bagh are colluding... He is a local TMC leader and was Panchayat Member from 2013-

18. He has received protection from Mamata Banerjee.” Alleging that the Chief Minister had failed to discharge her duty as the Home Minister the BJP leader said that “she should immediately step down owing responsibility.”

Demanding an investigation by the National Investigation Agency, Adhikari said after visiting the spot that instead of paying Rs 2.5 lakh to the next to the kin who had died in the blast Banerjee should have paid Rs 10 lakh each. The BJP leader earlier filed a petition in the Calcutta High Court seeking an order for an NIA investigation into the case. Adhikari also branded the ruling Trinamool Congress as a

“party of thieves.” He said “all in the TMC are thieves ... the party raises money from illegal sources ... they have taken Rs 300 crore from the Dear

Lottery,” adding Banerjee had been exposed before the people of Bengal and her party would evaporate in thin air in the coming elections.

Cracker factory blast: CID, forensic team start probe

Kolkata: Teams from the state CID and forensic department started their investigation into the explosion at an illegal firecracker factory in Egra area of West Bengal's East Mednapore district on Wednesday, a senior officer said. Forensic experts started collecting samples from now collapsed house at

Khadikul village which housed the illegal firecracker unit and its surroundings, he said. The CID officers will speak to witnesses as well as with family members of those killed in the blast, the officer said. A huge posse of local police have been deployed in village near the Odisha border. **PTI**

Major shake-up in NCP as it gears up for 2024 LS polls

PN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major organisational initiative taken 12 days after he resumed his office as the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief, Sharad Pawar appointed the party's in-charge for various regions to supervise the preparations for the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Maharashtra.

In another organisational change, the NCP leadership also announced its decision to



replace all such district and taluka presidents who have completed a term of three years. “These changes would be carried out at the NCP's anniversary conference to be held at Ahmednagar on June

10,” a senior party leader said. At a meeting held at the Yashwantrao Centre in south Mumbai where the party leaders discussed the political situation in various parts of state, Pawar said that his party would contest Lok Sabha and State Assembly polls as part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)—comprising NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress — and asked party leaders to work for success of all three parties.

Cong loath to hold Mamata hand at the cost of Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Pradesh Congress is not in a mood to compromise the State in lieu of friendship with Mamata Banerjee. Two days after the Bengal Chief Minister said that she was ready to accept congress friendship wherever it is in a strong position provided it too obliged her in a similar fashion the PCC leadership said that if Banerjee through her statement was asking for Bengal then there was no question of favouring her.

“After tormenting the Congress workers for the past one decade ... after framing them in false cases and forcing them to join the TMC at the point of gun the Chief Minister is now trying to show us lollipops ... because she knows that the ground beneath her feet is slipping away ... but this time the Congress is not going to get



Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury File Photo

entrapped,” PCC leader Ashutosh said. PCC president and Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Chowdhury too had spoken in similar language earlier saying “Congress will definitely fight elections in Bengal,” adding “today Mamata Banerjee is offering us a hand then of friendship because after the Karnataka elections the message has gone to her loud and clear that no anti-BJP front can sustain without the Congress Party.” His strong statement came a day after the Chief

Minister said that her party was ready to back the Congress wherever it was strong provided the Congress too returned the favour. “Where was she all these days when the Congress was fighting in Karnataka ... did she give any message to the voters to support the Congress ... even after the election results she extended her congratulatory message for the people of that State and even the JD(S) but she had no word of congratulations for the Congress ... and now suddenly realizing her mistake she is offering her support to us,” Chowdhury said reminding how Banerjee had upset the Congress apple cart in Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura.

“She went to Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura to eat into our vote base and now she is asking for concessions in Bengal ... there is no question of doing so ... the Congress is

free to take its own decisions ... the party will come up in a great way in Bengal as a large number of people are joining us now,” the senior Congress leader said. Curiously the BJP too interpreted Banerjee's statement in a similar light saying that the Bengal Chief Minister by offering the Congress support in states where it was stronger was in fact drawing a “no-gozone” for the grand old party.

Analysing Banerjee's statement BJP spokesperson Sajjad Poonawala said that TMC leader did not want Congress to play it big in states where it was weaker — like in Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Bengal etc. “It is not Mamata Banerjee's statement of support (for the Congress) but its statement of no-confidence,” he said, expecting Banerjee would definitely try to put a brake on Congress pan-Indian designs. **PTI**

Bengal Govt gives Sourav Z security

Kolkata: The West Bengal Government has decided to upgrade the security cover of former Indian cricket team captain and ex-BCCI president Sourav Ganguly to Z category, a senior official said.

The decision was taken on Tuesday following the expiry of the tenure of Y category security provided to Ganguly. “As the security cover of the VVIP expired, a review was done as per the protocol and it was decided to raise Ganguly's security cordon to Z category,” he said.

As per the new security arrangement, the former cricketer will have 8 to 10 police personnel guarding him, the official said.

Under the Y category security cover, Ganguly used to get three policemen from the Special Branch in his cordon and an equal number of law enforcers guarding his Behala residence. **PTI**

Garo army's regrouping: DGP seeks report in week

PTI ■ SHILLONG

Meghalaya Director General of Police (DGP) LR Bishnoi has sought a report from superintendents of police of five districts in the western Garo hills region on inputs about outlawed militant organisation Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) regrouping and recruiting cadres.

He asked the SPs to submit their reports within a week. “They have been asked to verify the inputs (about GNLA regrouping) in their respective areas. After verification, they are to submit their reports,” Bishnoi told PTI on Tuesday. The issue came to light after an

internal memo by a DSP-ranked officer in West Garo Hills sought action by all police stations to thwart attempts by the disbanded militant group to regroup and recruit cadres.

The memo stated that as many as 500 youths from various districts of Garo hills have joined the outfit and few have been sent to Myanmar for basic guerilla warfare training.

The police were directed to keep a close watch on the activities of the surrendered GNLA militants and businessmen who were sympathisers of the outfit in the past. The GNLA cadres surrendered in batches in 2017 and 2018.

SC directs Manipur Govt to take steps to ensure peace

PTI ■ AIZAWL/NEW DELHI

At least nine tribal MLAs and various civil society groups from the hill areas of Manipur held a meeting in Aizawl on Wednesday to discuss the prevailing situation in the northeastern state, which was recently rocked by ethnic violence, a leader of the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) said.

The ITLF, comprising various civil society organisations of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi-Hmar group in Manipur, was recently formed during an eviction drive that preceded the strife.

“The tribal legislators from

Manipur and ITLF leaders held a consultative meeting on Wednesday evening to review the situation in the state and discuss the political agenda and future course of action,” the ITLF leader told PTI.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court directed the Manipur Government to take steps to foster confidence and ensure peace and tranquillity in the state torn by ethnic violence, asserting being the top-most court it can ensure that the political executive exercises its power and does not turn “a blind eye” to the situation.

Taking note of submissions on alleged provocative

statements by Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, the top court asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to advise the constitutional functionary restraint.

“Please advise the constitutional authority to make statements with a sense of responsibility,” said the bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices P S Narasimha and J B Pardiwala. The Bench made clear it will not deal with legal issues arising out of the Manipur High Court's decision on grant of reservation to majority Meiteis as the pleas challenging the order were pending with the larger division bench there.

Letter No.-01/Stha Dhruv Heli.-01/2022-(Part-I)-2649 date-16.05.2023
GOVT. OF JHARKHAND
DEPARTMENT OF HOME, PRISON & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

NOTICE
Recruitment of Helicopter Pilots

The Govt. of Jharkhand invites application from Indian Nationals for immediate enrolment as Helicopter Pilot, preferably Dhruv endorsed, on contract basis. Attractive terms and competitive compensation package will be offered.

Requirements: CPL(H) or APL(H) holder having at least 2000 Hrs. on helicopters including 500 Hrs. PIC experience, 75 hrs. as PIC on Dhruv Helicopter with at least 10 hrs. of night flying experience, in addition 30 Hrs. of PIC experience in last 6 months and 5 Hrs. experience on type in past 30 days or The Pilots having no recency on type may produce a satisfactory skill test (as required for license renewal) and they shall be carried out followed by 5 Hrs. of PIC experience.

Employment: Selected candidates will be employed on contract basis initially for a period of three years.

Vacancy: 03 (Three)

Application: Curriculum Vitae including details of aviation experience, valid license & passport, current medical assessment along with recent passport size photograph must reach office of the Principal Secretary, Home Department, Jharkhand Mantralaya, Project Bhawan, Dhruwa, Ranchi-834004 (Jharkhand) by post or through email address: homejharkhand@gmail.com within 10(ten) days from date of publication of notice. Economy class air travel expense by shortest route for called candidates will be reimbursed. The Government reserves all rights of selection and recruitment.

Sd/-
Joint Secretary,
Department of Home, Prison & Disaster Management, Govt. of Jharkhand.

PR 297490 Home(23-24)#D

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 (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Vipul Sharma/ Ruchi Bhardwaj/ LBAGR00003463122 / LBAGR00003465113	Flat No. 412, 4th Floor, Grand Fort, Village Sikandra, Shastripuram, Agra, Uttar Pradesh / May 15, 2023	December 05, 2022 Rs.27,61,693/-	Agra/ Ghaziabad/ Gurgaon

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 18, 2023
Place : Gurgaon & Ghaziabad
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

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.

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Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Pratap Chandra Khilar/ Monika Rout/ LBAGR00003521531	Flat No-907, Tower-D, 9th Floor, Rof Aalayas Tower, Sec-102, Gurgaon Haryana. (Admeasuring an area of 535 Square Feet/ 15 May, 2023	November 30, 2022 21,30,730/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Devender Singh/ Sushma Raj/ LBAGR00004828894/ LBAGR00004856664	Unit No-0098, Ground Floor, Tower- Tristaar, Spaze Tristaar, Sec-92, Gurgaon (Admeasuring an area of 266 Sq Ft/ 15 May, 2023	December 19, 2022 Rs. 19,39,252/-	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 18, 2023
Place : Delhi
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Act fast

The drug regulator has proposed that Govt labs should test medicines before their export

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, the drug regulator, has proposed that cough syrups be tested in government laboratories before they are exported. The country got a bad name after cough syrups made by a few companies allegedly led to dozens of deaths in The Gambia and Uzbekistan in 2022. As per the proposal, the syrups could be tested at the Central or state laboratories. The World Health Organization had accused the Indian company Maiden Pharmaceuticals of exporting a syrup to The Gambia which contained lethal toxins ethylene glycol (EG) and diethylene glycol (DEG) used in car brake fluid. The cough syrup another company, Marion Biotech, sent to Uzbekistan also had EG or DEG. The two firms have disputed the charges, but the importing countries have become very cautious about Indian medicines after the mishaps. Last month, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the top US watchdog, highlighted the possibility of highly drug-resistant bacteria linked to eye drops made by Chennai-based Global Pharma Healthcare. While our Government did action against Maiden and Marion, it did not support the charge against Global Pharma Healthcare. Tamil Nadu's drug regulator also denied the CDC's charge. The point, however, is that our pharmaceutical exports face the danger of being seen as substandard. And in business, as in politics, perceptions are often as, if not more, important than the reality itself.

The pharmaceutical exports are a success story, rising from \$16.79 billion in 2016-17 to \$25.3 billion (Rs 208,231 crore) in 2022-23. The authorities in India, at all levels, must ensure that the rapacity and depravity

of a few unscrupulous businesspersons do not give a tragic turn to the story. And, by the way, this is not just about economic aspects; on the moral grounds too, the manufacturers who compromise the quality of drugs are very cruel people; they should not be allowed to thrive at any cost. Besides, if they can sell spurious or contaminated cough syrups and other medicines to The Gambia and Uzbekistan, they can also try to do the same in India. These people deserve no mercy; they should be stopped and prosecuted. Enforcement, however, has not been very swift; the WHO issued another alert last month, the third in seven months, for an India-made, contaminated cough syrup sold in the Marshall Islands and Micronesia. This didn't become a big issue in our country, as it did when reports from The Gambia and Uzbekistan came out, perhaps because of the smallness of the two nations. But the third alert did underline the fact that the previous two mishaps did not break the inertia of officialdom. But now the Union Health Ministry and the Department of Pharmaceuticals are reportedly contemplating the mechanism to be adopted to ensure that the quality of the pharma merchandise exports is up to the mark. The sooner they do it, the better it would be for the country.

PICTALK



Snow-covered meadows of J&K's Baderwah are attracting tourists in large numbers and boosting economy. PTI

Hypertension: Dealing with the silent killer

Monitoring blood pressure and spreading global awareness about its life-threatening condition are vital in the fight against hypertension

Hypertension is the leading cause of stroke, heart disease, renal complications and premature death. However, very few of us have the awareness that the condition is nothing but "high blood pressure." Yes, hypertension is commonly known as high blood pressure and can result due to many issues like family history, sedentary lifestyle, age, poor diet and stress among others. The pressure in arteries when the heart beats are known as systolic blood pressure and the pressure in arteries when the heart rests is called diastolic blood pressure. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the normal pressure level should be less than 120/80 mmHg.

You are at risk of pre-hypertension in case of systolic: 120-139 mm Hg and diastolic: 80-89 mm Hg. Moreover, hypertension is caused when the systolic is 140 mm Hg or higher and the diastolic is 90 mm Hg or higher. India has set a target of a 25% reduction in hypertension by 2025. Steps like the Indian Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) are launched



by the government to increase access to the treatment of the condition for more than 220 million people in India. May 17th is marked as World Hypertension Day. Healthcare professionals and centres come forward to organise campaigns and understand activities that help people understand hypertension, its symptoms, causes and treatments. Regular health checkups can save us from a lot of trouble similarly if blood pressure is checked in time, it can track the condition and help with the required treatment.

Unhealthy lifestyle: The obstacle to preventing hypertension!

A sedentary lifestyle and an imbalanced routine have been the cause of many critical health conditions lately. People, often in the corporate world, are so passionate about

achieving unachievable results that they skip the red flags their body sends. Excessive smoking, consuming alcohol, lack of physical activities, bad diet (that includes a lot of junk and no seasonal fruits & vegetables, dairy, whole grains, protein etc) are all part of an unhealthy lifestyle. Being hooked to the screen on our palms is another reason why we are not paying attention to our routine. **Stage 1 & stage 2 hypertension. What is a hypertensive emergency?**

Stage 1 hypertension occurs when the top reading ranges from 130 to 139 mm Hg or the bottom reading is 80 to 90 mmHg. Whereas, Stage 2 hypertension occurs when the top reading ranges from 140 mm Hg or higher or the bottom reading is 90 mmHg or higher. People with high blood pressure have face symptoms such as headaches, shortness of breath, and even nosebleeds.

