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CHAPTER CLOSED
BUT NOT FULLY:
WARNER
12 SPORTS

MODI'S MOSCOW HUG

India embraces all-weather friend Russia

PIONEER NEWS
SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW
DELHI/MOSCOW

India and Russia on Tuesday reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties and ongoing Ukraine conflict with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying peace dialogue does not succeed amidst guns and bullets. He also said no solution is possible in the battlefield. Modi said stronger ties between India and Russia will greatly benefit the people. He was officially conferred Russia's most prestigious civilian honour — the Order of St Andrew the Apostle — by President Putin for exceptional services in promoting bilateral ties between the two countries. On his bilateral talks with Putin, Modi in his opening remarks said he conveyed to Russia President and assured the world community that India is on the side of peace and was ready to contribute in ending the conflict in Ukraine. "For a bright future for the new generation, peace is most essential...Peace talks do not succeed amidst bombs, guns and bullets," he said. The Prime Minister also referred to his informal meeting with Putin on Monday and said listening to the Russian president lent



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, left, and Russian President Vladimir Putin in embrace during an informal meeting at Novo-Ogaryovo residence, outside Moscow, Russia, on Monday

"hope". While Modi did not explicitly mention Monday's Russian missile attack on a children's hospital in Ukraine, he said it was "heart-wrenching" to see innocent children dying. "Be it war, conflicts, terror attacks — everyone who believes in humanity is pained when there is loss of lives. But when innocent children are murdered, when we see innocent children dying, it is heart-wrenching. That pain is immense," Modi said.

Ukraine frowns upon India

It is a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow on such a day

— Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

"At our meeting yesterday, we listened to each other's views on Ukraine and I also placed before you the Global South's expectation on peace and stability," Modi said. The Prime Minister also highlighted Russia's help to India in the energy sector. When the world was facing shortage of food, fuel and fertilisers, we did not allow our farmers to face any problem and our friendship with Russia played a role in that, Modi said. "We would want our cooperation with

Russia to expand further so as to ensure welfare of our farmers," he said. The Prime Minister also flagged concerns over challenges of terrorism. "India has been facing the challenge of terrorism for around 40 years; I condemn all forms of terrorism," Modi said. He said the world has to face multiple challenges in the last five years — first due Covid-19 and then because of various conflicts. Modi called terrorism 'horrible,' and condemned Moscow terror attack adding Moscow and Dagestan too have been a victim of terrorist attacks. "India has suffered from terrorism. We know how horrible it is. Recently there were terrorist attacks in Moscow and Dagestan... We condemn terrorist attacks," Putin said during his bilateral meeting with Modi. Last week, terrorist attacks in Derbent and Makhachkala, two of the largest cities in Russia's Dagestan, killed 21 people and left 46 injured. Modi also said talks with Putin covered ways to diversify India-Russia cooperation in trade, commerce, security, agriculture, technology and innovation. "We attach great importance to boosting connectivity and people-to-people exchanges" he added.

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Jammu terror trail: Shocking incursions

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Massive combing and search operations were launched on Tuesday by the Indian Army, along with a team from the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir police, to pin down the perpetrators behind the 'audacious terror attack' on two Army vehicles. Five soldiers sacrificed their lives repulsing the attack near Badnota village of Machhedhi in the Billawar tehsil of Kathua district on Monday.

The Army's elite para-commandos and sniffer dogs also joined the search operation while drones and helicopters were pressed into service for surveillance. Some of the eyewitnesses were also questioned by the security forces to gather more information about the group of suspected foreign terrorists.

It is learned some of the villagers in the area had spotted suspicious movement of outsiders in the area but failed to timely inform the local police or other agencies for necessary follow-up action. Director General of Police R R Swain also flew to the area to oversee the operation on the ground. Accompanied by ADGP Anand Jain, DGP Swain



Indian Army personnel during a counter-terror operation following a terrorist attack on an Army convoy, in Kathua district, on Tuesday

PTI

conducted an aerial survey of the area and reviewed the ongoing operations. A team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials has been sent to Kathua in the Jammu region to extend all possible support to the police in its investigation. So far the probe agency has not registered a case to investigate the terrorist attack. The scope of the search operations was expanded to encompass large areas in the adjoining districts of Udhampur and Kathua, including Basantgarh, Seoj (a high-altitude area in Udhampur), and the upper reaches of Bani, Daggara, and Kindli in Kathua district.

Reacting strongly in New Delhi, the Indian Government also sent out a stern warning claiming the sacrifices made by the soldiers in the Kathua ambush will not go 'unavenged'. India will defeat the evil forces behind the attack. Since October 11, 2021, 43 bravehearts have sacrificed their lives in different terror attacks and encounters in the Jammu region.

The counter-terrorist operations were temporarily stalled late Monday evening due to bad weather conditions. The suspected group of foreign terrorists also fled the spot taking advantage of the darkness and bad weather conditions.

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Weather forecasting to get tech upgrade



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of widespread social media jokes and public skepticism over recent weather predictions particularly for Delhi-NCR by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Centre has announced major upgrades in weather forecasting infrastructure across key Indian cities, including Delhi NCR. As per plans, three dopplers radars and 180 automatic weather forecasting systems have been proposed for the national Capital and its adjoining regions while Mumbai will get four more. In Mumbai, to take the tally to 6. Also, Kolkata is set to receive additional radar soon. Waking up to the urgent need to have accurate equipment, the Government has plans on deploying

advanced technologies, including additional Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), radars, and a high-performance Computing (HPC) System with 20 petaflops capacity. These enhancements aim to align Delhi's forecasting capabilities with global standards, ultimately improving public safety and economic resilience against unexpected weather changes. "These upgrades are not limited to metro cities but will also benefit cities with populations exceeding 10 lakh. The overarching goal is to bolster weather forecasting capabilities in tier towns and remote areas nationwide," Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said after holding a special high-level meeting convened to address public concerns amid the ongoing monsoon season across India.

He acknowledged the public dissatisfaction with the accuracy of recent forecasts, marked by several missed yellow and orange alerts. In fact failure in accurate alert has caught the citizens many times unaware, leaving them in the uncertainty as they suffered in severe heatwaves conditions on the one hand and flood like situation on the other.

The IMD is continuously improving weather forecast systems to help the common man and share the benefits of world-class weather forecasting technology, said the Minister even as he acknowledged that the recent monsoon season in Delhi has been marked by significant public dissatisfaction and skepticism over the accuracy of weather forecasts by the IMD. According to experts, there are only 34 radars present in the country as of now. The number has increased by just 6 in the last 5 years. In contrast, the United States of America (USA) does weather prediction with almost 200 doppler radars.

A media report quoted JP Sharma from Skymet saying that, "The Numerical Weather Model depends on how much data you have given and what the quality of data is. If you provide the wrong information, then it will get rejected."

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Delhi drowns, in yet another downpour

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As heavy and sudden rain, accompanied with winds, lashed different parts of the national Capital on Tuesday, Delhiites were caught off guard as the rain created waterlogging in key areas and threw traffic out of gear. Laxmi Nagar, Central Secretariat, Delhi Cantonment, Palam, Safdarjung, Parliament Street, Dilshad Garden, ITO and Greater Kailash, among others, recorded heavy rain.

The Public Works Department (PWD) said until afternoon, it received 22 calls regarding waterlogging and around three to four complaints of uprooted trees. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) received 11 calls regarding waterlogging and seven complaints of uprooted trees. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had earlier predicted that moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning



A commuter gets drenched during rains in New Delhi on Tuesday

Ranjan Dimri

was likely to occur in many places. The maximum temperature recorded in Delhi was 33.2 degrees Celsius, three notches below the normal. The minimum temperature settled at 27.2 degrees Celsius, 0.7 degrees below the normal. Additionally, the Spicejet airline said all departures and arrivals in Delhi and their consequential flights may get affected due to the bad weather and asked passengers to keep a check on their flight status.

Continued on Page 8

Relief eludes Kejriwal in liquor scam

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A special court on Tuesday took cognisance of the seventh supplementary chargesheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate in the money-laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy 'scam'. The ED has named Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Aam Aadmi Party in the supplementary chargesheet. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja took cognisance of the chargesheet noting that there is sufficient material on record to proceed against the accused persons and listed the matter on July 12, when all the accused would be physically produced before the court. The probe agency had filed a 200-page chargesheet naming Kejriwal and the AAP as accused in the case on May 17. The ED has alleged that Kejriwal was intrinsically involved in the acts



File Photo: PTI

of policy formulation, kickback scheme and the final use of the proceeds of crime. The ED pointed out that Kejriwal is involved in the commission of grave economic offences and there is ample evidence on record to link him to the commission of the offence of money laundering. In its chargesheet, which is the

eighth in a series of charge sheets filed by the ED since November 2022, the ED claimed that Kejriwal was directly involved in formulating the excise policy and demanded kickbacks from the South Group in exchange for awarding them favours. The ED also alleged that Kejriwal was involved in using ₹45 crore of the proceeds of crime in AAP's Goa election campaign. Simultaneously, the court also took cognisance of the eighth supplementary chargesheet filed by ED and issued production warrants to Vinod Chauhan and issued summons to another accused Ashish Mathur, also named in the eighth supplementary chargesheet. Kejriwal's legal woes escalated when he was apprehended by the ED on March 21. Although he secured bail from the trial court, the High Court has since intervened, suspending the release order.

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Hathras A Conspiracy?



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government on Tuesday suspended the local SDM, a circle officer and four others based on the SIT report on the Hathras stampede that did not rule out a "big conspiracy" behind the incident. The SIT report also flagged lapses on the part of the local administration that led to the incident that claimed 121 lives on July 2. The report held the organisers responsible for the stampede, claiming they did not make arrangements to manage the crowd and also fixed the responsibility of administration, according to official sources. It said the local police and administration did not take the event seriously and failed to provide proper information to senior officers. The stampede at the 'satsang' of self-styled godman Surajpal alias Narayan Sakar Hari alias Bhole Baba claimed 121 lives. "In its preliminary investigation, the SIT has held the event organisers primarily responsible for the stampede on the basis of eyewitnesses and other evidence. The SIT did not rule out any big conspiracy behind the incident and has stated the need for a thorough investigation," officials said.

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Main accused in BMW case held

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Seventy two hours after he strammed his BMW into a two-wheeler at Worli in south-central Mumbai killing a fisherwoman and injuring her husband, the Mumbai police tracked down the Shinde Shiv Sena deputy leader Rajesh Shah's absconding son Mihir Shah and arrested him from Shahpur town in the neighbouring Thane district. One of the search teams that had been on the look for the 24-year-old Mihir Shah traced him to Shahpur, 73 kms away from Mumbai.

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Organ Racket in National Capital busted

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

India's emergence as a global medical tourism hub in recent times has been marred by several cases of organ theft, raising concerns among agencies and Ministries about blow to the country's reputation. To combat this menace, the Centre recently issued advisories for international patients. India's growing popularity as a premier medical tourism destination is evident from the influx of approximately 2 million patients from 78 countries each year, seeking medical, wellness, and IVF treatment. This booming



Delhi Police Crime Branch personnel with men arrested for their alleged involvement in an organ transplant racket exposed by them, in New Delhi, on Tuesday. The Crime Branch arrested seven people, including a doctor

PTI

industry currently generates \$6 billion annually which is projected to soar to \$13 billion by 2026, bolstered by the Indian Government's ambitious 'Heal in India' initiative, according to the CII (Confederation of Indian Industry). However, with no let-up in incidents of organ thefts, the health tourism industry faces a serious threat. The latest being a major organ donation transplant racket running in Delhi-NCR region with links to Bangladesh busted by the Crime Branch of Delhi Police.

According to the Delhi Police on Tuesday, a total of seven people, including a Delhi-based doctor

and the racket's Bangladeshi kingpin, have been arrested. Acting on a tip-off, the Crime Branch had been working on the case for two months. A majority of the donors and recipients are from Bangladesh brought to India on the basis of the fake documents for the surgeries. Former National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) Head Dr Vimal Bhandari, while talking about the issue of such rackets, said the onus of cross-checking the documents of the patient and the donor to ensure that such incidents do not happen lies on the authorisation committee.

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Woman held captive, tortured for dowry

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman was subjected to brutality by her husband and in-laws, including her father-in-law, a retired police inspector, in the Krishna Nagar police station area. The woman could have died had her neighbours not alerted her father upon hearing her cries. Locked in a room, she was beaten with belts by her husband and in-laws. Her cries for help drew the attention of neighbours, who informed her father. He immediately arrived and called the police. She was rescued and admitted to Lok Bandhu Hospital. A sub-inspector allegedly intimidated parents of the victim, identified as Aneeta Yadav of New Gudaora locality in Sarojini Nagar.

Aneeta's father Sudarshan Yadav is an army man. Aneeta is married to Rohit Yadav of Sector C in Krishna Nagar. Rohit's father Ram Naresh is a retired inspector from UP Police. In his complaint, Sudarshan stated that Aneeta was being beaten and starved for Rs 20 lakh as dowry. He mentioned that Aneeta was married in 2022, and he provided sufficient dowry at the time of marriage. "I am relieved that my daughter was saved due to the alertness of her neighbours. They had locked her in a room and were beating her with the intention to kill her. Ram Naresh is well-versed in using his connections. If my daughter had died, I would have regretted it my entire life and could have done nothing

against the perpetrators due to their good rapport with the police," he said. Sudarshan said Aneeta had been held captive in the room for the last three days and was being beaten. A case has been registered, and the police are investigating the incident. Meanwhile, a dowry harassment victim was sexually assaulted allegedly by the son of her husband's first wife and his accomplice at her husband's house in Jammu and Kashmir. A case was registered with the Ghazipur police station as the victim belongs to an area under this police station. The incident, reported on June 26, came to light on Tuesday. The victim was set free only after she provided a statement in writing, agreeing not to complain against them. Her

husband is a retired IAS officer. In her complaint, the victim stated that both her parents are deceased, and she was married to the man. She alleged that her husband's first wife, his son, daughter, and other family members had been harassing her since her marriage for dowry. "I thought their hearts would change with time, so I remained silent and endured the torture. But this was not the end of my suffering," she said. She recounted being held captive in a room from April 11 to 14 and starved. "My husband's son then snatched my mobile phone one day during my captivity. Later, he and his accomplice Faiyyaz raped me. I was filled with self-pity and hatred for myself. But I was helpless,"

she said. She pleaded for her release and to be sent to her home in Lucknow. "I first pleaded before the sexual assault perpetrators to free me and save my self-respect, but it fell on deaf ears. They raped me despite my resistance and agreed to release me only if I promised not to complain against them. I feared more torture if I stayed with them, so I agreed. My husband's son escorted me to Lucknow and threatened me with dire consequences if I reported the matter to the police. He threatened to have me killed and my body disappeared forever," she alleged. She stated that she felt so belittled that she mustered the courage to lodge a complaint against them.



Commuters wading through a waterlogged road in Gomti Nagar following a sudden downpour on Tuesday

Pioneer

Flyover to ease traffic snarls at Burlington crossing

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In view of the excessive traffic snarls at Burlington crossing, the Traffic department has proposed a flyover from there to Kaiserbagh bus station. DCP (Traffic) Kamlesh Dixit said here on Tuesday that letters were being exchanged on this issue with the departments concerned. "There are times when 20 traffic personnel are posted at the point to maintain the flow of vehicles here. The volume of traffic here is high and people face a lot of problems at this crossing. We get regular complaints about this crossing," he said. He added that all kinds of vehicles move through this crossing, increasing the load of traffic. Dixit pointed out that the traffic flow is maximum between 7 pm and 10 pm on this crossing, which has one road leading to Charbagh, another to Vidhan Bhawan, the third to Sadar and the fourth to Kaiserbagh. Besides, he said that the traffic

The volume of traffic here is high and people face a lot of problems at this crossing. The flyover is proposed from Burlington crossing to Kaiserbagh bus station

snarls were also occurring at the points where construction of flyovers was taking place, which hugely impacted the movement of traffic in that particular area as well as in the city. "We are coordinating with departments concerned to expedite the work and get it completed soon. The points where flyover construction is in progress currently are Kanpur road, Munshipulia, and Tedhipulia. A bigger issue is going to emerge at Munshipulia crossing where the side movement of the traffic will also be

stopped in the coming days. A major diversion will take place here, which will impact one-fourth of the city after three days," he said. He added that several meetings had been held on the issue where the requested time of completion of work is two months, which the traffic department has asked to reduce. He added that the Traffic department was focusing on snarls in front of the schools and had asked the schools concerned to appoint nodal officers for the purpose. "This is important in view of the fact that we cannot provide manpower at the time of opening and closing of the schools. Additional manpower should be provided by the schools for handling traffic at these times. The schools and the colleges are being motivated for the same," he said. He added that the Traffic department would also be carrying out awareness programmes in schools and colleges regarding traffic rules.

Woman dies, husband injured as four-wheeler collides with motorcycle

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A road accident, while her husband sustained grievous injuries in Gosainganj on Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Jyoti Mishra from Barabanki district, and her husband as Pawan. The couple was en route to the Gosainganj CHC for Pawan's medical consultation when a speeding four-wheeler hit their bike around 9 am. Recounting the incident, Pawan stated, "Jyoti fell to the ground, and I saw the vehicle run over her, resulting in her immediate death. I also suffered injuries in the accident and required hospitalisation." Meanwhile, a woman was allegedly killed by her husband and in-laws over dowry in Gosainganj. The incident occurred during the night on July 6, and the victim was identified as Sunaina. Her father Diwakar narrated the

sequence of events, stating, "My son-in-law Abhishek initially called me and claimed that Sunaina had fallen down the stairs. Shortly afterwards, he informed me that she was suffering from diarrhoea. Upon reaching her home, I discovered her lifeless body with wounds and bruises, indicative of physical abuse inflicted by her husband and in-laws. They had been harassing her for dowry ever since her marriage to Abhishek." Diwakar named Abhishek, along with Abhishek's parents and other family members, in the complaint. A case has been registered, and investigations are underway to uncover the truth behind this tragic incident. These incidents highlight the critical issues of road safety and dowry-related violence, necessitating thorough investigations and appropriate legal actions to ensure justice for the victims and their families.

Narrow escape for guests, staff as fire erupts in hotel

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A probe is underway to determine the cause of the fire that broke out at Hotel Raj near Burlington crossing in Hussainganj late Monday night. In the incident, 30 people, including guests and staff, who were trapped inside the hotel, were rescued by firefighters. Fortunately, no casualties were reported. The fire is suspected to have been caused by negligence regarding fire safety equipment and protocols. Reports said that around 12:15 am on Tuesday, a fire started in the hotel's basement and quickly spread to the upper floors. Smoke filled the rooms through ventilators and window slits. The hotel staff and some guests woke up to the smell of smoke and fire, causing

panic. Most of the guests and staff were asleep and initially didn't know how to react. Chaos ensued as people ran around and cried for help. Upon receiving the information, a police team and firefighters arrived at the scene. Following standard procedures, the team evacuated guests from each room and then began extinguishing the fire. Some guests panicked and ran around, leading to health complications, and were admitted to the hospital by firefighters. They did not suffer any burns. Some guests, terrified, attempted to jump out of windows but were stopped by firefighters who used hydraulic ladders to bring them down safely. Fire officials said that they had requested the hotel's fire safety certificate (NOC) from the

owner. They suspect the fire was caused by a short-circuit and noted the absence of fire safety equipment at the time of the incident. An investigation is ongoing. It's worth noting that the city's hotels have been under scrutiny by the Fire department for a long time, with regular updates on the installation of safety equipment and measures. Many of these hotels are over a decade old and were granted business permits without fulfilling the necessary safety norms. While it is now practically challenging to ensure these hotels fully comply with fire safety regulations, they have been instructed to install safety equipment and ensure safe exits. The ongoing probe will check if these norms were followed by the hotel owner.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From Abdul Rauf Mohammed Siddique to Abdul Rauf. In Future He will be Known as Abdul Rauf. Abdul Rauf s/o Mohammed Siddique Urf Bikanu, Hardauli, Baberu, Banda, Uttar Pradesh-210121

NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name from Shweta Chaudhary to Shweta Choudheri for all future purpose. Shweta Choudheri D/O Ram Chandra. R/O 10/291, Khalasi line, Kanpur.

NOTICE

I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM POORVIKA BHARTIA TO PURVIKA BHARTIA PURVIKA BHARTIA D/O ASHOK BHARTIA R/O 7/172, SWAROOP NAGAR F.NO.803, RATAN GREEN APARTMENT KANPUR

NOTICE

I SHABD VERMA S/O AMIT KUMAR VERMA Resident OF 11-D KURMANCHAL NAGAR, A BLOCK INDIRA NAGAR LUCKNOW UTTAR PRADESH THAT DEPUTANT CLASS 12th STUDENT AT SPRING DALE COLLEGE INDIRA NAGARLUCKNOW. THAT DUE TO MISTAKE MY FATHER NAME (AMIT VERMA) ON HIGH SCHOOL MARKSHEET HAS BEEN WRONGLY MENTIONED INSTEAD OF AMIT KUMAR VERMA IS MENTION IN AADHAAR CARD AND ALL DOCUMENTS KINDLY CONSIDER MY FATHER NAME AMIT KUMAR VERMA

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NOTICE

Be it known to all that we have severed all relations from our son Ankit Rajan and his wife Pratibha Srivastava and have evicted them from all our movable and immovable properties. In future, the responsibility of their activities and financial transactions will be theirs, not mine and the rest of my family. Rajendra Bahadur Singh Wife- Neelam Singh R/o T-203, Sumitra Niwas, 21/3, Lajpatrai Road, New Katra, Prayagraj.

NOTICE

I, KARAN SINGH F/o Nk ARVIND SINGH PARMAR, R/o Vill + Post Ghatampur, Dist Kanpur Nagar, State Uttar Pradesh, declare that my name and date of birth was wrongly mentioned in my son's service records, as KARAN SINGH PARMAR and 01 JUL 1957. But my correct name and date of birth is KARAN SINGH and 05 JUL 1962 for all future correspondence and documents.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RITIKA alias RITIK SRIVASTAVA D/o RAKES KUMAR SRIVASTAVA R/o N: 1803 Gadia Nawabga Barabanki U.P.-2250 changed my name to RITIK SRIVASTAVA.

PD(581)

I, RAVI BHATIA S, GHANSHYAM BHATIA R/o C-10 Krishna Gree Chhatikara Road Vrindaba Bangar Mathura U.P.-2811 changed my-minor Son name HEM KRISHN BHATIA to HARSH BHATIA aged-14-Years.

PD(582)

I, SATYAJEET SRIVASTAV S/o KISHOR KUMAR SRIVASTAVA R/o Gaya Prase Nagar Bilhaar Kanpur Nag Uttar Pradesh - 2092 changed my name to SSATYAJIT SRIVASTAV.

