

CITY 3
CM LAUNCHES PROJECTS WORTH
₹ 412 CR IN MAINPURI

OPINION 6
DECODING THE SCRIPTS OF
'MANN KI BAAT'

WORLD 10
IMRAN SLAMS GOVT, SAYS NO
PLANS TO TRAVEL ABROAD

LUCKNOW, SATURDAY MAY 27, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



SINDHU ENTERS
MALAYSIA
MASTERS SEMIS
11 SPORT

Fight over Sengol escalates

Why does Cong 'hate' Indian culture so much, asks Shah as Cong disputes that 'Sengol' is the symbol of transfer of power by British to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The war of words between the BJP and the Congress over the historical roots of the ceremonial sceptre Sengol, to be installed near the Chair of the Speaker in the new Parliament building, intensified on Friday.

Lambasting the Congress for the boycott call and disputing the historical importance of sengol, Union Home Minister Amit Shah tweet, "Why does the Congress party hate Indian traditions and culture so much? A sacred Sengol was given to Pandit Nehru by a holy Saivite Mutt from Tamil Nadu to symbolise India's freedom but it was banished to a museum as a 'walking stick'."

Shah's remarks came after Congress leader Jairam Ramesh claimed there was no documented evidence of Lord Mountbatten, C

Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru describing the Sengol as a symbol of transfer of power by the British to India.

Ramesh tweeted, "There is no documented evidence whatsoever of Mountbatten, Rajaji and Nehru describing this sceptre as a symbol of transfer of British power to India. All claims to this effect are plain and simple — bogus. Is it any surprise that the new Parliament is being consecrated with typically false narratives from WhatsApp University? The BJP-RSS distortions stand exposed yet again with maximum claims, minimum evidence."

Shah said, "Now, Congress has heaped another shameful insult. The Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam, a holy Saivite Mutt, itself spoke about the importance of the Sengol at the time of India's freedom."

The Congress, he further



posted, is calling the Adheenam's history as BOGUS! Congress needs to reflect on their behaviour". The Tamil tradition of a high priest presenting a sceptre to a newly crowned king as a symbolic gesture dates back to the Chola dynasty.

Several Union ministers hit out at the 20 Opposition parties, including the Congress, over their decision to boycott the inauguration ceremony.

A group of 270 eminent

citizens, including former bureaucrats, ambassadors and veterans condemned the Opposition parties for their decision and claimed that all the "family-first" parties have come together to boycott all that represents India.

The head of a Tamil Nadu monastery sought to counter Ramesh's claim, saying the Sengol was handed over to Lord Mountbatten and then it was presented to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1947 to symbolise transfer of power from British and wrong claims made in this respect by some people has caused sadness.

Tiruvavaduthurai Aadeenam, Ambalavana Desika Paramacharya Swami said the Sengol that was away from the gaze of people would now be prominently displayed in Parliament for the world to see.

To a question by reporters in Chennai on any proof for the handover of the Sengol, the pontiff said there were evidence, including photographs and reports that appeared in newspapers and magazines in

1947.

BJP president JP Nadda said what connects the boycotting parties is their dynastic leadership whose "monarchic" methods are at loggerheads with the principles of the Constitution.

While announcing the boycott, the Opposition parties had said the Prime Minister's decision to inaugurate it by himself, "completely sidelining President Droupadi Murmu, is not only a grave insult but a direct assault on our democracy which demands a commensurate response".

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri hit out at the Congress and others who gave the boycott call, saying the "boycott gang" is insulting the legacy of their own leaders and the freedom fighters.

In a series of tweets, Puri cited an old article of the Time Magazine published in 1947 which he said was a must read for those who wish they had built the magnificent new Parliament instead of Prime Minister Modi.

Continued on Page 9

New Parl will make Indians proud: Modi

PM urges people to share video that gives virtual tour of new Parl

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the new Parliament building will make every Indian proud, as he posted a video of the newly-constructed complex on Twitter and urged people to share it on the social media platform with the hashtag "MyParliamentMyPride".

Modi also urged people to share the video with their voiceover which he will retweet.

The new Parliament building will be inaugurated on Sunday and the ceremony will begin with an early morning havan and a multi-religion prayer followed by a formal opening in the Lok Sabha by



Prime Minister Modi.

"The new Parliament building will make every Indian proud. This video offers a glimpse of this iconic building. I have a special request — share this video with your own voice-over, which conveys your thoughts. I will re-Tweet some of them. Don't forget to use #MyParliamentMyPride," the Prime Minister said on Twitter.

The video shared by the Prime Minister gives a virtual tour of the new Parliament building, including the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

As many as 25 parties are expected to attend the inauguration of the new Parliament building even as 20 Opposition parties have decided to boycott the event.

Officials said the havan will be held outside the new building around 7 am and the ceremonial sceptre Sengol will be handed over to Modi by the high priests of the Shaivite order.

The Sengol will be installed near the chair of the Speaker in the new Parliament building.

Former vice president M Venkaiah Naidu, Lok Sabha

Speaker Om Birla, former prime minister HD Deve Gowda and Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh among others are expected to be present during the formal inauguration of the new complex.

The triangular-shaped four-storey Parliament building has a built-up area of 64,500 sqm. The building has three main gates — Gyan Dwar, Shakti Dwar, and Karma Dwar.

SC rejects PIL for launch by Prez

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking a direction to the Lok Sabha Secretariat for inauguration of the new Parliament building by President Droupadi Murmu.

A bench of justices JK Maheshwari and PS Narasimha told petitioner in-person advocate Jaya Sukin that the court understands why and how this petition was filed and it is not inclined to entertain this petition under Article 32 of the Constitution.

CAPSULE

FIVE JUDGES ELEVATED AS HC CHIEF JUSTICES

New Delhi: Five judges were on Friday elevated as chief justices of high courts with one of them due to retire on May 30.

NIA SEEKS DEATH FOR JKLF CHIEF YASIN

New Delhi: The NIA on Friday approached the Delhi High Court seeking death sentence for Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik, who was awarded life term by a trial court in terror funding case.

AJIMM, BJP CLASH OVER 'VANDE MATARAM'

Meerut: A clash erupted between AJIMM and BJP councillors of Meerut Municipal Corporation at oath-taking event organised for them here on Friday. The scuffle began following a disagreement over singing of 'Vande Mataram' to commence the event.

SC grants bail to ailing Jain for six weeks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday granted jailed former Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain interim bail for six weeks on medical grounds, saying a citizen has a right to receive treatment of his choice in a private hospital at his own expense.

The relief came a day after Jain collapsed in Tihar Jail due to dizziness and was admitted to the ICU of a Government hospital.

Continued on Page 9

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The old Parliament building, an architectural splendour and a historic landmark that guided the destiny of India for nearly a century and whose illustrious legacy will now be consigned to the pages of history, was inaugurated on January 18, 1927, by then Viceroy Lord Irwin.

On May 28, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the new Parliament building and dedicate it to the nation, the old Sansad Bhavan will also hand over its position



as the country's hallowed legislature, a privilege it enjoyed for over 96 years.

Revered today as India's temple of democracy, the old Parliament House has for these nine-and-a-half decades witnessed the imperial rule of the British and its chamber has heard the echoes of bombs hurled by revolutionaries

Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt in a bid to attain freedom.

The building has seen the dawn of Independence and its halls have reverberated with the historic "Tryst with Destiny" speech delivered by first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru on August 15, 1947.

An architectural marvel with its charming circular design and an impressive colonnade of 144 creamy sandstone on the first floor, the old building was opened amid much fanfare at a time when the new imperial capital of the British Raj — New Delhi —

was being built at a site in Raisina Hill area.

According to archival documents and rare old images, a grand ceremony was held on January 18, 1927, to mark the opening of the majestic building, then called Council House.

Over a century ago, when the nation was still in the making and Independence 26 years away, Britain's Duke of Connaught had laid the foundation stone of Parliament House on February 12, 1921, and said it would stand "as the symbol of India's rebirth to yet higher destinies".

Continued on Page 9

Now HC to hear all petitions on Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah masjid dispute

PTI ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court on Friday directed all matters related to the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute pending before a Mathura court be transferred to it.

Justice Arvind Kumar Mishra passed the order allowing a transfer application filed by Bhagwan Shrikrishna Virajman at Katra Keshav Dev Khewat Mathura through the next friend, Ranjana Agnihotri, and seven others. "It is requested to the respected chief justice to kindly nominate an appropriate bench for trial and disposal of such suits so withdrawn," he added.

The petitioners had requested that the original trial must be conducted by the HC itself like the Ayodhya matter.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is expected to clock the highest growth among the world's big economies this year and the country's economy is witnessing the "famous snowball effect" that will lead to more investments and more jobs, according to World Economic Forum (WEF) President Borge Brende.

"There have been reforms that have led to less red tape, better climate for investments and also the digital revolution is really happening in India," Brende said and stressed that he is "very bullish and optimistic" about the country's growth trajectory but not so optimistic about global growth.

India, which currently



holds the G20 presidency, is one of the fastest growing key economies in the world and WEF has had close collaborations with the country for the past many years.

"When the snowball starts to roll, it gets bigger and bigger, and that is what is happening with the Indian economy."

"The growth will lead to more investments, more jobs... It will be an exponential growth in the coming years and you

will see a situation where more poverty is eradicated and more opportunities are there for young people," Brende told PTI in an interview in the national capital.

Brende, who was on a short visit to India, had discussions about ongoing collaborations as well as India's G20 presidency with stakeholders. He met various Union ministers and company executives, among others.

"I think that nations in the developing world have something to learn from India. India is the largest democracy in the world and it is also an open society with entrepreneurs and innovators and free speech," he said.

Continued on Page 9

Rahul gets court NOC for passport for just 3 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday granted a no-objection certificate (NOC) to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for issuance of an "ordinary passport" for three years instead of the normal 10 years, following an objection raised by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy.

Rahul had surrendered his diplomatic passport upon his disqualification as an MP. Swamy argued that the court should listen the opinion of Union Home Ministry, which issued notice to Rahul on the controversial British citizenship holding issue.

"I'm partly allowing your application. Not for 10 years but three years," Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Vaibhav Mehta told Rahul's counsel.

Continued on Page 9

Special ₹75 coin to mark opening of new Parliament

New Delhi: The Government will issue a commemorative ₹75 coin to mark the inauguration of new Parliament Building on May 28 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As per a gazette notification by Department of Economic Affairs under the finance ministry, the weight of this coin could be 34.65- 35.35 gram.

Should be limit to politics: EAM on Opp boycott

Rajpipla: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday described as "unfortunate" the decision by 20 Opposition parties to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building and said there should be a limit to doing politics. Jaishankar said the inauguration of the new Parliament building should be celebrated as a festival by the entire nation.

Impressive building: Omar

Srinagar: National Conference leader Omar Abdullah on Friday said the new Parliament building was a welcome addition and looks "pretty damn impressive", amid criticism by the Opposition over its inauguration.

Abdullah, whose party's MPs have also announced to boycott the inaugural ceremony, said when he was the

member of the Lok Sabha, many of his colleagues often spoke about the need for a new and improved Parliament building.

"Setting aside the brouhaha about the inauguration for a moment, this building is a welcome addition. Better late than never is all I will say and this one looks pretty damn impressive," the NC vice president wrote on Twitter.

El Nino return predicted after 3-yr break

Normal monsoon from June-Sept this year: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday retained its forecast for "normal" monsoon from June-September this year, unchanged from its prediction in April, except north west region this year although it is said there is a high probability of El Nino phenomenon which is set to return after a three-year hiatus.

The IMD said at 96 per cent of the Long Period Average (a 50-year mean) of 87 cm, this is at the lowest end of what is considered "normal."



Announcing the so-called stage-2 long range forecast for Southwest Monsoon 2023, the IMD in its updates on Friday said rainfall during the June-September period is expected to be below normal at <92 per cent of long period average (LPA) in northwest India with an error margin of +/-4 per cent while overall monsoon is expected to be normal in the

country at 96 to 104 per cent of the LPA, which is based on rainfall data from 1971 to 2020.

It is likely to be normal at 94 to 106 per cent of the LPA in the northeast, central, and south Peninsular.

However, most parts of the country will witness deficient showers in June, except some pockets in peninsular regions such as south

Karnataka and northern Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Ladakh, it said.

The IMD said the warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean has begun and there was a 90 per cent probability of development of the El Nino phenomenon, which is known to affect monsoon rains in India.

However, a positive Indian Ocean Dipole is likely to develop during the monsoon season which would offset the adverse impact of the El Nino and bring rains to most parts of the country.

D Sivananda Pai, head of the IMD's Environment Monitoring and Research Center said this is an El Nino year associated with subdued rainfall in the northwest and central India and above-normal rainfall in the northeast.

Continued on Page 9

School jobs scam: SC stays ₹25 lakh cost on Abhishek, but allows probe

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the Calcutta High Court order, which imposed a cost of ₹25 lakh on Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee while dismissing his plea seeking recall of a previous order pertaining to probe into the school jobs scam case.

A vacation bench comprising Justices JK Maheshwari and PS Narasimha observed the high court had considered the points raised by Banerjee in his plea but the imposition of cost of ₹25 lakh was "perhaps not warranted." But then, it does not mean that no cost can be imposed at all....I think the order is a very balanced and fair order," he observed.

Continued on Page 9

UN favours memorial wall for Indian peacekeepers

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ UNITED NATIONS

Given India's contribution to various peacekeeping missions under the aegis of the United Nations, top UN officials have voiced support for New Delhi's initiative to establish a memorial wall honouring the fallen UN peacekeepers. The officials also lauded India's contributions to peacekeeping missions across the globe.

India is the third largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping with more than 6,000 military and police personnel deployed to Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Middle East and Western Sahara.



About 177 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice, the highest number by far from any troop-contributing country.

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was commemorated in the United Nations late Thursday with solemn ceremonies, including a wreath laid by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the Peacekeepers Memorial to honour the women and men who sacrificed their lives while serving under the UN flag.

Guterres also presided over

a ceremony in the General Assembly Hall at which the Dag Hammarskjöld Medals were awarded posthumously to 103 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers, who were killed in the line of duty last year, including three Indian personnel.

Border Security Force personnel Head Constables Shishupal Singh and Sanwala Ram Vishnoi, who both served with the Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Shaber Taber Ali who served in a civilian capacity with the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) were honoured with the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal at the solemn ceremony.

Continued on Page 9

CM launches projects worth Rs 412 cr in Mainpuri

Unveils statue of Madhavrao Scindia

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In his first visit to Mainpuri after urban civic polls, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated as well as laid foundations of projects worth Rs 412 crore in the district.

While inaugurating 23 industrial projects worth Rs 238.30 crore and laying the foundation stones of 40 development projects worth Rs 173.19 crore, the chief minister said that the government was working hard to make Mainpuri one of the most developed districts of the state. "The government is working toward a zero-tolerance policy to get rid of corruption and corrupt people. Our goal is to establish India as the world's largest economy by associating with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolutions," he said.

The chief minister also unveiled the statue of Madhavrao Scindia in the presence of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and senior ministers from his cabinet.

While unveiling the statue at the Scindia Tiraha, the chief minister said everyone was shocked by his untimely death in 2001 because he was a rising star in the nation's politics.

"Madhavrao Scindia was Member of Parliament for nine times and was even appointed as Union minister. As railway minister he made revolutionary changes including launching of Swarn Shatabdi train," he said. Yogi said that Madhavrao



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia launching several projects in Mainpuri on Friday

'A strong bond exists between Mainpuri and Scindia family'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said that the Scindia family's relationship with Mainpuri was 250 years old and his family had nurtured this relationship for the last many centuries.

"When foreign forces were invading India and the Rohilla Afghans launched a campaign to oppress this area, my forefather Dattaji Maharaj Scindia and after him, Maharishi Maharaj worked to preserve the unity and integrity of 'Mother India' in this entire region," he said in a function where the statue of Madhavrao Scindia was unveiled in Mainpuri on

Friday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was also present on this occasion.

Scindia said that it was 1770, and the Rohilla Afghans terrorised not only Mainpuri but also Etawah, Meerut, Budaun and Nazirabad.

He said the task of uprooting them was carried out by the Scindia family's ancestors.

"A strong bond exists between this land and the Scindia family. While the Scindia family liberated this area, my father breathed his last on this soil," he said.

Madhavrao Scindia's helicopter crashed on September 30, 2001 at 1 pm

in Bhainsroli in Bhogaon police station area when he was going from Delhi to Kanpur. In that crash eight people, including Madhavrao Scindia, died.

Scindia said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh was quickly advancing toward development and progress.

"Today, Uttar Pradesh is the shining star of India and has firmly established its presence on the international stage. The goonda raj and mafia raj, which existed in the state prior to 2017, have been completely eradicated under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath," he said.

Scindia always did positive politics. "A tragic incident took him away from us. Today is an emotional moment for all of us. We were paying tribute to a son of India," he said.

"The intersection in Mainpuri is named after Madhavrao Scindia and today we installed his statue. The memorial built for Madhavrao Scindia is small. Work will be done to make it grand and beautiful," he said.

Expressing his gratitude, the chief minister said that he was grateful to the people of Mainpuri for their support in the civic elections.

Stating that Uttar Pradesh had progressed under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the chief minister said that in the last six years the network of highways, expressways, and roads was being laid at the same speed with which air connectivity had progressed in the state.

"Earlier, benefits were only provided to a select group of people, but now all poor people are receiving benefits from government schemes without any discrimination," he added.

The chief minister informed that in six years, free houses have been given to 54 lakh poor people, and 1,21,000 'majras' have been electrified in the state. "In every district of the state, new opportunities for skill development and employment are being provided by linking the institutions with the industry," Yogi said.

Akhilesh Yadav plays plans to install 'Sengol' in Parl

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday hit out at the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party over plans to install 'Sengol' scepter—a historic Tamil artifact signifying transfer of power between kings or rulers—in the new Parliament building to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday.

The former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh said the use of 'Sengol' indicated that the party had "accepted" defeat and planned to hand over power—a reference to next year's general election, when the BJP will bid for an unprecedented third successive term.

Akhilesh Yadav endorsed the Congress stand on this issue and questioned the BJP's claims about the 'Sengol' and criticised it for "consecrating the new Parliament and attempting to perpetuate false narratives".

"The 'Sengol' is a symbol of transfer of power (from one hand to another)... The BJP seems to have accepted that the time has come to hand over power," Yadav tweeted amid a row over the scepter and the decision to have Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurate the building instead of President Droupadi Murmu.

"There is no documented evidence whatsoever of Mountbatten, Rajaji and Nehru describing this scepter as a symbol of transfer of British power to India. All claims to this effect are simply bogus. Wholly and completely manufactured in the minds of a few and dispersed into WhatsApp," Akhilesh Yadav said.

The BJP hit back through Union Home Minister Amit Shah and party boss JP Nadda. Shah accused the Congress of hating Indian civilisation and its ancient traditions. "Why does the



Congress party hate Indian traditions and culture so much?" he said.

"A sacred Sengol was given to Pandit Nehru by a holy Saiivite Mutt from Tamil Nadu to symbolise India's freedom but it was banished to a museum as a 'walking stick," the home minister tweeted.

"Now, Congress has heaped another shameful insult. The Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam, a holy Saiivite Mutt, itself spoke about the importance of the 'Sengol' at the time of India's freedom. Congress is calling the Adheenam's history as bogus! Congress needs to reflect on their behavior," Shah said.

Apart from the 'Sengol' row, the decision to have Modi inaugurate the new Parliament building has also prompted a furious pushback from the opposition and nearly two dozen, including the SP and the Congress. The SP was one of 19 opposition outfits that issued a statement this week confirming they will all stay away from the inauguration.

Maya asks cadre to strengthen party in Uttarakhand

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, on Friday, held a review of the party's Uttarakhand unit and asked senior leaders to work on removing shortcomings and broadening the mass base.

She said the attitude of the current Bharatiya Janata Party government in Uttarakhand was against the welfare of the people. The BSP is conducting a series of state-wise organisational review meetings ahead of next year's Lok Sabha elections.

According to a statement issued by the party here on Friday, Mayawati emphasised on removing the shortcomings in the Uttarakhand unit and working to strengthen the party organisation in the hill state.

She instructed the party cadre to go ahead and make changes that were required.

The BSP chief said there was a lot of scope for the party to move forward in Uttarakhand. She said that other parties were mostly engaged in election allurements, jumlebaazi and vadakhi-lafi which were affecting the interest and welfare of the general public.



