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NEW DELHI, SATURDAY MAY 20, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 33 Issue 138
*Air Surchage Extra if Applicable

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SC panel relief for Adani

No proof of stock price manipulation in Adani Grp firms, says report; Sebi probe draws blank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court panel's finding in which it gave a clean chit to Adani group has come as a major relief to the embattled billionaire Gautam Adani. A Supreme Court-appointed expert committee said it has found no evidence of stock price manipulation in Adani group companies, while a separate Sebi probe into alleged violation in money flows from offshore entities has "drawn a blank".

The six-member panel, however, said there was evidence of a build-up in short positions on Adani Group stocks ahead of the report of US-based short seller Hindenburg Research that alleged fraud, stock manipulation, and money laundering at the apples-to-port group.

Profits were earned from squaring off positions after prices crashed post-publication of the damning allegations.

Financial crime-fighting agency ED "found intelligence about potentially violative and concerted selling by specific parties just ahead of the publication of the Hindenburg report, and this may lead to credible charges of concerted destabilisation of the Indian markets, and Sebi ought to be probing such actions under



securities laws," it said citing a response from ED.

Suspicious trading has been observed on the part of six entities. Of these, four are FPIs, one body corporate and one individual.

The committee, headed by former SC judge Justice AM Sapre, in its 173-page report, said based on the data from the stock market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), it saw "no evident pattern of manipulation" in the steep stock price rise in billionaire Adani's companies that can be attributed to "any single entity or group of connected entities". It was not possible to conclude whether there had been regulatory failures regarding price manipulations, panel said in the report.

After the Hindenburg report stirred a political row and triggered a rout in the con-

glomerate's stocks, dethroning Adani as the world's third richest man, the SC had on March 2 constituted the expert committee to probe if there was any

failure to disclose transactions with related parties and if stock prices were manipulated.

The committee was to work in parallel with the probe by Sebi into offshore entities investing in the Adani Group. The regulator was first asked to complete the probe in two months and then given another three months till August 14.

These three were at the core of the allegations that Hindenburg had levelled against Adani. While the report is not the final word, it certainly comes as a relief for Adani's empire.

Continued on Page 2

Rahul's team will now have to come up with something more outlandish: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday attacked Rahul Gandhi following an expert panel report on the Adani issue denying any regulatory failure. The party said the Congress leader's speech writers will now have to come up with something more outlandish for him to sustain his "lie machine".

The Supreme Court-appointed panel of experts examining India's regulatory

mechanism in an investigation linked to the Hindenburg allegations has prima facie given a clean chit to the Adani Group and has said it appears there was no regulatory failure on the part of market regulator SEBI.

While the BJP's Amit Malviya lashed-out at Rahul, senior lawyer Mukul Rohatgi, who represented the Adani Group in the SC, claimed that the panel's conclusion is completely in favour of the corporate behemoth.

Continued on Page 2

₹2,000 note withdrawn

Valid till Sept 30; exchange 10 notes at one go any number of times

PNS/PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced withdrawal of ₹2,000 currency notes from circulation but gave public time till September 30 to either deposit such notes in accounts or exchange them at banks.

Unlike the November 2016 shock demonetisation when old ₹500 and ₹1,000 notes were invalidated overnight, the ₹2,000 notes will continue to be a legal tender till September 30.

In a statement, the RBI said



it has asked banks to stop issuing ₹2,000 notes with immediate effect.

While the RBI did not specify a limit for depositing the ₹2,000 currency notes in bank accounts, exchange of a maximum of ₹20,000 (10 notes

of ₹2,000) for other currency notes will be allowed at a time.

The move comes amid concerns of the highest denomination notes being used to hoard black money. The RBI had stopped printing ₹2,000 notes in 2018-19 and the notes were rarely in circulation.

The ₹2,000 denomination bank note was introduced in November 2016, primarily to meet the currency requirement of the economy in an expeditious manner after the withdrawal of legal tender status of all ₹500 and ₹1,000

bank notes in circulation at that time.

The RBI said it has also been observed that ₹2,000 denomination note is not commonly used for transactions. Further, the stock of bank notes in other denominations continues to be adequate to meet the currency requirement of the public, it added.

"In view of the above, and in pursuance of the 'Clean Note Policy' of the Reserve Bank of India, it has been decided to withdraw the ₹2,000 denomination bank notes from circulation," the RBI said.

"Members of the public are encouraged to utilise the time up to September 30, 2023 to deposit and/or exchange the ₹2,000 bank notes," it added.

Continued on Page 2

Centre's ordinance negates SC verdict on Delhi services

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Supreme Court gave the Delhi Government absolute power on "services", the Union Government on Friday created the National Capital Service Authority through an ordinance for the transfer of and disciplinary proceedings against Group-A officers from the DANICS cadre.

The ordinance states, "There shall be an authority to be known as the National Capital Civil Service Authority to exercise the powers conferred on, and discharge the

functions assigned to it."

The authority shall comprise the CM as its chairperson, along with the chief secretary and the principal home secretary, who shall be the member secretary. "All matters required to be decided by the authority shall be decided by majority of votes of the members present and voting. All recommendations of the authority shall be authenticated by the member secretary," it said.

"The Central Government, in consultation with the authority, shall determine the nature and the categories of officers and other employees

required to assist the authority in the discharge of its functions and provide the authority with such officers and employees, as it may deem fit...

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any law for the time being in force, the National Capital Civil Service Authority shall have the responsibility to recommend the transfers and postings of all the Group A officers and officers of DANICS serving in the affairs of the government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi but not officers serving in connection with any subject matter," reads the ordinance.

CAPSULE

AIDES OF CANADA-BASED TERRORIST HELD AT IGIA

New Delhi: The NIA on Friday arrested two "wanted" close aides of Canada-based "listed terrorist" Arsh Dhalia on their arrival at IGIA in Delhi on Friday.

DELHI LG SLAMS CM FOR 'DISREGARD OF RULES'

New Delhi: In a strong worded letter to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, LG Vinai Kumar Saxena accused his Government of highly "disregard of rules" after Supreme Court verdict.

India fully prepared to protect its sovereignty, dignity, asserts PM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is fully prepared and committed to protecting its sovereignty and dignity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday and asserted that the future development of the India-China relationship can only be based on mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests.

Responding to questions over the India-China standoff in eastern Ladakh, Modi in an interview with the Japanese publication Nikkei Asia, also emphasised that peace and tranquility on the border are essential for normal bilateral ties among the neighbours.

"India is fully prepared and committed to protect its sovereignty and dignity," the PM said while stressing his country's respect for sovereignty, the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

He also made it clear that "the future development of the India-China relationship can only be based on mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests" and noted



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being welcomed upon his arrival in Hiroshima, Japan on Friday

that "normalising" the ties would benefit the wider region and the world.

India-China ties have been fraught since the Galwan clashes in June 2020. Both sides have been periodically holding meetings to defuse the crisis at the border but a lasting solution has eluded them so far.

On Pakistan, the publication quoted him as saying that India wants "normal and

neighbourly relations." "However, it is incumbent upon them to create a conducive environment free from terrorism and hostilities.

"The onus is on Pakistan to take necessary steps in this regard," he said. Speaking about the Indian economy, he noted that it has been one of the world's fastest-growing.

Continued on Page 2

Modi to meet Zelenskyy in Hiroshima

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday left for a three-nation tour, including Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia, he is likely to meet President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Hiroshima on the sidelines of the G-7 summit over the weekend. Japan is hosting the summit.

It will be the first in person meeting between Modi and Zelenskyy since the Russian military action began in Ukraine more than a year ago. Both the leaders had talked on the phone during the last few months with the Indian Prime Minister calling for diplomacy and dialogue to end the war.

During their likely meeting in Japan, Modi and Zelenskyy may discuss the current situation in Ukraine and explore avenues for further co-operation.

The talks will likely focus on finding diplomatic solutions to de-escalate tensions and restore stability in the region.

Continued on Page 2

SC puts off age determination of Gyanvapi shivling

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday deferred a scientific survey to determine the age of a "shivling" found at Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque, saying implications of the Allahabad High Court order for it merit closer scrutiny.

The HC on May 12 had ordered determination of the age of the "shivling" using modern technology. However, the mosque's authorities have said the structure is part of a fountain in the "wazu khana".

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud issued notices to the Centre, the UP Government and the Hindu petitioners on the plea of th Anjuman Islamia Masjid committee against the HC order for the "scientific survey" of the structure.

Continued on Page 2

Indian Navy finds capsized Chinese fishing vessel

India deployed P-8I aircraft in Indian Ocean for search, rescue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy has located the capsized Chinese fishing vessel in the Indian Ocean and relayed this information to the Chinese warships for further assistance, the Navy said here on Friday.

The boat carrying 39 crew members on board was located by an Indian Navy P-8I long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft on Thursday, officials said.

"Position of the capsized



boat was relayed to PLA (N) warships for further assistance. Subsequently, P-8I also sighted the fishing vessel's life raft and guided fishing vessel Lu Peng Yuan Yu 017 towards it," they said. The Indian Navy is standing by to provide any additional assistance to the ongoing rescue efforts, officials added.

India had joined the massive search and rescue mission on Wednesday to locate the missing Chinese fishing vessel in the Indian Ocean region by

deploying its P-8I long range maritime air reconnaissance aircraft approximately 900 nautical miles (Nm) from India.

This humanitarian action was initiated after a request from China regarding the sinking of the Chinese fishing vessel Lu Peng Yuan Yu 028 with 39 crew members onboard on Tuesday. The crew included nationals from China, Indonesia and the Philippines, the Navy said here on Friday.

Continued on Page 2



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Appoint DERC chief in two weeks, orders SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that the Lieutenant Governor has to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, the Supreme Court on Friday ordered that the chairperson of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) be appointed within two weeks.

Referring to Section 84 of the Electricity Act, a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud said while appointing a sitting or a retired judge to the post of a State electricity regulatory commission, the chief justice of the high court, to which the judge concerned belonged, has to be consulted. It said the chief justice of the high court, under whose jurisdiction the electricity regulatory panel falls, need not be consulted for the appointment if the judge concerned has not served in that high court. The top court said Section 84 of the

Electricity Act, 2003 provides for appointment of chairperson and members of State commission and the substantive part indicates that State Government may appoint any person from among persons "who is or has been judge of HC".

"However, appointment is to be made after consulting chief justice of that HC. The expression makes it clear that consultation has to be made with the chief justice of the high court from which the judge is drawn. Where a sitting judge is to be appointed, the CJ consulted will be one who the judge is serving. Where it is a former judge, CJ of the HC where the judge has previously served. In view of clear provisions, the appointment of chairperson shall be made in two weeks," the bench, also comprising Justices PS Narasimha and KV Vishwanathan said. Referring to a 2018 Constitution bench judgement and the one the

Supreme Court recently pronounced on the services row between the Centre and the Delhi Government, the bench said it has been made clear that the "LG has to act on the aid and advice of the council of Ministers". A tug of war between the AAP Government and LG V K Saxena was going on for the last five months, with the latter's office insisting that the view of the Delhi high court chief justice was needed for appointing Justice (Retd) Rajeev Shrivastava, who had served in the Madhya Pradesh high court, as DERC chairperson. "Delhi Government sent a proposal to the LG for the appointment of a retired Madhya Pradesh high court judge as DERC chairperson before the post fell vacant. But no decision has been forthcoming," senior lawyer Abhishek Singhvi, who represented the Delhi Government, had submitted.

ED seizes ₹8.26 cr of online edu firm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has seized funds worth Rs 8.26 crore of a Bengaluru-based online education company, fully owned and controlled by Chinese nationals, as part of a probe linked to the alleged contravention of the foreign exchange law.

The funds of Pigeon Education Technology Private Limited have been seized under Section 37A of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the ED said in a statement.

The company provided online education under the brand name "OdaClass", it said. The ED conducted searches against the group in April and "found that the company is 100 per cent owned by Chinese nationals and all the affairs of the company, including financial decisions, are being taken by the persons sitting in China",

the ED said.

It was ascertained that the company has siphoned off Rs 82.72 crore to China and Hong Kong in the name of advertisement and marketing expenses "on the instructions" of Chinese director Liu Can, the ED said.

"The company could not produce any proof of receipt of service on its part and proof of any advertisement published against the said expenses," it said. The director and accounts manager of the company "admitted" during the investigation that the payment was made only on the instructions of Can, the ED said.

The company's Indian director Vedanta Hamirwasia stated that the Chinese director told them that the advertisements were published through Google and Facebook. However, no confirmation or invoice raised by these platforms has been submitted, it added.

HC restrains CBI from coercive action against Sameer Wankhede

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday restrained the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) from taking any coercive action against Narcotics Control Bureau's former Mumbai Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede till May 22 in the alleged Rs 25-crore bribery case relating to the arrest of actor Aryan Khan in the much-discussed in the mid-sea drug bust case.

A day after the CBI gave an oral assurance to the Delhi High Court that it would not take any coercive action against Wankhede till May 22 in the Aryan Khan bribery case, a HC vacation bench Justices Sharmila Deshmukh and Arif Doctor restrained the central investigating agency taking any "coercive" action against the NCB's former

director till Monday.

A HC vacation bench comprising Justice Sharmila Deshmukh and Justice Arif Doctor said that prima facie, there was a legal bar under the Prevention of Corruption Act, Sec. 17A, mandating the probe to be completed within four months of the alleged offence that had occurred in 2021.

"As the notice was issued to the accused under Cr. PC Sec. 41A, the judges restrained the CBI from any coercive action against Wankhede till May 22, when the matter would come up for next hearing before the high court," Wankhede's lawyer Rizwan Merchant.

However, the CBI counsel Kuldeep Patil opposed Wankhede's plea and said that the former NCP director should seek anticipatory bail.

SC asks Bihar Govt to produce records on remission to ex-MP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Bihar government to produce complete original records with regard to the remission granted to former MP Anand Mohan, who was serving life term in the 1994 murder case of then Gopalganj District Magistrate G Krishnaiah.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala told advocate Manish Kumar, appearing for the Bihar government, that no further adjournment will be granted in the case and directed him to place the complete records for perusal of the court. It listed the plea filed by the wife of the slain officer challenging the release of Mohan on August 8. At the outset, Kumar sought some time to file a reply to the plea.

Senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for Uma Krishnaiah, the wife of the slain officer, said the government has changed policy retrospectively and released him in the case.

SC panel relief for Adani

From Page 1

All 10 Adani Group stocks rose after the report was made public, ending between 1.2 per cent and 7 per cent in late trade.

Flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd recovered the day's losses and jumped 3.5 per cent each.

The panel in its report said Sebi has "drawn a blank" in investigations into suspected violations in overseas investments in the Adani group and pursuing the case could be a "journey without a destination".

"The foundation of Sebi's suspicion that led to investigations into the shareholding of the foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in the Adani-listed companies is that their ownership structure is 'opaque', it noted.

This is because "the ultimate chain of ownership above the 13 overseas entities holding Adani Group stocks is not clear".

The Sebi has found 42 contributors to the assets under the management of the 13 overseas entities and has been pursuing various avenues to ascertain the same. "It has been a long-standing suspicion of Sebi that some of the public shareholders are not truly pub-

lic shareholders and could be fronts for the promoters of these companies," it said. Yet, despite involving various Indian and overseas agencies in the investigation across multiple countries, "Sebi has drawn a blank", it said, adding that trying to prove who had invested in the foreign portfolio and investors who then pumped money into Adani could be an arduous task.

While the FPIs in question made declarations of the beneficial owner by identifying the natural persons controlling their decisions, a 2018 law had done away with the very requirement to disclose the last natural person owning any economic interest in the FPI.

The Sebi has been investigating the ownership of the 13 overseas entities since October 2020.

"The securities market regulator suspects wrongdoing but also finds compliance with various stipulations in attendant regulations. Therefore, the record reveals a chicken-and-egg situation," it said.

Prior to the Hindenburg report, which erased about USD 145 billion in the conglomerate's market value at its lowest point, the Adani Group

stocks climbed more than 1,000 per cent since early 2020, pushing the conglomerate's combined market value to a peak of USD 288 billion in September.

The combined market capitalisation of the Adani Group is now close to USD 160 billion.

The runaway rallies in the seven long-standing Adani Group firms - excluding last year's acquisitions of two cement companies and broadcaster NDTV - however, stoked concerns, including by Hindenburg, that there was a concerted effort by certain entities to bid up valuations.

The Adani Group has denied all the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements. Sebi is investigating alleged breaches of related-party transaction rules, public shareholding norms and share price manipulation.

"It is evident that such an exercise could be a voluminous one but potentially a journey without a destination," the panel said. "... It would be a humongous task to figure out who the ultimate beneficial owner is." The committee said that the market has re-priced and re-assessed the Adani stocks.

₹2,000...

From Page 1

Deposit into bank accounts can be made in the usual manner, that is, without restrictions and subject to extant instructions and other applicable statutory provisions, it said.

"In order to ensure operational convenience and to avoid disruption of regular activities of bank branches, exchange of ₹2,000 bank notes into bank notes of other denominations can be made up to a limit of ₹20,000 at a time at any bank starting from May 23, 2023," the RBI said.

To complete the exercise in a time-bound manner and to provide adequate time to the members of public, the RBI has asked all banks to provide deposit and/or exchange facility for ₹2,000 bank notes until

September 30, 2023. Also, the facility for exchange of ₹2,000 bank notes up to the limit of Rs 20,000 at a time shall also be provided at the 19 Regional Offices (ROs) of RBI having Issue Departments from May 23, 2023.

As per the RBI, about 89 per cent of the ₹2,000 denomination banknotes were issued prior to March 2017 and are at the end of their estimated life span of 4-5 years.

The total value of such banknotes in circulation has declined from ₹6.73 lakh crore at its peak as on March 31, 2018 (37.3 per cent of notes in circulation) to ₹3.62 lakh crore constituting only 10.8 per cent of notes in circulation as on March 31, 2023. In January 2014, the RBI announced withdrawal from circulation all bank notes issued prior to 2005.

India fully prepared to protect its sovereignty, dignity, asserts PM

From Page 1

"Our progress is evident, as we have risen from being the tenth largest economy in 2014 to now being the fifth largest globally... While it is true that global headwinds pose challenges to growth, we have built a strong foundation in recent years, which positions us favourably," he said.

"Cooperation and collaboration should define our times, not conflict," he told Nikkei Asia. The PM is on a three-nation trip to Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Asked about the issue of United Nations reform amid India's long and sustained bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council, Modi spoke

challenges in meeting their basic needs, especially in the face of rising costs of food, fuel, and fertilizers. We maintain communication with both Russia and Ukraine," Modi said.

"Cooperation and collaboration should define our times, not conflict," he told Nikkei Asia. The PM is on a three-nation trip to Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Asked about the issue of United Nations reform amid India's long and sustained bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council, Modi spoke

of the "limitations" of global governance institutions that remain "confined to outdated mindsets".

"These deficiencies have become evident in addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, terrorism, and financial crises," he said. "The credibility of the UNSC and its decision-making process will always be questioned if it continues to deny representation on a permanent basis to the world's largest democracy, as well as entire continents like Africa and Latin America."

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THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

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Modi to ...

From Page 1

The Ukrainian president is attending the summit following an invitation by Japan, the current chair of the powerful grouping.

Last year, Modi had met Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Co-operation Summit (SCO) in Samarkand. Emphasising on the resolution of the ongoing conflict, Modi told Putin that "this is not

an era of war." Ukraine's First Deputy Foreign Minister Emine Dzhaparova visited India last month, in first high-level trip to India from Ukraine after the conflict began in the eastern European country.

During her visit, Dzhaparova handed over a letter to Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi. The letter was written to Modi by Zelenskyy. Since the Ukraine conflict began, Modi spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as Zelenskyy a number of times.

In a phone conversation with Zelenskyy on October 4 last year, Modi said there can be "no military solution" and that India is ready to contribute to any peace efforts.

The Prime Minister on Friday arrived in Hiroshima after departing from New Delhi to attend the annual G7 summit to be held between May 19 and 21. This is the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Japanese city since India conducted nuclear tests in Pokhran in 1974. The last Indian Prime Minister to visit Hiroshima,

which suffered the atomic bomb attack in 1945, was Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957. Modi's presence at Hiroshima is significant since India is one of the few countries which has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

He will join the G7 leaders when they visit the Peace Memorial Park, dedicated to the victims and survivors of the attack.

Meanwhile, in his departure statement ahead of his six-day nation tour, the Prime Minister said here his presence

into account the explanations provided by Sebi and supported by empirical data, it is not possible to conclude that there has been a regulatory failure around the allegation of price manipulation. Rahul's speech writers will now have to come up with something more outlandish, for him to sustain his lie machine," he said.

As he left for Japan, Modi said in a tweet, "...Looking forward to a healthy exchange of views on diverse global subjects." From Japan, Modi noted that he will be travelling to Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea — the first ever visit by an Indian prime minister to the Pacific Island nation.

He will host on May 22 the third Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation (FIPIC III Summit) jointly with his Papua New Guinea counterpart James Marape. "I am grateful that all

14 Pacific Island Countries (PIC) have accepted the invitation to attend this important summit.

FIPIC had been launched during my visit to Fiji in 2014, and I look forward to engaging with the PIC leaders on issues that bring us together, such as climate change and sustainable development, capacity building and training, health and well-being, infrastructure and economic development," he said. Modi will also hold several bilateral meetings before travelling to Sydney in Australia.

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NIT-106/SILD/CUL/2023

सिडकुल के औद्योगिक आस्थान कोट्टदार में इलेक्ट्रिकल अवस्थापना आदि कार्यों के वार्षिक अनुसंधान की निविदायें दिनांक 26.05.2023 के अपरान्ह 02.00 बजे तक e-tendering द्वारा आमंत्रित की गयी है। विस्तृत निविदा नोटिस सिडकुल की वेबसाइट www.sildcul.com एवं www.uktenders.gov.in पर दिनांक 20.05.2023 से देखी जा सकती है। इस सम्बन्ध में यथा आवश्यक **Corrigendum** केवल उक्त **Website** पर ही **upload** किये जायेंगे।

Managing Director

OFFICE OF THE CITY MAGISTRATE/ MARRIAGE OFFICER GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR

No. MEMO/ST-CM(Marriage Registration)/2023
Date : 29th April, 2023

NOTICE

Ms. Ruchira Bhatia D/o Late Rajender Paul Bhatia R/o House No. 401, Sector-29, Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.) have applied for "Marriageability Certificate" for her, objections, if any to the issuance may be filed on any day upto 13.05.2023 in the office of the undersigned.

Marriage Officer
Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar (U.P.)