These are not specific to everyone and do not always occur unless the high blood pressure has reached a life-threatening level. An acute, marked elevation in the blood pressure linked with signs of

target-organ damage is a hypertensive emergency. The patient in such a condition must receive emergency medical help with blood pressure numbers higher than 180/120 mm Hg. Hypertensive emergency comprises cardiac ischemia, pulmonary oedema, acute renal failure, eclampsia, aortic dissection, and neurologic deficits.

How to prevent hypertension? Who needs frequent checkups?

If not treated in time, hypertension can not only lead to heart attack but many other severe health issues. Not people with underlying conditions or a history of hypertension in the family don't need to only go for checkups. Anyone starting at the age of 18 must get their blood pressure checked at least once in two years. Further, it can be as per the doctor's recommendation. Some people might need more frequent checkups with medications to track and treat hypertension.

(The writer is Sr Consultant Interventional Cardiologist, Department of Cardiology, Primus Super Speciality Hospital, and New Delhi)



VIKAS CHOPRA

Need to revamp, enforce arms law

Crackdown on illegal arms can play a major role in controlling crime in the country but the police will have to gear up to neutralise the syndicates



SIDHARTH MISHRA

The last few months have witnessed a sudden spurt in violence and crime in the Delhi NCR and elsewhere in the country. Though it reflects a deteriorating law and order situation, what is more, disturbing is that in many of the reported cases, the accused were young adolescents and minors who committed crimes against other youth as well as adults. The reason for violence against other youth was generally some animosity, but, more alarmingly, reasons for most of such violence were trivial.

In one such case, some minors stabbed a classmate just because, allegedly, the victim, being a class monitor, had written the name of one of them on the class board which irked the minor; in another case, a young boy was killed by other boys in a chukka-bar under a mistaken identity. Numerous such cases involving young offenders are constantly being reported in Delhi-NCR which is indicative of rising aggression and vengeful tendencies among the youth, especially in Delhi NCR. Frequent such incidents in Delhi-NCR, contrary to the general perception, are giving the impression of the region no longer being a safer place to live.

From such incidents, it is alarmingly apparent that even on trivial issues, youth do not think of just simply hurting their adversary, rather they only think of killing. Almost all the cases reported recently point towards this direction and raise serious concerns about not only the deteriorating law and order situation but also about the direction in which our youth seems to be going.

The commission of a crime by youngsters has extremely adverse consequences not only for the victim and their families but also for the young offender and his family. Once a crime is committed, a saga of misery and agony follows. First, the offender becomes a wanted or arrested accused under



the law, who is not just likely to face imprisonment and sentence but also animosity from the victim and their family members as they would probably keep a grudge and want to take revenge. Moreover, on being arrested, young offenders further fall into deep prey, as they often end up meeting hardcore criminals in jail, who trap them and push them into the crime business from which there is no return possible.

Such a situation is highly detrimental to a young offender whose single mistake sometimes can lead to lifelong agonies and miseries and can destroy the whole of their career and prospects. Moreover, the families of the offenders as well as the victims feel devastated and get trapped in a long-drawn and harassing legal battle that was unnecessary and could be avoided.

A large number of youths seem to be regularly falling prey to criminogenic tendencies and subsequent commission of crimes which is not in favour of anyone, neither the victim nor the offender, nor the society or

A LARGE NUMBER OF YOUTHS SEEM TO BE REGULARLY FALLING PREY TO CRIMINOGENIC TENDENCIES AND SUBSEQUENT COMMISSION OF CRIMES, WHICH IS NOT IN FAVOUR OF ANYONE

the nation. This is no doubt true that many crimes are committed under a sudden heat of passion and due to circumstantial reasons and the offenders mostly repent later, however, it is important to find out ways to curb the rising incident of crimes, especially, involving the young offenders.

Besides many other factors responsible for the commission of crimes, one of the very pertinent reasons required to be addressed is the easy availability of illegal arms and weapons with which the crimes are committed. Almost all crimes are committed with weapons, most of which are illegally procured. There could be no doubt that the restriction on the availability of arms will surely lead to an automatic reduction in the crime rate.

The present arms law in India is contained in the Arms Act 1959 and Arms Rules 1962 which are comprehensive legislations and provide detailed provisions regarding possession of arms. The Act defines prohibited arms and ammunition and provides that the acquisition, possession,

manufacture, import-export, transport and sale of prohibited arms and ammunition without a valid license is completely prohibited. Contravention of legal provisions carries punishment that may extend from 7 years imprisonment to a life sentence. Both these laws aim to curb the menace of illegally keeping weapons that could create a threat of violence that might result from possessing them.

India has the strictest arms law, especially regarding issuing gun licenses, however, it still has a high rate of deaths due to guns as illegal weapons are easily available. There is a clear lack of fear among offenders that usually results from a lack of law enforcement. It is not the severity of punishment, rather it is the certainty of punishment that matters. Ending illegal arms can play a major role in controlling crime, but for this, the police shall have to revamp their work for controlling illegal arms and their syndicates in this country.

(The writer is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SELF-RELIANCE IN DEFENCE SECTOR

Sir — India's defence sector has been grappling with the challenge of achieving self-reliance while also meeting the requirements of the armed forces. The defence ministry's initiative for the approval of a list of 928 components and subsystems to be purchased only from the domestic industry as part of the government's "Atmanirbharta" or self-reliance programme is certainly a commendable step towards indigenisation, but the involvement of the private sector could further accelerate production. The current approach to indigenisation in the defence sector has largely been dependent on the DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) and DPSUs (Defence Public Sector Undertakings) to deliver on the promise. However, there have been delays in DRDO projects, and the armed forces have raised concerns over the quality of products which has resulted in the armed forces resorting to imports rather than waiting for indigenously developed products.

The solution to this problem lies in encouraging the private sector companies to participate in defence production for the nation, especially in medium and high-tech regimes. Premier institutes like IITs and private universities could also be incentivized to run academic courses in the defence sector but the private sector's involvement in defence production has been limited due to cumbersome procedures and a lack of incentives. The government needs to provide tax incentives to defence manufacturers and encourage startups, particularly in cutting-edge technology products like drones used in warfare. However, the DRDO needs larger budgets, trained manpower and more operational freedom to compete with global defence R&D organisations. The government needs to find innovative ways to augment resources in the defence sector, India still has a long way to go before becoming self-sufficient in key critical

The return of the Koh-i-Noor



It seems that all acute problems of India have ceased to exist and so now the time has arrived to immerse in the luxury of going all out to immerse in trivialities of bringing back the Koh-i-Noor as if the "national pride" of India and Indians hang on it!

Firstly, this atrocious story of "national pride" gets sponsored by that set of Indians who are nouveau-riche and do not have to worry about money and other perennial problems faced by the not-so-fortunate lot. Also, they have nothing better to do other than visit high-end shopping malls, multiplexes, night-

clubs, pubs and stadiums to immerse in IPL! Secondly, millions of Indians are leading a hell-like existence plagued by rampant poverty, hunger, malnutrition, child as well as bonded labour, illiteracy, joblessness, injustice, terrorism, militancy, disease, lack of medicines and health care and what not! Sexual atrocities against vulnerable women and child trafficking are also increasing steadily. Innumerable poor Indians are either mortgaging their properties or taking loans demanding high rates of interest to venture to foreign lands to escape the wretched life back home!

Would the return of the Koh-i-Noor ensure food attire shelter education medicine justice and livelihood to the billions of have-nots? Would the incoming of the diamond bring relief in the lives of innumerable child and bonded labourers and those migrant workers who are toiling in slave-resembling conditions in the civil war plagued Middle-East and North/Central Africa?

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

besides 10 kg of rice per person per month to BPL families along with 200 units of free electricity for every single household, except free bus service for the female commuters across the State.

Interestingly enough, this poll goods delivery by the Congress will cost the State exchequer a burden of around Rs 62000 crore per annum, more than the deficit pegging at Rs 60,581 for 2022-23 fiscal - a situation that might have an adverse bearing on the investment front of the State with all its impending pecuniary straits, to name. The editorial's sage advice that to encounter the BJP's poll plank, the Opposition must come up with a viable alternative instead of merely concentrating on defeating the BJP, carries weight and merits a mature reflection.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

PURITY LEADS TO PEACE

Peace comes from purity, which is gained by giving up lustful desires



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Yes, it does. Let us see how. Purity comes from right behaviour, which means that we should always try to obey dharma and never cross 'maryada' (social norms). Goodness follows, which is illuminating and free from diseases on account of purity. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 14.6) Yajna (making sacrifices), charity and austerity (tapasya) purify. Purity is so important for a human being that devotees of God perform all acts by body, mind, intelligence and senses for self-purification only. (5.11) Purity endears one to God (12.16), who Himself is supremely pure. (10.12)

Becoming pure and endearing oneself to God is not that easy though, as we can imagine. A strong desire for purity will lead us to be detached in many ways. For example, unless one is detached from tasty but harmful foods, how do you ensure good health, which is critical for being peaceful? The same is true about what we see. Watching something, which excites us excessively takes away our peace without us realizing it. What about hearing nonsense, which degrades only? The same is true about what we speak. Mind is the biggest offender. One may feel that what we think is harmless. This is far from the truth. How does one lose control over one's mind? It is in plain words: giving full freedom to the mind. Once the mind is out of control, it gives more pain than one can imagine. Most mental sicknesses have origins in the mind being attached to think what is harmful to us.



Ahankar is another big enemy. We are attached to the feeling of being a doer, superior, etc. What does this do? We are distanced from others and from God. What about being attached to too many comforts? One does not even bother to walk, which is basic for good health. Are we making the best use of our special abilities? How about intelligence? Are we making the best use of this faculty? Our intelligence is at its worst when we consider sex pleasure as the topmost pleasure for which we are ready to sacrifice all that we have achieved.

If we do all that we are on our way to mind control. What else will help in mind control? Lord Krishna guides in the Geeta, "It can be brought under control by practice and detachment from sense objects." (6.35) We should obey God's instructions about detachment from sense objects, especially sex. Lord Krishna wants us to always remember God, having surrendered our mind and intelligence to Him; one will then get help from God. (8.7) Additionally, we should renounce all desires in toto caused by selfishness and regulate all the senses from all sides. We should slowly become detached from patient intelligence. (6.24-25) Then, what will happen? We would become like a yogi, who has a peaceful disposition, is fearless, and is established firmly in the vows of brahmachari (sex pleasure according to dharma only). (6.14)

Having achieved this status, we become qualified to gain peace, and we will obtain all kinds of benefits. Lord Krishna cites the example of a yogi. "A yogi of peaceful mind, whose passion is at rest; who is of divine consciousness; is free from sins; he achieves real happiness." And the list goes on.

What is the conclusion? Peace comes from purity, which is gained by giving up lustful desires, i.e. not being desirous to enjoy in a wrong manner, because attachment to harmful sense objects binds. Yes, we all need enjoyment, but wise persons limit such enjoyments, which are conducive to bodily existence, and thus remain peaceful. A strong desire for purity is the starting point. This will help in getting detached from harmful sense objects, which will in turn help in mind control. Once the mind is in control, we will be peaceful, really peaceful, not momentarily.

(Bishnoi is a spiritual writer. The views expressed are personal)

Parliamentary panels are indispensable

In a democratic set-up, a legislature — by its very composition — cannot perform all its functions effectively due to several inherent limitations



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

In a parliamentary democracy like ours, Ministers are accountable to the legislature collectively and severally. Ministers answer questions, pilot legislative/policy proposals and reply to the debates. Though the bureaucracy acts behind the scene by giving inputs to the minister, they are not directly in the line of fire. However, in the committees, the onus of explaining and defending the acts of omission and commission rests on the shoulders of the top bureaucracy.

While in a malfunctioning Parliament, ministers often escape the heat and fury of opposition when the proceedings are disrupted due to dharnas, walkouts and adjournments, the officers appear before the committees which are at work around the year despite parliamentary logjams.

Prof. Woodrow Wilson, who later became the 28th President of the US, aptly described the real work ethos and culture of the committees when he said "The Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, whilst the Congress in its committee-rooms is Congress at work. The committees are considered the high tribunal of parliament where, ordinarily, the game is not between the Treasury and the Opposition but between the legislature and the Executive.

Some wag has described the game as a tug of war in which the members always win but the mandarins never lose.

A legislature by its very composition, cannot perform all its functions efficiently and effectively due to inherent limitations. First, there is a great constraint of time. Secondly, the problem gets confounded when the legislatures, especially the State Legislatures, meet for a few days and the proceedings are derailed. Thirdly, the floor of the House is not suited for detailed scrutiny, sifting of evidence, and recording of testimony. Fourthly, it is not possible to secure the participation of every member on the floor of the house on every issue before it. Therefore, Parliaments across the world, irrespective of the form of government, set up a variety of committees to discharge their multifarious functions. Our Parliament, between the two Houses, has over five dozen committees covering almost the entire gamut of governmental activities. Similarly, the State Legislatures have a large number of committees. Articles 105 and 194 confer the same powers, privileges and immunities on both the Houses of Parliament and the State Legislatures and the members of the committees thereof. A Committee is a mini legislature as there is a proportional representation of members belonging to different political parties. Each committee has well-defined functions and mandates and has to work within its remit and report to the legislature within the given timeline.

A committee has the inherent power to send for papers, persons and records, which is an integral part of the power of legislative oversight to expose and publicise 'corruption, maladministration, or inefficiency in the agencies of the Govt.' This power is 'an aid to legislative functions and not to expose private affairs of individuals without justification in terms of the power' of the legislature. The committees perform bonafide legislative functions when they secure the testimony of witnesses.

Unlike committees of many parliaments of the world, the sittings of our Committees are held in private. The objective is to enable the witnesses, who are preponderantly senior bureaucrats, to make free and frank



A COMMITTEE HAS THE INHERENT POWER TO SEND FOR PAPERS, PERSONS AND RECORDS, WHICH IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE POWER OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT TO EXPOSE AND PUBLICISE 'CORRUPTION, MALADMINISTRATION, OR INEFFICIENCY IN THE AGENCIES OF THE GOVT'

(The author is ex-Addl Secretary, Lok Sabha. The article is an abridged version of the talk delivered recently at Amrawati to a batch of senior officers of the Andhra Pradesh Govt)



deposition without the glare of the media and to ensure that the instinct to play to the gallery is not aroused.