She said even after so many days of separation, Uttarakhand was fighting with inflation, poverty and unemployment and yearning for proper public interest, public welfare and expected development.

Mayawati also referred to the work done by her party in the erstwhile undivided Uttar Pradesh, saying it was the BSP government that demarcated Udhm Singh Nagar, Bageshwar, Champawat and Rudrapur as new districts. Uttarakhand was formed on November 9, 2000 as the 27th state of India when it was carved out of northern Uttar Pradesh.

Meanwhile, Mayawati also

held a meeting of the office-bearers of Maharashtra unit on Thursday and stressed on increasing the party's mass base.

The BSP president exhorted party workers in Maharashtra to begin preparations for the coming Lok Sabha elections, saying the party should have become a power to reckon with in the state by now.

The Dalit politician regretted that her party had so far been failing to become a big force in the state which was the 'karmabhoomi' of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and Manjavar Kanshi Ram.

The BSP chief also said because of the raging power tussle in Maharashtra, there was a possibility that the state may go for early polls.

"There is an atmosphere of political instability in Maharashtra due to the continuous struggle for power, selfishness and mutual animosity and this was affecting welfare and development of the common people," she said.

The BSP chief asked party workers to work with full force across 48 Lok Sabha and 288 assembly constituencies in Maharashtra.

Maniyar nagar panchayat chairperson booked for forging date of birth

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a major setback to Samajwadi Party, its newly-elected chairperson of Maniyar nagar panchayat in Ballia was booked for allegedly fabricating her date of birth while filing her nomination papers for the civic body polls, police said on Friday.

According to a complaint filed by Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) of Ballia, Maniram Singh, SP leader Ritu Devi produced her class 8 mark sheet of Naveen Balika Junior High School in Sripur as her age proof, which suggested her current age as 32 years. However, records showed that no examinee with her name took an exam at the said school that year, the complainant added.

Following allegations against Devi of forging her date of birth, Ballia District Magistrate Ravindra Kumar ordered the BSA to conduct an investigation, the police said.

Ballia City Kotwali Station House Officer Rajeev Singh said that based on Singh's complaint, an FIR was registered on Thursday night against Devi under sections 419 (cheating by impersonation), 420 (cheating), 467 and 468 (falsification of documents) and 471 (dishonest use of fake certificate) of the Indian Penal Code.

The matter is being probed and appropriate action would be taken, the SHO said.

The SP candidate had defeated Bharatiya Janata Party's Buchiya by a margin of 1,609 votes in the Maniyar nagar panchayat seat reserved for Scheduled Tribe women. Devi secured 4,919 votes, while Buchiya got 3,310 votes. A total of seven candidates contested this seat.

Meanwhile, in a killing over an election related dispute, a gram pradhan (village head) was shot dead in broad daylight in Gonda, police said on Friday.

The sensational killing took place on Thursday. Police personnel from nearby police stations have been deployed in the area to maintain peace.

According to Additional Superintendent of Police Shivrav, Bhupmani Shukla (40), the head of Pariyava village within Tarabganj police station limits, was shot at by an unidentified assailant in the afternoon. Shukla was rushed to the district hospital where the doctors pronounced him dead.

After Shukla was shot at Bhanpur intersection under Tarabganj police station, the angry relatives created a ruckus at the district hospital and insisted on taking the body home without a post-mortem. After much persuasion by the police, the relatives gave consent for autopsy.

A case has been registered by the police and efforts are on to trace out the killers who are absconding from the village.

UP police arrest Abu Salem's kin in Mumbai

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Police claimed to have arrested jailed gangster Abu Salem's nephew, Arif, from outside a hotel on Hill Road in Bandra, Mumbai.

Arif was on the absconders' list of the police and a hunt was on to apprehend him. Acting on a tip-off, a team of the UP Police rushed to Mumbai and started looking for Arif, Special Director General Prashant Kumar said here on Friday.

He said the team members, with the help of the local police in Mumbai, got success when they nabbed the nephew of the don. Arif is being brought to UP for further legal proceedings.


Kumar said that Arif was arrested in connection with a case lodged against him at Kotwali Azamgarh on May 25 by one Shabana Parveen.

Parveen has alleged in the FIR that one Hena, her husband Salam and Mohammed Arif forcefully grabbed her ancestral land.

The police had registered the FIR against the three accused under the charges of Indian Penal Code sections 386 (extortion), 420 (dishonesty), 467 (forgery).

Kumar said that the Special Operations Group of Azamgarh police got information that Arif was hiding in Mumbai and a team immediately dashed off there and nabbed him.

Arif is the son of Abdul Hakim who is the real elder brother of Abu Salem.

**U.P. RAJARSHI TANDON OPEN UNIVERSITY**
University Campus, Shantipuram (Sector-F), Phaphamau
Prayagraj - 211021

Adv. No. : 52/2023 Dated : 26/05/2023

Applications are invited for the post of **DEPUTY REGISTRAR**

General Conditions : (1) Prescribed application form along with qualifications, pay scales & other necessary general information's are available on University website www.uprtou.ac.in (2) Duly completed application form along with self attested required enclosures & requisite D.D. must reach by **Registered Post/Speed Post only** on or before dated 16/06/2023.

Registrar

Peak demand for power increases in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amidst scorching heat along with frequent scattered rainfall, the peak demand for power has gone beyond 26,000 megawatt this week.

With the increase in demand, as Uttar Pradesh reels under power cuts, the state government on Friday asked the UP Power Corporation Limited, divisional commissioners and district magistrates to ensure power supply to all categories of consumers as per the power supply schedule.

Additional Chief Secretary (Energy) Mahesh Kumar

Gupta said here on Friday that on May 23, the peak demand for power was 26,166 MW and the UPPCL had ensured supply to domestic, commercial and industrial category of consumers. However, with the state reeling under frequent power cuts amid the intense heat wave, the state government has assured uninterrupted power supply.

The opposition Samajwadi Party has targeted the Yogi Adityanath government over the crisis. Though there was a significant drop in mercury on Friday across the state after scattered rainfall, there was no

let-up in demand for power. The crisis is more acute in villages and small towns that often face emergency load shedding for one to two hours every day, in addition to the frequent power disruptions caused by local faults.

The Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd, crippled with maintenance and staff shortage issues, is now gearing up to meet the demand of the customers after peak power demand crossed 26,000 MW on May 23. On May 1, the peak demand of electricity in the state was 14,675 MW which increased to 19,680 MW by

May 6. As per the estimates of the UPPCL, the demand is likely to exceed 27,000 MW by the end of May.

Districts such as Kannauj, Banda, Chandauli, Deoria, Kaushambi, Ambedkar Nagar and Bareilly are experiencing frequent power cuts. Instances of frequent tripping of distribution lines have been reported almost from all cities, including Lucknow, where the instances of fire in transformers were also reported due to load increase.

According to Jitendra Singh, general secretary of Uttar Pradesh State Power

Corporation Engineers' Union, every year, along with the increase in consumption, there is also an increase in the approved load. However, this time, due to negligence by the UPPCL management, the business plan for December 2022 was approved late, resulting in a delay of three to four months.

Avadhesh Verma, chairman of the Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Consumers Council, said, "The availability of electricity is not a major problem, but the existing power distribution infrastructure in the state is unable to cope with the increase in demand."

AIMIM, BJP councillors clash over 'Vande Mataram' in Meerut

Meerut (PTI): A clash erupted between AIMIM and BJP councillors of the Meerut Municipal Corporation at an oath-taking ceremony organised for them here on Friday. The scuffle began following a disagreement over the singing of 'Vande Mataram' to commence the event.

Trouble began during the ceremony at the Chaudhary Charan Singh University auditorium when councillors of the Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi-led All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) refused to sing the national song.

Police personnel deployed at the venue intervened in the clash, separated the members of the two parties, and brought the situation under control. A

case was later registered against several BJP members at the local Medical College police station. At the ceremony, Harikant Ahluwalia was sworn in as mayor by the commissioner amid the noisy scenes and shouts of 'Vande Mataram' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai'. Ahluwalia then administered the oath to the newly elected councillors in batches of 15. Speaking to news persons later, the AIMIM councillors accused the BJP of assaulting them. Ward 71 councillor Fazal Karim alleged that ward 75 corporator Reshma's husband Dilshad Saifi and ward 79 corporator Asif sustained injuries.

AIMIM metropolitan president Imran Ansari said all 11 corporators of the party would go to the local police

station to get an FIR registered against the BJP workers.


Responding to queries about the incident, the BJP's former state unit president and Rajya Sabha MP Laxmikant Bajpai said, "Why this objection to singing 'Vande Mataram' mentioned in the Constitution of India when they take oath on the Constitution? There is no compulsion on singing it but at least stand up and be quiet when it is being sung."

Bajpai also criticised the district administration, alleging that an employee who did not know the national song properly was selected to sing it. The BJP leader claimed this forced him to go and sing 'Vande Mataram' himself.

Meanwhile, the police case regis-


tered against the BJP leaders was based on a complaint lodged by Dilshad Saifi. SHO Yogendra Singh said BJP corporator Uttam Saini, and party leaders Rajiv Gupta, alias Kale, and Kavita Rahi were among nearly 15 people were mentioned in the FIR. The case was registered under IPC sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 352 (punishment for assault or criminal force otherwise than on grave provocation) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation), action will be taken after an investigation, the SHO said.

Earlier in the day, three of the 11 corporators of the AIMIM took the oath at the ceremony and the rest are expected to do so on Saturday, Ansari said.

**Indian Bank**

Indian Bank

Zonal Office : S 19/33, Ekram Khan Building, Nadesar, Varanasi. Ph.: 0542-2505443, Email : zovaranasi@indianbank.co.in

**ALLAHABAD**

Demand Notice

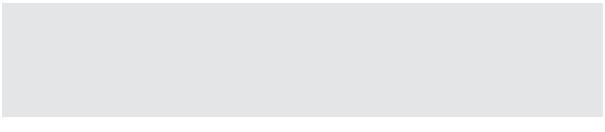
This Demand Notice is hereby given under section 13(2) of the Securitisation and reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement (Security) Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) read with rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) rules 2002 hereinafter calling upon the under mentioned borrowers/guarantors to repay the amount outstanding for the credit facilities granted to them/on their guarantee within 60 days from the date of this notice if you fail to repay to the bank the below mentioned amount, with further interest and incidental expenses, costs etc. In terms of the notice u/s 13(2) of the act. The bank will exercise all or any of the rights detailed under sub-section (4) of the section 13 and under other applicable provisions of the said act. You are also put on notice that in terms of sub-section (13) of section (13) you shall not transfer by sale, lease or otherwise the said secured assets detailed below of this notice without obtaining written consent of the bank, the details of the accounts and secured assets along with amount outstanding with interest and other charges and expenses thereon are given below.

S. No.	Name of Borrowers/Guarantors /Property Owners	Details of Mortgage Property	Demand Notice Date & Amount
Branch : Bhadohi			
1.	Borrower : M/s Maa Vindhyaawasani Ply Emporium Proprietor : Mr. Mahesh Prasad Jaiswal Address : Mondhi Station Road, District Sant Ravidas Nagar - 221401 Mortgagor/Guarantor : Mr. Mahesh Prasad Jaiswal s/o Mr. Amrit Lal Address : 65, Chakanevaji, Tehsil Bhadohi, District Sant Ravidas Nagar - 221401 Guarantor : Mr. Amrit Lal Jaiswal Address : 65, Chakanevaji, Tehsil Bhadohi, District Sant Ravidas Nagar - 221401	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Khata No. 292, Area 0.014 Hect (140 Sq.mtr) situated at Siyarahana, Taluka Chauthan, Bhadohi Sale Deed No. 113 Dated 17.01.2017 in the name of Mr. Mahesh Prasad Jaiswal s/o Mr. Amrit Lal R/o Narotampur Chamrupatti, Bhadohi. Boundries : East- Land of Badelal, West - Land of Chunnailal, North - Land of Badelal & Others, South - Mondhi to Kariyaon Marg	29.03.2023 Rs.9,84,973/- (+Intt. & Other legal & banking expenses at applicable rate)
Branch : Gopiganj			
2.	Borrower/Mortgagor : Mr. Yogesh Kumar Pathak s/o Late Mr. Rajpatil Pathak Address : (1) 22 B/1 Masjid Wali Gali, Near Rajiv Chowk, Gurugram - 122002 (2) Plot No. 567, Hanuman Mandir Road, Jakhaw Gopiganj, Bhadohi Co-Borrower : Mrs. Vandana Pathak Address : (1) B/1 Masjid Wali Gali, Near Rajiv Chowk, Gurugram 122002 (2) Plot No. 567, Hanuman Mandir Road Jakhaw Gopiganj, Bhadohi	All that part and parcel of the property at Plot No. 567, Area : 0.025 Hect. situated in Mauza Jakhav, Pargana Bhadohi, Tehsil Gyanpur, District Bhadohi. Boundries : East- House of Nagendra Pathak, West - Land of Hans Narayan, North - Rasta,, South - Land of Chhedilal Kahar.	20.03.2023 Rs.12,67,417/- (+Intt. & Other legal & banking expenses at applicable rate)

Date : 27.05.2022
Place : Varanasi

For Commission & Omission in Publication, Please contact with the branch or Zonal Office.

Authorized Officer, Indian Bank





कार्यालय वरिष्ठ प्रबन्धक मेगा फूड पार्क, बहेड़ी

उ.प्र. राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण,

ए-1/4 लखनपुर, कानपुर

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जनपदों में स्थित औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में विद्युत अनुसंधान एवं रख-रखाव कार्य हेतु सरकारी विमानों/सार्वजनिक उपकरणों/निर्माण/प्राधिकरणों/परिषदों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत एवं आई एं श्री में विद्युत लाईसेंस फार्म/डेकेटों से ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं, जो दिनांक 27.05.2023 को पूर्वान्ह 11.00 बजे से दिनांक 03.06.2023 को अपरान्ह 5.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती हैं। निविदाओं को दिनांक 05.06.2023 को पूर्वान्ह 11.00 बजे खोला जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा शब्द चर्चा की मूल प्रतियां दिनांक 08.06.2023 को सायं 5.00 बजे तक कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती हैं। ई-निविदा के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाने वाली निविदा सम्मती विवरण निम्नवत है:-

क्रमक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत रु. (लाख में)
1	Ugradation of Electrical System and Street Light under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at I. A. GC Shahjahanpur.	40.82
2	Ugradation of Electrical System and Street Light under Atal Industrial Infrastructure Mission at I. A. Uteawa Distt. Amethi.	30.94

नोट:- 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में सम्मिलित कर एवं जी.एस.टी. सहित दरे अंकित करें। अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्य हेतु निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सूक्षा विभाग" उ.प्र. शासन, लखनऊ में श्री को अनुमोदित लाइसेंस अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को **Consider** नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सम्मती विस्तृत जानकारी प्राधिकरण की **website: www.onlineupsida.com** पर स्थित ई-लिंक एवं यूटिलिटी की **website: http://etender.up.nic.in** पर देखी जा सकती है।

वरिष्ठ प्रबन्धक मेगा फूड पार्क बहेड़ी
उ.प्र.रा.औ.वि.प्रा.,कानपुर

DM inspects Ganga ghats

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

DM Divya Mittal inspected the Ganga ghats of the city, including Vidhyachal, on Thursday. During the inspection by motor boat she interacted with people to become aware of the ground realities of the ghats. She assured the people that under beautification of ghats they will be illuminated with high mast lights, changing rooms for women will be made available and daily cleaning of ghats will be ensured. She said arrangements for music and sound systems were under the plan to make the Ganga Aarti more attractive. Regarding erosion on the banks the DM said the proposal to stop it in the pipeline. During the inspection of ghats she was accompanied by ADM Shiv Pratap Shukla,

Joint Magistrate Alok Kumar, EO Angad Gupta and others.

HEALTH CHECK-UP: On the occasion of weekly parade at Police Lines the health check-up of cops was conducted on Friday. SP Santosh Kumar Mishra in his address said fitness of cops is a must for performing the duty properly. The doctors conducted the check-up of more than 50 cops in the camp.

MEETING: Divisional Commissioner Dr Muthukumarasamy B while presiding over the meeting of divisional Udyog Bandhu on Thursday warned the officials to dispose of matters of entrepreneurs on priority otherwise remain prepared to face the music. About the over bridge at Gazia he was apprised that it had already been completed.

New airport terminal inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while inaugurating the Kanpur new airport terminal along with Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday said the vision which had been seen by the people of Kanpur in the year 1980 has been made a reality today and the credit for it went to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said air transport helped generate economic growth and unlocked country's economic growth potential as it attracted business investments and human capital. He said Kanpur is one of the most important industrial hub of Uttar Pradesh and this new airport terminal will augment economic growth in the form of trade and commerce and place Kanpur on par with the developed cities of the country. He said this will encourage foreign buyers directly to visit Kanpur. He said earlier the passengers had to either stop at Mumbai or Delhi before they could reach Kanpur and this was in fact cumbersome and tedious. He said there was certainly not an inch of doubt that this terminal will be highly beneficial for both Kanpur and Uttar Pradesh. The two VVIPs arrived around two hours behind schedule and a huge crowd had assembled at the terminal for the inaugural ceremony. In his brief address Scindia said this new terminal had opened the doors of development and progress for



Kanpur and this will also herald a new era of travel and convenience. Speaker Satish Mahana while expressing thanks to Modi and Yogi said the endless wait for progress finally came to an end and now there will be rapid growth and development of this industrial city. BJP MP Devendra Singh Bhole and many more BJP dignitaries were present on the occasion. The top officials of the district administration were

also present at the terminal to welcome the CM. Divisional commissioner informed that at a time three aircraft can be accommodated and keeping in view the future needs it can also accommodate six aircraft as well and for this special provisions had already been made. He said departure side of the airport building can handle 300 passengers and arrival side 150. He said this terminal building had four conveyor belts.

Tiwari takes oath as mayor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Ashok Tiwari of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the newly elected mayor of the Varanasi Nagar Nigam, took oath of his office which was administered by Divisional commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma at Rudraksh Convention Centre here on Friday evening. In the swearing-in ceremony Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and other ministers were present. Apart from the mayor, majority of corporators elected from 100 wards also took oath. Mayor Ashok Tiwari and two corporators took oath in Sanskrit while four Muslim women in Urdu.

However, a lot of mismanagement was seen at the venue due to heavy rush of supporters of newly-elected corporators. Though the space in this hall was limited, it was a hard time for the police personnel to control the mobs of supporters trying to enter the hall. Due to commotion several invited dignitaries and elected corporators found it tough to enter there. Commissioner of Police (CP) Mutha Ashok Jain and other senior administrative and police officers were present there to keep watch on the situation. DyCM KP Maurya congratulated Ashok Tiwari and wished for the new responsibility. Addressing the gathering, he said that Varanasi, which is the parliamentary constituency of the Prime

Minister, is also the oldest and cultural capital of the world. He recalled that in 2014 when Narendra Modi had come to contest from this parliamentary seat saying that he (Modi) was called by Maa Ganga. "There was a time when America was not giving a visa to our popular leader Modi but today the US President himself welcomed him," he said, adding that the PM had given the message of cleanliness to the whole country by using a shovel at Assi Ghat in Varanasi. Mayor Ashok Tiwari, in his address, said that as per the intention of the PM and CM, the city's cleanliness, traffic, street lighting system etc will be further strengthened. The function was also attended by UP Ministers Ravindra Jaiswal

and Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, MLAs Neelkanth Tiwari, Saurabh Srivastava, Dr Awadhesh Singh, Sunil Patel, regional BJP president Dilip Singh Patel, state co-incharge (Bihar) Sunil Ojha, city chief Vidhasagar Rai and many others.