Office of the Executive Engineer Drinking Water and Sanitation Division, Latehar E-Procurement Tender Notice

Tender Reference No. DWSD/LTR/SVS-01/2023-24 (2nd Call) Date - 19.05.2023

01	Name of Department	- Drinking Water & Sanitation Department, Jharkhand
02	Date & Time of Tender uploading in Web site	- 20.05.2023 at 04.00 P.M
03	Last date of Receipt of Bid	- 26.05.2023 05.00 P.M
04	Last date of Submission Cost of BoQ and Earnest Money	- 27.05.2023 at 05.00 P.M
05	Date of Opening Tender	- 29.05.2023 at 03.30 P.M
06	Name & Address of Tender Inviting Authority	- Executive Engineer D W & S Div Latehar
07	Contact No of Procurement Office	- 9430725642 & 6201242103

Detail of work:-

Sl No	Name of work	Group No	No of Scheme	No of FHTC	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Boq	Time of Completion
01	Construction of Rural Water Supply For SVS under JMI in different Village of Latehar District with FHTC work under D W & S Div Latehar for FY 2022-23	SVS Ker-2	17	528	15421600.00	309000	10000	03 month
02	Construction of Rural Water Supply For SVS under JMI in different Village of Latehar District with FHTC work under D W & S Div Latehar for FY 2022-23	SVS Junahar	27	409	20157300.00	405000	10000	03 month

1. Estimated Cost & EMD cost may Be Changed
2. Further details can be seen on website <http://jharkhandtender.gov.in>
3. Only Registered Contractor in this Department in (Appropriate Class) Participate in said Tender.

Executive Engineer
D.W & S Division Latehar
PR 297801 Drinking Water and Sanitation(23-24)

Indian Navy finds capsized...

From Page 1

"In a swift humanitarian action on May 17, the Indian Navy deployed its air maritime reconnaissance assets in the southern Indian ocean region approximately 900 Nm from India, in response to sinking of a Chinese fishing vessel Lu Peng Yuan Yu 028 with 39 crew members onboard," they said.

P-8I aircraft carried out multiple and extensive searches despite adverse weather and located multiple objects possibly belonging to the sunken vessel. As an immediate response, search and rescue equipment was deployed at the scene by the Indian aircraft on request of PLA (N) ships closing the area.

In a display of India's obligations as a credible and responsible partner for ensuring safety at sea, the Indian Navy units also coordinated SAR efforts with other units in the area and guided the PLA (N) warships transiting to the scene of incident. Indian Navy continues to remain assistance to provide all

ing SAR efforts," the Navy said. Reports indicated, two bodies were found in the search for the missing crew members, China's State media reported. The ongoing search operation following the capsizing of the Lu Peng Yuan Yu 028 "found and salvaged the remains of two victims", Xinhua news agency reported. No details were given on the nationalities of the two bodies found on Thursday.

The boat capsized within Australia's vast search-and-rescue region, Beijing's ambassador to Canberra said on Thursday, noting it was 5,000 kilometre to the west of Perth, the State capital of Western Australia.

Countries are responsible for ensuring search and rescue in determined areas of the world's oceans under an international maritime convention.

Reports from Beijing said Australian maritime authorities have identified a large area in the Indian Ocean where they will focus the search for the capsized Chinese fishing vessel, which reportedly sank on

Tuesday. A spokesperson for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) told the Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency on Thursday that based on drift modelling, a remote 12,000 square km zone has been identified to search for the vessel. A Chinese deep-sea fishing vessel capsized on Tuesday in the central Indian Ocean, which has so far left 39 people on board missing, including 17 Chinese mariners, 17 Indonesian mariners and five Philippine mariners.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told media in Beijing on Wednesday that the Chinese and foreign vessels have arrived at relevant waters to conduct a search and rescue operation after the fishing vessel "Lupeng Yuanyu 028" capsized.

More help is on the way. "We will continue to work together with relevant sides to do everything possible to find those who have gone missing," he said. "We would like to thank the Australian maritime search and rescue aircraft and

coordinating foreign vessels passing by to help with the search and rescue efforts. We hope countries nearby will continue to join our search and rescue efforts.

We will not give up as long as there is still hope for saving lives," he said. An AMSA spokesperson said they continued to coordinate a multinational search effort after a distress beacon signal was received by AMSA from the fishing vessel at about 5:30 am (AEST) on the morning of May 16.

The AMSA requested assistance from the Australian Defence Force (ADF). An ADF P-8A Poseidon aircraft was tasked with assisting with the long-range search. The ADF aircraft will rejoin the search on Thursday after overnighting in the Maldives, the Xinhua report said.

A private charter aircraft from Perth, with State Emergency Service (SES) observers on board, also assisted with the search on Wednesday and will rejoin the search on Thursday.

LG accuses CM of disregard for senior officers, rules

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a strongly worded letter to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal after the ruthless and unsubstantiated behaviour of his minister towards senior officers, the Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena accused him of 'unconstitutional brazenness, intimidation, disregard of rules' by the AAP government after the Supreme Court verdict.

Replying to L-G's letter, Kejriwal expressed disappointment on the language being used in Letter. Kejriwal asked on Friday whether the Centre was scheming to overturn the Supreme Court ruling that empowered the elected government with legislative and executive powers in administrative services. Kejriwal questioned LG's inaction in the matter of transfer of services secretary Ashish More, ordered by the government hours after the SC verdict on May 11. The AAP also wondered whether Saxena had put More's file on hold until the Centre's ordinance reverting the SC order expected to be implemented next week. "Why is LG Sahib not obeying the SC

order? Why hasn't the Services Secretary signed the file for two days? It is being said that the Centre is going to reverse the SC order by bringing an ordinance next week? Is the central government plotting to overturn the SC order? Is LG Sahib waiting for the ordinance, that's why not signing the file?" he wrote in a tweet in Hindi.

In the letter, the lieutenant governor said that in the past one week, a "gloomy face of governance" emerged in Delhi where "organised, structured and specialised administrative machinery" is yet again facing the "brunt" of "highhandedness" of the political executive. "I write to you to bring to your notice the unconstitutional brazenness, intimidation and disregard of rules and procedures being indulged into by your government and its ministers, especially... (Services) Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, ever since the Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court dated 11.05.2023," Saxena's letter read.

The L-G's letter referred to the allegation of Services Secretary Ashish More, who was removed by the AAP dispensation, against minister



Saurabh Bharadwaj.

Alleging a "chaotic style of governance", Saxena claimed that decisions were being conveyed to him through Twitter and the media and that he was being held to ransom through consistent media pressure for agreeing to the recommendations made by the Minister (Services) without application of mind. "A witch-hunt, harassment of officers, media trials, threats and street postures were resorted to so as to ensure that the Lt. Governor discharges his duties as per the whims and fancies of the Ministers of GNCTD. I am enclosing a chronology of events following the CB Judgment dated 11.05.2023 for your ready reference," he said.

Saxena also flagged instances of alleged "misbehaviour" by Services Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj with IAS officers, including a woman officer. He also referred to allegations of alleged trespass in an officer's chamber and "taking unlawful custody of certain files, which were related to cases of corruption like those in the new Excise Policy and the residence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, among others, that were being looked into by the Department".

"Moreover, vehement and unreasonable demands for removal of the head of administration of GNCTD, the Chief Secretary, and casting aspersions on him of putting undue influence on other two mem-

bers of the Civil Services Board, as evident from the minutes of the CSB dated May 16, 2023, are an oxymoron, since every meeting including that of the Council of Ministers is headed by a person and that person can, as per your logic, coerce the other members present in the meeting as per his wishes since he is senior," the letter stated. Without naming the officer, the Lieutenant Governor wrote, "The officer with close to two decades of professional experience while elaborating the misbehaviour meted out to him by Shri Bharadwaj, mentions that when he was forced to sign a dictated statement of Minister, he was intimidated with the minister shouting 'sign kar, aise kaise sign nahi karega. Tere ko karna hi padega. Isske baad tera career khatam. Teri toh zindagi barbaad karke rahunga. Iss Dilli... Chiarg Dilli ka rahena wala hu' (Sign it, you have to sign. After that, your career is over. I will ruin your life. I hail from Chirag Dilli)." Again in the presence of another lady IAS officer, the Minister said: "turn dono ka career toh ab khatam hai. Turn log elected government ki baat nahi sunte

ho. Chief Secretary ke behkaave mein aakar elected government se panga le rahe ho, main abhi dekhta hoon aage turn log naukri kaise karte ho. You will lose your job and ultimately job bachane ke liya tumko mere pass hi aana hoga. Tab dekhunga tum dono ko." Saxena asked Kejriwal to take his letter in "right stead and spirit and ensure concrete action for the mitigation of issues" raised by him.

Earlier in the day, Bharadwaj requested the lieutenant governor (LG) to clear the file related to the transfer of Services Secretary More, saying several administrative changes were held up due to the delay. In a letter to the LG, Bharadwaj said the Delhi government had sent the file two days back.

More was transferred hours after a Supreme Court order on May 11 put the control of bureaucrats working with the Delhi government (excluding those related to police, public order, and land) under the elected government. Urging Saxena to clear the file soon, Bharadwaj said, "We had sent a proposal to change the Secretary (Services) two days back."

Kejriwal meets LG over delay in clearing Services Secy's removal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, has approved the proposal sent by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to assign additional charge of the Services Department to AK Singh, IAS AGMUT 1995, Pr Secy, E&F and Development.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal met with the Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena over his delay in clearing the file for the Services Secretary's removal. Furthermore, Delhi Services Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Friday alleged that chief secretary Naresh Kumar has given death threat to him and he has lodged a complaint to the L-G, demanding appropriate action against him. Bharadwaj said he has explained the May 16 incident.

After a meeting with the LG, Kejriwal provided an update on the status of the file regarding the transfer of the Services Secretary. The CM said, "He met with the LG and inquired about the

timeline for the approval of the file concerning the transfer of the Services Secretary. "In response, the LG assured him that he is in the process of sending it. He is hopeful that the LG will expeditiously forward the file for the transfer of the Services Secretary", Kejriwal said. On May 17, the Delhi Government had sent the file concerning the Services Secretary's transfer to the LG.

Prior to Chief Minister and L-G's meeting, five Delhi Ministers had to sit on a dharna for one and a half hours to get L-G's appointment.

"The delay has hindered the government's ability to execute essential tasks and fulfil its responsibilities effectively, in light of the Supreme Court order on Services", the Kejriwal government said in a statement.

Furthermore, Kejriwal addressed circulating rumours suggesting that the central government intends to introduce an ordinance to overturn the Supreme Court's order.

More asks for security amid tussle with AAP Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid tussle with the AAP Government, Secretary (Services) Ashish More has written to Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena and the Union Home Ministry, expressing serious threat to his life and sought adequate security cover. In his incident report, More urged his superior authorities to take cognizance of the matter. The IAS officer said that he was detained by the Delhi Services Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj in his room for over an hour.

Responding to the allegations, Bharadwaj said More's conduct was "on record". If he said it was physical assault or I showed a gun, what could I have done. The conduct of the officer is on record. He said he will follow the transfer order and then he absconded and went "incommunicado," Bharadwaj said when asked about More's charges against him. He said the Delhi government is going to take action against several officers and everything will be soon cleared. "The minister acted in a



rude and verbally violent and even in a physically threatening manner by getting up from his chair and coming over to my seat to force me to sign the statement. There was every possibility of a physical assault on me by him at that point of time. It reveals that the Minister has a personal vendetta against me which he himself clearly said to me," reads the incident report.

He further stated that it has become difficult to attend meetings.

The report said that the Minister had told him that he has a personal enmity against him and will act in vengeance even though the officer submitted to him that the matter is nothing personal from his side.

"On May 16, at 1.15 pm, I was informed by my personal staff that I am being called by Saurabh Bharadwaj, Minister (Services) to his chamber on seventh floor of the Delhi Secretariat. I immediately went to his chamber. Upon meeting the Minister, he said that he had asked for all files pertaining to earlier years decision, but files relating to the period subsequent to April 2022 had not reached him so far. Apart from that he was asking for a file pertaining to the Notification of Civil Services Board (CSB) which was issued in the year 2014. I informed him that I have already instructed the concerned officers of Services Department to provide all the files to the Office of the Minister," reads the incident report.

"After a while, he directed me to sit there itself and called the Special Secretary (Services-II), Kinny Singh, IAS, to his chamber. Thereafter, when Kinny Singh came, he asked the same questions to her which were asked to me particularly about the file related to the Notification related to 2014.

She told that this file pertains to Services-I Branch, which is looked after by the Special Secretary (Services-I) YVVJ. Rajasekhar, IAS. Then, he asked why all the files are with Rajasekhar and why copy of the Notification is not kept anywhere else in any other file", he alleged.

"I requested the minister that I may be allowed to go, so that I can resume preparing the record of proceedings of the CSB meeting, which was held today at 10.30 am. He retorted by saying that "kya proceedings banaa rahe ho...kagaz hi kale karne hal turnko...you have wasted all the time since 11.05.2023 and you have absconded from your duty and deliberately you are not following the directions of the elected government," he further alleged.

The incident report further states, "after sometime, Amitabh Joshi, Deputy Secretary (Services-I) brought some files and kept them on the Minister's table. The Minister again asked about the file with Notification of constitution of CSB which was notified/issued.

Amitabh Joshi told that this file is with Rajasekhar, Special Secretary (Services-I). Then, the Minister handed over a white paper to Amitabh Joshi and asked him to write what he has dictated verbally."

"Thereafter, he ordered Kinny Singh, also to sign the same statement and put on the date also. Singh was reluctant to sign the statement, but the Minister directed her in an intimidatory way to sign the statement. After taking signatures of both the Deputy Secretary (Services-I) and Special Secretary (Services-II), the Minister got up from his chair and brought the paper in front of me and kept it on the table and asked me to sign the same by coming face to face bending over me", according to the incident report.

When he refused, the minister became "extremely furious and started shouting over" him, saying that 'sign kar, aise kaise sign nahi karega. tere ko karna hi padega. Isske baad tera career khatam. Teri toh zindagi barbaad karke rahunga. issi Dilli...Chirag Dilli ka rehne wala hu'.

Atishi directs PWD to expedite construction of two flyovers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi PWD Minister Atishi on Friday directed officials to expedite the construction of two flyovers between Punjabi Bagh and Raja Garden, and complete them by October instead of December to avoid inconvenience to commuters. The project's deadline is in December and according to a statement, the public works department (PWD) has completed 50 per cent of works.

The new flyovers will significantly reduce the traffic load on the Ring Road corridor, the minister said after an inspection of the projects. She directed officials to expedite the construction and complete it by October instead of December to avoid any inconvenience to commuters, the statement said.

On the benefits of the flyovers, the statement said this will save time of commuters and also reduce fuel consumption. The flyovers will make traffic movement smoother in the Punjabi Bagh area and

help reduce 1.60 lakh tons of carbon emissions as well as save 18 lakh litres of fuel annually, it said.

These will lead to annual savings of Rs 200 crore of the public, the statement said and added that the total cost of the project will be recovered within a few years. The existing single flyover at Punjabi Bagh will be doubled, it said. There is currently a one-way road at this location.

The construction of a new flyover, spanning 1,300 metres with six lanes, between the ESI Metro Station and the Club Road is also underway. Furthermore, the construction of two subways and a foot-over bridge is being carried out for pedestrians in the area.

"The PWD and our engineers are working round the clock to not only beautify Delhi's roads but also expand them to reduce traffic congestion. In this regard, the doubling of the flyover and expansion in Punjab Bagh will prove to be a game-changer in reduc-

ing traffic load on existing roads and contributing to Delhi's progress," Atishi said.

The corridor between the Punjabi Bagh flyover and the Raja Garden flyover is a part of the Ring Road and this section carries a significant vehicular load as it connects with the NH-10 Rohtak Road, through which traffic from Haryana enters the national capital.

It also connects North Delhi to South Delhi, Gurgaon, and other parts of the National Capital Region. The existing flyovers and low-capacity intersections in this area are not sufficient to handle the current traffic load, leading to congestion.

The constructions on this corridor will shift the traffic from existing roads to an elevated road, which will benefit lakhs of people commuting in and around Delhi-NCR on a daily basis.

According to the statement, around 1.25 lakh vehicles will use the two flyovers everyday.

AAP renews attack on Modi's qualifications through Sisodia's letter



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi renewed its attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's academic qualifications through a letter purportedly written by former Delhi education minister Manish Sisodia from behind bars referring to the "shaking foundations" of a "fourth passing king's rajmahal (palace)". The letter was shared on Twitter by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

In his letter, Sisodia highlighted the urgent necessity to provide equal opportunities and access to education for every child, regardless of their socio-economic background. In the letter, Sisodia has emphasised the transformative power of education and the need to uplift the underprivileged sections of society.

He has also urged society to reflect on the consequences of neglecting the education of the less fortunate. He emphasised that denying education to the impoverished not only perpetuates inequality but also the cycle of hatred and violence. "If every poor person gets a book, then who will spread hatred? If everyone has work in their hands, then who will wield swords on the streets?" he said in the letter written in Hindi.

tion and its potential to dismantle barriers, Sisodia asserted that an educated society, built on knowledge and wisdom, is the key to combating divisive ideologies.

"If everyone receives a good education, 'WhatsApp University' will shut down. If society stands on the foundation of education and wisdom, then how will anyone be trapped in the illusion of hatred?" he asked. The senior AAP leader also highlighted the empowerment that education brings, particularly to the marginalised.

Underlining the importance of providing tools such as a pen to express thoughts and aspirations, he said, "If every child in society becomes educated, your cunningness and tricks will be questioned. If the power of the pen reaches the poor, then they will express their inner thoughts in the open."

He added, "The sound of conch shells is resonating in schools of Delhi and Punjab, awakening the desire for good education across India." Sisodia asserted that providing education to every child, especially the underprivileged, will shake the very foundations of inequality and injustice. "Whether you send us to jail or hang us, this journey will not stop. If every poor child becomes educated, your palace will be left hollow," he added.

Govt constituted 33 teams to inspect industrial units in city: Rai



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has constituted 33 teams to regularly inspect industrial units and bring pollution in the city under control, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Friday.

He was speaking at a review meeting on industrial pollution with officers of Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), environment department and Delhi Development Authority (DDA). "It has been decided to deploy 141 patrolling teams comprising 472 personnel during the day time and 108 patrolling teams comprising 397 personnel at night from three departments all over Delhi to monitor dumping of industrial waste.

"As many as 1,721 registered industrial units in Delhi have switched to PNG," Rai said. The teams will oversee all industrial units in Delhi and implement immediate measures to curb pollution, he said. Periodic reports will be submitted to the environment department based on their findings and the DPCC team has been instructed to take strict action against any industrial unit found violating environmental regulations, he said.

Australian delegation visits '181' women helpline office operated by the DCW

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A delegation led by Australia's Ambassador for Gender Equality Stephaine Copus Campbell visited the '181' Women helpline office operated by the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) and interacted with the panel chief Swati Maliwal over issues concerning women in India and Australia.

The two officials discussed setting up exchange programmes to strengthen similar institutions in both countries, said a DCW statement. The 181 is a 24x7 hotline operated by the DCW for women in distress. The caller is counselled, and if need be, her grievance is marked to authorities such as Delhi Police, hospitals, and shelter homes for redressal, said the statement.

In most cases, a team of counsellors is dispatched to meet the distressed women to



assist them. The Commission has received over 20 lakh calls on the helpline since it was handed over to it in February 2016.

Campbell and her team visited the helpline on Thursday and its members witnessed live counselling by the callers on the helpline. They also interacted with several field counsellors who have undertaken rescue operations.

During the visit, Campbell and Maliwal discussed issues concerning women in India

and Australia and shared best practices being followed in both countries. "Ms Stephanie Campbell is a very passionate person deeply interested in the issues concerning women and girls across the globe. She was very inquisitive and interacted at length with the entire team," Maliwal said.

She said the Australian official was very appreciative of the functioning of the Commission and she was looking forward to engaging further with the Australian Embassy.

14 child labourers in poor health rescued from Naraina

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 14 child labourers, most of them in poor health and with burn injuries, were rescued from various hotels, roadside eateries and factories in west Delhi's Naraina area. The children, aged between 12 and 17, were rescued during a joint raid conducted by Delhi Police, Delhi Labour Department and Bachpan Bachao Andolan on Thursday night.

Bachpan Bachao Andolan is an NGO founded by Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi. An FIR has been registered in the matter. Nine factories and hotels that engaged the children for work have been sealed, a senior police official said.

"The rescued children were working in miserable and hazardous conditions, and most of them had burn marks on their hands and the rest of their bod-



ies," Bachpan Bachao Andolan said in a statement. Four of the children are visually impaired, while one child does not have vision in one eye, it said.

Most of the rescued children hail from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand and were working at roadside eateries, hotels, vehicle repair shops, and meat and sweet shops in Naraina, the statement said.

"Despite having strong laws to protect children from all kinds of exploitation and child labour, people continue to employ underage children in commercial activities and exploit them," said Bachpan Bachao Andolan director Manish Sharma.

Ghaziabad-Aligarh Expressway makes history by laying concrete over 100 km in 100 hours

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ghaziabad-Aligarh Expressway has made history by laying of bituminous concrete over a distance of 100 lane kilometers in an unprecedented time of 100 hours, an official statement by the Unions Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said.

Addressing the celebration ceremony virtually, minister (MoRTH) Nitin Gadkari said the Ghaziabad-Aligarh section of NH34, spanning 118 kilometers, plays a vital role as a transportation link

between the densely populated regions of Ghaziabad and Aligarh.

He said this project traverses various towns and cities in Uttar Pradesh, including Dadri, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Sikandrabad, Bulandshahr, and Khurja and the accomplishment highlights the dedication and ingenuity of India's road infrastructure industry. It serves as a critical trade route, facilitating the movement of goods and contributing to regional economic development by connecting industrial areas, agricultural regions, and educational institutions, he added.



Congress leader Sachin Pilot with wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik at Jantar Mantar. Ranjan Dimri

Climate change, overuse drying up 50% of earth's large lakes: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Climate change and unsustainable human consumption have started taking toll on the Earth's large water reservoirs with more than 50 per cent of them already in the process of drying up, according to scientists who had surveyed the area of 1,972 of Earth's biggest lakes.

However, while the majority of global lakes are shrinking, 24 per cent saw significant

increases in water storage, said the study published in the journal Science.

The study is the first comprehensive assessment of trends and drivers of global lake water storage variability based on an array of satellites and models, said lead author Fangfang Yao, University of Virginia, US.

He said this new method of tracking lake water storage trends and the reasons behind them could give water managers and communities insight into how to better protect critical



Visual sources of water and important regional ecosystems.

Motivated by environ-

mental crises such as the drying of the Aral Sea between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan,

Yao and colleagues from the University of Colorado Boulder (US), Kansas State University (US), France, and Saudi Arabia set out to measure changes in water levels in nearly 2,000 of the world's biggest lakes and reservoirs, representing 95 per cent of the total lake water storage on Earth.