It is not permissible for anyone privy to the proceedings to communicate directly or indirectly with the media about the proceedings till the report is presented to the legislature. Any information given, or testimony made, is likely to be quoted in the report of the Committee unless a specific request is made to the contrary in the public interest.

Govt. may refuse to share the information invoking the plea of public interest. But the plea has to be invoked with great foresight as non-disclosure of information may boomerang and do more damage.

A witness/representative of the ministry appearing before the committee is deemed to be under oath that he shall be true will conceal nothing and that no part of the evidence tendered shall be false. This applies with equal rigour concerning the documents or information supplied to the committee.

The refusal to answer questions, prevarication or wilfully giving false evidence, suppression of truth, or giving convoluted answers, trifling with the committee, or destruction of material documents sought by the committee, constitute a breach of privilege and contempt of the committee. Any testimony violating the sanctity of the rule of evidence is perjury and punishable. The depositions made before the Committee are recorded verbatim. The whole or part of the evidence is likely to be quoted in the report. The unfinished labour of love of the predecessor committee is taken forward by the successor committee. The dissolution of the legislature does not wipe clean the slate of a committee. The senior bureaucracy is regularly involved in the

working of the committees at various stages. The work starts with the submission of advanced study material sought by a committee. This is followed by the submission of replies to the questionnaire of the committee, and preceding evidence. Officers take care to see that the replies to questions or statements made by the minister in the house and the testimony given before the committee are not at variance. Usually, committees send a post-evidence questionnaire to seek clarifications on issues not covered in oral evidence or questions that could not be replied to orally.

So, the Officers have the onerous task to collect, collate, and cross-check the veracity or otherwise of the information, and supply the same to the committee within the given timeline.

A trend is seen in many State Legislatures where secretaries seek exemption from personal appearance disregarding the cardinal tenet that parliamentary work has precedence over administrative work. Of course, departmental heads well versed in parliamentary practices make such requests sparingly and with adequate justification. In a compelling circumstance, a secretary may seek to fix a new date for evidence or draft his next below-senior officer to depose before the committee with the prior permission of the chairman. 'An unexamined life is not worth living', and more so, a public servant must gladly suffer parliamentary scrutiny. Besides, engagement with the committees gives opportunity for the departmental heads to share their constraints and difficulties. It also strengthens the bureaucratic chain of accountability and helps remove programmatic shortcomings and

deficiencies. The bureaucracy is responsible for the examination and implementation of the recommendations of the committees. Though the recommendations are not binding, it does detract from their importance. The well-considered recommendations are the end product of the valuable inputs furnished by the ministries, and domain experts, and the extensive deliberations and the consensus that all party members in the committee reach. Where it's not feasible to implement a recommendation, the bureaucracy adduces reasons for sharing the constraints. The committee may not reiterate the implementation of such a recommendation. In fine, the committees wield - Influence not direct power; give Advice not command; offer Criticism, not obstruction; and make Scrutiny but do take initiative.

To quote Prof Wheare, 'the committees bring unity out of plurality, direction out of confusion and decision out of discussion.' When an all-party committee speaks agreeably and in voice, it carries great weight and consideration and it impels the Government to implement the recommendations.

Though the Committees of a legislature are serviced by the officers and staff of the legislature Secretariat, the officers of the executive play a very significant role by supplying background papers replying to the questionnaire and giving oral testimony. More so, the recommendations are examined and implemented by the bureaucracy. The invaluable contribution of the bureaucracy forms the basis of committees' reports. So, every committee invariably acknowledges the contribution and cooperation of the bureaucracy in their report submitted to the House.

The Red Cross: A beacon of humanity's compassion

In the past year, over 5 million people received relief assistance through the initiatives of the global Red Cross teams

It has been one year, two months and over three weeks since the Russia-Ukraine war broke out killing hundreds of uniformed men and civilians in both countries. Millions of people, including women, children, older people and those with disabilities, have fled, leaving everything behind. A report suggests that almost 6 million people are internally displaced in Ukraine and over 7.8 million have fled to other countries. The international armed conflict has caused displacement the scale of which Europe has not seen in decades. These families are in limbo as they try to figure out their next move — starting over in a new place or returning to uncertainty or possible danger.

During this time, the Red



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Cross teams have been there to answer the call — providing essential humanitarian aid to those who need it most during these challenging and uncertain times. In the past year, over 5 million people received relief assistance through the initiatives of the Global Red Cross Team which has been continuing to provide critical service to the people. With over 100,000 volunteers who are involved in the operation, the Red Cross has ensured to reach over 718,000 people providing health interventions. Not only this, \$64.8 million in multipurpose cash assistance has been distributed to more than 626,000 people. Also, 66,500 people have been aided with protection, gender and inclusion activities and

over 8 million people have benefitted from improved access to water. Over 367,000 people with mental health and psychosocial support have received aid. The figures (from February 2022 to September 2022) are multiplying. The effort continues beyond Ukraine's borders too.

While organisations — including The World Red Cross — celebrated World Red Cross Day on May 8th, it is a global reminder of the immense humanitarian contributions made by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Since its inception in 1863, the Red Cross has played a significant role in alleviating suffering, providing medical assistance, and promoting respect for human dignity

during times of crisis.

Founded by Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman who witnessed the horrors of war during the Battle of Solferino in 1859 and was moved by the suffering of wounded soldiers, envisioned a neutral and impartial organization that would provide care to all victims of armed conflicts, which materialized in 1863 with the establishment of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva.

During World War I, the Red Cross served as a crucial humanitarian link, delivering medical supplies, establishing hospitals, and facilitating communication between separated families. Its unwavering dedication to relieving suffering and

respect for human life resonated deeply with people across borders.

The Red Cross's efforts further extend far beyond war zones. During natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tsunamis, the Red Cross swiftly mobilizes relief operations, providing emergency medical care, food, water, shelter, and other necessities to affected communities. Their volunteers work tirelessly, often risking their own lives, to bring hope and solace to those in distress.

Amidst the pages of Red Cross history, also lies the remarkable contribution of the young Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi during the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902), where Gandhi played a significant role in

organizing a volunteer medical corps under the auspices of the British Red Cross.

World leaders from Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission to Emmanuel Macron, President of France to Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada to former German Chancellor Angela Merkel have acknowledged the immense contribution of the Red Cross. For Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, "The Red Cross is an indispensable partner in humanitarian response."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighted the importance of the Red Cross, stating, "The Indian Red Cross Society, as part of the Global Red Cross Movement, has been at the forefront of

humanitarian efforts, offering assistance, comfort, and support to those in need across our nation."

While the Red Cross continues to play a vital role in responding to crises and its volunteers and staff work tirelessly to provide emergency assistance to the most vulnerable populations and further contribute to disaster preparedness, health promotion and community resilience, helping communities around the world build a better future, this enduring impact on global humanitarianism, serves as a reminder that compassion and empathy can transcend borders and inspire positive change for peace. Beyond borders, leaders and citizens must accept this as a shared responsibility.

Pakistan's top security body endorses Army's decision

Rights group oppose

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's top security body has endorsed the decision taken by the top Army commanders to invoke the stringent Army Act and Official Secrets Act against people found to be involved in attacking key military installations following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan on May 9.

The National Security Committee (NSC) chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday decided to lay hands within 72 hours on all those involved in the violent attacks, their facilitators, and leaders on whose instigation these people had committed vandalism.

However, the proposed move to try arsonists under the tough Army Act has come

under severe criticism, with rights groups such as the Amnesty International and the National Human Rights Commission of Pakistan expressing concerns.

Dinushika Dissanayake, Deputy Regional Director for South Asia at Amnesty International, said: "It is alarming to note that the Pakistani Army has stated its intention to try civilians under military laws, possibly in military courts. Trying civilians in military courts is contrary to international law."

Dissanayake said that any indication that the trial of civilians could be held in military courts was incompatible with Pakistan's obligations under international human rights law.

"This is purely an intimidation tactic, designed to crack

down on dissent by exercising fear of an institution that has never been held to account for its overreach," Dissanayake asserted in a statement.

Violence erupted across Pakistan on May 9 when former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a corruption case from the premises of the Islamabad High Court.

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCPC) tweeted that it "strongly opposes the use of the Pakistan Army Act 1952 and Official Secrets Act 1923 to try civilians".

"While those responsible for arson and damaging public and private property during the recent protests should be held to account, they remain entitled to due process," Pakistan's apex independent human rights body tweeted.

"All the civilians tried under these acts in the past

should also have their cases transferred to civil courts," it said in a separate tweet.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party supporters torched buildings and vehicles and attacked police and military personnel as well as installations in the clashes that left 10 persons dead.

Thousands of supporters of Khan, 70, were arrested in the violence on May 9 that Pakistan's Army described as a "dark day" in the history of the Islamic country.

The NSC meeting attended by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar, Information Minister Mar-i-yum Aurangzeb, Principal Secretary to PM Dr Tauqir Shah and others expressed solidarity with the armed forces and decided to observe May 9 as "black day".

'Attackers will be tried under military laws'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A top Pakistani minister said on Wednesday that those involved in attacks on army installations in the wake of former prime minister Imran Khan's arrest would be tried under the stringent military laws, amid concerns expressed by the rights groups. Addressing a press conference, information minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said scores of people have been arrested for their alleged involvement in arson attacks and vandalism on May 9 following former premier Khan's arrest from the Islamabad High Court premises. The minister said it was the state's responsibility to arrest and punish the culprits.

"Attackers will be tried under the relevant civil and military laws," she said, adding that the National Security Committee has also "categorically vowed to take strict action against them," she said.



She said that martyrs' graveyards were attacked which was akin to showing enmity towards the country.

"We have the video evidence and we will not spare anyone who did this," she said. When asked if Khan would also be tried under the army law, she said he would be tried by the "relevant courts".

As government officials press to use the Pakistan Army Act and the Official Secrets Act against those responsible for violence, local and international rights bodies have expressed concern. Amnesty

International and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan issued separate statements on Tuesday and raised an alarm at the possibility of trial under military laws.

Dinushika Dissanayake, Amnesty's deputy regional director for South Asia, said that trying civilians in military courts was contrary to international law. Dissanayake accused the Pakistani government of using military law as "an intimidation tactic, designed to crack down on dissent by exercising fear of an institution that has never been held to account for its overreach."

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said civilians arrested should be tried in civil instead of military courts.

"While those responsible for arson and damaging public and private property during the recent protests should be held to account, they remain entitled to due process," the group said in a statement.

Khan demands inquiry into military attacks on installations

Lahore (PTI): Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan Wednesday demanded an independent inquiry into the violence following his arrest last week as he distanced himself and his party from attacks on state and military installations.

Khan made the demand in an address to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore via video link, amid reports that his house has been surrounded by police.

Ahead of his address, Khan said in a tweet that police had surrounded his house in an upscale area of Punjab's provincial capital Lahore and he could be arrested.

"Probably my last tweet before my next arrest. Police has (sic) surrounded my house," the 70-year-old leader tweeted.

In his address, Khan said the ruling coalition is deliberately trying to create a conflict between his party and the powerful army.

"The cases that are being filed under military laws — it never happened before that without any investigation or independent inquiry... it was suddenly decided that PTI is a terrorist organisation," Khan said, adding that 7,500 workers of his party have been arrested.

He said he criticises the army the same way he criticises his children, which is for reform.

"The Pakistan Democratic Movement is trying for a confrontation between the army and PTI... But who will come out as the winner in this?" he asked.

Khan said he has defended the Pakistan Army across the world. "I was a known face. Name another Pakistani who defended the army the way I did on international media," he asked. "And I did it because I am a free man. I never accepted slavery."

Recalling the incidents leading to the creation of Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan), Khan said, "I am afraid today that Pakistan is on the route to destruction."

Govt gives Khan deadline to hand over 'terrorists' hiding at his residence

Lahore (PTI): The interim government in Pakistan's Punjab province on Wednesday claimed that some '30 to 40' terrorists are hiding at the Lahore residence of former prime minister Imran Khan, giving him an ultimatum of 24 hours to hand them over or face stern action.

The police in March had stormed the Zaman Park residence of Khan to arrest him but strong resistance of his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, workers thwarted that plan.

"We have received an intelligence report that some 30 to 40 terrorists who were involved in attacking the military installations, especially Lahore Corps Commander House on May 9, are hiding at Zaman Park residence of Imran Khan. We give an ultimatum of 24 hours to Khan and his party to hand them over to police or

face stern action," Punjab's caretaker information minister Amir Mir said at a press conference.

Mir, who is the brother of known anchor Hamid Mir, asked Khan to take this ultimatum seriously as the law enforcement agencies have reserved the right to arrest the terrorists from his house.

Referring to the May 9 protesters as 'terrorists', Mir said the government was aware of their presence at Khan's Zaman Park residence as it had credible intelligence reports.

"The intelligence report that has come is very alarming," Mir said, adding that the agencies were able to confirm the presence of the "terrorists" in Zaman Park through geofencing. Geo-fencing is a technology that allows the movements of a person, vehicle, etc. to be recorded or limited using satellite signals.

Overseas travel ban on Rajapaksa lifted

PTI ■ COLOMBO

A Sri Lankan court here on Wednesday ordered the lifting of the overseas travel ban on former president and prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. The Fort Magistrate's Court imposed a ban on overseas travel on Rajapaksa, 77, and over a dozen other politicians in May last year in view of investigations against them for their alleged involvement in the deadly attack on peaceful anti-government protesters in Colombo.

At least nine people were killed and over 300 others injured in the violence in May. The overseas travel ban on former president Rajapaksa, MP Rohitha

Abeysunwardena, Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi, and ex-Provincial Council member Kanchana Jayaratne was completely lifted by the Fort Magistrate's Court on Wednesday, newsfirst.lk website reported.

Colombo Fort Magistrate Thilina Gamage ordered the



court registrar to immediately convey the order to the Controller General of Immigration and Emigration. The impounded passports were ordered to be released to the four politicians, the Daily Mirror newspaper reported.

A number of MPs' homes and offices were torched by enraged mobs in Sri Lanka last year in a wave of spontaneous violence triggered after then Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's supporters attacked anti-government protesters amidst the unprecedented economic crisis in the island nation.

The protesters demanded the resignation of Rajapaksa's younger brother the then president Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned a few hours later and a curfew was imposed across the country.

Rajapaksa, known for his brutal military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) during his presidency from 2005 to 2015, saw his private residence set on fire.