CELEBRATED: The activists of Namami Gange celebrated the completion of nine years of Modi government by performing Ganga-Aarti at Dashashwamedh ghat here on Friday. They also hailed the government for launching nine major schemes playing a big contribution in India's development journey and making the country prosperous. After performing Ganga aarti,



Newly-elected Mayor Ashok Tiwari taking oath of office in Varanasi on Friday

they sought the blessings of Baba Vishwanath (Lord Shiva) and Bhagwan Bhaskar (Lord Sun) for the continuation of public welfare schemes by the government. They offered bhog with fruits and sweets for making the nation self-reliant and healthy. Regional convenor (Kashi) Rajesh Shukla praised the government's commitment to good governance and poor welfare. Prayers were offered for the strength of the work being done by the Modi government in the difficult circumstances. On the occasion, they also offered shramdaan to make the ghats of river Ganga clean. Shukla said that the visionary leadership of Modi initiated several economic and social schemes with emphasis on economic development, social welfare and technological progress. Shukla said that the Modi government gave momentum to development work and helped the nation move towards prosperity. He also said that the nine major schemes under the leadership of Modi including Make in India, Startup India, Digital India, Smart City Mission, Vande Bharat Express, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Skill India, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana which has changed the face of the country. City co-convenor Bina Gupta, Vijeta Sachdeva, Sameer Jaiswal, Santosh Pandey, Raghuveer Singh, Sumitra Gupta, Sulochana Yadav and others were present,

INDIABULLS RURAL FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED					
(CIN :U74140MH1993PTC074596)					
Extract of the audited financial results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2023					
Particulars	Quarter ended 31 March 2023	Quarter ended 31 Dec 2022	Quarter ended 31 March 2022	Year ended 31 March 2023	Year ended 31 March 2022
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited	Audited
Total income from operations	5.87	5.58	4.95	22.07	21.01
Net profit for the period (before tax, exceptional and extraordinary items)	4.41	2.56	2.20	11.76	7.37
Net profit for the period before tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	4.41	2.56	2.20	11.76	7.37
Net profit for the period after tax(after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	3.12	1.80	1.65	8.66	5.34
Total comprehensive income for the period [Comprising profit for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)]	3.13	1.85	1.66	8.67	5.36
Paid-up equity share capital	41.80	41.80	41.80	41.80	41.80
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve)	33.33	30.20	24.66	33.33	24.66
Securities premium account	74.83	74.83	74.83	74.83	74.83
Net worth	149.96	146.83	141.29	149.96	141.29
Outstanding debt	49.95	49.90	49.75	49.95	49.75
Debt equity ratio	0.33	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.35
Earnings per share before extraordinary items (Face Value of Rs. 10 per Equity Share) (EPS for the quarter and nine months are not annualised)*					
-Basic (Rs)	*0.75	*0.43	*0.39	2.07	1.28
-Diluted (Rs)	*0.75	*0.43	*0.39	2.07	1.28
Note to financial results:					
1) The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 26 May 2023.					
2) The above presentation is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/ annual financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and other disclosure requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of quarterly / annual financial results are available on the company's website (http://indiabullsruralfinance.com) and on the website of BSE (http://www.bseindia.com).					
Registered Office: One International Center, Tower-1, 4th Floor, S. B. Marg, Elphinstone(W), Mumbai, 400013			For and on behalf of the Board of Directors		
Place : Gurugram			Purav Acharya		
Date : 26 May 2023			Whole Time Director		

Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited					
(Formerly "Yaari Digital Integrated Services Limited" & "Indiabulls Integrated Services Limited")					
(CIN: L51101HR2007PLC077999)					
Extract of Consolidated Audited Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2023					
Particulars	Quarter ended 31-Mar-23	Quarter ended 31-Dec-22	Quarter ended 31-Mar-22	Year ended 31-Mar-23	Year ended 31-Mar-22
	Refer note-3	Unaudited	Refer note-3	Unaudited	Audited
Total Income from Operations	-	13.95	5.01	185.90	22.50
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(70.48)	(7.89)	(39.10)	84.69	(131.76)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items))	(70.48)	(7.89)	(39.10)	84.69	(131.76)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax, Minority Interest and Share of Profit / (Loss) of Associate (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(70.83)	(7.41)	(53.11)	94.85	(145.77)
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(90.85)	(12.53)	(133.01)	58.58	(154.88)
Equity Share Capital	19.74	19.74	19.74	19.74	19.74
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the audited Balance Sheet				(242.79)	(313.85)
Earnings per Share (EPS) before extraordinary items					
-Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(7.06)	(0.74)	(5.29)	9.44	(14.51)
-Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(7.06)	(0.74)	(5.29)	9.44	(14.51)
Earnings per Share (EPS) after extraordinary items					
-Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(7.06)	(0.74)	(5.29)	9.44	(14.51)
-Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(7.06)	(0.74)	(5.29)	9.44	(14.51)
Notes:					
1) The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 26 May 2023.					
2) Key Standalone Financial Information:					
Particulars	Quarter ended 31-Mar-23	Quarter ended 31-Dec-22	Quarter ended 31-Mar-22	Year ended 31-Mar-23	Year ended 31-Mar-22
	Refer note-3	Unaudited	Refer note-3	Unaudited	Audited
Total Income	32.48	23.30	4.50	529.69	20.79
Profit/(Loss) before Tax	(39.41)	(11.75)	(43.60)	412.77	(170.15)
Net Profit/(Loss) after Tax	(39.66)	(11.28)	(43.60)	412.99	(170.15)
3) Figures for the quarters ended 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2022 represent the balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and published reviewed year to date figures upto third quarter of the respective financial year.					
4) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly /Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Annual Financial Results are available on the Company's website (https://www.yaari.com) and on the website of BSE (https://www.bseindia.com) and NSE (https://www.nseindia.com).					
Registered Office: 5th Floor, Plot No. 108, IT Park, Udyog Vihar, Phase-1 Gurugram, Haryana 122016			For and on behalf of the Board of Directors		
Place : Gurugram			Kubeir Kherra		
Date : 26 May 2023			Executive Director & CEO		

Indiabulls Enterprises Limited					
(CIN: U71290HR2019PLC077579)					
Extract of Consolidated Audited Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2023					
Particulars	Quarter ended 31-Mar-23	Quarter ended 31-Dec-22	Quarter ended 31-Mar-22	Year ended 31-Mar-23	Year ended 31-Mar-22
	Refer note-3	Unaudited	Refer note-3	Audited	Audited
Total Income from operations	17.95	18.88	27.93	87.97	117.18
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax and Share of Profit / (Loss), Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(2.18)	5.20	(11.75)	14.75	(8.11)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax and Share of Profit / (Loss) (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items))	(11.24)	5.20	(11.75)	5.69	(8.11)
Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(11.65)	1.41	(33.00)	4.59	(102.69)
Equity share capital	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67	39.67
Reserves (excluding revaluation reserve) as shown in the audited Balance Sheet				231.41	226.83
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each from continuing operations					
-Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.55)	0.23	(0.62)	0.11	(0.58)
-Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.55)	0.23	(0.62)	0.11	(0.58)
Earnings per share (EPS) of Rs.2 each from discontinued operations					
-Basic (Amount in Rs.)	(0.05)	(0.15)	(1.06)	0.09	(4.62)
-Diluted (Amount in Rs.)	(0.05)	(0.15)	(1.06)	0.09	(4.62)
Notes:					
1. The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved at the meeting of the Board of Directors held on 26 May 2023.					
2. Key Standalone Financial Information:					
Particulars	Quarter ended 31-Mar-23	Quarter ended 31-Dec-22	Quarter ended 31-Mar-22	Year ended 31-Mar-23	Year ended 31-Mar-22
	Refer note-3	Unaudited	Refer note-3	Audited	Audited
Total Income	14.54	14.02	32.29	84.71	125.52
Profit/(Loss) before Tax	(382.15)	(0.11)	(9.37)	(368.56)	2.85
Net Profit/(Loss) after Tax	(381.24)	(3.94)	(14.02)	(383.46)	(15.04)
3. Figures for the quarters ended 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2022 represent the balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and published reviewed year to date figures upto third quarter of the respective financial year.					
4. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly / annual financial results filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / annual Financial Results are available on the Company's website (https://www.indiabullsentprises.com) and on the website of BSE (https://www.bseindia.com) and NSE (https://www.nseindia.com).					
Registered Office: 5th Floor, Plot No. 108, IT Park, Udyog Vihar, Phase-1 Gurugram, Haryana 122016			For and on behalf of Board of Directors		
Place : Gurugram			Vijay Kumar Agarwal		
Date : 26 May 2023			Executive Director		

The Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Allahabad is all set to restart its highly acclaimed MTech Biomedical Engineering programme from this year. The Department of Applied Sciences of the esteemed IIIT-A, has recently announced the commencement of admissions for its MTech Biomedical Engineering programme for the session (July-December 2023). This cutting-edge course aims to equip students with necessary skills and knowledge to excel in the dynamic field of biomedical engineering. In the year 2012 this course was initially introduced as the five-year Integrated MTech in Biomedical Engineering. The graduates having interdisciplinary background from those earlier batches have found success in various sectors, including healthcare, IT, electronics and instrumentation and medicine. Many students have pursued careers as scientific researchers in esteemed institutions in India and abroad, such as IITs, NITs, IISc Bangalore, John Hopkins Institute, NTU Singapore and more. Most of the Institute's filed patents in recent years came from the field of Biomedical Engineering. This programme has now been rejuvenated as the MTech Biomedical Engineering programme at IIIT-A is designed to provide students with a strong comprehensive understanding of the interdisciplinary field that combines principles of engineering, medicine, and biology.

Chancellor of Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T) has appointed Dr Anand Kumar Singh as the new Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of the varsity. He was earlier the Deputy Director General of Indian Council of Agriculture Research. He replaces the acting V-C, Dr Bijendra Singh who had been given the additional charge of CSA in addition to Acharya Narendra Dev Agriculture and Technology University. He has been appointed to the prestigious post for a three year term. Giving information about the appointment, media incharge and soil scientist, Dr Khalil Khan said that he has been the head of the Division, ICAR, Principal Scientist, ICAR, Senior Scientist, ICAR,Senior Scientist (Fellow), TATA Energy Research Institute, Research Scientist, TATA Energy Research Institute, Secretary, The Horticultural Society of India 2008-2012. He also holds PhD, Saga University, Japan, Post- Doc. University of California, USA. He added that his research had been centred on horticulture- genetic improvement of fruit crops, plant tissue culture and transcriptome analysis of mango and happens to be one of the most honoured scientists. His contribution has been immense.

ONLINE COURSES: The Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur will start

Cyber Security online courses simultaneously in seven district. The courses will be run under the expert guidance of the faculty of IIT-Kanpur. Once the course was complete the IIT-K will provide a certificate issued by the C3ihub. The course will be for eight weeks duration and will comprise lectures and practical guidance for one hour each day. The courses will be run both in English and Hindi and it will be free for SC students while for girls it will be for ₹1,000 and for boys it would be for ₹2,000. He said there was an acute trained staff shortage along with shortage of skills and knowledge and IIT-K has taken up the cudgels to tackle the current problem.

Chief Proctor of the University, Dr Pravin Katiyar, informing about the course said special sessions will be conducted on network security, current trend of cyber threats, cryptography, application security and OS security. He said majority of the college students who were in the habit of networking were unaware of security and the various threats which loomed large on those who were working online. He said in the current times application security was highly essential and thus there was an imperative need to ensure that the students were apprised about the various threats and risks. He said application security leads to preventing data or code within the app from being hijacked and encompasses the security considerations that happened during application

development and design, but it also involved systems and approaches to protect apps after they got deployed. He said it included hardware, software, and procedures that identified or minimised security vulnerabilities. He said a router that prevented anyone from viewing a computer's IP address from the Internet was a form of hardware application security but security measures at the application level were also typically built into the software, such as an application firewall that strictly defined what activities were allowed and prohibited.

Dr Katiyar informed that another area to be taken up strongly was cryptography which was a term used in data communication that referred to protecting the private information shared between two parties. He said OS security in fact referred to the processes or measures taken to protect the operating system from various dangers,including viruses, worms, malware, and remote hacker intrusions. He said the students who pursue the diploma course will be prepared to take up networking challenges in the current times. He said system threats referred to misuse of system services and network connections which put user into trouble. He said system threats can be used to launch programme threats on a complete network called as programme attack. He said system threats created such an environment that operating system user files were misused.

Mayor, corporators administered oath of office

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The newly-elected mayor Ganesh Kesarwani and 100 corporators were administered the oath of office in a grand swearing in ceremony, at KP College ground on Friday.

Owing to heavy rains in the morning and rough weather conditions, the programme could not start on its scheduled time. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya was the chief guest on the occasion, while the out going mayor Abhilasha Gupta Nandi handed over the Nagar Nigam 'gada' (mace) to Kesarwani as a symbol of transfer of power. The new mayor took a pledge to organise 'Swachchhata Pathshala' in each mohalla of the city to give a boost to Prime Minister Modi's Swachchhata Abhiyan. He also made mention of Maha Kumbh-2025 and said it will be



as grand as dreamt by the prime minister and chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. No stone will be left unturned to make Mahakumbh 'Divya', 'Bhavya', and 'Navya', he added. The number of nagar nigam wards went up from 88 to 100. So this time 100 corporators have been elected to represent their respective wards. All 100 newly-elected corporators

were present on the dais to take oath. Besides the mayor from the BJP, the saffron party won 56 out of 100 seats of corporators to prove its supremacy in the nagar nigam house. The number of independent corporators in the house will be 19, while the Samajwadi Party (SP) will represent 16 wards in the nagar nigam house. The Congress has won four seats, while the

BSP, AIMIM and Nirab Shoshit Hamara Aam Dal won two seats each, so it will be an easy task for mayor Ganesh Kesarwani to sail through smoothly with weak opposition in the house. On the occasion chief guest Keshav Prasad Maurya lit the ceremonial lamp and congratulated the mayor and all corporators who are ready for their new innings. Over 300 persons attended the function.

CAMPAIGN: Around 8.5 lakh children below five years will be given 'Do boond zindagi ki' during the week-long intensive pulse polio campaign to start in the district from May 28. On the first day of the programme, the Health department will organise Polio Booth Day in which infants will be administered anti-polio drops at 3,397 booths. Door-to-door campaigns will start from May 29 for children who could not reach the

booths and the drive will be continue for five days. If any child is left out, he/she can still be given the dose later. Additional CMO and district immunisation officer (DIO) Dr Teerath Lal said, "Health department has set a target to cover 8,59,978 kids below five years in the district for while 3,397 booths have been set up. We have also constituted 2,022 teams to conduct door to door campaign to cover each and every house". He said the aim is to cover maximum number of houses under the door to door campaign and a micro plan is being prepared for it. At least 60 mobile teams and 57 transit teams have been constituted to achieve the target. The DIO, however, said as per the micro plan, all the identified 8,59,978 children from birth to five years of age need to be vaccinated and appealed to parents to ensure every child is covered in the polio prevention drive.

Police files chargesheet in Umesh Pal murder case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The police on Friday filed a chargesheet in the SC-ST Special Court in connection with the Umesh Pal murder case. The police have filed this chargesheet against one of the accused Sadaqat Khan. The police filed a chargesheet of 1,857 pages in the court of SC-ST Special Judge Anirudh Kumar Tiwari. The judicial custody period (90 days) of Sadakat Khan, an accused in the aforesaid case at the Dhoomanganj police station filed by the complainant Jaya Pal, wife of Umesh Pal, is ending on May 27. The chargesheet against Sadakat Khan was filed in the court in the afternoon.

This charge sheet has been filed under the SC/ST Act. The first arrest in this case was of Sadaqat Khan from the Muslim boarding hostel on February 27. He was arrested with illegal weapon.

On March 21 Atiq Ahmed's servant Rakesh alias Lala, apart from driver, Akhtar Katra, who did recce in the murder case, Mohd Sajad and Niyaz Ahmed were arrested and sent to jail. Another arrest in the case took place on April 1 when the STF arrested Atiq's domestic help Shahrulkh. Atiq's brother-in-law Dr Akhlaq was arrested on April 4 and sent to jail. He is accused of giving shelter to Muslim Guddu at his house in Meerut.

IIT (BHU) physicist part of major scientific discovery

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The globally acclaimed solar and heliospheric physicist in Indian Institute of Technology (Banaras Hindu University) Dr Abhishek Kumar Srivastava is the part of a major scientific discovery in which it is found that huge wave energy in highly magnetised sun's plasma maintains million degree corona. Using the world's largest solar telescope, the 1.6 m Goode Solar Telescope (GST) at the Big Bear Solar Observatory (BBSO), Prof Ding Yuan and science team members detected numerous dark features in a big sunspot, which appear as the coldest structure of the sun.

"These dark features are plasma fibrils aligned with a strong magnetic field at kilo-Gauss at the sunspot. The fibrils oscillate transversely, which means this is a kink MHD wave and they are able to drag the kilo-Gauss magnetic field lines to move laterally. It



A multiwavelength image of the Sun on a day when such waves have been observed in the strongly magnetized sunspot (left) and IIT (BHU) scientist Dr AK Srivastava.

implies that the fibril kink oscillations could potentially provide a very strong energy flux," said Dr Srivastava, adding that the science team has developed a mathematical model of fast kink waves in sunspots and estimated that the energy flux is 1,000 to 10,000 times stronger than energy losses in active region plasma. This is sufficient to maintain the atmosphere of the Sun at a million degree Kelvin temperature. "These novel scientific results, accompanied by the

first ever high resolution view of sunspot umbra and high energy wave dynamics in its plasma fibrils are published in the prestigious Nature Astronomy Journal on 25th May 2023," informed Dr Srivastava who played a significant role in framing the scientific works. He said that this new scientific discovery will change the view of strongly magnetised plasma regions at the sun as it was never seen before and will play a significant role in solving the most

outstanding coronal heating problem. "It will also be an outstanding scientific result for the next generation solar telescopes and a ready reference to the laboratory plasma experiments where scientists are trying to confine the plasma and generate the green energy for the benefits of mankind," he said, adding that the sun is powered by nuclear fusion of hydrogen at the core, where the temperature reaches 16,000,000 degrees Celsius. "At the visible surface (or photosphere) of the sun the temperature drops to about 5,800 degrees Celsius. It is intuitive that the hydrogen gas located further away from its core should be cooler. The corona is more distant from the core than the photosphere, but its temperature reaches millions of degrees. No current theory could explain this counter-example, this is called the coronal heating problem, a century-long challenge to physicists," he said.

Modi govt's 9 years: BJP to organise 14 public meetings in Kashi region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will organise 14 public meetings in Kashi region to celebrate the completion of nine years of Modi government at the Centre from May 30. The public meeting of Varanasi Lok Sabha, which is the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will be held on June 18 at Jagatpur Inter College. During the period the party plans to go among the public through various programmes and campaigns to highlight the achievements of the central

government under the leadership of Modi.

Giving this information, regional BJP president (Kashi Region) Dilip Singh Patel said one public meeting will be held in each of the 14 parliamentary constituencies of the region, including Varanasi, Chandauli, Bhadohi, Mirzapur, Jaunpur, Machhalishahr, Sonbhadra, Ghazipur, Prayagraj, Phulpur, Pratapgarh, Sultanpur, Kaushambi and Amethi. Patel said the dates of all these public meetings have already been fixed in most of the districts. In each district preparations for making the

meeting a success have already been started. Besides, on June 2 all ministers incharge of all Lok Sabha constituencies will address press conferences in their respective areas.

According to the regional BJP chief, a list of 250 special families is being prepared in each constituency and the list includes the names of Padma awardees, sportspersons, artists, industrialists, doctors, former judges and martyrs and other famous families. Along with this a list of 10 senior party workers is also being prepared as per the decision of the party leadership and one person will

be entrusted with the responsibility of meeting 25 specific families, who will go among these families and discuss the achievements of the central and state governments.

Regional BJP spokesman Navratan Rathai said the Yoga Day on June 21 will be organised at all the Shakti Kendras in each Lok Sabha whereas on June 25, the Mann Ki Baat programme will be heard by workers in all the booths which will be followed by other programmes and photographs of the same will be uploaded on NaMo App by the booth members concerned.

Ministers discuss traffic woes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

UP Ministers of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal and Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' held a meeting with the officers at Circuit House here on Friday and discussed the traffic jam problem in the city areas. Both the local ministers stressed on making smooth traffic system. The meeting was attended by District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and senior officers from Nagar Nigam, Varanasi Development Authority (VDA), Public Works Department (PWD) and Setu Nigam (Bridge Corporation).

In the meeting all the jam spots of the city were identified by the ministers. For the solution of which along with the construction of new flyovers, the expansion plan of the old flyover was discussed and



UP Ministers Ravindra Jaiswal and Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' discussing traffic issues with officers in Varanasi on Friday.

agreed upon. An agreement was also reached on the widening of several major roads. In the meeting, an agreement was also reached on the construction of a new road parallel to the Varuna river.