Changes in NMC standards obstructed new medical colleges

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Sudden changes in standards are the primary reason for the difficulties faced in obtaining permission from the National Medical Commission (NMC) to start new medical colleges in 13 districts of the state. Initially, the state government aimed to establish 13 new autonomous medical colleges adhering to the standards set by the NMC in 2020. These colleges sought Letters of Permission (LoPs) from the NMC in 2023, planning to commence the academic session in 2024-25. However, the

NMC is now evaluating these applications based on the updated standards introduced in 2023 for the MBBS course. Meanwhile, the state government has reiterated its commitment to the 'One District, One Medical College' initiative. The government is exploring all possible options to commence teaching in the new medical colleges in 13 districts beginning the 2024-25 academic session. According to sources, an appeal has been made by all the state autonomous medical colleges under Article 28 (5) of the NMC Act 2019.

Additionally, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has personally spoken to Union Health Minister JP Nadda, emphasising the need to adhere to the standards set in 2020 to ensure the 2024-25 academic session can proceed in these medical colleges. As per sources, the state government had envisioned 13 new medical colleges based on the standards set by the NMC in 2020. Based on these standards, LoPs were sought from the NMC in 2023, with the aim of starting the academic session in 2024-25. However, new standards for the

MBBS course were introduced by the NMC in 2023. In response, the Yogi government wrote to the NMC, requesting that inspections of these 13 new medical colleges be conducted based on the old standards. Not only Uttar Pradesh but also many other states and private medical colleges have requested the NMC to postpone the implementation of the 2023 standards. This is because the new standards for medical teachers and infrastructure are significantly higher than those set in 2020. The sources indicate that various autonomous state medical

colleges have made every effort to fill the posts of medical teachers. The state government granted the authority to appoint contract-based medical teachers to a local committee chaired by the principal. Additionally, four committees were formed for the appointment of regular medical teachers. Upon the issuance of the NMC notice, dated May 2, 2024, the Model Code of Conduct was in effect in the state due to the Lok Sabha elections. Immediately after it ended, advertisements were issued to invite applications for the appointment of medical teachers, and the selec-

tion process is currently underway. However, there is a challenge in meeting such rigorous standards within a short timeframe. It is noteworthy that under the old NMC standards of 2020, 50 medical teachers were required, whereas the 2023 standards now mandate 86 medical teachers. Similarly, the old standards required 24 senior residents, whereas the 2023 standards specify 40 senior residents. Furthermore, while six professor positions sufficed under the old standards, the 2023 standards necessitate 17 professors.

UP outperforms other states in providing tap water connections

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh has outperformed other major states in providing tap water connections to households, not only in terms of number but also in terms of affordability. The UP model, driven by the double-engine government, distributes tap water to maximum households. Due to the policies of the double-engine government, it costs approximately Rs 59,000 to provide tap connections to each family in the state. In contrast, the expenditure in other states, even with fewer connections, was significantly higher. UP provided tap connections to the common people at the most economical cost.

This achievement can be attributed to the government's transparent policies and the region's favourable geographical location. Additionally, the reliance on solar energy for over 80 per cent of schemes in Uttar Pradesh significantly contributed to this success. Solar energy reduced maintenance costs, further enhancing the initiative's efficiency. In Uttar Pradesh, preparations are being made rapidly to supply the cheapest water shortly. The biggest reason is that around 80 per cent of the schemes here depend on solar power. This will reduce the electricity cost.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, around 32,930 solar-based schemes are running in Uttar Pradesh to provide tap water to households. The remaining 40,591 schemes are being run on electricity. Pure drinking water is being supplied to 2,23,66,237 families through solar-based projects, while currently, water is being provided to 36,65,080 families through electricity. Providing water to Vindhya and Bundelkhand has been a top priority for the Yogi government. Tap water connections have reached nearly 98 per cent of the Vindhya-Bundelkhand region.

Azakhana keep Nawabi-era glory intact

PNS ■ LUCKNOW



The century-old Azakhana of Saltanat Manzil, situated on Hamid Road opposite City Station, still retains the glory of the era of Khan Bahadur Nawab Syed Hamid Husain Khan, and his wife Rani Saltanat Begum. Later, Nawab Syed Mehdi Husain Khan and Nawab Syed Raza Hasan Khan carried forward this tradition. Presently, Prof Syed Ali Hamid and Nawabzada Syed Masoom Raza (Advocate) are not only maintaining the grandeur of the Azakhana but are also making efforts to add to its beauty. "There is no doubt that when the old Azakhanas of Lucknow

are mentioned, the Azakhana of Saltanat Manzil occupies a prominent place. This century-old Azakhana contains a main hall leading through a big rounded arch, containing the 'Shahnashin', a row of silver 'Alams' with an exquisite one made of kundan work in the middle and 'Patkas' embroidered with gold and silver zari work, silver gulab-pash for

sprinkling rose water during majlis, silver incense-holder, silver candle stands and beautifully carved silver mashaals (torches), all reminiscent of the bygone Nawabi era. This family has descended from Nawab Meer Shah Ali Khan Saheb Bahadur, Law Minister of King Ghaziuddin Hyder, the First King of Awadh," said Syed Masoom Raza.


NDA aims to sweep bypolls, says RLD leader

Lucknow (PNS): National spokesperson of Rashtriya Lok Dal Anil Dubey said on Tuesday that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) aims to secure victory in all 10 seats in the upcoming by-elections. Speaking to reporters upon his arrival at Ayodhya, where RLD workers warmly welcomed him at the Circuit House, Dubey criticised the opposition's tactics during the Lok Sabha elections, accusing them of creating an atmosphere of falsehood across the state. "The opposition leaders fabricated perceptions that the constitution and reservation were under threat," Dubey remarked. He highlighted RLD's success in dispelling these falsehoods in West Uttar Pradesh but acknowledged their impact in the eastern and central regions, where the opposition won seats despite lacking public support. Dubey expressed confidence in Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary's prospects in the by-elections, noting their increasing popularity in Uttar Pradesh. He contrasted this with what he described as the waning influence of the "duet" formed by former CM Akhilesh Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, suggesting it is no longer effective in the state. Predicting a sweep for NDA in the upcoming by-elections, Dubey said that both the people of Uttar Pradesh and the nation recognise that there is no threat to the Constitution or reservation.

CPI (ML) demands high-level probe into Firoz's death

Lucknow (PNS): The CPI (ML) has demanded a high-level investigation into the death of Firoz in the alleged mob lynching in the Thana Bhawan police station area of Shamli. The party condemned the filing of cases under sections of the new criminal law against three journalists, including Zakir Ali Tyagi and Wasim Akram Tyagi, who reported the incident on social media. CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said in a statement issued on Tuesday that incidents of hate crimes against minorities had increased in the state after the Lok Sabha elections. "Before the Shamli incident, Farid alias Aurangzeb was lynched by a mob in Aligarh on June 18, while there was mob violence against two brothers, Tanzeem and Faizan, in Bulandshahr on June 30. Hate politics, protective role towards the accused and lack of strict action by the administration are

fuelling such incidents," he alleged. The CPI-ML leader said that the police filing a case against the journalists on the claim of Firoz's death due to mob lynching on July 4 in Shamli was an attack on journalism and the freedom of press. "These cases in which three persons from the minority community, including three journalists, have been named should be quashed. The police claim that the death was not due to mob lynching but due to a scuffle or some other reason. However, according to family members, the death occurred within barely two hours of the incident," he said. He added in such a situation, the truth would come out only through a high-level probe. "The real culprits should get strict punishment and the victim's family should get justice. Incidents of hate crimes should be strictly prohibited," he demanded.



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Tender Enquiry No. 1680/EM/G/O&M/PC-2566 Dated: 08-07-2024
Chief Engineer/ O&M (P&P Cell-II), GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat, invites E-tender for the Procurement of Leakage Current Analyzer for Surge Arrestor, Quantity as per NIT. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 08-07-2024 from 17:00 Hrs. onwards
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
GHTP-52/24

76155/12/3080/2023/35462 Dated CHD :- 7/9/2024

MISSION KAYAKALP

Corporate sector comes forward to modernise schools in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The corporate sector has come forward for the success of 'Mission Kayakalp', aimed at modernising schools with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund, launched by the Uttar Pradesh government. So far, the corporate sector has provided Rs 18,000 crore for the 'Mission Kayakalp', for the renovation of primary schools in the state through CSR funds. The initiative launched by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to modernise education in Uttar Pradesh is now bearing fruits as major private companies have stepped forward to support the ambitious 'Mission Kayakalp'. By leveraging their CSR funds, these companies are helping transform state schools into institutions with world-class facilities. A prime example of this initiative is Tata's Air India SATS, which has taken up the task of

revamping primary schools in the Maharajanj district. The renovation of one school has already been completed, and another is nearing completion as part of the initiative. These schools are being equipped with top-notch amenities, including kitchens, classrooms, and smart classes, as found in popular private schools. The UP government launched 'Mission Kayakalp' with the goal of modernising primary schools across the state according to various parameters. The government has also appealed to private companies to join and support this initiative. AI SATS has taken the initiative to renovate two primary schools in Maharajanj, providing Rs 45 lakh to the district administration for this purpose. This amount is being used to equip Composite School Sonari Khas and Primary School Chowk Cantonment in the Chowk area with world-class facilities.

The renovation of Primary School Chowk Cantonment has already been completed. The school's walls have been adorned with wood furnishings, and both have been developed into model schools with facilities like computers, interactive panels, smart classes, and furniture. The schools have been improved based on 19 parameters, including among others drinking water, blackboards, furniture, toilets, tap water, painting, science labs, libraries, and computer labs. The makeover of these schools aims to attract students, including those who stayed away from it for lack of facilities and promote attendance in schools. AI SATS is focusing on providing quality education through smart and online classes, promoting learning and good health through sports facilities, and encouraging reading habits with the establishment of libraries. Additional objectives include

attracting more girls to participate in school cleanliness, constructing toilets and boundary walls, and creating informative wall paintings to provide students with better learning opportunities. Numerous prominent government and non-government institutions are bolstering the Education department's 'Mission Kayakalp' through their CSR funds. According to the Basic Education department, 75 institutions across the state have collectively contributed more than Rs 18,000 crore. These contributions have been allocated to various initiatives, including improving school infrastructure and setting up smart classes. Additionally, CSR funds have facilitated the installation of computer and science labs, furniture, swings, and RO systems. While some institutions have directly provided infrastructure, others have contributed funds specifically for these improvements.

Rahul meets Captain Anshuman Singh's family in Rae Bareli

Martyr's mother requests govt to end Agniveer scheme

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Senior Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday reached his parliamentary constituency Rae Bareli, where he met the family members of Kirti Chakra winner Captain Anshuman Singh. Gandhi had called the martyr's family from Lucknow to meet him. "We are sad that our son has left us all in the lurch when the family needed him. I want to live with this pain all my life and I want more pain so that I can remember my son," the martyr captain's mother, Manju Singh, said after meeting Rahul Gandhi. "An official said that Rahul Gandhi met the family members of Captain Anshuman Singh in the Bhuemau Guest House in Rae Bareli. President Droupadi Murmu on Friday conferred the Kirti Chakra on the martyrdom of Captain Anshuman Singh to the late officer's wife, Smriti, and mother Manju Singh at the Defense Investiture Ceremony in Delhi. This is the second highest award given for brav-



Congress MP and Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi during his visit to the 'Shaheed Smarak' in Rae Bareli on Tuesday

PTI

ery in peacetime. Captain Singh was martyred in July last year while saving people from a fierce fire. "During the meeting with Rahul Gandhi, we talked about Agniveer. There should not be two types of armies. The government is expected to listen to Rahul Gandhi and consider it. Rahul said that he has requested the government to end the Agniveer scheme, which is not

fair to the army. The country is with us. I talked to Rahul Gandhi about the families of the martyrs, he will do something for those families," Manju Singh said. Insisting on doing away the Agniveer scheme in army recruitment, Manju Singh said: "We are from a military family; whether it is the ruling party or the opposition, we will fight everyone and we request the

Recue op underway in flood-hit districts, 7 airlifted in Pilibhit

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid continuous downpour, the Uttar Pradesh government has intensified its relief and rescue operations to prevent loss of life and property damage in flood-affected areas. Under the supervision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, proactive measures have been taken, leading to the successful airlifting and rescue of seven individuals trapped in Pilibhit floods by an Air Force team on Tuesday. Chief Minister Yogi is actively monitoring the flood-affected regions, providing necessary guidance to officials and the relief department to ensure smooth operations. Efforts include relocating livestock to safer areas. Currently, ten districts in the state are grappling with flooding caused by heavy rains in Nepal and Uttarakhand. Following CM Yogi's directives, assessments of crop damage are also underway. Relief Commissioner GS Naveen Kumar said that the floods in Pilibhit have affected 252 villages across five tehsils, though water levels are now receding. The State Emergency Centre received information about individuals stranded in Binaura village, Pilibhit, prompting a successful airlift



People make way through a flooded road following rains in Pilibhit on Tuesday

SDRF, NDRF, and PAC providing assistance. In Shravasti, 82 villages across two tehsils have been affected by floods. Relief efforts are underway with teams from NDRF, SDRF, and PAC. The situation is reported to be under control. In Kushinagar, 16 villages across two tehsils have been impacted by floods. Relief operations are being conducted with teams from SDRF and PAC. The situation is improving, and nutritious food is being provided through community kitchens. In Shohratgarh tehsil of Siddharthnagar, crops have been affected, and a survey report detailing the damage has been submitted to the government. In Haraiya tehsil of Basti, one village has been affected, impacting 150 people from 35 families. Four boats have been deployed to assist with transportation. Similarly, in Shahjahanpur tehsil, crops have been affected, and a survey is underway to assess the damage. During the floods, 42 people from eight families were stranded, but all have been safely evacuated using boats. They are now accommodated at Panchayat Bhawan, where food arrangements have been made.

operation that rescued seven individuals. Additionally, 7,365 people stranded by the floods were safely evacuated and relocated. The relief commissioner further said that teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and two teams from the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) are actively deployed in the affected areas. A team from the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) is also conducting rescue operations. A total of 37 boats are engaged in relief operations, assisting with evacuations. Furthermore, 23 shelters have been established, currently accommodating 261 people. Community kitchens are operational, providing meals to

everyone, and 3,130 lunch packets have been distributed to residents in the flood-affected villages. In Lakhimpur Kheri, 41 villages across five tehsils have been affected by floods. A total of 221 people were safely evacuated through rescue operations conducted by teams from NDRF and PAC. Additionally, 12 individuals stranded in Murgaha village of Nighasan were successfully relocated. In Gonda, floods have impacted crops in three villages. Surveys to assess the damage have been completed, and reports have been submitted to the government. Similarly, 20 villages across three tehsils in Balrampur have been affected by floods. Relief operations are ongoing with teams from

Four children among 13 killed in separate road mishaps

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Tragedy struck Mahoba, Hardoi, and Amethi districts on Tuesday, resulting in the deaths of 13 people, including four children. In the first incident, four people were burnt alive, and two others were critically injured in a head-on collision between two motorcycles on Nanora Road in the Srinagar police station area of Mahoba. The police reached the scene and, after significant effort, managed to pull out the burnt victims and send them to the hospital. Reports said that Lalitesh, from Peera hamlet of Chhatarpur, had come to visit his sister Kesar's in-laws in Mudhari hamlet, Mahoba. On Tuesday morning, Lalitesh, along with Kesar and her two sons Devendra (12) and Raj (8), was travelling by

motorcycle to Garhi Malhara in Chhatarpur to attend a wedding ceremony. In Chitaya hamlet of the Srinagar police station area, Lalitesh's motorcycle collided head-on with another bike, causing an oil tanker to burst and ignite both motorcycles. Passers-by informed the police, who rushed to the scene and managed to pull Kesar and her son Devendra out. They were sent to the District Hospital in critical condition. However, Lalitesh, Raj, and the occupants of the other motorcycle, Chandrabhan (40) and Sunil from Bhandara hamlet, were charred to death. SP Mahoba, Aparna Gupta supervised the operation. In a separate incident, an uncontrolled bus crashed into a hut in Hardoi, killing four people, including three women. The accident occurred on the Bilgram-Madhoganj road due to a steering

failure. District Magistrate MP Singh and Superintendent of Police KC Goswami arrived at the scene to gather information. Rahmat Ali, a resident of Sekh vapur in the Madhoganj police station area, lived in a roadside hut with his wife Munni Devi. Rahmat's son Afroz had been allotted a house and lived in the village with his wife and children. Rahmat, who was unwell, had his mother-in-law Hasana, his brother-in-law's son Sufiyan, his daughter Ayesha, and his sister Nanhakki visit him. On Monday night, everyone stayed in Rahmat Ali's hut. On Tuesday noon, they were sitting outside on a cot when a bus travelling from Bilgram to Madhoganj lost control due to steering failure and ran over them, causing severe injuries. They were taken to Madhoganj hospital where all

four died. The news prompted DM MP Singh and SP KC Goswami to visit the scene. Officials noted that the accident occurred because of a steering failure in the bus. In another tragic incident, a bus travelling from Delhi to Siwan (Bihar) collided with an unidentified vehicle on the Purvanchal Expressway in the Shukul Bazar police station area of Amethi district. The collision killed five passengers and injured 12 others. The accident occurred near kilometre marker 68.8 on the Purvanchal Expressway around 2 am on Monday. According to Shukul Bazar police station in-charge inspector (SHO) Tanuj Pal, the collision with the unidentified vehicle severely damaged the left side of the bus, resulting in the deaths of five passengers and injuries to 12 others.

UP to host programme on natural farming, agri science on July 19

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh will host a regional consultation programme on natural farming and agricultural science on July 19. Around 500 representatives from 12 states, including Uttar Pradesh, will attend the programme. Besides the regional programme, a state-level natural farming workshop will be held in Ayodhya and Banda on July 20 and another workshop on 'Health and Dietary Traditions in Amrit Kaal's India' in Ayodhya on the July 19 and 20. The regional consultation programme on natural farming and agricultural science is being organised by the Union Agriculture Ministry here on July 19. Around 500 representatives from 12 states, including the host state Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, and Chandigarh, will participate in the event. Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat will be the chief guest for the event. Addressing mediapersons in Lucknow on Tuesday, UP Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi said that the programme would include participation from officials of the Central and state governments, union territories, vice-chancellors and deans of 15 agricul-



UP Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi addressing mediapersons at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Tuesday

Pioneer

tural universities, scientists from 180 Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and leading natural farmers. The event will feature stalls showcasing natural farming techniques and a dialogue between scientists and farmers. Acharya Devvrat will highlight the special efforts made in natural farming in Kurukshetra. Shahi announced that a state-level natural farming workshop would be held at Acharya Narendra Dev Kumarganj University in Ayodhya on July 20. The workshop will feature scientists from 25 Krishi Vigyan Kendras in eastern Uttar Pradesh, nodal officers of natural farming, vice-chancellors of agricultural universities, deans, and approximately 250 farmers. "The UP government is prioritising natural farming. The government has approved the establishment of a natural

farming lab at Rani Lakshmbai Central Agricultural University in Jhansi. Additionally, international-level labs for natural farming will be set up at Banda Agricultural University. These labs, funded with Rs 25 crore, will conduct tests related to natural farming and are expected to become operational within a year or a year and a half," Shahi said. The minister announced that a programme focusing on health and dietary traditions would be held at Acharya Narendra Dev Agriculture University on July 19-20. The event will include a discussion on achieving better health through consumption of millets (Shri Anna), highlighting the research of Karnataka scientist Padmashree Khadar Vali. Attendees will include former Rajya Sabha MP RK Sinha, agricultural scientists, Shri Anna farmers, FPOs, and processors. Additionally, a Shri Anna

workshop will also be held at Banda Agriculture University on July 26. The minister highlighted that the Yogi government has consistently taken significant initiatives to boost the cultivation of pulses and oilseeds. In 2016-17, oilseed production was 12.40 lakh MT, which increased to 28.16 lakh MT last year, he said. Since the Yogi government took office, oilseed production in Uttar Pradesh has risen by 15.75 lakh MT. Similarly, pulse production has grown from 23.94 lakh MT to 32.53 lakh MT, an increase of about 8.5 lakh MT as compared to previous years. Despite these improvements, the country imports oilseeds worth Rs 1.30 lakh crore and pulses worth Rs 25-30 thousand crore annually. The Yogi government is dedicated to making Uttar Pradesh self-sufficient in producing pulses and oilseeds, Shahi said. He added, "The Kharif plantation and sowing programme is underway, with crops sowed in 34.75 lakh hectares this year. The target for this year is 102 lakh hectares, and approximately 35 per cent of this area has already been covered. In comparison, only 29.63 per cent of the area had been covered by this time last year. An action plan was developed and implemented on schedule for the farmers, and awareness was raised through Kisan Pathshala programmes."

Govt action in Hathras tragedy eyewash: Rai

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajai Rai on Tuesday termed action by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in the Hathras stampede case just an eyewash and alleged that the government was trying to save the senior officers. Rai threatened to hit the streets if the government failed to ensure justice to the bereaved

families. The SIT constituted after the heart-wrenching incident in Hathras on Tuesday submitted its report to the government, on the basis of which Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath suspended five officials. Reacting to the CM's action here on Tuesday evening, Rai said that even after such a painful accident, the attitude of the government was extremely shameful.



Regional Office: Netaji Marg, Nr. Mithakhali Six Roads, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-6. Phone: +91-79-26421671-75

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorized Officer issued demand notice to the borrower(s) on the date mentioned against the account stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular the borrower(s) that the undersigned has taken the symbolic possession of the property described herein below under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned against the account. The borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank for the amounts, interest, costs and charges thereon. The borrowers'/mortgagors' attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of borrower(s) & Loan Account No.	Description of the property mortgaged (Secured Asset)	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Symbolic Possession Notice	O/s Amount as on date of Demand Notice
Mr. Ashok Khurana Mrs. Meenakshi Khurana 20007570000057	All that piece and parcel of the immovable property situated at Part of Gata No.96 101 113 Bankey Rondhi, Mustkil Bareilly, Taluka & Dist-Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh-243001 and bounded by: North: House of Vineeta Rathor, East: Rasta 20 feet wide, West: Plot No.222 B, South: Plot No.221 D and 221 C Part	20.10.2023	05.07.2024	Rs.9,62,888.19
Place: Bareilly Date: 10/07/2024				Authorised Officer Bandhan Bank Limited

NDRF alert to deal with floods in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view of the threat of flood the state government is fully alert for relief and rescue operations. For this the departments concerned have also been alerted. The 11 Battalion of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) of Varanasi has geared up to deal with the danger of floods. The NDRF has made the teams ready. This Varanasi based NDRF Battalion carry out rescue and relief work in 42 districts of Uttar Pradesh. NDRF Varanasi also played an important role in the earthquake in Turkey. The state government has already alerted flood relief agencies in view of the potential threat of rain and disaster. Deputy Inspector General, 11 NDRF Manoj Kumar Sharma said that the NDRF is fully pre-



pared for relief and rescue work in any adverse circumstances during floods. Flood affected areas in Varanasi have already been marked. For this, two teams of NDRF have been

deployed with rescue equipment like rescue motor boat, deep divers, life jackets, life buoys, oxygen cylinders etc. "NDRF's water ambulance has been deployed in the Ganga river with para medical team. The number of teams can be increased as per need in Varanasi. The National Disaster Response Force is fully prepared for this also", he said. Sharma said that the districts in which floods occur more every year have already been marked. "Coordinating with the district administration, teams have been deployed with all rescue and relief equipment in Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Shravasti, Lucknow, Kushinagar and Lakhimpur Kheri. Teams will also be deployed in other districts as per the need", he further added.