He, along with his wife and family, had fled his official residence - Temple Trees - and took shelter at the naval base in Trincomalee after a series of deadly attacks on his supporters. The economic and political turmoil also led to the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the 73-year-old younger brother of Mahinda Rajapaksa in July. The powerful Rajapaksa clan, led by patriarch Mahinda, dominated Sri Lanka's political scene for decades till they were forced to quit their posts last year.

Arab foreign ministers meet ahead of Arab League summit

AP ■ BEIRUT

Arab foreign ministers met on Wednesday in Saudi Arabia ahead of the Arab League's annual summit in the kingdom to discuss the upcoming gathering's agenda and draft resolutions.

This year's summit, starting Friday in the city of Jeddah, will mark the readmittance of war-torn Syria into the 22-member league, after a 12-year suspension.

Syria's membership was frozen following Syrian President Bashar Assad's brutal crackdown on the 2011 mass protests against his rule.

The country quickly descended into a brutal civil war that has killed nearly half a million people and displaced half of the country's pre-war population of 23 million. Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad held bilateral meetings this week in the

kingdom with several of his counterparts as Damascus continues to appeal for much-needed investment in the war-torn country — crippled by the conflict and Western sanctions — and has moved to restore ties with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq.

Syria's return to the Arab fold comes as Damascus is also trying to amend ties with Turkey, a key backer of the armed Syrian opposition groups in the country's northwest.

But a few Arab countries remain skeptical of Syria's return to the league, primarily Qatar.

Qatar's top diplomat, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said Wednesday that his country opposes Syria's return but that it doesn't want to stand "against the Arab consensus."

S Korean, Canadian leaders vow co-op on clean energy, North Korea threat

AP ■ SEOUL

The leaders of South Korea and Canada on Wednesday vowed to strengthen their security and economic cooperation to address challenges posed by North Korea and expand Canadian supplies of minerals crucial to South Korea's technology industry as they held a summit in Seoul.

The meeting between South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau came before they travel to Japan for the weekend's Group of Seven meetings, where geopolitical uncertainties worsened by Russia's war on Ukraine, China's regional assertiveness and North Korea's nuclear ambitions are expected to drive discussions.

In a joint statement issued after the meeting, the leaders condemned North Korea's growing nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme and urged Pyongyang to return to US-led denuclearisation talks, which have stalled since



2019 over disagreements related to international sanctions imposed on the North.

They expressed concern over North Korea's human rights violations and "the regime's complete disregard for the well-being of its people," and said their governments would try to improve international awareness about the issue. "We will also be continuing our work to support human rights organisations"

focused on advancing North Korean human rights, Trudeau said in a joint news conference with Yoon after their summit.

"North Korean people are the first victims of the terrible regime in North Korea, an example of why autocracy has terrible, terrible impacts on its own people first and foremost, before (it) even destabilises and puts at risk people in neighbouring countries," he said.

China seeks int'l search after fishing vessel with 39 people sinks

Beijing (PTI): China on Wednesday sought the help of several countries to rescue 39 people who were on board a Chinese fishing vessel that sank in the Indian Ocean, the official media here reported.

Thirty-nine people, including 17 Chinese crew members, 17 Indonesians, and five from the Philippines, were on board the Chinese fishing vessel that capsized in the central part of the Indian Ocean on Tuesday, it said.

So far, none of the missing persons have been found and a search is underway, the report said. The Chinese Foreign Ministry has contacted relevant departments in Australia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia, the Philippines and other countries to join the search and rescue operations, the report said.

Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping ordered all-out efforts in the rescue of the missing people in the boat

tragedy.

Xi gave the instruction following the incident that occurred around 3 am on Tuesday, urging relevant departments to activate the emergency response mechanism immediately. Xi called for coordinating international maritime search and rescue assistance, and making every effort to carry out rescue, the report said. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant embassies abroad should strengthen contact with relevant local parties to coordinate the search and rescue work, Xi said. He also ordered to strengthen early warning alerts of safety risks for distant-sea operations to ensure the safety of people's lives and property. Chinese Premier Li Qiang has also called for maximum efforts to coordinate relative parties to organise the rescue work and reduce casualties, it said.

Taiwan Opp picks former police chief as its presidential candidate

AP ■ TAIPEI

Taiwan's opposition Nationalist Party picked the popular mayor of New Taipei City, Hou Yu-ih, on Wednesday as its candidate in next year's presidential election, seen as a referendum on the island's future relations with China. Hou, the former head of the National Police Agency, will face current Vice President William Lai of the governing Democratic Progressive Party in the January polls.

The Nationalists seek warmer ties with mainland China, while the governing party is seen as pro-independence. Current President Tsai Ing-wen has served two terms and is unable to run again.

Hou was chosen by the Nationalists over Terry Gou, a billionaire Taiwanese businessman who founded Foxconn, the world's largest contract electronics maker. One of his first tasks will be to try to unite the party behind his candida-



cy. Hou has said little publicly about his approach to China, focusing instead on local politics. Beijing claims Taiwan as its territory and has repeatedly threatened to take the island by force.

Near-daily flights by Chinese fighter jets near Taiwan have raised tensions. Hou enjoys popular support as mayor of New Taipei, the administrative region that surrounds Taipei, the capital. Liu Cheng-shan, a professor of political science at National Sun Yat-Sen University, said

Hou has developed a reputation for getting things done as mayor. "He gives everyone an image of someone who quietly does the work and is diligent," Liu said.

"I'm Taiwanese. I'm humble, diligent and honest," Hou said Wednesday, speaking in Taiwanese at the Nationalist Party headquarters in Taipei.

"I will work hard to strive for a good future for this piece of land."

We know that the Republic of China is our country and Taiwan is our home."

Prince Harry, Meghan involved in 'near catastrophic' car chase with paparazzi

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Prince Harry and his wife Meghan were involved in a "near catastrophic car chase" for over two hours involving paparazzi in New York, a spokesperson for the prince said on Wednesday.

The incident happened after the Duke and Duchess of Sussex attended an awards ceremony in New York on Tuesday.

Accompanied by Meghan's mother, Doria Ragland, they attended the Ms. Foundation Women of Vision Awards. Harry's mother, Princess Diana, was killed in a horrific car accident in 1997 while being pur-



sued by paparazzi in Paris. In a statement, the prince's spokesperson said the "relentless pursuit" lasted for over two hours, the BBC reported. The statement said the incident resulted in near collisions with

other drivers on the road, pedestrians and police officers.

"While being a public figure comes with a level of interest from the public, it should never come at the cost of any-

one's safety," the spokesperson said. "Dissemination of these images, given the ways in which they were obtained, encourages a highly intrusive practice that is dangerous to all involved," the spokesperson added. The New York Police Department (NYPD) did not immediately confirm knowledge of the incident.

The incident is said to have happened after the couple's first public appearance together since the King's Coronation earlier this month.

Pictures that have appeared on social media have shown Harry, Meghan and her mother Ragland in a taxi, Sky News reported.

Dozens of Serbian schools get bomb threats

AP ■ BELGRADE

Dozens of Serbian schools on Wednesday received bomb threats, the education ministry said, amid security concerns following two mass shootings early this month, including one in an elementary school.

The education ministry said 78 elementary schools and 37 high schools in Belgrade received warnings by email early on Wednesday that explosive devices had allegedly been planted.

Classes were postponed and students evacuated as police checked the buildings.

There have been no reports that bombs were found in any of the schools, and police are



yet to issue their report. Similar multiple threats have been sent to school addresses in the past, in Serbia and other countries in the region, and have proven false each time. However, the threats

could further heighten security fears after the May 3 and May 4 shootings that left 18 people dead and 20 injured.

Authorities already have deployed police in schools and launched a gun crackdown.

The first shooting happened at an elementary school in central Belgrade when a 13-year-old boy took his father's gun and opened fire. A day later, a 20-year-old shot randomly at people with an automatic weapon in two villages south of Belgrade.

The shootings stunned Serbia and sparked calls for action. Tens of thousands marched in two protests against violence after the shootings, and more protests are planned on Friday.

Opposition parties are demanding that ministers of interior and intelligence chief resign and that two pro-government networks be stripped of nation-wide broadcast licenses because of airing violent content and hosting war criminals and crime figures on their programme.

Opponents also have accused populist President Aleksandar Vucic of hate speech against critics and a crackdown on democratic freedoms, which they say fuel tensions and divisions in the troubled Balkan nation.

Vucic has denied this. He has called an own rally for May 26 while suggesting a snap election could be held by September.

Russia agrees to extend grain deal

AP ■ ANKARA

Russia agreed to extend a deal that has allowed Ukraine to ship grain through the Black Sea to parts of the world struggling with hunger, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced Wednesday, a boost to global food security after the war launched more than a year ago drove up prices.

"I want to give a good news," Erdogan said. "With the efforts of our country, the support of our Russian friends and the contribution of our Ukrainian friends, the Black Sea Grain Initiative has been extended by another two months."

The breakthrough accord that the UN and Turkey brokered with the warring sides last summer came with a separate agreement to facilitate shipments of Russian food and fertilizer that Moscow insists hasn't been applied.

Russia had set a Thursday deadline for its concerns to be ironed out or had threatened to bow out. Such brinkmanship isn't new: With a similar extension in the balance in

March, Russia unilaterally decided to renew the deal for just 60 days instead of the 120 days outlined in the agreement.

Extending the Black Sea Grain Initiative is a win for countries in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia that rely on Ukrainian wheat, barley, vegetable oil and other affordable food products, especially as drought takes a toll. The deal helped lower prices of food commodities like wheat over the last year, but that relief has not reached kitchen tables.

In talks last week in Istanbul, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said the grain deal "should be extended for a longer period of time and expanded" to "give predictability and confidence" to markets.

Moscow has said it opposed such an expansion, then opted for another shorter extension.

Russia, meanwhile, is rapidly shipping a bumper harvest of its wheat through other ports.

Critics say that suggests Moscow is posturing or trying to wrest concessions in other

areas — such as on Western sanctions — and claim it's dragged its heels on joint inspections of ships by Russian, Ukrainian, UN and Turkish officials. Average daily inspections — meant to ensure vessels carry only food and not weapons that could aid either side — have steadily dropped from a peak of 10.6 in October to 3.2 last month. Shipments of Ukrainian grain also have declined in recent weeks.

Russia denies slowing the work and was seeking five things to extend the deal, according to its ambassador in Geneva, Gennady Gatilov:

— A restoration of foreign supplies of farm machinery and replacement parts.

— A lifting of restrictions on insurance and access to foreign ports for Russian ships and cargo.

— Resumed operation of a pipeline that sends Russian ammonia, a key ingredient in fertilizer, to a Ukrainian Black Sea port.

— An end to restrictions on financial activities linked to Russia's fertilizer companies.

— Renewed access to the international SWIFT banking

system for the Russian Agricultural Bank.

It wasn't immediately clear if any of those concessions were made, but they mainly rest with the private sector.

The deal has allowed over 30 million metric tons of Ukrainian grain to be shipped, with more than half that going to developing nations. China, Spain and Turkey are the biggest recipients, and Russia says that shows food isn't going to the poorest countries.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says Ukrainian corn for animal feed has headed to developed countries, while "a majority" of grain for people to eat has gone to emerging economies.

Even if a "meaningful part" of the shipments headed to developed nations, that "has a positive impact to all countries because it brings prices down," Guterres told reporters in Nairobi, Kenya, this month. "And when you bring prices down, everybody benefits." William Osnato, a senior research analyst at agriculture data and analytics firm Gro Intelligence, said there had been "bluster" coming

from Russia to push for easing some sanctions because it's shipping record amounts of wheat for the season, and its fertilizers are flowing well, too.

Trade flows tracked by financial data provider Refinitiv show that Russia exported just over 4 million tons of wheat in April, the highest volume for the month in five years, following record or near-record highs in several previous months.

Exports since last July reached 32.2 million tons, 34 per cent above the same period from last season, according to Refinitiv. It estimates Russia will ship 44 million tons of wheat in 2022-2023. With Ukraine's wheat harvest coming up in June and the need to sell that crop in July, maintaining a Black Sea shipping corridor is key to avoid "taking another large chunk of wheat and other grains off the market," Osnato said.

Ukraine also can send its food by land through Europe, but those routes have a lower capacity than sea shipments and have stirred disunity in the European Union.

Russia freezes bank accounts of Finland's diplomatic missions

AP ■ HELSINKI

Russia has frozen the bank accounts of Finland's diplomatic representations in Moscow and St. Petersburg, disrupting money flow and forcing the country's missions to resort to cash payments, the Finnish foreign minister said Wednesday. Pekka Haavisto said Moscow's move at the end of April breaches the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and Helsinki has delivered a diplomatic note on the matter to Russia. "We're not alone with the money traffic problem," Haavisto told reporters during a news conference. "Also some other European Union nations have encountered problems with money traffic in Russia. But according to our information, restrictions on Finland are among the tightest."

He said Moscow's measure affects, among other things, payment of rents, electricity and water bills by the Finnish Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate General in

Russia orders arrest of director who criticised Ukraine war

Tallinn (Estonia) (AP): A Moscow court has ordered the arrest of prominent film producer Alexander Rodnyansky and theatre director Ivan Vyrypaev for "spreading false information" about the Russian army.

The initial court hearings against Rodnyansky and Vyrypaev were held on 27 April, but not reported by the court until Wednesday. According to

the court's press service, Rodnyansky and Vyrypaev, who are outside Russia, will be placed in custody once Russian authorities manage to detain them or to get them extradited.

Russia's Interior Ministry additionally put Vyrypaev on the federal wanted list.

Kyiv-born Rodnyansky has been among the most influential figures in Russian cinema in recent decades.

St. Petersburg, which now have to rely on their cash assets. The move does not, however, affect salary payments to staff and there is no risk of a closure of Finland's diplomatic missions in Russia, Haavisto said. Earlier this year, Finland temporarily closed its diplomatic missions in the Russian Arctic city of Murmansk and the city of Petrozavodsk in the Karelia

region — both not far from the Finnish border. Haavisto — the caretaker foreign minister — as the new Finnish government is currently under formation — stressed that current EU sanctions on Moscow aren't directed at Russia's embassies and consulates and Helsinki hasn't frozen the bank accounts of Russia's diplomatic missions in Finland.