Ravindra Jaiswal directed the officials that Varanasi apart from being the prime

minister's parliamentary constituency is also an ancient spiritual city, where tourists come from all over the country and abroad, therefore, it is our priority to free the city from jams. Directing the officers, he said the construction work of under-construction and incomplete roads should be completed soon by running a campaign on a war footing on priority so that general public can get the benefit of these roads. Laying special emphasis on smooth traffic in the city, he said that the construction and repair work of roads should be ensured as per the standard in any condition and pits and sewer lines should not remain open anywhere on the roads. Minister Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' also gave some suggestions to the officers. MLA Saurabh Srivastava and others were also present in the meeting.

BHU, IIVR sign MoU



BHU Registrar Prof AK Singh and IIVR Director Dr TK Behera after signing the MoU in Varanasi on Friday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and ICAR-Indian Vegetable Research Institute (IIVR) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to carry out collaborative research and extension activities. The MoU was signed by Registrar, BHU, Prof Arun Kumar Singh and Dr TK Behera, Director, ICAR-IIVR. The arrangement will provide an opportunity to students of Institute of Agricultural Sciences or BHU to work with scientists of ICAR-IIVR. Similarly scientists of ICAR-IIVR will have a chance to benefit from the expertise and experience of BHU. As per the MoU, both the institutions will host joint training programmes for the benefit of scientists and researchers. The institutions will also be involved in capacity building and professional development of human resources and quality research publications. Both BHU and ICAR-IIVR will jointly work for development of farms and farm families. Prof Kalyan Ghadei, Head, Department of Agricultural Extension, with support of Dr Saikat Maji, Assistant professor, coordinated the process of materialising the understanding between the two leading institutions in agricultural research and studies.

As per the MoU, both the institutions will host joint training programmes for the benefit of scientists and researchers. The institutions will also be involved in capacity building and professional development of human resources and quality research publications. Both BHU and ICAR-IIVR will jointly work for development of farms and farm families. Prof Kalyan Ghadei, Head, Department of Agricultural Extension, with support of Dr Saikat Maji, Assistant professor, coordinated the process of materialising the understanding between the two leading institutions in agricultural research and studies.

Azamgarh stn to be redeveloped

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), Azamgarh station will be redeveloped by providing state-of-the-art facilities at a cost of ₹27.05 crore. Azamgarh is one of the 15 railway stations of Varanasi division of North Eastern Railway (NER) which would be redeveloped under ABSS. The appearance of the Azamgarh station will be developed by incorporating the art and culture of the city. Giving details, PRO of Varanasi Division (NER) Ashok Kumar said at a cost of ₹5.04 crore, the circulating area, approach roads, along with water drainage and pathways will be redeveloped while ₹8.24 crore will be spent on making the facade of the station building attractive and ₹4.07 crore for construction of a new foot over bridge (FOB). Besides, he said upgradation of platforms, improvement of surface, sheds and false ceiling on platforms will also be done at a cost of ₹4.86 crore while ₹1.54 crore

will be spent on improvement of passenger waiting room and making it attractive and comfortable. The other beautification work will be done at a cost of ₹15 lakh while ₹93 lakh will be spent on improvement of train display boards, digital clocks, auto announcement and unreserved and reserved ticket counters while ₹1.95 crore will be spent on arrangement of lift, facade lighting, LT panels, signage, lights and fans while ₹23 lakh will be spent on construction of a 'pay and use' toilet and ₹2 lakh on plantation of trees in station premises, the PRO added. According to him, tenders have been invited for all works related to state-of-the-art passenger facilities at Azamgarh station and after the disposal of the tenders, the works will be completed with full quality in the target period. "After the completion of the plans made for the overall development of Azamgarh station, the passengers will get a pleasant feeling of coming to the big station," Ashok Kumar said.

US students learn Indian culture



American students in Sunbeam Lahartara in Varanasi.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A group of American students along with their teachers were in Sunbeam School (Lahartara branch) to learn Hindi language and Indian culture under the intercultural programmes of AFS Institute of the US. The school known for its quality education and modern activities has been hosting such visits of foreign students for the past several years and since 2016, the groups of students from AFS Institute came continuously to Sunbeam School Lahartara for their education.

This year also a group of 12 students and two teachers stayed at the school on their week-long educational tour that ended on Friday. These children started their spiri-

tual and educational journey in Kashi by offering prayers at Kashi Vishwanath temple. They started getting mixed with the beauty of the panoramic ghats of the city in the morning.

The lifestyle of the people and beauty of the Ganga ghats helped them a lot to understand the Indian culture and life of Banaras apart from spirituality of this ancient city.

After reaching Sarnath, the place of Buddha, they experienced the deep wisdom of humanity and the middle path. They also visited leading export company Banaras Beads Limited, Stuti Weaves Handloom Colony to observe Indian craftsmanship, a 'gaushala' (dairy farm), Panini Kanya

Mahavidyalaya where the girls obtain Vedic knowledge, Kashi Labh Mukti Bhavan, a place for old aged persons to stay in their bid to get salvation and Banaras Hindu University (BHU). The American group comprised students including Raj Pandya from Illinois, Sahil, Siddharth Girdharan (both from North Carolina), Brooklyn (California), Brian (Florida), Angela (New York), Sricharita (Virginia), Liam (Texas), Kayla (Washington DC), Gage (Corea), Lydia (Arkansas) and Swara (New Jersey) and they were led by Ted Johnson, a teacher living in Chicago. Chairman of Sunbeam Education Group Dr Deepak Madhok said this is the medium which truly establishes the roots of international education in a school and also paves the way for our children to go abroad and get acquainted with the modern method. "Sunbeam Lahartara is truly an educational laboratory where every day new experiments are done for the bright future of the students here," he added.

Director of the group Bharti Madhok, while expressing happiness, said it is really a matter of pride that for the last seven years, only Sunbeam Lahartara is being selected in the whole of India for the project and this is proof that Sunbeam Lahartara preserves the tradition and culture of Kashi along with modern education.

Amrita Barman, deputy director of the group, said that many virtuous people have been getting prosperous from the soil of Kashi for centuries, and it is a pleasure to see these children here in this episode, may this journey continue like this.

Mission Life drive continues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the guidance of DRM Ramashray Pandey, Mission life (Lifestyle for Environment) as a mass movement to combat climate change in the environment continued in Varanasi Division of NER by the team of Environment and Housekeeping Management Department (EnHM), a part of Mechanical department. In this direction, after Banaras and Varanasi City, the campaign was launched at Ghazipur City railway station on Thursday with the objective of promoting and adopting a healthy and sustainable way of living based on the values of conservation and moderation, The EnHM team also appealed to the passengers to save water

and electricity for environmental protection and motivate others to adopt eco-friendly lifestyle and save natural resources. At Ghazipur City station, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (EnHM) Alok Kesharwani, along with station superintendent NS Siddiqui, chief health inspector Usha Kumari, JE (EnHM/Varanasi) Pawan Kumar Singh, traffic inspector Manish Singh, commercial inspector Virendra Singh, Railway Protection Force (RPF) inspector Kamlesh Singh, RPF S-I Jaishankar Dubey, section engineer (C&W) Jitendra Gautam, JE (C&W) Jainendra Kumar, senior travelling ticket examiner Vivek Verma and others appealed to the passengers not to use plastic bags on foot over bridges, platforms and in trains.

Eye check-up camp held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

An eye check-up camp with Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) was organised in Balua gram panchayat of Badagaon block under the auspices of the Hans Foundation here on Thursday in which around 100 people were examined and tested by a team of skilled eye doctors. Counselling on eye care and medicines were also provided to the people during the test. The MMU team also conducted other health check-ups of all the people present on the spot and distributed necessary medicines. The doctors made the community aware, appealing to people to wash their eyes with clean water daily and get the eyes checked every six months. "It is necessary to have sufficient light while studying. Otherwise, the eyesight will become weak. There should be proper cleanliness in surrounding areas because in unhygienic conditions, insects are born which can harm the eyes. Do not use old

medicine even in case of emergency," the team members appealed to the people. They also said that as after 50 years of age eye related diseases start increasing so in any case of problem, the patient should contact the eye doctor. Apart from this, the team members also gave detailed information about symptoms, prevention and treatment of cataract and glaucoma. Pratyaksha Pandey, the project manager of the organisation, said in collaboration with the Health department, primary health services are being provided daily through MMU in four blocks of the district (Badagaon, Arajilina, Kashi Vidyapeeth and Chirgaon). An eye test camp will be conducted in these blocks for the next 10 days. After the tests, a target has been set by the organisation to distribute spectacles to 800 patients. The MMU is providing services of 14 types of pathology tests including blood test, blood pressure and diabetes to the community by going village to village.

Shreya felicitated



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The alumni council of Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University (UPRTOU) felicitated Shreya Singh, a passed out student of the university's MA Sociology programme on her selection in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Vice-Chancellor Prof Seema Singh honoured Shreya Singh by giving her an 'angvashram' and a memento AT the felicitation ceremony organised at Lokmanya Tilak Shastrarth auditorium. The V-C also welcomed Shreya's mother Pankaja Singh and father Shailesh Singh. She said Shreya's selection in IAS is a big achievement for the open university which will inspire other students as well. Shreya said the study material of open university is very helpful for the competitive students. She passed MA examination in Sociology from the open university in the Covid period. Shreya secured 639th rank in the IAS. The ceremony was conducted by Dr Gyan Prakash Yadav, president of

alumni council and coordinator of the felicitation ceremony. The guests were welcomed by Prof S K Kumar, Director of Social Sciences and the vote of thanks was proposed by Registrar Col Vinay Kumar. The teachers, staff and students of the university were present.

FIRE: Three persons sustained burn injuries after a fire broke out in a house in Rajrooppur locality under Dhoomanganj police station. All the injured Anshoo Singh (22) and Harveer Singh (28), both tenants and residents of Dhata (Fatehpur) and house owner's wife Girjesh were admitted to separate hospitals. Chief Fire Officer RK Pandey said the fire broke out in the house of Dinkar Singh around 8:20 am due to leakage in a domestic LPG gas cylinder. When the fire broke out, both the tenants along with the wife of house owner tried to control it but sustained minor burns in the effort. On being alerted a team of the Fire department along with fire tender rushed to the spot and controlled the fire within half an hour.

FIRST COLUMN

FAITH AS INTERACTION, NOT AS KNOWLEDGE


We must approach God by exercising our free will, which can be done in multiple ways



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Yes, it is not a matter of knowledge. With the advent of the internet, who is not aware of God? But how many pursue this knowledge? Very few to say the least. Why? Because faith comes from interaction with God. We approach God and He responds, otherwise this relationship is a non-starter. A simple example will help. I don't have any interaction with a particular resident of my neighbourhood. There will be no progress in my relationship with that person. Yes, we must get in touch with God, who limits himself to instruct us through bonafide scriptures, preachers, who have a wide following, etc. We must approach God by exercising our free will. And we can do so in multiple ways like praying to God, going to a temple, chanting God's name, etc. Every such act is taken notice of by God, who responds appropriately.

To bring clarity to this phenomenon, I will narrate my experience in this connection. The very first thing God notices is our dutifulness. We, human beings, have been given the responsibility of doing our duties according to time, place and circumstances. This is how the creation can go on. Lord Krishna warns that even maintenance of the body will not be possible through inaction. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 3.8) God gets interested in those who are dutiful. The next thing, which impresses God is obeying dharma. After all, dharma is the bedrock on which the creation rests. God even incarnates to re-establish dharma. (4.8) Now such persons are keenly watched because such people become good people. The mode of goodness in them becomes predominant by overpowering the other two modes of passion and darkness. (14.10) If such a person requests help, God is prepared to do so; one just has to sincerely pray for it.



We normally seek help from God in two ways. One is to get out of some trouble and the other is to gain something material like a decent job. What is God's response? Let us understand one simple rule: God is always just; He couldn't be favouring someone at the cost of another, as will be in the case of landing a job. However, God can be more generous in case of helping someone to recover from a major illness. In this case, also, God has to determine if the sick person deserves such a favour and how much. But all said and done, God does respond. How much and when is decided by God, as found appropriate by Him. No request for help is ignored; only the quantum and the quality are to be decided.

In one matter, God is more forthcoming, i.e. to guide. If a person is sincerely seeking guidance to do something noble, God will be very keen to help, because being the owner of everything, He must encourage what suits the creation. Don't we need good people to keep all of us going? God gives the right intelligence, as in the case of medical scientists. If someone is genuinely looking for a medical solution, which can help millions, and the motive is not to encash it to the fullest extent, God will help. What do you think we will do if we were to decide? God gives me spiritual solutions to common problems about which I can write. One may call it realisation as it really helps me personally. What more than any other favour reinforces faith is peace, which we all know is sought by everyone, but only a few manage it.

The conclusion is to approach God in ways, which please Him, about which He has given detailed instructions. Swami Ravi Das was a leatherworker. He had no formal education, but he became a great devotee of God. Knowledge is helpful only as a tool, even spiritual; it must be practised. Spiritual activities take us to a higher level. Therefore, let us get going and link with the owner of the creation. He is waiting and He has plenty to give.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

US must undertake a midcourse correction



K A BADARINATH

Even if the US revises its debt ceiling of \$31.4 trillion, its risk-ridden economy may precipitate a global crisis of a larger magnitude



With the looming debt crisis in the United States with the potential to default, a showdown between Republicans that control the House and the democratic white house may not augur well for the global economy and developing countries like India. Owing unsustainable economic policies over a few decades and irresponsible handling of resources has led the largest global economic powerhouse into a big mess of its own making. Even if president Joe Biden manages to clinch a last-minute deal with Republican top leadership to push up the debt ceiling beyond us \$ 31.4 trillion, larger questions continue to haunt the Americans. Mobilizing loans through US bonds or debt paper may not be the immediate concern but potential default on June 1 is what may turn catastrophic to not only Americans but the entire world. For Americans, it means that democrats will not be able to fund their fancied social security payments on medical and health insurance, pension or social development projects.

President Biden and his Democratic administration will have to put on hold all fancy projects like waiving student loans or fees to provide personal tax concessions to youngsters and new taxpayers democrats understand the full importance of lifting the already unsustainable debt limit of \$ 31.4 trillion. In fact, this also explains US President Biden's decision to forgo the scheduled quad summit in Australia and head back home after the G-7 leaders meeting in Hiroshima. Eventually, the quad summit had to be called off with heads of the US,



THERE IS EVERY POSSIBILITY OF US MOVING INTO ECONOMIC RECESSION. THEREBY STYMIEING DEMAND FOR GOODS AND SERVICES GLOBALLY

(The author is the director and chief executive of this non-partisan think tank based in New Delhi)

Australia, Japan and India meeting briefly at Hiroshima on the sidelines of the G-7 congregation. The larger issue that confronts us and the world is a wee bit different and difficult.

There is every possibility of us moving into economic recession thereby stymieing demand for goods and services globally. This will hit the economic growth sentiment internationally big time. Secondly, the possibility of banks getting stuck with worthless dollar-denominated bonds or debt paper in the medium term cannot be ruled out unless both the federal reserve and political leadership in the US take recourse to the mid-course correction that involves massive spending cuts or improve the country's revenues. Such a policy may be very unattractive for Democratic voters when they have to elect their president in 2024.

Thirdly, containing the contagion effect of the US economy moving into the abyss will be a herculean task. One cannot easily forget the global financial crisis triggered by real estate-linked mortgages that turned worthless in 2007-08. This housing bubble stirred a perfect storm to impact both large developing countries like India as well as least developed countries alike. Excessive risk exposure taken by banks was the biggest element in this crisis of the worst kind after the great depression of 1929.

Fourthly, if the US default finally happens, then countries like India having huge exposure to American greenback will also face the heat.

But, this diversification should go the whole hog and consciously lead to pursuing the de-dollarization of the Indian economy as a state policy. Fifthly, while exports to the US become attractive and import bills get squeezed, a demand slump globally will negate the advantages gained in trade deals. There is no reason why India should not pursue a more independent trade and currency policy keeping herself at a safe distance from the federal reserve and recalibrating her linkages with Washington DC. Sixthly, Democrats and Republicans must work towards mid-course correction on the economic and development front rather than recklessly going for borrowing more from Tom to pay Peter.

Limiting the fresh debt limit to us \$ 1.5 trillion till March 31, 2024, and achieving concomitant cuts in spending by us \$ 1.47 trillion would save the perilously placed our economy. Seventhly, precipitating a perfectly cooked crisis is not in anyone's interest and hence reining in the fresh spending to less than one per cent as per the limit, save, grow act of 2023 makes eminent sense. On the parallel, limiting the mop-up of fresh debt and gradual reduc-

tion in existing debt stock would augur well for the US economy that's seeking to reposition itself and instil confidence in its trading and investment partners.

The debt-to-GDP ratio was approximately 97 per cent at the end of FY 2022, and under current policy and based on this report's assumptions is projected to reach 566 per cent in 2097, it pointed out. While pursuing a revised economic policy dispensation, president Biden should not easily forget the 2011 crisis that was triggered by our congress. This pushed up the borrowing costs for the treasury by a humongous us \$ 1.3 billion in just one year. Also, we should not provide any leverage to China for encashing its crisis. China is easily the largest holder of us debt paper, notes and long-term bonds with valuations ranging from \$ 859.4 billion to \$ one trillion.

China may like to leverage our debt paper to rebalance its own resources position which again may not be looking too good. China's own debt of us \$ 14.34 trillion as of April 12, 2023, and swelling at a whopping \$ 3.81 trillion annually may not be something to brag about by president Xi's oligarchs driven communist party. Potential defaults in us, and machinations in China have valuable lessons for India that are overly conservative on borrowings, especially by the Narendra Modi government.

The tragedy for workers in today's 'gig' economy

All temporary, freelance and contract workers must be properly defined and identified to ensure minimum wages, maximum working hours and social security

You see many youths around you, who deliver the goods coming via e-commerce apps and websites. Similarly, millions of drivers all over the world provide app-based taxi services. E-commerce and technology-driven businesses have become a major part of the economy these days. This section of the economy is known as the 'gig economy' and the people working there are called 'gig' workers. Recently, the delivery workers of an e-commerce company named 'Blinkit' went on a one-day strike, which was also given a lot of importance by the media. The case was that a company called 'Blinkit', which claims to supply consumers with their grocery requirements in 10 minutes to half an hour, had reduced the



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

(The author is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi)

payment to its delivery agents by half. Significantly, before this change, the company used to pay Rs 25 to the delivery agent for each delivery. Till about a year ago, the delivery agents were given Rs 50 per delivery. Delivery workers' complaint is that fuel costs have skyrocketed during this period, but their wages have shrunk to a quarter.

The reality is that today youth in big and small cities are forced to work as delivery agents in the absence of any decent employment. In the initial phase, these workers also used to earn sufficiently, but due to low payouts, now their economic condition has become very pathetic. The reality is that in the absence of alternative employment, it has become almost a compulsion

for the youth to work as delivery agents.

On the other hand, companies like 'Ola' and 'Uber' providing app-based taxi services have also started charging highly exploitative commissions from taxi drivers. Due to this, the drivers of 'Ola' and 'Uber' have also resorted to agitational means like strikes many times. But the exploitative commission policy of 'Ola' and 'Uber' continues unabated. Despite the strike by Blinkit's delivery agents, no solution is in sight.

Gig workers like drivers of 'Ola', 'And Uber', delivery agents of 'Blinkit', 'Zomato', 'And Swiggy' etc. or any other type of workers registered with any other app-based service provider, whose employment depends on the mercy of

these app companies, businesses or whose livelihood depends on the delivery of goods or ordering of services based on messages received from these apps, are today suffering from the exploitation by these companies.

Nowadays the word gig is very much in vogue. Till two-three decades ago, the word gig was not much in use. It has become necessary to understand the meaning of the word 'gig' and the terms such as 'gig economy' and 'gig worker' etc. and their effects on society.

A few decades back, there were only two types of workers. One, the salaried employees and the other, the casual workers. Salaried workers are generally employed on a permanent basis with a fixed salary and other facilities. A

certain procedure has to be followed for the removal of these workers from employment. On the other hand, casual labour means daily wage workers. These labourers are paid wages on a daily basis and have to go in search of employment every day.

In the organized sector, earlier most workers were generally employed on a permanent or regular basis and their employment was also fairly secure. In the unorganized sector like agriculture, construction and sometimes in manufacturing, the practice of daily wage labourers is seen. Generally, educated and trained workers were mostly salaried workers and most of the daily wage laborers used to be uneducated and untrained workers. But these days even

organised sector employers have found an easy way to employ gig workers or sometimes on contract or on fixed term; where workers lack job security and social security. Further, there is the absence of regulations like working hours and working conditions, as these workers in order to earn sufficiently have to work for longer hours and under precarious conditions.

