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HUNTER BIDEN'S GUN TRIAL
ENTERS ITS FINAL STRETCH

MONEY 10
EQUITY MUTUAL FUND
INFLOW SWELLS IN MAY

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MY BEST: BUMRAH
11 SPORTS



Army personnel during a search operation after a bus carrying pilgrims was ambushed by terrorists, in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, on Monday. At least 9 people were killed and 33 others suffered injuries in the terror attack on the bus, according to officials PTI

Manipur CM's security convoy ambushed, Biren not present at spot

PNS ■ IMPHAL/NEW DELHI

Suspected militants ambushed the advance security convoy of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh in Kangpokpi district on Monday morning, leaving one personnel injured. The convoy was on its way to violence-hit Jiribam district when it came under attack around 10.30 am near Kotlen village along a stretch of National Highway-53, police officials said. Multiple gunshots were fired at the vehicles of the security forces, who retaliated, a police officer said. The driver of one of the convoy vehicles suffered bullet injuries on his right shoulder, and he is being taken to a hospital in Imphal, the officer said. "Security forces have reached the ambush site, around 36 km from the state capital, and launched combing operations to trace the gunmen," he said. "CM Biren Singh, who is yet to reach Imphal from Delhi, was planning to visit Jiribam to take stock of the situation in the district," said an official.

"Two police outposts, a forest beat office and at least 70 houses were torched in Jiribam by suspected militants on Saturday in a fresh bout of violence in the ethnic strife-torn state. Biren was in Delhi to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which he described as his responsibility as a Chief Minister.

Singh condemned the ambush and termed it a direct attack on himself and the people of the State, assuring that the "rule of law" will be established. Speaking to reporters at Shija hospital, where the injured person is undergoing treatment, Singh said, "It is very unfortunate and highly condemnable. It's an attack on the Chief Minister, which means a direct attack on the people of the State. The state government has to do something... We will take a decision."

Singh explained that fortunately the person was not seriously injured.

Manhunt to nab J&K terrorists

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A day after suspected Pakistani terrorists desperately tried to widen the 'arc of terror', by targeting a passenger bus ferrying pilgrims via Shiv Khori Shrine to the Katra base camp in Reasi district, a joint team of security forces involving elite para commandos of the Indian Army on Monday launched a massive manhunt to track down the perpetrators behind the 'dastardly' attack. Despite the terror attack pilgrims remained undeterred as they arrived in large numbers to offer prayers at the Shiv Khori shrine on Monday.

While supervising the ongoing search operations in the area, Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Mohita Sharma told reporters on ground zero at least two terrorists were involved in the terror attack on Sunday.

A total number of nine people, including four members of a family from Jaipur in Rajasthan, were killed and 41 others received critical injuries when their bus came under attack by a group of hiding terrorists. It is believed the terrorists belong to the same group of foreign terrorists responsible for targeting Army personnel in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch in recent months.

Govt formation sideshow in Odisha, Andhra, Arunachal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BHUBANESHWAR/AMRAVATI

After the formation of Narendra Modi-led NDA Government at Centre, the focus now shifts to the States — Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim- where also Government formation is in process after the simultaneous polls with Lok Sabha were conducted.

While Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) president Prem Singh Tamang was sworn in as Chief Minister of the Himalayan State on Monday, BJP legislature party of Odisha and TDP legislatures in Andhra Pradesh have convened a meeting on Tuesday to elect the Chief Minister of their States and new Governments will take oath on Wednesday. BJP has appointed Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Bhupendra Yadav to oversee the selection of the new Chief Minister of Odisha.

The other winning State of BJP is Arunachal Pradesh which secured 46 seats in the 60-member Arunachal Pradesh Assembly led by incumbent CM Pema Khandu. While the results



Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) president Prem Singh Tamang greets people before taking oath as Chief Minister during the swearing-in ceremony, in Gangtok, on Monday PTI

were declared on June 2 along with Sikkim, the swearing in ceremony was delayed due the party's preoccupations in Delhi as Modi was to take oath for the third time.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) which is the major partner of BJP in NDA has also convened its Legislature Meeting on June 11 to elect N Chandrababu Naidu as the leader and the oath ceremony is being scheduled for Wednesday.

BJP secured a majority by winning 78 seats in the 147-member Odisha Assembly. However, the party is yet to choose a leader who will be at the helm of the State. While the chance of senior Odisha MP Dharmendra Pradhan becoming the next Chief Minister of the State

seems bleak after his induction into the Modi 3.0 Government, the focus is now on Brajarajnagar MLA-elect Suresh Pujari, who returned from New Delhi on Monday.

Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, the BJP's Odisha in-charge, said, "The legislature party meeting will be held on Tuesday and the new Government will take oath on June 12." "Experienced leaders led by newly-appointed observers Rajnath Singh and Bhupendra Yadav will hold a discussion with the legislators," Pujari told the media.

Besides Pujari, state BJP president Manmohan Samal, KV Singh and Mohan Majhi are also in the race for the Chief Minister's post.

BJP keeps plum of Cabinet pie



(Left to right): Amit Shah (Minister of Home Affairs; and Minister of Cooperation), Rajnath Singh (Minister of Defence), Nirmala Sitharaman (Minister of Finance; and Minister of Corporate Affairs), Piyush Goyal (Minister of Commerce and Industry), Ashwini Vaishnaw (Minister of Railways; Minister of Information and Broadcasting; and Minister of Electronics and Information Technology) and Chirag Paswan (Minister of Food Processing Industries)

RAJESH KUMAR/DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

There is no big change in the Team Modi 3.0 as some of the top Ministers will continue with their erstwhile portfolios hence giving no scope to the major coalition partners — TDP, JD(U) — to flex their muscles to take the reins of important Ministries. The allocation of portfolios underlined Prime Minister Narendra Modi's faith in his colleagues, especially those handling the frontline Ministries which shaped and drove the Government's policies and programmes.

Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman, S Jaishankar and Nitin Gadkari — have been retained with their respective Ministries from the previous regime — Home, Defence, Finance, External Affairs and Road, Transport and Highways portfolios, to give impetus to first 100 days as mandated by Modi before going for the Lok

Sabha polls this March.

Now all eyes will be on the full annual Budget to be presented by the Modi regime in the third term as the aspirations of alliance partners like review of controversial Agniveer schemes etc has to be on the platter.

The new Cabinet-led by Modi aimed for continuity while trying to strike a balance between giving space to BJP bigwigs and accommodating NDA allies. Now, sources said that there is a possibility that BJP will continue to keep the Lok Sabha Speaker's post with itself and not budge to the demands of TDP as speculated.

Sources said the Modi Government was reluctant to give the important Cabinet portfolios to its alliance partners. Notably, the NDA partners — TDP and Janata Dal (United) could not get the Cabinet portfolios which they demanded.

TDP's Kinjarapu Ram Mohan

Naidu will be the new Civil Aviation Minister, a post previously held by Jyotiraditya Scindia. TDP leader C Pemmasani, who is the richest candidate of the Modi Government, will be Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications while Scindia will be Cabinet Minister for communications and development of northeastern region.

Piyush Goyal who emerged successful in the Lok Sabha polls has been retained as Minister of Commerce while Ashwini Vaishnaw to accelerate as Railways Minister and in addition, will return in the newly formed NDA Government as the Information and Broadcasting Minister, a position previously held by Anurag Singh Thakur.