For the study, the team created a technique by combining three decades of observations from an array of satellites with models to quantify and attribute trends in lake storage

globally. They surveyed the lakes by using 2,50,000 lake-area snapshots captured by satellites between 1992-2020. Collecting water levels from nine satellite altimeters and using long-term water levels, the scientists reconstructed the volume of lakes dating back decades.

The results were staggering, they said. 53 per cent of lakes globally experienced a decline in water storage. By leveraging recent advancements in water use and climate

modelling, climate change and human water consumption were found to dominate global net decline in natural lake volume and water losses in about 100 large lakes, Yao said.

"And many of the human and climate change footprints on lake water losses were previously unknown, such as the desiccations of Lake Good-e-Zareh in Afghanistan and Lake Mar Chiquita in Argentina," said Yao.

"Sedimentation dominated the global storage decline in

existing reservoirs," said Ben Livneh, also a co-author, and associate professor of engineering at CU Boulder.

While the majority of global lakes are shrinking, 24 per cent saw significant increases in water storage. Growing lakes tend to be in underpopulated areas in the inner Tibetan Plateau and Northern Great Plains of North America and in areas with new reservoirs such as the Yangtze, Mekong, and Nile river basins, the study said.

Defence production crossed ₹1L-cr in FY 22-23: Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to its drive in attaining self-reliance, the value of Indian Defence production for the first time ever has crossed the figure of Rs 1 lakh crore in financial year (FY) 2022-23. The value currently stands Rs 1,06,800 crore and it will go further up once the data is received from the remaining private Defence industries. Announcing this here on Friday, Defence Ministry officials said the current value of Defence production in FY 2022-23 is a rise of more than 12 per cent over FY 2021-22, when the figure was Rs 95,000 crore.

The government is continuously working with defence industries and their associations to remove the challenges faced by them and promote defence production in the country. A number of policy reforms have been taken to achieve the objective of ease of doing business, including the integration of MSMEs and



start-ups into the supply chain.

Due to these policies, the industries, including MSMEs and start-ups, are forthcoming in defence design, development and manufacturing and there is almost a 200 per cent increase in the number of defence licenses issued to the industries in the last 7-8 years by the government, they said.

These measures have given a boost to the defence industrial manufacturing ecosystem in the country and generated tremendous employment opportunities.

India is one of the largest importers of arms globally.

Sea trials commence for 6th Kalvari class submarine Vaghsheer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Sea trials of the Navy's sixth and final Kalvari class submarine Vaghsheer, have commenced and it is expected to be commissioned into the force by early next year.

The commissioning of the submarine, built under Project-75, is set to enhance the Navy's combat capability at a time when China has been increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean region.

"The sixth submarine of Project-75 commenced her sea trials on May 18," the Navy said on Friday. Vaghsheer is scheduled for delivery to the Indian Navy in early 2024 after completion of the sea trials.

The submarine was launched in April last year from the Kanhoji Angre Wet Basin of the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).

India has been focusing on bolstering its maritime capability with a focus on the Indian Ocean in the backdrop of concerns over China's growing forays into the region, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy.

The Project-75 includes indigenous construction of six submarines.



Completion of the sea trials.

Top Opp leaders to attend Sidda-DKS's swearing in

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Top Opposition leaders including several Chief Ministers from non-BJP ruled States have shown a first sign of unity by deciding to attend the swearing in ceremony of the new Congress Government in Karnataka where K Siddaramaiah will take oath as Chief Minister along with the State Congress chief D K Shivakumar as the Deputy Chief Minister.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar rushed to national Capital on Friday to invite personally the party leaders besides meeting some of the leaders from Opposition camp. Some legislators too will be sworn in as Ministers along with the CM and Deputy CM, the names of whom were decided by Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar after discussing with the party's high command. With the sanctioned strength of the Karnataka Cabinet being 34, there are too many aspirants for ministerial berths.

The swearing-in ceremony, which will see Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot administering the oath of office and secrecy to the Chief Minister and his Cabinet at 12.30 PM at Kanteerava Stadium here. The venue is the same place Siddaramaiah took oath in 2013, when he became Chief Minister for the first time.

The event may turn out to be a show of strength for opposition parties amid unity efforts to take on the ruling BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, his Deputy and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, NCP Supremo Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena UBT Uddhav Thackeray, PDP chief Mehbooba, National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah and others who were directly called by Kharge



have confirmed their participation for the oath ceremony where the grand old party's top leaders including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi too will grace the occasion. Shivakumar said he came Delhi to personally invite the Congress president and the Gandhi family.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, the CM's of Congress ruled States too will attend the occasion while TMC supremo and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee announced that she will be unable to make it however has designated party leader Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar for the programme in Bengaluru.

The first daunting task that Siddaramaiah is expected to face is putting in place a Cabinet with the right combinations that will strike a balance in having representatives from all communities, regions, factions, and also from among the old and new generation of legislators.

It is expected that at the first cabinet meeting after the swearing-in tomorrow, the new government might take measures to implement five guarantees. The Congress has promised to implement the guarantees' 200 units of free power to all households (Gruha Jyoti), Rs

2,000 monthly assistance to the woman head of every family (Gruha Lakshmi), 10 kg of rice free to every member of a BPL household (Anna Bhagya), Rs 3,000 every month for graduate youth and Rs 1,500 for diploma holders (both in the age group of 18-25) for two years (YuvaNidhi), and free travel for women in public transport buses (Shakti), on the very first day of assuming power in the state.

Students writing CET-2023 advised to arrive 2 hrs early

New Delhi: With the Karnataka swearing-in ceremony falling on the same day as the CET-2023 exams, students writing their papers in centres near Kanteerava stadium where the oath-taking is being held have been advised to report two hours before the scheduled time. The Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA), in a statement said that the authority has taken appropriate measures to ensure students reach the designated centres without delay. The steps have been taken anticipating traffic congestion around Kanteerava stadium on May 20. PNS

'India disaster risk reduction central public policy issue'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

India accords high priority to mitigation of disaster and disaster risk reduction is a "central public policy issue," Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi PK Mishra said in the United General Assembly (UNGA).

He also said India is developing ambitious mitigation programmes to reduce the risk of losses from all hazards, including landslides, floods, earthquakes, heat waves and lightning.

In his address late Thursday to the Midterm Review of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) at a plenary in the UN General Assembly, Mishra said in India disaster risk reduction is a "central public policy issue".

Mishra is leading the Indian delegation at the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Midterm Review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (HLM) that is taking place from May 18-19 at the United Nations



Headquarters.

He said under India's current presidency of the G20, the group's members have agreed to establish a Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction.

"The five priorities identified by the G20 Working Group - early warning for all, resilient infrastructure, improved financing of DRR, systems and capacities for response and 'build back better', and eco-system based approaches to DRR - will provide added impetus to the achievement of Sendai targets globally," he said.

Mishra told the UNGA that India has significantly increased funding earmarked for disaster risk reduction and has brought about landmark changes in its financing architecture to support the entire

spectrum of disaster risk management needs - disaster risk mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction.

India's state and local governments have access to about USD 6 billion for disaster risk mitigation over five years (2021-2025). This is in addition to a resource of USD 23 billion meant for preparedness, response and recovery.

"In just over a decade, we have been able to reduce the loss of lives from cyclones to less than 2 per cent," he said, adding that India is now developing ambitious mitigation programmes to reduce the risk of losses from all hazards - landslides, glacial lake outburst floods, earthquakes, forest fire, heat waves, and lightning.

BJP to train 200 women from every LS seat to become 'Mahila Mitra'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP National President J P Nadda on Friday evening inaugurated the "Kamal Mitra" online training programme here where 200 women from every Lok Sabha constituency will be trained to become 'Mahila Mitra'.

Addressing the BJP women leaders and workers at the party headquarters Nadda said while women welfare is being talked about for long "it is now under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that programme of women empowerment is being implemented on the ground zero".

BJP chief told the gathering that they should ensure "effective implementation of the online training as digital has its advantages but glitches too."

He said the programme gives an opportunity to the BJP to reach the information on the women-centric programmes to "as many women as possible".

In the "Kamal Mitra" training programme, 200 women from every Lok Sabha constituency will be trained to



become 'Mahila Mitra' on the women-oriented schemes launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to the National President of Mahila Morcha, Vanati Srinivas "Kamal Mitra is a unique training program through which there is a plan to train their female workers on the schemes implemented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi."

"The target of this training program is to prepare 100000 Kamal Mitra sisters by training 200 office bearers and female workers of Mahila Morcha in each Lok Sabha constituency," she said.

The 15 schemes on which training is being imparted include 'Ujjwala Yojana', 'Sukanya Samridhi Yojana', Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, 'Matrutva Vandana Yojana'.

Co-op bank ex-chief among many whose assets seized by ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth over Rs 122 crore of various accused, including that of a former chairman of Pune-based Seva Vikas Cooperative Bank and promoter of an education group as part of money laundering investigation linked to an alleged bank loan fraud.

The ED has issued a provisional order for attaching 47 immovable properties worth Rs 121.81 crore located in Pune in Maharashtra and movable assets of Rs 54.25 lakh (belonging to Devi Concrete Products) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The properties belong to Amar Mulchandani, former chairman of Seva Vikas Cooperative Bank, Vivek Aranha, promoter of Pune-based Rosary Education group, Sagar Suryawanshi, Khemchand Bhojwani and their family members and



linked entities.

The case stems from a Pune Police FIR against the Rosary Education group, its promoters and others with regard to an alleged loan fraud, the ED said in a statement.

"Subsequently, joint registrar (audit) did an audit of the entire Seva Vikas co-op bank and found gross fraud and misappropriation of Rs 429.6 crore across 124 NPA (non performing assets) loan accounts. Based on this audit report, additional FIRs were registered against the loan beneficiaries and bank management including its chairman Amar Mulchandani," the ED said.

Cancerous cells link up with healthy brain ones, cause speedy cognitive loss: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A team of scientists has discovered that the cancerous cells link up with healthy brain cells to become hyperactive and cause speedy cognitive loss and death in patients. This is being touted as a pathbreaking finding that could bring in a fundamental change in the treatment of cancerous brain tumours. The study is published in the latest issue of the science journal Nature.

The team from the San Francisco Medical Centre, University of California and led by Saritha Krishna, an Indian, also found out that a commonly used anti-seizure drug was effective in reducing the hyperactivity of the tumour cells and even halting their growth.

Scientists have found out that the communication between healthy brain cells and cancerous cells could be manipulated to slow down or even halt the growth of the tumour.

These findings will be



more beneficial to patients with glioblastoma, considered the most fatal among adult brain cancers, the study noted.

The study conducted by Krishna and fellow scientist Shawn Hervey-Jumper discovered a previously unknown mechanism by which brain tumours hijack and modify brain circuitry to cause a decline in cognitive activities in glioma patients while recording the brain activity in patients undergoing awake-brain tumour surgery.

This unexpected finding showed that the deadly cancer cells can hijack and restructure connections in surrounding brain tissue to make them hyperactive, speeding up cog-

nitive decline and shortening the survival period among patients.

This forced the scientists to carry out extensive biological characterisation of the connected tumour cells, using brain organoids (small bundles of neurons derived from human stem cells and mouse models grafted with human glioblastoma cells).

"These experiments revealed a key role of a protein called 'thrombospondin-1' in this neuronal hyperexcitability and that the drug, gabapentin, a commonly used anti-seizure medication, successfully reduced neuronal hyperexcitability and halted further tumour growth," the study said.

Opp criticises BJP for opening new Parl on Savarkar's birth anniv

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi set to inaugurate the new Parliament building on May 28, which happens to be the birth anniversary of Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar, several Opposition parties on Friday targeted the government with the Congress calling it a "complete insult" to the country's founding fathers.

Some opposition parties also asked why would the prime minister, who is the head of the executive and not the legislature, inaugurate it.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said it was a complete insult to all the nation's founding Fathers and Mothers as this event is a total rejection of the Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Bose, et al. "A blatant repudiation of Dr. Ambedkar," Ramesh mentioned.

He was responding to a tweet by TMC MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, who tweeted, "26 November 2023- Indian Constitution which gifted parliamentary democracy to the nation shall step into 75th year which would've been befitting for inauguration of new Sansad Bhawan. But it shall be done on 28 May, birthday of Savarkar- How much relevant?"

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla met Modi on Thursday and extended an invitation to

inaugurate the new building, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said.

"Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the new Parliament building on 28th May 2023, which is also the 140th birth anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the great son of India," BJP IT department head Amit Malviya tweeted.

"Veer Savarkar was born on 28th May 1883 in Bhagur. The new Parliament is designed to last at least 150 years. The current premise has been in existence for 100 years now," he added.

while RJD leader Manoj Kumar Jha too sought to know as why not the President of India should inaugurate the new Parliament building, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi asked why should the prime minister inaugurate the Parliament building.

"He is head of the executive, not legislature. We have separation of powers and Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker and Rajya Sabha Chair could have inaugurated (it). It's made with public money, why is PM behaving like his 'friends' have sponsored it from their private funds," Owaisi said on Twitter.

Congress whip in Lok Sabha Manickam Tagore reiterated the party's allegation that its members were not allowed to speak in Parliament and their microphones were switched off.

US gears up for Modi's State visit

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

As both the countries gear up for the first state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US next month at the invitation of President Joe Biden, it said the visit offers a great opportunity for the two leaders to review growing bilateral trade, investment and defence partnership and discuss new areas of cooperation.

Meanwhile, ahead of Prime Minister Modi's state visit, officials of both countries have intensified their discussions on co-producing jet engines, long-range artillery and infantry vehicles under the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET).

At a meeting with Indian Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane at the Pentagon earlier this week, US Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks termed the proposals to co-produce jet engines, long-range artillery and infantry vehicles under iCET "unprecedented opportunities" to strengthen ties between the defence sectors of the two nations.

The two officials discussed priorities for strengthening the US-India defence partnership, including increasing defence industrial cooperation and operational collaboration, Pentagon spokesperson Eric Pahon said. Hicks underscored the importance of the US-India relationship as critical for promoting peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

Cal HC stays order axing 32K teachers

Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court on Friday passed an interim stay on an earlier order terminating jobs of around 32,000 teachers in West Bengal Government-sponsored and aided primary schools till the end of September or until further orders.

A single bench had on May 12 ordered the cancellation of appointment of around 32,000 candidates who had not completed teacher training when they were recruited as primary teachers through a selection process in 2016 on the basis of Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) of 2014.

"There shall be an interim stay on termination of jobs till the end of September, 2023, or until further orders, whichever is earlier," a division bench presided by Justice Subrata Talukdar directed.

The termination of jobs without giving a chance of meaningful right of defence to the affected parties prima facie requires judicial intervention, the bench, also comprising Justice Supratim Bhattacharya said, while passing its interim order on an appeal by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education and some affected teachers. Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay had earlier ordered the cancellation of appointment. **PTI**

CBI summons Abhishek in school job scam case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

In a new jolt for the Mamata Banerjee Government the Central Bureau of Investigation on Friday summoned Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee in connection with the school level recruitment scam.

The CBI summoned the junior Banerjee soon after his efforts to put a stay on a previous order passed by a single Bench of the High Court allowing his interrogation by the central agency. A last minute effort to get a stay from the Division Bench failed after the Bench led by Justice Subrata Talukdar refused to hear the matter summarily.

A second attempt to get the Chief Justice to form a special bench to hear the case too failed following which the CBI issued summons to Banerjee to appear at its office in Kolkata by 11.30 am on Saturday sources said. Banerjee who was leading a road show in Bankura and was to address a



Abhishek Banerjee

rally cut short his visit telling the crowd that he would soon return and organize a bigger movement.

"The BJP is unleashing the CBI and ED after me because they cannot fight me politically... not only this they have even targeted my family members... but nothing can stop me as I will continue to raise my voice against their misdeeds," the junior Banerjee said even as the opposition parties countered his statement saying it was not the BJP government but the High Court that had got the CBI to summon him.

BJP treats us like servants; will finish them off: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday lashed out at the BJP for treating Trinamool Congress leaders like servants and trying to browbeat them into submission. Banerjee's attack came hours after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) sent summons to her nephew and TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee to appear before it in connection with the school-level cash-for-job case.

"They (BJP) are treating us like servants... but I am made of different metals... There is no point threatening me or venting out their frustrations at me... There is no point sending ED and CBI which they are trying to do because the people are watching all this and they will give them a befitting reply," Banerjee told a large gathering at Bankura through a video-conference meeting after the junior Banerjee who was scheduled to address the rally had to rush back to Kolkata following the CBI summons.

Attacking the Centre for tormenting her Government from all sides after having failed to defeat it politically in the 2021 Assembly elections Banerjee said, "You (BJP gov-



ernment) take away all the GST and refuse to return the State government's share... you have blocked the funds meant for 100-days' work," warning "the more you torment us the more you will lose your deposit in the forthcoming elections."

The BJP was sending Agencies because they were afraid of Abhishek Banerjee, she said, adding there was a plan to target her family members by putting them behind the bars. Saying that she would never bow before the BJP government, Banerjee said, "all these ED and CBI are being used to subjugate me... But I will only bow my head before the people and no one else."

Vowing not to stop before throwing the BJP out of India, Banerjee said that the polls were drawing nearer and it was a matter of a few months before the countdown began for the saffron outfit in Delhi.

'MVA to set up panel to decide seat-sharing formula for LS polls'

Mumbai: The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies will form a committee to discuss the seat-sharing formula for next year's Lok Sabha polls, senior Maharashtra Congress leader Naseem Khan said on Friday. The MVA comprises the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress.

The tripartite alliance that was formed after the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly election results ruled the state from November that year to June 2022, when its government collapsed following a rebellion against the Shiv Sena leadership by Eknath Shinde and 39 MLAs of the party.

"A committee of leaders from all three alliance partners will be formed to take a review of all the 48 Lok Sabha constituencies and recommend a formula which will be finalised by the leadership of the three parties," Khan, who is the working president of the state Congress, told PTI.

The seat-sharing will be done on electoral merits and there is no criterion that the constituency with a sitting MP belonging to one of the allies will remain with the party, he said. "Electoral merit will be the only criterion," he added. Earlier in the day, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said

the undivided Shiv Sena had won 18 seats in Maharashtra in the last general elections and these seats will remain with his party. Talking about it, Khan said the 18 seats won by the Shiv Sena in 2019 were in alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and it was not a criterion for seat-sharing in the MVA.

"This has been decided at the MVA meeting on May 15 convened by (NCP chief) Sharad Pawar where Uddhav Thackeray was also present," Khan said. He also asserted that the MVA leaders have agreed to ensure that the process of seat-sharing will be smooth and without any controversy.

"NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress have started preparations for the Lok Sabha polls. Sharad Pawar chaired a meeting of NCP leaders earlier this week, while Shiv Sena (UBT) is also holding internal meetings as part of preparations. Congress state executive will meet on May 23," he said.

He said his party's state executive will deliberate on the prevailing political situation. Of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in the state, the BJP had won 23 in 2019, followed by the then undivided Shiv Sena's tally of 18. While the NCP won four seats, the Congress got one. **PTI**

J&K ready to host G-20 delegates

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The Union Territory administration in Jammu and Kashmir is fully geared up to host G-20 delegates between May 22-24 in Kashmir valley amid heightened security arrangements.

A grand welcome is awaiting delegates of G20 Nations on their arrival in Srinagar on May 22. The UT administration will be rolling out a red carpet welcome during the cultural evening on the banks of Dal Lake.

To secure the main venue of the first major international event being held at Srinagar Convention centre, located on the banks of Dal Lake, the National Security Guard commandos have been rushed to the valley.

The elite commandos will be deployed alongside quick reaction teams of the central para military and J&K police teams to secure the venue and the entire road link between the airport and the SKICC.

The marine commandos of the Indian navy are also stationed in Dal Lake and frequently launch long range patrols to secure venue from any form of threat. Meanwhile, to add a festive look several parts of Srinagar city have been spruced up with wall graffiti on different themes. **PTI**

Temple beneath Sufi Dargah at Trimbakeshwar, claims Mahant

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Mahant belonging to the Akhil Bharatiya Sant Samiti (Maharashtra) on Friday stoked a fresh religious controversy by claiming that a Hindu temple exists beneath a prominent Dargah (Mausoleum) near the Trimbakeshwar Temple in Nashik district of north Maharashtra.

Within days after an attempt of sacrilege made reportedly by members of a minority community to enter the ancient Trimbakeshwar Shiva temple in Nashik district, Akhil Bharatiya Sant Samiti (Maharashtra) Mahant Aniket Shastri said that the Hazrat Pir Syed Gulab Shahwali Baba Dargah was built on a cave of the Nath Sect of Baba Goraknath. Talking to media persons, Mahant Shastri asked the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct a survey at the Hazrat Pir Shahwali Baba Dargah to uncover the

Hindu idols lying below the dargah. "There are several idols of Lord Ganesh and other Hindu deities and symbols there. We would like the ASI to conduct a detailed survey to unearth Hindu idols lying there," Mahant Shastri said.

Mahant Shastri also claimed that Hazrat Pir Shahwali Baba Dargah, revered by people of all communities, was built after pulling down an old temple of the Nath Sect. Mahant Shastri's claim came a day after he called for recital of Hanuman Chalisa in mosques, apparently in retaliation to old practice of showing 'incense' (dhoop) to the Trimbakeshwar Temple during the annual 'Urs' of the Dargah.

In a related development, a delegation of senior state Congress leaders, led by state party president Nana Patole and Maharashtra's former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, Additional Director General of Police Sanjay Saxena and urged him to take immediate steps to

check the deteriorating law and order in the state.

The Congress delegation alleged that some people were trying to drive between the majority and minority communities and disrupt law and order situation in the state. "Apart from trying to create rift between the two comments, some people are vitiate the atmosphere by making inflammatory statements. We demand action against all those miscreants," Patole told the Additional DGP.

Interacting with the media persons, Patole alleged that attempts were being made deliberately disturb communal harmony in places like Sambhajinagar, Amravati, Akola, Shevgaon, Ahmednagar and Trimbakeshwar by upsetting the social unity of the state.

"Deteriorating law and order by spoiling environment in state is a matter of concern for state and strict action needs to be taken against those who encourage such activities.

NIA arrests two aides of Canada-based ultra Dhalla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested two 'wanted' close associates of Canada based 'listed terrorist' Arsh Dhalla when they arrived at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) here from Manila, Philippines, where they have been living.

"The duo, identified as Amritpal Singh alias Ammy and Amrit Singh, both hailing from Punjab, were nabbed in an early morning operation by the NIA, whose team was waiting at the Airport for their flight to land," the NIA said in a statement.