This new class of labour, namely, gig labour is the outcome of the emerging gig economy, based on new technology. This new category has emerged in the form of online platforms, cloud working, freelancing, e-commerce, supply chain, etc. That is, it can be said that new technology and new business models are the creators of this new labour class.

These workers who are serving based on work/order provided by the apps are clearly working under the instructions of the apps owned by e-commerce companies, but in government definitions, they are not considered workers, they are called 'freelancers'.

All such gig, temporary, and contract workers will have to be properly defined and identified while ensuring minimum wages, maximum working hours and various types of social security for them. If this does not happen, this system will be called nothing more than 'Jungle Raj', whose rule is 'survival of the fittest'. The Government of India is expected to make policies for the social security of the workers of these online platforms i.e., gig workers.

New panel formed to guide Project Cheetah

NTCA formed 11-member committee after death of 6 felines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following the death of six cheetahs, including three newborn cubs, within a period of two-and-a-half months at the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh, the Centre has set up yet another high-level panel of national and international experts to oversee and monitor the ambitious Project Cheetah in India.

A statement issued by the Union Environment Ministry said the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has constituted yet another panel an 11-member Cheetah Project Steering Committee

The decision to form the committee was taken in a meeting with the additional chief secretary of the Madhya Pradesh government. The move comes in the wake of the death of three cheetah cubs born to the Namibian cheetah allegedly died of dehydration and malnourishment.

The Committee will be



chaired by Rajesh Gopal (former member secretary of the NTCA and currently with the Global Tiger Forum).

Members of the Committee include RN Mehrotra, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, Rajasthan; PR Sinha, a former director of the Wildlife Institute of India; HS Negi, a member of the NTCA; GS Rawat, former Dean of the WII; Qamar Qureshi, a scientist with the WII; the current Inspector General of the NTCA; the current Chief Wildlife Warden of Madhya Pradesh, and others. The NTCA has also constituted a panel of international cheetah experts who will provide advice "as an when required" to Project Cheetah.

They experts are Adrian Tordiffe (Veterinary Wildlife Specialist, Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria,

South Africa); Laurie Marker, of the Cheetah Conservation Fund, Namibia; Andrew John Fraser, Farm Olievenbosch, South Africa; and Vincent van der Merwe, Manager, of the Cheetah Metapopulation Project, The Metapopulation Initiative, South Africa. The Committee will review the progress of the programme and monitor it.

It will also provide advice on cheetah introduction to the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and the NTCA, as per the press release. It will open "the cheetah habitat" for eco-tourism and suggest regulations to further this. It will also provide suggestions on how to involve the community in the project's activities.

In October last year, the ministry had constituted a "Cheetah Task Force" to monitor India's cheetah introduction programme.

Opposition unity risks becoming talking shop

MANISH ANAND ■ NEW DELHI

While the Opposition unity efforts are gaining pace with a meeting being planned to be held in Patna next month, the Congress is keeping the regional satraps guessing.

The Janata Dal (United) is hoping that the Congress will be benign and show large heartedness to accept the proposal of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to focus on just 200 Lok Sabha seats and leave the rest to other constituents of the Opposition.

"As of now we are optimistic that the Congress will come on board. The Congress will also be attending the Opposition meeting in Patna next month. But it will be premature that there will be an understanding on all the 545 Lok Sabha seats. We are aiming to bring everyone onboard for a one-on-one contest with the Bharatiya Janata Party on most of the Lok Sabha seats," said a senior JD (U) functionary, who is known to be close to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

What appears to be worrying the Opposition is that the Congress is gaining confidence after the Karnataka election verdict, and the key movers of the unity plank are now keeping fingers crossed over the



channel of communication with the Gandhis. "The Congress needs to remember that the party had won 2013 and 2018 Karnataka Assembly elections, and we all know the seat count of the party after the 2014 and the 2019 general elections.

Besides, the Congress had wrested all three BJP-ruled states of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh," said another leader from the Opposition camp. There is clear emphasis from the non-Congress Opposition camp for pre-poll seat adjustment so that there is scope for one-on-one contest against the BJP.

Yet, the Opposition leaders are also acknowledging the fact that the pact events in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh don't infuse enough confidence even of the outcome of the one-on-one contest. "Uttar Pradesh is going to be too sticky for the Opposition unity efforts. The

political situation has taken drastic changes, and it's also not so easy to establish contacts with a section of the Opposition leaders in UP. The state with 80 Lok Sabha seats may test strength of the votary of the Opposition unity plank," said the JD (U) functionary.

Incidentally, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which is the party with the most number of Lok Sabha MPs after the BJP from UP, broke ranks with the Opposition to decry the boycott call given by the Congress and others of the inauguration of the new parliament building.

"Also, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh may remain outside the Opposition unity efforts, as the dominant non-BJP parties in these two states will continue to be the fence-sitters. They will watch out for Lok Sabha poll verdict to decide on their courses of actions. Thus, we will no more be making efforts to reach out to them," added JD (U) functionary.

NIA seeks death penalty from Delhi HC for Yasin Malik

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has urged the Delhi High Court to award death sentence to Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief and Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik. The petition is listed for hearing on May 29 before a Division Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Talwant Singh.

Kashmir separatist leader Malik who was involved in many terror attacks was sentenced to life imprisonment by a special NIA court in a terror funding case in May 2022. He had pleaded guilty in the case. The NIA had demanded capital punishment for Malik before the trial court as well. Earlier, the prayer was refused by the Special Court stating that death penalty should be awarded only in exceptional cases "where the crime by its nature shocks the collective consciousness of the society".

Malik was convicted of offences under Section 120B, 121, 121A of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Sections 13 and 15 of UAPA read with 120B of the IPC besides Sections 17, 18, 20, 38 and 39

of UAPA. In a detailed judgment, the NIA Court had observed that Malik betrayed the good intentions of the Government by choosing the violent path.

"Betraying the good intentions of government he took a different path to orchestrate violence in the guise of political struggle. ...the evidence on the basis of which charges were framed and to which convict has pleaded guilty, speaks otherwise," the special court had underscored. The judge had also rejected Malik's argument that he had become a Gandhian after 1994.

"It only took one small incident of violence at Chauri Chaura for the Mahatma to call off the entire non cooperation movement but the convict despite large scale of violence engulfing valley neither condemned the violence nor withdrew his calendar of protests, which had led to the said violence," the judge underlined.

Mark 9 years of Modi Govt as 'Maafi Divas', says Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi completing nine years in office, the Congress on Friday demanded his apology for what it said was "betrayal" of the people and asked him nine questions on issues ranging from rising prices and unemployment to national security and social harmony.

The Opposition party also said the government should mark this day as 'Maafi Divas' and released a booklet 'Nau saal, Nau sawaal'.

It said Modi became the Prime Minister on this day nine years ago and therefore, the party wants to ask nine questions of him. The grand old party also said it will hold press conferences in 35 cities over the



Congress Party leader Jairam Ramesh with party leaders Supriya Shrinete (L) and Pawan Kherra (R) and others during a Press conference, in New Delhi on Friday. Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

next few days to highlight the "failures" of the Narendra Modi Government in the last nine years. The press conferences have been titled 'Nau Saal, Nau Sawaal' (nine years, nine questions). Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said at a Press conference that Rahul

Gandhi had raised critical issues during the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the nine questions are based on that. Flanked by party colleagues Pawan Kherra and Supriya Shrinete, Ramesh said the booklet is a report card of the nine years of the Modi Government and Congress

leaders will hold press conferences in 35 cities across the country to highlight the "failures" of the government. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge took to Twitter and said, "In last 9 years, the Modi Government has become a "Vishwaguru" in snatching away employment of crores of youths" and used the hashtag "#NaakamiKe9Saal" to mark the occasion.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said, "The BJP built its edifice in 9 years on false promises and people's suffering. Inflation, hatred and unemployment - Prime Minister ji, take responsibility of these failures of yours," Rahul said in a tweet in Hindi, using the hashtag and shared nine questions to Prime Minister.

BJP asks Cong to do fact check before pointing finger at Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday ridiculed Congress for allegedly "not leaving panchtatra" — Prithivi (earth), Pavan (air), Jal (water), Tej (solar energy), Nabh (sky) — untouched by its 'corruption saga' as it listed-out 'major achievements' of the Modi-Government in last nine years.

BJP which is celebrating nine-years of the Modi Government at the Centre by organising various organisational events and assigning central Ministers and MPs constituency-wise tasks, dismissed the 'nine questions' posed by the Congress party on Modi's nine years in office. Addressing a press conference here BJP's National spokesperson Ravishankar Prasad called



Ravishankar Prasad

Congress as a "bundle of lies and mountain of deception." The BJP's Rajya Sabha member alleged that the questions were the result of Congress's "hatred towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Listing-out 'achievements' of Nine-years of the Modi-government, BJP's spokesperson said inflation at 4.7 percent was one of the lowest across the world, economy

crossed three trillion and export increased to Rupees thirty lakh crore under Modi's dispensation. He asked Congress to check facts before pointing finger at the ruling party. Prasad said poor received Rs six lakh sixty eight thousand four thirty five crore from Direct Bank transfer (DBT) through 312 schemes.

He said in 2014 India imported 78 percent of its mobile "but today 99 percent of mobiles are manufactured in India, generating employment, particularly for women," India is now second largest exporter of mobiles as it is also exporting Rs Rs Sixteen thousand crore defence exports, he said. Prasad claimed at 4.7 percent inflation in the country is at the lowest if compared with

that of the US 8.9 per cent, Australia 8.5, France 13.5 and Sweden 20.2 percent. "Under Manohan Singh government India was fragile-five economies but under Modi it is among the top five countries, ahead of England", said Prasad. Taking a swipe at the Congress for raising the issue of corruption against the BJP government, the BJP leader said the Opposition party had covered all "panchtatra" in its corruption activities during its regime at the centre.

"We talk about 'Panchtatra'. Congress party's associates did corruption in all five elements of 'Panchtatra' - Commonwealth games scam, Coal scam, 2G scam, helicopter and submarine scam...": said Prasad.

UPSC mulling criminal action against 2 for fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is considering criminal and disciplinary penal action against two candidates for allegedly claiming selection in the civil services examination, the results of which were declared on Tuesday, according to an official statement.

The case relates to Aysha Makrani (from Madhya Pradesh) and Tushar (from Haryana) who fraudulently claimed that they have been finally recommended by the Commission in the civil services examination 2022 against two roll numbers of genuinely recommended candidates, it said. "The claims of both per-

sons are fake. They have forged the documents in their favour to buttress their claims," said the statement issued on Friday.

By doing so, both Makrani and Tushar have acted in contravention of the provisions of the Rules of the Civil Services Examination, 2022 notified by the government of India (Department of Personnel and Training), it said.

Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of the Examination Rules, the UPSC is contemplating both criminal as well as disciplinary penal action against the two candidates for their fraudulent acts, the statement said. "The system of the UPSC is robust as well as foolproof and such errors are not possible," it added. The

UPSC conducts civil services examination annually in three stages — preliminary, main and interview — to select officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

Sharing details, the Commission said Aysha Makrani, daughter of Salimuddin Makrani, who is claiming her final recommendation by the UPSC, is found to have forged documents in her favour. Her actual roll number is 7805064. She appeared in preliminary examination held on June 5th, 2022 and scored only 22.22 marks in General Studies Paper-I and 21.09 marks in General Studies Paper-II, it said.

India, US to review Def ties during Austin's visit

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

India and the US will review the entire spectrum of their bilateral Defence ties and explore possibilities of jointly manufacturing state-of-the-art weapons during talks between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his counterpart Lloyd Austin next week in New Delhi.

Incidentally, the visit on June 4-5 comes weeks ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the US on June 23.

He is likely to discuss various aspects of defence related issues including access to cutting edge technology from the US during his talks with US President Joe Biden. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius is scheduled to arrive in India on June 6 to hold talks with



Rajnath. This visit underscores Germany's keen interest in deepening its defence co-operation with India, an emerging global power.

Announcing Defence Secretary Austin's visit to New Delhi, the Pentagon said late Thursday, "this visit provides an opportunity to accelerate new defense innovation and industrial cooperation initiatives and drive ongoing efforts to expand operational cooperation between the US and Indian militaries." the Pentagon



said. Austin will also meet other leaders in the Indian capital as the United States and India continue to modernise the US-India Major Defense Partnership, the Pentagon said. Austin will also visit Japan, Singapore and France next week.

Austin will begin his trip from Japan, as part of his seventh official visit to the Indo-Pacific region. In Tokyo, he plans to meet with Japanese Defense Minister Yasukasu Hamada and other senior lead-

ers and also visit the US troops stationed in Japan, it said. The visit also comes as the United States and Japan take important strides to modernise alliance capabilities, optimise US force posture, and build links with like-minded partners following the historic US-Japan "2+2" ministerial meeting earlier this year, the Pentagon said.

From there, Austin will travel to Singapore where he will deliver plenary remarks at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) 20th Shangri-La Dialogue. On the margins of the Dialogue, the secretary will meet with key leaders to advance US defense partnerships across the region in support of the shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, anchored in ASEAN centrality. After Singapore, Austin will visit New Delhi and then con-

clude his trip in France to participate in events commemorating the 79th anniversary of D-Day, and meet with French and United Kingdom defence leaders, it added.

Meanwhile, ahead of Prime Minister Modi's state visit to US, 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 Pentagon last week, US Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks termed proposals to co-produce jet engines, long-range artillery and infantry vehicles under iCET "unprecedented opportunities" to strengthen ties between defence sectors of two nations.

'Unvaccinated at risk of long Covid'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After examining nearly 10,000 patients, most of whom had Covid-19, researchers have outlined 12 symptoms including post-exertional malaise, fatigue, brain fog, dizziness, gastrointestinal symptoms, heart palpitations, issues with sexual desire or capacity and loss of smell or taste that can affect nearly every tissue and organ in the body and the unvaccinated were more likely to have long Covid.

The findings are published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). The research team also found that long Covid was more common and severe in study participants infected before the 2021 Omicron variant. The



study, coordinated through Researching Covid to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) initiative of National Institutes of Health (NIH), US, examined data from 9,764 adults, including 8,646 who had Covid-19 and 1,118 who did not have Covid-19.

Based on patient-reported symptoms, the researchers established a scoring system. They gave each patient a score based on symptom combinations after assigning points to each of the 12 symptoms. Thus,

they identified a meaningful threshold for identifying participants with long Covid. They also found that certain symptoms occurred together and defined four subgroups or "clusters" with a range of impacts on health.

In addition to establishing the scoring system, the researchers found that participants who were unvaccinated or who had Covid-19 before the Omicron strain emerged in 2021 were more likely to have long Covid and more severe cases of long Covid.

Based on a subset of 2,231 patients in this analysis who had a first Covid-19 infection on or after Dec. 1, 2021, when the Omicron variant was circulating, about 10 per cent experienced long-term symptoms or long COVID after six months. Further, reinfections

were also linked to higher long COVID frequency and severity, compared to people who only had Covid-19 once.

"This study is an important step toward defining long Covid beyond any one individual symptom," said study author Leora Horwitz, director of the Center for Healthcare Innovation and Delivery Science, US, and co-principal investigator for the RECOVER Clinical Science Core, at NYU Langone Health, US.

"This approach, which may evolve over time, will serve as a foundation for scientific discovery and treatment design. The researchers explained that studying the underlying biological mechanisms of long Covid is central to advancing informed interventions and identifying effective treatment strategies.

Study: Running stops age-related memory loss

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

If long-term running continues to be the part of your exercise even as you are in your mid-age, in all likelihood you will not face age-related memory problems, so say a team of researchers.

They reached the conclusion after studying the effects of long-term running on a network of new hippocampal neurons generated in young adult mice, at middle age.

More than six months after tagging the adult-born neurons with a fluorescent reporter vector, they identified and quantified the direct afferent inputs to these adult-born neurons within the hippocampus and (sub)cortical areas, when the mice were middle-aged. "The long-term running as



part of exercise in middle age helps in wiring 'old' new neurons born in early adulthood, or adult-born neurons, into a network relevant to the maintenance of episodic memory encoding during aging," they said.

Episodic memory is a type of long-term memory involving conscious recollection of previous experiences together with their context in terms of time, place and associated emotions. Published in the journal eNeuro, the researchers from Florida Atlantic University (FAU), US, and Center for

Research and Advanced Studies (CINVESTAV), Mexico, said the study provided novel insight into the benefits of exercise and that it should motivate adults to keep moving throughout their lifetime, especially during middle age.

Deficits in cognitive ability linked with aging are associated with reduced hippocampal volume. The hippocampus and adjacent cortices are brain areas essential for learning and memory.

Aging-related memory function decline is also associated with the degradation of synaptic (junction between two neurons) inputs from the perirhinal and entorhinal cortex onto the hippocampus, brain areas that are essential for pattern separation, and contextual and spatial memory. Along with significantly

increasing these adult-born neurons, long-term running was found to enhance the recruitment of presynaptic (sub)-cortical cells to their network. That is, running not only rescued perirhinal connectivity but also increased and altered the contribution of the entorhinal cortices to the network of old adult-born neurons.

"Long-term exercise profoundly benefits the aging brain and may prevent aging-related memory function decline by increasing the survival and modifying the network of the adult-born neurons born during early adulthood, and thereby facilitating their participation in cognitive processes," said Henriette van Praag, corresponding author, an associate professor of biomedical science in FAU.

ROW IN WB OVER NEW MOVIE ‘THE DIARY OF WEST BENGAL’

BJP slams TMC for police action ‘State Govt is trying to control free speech’

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The dust raised by ‘The Kerala Story’ had hardly settled down when a new controversy erupted in Bengal, this time over a new film, ‘The Diary of West Bengal’.

The BJP has strongly criticized the Trinamool Congress Government for the Kolkata Police action of serving a notice to the film’s director Sanoj Mishra.

Criticising the State Government for trying to control free speech, BJP national vice-president Dilip Ghosh on Friday said that the ruling outfit was “afraid of everything and the notice served on the film’s director is a mark of that fear.”

He said, “I have no idea of the facts and neither do I know anything about the film ... but from whatever I have heard it seems that the State Government has become unnecessarily afraid of the developments ... if the TMC has nothing to do with what the film says then there is nothing to be afraid of.”

Alleging that in its fear of losing power the TMC Government was trying to control free speech, Ghosh said, “The Government cannot suppress the



fundamental right of people ... everyone has a right to express and in case of films there is censor board and similar regulating authorities ... So I do not understand how the police came into the picture ... why have the police serve notice on film directors?”

He recalled how the State Government had “received a rap on its knuckles from the Supreme Court after banning ‘The Kerala Story’ in Bengal.”

Acting on an alleged complaint — based apparently on the trailer of the film — lodged by an individual the Amherst Street Police Station had earlier issued notice of appearance to Sanoj Mishra the director of the film.

The director however, on Friday made it clear that he had no intention to bring Bengal to disrepute. Speaking about the notice allegedly served on his reported act of trying to defame the State Mishra on Friday “my intention is

not to malign the image of the State. We have shown only facts in the film which are well-researched.”

Meanwhile, though the TMC would not react officially to the controversy, a senior leader from North Kolkata of which Amherst Street Police Station is a part said, “the single-point agenda of the BJP is to provoke communal divide and tension in the country by getting its agents to write books or produce communally angled films.

K’taka Cong on mission to repeat victory in 2024 polls

Dy CM who is KPCC chief too focused on bagging all 28 seats in LS polls

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ BANGALORE

Though the cacophony of electioneering and victory parades have come to an end with the high-decibel swearing in of Siddaramiah as Chief Minister and D K Shivakumar as his deputy, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee continues to be in a mission mode. Though the Lok Sabha election is expected only in the months of March-April 2024, it has not deterred Shivakumar, who holds the additional post of KPCC president, from his hectic schedule. He is on a mission to make a clean sweep of all the 28 seats at stake in the State to establish his command over the party.

The report going round Karnataka is that Shivakumar would be elevated as the Chief Minister after 30 months of rule by Siddaramaiah. This is the formula which has been

worked out by the Congress High Command to placate Shivakumar who was the frontrunner along with Siddaramaiah for the post of chief minister.

Both Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah refuse to tell anything about the arrangement though minister M B Patil courted controversy on Wednesday by blatantly ruling out any change of leadership for the next five years.