The NDA partners TDP and JD(U) were lobbying for Railways Ministry but the Modi Government was reluctant to give it to its

partners. Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be the new Agriculture Minister as well as Rural Development, and ex-Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar will now head the Ministry of Power and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs which previously held by Hardeep Singh Puri. Dharmendra Pradhan will continue heading the Education Ministry. Gujarat BJP president Chandrakant Raghunath Patil has been appointed as the new Jal Shakti Minister. Alongside Patil, V Somanna and Raj Bhushan Choudhary have been appointed as Ministers of State in the Ministry of Jal Shakti. Somanna also takes on the role of Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways, according to an official statement.

Dr Jitendra Singh is MoS (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Science and

Technology; MoS (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences; MoS in the Prime Minister's Office; MoS in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; MoS in the Department of Atomic Energy; and MoS in the Department of Space. Arjun Ram Meghwal is MoS (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Law and Justice; and MoS in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. Jadhav Prataprao Ganpatrao is MoS (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Ayush; and MoS in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

RDL leader Jayant Chaudhary is MoS (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; and MoS in the Ministry of Education. Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan is all set to become the new Minister of Food Processing Industries.

Get ready for second-degree burns

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Northwest India, including regions like Jammu division, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, and parts of Jharkhand and Odisha in the East, is bracing for another bout of extreme heat in the coming days, with temperatures expected to soar over 45 degrees Celsius.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued warnings, indicating that heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are likely to prevail over these areas in the next five days.

This looming heatwave comes on the heels of a series of intense and prolonged heat waves experienced across the country in April and May. Tragically, many States, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha, have reported heatwave-related deaths and illnesses. Since March, nearly 25,000 suspected cases of heat stroke and 56 deaths have been recorded as per data shared by the National Centre for Disease Control, with States like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh being the worst hit.

However, these figures might be just the tip of the iceberg as data from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Delhi which also



experienced blistering weather were not included.

The IMD has forecast that the heatwave is likely to affect several States, including Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Gangetic West Bengal. As per the IMD bulletin, heatwave conditions are likely in pockets of Jammu division, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Jharkhand, and Odisha during the next 5 days; Himachal Pradesh from June 12 to 14; Uttarakhand from June 11 to 14; Rajasthan on June 12 and 13; Madhya Pradesh from June 12 to 14.

Heatwave conditions are also likely in parts of Gangetic West Bengal until June 13. Heatwave to severe heatwave

conditions are predicted in isolated pockets from June 10 to 12 and in parts of Bihar from June 10 to 12. They were likely in parts of Uttar Pradesh until June 14. IMD director general M Mohapatra said the fresh spell of heatwave is expected mainly due to an anticyclone which is causing subsidence of hot air over northwest India.

"The onset of heatwaves is often attributed to anticyclones, which result in the subsidence of hot air over affected regions. This phenomenon leads to the compression and heating of air, creating a heat dome effect that traps heat and suppresses cloud formation. Consequently, cooler air currents are displaced, exacerbating the heat," explained a Met official.

Delhi Police scores big in India-Pak T20 match

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Known for its witty post and humorous takes, the Delhi Police's handle on social media platform X (formerly Twitter) has left netizens laughing through its unique meme soon after the blockbuster India-Pakistan clash in the T20 World Cup in New York as the Indian team beat its arch-rivals in a low-scoring nail-biting clash. The post garnered over one million views in less than a day.

As millions were glued to their screens as India defeated Pakistan by six runs in the highly-anticipated T20 World Cup 2024 on Sunday, celebratory posts flooded social media. As fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah

ended the game by taking three wickets, the Delhi Police were quick to share a quirky post while tagging the New York Police Department (NYPD). The police posted, "Hey, @NYPDnews We heard two loud noises. One is 'Indiaaa.. India!', and another is probably of broken televisions. Can you please confirm?"

The post went viral almost immediately. It was reposted by over 7,700 people, reached over one million views, was liked by over 46,000 people, and had more than 1,200 comments. However, this is not the first time that the police department is deploying social media for its use.

Big cat photobombs oath pageant

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his 72 members Council of Ministers were taking oath for his third consecutive term on Sunday, an uninvited guest caught the attention of social media users at the grand forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The Delhi Police, however, through its social media handle said claims of a wild animal at the ceremony are false. "It was not wild. Ignore such baseless rumors," the police said in a post.

A short video clip of the ceremony has gone viral in which netizens noticed an animal roaming in the corridors of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The animal, allegedly a leopard, was seen casually



walking in the Rashtrapati Bhavan when the official procedure was being carried out. The incident took place when Madhya Pradesh MP

Durgadas Uikey, also known as DD Uikey, was taking oath as one of the Union Ministers. In the video, an animal was seen casually walking at the Rashtrapati Bhavan when the

official procedure was being carried out on the stage. Several internet users took to social media and commented "Was it a leopard? An ordinary cat? Or a dog?" as the video was widely shared. Some alleged that the animal was a leopard while others wondered if it was a pet animal and some even raised questions over the video's authenticity.

Some users even claimed that the video was edited with a focus on its background. Reacting to the viral video, a user wrote, "So wild animals are now casually roaming about in Rashtrapati Bhavan?? That is not a pet animal. What was the security doing?? Did all the CCTV footages break? Were the security personnel sleeping in the control room?"

Employees to agitate demanding implentation of contract policy

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

If the government does not implement the contract policy by June 30, then there will be a big agitation in July. This warning has been given by the electricity workers of Madhya Pradesh. On Monday, they also held a symbolic demonstration in Bhopal. As soon as the code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections ended, the employee organizations have started coming out in the field with their demands. It started from Monday. Under the banner of United Forum for Employees and Engineers, the electricity workers held a symbolic demonstration outside the office of the power company located in MP Nagar, Bhopal.

Organization president VKS Parihar said, the contract policy should be implemented in June. If this does not happen, the contract workers of the entire state will take to the streets to protest in July. Former CM Shivraj had called a Mahapanchayat in 2023. The officials of the organization said that former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had called a Mahapanchayat of many departments before the Assembly Elections-2023 and the demands of the employees were fulfilled. On July 4, 2023, a Mahapanchayat of contract employees was also called at Lal Parade Ground. In which he praised the hard work of the Energy Department from the stage

itself. Understanding the difficulties faced by contract employees, an announcement was made for them. On July 22, the Contract Policy-2023 was approved by the Cabinet. The new contract policy was implemented actively in most of the departments. On the other hand, 6 thousand contract officers and employees working in the power company have been waiting for the policy to be implemented for 11 months. Organization's media in-charge Lokendra Srivastava said, during the meeting with Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar and Managing Director of Power Management, it was clearly said that after amending the contract pol-

icy, the policy should be issued soon, but even after 11 months this has not happened. United Forum Madhya Kshetra Company Convenor RS Kushwaha said, the contract policy was issued in July 2023, but it was not implemented. Eight employees have died while working in the power company. Till date, compassionate appointment has not been provided to their families. Contract workers are paying for the wrong policies of power companies. President Parihar said, correspondence has been made to the Principal Secretary Energy and Managing Director of Power Management. It has been requested in the letter that by the end of the

month of June, the Contract Policy 2023 should be issued by adding the necessary amendments including dearness allowance and annual salary increment. If this does not happen, all the contract officers and employees of the state will come to Bhopal in the first week of July and hold a big demonstration. During the demonstration in Bhopal, Mukesh Verma, Akhilesh Suryavanshi, Shivam Lakhera, Sanjay Baghel, Varun Namdev, Hemant Verma, Durgesh Dubey, Prashant Pal, Kuldeep Khandekar, Omprakash Mudia, Chandramani Gajbhiye, Rohit Lal, Pawan Jaiswal, Naman Tripathi, Anoop Saini, Pratap Darbar of the organization were present.



Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) activists stage a protest against the alleged irregularities in the NEET entrance exam results, in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

CBI arrests 7 people including NHAI project director

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The CBI has arrested 7 people including NHAI's Chhatarpur Project Director on charges of taking bribes in exchange for change of ownership of Jhansi-Khajuraho project and issuance of NOC. All were produced in Bhopal court on Monday morning and were sent CBI custody till June 14 was sought from the court. On this, the court has approved the remand of all 7 accused till June 14. Officers of CBI's Anti Corruption Unit-3 said that Purushottam Lal Chaudhary, Director of Jhansi-Khajuraho Highway Project of National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), had taken a bribe of Rs 10 lakh for change of ownership of the project and issuance of its NOC. In this case, CBI arrested Project Director Chaudhary and NHAI Consultant Sharad

Prakash Verma on Sunday at NHAI office in Chhatarpur while taking bribes. Apart from this, CBI has arrested PNC Infratech employees Brijesh Mishra, Shubham Jain, Anil Jain, Satyanarayan Anguluri and Prem Kumar Sinha. CBI's anti-corruption team had registered a case on 8th June against 10 people including Jhansi-Khajuraho highway project director Purushottam Lal Chaudhary. CBI has arrested 7 of these accused. While the CBI team is raiding the hideouts of the accused to arrest others. The CBI team reached the NHAI director's office on Sunday along with him. After examining the important files from here, they have been seized. Later, on his information, Brajesh Mishra, project manager of PNC company which is constructing the road, was also arrested. After this, Shubham Jain, Anil Jain,

Satyanarayan Anguluri and Prem Kumar Sinha associated with NHAI and PNC were also arrested. On Sunday, the CBI team took all these 7 people in NHAI vehicles and reached the district hospital. Here, all the officers, employees and the arrested people were medically examined. After this, they left for Delhi with all of them. These NHAI officers arrested were identified as Purushottam Lal Chaudhary, General Manager and Project Director Jhansi - Khajuraho Highway and Sharad Prakash Verma, Consultant NHAI, Jhansi - Khajuraho Highway Project while the arrested employees of PNC Infratech Limited were identified as Brijesh Mishra, Shubham Jain, Anil Jain, Satyanarayan Anguluri, Prem Kumar Sinha, Resident Engineer, Jhansi - Khajuraho Highway Project.

Harmonizing Horizons: Celebrating three years of WICCI MP

PNS ■ JABALPUR

The Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce Madhya Pradesh commemorated its third-year anniversary with an event marking the fourth anniversary of E-mediation Writings, illuminating the theme of 'Empowering India with a Mediation Mindset on June 02 at Bhopal. The event garnered participation from luminaries such as Hon'ble Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Mangubhai Patel, Judge of the Supreme Court of India, Justice JK Maheshwari, Former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court and Chairperson of Armed Forces Tribunal, Justice Rajendra Menon, as well as esteemed judges from various high courts. The proceedings commenced with a gracious welcome by

National Member of WICCI Adv Neena Khare. In his inaugural address, Chief Guest and Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Mangubhai Patel, highlighted the pivotal role of mediation in the judicial landscape, emphasizing the imperative for youth engagement in advocating its merits. Governor Patel particularly urged for focused efforts in tribally dominated areas to ensure equitable access to dispute resolution mechanisms, especially for economically and socially marginalized communities. During a special address, Guest of Honour, Justice JK Maheshwari, who also serves as the Visitor to Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur, delved into the rich tapestry of Indian cultural heritage, drawing parallels from ancient texts like

the Ramcharitramanas and Mahabharata to illuminate the historical precedence of mediation. Justice Maheshwari accentuated the significance of mediation in resolving familial disputes with impartiality and equanimity. In his presidential address, Rajendra Menon, emphasised on the integration of professional mediation courses within educational institutions, elaborated the need for robust training infrastructure to nurture skilled mediators. Justice Menon implored Dharmashastra National Law University to spearhead similar initiatives to cultivate a generation adept in the art of mediation encouraging younger lawyers to take a step towards this path by skillling themselves in and working in the area of mediation advo-

cacy. Furthermore, he highlighted the mandatory guideline issued by the Bar Council of India on May 20, 2024, making mediation a compulsory subject. This guideline, initially communicated in 2020, includes a detailed syllabus and references for implementation by legal education centres. Justice Menon called upon institutions to adhere to the guideline and expressed hope for widespread adoption within a year. The event culminated with the ceremonial launch of the E-Mediation Writing calendar by the EMW team, heralding a new chapter in the Chamber's ongoing mission to foster a culture of constructive dispute resolution. The inaugural panel discussion session centred around the transition from Mediation Advocacy: Competition to

Collaboration, chaired over by the esteemed Justice Vijay Kumar Shukla, Judge, High Court of M.P. His discourse emphasized the pragmatic application of mediation methodologies. Joining the discussion as panellists were Shri Justice Vishal Dhagat, Judge, High Court of M.P and Justice Purushaindra Kaurav, Judge, Delhi High Court. Justice Dhagat emphasised upon the mediative approach to arrive at a solution in a collaborative, consensus-building manner involving far more than just the practice of law. Justice Kaurav, drawing from Munshi Premchand's writings, eloquently illustrated neutral dispute resolution techniques embedded within rural narratives. He further elaborated on the mediation practices followed since the medieval times.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav during a road show in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh on Monday. Pioneer photo

Accreditation boosts people's confidence: Prof Ajai Singh

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

On the occasion of World Accreditation Day, Professor (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, underscored the significance of accreditation in fostering public trust and confidence. Speaking as the Chief Guest at today's program in Bhopal, Professor Singh highlighted that accreditation assures the public that the products, services, and capabilities they rely on adhere to established standards. "Getting accreditation increases people's confidence," stated Professor Singh. "It guarantees that the institution's work meets high-quality benchmarks, which is crucial for trust and reliability." Recently, AIIMS Bhopal made history by becoming



the first government hospital in Central India to receive accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) for all its facilities. This accreditation reflects AIIMS Bhopal's commitment to maintaining excellence and rigorous standards in healthcare. The event was organized by

the International Laboratory Testing Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) and NABL. World Accreditation Day, celebrated annually, addresses a unique theme each year. The theme for 2024 is "Accreditation: Empowering Tomorrow and Shaping the Future," focusing on issues such as digitalization, new features, and sustainability.

The ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) serves as a crucial technical foundation for the exchange of calibration, testing, medical testing, and inspection results. It also supports the development of proficiency testing programs and the production of reference materials from recognized conformity assessment sources. This framework ensures confidence in various implementations, aiding local and national services like safe food provision, clean energy projects, healthcare, and environmental maintenance. "Accreditation supports the delivery of essential services that ensure our safety, health, and environment," added Professor Singh. "It is instrumental in building a future where quality and trust are paramount."