The accused were facing non-bailable arrest warrants issued against them by the NIA Special Court here in a case related to the unlawful and violent activities of banned organisations in India. They also have been accused in several criminal cases registered by the Punjab police. The NIA

had registered a suo moto case on August 20 last year under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

"NIA investigations have revealed that accused entered into a criminal conspiracy to raise funds for the banned terrorist organization Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and also smuggle arms, ammunition and explosives for it from across the border," the agency said. The accused had been working for individual designated terrorist Arshdeep Singh Dhalla to promote violent criminal activities of the KTF in India.

In association with another notorious wanted accused Manpreet Singh alias Peeta, they had been involved in smuggling weapons from Pakistan and recruitment of youth to carry out acts of violence and terror in the country at the behest of the KTF, the NIA alleged. They were also

part of an extortion racket for raising funds for banned outfit. The accused used to identify extortion targets, including businessmen, and then threaten them into parting with huge amounts of money.

CORRIGENDUM
ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005
Notices under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. LBGUR0004983636, Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower **VIBHORE KUMAR/ ANURADHA JASUJA** Demand Notice under section 13(2) dated **March 25, 2021** published in **News Paper The Pioneer (Eng.) & Pioneer (Hindi)** dated **June 08, 2021**. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said notices and Date of Notice Sent was mentioned as **April 12, 2021** instead of **April 22, 2021**. We therefore, request you to please read the same as **April 22, 2021**. All other details mentioned in the said Notice dated will remain same. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you in this regard.
Date: **May 20, 2023**
Place: **Delhi/ NCR**
Authorised Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Amba...
Rainbow memories
21 beautiful years from 19.05.1980
We've been blessed to have your Laughter
And your wonderful, loving presence
Every precious moment
You are Always in our hearts
Gun Nidhi & Manju Kapur Dalmia
Agastya, Katyayani & Maya
Amba's friends and family

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE
ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005
Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Rohit Chandell/ Poonam/ LBFDB0004907261	Flat No-301 C Type, Floor 3rd, Tower- R, Happy Homes Exclusive, Village Budena, Sector-86, Faridabad (Admeasuring An Area of 645.840 Square Feet/ 17 May, 23	December 01, 2022 Rs. 3,29,841/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Dinesh Kumar/ Darshana/ LBDEL00001898530/ LBDEL00001974043	Plot No 31, Ground Floor, Block-5, Eros Garden Colony, Charmwood Village, Haryana, Faridabad (Admeasuring An Area of 1148 Sq. Feet/ 17 May, 2023	December 19, 2022 Rs. 54,47,006/-	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 20, 2023**
Place : **Delhi/NCR**
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Aro granite industries Ltd.
(100% Export Oriented Unit)
CIN : L74899DL1988PLC031510
Regd. Office : 1001, 10th Floor, DLF Tower A, Jasola, New Delhi - 110025
Ph. : 011-41686169, Fax : 011-26941984, Email : investorgrievance@arogilite.com, Website : www.arogilite.com
EXTRACT OF STANDALONE AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULT FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023 (Rs. in lacs)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended	Year Ended	Quarter Ended
		31.03.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2022
		(Audited)	(Audited)	(Audited)
1	Total Income from operations	4,701.44	16,444.83	4,886.60
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	16.57	(590.69)	68.44
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	16.57	(590.69)	68.44
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	48.87	(578.81)	(15.64)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	45.43	(587.09)	(16.06)
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	1,530.00	1,530.00	1,530.00
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year		17,531.43	
8	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)-			
1. Basic:		0.30	(3.84)	(0.10)
2. Diluted:		0.30	(3.84)	(0.10)

Note:
The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Annual Financial results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/Annual Financial results is available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s), www.bseindia.com, and www.nseindia.com and the Company's website www.arogilite.com.
For & on behalf of the Board
-Sd-
Sunil Kumar Arora
Managing Director
DIN: 00150688
Place : **HOSUR, TAMILNADU**
Date : **19.05.2023**

FTII students on protest after mate's expulsion

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The medical condition of three students deteriorated on Friday, as the hunger strike undertaken by the students of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Pune in protest against the expulsion of a student from the 2020 FTII batch, entered the fifth day. After the doctors advised the three of the agitating students whose condition to get admitted to a local hospital, the Students' Association of FTII said that non one from the

Condition of 3 on hunger strike deteriorates



institute management had bothered to visit them. "It is distressing to note that no one from the FTII administration has visited them yet.

The administration has scheduled the Academic Council meeting on the 30th of May 2023, which is quite a long time away," the Association spokesperson said. "The students' demand needs to be resolved immediately as health of the students is at stake, and the institution cannot afford to take any risks. We believe that administration needs to address

concerns of students, meet them and ensure their well-being, the spokesperson said. The students have been protesting against recent decision taken by Academic Council to expel student from 2020 batch and admit him to the next batch on discriminatory supernumerary conditions.

Apart from admitting the expelled student to next batch, the agitating students have been rooting for start of semester should start from very beginning after the strike ends, for the 2020 batch.

Banks will finance solar goods soon: Power Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that would make the decentralised renewable energy (DRE) livelihood applications such as solar dryer, solar or biomass powered cold storage/chiller, solar charkha, etc affordable, the Government is mooting a mechanism wherein banks will dole out finance for purchase of such solutions which are not only energy efficient but also economically viable.

"If a family wants to own a solar dryer, they should be able to get financing from the banks - we will work towards it. Manufacturers and users of DRE for livelihoods are pioneers and now the government will scale it up to the next level," said Union Power Minister RK Singh at the national summit

on powering sustainable livelihoods held recently. He said that a new scheme for distributed applications of renewable energy (RE) is on anvil. "There is already major work happening on the ground and our scheme could benefit lakhs of families across the country. However, for that government will, however, need large scale-manufacturing and standardising of distributed applications of RE to lower prices and expand the sector.

"We have seen the potential of grid-scale solar power; India will scale up distributed applications of renewable energy for livelihoods. Just like we have a large programme on rooftop solar and solar irrigation, we will create a large programme for DRE livelihoods," said Singh.

Rupala asks productivity council to hold studies on fisheries sector

New Delhi: With an aim to further strengthen mechanisms of delivery under its flagship Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), the Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Parshottam Rupala here at an event held recently to launch these interventions.

The Minister informed that the area of studies would be undertaken in 'best practices in fish marketing system of Andhra Pradesh and dissemination through workshop', 'agro-climatic zone-specific mapping of innovative fishing practices for enhancing production and productivity in Upper Gangetic Plain Region' and 'design improvement in storage containers used in supply chain for inland and marine fishes by vendors.'

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Biofloc technologies and their dissemination through workshop,' way to strengthen monitoring mechanism of implementation of PMMSY and assessment of post harvest losses in inland and marine fisheries and to suggest measures to minimize these losses,' will be studied by the NPC teams.

The NPC would complete the field studies in about nine months and then reports will be submitted to the Ministry for further action, said Sundeep Nayak, NPC Director General. The Ministry has the targets of enhancing fish production by an additional 70 lakh tonnes, increasing fisheries export earnings to ₹1,00,000 crore by 2024-25 and doubling incomes of fishers and fish farmers under the PMMSY. **PNS**



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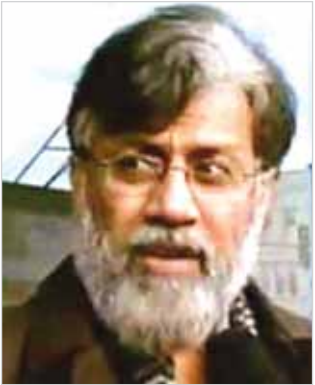
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Redouble efforts

Tahawwur Rana's extradition is a victory for our diplomatic corps and national security functionaries

With a US court clearing the extradition of Tahawwur Hussain Rana to India, the chances of bringing the culprit(s) of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks has become higher. The attacks claimed the lives of 174 people, including six American nationals; and yet it has taken almost 15 years to arrive at a decision about the extradition of one of the accused persons. It speaks volumes about the efficiency of the mechanisms in place to combat terror. Rana was reportedly trying to enter a plea bargain; had it been accepted, he would have got away with a light sentence. The extradition needs approval from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken; after that, Rana would be handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is probing the 26/11 case. Blinken's nod doesn't seem to be problematic, for the US Government has made its stand clear over the issue. On September 28, 2020, Christopher D Grigg, chief of the National Security Division of the US Attorney's Office, and attorney Nicola T Hanna, maintained that Rana's prior arguments against his extradition to India "had no merit." India is in touch with the US authorities for speedy extradition of Tahawwur Rana, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said reacting to the California court's decision to extradite the Canadian-Pakistani national to India. Importantly, the court order came a month before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first state visit to the US at the invitation of US President Joe Biden. Hopefully, there would not be any more procedural blocks in Rana's extradition.



It needs to be emphasised here that bilateral ties between countries play a major role in curbing terrorism. In the last few years, India's relations with the US-led Western nations and Arab countries have improved remarkably; this has resulted in action against fugitive terrorists. During the 2012-18 period, 24 terror suspects were deported to India, most of whom, 18, came from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Much of this has to do with Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) and United Arab Emirates President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ), the two prominent Muslim rulers who detest Islamic extremism. But this also has to do with our foreign office and national security establishment. Similarly, India and the US, the 'estranged democracies' for decades after Independence, have come closer in all possible spheres of life—economic, strategic, military. Besides, there are 4.3 million Indian origin people in the US. Indian diplomats and national security functionaries have been leveraging our relations with the US and other Western nations. It is time we redoubled this endeavour so that there are more extraditions, greater action against terrorists and their backers abroad, and more pressure on Pakistan to desist from its nefarious activities against India.

PICTALK



Students pose for pictures with G20 painted on their faces on the occasion of upcoming G20 meetings in Srinagar. PTI

Karnataka shows limits of Hindutva politics

The BJP didn't stick to the development agenda and paid the price for it. Its Hindutva plank failed as one-size-fits-all approach doesn't always work in politics

The Karnataka Assembly election verdict has undeniably exposed the limits of Hindutva politics. Also, the one size fit all approach in building an electoral narrative of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has come under stress in the wake of the Karnataka poll verdict. The Congress victory in Karnataka bares the underlying social yearning for disposable income on the hands of the people. Seen along with the Himachal Pradesh verdict, Karnataka has certainly loudly spoken that the politics of Hindutva may not overwhelm the economic distress in a large section of the society.



terms of GST collections, indicating the people in the state had a higher appetite for consumption.

Karnataka has also been the top foreign direct investment destination in India, besides being ranked at the top of several economic indicators by the NITI Aayog. Basavaraj Bommai, the outgoing chief minister of Karnataka, had also presented a Rs 3 lakh crore State Budget, which was a first for the state. The double-engine poll plank of the BJP was also being backed by several claims such as the state getting the first Vande Bharata train and AIIMs in southern parts of the country, the Centre backing over Rs 28,000 crore infrastructure projects to

decongest traffic of Bengaluru with a mix of initiatives for Suburban Ring Rail and Railways, Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, which was being projected to encourage a Delhi NCR kind of expansion of the IT capital of India, and so on.

Yet, midway through the election campaign in Karnataka Home Minister Amit Shah first pushed the issue of Muslim reservation at the forefront of the BJP's poll narrative, building a case that the Constitution doesn't accord legal sanctity to religion-based affirmative action, in the backdrop of the Congress attack on the Bommai government's decision to scrap four per cent quota for the minority community. Afterwards, Prime Minister Modi lent his weight to the 'Jai Bajrang Bali' slogan, which became a constant in the BJP's campaign in the state. That came in response to the Congress' alleged bid to tame organisations such as Bajrang Dal in Karnataka. Somehow, the double-engine poll plank of the BJP took the backseat and the politics of Hindutva came to the forefront of the party's campaign.

(The writer is contributing editor of The Pioneer)

Repression in Myanmar continues

Unfortunately, most of the world has put the issue of the Junta's repression on the margins of discourse while its forces keep attacking villages

That Myanmar's junta's savage repression of its people has few parallels in history, is known. If further proof was necessary, it was provided by its conduct during cyclone Mocha which hit the country on Sunday, May 14, killing scores of people and devastating it. Instead of rendering succour to the victims, which any government worth the name would have done, it used the storm as a cover to attack villages mainly in the Sagaing region, north-west of Mandalay, which has been a bastion of resistance to it and home to several militias, which are a part of People's Defence Force (PDF), the armed wing of the National Unity Government (NUG), formed by some leaders of the National League for Democracy, founded and led by Myanmar's icon of democracy, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, activists and representatives of several insurgent ethnic organisations and minor parties. According to reports, between 15,000 to 18,000 people, who feared the military more than the rain and the storm, fled from Kani and Khin Oo townships, when the offensives started, just when Mocha was about to break.

Such attacks are revolting but not surprising. Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 6, 2023, that, overall, the military's airstrikes against civilian locations increased by 141 per cent in the second year of its takeover, and its shelling of communities, including hospitals schools and places of worship, by over 100 per cent. On March 17, 2023, Noeleen Heyzer, United Nations special envoy to Myanmar told the 193-member UN general assembly that Myanmar military's takeover of the country has had disastrous consequences. She pointed to the junta's intensified use of force since the extension of the state of emergency on February 1, 2023, bombing, burning of



civilian infrastructure "and other grave human rights violations to maintain its grip on power."

While nothing is surprising in the junta's action, there is disappointment over the response of the democratic countries of the world, including those of the Western hemisphere. It is not that they have done nothing. In February 2023, the European Union sanctioned 16 individuals and entities imposing an asset freeze and travel ban on them. This was in addition to the 93 individuals and 18 entities earlier subjected to the same measures, and orders barring all EU citizens from advancing funds to those sanctioned.

These measures, however, have not been enough with China and Russia actively backing the junta. Anna Roberts, executive director of Burma (Myanmar's original name) Campaign UK, an advocacy group working for human rights, democracy and development in Myanmar, welcomed the February 2023, sanctions as being "right on target." She, however, also pointed out that the EU was too slow in implementing these sanctions, adding that "the delay in cutting off the sources of revenue, arms and equipment" was costing lives.



THE US AND THE EU'S APPROACH TO MYANMAR HAS BEEN IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THEIR SUPPORT TO UKRAINE WHICH THEY HAVE HELPED WITH HUGE AMOUNTS OF SOPHISTICATED ARMS AND MONEY TO COUNTER THE RUSSIAN INVASION

She further stated, "Two years from the coup, there are hundreds of companies and individuals which should be sanctioned, have not been." Amnesty International, Global Witness and Burma Campaign UK said on March 1, 2023, that Myanmar continued to receive aviation fuel, used in airstrikes, from companies in Asia and Europe, and they had identified more companies involved.

Nor has the United States done enough. On March 24, 2023, the US Department of Treasury designated two individuals and six entities connected with the junta, for helping the latter to continue perpetrating atrocities through the import, storage and distribution of jet fuel to Myanmar's military. Before this, the US had imposed sanctions on 80 individuals and 30 entities in the country.

President Joe Biden announced on February 10, 2021, that his administration was "taking steps to prevent the generals from improperly having access to \$1 billion of Burmese government funds held in the United States." The statement followed the Junta's attempt on February 4 to empty the account, which was blocked by the New York Fed even

before the coup. While the freezing of the funds was a good move, these should have been used to aid the resistance movement in Myanmar which requires both money and arms to fight the junta's overwhelmingly better-armed forces enjoying unlimited air support.

The US and the EU's approach to Myanmar have been in sharp contrast to their support to Ukraine which they have helped with huge amounts of sophisticated arms and money to counter the Russian invasion. Most of the world has put the issue of the Junta's repression on the margins of discourse. Not surprisingly, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's son, Ko Htein Lin Kim Aris, said at a meeting in London on May 6, 2023, to hail King Charles III's coronation, "Whilst the rest of the world have seemingly forgotten my mother and the situation in Burma, I know there are many people around the world who are doing their best to help and support them in these most difficult times." Unfortunately, the people who are doing their best do not have perches in the corridors of power.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JUSTICE DELAYED

Sir — The protesting wrestlers at Jantar Mantar questioned the delay in justice to those who have made the country proud. For the last 26 days, the wrestlers have been sitting in protest to share their pain. Everyone supports them, but the justice which should have been given to them is being delayed. "The pain and issues of wrestlers need to be heard and addressed and the government and administration must act swiftly on the grievances of protesting wrestlers and justice should be delivered." The wrestlers are protesting at Jantar Mantar for the last 26 days and have accused Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh of sexual harassment. With this, there must be immediate justice for the wrestlers. The government must listen to these sports persons as if their fight continues it could become a subject of national

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

RAFAEL PULLS OUT OF FRENCH OPEN

Sir — Sadly, Rafael Nadal has pulled out of the 2023 French Open because of a lingering hip injury. It is hard to imagine the French Open without Nadal, the owner of a record 14 championships at Roland Garros, which is a testament to his excellence on the rusty red clay. Nadal has played at the French Open through intense pain before, even winning the title in 2022 with a partially anaesthetized foot.

But a French Open happening without him for the first time is an early preview of a Rafa-less future. For years Nadal has guarded the hallowed red clay like a demesne, repelling players of one generation after the next, and has created incredible metrics at Roland Garros that in many ways redefined tennis greatness.

We are probably at the end of an era, in which one man has dominated the French Open more comprehensively than anyone else. And the French Open without Nadal? — certainly, a difficult thing to wrap your mind around. Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Appointment of SC judges



Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra and senior advocate Kalpathy Venkataraman Viswanathan's recent appointment as Supreme Court judges is a significant milestone for our judicial system, with immense importance for the future of justice in our country. Both individuals, highly capable and accomplished in their fields, will greatly contribute their valuable insights and expertise to

the Supreme Court. Their appointment directly impacts the interpretation and application of laws, as the highest court comprises judges with impeccable legal knowledge, unwavering integrity, and a commitment to justice. Justice Mishra and Mr Viswanathan possess commendable qualities, instilling confidence among our citizens. With Justice Mishra's prior judicial experience in multiple high courts and Mr Viswanathan's extensive background as a senior advocate, their collective expertise enhances their comprehensive case analysis. However, urgent reforms are imperative to address issues like overwhelming case backlogs, lengthy trial delays, and ensuring equitable access to justice for all individuals. Throughout their tenure, we can expect their unwavering commitment to justice, fairness, and protecting the rights of every individual.

Vishal Mayur | Tumkur

THE PLANET ON THE BOIL

Sir — World leaders, scientists, intellectuals. Environmentalists - are still busy deciding what we have to do to avoid the menace of climate change. When? how to do? What to do? But the nature is taking its own course and the planet earth is heating up faster than one had ever imagined.

The climate forced itself to start dancing orgy on the earth. The heat and increasing temperature have made life difficult for all living beings. The world will face the hottest temperature in the next five years i.e. from 2023 to 2027, warns a recently presented UN report.

The average temperature is set to increase by 1.5 degrees. To prevent this, a pledge was taken two decades ago at the Climate Change Conference. But unfortunately not much was achieved as the issue became a political issue with each country trying to push its own agenda realising little that the global warming is not confined to any one country alone. So due to lack of collec-

tive action the climate change could not be stopped.

Along with this report, news is coming from Italy that the areas which were facing severe drought for the last two years have become deluges due to floods.

Nine people have died and many are missing in floods caused by heavy rain in Italy's northern Emilia-Romagna region. Officials say 14 rivers have breached their banks, flooding 23 towns. The mayor of Ravenna says that his city is no longer recognizable.

Local officials, last year, declared a state of emergency in these areas due to drought. Now it has to be done because of the flood. This is just a trailer. The full picture of climate change is yet to be seen. And in all probability the developing countries would be the worst sufferers as their preparation to deal with it is almost non-existent.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRST COLUMN

THE GAMING, E-SPORTS SECTOR COMES OF AGE

The gaming and esports industry is rapidly evolving with emerging technologies



APURV MODI

The gaming and esports industry has seen tremendous growth over the past few years, and it shows no signs of slowing down. With the rise of new technologies and the changing landscape of how we consume media, the gaming and esports industry is poised for even more growth in the years to come. India's gaming market is worth \$2.6 billion, expected to reach \$8.6 billion by 2027.

The rise of internet access and affordable data plans have certainly contributed to the popularity of online gaming in small towns and cities. In the past, gamers in these areas may have had limited access to high-speed internet, making it difficult to play online games that require a strong and stable connection. However, with the increasing availability of internet services and data plans, gamers in these areas are now able to play online games with ease.

Let's look at some of the trends that will shape the gaming and esports sector shortly:

Mobile Gaming: Mobile gaming has been on the rise for years, and it's not slowing down anytime soon. The convenience and accessibility of mobile gaming have made it a popular option for gamers on the go. With the increasing processing power of smartphones, mobile games are becoming more sophisticated and complex. The mobile gaming industry is expected to reach \$98 billion by 2025, which is more than half of the total gaming market.



Cloud Gaming: Cloud gaming is a relatively new technology that allows gamers to stream games from remote servers rather than relying on local hardware. This has the potential to revolutionize the gaming industry by allowing players to play high-end games on any device with an internet connection. Companies like Google, Microsoft, and Amazon are investing heavily in cloud gaming, and it's expected to become a \$7 billion industry by 2024.

Esports: Esports has become a massive industry in recent years, with millions of fans tuning in to watch professional gamers compete in tournaments. The esports industry is expected to reach \$3 billion by 2025, and it's showing no signs of slowing down. The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the growth of esports, as traditional sports were put on hold, and people turned to esports to fill the void.

Virtual Reality (VR) Gaming: Virtual reality gaming has been around for a few years, but it's still in its early stages. Technology is becoming more affordable and accessible, and it's expected to become a \$7 billion industry by 2025. VR gaming has the potential to create truly immersive experiences for players, and it could revolutionize the way we play games.

Cross-Platform Gaming: Cross-platform gaming allows players to play games with others on different platforms, such as Xbox, PlayStation, and PC. This has become increasingly popular in recent years, and it's expected to become even more widespread in the future. Cross-platform gaming has the potential to bring players together and create a more unified gaming community.

Gamification: Gamification is the process of using game design elements in non-gaming contexts, such as education, marketing, and employee training. This trend has been growing in popularity in recent years, and it's expected to continue to grow in the future. Gamification has the potential to make learning and training more engaging and interactive, and it could be used in a variety of industries.

Not limited to this, the gaming and esports industry is a rapidly evolving space with new technologies and trends emerging all the time. Mobile gaming, cloud gaming, esports, virtual reality gaming, cross-platform gaming, and gamification are just a few of the trends that will shape the industry in the years to come. As technology continues to advance, it will be exciting to see how these trends evolve and shape the future of gaming and esports.