G-7 leaders likely to focus on tensions in Asia at summit

AP ■ HIROSHIMA

The symbolism will be palpable when leaders of the world's rich democracies sit down in Hiroshima, a city whose name evokes the tragedy of war, to tackle a host of challenges including Russia's invasion of Ukraine and rising tensions in Asia. The attention on the war in Europe comes just days after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy completed a whirlwind trip to meet many of the Group of Seven leaders now heading to Japan for the summit starting Friday. That tour was aimed at adding to his country's weapons stockpile and building political support ahead of a widely anticipated counteroffensive to reclaim lands occupied by Moscow's forces. "Ukraine has driven this sense of common purpose" for the G-7, said Matthew P. Goodman, senior vice president for economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He said the new commitments Zelenskyy received just ahead



China claims the self-governing island as its own and regularly sends ships and warplanes near it.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida also hopes to highlight the risks of nuclear proliferation during the meeting in Hiroshima, the site of the world's first atomic bombing. The prospect of another nuclear attack has been crystallized by nearby North Korea's nuclear program and spate of recent missile tests, and Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons in its war in Ukraine. China, meanwhile, is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal from an estimated 400 warheads today to 1,500 by 2035, according to Pentagon estimates. Concerns about the strength of the global economy, rising prices and the debt limit crisis in the US will be high on leaders' minds. G-7 finance ministers and central bank chiefs meeting ahead of the summit pledged to enforce sanctions against Russia, tackle rising inflation, bolster financial systems and help countries burdened by heavy debts.

of the summit could push members of the bloc to step up their support even further. "There's a kind of peer pressure that develops in forums like this," he explained.

G-7 leaders are also girding for the possibility of renewed conflict in Asia as relations with China deteriorate. They are increasingly concerned, among other things, about what they see as Beijing's growing assertiveness, and fear that China could try to seize Taiwan by force, sparking a wider conflict.

North Korea shows Kim Jong examining a military spy satellite

Seoul (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un examined a finished military spy satellite, which his country is expected to launch soon, during a visit to an aerospace facility where he described space-based reconnaissance as crucial for countering the US and South Korea.

Kim during Tuesday's visit approved an unspecified "future action plan" in preparations for launching the satellite, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said on Wednesday. North Korea hasn't disclosed a target date for the launch, which some analysts say may be in the next few weeks.

That launch would use long-range missile technology banned by past UN Security Council resolutions, although previous missile and rockets tests have demonstrated North Korea's ability to deliver a satellite into space.

There are more questions, however, about the satellite's capability. Some South Korean analysts say the satellite shown in North Korean state media photos appears too small and crudely designed to support high-resolution imagery. Photos that North Korean media released from past missile launches were low-resolution.

Photos released by the Rodong Sinmun newspaper of Tuesday's visit showed Kim and his daughter — dressed in white lab coats — talking with scientists near an object that looked like the main component of a satellite. The newspaper did not identify the object, which was surrounded by a perimeter of red tape.

KCNA said the satellite was deemed ready to be loaded onto

a rocket after scientists examined the device's assembly and put it through tests to confirm whether it would withstand the environment of space.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said North Korea has yet to inform international maritime and telecommunication authorities of any launch plans. It said a North Korean satellite launch would violate various UN Security Council resolutions banning the North from any launches involving ballistic technologies and "threaten regional peace and stability."

"The announcing of the satellite launch plan shows yet again that the North Korean regime is preoccupied with continuing its illegal provocations while ignoring the plight of its people," the ministry said in a statement, referring to North Korea's broken economy and deepening international isolation. The visit was Kim's first public appearance in about a month, following a previous visit to the aerospace centre on April 18 as state media announced that the satellite had been built.

Kim said acquiring a spy satellite would be crucial for his efforts to bolster the country's defence as "US imperialists and (South) Korean puppet villains escalate their confrontational moves" against the North, KCNA said.

The next step in North Korea's launch preparations, or the "future action plan" state media mentioned, could be installing the satellite on what would likely be a three-stage space rocket, said Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies.

RADHIKA (INDIA) PRIVATE LIMITED
CIN:- U74899DL1975PTC007733
Regd. Office: B-66, Naraina Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi -110028

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Certificate of Registration (COR No. B-1400166) issued by RBI in the name of Radhika (India) Private Limited having registered office at B-66, NARAINA INDUSTRIAL AREA PHASE-II NEW DELHI DL 110028, has been misplaced and not traceable. We have lodged FIR having LR No: 449549/2023 on 16th May 2023. If anyone found the Certificate, return of the same to the company at the above address.

The public at large is cautioned against any misuse of this certificate by unscrupulous elements. We will not be responsible for any loss or damage caused due to such misuse. Public are requested to contact the company at its registered office before dealing with company.

PERFECTPAC LIMITED
Regd. Office: 910, Chiranjiv Tower-43, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019
Phone No.: 011-26441015-18, Email: compliance@perfectpac.com
Website: www.perfectpac.com
CIN No.: L72100DL1972PLC005971

EXTRACT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2023

PARTICULARS	Quarter Ended			Year Ended	
	31.03.2023	31.12.2022	31.03.2022	31.03.2023	31.03.2022
	Audited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited	Audited
Total Revenue from operations	2,857.67	2,151.24	2,518.23	9,992.99	8,849.73
Net Profit / (Loss) for the year/period (before Exceptional Items and Tax)	182.85	41.15	78.51	365.76	158.95
Net Profit / (Loss) for the year/period before tax (after Exceptional Items)	182.85	41.15	78.51	365.76	158.95
Net Profit / (Loss) for the year/period after tax and Exceptional Items	153.17	31.08	52.13	283.20	103.01
Total Comprehensive Income for the year/period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the year/period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	157.87	31.08	57.66	287.90	108.54
Equity Share Capital	133.26	133.26	133.26	133.26	133.26
Earnings Per Share of Rs. 10/- each					
1. Basic (Rs.)	2.30	0.47	0.78	4.25	1.55
2. Diluted (Rs.)	2.30	0.47	0.78	4.25	1.55
	Not Annualised	Not Annualised	Not Annualised	Annualised	Annualised

NOTES:

- The above audited financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at its Meeting held on May 17, 2023. The Statutory Auditors of the Company have carried out audit of the aforesaid results.
- The Board of Directors have recommended a dividend of Rs. 1/- (i.e. 50 %) per Equity share of the face value of Rs. 2/- per share for the year ended March 31, 2023 subject to approval of the shareholders of the Company at the ensuing Annual General Meeting.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of audited financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2023, filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the audited financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2023 is available under the Investor Section of Company's website at www.perfectpac.com and on the website of the stock exchange i.e. www.bseindia.com.

For Perfectpac Limited
Sanjay Rajgarhia
(Managing Director)

Key Trump attorney departing legal team

Washington: A key lawyer for former President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he was leaving the legal team, a move that comes as a special counsel investigation into the retention of classified documents shows signs of being in its final stages.

Timothy Parlatore told The Associated Press that his departure had nothing to do with Trump and was not a reflection on his view of the Justice Department's investigation, which he has long called misguided and overly aggressive, or on the strength of the government's evidence. He said he believed he had served Trump well.

Other lawyers, including former Justice Department prosecutor James Trusty, are continuing to represent Trump in Washington investigations.

CNN earlier reported Parlatore's departure. Parlatore has long been a key member of the team representing Trump in an investigation by Justice

Department special counsel Jack Smith into the possession of hundreds of classified documents at the former president's Florida home, Mar-a-Lago as well as into possible efforts to obstruct that probe.

A grand jury over the last several months has heard from a broad array of witnesses close to Trump. Federal prosecutors in March questioned another of Trump's lawyers, M. Evan Corcoran, before the grand jury after successfully piercing attorney-client privilege.

Parlatore testified voluntarily in December about efforts to recover classified documents in response to government demands.

Last month, Parlatore and other lawyers for Trump issued a letter to the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Mike Turner, laying out a series of defence arguments of Trump and saying that the Justice Department should be "ordered to stand down" in its investigation. AP

Global Teacher Prize winner calls on Indian teachers to apply for 2023 edition

London (PTI): Ranjitsinh Disale, the winner of the USD 1 million Global Teacher Prize, on Wednesday called on inspiring Indian teachers to apply for the 2023 edition of the annual prize, which celebrates innovative and impactful teaching achievements worldwide.

The winner of the 2020 edition of the prestigious prize also called on parents and pupils to nominate their life-changing educators for the renowned accolade.

Disale was recognised for his work in transforming the life chances of young girls at the Zilla Parishad Primary School in Paritewadi village of Maharashtra.

Since winning the prize, he has gone on to meet prominent policymakers and advise the World Bank. "India has one of the world's most youthful populations and is therefore set to play a huge role in shaping the world," he said.

"Our country's inspiring teachers are integral to nurturing the next generation of visionaries. That is why I encourage them to apply for the Global Teacher Prize 2023 and call on parents and pupils to nominate the great educators in

their lives. They deserve to have their stories heard, and for the world to know about all that they have accomplished," he said in a statement.

Now in its eighth year, the prize is open to working teachers in every kind of school who spend at least 10 hours per week teaching and plan to remain in the profession for the next five years.

"The Global Teacher Prize was launched to highlight the importance of education in tackling the great challenges ahead — from climate change to growing inequality to global pandemics," said Kerala-born Sunny Varkey, Founder of the Global Teacher Prize and Chairman of the Varkey Foundation.

"I urge inspiring teachers all around the world to apply for this year's edition," Varkey said.

The Global Teacher Prize 2023 is organised in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and in strategic partnership with UAE-based global philanthropic organisation Dubai Cares.

'Africa's Sahel region needs help to fight extremism and stop its spread'

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Africa's Sahel region has become a hot spot for violent extremism, but the joint force set up in 2014 to combat groups linked to the Islamic State, al-Qaida and others has failed to stop their inroads, and a senior UN official warned on Tuesday that without greater international support and regional cooperation the instability will expand toward West Africa coastal countries.

"Resolute advances in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime in the Sahel desperately need to be made," UN Assistant Secretary-General for Africa Martha Pobebe told a UN Security Council meeting.

The counterterrorism force, now comprised of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger, lost Mali a year ago when its ruling junta decided to pull out. Pobebe said the force hasn't conducted any major military operations since January.

She said the force is adjusting to new realities: France moving its counterterrorism force from Mali to Niger due to tensions with the junta and Mali's decision to allow Russian mercenaries from Wagner to deploy on its territory.

She said Burkina Faso and Niger have recently strengthened military cooperation with Mali to counter an upsurge in extremist attacks, but "despite these efforts, insecurity in the tri-border area continues to grow".

Pobebe criticised the international community, saying a lack of consensus among donors and partners left the joint force without sufficient funding and other needed support to become fully operational and autonomous so it could have "the capacity to help stabilise the Sahel region".

An agreement between the UN, EU and the force under which the UN peacekeeping force in Mali supplied fuel, rations, medical evacuation and engineering support to the joint force is expected to end in June, she said, expressing hope that the Security Council will consider the issue of UN financing for African peace operations.

Eric Tiare, executive secretary of the force known as the G5 Sahel, said experts have finalised a new concept of operations, which will be submitted to its defence council and then to the African Union to be endorsed. "Given that the Sahel is at a crossroads, as it is seeing many threats to international

peace and security, it's absolutely vital that we provide support to the force," he said.

"The force needs what it has always lacked and what it has always sought.

That is sustainable funding and equipment as we seek to counter terrorism."

UN experts have reported in recent years that Africa has been the region hardest hit by terrorism, and UN counterterrorism chief Vladimir Voronkov told the Security Council in January that the Islamic State groups' expansion in Africa's centre, south and Sahel regions is "particularly worrying".

Last August, African security expert Martin Ewi said at least 20 African countries were directly experiencing activity by the Islamic State group, and more than 20 others were "being used for logistics and to mobilise funds and other resources". Ewi, who coordinates a transnational organized crime project at the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa's capital, Pretoria, told the Security Council that the Islamic State threat was growing by the day in Africa and the continent could be "the future of the caliphate", which is what the Islamic State called the large swath of Syria and Iraq it seized in 2014 but lost in 2017.

Piramal Capital & Housing Finance

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DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of **Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL)** [formerly known as **Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL)**] under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property address
(LC No. 07700002141 of Ghaziabad Branch) Neeru Lal (Borrower) Dijenra Lal (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 1828188 /- (₹ Eighteen lakh Twenty Eight Thousand One Hundred Eighty Eight Only) NPA (09-02-2023)	Flat No-122 , Dda Lig Flat First Floor Without Roof Rights, Pocket-3 Village Madipur Paschim Puri Delhi New Delhi Delhi :- 110063
(LC No. 2550000633 of Netaji Subhash Place Branch) Neeru Lal (Borrower) Dijenra Lal (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 1506131 /- (₹ Fifteen lakh Six Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Only) NPA (09-02-2023)	Flat No-122 , Dda Lig Flat First Floor Without Roof Rights, Pocket-3 Village Madipur Paschim Puri Delhi New Delhi Delhi :- 110063
(LC No. 000000464 of Karnal Branch) Vivek Gupta (Borrower) Vimal Gupta (Co Borrower 1) Ashok Gupta (Co Borrower 2)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 3092610 /- (₹ Thirty lakh Ninety Two Thousand Six Hundred Ten Only) NPA (04-12-2019)	Plot No.260 Situated At Jay Dee Greens Sector-39 P, Karnal Karnal Karnal Haryana :- 132001
(LC No. 2660000263 of Delhi Rajouri Garden Branch) Surender Mohan Azad (Borrower) Vandana (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 4017774 /- (₹ Forty One lakh Seventeen Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Four Only) NPA (10-03-2022)	Unit No-402 4th Floor Tower- 03 Ec Village-1 Plot No- G H - 8 Sec-1 Greater Noida West G B Nagar Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh-201308
(LC No. 15000003768 of Haldwani Branch) Dinesh Singh Mahara (Borrower) Vinita (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 1035886 /- (₹ Ten lakh Thirty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Six Only) NPA (04-10-2019)	Part Of Kshara No. 190 Min Village Japur Padli Near Anshu Bar Haldwani Nainital Uttarakhand :- 263139
(LC No. 1300000019 of Gurgaon Branch) Shashank Swarup (Borrower) Swapani Swarup (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 7828195 /- (₹ Seventy Eight lakh Twenty Eight Thousand One Hundred Ninety Five Only) NPA (04-08-2019)	Flat No-402 4th Floor Tower - 2, Ild Spire Greens, Sec-37 C Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana :- 122001
(LC No. 1310000056 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) Manu Kataria (Borrower) Sapna Kataria (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 7905952 /- (₹ Seventy Nine lakh Five Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Two Only) NPA (06-06-2019)	Flat No-408,4th Floor(duplex) Tower No- T2 Ild Spire Green, Sec-37 C Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana :- 122001
(LC No. 13100000498 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) Naveed Ahmed (Borrower)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 4818421 /- (₹ Forty Eight lakh Eighteen Thousand Four Hundred Twenty One Only) NPA (04-08-2019)	Flat No-1418,14th Floor Tower - 2, Ild Spire Greens, Sec-37 C Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana :- 122001
(LC No. 1310000064 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) Gagandeep Singh Dhingra (Borrower) Hargun Kaur Dhingra (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 4513941 /- (₹ Forty Five lakh Thirteen Thousand Nine Hundred Forty One Only) NPA (06-06-2019)	Flat No-0118, 1st Floor, Tower No-02, " I L D Spire Greens", Sec-37 (c) Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana :- 122001
(LC No. 1310000051 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) P R Deepak (Borrower) Rani Raghavan (Co Borrower 1)	29-04-2023 / ₹ 4306106 /- (₹ Forty Three lakh Six Thousand One Hundred Sixty Six Only) NPA (06-05-2019)	Flat No. 0317, 3rd Floor, Tower 2, I L D Spire Greens, Sector 37 C, Gurgaon Gurgaon Gurgaon Haryana :- 122001

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to PCHFL as aforesaid, PCHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of PCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date: 18-05-2023
Place: Delhi
5/-
(Authorised Officer)
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited

LIC shares sink 40% in first year of listing

Investors' wealth erode by ₹1.93 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of the country's largest insurer LIC have tumbled nearly 40 per cent from its issue price in the first year of trading, with investors' wealth eroding by ₹1.93 lakh crore.