Electricity supply of Panna distt disrupted due to theft of transmission tower parts

PNS ■ JABALPUR

The tower of ERS located at village Bhad in 132 KV Satna - Devendra Nagar - Panna transmission line of MP Transco's (Madhya Pradesh Power Transmission Company) got damaged due to theft of its parts. Due to the damage to this tower which supplies electricity in Panna district, the residents of the area had to face a lot of trouble. In this scorching heat, electricity supply was disrupted in many areas of Panna district for 02 to 12 hours. It was the skill and dedication of MP Transco's transmission line maintenance team that enabled the line to be restarted within 12 hours, otherwise it would have taken 03 to 04 days to re-energize. MP Transco Satna Executive Engineer RS Pandey said that the 132 KV power transmission line supplying electricity to Panna area, some parts were stolen by unknown people from the ERS (Emergency Restoration System) tower of location number 85-86 of Satna - Devendra Nagar - Panna transmission line, due to which this tower located near

village Bhad under Nagaud tehsil of Satna district got damaged. Due to damage to this tower at 8:45 am the supply of 132 KV substation Panna was disrupted. From this substation, electricity is supplied to Pawai, Majhgawan, Ajaygarh, Brijpur and Devendra Nagar areas of Panna district. Meanwhile, The brave personnel of MP Transco's, Transmission Line Maintenance (TLM) team braved the scorching heat of the afternoon (in which the temperature of the iron angle and parts of the tower exceeds about 50 degrees Celsius and carrying out repair work in these conditions is extremely difficult and challenging). Working continuously, MP Transco's were succeeded in restarting this important line by completing the repair work on the damaged tower at around 8:45 in the night. Notably, just a few days ago, angle parts etc. were stolen from transmission line towers in Rewa-Amarpatan area, due to which the entire Vindhya region was badly affected due to power disruption.

CM meets newly appointed Union Ministers

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav met with newly appointed Union Ministers in New Delhi. He congratulated Virendra Kumar, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and other ministers at their residences, expressing hope that their co-operation would foster new progress in Madhya Pradesh. Yadav, On Monday met with Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Cabinet Minister Ashwini Vaishnav at the Haryana State Guest House, and Union Minister Chirag Paswan at his residence, extending his greetings and best wishes. Additionally, Yadav paid a courtesy visit to Union Ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Prahlad Joshi, and others. Yadav, On Monday also met Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in New Delhi. Prior to this, he had met with Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, along with other ministers and Chief Ministers of various states, at the oath ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Ministers late Sunday evening.

Kalighat paintings are the result of collaboration among a group

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

As part of the popular museum educational program series "Do and Learn" of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya among children, housewives and students, a workshop on traditional Kalighat painting of West Bengal will be held till 18 June 2024. In this workshop, traditional artist of West Bengal, Kalam Patua, a scroll painter, is training the registered participants. He said that art is a part of our history, culture and tradition. Ancient art not only captures the essence of bygone eras but also allows us to understand more about contemporary art. We all get the opportunity to express our talents and emotions through art. We believe that mastering new art techniques can boost your creativity. Kalighat painting is believed to have originated from the famous Kalighat temple of Bengal. It was started by the Patua community. Under this art, paintings of Kali Maa were made on handmade cloth or paper, in this art trees are often depicted as women, because they represent shelter,

fertility, growth and opportunity. Since Kalighat paintings began near the temple of the goddess Kali, Kali is the embodiment of mother power so female subjects are often depicted as strong in her honour. The brushes used for sketch drawings are made from squirrel and goat hair. What makes Kalighat paintings so unique? The entire family participates in the making of this painting Depending on gender and age, each family member has a specific role to play in the construction process. Who are usually from the same family. So, while some members grind the ingredients to make paint at home, others outline the shapes, fill in the colors, or add finishing touches such as motifs and background patterns. These artists were called Patua because they made paintings of Goddess Kali on board or cloth Apart from this, the painters also made pictures of other gods and goddesses along with the scenes from Ramcharitmanas. However with time many other aspects of education, freedom struggle and daily life are also depicted through this painting.



Congress State President Jitu Patwari and other leaders during the MP Youth Congress state executive body meeting at PCC headquarters in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

VD expresses gratitude on decisions in 1st Cabinet

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

BJP State President and Khajuraho MP Vishnudutt Sharma welcomed the decision of building 3 crore new concrete houses for the poor of the country under the PM Awas Yojana in the first cabinet meeting held Monday after Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister for the third time and said that this is a historic decision in the

interest of the poor and full of human sensitivity. Modi has decided to fulfill the guarantee of building 3 crore new houses in the BJP's manifesto in the first cabinet meeting of his third term. This decision reflects the sensitivity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with giving concrete roofs to the poor of the country. BJP State President Sharma said that in the manifesto of the Lok Sabha elections of the Bharatiya

Janata Party, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had guaranteed to build 3 crore concrete houses for the poor under the PM Awas Yojana. Today in the very first cabinet, the Prime Minister has decided to fulfill the guarantee made for the poor. BJP State President Vishnudutt Sharma said that as a nation, it is our duty to take such steps which can increase the prosperity of the common people of the country and their families.

Govt officers and employees are servants of the society: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that government officers and employees should work with the feeling that they are not government servants but servants of the public. There should always be a manifestation of humanity and sensitivity in their working style. The rights enjoyed by government officers and employees are for the fulfillment of public aspirations and interest for which they are accountable to the public. Government service provides an opportunity to showcase one's versatility and is also a challenge for them. Generally, when a person is empowered, he gets a sense of stability, whereas we have to remain constantly alert and active. Government service is not just a job but a big responsibility to do the

best for society. Whatever role we get, we should try to play it in the best possible way with full confidence. Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said this while addressing the inaugural session of the joint basic training programme of Indian Administrative Service, Indian Forest Service, and State Service officers at the Academy of Administration, Bhopal online from New Delhi.

Chief Minister interacts with trainees

A state level training program of Indian Administrative Service 2023 batch, basic training program of Indian Forest Service 2022 batch and joint basic training program of State Civil Service 2019-20 batch started at the R.C.P.V. Noronha Academy of Administration and Management, Bhopal from June 10. The program was

inaugurated at the Academy of Administration by Additional Chief Secretary General Administration and Director General Academy of Administration Vinod Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary Forest J.N. Kansotiya, Secretary General Administration Smt. G.V. Rashmi and Director Administration Academy Mujibur Rahman who lit the lamp. The theme song of the Academy was also sung. All the trainees introduced themselves on this occasion.

Good governance is the work done in public interest

Chief Minister Dr. Yadav said that government officers and employees are expected to work for good governance. While explaining good governance, he said that work done in public interest is good governance. The Ramraja of Lord Ram, and the tenure of

Emperor Vikramaditya and Emperor Ashoka are considered synonymous with administrative efficiency and good governance. He told them to make the best use of their time and try to move forward based on their ability and capability. **Create an identity by working like a Karmayogi while remaining fearless and selfless**

Chief Minister Yadav encouraged the trainees to create their own identity by working like a Karmayogi while remaining fearless and selfless, to spread their aura in the society on the basis of transparency, honesty and dutifulness in their working style and inspired all to adopt new disciplines and innovations. He also wished them a bright future.