(The writer is MD & Co-Founder, of Tech Almond Solutions)

Govt must push to privatise fertiliser PSUs



UTTAM GUPTA

Despite Govt's announcement to privatise the CPSUs, the fertilizer units remain under its control as fertiliser availability is a politically sensitive issue

In the Budget for 2021-22, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the government's approach to privatisation of Central public sector undertakings (CPSUs). Privatization occurs when it sells its majority shareholding (more than 50 percent) in the CPSU and transfers control to a private entity.

For this purpose, it divided CPSUs in two broad categories—i.e. strategic and non-strategic. The strategy covers four sub-groups: atomic energy, space and defense; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking, insurance and financial services. The non-strategic category includes all other sectors such as industrial and consumer goods, hotel and tourist services, trading, and marketing.

While, the government wants to sell CPSUs in the strategic sector with the caveat that at least one (and a maximum of four) will be retained in the public sector, it will privatise 'all' undertakings in non-strategic sectors. All loss-making undertakings in the latter category will be closed.

In the follow through, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) and Niti Aayog identified 176 CPSUs in the non-strategic sectors and have recommended that over 60 percent of them or 106 be wound up, while the rest, considered "viable units," be privatised. But, so far there has hardly been any progress except the steel sector.

While, generally, there is resistance from the top brass within the establishment, the ministry of chemicals & fertilisers, has categorically opposed privatisation of undertakings under its ambit. The DPE/Niti Aayog had recommended privatisation of all the nine CPSUs under the fertilizer ministry, including Madras Fertilizers Limited (MFL) and National Fertilizers Limited (NFL).

Leveraging government's majority ownership and control, the bureaucrat in the concerned ministry for long has been used to calling the shots in the running of the CPSU including day-to-day interference in their management and seeking favors under a variety of quid pro quo arrangements. So, he won't let this power go away easily which is inevitable when it is privatized.

This applies to the entire bureaucracy. However, in view of political bosses having taken the decision, the resistance has to be overcome sooner than later. But, why is the ministry of chemicals & fertilizer opposing privatization?

First, being a crucial input used by farmers for increasing production of foodgrains, fertilizers are politically sensitive (in his speeches, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often referred to shortage of urea under earlier regimes which hasn't been seen during his tenure) and the ruling establishment can't afford to take any chances when it comes to ensuring their adequate availability in every nook and corner of the country. In this backdrop, if the government has manufacturing units directly under its control, it can always ask them to increase production whenever it apprehends a shortage. This won't be possible if all these are in private hands.

If that is the thinking then the forward is for the government to classify fertilizers as a 'strategic' sector which allows for the possibility of retaining a maximum of



THE INVESTORS COULD COME IN ONLY IF THE VALUATION IS KEPT LOW. BUT THAT WON'T BE ANYWHERE NEAR THE MONEY INVESTED IN THEIR REVIVAL. SUCH A DEAL COULD INVITE CRITICISM

(The writer is a Policy Analyst)



four undertakings in the public sector and thus help address the aforementioned worry. Is that really necessary? The answer is clearly 'no'.

Already, 'adequate' and 'effective' mechanisms are in place to prevent occurrence of a shortage situation. The requirement of all fertilizers for each cropping season i.e. kharif (April to September) and rabi (October to March) is assessed by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DoAC) in consultation with Department of Fertilizers (DoF), states, railways and fertilizer manufacturers. It is broken down month-wise. The supply, movement and distribution of all fertilizers is monitored through online web based "Fertilizer Monitoring System (FMS).

In this comprehensive exercise involving all stakeholders including the manufacturers, the government can always direct any plant even if it is privately owned to increase production/supplies to meet shortage if any. The latter can't say 'no' all the more because he depends on the former for subsidy support given as reimbursement of the excess of the cost of production and distribution over the maximum retail price (MRP) set at a low level.

Second, India imports 25-30 percent of its urea requirement. Urea is imported only through designated state agencies, primarily CPSUs such as the NFL. It could be argued that asking PSUs to import urea ensures more effective management of such supplies which will be jeopardized if the government has no fertilizer enterprise left within its fold (post their privatization). This argument is specious.

India also imports non-urea fertilizers where the dependence on import is much higher viz. diammonium phosphate (DAP): 50 percent; muriate of phosphate (MoP): 100 percent. Their imports are not channelized through state agencies/CPSUs even as any entity is free to import DAP and MoP. Yet, the country hasn't faced any shortage of these fertilizers. Likewise, even when urea import is left to private entities, there won't be any problem.

Besides, channelizing imports through CPSUs is pregnant with the risk of politician-bureaucrat-business nexus triggering inflated payments to exporters in exchange for commission. For instance, in the 90s, 'NFL making payment of millions of dollars for urea that never arrived' made headlines.

Third, under the New Pricing Scheme (NPS) of allowing cost and in turn, subsidy (cost minus MRP) for urea, the bureaucrat determines how much of each of the cost components such as capital related charges or CRC (these include interest cost, depreciation and return on shareholders funds), other fixed cost, cost of gas and other inputs, etc., is to be allowed for subsidy payment to each unit. Generally, units under CPSUs are allowed higher cost and higher subsidy on every ton of urea produced to accommodate their inflated expenses.

For instance, six years back, Modi - Government had approved revival plans of five plants under the Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd (FCIL) and the Hindustan Fertiliser Corporation of India Limited (HFCL) viz Sindri (Jharkhand), Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh),

Barauni (Bihar), Talcher (Odisha) and Ramagundam (AP). For decades, these plants had been on the ventilator guzzling thousands of crores of taxpayers money. Their revival couldn't be justified on financial viability considerations; yet, their revival was approved due to their location being in politically sensitive areas.

Entailing an investment of around Rs 40,000 crore, these plants were commissioned in 2021/2022. Given the high CRC associated with the high invested capital (Rs 8000 crore per plant on an average), their viability can be protected only if they continue to get inflated retention price under the NPS. The big question is, will they continue to get the same treatment even after their disinvestment? If not, the government won't get suitors.

The investors could come in only if the valuation is kept low. But, that won't be anywhere near the money invested in their revival. Such a deal could invite criticism. The dilemma could be behind the fertilizer ministry opposing privatization.

To conclude, the concern on account of securing adequate supplies - whether from domestic production or import - is unwarranted. As for disinvestment of CPSUs housing high-cost plants, the government will have to take a tough call. It should tell the suitor upfront that the inflated price under NPS won't continue. In lieu of this, it may accept low valuation, a price worth paying now if only to avoid the pitfalls of retaining the undertakings under public sector fold. Finally, the government should unshackle the process of share sale from bureaucratic red tape.

Thoughts on world whisky day: Banning alcohol doesn't work

There may be a number of arguments for not drinking alcohol but banning it is the worse solution to dissuade people from drinking

On 20 May 2023, readers wake up to World Whisky Day! The third Saturday of every May is celebrated as World Whisky Day as aficionados of the drink all over the globe taste at least a "dram" of the water of life. Launched in 2009 by Blair Bowman, a student of the University of Aberdeen, to celebrate the official drink of Britain and Scotland, the WWD has attracted millions over the years. In India, this year's WWD is observed in the backdrop of the death of around 25 persons in Tamil Nadu early this week due to spurious liquor. It is not an isolated incident in Tamil Nadu where there is a total ban on toddy and arrack, the poor man's whisky. Arrack is banned in neighbouring

Kerala also and this is seen as the major reason behind the youths getting addicted to drugs which offer instant salvation. The ban on toddy and arrack has been proved to be counterproductive. There were no deaths due to spurious liquor when the Governments in the States had permitted retail outlets to sell arrack. The stuff was distilled using the best of vegetables and fruits while those working in the farms from dawn to dusk could cool their body and soul after a day's hard work out in the sun. Eminent short story writer VKN (Vadakkal Kootalla Narayanankutty Nair) portrayed the beauty of arrack through his literary works. There were no anti-liquor brigades demanding a ban on VKN's short stories and



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

novels and the author was honored with the Kendra Sahitya Academy award for his portrayal of life in rural Kerala. Many literary persons have confessed that they took up consuming liquor after reading the books of VKN! Ban on arrack, alcohol and tapping of palm trees threw lakhs of labourers out to the streets. Bootlegging became the order of the day. Workers turned to low-quality liquor following the ban on arrack and this is seen as the reason behind their addiction to alcohol. Some of the spurious brands are known by the name Aana Mayakki (one capable of tranquillizing elephants) and Manavatti (Malayalam for Bride-a measure of this brand is powerful enough to make your lower

States and he shouted at Menon. The latter asked him to meet him the next day at his office. Nesamani wrote to Sardar Patel that Menon was in an inebriated state and asked him to get out of his suit. Sardar, a teetotaler seemed disturbed by Nesamani's letter and summoned Shankar. "Shankar, does Menon take drinks?" asked Patel. Shankar was caught in a difficult situation as he cannot lie to the Sardar nor he could let down his friend Menon. "Sir, Menon takes one or two pegs in the evening after ensuring that his table is cleared," replied Shankar. Sardar's response caught Shankar off-guard. "No issues, Shankar. You tell all Secretaries to take the same drink which Menon takes," said Sardar,

which has been quoted by Shankar in his memoirs. Well, if you think Whisky and Scotch distilled and bottled in Britain and Scotland are the best in the world, you are off the mark. Some Indian companies like Radico Khaitan, Paul John and Amrut Distilleries are making waves all over the world with their quality products. Rampur Indian Single Malt Whisky, Cinnamon Whisky (RK), Paul John's Mithuna and Kanya, John's Original Choice (one of the top 10 selling whiskies worldwide) have done India proud thanks to master craftsmen like Michael D'Souza. Paul John's Mithuna has been rated as the third finest whisky in the world by Jim Murray, the ace whisky writer.

This is not to make people drink alcohol but there are unsung heroes like Lalit Khaitan and Abhishek Khaitan, Paul John and Neelakanta Jagdale (Amrit) whom we should respect for their tenacity to take on global giants. Liquor is not something to be discussed in a hush-hush manner. "I can survive for any number of days or years without consuming liquor. But I can't survive even for an hour without the right to have my drink," Piloos Modi had said when the then Janata Party Government came out with a proposal to have total prohibition in India. Happy WWD! (The writer is a staffer with the Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

(The writer is special correspondent with the Pioneer. Views expressed are personal)

'Police left ex-PM's house after having water, biscuits'

PTI ■ LAHORE

Punjab Police who visited Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence here to conduct a search operation to arrest "terrorists" reportedly hiding there have returned with only "water and biscuits", former Pakistan prime minister's chief security officer said on Friday.

A delegation comprising Lahore Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Lahore Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider, DIG Operations Sadiq Dogar and SSP Operations Sohaib, met Khan, the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party to hold negotiations with him, according to the Dawn newspaper.

The move comes hours after Punjab Police obtained warrants to conduct a detailed search at Khan's residence.

According to the Punjab Police statement, the search

would encompass a thorough examination of both the entrance and exit points of the residence, with the primary objective of finding "terrorists" hiding at the place, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Khan's chief security officer Iftikhar Ghuman, however, said the Punjab police have returned from Zaman Park "empty-handed", the report said.

Talking to journalists outside Khan's residence, Ghuman said: "I think they have understood that there is nothing here. The only thing they got here was water and biscuits."

"We opened the doors of the house for them in front of you. Now you ask them what they got," he added.

On Wednesday, the Punjab government claimed that "30 to 40 terrorists were hiding inside Khan's residence," and gave an ultimatum of 24 hours to his party to hand over the miscre-



Former PM of Pakistan and PTI chief Imran Khan appears before an anti-terrorism court, in Lahore, Pakistan, on Friday

ants. However, no action was taken after the deadline expired on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Lahore Capital

City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique Kamyana claimed to have arrested six more "terrorists" attempting

to flee from Khan's Zaman Park residence.

On Friday, an anti-terrorism court here approved pre-arrest bail till June 2 to Khan in three terrorism cases filed against Pakistan's former prime minister in the wake of violence that erupted after his arrest on May 9. In a video-link address from his Zaman Park residence here on Wednesday, Khan said Pakistan is heading towards an imminent disaster and it may face disintegration.

On May 9, Khan was arrested by the paramilitary Pakistan Rangers at the Islamabad High Court premises that triggered unrest in Pakistan.

For the first time in Pakistan's history, the protesters stormed the army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi and also torched a corps commander's house in Lahore.

Police put the death toll in violent clashes to 10, while

Khan's party claims 40 of its workers lost their lives in the firing by security personnel.

On Monday, the top military brass vowed to bring the arsonists, who attacked the civil and military installations, to justice through trial under relevant laws of the country, including the Pakistan Army Act and Official Secrets Act.

Law enforcement agencies have arrested over 7,000 PTI workers across Pakistan, 4,000 of them from Punjab.

Meanwhile, Lahore police claimed to have arrested 14 "terrorists" who were trying to flee from Khan's Zaman Park residence. Khan, the cricketer-turned-politician, was ousted from power in April last year after losing a no-confidence vote in his leadership, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China and Afghanistan.

PROMINENT HINDU LEADER OF IMRAN'S PARTY QUILTS

Islamabad: Jai Parkash, a prominent Hindu leader and a minority member of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, resigned on Friday, making him the latest politician to quit the former prime minister's party following the May 9 attack on the country's military installations and government buildings.

Following the arrest of Khan, Chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party on May 9, violent protests broke out in several cities across the country during which several government properties were damaged.

Supporters of Khan stormed the Pakistan Army's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi and the Corps Commander House in Lahore was torched.

Iran executes 3 people over violence

Dubai (AP): Iran on Friday executed three men accused of deadly violence during last year's anti-government protests despite objections from human rights groups.

Mizan, the judiciary's website, announced the executions of Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi, without saying how they were carried out. Authorities say they killed a police officer and two members of the paramilitary Basij group in Isfahan in November during nationwide protests.

Rights groups say the three were subjected to torture, forced into televised confessions and denied due process.

The protests erupted last September after the death of a 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, who had been detained by the country's morality police for allegedly violating its strict Islamic dress code.

The demonstrations rapidly escalated into calls for the overthrow of the theocracy that has ruled Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The demonstrations have largely subsided in recent months, though there are still sporadic acts of defiance, including the refusal of a growing number of women to wear the mandatory Islamic headscarf, known as the hijab.

Iran has executed a total of seven people in connection with the protests. Rights groups say they and several others who have been sentenced to death were convicted by secretive state security courts and denied the right to defend themselves.

"The prosecution relied on forced confessions," and the indictment was riddled with irregularities that reveal this was a politically motivated case," Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran, said of the three executed on Friday.

The group said Kazemi had called a relative and accused authorities of torturing him by flogging his feet, using a stun gun and threatening him with sexual assault.

PM Modi's visit great opportunity to review deep India-US ties: Official

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first state visit to the US at the invitation of President Joe Biden offers a great opportunity for the two leaders to review growing bilateral trade, investment and defence partnership and discuss new areas of cooperation, a senior State Department official said.

Modi will embark on his state visit to the US next month on an invitation by President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden. The US president and the First Lady will also host Modi at a state dinner on June 22.

"We are really excited to host Prime Minister Modi in June here in Washington. This is going to be a great opportunity for our two leaders to underscore the deep ties between our two countries and between our peoples," said Nancy Izzo Jackson, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for India at the Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs. "They will review our growing trade,

investment and defence partnership. We also expect that they are going to discuss new areas of cooperation as we work together to face global challenges like health, climate change, clean energy technology and food security," she said in response to a question.

"Underpinning all of these issues, however, is our shared investment in our people-to-people ties, whether that is promoting educational exchanges or investing in our workforce development. Certainly, visas are a part of that conversation," Jackson said. She asserted that this was one of the most consequential global relationships.

"Our bilateral partnership cuts across our most crucial global strategic priorities - defence, economic and trade security, health, emerging technology and the ever-growing people-to-people ties," Jackson said.

Earlier, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre while announcing the visit on May 10, said the upcoming

visit will affirm the deep and close partnership between the US and India and the warm bonds of family and friendship that link Americans and Indians together.

PM Modi's visit will strengthen the two countries' shared commitment to a free, open, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific, she said, amid China's aggressive behaviour in the strategic region. The visit will also elevate the bilateral strategic technology partnership, including in defence, clean energy, and space, she said.

Modi's visit to the US comes ahead of the G20 Summit being hosted by India in September.

After becoming Prime Minister in 2014, Modi has made more than half a dozen trips to the United States for bilateral and multilateral meetings with all three American presidents, Barack Obama, Donald Trump and now Biden, but this is for the first time he has been invited for an official State Visit, a privilege accorded to America's close friends and allies.

China warns against 'geopolitical games' as US announces Blinken trip to Papua New Guinea

AP ■ BEIJING

China on Friday warned against the introduction of "geopolitical games" in the South Pacific following the announcement that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit Papua New Guinea next week. The US opted to send Blinken after President Joe Biden cancelled what was to have been a historic stop in Papua New Guinea as well as a visit to Australia for a meeting of leaders of the so-called Quad partnership so he can focus on debt limit talks in Washington.

The administration has made putting a greater focus on the Pacific region central to its global outreach, largely to counter China's growing influence there.

"China has no objection to normal exchanges and cooperation between relevant parties and Pacific Island countries, and has always advocated that the international community

should pay more attention to and support the development and revitalisation of the island countries," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily briefing.

However, Wang added, "We also oppose any introduction of any geopolitical games into the Pacific Island country region." Biden's planned Papua New Guinea visit would have been the first by a sitting US president to the island country of more than 9 million people.

The area has received diminished attention from the U.S. in the aftermath of the Cold War, and China has increasingly filled the vacuum through increased aid, development and security cooperation.

The US and regional partners New Zealand and Australia were particularly concerned when China signed a security pact last year with the Solomon Islands that could allow the presence of Chinese naval ships and security forces.



The Solomon Islands later agreed to sign an accord between the United States and more than a dozen Pacific nations after indirect references to China were removed, with its foreign minister saying he didn't want his country to be forced to take sides.

Last September, Biden also hosted leaders from more than a dozen Pacific Island countries at the White House, announcing a new strategy to help the region with climate change and mar-

itime security. A second summit is planned later this year.

His administration also recently opened embassies in the Solomon Islands and Tonga and has plans to open one in Kiribati.

During his visit on Sunday and Monday to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea's capital, Blinken will meet with leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum on Biden's behalf, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said Thursday.

The sides will discuss "shared priorities such as tackling the climate crisis, advancing inclusive economic growth for the people of the Pacific Islands, and highlighting the US commitment to realise a prosperous, resilient, and secure Pacific Islands region," Miller said, without mentioning China.

Blinken will also meet with Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape and sign bilateral defence cooperation and maritime security agreements, Miller said.

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Email: id.investorrelations@ullitd.com, website: ullitd.com.

Date: 19th May 2023

COMPANY NOTICE
Regulation 29 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, notice is hereby given that 01st/2023-24 meeting of the Board of Directors of the United Leasing & Industries Ltd. will be held on Tuesday 30th May, 2023 at 12.30 PM. To consider and take on record inter alia, the Audited financial results for the year ended on 31st March, 2023, any other matter with the permission of the chairman.

Please note that vide our letter dated 27th March 2023, we had informed the Trading Window Closure with effect from Saturday 1st April, 2023 till 48 hours after the announcement of Audited Financial Results to the Stock Exchange, in compliance with the amended SEBI Regulations and the Code of Conduct for prevention of Insider Trading.

For United Leasing & Industries Limited
Sd/-
Shashi Shekhar
Company Secretary
Membership No ACS 30145

Place: New Delhi
Date: 19th May 2023

Annexure IX
GURU NAKH DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR
(Established by the State Legislature Act No.21 of 1000)
Only University of Punjab to have earned "Category-1" Status
Accredited with CGPA 3.85 on four point scale at "A++" grade (highest among all India central, state public and private universities) and conferred upon "University with potential for excellence" status by UGC

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Admissions are open for following UGC DEB entitled courses under Directorate of Open & Distance Learning, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The candidates may visit the Directorate's website (<http://odl.gnu.ac.in>) for filling online application form and further details.

Under Graduate Degree BA, B Com, BCA, BBA
Post Graduate Degree MA (Punjabi), M. Com, MA English, B Lib
UG Diploma DCA

Online Registration is open for session 2023 w.e.f. from 20th May 2023

For any enquiry, please contact the Directorate office via email: odl@gnu.ac.in or via phone +91-183-2258619 or +91-183-2823198

Note: Any Corrigendum / Addendum to the Admission Notice may be issued, if required, as per rules & regulations of the University, will be published on the Directorate website only.

Dean Academic Affairs
na/12/16529/2023/24214 Dated CHD :- 5/19/2023

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Indians wait to attain Green Card due to country-based quota system: Official

PIONEER NEWS SERVICES/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Scores of people from all over the world including from India have to wait for long to attain the Green Card due to the country-based quota system in its allocation. It can only be changed by the US Congress, a US official has said.

Indian professionals have to wait for the card for more than a decade.

Aspirants from China, Mexico and the Philippines also have to go through the long and agonizing wait for the Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card.

It is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently. The per-country caps are numerical limits on the issuance of green cards to individuals from certain countries.

Immigration law provides for approximately 140,000 employment-based green cards to be issued each year.

However, only seven per cent of those green cards can go to individuals from a single country annually.



Douglas Rand, the Senior Advisor to the director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), said the annual limit established by Congress on family-sponsored preference green cards is 2,26,000 for the whole world while the annual limit on employment-based green cards is 1,40,000.

On top of that, the per-country limit is set at seven per cent of the total annual family-sponsored and employment-based preference limits, he told Indian Americans during a virtual town hall organised by the State Department on visa and consular issues.

"That means 25,620. That is why individuals from India, China, Mexico and the Philippines typically face such a long wait times than people from other countries," Rand said in response to a question.

"There is demand for so many more than 25,620 green

Sunak, wife's fortunes take a hit in new rich list analysis

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and wife Akshata Murty, who made their UK rich list debut last year, lost around GBP 201 million since then as a result of a drop in the value of Murty's shares in Infosys, according to a media report on Friday.

The couple has slipped from 222nd position in 2022 to 275th in this year's tally with an estimated wealth of GBP 529 million, largely attributed to the Indian software firm co-founded by Murty's father Narayana Murthy, claimed "The Sunday Times Rich List" 2023. "The couple's most valuable asset has long been a shareholding in Infosys, an Indian IT giant set up by Murty's father," the rich list analysis said. "Over the past year, their wealth has fallen by more than half a million pounds a day. When the pair made their debut on the Rich List 12 months ago, this stake was worth about GBP 690 million. Since then Infosys' shares have plummeted owing to lower revenues from its banking, tech and other clients," it noted.

Death toll in Myanmar cyclone rises to 54

AP ■ BANGKOK



At least 54 people were killed and more than 185,000 buildings damaged in Myanmar by a powerful cyclone last weekend, state television MRTV reported. Communication difficulties in the affected areas, where infrastructure was already poor, and the military government's tight control over information leave the actual extent of casualties and destruction unclear.