Breakthrough promises to revolutionise healthcare

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI



In a significant leap forward for medical diagnostics, researchers have unveiled a pioneering lab-on-chip device capable of detecting early-stage diseases with unprecedented accuracy. This breakthrough, developed at the Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) Varanasi, promises to revolutionise healthcare by allowing for quicker and more reliable detection of neurological illnesses such as Parkinson's disease, depression, and even schizophrenia. The scientists at IIT(BHU), Nanomaterials for Electronics and Energy Devices (NEED) Lab have unveiled a cutting-edge technology capable of real-time sensing and monitoring of dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the human brain. This innovation promises to revolutionise the understanding of brain function and pave the way for new treatments for neurological disorders at a very early stage. Thereby, well-known as biomarker sensing for early-stage disease detection. The newly invented device, named metallic nanoparticle decorated atomically-thin, two-dimensional (2D) semiconductor utilises advanced surface-enhanced Raman scattering (SERS) technology that can detect minute concentrations of neurotransmitters such as dopamine with unprecedented accuracy and speed. Unlike traditional methods that rely on indirect measurements or invasive procedures, this newly invented lab-scale device offers non-invasive, real-time monitoring, providing researchers and clinicians with immediate insights into brain activity and neurotransmitter dynamics. A recently published paper from IIT (BHU) in an American Chemical Society Journal explained the phenomena and mechanism of such molecular detection exclusively.

Dr Santanu Das, Assistant Professor and lead researcher/scientist at the Department of Ceramic Engineering, IIT(BHU) described the significance of this innovation: such a lab-on-chip SERS device represents a major leap forward in next-generation SERS sensing. Dr Das also added the implications of such innovation are profound, where developing novel materials and transforming them into a device could potentially support the various national missions of device manufacturing, as proposed by Government of India. He mentioned that by enabling early intervention and personalised treatment plans, such a lab-on-chip SERS device could potentially save countless lives by detecting the chance of having Parkinson's disease, depression, and even schizophrenia. By accurately measuring neurotransmitter fluctuations, clinicians can tailor treatments more effectively and monitor patient responses in real-time, potentially improving outcomes and quality of life for millions worldwide, he added. Ummyia Qamar, a PhD research scholar under the supervision of Dr Das explained that when the dopamine levels in the human body are within a certain range, it promotes good health, however when the levels are too high or too low, it can lead to severe health concerns. For example, when the

dopamine levels are too high it can hinder the impulse control of the human body, sometimes leading to aggressive behavior. Huntington's disease, which causes nerve cells to gradually break down, leading to hyperkinetic/uncontrollable movements, is a result of excessive dopamine levels in the human body. On the other hand, if the level falls below an optimum level a person faces a lack of motivation, tiredness, and lethargy leading to severe depression. Reduction or dying of the nerve cells that produce dopamine causes lowering of dopamine levels in the human body, leading to Parkinson's disease that plays with the central nervous system (CNS), causing tremors or slowness. As society continues to grapple with the complexities of neurological disorders and mental health challenges, such laboratory-based invention offers a beacon of hope. This innovation not only promises to deepen our understanding of neurotransmitter sensing but also holds the potential to transform treatment strategies and improve the lives of individuals affected by other neurological conditions at significant early stages. With its ability to sense neurotransmitters in real time, the research represents a remarkable advancement in non-invasive sensing, a new era of possibilities for brain research and healthcare innovation.

India & Spain can jointly achieve better position in higher education: Pathak

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A four-day conference of international educationists is being organised at the University of Barcelona, Spain from July 8 to 11. The Indian delegation at this conference is led by Professor Vinay Kumar Pathak, President of the Association of Indian Universities and Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU). In his address on the first day, he said that academic discussions should continue between Indian and Spanish universities. Speaking in the opening session of this international conference, Prof Pathak said that the form of the education system in Indian universities has been historical. Explaining the current scenario and future



Vice-Chancellor, CSJM University, Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak taking part in the international conference in Barcelona, Spain.

plans of education and teaching in Indian universities, Prof Pathak said that India and Spain can jointly achieve a better position in higher education. They can guide the whole world. In India, employment-oriented education system along with Indian knowledge tradition and innovations is an integral part of the cur-

riculum of universities. In such a situation, better work can be done in this direction by joining hands with universities in Spain and the rest of the world. Prof Pathak also talked about the responsibility of universities regarding the research being done there and the creation of new courses and classroom teaching according to the

demand of the industry. He said it should also be ensured that the integral contribution of universities in building a better tomorrow not only remains but also increases. But for this it is necessary that we strengthen the quality-oriented, complementary education system so that better results can be seen in the future. Renowned educationists of the country and the world are participating in this international educational conference. Professor VK Pathak, also represented the Indian team and presented his views about Indian education and educational discourse in this seminar. Dr Pankaj Mittal, General Secretary of the Association of Indian Universities was also present and spoke in detail about Spain and the Indian university networking system.

MLA's ward-stay programme continues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former UP Minister and MLA of Varanasi South Dr Neelkanth Tiwari stayed in Ward Bageshwari Devi on Tuesday on the fifth day under the 75-day ward stay programme, prior to 74th birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 17. During the stay, he participated in many different programmes including a cleanliness campaign in the ward with Nagar Nigam officials and employees. Local residents also contributed to the same. During the cleanliness campaign, the Nagar Nigam officials were instructed to keep the entire area free from garbage and debris. After the cleanliness campaign, Dr Tiwari inspected the conduct of classes in the local primary school using the smart class system.

NCR GM gives awards to employees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

General Manager (GM), North Central Railway (NCR), Ashok Kumar Verma conferred awards to staff for their alertness and contribution towards safety in train operations in the presence of its principal head of departments (PHODs). On the occasion safety awards were given to seven Railway employees by the GM. The awarded employees include Basuki Nath Rai, loco pilot, GMC (Prayagraj division), Upendra Singh Patel, assistant loco pilot, GMC (Prayagraj division), Roopchand, track maintainer, Ghasinagar (Agra division), Yogendra Prajapati, senior technician, Prayagraj/Prayagraj division, Gaurav Jha, Pointsman, Khajraha (Jhansi division), Naman Maurya, pointsman, Chhalesar (Agra division), Ved Prakash Tiwari, senior train manager, Goods/veerangana Laxmibai Jhansi/Jhansi division.



Ved Prakash Tiwari conferred with the Employee of the Month Award for the month of June, 2024. While working in train No. 06225 (summer special) on May 22, 2024, while exchanging signals with the loco pilot at the time of departure from Gwalior station, he saw that a woman, aged about 70 years, slipped in process of boarding the moving train and fell between the platform and the train. He took immediate

action and stopped the train by lowering its pressure and informing the loco pilot about it on the walkie-talkie. He lifted the woman and made her sit on the platform and informed the on duty deputy station superintendent, Gwalior and RPF staff. Due to his alertness, a life could be saved. He has rendered excellent service in the line of his duty with extraordinary commitment and full dedication.

Woman found hanging

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A woman was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in Sadar Kotwali police station area of Unnao on Tuesday morning. Her parents rushed to the spot, accused the in-laws of killing their daughter and staged agitation. They attempted to stage a massive jam in front of the mortuary with the body. They were later pacified by the police. After lodging an FIR on the basis of the complaint, police have assured to initiate action. Dinesh Chandra of Madhaulkheda village of Lalaikheda outpost, Sadar Kotwali, was married to Pushpa (24) four years ago. On Tuesday, Pushpa was found hanging. Dinesh informed her parents who rushed to the mortuary and accused her in-laws of killing their daughter. They alleged that after marriage, her in-laws had been demanding dowry. When Pushpa refused she was allegedly beaten up and

humiliated. They alleged that after killing Pushpa, she was hanged to make it look like a case of suicide. Circle Officer (City) Sonam Singh probed the issue. She said on the basis of complaint, further action will be initiated against the guilty. A probe is still on taking all points into consideration, she added. Meanwhile a man was killed due to explosion in the firecrackers stored in his shop in Pakrakhurd village under Bihar police station area of Unnao on Monday night. The police sent the body of the deceased for an autopsy. Ali Ahmad (45) of Pakrakhurd village, returned from Kanpur on Monday night with the firecrackers for his trade. After storing the goods in the shop, he slept in front of it. Late at night due to powerful explosion in the firecrackers, its shutter and doors got dismantled. According to villagers, Ahmad was killed as iron strip of the shutter pierced his head. Police rushed to spot and carried out a probe in the matter.

Rathyatra Mela concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Despite bad weather and rain, rush was seen on the last day of the three-day famous Rathayatra Mela here on Tuesday. During the wee hours on Wednesday, the idols of Lord Jagannath, his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra, kept on the traditional wooden Rath (chariot) based on 14 wheels and placed near Rathayatra crossing, were brought back to the Jagannath Temple at Assi to mark the conclusion of the festival. On the last day, a good number of locals reached there and offered prayers. Many of them also pulled the Rath to seek the blessings of the Almighty. Elaborate security arrangements were made in the areas where Rathayatra Mela was organised during the last three days and no vehicles were allowed to move to Rathayatra crossing from any of the corners, including Bhelupur,



Devotees taking part in a procession during Rath Yatra festival celebrations in Varanasi on Tuesday

PTI

Luxa, Mahmoorganj and Siga. The history of this fair is old as since 1802 it has been celebrated here. In 1780, Pandit Nityanand, the chief

priest and manager of Jagannath temple in Puri (Odisha) visited this holy city and then set up a temple of Lord Jagannath near Assi.

Brijendra Kumar takes charge as NCR PCCM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Brijendra Kumar, an officer of 1994 batch of Indian Railway Traffic Service has taken over the charge as Principal Chief Commercial Manager (PCCM) NCR here on Tuesday. Earlier he was working as the Chief Commercial Manager/Freight Marketing, West Central Railway. He took over the charge from outgoing PCCM Prabhat Ranjan who has been



transferred to Central Railway (CR). Brijendra Kumar is one of the dynamic officers of Indian Railways and has a vast experience of Railway working in Operating, Safety and Commercial departments. He started his carrier in Railways as assistant operations Manager at Jhansi Division. He has worked in various capacities in Central Railway, West Central Railway. Kumar said as PCCM his priority will be enhancement of passenger services, facilitating merchants and customers to attract new loadings for Railway and thus increase the revenue for Railway.

32-yr-old man dies in road accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A bike-borne man was killed when he ramed into a truck ahead of him near Durga Devi turn in Sajeti police station area late on Monday night. He was killed on the spot. On the information of passersby, the police after informing the kin of the deceased, sent the body for an autopsy and started a probe in the matter. According to a report received here, Ramsajivan (32) of Aswarmau, Sajeti, had gone to Hamirpur to attend some personal work. Late at night he was returning to home on the bike. When he reached near Jawahar nullah on the Durga Devi turn, the driver of the truck ahead of

him suddenly applied brake as a result of which Ramsajivan lost control over the bike which ramed into the truck from behind. The station officer (SO) of Sajeti said on the basis of the complaint further action will be initiated in the matter. Meanwhile a motorcyclist was killed after he was hit by an unidentified vehicle near Mudadeo village under Sikandra police station area of Kanpur Dehat early on Tuesday morning. On getting information the police sent the body for an autopsy after investigation. According to a report, Raja Pal (20) of Silhara, Rajpur (Kanpur Dehat) had gone to attend the marriage ceremony of a relative's daughter in Ajitmal. He

was returning from there early on Tuesday morning when the unidentified vehicle knocked him down near Mudadeo village and caused serious injury. After informing the kin the police sent him to the Sikandra community health centre (CHC) in a critical condition where Dr Anita Shukla on emergency duty examined the injured and declared him dead. The kin rushed to the CHC and his mother Dulari Devi burst into tears. The police sent the body for an autopsy. Inspector Sikandra Mahesh Kumar said efforts are on to nail the absconding vehicle driver. **MEMORANDUM:** A delegation of lawyers met the BJP MP Ramesh Awasthi on Tuesday

and handed over a memorandum addressed to the prime minister containing various demands for solution. The delegation comprised Abhinav Tewari, Prashant Shukla, Sanjiv Kapoor, Atul Singh, Shivam Gangwar, Aju Mishra, Ashish Gupta, Satyam Shila, Rajul Srivastava and Neeraj Nishad. **NOMINATED:** Pranit Agarwal, Director of MHPL, has been unanimously nominated president of Kanpur Futsal Association. General Secretary of the Association Dr Vikas Victor, while praised the Agarwal's organisational skills. Patron Surendra Maithani, MLA and Chairman Dr Rajat Aditya Dixit congratulated Pranit Agarwal on his nomination.

Online attendance opposed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Teachers from all over the state have mobilised against online attendance. Teachers are opposing online attendance. In this connection hundreds of women teachers marched on foot on Tuesday. Under the banner of Uttar Pradesh Mahila Shikshak Sangh, the teachers gathered at the Upper Primary School in Old Katra and reached the Collectorate raising slogans. A memorandum was sent to the chief minister and basic education minister through ADM (City) in which it was demanded that the system of online attendance should be abolished. Divisional president of the Sangh, Aparna Bajpai,

district president Anuragini Singh, Ritu Singh, Shweta Srivastava spoke on the occasion. **SUCCUMBS:** A 25-year-old youth, Mohammad Jalil, who was injured in a scuffle near Mauaima flyover bridge died in the hospital on Tuesday while undergoing treatment. After the post-mortem, the body was handed over to the family on Tuesday. A case has been registered against five youths in this connection. The incident happened over alleged molestation of a girl. Mauaima Station House Officer Arvind Kumar Gautam said tht Jalil's brother Mohammad Hakim had filed a case in this connection and one of them has been arrested.

Seminar to mark ABVP foundation day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

On the occasion of the 76th foundation day of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a seminar was held at the Malviya auditorium of Ishwar Sharan Degree College. The event was organised by the ABVP workers of Prayag Mahanagar. ABVP celebrates its foundation day as National Students' Day across the country, marking it as a significant national programme. The seminar featured

Ashish Chauhan, ABVP's national organising secretary, as the keynote speaker, with Ishwar Sharan Degree College Principal Anand Shankar Singh presiding over the event. Having completed 75 years, ABVP has entered its 76th year, emerging as the world's largest student organisation. The ABVP has made significant contribution in various fields such as education, society, environment, service, sports, and technology. The organisation's success is attrib-

uted to the dedication and struggles of its former workers. Present in every campus across the country, ABVP aims for nation reconstruction through personality development. Unlike other student organisations affiliated with specific political parties, ABVP independently makes its own decisions and focuses on addressing student issues. Ashish Chauhan highlighted ABVP's journey, stating, "Today marks the 76th foundation day of ABVP, a journey intertwined

with India's development. ABVP workers, guided by the motto 'Knowledge, Character, Unity', prioritise the nation above all. Representing the voice of India's youth, ABVP has steadfastly avoided party politics, focusing instead on student interests. Dr Anand Shankar Singh, Principal of Ishwar Sharan Degree College, praised ABVP's working culture, stating, "ABVP's ethos reflects the Indian society's working culture. I learned valuable lessons from ABVP during

my early days, which remain with me. ABVP's assertion that 'student power is national power' is evident today." The seminar also saw participation from ABVP Ishwar Sharan Degree College Unit vice-president Swati Palak and unit secretary Divyansh Upadhyay. **INJURED:** A 25-year-old youth sustained grievous injuries after an electric pole suddenly fell on Shastri Bridge on Tuesday afternoon. He was taken to a hospital. A panic-like situation prevailed there.

Farewell given to PMG on transfer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Krishna Kumar Yadav was given an emotional farewell at a function held here on Monday. Yadav has been transferred to Ahmedabad (Gujarat). The local officers wished him a bright future and good luck for his new responsibilities. On the occasion, general secretary of All India Postal Officers' Association and Senior Postal Superintendent of Post Offices

(Varanasi East Division) Rajiv Kumar said that during his glorious tenure of three years and nine months, Yadav not only connected Postal services to the people but also gave it wider dimensions. "Along with promptness in departmental works, Yadav's unwavering attachment to social and literary concerns, establishes him as a sensitive and popular officer", he added. Assistant directors RK Chauhan and Brijesh Sharma said that during Yadav's tenure,

Varanasi region not only established new dimensions in terms of achieving departmental goals, but public awareness and participation about Postal services also increased. Superintendent of Post Offices Varanasi West) Vinay Kumar and Parmanand Kumar (Jaunpur) talked about learning from his versatile personality and deeds. Superintendents of Post offices Hemant Kumar (Ballia) and PK Pathak (Ghazipur) said that Yadav encouraged everyone to work in a positive manner.

Russia is India’s all-weather friend: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/MOSCOW

Underlining the time-tested ties between two countries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday described Russia as India’s “all-weather friend” and hailed President Vladimir Putin’s leadership in strengthening the bilateral relationship over the past two decades. He termed Russia as “Sukh-dukh ka saathi.”

He also announced that India has decided to open two new consulates in Kazan and Yekaterinburg cities of Russia in a bid to further boost travel and trade with the country. India currently has two consulates in Russia at St Petersburg and Vladivostok.

The Prime Minister’s praise of Putin, during an address to the Indian diaspora in Moscow, came amid attempts by Western powers to isolate the Russian leader over the war in Ukraine. “On hearing the word Russia, the first word that comes to mind of every Indian is India’s all-weather friend (sukh-dukh ka saathi) and a trusted ally,” Modi said.

“No matter how low the temperature dips below minus during Russian winter,



India-Russia friendship has always remained in ‘plus’, it is full of warmth. This relationship is built on the strong foundation of mutual trust and mutual respect,” the Prime Minister said.

Modi said he had a special appreciation for “his friend” President Putin for steering India-Russia friendship to greater heights over the last two decades. The Prime Minister said for a long time the world had seen an “influence-oriented global order”. “But, what the world needs right now is confluence not influence and no one can deliver this message better than India which has a strong tradition of worshipping confluences,” Modi said.

The Prime Minister said India was undergoing a transformation and the pace of development over the past 10 years has taken the world by surprise. Modi said India was changing as it believes in the strength of its 140 crore citizens who are now dreaming of turning their resolve of ‘Viksit Bharat’ into reality. “Today’s India is full of self-confidence, unlike the situation before 2014, and this is our biggest capital,” Modi said. “When people like you bless us, even the biggest goals can be achieved. You all know that today’s India achieves whatever goal it sets its mind to,” the prime minister said. The Prime Minister said it

was in his DNA to challenge all the challenges and India will write a new chapter of global growth in coming years.

Modi said it was exactly a month ago that he took oath as prime minister for the third consecutive term when he had made the resolve to work at thrice the strength and speed to fulfill the aspirations of the country.

“Our government envisions making India the world’s third-largest economy, build three crore homes for the poor and turn three crore poor women in villages to ‘lakhpati didi,’” the Prime Minister said amid chants of ‘Modi, Modi’ and ‘Modi hai toh mumkin hai’. “In several goals of the government number three has assumed significance,” he said.

He said India was the country which sent Chandrayaan to a place on the moon where no country has gone before and has given the world the most reliable model for digital transactions. “India’s development of the past 10 years was just a trailer, we will see much faster growth in the next 10 years,” Modi said.

As regards opening the new consulates, the Prime Minister made the announcement of the opening of new

consulates at Kazan and Yekaterinburg while addressing the Indian diaspora here during his two-day visit to Russia. “I want to share some good news with you all. We have decided to open new consulates in Kazan and Yekaterinburg. This will enhance travel and business trade,” Modi said.

Yekaterinburg is Russia’s fourth largest city which has emerged as an important economic centre. The city had hosted four FIFA World Cup matches in 2018 when the sporting event was held in Russia.

Located on the confluence of the Volga and Kazanka rivers, Kazan is a cultural and educational hub and an emerging economic centre in Russia. Russia will also host the BRICS Summit in October in Kazan.

Modi on Monday began a high-profile visit to Russia for the 22nd India-Russia annual summit with President Vladimir Putin, his first trip since the start of Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

The prime minister, after concluding his engagements in Russia, will, on July 9, leave for Austria on the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to that country in over 40 years.

Moscow agrees to repatriate all Indians operating as support staff to Russian military

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/MOSCOW

Taking cognisance of India’s call to end the recruitment of Indians as support staff to the Russian military, Russia has broadly heeded to this and also agreed to ensure repatriation of those still working in the force, sources said on Tuesday.

It is learnt that Moscow agreed to release the Indians after the issue was brought up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an informal meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday night. The Russian president hosted a private dinner for the Indian prime minister at the former’s residence in Novo-Ogaryovo on the outskirts of Moscow late on Monday evening.

Modi on Monday began a two-day high-profile visit to Russia for the 22nd India-Russia annual summit with President Putin, his first trip since the start of Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Last month, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the issue of Indian nationals serving with the Russian Army remains a matter of “utmost concern” and demanded action from Moscow over it.



An announcement on Russia’s decision to discharge all the Indians working as support staff to the Russian Army is expected to be made after summit talks between Modi and Putin on Tuesday. Russia has broadly agreed to our request on the issue, the sources said.

On June 11, India said two Indian nationals, who were recruited by the Russian Army, had been killed in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which took the number of such deaths to four.

Following the deaths of two Indians, the MEA demanded a “verified stop” to further recruitment of Indian nation-

als by the Russian Army. In a strongly-worded statement, it said India demanded that there be a “verified stop to any further recruitment of Indian nationals by the Russian Army” and that such activities would not be in “consonance with our partnership.”

Earlier in March, 30-year-old Hyderabad resident Mohammed Asfan succumbed to injuries sustained while serving with the Russian troops on the frontlines with Ukraine. In February, Hemal Ashwinbhai Mangua, a 23-year-old resident of Surat, died in a Ukrainian air strike while serving as a “security helper” in the Donetsk region.

Large-scale atrocities against Dalits in TN: Union Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister L Murugan on Tuesday alleged large-scale atrocities were taking place against Dalits in Tamil Nadu and claimed that even political leaders were not safe in the state under the DMK government.

A delegation of the Tamil Nadu BJP unit, led by the party’s state vice president VP Duraisamy, will approach the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Human Rights Commission later in the day, urging them to take appropriate action in the matter, Murugan told a press conference at the BJP headquarters here. Senior leaders of the BJP Tamil Nadu unit, including Duraisamy, were present at the press conference.

“After the DMK came to power in May 2021, there has been a tremendous increase in the atrocities against Dalits in Tamil Nadu. A survey is telling that every year more than 2,000 cases of atrocities against



Dalits are filed in the state,” Murugan said. He referred to a series of incidents of alleged atrocities against Dalits since 2022 and some incidents of attack and murder of the BJP leaders in the state, putting the blame on the “complete failure” of Chief Minister MK Stalin. “Recently, K Armstrong, a Dalit leader and BSP state president was murdered,” he said, alleging that “even political leaders are not safe” in the state under the DMK rule. “Scheduled caste leaders and people do not have security. They are facing harassment under the DMK government,” he said.

“A delegation of BJP Tamil Nadu unit, led by Duraisamy, is going to submit a memorandum to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Human Rights Commission today in this connection, urging them to take appropriate action in the matter,” the Union minister said.