Training to nine Indian Administrative Service, 15 Indian Forest Service and

127 State Civil Service trainees

Additional Chief Secretary and Director General Academy of Administration Vinod Kumar said that the main objective of basic training is to orient the selected talents towards public service. The administrative structure of Madhya Pradesh, administrative system, rules, and procedures have been included in the training. Along with this, the participants will also be introduced to the social, economic, geographical, and cultural aspects of the state.

Director Academy of Administration Mujibur Rahman said that 9 trainees of the Indian Administrative Service, 15 of the Indian Forest Service, and 127 trainees of State Civil Service will receive training in the joint basic training program.



General Nursing and Midwifery students stage a protest demanding posting in Government jobs, at Government JP hospital in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav with Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vashishth during a meeting in New Delhi on Monday. BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma and BJP Bhopal district president Sumit Pachouri were also present on the occasion. Pioneer photo

LG assures AAP govt to take up water supply matter with Haryana govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Monday assured the AAP government that he will take up the water supply matter with the Haryana government. He advised the AAP government's ministers to not indulge in 'blame game'. Earlier, Delhi Water Minister Atishi Marlena and Delhi Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj met Lieutenant Governor Saxena urging him to intervene in the water crisis issue and ask the BJP ruled Haryana to release water for Delhi. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar and Chief Executive Officer of Delhi Jal Board (DJB) A. Anbarasu.

The AAP led Delhi Government has accused the Haryana government of releasing insufficient water to Delhi amid the ongoing water crisis. After the meeting, Atishi said

the LG assured them that he would talk to the Haryana government to ensure that the national capital's share of 1,050 cusecs water is released in the Munak canal. Saxena also advised the ministers to avoid blame games and prevent wastage of water. "The issue of 54 per cent unaccounted water and 40 per cent leakage in Delhi due to theft and unrepaired pipelines was again flagged by the LG and it was agreed by the Minister that a concrete plan of action for addressing this issue will soon be prepared by DJB. The LG assured that he will take up the matter of supply with the Government of Haryana and request them to give extra water on human grounds. LG also assured that the issue of staffing at DJB and additional burden on the CEO (DJB) will be addressed suitably at the earliest," an official statement by Raj Niwas stated. A team of Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) officials, along with senior officials from GNCTD and

Government of Haryana, inspected the supply of water at the head of Munak Canal in Delhi on Sunday's evening. "The team found the water supply from Haryana to be sufficient," it stated. The inspection report revealed that Haryana on Sunday, had released 2289 cusec of water at Munak in Haryana and the quantity of water released from Munak to Kakori for supply exclusively to Delhi, was 1161.084 cusec against the quota of 1050 cusec of water. "However, water received from Munak Canal at Bawana in Delhi was 960.78 cusec, amounting to a loss of 200 cusec, i.e. 18 per cent, on that date. These losses should be less than 5 per cent as per the accepted norms," it stated. In a statement, the LG office said Saxena assured the ministers that he will take up the matter of supply with the government of Haryana and request them to give extra water on humanitarian grounds.

Press statement issued by LG office over meeting on water situation was misleading: Saurabh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Monday alleged that the press statement issued by the Delhi Lieutenant Governor House following a meeting over water situation in the national capital was "misleading" and demanded that the video of the meeting be put in the public domain. There was no immediate reaction from the office of LG Vinai Kumar Saxena, who had met Delhi ministers Atishi and Bharadwaj and assured them to take up the water supply matter with the Haryana government. During a press conference, Bharadwaj was asked that the facts stated by Atishi and the LG Office press statement were different. Delhi Urban Development Minister said, "It is very unfortunate that the discussion that happened during the meeting is being presented in a wrong and false manner in the press statement. The press statement is quite misleading and portrays facts in a wrong light." Meanwhile, the AAP held a protest on Monday at Haryana Bhawan over its allegation that the neighbouring state is not releasing Delhi's share of the Yamuna's water, leading to a shortage in the city. Scores of AAP workers, including party MLA Kuldeep Kumar, raised slogans against the BJP-led Haryana government. Bhardwaj claimed that there were three video cameras recording the proceedings of the meeting and said, "You have video-recorded the meeting. Please put it in the public domain. Let the peo-

ple of Delhi and the country see the discussion. Please make the video public. Let people see what discussion happens between ministers and LG. He cannot make it public because people will get to know his reality. This proves that Lt Governor and his office issue misleading press releases which is a criminal offence." Bharadwaj also alleged that when he and Atishi reached the LG Secretariat for the meeting, the security personnel asked them to deposit their phones outside. "We were asked to keep our phones outside and when we questioned, there was discussion among the police personnel and they allowed us to take our phones in the meeting. When we apprised LG sir over the matter, he apologised and said there must have been some miscommunication," he said. Further, the AAP Kondli MLA said, "The BJP is playing dirty politics and depriving the people of Delhi of their share of water at a time when heatwave conditions are prevailing in north India. The Lt Governor should intervene as the representative of the people of Delhi," Kumar said. After the meeting, Atishi said the Lt Governor assured them that he will talk to the Haryana government to ensure that the national capital's share of 1,050 cusecs water is released in the Munak canal. The LG Office in a statement said Saxena assured the ministers that he will take up the matter of supply with the government of Haryana and request them to give extra water on humanitarian grounds. Saxena also advised the ministers to avoid blame game and prevent wastage of water, it said.

Couple nabbed for smuggling stolen mobiles

New Delhi: A 26-year-old man, his wife and their two associates were arrested for allegedly smuggling stolen mobile phones to Nepal via Bihar. According to police, the arrested accused have been identified as Arjun (26), his 24-year-old wife, and their two associates Himanshu (19) and Jagannath Kumar (28). Arjun, the mastermind of the gang, is previously involved in more than 14 cases of attempt to murder, robbery, snatching, theft, and the arms act, police said. "On May 19, a secret information was received about Arjun that he was expected to come at Kamla Market to move/send snatched/stolen mobile phones to a preferred market in Nepal by bus or train and that he may

also possess illegal weapon," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (central) M. Harsha Vardhan. A team was formed to nab the accused. On the basis of information, the team laid a trap near Ajmeri Gate red light close to Kamla Market, he added. "The team members spotted a car near Ajmeri Gate red light and apprehended Arjun and his wife. While searching them, a loaded pistol along with seven live rounds were recovered from Arjun," the DCP said. "Upon searching of the car, the team uncovered a cache of stolen mobile phones concealed within cartons in the car's trunk, amounting to approximately 150 devices of various brands, 140 adapters of mobile chargers and 90 USB cables," he added.



Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel calls on Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar in New Delhi on Monday. Pioneer photo

Maihar police seize 50 kgs of Cannabis

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Maihar district police have arrested drug peddlers smuggling Cannabis weighing 50 kg worth Rs 3 lakh along with this, a four-wheeler used to transport the drugs illegally. The police have also arrested 7 smugglers in the case. On June 8, 2024, the Badera police station of Maihar district conducted a checking campaign during this, Innova car number MP19CA2888 and Baleno car number MP

19CB 9579 near Patehra on village Bhadanpur Karmatia Road were stopped and when the cars were checked police seized a total of 50 kg filled in two sacks from the Innova car. The nabbed accused were identified as Saddam and Aman Khan alias Sheikh who were travelling in the car, were arrested. Five other smugglers, Maqsood Khan, Mohammad Tahir, Arun Dahiya, Mohit Sharma and Batla were also arrested.