Cyclone Mocha roared in from the Bay of Bengal on Sunday with high winds and rain slamming a corner of neighbouring Bangladesh and a wider swath of western Myanmar's Rakhine state. It made landfall near Rakhine's Sitaw township with winds up to 209 kilometres (130 miles) per hour before weakening to a tropical depression Monday as it moved inland. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said widespread destruction of homes and infrastructure was seen throughout Rakhine state. "Urgent needs include shelter, clean water, food assistance and healthcare services," it said. "There are rising concerns in flooded areas about the spread of waterborne disease and the movement of landmines," a legacy of civil conflict that has been going on in Myanmar for decades. "The impact of the cyclone was also felt heavily in the country's northwest where houses were blown or washed away. Strong winds and rains have also damaged camps for displaced people in Kachin state," the UN agency said.

Refugee camps in Bangladesh, where more than 700,000 members of Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya minority fled in 2017 to escape a brutal counterinsurgency campaign, missed the brunt of the storm with no reported deaths, thanks in part to a well-organised evacuation, but housing was severely damaged.

Rushdie honoured at first public appearance since being stabbed

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Salman Rushdie has been Shonoured with the PEN Centenary Courage Award as the Mumbai-born writer made his first in-person public appearance since being stabbed and severely wounded in a knife attack at a literary event here last year.

Rushdie, 75, attended the 2023 Literary Gala in New York City at the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan on Thursday night.

PEN America honoured its former president Rushdie, who accepted the award in person.

"Well, hi everybody. It's nice to be back—as opposed to not being back, which was also an option. I'm pretty glad the dice rolled this way," said Rushdie, who was greeted by the audience with whoops and a standing ovation.

"I have a long association with PEN America. I'm just happy to be back amongst an evening of writers and book people," he said.

Rushdie was stabbed by a 24-year-old New Jersey resident identified as Hadi Matar, a US national of Lebanese origin, on stage in August last year while he was being introduced at a literary event at Chautauqua Institution in West New York.

The brutal attack left the Booker Prize-winning author, born to a Kashmiri family in Mumbai, debilitated and without vision in one eye.

Speaking to 700 guests at the gala - a black-tie annual event that gathers acclaimed writers, human rights defenders, and cultural luminaries - Rushdie issued a call to action.

"Terrorism must not terrorise us. Violence must not deter us. The struggle goes on," he said.

It was an emotional return to the stage for Rushdie, who for decades has been a tireless defender of persecuted writers and the freedom to write while himself living under a death threat for his writing, PEN America said in a statement.

Rushdie said he was accepting the award on behalf of the "heroes" who rushed the

dias at the Chautauqua Institute and tackled his assailant after he was repeatedly stabbed on August 12.

"If it had not been for these people, I most certainly would not be standing here today. I was the target that day, but they were the heroes. The courage, that day, was all theirs. I owe my life to them," he said.

PEN America's current president, playwright and novelist Ayad Akhtar said the organisation was honouring Rushdie "because of what he stood for and continues to stand for."

Rushdie, who turns 76 next month, began his close association with PEN America when the Booker Prize-winning author emerged after more than a decade in hiding as the

result of a call for his death issued in 1989 by the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini over his novel The Satanic Verses.

He served as PEN America president from 2004-06. PEN America stands at the intersection of literature and human rights to protect open expression in the United States and worldwide.

Rushdie has written more than a dozen books since 1981 when he first rose to fame after publishing his Booker Prize-winning tome 'Midnight's Children'. He has also published four non-fiction works, including a memoir. His latest and 15th novel is titled 'Victory City,' a fictionalised telling of the story of the Vijayanagara Kingdom.

Saudi's diplomacy surge brings Assad, Zelensky to Arab summit

AP ■ JEDDAH

Saudi Arabia hosted an Arab League summit on Friday in which Syrian President Bashar Assad was welcomed back after a 12-year suspension and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky made a surprise visit to rally support against Russia.

Russian airstrikes have left a swath of destruction across both countries, but in Syria they came at Assad's invitation and helped him cling to power through years of grinding civil war.

Several other Arab states have maintained warm ties with Moscow while remaining largely neutral on the Ukraine war.

The odd pairing of the two leaders in the same forum is the result of a recent flurry of diplomacy by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman, who is pursuing regional rapprochement with the same vigour he previously brought to the oil-rich kingdom's confrontation with its archrival Iran.

In recent months, Saudi Arabia has restored diplomatic ties with Iran, is ending the kingdom's years long war against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen and led the push for Syria's return to the 22-member Arab League.

The Saudi crown prince welcomed both Assad and Zelensky to the Red Sea city of Jeddah, expressing support for "whatever helps in reducing the crisis between Russia and Ukraine."

He added that the kingdom, which brokered a prisoner exchange last year, "is ready to exert efforts for mediation."

Addressing the summit in English, Zelensky appeared to invoke the Arab world's own



Jordan's King Abdullah II arrived in Saudi Arabia on Friday. Agencies

troubled history of invasion and occupation, saying that nations would understand that Ukraine "will never submit to any foreigners or colonisers. That's why we fight."

He took a swipe at Iran for supplying attack drones to Russia and spoke about the suf-

fering of Muslim ethnic Tatars living under Russian occupation in Crimea. He also accused some in the hall of "turning a blind eye" to Russia's violations, without naming them.

The visit comes amid a whirlwind of international travel by the Ukrainian leader, but until now he has mostly visited allied countries.

Saudi Arabia pledged USD 400 million in aid to Ukraine earlier this year and has voted in favor of UN resolutions calling on Russia to end its invasion and opposing the annexation of Ukrainian territory. But it has resisted US pressure to increase oil production in order to squeeze Russia's revenues.

Assad, who remains a close ally of both Russia and Iran, said he hoped the summit would mark the start of a "new stage of Arab solidarity to achieve peace, development,

and flourishing in our region instead of war and destruction." He added that Arab countries should reject "external interference" in their affairs. In recent years, Assad's forces have recaptured much of Syria's territory from insurgents with crucial help from Russia — which intervened militarily on his behalf beginning in 2015 — and Iran.

Saudi Arabia had been a leading sponsor of the opposition at the height of the war but pulled back as the insurgents were eventually cornered in a small pocket of northwestern Syria. "Saudi Arabia's push to bring Syria back into the fold is part of a broader shift in the kingdom's approach to regional politics," says Torbjorn Solttvedt, a leading Mideast analyst at the risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft. "The previously adventurist foreign policy defined by the

Yemen intervention and efforts to confront Iran are now being abandoned in favour of a more cautious approach," he said.

Assad's first official meeting on Friday was with his Tunisian counterpart, Kais Saied, who is waging his own crackdown on dissent in the birthplace of the Arab Spring protests that swept the region in 2011.

"We stand together against the movement of darkness," Assad said, apparently referring to extremist groups that came to dominate the Syrian opposition as his country's civil war ground on, and which drew a large number of recruits from Tunisia. The Saudi crown prince later welcomed each leader to the summit, including a smiling Assad wearing a dark blue suit. The two shook hands and kissed cheeks before the Syrian leader walked into the hall.

World leaders tighten sanctions against Russia

AP ■ HIROSHIMA

Leaders of the world's most powerful democracies vowed on Friday to tighten punishments on Russia for its 15-month invasion of Ukraine, days before President Volodymyr Zelensky joins the Group of Seven summit in person on Sunday.

"Our support for Ukraine will not waver," the G7 leaders said in a statement released after closed-door meetings, vowing "to stand together against Russia's illegal, unjustifiable, and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine."

"Russia started this war and can end this war," they said.

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, confirmed on national television that Zelensky would attend the summit.

"We were sure that our president would be where Ukraine needed him, in any

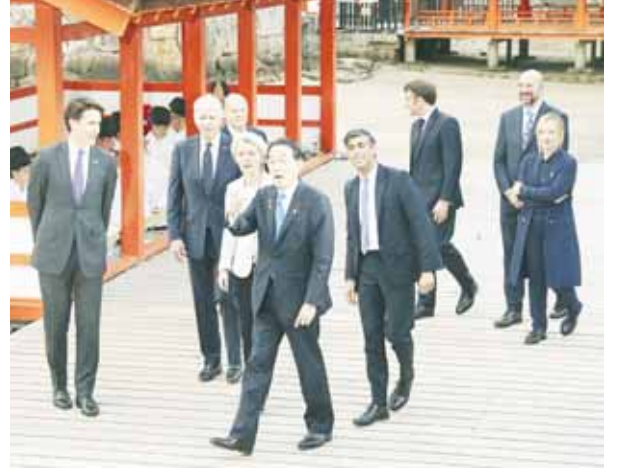
part of the world, to solve the issue of stability of our country," Danilov said Friday.

"There will be very important matters decided there, so physical presence is a crucial thing to defend our interests," Zelensky announced Friday that he had opened a visit to Saudi Arabia, where Arab leaders were holding a summit.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats against Ukraine, along with North Korea's months-long barrage of missile tests and China's rapidly expanding nuclear arsenal, have resonated with Japan's push to make nuclear disarmament a major part of the G7 summit.

World leaders Friday visited a peace park dedicated to the tens of thousands who died in the world's first wartime atomic bomb detonation.

After group photos near the city's iconic bombed-out dome, a wreath-laying and a symbolic cherry tree planting,



G7 leaders from left to right, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, US President Joe Biden, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Japan's PM Fumio Kishida, Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron, European Council President Charles Michel and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni visit the Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima Island in Hatsukaichi, western Japan on Friday. AP/PTI

a new round of sanctions were unveiled against Moscow, with a focus on redoubling efforts to enforce existing sanctions meant to stifle Russia's war effort and hold accountable those behind it, a US official said. Russia is now the most-

sanctioned country in the world, but there are questions about the effectiveness of the financial penalties.

The US component of the actions would blacklist about 70 Russian and third-country entities involved in Russia's defense production, and sanction more than 300 individuals, entities, aircraft and vessels, said a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to preview the announcement.

The official said the other G7 nations would undertake similar steps to further isolate Russia and to undermine its ability to wage war in Ukraine.

Details were to emerge throughout the weekend summit.

The G7 nations said in Friday's statement that they would work to keep Russia from using the international financial system to prosecute its war, would "further restrict Russia's access to our economies" and would prevent sanctions evasion by Moscow.

Ukraine's President takes his campaign to G7, Arab summit

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed a summit of Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia on Friday before what a senior official said would be a trip to Japan for a meeting with the leaders of the world's most powerful democracies.

Zelensky has in recent months made foreign trips to shore up diplomatic support for Ukraine's fight against Russia's full-scale invasion almost 15 months ago and solicit more military support.

He earlier this week returned from a three-day trip to Italy, the Vatican, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Ukraine and Russia are squaring up for a major and potentially decisive phase in the war as Kyiv prepares an expected counter-



In this photo Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, left, is greeted by Prince Badr Bin Sultan. Agencies

offensive.

The conflict has been bogged down in a war of attrition in recent months amid bad weather.

Zelensky's office said he was invited to attend the Arab League summit in Jeddah where he met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman before holding other bilateral meetings. They discussed Zelensky's peace plan, the security situation in Ukraine and possible investments in the reconstruction of the country, a presidential statement said. Zelensky also invited Prince Mohammed to visit Ukraine.

Biden endorses F-16 training for Ukrainians

Hiroshima (AP) President Joe Biden on Friday endorsed plans to train Ukrainian pilots on US-made F-16 fighter jets, according to two people familiar with the matter, as he huddled with allies at the Group of Seven summit on how to bolster support for Kyiv against Russia's invasion.

The people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss Biden's private conversations with allies, said he announced he had approved the training, which is likely to be conducted in Europe over the coming months, during a meeting of G7 leaders in Hiroshima, where the leaders also announced new sanctions on Moscow in advance of President Volodymyr Zelensky joining them at the summit on Sunday.

Biden told the leaders that decisions on when, how many, and who will provide the fourth-generation fighter jets for Ukraine to use in battle will be made in the months ahead while the training is underway.

Xi meets Central Asian leaders, calls for trade development

AP ■ BEIJING

Chinese leader Xi Jinping promised to build more railway and other trade links with Central Asia and proposed jointly developing oil and gas sources at a meeting on Friday with the region's leaders that highlighted Beijing's growing influence.

The two-day China-Central Asia Summit in the western city of Xi'an came as President Joe Biden and other leaders of the Group of Seven major economies met in Japan. It reflected Beijing's efforts to develop trade and security networks centred on China, which resents US domination of global affairs.

China is making economic inroads into Central Asia, including with its Belt and Road Initiative to build railways and other trade-related infrastructure.

That has eroded Russian influence over former Soviet republics that look to the world's second-largest economy as an important market and source of investment.

"We need to expand eco-



nomics and trade ties," Xi said in a speech to leaders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

In a swipe at Western leaders, Xi called for the region to "resolutely oppose external interference" and "attempts to instigate colour revolutions," a reference to movements that overthrew leaders in countries such as Ukraine and Georgia.

China accuses the West of abetting agitation against the ruling Communist Party in the western region of Xinjiang, home to predominantly Muslim ethnic minority groups that have ties to Central Asia.

The Chinese leader promised to increase cross-border trade by developing highways and rail lines and encouraging China's trading companies to set up warehouses in Central Asia. He promised to simplify import procedures.

Xi proposed establishment of a China-Central Asia partnership to develop oil and gas sources.

He said Beijing wants to speed up construction of an additional pipeline to supply Central Asia gas to China's energy-hungry economy and to promote nuclear power.

Xi promised Chinese help for Central Asian governments to strengthen security and defense and to fight terrorism. He promised to "jointly promote peace" in Afghanistan.

Beijing earlier announced plans for a regional anti-terrorism centre to train Central Asian security forces.

Xi's government sees political Islam as a threat and is accused of detaining some 1 million people in Xinjiang in what Beijing says is a campaign to stop extremism.

Russian PM Mikhail to visit Beijing

Beijing (AP) Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin will visit Beijing next week for talks, China's Foreign Ministry said Friday, marking the latest exchange in a relationship in which Russia is becoming increasingly reliant on China for economic and diplomatic support.

"During the visit, the two sides will have an in-depth exchange of views on practical cooperation in bilateral relations and issues of common concern," ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a daily briefing.

"We look forward to further strengthening cooperation between the two sides, deepening people-to-people and local exchanges (and) injecting strong momentum into the recovery of the world economy," Wang added.

Meanwhile, China's Deputy Permanent UN Representative Geng Shuang again criticised Western arms sales to Ukraine, saying it would only lead to escalation, more civilian casualties and displacement, and make it harder to obtain a ceasefire and start peace negotiations.

Atomic bomb survivors look to G7 summit as a 'sliver of hope' for nuclear disarmament

AP ■ HIROSHIMA

This weekend's Group of Seven industrial nations summit in Hiroshima provides a rare — and possibly final — chance for survivors of the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to push for nuclear disarmament before a global audience.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who has roots in Hiroshima, chose the city in part to highlight their nuclear nonproliferation efforts, which have been shaken by Russia's nuclear threats against Ukraine and rising aggression from North Korea.

He greeted leaders from the G7 on Friday at the city's Peace Memorial Park and escorted them to pay respects to those who died from the attack after seeing exhibits at a museum dedicated to them,

and met with a survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bombing.

On Sunday, Kishida will also do the same for leaders from guest nations.

Kishida has pledged to act as a bridge between nuclear and non-nuclear states, but some critics say his disarmament goals are hollow.

Japan relies on the United States nuclear umbrella for protection and has been rapidly expanding its military.

Sueichi Kido, a 83-year-old "hibakusha" or survivor of the Nagasaki explosion, says he is skeptical about whether the prime minister can convince G7 leaders — including nuclear states the US, the United Kingdom and France — to make real disarmament progress.

"But because they are meeting in Hiroshima I do have a sliver of hope that they will have positive talks and make a tiny step toward

nuclear disarmament," Kido said.

The United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people.

It dropped a second bomb three days later on Nagasaki, killing another 70,000. Japan surrendered on August 15, ending World War II.

Kido hoped the leaders would spend more time than former US President Barack Obama in his rushed 2016 visit through the museum exhibits that include the mangled buildings and bodies in the aftermath of the attack.

Obama's trip to Hiroshima was the first by a serving US leader. "I earnestly want the leaders to have a firm understanding of what the atomic bombs did to human beings," Kido said.

UK extends Russian export ban to diamonds, metals

London (PTI) The UK on Friday extended its package of sanctions against Russia with a ban on Russian diamonds, an industry worth USD 4 billion in exports in 2021, as well as imports of Russian-origin copper, aluminium and nickel and sanctioned 86 more people and entities linked with the country over the Russia-Ukraine conflict. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who is in Japan for the G7 Summit, said the trade measures and individual sanctions will hit Russian President Vladimir Putin's key revenue streams.

During talks with world leaders in Hiroshima — the site of the World War II atomic bombing, Sunak warned against complacency in defending democratic values and standing up to autocratic regimes. "For the sake of global peace and security, we must show that brutal

violence and coercion does not reap rewards," said Sunak.

"As today's sanctions announcements demonstrate, the G7 remains unified in the face of the threat from Russia and steadfast in our support for Ukraine. We are meeting today in Hiroshima, a city that exemplifies both the horrors of war and the dividends of peace. We must redouble our efforts to defend the values of freedom, democracy and tolerance, both in Ukraine and here in the Indo-Pacific," he said. The latest announcement follows Sunak's meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky during a surprise visit to London earlier this week when he confirmed new military aid and stressed the importance of long-term international support for Ukraine.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice be it known to all that my client Mrs. Meera Devi W/o Mr. Rajender Prasad R/o C/3505, Tower C, Bharat City, Tilla Mod, Phase 1, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh 201003 has disowned and disinherited her Younger Son: Rakul Kumar and his Wife: Sheela from her all movable and immovable properties and assets. Both of them are not under the control of my client and regularly threatening her to implicate in false criminal cases. My client is having no concern with them in any manner whatsoever. If anybody dealing with them will do so at his/her own risk, cost and consequences and my client and their other family member shall not be held liable for their any of act or deeds whatsoever.

Mohd Wassem (Advocate)
Reg. No. 24955/2021

NOTICE

I Pankaj Kumar Sharma S/o Govind Swaroop Sharma R/o Flat No - 704, Aster - 4, Supertech Emerald Court, Sector - 93A, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh being the Authorized Representative of M/s Investors Clinic Infratech Pvt. Ltd. Address, 21st Floor, Tower - Astralis, Superhigh Supertown, Sector-94A, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301 have declared that, M/s Investors Clinic Infratech Pvt. Ltd. have purchased a property bearing No. M - 803 in Project Aditya Urban Homes, address Village - Shahpur Bamheta, NH - 24, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, we have lost the original allotment letter & payment receipts of the above said property. We have requested M/s Shubh Homes Realcon Private Limited to issue the duplicate allotment letter & payment receipts of the said property, if anybody or financial institutions have objection, he/she may contact to M/s Allegiance Conbuild Private Limited office GF, 10 New Rajdhani Enclave, Vikas Marg, Delhi Within Seven Day.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform you that the original Allotee of Residential Property No. 1-011 Sector 22, Noida Shri Vinod Kumar Chhabra S/o Shri B.M.Chhabra, R/o 25, Juniper Drive Stonely Creek LBE47 Ontario Canada had executed a General Power of Attorney in favour of Smt Kheema Rawat W/o Shri S.S.Rawat R/o 1-011 Sector 22, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budhina Nagar wide G.P.A. dated 29 April 1992 and the same was duly registered in the office of sub-registrar Ghaziabad and an Agreement to Sell has also been executed by Shri Vinod Kumar Chhabra which is not registered. On the basis of above said General Power of Attorney Smt Kheema Rawat want to transfer the above said property in favour of Shri Sube Singh Rana S/o Shri Mahabir Singh Rana and Mr. Rituraj Rana S/o Shri Sube Singh Rana, Both R/o D-76 Sector 56, Noida, Gautam Budhina Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 because the above said Agreement to Sell is not registered. So with the help of this notice it is informed that on the transfer of the above said Residential Property and if anyone has/have objection he/she will submit his/her objection in the office of D.G.M./O.S.D (Residential plot Department) Noida Authority along with the proofs within 15 days of the publication of this notice.

Smt. Kheema Rawat

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client is desirous of purchasing a Flat E-43-2 Ground Floor BPTP Park Elite Floors Sec-85 Faridabad Haryana measuring Super Built Up Area 108.324 Sq Mtrs ("Schedule Property") from its present owner Mrs Lalita Chaudhary W/o Ranjeet Kumar Chaudhary ("Owner"). Any person/ asserting any right, title, interest or claim in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, in any manner whatsoever or having any claim against the Schedule Property or the documents thereof or against the Owner or objecting to such transaction with My Client, should write to the undersigned within 10 (ten) days from the date of issuance of this notice with all documentary proof on which they are basing and asserting their rights with regard to Schedule Property or any part thereof, after which period My Client shall proceed on the basis that there are no claims of whatsoever nature with regard to the Schedule Property.

Shivendu Singh (Advocate)
G2/29, Salcon Rasvillas, Saket, New Delhi-17
Mob: 9871690063 Em: shiv.1982@gmail.com

G20 NORTHEN RAILWAY 75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

CORRIGENDUM

In continuation to this office Tender Notice No. 44225155C earlier was due on 19/05/2023 (published on 25/04/2023 in The News Papers) for 01 No "NON CONTACT WHEEL PROFILE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM FOR ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVES, DETAILED DESCRIPTION WITH SCOPE OF SUPPLY AS PER ANNEXURE-B" Certain conditions have been revised pertaining to Annexure B & Tender opening date, now due on 01.06.2023 & Corrigendum. I has been issued in this regard on www.ireps.gov.in All bidders/ tenders are requested to read these conditions carefully before submission of his/their offers.

No. 16/44225155C/ETD/GZB Date: 18.05.2023
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1521/23

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Monday, 29th May 2023, Inter-salia, to consider and approve the Audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and year ended on 31st March, 2023.

The information contained in this notice is also available on the Company's website www.cubical99.com as also on the website of the Stock Exchange viz. BSE Limited - www.bseindia.com

For Cubical Financial Services Limited Sd/- Managing Director
Place: New Delhi (Ashwani Kumar Gupta)
Date 19-05-2023

G20 NORTHEN RAILWAY 75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

CORRIGENDUM

Ref: i) Tender Notice No. 05/2023-24 dated 13.04.2023 (S.No. 07)
ii) Tender No. 08235081 due on 15.05.2023

In reference to above tender, the due date has been extended from 15.05.2023 to 26.05.2023 and tender qty has been changed. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

The corrigendum has been published on website www.ireps.gov.in. 1522/2023
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

G20 NORTHEN RAILWAY 75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

CORRIGENDUM

Ref: i) Tender Notice No. 05/2023-24 dated 13.04.2023 (S.No. 06)
ii) Tender No. 08235045 due on 12.05.2023

In reference to above tender, the due date has been extended from 12.05.2023 to 22.05.2023. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

The corrigendum has been published on website www.ireps.gov.in. 1523/2023
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Tender Notice Reference No. 506/DR

The Department of Director of Research invites online bids for the following:-

Sr. No.	Item	Quantity
1.	Radio Transmitter and Transmission Tower	1 No.