Murugan said the DMK claims that it is the pioneer of social justice but the ruling party is not following the idea of social justice in the state. “Stalin doesn’t have the moral right to talk about social justice because of the incidents of atrocities against Dalits taking place in the state,” he charged.

No open court hearing of same-sex marriage pleas: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to allow open court hearing of pleas seeking review of its last year’s judgement declining legal recognition to same-sex marriage. In a setback to gay rights activists, a five judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud had on October 17 last year refused to accord legal backing to same-sex marriage, saying there was “no unqualified right” to marriage with the exception of those that are recognised by law.

The apex court, however, had made a strong pitch for the rights of queer people so they don’t face discrimination in accessing goods and services that are available to others, safe houses known as ‘Garima Greh’ in all districts to provide shelter to members of the community facing harassment and violence and dedicated hotline numbers which they could use in case of trouble. A five judge bench comprising the CJI and Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Hima Kohli, BV Nagarathna and PS



Narasimha are scheduled to consider in chambers the pleas seeking review of the judgement on July 10. On Tuesday, senior advocates Abhishek Singhvi and NK Kaul mentioned the matter and urged the CJI to hear the review petitions in an open court.

“I say that if these petitions can be heard in the open court...,” Kaul asked the court. These are the constitution bench review matters which are listed in chambers, the CJI told him. As per the practice, the review pleas are consid-

ered in chambers by judges. In its judgement, the bench had held that transgender people in heterosexual relationships have the freedom and entitlement to marry under the existing statutory provisions. It had said an entitlement to legal recognition of the right to union, akin to marriage or civil union, or conferring legal status to the relationship can be only done through “enacted law”. The five-judge constitution bench headed by CJI Chandrachud had delivered

four separate verdicts on a batch of 21 petitions seeking legal sanction for same-sex marriages. All five judges were unanimous in refusing to accord legal recognition to same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act and observed it was within Parliament’s ambit to change the law for validating such union.

While the CJI had written a separate 247-page verdict, Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul (since retired) had penned a 17-page judgement in which he broadly agreed with Justice Chandrachud’s views.

Justice S Ravindra Bhat (since retired), who authored an 89-page judgement for himself and Justice Hima Kohli, had disagreed with certain conclusions arrived at by the CJI including on applicability of adoption rules for queer couples. Justice PS Narasimha had said in his 13-page verdict that he was in complete agreement with the reasoning given and conclusions arrived at by Justice Bhat.

The judges were unanimous in holding that queerness is a natural phenomenon and not “urban or elite” occurrence. In

his judgement, the CJI had recorded the assurance by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the Centre will constitute a committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for the purpose of defining and elucidating the scope of entitlements of queer couples who are in a union. The LGBTQIA++ rights activists, who had won a major legal battle in 2018 in the Supreme Court which decriminalised consensual gay sex, had moved the apex court seeking validation of same-sex marriage and consequential reliefs such as rights to adoption, enrolment as parents in schools, opening of bank accounts and availing succession and insurance benefits.

Some of the petitioners had urged the apex court to use its plenary power, “prestige and moral authority” to push the society to acknowledge such a union which would ensure LGBTQIA++ lead a “dignified” life like heterosexuals. LGBTQIA++ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit, asexual and allied persons.

CBI arrests two more in NEET-UG paper leak case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested two more persons, including a candidate, from Patna in connection with the alleged leakage of NEET-UG paper, taking the total number of arrests by the agency to 11, officials said Tuesday.

NEET-UG aspirant Sunny who hails from Nalanda and father of another candidate Ranjit Kumar who is from Gaya have been arrested, they said.

The CBI has so far arrested eight persons in Bihar NEET-UG paper leak case and one each in connection with alleged manipulation in Gujarat’s Latur and Godhra, and one from Dehradun in connection with general conspiracy, the officials said. The agency had earlier arrested principal and vice principal of Hazaribagh-based Oasis school in the case and two persons who allegedly pro-

vided safe premises to NEET candidates where burnt question papers were recovered by the Bihar Police.

The CBI, which is probing the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam, has registered six FIRs. The FIR from Bihar pertains to leakage of paper while the remaining from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra are linked to impersonation of candidates and cheating. The agency’s own FIR on a reference from the Union Education Ministry pertains to a “comprehensive investigation” into the alleged irregularities in the examination. NEET-UG is conducted by the NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. This year, the exam was conducted on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. More than 23 lakh candidates had appeared for the test.

Meet outlines steps to empower physically challenged persons

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Providing accessible infrastructure, employment opportunities, and education to people with disabilities is crucial for ensuring their full participation and inclusion in society, Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice, and Empowerment, said, stressing on diversity rather than disability with the nature of humanity.

He was speaking at the ASSOCHAM’s 6th Conference on Empowering Persons with Disabilities through Accessible & Assistive Technology here on Tuesday, Aggarwal also emphasised the gathering to not help people PWD with charity purposes but include them with designated job profiles and not quota. For enhancing education, he gave examples of use of devices such as braille displays, speech-to-text software, and adapted learning tools to facilitate learning. Providing necessary workplace accommodations such as ergonomic chairs, specialized keyboards, and software solutions to support productivity, he added.

Focused on the theme ‘Innovation and Sustainable Solutions for Equal Opportunities,’ the conference aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat, aspiring to position India as a Global AT Hub. Driven by competitive manufacturing costs, sup-



porting government policies like Make in India, India can position itself as a key player in the global market, said the experts. A joint knowledge report “Accessibility for all: embracing digital transformation with universal design” prepared by ASSOCHAM and EY was also released at the event.

Anil Rajput, Chairperson of the ASSOCHAM National CSR Council said “According to the WHO, 16 per cent of the world’s population, which is over a billion people, have some form of disability, and 80 per cent of these live in the developing countries. With mobility being a critical factor in the lives of PwDs, he urged automobile manufacturers to bring in the latest technologies in vehicles for disabled people that are being used in different parts of the world. Amit Singh, Partner, EY

stressed on collaboration among government and private sector to create sustainable solutions for civil society and reducing barriers to participation.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the field of emerging technologies by augmenting assistive devices’ capabilities, personalizing experiences, and boosting accessibility. The country has a significant portion of its population that have disabilities that require immediate attention and solutions, he added.

Dr. Sara Varughese of CBM India addressed the pressing need for socially inclusive infrastructure, while Dipendra Manocha of DAISY Forum of India advocated for government policies to support mass production of assistive devices, aiming to lower costs and broaden availability.

Congress attacks Centre on unemployment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi government has only one mission and that is to “keep the youth jobless”, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged on Tuesday in a scathing attack against the Centre on the issue of unemployment.

The Modi government may be refuting independent economic reports like the one by Citigroup on unemployment but how will it deny government data, Kharge asked in a lengthy social media post citing various reports.

“The truth is that Modi government is solely responsible for shattering the dreams of crores of youth in the last 10 years,” he alleged. Kharge said the latest government data punctures the government’s claims. According to NSSO’s (National Sample Survey Office) Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, in the manufacturing sector, 54 lakh jobs were lost in unincorporated units in the seven years between 2015 and 2023, he said.

“In 2010-11, 10.8 crore employees were employed in unincorporated, non-agricultural enterprises across India, which has become 10.96 crore in 2022-23 - that is, a marginal increase of only 16 lakh in 12 years,” he said. Kharge cited the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), to state that the urban unemployment rate is at 6.7 per cent (Q4, FY24).



“Modi government beats the drum of employment generation in the Formal sector by showing EPFO data, but even if we assume that data to be true, it has seen a 10% decline in new jobs in 2023,” he said. A report by IIM Lucknow, after analysing government data, shows that unemployment growth, high unemployment among the educated, low participation of women in the workforce are prevalent in the country, Kharge said. He said the Modi government rejects independent economic reports because they expose their “shameless attempt to whitewash”.

According to the CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy), the current unemployment rate in the country has reached 9.2 per cent, he said, adding that it is a whopping 18.5 per cent for women. “According to the ILO report, 83% of the unemployed in the country are youth. According to the India Employment Report 2024, between 2012 and 2019, about 7 crore youth joined the labour force, but there was zero growth in

employment - only 0.01%!” he added. The Congress chief also referred to the 2023 report from Azim Premji University to say that 42.3 per cent of graduates under the age of 25 in the country are unemployed. “According to the latest report of Citigroup, India needs 1.2 crore jobs annually, and even 7% GDP growth will not be able to create enough jobs for our youth. Under the Modi Govt, the country has achieved an average of only 5.8% as GDP growth,” he said. “Be it government jobs, or private sector, self-employment or unorganised sector - Modi government has only one mission ‘Keep the youth jobless,’” Kharge said. The Congress, which has been attacking the government over the issue of unemployment, on Sunday cited the Citigroup report to allege that the Modi government had accentuated India’s “unemployment crisis” with the decimation of job-creating MSMEs through the “Tughlakian demonetisation, a hastily rushed GST, and rising imports from China”.

Strong message

PM Modi's Russia visit signals India's intent to preserve its strategic autonomy and pursue its national interest



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in Moscow for a two-day state visit. The visit comes after a long gap as the last time PM Modi visited Russia was in 2019. Since then, a lot has happened in the international arena and India and Russia have emerged as reliable friends. This visit holds profound implications for India-Russia relations, and it sends nuanced messages to both China and the West. India and Russia share a long-standing relationship rooted in historical, strategic, and economic cooperation. This visit underscores India's commitment to maintaining and strengthening these traditional ties. The partnership between the two nations spans various sectors, including defence, energy, space, and nuclear technology. By reaffirming these bonds, PM Modi signals India's intent to preserve its strategic autonomy and resist external pressures to align exclusively with any single global power bloc. India's relationship with China has been marked by border tensions. PM Modi's visit to Russia is a strategic manoeuvre in this delicate balance. Russia and China have their own close ties. However, India's engagement with Russia serves to remind China that India has strong partnerships beyond its immediate neighbourhood. PM Modi was welcomed at the airport by Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister, Denis Manturov, a higher-ranking official than the Deputy Prime Minister who greeted Chinese President Xi Jinping on his recent visit. This underscores the significant importance Russia places on its relationship with India and is in contrast with Xi Jinping's welcome, where the lower-ranking Deputy Prime Minister received him. On the other hand, India's relationship with Western powers, particularly the United States, has grown significantly in recent years. However, by visiting Russia, PM Modi communicates India's desire to maintain an independent foreign policy. This visit is a reminder that India will not be swayed into a singular alignment with Western interests. It underscores India's multipolar approach to international relations, where it seeks to engage with all major powers based on mutual interests and benefits. To put things in perspective Russia happens to be the major supplier of arms to India and India made no bones about buying Russian oil despite western sanctions. One of the critical aspects of PM Modi's visit is the focus on economic and energy cooperation. Russia is a significant supplier of energy resources, including oil and natural gas. Strengthening this energy partnership helps India secure its energy future while diversifying its sources. Defence cooperation has been a cornerstone of India-Russia relations. PM Modi's visit likely includes discussions on furthering defence ties and technology transfers. Furthermore, India has challenges in its neighbourhood and by leveraging its friendship with Russia, it can always have an edge. Besides, Russian support would come handy in India's bid for a permanent seat at the United Nations. India's engagement with Russia is vital for world peace and fostering a multipolar world which is the best guarantee for world peace.

PICTALK



NDRF personnel rescue trapped people from the flooded areas in Tanakpur

Babas thrive on social equality deficit



SIDHARTH MISHRA

The Hathras incident points to a deeper societal neglect of marginalised communities, offering a fertile ground for dubious leaders to emerge as champions of social reform

The unfortunate incident in Hathras is finding a very despicable narrative in social media. Nobody seems to be mourning the death of 120-odd people belonging mostly to the Dalit community but contesting the fact that a godman had emerged from the Jatav community. We political analysts talk of undercurrents in polls and leave it unexplained. The emergence of a Baba like Surajpal Singh explains it. In times when the most powerful of the political leaders with the help of all the money and machinery at their disposal find it difficult to get 25000 people to attend a rally, there must be something in Surajpal Singh's modus operandi which saw a gathering of 250000 people. When the BJP blames the Hindu voters for deserting it, particularly in Uttar Pradesh during the last parliamentary elections, its answer lies in the Hathras incident. The opposition leaders led by Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav have blamed the administration for the tragedy and in a way covertly if not overtly taken a stand in defence of the Baba. It's not only about a Surajpal from the Jatav community but several others like Rampal from the Jat community in Haryana, who have challenged the upper caste monopoly on Hindu spiritual discourse. They have their methods that challenge the Puritan practices but they are applauded by their followers for it. The police report filed in the matter states that organisers "underreported the number of expected attendees, did not cooperate in managing traffic, and concealed evidence after the stampede, which occurred when people stopped to collect soil from the path of the baba's vehicle." The FIR indicated that the police and administration did everything possible with available resources. The FIR ironically also shows that how the administration, not just district but pan-India, has been completely unaware of the swelling undercurrent. When such a large gathering of people clamber to clutch dust particles



kicked up by a departing godman's car, it reflects that the government and society have failed to engage with the poor and the deprived. Poverty is not as an economist would define it but that of ignorance and inequality. This provides just the fertile ground for a Baba from the community to emerge as a 'social reformer'. The social reform programmes of the government, be it the 'sarvodaya' of the yore or the 'antodaya' of the current times, have focussed on cash transfer and not social equity transfer. This explains the financial sinews of Surajpal and others like him. The financially prosperous in the community donate liberally as he talks of ending social discrimination. In his discourses Surajpal talks of equality and empowerment. He advocates education and even facilitates the admission of children from his community into upmarket schools. He routinely condemns caste-based discrimination and preaches universal brotherhood. What got his following soar was that during the Covid-19 pandemic, he is reported to have facilitated food and medicine distribution and other such succour to the poor from the community. During the second wave of the pandemic, in

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THE SOCIAL REFORM PROGRAMMES OF THE GOVERNMENT, BE IT THE 'SARVODAYA' OF THE YORE OR THE 'ANTODAYA' OF THE CURRENT TIMES, HAVE FOCUSED ON CASH TRANSFER AND NOT SOCIAL EQUITY TRANSFER. THIS EXPLAINS THE FINANCIAL SINEWS OF SURAJPAL AND OTHERS LIKE HIM

May 2021, when contagion was at its peak, Surajpal organised a camp in Farrukhabad. The district administration had allowed the presence of 50 people but several thousand attended. Such 'social movements' are not alone in western Uttar Pradesh where Surajpal operates. People flock to 'Deras' of different hues, especially in the region of Haryana-Punjab. Though all these Deras have followers among every caste, most followers are Dalits and backward caste people, who are often economically weaker too. Punjab has been witness to the emergence of a large number of Deras due to prevailing inequality in the social and economic order and the marginal position of the Dalits in society. According to rough estimates given by Sikh scholars, there are more than 9,000 Sikh and non-Sikh Deras in 12,000 villages in Punjab. Of these, there are about 300 major Deras across Punjab and the neighbouring Haryana. Out of these almost a dozen have over one lakh devotees each. Going by these standards Surajpal's Ashram has if not more at least as strong a numerical strength as the major Deras of Punjab like Radha Soami (Beas), Dera Sacha Sauda (Sirsa),

Nirankari, Namdhari, Diya Jyoti Jagran Sansthan (Nurmahal), Dera Sant Bhanirwala (Ropar), and Dera Sach Khand (Ballan). As of now, a judicial commission has been set up to enquire into the matter. The commission would blame Surajpal, his devotees and the administration for the tragedy. The state would also for some time act with full might carrying out arrests. Once the public outcry dies down, the media would withdraw its cameras and post it at another news event. The matter under judicial probe too will hit a dead end. Probably nobody wants to answer why Babas like Surajpal get a tailor-made pitch to mould public emotion. Through their clout they come to command political influence and every political party wants them on their side. No wonder Congress and Samajwadi Party are backing Surajpal Singh in the same way as the BJP government of Haryana gave liberal furloughs to murder convict Ram Rahim Singh of Dera Sacha Sauda. The wrath of Babas could be politically harmful. (The writer is the author and president of the Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REEVALUATE CANDIDACY CRITERIA

Madam — The radical Sikh preacher and chief of 'Waris Punjab De,' Amritpal Singh, who is imprisoned in Assam's Dibrugarh district under the National Security Act, and Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, who is in Delhi's Tihar jail for a terror funding case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, were granted parole to take their oaths as members of the Lok Sabha on July 5. This event took place amid heavy security in and around the Parliament complex. People are wondering how, under our constitution, both individuals were allowed to run for MP and won convincingly as independents. This reflects on the electorate's choices, not the country's policies. Moreover, while both Amritpal (31) and Rashid (56) took their oaths to uphold the Constitution, they have no faith in it. I believe it is high time our Parliament revisited the criteria for election candidates. Anyone facing charges of terrorism or anti-national activities should not be allowed to contest elections, regardless of their popularity. Any individual who does not respect India's integrity and sovereignty should be ineligible to file a nomination. Instead, an affidavit affirming faith in the Constitution and National Integrity should be a prerequisite for candidates. **Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee** | Faridabad

CELEBRATING TRUE HEROES

Madam — At a recent event in Kozhikode, Kerala, Union Minister Suresh Gopi referred to the cleaning staff as "superheroes" for their efforts in maintaining the cleanliness of the venue. He also invited them to sit in seats reserved for special guests, which they did hesitantly. Kudos to the minister for recognizing and honoring the work of a group of workers who are often overlooked. We hope this generous gesture will inspire more such acts of appreciation for those who typically remain on

Mumbai battles monsoon rains



Mumbai, India's financial capital, has come to a standstill as heavy rain lashes the city, causing widespread flooding and disruption. The city's residents are struggling to cope with the torrential downpour, which has led to waterlogging in many areas, particularly low-lying regions like Sion,

Andheri, and Kurla. The rain has also caused significant damage to property and infrastructure, with reports of wall collapses and tree falls disrupting daily life. The city's drainage system has been overwhelmed, leaving many areas submerged in water and hindering emergency services. The heavy rain has also affected the city's transportation systems, with flights and trains delayed or cancelled, and major roads clogged with traffic. Schools and offices have been forced to shut down, and the authorities are working hard to mitigate the situation. However, the city's residents are bracing themselves for another day of heavy rain and flooding, as the weather forecast predicts more rainfall in the coming days. The situation has sparked discussions on the need for improved urban planning and infrastructure to handle such extreme weather events. **Purva Pandya** | Ujjain

the margins of social functions. Even Gandhiji once said, "Sanitation is more important than Independence." **Avinash Godbole** | Dewas

AGENDA OF PM'S RUSSIA VISIT

Madam — As Prime Minister Narendra Modi traveled to Russia on Monday, July 8, there was anticipation about whether he would address the issue of Indian nationals fighting for the Russian army in the conflict zone and ensure their safe return to India as soon as possible. The prime minister will hold summit talks with President Vladimir Putin amid this ongoing conflict in Ukraine during this visit, which is his first trip to Russia since 2019 and the first since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. India has a longstanding relationship with Russia, initially with the USSR, thanks to the diplomatic and strategic initiatives of various Congress governments over the decades. More recently, during his ten years as Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh met with Russian Presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry

The Imperative of upskilling strategies in modern business



ANISH SRIKRISHNA

By investing in learning and development initiatives, organisations not only equip their workforce with essential skills but also drive sustainable growth

In today's fast-evolving business environment, the ability to adapt and thrive through continuous learning has become indispensable for sustained success. To remain competitive amidst technological advancements, economic shifts, and geopolitical changes, businesses must adopt proactive upskilling strategies. These strategies empower organizations to innovate and stay resilient, ensuring readiness to tackle uncertainty and adapt to evolving market demands. A crucial aspect of fostering organizational success lies in developing a robust upskilling plan tailored to the needs of C-suite executives. This comprehensive approach focuses not only on enhancing technical competencies but also on cultivating strategic thinking and leadership abilities. CEOs play a pivotal role in this endeavor by investing in tailored Learning and Development (L&D) programs. These initiatives aim to refine communication skills, enhance adaptability, manage crises effectively, and unleash influential leadership potential. Strategic thinking involves



synthesising information from diverse sources and cultivating collaborative relationships with stakeholders. These competencies are pivotal for making informed decisions and driving organizational progress. Embracing technology-centric strategies that incorporate cutting-edge skills such as Generative AI, Machine Learning, Data Analytics, and Cybersecurity is essential for navigating complexities and maintaining market competitiveness. To effectively implement upskilling initiatives, organizations must first identify skill gaps within their workforce through regular assessments and performance reviews. Tailoring training programs to address these specific needs is key. Technology plays a crucial role in modern L&D, with e-learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and mobile appli-

cations offering flexible and accessible training options. Research underscores the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning. Encouraging cross-functional experience is another pivotal element of a robust development plan. Leaders benefit from rotating through various roles and departments, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the organization and fostering better decision-making. Building strong internal and external relationships is crucial, enabling effective collaboration and leveraging partnerships for innovation and growth. The 2024 Business Outlook Report highlights that a significant majority of small and medium-sized enterprises have either implemented or plan to implement upskilling strategies. Failure to do so risks falling behind in a competitive landscape. McKinsey & Company supports this, citing that investment in employee development enhances engagement and retention. AI-powered Human Capital Management (HCM) systems are transforming how

organizations manage skills gaps. These systems analyze workforce data to identify current competencies and predict future skill requirements, recommending personalized development opportunities. Tracking metrics such as employee engagement, course completion rates, and skill acquisition is crucial for refining L&D strategies aligned with business objectives. Creating a culture that values learning is pivotal for upskilling success. Leaders must champion continuous development by setting an example, fostering an environment where learning is encouraged and rewarded. This involves integrating development goals into performance reviews, providing incentives for learning activities, and ensuring visible support from CEOs and senior leaders. Such a culture not only keeps businesses abreast of industry changes but also fosters sustainable growth and innovation, securing a competitive edge in the market. (The writer is CEO, TimesPro; views are personal)

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FIRST COLUMN

DISCOVERING TRUE STRENGTH

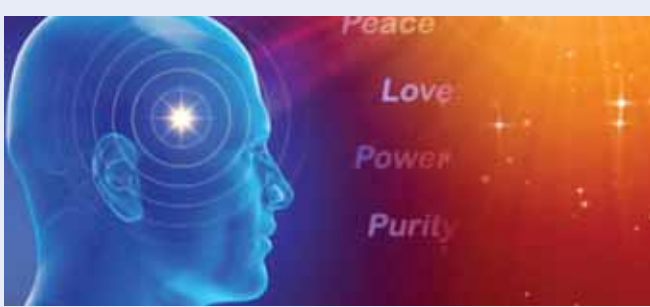
The soul's intrinsic qualities of peace, love, and wisdom give us true strength and power



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Mahatma Gandhi has defined power in 2 forms, one is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. According to him power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. However, the world that we live in today has a different scenario wherein power spells authority, strength, capability and superiority. If we walk down history lane, we can see that all good and bad endeavours by individuals or groups in the past were directed at garnering power. Be it world wars, political uprisings, revolutions, religious propaganda, scientific research, technological innovations, economic strategies, or ethnic-cultural dominance, almost everything was aimed at being powerful or being in the seat of power. So what is it about power that makes most of us go crazy after it? Well!! The simple reply to this would be .. Who doesn't want to be powerful & experience the adrenaline rush? Of course, all of us just love that moment of power that allows us to do what we want to do on our terms.