Shivakumar has been asked to lead the Congress till the Lok Sabha election and this is being seen as the confidence he enjoys with the High Command. The fact that he has not lowered the guards is proof of his single point pursuit to win Karnataka and hand it over to the national leadership. Sources close to Shivakumar told *The Pioneer* that the war room in his office in the Pradesh Congress Committee Office is functional round the clock as his close aides are filtering and analyzing the short-comings faced during the assembly poll. Shivakumar is personally overseeing the records of past Lok Sabha polls and method of voting in the constituencies.

Cabinet expansion at noon today, portfolios to be allotted by evening

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Minister K H Muniyappa on Friday said the Cabinet expansion will take place on Saturday afternoon and the portfolios would also be allotted by evening.

Muniyappa also said barring four or five ministerial posts, rest would be filled up in the same day.

According to the Minister, the Cabinet would be a mix of seniors and young people.

“Tomorrow, the Cabinet expansion will take place. Time has also been fixed. It would be tomorrow afternoon. Most of the posts would be filled,” Muniyappa told reporters after returning from New Delhi.

To a question on how many ministerial posts would be filled, he said, “Barring four or five, rest all would be filled up.”

FROM PAGE 1

FIGHT OVER SENGOL ESCALATES

Citing the article, Puri said, “Vividly describes Hindu (customs and traditions) followed on eve of independence. The #Sengol they insult now was received with Hindu rituals by PM Nehru. Now hypocrisy is on full display— attempts being made to paint it in different colours — motives ascribed, crocodile tears shed!”

Slamming Jairam Ramesh, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi alleged that the Congress party has a habit of denigrating “Bharatya” value and culture.

“Today when the world is taking note of Bharat’s rich traditions, the Congress party is trying to find new ways to insult Bharat and its heritage. The Congress party still seems to be in a colonial hangover.”

The Opposition parties contend that President Droupadi Murmu should do the honours as she is not only the Head of State, but also an integral part of Parliament as she summons, prorogues, and addresses the institution.

The signatories to the joint statement by eminent citizens slamming the opposition boycott included ex-NIA director YC Modi, former IAS officers RD Kapoor, Gopal Krishna and Samarendra Chatterjee, and Lingaya University Vice Chancellor Anil Roy Dubey.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena hit out at the Centre for not inviting President Murmu for the inauguration event and alleged that Prime Minister Modi considers the new complex his “estate” as he feels that it has been created by him.

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) leader Chirag Paswan wrote to Prime Minister Modi extending his wishes for the inauguration of the new Parliament building and slammed the opposition parties for their boycott decision.

Former Lok Sabha Speaker and senior BJP leader Sumitra Mahajan said Parliament is a temple of democracy and partisan politics should not be played over the institution.

IMPERIAL LANDMARK’S TRYST WITH DESTINY

The sprawling edifice covering an area of nearly six acres and its creamy sandstone colonnade, is one of the most distinctive parliament buildings anywhere in the world, and one of the most defining and widely-recognised structures.

The last legislative sitting in it before the inauguration was the Budget session of Parliament which concluded in April.

Over the decades, as India evolved into the nation it is today, Parliament House has been witness to many a moment in history from cerebral debates to high-decibel, raucous discussions and the passing of legislations — some landmark and others controversial.

The multi-chequered history of the old Parliament building will now be frozen in time.

The odyssey of the old Parliament building is also the journey of the new capital of India built under the rule of the then monarch King George V, later christened New Delhi by him in 1926, less than a month before the inauguration of the circular landmark.

It was conceived by the British in 1920s after the imperial capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. Lutyens and Baker gave shape to the new imperial capital, with the Viceroy’s House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan) and the North Block and South Block as the centrepiece of ‘New Delhi’.

Lord Irwin inaugurated the Parliament building in 1927, and four years later led the inauguration ceremony of “New Delhi” which started on February 10 and lasted about a week.

A viceroy in India was the representative of the British Crown in the country, and Lord Irwin was the first to occupy the

Viceroy’s House built atop the Raisina Hill. After India turned a Republic in 1950, it became known as the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the abode of the President of India.

Till the Council House or Parliament House as it is known today, was built, the legislature was housed in the iconic Old Secretariat building of the government, which today is home to the Delhi Assembly.

In 2006, the Parliament Museum was added to showcase the 2,500 years of rich democratic heritage of India.

Once the new Parliament building, part of the redevelopment of Central Vista, is inaugurated, India will in many ways, turn a page, since the opening of the old Parliament in 1927.

“Today, you meet for the first time in your new and permanent home in Delhi” Viceroy Lord Irwin had said, addressing the first session of the third legislative assembly on January 24, 1927.

SC GRANTS BAIL TO AILING JAIN FOR SIX WEEKS

Photos showed the AAP leader on oxygen support. Jain was claimed to have lost 30 kg while lodged in jail since his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money laundering case in May last year.

Jain has been given bail till July 11 and has been warned against influencing witnesses, tampering evidence or leaving Delhi within that period.

The court will hear this matter next on July 10, when the Aam Aadmi Party leader’s latest medical reports will be submitted.

A vacation bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and PS Narasimha allowed Jain, 58, to undergo treatment in a hospital of his choice and asked him to produce medical records by July 10. “After hearing learned counsel for the parties, at present there is no reason to disbelieve the Report of GB Pant Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research. We think it appropriate that the citizen is having a right to take treatment of his choice, at his own expenses, in a private hospital.”

“Therefore, we deem it appropriate to release the petitioner on interim bail on medical grounds for a limited period of six weeks,” the bench said.

The SC said during the period when he is on interim bail, all relevant treatment papers and documents related to prognoses shall be produced before the apex court. It also asked Jain to stay away from media, including social media.

“The petitioner (Jain) shall refrain himself to appear before print or electronic media or any social media platform to give any statement on any issue during the interim bail,” the bench said in its order.

It listed the matter for further hearing on July 10. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Jain, said the former Minister is suffering from a spine problem, has lost 35 kg weight and has virtually turned into a skeleton. He placed on record the medical reports of Jain issued by the GB Pant Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research, New Delhi, dated May 4, 2023. Singhvi said the hospital is the mandatory referral hospital for Tihar jail and its report cannot be refuted.

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the ED, sought Jain’s examination by a panel of doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) or Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital here. If medical reports suggest treatment, the probe agency will not oppose it, he said.

He submitted that Jain had moved petitions for bail on medical grounds in the case earlier as well, but the pleas were withdrawn as the agency sought his examination by a medical board of AIIMS or RML hospital.

“He was Health Minister and jail

Minister of Delhi. He needs to be examined at a hospital that was not under him,” Raju said, claiming earlier medical reports prepared by hospitals were found to be fake. The bench said it is considering enlarging Jain on medical bail but would look into his examination by doctors of either AIIMS or RML hospital on the next date of hearing.

EL NINO RETURN PREDICTED AFTER 3-YR BREAK

He said in a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) year, monsoon rainfall is compensated.

“It is El Nino and positive IOD this year...we are expecting the impact of El Nino in central India to be compensated by positive IOD. But that may not happen in the case of northwest India.”

In view of the above, the IMD has retained its forecast for a normal monsoon season for the country, barring the north-western region, which includes Rajasthan. Haryana and Punjab, considered as the granaries of India.

The weather office said rainfall during the June-September period is likely to be 96 per cent of the long-term average, with an error margin of four per cent of the long period average.

Below-normal rainfall in northwest India is expected to impact agriculture. “We recommend a regional plan based on our forecast. Our extended-range forecast and the short-range forecast will also help them plan. We are also issuing advisories for farmers. We are regularly briefing all ministries on the outlook,” he said.

Monsoon is critical for India’s economy as 51 per cent of India’s farmed area, accounting for 40 per cent of production, is rain-fed. With 47 per cent of the country’s population dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, a bountiful monsoon has a direct correlation with a healthy rural economy.

The IMD also said southwest monsoon over the ‘monsoon convergence zone’, or the rainfed-regions of India, is expected to be normal at 96-106 per cent of the LPA. In April, the IMD had forecast a normal monsoon with the country expected to witness 96 per cent rains of the long-term average, with an error margin of five per cent of the long period average.

In June, below normal monthly rainfall is expected over most parts of the country except some areas of south peninsular India, northwest India, extreme north India and some isolated pockets of northeast India, where above normal rainfall is expected. In June, above-normal monthly maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, except for the extreme north and some parts of the southern peninsular India, where below-normal and normal temperatures respectively are likely.

SCHOOL JOBS SCAM: SC STAYS ₹25 LAKH COST ON ABHISHEK, BUT ALLOWS PROBE

The bench said it will stay the imposition of cost and will hear in July Banerjee’s plea against the high court’s May 18 order dismissing a petition filed by him seeking recall of a previous order of the high court which said probe agencies such as the CBI and ED could interrogate him in the case.

“Re-list in the week commencing July 10. Till the next date of listing, the imposition of the cost part by the impugned order shall remain stayed,” the bench said.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Banerjee, referred to the high court order, and said there were “errors apparent” in it.

“We are not doing anything, we are only issuing notice and asking for

response,” the bench observed, adding that it will post the matter for hearing after the vacation. PTI

INDIA SET FOR EXPONENTIAL GROWTH, SAYS WEF PREZ

Further, Brende highlighted that India has more of a broad ecosystem of startups than in any other developing country and that is growing. This is something that other countries can also be inspired by, he added.

Geneva-headquartered WEF is an international organisation for public private cooperation, and is known for its annual Davos meeting, often described as the biggest congregation of the global elite. The Forum engages the foremost political, business, cultural and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

This year, WEF expects almost 6 per cent economic growth for India and will be the highest growth for any big economies of the world, he said. “We, at WEF, see the growth path forward for India that is also strong... Overall, I am optimistic, provided there are no external factors that will influence negatively. We have no time for wars, conflicts and we have no time to be complacent,” he said. Earlier this month, the United Nations in a report said that India’s economy -- the largest in the South Asia region -- is expected to expand by 5.8 per cent in 2023 and 6.7 per cent in 2024 (calendar year basis), supported by resilient domestic demand. However, higher interest rates and weaker external demand will continue to weigh on investment and exports in 2023, it had said in the World Economic Situation and Prospects Mid-Year Update.

On what India needs to do in the short-term, Brende said the country is already seeing and capitalising on the yield from the reforms that have taken place. “That should be the inspiration to continue with the reform agenda. Investing more in infrastructure, connecting different regions even better and India needs more investment in education, upskilling, reskilling and right skilling in the years to come,” he said. Brende, also a former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry, highlighted that during the coronavirus pandemic, India did something very right. “Some countries overspent on stimulus, that there is no ammunition left. India was not in debt itself, of course, it came up with stimulus but Prime Minister Narendra Modi was able to hold back whereas some countries are in debt trap,” he noted.

RAHUL GETS COURT NOC FOR PASSPORT FOR JUST 3 YEARS

Rahul is scheduled to visit the United States in the first week of June during which he will attend meetings and interact with university students.

He is slated to visit Washington DC, New York and San Francisco. The Congress leader will likely address Indian Americans meet lawmakers at the US Capitol, and interact with members of think tanks, Wall Street executives and university students during his stay.

The magisterial court, in the forenoon, reserved its order on Gandhi’s plea for grant of NOC after hearing submissions of his lawyers and Swamy, who is the complainant in the National Herald case.

Swamy who was assisted by Advocates Satya Sabharwal and Vishesh Kanodia opposed the application, saying it was “devoid of any merit” and insisted the passport should be issued only for one year and renewed every year thereafter. “It is a special case. The passport should not be issued for 10 years. It seems wrong,” he said, and claimed Rahul’s Indian citizenship was under question. He alleged Rahul is a

British citizen.

Rahul’s advocate Tarannum Cheema contested Swamy’s claim and said two petitions asking for initiating criminal proceedings against the Congress leader on the citizenship issue have already been dismissed by higher courts.

Swamy has accused Sonia and Rahul of cheating and misappropriation of funds in acquiring ownership of the now-defunct daily newspaper National Herald.

Swamy objected the issuance of new passport to Rahul, saying that if Rahul is allowed to travel abroad, it may hamper the probe in the National Herald case. Swamy also argued that the court must hear the opinion of Union Home Ministry as it had issued notice to Rahul for illegally holding British citizenship.

The court called Swamy after Rahul filed the petition seeking no-objection for getting ordinary passport. Earlier day Rahul’s counsel said there are no criminal cases pending against him and therefore, he can be granted a no-objection certificate. However, the court opined that Swamy has the right to file a reply to Rahul’s plea.

The Enforcement Directorate is also probing the money laundering angle in National Herald case. Meanwhile, Union Home Ministry in April 2019 issued notice to Rahul for holding a British passport illegally on Swamy’s complaint. Swamy in his complaint to Home Ministry and other agencies produced documents of a British company, where Rahul is a director declaring himself as British citizen with London residential address.

UN FAVOURS MEMORIAL WALL FOR INDIAN PEACEKEEPERS

India’s Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj received the medal from the Secretary-General.

Later at a traditional reception hosted by the Permanent Mission of India on Peacekeepers Day, Kamboj said, “We are collectively working towards installing a Peacekeeping Memorial Wall with all names inscribed of our fallen heroes.”

She called on UN Member States to collectively join in co-sponsoring the resolution for the memorial wall that is expected to be put up for adoption in the General Assembly soon.

“In essence, the idea is to set up a memorial wall in a prominent location at the United Nations headquarters with the names of all the fallen heroes, and I do believe very honestly, that this is the very least that we can do for them as we salute them today.”

The Secretary General’s Chef de Cabinet Courtenay Rattray said at the reception that “we welcome India’s initiative to honour fallen peacekeepers through the establishment of a memorial wall. We call on all Member States to support this worthy idea.” Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix expressed appreciation and support for India’s initiative to honour the fallen peacekeepers through the establishment of the memorial wall.

“In addition to our collective remembering of the fallen heroes, we will also continue our efforts to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers,” he said.

Kamboj added that despite all doubts and uncertainties, “we believe in UN peacekeeping and that UN peacekeeping has made this world a less violent and a more stable place.”

Kamboj, during remarks to the UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting on Peacekeeping Operations in September last year, had reiterated that the least the UN system needed to do was to ensure that the proposed memorial wall at UN headquarters in memory of the fallen peacekeepers is installed urgently and in a visibly prominent location at the headquarters. India stood ready to contribute, including financially, towards this noble

endeavour, she had said.

In 2015, the Permanent Mission of India to the UN launched a virtual memorial wall, dedicated to the Indian troops who gave their lives while doing active service as UN peacekeepers. The wall of honour included details of 161 Indian peacekeepers who had made the supreme sacrifice in 16 UN Peacekeeping Missions in the years up to 2015.

The initiative was a precursor to the eventual construction of a UN Peacekeepers Memorial Wall on the UN headquarters premises. India had proposed the construction of the memorial wall as an appropriate way to commemorate all the troops from member states of the United Nations who had given their lives while on duty under the Blue Flag of the United Nations.

Rattray said the UN remembers with gratitude the more than 4,200 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the service of peace since 1948.

He said India’s contribution to peacekeeping has been amongst the largest since the inception of UN peacekeeping. He noted that over 200,000 Indian men and women have served in 49 peacekeeping missions in the last seven decades.

He added India is not alone in its support of UN peacekeeping and expressed gratitude to all countries “whose citizens step up to answer the call to peace around the world.”

He added that strengthening the UN’s support of peacekeepers is a central part of the Secretary General’s action for the peacekeeping plan initiative.

“It includes enhanced accountability for acts of violence against peacekeepers,” he said adding that the Security Council resolution 2589, adopted in August 2021 under India’s Presidency of the Council, “was the first Council resolution specifically devoted to this imperative of better accountability for crimes against peacekeepers.”

Lacroix paid special tribute to peacekeepers from India, “certainly one of the biggest troop and police-contributing countries with more than 200,000 peacekeepers having served since the inception of peacekeeping.”

Under Secretary General, Department of Operational Support Atul Khare highlighted the contributions made by India to peacekeeping efforts over the last few years.

“India has contributed to the work of my department in many important areas, such as improving the United Nations peacekeeping missions’ medical support systems, including the vaccination doses against coronavirus, support to enhancing intensive care capacities in our missions” as well as the phase one rollout of UNITE AWARE, a technology platform launched by India in collaboration with the UN during its August 2021 presidency of the Security Council aimed at ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Khare also expressed gratitude for the “support that we have received from India for the peace and security operation in Somalia”, its contributions to the trust fund for the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and for being an “active member” of the Group of Friends for leading on environmental management in the field (LEAF), for demonstrating a commitment to better environmental management. Khare noted that India’s contribution to green energy, the Gandhi Solar Park installed at the UN headquarters in 2019 “are all measures which we deeply appreciate.”

He also acknowledged “the good work” of nearly 28 nationals from India in his department and 14 in the Office of Information and Communication Technology, “who do great work.”

This year marks the 75th anniversary of UN Peacekeeping and the theme for this year’s observance, ‘Peace Begins with Me’, recognises the contribution and efforts of UN peacekeepers alongside many partners including communities to secure peace and progress.

Imran slams govt, says no plans to travel abroad

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Unfazed after being placed on the no-fly list, Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan on Friday took a swipe at the top leaders of the ruling coalition, saying he has no plans to travel overseas as he neither owns properties nor has any businesses abroad. Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and other leaders and former assembly members of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party were reportedly barred from leaving the country on Thursday.

Taking to Twitter, Khan wrote: "I want to thank the government for putting my name on the ECL as I have no plans to travel abroad, because I neither have any properties or businesses abroad nor even a bank account outside the country." "If and when I do get an opportunity for a holiday, it will be in our northern mountains, my favourite place on earth," he said. The Exit Control List (ECL) is maintained by the

interior ministry and deals with individuals who are not allowed to leave the country due to pending court cases or for other reasons.

Earlier, the Samaa News channel reported on Thursday that the Pakistan government had barred Khan, his wife and at least 80 people from leaving the country.

"The federal government has decided to add the names of 80 people, including PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, to the no-fly list," the report said.

Top leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) including the party's supremo Nawaz Sharif are accused of amassing huge wealth in country's like the UK.

Sharif was sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment by an anti-graft court in one of the three corruption cases against him in the Panama Papers scandal in 2018.

During the trial, the National Accountability Bureau

(NAB) had presented around 21 witnessed to prove that Sharif family cannot justify the money trail to buy four apartments in Avenfield House, Park Lane, London. It is alleged that the properties were bought with graft money in 1990s when he served twice as the prime minister.

Sharif, however, has rejected any wrongdoing and insisted they were bought with the legitimate money.

Khan, 70, and several top leaders of his party are facing cases in connection with the violence that erupted after the PTI chief's arrest on May 9 in a corruption case.

On May 9, violent protests erupted after paramilitary Rangers arrested Khan from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) premises. His party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Lahore Corps Commander's House, the Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad in response to Khan's arrest.

Senior leader quits ex-Pak PM's party

Islamabad (PTI): Firdous Ashiq Awan resigned from Imran Khan's party on Friday over the recent violent and "terrorist activities" and said the former prime minister and Pakistan cannot go together, becoming the latest senior leader to quit the opposition party.

Awan, 53, served as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting from 2019 to 2020.

She is the latest politician who resigned from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. Awan, the former Federal Minister for Population Welfare, said she was parting ways with the PTI over the party's "violent and terrorist activities".

Only 33 suspects handed over to military for trial: Sanaullah

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Friday said that only 33 suspects have been handed over to authorities so far to be tried by military courts for their alleged involvement in the attacks on sensitive defence installations during the May 9 protests following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan. Thousands of supporters of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party ransacked and set ablaze military and civilian buildings after party chief Khan was arrested from the Islamabad High Court in a case of alleged corruption, following which a crackdown was launched to arrest and punish the perpetrators.

Amidst criticism from local and international rights groups, Pakistan started the legal process

to prosecute those involved in the violence under military and civilian laws. Sanaullah, at a press conference, provided details about the number of people arrested and handed over to the military for trial under the stringent military regulations for attacking the Army's facilities.

"So far, only 19 accused have been handed over to the military courts or military officials in Punjab and 14 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," he said.

The minister said that police registered 499 First Information Reports (FIRs) at various police stations, and only six of them, including two in Punjab and four in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces, are being processed for a possible trial in the military courts.

"But an atmosphere is being created as if all are being tried in

military courts," he said. Asserting that only those involved in attacks on military installations would be tried under military laws, Sanaullah said that no innocent person would be harmed.