Closing date & time: 03-06-2023 at 4:00 p.m.
For details log onto www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note:- Any corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.

Director Research
Guru Nanak Dev University,
Amritsar

NA/12/16526/2023/24208 Dated CHD :- 5/19/2023

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences

Sadiq Road, Faridkot — 151203 Ph. 01639- 256232, 256236

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items/services upto 05.06.2023 1) Supply of Printer, scanner and MFP 2) Supply and proper installation of the Air Conditioners 3) Purchase of Desert Cooler 4) Operation of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra at GGSMCH, Faridkot 5) Procurement of Multiload CR system along with Dry Imager (Printer) 6) Procurement of Sanitary Material required at GGS Hospital, faridkot.

E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items/services upto 12.06.2023

1) Procurement of Garbage bags for general/bio medical waste 2) Purchase of Stationary cum office items 3) Pest control services 4) Purchase of Books for General Library of GGS Medical College and Hospital, Faridkot.

Terms and conditions can be downloaded from http://eproc.punjab.gov.in. The tenders will be accepted in E-Tender mode only. Bidder can also download tender notification and document from the University website i.e. www.bfuhs.ac.in

nil/12/96/2023/24175 Dated CHD :- 5/19/2023 Registrar

All 10 Adani Group firms settle in positive territory; Adani Wilmar shares jump nearly 7%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of all the ten listed Adani Group firms ended on a positive note, with Adani Wilmar climbing nearly 7 per cent, after an expert committee said it was not possible to conclude if there has been a regulatory failure on stock price manipulation allegations.

The stock of Adani Wilmar zoomed 6.85 per cent, Adani Power rallied 4.93 per cent, Adani Transmission soared by 4.62 per cent, Adani Green Energy went up by 4.18 per cent, Adani Enterprises climbed 3.65 per cent, Adani Ports jumped 3.65 per cent, NDTV gained 3.53 per cent and Adani Total Gas advanced 3.05 per cent on the BSE.

Shares of Ambuja Cements climbed 1.20 per cent and ACC went higher by 1 per cent.

In the equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 297.94 points or 0.48 per cent



to settle at 61,729.68.

An expert committee appointed by the Supreme Court said it cannot conclude any regulatory failure around

Adani Group's stock rallies, and that Sebi has "drawn a blank" in its probe into alleged violations in money flows from offshore entities into

the conglomerate.

But the six-member panel said there was evidence of a build-up in short positions on Adani Group stocks ahead of

the report of US-based short seller Hindenburg Research, and profiting from squaring off positions after prices crashed post-publication of the damning allegations.

"At this stage, taking into account the explanations provided by Sebi, supported by empirical data, prima facie, it would not be possible for the committee to conclude that there has been a regulatory failure around the allegation of price manipulation," the panel said in the report submitted to the Supreme Court.

It further said there is a need for an effective enforcement policy that is "coherent and consistent" with the legislative position adopted by Sebi.

According to the committee, it also cannot say that there has been a regulatory failure on Sebi's part on minimum public shareholding rules or related party transactions.

surge after a six-member panel of the Supreme Court stated that it was premature to conclude any regulatory failure in the Adani-Hindenburg case related to price manipulation allegations," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

The apex court had appointed the committee parallel to the investigation that markets regulator Sebi was conducting into allegations against Adani Group and the plunge in the apples-to-port conglomerate's shares, triggered by Hindenburg's allegations.

Adani Group stocks had taken a beating on the bourses after Hindenburg made a litany of allegations, including those about fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation, against the business conglomerate.

Adani Group dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements.



Sensex snaps 3-day losing run, climbs nearly 300 pts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty found firmer ground on Friday after a three-session losing streak, propped up by buying in IT, tech and banking counters amid a positive trend overseas and unabated foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 297.94 points or 0.48 per cent to settle at 61,729.68 helped by bag-end buying. During the day, the benchmark faced volatile trends, hitting a high of 61,784.61 and a low of 61,251.70.

The NSE Nifty advanced 73.45 points or 0.41 per cent to end at 18,203.40.

On a weekly basis, the BSE Sensex declined 298.22 points or 0.48 per cent. The Nifty dipped 111.4 points or 0.60 per cent.

"Positive global cues helped markets reverse its 3-day losing streak, as buying in IT, select banking and realty stocks aided recovery. If the global situation over interest rate movement and demand scenario doesn't improve, we may see bouts of profit-taking in the near term," said Amol Athawale, Technical Analyst (DVP), Kotak Securities Ltd.

Tata Motors was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising over 3 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Axis Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank, UltraTech Cement and Kotak Mahindra Bank.

On the other hand, NTPC, Asian Paints, Titan and Power Grid were among the laggards.

Punjab National Bank on Friday reported over five-fold jump in its net profit to ₹1,159 crore for the March 2023 quarter, helped by lower bad loans

and a rise in interest income. Its shares surged 1.61 per cent to close at ₹49.26 apiece on BSE.

"The markets trended lower during the week gone by, as the IT sector witnessed a drag owing to a weak set of numbers being declared by one of the majors.

"The concerns regarding global economic outlook too impacted the sentiments; a strong growth reported by China failed to meaningfully influence the bulls. Over the near term the markets may be expected to be volatile, led by very stock-specific movements as the earnings season goes underway in full swing," said Joseph Thomas, Head of Research, Emkay Wealth Management.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge dipped 0.16 per cent, and the midcap index ended flat marginally lower by 0.01 per cent.

Among the indices, IT jumped 1.40 per cent, teck climbed 1.24 per cent, services (0.84 per cent), realty (0.79 per cent), bankex (0.56 per cent) and utilities (0.52 per cent). Industrials, capital goods and oil & gas were the laggards.

"Global shares hit a one-month high on Friday as markets reflected increased hopes of a US debt ceiling deal that could avoid a potentially calamitous default and investors shrugged off hawkish rhetoric from Fed speakers," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In Asia, Seoul and Tokyo markets ended in the green, while Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower.

European markets were trading with gains. The US market ended on a positive note on Thursday.

Sebi proposes new framework for AIFs to strengthen corporate governance rules



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

To strengthen corporate governance mechanism, capital markets regulator Sebi has proposed to amend the current rules governing alternative investment funds (AIFs).

Under the proposal, Category I and Category II AIFs should not borrow funds directly or indirectly or engage in leverage for the purpose of making investments, Sebi said in a consultation paper on Thursday.

These AIFs can borrow for the purpose of meeting short-fall in drawdown while making investment in an investee company, subject to certain conditions. The conditions included that such borrowing by these AIFs should be done only in case of emergency and as a last recourse, the amount borrowed should not exceed 10 per cent of the investment proposed to be made in the investee company and the cost of such bor-

rowing should be charged only to such investor who delayed or defaulted on drawdown payment.

Category I and Category II AIFs should maintain 30 days cooling off period between two periods of permissible leverage.

"The regulatory intent behind permitting borrowing for Category I and II AIFs is that the funds borrowed shall be utilized for meeting operational requirements of the AIF, and not for the purpose of making investment," Sebi noted. Further, the regulator proposed to mandate that AIFs should hold the instruments or securities of their investments only in dematerialised form.

Also, it has been suggested that the requirement of mandatory appointment of a custodian for safekeeping of securities for AIFs with corpus of over ₹500 crore, should be extended to AIFs with corpus of less than ₹500 crore as well.

Large Value Fund for accredited investors (LVFIs) should be permitted to extend their tenure up to four years, subject to approval of two-thirds of the unit holders by the value of their investment in the LVFI. Sebi noted that many AIFs are still holding their certificate of registration despite having no fund raising or investment activity in their schemes for several years.



Power Grid Corporation net profit rises 4% to ₹4,320 crore in March qtr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Power Grid Corporation on Friday posted a nearly four per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹4,320.43 crore in the March 2023 quarter, mainly on the back of higher revenues.

The company had reported a consolidated net profit of ₹4,156.44 crore in the year-ago period, according to a BSE filing.

The total income in the quarter under review increased to ₹12,557.44 crore from ₹11,067.94 crore a year ago.

In the financial year 2022-23, the consolidated net profit declined to ₹15,417.12 crore from ₹16,824.07 crore in FY22.

The total income rose to ₹46,605.64 crore in 2022-23 from ₹42,697.90 crore in 2021-22.

The company's board, in its meeting held on Friday, has recommended a final dividend of ₹4.75 per share for the financial year 2022-23.

This final dividend is in addition to the first interim dividend of ₹5 per share and the second interim dividend of ₹5 per share for the financial year 2022-23.

InterGlobe Aviation shares settle marginally lower

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of InterGlobe Aviation ended marginally lower on Friday amid profit-taking at the counter.

InterGlobe Aviation had climbed nearly 2 per cent in morning trade after the company flew into the profitability zone, raking in a net profit of ₹919.2 crore in the March quarter.

The stock of the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo failed to hold on to the morning gains and ended at ₹2,264.35 apiece, registering a marginal decline of 0.03 per cent on the BSE. During the day, it went up by 1.90 per cent to ₹2,308.

On the NSE, it skidded 0.31 per cent to finish at ₹2,257.45 per share. In intraday, it climbed 1.66 per cent to ₹2,302.45. Fuelled by robust market demand and higher revenues, InterGlobe Aviation



on Thursday flew into the profitability zone, raking in a net profit of ₹919.2 crore in the March quarter.

InterGlobe Aviation, which had faced turbulence last year, had a net loss of ₹1,681.8 crore in the three months ended March 2022.

IndiGo said it is adding 5,000 people to its workforce and looking to add 45-50 aircraft this fiscal and that it continues to deal with supply-

chain issues and work on mitigating measures.

The airline has reported its "best-ever fourth-quarter net profit of ₹9,192 million for the quarter ended March 2023". Excluding the foreign exchange gain of ₹252.8 crore, the net profit aggregated to ₹666.4 crore, according to a release.

Total income surged nearly 78 per cent to ₹14,600.1 crore in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal.

Forex kitty jumps \$3.5 bn to \$599.53 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising for the second consecutive week, India's forex kitty jumped \$3.553 billion to \$599.529 billion for the week ended May 12, the RBI said on Friday. The overall reserves had jumped by \$7.196 billion to \$595.976 billion for the pre-

vious reporting week.

It can be noted that in October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by

global developments.

For the week ended May 12, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by nearly \$3.577 billion to \$ 529.598 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI on Friday.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by \$38 million to \$46.353 billion,

the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by \$35 million to \$18.413 billion, the apex bank added. The country's reserve position with the IMF was down by \$28 million to \$ 5.164 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

Zomato Q4 net loss narrows to ₹187.6 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Online food delivery platform Zomato on Friday said its consolidated net loss narrowed to ₹187.6 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2023 on the back of robust revenue growth.

The company had posted a consolidated net loss of ₹359.7 crore in the same period previous fiscal, Zomato said in a regulatory filing.

Its consolidated revenue from operations during the period under review stood at ₹2,056 crore against ₹1,211.8 crore in the year-ago period.

The total expenses in the fourth quarter were higher at ₹2,431 crore compared to ₹1,701.7 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, the company said.

For the fiscal ended March 31, 2023, the consolidated net loss was ₹971 crore, down



from a consolidated net loss of ₹1,222.5 crore in 2021-22.

In FY23, consolidated revenue from operations stood at ₹7,079.4 crore compared to ₹4,192.4 crore in FY22, the company said in a filing.

Zomato said it has appointed Rakesh Ranjan as CEO-Food ordering and delivery business, while Rinshul Chandra has been designated as COO-Food ordering and

delivery business.

In addition, Rishi Arora has been appointed as CEO-Zomato Hyperpure, a subsidiary of the company.

Ranjan, Chandra and Arora have been with Zomato/Blinkit for more than 5 years across various roles, it added.

In a letter to the shareholders, Zomato Managing Director and CEO Deepinder Goyal asserted that the com-

pany is confident of achieving profitability for the entire business within the next four quarters.

Zomato is aiming to get there by increasing profits in the food delivery business and reducing losses in the quick commerce (Blinkit) business, he added.

"In food delivery, over the last five quarters, we have improved our margins meaningfully while further strengthening our market position," Goyal said, adding the company would continue with the same mindset as it looks to further expand the adjusted EBITDA margin from the current 1.2 per cent to the stated goal of over 4-5 per cent of gross order value (GOV).

It would translate to ₹1,000 crore to ₹1,300 crore of annual cash operating profit at the current scale of the food delivery business, he added.

JSW Steel Q4 profit grows 12% to ₹3,741 crore in Jan-Mar; output rises 13% to 6.58 MT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JSW Steel on Friday posted 11.90 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹3,741 crore for March quarter 2022-23, helped by higher income.

Its net profit in the year-ago period was ₹3,343 crore, JSW Steel said in a BSE filing.

Total income rose to ₹47,427 crore from ₹47,128 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total expenses were at ₹43,170 crore as against ₹41,282 crore a year ago.

On a standalone basis, JSW Steel's net profit rose to ₹2,828 crore from ₹2,737 crore in January-March 2022. Income was at ₹37,705 crore as against ₹36,427 crore in the same period a year earlier.

Expenses on standalone basis were at ₹33,767 crore as against ₹31,646 crore a year



ago.

In a separate statement, JSW Steel said its overall crude steel production was at 6.58 million tonne (MT) during Q4 FY23, up 13 per cent over the year-ago period. Sales during the quarter also rose 9 per cent year-on-year to 6.53 MT.

"Its net debt as of March 31, 2023 stood at ₹59,345 crore, lower by ₹10,153 crore against

Gold declines ₹105; silver climbs ₹255

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices eased ₹105 to ₹60,045 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid a decline in yellow metal prices globally, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹60,150 per 10 grams.

Silver, however, climbed ₹255 to ₹73,500 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹60,045 per 10 grams, down ₹105 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the overseas market, gold was trading lower at \$1,967 per ounce while silver was up at \$23.88 per ounce.

Rupee falls 5 paise to close at 82.67 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee fell 5 paise to close at 82.67 (provisional) against the US currency on Friday, weighed down by a strong greenback overseas and surging crude prices in the international market.

However, a firm trend in domestic equities and persistent foreign capital inflows supported the rupee and

restricted the fall, traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 82.71 against the dollar, and finally settled at 82.67 (provisional), down 5 paise from its previous close.

During the day, the rupee touched a high of 82.64 and a low of 82.80 against the green-

back. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 82.62 against the

dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.32 per cent to 103.25.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 1.05 per cent to USD 76.66 per barrel.

"Indian rupee fell to a two-month low on overnight surge in the US Dollar and positive crude oil prices. However, late



recovery in domestic equities and FII inflows prevented a sharp fall in the rupee," said

Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Hawkish statements from the US Federal Reserve officials also supported the greenback. There are rising odds that the Fed may continue to hike interest rates in its June FOMC meeting to tame inflation.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on the strong Dollar. Optimism

over the debt ceiling deal and hawkish Fed speak may continue to support the US Dollar.

"However, a rise in risk appetite in global markets and inflows from foreign investors may support the rupee at lower levels. Investors may watch out for Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech. We expect USD/INR spot to trade in between 82.30 to 83.30 in the near term," Choudhary added.

BUSINESS BRIEF

INDIA GLOBAL LEADER IN ENERGY TRANSITION: MIN New Delhi: The Sustainable Is Attainable Fest (SIA FEST) by Tata Power, one of India's largest integrated power companies, and News18, which saw the convergence of leaders from diverse fields, made a decisive bid towards India's global green leadership. It reinforced the call for mass collective awakening, and behavioural shift, to ensure that India, one of the fastest-growing economies of the world, sets new benchmarks in green energy transition. Union Power Minister RK Singh hailed India as a global leader in energy transition, and a trailblazer. "Our per capita carbon emissions are one-third of global levels. In the 2015 Paris Summit we pledged that by 2030 we would have 40% of our total energy from non-fossil fuels; we're already at 42.8% seven years ahead of the deadline. We have also emerged as the most attractive markets for renewables," said Singh at the Fest.

It's Sevilla vs Roma in Europa final



AP ■ SEVILLE

Erik Lamela propelled Europa League specialists Sevilla into the final once again with a 2-1 victory over Juventus on Thursday, sealing a 3-2 aggregate triumph in a gripping clash.

Lamela headed home in extra-time to complete an impressive comeback for the record six-time winners of the competition, who will face Jose Mourinho's Roma in Budapest on May 31 after they edged past Bayer Leverkusen.

Dusan Vlahovic fired visitors Juventus ahead in the second half, two minutes after coming on as a substitute,

but Suso smashed home from outside the area to take the game to extra-time.

Lamela connected perfectly with Bryan Gil's cross in the 95th minute to delight the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan, and Sevilla held on to reach the final for the first time since 2020.

"A lot of things went through my head, good moments, bad moments. It was a unique moment," Lamela told Movistar.

"Now we are a step away, it's a great opportunity. It's a night I will remember forever, it's something incredible to play here, in front of all these fans."

Juventus failed to set up an all-Italian final against Roma, but Italy still

has with one representative in each of the three European finals.

Inter Milan reached the Champions League showdown against Manchester City by seeing off rivals AC Milan on Tuesday, while on Thursday Fiorentina beat Basel to reach the Conference League final where they will face West Ham.

Defeat is concerning for Juventus, who are second in Serie A but braced for a potential points deduction which could knock them out of the top four. Winning the Europa League would have been an alternative route to Champions League qualification.

Massimiliano Allegri's side, with-

out the injured Paul Pogba, were significantly better than in the first leg but fell short.

"You have to put them in the back of the net when you have the chances," Allegri said.

"The boys played a good game, but it was a European semi-final, we had to give a little more."

He said his young Juventus side paid the price for their lack of experience compared to Sevilla. "It's a team that lacks experience at international level, these are physical matches, which require a lot," he added.

"Being with your childhood team, living each game and another final now,

is incredible, and you have to enjoy it," said veteran Sevilla defender Jesus Navas.

"The team was impressive, we gave everything, and the fans, they deserve everything."

ROMA THROUGH

Jose Mourinho's Roma remain on track for a second European trophy in two seasons after a goalless draw at Bayer Leverkusen sent them through to the Europa League final 1-0 on aggregate.

The Europa Conference League holders created little in attack but defended doggedly, as the increasingly frustrated home side peppered their goal in search of an equaliser.

The visitors held on through eight minutes of added time and will face six-time winners Sevilla in the final in Budapest on May 31.

Roma captain Lorenzo Pellegrini told Sky Sport Italia: "There are many things which Roma can and must improve, but as a true group, as a family, we have succeeded in this small feat."

Leverkusen midfielder Kerem Demirbay accused Mourinho of using "ugly" defensive tactics.

"It's a shame that in a semi-final at such a high level that this type of play can be rewarded," he told Germany's RTL. "They made things very ugly at the end."

Roma came into the game with a narrow 1-0 lead, thanks to a second-half goal from Rome-born midfielder Edoardo Bove in the first leg.

Mourinho has stayed true to the defensive tactics for which he is known this Europa League campaign -- Roma conceded just three goals in eight knockout games on the way to the final.

For Roma, who are six points off fourth spot in Serie A with three games to play, the victory not only means a shot at a maiden Europa League title, but also a chance at making next year's Champions League.

Despite the elimination, Leverkusen's short-term future looks bright, with Alonso, who has lifted Leverkusen from the relegation spots to a European semi-final since taking over late last year, declaring he would be at the BayArena next season.



West Ham end 47-year wait to reach European final

AP ■ LONDON

West Ham will face Fiorentina in their first European final for 47 years after Thursday's 1-0 victory at AZ Alkmaar clinched a 3-1 aggregate success in the Europa Conference League semi-finals.

Pablo Fornals scored West Ham's winner in the final moments of the tense second leg to set up a clash with Fiorentina in the final in Prague on June 7.

The Hammers last reached a major European final in 1976 when they were beaten by Anderlecht in the Cup Winners Cup.

In the other semi-final second leg, Antonin Barak's last-gasp goal sealed Fiorentina's dramatic 3-1 win at FC Basel.

The Serie A club are the first team to reach the final of four different major European competitions.

Vincenzo Italiano's side trailed 2-1 after the semi-final first leg, but they turned the tie around in Switzerland.

Nicolas Gonzalez's double and Barak's goal in the final seconds of stoppage-time in

extra-time clinched a 4-3 aggregate triumph.

West Ham have not won a major trophy since Trevor Brooking's goal beat Arsenal in the 1980 FA Cup final.

They lost the 'Steven Gerrard' FA Cup final on penalties after a 3-3 draw against Liverpool in 2006.

"We're absolutely thrilled. It's a big achievement for the club, but now it's about going and winning it. AZ are very good at what they do, but I'm delighted we did it," West Ham boss David Moyes said.

"We've brought in a lot of international players to get better, but we've really struggled this season. We had to go back to what gets you wins, and thankfully we did that."

Last season, West Ham lost 3-1 on aggregate to eventual winners Eintracht Frankfurt in the Europa League semi-finals. West Ham have won 13 of their 14 games in the competition this season and will be favourites whoever they play in the final.

"We've created history. It's the first time in 47 years. It's pure emotion and happiness to get it done," West Ham midfielder Declan Rice said.



Marquinhos extends PSG contract to 2028

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain captain and Brazil defender Marquinhos has extended his contract until 2028, the club announced on Friday.

"The 29-year-old Brazilian defender and the Red and Blue will continue their adventure together until June 30, 2028," Qatari-owned PSG said Friday in a statement.

Marquinhos joined the club from Roma in 2013 when he was just 19. He has become an indispensable part of the PSG set-up and was a member of the side that reached the 2020 Champions League final.

"I am very happy to announce this contract extension but also very proud," said Marquinhos.

"This is a very special moment for me," he added, saying he was "convinced that we

will continue to achieve great things together in the years to come".

With Lionel Messi on the point of leaving and speculation surrounding the futures of Neymar and Kylian Mbappe, the decision of Marquinhos to throw his weight behind PSG has been welcomed by the club.

"This is already very good news for the club, for me as coach and for the fans," said Christophe Galtier in a press conference.

"It is an example. He is finishing his 10th season. He is one of the best central defenders in the world, he has been omnipresent for 10 years. It's a strong signal sent to everyone."

PSG were beaten by Bayern Munich in the last 16 of this year's competition but are on the verge of wrapping up their ninth Ligue 1 title in 11 years.