Power has different meanings for different people, but the most common association of power is with money and that is why the rich and the powerful people in society always make headlines due to their high net worth. Another common imagery of power goes with political leaders who are seen as synonymous with power. In the 21st century, science and technology combined with marketing has also become another means of power along with media which has also emerged as a highly influential medium of power. It won't be exaggerating to say that media is one such source that affects all other powers as it can help to highlight downplay or even destroy the power value of all the above-mentioned powers. However in reality these are all outer forms or sources of power and since they are based on outer reality they tend to deplete or change and perish with time also they are unstable, unreliable and often disempowering. If that is so then what is the True source of power? The majority of us are unaware of the reality that True power is rooted in human consciousness i.e. in the soul. Yes!! But it's unfortunate that most of us, in our quest for power, totally forget that money or status



is the only means from which temporary power can be derived. Such power is also limited in its outreach, value or benefit. The sense of 'I' and 'mine' turns such power into a limitation and it has its influence for a limited period on a limited area of life to a limited degree. On the other hand, true power will be unlimited, benevolent and universal in its impact & hence it will automatically empower others. Therefore to reclaim our real power we need to first understand who we are and live life from a spiritual perspective because when the spirit is awake and aware it is indomitable. When we become aware of how powerful we are from within, we become free from all kinds of desires. Remember! A person who can control his thoughts and emotions and live by the highest values of peace, love, truth and joy under all circumstances is truly powerful. Such a person can influence and bring about change not only in his life but also in others' lives and the world around him. As children of the Supreme, every human being is a soul inherent with core values like peace, joy, love, purity, wisdom, power and bliss. Due to gross ignorance about these very values, we lose our true power and start searching for it in the wrong sources. That is why today the whole human race has become weak and impure. But! Now the Supreme Source of Power himself is guiding us all to regain our lost power and sovereignty by imparting knowledge of spirit (soul) through which we would become the rulers of our inner kingdom. So what are we waiting for? Let's just begin the journey to experience real power by connecting to our true selves and the Supreme Source.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and a popular columnist; views are personal)

Airfares to surge amidst aircraft shortage



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Indian air travelers are bracing for a steep hike in ticket prices as India is feeling the repercussions of a significant disruption in Boeing's production schedule



Airfares to shoot up sharply as airlines in India, the third largest in the world, face a shortage of aircraft. The airlines are to suffer as the US Boeing is in crisis for its Starliner space vehicle leakage and two fatal crashes defrauding the US government. Boeing has lost more than \$32 billion since 2019. Fewer companies could lose that kind of money and not be facing bankruptcy. Boeing may face three years of probation, independent safety audits and a penalty of \$ 487.3 million in penalty. It has put its new aircraft manufacturing off schedule causing delivery of far fewer planes to airlines in India. It would hamper the growth of the industry here and limit the capability to offer seats to fliers. It would result in severe seat shortages and spiralling fares.

The US Justice Department might charge Boeing with fraud if it does not plead guilty to two deadly Max crashes in 2018 and 2019 killing 346 people. The case stems from the department's determination that Boeing violated an agreement that was intended to resolve a 2021 charge of conspiracy to defraud the US government. Boeing is charged with misleading regulators who approved the 737 Max and set pilot-training requirements to fly the plane. The company blamed two relatively low-level employees for the fraud. Boeing reached a \$2.5 billion settlement for the 2018 and 2019 Ethiopian crashes with the Justice Department in January 2021 to avoid prosecution on a single charge of fraud — misleading federal regulators who approved the plane.

Boeing blamed the deception on two relatively low-level employees. In March 2019, an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX crashed, killing all 157 on board, after which regulators around the world grounded MAX aircraft. The crashes were blamed on a flaw with a newly-



BOEING REACHED A \$2.5 BILLION SETTLEMENT FOR THE 2018 AND 2019 ETHIOPIAN CRASHES WITH THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IN JANUARY 2021 TO AVOID PROSECUTION ON A SINGLE CHARGE OF FRAUD — MISLEADING FEDERAL REGULATORS WHO APPROVED THE PLANE

inducted system for pushing the aircraft nose down to prevent the plane from stalling. This week the justice department's criminal fraud section told a federal court Boeing violated terms of the settlement by failing to make promised changes to detect and prevent violations of federal anti-fraud laws. The determination means that Boeing could be prosecuted "for any federal criminal violation," including the charge of fraud that the company hoped to avoid with the settlement, the Justice Department said.

The company handed over 27 planes in January, its lowest tally since September, compared with 67 deliveries in December. It sold three Boeing 737 Max planes but also logged three cancellations. As it was grappling with the situation on January 5, 2024, a door plug blew out on an Alaska Airlines flight at 16,000 feet shortly after take-off from Portland, Oregon. None was injured but it ripped off headrests and exposed passengers to a gaping hole in the 26th row. Bolts holding a door panel were also found missing, the US National Transportation Safety Board reported.

This led the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to halt Boeing's planned production increases till it was satisfied with the quality control issues. The Max planes that Air India wants to buy, Boeing says, would have to work about 50 of the undelivered planes because of incorrectly drilled holes in 22 fuselages or the larger outer shell that encompasses the main aircraft body.

It is a new production glitch that could slow deliveries further. Various FAA safety inspections would periodically stop the production line. The FAA says that it would allow the variant of the 737 Max 9 with the door plug to fly again — after demanding checks to the bolts on every plane. The family of two MAX victims want Boeing to face a criminal trial and pay a fine of \$ 24.8 billion. They are against plea bargaining saying this was just a reworking of "letting Boeing off the hook". In such a situation, the hope of Air India Express and Akasa getting their deliveries does not look bright.

Questions arise about how the two airlines agreed to the deal of MAX, which still has not cleared safety issues. China has reportedly cancelled some of its bookings. Amid such situations in June 2022, Tata Sons signed the agreement during the Paris Air Show for 20 Boeing Dreamliners, 10 Boeing 777X widebody aircraft, and 190 Boeing 737 MAX narrow-body aircraft along with 250 Euro Airbus for \$ 70 billion, according to Tata Sons and Air India chairman N Chandrababhan.

In June 2023, IndiGo made the world's largest aircraft order by signing a deal for 500 A320neo family planes from Airbus. IndiGo is expecting some Airbus 320 deliveries.

But that would not suffice the needs of the growing number of passengers. IndiGo is set to ground many aircraft. So would Spicejet, which met with several security issues. The delays, which are said to be unavoidable, would create a

shortage of aircraft almost with all major airlines, IndiGo, Spicejet, Akasa and Air India. Jet Airways and Go First have gone bankrupt adding to the shortage. The Boeing crisis could hit India hard with Air India and Akasa having fewer aircraft and an overall shortage of seats for domestic and international routes spiralling fares. Airlines in India carried a record 152 million passengers in 2023, a 30 per cent increase from 2022 and a 5 per cent rise over 2019. According to the Director General of Civil Aviation, the domestic air traffic from January to May rose 4 per cent during the period to 13.8 million.

The aviation industry fears that the reduced aircraft delivery is set to impact the aviation market severely more so as several passengers rise more owing to a fallacious dynamic Indian Railways fare structure. It hikes train fares to the level of air fares making people prefer to travel by air. This is impacting the railways and the airlines alike.

Fares in certain destinations like Kochi-Delhi Kolkata-Delhi Mumbai-Delhi or Guwahati-Delhi could skyrocket and match some of the international routes as the country does not have an integrated transportation approach.

If the rail fares are cut and the reservation system rationalised, it could take off a significant load from the airlines. The unimaginative system predicts a scramble for airline tickets by the end of December winter vacation.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

Leadership shifts in the UK and Iran signal a new era of moderate politics

The recent election results in the UK and Iran reflect a broader global trend of voters favouring leaders who advocate for inclusivity and moderation

There has been a change of leadership in both the United Kingdom and Iran. In the UK, Rishi Sunak of the Conservative Party has been succeeded by Keir Starmer of the Labour Party. In Iran, the people have elected Masoud Pezeshkian, a reformist and relatively liberal candidate, as their new President.

The Iranian presidential election was necessitated by the death of the former President, Ebrahim Raisi, in a helicopter crash in May. These shifts, one in Europe and the other in Asia, represent a change in the mindset of people across continents. Both countries, with their rich traditions and civilizations, have seen their electorates reject hardliners in



AKHILESH SUMAN

favor of moderate leaders and parties. This highlights how, when given the choice, people make thoughtful decisions on a large scale, guided by the current needs rather than the incessant rhetoric of hardliners invoking civilization and nationalism. The Labour Party in Britain had been out of power for the last 14 years. Many predicted the party's demise and

believed the country would remain under Conservative rule indefinitely. The Conservatives, driven by their nationalistic desires, even led the UK out of the European Union, isolating the nation from its neighboring democracies. It is noteworthy that while the Conservatives' loss marks a historic low in the context of British democracy, the significant increase in seats for the Liberal Democrats, from 11 in 2019 to 72 now, represents a historic high.

As the Liberal Democrats are considered somewhat more left-leaning than even the Labour Party, there is a renewed emphasis on improving the quality of life for the common man, more so than at any other time in

the country's political landscape. Conversely, since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has consistently positioned itself against the West to assert its sovereignty. This stance has not only led to cultural conflicts with the West but also created significant challenges for Iran's economy. Its isolation and confrontations with G7 nations have weakened its oil-based economy.

Additionally, the Iranian people have periodically expressed their dissatisfaction with the country's social laws. With the recent changes in leadership in Britain and Iran, both new leaders have pledged to end their countries' isolation and foster global friendships. This suggests that the UK may seek to



renew ties with the European Union, and Iran may aim to improve relations with the West. It will be interesting to see if Keir Starmer will reconsider Brexit and move the UK closer to the EU. Similarly, as the new Iranian President promises to "extend a hand of friendship to everyone," it

remains to be seen whether this will lead to peace with the USA and, eventually, with tech-rich Israel. It will also be intriguing to observe if the Iranian leader can persuade the Supreme Leader to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) framework, which is the main reason for

Iran's isolation in the West. These election results suggest a potential leftward shift in global politics, with significant changes occurring in both major European and Asian countries. This could mean that governments will need to focus more on job creation and improving the quality of life for their citizens. Britain is currently facing financial difficulties and high inflation, despite soaring property prices. Similarly, the Iranian people are feeling the weight of ever-increasing sanctions imposed by the US and its allies. Iranians need a new economy and a new approach to their relations with the West. While Western nations are cautiously optimistic

about the change in Iran, they are confident that the new Labour leadership in the UK will adopt a pragmatic approach. Moving away from the Conservative tactics of unnecessary assertiveness driven by nostalgic colonial attitudes, the UK will need to redefine its strategy and engage more openly with the public.

Finally, there is a message for political parties worldwide: if you stay connected with the grassroots and continue to address the issues of the common people in pragmatic ways, you will remain relevant and potentially revive.

(The writer is a senior journalist and has been covering foreign affairs and international politics; views are personal)

Bypolls in 13 Assembly seats of seven States today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bypolls to 13 assembly constituencies in seven states on Wednesday will decide the fate of many veterans and some debutantes including Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's wife Kamlesh Thakur. The assembly seats going to polls are Raiganj, Ranaghat Dakshin, Bagda and Maniktala (West Bengal); Badrinath and Manglaur (Uttarakhand); Jalandhar West (Punjab); Dehra, Hamirpur and Nalagarh (Himachal Pradesh); Rupauli (Bihar); Vikravandi (Tamil Nadu) and Amarwara (Madhya Pradesh). The bypolls are to be held against vacancies created either due to deaths or resignation of incumbent members. In West Bengal, the stakes are high for both the ruling TMC, which is looking to capitalise on its improved performance in the Lok Sabha polls, and the BJP, which is seeking to leverage the significant leads it made in the four constituencies in the parliamentary polls. The TMC won Maniktala seat in the 2021 West Bengal elections while the BJP won

Raiganj, Ranaghat Dakshin and Bagda. Later, the BJP MLAs switched to the TMC. The Maniktala bypoll was necessitated by the death of sitting TMC MLA Sadhan Pandey in February 2022. The TMC has fielded Pandey's wife Supti from the seat. The ruling party has fielded Krishna Kalyani from Raiganj and Mukut Mani Adhikari from Ranaghat Dakshin. In Badgah, a Matua-majority constituency, the TMC has fielded Madhuparna Thakur, a member of the Matua Thakurbari and daughter of party Rajya Sabha MP Mamatabala Thakur. Kalyani, Adhikari and Biswajit Das had unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls on TMC tickets after resigning from the BJP. The BJP has fielded All India Football Federation president Kalyan Chaubey from Maniktala, Manoj Kumar Biswas from Ranaghat Dakshin, Binay Kumar Biswas from Bagdah and Manas Kumar Ghosh from Raiganj. Buoyed by its Lok Sabha poll performance, the TMC hopes to win all four assembly seats. "We are confident of winning all four assembly seats. The people of Bengal have rejected the BJP in the last Lok Sabha polls," said TMC leader Kunal



Ghosh. The TMC won 29 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal, up from 22 in the 2019 parliamentary polls. On the other hand, the BJP's tally came down to 12 from 18 in 2019. In Himachal Pradesh, bypolls will be held for three assembly constituencies -- Dehra, Hamirpur and Nalagarh. The seats fell vacant after the three independent legislators Hoshiyar Singh (Dehra), Ashish Sharma (Hamirpur) and KL Thakur (Nalagarh), who had voted in favour of the BJP in the Rajya Sabha polls held on February 27, resigned from the House on March 22. The BJP has fielded

the three former Independent MLAs from their respective seats after they joined the party. A total of 13 candidates are contesting the bypolls in the three segments with 2,59,340 voters. The Congress' pick in Dehra is Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's wife Kamlesh Thakur. She will take on BJP's Hoshiyar Singh, one of the nine MLAs who had voted against the Congress candidate in the Rajya Sabha polls. "Vote for the CM and not the MLA. Now, Dehra will also become the constituency of the CM," Kamlesh Thakur told people while canvassing implying that voting for her

meant voting for the CM and hence "development". "I will not need to go to the Secretariat to get your work done, I will get it done from the chief minister at home," she said. In Hamirpur, the home district of Sukhu, former Independent MLA Ashish Sharma is pitted against Congress' Puspender Verma. Former Independent legislator KL Thakur is facing old rival Hardeep Singh Bawa of the Congress in Nalagarh. The entry of BJP dissident Harpreet Saini, who is contesting as an Independent, has made the contest triangular. The BJP got a lead in all three assembly constituencies during the recently held Lok Sabha polls. Neighbouring Uttarakhand's Manglaur constituency will also witness a three-cornered fight. The bypoll was necessitated by the death of sitting BSP MLA Sarwat Karim Ansari in October last year. The BJP has never won the Muslim and Dalit-dominated Manglaur seat which has been held either by the Congress or the BSP in the past. This time, the BSP has fielded Ansari's son Ubedur Rehman against Congress nominee Qazi Mohammad

Nizamuddin. Gujjar leader and BJP nominee Kartar Singh Bhadana is also in the fray. Polling will also be held for the Badrinath assembly bypoll. The seat fell vacant after sitting Congress MLA Rajendra Bhandari resigned and switched to the BJP in March this year. Badrinath will witness a direct fight between BJP's Rajendra Bhandari and Congress newcomer Lakhpat Singh Butola. Traditionally, the party in power in the state has an edge over its rivals in bypolls. Of the 15 bypolls held in Uttarakhand since its creation, 14 were won by the party in power. In Punjab, the bypoll to the Jalandhar West assembly segment is being seen as a litmus test for Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who has pulled out all the stops to register a win after the party's drubbing in the Lok Sabha polls. The seat, which fell vacant after Sheetal Angural resigned as AAP legislator, is witnessing a multi-cornered fight. Fifteen candidates are in the fray for the by-election while there are a total of 1.72 lakh voters who are eligible to cast their votes. The ruling AAP has fielded Mohinder Bhagat, the son of former

minister and former BJP MLA Bhagat Chunni Lal. Bhagat had joined the AAP after quitting the BJP last year. The Congress has placed its bet on Surinder Kaur, who is the former senior deputy mayor and five-time municipal councillor in Jalandhar. She is a prominent Dalit leader of the Ravidassia community. The BJP has fielded Angural, who switched sides in March after quitting the AAP. He had won this seat in the 2022 Punjab assembly polls on an AAP ticket. Winning the bypoll is important for Mann as his party faced a drubbing in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, winning only three of the 13 seats. Mann led the AAP's campaign for the bypoll and canvassed for Bhagat by holding public meetings and roadshows. He rented a house in Jalandhar and moved there along with his family and had said he would keep the house even after the bypoll. Prestige is also at stake for the BJP which also wants to emerge victorious in the Jalandhar West seat after drawing a blank in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The counting of votes for the bypolls will be held on July 13.

GNDU Hindi Department holds special lecture



PNS ■ AMRITSAR

The Department of Hindi of the Guru Nanak Dev University organised an enlightening lecture as part of their ongoing lecture series in the department. The special guest speaker for the event was Dr Vartika Nanda, Professor, prison reformer, and Head of the Journalism department at Lady Shri Ram College in Delhi. With her vast experience in journalism, Dr Nanda brought a unique perspective captivating everyone present as she delved into various aspects of society, literature, and various aspects of journalism from a Hindi language perspective. Her insights shed light on the importance of language in shaping public discourse and understanding societal issues.

Vijayan vulnerable as more comrades go against him

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Since the day he was elected as the Secretary of the Kerala CPI (M) in 1998, a post which had occupied till 2015 and he was elevated to the post of the Chief Minister in 2016, Pinarayi Vijayan was the monarch of everything he surveyed. The whole Kerala and the CPI (M)'s central leadership danced to his tunes till the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha election were announced. The CPI (M) had to contend with just one out of the 15 seats it contested. Though the results of the 2019 election too were on the



same lines, there was nobody to question the supremacy of Vijayan either in the party or in the Government. Things have changed a lot over the last one month as even former ministers like Thomas Issac (who had grand plans for the economy of the country as he

had hoped to be appointed as the Union Finance Minister in the eventuality of the INDI alliance winning the election) and MA Baby questioning the leadership qualities of Vijayan, something which was considered as unthinkable even a month back. While Issac chose to attack Vijayan through innuendoes, Baby's article appeared in the latest edition of "Pachakkuthira" a magazine owing allegiance to the Church. Baby said that if the leadership fails to listen to the party cadre and rectify itself, there is no future for the Left

parties in the country. He also pointed out that the Left which controlled the Central Government once is at its lowest ebb now. According to Issac, it was the arrogance and contempt of the people in power which cost the CPI (M) the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Both Issac and Baby, known as the glamour stars of the CPI (M) are known critics of Vijayan and his son -in-law Mohammed Riyaz, the minister for PWD and Tourism. Riyaz, the second husband of Vijayan's daughter Veena is the de facto number two in the council of ministers.

Hathras A Conspiracy?

From Page 1

The lawyer of the 'godman' on July 6 claimed "some poisonous substance" sprayed by "some unidentified men" triggered the stampede. The investigation committee also found the event organisers and the tehsil-level police and administration guilty. It said the local SDM, circle officer, tehsildar (revenue official), inspector, and outpost in charge were guilty of negligence in discharging their duties. "The Sub-District Magistrate of Sikandrara granted permission for the event without inspecting the venue and did not even inform the senior officials," the report said, adding the official did not take the event seriously. The SIT recommended action against the concerned officials posted in Sikandrara, including the SDM, circle officer, SHO Sikandrara police station, tehsildar, and police outpost in charge of Kachora and

Pora.

"The organisers took permission to organise the programme by hiding facts. The conditions applicable for permission were not followed. The organisers did not make adequate and smooth arrangements by inviting an unexpected crowd. Nor were the conditions of permission given by the local administration for the program followed," the SIT report said. People associated with the organising committee have been found guilty of creating chaos, it said, adding that they engaged volunteers without proper police verification. "The organising committee misbehaved with the police. An attempt was made to stop the local police from inspecting the event venue," it said. The Satsangikarta or preacher (bhole baba) was allowed to meet the crowd without any security arrangements, it said.

Organ Racket...

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"An authorisation committee which has six to seven members including the medical superintendent as its chairman calls both the donor and the patient to cross-check all the documents. If any problem arises the matter is forwarded to the ministry," he said, adding that the process happens on record. "Thus the onus to make sure that such cases do not happen lies with the authorisation committee," said the former chief of National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation. Elaborating on the case, DCP Crime Branch Amit Goel said, "On June 16, secret and credible information was received from reliable sources about the members of a well organised crime syndicate, who are involved in illegal kidney transplants. The information was further developed and on June 16, on specific information, a raid was conducted by a

team at Jasola Village." He added that four accused persons, namely Rasel, the kingpin, Rokon, Sumon Miya, all natives of Bangladesh and Ratesh Pal, also hailing from Bangladesh were apprehended. During interrogation, they confessed that they targeted the patients suffering from kidney disease hailing from Bangladesh by visiting the dialysis centres in Bangladesh. "They arranged the donor from Bangladesh, taking advantage of their poor financial background and exploiting them on the pretext of providing them a job in India," Goel stated. The accused used to confiscate their passports after they reached India. Thereafter, the accused prepared the forged documents of patients/donors to show the relationship between them as this is mandatory that only the close relative can be a donor.

Modi visit a blow to...

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This reaction came after Modi held an informal meeting with Putin at the latter's official residence in Novo-Ogaryovo outside Moscow on Monday, marking his first trip to Russia since it launched military action against Ukraine in February 2022. Zelenskyy, who had met Modi on the sidelines of the G 7 summit last month, said in a social media post, "It is a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow on such a day." Zelenskyy's criticism came on the day a Russian missile struck a children's hospital in Kyiv, killing at least 24 people and causing widespread destruction. On the other hand, Modi is believed to have told Putin that dialogue and diplomacy was the only way forward to resolving the Ukraine conflict as a solution cannot be found on the battlefield, sources said.

MODI'S MOSCOW HUG

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Putin thanked Modi for trying to help find a peaceful solution to the Ukraine crisis. "I am grateful to you for the attention you pay to the most pressing issues, particularly trying to find ways to resolve the Ukraine crisis, primarily through peaceful means," Putin was quoted as saying by the official TASS news agency. Putin made the statement during his talks with Modi here at the Kremlin, it said. Putin noted that Russia and India worked closely on the international stage. "We closely cooperate on the international stage, namely within international organisations," Putin was quoted as saying by the state-run TASS news agency. He specified that cooperation was underway "primarily within the UN and groups such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS." "Yesterday, we had the opportunity to communicate in an informal atmosphere and talk about almost all the issues," Putin said.

He also said he believes that Moscow and New Delhi maintain a privileged strategic partnership. "Our countries have enjoyed decades of good friendship," he said. "Today, our relations have the nature of a privileged strategic partnership," he added. The Russian leader expressed satisfaction with growing trade between the two countries which he said saw a 66 per cent increase last year "and rose by another 20 per cent in the first quarter of this year." Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Modi paid tributes at the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' in Moscow. He also laid a wreath at the Tomb. The 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' is a war memorial located at the Kremlin wall, Moscow. It is dedicated to the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives during World War II. As regards the award, Modi was conferred the 'Order of St Andrew the Apostle' award by Russian President Vladimir Putin for exceptional services in promoting bilateral ties between the two countries.