LIC had listed at over 8 per cent discount on May 17 last year after a successful Initial Public Offering (IPO) which fetched ₹20,557 crore to the exchequer. Shares of LIC had listed at ₹872 on the BSE and at ₹867.20 on the NSE. The stock of LIC is down 39.92 per cent as against the issue price of ₹949 on the BSE. On the NSE, it has tumbled



39.93 per cent from the issue price.

On Wednesday, LIC shares ended with a gain of 0.48 per cent at ₹570.10 on the BSE. On the NSE, shares of the firm ended at ₹570, an increase of 0.44 per cent.

In the first year of trading, shares of the company have hit a 52-week high of ₹920 and a 52-week low of ₹530.20. It has

valued companies with a market capitalisation of nearly ₹5.54 lakh crore.

At the close of trading on Wednesday, the company commanded a market capitalisation of ₹3,60,588.12 crore. This is down by ₹1,93,411.88 crore from the valuation it commanded on the listing day.

The company now stands at the 13th position in the overall ranking of top domestic companies by market valuation.

Reliance Industries is the country's most valued firm with a market capitalisation of ₹16,49,996.39 crore, followed by TCS (₹11,74,226.18 crore), HDFC Bank (₹9,15,678.59 crore), ICICI Bank (₹6,56,439.98 crore) and Hindustan Unilever (₹6,25,449.45 crore).

They are followed by ITC (₹5,31,484.18 crore), State Bank

of India (₹5,23,428.49 crore), Infosys (₹5,17,612.27 crore), HDFC (₹4,98,825.68 crore), Bharti Airtel (₹4,41,745.99 crore), Bajaj Finance (₹4,06,125.96 crore), Kotak Mahindra Bank (₹3,79,253.52 crore) and Life Insurance Corporation (₹3,60,588.12 crore).

LIC had fixed the issue price of its shares at ₹949 apiece after a successful initial public offering, which was over subscribed nearly 3 times when it closed on May 9, 2022.

"There are several reasons why LIC could not live up to expectations, even as analysts remained upbeat about its IPO, Girish Sodani, Head of Equity Market at Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

One of the reasons the IPO failed to get a good listing was the dampening market environment in 2022.

Sensex, Nifty drop for 2nd day on selling in IT, tech shares

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty declined for a second straight day on Wednesday due to intense selling in IT, banking and tech stocks amid a mixed trend in global equities.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 371.83 points or 0.60 per cent to close at 61,560.64 after a flat start. During the day, it tumbled 592.37 points or 0.95 per cent to 61,340.10.

The NSE Nifty declined 104.75 points or 0.57 per cent to settle at 18,181.75.

"In response to weak global sentiments, domestic investors remained cautious as the US market grappled with recession concerns led by recent economic data indicating slowdown. The US retail sales figures for April reflected a decrease in demand, and ongoing debt ceiling negotiations further dampened market sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Among the Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Asian Paints, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies,



Infosys, Tata Steel, Wipro, Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors, Titan and Bajaj Finserv were the major laggards.

In contrast, IndusInd Bank, ITC, Bharti Airtel, Maruti, UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra and State Bank of India were the gainers.

"Markets lingered in negative territory as cautious investors continued to book profit after the recent spike. The subdued economic readings coming in from the US and China once again raise concerns of a slowing economy and hence recession fears, which is making investors jittery about the future," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

RBI gives nod to SBIFML to acquire 9.99% stake in HDFC Bank

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank has given its approval to SBI Funds Management (SBIFML) to acquire up to 9.99 per cent stake in HDFC Bank, the private sector lender said on Wednesday. The approval has been granted with reference to the application made by SBIFML to RBI, HDFC Bank said in an exchange filing.

"...We would like to inform you that the RBI vide its letter dated May 16, 2023 addressed to SBIFML, has accorded its approval to SBIFML for acquiring up to 9.99 per cent of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of HDFC Bank Limited," the bank said.

It further said SBIFML has been advised by RBI to acquire the major shareholding in the bank within a period of six months (by November 15, 2023). SBIFML has to ensure that the aggregate holding in the bank remains below 10 per cent of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of the HDFC Bank at all times.

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Corporate Office: Block-C, Sector 45, Gurugram, Haryana-122 003
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NOTICE

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

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert-No.	Dist-No.	Lost Shares			
1	SRF0032266	T JANAKI	90190904	14965045-94	50			
			90245568	9004946-95	50			
			90245569	9004996-5045	50			
			1131773	310752854-3453	600			
			845204	50843400-49	50			
2	SRF0144398	VINOD KUMAR KAPUR PARVEEN KAPUR	845206	50843500-49	50			
			90621692	30795597-646	50			
			90621695	30795747-96	50			
			28642	2115501-25	25			
			54785	2809462-69	8			
			95085	4085083-98	16			
			300777	15701154-203	50			
			300778	15701204-23	20			
			300779	15701224-33	10			
			300780	15701234-35	2			
3	A 0001576	ASHOK SATYAPRIYA LACHAKE	300781	15701236-36	1			
			449777	23720946-95	50			
			449778	23720996-1015	50			
			449779	23721016-25	10			
			449780	23721026-27	2			
			449781	23721028-28	1			
			90150311	10377090-139	50			
			90150312	10377140-184	45			
			1131619	310693322-4561	1240			
			4	SRF0112623	JASVINDER KAUR	90123733	9075106-55	50
						90123734	9075156-205	50
						1124886	308111890-2289	400
						377333	17168919-38	20
						377334	17168939-43	5
						377335	17168944-45	2
90195603	15143225-49	25						
1131821	310773634-841	208						
23454	1962151-75	25						
139057	5675932-43	12						
6	P 0004636	PAMELA DESOUZA MR ANTHONY M DESOUZA	682961	57738098-147	50			
			682962	57738148-97	50			
			749052	61805953-54	2			
			749053	61805955-55	1			
			776536	6576012327	5			
			90033442	7363090-129	40			
			90033443	7363130-69	40			
			90033444	7363170-209	40			
			1131604	310684718-77	1060			
			7	SRF0024690	NARAYAN CHANDRA MALLICK	359103	16880924-33	10
						359104	16880934-38	5
						508103	24900716-725	10
						508104	24900726-730	5
						90055073	8366606-25	20
						90184931	14538060-69	10
1131835	310784738-77	240						
90074960	9203270-309	40						
90074961	9203310-49	40						
90074962	9203350-69	20						
8	SRF0035514	MADAPPA CHENDANDRA SOMAYYA RENU MADAPPA	90193031	15046545-94	50			
			90193032	15046595644	50			
			1129811	309934742-5541	800			
			90177428-31	13226265-464	200			
			90177422-27	13225965-6264	300			
			90043426-35	7713078-477	400			
			90003203	3584074-79	50			
			87814	1871426-75	50			
			87813	1657626-50	50			
			2081376-400					
9	S 0012851	SWARNAKUMARI PRASAD	26955	2062851-900	50			
			495526-38	24678704-9353	650			
			90157444-46	11945630-729	100			
			90112924-27	8826238-397	160			
			1128489	309470714-53	1040			
			2905932-47					
			3431696-710					
			346526-38	16658912-9561	650			
			139036-37	5675389-488	100			
			87814	1871426-75	50			
10	G 0002808	GYARTRILAL RAMSHAY VARMA MRS VIDYA GYARSILAL VARMA MR RAJAKUMAR GYARSILAL VARMA	26955	2062851-900	50			
			495526-38	24678704-9353	650			
			90157444-46	11945630-729	100			
			90112924-27	8826238-397	160			
			1128489	309470714-53	1040			
			2905932-47					
			3431696-710					
			346526-38	16658912-9561	650			
			139036-37	5675389-488	100			
			87814	1871426-75	50			

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

Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates.

for SRF LIMITED
Sd/-
RAJAT LAKHANPAL
Sr. VP (Corporate Compliance)
& Company Secretary

Place: Gurugram
Date: 17-05-2023

Foreign portfolio investment in Indian equities drop 11% to USD 542 bn in Jan-Mar qtr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The value of foreign portfolio investment (FPI) in Indian equities was at \$ 542 billion in the March quarter of 2023, a decline of 11 per cent from the preceding year, largely due to the exodus of foreign money from the domestic market, according to a Morningstar report. In comparison, the value of FPI in Indian equities was \$612 billion in the January-March quarter of 2022.

On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the value of FPI in Indian equities fell by 7 per cent from \$584 billion recorded in the three months ended December 2022. This came following a surge in their investment value for three quarters in a row. The decline led to FPIs' contribution to Indian equity market capitalization falling to 17.3 per cent during the year under review from 17.8 per cent for March 2022.

After withdrawing record funds in 2021-22, foreign portfolio investors continued their sell-off in the last fis-

cal too and pulled out ₹37,631 crore from Indian equities amid aggressive rate hikes by central banks globally.

Since the start of foreign investment in 1993, this is for the first time foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) sold consecutively for two financial years.

They sold equity worth ₹1.4 lakh crore in FY22 and the pace of selling slowed down to ₹37,632 crore in FY23, data with the depositories showed. Before these outflows, FPIs invested a record ₹2.7 lakh crore in equities in 2020-21 and ₹6,152 crore in 2019-20.

In the financial year 2022-23, most of the major central banks started hiking the interest rate, which resulted in the departure of hot money from emerging markets including India. This resulted in the unprecedented rise in prices (inflation) in most of the economies. Apart from global monetary tightening, volatile crude, rising commodity prices along with Russia and Ukraine conflict led to an exodus of foreign money in 2022-23.

NCLAT set aside insolvency proceedings against McLeod Russel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has set aside the insolvency proceedings against leading bulk tea producer McLeod Russel following a settlement between the promoter and IL&FS Infrastructure Debt Fund.

A supplementary affidavit was filed before NCLAT by the appellant (Aditya Khaitan), whereby an agreement between the parties dated May 5, 2023 was brought on record.

The financial creditors also informed the appellate tribunal they already settled the matter with the promoter Khaitans and there are no issues between

the parties.

Following this, a two-member NCLAT bench closed the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) initiated by the Kolkata bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on February 10, 2023.

"In view of the aforesaid, settlement agreement is taken on record, we close CIRP initiated by order dated 10.02.2023. Order dated 10.02.2023 is set aside," said NCLAT order, which was uploaded on the website on Tuesday evening.

During the proceedings, the financial submitted that "in the event of default, liberty be given to revive the appeal."

BUSINESS BRIEF

BSES, MCD TO PROMOTE 'GREEN CREMATORIUMS'



New Delhi: BSES touches all aspects of peoples' lives, including in their final journey. In a move to foster eco-friendly cremation practices, BSES is promoting 'green crematoriums'. In partnership with the MCD, it has facilitated the installation of an electric furnace at the civic body's Sarai Kale Khan crematorium. The move aims to promote a shift towards 'green crematoriums', facilities that use cleaner, more sustainable technologies for cremations. Apart from this, doing its bit to give dignity to the last journey of departed soul and to provide ease to the bereaved family during the last rites, BSES has also been renovating selected crematoriums. Over the years, it has spruced-up and renovated over 10 crematoriums in South and West Delhi and has also provided facilities like Benches, Chairs, Exhaust Fans, Fans, Water Tanks, Dustbins etc.

SECURENOW INSURANCE CROSSES ₹200 THRESHOLD MARK

New Delhi: The insurance broking company SecureNow Insurance Broker Pvt. Ltd. crossed the ₹200 crore premium threshold during FY23, marking a major milestone in the growth of the company. The company focuses on selling commercial insurances to SMEs and mid-market clients, and has built an end-to-end insurtech platform that currently serves 40,000 small businesses across 150 locations. The firm aims to increase this to over one million businesses within the next three years.

Jindal Stainless board nods raising up to ₹5K crore

NEW DELHI: Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL) on Wednesday said its board has approved a proposal to raise up to ₹5,000 crore through multiple financial instruments.

The board of directors of the company at its meeting on Wednesday approved raising funds up to ₹5,000 crore or equivalent in any freely convertible foreign currency, an exchange filing by the company said.

The company looks to raise the amount by issue of debt securities including secured or unsecured non-convertible redeemable debentures or bonds or commercial paper or notes (listed/unlisted).

Audi India announces industry first initiative for e-tron owners

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Luxury carmaker Audi on Wednesday said it has launched an app to help customers of its e-tron range access charging points across the country. The German carmaker has introduced 'Charge my Audi' on the myAudiConnect app, an industry first initiative that enhances convenience for customers. The application currently includes five charging partners — Aargo EV Smart, Charge Zone, Relux Electric, LionCharge and Zeon Charging — and gives an access to over 750 charge points to e-tron owners.

In an interaction with PTI, Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon said the company is in constant touch with the customers trying to understand ownership experience. "We feel while there are multiple chargers available across the country it is a big hassle to download each app for each of the chargers", he noted.

SC upholds HC order to restrain Dil Afza, says Rooh Afza an old brand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea challenging the Delhi High Court order that restrained the manufacture and sale of sweet beverage concentrate 'Sharbat Dil Afza' during the pendency of a lawsuit by Hamdard Dawakhana which sells 'Rooh Afza' for alleged trademark infringement.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud refused to interfere with the high court order dated December 21, 2022.