Meanwhile taking action against illegal betting and gambling, a team of Kotwali Police Station and Mandi Police Station I raided a farm house near village Mudla on the information received from an informer, in which 12 people were caught gambling from whom Rs 27.5 lakh in cash, 16 mobile phones, three four-wheelers were recovered. The arrested accused were identified as Manoj of Nasrullaganj Sehore, Brijesh Yadav of Dewas, Sandeep

Dubey of Sehore, Aqak Ali of Bhopal, Praveen Sharma of Bhopal, Nasir Qureshi of Ashta, Zoheb of Shajapur, Yogesh Agarwal of Harda, Naveen Sharma of Sehore, Sher Khan of Ujjain, Quresh Khan of Ujjain and Ibrahim Qureshi of Bhopal. In the preliminary investigation against the arrested accused Naveen Sharma has been found to have committed crimes of gambling and betting in police station Ashta and police station Rehti in the past.

Gangster nabbed from Kalindi Kunj

New Delhi: A gangster was arrested from Delhi's Kalindi Kunj area while on his way to exact revenge on a person with whom his wife was living when he was in jail.

The officials said that the gangster was identified as Akash alias Kana, a resident of Madanpur Khadar. He was searching for one Ranjan, a member of Shahrukh gang, associated with Lawrence Bishnoi gang, who took his wife, they said.

Ranjan's house was set on fire by Akash in the intervening night of August 31 and September 1, police said. "The accused Kana is involved in multiple cases, including a robbery-cum-murder case in Sarita Vihar.

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.
Corporate Office: Unit No. 802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V. Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400069
Bhopal Branch: Plot No.11, 3rd Floor, Alankar Complex, Ward No.47, Zone-2, M.P. Nagar, Above ICICI Bank, Bhopal-462991

Aadhar
Housing Finance Ltd

POSSESSION NOTICE Appendix IV (for immovable property)				
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) under the Securitisation 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, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of AHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.				
S. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Co Borrower(s) (Name of the Branch)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1	(Loan Code No. 00600002202/ Bhopal Branch) Narender Sahu (Borrower), Suman Seema Sahu (Co-Borrower), Manoj Kumar (Guarantor)	All that part & parcel of property bearing, House On Plot No D 2 Ward No 74 Kailash Nagar Semra Kalan Near Semra Mandi Govt School, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh - 462001. Boundaries: East- Property No. 05, West- Road, North- Property No D-01, South- Property No. D-03 and D-04	11-08-2023 & ₹ 16,66,339/-	06-06-2024
2	(Loan Code No. 00600003195/ Bhopal Branch) Mini Kumar Shashi (Borrower), Arthi S Kumar (Co-Borrower)	All that part & parcel of property bearing, House On Shed No 39 Ambedkar Nagar Housing Board Colony Ward No 28 Near Jahela Hospital, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh - 462010 Boundaries: East- Shed No.40, West- Shed No. 38, North- Shed No. 07, South- Colony Road	08-06-2023 & ₹ 11,12,707/-	07-06-2024

Place : Madhya Pradesh
Date : 11-06-2024

Authorised Officer
Aadhar Housing Finance Limited

Indian Bank

INDIAN BANK : JAHANGIRABAD BRANCH , BHOPAL

Notice under Sec. 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002
Notice under Sec. 13 (2) of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 Sent on 12.04.2024 by Regd. Post to
1. M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society
Village Rasuliya Gosai, Sikandarabad Road, Ratibad, Tehsil Huzur, Bhopal, M.P. - 462044,
2. Mr. Swapnil Rai S/o Shri Narayan Rai (Chairman/Guarantor),
H.No. 101, D K Devsthal, Phase-I Bawadia Kalan, Bhopal, M.P. - 462026
3. Mr. Imran Khan S/o Shri Abdul Gaffar Khan (Secretary/Guarantor),
3/B9, Sahara Estate, Bangresia, Tehsil Huzur, Bhopal, M.P. - 462045
4. Mr. Vaibhav Raj Singh S/o Shri Rajkumar Singh (Vice Chairman/Guarantor),
E2/35, Officers Colony, Devendra Nagar, Raiপুর, Chattisgarh
5. Mrs. Deepika Rai W/o Mr. Swapnil Rai (Guarantor)
H.No. 101, D K Devsthal, Phase-I Bawadia Kalan, Bhopal, M.P. - 462026
Sub: Your Loan account M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society (account No. 50389490679, 58000954819, 58004764064, 50406323576) with Indian Bank JAHANGIRABAD Branch – Reg.
You committed default in repayment of loans to the tune of **Rs. 1,41,27,345.00 (Rupees One crore forty one lakhs twenty seven thousand three hundred forty five only)** with further interest at the agreed rate from **12.04.2024** till date of repayment. The Bank, issued notice under the Act on 12.04.2024 calling upon you to repay the outstanding amount of **Rs. 1,41,27,345.00 (Rupees One crore forty one lakhs twenty seven thousand three hundred forty five only)** as on date. The notice was sent to you by Regd post has been returned unserved. A copy of the same is affixed at Survey No. 476, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, P.H. No. 41 (old no. 32) Village Rasuliya Gusai, Sikandarabad Road, Ratibad, Tehsil Huzur, Dist. Bhopal & Diverted Land at Survey No. 486,487,536 (old), 486/2, 487/2, 536/2 (new), Village Rasuliya Gusai, R.N.M. No. -05, PH No. 32 (old), 41 (New), Near Sikandarabad Village, Ratibad, Tehsil Huzur, Dist. Bhopal in the name of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society Area-42.5 decimal (equal to 1719.766 sq. mtr.). **Boundaries:** North: Land of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society., South: Land of Khasra No. 536, 487, East: Land of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society, West: Land of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society & Mrs. Ragini, Kanishk & Others

SCHEDULE
The specific details of the assets in which security interest is created are enumerated hereunder:
Mortgaged Assets : 1. All the part and parcel of property bearing freehold land and building situated at Survey No. 476, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, P.H. No. 41 (old no. 32) Village Rasuliya Gusai, Sikandarabad Road, Ratibad, Tehsil Huzur, Dist. Bhopal admeasuring 20500 sq.mtr. in the name of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Educational Society
Boundaries: North: Other Property and Nala, South: Other's Land of Kh No. 494, 495, East: Others Land of Kh. No. 495, 494, 493, West: Land of Kh. No. 402 & Road
Mortgaged Assets : 2. All the part and parcel of the Freehold Diverted Land at Survey No. 486,487,536 (old), 486/2, 487/2, 536/2 (new), Village Rasuliya Gusai, R.N.M. No. -05, PH No. 32 (old), 41 (New), Near Sikandarabad Village, Ratibad, Tehsil Huzur, Dist. Bhopal in the name of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society Area-42.5 decimal (equal to 1719.766 sq. mtr.). **Boundaries:** North: Land of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society., South: Land of Khasra No. 536, 487, East: Land of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society, West: Land of M/s IASSCOM Fortune Education Society & Mrs. Ragini, Kanishk & Others

Authorized Officer
Chief Manager of Indian Bank, Zonal Office- Bhopal

Bypolls for 13 Assembly seats in 7 States on July 10

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Monday announced bypolls to 13 assembly constituencies across seven states, including four in West Bengal, on July 10. The bypolls are to be held against vacancies created either due to deaths or resignation of incumbent members.