Relief eludes Kejriwal...

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Subsequently, Kejriwal faced another setback as he was detained by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) shortly after. The AAP National Convenor currently finds himself in judicial custody concerning the CBI and ED cases. It has alleged that Kejriwal was the "kingpin and key conspirator" of the excise "scam" and was "vicariously responsible" for it. Reacting to the development Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva called the development "very serious". Demanding the resignation of Kejriwal, he said, "Though Arvind Kejriwal should have shown moral courage to resign when his government's name first cropped up in liquor scam but after today's court's cognizance and summoning he has lost all

authority to continue as Chief Minister." While AAP national secretary Pankaj Gupta alleged that the BJP-led Centre is hatching a "big conspiracy" against AAP, Gupta also accused the BJP of wanting to finish off AAP, which governs Punjab and Delhi, at any cost. ED's intention from the very beginning of this fake investigation was to frame AAP, arrest all its top leaders and crush the party. BJP sees AAP as the biggest threat in the future and has deployed ED and CBI to ensure AAP is finished. Over the last two years of this investigation, ED and CBI have framed a false case in the courts while BJP has run a false narrative in public against AAP and its leaders," the AAP said in a statement.

Delhi drowns...

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Ironically, the stretch near the Civic Centre building in Minto road was waterlogged. It was also witnessed in several areas including Sadar Bazar underpass, Jangpura, Mandoli, Sangam Vihar, Najafgarh, Burari, Durga Vihar, Laxmi nagar, ITO, Delhi Cantt, Palam, Dilshad garden, Gol market, Greater Kailash, Kishanganj, Sarai Rohilla and outside Central Secretariat Metro Station among others. Meanwhile, the Delhi BJP demanded the city government to call an all-party meeting within 24 hours on the cleaning of drains and monsoon preparedness or threatened the AAP to be ready to face BJP's protest. Further, the Delhi Traffic Police on X (formerly Twitter) said, "Movement of

traffic has been restricted at Azad Market underpass in the carriageway from Azad Market towards Shastri Nagar due to waterlogging." In another post, the police said the traffic movement was affected on the Windsor Palace roundabout in front of Ashoka road from C-Hexagon due to damage of sewerage pipeline. "Traffic is affected on Rohtak Road in both the carriageways from Rajdhani Park towards Mundka and vice-versa due to waterlogging. Kindly plan your journey accordingly," the police said on their X handle. The rain also hit traffic movement on MB Road in both the carriageways from Khanpur T-point towards Hamdard T-point and vice-versa, according to the police. Commuters also took to X to share their ordeal.

One of the commuters said the traffic was massive on the Delhi-Meerut expressway near Sarai Kale Khan. Another said the traffic was heavy on the stretch from Wazirabad flyover to the Kashmere Gate ISBT. Others said the traffic was heavy under Savitri flyover, from Mahipalpur till Rangpuri signal, on Nizamuddin bridge under metro bridge, at MB road Sangam Vihar to Khanpur, Sant Nagar main market, from Dhaura Kuan to Mahipalpur, Paschim Vihar, at tis Hazari red light, on Rani Jhansi Road, and near Jhandewalan, Mundka traffic signal among others. The Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded in the 'satisfactory' category with a reading of 76 at 9 am, according to Central Pollution Control Board data.

Weather forecasting to get tech upgrade

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Hence, the quality of data is quite important. We are adding networks but the speed we are adding is very slow and hence we are not getting the required amount of quality data for a pinpointed prediction." Accurate weather predictions play a vital role in saving lives by providing early warnings of storms, heatwaves, and other natural disasters. Farmers rely on forecasts for agricultural planning, while energy sector operators use them to manage heating, cooling, and renewable energy production efficiently. Aviation and maritime sectors also depend on accurate forecasts for safe operations.

Jammu terror trail: Shocking incursions

From Page 1

Meanwhile, the mortal remains of the martyred soldiers identified as Nb Sub Anand Singh, Hav Kamal Singh, Nk Vinod Singh, Rfn Anuj Negi & Rfn Adarsh Negi were dispatched to their native places after paying homage to them at the wreath-laying ceremony in the Western Command. The Spokesperson of the Indian Army in a post on X (earlier Twitter) said, "Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi and all Ranks of the Indian Army salute the supreme sacrifice of Bravehearts who laid down their lives in the line of duty. Indian Army offers its deepest condolences and stands firm with the bereaved families in this

hour of grief". The Chief Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, President Droupadi Murmu Tuesday termed the terrorist attack on an Army convoy in Jammu and Kashmir a "cowardly act" and said it deserved condemnation and firm counter-measures. In a post on X, Murmu said, "My sympathies are with the families of the bravehearts who laid down their lives in this ongoing war against terror in its all forms. I pray for the speedy recovery of those injured." Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also reacted to the terror attack on Tuesday, Singh said he was "deeply anguished" over the death of five Army personnel in a terrorist attack in Jammu and

Kashmir's Kathua district. Singh said counter-terror operations are underway and the soldiers are determined to "usher in peace and order" in the region. Extending deepest condolences to the bereaved families Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane said, "Their selfless service to the nation will always be remembered and their sacrifice will not go unavenged and India will defeat the evil forces behind the attack." Aramane's remarks were shared on X by a spokesperson of the Defence Ministry. Meanwhile, angry residents and political workers hit the streets across Jammu as India woke up to the gory images

of blood-stained army vehicles in which the soldiers were traveling at the time of the ambush. Lawyers from the Jammu Bar Association held a protest against the terror attack on an army patrol in Kathua, calling it an act of cowardice by Pakistan-based terrorists. Media teams were permitted to visit the ambush site on Tuesday to capture the telltale signs of mayhem on ground zero. On their arrival, the media teams witnessed the spot where the entire road stretch was littered with bloodstains, empty bullet cartridges, army vehicles with shattered windscreens and flattened tyres. The tarpaulin sheet, used to cover the rear portion of the army truck,

was also full of perforations and was torn apart. Preliminary reports suggested before opening indiscriminate firing from different directions on the army trucks the terrorists also lobbed grenades to distract the truck drivers. A villager Puran Chand Sharma, who runs a shop in the area told media persons, "A civil bus passed the road about 10 minutes before the attack. We heard a loud explosion and initially took it as a tyre burst but the subsequent heavy firing made us realize that an encounter had started." The heavy firing continued till 5 pm followed by intermittent firing for another hour. "About 12 villagers were at my shop. We

hid ourselves inside to avoid getting caught in the crossfire. After the firing stopped, we rushed to help evacuate the casualties," he said. Vijay Kumar, another local, said this is the first terror incident in the village since cross-border terrorism broke out in Jammu and Kashmir over three decades ago. Till the time of filing the report, another encounter broke out between the security forces and the terrorists in the Doda district on Tuesday. A police spokesman said, "An encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces in Goli-Gadi forests in the upper reaches of Doda district. More details to follow".

Kyiv mourns as rescuers' final efforts continue

AP ■ KYIV

Rescue operations stretched into a second day at a major Kyiv children's hospital struck by a Russian missile, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday, adding that 38 people were killed and almost 200 injured in an intense day-time barrage that smashed into cities across the country. Zelenskyy said on the social platform X that 64 people were hospitalized in the capital as well as 28 in Kryvyi Rih and six in Dnipro — both in central Ukraine. It was Russia's heaviest bombardment of Kyiv in almost four months and one of the deadliest of the war, hitting seven of the city's 10 districts. The strike on the Okhmatdyt children's hospital, which interrupted open-heart surgery and forced young cancer patients to take their treatments outdoors, drew an international outcry. Kyiv city administrators declared Tuesday an official day of mourning. Entertainment events were prohibited and



Rescuers and volunteers clean up the rubble and search for victims after a Russian missile hit the Okhmatdyt hospital in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Monday

AP/PTI

flags lowered in the capital. Russia denied responsibility for the hospital strike, insisting it doesn't attack civilian targets in Ukraine despite abundant evidence to the contrary, including Associated Press reporting.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday repeated that position, pointing to a Russian Defense Ministry statement that blamed a Ukrainian air defense missile for partially destroying the hospital. The Russian onslaught Monday

came on the eve of a NATO summit in Washington where alliance countries are expected to pledge new military and economic support for Ukraine. Earlier on Monday, Russian missiles blasted cities across Ukraine on Monday, damaging the country's largest children's hospital and other buildings in a fierce assault that interrupted heart surgeries and forced young cancer patients to take their treatments outdoors. At least 31 people were killed, officials said. The daytime barrage targeted five Ukrainian cities with more than 40 missiles of different types, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted 30 missiles. More than 150 people were wounded. It was Russia's heaviest bombardment of Kyiv in almost four months, hitting seven of the city's 10 districts. At least seven people were killed in the capital, including two staff members at the hospital. Strikes in Kryvyi Rih, Zelenskyy's birthplace in central Ukraine, killed 10. The

attack on the Okhmatdyt children's hospital caused debris to fall into heart patients' open chests in the middle of surgery. Cancer patients had their beds wheeled into parks and onto the streets. "It is very important that the world should not be silent about it now and that everyone should see what Russia is and what it is doing," Zelenskyy said. Russia denied attacking the hospital and said the strikes hit military targets. The assault unfolded a day before Western leaders who have backed Ukraine were scheduled to begin a three-day NATO summit in Washington to consider how they can reassure Kyiv of the alliance's unwavering support and offer Ukrainians hope that their country can survive Europe's biggest conflict since World War II. Zelenskyy said during a visit to Poland that he hopes the summit will provide more air defense systems for Ukraine. In a statement, US President Joe Biden called Monday's missile strikes "a horrific reminder of Russia's brutality".

UK PM addresses Parl for first time

PTI ■ LONDON

Keir Starmer on Tuesday hailed the new UK Parliament as the most diverse in terms of race and gender in British history in his maiden address to the House as the Prime Minister, with Opposition Leader Rishi Sunak wishing him well for the "formidable task" ahead. The Labour Leader, whose party won a landslide victory in last week's general election, hailed the new Parliament as the most diverse in terms of race and gender in history. He also pointed to the new House of Commons having the largest number of LGBT+ MPs of any Parliament in the world as he welcomed the re-election of Sir Lindsay Hoyle as the Speaker. "Mr Speaker-elect you preside over a new Parliament, the most diverse Parliament by race and gender this country has ever seen," said 61-year-old Starmer. "I'm proud of the part that my

party has played, proud of the part that every party has played in that. Including, in this intake, the largest cohort of LGBT+ MPs of any parliament in the world," he said. "We all have a duty to show that politics can be a force for good. So whatever our political differences, it is now time to turn the page, unite in a common endeavour of national renewal and make this new Parliament a Parliament of service," he added. Sunak, re-elected as MP from his North Yorkshire constituency, then delivered his maiden speech as Leader of the Opposition and once again apologised to his Conservative Party colleagues who were missing from the Commons, having lost their seats in the party's worst electoral defeat. In his capacity as interim leader — having resigned following the party's defeat, the 44-year-old British Indian leader stressed that it was time for the Tories to rebuild and take up the role in

Opposition "professionally, effectively and humbly" to hold the new government to account. Sunak said: "Can I start by congratulating the Prime Minister on his election victory and as he takes on his formidable task he and his family deserve the good wishes of all of us in this House. "In our politics we can argue vigorously, as the Prime Minister and I did over the past six weeks, but still respect each other and whatever disputes we may have in this Parliament I know that everyone in this House will not lose sight of the fact that we are all motivated by our desire to serve our constituents, our country and advance the principles that we honourably believe in." The re-elected Speaker opened the proceedings by paying tribute to the new "Father and Mother of the House" — Tory MP Sir Edward Leigh and Labour's Diane Abbott — the oldest members of the Commons.

To counter China, NATO moving closer under US leadership

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In the third year of the war in Ukraine, NATO is set to deepen relations with its four Indo-Pacific partners, which, although not part of the military alliance, are gaining prominence as Russia and China forge closer ties to counter the United States and the two Koreas support opposing sides of the conflict in Europe. The leaders of New Zealand, Japan and South Korea for the third year in a row will attend the NATO summit, which starts Tuesday in Washington, DC, while Australia will send its deputy prime minister. China will be following the summit closely, worried by the alliance's growing interest beyond Europe and the Western Hemisphere. "Increasingly, partners in Europe see challenges halfway around the world in Asia as

being relevant to them, just as partners in Asia see challenges halfway around the world in Europe as being relevant to them," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last week at the Brookings Institution. America's top diplomat said the US has been working to break down barriers between European alliances, Asian coalitions and other partners worldwide. "That's part of the new landscape, the new geometry that we've put in place." Countries with shared security concerns are strengthening ties as competition escalates between the United States and China. Washington is trying to curb Beijing's ambition to challenge the US-led world order, which the Chinese government dismisses as a Cold War mentality aimed at containing China's inevitable rise. On Monday, Beijing responded angrily to unconfirmed

reports that NATO and its four Indo-Pacific partners are expected to release a document laying out their relationship and ability to respond jointly to threats from cyberattacks and disinformation. Lin Jian, a spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry, accused NATO of "breaching its boundary, expanding its mandate, reaching beyond its defence zone and stoking confrontation". The war in Ukraine, which has pitted the West against Russia and its friends, has bolstered the argument for closer cooperation between the US, Europe and their Asian allies. "Ukraine of today may be East Asia of tomorrow," Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told the US Congress in April. The US and South Korea accused Pyongyang of supplying Russia with ammunition, while Russian President Vladimir Putin visited North

Korea last month and signed a pact with leader Kim Jong Un that envisions mutual military assistance. South Korea and Japan, meanwhile, are sending military supplies and aid to Ukraine. The US also says China is providing Russia with machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that allow it to make weapons to use against Ukraine. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol will bring to Washington "a strong message regarding the military cooperation between Russia and North Korea and discuss ways to enhance cooperation among NATO allies and Indo-Pacific partners," his principal deputy national security adviser, Kim Tae-hyo, told reporters on Friday. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said discussions would "focus on our collective efforts to support the rules-based system".

EU halts Georgia's accession to bloc, freezes financial aid over much-criticised law

AP ■ TBILISI

Georgia's accession to the European Union has been halted, and some of the bloc's financial support to the South Caucasus country has been frozen after the Georgian authorities adopted a new law that critics feared would curb democratic freedoms, the EU Ambassador in Georgia said Tuesday. According to Pawel Herczynski, EU leaders made the decision to halt the process during the last summit of the European Council, and it came in the wake of the Georgian authorities adopting the law on "foreign influence" despite weeks of protests. In addition, a total of 30 million euros (USD 32.5 million) in financial support, earmarked for Georgia's Defence Ministry in 2024, has been frozen, Herczynski said at a news conference. "This is only the first step, there will be other steps. Our

direct support to the government of Georgia will be limited, and we will seek to redirect support from the government of Georgia to civil society and the media," he said. "It is sad to see EU-Georgia relations at such a low point, when they could have been at an all-time high." The law, which came into effect last month despite mass protests and a veto from the country's president, requires media, nongovernmental organisations and other non-profit groups to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20 per cent of their funding from abroad. The opposition has denounced the bill as "the Russian law" because Moscow uses similar legislation to stigmatize independent news media, organisations and individuals critical of the Kremlin, and called its passage a sign of neighbouring Russia's hold

over Georgia. EU officials have repeatedly denounced the law as undemocratic and said it would hinder Georgia's path to EU membership. The bloc agreed to grant membership candidate status to Georgia in December on condition that it fight disinformation, including against the EU, bring its foreign and security policies into line with the bloc's, and introduce new justice reforms, among other measures. Membership talks did not get underway. To start talks with a candidate, the 27 EU nations and that country must agree on a negotiating mandate. EU experts must also conduct a screening procedure, to analyze how much work needs to be done to bring Georgia's laws and standards into line with those of the bloc. Once those preconditions have been met, an intergovernmental conference would

be called with Georgia to officially launch the start of talks. Each step requires unanimous agreement from the EU member nations and can be blocked at any point. At a summit on June 27, EU leaders warned Georgia that its path toward membership would be blocked unless the "foreign influence" law was repealed. They called "on Georgia's authorities to clarify their intentions by reversing the current course of action which jeopardizes Georgia's EU path, de facto leading to a halt of the accession process." In the days before the summit, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the bloc was considering "putting a hold to our financial assistance to the government" in Tbilisi and downgrading political contacts. It was not clear how much money overall would be affected.

Israeli forces push deeper into Gaza

AP ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

Israeli forces advanced deeper into the Gaza Strip's largest city in pursuit of militants who had regrouped there, sending thousands of Palestinians fleeing on Monday from an area ravaged in the early weeks of the nine-month-long war. Hamas warned that the latest raids and displacement in Gaza City could lead to the collapse of long-running negotiations over a cease-fire and hostage release, after the two sides had appeared to have narrowed the gaps in recent days. Israeli troops were again battling militants in areas that the army said had been largely cleared months ago in northern Gaza. The military ordered evacuations ahead of the raids, but Palestinians said nowhere feels safe. Most of the population of 2.3 million has been displaced, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands are packed into sweltering tent camps. Israel ordered the evacuation of northern Gaza in the first weeks of the war and has prevented most people from returning. But hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remain, living in shelters or the shells of homes. "We fled in the darkness amid heavy strikes," said Sayeda Abdel-Baki, a mother of three who had sheltered with relatives in the Daraj neighbourhood. "This is my fifth displacement." Residents reported artillery and tank fire, as well as airstrikes. Gaza's Health Ministry, with limited access to the north, did not immediately report casualties. Israel issued additional evacuation orders for areas in other neighbourhoods of central Gaza City. The military said it had intelligence showing that militants from Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad group were in the area, and called on residents to head south to the city of Deir al-Balah. Israel accuses Hamas and other militants of hiding among civilians. In Shijaiyah, a Gaza City neighbourhood that has seen weeks of fighting, the military said troops raided and destroyed schools and a clinic that had been converted into militant compounds.

The war has decimated large swaths of urban landscape and sparked a humanitarian catastrophe. Israel and Hamas seem to be the closest they have been in months to agreeing to a cease-fire deal that would pause the fighting in exchange for the release of dozens of hostages captured by Hamas in the October 7 attack that triggered the war. CIA Director William Burns returned to the region Monday for talks in Cairo, according to Egypt's state-run Qahera TV, which is close to the security services. An Israeli delegation was also heading to the Egyptian capital, Israeli media reported. But obstacles remain, even after Hamas agreed to relent on its key demand that Israel commit to ending the war as part of any agreement. A key part of that shift, officials told The Associated Press, is the level of destruction caused by Israel's rolling offensive. Hamas still wants mediators to guarantee that negotiations conclude with a permanent cease-fire, according to two officials with knowledge of the talks. The current draft says the mediators — the United States, Qatar and Egypt — "will do their best" to ensure that negotiations lead to an agreement to wind down the war. Israel has rejected any deal that would force it to end the war with Hamas intact — a condition Netanyahu reiterated on Sunday. Hamas on Monday said it is "offering flexibility and positivity" to facilitate a deal, while accusing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of "putting more obstacles in the way of negotiations." Meanwhile, Hamas' top political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, warned mediators of "catastrophic consequences" if Israel continued its operations in Gaza City, saying Netanyahu and the army would bear "full responsibility" for the collapse of the talks, the group said in a subsequent statement. The two officials said there's also an impasse around whether Hamas can choose the high-profile prisoners held by Israel that it wants released in exchange for hostages.

France's ex-pres, other lawmakers start talks to see who can form next govt

AP ■ PARIS

Former Socialist President Francois Hollande and other newly elected lawmakers from the leftist coalition made a grand entrance Tuesday at the National Assembly for talks seeking to cobble together a government after chaotic voting results left them with the most seats, but no absolute majority. President Emmanuel Macron on Monday asked his prime minister, Gabriel Attal, to continue handling day-to-day affairs, less than three weeks before the start of the Paris Olympics. Macron leaves Wednesday for a NATO summit in Washington. Sunday's vote left no faction even close to the majority needed to form a government, raising the risk of paralysis for the European Union's second-largest economy. The legislature is now split between the leftist coalition, Macron's centrist allies and the far-right National

Rally. While a fractured parliament is not uncommon in Europe, the situation is unprecedented in France's modern history. Leaders of the leftist coalition, the New Popular Front, which received the most votes, say they should form a new government. The three main parties in the coalition - the hard-left France Unbowed, the Socialists and the Greens - began negotiations to find a candidate for prime minister. Hollande, who was France's president from 2012 to 2017, joined other members of his Socialist party in front of dozens of journalists. He did not speak at his arrival at the National Assembly. Hollande left power in 2017 without running for reelection amid crushing unpopularity, making way for Macron, his former economy minister. He made an unexpected comeback on the French political stage in recent weeks as one of the most prominent candidates in the

elections, winning a seat in his hometown of Tulle in southwestern France. He's now seen as a key player in politics as both the leftist coalition and Macron's centrists are taking steps to try to form a government. The New Popular Front "is the leading Republican force in this country and it is therefore its responsibility to form a government ... to implement the public policies expected by the French people," Green lawmaker Cyrielle Chatelain said. Hard-left lawmaker Mathilde Panot said, "France Unbowed lawmakers are going into the National Assembly not as an opposition force... but as a force that intends to govern the country." Their talks are complicated by internal divisions. Some are pushing for a hard-left figure while others, closer to the centre-left, prefer a more consensual personality. France's prime minister is accountable to parliament and can be ousted

through a no-confidence vote. The top negotiator for the Socialist party, Johanna Rolland, said the future prime minister won't be Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the divisive hard-left founder of France Unbowed who has angered many moderates. Speaking on France 2 television Tuesday, she suggested the leftist coalition could possibly work with centre-left members of Macron's alliance. Mélenchon, who did not run in the legislative elections, also joined the talks at the National Assembly on Tuesday afternoon. Yael Braun-Pivet, a member of Macron's centrist alliance and former president of the National Assembly, said "in my view, the French people sent us a clear message. They did not want to give an absolute majority to any specific political bloc so they're ordering us to listen to one another, work together and that's what we need to do."

Indian-origin jailed for rape in Singapore

Singapore (PTI): An Indian-origin Singaporean bar owner was sentenced to jail for 13 years and four weeks on Monday and will receive nine strokes of the cane for raping a runaway 17-year-old girl after allowing her to work for him. Raj Kumar Bala, 42, was convicted of a charge each of raping and molesting the victim and pleaded guilty to a third charge of harbouring a runaway under the Children and Young Persons Act, Channel News Asia reported. Defence lawyer Ramesh Tiwary said his client has asked to be released on bail pending appeal, according to the channel's report. The court heard that the victim was 17 in February 2020 when she ran away from the Singapore Girls' Home. She found out about a job opportunity at Bala's Don Bar and Bistro in Dunlop Street in the Little India precinct of hotels, motels and eateries through another runaway who

was working there. The other runaway was also sexually assaulted by Bala in a charge that stood down for the time being. The victim went down to the bar to interview for the job and met Bala, who described the job duties to her, including serving customers and making drinks. He offered her the role, saying she could stay at the bar with other runaways. The victim worked at the bar for a few days, but police received a tip-off about people who absconded and worked there. They raided the place in the early hours of February 22, 2020. The victim fled with another girl to escape the raid, before being picked up by Bala. He drove them to his condominium, telling them they could stay there, before drinking alcohol with the girls. He raped the victim while she was heavily intoxicated and also engaged in sex acts with the other girl.