"Rooh Afza has a well-established brand. You were selling some kind of medicine and suddenly you start drinks with similar-sounding names. We will not interfere. Dismissed," the bench, also comprising Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala, said.

The high court, in its order, had restrained the manufacture and sale of 'Dil Afza' after Hamdard Dawakhana had alleged trademark infringement.



Hamdard for over a century and has acquired immense goodwill and it was essential to ensure that the competitors keep a safe distance from the mark.

The court's order came on an appeal by Hamdard against a single judge's order refusing to pass an interim order to restrain 'Dil Afza' manufacturer Sadar Laboratories (respondent) from allegedly indulging in trademark infringement.

The High Court also noted that both the products have the "same deep red colour and texture" and the "structure of the bottles is not materially different" and thus opined that the "commercial impression of the impugned trademark is dece.

JSL Q4 net profit falls to ₹716 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL) on Wednesday posted a nearly 20 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹716.29 crore for the March quarter due to higher expenses.

The company had clocked a net profit of ₹894.93 crore during the January-March quarter of FY2021-22, JSL said in a regulatory filing.

The company's total income during the fourth quarter fell to ₹9,803.01 crore from ₹9,752.11 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses rose to ₹8,885.45 crore as against ₹8,579.12 crore.

The company's board has approved a dividend of ₹1.50 per equity share of face value ₹2 each for the financial year ended March 31, 2023.

With revocation of export duty, the company ramped up export sales in Q4 FY23 and consequently delivered the highest-ever quarterly sales volume of 5,07,632 tonne, JSL said in a statement.

Net debt in 2022-23 stood at ₹2,591 crore.

L&T's construction arm bags multiple EPC orders in domestic market

NEW DELHI: Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Wednesday said it has bagged 'significant' engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) orders from the domestic market for its buildings and factories business.

The buildings & factories (B&F) business of its arm Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Construction has won an order from a developer to construct residential towers in Thane, Mumbai, the infrastructure major said in a statement.



I liked everything about our win: Inter's Inzaghi

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi said he had been impressed by every facet of his team's "extraordinary" journey to the Champions League final after they beat AC Milan 3-0 on aggregate on Tuesday.

"We will only fully realise what we have done in the days to come," Inzaghi told Mediaset.

"It's a dream come true. We always believed we could do it, we have had an extraordinary journey (to the final).

"What pleased me? Everything. The running, the determination, the concentration... they were very good."

He said he could now sit back and enjoy Wednesday's second leg of the other semi-final between Manchester City and Real Madrid which is finely poised at 1-1 from the first leg.

"They're obviously two of the best teams in Europe. The first match was well-balanced.

"I'll be watching the match with a great, great deal of interest!"

Inter have been European champions three times and their last crown came in 2010 when Jose Mourinho led them to a 2-0 victory against Bayern Munich in Madrid.

FIRST TIME IN 13 YEARS

Inter beat AC Milan at San Siro to reach Champions League final

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan reached their first Champions League final for 13 years as Lautaro Martinez's sole goal of the match gave them a 3-0 aggregate win against AC Milan on Tuesday.

Inter will undoubtedly be the underdogs against either Real Madrid or Manchester City in Istanbul on June 10, but the way they managed both legs of this all-Milan tie suggests they will be hard to beat.

The key moment of the night at the San Siro came when Argentinian Martinez exchanged passes with substitute Romelu Lukaku and drilled a shot from inside the penalty area that Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan allowed in at his near post.

Martinez, Inter's captain, hailed the cohesion of his team over the two matches against their city rivals.

"What counts is the squad. I experienced it at the World Cup (with Argentina)," he said.

"It makes it easy if you have a united squad with everyone pulling in the same direction. It means you get to play these very important matches in the best possible way."

He added: "After winning the World Cup and experiencing what is the pinnacle for a player I knew we could reach this final, and we did it." His goal effectively killed off the tie. Trailing 2-0 from the first leg, Milan had pushed hard in the first



half, spearheaded by Rafael Leao who shot across the goal and past the post with one of his side's best chances.

LUKAKU SPARK

Maignan then superbly dropped to his knees to collect Edin Dzeko's glancing header from Hakan Calhanoglu's pacy free-kick.

Lukaku's introduction in the second half proved the spark that

Inter will hope to thrive as underdogs in final

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan are dreaming of a shock Champions League triumph after upsetting the odds to reach this season's final, securing their place in Istanbul on June 10 with a deserved semi-final win over city rivals AC Milan.

"If you had said at the start of

the season that we would reach the Champions League final, I would probably have found it hard to believe you," Inter president Steven Zhang admitted after his side beat Milan 1-0. Tuesday's result was, remarkably, Inter's fourth win over Milan in four meetings in 2023, all of them without conceding a goal.

It allowed the blue and black half of the city to avenge Champions League exits to their rivals in the 2003 semi-finals -- on the now-scrapped away goals rule -- and the 2005 quarter-finals.

"It's a dream come true. We always believed we could do it, we have had an extraordinary journey," coach Simone Inzaghi told broadcaster Mediaset.

Inter needed to extend their lead.

Absent for much of the season with injuries and with a damaged reputation following a disastrous World Cup with Belgium, Lukaku has slowly worked his way back to his best.

The forward on loan from Chelsea immediately caused problems in the Milan defence and created Martinez's goal to guarantee their place in their first Champions League final since the last time they won European club football's biggest prize under Jose Mourinho in 2010.

"Tutti a Istanbul", the joyous Inter fans sang with the Nerazzurri now one game away from a fourth Champions League title.

Facing Inzaghi's men will be either Manchester City or record 14-time winners Real Madrid, with that semi-final finely poised at 1-1 ahead of Wednesday's decider at City's Etihad Stadium.

"We're going to have to give it our all," Martinez said.

Milan's coach Stefano Pioli was left to contemplate a harsh ending to "a terrific" run to the last four.

"It's normal to be disappointed after losing in the semi-final, especially in a derby.

"The players gave their all in both legs but Inter deserved it. They played better than us, winning both matches.

"Given our journey and what we've done over the past three years it would have been fabulous to get to the final. But we didn't make it, that's a massive disappointment."

Qatar's Sheikh Jassim makes improved bid for Man Utd: Source

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani has made an improved bid to secure Manchester United from the Glazer family, a source close to the bid said on Tuesday.

Sheikh Jassim is in a bidding war with British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe after the pair emerged as the main contenders to buy the Premier League giants.

Ratcliffe appeared to be the front runner when a third round of bidding closed last month.

INEOS chemical company founder Ratcliffe, a boyhood United fan, had reportedly placed a higher valuation on the club as he seeks a majority stake.

However, his bid could allow for executive co-chairmen Avram and Joel Glazer to remain invested in the Red Devils - a move that would be deeply unpopular with supporters.

By contrast, Sheikh Jassim's bid is for 100 percent control of the club and promises to wipe United's £970 million (\$1.2 billion) debt.

The Glazers, who have failed to win over the fans since they saddled the club with debt in a £790 million leveraged takeover in 2005, appeared ready to cash out at an enormous profit when their first invited external investment in November.

However, they are reported-



ly holding out for a world record £6 billion fee for a football club before they agree to sell.

The Manchester United Supporters' Trust (MUST) has called for a swift conclusion to the process to allow new owners to be in place for the summer transfer window.

United's fortunes on the field have slumped during the Glazers' reign in charge.

They have not won a Premier League title since former manager Alex Ferguson retired a decade ago.

But United did end a six-year trophy drought earlier this season when they lifted the League Cup in Erik ten Hag's first year as manager.

'Kane has long career ahead at Spurs'

AP ■ LONDON

Tottenham are confident Harry Kane will see out his career at the club, former captain Gary Mabbutt said on Wednesday, despite persistent rumours of a big-money move for the England skipper.

Club ambassador Mabbutt said Spurs would do everything they could to hold on to their record goal scorer, whose contract has just over a year to run.

"We will do everything

we possibly can that Harry will remain a Tottenham player for the rest of his career," Mabbutt told reporters in Bangkok.

"So that's what we're hoping for. That's what we believe is going to happen."

The 29-year-old has bagged 27 goals this season, second only to Manchester City's Erling Haaland.

But with Tottenham sixth in the Premier League and out of the hunt for Champions League places, Kane has been linked with a



summer move to Manchester United or Paris Saint-Germain.

Tottenham are on their third manager of the season -- interim boss Ryan Mason -- and Kane has publicly criticised the club's culture since the sacking of Mauricio Pochettino, who led them to the 2019 Champions League final.

But Mabbutt, who lifted the FA Cup as Spurs skipper in 1991, insisted the turmoil would not put big-name coaches off taking the job.

ATK removed, it's Mohun Bagan Super Giant from June 1

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Judging to fans' longstanding demands, the stakeholders of Mohun Bagan on Wednesday announced that they would remove the prefix ATK from the name of the 133-year city-based football giants.

The club, which is principally owned by the RP Sanjiv Goenka Group, will now be known Mohun Bagan Super Giant, a pattern which follows the conglomerate's naming philosophy of their sports teams.

RPSG are also the owners of IPL franchise Lucknow Super Giants. Their earlier IPL team was known as Pune Supergiants.

"Subsequent to the Board meeting held today, the name of the club will be Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) from 1st June 2023," the club announced.

Goenka had informally announced that the ATK prefix was finally going away after three years and they would be known as MBSG, but the date was formalised after their Board

meeting here on Thursday.

"We are removing ATK, it will be Mohun Bagan Super Giant from next season. Well, it was something that was on the cards. I was waiting for the win to announce it," Goenka had said after their ISL triumph.

Two-time Indian Super League champions ATK was formerly known as Atletico de Kolkata because of their tie-up with the Madrid-based Spanish giants.

But Atletico Madrid parted ways after three seasons and sold its 25 per cent stake to the RPSG Group which then became the principal owners of the ISL franchise that came to be known as ATK.

ATK then came to the rescue of Mohun Bagan, who were struggling to get into the top-tier ISL because of financial woes.

The RPSG Group bought a majority (80%) stake in Mohun Bagan ahead of the 2020-21 season as the two merged clubs came into existence from June 1, 2020.

Newcastle don't feel 'hunted': Howe

AP ■ NEWCASTLE

Newcastle boss Eddie Howe says he does not feel as if his team are being "hunted" as he seeks to fend off charging Liverpool and finish in the Premier League's top four.

The Magpies, seeking to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in two decades, host high-flying Brighton at St James' Park on Thursday.

Roberto De Zerbi's side, fresh from a 3-0 win at Arsenal, are chasing European football for the first time in their history.

Newcastle are currently third in the table -- behind Manchester City and Arsenal -- level on points with Manchester United. Both Newcastle and United have three games remaining.

Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool are just one point behind, having played a game more, after their seventh straight league win at Leicester on Monday.

Howe said Newcastle still had matters in their own



hands and insisted he was not focusing on red-hot Liverpool.

"I don't feel like we're being hunted," he said at his pre-match press conference on Wednesday. "I don't feel that emotion. It's us against ourselves, really. That's how I see

it. It's us trying to be the best we can be.

"I've not focused on any other team all season. In my experience, I knew Liverpool were never far away because they are a top team and they are capable of going on runs

of wins.

"They are very similar to Manchester City where they can win a group of games without blinking. They have got that experience."

Victory in Newcastle's last two home games, against Brighton and then Leicester on Monday, would guarantee a place in the Champions League.

Howe also said he hoped the security breach that left him in danger at Elland Road could help prevent a future "tragedy" on a football pitch.

The 45-year-old was confronted in his technical area by an angry spectator during Saturday's 2-2 Premier League draw at Leeds, and a man has since been banned from the stadium for life and charged with assault.

"I just hope that that incident itself can then help the authorities and whoever is concerned with the security and safety of the players and staff," he said.

He added: "I'd hate to see a tragedy on a football pitch that could have been avoided."



Alonso to give Leverkusen fans 'a night to remember' against Roma

AP ■ LEVERKUSEN

Bayer Leverkusen manager Xabi Alonso said he wanted to give the team's fans something to remember for years in Thursday's Europa League semi-final second leg at home against Roma.

Leverkusen lost 1-0 in Rome but Alonso, who tasted Champions League glory with Liverpool and Real Madrid, said his side knew "the result is still open".

"Our goal is that in a few years, people will remember tomorrow night because of the atmosphere and the passion we will have," said Alonso, who took over Leverkusen in October and lifted them out of the relegation zone to European contention.

"I feel the energy from the team and we'll give every-

thing.

"When we've given everything, then we can leave our heads held high."

Alonso admitted, however, that he was not able to second-guess what Roma manager Jose Mourinho, who coached Alonso for three years at Real Madrid, would be thinking ahead of the return leg.

"It's not easy to know what's going on in his mind," said the Leverkusen manager.

"He's a special character. He's able to transmit a winning mentality to his teams and he's doing that in Rome."

Leverkusen midfielder Florian Wirtz said on Wednesday his side "don't need a miracle" to reach the Europa League final and have the quality to "turn the game around".

"We would have liked a better starting position, but there does not need to be a miracle tomorrow," the 20-year-old midfielder said at Wednesday's press conference.

"We have shown in Europe again and again what we are made of and what our strengths are."

Leverkusen have beaten Bayern Munich, Atletico Madrid, Union Berlin and RB Leipzig at home this season and Wirtz said his side "know we will have the stadium behind us".

"In Rome, the whole stadium was against us. (The fans) will motivate us from the beginning, even during the warm-up."

"I definitely want to get into the final. Nothing else matters."

Floods force cancellation of Sunday's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix

AP ■ PARIS

The Emilia Romagna Formula One Grand Prix due to be held at Imola this weekend has been called off as it is "not possible to safely hold the event" due to heavy flooding in the region, organisers said on Wednesday.

Five people have died after heavy rains caused flooding across Italy's northern Emilia Romagna region.

At Imola, the Santerno river which borders the track was flooded and race organisers had asked journalists and team staff not to go to the circuit on Wednesday.

Formula One said in a statement that following high level discussions "the decision has been taken not to proceed with the Grand Prix weekend at Imola".

"The decision has been taken because it is not possible to safely hold the event for our fans, the teams and our



personnel and it is the right and responsible thing to do given the situation faced by the towns and cities in the region," it added.

"It would not be right to put further pressure on the local authorities and emergency services at this difficult time."