The assembly seats going for bypolls are Rupauli (Bihar), Raiganj, Ranaghat Dakshin, Bagda and Maniktala (all West Bengal), Vikravandi (Tamil Nadu), Amarwara (Madhya Pradesh), Badrinath and Manglaur (Uttarakhand), Jalandhar West (Punjab) and Dehra. Hamirpur and Nalagarh (Himachal Pradesh).

The notification for the elections will be issued on June 14, the last date for filing of nomination papers is June 21, the poll papers will be scrutinised on June 24 and the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers is June 26. The bypolls will be held on July 10 and the counting of votes will be on July 13. The Election Commission said the bypolls have to be completed before July 15. The bypoll to the Jalandhar West assembly constituency was necessitated by the resignation of Sheetal Angural. Angural was AAP's Jalandhar West (SC) lawmaker. He resigned from the assembly on March 28, a day after he and then-Jalandhar MP Sushil Rinku switched over to the BJP



from AAP. During the 2022 assembly polls, Angural defeated Rinku, who was the Congress candidate, from the Jalandhar West constituency. The Amarwara assembly seat in MP was won by Kamlesh Shah on a Congress ticket in the November 2023 elections when he defeated BJP nominee Monika Manmohan Shah Batti by a margin of 25,086 votes. The byelection was necessitated after Kamlesh Shah, a three-time Congress MLA from Amarwara, resigned on March 29 this year and joined the ruling BJP soon after. Shah subsequently resigned from the state assembly. Historically, since 1972, the BJP has won the Amarwara (ST) seat, twice—in 1990 and 2008—while the Congress bagged it nine times. The Gondwana Gantantra Party (GGP), a tribal outfit, secured this constituency once in 2003. Bypolls for three assembly seats in Himachal Pradesh represented by three

Independent lawmakers who resigned from the assembly and joined the BJP. The three Independent MLAs -- Ashish Sharma (Hamirpur), Hoshiyar Singh (Dehra) and KL Thakur (Nalagarh) -- resigned from the assembly on March 22 and joined the BJP the following day. The by-election to the Rupauli assembly seat, a part of the Purnea Lok Sabha constituency in Bihar, was necessitated following the resignation of sitting JD(U) MLA Bima Bharti, who recently switched over to the RJD and contested the Lok Sabha polls as its candidate from the Purnea seat. The Badrinath seat in Uttarakhand fell vacant after Congress MLA Rajendra Bhandari resigned from the House in March and joined the BJP. The bypoll to the Manglaur seat was necessitated by the death of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA Sarwat Karim Ansari last October.

Sonia meets Bangladesh PM



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi met with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina here on Monday and held discussions on a wide range of issues. Sonia Gandhi was accompanied by her son and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, besides her daughter and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. "CPP Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi, and General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra called on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina Wazed this afternoon in New Delhi," the Congress said in a social media post. "We discussed a wide range of topics to further strengthen the natural bond that India

and Bangladesh share, based on trust, cooperation, and a commitment to mutual growth," Rahul Gandhi said in a post on his WhatsApp channel. He also shared a video of the meeting with Hasina. The Congress also shared the video, besides pictures of the meeting and said they discussed a wide range of topics to strengthen the India-Bangladesh bond. The photos showed Hasina greeting Sonia Gandhi with a hug. The Gandhi family shares a close bond with Sheikh Hasina's family. Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and Priyanka also met with the visiting Bangladesh delegation accompanying the prime minister.

Hasina arrived in Delhi on Saturday to attend Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony on June 9.

IAF Chief to attend graduation ceremony at AFA



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari will attend the graduation ceremony at the Air Force Academy (AFA), Dundigal, in Hyderabad on June 15, officials said here on Monday. This will mark the successful completion of pre-commissioning training of flight cadets of the flying and ground duty branches of the Indian Air Force (IAF), the defence ministry said in a statement. "The Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) of the 213 Officers' Course at the Air Force Academy (AFA), Dundigal, Hyderabad, will be held on 15 June, 2024, with traditional military splendour, to mark the successful completion of pre-commissioning training of flight cadets of the Flying and Ground Duty branches of the Indian Air Force (IAF)," it said.

Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari would be the Reviewing Officer of the parade, the statement said. During the function, he will confer the President's Commission to the graduating trainees.

President Murmu meets Maldivian counterpart, Nepal PM at Rashtrapati Bhavan



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday met her Maldivian counterpart Mohamed Muizzu and Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here. During the meeting with Prachanda, Murmu said Nepal is a priority partner under India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and conveyed the country's commitment to "further strengthen our unique ties". Both leaders discussed ways to take forward the developmental initiatives across various sectors in Nepal, which are benefiting the people of both countries, a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. Welcoming President Muizzu, Murmu conveyed her greetings to the new government and the people of the Maldives and

expressed confidence that the island nation will continue on the path of prosperity and development under his leadership. "Both leaders noted the longstanding and multifaceted ties between two countries and highlighted important pillars of our wide-ranging bilateral cooperation including people-to-people linkages, capacity building cooperation, economic and trade relations and development cooperation," the statement said. The President expressed hope that India-Maldives relations will continue to strengthen in the years to come, it added. Both Prachanda and Muizzu were among seven leaders from India's neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region who attended the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Council of Ministers here on Sunday.

Modi did no favours to farmers by releasing fund due to them: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did no special favour to farmers by releasing the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi fund, which was due to them a month ago but delayed by the poll code, the Congress said on Monday. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the release of the 17th instalment of funds, which Modi is touting as the first decision of his new government, is the legitimate entitlement due to farmers, according to the policy of his government. If he is genuinely concerned about farmers, the prime minister should grant legal status to minimum support price (MSP) for their produce, announce a farm loan waiver and provide guaranteed insurance payment directly into their bank accounts, he said. Taking charge as prime minister in his third term, Modi on Monday signed his first file authorising the release of the 17th instalment of the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi fund, amounting to nearly Rs 20,000 crore that will benefit around 9.3 crore farmers. After signing on to the release of the fund, Modi said, "Ours is a government fully committed to 'kisan kalyan (farmers' welfare)'.

Jaishankar holds meetings with leaders of neighbouring countries

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister S Jaishankar on Monday held separate bilateral meetings with Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe. Jaishankar also called on Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, Bhutan PM Tshering Tobgay and Seychelles Vice President Ahmed Afif. The seven leaders from India's neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region were in Delhi to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Council of Ministers on Sunday. "Delighted to call on President Dr Mohamed Muizzu of Maldives today in New Delhi. Look forward to India and Maldives working together closely," Jaishankar said on X. Jaishankar was the external affairs minister in Modi's previous Cabinet. He took oath as a Union minister on Sunday. It was Muizzu's first visit to India after he became the island nation's president on November 17 last year. The ties between India and the



Maldives came under severe strain since Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, took charge of the top office. Within hours of his oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from his country. The Indian military personnel were replaced by civilians earlier this month. After his meeting with Hasina, Jaishankar said, "Honoured to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh today. The India-Bangladesh Maitri continues to advance." On his meeting with Wickremesinghe, Jaishankar said, "Appreciate President Ranil Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka for receiving me this morning in New Delhi. Recognized the steady progress in India-Sri Lanka relations."