Israeli strike kills ex-bodyguard of Lebanon's Hezbollah leader

AP ■ BEIRUT

An Israeli strike in Syria Tuesday killed a former personal bodyguard of the Hezbollah leader, an official with the Lebanese militant group said. The news came hours after an Israeli drone strike on a car in Syria near the Syria-Lebanon border was reported by a war monitor and by pro-government radio Sham FM. The Hezbollah official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. The Britain-based pro-opposition war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said two members of Hezbollah in the car were killed in the strike, while a Syrian driver was critically wounded. There was no immediate comment from Syrian authorities or from the Israeli military. Hezbollah later identified the militant as Yasser Nemr Qranbish, though they did not



disclose the details of his death as they normally do with combatants who aren't in leadership roles. Hezbollah supporters on social media mourned his death, calling him the "shield of the Sayyed", in reference to his tenure as a bodyguard of leader Hassan Nasrallah. Since October and the Hamas attack on southern Israel, Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon have killed over 450 people, most of them Hezbollah fighters, but the dead also include more than 80 civilians and non-combatants. On the Israeli side, 17 soldiers and 11 civilians have been killed since the war in Gaza

began. Tens of thousands of people on both sides of the tense Lebanon-Israel frontier have been displaced in the monthslong war. For years, Israel has frequently launched strikes on targets in Syria linked to Iran, its powerful regional backer, but rarely acknowledges them. The strikes have escalated over the past five months against the backdrop of the war in Gaza and ongoing clashes between Hezbollah and Israeli forces on the Lebanon-Israel border. A day after the Hamas surprise attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, Hezbollah launched rockets on northern Israel, leading to limited clashes along the tense border with Lebanon. The attacks have since gradually escalated, with Hezbollah introducing new weapons in their attacks and Israel striking deeper into Lebanon. The group maintains that it will stop its attacks once there is a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

Hurricane Beryl kills four, plunges 3 million into darkness in Texas

PTI ■ HOUSTON

At least four people were killed, and nearly three million homes and businesses were left without power as powerful tropical storm Beryl, which brought damaging winds and floods, slammed into Texas early on Monday. Beryl brought Schools, businesses, offices, and financial institutions to a halt soon after it made landfall near Matagorda as a category 1 hurricane, the National Hurricane Centre said on Monday evening. Flooding, rains and tornadoes were possible across portions of eastern Texas, Western Louisiana. Two people were killed after trees fell on homes, and a civilian employee of the Houston Police Department was killed when he was trapped in flood waters. One more person was reported dead in a fire incident.



A detail of down trees on Memorial drive and Wescot street in Houston, on Monday, after Beryl came ashore in Texas as a hurricane and dumped heavy rains downtown.

AP/PTI

Officials asked residents to stay home on Monday night as floodwaters from Beryl began to recede, and crews started surveying the damage. "Don't let the clear skies fool you," Mayor John Whitmire said at a news conference. "There were no immediate reports of widespread structural damages,"

he said. "We still have dangerous circumstances." Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo offered a similar message: "We're not out of the woods yet... Let's just wait until tomorrow. Doing a damage assessment on your own property is one thing, but driving around unnecessarily — we really ask that you avoid it."

Sensex, Nifty hit all-time high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Tuesday, hitting their fresh record closing levels on the back of gains in auto and FMCG shares and foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 391.26 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 80,351.64. During the day, it jumped 436.79 points or 0.54 per cent to hit a new lifetime high of 80,397.17.

The NSE Nifty went up by 112.65 points or 0.46 per cent to 24,433.20 -- its record closing high. During the day, it surged 123.05 points or 0.50 per cent to hit a new record peak of 24,443.60.

“Both domestic and global factors continue to drive the market momentum. Currently, consumption sectors like FMCG and auto are leading the gains, buoyed by progress in the monsoon and kharif sowing,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Among Sensex shares, Maruti Suzuki India jumped over 6 per cent amid reports that the UP government waived registration taxes on



hybrid cars as part of its initiative to promote environmentally friendly vehicles in the state. Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Sun Pharma, ITC, Nestle and Tata Motors were the other big gainers. Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj

Finance and JSW Steel were among the laggard.

Investors are eagerly awaiting the first-quarter earnings results, which will guide market direction, Nair said, adding, “Additionally, continuous positive FII inflow contributes to the prevailing positive

sentiment.”

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.36 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.22 per cent.

Among the indices, auto jumped 2.17 per cent. Consumer durables (2.01 per cent), realty (1.23 per cent),

consumer discretionary (1.21 per cent), healthcare (1 per cent) and utilities (0.76 per cent) also closed higher. Telecommunication, capital goods and tech were the laggards.

A total of 2,010 stocks advanced while 1,924 declined and 92 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Also, 320 stocks hit their upper circuit limit while 242 firms hit the lower circuit levels.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms on Tuesday hit a fresh lifetime high of Rs 451.27 lakh crore.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled higher while Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading mostly lower. US markets ended mostly higher on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 60.98 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.51 per cent to USD 85.31 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark declined 36.22 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at 79,960.38 on Monday. The NSE Nifty dipped 3.30 points or 0.01 per cent to 24,320.55.

Financial inclusion index rises with growth across all segments: RBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank's FI-Index, capturing the extent of financial inclusion across the country, rose to 64.2 in March 2024, showing growth across all parameters. The index captures information on various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.

“The value of the index for March 2024 stands at 64.2 vis-à-vis 60.1 in March 2023, with growth witnessed across all sub-indices,” the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a statement on Tuesday. Improvement in FI-Index is mainly contributed by usage dimension, reflecting deepening of financial inclusion, it added. The FI-Index comprises three broad parameters — access (35 per cent), usage (45 per cent), and quality (20 per cent) — with each of these consisting of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.

In August 2021, the central bank said FI-Index has been conceptualised as a comprehensive index, incorporating details of banking, investments, insurance, postal, as well as the pension sector, in consultation with government and respective sectoral regulators. The index is responsive to ease of access, availability and usage of services, and quality of services.



According to RBI, a unique feature of the index is the quality parameter which captures the quality aspect of financial inclusion as reflected by financial literacy, consumer protection and inequalities and deficiencies in services.

Rupee gains 1 paise to 83.49 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee inched up one paise at 83.49 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday as gains from strong domestic equities and sliding global crude prices were negated by a surging greenback overseas. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee started slightly up at 83.49 and hit an intra-day high of 83.47 and a low of 83.51 against the American currency during the session.

It finally settled at 83.49 against the dollar, registering a gain of one paise over the previous close.

On Monday, the rupee settled at 83.50 against the US dollar. “Indian rupee gained today on optimism as Nifty touched fresh all-time highs and fresh FII inflows. A decline in crude oil prices also supported the rupee. However, a positive US dollar capped sharp gains. The US dollar gained on weak Euro amid political uncertainty in France,” Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.06 per cent to 104.72.

Govt may relax 45 days payment rule for MSMEs in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government may relax the requirement of making payments to MSMEs within 45 days of buying goods and services to check large corporate from looking at other sourcing avenues, sources said.

The announcement to this effect could be made in the Budget likely to be presented on July 23.

The government is considering suggestions regarding changes to Section 43B(h) of the Income Tax Act made by MSMEs during pre-Budget consultations, sources said.

The government in last year's Budget added a new clause under Section 43B of the Income Tax Act to address the challenge of delayed payments faced by MSMEs in the country.

According to Section 43B(h) of the Income Tax Act, introduced through the Finance Act 2023, if a larger company does not pay an MSME on time — within 45 days in case of written agreements — it cannot deduct that expense from its taxable income, leading to potentially higher taxes.

MSMEs fear that due to this provision, large buyers could cold-shoulder MSME suppliers and start buying either from those MSMEs that are not registered with Udyam or from non-MSMEs. The amendment was brought



in for MSMEs to get timely payment, but there are a lot of fear were raised by them, sources said, adding that they feared that large corporate, in bid to safeguard their interest, can shift their sourcing requirement to bigger firms or ask their vendors to give up their MSME registration to do business with them. Earlier in May, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the changes, if any, to the rule will have to be done in the full Budget in July under the new government as per the representations submitted by MSMEs. The MSME sector accounts for 30 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and the second largest employer after agriculture. The share of exports from products specified for MSMEs constituted 45.56 per cent of the country's total exports.

Temasek expects India growth to remain firm over next 2 yrs

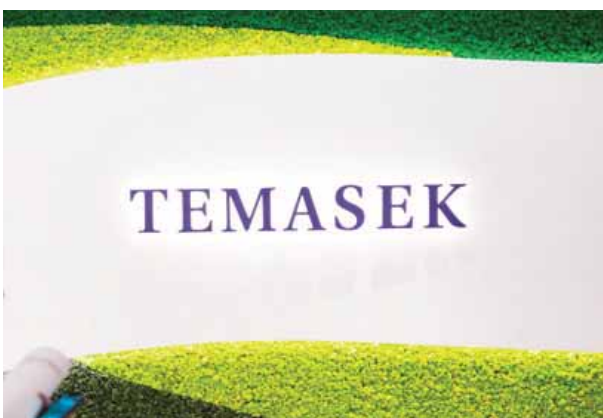
PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore investor Temasek expects India's growth to remain firm over the next two years, driven by infrastructure-led capital expenditure, and a recovery in private consumption. Temasek on Tuesday reported an SGD 7 billion rise in its Net Portfolio Value (NPV) to SGD 389 billion for the financial year ended March 31, 2024, mainly driven by gains to the US and India investments.

India has continued to see strong economic momentum alongside improving macro and political stability, the

company said in a statement. “We expect growth to remain firm over the next two years, primarily driven by infrastructure-led capital expenditure, accelerated supply chain diversification, and a recovery in private consumption,” Temasek said. Temasek said its Net Portfolio Value (NPV) rose by SGD 7 billion to SGD 389 billion for the financial year ended March 31, 2024.

“The increase was mainly due to our investment returns from the US and India, offset by the underperformance of China's capital markets,” it said.



Temasek said it maintained a cautious but steady investment pace amidst global economic uncertainties, and invested SGD 26 billion into

opportunities in sectors such as technology, financial services, sustainability, consumer, and healthcare, aligned with the four structural trends of digitisation, sustainable living, future of consumption, and longer lifespans.

Excluding Singapore, the US continued to be the leading destination for Temasek capital, followed by India and Europe while it has also stepped-up investment activities in Japan.

Temasek divested SGD 33 billion for the year. Of this, about SGD 10 billion was due to the redemption of

capital by Singapore Airlines and Pavilion Energy for their mandatory convertible bonds and preferential shares respectively.

Overall, Temasek had a net divestment of SGD 7 billion, compared to a net investment of SGD 4 billion a year ago.

“We invested in Electric Vehicle companies Mahindra Electric Automobile in India and BYD in China, sustainable battery solutions provider Ascend Elements in the US, and electrolyser manufacturer Electric Hydrogen in the US,” it added.

Khadi and Village Industries' annual turnover crossed ₹1.5 lakh crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Khadi and Village Industries' Annual turnover crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore for the first time in FY 2023-24 with over 10 lakh new jobs generated during the fiscal, its Chairman Manoj Kumar said on Tuesday. According to provisional figures for 2023-24 released by KVIC, a 315 per cent increase in production and a 400 per cent rise in sales were registered in the last 10 years. New employment generation also witnessed an 81 per cent increase during the decade starting from 2013-14. “For the first time, over 10 lakh new jobs were created and our turnover crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore in 2023-24,” Kumar said. Surpassing all previous figures, there has been an increase of almost 400 per cent in sales, nearly 315 per cent in production, and 81 per cent in

new employment generation compared to the financial year 2013-14, KVIC stated. KVIC's sales were Rs 1.34 lakh crore in 2022-23.

“The production of Khadi and village industry products, which was Rs. 26,109.08 crores in the financial year 2013-14, reached Rs. 108,297.68 crores in the financial year 2023-24, a jump of 314.79 per cent, while the production in the financial year 2022-23 was Rs. 95956.67 crores. This continuously increasing production is strong evidence that the Khadi and Village Industries Commission has done historical work in rural areas,” KVIC said.

“In the financial year 2023-24, KVIC's efforts have created 10.17 lakh new jobs in rural areas, strengthening rural India's economy,” it stated. The KVIC Chairman said the demand for Khadi and village industry products made by rural artisans is increasing.

Sebi invites public comments on proposed amendments to REIT, InvIT rules

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday said it has sought public views on the proposed amendments to the master circulars for REITs and InvITs.

In a consultation paper, Sebi said these amendments will provide clarity on the nomination rights of directors to the boards of REIT (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and InvIT (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) managers.

In the proposed amendments, the markets watchdog has addressed market participants' requests for clarification on the rights of unitholders to nominate a director to the board of the investment manager or manager of REITs and InvITs.



The changes propose that the restriction on nominating a unitholder nominee director will not apply if the right to appoint a nominee director is available as per the Sebi (Debenture Trustees) regulations. Under the current norms, a unitholder holding a significant portion of units in

an InvIT or REIT has the right to nominate a director, provided their unitholding exceeds a specified threshold. “It has been represented by market participants to provide clarity on the availability of the right to nominate a director on the Board of Directors of the Investment Manager of InvIT

/ Manager of REIT, to a unitholder where such nomination right is also available to a unitholder in the capacity of lender to the Investment Manager / Manager or the InvIT/REIT (or its HoldCo(s) or SPVs),” Sebi said.

“...It is proposed to amend the Master Circular for InvITs dated May 15, 2024 and Master Circular for REITs dated May 15, 2024 to provide that the restriction relating to the right to nominate a Unitholder Nominee Director shall not be applicable if the right to appoint a nominee director is available in terms of the Sebi (Debenture Trustees) regulations,” it added.

Sebi has invited public comments and suggestions on the draft circulars till July 29.

ONGC to invest ₹2 lakh cr to meet net zero emission target

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will invest about Rs 2 lakh crore in setting up renewable energy sites and green hydrogen plants and cutting gas flaring to zero to achieve its 2038 net-zero carbon emission goal.

The company, which produces about two-thirds of India's crude oil and about 58 per cent of natural gas, on Tuesday released a 200-page document, detailing its path to achieving net zero emissions.

It listed clean energy projects even as it looks to boost its hydrocarbon output to meet the country's energy needs. ONGC will invest Rs 97,000 crore by 2030 in setting up 5 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity, green hydrogen, biogas, pump storage plant and offshore



wind project, according to the document. Another Rs 65,500 crore will be invested by 2035, mostly in a green hydrogen or green ammonia plant, and the remaining Rs 38,000 crore by 2038, primarily in setting up 1 GW of offshore wind projects. These projects will help the firm offset 9 million tonnes

of carbon emissions it is directly (Scope-1 emissions) or indirectly (Scope-2 emissions) responsible for.

ONGC said it will invest Rs 5,000 crore to cut gas flaring to zero by 2030 through technological intervention. The firm released into the atmosphere 554 million cubic metres of methane in

2021-22 (base year), mostly because it was an incidental by-product of oil or the quantity was not economical enough to pipe it to consumers.

ONGC will spend Rs 30,000 crore in setting up 5 GW solar parks that will convert sunlight into electricity and turbines that will do the same with wind energy. It will add 1 GW of solar and onshore wind capacity by 2035 and 2038 at a cost of Rs 5,000 crore each.

It will invest Rs 40,000 crore by 2030 and a similar amount by 2035 to set up two 1,80,000 tonnes per annum green hydrogen and/or 1 million tonnes of green ammonia projects.

ONGC, which has installations in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal to produce oil and gas from below the seabed, is also looking at installing offshore wind turbines to generate

0.5 GW of electricity by 2030 and double it by 2035. The first 0.5 GW offshore wind project is likely to cost Rs 12,500 crore and the next about Rs 12,000 crore.

By 2038, it will add another 1 GW of offshore wind energy capacity at an investment of Rs 25,000 crore, the document said. The company is also looking at investing Rs 20,000 crore for setting up 3 GW of pump storage plants to meet electricity requirements when renewable sources like sunlight and wind energy are not available.

The remaining investment will be in biogas, carbon capture and other clean energy projects. All this while it continues to hunt and produce more oil and gas. Crude oil, which companies like ONGC pump out from below the seabed and from underground reservoirs, is a primary source of energy. It

is processed in oil refineries to produce petrol, diesel and jet fuel. With the world looking to transition away from fossil fuels, companies around the globe are looking at new avenues to use crude oil.

Gas produced in a similar fashion is used to generate electricity, produce fertiliser or convert into CNG to power automobiles or into PNG to fire kitchen stoves. Scope 1 emissions are from directly emitting sources that are owned or controlled by a company. Scope 2 emissions are from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam, or other sources of energy generated upstream from a company's direct operations.

ONGC produced 21.14 million tonnes of oil in 2023-24 (April 2023 to March 2024) and 20.648 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas.

Taiwan Expo India 2024 kicks off

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The three-day Taiwan Expo India 2024, which kicked off here from Tuesday at Bharat Mandapam has over 60 companies presenting cutting-edge solutions in smart manufacturing, green sustainability, healthy living, and smart city development. The event serves as a crucial platform for exploring advancements in green energy and smart technology, facilitating collaborations between Taiwanese innovators and Indian stakeholders.

However, it is the Taiwan Excellence Pavilion featuring products from 24 Taiwanese brands across AI application, ICT, industrial applications, lifestyle, and medical sectors which is drawing a large



number of visitors since the inauguration of Expo on Tuesday here. The inauguration kicked off with a dynamic product launch session, spotlighting HERO products from industry leaders like ADVANTECH, GIGABYTE, Mbran Filtra, MSI, and Zyxel. Additionally, 19 other prominent brands such as AVER, CHIMEI MOTOR, CyberPower, and EverFocus are showcasing their world-class offerings, underscoring Taiwan's prowess in innovation and technology.

TEST OF TIME FOR GUKESH TO EXCEL IN FASTER VERSION

Gujrathi joins in as a wild card in Zagreb

PTI ■ ZAGREB (CROATIA)

World Championship challenger D Gukesh will look to improve his billing in the faster version as Vidit Gujrathi joins him for the Superunited rapid and blitz chess tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour. Set to meet Chinese Ding Liren in Singapore from November 20th to decide the next world champion, Gukesh has repeatedly proved his superior ability in the Classical format. But when it comes to faster version, the Indian is yet to find his place amongst the world elite. The fact remains that in case of a tied result in the World

Championship, there will be games under faster time control of rapid and blitz chess to determine the winner and Gukesh would like to set the record straight like American Fabiano Caruana just did a few days back in Bucharest when he won the tiebreaker by a mile winning his games against Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa and Alireza Firouzja of France. Gujrathi, who has got a wildcard, will be the other Indian in the fray in the USD 175000 prize money tournament that will have nine rounds under rapid and 18 under blitz chess rules. With each win worth two points in rapid and one under the blitz rules, it remains to be seen who will be the master of Zagreb but



the odds are in favour of top seed Caruana who will look forward to notching back-to-back wins on the tour. Ian Nepomniachtchi from Russia and Alireza are another two players who can turn the tide in their favour on their day and here they have five playing days to prove their true mettle. Wesley So of America, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France and Anish Giri of Holland are the other three in contention while local star Ivan Saric and another American Levon Aronian complete the ten-player line up. So remains dangerous but is clearly struggling with form while Vachier-Lagrave has to prove himself yet again.

Levon Aronian led his team to a triumph in the last Global Chess League in Dubai but the former Armenian is clearly past his best. Giri, on the other hand, has had mixed success in faster version and will like to end it on a high. All eyes will be on Gujrathi if he can replicate his magic. Gujrathi had come out as one of the best prepared players in the last Candidates tournament and there is every chance that he will spring a few surprises here. Players: D Gukesh, Vidit Gujrathi (Ind); Fabiano Caruana, Levon Aronian, Wesley So (Usa); Alireza Firouzja, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra); Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fid); Ivan Saric (Cro); Anish Giri (Ned).



Photo of a young Messi with Lamine as a baby resurfaces after almost 17 years

AP ■ BARCELONA

When Joan Monfort took photos of Lionel Messi with a baby for a charity calendar almost 17 years ago, he knew the long-haired young man would make it big in soccer. He could not have imagined the little boy would as well. The baby in the photos - which have gone viral - was none other than Lamine Yamal, the Spanish wunderkind, who at 16 is showing such promise that he's already being compared to the greats. The youngest to have played for Spain, he became the youngest player ever in the ongoing European Championship in Germany. The long-forgotten photo from 2007 resurfaced after Yamal's father posted it on Instagram last week with the text "the beginning of two legends." Monfort, 56, who works as a freelance photographer for The Associated Press and others, said the photo shoot took place in the visitors' locker room at Barcelona's Camp Nou in the autumn of 2007, when Yamal was just a few months old. Barcelona players posed with children and their families for a calendar as part of an annual charity drive by local newspaper Diario Sport and UNICEF. Monfort was in charge of the photo shoots - and it just so happened that Messi was paired with Yamal's family. His mother, who is from Equatorial Guinea, is next to Messi and the baby in one of the photos. "We made the calendar with the help of UNICEF. So UNICEF did a raffle in the

neighborhood of Roca Fonda in Mataró where Lamine's family lived. They signed up for the raffle to have their picture taken at the Camp Nou with a Barca player. And they won the raffle," Monfort said. It wasn't an easy assignment, he recalled, mainly because Messi wasn't sure how to interact with baby Lamine, who was in a plastic tub for the shoot. "Messi is a pretty introverted guy, he's shy," Monfort said. "He was coming out of the locker room and suddenly he finds himself in another locker room with a plastic tub full of water and a baby in it. It was complicated. He didn't even know how to hold him at first." Messi was 20 at the time and already considered a big talent, but it would take a couple of years before he made his mark as the most outstanding player of his generation for Barcelona and Argentina. Like Messi, Yamal has gone through Barcelona's renowned La Masia youth academy. Despite his age, he's been one of Spain's best players at Euro 2024, where his team will play France in the semifinals on Tuesday. Yamal will turn 17 on Saturday, the day before the final in Berlin. Monfort, 56, had no idea it was Yamal in those photos from 2007 until a friend messaged him as they started trending online. He's had a long career as a sports photographer since 1991, following Barcelona around the world, but said he's never experienced this level of excitement around any of his photos.