Howe ready for Euro challenge as Newcastle eye Champions League

AP ■ NEWCASTLE

Eddie Howe says Newcastle will need more quality and depth in their squad next season if they are to cope with the demands of a potential Champions League campaign.

Howe's side are guaranteed to at least reach the Europa League after thrashing Brighton 4-1 on Thursday.

But the third placed Magpies have a lucrative Champions League berth within their grasp.

They will be certain of qualifying if they win one of their last two games against Leicester on Monday or Chelsea on May 28.

Newcastle boss Howe has spent over £250 million (\$310 million) to revitalise his squad since taking charge in 2021 and he knows further investment in new signings will be required to compete in the Premier League and Europe next term.

"We need to figure that out. If you have a strong squad, rotation will be important. Rotation is going to be important, utilising the whole squad is going to be important," he told reporters on Friday.

"We haven't felt the necessity to necessarily do that on a consistent basis because we've been in one competition - of course, we had the League Cup run. We have rotated to



a degree, but maybe not in the numbers that we might need next year.

"If you're going to do that, then the squad needs to be strong enough, so if you put out two XI's, they're of equal strength."

The strength of Howe's current squad could be put to the test on Monday evening with his midfield resources stretched severely in the aftermath of an energy-sapping clash with the Seagulls.

Joe Willock was helped from the pitch in some discomfort with a hamstring injury which the Magpies fear will end his season with two games to go, while Bruno Guimaraes has been nursing a persistent ankle problem in recent months.

Toney's future with Brentford despite betting ban: Frank

AP ■ LONDON

Thomas Frank says Ivan Toney will stay at Brentford despite the England striker's eight-month ban for gambling offences. Toney was hit with the suspension by the Football Association after committing 232 breaches of its betting rules between 2017 and 2021.

Brentford's top scorer will not play again until January 2024, with the ban also prohibiting him from training with his team-mates until September.

The FA indicated on Thursday it will apply to FIFA to have the ban extended worldwide, thereby ruling out the pos-



sibility of Toney being loaned abroad for the duration.

The 27-year-old has scored 20 of Brentford's 54 Premier League goals this season, as well as making his England

debut against Ukraine in March.

Regardless of the disruption Toney's absence will cause, Brentford boss Frank indicated the player will still have a future at the west London club

"I've been in contact with him. He's disappointed and sad about the situation. His future is with Brentford, there's no doubt about that," Frank told reporters on Friday.

"We are waiting for the information so we know what we can do. What he's allowed to do, especially for the first four months.

"One thing is for sure, we will do everything to be there for him, support him and be aware of the mental health in it.

"He's made some mistakes, but we need to be there, and want to be there, for him and help him. We just need to know what we are allowed to do."



Bellingham sidelined with knee pain ahead of key game

AP ■ DORTMUND

Jude Bellingham is likely to miss a crucial game in Borussia Dortmund's challenge for the German title after knee pain ruled him out of training with the team this week, coach Edin Terzic said on Friday.

The England midfielder felt pain in Dortmund's 5-2 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach last week and hasn't been in full training since. Terzic said there is "a big question mark" about whether he can play in Dortmund's game against Augsburg on Sunday.

Bayern Munich leads Dortmund by one point in the Bundesliga standings with two games to go. If Bayern beats Leipzig on Saturday, Bayern's big advantage on goal difference means Dortmund would realistically need a win to keep its title chances alive ahead of the final round of games next week.

The 19-year-old Bellingham has scored 14 goals in 42 games

for Dortmund this season, including four in his team's last four Bundesliga games.

Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel is set to have Yann Sommer available to face Leipzig on Saturday after the Switzerland goalkeeper had a stomach bug this week. Sommer was signed in January as a stand-in for Manuel Neuer, who hasn't played since the World Cup after breaking his leg while skiing.

Tuchel said Bayern remains without injured left back Alphonso Davies and forward Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting, and that defender Lucas Hernandez is not yet ready for a comeback after his long-term knee injury.

Tuchel wants his team to be alert for Leipzig counterattacks, highlighting the third-place team's strength in transition.

"It is extremely important, if we want to control the game, to watch out and to prevent the counterattacks before they happen," Tuchel said.

Arteta hits back at criticism of Arsenal's title collapse

AP ■ LONDON

Mikel Arteta insists Arsenal deserve respect for their unexpected Premier League title challenge despite the collapse that allowed Manchester City to move into pole position.

City will be crowned champions if second placed Arsenal lose at Nottingham Forest on Saturday or if the leaders beat Chelsea on Sunday.

One win from their final three games is enough for City to take the title for a fifth time in six seasons.

It is a bitter pill to swallow for Arteta after his team led the title race for much of the season. The Gunners have endured criticism of their failure to hold off City, with last weekend's dismal 3-0 defeat against Brighton sparking questions about the character of Arteta's squad.

But, in a thinly-veiled dig at their detractors, Arsenal boss Arteta said his team had surpassed expectations by pushing treble-chasers City so hard.

"We have shown this season," Arteta replied when asked if Arsenal can be title contenders again next season.

"We're still there, with two games to go (City have three as they have a game in hand) we can still be champions against probably the best team in Premier League history."

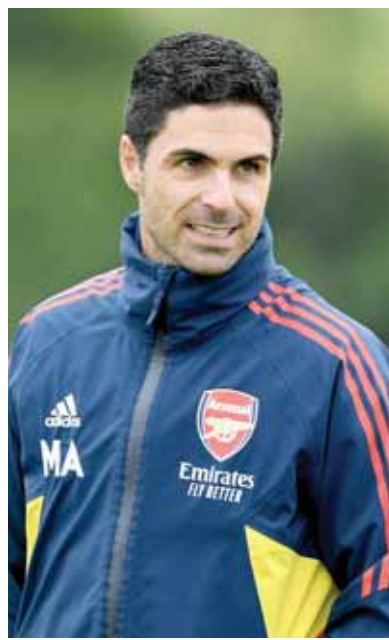
"For 10 months we're still there. There's two games still to go and we're not going to bottle that for sure."

"What happens next season will depend on what we do, how we evolve and how we start. That prediction is very difficult to do today."

Arteta did concede improvements will need to be made to his young team before Arsenal can expect to hold their own in the Champions League next season.

"At the level that we want? No. We didn't have the capacity to do that as well with the Europa League so it's part of that evolution," he said.

"We want to be better and the rest will be better, then the margins will be



higher and we have to start to live with those standards and improve and be smarter."

Meanwhile, Arteta said discussions over the future of Granit Xhaka will wait until the end of the season.

Xhaka is approaching the final 12 months of his contract and has been linked with a move to Bayer Leverkusen. The Switzerland midfielder played for four years with Borussia Moenchengladbach before he moved to Arsenal in 2016.

"The clarity is there. He is a player that has played I think every minute since I have been the manager," Arteta said.

"He is an incredibly respected figure at the club. Whatever happens is something we will discuss, certainly not now."

Arsenal duo Oleksandr Zinchenko (calf) and Gabriel Martinelli (ankle) will not feature again this season.

"Gabi's is a pretty nasty injury, we need to assess in the next week how long he'll be out for," Arteta said.

Jones to leave Man United

AP ■ MANCHESTER

He was once described as having the potential to outshine George Best, David Beckham, Cristiano Ronaldo and Wayne Rooney as Manchester United's greatest ever player.

On Friday, however, the Premier League club confirmed that Phil Jones will leave when his contract expires at the end of the season after seeing his career wrecked by injuries.

The defender joined United from Blackburn Rovers in 2011 and was part of Alex Ferguson's last league title-winning team. But he has only made five appearances in the past three seasons and never fulfilled the potential many believed he had.

Jones made 229 appearances for United.

RR KNOCK PBKS OUT OF IPL 2023

PTI ■ DHARAMSHALA

Devdutt Padikkal and Yashasvi Jaiswal hit sublime fifties as Rajasthan Royals kept their slim play-off hopes alive with a four-wicket win over Punjab Kings in their final IPL league match here on Friday.

Sent into bat, PBKS were reeling at 50 for four but Sam Curran (49 not out) and Jitesh Sharma (44 off 28 balls) revived the innings while M Shahrulkh Khan (41 not out off) provided the late surge to power the side to 187 for 5.

A target of 188 was never going to be easy and RR needed to complete the chase in 18.3 overs to momentarily get ahead of Royal Challengers Bangalore's net runrate but they couldn't.

But still RR got two points to stay afloat with Jaiswal (50 off 36) scripting the chase, adding 73 off 49 balls with Padikkal (51 off 30) and another 47 off 22 balls with Shimron Hetmyer (46) as RR romped home in 19.4 overs.

With the win, RR moved to fifth spot with 14 points, same as RCB (4th) and Mumbai Indians (6th), who both still have a match to play in the league stage. The loss meant, PBKS are officially out of the IPL.

Chasing 188, RR suffered an early setback with Kagiso Rabada getting Jos Buttler LBW for his third duck. But Padikkal and Jaiswal batted with purpose to take RR to 85 for 1 in 9.4 overs. While Jaiswal began the chase with a hat-trick of fours,

Padikkal, who was promoted up the order, then took the charge, sending the bowlers on a leather hunt.

But RR lost Padikkal and skipper Sanju Samson (3) in quick succession to leave them at 90 for 3 in the 11th over.

Jaiswal then found a perfect partner in Hetmyer, who slipped into the role of the aggressor with three sixes early on.

Jaiswal completed his fifty in 35 balls before falling to a reverse hit off Nathan Ellis.

With both Jaiswal and Padikkal departing after completing their fifties, RR still needed 51 off 33 balls and it was Riyan Parag (20 off 12 balls) who slammed two successive sixes off Rabada to bring the equation down. But PBKS skipper Shikhar Dhawan pulled off a sensational catch to end Hetmyer's stay even as RR brought in Dhruv Jurel as an impact sub, who clobbered a six in the fourth ball of the last over to knock off the winning runs.

Earlier, PBKS were down 50 for 4 in 6.3 overs but Curran and Jitesh added 64 to resurrect the innings with the latter being the aggressor. Curran and Shahrulkh then piled up 73 off 37 balls with 46 of them coming off the last 2 overs to take them to a good score.

It was the second last over which proved to be a turning point with Yuzvendra Chahal, who had conceded 12 runs in his first three overs, went for 28 runs with Curran and Shahrulkh producing some clinical hitting.

Shahrulkh then milked



Trent Boult (1/35) for 18 runs as the last five overs yielded 70 runs. Forced into the XI due to R Ashwin's back spasm, Adam Zampa finished with 1 for 26, while Navdeep (3/40) picked up three wickets but Sandeep Sharma had a forgettable outing as he bled 46.

However, playing only his second game, Navdeep broke the partnership with Atharva (19) holing out at midwicket after hitting successive fours.

Boult and Zampa conceded just 3 runs each in the next two overs which put Dhawan under pressure and he was then trapped by Zampa in front.

Liam Livingstone was Saini's second victim as PBKS slipped to 50 for 4. However, after the strategic timeout, Jitesh changed gears, smashing Sandeep Sharma for two maximums before thumping Zampa across the deep extra cover.

Saini was next in his firing line, slicing one across point before smoking him over deep extra cover. A short ball was next hammered across the mid-wicket region. However, a slower delivery did the trick with Jitesh holing out at extra cover.

Shahrulkh then joined Curran but they couldn't find the big hits initially before exploding in the 19th over bowled by Chahal.

The first two balls were sent for a four and six by Shahrulkh before Curran took over, clobbering two sixes and a four to take PBKS across the 150-mark. Shahrulkh then blasted a six and four to finish it in style. Shahrulkh producing some clinical hitting.

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Boult pegged PBKS back early on, dismissing Prabhshirran Singh (2) with a caught and bowl effort but Dhawan (17) and Atharva Taide (19) picked some boundaries as they were 38 for 1 in 3.3 overs.

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CSK aim at playoff spot against DC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A determined Chennai Super Kings unit wouldn't mind being masters of its own fate in its bid to steamroll the already ousted Delhi Capitals, who are looking to end a forgettable IPL campaign on a high in a final league game, here on Saturday.

At the moment, CSK are on second on the points table with 15 points from 13 games. But a loss against DC along with a string of unfavourable results could see the four-time champions miss out on the last leg of IPL action.

A win would, however, confirm a play-off spot but whether they finish in second place or third would depend on the Lucknow Super Giants' result against Kolkata Knight Riders later in the day.

CSK have a better net run rate of +0.381 than LSG's +0.304, who are also on 15 points.

The slow nature of Feroz Shah Kotla track will suit CSK's game-plan and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, in all likelihood playing his last competitive game in the National Capital will like to make full use of the conditions against an out-of-sorts team.

Batting has been CSK's strong suit. Devon Conway, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Ajinkya Rahane have provided solid starts but CSK need the likes of Ambati Rayudu, Ravindra Jadeja and Moeen Ali to complement Shivam Dube better in the middle overs.

Dhoni has managed some cameos in the bag end of the innings and the skipper is expected to continue doing so despite calls of him coming up the order.

On the bowling front, Tushar Deshpande has been

expensive but he gets breakthroughs while young pacer Matheesha Pathirana has been doing a good job.

The spin trio of Jadeja, Moeen and Maheesh Theekshana have also been effective in stemming the flow of runs.

But standing in CSK's way is an unpredictable Delhi side.

After a miserable first half, where they lost five games on the trot, the Capitals did manage to pick up some momentum, winning five out of their next eight games but it came too late in the competition.

They are out of the reckoning but head into the contest on the back of their first 200 plus scores and a morale boosting 15-run win over Punjab Kings, all but ending their chances of qualification.

Come Saturday, David Warner and Co. would like to play the proverbial party-pooper once again by ending their IPL season with a win at home.

But Delhi hasn't fared well at home, with skipper Warner conceding their batting unit has struggled to figure out what the best total is at the Feroz Shah Kotla this season because of slow and inconsistent pitches.

Apart from a few cameos by Axar Patel, Delhi's Indian batting line-up has failed miserably this season.

The bowling unit has eked out most of Delhi's wins with the spin duo of Axar and Kuldeep Yadav doing a remarkable job.

Old warhorse Ishant Sharma has been invaluable, handed the ball in crunch situations, the veteran pacer kept his calm won the matches against Gujarat Titans and Punjab. However he hasn't provided too many breakthroughs despite being accurate on most occasions.

Don't care what people say: Kohli



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Virat Kohli feels that he doesn't give himself enough credit for scoring six IPL hundreds but he couldn't care less about critics, who are always pointing fingers at his mid-dling strike-rate.

"I never look at past numbers. I put myself under so much stress already. This is my sixth IPL hundred. I don't give myself enough credit some-

times despite playing impact knocks. (So) I don't care what anyone says on the outside. Because that is their opinion," said Kohli at the post match presentation, when asked about his not-so-great record against SRH.

Kohli, who has faced criticism for his mid-130s strike-rate, didn't forget to remind people how he has shouldered responsibility of his team in franchise and national cricket.

"When you are in that situation yourself, you know how to win games of cricket. I have done that for a long period of time, it is not like when I play I don't win games for my team. I take pride in playing according to the situation," said Kohli, who was named 'Player of the Match'.

LSG eyeing back-to-back playoff berth

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Set to be clad in local giants Mohun Bagan's iconic green and maroon jersey, Lucknow Super Giants would find themselves at home as they look to seal their playoff berth knocking out a hapless Kolkata Knight Riders in the final IPL game, here on Saturday.

The real home team in this case, KKR, have not only complained of being let down by the conditions but their problems go deeper, having struggled to find a perfect winning combination in a topsy-turvy season, enduring seven defeats. Out of those seven, four losses were at the Eden Gardens.

Be it the batting, which still seems to be a work in progress, the bowling, especially pace department, has also looked terribly short on experience.

In fielding, they have made a mockery of themselves with some of the efforts suggesting that the two-time champions have showed they do not 'belong' at this level.



KKR batters simply have not been able to adapt to the surface while batting first as they scored below-par totals of 179/7 and 149/8 against Gujarat Titans and Rajasthan Royals respectively.

Putting things into perspective, CSK and SRH scored 235/4 and 228/4 when they were put into bat by KKR at the same venue.

Courtesy, some individual brilliance from Rinku Singh and Varun Chakravarthy, the KKR still are lucky to have been able to keep their campaign alive in 'blow hot-n-cold' season.

With a heavy mid-table traffic, there is a possibility of four teams to be locked on 14 points with the one with a superior net run-rate making the playoffs.

LSG however do not have to fret so much about the mathematical scenarios as a win would be enough for them to seal their back-to-back playoff berth.

On momentum too, LSG look far superior to a struggling KKR who have struggled to get into the act at their home den.

Ponting feels India should have SKY in WTC squad



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Batting great Ricky Ponting is a tad surprised that Suryakumar Yadav doesn't feature in India's main squad for next month's World Test Championship final but backed Ishan Kishan to provide the much-needed 'X' factor in the absence of injured Rishabh Pant.

Pant, who is recovering from injuries that he suffered in a horrific car crash in December, was India's go to batter in case of a top-order failure, especially in overseas conditions.

Suryakumar, who made his Test debut against Australia at home earlier this year, could do the same for the team but he is only among the stand-by players. An injury to K L Rahul has made way for Kishan, who Ponting thinks can help India play an aggressive brand of cricket in their quest for a first ICC title in 10 years.

Asked if Suryakumar should have been in the squad, Ponting expressed surprise and said "yes".

"But there is another X factor that has just been added in Ishan Kishan. If you look at the way he plays, he is probably the most like Rishabh Pant with his potential to keep and bat in the middle order.

"If they do play those guys they should be given the right to play an aggressive brand of cricket."

"The best chance for India to achieve a result is by being a bit more adventurous in the way they play and Australia will try to do the same thing," said Ponting.

Shreyas Iyer, K L Rahul and Jasprit Bumrah are the other injured players who are not available for the final.

"With the injury issues India have got, they can go with few different ways especially in batting. Before Rahul's injury I had him in the eleven, now that he is not there, they need to pick Ishan or K S Bharat," said the three-time ODI World Cup winner.

ADVANTAGE AUSTRALIA

Ponting feels Australia have a slight upper hand going into the title clash.

"If this game was played in India, I would have said it would be really hard for Australia to win. If this game was played in Australia I would say Australia will be favourites but in England, it brings the teams together."

"We don't know what the conditions will be like. Having played at the Oval I think conditions will be much similar to an Australian wicket compared to an Indian wicket, therefore giving a slight advantage to Australia."

WHO IS BETTER PREPARED?

Majority of India's WTC squad members are playing in the IPL while only three Australians are part of the T20 competition.

For India, Cheteshwar Pujara is the only one playing his trade in county cricket, while Australians currently in England include Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne. Skipper Pat Cummins and pace spearhead Mitchell Starc have chosen to stay back home and have not played in months.

"There are two ways to look at this. For someone like Virat, is he better off playing now and scoring runs at a consistent basis and have confidence going into a game rather than the Australians back home who haven't been playing much cricket but will be mentally better prepared," Ponting said.

"So there are both ways to look at it. Is Shami going to be better skill wise compared to Cummins who has not played any cricket in months? It is a hard one. Lot of it comes down to individuals."

CAN'T EXPLAIN SIX HOME DEFEATS: LARA

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

SRH head coach Brian Lara admitted that his team came up against a "Virat Kohli at his best" but found it hard to explain why they lost six out of the seven home games.

"... Our guys played brilliant cricket but we came up against Virat Kohli at his best, and Faf, who has done a tremendous job for RCB throughout the season. He (Faf) is current Orange Cap holder right? So we came up against two world class players and overall I felt was a good effort from the boys," Lara said.

The legendary southpaw couldn't put a finger on why SRH lost six home games which became their undoing.

"It's hard to sit here and explain in a broad sense why but just that we are going to get better, but this sort of record is something you don't expect but it has happened," Lara said.

Dhoni's knee has not been 100%: Hussey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings skipper MS Dhoni doesn't want to strain his dodgy knee by running between the wickets and thus bats down the order to provide the final flourish, says batting coach Mike Hussey.

The talismanic keeper-batter has been nursing a knee injury throughout this IPL but despite that, Dhoni has kept wickets in all the games while playing useful cameos towards the end of the innings batting as low as number 8.

"I think it's pretty clear that he likes to come in the last few overs, that's his plan," Hussey said.

"It's been well documented that his knee has not been a 100 per cent and he's trying to get through the matches as best as he can throughout the tournament. So I think, he doesn't want to come in the 10th, 11th or 12th over and have to run those quick doubles all the time, that's going to put pressure on the knee."

"He's trying to delay coming in as



long as possible and having that impact late in the innings. He shows a lot of backing and faith in the likes of (Shivam) Dube, (Ravindra) Jadeja, (Ajinkya) Rahane and (Ambati) Rayudu to do the job before he comes in." Last week in the game against DC, Dhoni was seen limping and struggled to run between the wickets and after CSK's loss against KKR which was their last home game, he did a lap of honour around the Chepauk with an ice pack strapped around his knee.

As far as Dhoni's retirement from IPL goes, Hussey feels the veteran batter can continue playing for the next five years.

"He's still batting very well, is still motivated to come into training and working on his game and hitting the ball well. We've seen he comes late in the innings and finishes things well."

"He's still got the six-hitting ability, while he's enjoying it and is contributing to the team then there is no reason why he can't keep going for maybe another five years."

Mohsin is a gem, one for future: Morkel

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former South Africa pacer Morne Morkel feels uncapped India left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan is a gem of a bowler and said the 24-year-old is one for the "future and should be looked after well".

The UP pacer continued from where he left last season, despite being out of action for 12 months with a serious injury that could have forced him to amputate his bowling arm if he was late for treatment.

"For him, moving forward in his career is a big step," Morkel said.

"I'm just excited that he's fit now and available for selection."

Mohsin successfully defended 11 runs in the final over in

their match against Mumbai Indians to seal a dramatic five-run win.

"To come back without any cricket at all and with handful of training sessions, and then play the IPL where the margins are so small, to show that composure and calmness was pleasing," said Morkel, who is the bowling coach of LSG.

"I'm very impressed with Mohsin. He almost lost his arm due to the injury, being a year out of the game and coming back bowling an over like that has been inspirational," he said.

Having bagged 14 wickets in nine matches with an economy rate of 5.97 in his debut IPL season in 2022, Mohsin suffered a serious shoulder injury with blood clots in his bowling shoulder.



der. Forget bowling, he was not able to lift his bowling arm following the surgery.

After being ruled out of the initial phase, Mohsin played only his second game against MI and returned with figures of 1/26 from three overs.

"It's exciting not just for our franchise but for the Indian cricket. They have got a real gem of a cricket player and somebody they need to look after," Morkel said.

Mohsin is also battling emotional battle with his father in the ICU a day before their match against MI. "It shows the character of person. He's got a very big heart, work ethics are right up there. Definitely he's one to look out for in future," Morkel said.