He clarified that military officials would investigate the cases but would not start prosecution until it was determined where the Army Act or the Official Secrets Act would be applicable. Details of the FIRs, he said 88 cases were registered under the Anti-Terrorism Act and the remaining 411 under other charges, like vandalism, arson or interfering in state matters. Sanaullah added that around 3,950 people were arrested in cases registered under terrorism charges, including 2,588 in Punjab and almost 1,100 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

'Pope runs fever, skips meetings'

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis skipped meetings on Friday because he was running a fever after a particularly busy day, the Vatican said. The Vatican No. 2, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said Francis was tired and attributed the fever to the fact that Francis had greeted, one by one, a particularly big crowd of his school foundation on Thursday afternoon.

"He wanted to greet all of them and probably at a certain point lost his resistance," Parolin was quoted as saying by the LaPresse news agency.

The last time Francis spiked a serious fever, in March, the 86-year-old pontiff was rushed to the hospital where he was diagnosed with acute bronchitis.

He received intravenous antibiotics and was released three days later.

Credit Suisse owes millions to Georgia's ex-PM: Court

London (AP): Credit Suisse owes former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili hundreds of millions of dollars for failing to protect the billionaire's money held in a trust pilfered by a manager, a Singapore court ruled Friday, the latest scandal for the Swiss bank whose yearslong problems forced its takeover by a rival.

Ivanishvili in 2004 put more than USD 1.1 billion into a trust overseen by the bank's Singapore subsidiary, Credit Suisse Trust Limited, and the employee managing the trust "misappropriated many millions of dollars" over nine years before being caught and sent to prison, the Singapore International Commercial Court said. Bidzina, who amassed a fortune in Russia as a businessman before serving as Georgia's prime minister from 2012 to 2013, sued the Swiss bank for about USD 1.2

billion, saying it failed to properly administer the trust and keep its assets safe.

"The judgment published today is wrong and poses very significant legal issues," Credit Suisse said in a written statement.

"Credit Suisse Trust Limited intends to vigorously pursue an appeal."

The bank has previously acknowledged that it did not take reasonable steps to protect the trust's assets as of the end of 2008 and agreed to pay more than USD 79.4 million last year in a settlement.

"The defendant is liable to compensate the plaintiffs for their loss," which has been calculated at USD 926 million, minus the amount of the settlement, Judge Patricia Bergin said in a ruling.

She added that any payout in a related case in Bermuda must be reduced so there isn't "double recovery."

Recession may be necessary to get inflation down: UK Treasury chief

AP ■ LONDON

Britain's Treasury chief said he would be prepared to see the UK economy slip back into recession if further interest rate hikes are necessary to bring down inflation.

With the Bank of England expected to keep raising rates following higher-than-anticipated inflation figures this week, Jeremy Hunt said it was necessary to prioritise measures to slow the pace of price increases.

In an interview with Sky News that aired on Friday, Hunt said the "only path to sustainable growth" is to bring inflation under control. Asked if he was comfortable with further rate hikes even if it could precipitate a recession, Hunt said, "Yes, because in the end, inflation is a source of instability. ... It is not a trade-off between tackling inflation and recession."

Like other central banks, the

Bank of England has been raising interest rates aggressively over the past 18 months or so to a 15-year high of 4.5 per cent after inflation spiked sharply, first because of bottlenecks caused by the coronavirus pandemic and then Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which caused energy and food prices to surge.

Higher borrowing costs are aimed at making it more expensive for individuals and businesses to borrow, which dampens demand in the economy.

"If we want to have prosperity, to grow the economy, to reduce the risk of recession, we have to support the Bank of England in the difficult decisions that they take," Hunt said.

There had been hope that the bank, whose primary task is to keep inflation at around 2 per cent, may pause rate hikes but the inflation figures this week raised alarm bells that it will have to go on tightening monetary

policy.

The consumer prices index eased to 8.7 per cent in the year to April from 10.1 per cent in March, largely because last year's energy spike in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine dropped out of the annual comparison.

The decline wasn't as big as anticipated, especially as prices in the wholesale gas market have been falling for months.

Since then, financial markets have priced in further rate hikes from the central bank in the coming months, possibly up to 5.5 per cent, bad news for borrowers and those looking to get a new mortgage.

"The shock print for inflation this week has very quickly reset most forecasters' expectations of where the peak in the Bank of England rate will be," said Luke Hickmore, investment director at asset management firm abrdn.

Strong quake shakes Tokyo, eastern Japan

Tokyo (AP): A strong earthquake shook Tokyo and other areas of eastern Japan on Friday, but no tsunami warning was issued. The magnitude 6.1 quake was centred off the east coast of Chiba Peninsula at a depth of 44.5 kilometres, the US Geological Survey said. Strong shaking was reported in Chiba and Ibaraki prefectures, but the USGS said there was little chance of serious damage or fatalities. Kyodo News service said no problems were reported at the Tokai No. 2 nuclear power plant in Ibaraki.

A strong earthquake hit central Japan on May 5, killing at least one person and injuring more than 20 others.

Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone nations. A massive 2011 quake in the country's northeast caused a devastating tsunami and nuclear plant meltdown.

Russia says border regions under attack

Kyiv (AP): Russia's southern Belgorod region bordering Ukraine came under attack on Friday from Ukrainian artillery fire, mortar shells and drones, authorities said, hours after two drones struck a Russian city in an area next to the annexed Crimea Peninsula.

Moscow's forces, meanwhile, struck a building containing psychology and veterinary clinics in the city of Dnipro, in central Ukraine, killing two people and wounding 30, including two children, Ukrainian officials said.

Video released by regional Gov Serhiy Lysak showed fire engulfing the three-story building that appeared almost destroyed, with only parts of a wall standing, as firefighters battled the flames.

A Russian S-300 missile hit a dam in the Karlivka district of Donetsk province in eastern Ukraine, threatening nearby settlements with flooding. The

town of Graivoron in Russia's Belgorod region, about 7 kilometres (more than 4 miles) from the Ukrainian border, came under fire for several hours, damaging four houses, a store, a car, a gas pipeline and a power line, Gov Vyacheslav Gladkov reported.

Closer to the frontier, a recreation centre, a shop and an empty house were damaged in the village of Glotovo. One woman was wounded when nearby Novaya Tavolzhanka was shelled, Gladkov said.

Earlier this week, the Belgorod region was the target of one of the most serious cross-border attacks from Ukraine since the war began 15 months ago. Details of the raid were murky.

Russia blamed the Ukrainian armed forces, but two Russian groups said they were involved, with the aim of bringing down Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Belgium, Iran conduct prisoner swap in Oman



Protesters wear clothes reading Free Olivier during a solidarity demonstration with Belgian aid worker Olivier Vandecasteele in Brussels on December 25, 2022. AFP

AP ■ DUBAI

Belgium and Iran conducted a prisoner exchange Friday in Oman, with officials saying Tehran released a Belgian aid worker in exchange for an Iranian diplomat convicted of attempting to bomb a meeting of exiles in France. The initial announcement by Oman's Foreign Ministry did not identify the prisoners being swapped. Later Friday, Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said in a statement that the aid worker, Olivier Vandecasteele, had been freed. Iranian state television later confirmed that the diplomat, Assadollah Assadi, was freed as well.

Oman's Foreign Ministry said that "those released were transferred from Tehran and Brussels to Muscat today, Friday, in preparation for their return to their countries." It added that "the sultanate of Oman appreciated the high positive spirit that prevailed in the talks in Muscat between the Iranian and Belgian sides, and their keenness to settle this humanitarian issue."

De Croo said Vandecasteele was transferred to Oman on Thursday night. He was received by a team of Belgian diplomats and military officials, then was assessed by doctors.

"Olivier spent 455 days in prison in Tehran. In unbearable conditions. Innocent," De Croo wrote. "Olivier Vandecasteele's return to Belgium is a relief. A relief for his family, friends and colleagues."

Oman has long served as an interlocutor for the West with Iran.

In January, Iran sentenced Vandecasteele to a lengthy prison term and 74 lashes after convicting him of espionage in a closed-door trial. He also was fined USD 1 million.

Vandecasteele was arrested in Iran in February 2022 while packing up his belongings, after working with the Norwegian Refugee Council and Relief International in the Islamic Republic from 2015 to 2021, according to Amnesty International.

His family and the Belgian government strongly denied Iran's claims, made without offering evidence, that he was a spy. To make the swap with the Iran diplomat possible, Belgium had adopted in March a controversial prisoner exchange treaty that was upheld by the country's constitutional court.

In 2021, Belgium convicted Assadi of masterminding a thwarted bomb attack against an exiled Iranian opposition group in France and sentenced him to 20 years in prison.

'Time to widen India-UK relations'

PTI ■ LONDON

UK Opposition Leader Sir Keir Starmer on Friday said it was time for the India-UK relationship to be widened across all critical areas as he set out the Labour Party's foreign policy pitch in the lead up to the general election expected next year. Starmer said he sees huge scope of mutual benefit from enhancing the bilateral ties.

According to a statement, he would be making a keynote address to open India Global Forum's (IGF) annual UK-India Week summit in London next month. The address will mark the first major insight into the Labour leader's vision for the party's relationship with India, which went through some strain over sensitive issues such as Kashmir under his predecessor Jeremy Corbyn.

"The time has now come to look to the future and work on how we can deepen and widen our cooperation in critical areas such as trade and investment, technology and innovation, climate action, diversity and inclusion, and healthcare, the future of work, skills and education – all areas where I see huge scope for mutual benefit," said Starmer.

The IGF UK-India Week, now in its fifth year, is a five-day series of events to be held between June 26 and 30 to bring together senior politicians, business and thought leaders from the UK, India and around the world to focus on the prospects of strengthening India-UK ties across different sectors. "I believe it's timely that Sir Keir will be opening UK-India Week this year. We are at a critical juncture, and so his participation underscores the importance of the need for a bipartisan approach to the relationship with India," said IGF Founder and CEO Professor Manoj Ladwa.

US, Chinese trade officials concerned over restrictions

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and her Chinese counterpart, Wang Wentao, expressed concern Thursday about policies of each other's governments following Chinese raids on consulting firms and US curbs on exports of semiconductor technology, their governments said. The two sides announced no progress in disputes over technology and security but Raimondo and Wang promised to strengthen exchanges on trade issues.

Companies from both sides have been buffeted by tighter official controls on trade in semiconductors and other activity on security grounds. Political relations between the two governments are at their lowest level in decades following disputes over technology, security, China's territorial claims and Beijing's treatment of Hong Kong and ethnic



minorities, Raimondo "raised concerns" about Chinese actions against US companies in China, her office said in a statement. It said they also discussed the trade and investment environment and "areas for potential cooperation" but gave no details.

Chinese police raided offices of consultants Bain & Company, Capvision and a due diligence firm, Mintz Group, following the expansion

of national security and intelligence laws. Authorities have given no explanation for the raids.

The raids rattled foreign companies, which the British Chamber of Commerce in China said this week want "greater clarity" about enforcement. Chinese authorities have said companies are obliged to obey the law but have given no indication whether they see possible violations.

'Debt ceiling talks making progress'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy said on Friday negotiators "made progress" on an agreement with the White House to raise the debt limit as they race to close out a deal ahead of a looming deadline to avert a potentially catastrophic default.

McCarthy told reporters at the Capitol that there is still more work to do.

The two sides are narrowing on a two-year agreement that would curb federal spending and lift the borrowing limit ahead of a deadline as soon as June 1 when Treasury could run out of money to pay the nation's bills.

President Joe Biden and the Republican speaker hope to strike a budget compromise this weekend. Any deal would need to be a political compromise, with support from both

Democrats and Republicans to pass the divided Congress.

A person familiar with the talks said the two sides are "dug in" on whether or not to agree to Republican demands to impose stiffer work requirements on people who receive government food stamps, cash assistance and health care aid, some of the most vulnerable Americans.

Yet both Biden and McCarthy expressed optimism heading into the weekend that the gulf between their positions could be bridged. A two-year deal would raise the debt limit for that time, past the 2024 presidential election.

House Republicans have pushed the issue to the brink, displaying risky political bravado in leaving town for the Memorial Day holiday. The US could face an unprecedented default as soon as June 1, hurling the global economy

into chaos. In remarks at the White House on Thursday, Biden said, "It's about competing versions of America."

"The only way to move forward is with a bipartisan agreement," Biden said on Thursday. "And I believe we'll come to an agreement that allows us to move forward and protects the hardworking Americans of this country."

Lawmakers are tentatively not expected back at work until Tuesday, just two days from the early June deadline when Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said the US could start running out of cash to pay its bills and face a federal default.

Biden will also be away this weekend, departing on Friday for the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, and Sunday for his home in Wilmington, Delaware. The Senate is on

recess and will return after Memorial Day.

Meanwhile, Fitch Ratings agency placed the United States' AAA credit on "ratings watch negative," warning of a possible downgrade.

Weeks of negotiations between Republicans and the White House have failed to produce a deal — in part because the Biden administration resisted negotiating with McCarthy over the debt limit, arguing that the country's full faith and credit should not be used as leverage to extract other partisan priorities.

The White House has offered to freeze next year's 2024 spending at current levels and restrict 2025 spending, but the Republican leader says that's not enough.

"We have to spend less than we spent last year. That is the starting point," said McCarthy.

Princess Sophia's UK home gets Blue Plaque

PTI ■ LONDON

Princess Sophia Duleep Singh, the daughter of Maharaja Duleep Singh – the last ruler of the Sikh empire – and the goddaughter of Queen Victoria, was honoured with a commemorative Blue Plaque in London on Friday. The Blue Plaque scheme, run by the English Heritage charity, honours the significance of particular buildings associated with historical figures. In memory of the British-Indian Princess, it now adorns Faraday House, which was granted to Sophia and her sisters as a grace and favour apartment at Hampton Court Palace southwest of London by Queen Victoria.



"As a political journalist, I thought I knew the story of the suffragettes, and then I found this extraordinary woman and she blew me away," said Anita Anand, the author of the biography 'Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary'.

"As the last princess of the Sikh Empire, goddaughter of Queen Victoria, society darling and fashion icon, a life of comfort and celebrity was hers for the taking, but she chose a harder path. Using her international fame and influence, putting herself in physical danger, she fought for the right of women to vote. Campaigning with unrelenting ferocity, loyalty and selflessness, she moved the dial," she said.

Named after another former resident, the eminent English physicist Michael Faraday (1791–1867), Faraday House was Princess Sophia's main residence for over four decades.

DJOKOVIC EYES HISTORY AT FRENCH OPEN



AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic will bid for a record-breaking 23rd Grand Slam title at a French Open without his old rival Rafael Nadal for the first time since 2004, while Iga Swiatek attempts to become the first woman to defend the title in 16 years.

Serbian veteran Djokovic will not be the favourite for the title, though, after struggling with an elbow injury and failing to get past the quarter-finals in any of his three clay-court events

so far this season.

Carlos Alcaraz won the Barcelona and Madrid Opens en route to taking over from Djokovic as world number one, while Daniil Medvedev is seeded second for Roland Garros after his maiden clay triumph in Rome.

But Djokovic will know this is a massive opportunity to break out of his tie with 14-time French Open winner Nadal at the top of the all-time list of most men's Slam singles titles.

The two-time champion has lost eight of his 10 French Open meetings with Nadal who

is missing this year's edition due to a hip injury he suffered at the Australian Open.

"I know I can always play better," Djokovic said after losing to Holger Rune in the Italian Open last eight.

"Definitely am looking forward to working on various aspects of my game, of my body, hopefully getting myself in 100 percent shape. That's the goal."

Djokovic and Alcaraz are seeded to meet in the semi-finals after being placed in the same half of the draw.

The 36-year-old may also

have to get past Monte Carlo Masters champion Andrey Rublev in the quarters.

The other side of the draw appears wide open, with in-form Medvedev the highest seed despite never having previously got past the quarter-finals on the Paris clay. The Russian lost in the first round on each of his first four visits before making the quarters in 2021.

"I would never (have) thought I would be able to make this (win a clay-court title)," Medvedev said after beating Rune in the Rome final.

"But I have to be honest — a Grand Slam is always bigger."

In-form youngster Rune, who made a surprise run to last year's quarter-finals, could face Casper Ruud in the last eight in a rematch of a bad-tempered meeting 12 months ago.

Ruud went on to be thrashed in the final by Nadal and also lost the US Open showpiece match to Alcaraz.

But the Norwegian world number four has struggled for form this year, only reaching the quarters in two of the 10 tournaments he has played.

Sabalenka faces no Ukraine handshake at French Open

AP ■ PARIS

Aryna Sabalenka on Friday said that "it's OK if she hates me" as the Belarusian star braced to face Ukraine rival Marta Kostyuk in a highly-charged French Open showdown.

World number two Sabalenka knows that Kostyuk, an outspoken critic of tennis authorities over their handling of players from Russia and their Belarusian allies in the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine, will refuse to shake hands after their first round match at Roland Garros.

"If she hates me, OK. I can't do anything about that," said 25-year-old Sabalenka.

"There are going to be people who love me; there are going to be people who hate me. If she hates me, I don't feel anything like that to her."



Kostyuk refused to shake hands with Belarus's two-time Grand Slam title winner and former world number one Victoria Azarenka at last year's US Open in New York.

They agreed to touch racquets instead at the net at the end of the match.

"If I could I would stop the

war," said Australian Open champion Sabalenka.

"And about the no shaking, I can kind of understand them. Like I imagine if they're going to shake hands with Russians and Belarusians, then they're gonna get so many messages from their home countries."

"So I kind of understand why they are not doing it. At the same time, I feel like sports shouldn't be in politics. Like we're just athletes. If they feel good with no shaking hands, I'm happy with that."

Sabalenka defeated Kostyuk in Dubai in February 2022, just one week before Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine.

Last week in Rome, Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina refused to shake hands with Veronika Kudermetova after beating the Russian in the semi-final.

Bharatiya Vidyapeeth, KIIT win rugby titles

Aneesh, Vikkas, Siva bag golds in swimming

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Kalinga Institute of Information Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar bagged the women's Rugby Sevens crown with a dominating 56-0 win over University of Mumbai in the Khelo India University Games at Guru Gobind Singh Sports College ground on Friday. Nirmalya led the lines admirably for the women from Odisha with three tries (15 points) to her name.

However, KIIT men's team failed to win the yellow metal, losing to Pune's Bharatiya Vidyapeeth 19-10 in the final.

Earlier in the day, Aneesh Gowda of Christ University bagged the first gold of the Games with a win in the men's 400m freestyle while Vikkas Prabhakar of SRM University, Tamil Nadu emerged the fastest male swimmer and Siva Sridhar of Jain University, Karnataka became the first double gold medallist. Vikkas clocked 23.47 seconds to win the gold. Siva claimed the yellow metal in the men's 200m

medley and the men's 100m backstroke.

In the women's kabaddi, University of Mumbai bt Guru Nanak Dev University 22-5 to set up a title clash with Himachal Pradesh University, which defeated CRSU, Jind 31-22 in another semi-final match. In the kabaddi men's event, Chandigarh University beat SRM University, Chennai 33-32 in the semi-final while Guru Kashi University, Talwani Sabo pipped VELS University, Tamil Nadu 57-39 to enter the final.

In the shooting event at the Karni Singh range in New Delhi, Hriday Hazarika of Assam's Cotton University outshot Guru Kashi University's Arjun Babuta to take the men's 10m air rifle gold.

A week back, Hriday won a world cup silver for India at Baku. His India teammate Ashi Chouksey won the women's 50m rifle 3 positions gold for Guru Nanak Dev University with a score of 461.6. Her college and India teammate Sift Kaur Samra won the silver with a score of 457.7.