DC HURT PBKS PLAY-OFF CHANCES

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

Beleaguered Delhi Capitals finally came out all guns blazing as they played party poopers to all but knock Punjab Kings out of play-off contention with a 15-run victory in the IPL, here on Wednesday.

Already out of the playoff race, Delhi Capitals finally came to the party in their penultimate match of the season to post an imposing 213/2 after PBKS opted to bowl.

Rilee Rossouw exhibited some exceptional strokeplay in a 37-ball 82 not out, while Prithvi Shaw (54; 38b) also slammed a fifty on his comeback after about a month as DC scored their first 200-plus total of this season.

In response, PBKS managed just 198/8 in the stipulated 20 overs despite all the fielding harakiri committed by DC.

Englishman Liam Livingstone slammed a 48-ball 94, studded with five fours and as many as nine sixes, but it was not enough as the total proved too much.

While Delhi now are ninth on the table after a consolation win, Punjab Kings due to this heavy defeat stay put on 12 after 13 games and even a win in the last match and a 14-point finish might not be enough as the net run-rate -0.308 only added insult to injury.



The Preity Zinta co-owned side since their 2014 final appearance, have not even made it to last four stage for nine years in a row.

But DC's fielding effort did give them enough chances.

As many as three catches were dropped including Livingstone on three, and Taide on 35, both in the bowling of Kuldeep Yadav who returned with 0/21 from his three overs.

They also missed two run-out chances when both the batters, Livingstone and Taide, were out of the crease but DC could not manage to hit the stumps on a sloppy outing.

PBKS took a tactical decision to retire out rookie Atharva Taide after his 42-ball 55 (5x4, 2x6) as he simply found it difficult to get going after first part of the innings.

Livingstone kept the PBKS run chase going racing to a 30-ball fifty, his sixth of the tournament as he brought the equation down to 38 from last two overs from being an near impossible 79 from four overs.

The Englishman turned it on in style in the 17th over when Khaleel started off with no-ball for height as he leaked 20 runs.

Three sixes off Mukesh Kumar in the next over put the equation on course for PBKS before Anrich Nortje, who had dropped Livingstone early on, redeemed himself with a perfect penultimate over.

Nortje conceded just five runs and cleaned up Sam Curran (11), while PBKS lost another when Harpreet Brar was run out.

DC bowlers stifled PBKS' tall chase early on with leftarm seamer Khaleel Ahmed starting off with a maiden, while Ishant Sharma dismissing Dhawan off the first ball.

From 10/1 in three overs, PBKS duo Prabhshimran and Atharva finally stepped it up with five boundaries (4x4, 1x6) in a row across two overs.

Already out of playoff race, DC got off to a flying start with Prithvi Shaw smashing a 54 on his comeback after nearly a month.

Shaw, who made his last appearance in this season's IPL against Kolkata Knight Riders on April 20, returned to form to post a 35-ball 50, his first in 13 IPL innings.

Shaw copped body blows from Rabada en route his 38-ball knock (7x4, 1x6) as he along with his skipper David Warner (46 from 31b; 5x4, 2x6) gave their best start of the season.

The duo put together a 94-run opening stand, their highest this season before Rossouw took charge of the proceedings with his maiden IPL fifty that came off 25 balls.

Rossouw took charge when he sent his South African teammate into the orbit with a six over long-off.



RCB play SRH in must-win game

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Virat Kohli will be in focus as Royal Challengers Bangalore look to strengthen their claim for an IPL play-off berth in their must-win match against laggards Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Thursday.

RCB are currently in the fifth spot with 12 points from as many games and face two must-win matches to guarantee their play-off spot.

SRH, on the other hand, are out of the tournament and languishing at the ninth spot with eight points from 12 matches.

Alongside skipper Faf du Plessis, Kohli is one of the top-scorers for RCB but after back-to-back failures -- 18 against Rajasthan Royals and 1 against Mumbai Indians -- the maestro would be looking to produce his best against SRH and help his side's cause.

Du Plessis has been leading the side from the front and is in scintillating form, occupying the top spot in run-getter's list with 631 runs from 12 games at an average of 57.36.

Kohli is the next best RCB batter with 438 runs, averaging 39.81 with six fifties. But unlike Du Plessis, Kohli has not been consistent enough and has struggled with his strike-rate at times.

The other batter RCB would be banking on is Glenn Maxwell, who has made a great impact with his sparkling knocks, which includes five half-centuries.

RCB are high on confidence after a commanding 112-run demolition of Rajasthan Royals in their last game.

Riding on Du Plessis and Maxwell's back-to-back fifties, RCB posted 171 for 5 and then Wayne Parnell (3/10) led the way in the company of Michael Bracewell (2/16), Karn Sharma (2/19) and Mohammed Siraj (1/10) to bundle out RR for a paltry 59.

On the bowling front, the onus would again be on Parnell, Siraj and Bracewell to deliver the goods.

The last match also saw RCB return to winning ways after back-to-back defeats against MI and Delhi Capitals.

SRH, on the other hand, will play for pride after becoming the second team to crash out of the tournament.

SRH would look to give their fans something to cheer about by registering wins in their remaining two games.

It has been lacklustre outing for SRH this season, both in batting as well as bowling department.

Barring Heinrich Klaasen and, to some extent Rahul Tripathi, no other batter could deliver for the team. SRH were hit hard by the poor form of their skipper Aiden Markram as much was expected of the South African.

Harry Brook showed sparks initially before fading away while Mayank Agarwal was nowhere to be noticed.

Among SRH bowlers, the experienced Bhuvneshwar Kumar is the most successful with 14 wickets from 12 games, but he too didn't look at his best.

Mayank Markandem (12 wickets from 10 games) impressed but SRH suffered heavily due to the poor form of Marco Jansen, T Natarajan and Umran Malik.

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan avoided a possible amputation of his bowling hand after approaching the doctor just in time, the Lucknow Super Giants player revealed after his match-winning effort against Mumbai Indians in the IPL here.

Entrusted with the task to defend 11 runs in the final over against a marauding Tim David and Cameron Green, Mohsin gave away just five to help his team win the game and inch closer to a play-off berth on Tuesday night.

This after the speedster underwent a surgery to remove blood clots in his bowling shoulder last year. The shoulder injury on his bowling hand kept him out of LSG's line-up for majority of the 2023 IPL season.

"It was a very tough time and I had given up hope of playing cricket at one point because I was not able to even lift my hand, forget bowling," Mohsin said at the post-match press conference, recalling the time he was battling the injury. "I was not able to straighten it (my hand), my physio worked alongside me. It was medical related, it was quite scary, as the doctor had said if I was late by another month they would have had to amputate my hand," he added.

The 24-year-old from Uttar Pradesh had a sensational season last year but missed whole of domestic season and most part of the IPL this year due to the injury.

He was playing in only his second match this IPL season.

"Regarding my injury, I would first like to say that no cricketer should suffer this kind of condition. It was quite

Thought I would not be able to play again: Mohsin

strange, my artery was blocked, my nerve was blocked.

"But my association's (Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association) Rajeev Shukla sir, LSG's Sanjeev (Goenka) sir, my family helped me a lot. They gave their best, but still I was struggling before and after the surgery."

Talking about his plan in the final over, he said he was looking to implement what he did in training.

"Obviously there is pressure when bowling the last over, but I was speaking to the captain that I would be looking to execute what I have been doing during practice. So I followed that and backed myself," Mohsin said.



"I was not thinking that I have to defend 11 runs or 10 runs, my aim was to just bowl six good balls, and thankfully, it worked. I had the confidence in my ability, irrespective of who I was bowling to, and the ball was also reversing a bit."

After he was ruled out of majority of the season, the franchise picked Saurashtra and India left-arm seamer Jaydev Nadkarni as a replacement at the IPL auction last December, but they kept Mohsin in the squad.

Looking ahead, he said, "I will try to keep myself fit and play as much as possible. I was with the team, doing my rehab and training."

"As you are aware now, my father was discharged yesterday (on Monday) only as he had suffered a brain stroke. I had gone to the hospital to see him, told him that he would get well, and see me playing. He must have been very happy watching me play," he said.

India end Sudirman Cup campaign with 4-1 win over Australia

PTI ■ SUZHOU

Already out of the knockout race, India signed off their campaign in the Sudirman Cup badminton tournament with a 4-1 win over Australia in their final Group C tie here on Wednesday.

Placed in the 'group of death', India had lost 1-4 to Chinese Taipei and 0-5 against Malaysia -- two heavyweights of the game -- to crash out of the mixed team championship.

Against Australia, India did not have the best of starts as the mixed doubles pair of Sai Pratheek and Tanisha Crasto lost 21-17, 14-21, 18-21 against Kenneth Zhe Hooi Choo and Gronya Somerville.

HS Prannoy drew the scores for India with a com-



manding 21-8, 21-8 win over Jack Yu in just 28 minutes.

With nothing at stake, India fielded Anupama Upadhyaya in the women's singles in place of PV Sindhu and the youngster didn't disappoint, scoring a 21-16, 21-18 win over Tiffany Ho.

MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila then defeated Ricky Tang and Ryane Wang 21-11, 21-12 in the men's doubles to hand India an unassailable 3-1 lead in the contest.

The women's doubles pair of Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa finished off the contest in style, beating Kaitlyn Ea and Angela Yu 21-19, 21-13 to give India a consolation win.

We're making same mistake over & over again: Bond slams MI bowlers

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Mumbai Indians' bowling coach Shane Bond has expressed his frustration with the team's bowling unit for committing the "same mistake over and over again" in match situations, recently against Lucknow Super Giants.

"For me, the most frustrating thing is about not sticking to the plans that we talk about. We were very clear with what we wanted to do on this wicket to players like Marcus (Stoinis) and where we wanted to bowl, we didn't bowl there consistently enough," Bond said at the post-match press conference.

"When you're looking at a team plan, you've got to get the batsmen to hit in areas where you want them to hit. Make it as hard as possible for them. You don't want them to hit you in areas that they want to hit."

"We saw that with Stoinis -- a fine player. We knew he was trying to hit straight down the ground and we dished out balls for him to do it. In the end, his innings was the difference between the two teams."

Stoinis flaunted his raw power on way to an unbeaten 89 off 47 balls as LSG recovered from a poor start to post a competitive total.

Stoinis smashed eight sixes in his belligerent knock and shared an 82-run partnership with stand-in skipper Krunal Pandya (49 retired hurt) after LSG found themselves reliving at 35 for three in the seventh over.

Bond added, "We've always prided ourselves in our preparation, the work that we do behind the scenes and how we review the game -- the mistakes on which we want to improve. The frustrating thing is that we're making the same mistake over and over again. From my point of view, it's disappointing."

"For 15 overs, we were excellent, we delivered what we wanted to. One player put us under pressure. That's what Rashid Khan did the other night and we made the same mistakes. It didn't cost us in the last game, it definitely cost us tonight."

"You can never stop good players from scoring runs. You'd rather have players scoring 89 from 47 be at 70 from 47. Those 17 to 20 runs can make a difference. We've talked about that at Wankhede over the course of the year. You are talking about a difference of 10-15 runs," he said.

"There's no way we should have gone for 54 runs in the last three overs on that ground. It was just poor."

Mohsin, who missed the whole of domestic season due to a shoulder injury, helped LSG take a major step towards a top-four finish by holding his nerve in the final over.



India, Pak to renew rivalry after 5 years, clubbed in same group in SAFF Cup

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and Pakistan are set to renew their football rivalry after nearly five years as the two neighbouring countries have been clubbed in the same group in the SAFF Cup to be held in Bengaluru from June 21 to July 4.

The draw of the 14th edition of the South Asian Football Federation Cup was held here on Wednesday with defending champions India, Pakistan, Kuwait and Nepal being clubbed in Group A. Lebanon, Maldives, Bangladesh and Bhutan are in Group B.

The group matches will be played in a round-robin league format and the top two teams in

each group will qualify for the semifinals of the eight-nation regional tournament at the Kanteerava Stadium.

Lebanon and Kuwait -- the two countries outside of South Asia -- were invited to make the tournament more competitive. Lebanon are the highest ranked side in the tournament at 99th while Pakistan are the lowest at 195th. India are the second highest ranked side at 101st.

The Indo-Pak Group A match will be played on June 21 in the second match of the opening day after Kuwait face Nepal in the inaugural game.

India and Pakistan last played against each other in September 2018 in the semifinal of the 12th edition of the SAFF



Cup in Dhaka. India won that match 3-1 but lost to Maldives 1-2 in the final.

Overall, India and Pakistan have officially played more than 20 international matches. Of the two, India have been the dominant side with more than a dozen wins under their belt.

India have won the SAFF Cup eight times while finishing runners-up four times. The only time India did not reach the final was in the fifth edition in 2003 in Dhaka when the country finished third.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) is hopeful that Pakistan players and support staff will get visas to take part in the tournament.

"Pakistan has confirmed its participation in the tournament, that is why they are here in the draw. All the countries of the South Asian region have the right to play in this tournament," AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey said after the draw.

"But things like grant of visas, providing security to the teams, these are not the job of any football federation of any country. The AIFF administration will coordinate with the concerned ministries of the government and we will get the answer with the passage of time."

Pakistan did not feature in two tournaments out of the 13 editions held so far since 1993.

The Pakistan Football Federation could not send its team in the 2015 edition held in India due to internal issues. The country missed the 2021 edition in Maldives as it was serving suspension from FIFA.

India head coach Igor Stimac reiterated that the competitiveness of the tournament will be higher with the addition of the two teams from the Middle East.

"We need to behave and act as favourites to win the tournament. We welcome Kuwait and Lebanon as guests. Playing against them should help us in our preparations for the AFC Asian Cup," said Stimac.

"A long duration camp was always something we were insisting on and we are going to use it to improve certain parts of our game, work more on the mental strength and passing confidence," he said.

- SAFF CUP FIXTURES:**
- June 21: Kuwait vs Nepal, 3.30 pm IST; India vs Pakistan, 7.30 pm IST.
 - June 22: Lebanon vs Bangladesh, 3.30 pm IST; Maldives vs Bhutan, 7.30 pm IST.
 - June 24: Pakistan vs Kuwait, 3.30 pm IST; Nepal vs India, 7.30 pm.
 - June 25: Bangladesh vs Maldives, 3.30 pm IST; Bhutan vs Lebanon, 7.30 pm IST.
 - June 27: Nepal vs Pakistan, 3.30 pm IST; India vs Kuwait, 7.30 pm IST.
 - June 28: Lebanon vs Maldives, 3.30 pm IST; Bhutan vs Bangladesh, 7.30 pm IST.