Bradley appointed US Ryder Cup captain after Woods turns down job

AP ■ NEW YORK

Keegan Bradley is assured of making another Ryder Cup team, this time as the U.S. Captain. The PGA of America announced his selection after months of talking with Tiger Woods about taking the job. The PGA of America released the news on Instagram after word began to leak during the day that Bradley, who has played on only two Ryder Cup teams and never was an assistant captain, was chosen to lead the 2025 matches at Bethpage Black in New York. Bradley already was in New York going through media training, with a news conference to introduce him set for noon Tuesday at the NASDAQ building. At age 38, he will be the youngest American captain since Arnold Palmer was a playing captain in 1963 at East Lake. Sports Illustrated was first to

report that Bradley would be the next captain. Woods was the first choice of the Ryder Cup committee and had been in negotiations for months about what the job would entail and whether he had time to fulfill the duties, many of them involving promotion of the event. While he plays only a limited schedule, Woods is the vice chairman of the commercial PGA Tour Enterprises board as it tries to hammer out an investment deal with the Saudi backers of rival LIV Golf. He was a playing captain for the 2019 Presidents Cup when the Americans won at Royal Melbourne, and he served as an assistant Ryder Cup captain at Hazeltine in 2016. "I'm dedicating so much time to what we're doing with the PGA Tour. I don't want to not fulfill the role of the captaincy if I can't do it," Woods had said



in May at the PGA Championship. Once Woods wasn't an option, the PGA of America went for some local flavor with Bradley. He is a New England native who played his college golf at St. John's. "Keegan's past Ryder Cup experience, strong

relationships and unwavering passion for this event will prove invaluable as he guides the U.S. Team over the next year-and-a-half," PGA of America President John Lindert said. "We are confident that with Keegan at the helm, the 2025 U.S. Ryder Cup team will compete at Bethpage with the same confidence and determination that has defined his career." Bradley has six PGA Tour victories, including the 2011 PGA Championship. Two of those victories came last season, and Bradley figured it might be enough for him to make another Ryder Cup team. He was devastated when U.S. Captain Zach Johnson overlooked him with his four captain's picks, going with Rickie Fowler, Justin Thomas, Jordan Spieth and Brooks Koepka. The prototype of Ryder Cup captains typically is a player

just outside the prime of his career, usually in the mid-40s. And ever since players gained a stronger voice in selecting captains after the 2014 matches, the model has been for future captains to first serve as assistants at the Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup. The template also is for the immediate past captain - Johnson in this case - to be an assistant at the next Ryder Cup. With so much outside-the-box thinking on the Bradley selection, it was not immediately clear if that was still true. Bradley last played in the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles in Scotland in 2014, when Tom Watson benched him and Phil Mickelson for both Saturday sessions in another European victory. Bradley made his Ryder Cup debut in Medinah in 2012, teaming with Mickelson to go 3-0 before losing to Rory

McIlroy in singles in what turned out to be a European victory, the largest comeback by a visiting team. He famously did not unpack his bag from the 2012 matches and said he would not open it until he was on a winning team. Now he might get that chance. "My passion and appreciation for golf's greatest team event have never been stronger," Bradley said in a news release. "The Ryder Cup is unlike any other competition in our sport, and this edition will undoubtedly be particularly special given the rich history and enthusiastic spectators at this iconic course. I look forward to beginning preparations for 2025." This is the latest the Americans have selected a captain in more than 30 years. It was never supposed to take this long or be this complicated.

With plenty of swimming stars at 2024 Olympics, France's Marchand may shine brightest

AP ■ NEW YORK

Most of the big stars from the last Olympics will be back at the pool in Paris. Caeleb Dressel. Katie Ledecky. Ariarne Titmus. Emma McKeon. But the local favorite might just shine brightest of them all. France's Léon Marchand has drawn comparisons to the great Michael Phelps, a link that was only strengthened by Phelps' longtime coach, Bob Bowman, overseeing the 22-year-old's rise to prominence. At last summer's world championships in Fukuoka, Marchand broke Phelps' 15-year-old world record in the 400-meter individual medley, to go along with victories in the 200 IM and 200 butterfly - two more of Phelps' signature events. "Leon has several things that make him a great," Bowman said. "He has speed and he has endurance. So he kind of has the whole package that you want, and so far he's done well under pressure, which is the other piece of that equation. He has it all really." Marchand will also have the home-pool advantage in Paris, where the swimming will be contested in a temporary facility set up inside the La Défense Arena, the 30,000-seat home of the



rugby club Racing 92. The place figures to be especially loud every time Marchand steps up on the blocks. "I get to swim the (400) IM against the world record holder in his home country," said Carson Foster, the top American hopeful. "That atmosphere is going to be electric." Marchand, who swam for Bowman at Arizona State, competed in four events at the Tokyo Games, with a best showing of sixth in the 400 individual medley. But he emerged as one of the sport's rising stars at the 2022 world championships in Budapest, and his performance the following year in Fukuoka only raised the stakes heading into his home-country Olympics.

"When I came back from Tokyo, I was like, Damn, this is like a game-changer. Now I can actually beat those guys pretty soon," Marchand said. "I know I can train better. I know I can improve this." D O P I N G CONCERNSSwimming has faced many doping scandals over the years, going all the way back to the East Germans' rise to prominence in the 1970s that was powered by state-sponsored doping. Now, all eyes are on the Chinese after reports that nearly two dozen of their top swimmers tested positive for banned substances ahead of the Tokyo Olympics but were allowed to compete. Five of those swimmers went on to win medals, including three golds. It was also revealed that three

of those same Chinese swimmers had previously tested positive for a different substance but faced no ramifications. Ledecky said many swimmers have lost faith in the World Anti-Doping Agency and can't help but wonder if the competition in Paris will be fair. Phelps, who won a record 23 gold medals during his career, went before the U.S. Congress to express his concerns. "It is clear to me that any attempts of reform at WADA have fallen short, and there are still deeply rooted, systemic problems that prove detrimental to the integrity of international sports and athletes' right to fair competition, time and time again," he said. BIG RIVALSThe United States and Australia have long been the world's most prominent swimming nations, fueling a rivalry that will heat up again in Paris. While the Americans traditionally have the deepest team, the Aussies have proven to be formidable foes in recent years - especially on the women's side. At the 2023 worlds, the team from Down Under captured 13 gold medals in swimming. The U.S. Won seven, though it did lead the overall medals table 38-25.

Rodri calls for more protection for players after Spain teammate's Euro 2024 is ended

AP ■ MUNICH

Rodri has called for more protection for players after one of his Spain teammates was ruled out of the rest of the European Championship. Pedri's tournament was ended after the midfielder sustained a knee injury last Friday in a hefty challenge by Toni Kroos at the start of the quarterfinal against Germany, which La Roja went on to win 2-1. Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said Kroos should have been sent off in the final match of his illustrious career. He did not even receive a yellow card. "As football players, we always want to be protected," Rodri said on Monday. "This is the job of the referee. "I mean, he puts the standard, so what is a yellow card or red card is his job. It's not our job. And we play with the rules or with the level he put. This is the reality." Rodri, considered the best defensive midfielder in the world, is expecting another hard-fought encounter in Tuesday's semifinal against France. "Tomorrow is going to be a very, very physical battle because they are a very physical team. So we will have to go in the same way, try to be



strong, use the body, because we know the power they have," he said. Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann had said before the quarterfinal that his players would try to make life hard for Spain wonderkid Lamine Yamal. And tackles were flying in right from the start in Stuttgart on Friday. A pragmatic De la Fuente said the 16-year-old Yamal has to get used to it. "It's part of football, it's part of the game," he said. "There are ways to gain an edge through playing or with intimidatory tactics. Each one uses their tools, always within a disciplinary regime imposed by the referee. "You have to explain to a 16-year-old kid that he needs to see that reality. Lamine has to continue being him and learn that this is how it is.

Djokovic gets into it with Wimbledon fans after reaching the quarterfinals

AP ■ LONDON

Maybe the Centre Court spectators were saluting Novak Djokovic's opponent by saying his name. Maybe they were booing Djokovic, trying to rattle him. The 24-time Grand Slam champion was sure it was the latter - and he let everyone know he was not happy about it. Djokovic easily beat 15th-seeded Holger Rune 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 in just over two hours Monday night to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals, then made sure to get a message across to those fans he thought were against him. Rune's supporters at various tournaments often will stretch out his last name, saying, "Ruuuuuuuuuu!" - which sounds rather similar to

"Boooooo!" - and that happened again Monday. During his on-court postmatch interview, Djokovic spoke briefly about the match, but then veered into a discussion about the people in the stands. "To all the fans that have respect and that stayed here tonight: Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart. I appreciate it. And to all those people that have chosen to disrespect the player - in this case, me - have a gooooooood night. Gooooooood night. Gooooooood night. Very goooooood night," he said, stretching out the "Os" in "good" so they sounded like "boo." The interviewer tried to dissuade Djokovic from thinking anyone was trying to

taunt him. "They were. They were. They were. I don't accept it. I know they were cheering for Rune. But that's an excuse to also boo," Djokovic said. "Listen, I've been on the tour for more than 20 years. So trust me, I know all the tricks. I know how it works. It's fine. It's fine. It's OK. I focus on the respectful people, that have respect, that paid (for) a ticket to watch tonight - and love tennis. And love tennis. And appreciate the players and the effort that the players put in here." At his news conference later, Djokovic was asked whether he thinks the All England Club should do something to curb rowdy fan behavior. "Look, I don't know what Wimbledon can really do



about it. I mean, in those particular moments when it happens, the crowd paid their tickets. They have the right to be there and cheer the way they want to cheer. That's absolutely something they choose - how they behave or how they choose to support the player is really up to them." Djokovic responded. "Yes, you could argue maybe a chair umpire or whoever can step in in certain moments and calm them down, but there's not much you can do. You're not going to take out the whole section of the crowd or stadium because they're misbehaving or showing disrespect." Rune - who got off to a terrible start in the match, dropping the first 12 points - didn't make much of it all.

"If you don't know what was happening, probably it sounded like boo," he said. "He was just better than me today," Rune said. "Whether the crowd was this or that, I think it was great support for both players, to be honest." When the match ended, Djokovic gestured as if he were playing a violin, maybe mockingly indicating he felt bad for anyone in the arena that he had saddened by winning and getting to the quarterfinals at the All England Club for the 15th time. He has won the championship at Wimbledon seven times and was the runner-up to Carlos Alcaraz last year. "I played in much more hostile environments, trust me," Djokovic said.

Gautam Gambhir named India coach

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World Cup-winning former opener Gautam Gambhir was on Tuesday named head coach of the Indian cricket team by the BCCI, which hoped that he would bring “tenacity and leadership” to the position that was held with “remarkable success” by Rahul Dravid until recently. The 42-year-old was the front-runner to replace Dravid whose tenure ended with the country's title win in the T20 World Cup in Barbados last month. “It is an absolute honour to serve my tricolour, my people, my country,” said Gambhir in a BCCI statement. “I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Rahul Dravid and his team of support staff for their exemplary run with the team. I am honoured and excited to take on the role of Head Coach for Team India. “I have always taken pride while donning the Indian jersey during my playing days and it is going to be no different when I take up this new role. Gambhir said he looks

forward to working closely with the BCCI, Head of Cricket VVS Laxman, the support staff, and, “most importantly, the players, as we work towards achieving success in the upcoming tournaments.” Gambhir's first assignment as India coach will be the of tour Sri Lanka for three T20Is and as many ODIs starting July 27. “The Board would like to thank former Head Coach, Mr Rahul Dravid for his brilliant run with the team. Team India now embarks on a journey under a new coach – Mr Gautam Gambhir,” said BCCI President Roger Binny in an elaborate statement. The Board stated that the Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Ashok Malhotra, Jatin Paranjpe and Sulakshana Naik on Tuesday unanimously recommended Gambhir. The BCCI had invited applications for the position on May 13. “His experience, dedication, and vision for the game make him the ideal candidate to guide our team forward. We are confident that under his leadership, Team India will continue to excel and make the nation proud,” Binny.

The sentiment was echoed by Board secretary Jay Shah. “Gambhir has been a fierce competitor and a brilliant strategist. We believe he will bring the same tenacity and leadership to his role as Head Coach. His transition to the role of Head Coach is a natural progression, and I believe he will bring out the best in our players,” he said. Shah said he expects Gambhir, who played key roles in India's 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 ODI World Cup triumphs, to inspire and lead the team to new heights. “His vision for the future of Indian cricket aligns perfectly with our goals, and we are excited about the journey ahead,” he added. As a player, Gambhir also led Kolkata Knight Riders to IPL titles in 2012 and 2014. He then proved his coaching credentials as the mentor of the KKR team that won the IPL title earlier this year. The former left-hander became a top pick to replace Dravid after VVS Laxman, the director of cricket at the Bengaluru-based National Cricket Academy, expressed his unwillingness to take up



top post. Dravid, who had replaced Ravi Shastri after the T20 World Cup in November 2021, was on extension after his two-year tenure ended in the 2023 ODI World Cup. The former India skipper finally bid adieu after India lifted the T20 World Cup title, their first ICC trophy in 11 years. It is learnt that Gambhir has sought the services of his Kolkata Knight Riders' academy head Abhishek Nayar to be his assistant coach. Nayar is also a close friend of national ODI and Test skipper Rohit Sharma. **‘ABSOLUTE HONOUR TO SERVE MY TRICOLOUR’:** Gambhir, whose only regret in life was that he could not serve the country as a soldier,

termed it as an absolute to honour to serve the Tricolour. Having made his debut for the Indian national team in 2003, Gambhir quickly made an impression with his tenacity and skill as an opener. However, it was in 2007 that Gambhir's career truly took off. His contributions in the inaugural ICC T20 World Cup were instrumental in India's success and he was the top-scorer in the final against Pakistan, scoring a crucial 75 runs, which helped India lift the trophy. The pinnacle of Gambhir's career was the 2011 ODI World Cup. Gambhir once again played a match-winning innings in the final, against Sri Lanka. His 97 runs were crucial in India's successful chase, ultimately leading to India's first World Cup victory in 28 years. For someone who did not get a chance to show his leadership as skipper, Gambhir proved his captaincy credentials when he turned the fortunes of Kolkata Knight Riders by rebuilding a team and captaining them to their maiden title in 2012. His coaching skills first came to fore with debutants

Lucknow Super Giants as he guided them to the playoffs in both IPL 2022 and 2023 seasons. But his best came when he reunited with KKR, this time mentoring them to their third title. Gambhir will nonetheless have huge boots to fill given Dravid's outstanding service as head coach. Under him, Team India finished as runners-up in the 50-over World Cup last year and the ICC World Test Championship in 2023 in England. Apart from the team's dominance in bilateral series at home, Dravid's “dedication to nurturing young talent and instilling discipline and sportsmanship in the team” has also been described as exemplary by the BCCI. The Board also congratulated Paras Mhambrey (Bowling Coach), T Dilip (Fielding Coach) and Vikram Rathour (Batting Coach) on a highly successful tenure. Their tenures too came to an end with Dravid's departure. “The BCCI values their contribution and wishes them the best going forward,” it added.



Retired Warner says he is open to play Champions Trophy next year

PTI ■ SYDNEY

David Warner has declared his international career a “closed chapter” but at the same time, the Australian batting great won't mind padding up in the Champions Trophy next year should he be selected, something that has been described as an “emergency option” by his ODI captain Pat Cummins. Warner retired from ODIs after Australia's World Cup-winning run in November last year, while his last Test was against Pakistan in January. His final T20I came against India on June 24 at the shortest format's recently-concluded global showpiece. “Chapter closed!! It's been an unbelievable experience to play at the highest level for such a long period. Australia was my team. The majority of my career was at the international level. It's been an honour to be able to do this. 100+ games in all formats is my highlight,” Warner wrote in an Instagram post on Monday. “I will continue to play franchise cricket for a while, and I am also open to playing for Australia in the Champions trophy if selected,” he added. This is not the first time that Warner has shown interest in playing the 50-over tournament. Even while announcing his ODI and Test retirement in January, he had said he'd be open to playing the Champions Trophy, which is set to return after an eight-year hiatus in Pakistan next year. Back in January when Pat Cummins was asked about Warner's return for the Champions Trophy, Cummins had said “I think it's probably time to

give some others a crack [in ODIs], but knowing that he's going to still be playing cricket.” “So it might be more of a kind of break glass in an emergency option. But, you know, David is going to be scoring runs somewhere in the world. So you never quite know that this is (the end).” Reflecting on his illustrious career, Warner, who retired as Australia's highest scorer and seventh-most prolific batter in the world in T20 format with 3,277 runs from 110 matches at an average of 33.43 and strike rate of 142.47, thanked his family, fans and teammates. “For all the cricket fans out there, I truly hope I have entertained you and changed cricket, especially tests, in a way where we scored a bit faster than others. We cannot do what we love without the fans, so thanks. “I want to say thanks to everyone out there who has made this possible. My wife and my girls, who sacrificed so much, thank you for all your support. No person will ever know what we've been through. From 112 Tests, he has scored 8,786 runs at an average of 44.59 with 26 hundreds and 37 fifties between 2011 and 2024. He also scored 6,932 runs from 161 ODI matches at an average of 45.30 with the help of 22 centuries and 33 half centuries. “To the players and staff, thanks for putting up with me. No more what's app junk, your ears are now going to be free of my voice. This team has had unbelievable success. The Last few years and long may this continue. Pat cummins, Andrew old Mac and staff have got this,” he added.

BUMRAH, MANDHANA NAMED ICC PLAYER OF MONTH FOR JUNE



PTI ■ DUBAI

Hero of India's victorious T20 World Cup campaign, Jasprit Bumrah added another feather to his hat when he was on Tuesday named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for June. It was double delight for India as women's team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana was also named the 'Women's Player of the Month' by the global body. Mandhana won her first ICC

Women's Player of the Month after playing a starring role in India's sweep over South Africa in the ODI series last month. Bumrah came out on top in the men's vote from compatriot Rohit Sharma and Rahmanullah Gurbaz of Afghanistan, while Mandhana won the women's award by overcoming England's Maia Bouchier and Sri Lanka's Vishmi Gunaratne. Bumrah, who bagged 15 wickets to be adjudged the Player-of-the-Tournament

in the T20 global showpiece last month, also claimed the Men's Player of the Month accolade for June, the ICC announced. “I am delighted to be named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for June,” Bumrah said in the ICC statement. “It's a special honour for me following a memorable few weeks spent in the USA and West Indies. We have had a lot to celebrate as a team, and I'm delighted to be able to add this personal accolade to the list.” The 30-year-old was

at his dependable best in the USA and Caribbean and bowled at an average of 8.26, at an astonishing economy rate of 4.17. He joined Virat Kohli (a two-time winner in his own right) as India players to claim the Men's T20 World Cup Player of the Tournament award. India were the first team to win the men's T20 World Cup without losing a game all tournament. Barring a washout against Canada in the first round, the Rohit Sharma-led India

went on to win all eight matches they played in the tournament. “To perform as well as we did at the tournament and lift the trophy at the end is incredibly special, and I will carry those memories with me forever,” Bumrah said. “I wish to congratulate my captain Rohit Sharma and Rahmanullah Gurbaz for their excellent performances in the same period, and I am humbled to have been chosen as the winner.”

In the women's game, Mandhana set the tone with a commanding 117 in the first outing in Bengaluru. Despite an early stutter by the hosts in which they fell to 99 for five, Mandhana remained resolute, and benefitted from some lower order resistance to guide India to a formidable score of 265 from their 50 overs, which proved far beyond the Proteas. Mandhana went one better in the second match, hitting her second successive century and top scoring in a game that saw 646 runs in total. The opener blitzed the South African bowling attack, smashing 136 in 120 balls and in tandem with her captain Harmanpreet Kaur, posted just enough to see off the resurgent visitors. She came close to sealing a hat-trick of hundreds in the final outing, falling agonizingly on 90 in a stylish effort that ensured India recorded a comfortable victory to close out the series. During the period, Mandhana recorded 343 runs at an average of 114.33, with a strike rate of over 100, earning her the Player of the Series award. “I'm really glad to have won the ICC Women's Player of the Month for June. I'm really happy with the way the team has performed and I'm happy to have contributed. For us, we won the ODI and the Test series and hopefully we can continue our form and I can further contribute to win more matches for India,” Mandhana said.

Focus on Jaiswal's batting position as stronger India ready to make statement against Zimbabwe

PTI ■ HARARE

India will find it tough to choose between Yashasvi Jaiswal's seemingly effortless flamboyance and Abhishek Sharma's uber-cool aggression at the top when they rejig their combination to make space for World Cup-winning squad members in the third T20 International against Zimbabwe here on Wednesday. The arrival of Jaiswal, Sanju Samson and Shivam Dube, all of whom were part of the main team during the title-winning run last month, gives the Indian team a formidable look in the most important game of the series as visitors look to press home the advantage after the booster shot of a series-levelling 100-run victory in the second match. Abhishek, the left-handed

opener, did enough to live up to his pre-series hype with a 46-ball century in only his second game and did look the part opening the innings. However, Jaiswal, with a handsome strike rate of 161 plus in 17 T20I matches, including a hundred and four half-centuries, does have the first claim to be skipper Shubman Gill's opening partner by virtue of being the reserve opener of the first-choice T20 team. Although rare but it is not uncommon for batters to be dropped in the very next match after a milestone innings. Case in point were Manoj Tiwary, immediately after his maiden ODI hundred against the West Indies in 2011, and Karun Nair after his triple hundred in a Test match against England in 2016. But skipper Gill is unlikely to let



that happen with his best friend since their U-14 days and someone who scored his first international ton with a willow borrowed from the former. So, it could well be a case of one

of the two southpaws batting at one drop. Sanju Samson, who normally bats at No. 3 for Rajasthan Royals, might come in at No.5, while Ruturaj Gaikwad, who batted at No.3, will probably

drop down a place to No.4. As far as the changes in the playing eleven are concerned, Jaiswal is likely to replace B Sai Sudharsan, who was selected only for the first two games. Samson will come in place of Dhruv Jurel, who had a good outing behind the stumps. Dube, the only player who was a part of T20 World Cup playing XI, is likely to walk in to replace Riyan Parag. The imposing batter could be an even bigger nemesis for the Zimbabwean spinners during the back-10. As far as Zimbabwe is concerned, their batting has left a lot to be desired with scores of 115 while batting first and 134 in the second essay chasing 235. On the Harare Sports Club track where there is a bit of extra bounce available for the spinners, Ravi Bishnoi (6/24 from 8 overs)

and Washington Sundar (3/39 in 8 overs) have proved to be unplayable at times. Bishnoi, who normally bowls 20 to 22 googlies in his 24 balls per match, has varied his pace brilliantly and with home skipper Sikandar Raza being kept quiet, the other batters haven't looked good enough to counter the Indian bowling attack. The 13-run shock defeat in the opener was a timely wake-up call for the young visiting side and it did well to play without five specialist bowlers in the second game where batting first became an advantage. For skipper Gill, a good score would be a necessity after two dry games and he is just too good a player to fail thrice. That could prove to be an ominous sign for the home team bowlers, who don't have even one guy with

express pace. In a nutshell, it could be another one-sided game.

TEAMS (FROM)
India: Shubman Gill (captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Abhishek Sharma, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sanju Samson (wk), Shivam Dube, Rinku Singh, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Avesh Khan, Mukesh Kumar, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel, Khaleel Ahmed, Tushar Deshpande.
Zimbabwe: Sikandar Raza (captain), Faraz Akram, Brian Bennett, Johnathan Campbell, Tendai Chatara, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Brandon Mavuta, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Antum Naqvi, Richard Ngarava, Milton Shumba.