OTHER RESULTS:

(Volleyball) Women's: SRM University, Chennai bt Panjab University, Chandigarh 3-1 (20-25, 25-16, 25-17, 25-15); Punjab University, Patiala bt Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam 3-1 (25-16, 22-25, 25-20, 25-19); GNDU, Amritsar bt Sri Kushal Das University 3-1 (22-25, 25-20, 25-16, 25-21) Men's: University of Madras bt Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune 3-0; SRM University bt University of Calicut 3-2 (25-16, 18-25, 20-25, 27-25, 15-11); Kurukshetra University bt Mangalore University 3-2 (22-25, 23-25, 25-19, 25-14, 15-13); Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth bt Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada Univ 3-2 (22-25, 21-25, 25-18, 25-21, 15-12) (Table Tennis) Men's: Semifinals- Chitkara University bt Gujarat University, Chandigarh University bt University of Madras; (Women's) SRM bt Chitkara 3-0; Adamas bt Calcutta 3-1 (Basketball) Men's: Swarnim Gujarat Sports University, Gandhinagar bt Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam

67-65; Jain University, Karnataka bt Swarnim Gujarat Sports University, Gandhinagar 102-68; Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam bt University of Madras, Chennai 89-85; Jamia Milia Islamia bt Punjabi University 92-90; Punjab University bt Kurukshetra University 93-62

Women's: Punjab University bt Banaras Hindu University 94-43; Guru Nanak Dev University bt Laxmibai National Institute of Physical Education 73-66; SRM University, Chennai bt MG University, Kottayam 68-54

(Football) Women's: CBLU, Bhiwani draw Guru Jambheshwar University 1-1 Men's: MG University, Kottayam draw Adamas University, Kolkata 2-2; Baba Sant Singh Bhag University, Punjab bt Punjab University 3-2 (Swimming) 400m Freestyle Men's: 1-Aneesh Gowda, 2-Anurag Singh, 3-Krishna Rajendra Gadhak; Women's: 1-Preetha V, 2-Pratyasa Ray, 3-Maanya Mukta Mahesh; 200m medley Men's: 1-Siva Sridhar, 2-Rohit Benedicton, 3-Aneesh Gowda; 4x200m Freestyle Women's: 1- Jain University, 2-University of Madras, 3-University of Delhi Institution of Eminence; 200m Breaststroke Men's: 1-Danush S, 2-Aditya Dubey, 3-L. Manikanta; 200m Breaststroke Women's: 1-Kalyani Saxena, 2-Aarti Patil, 3-Antara Datta; 100m Backstroke Men's: 1-Siva Sridhar, 2-Rohit Benedicton, 3-Siddhant Sejal; 100m Backstroke Women's: 1-Pratyasa Ray, 2-Shrungi Bandekar, 3-Bharti; 50m Freestyle Men's: 1-Vikkas Prabhakar, 2-Veer Khatkar, 3-Shailesh Shwejal.

Pramanik lauds UP govt



Nisith Pramanik being introduced to the players

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Union Minister of State, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Nisith Pramanik on Friday lauded the efforts of the Uttar Pradesh Government in organising the biggest-ever Khelo India University Games.

Addressing the media at UP Badminton Academy, Pramanik said, "I want to congratulate the Yogi government for hosting the 3rd edition of the Khelo India University Games in a grand manner. I am sure all of you have witnessed the spectacu-

lar opening ceremony on Thursday."

Speaking about the several new initiatives taken by the Ministry in this edition of KIUG, he said: "We have launched a dedicated website and an app, to enable the athletes to get rid of paperwork and with the help of face-recognition technology, they will be able to take care of things like accommodation, entry etc. Also, with the help of a Digi-locker, athletes will be able to access their certificated immediately after the completion of the Games."

Man Utd thrash Chelsea to secure CL return

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Erik ten Hag said Manchester United are back where they belong after a 4-1 thrashing of Chelsea on Thursday secured a return to the Champions League next season.

Casemiro, Anthony Martial, Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford were on target as the Red Devils moved up to third in the Premier League.

A miserable night summed up Chelsea's season despite spending over £500 million (\$620 million) in the transfer market as they slumped to an eighth defeat in 10 games since Frank Lampard returned as interim manager.

By contrast, confirmation of a top-four finish rounds off a successful first season in charge for Ten Hag after also ending United's six-year trophy drought by winning the League Cup in February.

More silverware could be to come next month should United halt Manchester City's charge towards the treble in the FA Cup final.

But a return to Europe's elite competition next season was one of Ten Hag's primary aims when he took the reigns after a disastrous 2021/22 campaign when United finished sixth.

"I think (it is) a successful



season but the season is not finished," said Ten Hag.

"This club belongs in the Champions League, but this league is very strong, with many clubs competing for this position."

"It is the main objective of the season to get into the Champions League. The competition is tough, many teams with really good squads, good managers, so you are doing a good job (to qualify). For this moment it is the maximum but we want more (next season)."

Casemiro's arrival from Real

Madrid has been fundamental to United's revival.

The 31-year-old's class and experience shone through against a youthful Chelsea side that were punished for a lack of efficiency in both boxes.

"It was another reality day today when you look at the emphatic nature at the top end of the pitch of United compared to us," said Lampard. "Results for Chelsea this season are not good enough."

Mykhailo Mudryk should have netted his first Chelsea goal when the Ukrainian sliced wide

a glorious chance on five minutes. Just 60 seconds later, the visitors trailed as Casemiro was afforded a free header to turn home Christian Eriksen's free-kick.

A positive night for United was blighted by an injury to winger Antony, who was forced off on a stretcher with an ankle injury that will make him a major doubt for the FA Cup final in 10 days' time.

But the home side ended the game as a contest in first-half stoppage time when Casemiro's no-look pass opened up the Chelsea defence for Jadon Sancho to square for Martial.

Ten Hag's men should have had more goals to round off a fine night in the second period as Fernandes smashed against the bar and Eriksen somehow failed to turn in Tyrrell Malacia's cross from point-blank range.

Fernandes did finally get his goal from the penalty spot after the Portuguese midfielder was brought down by Wesley Fofana.

More calamitous Chelsea defending invited Rashford to become the first United player in a decade to score 30 goals in a season.

Fernandes pounced on Fofana's loose pass and teed up the England international, who needed two attempts to beat Kepa Arrizabalaga.

Sindhu, Prannoy in Malaysia Masters semis, Srikanth out



PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Star Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy advanced to the women's and men's singles semifinals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament with hard-fought wins over their respective opponents here on Friday. While double Olympic medallist Sindhu, seeded sixth in the tournament, beat lower ranked Yi Man Zhang of China 21-16, 13-21, 22-20, Prannoy

earned a 25-23, 18-21, 21-13 win over Kenta Nishimoto of Japan in the quarterfinals.

Sindhu faces seventh seed and world number nine Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia in the semifinals on Saturday. Tunjung upset second seed Yi Zhi Wang of China in the quarterfinals 21-18, 22-20.

Tunjung has been in fine form recently and Sindhu had lost to her in the Madrid Spain Masters final in straight games

BAI to conduct trials for Asia Junior C'ship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) will conduct a selection trial at the Karnail Singh Stadium here from June 4 to 7 to pick the team for the Asian Junior Championships.

The Asian junior championships is scheduled to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from July 7 to 16.

The players will be selected on the basis of their performances in the selection trials.

The trials will include top-8 boys and girls singles shuttlers as well as top-4 pairs from doubles events from the All India Junior Ranking Badminton Tournament held in Guwahati earlier this month, along with top-4 singles players and top-2 doubles pairs in the BAI rankings. Anwesha Gowda (4th), Anupama Upadhyaya (8th), Unnati Hooda (14th) and five other players, who are ranked inside top-20 in BWF rankings, will also take part in the trials.

India have so far won nine medals, including two gold, one silver and six bronze in the continental championships.

Prannoy has never played against the 21-year-old Adinata, who began playing at the senior level just last year.

In another men's singles quarterfinal, Srikanth lost 21-16, 16-21, 11-21 to Adinata in 57 minutes to bow out of the tournament.

In April. The Indian will, however, go into the semifinals with a 7-1 head-to-head advantage over Tunjung.

World number nine Prannoy faces qualifier Christian Adinata, ranked 57, of Indonesia, who beat Kidambi Srikanth 16-21, 21-16, 21-11 in another quarterfinals, in the

Sensational Shubman takes GT to final

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Shubman Gill extended his sensational run with a third century of the season as Gujarat Titans crushed Mumbai Indians by 62 runs to storm into their second consecutive IPL final here on Friday.

Gill's 60-ball 129 (7x4s, 10x6s) fired Gujarat Titans to a huge 233/3 and in reply, Mumbai Indians, struck by a string of injuries, went down fighting in Qualifier 2 with Suryakumar Yadav (61) and Tilak Varma (43) providing the resistance.

Mohit Sharma, introduced in the 15th over, finished with figures of 2.2-0-10-5, triggering a collapse as MI collapsed from 149/4 in 14 overs to 171 all-out in 18.2 overs.

The 23-year-old Gill scored his third century in the last four innings, recorded the highest score of the season for any batter and took his tally to 851 runs in yet another sensational knock.

Gill's whirlwind knock made him only the second Indian batter after Virat Kohli (2016) and overall fourth in the history, after Jos Buttler (2022) and David Warner (2016), to score more than 800 runs in an IPL season.

Chasing 234, MI were forced to rejig their batting line-up with Ishan Kishan being substituted after he ran into Chris Jordan during change of overs in the first innings and hurt his eye.

Rohit Sharma also copped



a blow to his hand while fielding and Cameron Green had to retire hurt for a bit, after being smacked on his left forearm by Hardik Pandya.

Mohammad Shami caused early troubles for Mumbai, getting rid of makeshift opener Nehal Wadhwa (4) and Rohit (8), but Varma took on the India and GT pace spearhead, hitting four fours and a six to collect 24 runs off the fifth over.

However, Varma's blitz did not last long as Rashid Khan cleaned him up after a 14-ball 43 (5x4s, 3x6s). MI reached 72 for three after the powerplay. Suryakumar and Green kept the scoreboard ticking with their fourth wicket stand that took MI past the 100-run mark in the 10th over, but in the 12th, Josh Little ended their resistance by cleaning up the Australian.

Green struck four fours and two sixes in his 20-ball 30.

Suryakumar tried to take the game deep with 61 from 38 balls with seven fours and two sixes, but lost his leg stump while attempting to hit Mohit Sharma in the fine leg region.

Mohit struck again to remove Vishnu Vinod (5) in the same over and Rashid shut the doors on MI with the wicket of Tim David (2) in the 16th.

Earlier, Gill began sturdily and turned brutal in the second half of the innings, adding 138 runs for the second wicket with B Sai Sudharsan, who happily played second fiddle with a 31-ball 43 before he was retired out.

Gill hit three sixes off MI's hero of the last game, Akash Madhwal (1/53), in the 12th over to cross the 800-run mark.

He brought up his fifty off 32 balls with two sixes and three fours and unleashed a flurry of sixes against seamers and spinners alike here at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

Gill also surpassed Yashasvi Jaiswal's 62-ball 124 to record the highest individual score this season, with Mumbai Indians being on the receiving end on both the occasions.

In the process, the 23-year-old also went past RCB's Faf du Plessis (730 runs) to claim the Orange Cap.

Additionally, Gill's 129 bettered Virender Sehwag's 122 against Chennai Super Kings in the 2014 season as the highest score for a batter in the IPL playoffs. After a 30-minute delay to the start due to rain, GT had made a sedate start.

A vital moment had come at the end of the sixth over when Tim David at mid-on dropped a catch to provide Gill with a lifeline, with GT finishing the powerplay at 50/0.

Gill certainly had luck on his side as twice in as many balls he managed to survive, off Kumar Kartikeya.

After Kishan could not run-out the batter who had gone down the track and had an inside edge deflecting the ball into his pads, Gill hit the next delivery in the air only to find the ball dropping very close to the fielder at deep mid-wicket.

Divine to perform at IPL 2023 finale

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rapper Divine will be performing at the finale of the 2023 Indian Premier League (IPL) on May 28.

Divine, whose real name is Vivian Fernandes, will perform at the first-ever mid-innings/half-time show during the finale, to be held at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, a press release stated.

The rapper will be joined by long-time collaborator and Canadian play-back singer Jonita Gandhi for a special collaborative showcase of their track "Naya Sher", which features Indian cricketer Virat Kohli.

"I am proud to be representing the hip hop movement at the country's largest stadium and bringing together the parallel worlds of cricket and music. I'm looking forward to performing for all my fans all around the world, including all the sports aficionados of the country at the most prominent sporting league of the country."

"This is my very first performance at the IPL and I'm excited and grateful. From being a big fan of cricket, to playing at the stadium for the finals, is truly a dream come true," Divine said in a statement.



Dhoni takes someone else's trash and makes it treasure: Hayden

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is a "magician" who can turn someone else's "trash into treasure" says the great Matthew Hayden, who also reckons that the former India captain's unmatched contribution to the CSK success story makes his playing future with the franchise "almost irrelevant".

Dhoni's tactical genius has played a big part in CSK reaching their 10th IPL final. He did not have the best of bowling attacks at his disposal at the start of the tournament but he has been able to bring the best out of it. How he has used Ajinkya Rahane and Shivam Dube in the batting department has also been praised widely.

Dhoni, who has played with a knee injury throughout the tournament, has given himself 8-9 months to decide on his playing future. Hayden, however, feels the World Cup winning captain will not be around for the next IPL.

"MS is a magician. He takes someone else's trash and makes them treasure. He is a very skilful and positive captain. He said something really interesting which I thought summed up not only his humility and his truth around cricket where he is represented and that is in Tamil Nadu Cricket Association," Hayden said.

resented and that is in Tamil Nadu Cricket Association," Hayden said.

"The alignment between that association and the franchise, how strong that is in terms of building that process. To me that is MS. There is a systematic way of going through things and working through them. He did that for India and he is doing it for Chennai Super Kings. "Whether he plays or not next year it is almost irrelevant. Personally I don't think he will but then he is M S Dhoni," he said at an event organised by University of Technology Sydney (UTS). With the rapid rise of T20 cricket around the world, it has become increasingly difficult for the players to play all three formats.

Hayden thinks not only that makes it impossible for players to commit to all formats, it also questions the future of the game, especially the 50-over version. "The time of three-format players is shortly coming to an end. I would challenge the game around whether those formats are even viable anymore."

"It seems to me there is great enthusiasm still to play Test cricket and World Test Championship is a good example of that. Otherwise I see lot of T20 cricket being played."

BCCI could rest all seniors for Afghanistan series

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Contrary to reports in some quarters that BCCI is planning to cancel the proposed home series against Afghanistan due to cramped calendar, there is possibility that a second string team might play with all seniors including ODI and Test captain Rohit Sharma along with senior player Virat Kohli rested before West Indies tour.

All Indian players were involved in a gruelling IPL for nearly two months and will be in England for a one-off WTC final but after that, most seniors like Kohli and Rohit will need rest before they embark on West Indies tour where all three formats will be played. Kohli and Rohit are certain two play Tests and ODIs and would need adequate rest.

With only window for Afghanistan series between June 20-30, the BCCI might have

shorten the series or may be only convert it into either T20I or ODI series and play the second string side led by Hardik Pandya.

Mirwais Ashraf, the president of the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) is in India for the final of the IPL and while a meeting between the members of the Asian Cricket Council is slated to take place, India and Afghanistan cricket boards could also finalise the details of their proposed white-ball series.

The Indian team has a packed schedule lined up after the conclusion of the IPL. While the coaching staff and some members of the team have already flown to England to prepare for the final of the World Test Championship against Australia starting on June 7, there is also a full tour of the Caribbean lined up ahead.

India will play two Tests, three ODIs and five T20Is against the West Indies from July



12 to August 13, after which the team is expected to play a three-match T20I series in Ireland. The Ireland series will mostly feature IPL performers and even Pandya could rest from that series keeping Asia Cup in mind.

The ACC board members will meet on the sidelines of the IPL final to finalise the future of the Asia Cup 2023, which means that the workload will only increase for the Indian players, given that there is an all-important 50-over World Cup lined up for October-November.

If finalised, the Asia Cup 2023 is expected to be played in September, which means that the Indian players will be hard pressed to find time to rest and recuperate, and a packed calendar has already witnessed big injuries to key players such as Jasprit Bumrah and Shreyas Iyer with no set timeline of comeback.

Additionally, in September, India are also set to play a three-match ODI series against Australia — a second such series this year — to finalise World Cup preparations.

According to 'Cricbuzz', the BCCI is finding it difficult to schedule the Afghanistan series, proposed to be having three ODIs, given the time constraint and also because the broadcast deal with Disney Star has ended and a new tender is yet to be issued.

However, a senior BCCI secretary Jay Shah during an earlier interaction with media in Mumbai had said "BCCI media rights tender will be on schedule this year (June-July) and will depend on the Afghanistan tour, but more likely the process will start from the Australia series. The Board will speak to all stakeholders concerned and will come up with an interim decision."

WTC winners to get \$1.6 mn prize money

PTI ■ DUBAI

The winners of next month's World Test Championship Final between India and Australia at The Oval will take home USD 1.6 million in prize money, while runners-up will get richer by USD 800,000, the ICC announced here on Friday.

The championship decider will be played at The Oval, London from June 7-11 with June 12 as the reserve day.

The tournament prize money is the same as that for the inaugural World Test Championship Final in 2019-21 — a total purse of USD 3.8 million besides the WTC Mace.

The Kane Williamson-led New Zealand side were rewarded with USD 1.6 million besides the glittering Mace in Southampton two years ago, courtesy an eight-wicket win over India in the six-day final.

All nine teams will get a share in the USD 3.8 million purse with South Africa earning USD 450,000 for finishing third in the WTC 2021-23 standings.

England, who made a late surge and finished their campaign in fourth spot, will bag



USD 350,000. Sri Lanka, who were among the top teams in the race for a spot in the decider during the epic finale, finished fifth to earn USD 200,000.

The remaining teams New Zealand (No.6), Pakistan (No.7), West Indies (No.8), and Bangladesh (No.9) will be rewarded with a sum of USD 100,000 each.

Roy ends England deal to play T20 cricket in USA

AP ■ LONDON

Batting star Jason Roy is ending his England contract to play in the first season of Major League Cricket in the United States.

The aggressive opener, who has just returned from a stint with Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League, reportedly has an offer from their affiliated MLC franchise, the Los Angeles Knight Riders.

It is understood the 32-year-old has been offered about £300,000 (\$370,000) for the first two seasons of the new American Twenty20 competition, which launches in July.

Roy was dropped from England's central contract list last

year, downgraded to an incremental deal worth between £60,000 and £70,000.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement on Thursday that it had agreed for Roy to play in the US "on the proviso that he gives up the remainder of his ECB incremental contract, which both parties have agreed to".

"The ECB wish to clarify that this decision will not affect Jason's selection for England teams going forward," it added. "We have absolute confidence and faith that Jason is committed to England cricket."

The aggressive opener did not feature in England's T20 World Cup triumph in October and November, but has held on to his place in the 50-over side and will



hope to feature in this year's 50-over World Cup defence in India.

The Surrey player said in a statement on Twitter that he would never walk away from England.

"Representing my country continues to be my proudest moment as a professional cricketer," said Roy, who has scored nearly 6,000 international runs in all formats.

"I hope to play for England for many more years — that remains my priority."

He added: "As a single format player with no central contract I wanted to take the opportunity to play this competition as there are currently no scheduling conflicts with England. It benefits me as an England player to play as much competitive cricket as possible."



Oz include Peirson as cover for Inglis

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia have selected wicketkeeper Jimmy Peirson as cover for back-up gloveman Josh Inglis, who will return home after the opening Ashes Test for the birth of his first child.

Alex Carey is Australia's first-choice keeper for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against India and the five Ashes Tests and Inglis has been selected as his back-up.

But Inglis will return to Perth after the first Ashes Test starting on June 16 and his place will be taken up before the second Test at Lord's by 30-year-old Queensland gloveman Peirson, who has 65 first-class games to his credit, according to cricket.Com.Au on Friday.

The Australian team management has said Inglis will rejoin the squad later in the series. Peirson, who has been impressive at the domestic and Australia 'A' level with both the bat and gloves, trained with the Test squad in Brisbane last week and would be fancying his chances of wearing the iconic Baggy Green during the Ashes. The right-handed lower-order batter has improved his

batting drastically over the years, going from an average of less than 30 in his first 35 first-class games to 42.56, including six tons in 30 games since the 2020-21 season.

He also struck an unbeaten 128 for Australia 'A' during their tour of Sri Lanka last year.

Peirson's appearance in the Australian Test squad has partly been delayed because Tim Paine was the first-choice keeper for a long time and then Carey replaced the former captain, who stepped down due to a controversy ahead of the 2021 Ashes series at home.

Peirson said he was driven by the desire to set higher standards for himself.

"These guys (Carey and Inglis among others) are setting their benchmark, and I want to set my benchmark higher, and maybe bring a few other attributes into that as well, through leadership or whatever else," said Peirson. "It's great to have that competition. That's what drives you to be the best you can be. If someone's pipping you, you want to be better than them. That's certainly one of my great driving factors: I want to be the best, I want to be the next man in."