"Great to meet PM Tshering Tobgay of Bhutan. Spoke about our unique and multifaceted friendship," Jaishankar said on the meeting with Tobgay. He said the meeting with Mauritius Prime Minister Jugnauth, reflected the special bond between the two countries. On the meeting with the Nepalese prime minister, Jaishankar said: "So glad to call on PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' of Nepal. Discussed the growing various facets of India-Nepal cooperation." Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay and Vice-President of Seychelles Ahmed Afif also attended Modi's swearing-in ceremony.

Celebrities congratulate Modi on securing third term as PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Film stars Chiranjeevi, Sidharth Malhotra, Varun Dhawan, Kamal Haasan and Paresh Rawal on Monday congratulated Narendra Modi for taking oath as the prime minister for the third consecutive term. Modi, 73, was sworn in as the PM for the third time in a row at a grand ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday evening here. He became only the second prime minister after Jawaharlal Nehru to secure a third consecutive term. Modi, 73, was sworn in as the PM for the third time in a row at a grand ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday evening here. He became only the second prime minister after Jawaharlal Nehru to secure a third consecutive term. Telugu superstar Chiranjeevi, who was named a Padma Vibushan recipient earlier this year, extended his wishes to the prime minister on X. "Hearty Congratulations to Shri @narendramodi ji on being sworn in as the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India for a historic third term! I wish you and all the wonderful ministers in your cabinet all the strength to take our country forward on the path of pros-

perity and glory," he wrote. His son and "RRR" star Ram Charan also congratulated Modi. "Congratulations to India's beloved Prime Minister @narendramodi ji and #NDAGovernment commencing your historic third term. Looking forward to a more prosperous India under your reign. Jai Hind #Narendramodi #PMOath #ModiCabinet," Charan said. "PM @narendramodi, congratulations for a historic 3rd term. Jai Hind," wrote Malhotra on his Instagram Stories. His "Student of the Year" co-star Varun Dhawan tagged Modi on X and said: "May you guide our country to greater heights. Hari Om." Haasan, founder of political party Makkal Needhi Maiam in Tamil Nadu, urged the prime minister to work together to create a "more inclusive India". "Nations that harness their greatest strength - their people - shall accomplish the greatest glories. Congratulations to the Hon.



Prime Minister of India, Shri @narendramodi ji, on your third term. "In the spirit of national interest, unity, and patriotic duty, let the elected representatives of the 18th Lok Sabha work together to fulfil the dream of

a stronger, brighter, and more inclusive India. Jai Hind!" he wrote in an X post. Rawal, former BJP MP from Ahmedabad East Lok Sabha seat, said Indian citizens look forward to more terms under the Modi government.

"The people of India extend their heartfelt best wishes to our respected leader Shri @narendramodi ji on this historic occasion of him becoming the Prime Minister for the third time. Remember one thing that the people love you a lot, so they will not just count till three, they will keep counting further. Jai Ho. Jaikar Ho." "Congratulations to Shri Narendra Modiji on your remarkable third term as our Prime Minister. India's future certainly looks bright with your leadership at the helm," wrote Malayalam superstar Mohanlal on X. He also congratulated actor and BJP's sole MP from Kerala Suresh Gopi (Thrissur) and Kerala BJP General Secretary George Kurian on being sworn in as @PMOIndia for the third consecutive term," said Tamil cinema star Vijay, according to his political party Tamilaga

Vettri Kazhagam's official X page. In an X post, Suneil Shetty wished Modi "continued strength and wisdom in your leadership". The prime minister's swearing-in ceremony was attended by a host of film celebrities, including Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Rajinikanth, BJP MP-elect from Mandi Kangana Ranaut, Anil Kapoor, Anupam Kher, Raveena Tandon, Vikrant Massey, Anuradha Paudwal, Rajkumar Hirani, Mahaveer Jain, and Kailash Kher. After the ceremony, Kher shared the video of Modi taking oath on his official X page. "An oath that makes Indians feel empowered and secure! Jai Hind! #PrimeMinister #India," the actor captioned the clip. "Best wishes, Prime Minister @narendramodi ji, on your swearing-in. May your tenure be marked by progress, strength, and unwavering commitment to the nation's prosperity. Bharat Mata ki Jai!" Kapoor wrote on the microblogging site.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MODI 3.0		
SL. NO.	NAME	MINISTRY
		Prime Minister and also in-charge of: Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Department of Atomic Energy; Department of Space; All important policy issues; and All other portfolios not allocated to any Minister.
CABINET MINISTERS		
1.	Raj Nath Singh	Minister of Defence.
2.	Amit Shah	Minister of Home Affairs; and Minister of Cooperation.
3.	Nitin Jairam Gadkari	Minister of Road Transport and Highways.
4.	Jagat Prakash Nadda	Minister of Health and Family Welfare; and Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
5.	Shivraj Singh Chouhan	Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; and Minister of Rural Development.
6.	Nirmala Sitharaman	Minister of Finance; and Minister of Corporate Affairs.
7.	Dr. S Jaishankar	Minister of External Affairs.
8.	Shri Manohar Lal	Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs; and Minister of Power.
9.	H. D. Kumaraswamy	Minister of Heavy Industries; and Minister of Steel.
10.	Pyush Goyal	Minister of Commerce and Industry.
11.	Dharmendra Pradhan	Minister of Education.
12.	Jitan Ram Manjhi	Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
13.	Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh Sarbananda Sonowal	Minister of Panchayati Raj; and Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
14.	Dr. Virendra Kumar KR Naidu	Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
15.	Prahalad Joshi	Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment.
16.		Minister of Civil Aviation.
17.		Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution; and Minister of New and Renewable Energy.
18.	Jual Oram	Minister of Tribal Affairs.
19.	Giriraj Singh	Minister of Textiles.
20.	Ashwini Vaishnav	Minister of Railways; Minister of Information and Broadcasting; and Minister of Electronics and Information Technology.
21.	Jyotiraditya M. Scindia	Minister of Communications; and Minister of Development of North Eastern Region.
22.	Bhupender Yadav	Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
23.	Ganendra S Shekhawat	Minister of Culture; and Minister of Tourism.
24.	Anpurna Devi	Minister of Women and Child Development.
25.	Shri Kiren Rijiju	Minister of Parliamentary Affairs; and Minister of Minority Affairs.
26.	Hardeep Singh Puri	Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
27.	Mansukh Mandaviya	Minister of Labour and Employment; and Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports.
28.	G. Kishan Reddy	Minister of Coal; and Minister of Mines.
29.	Chirag Paswan	Minister of Food Processing Industries.
30.	C R Patil	Minister of Jal Shakti.
MINISTERS OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)		
1.	Rao Inderjit Singh	Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Planning; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Culture.
2.	Jitendra Singh	Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Science and Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences; Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office; Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Minister of State in the Department of Atomic Energy; and Minister of State in the Department of Space.
3.	Arjun Ram Meghwal	Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Law and Justice; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
4.	Jadhav P Ganpatrao	Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Ayush; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
5.	Jayant Chaudhary	Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Education.
MINISTERS OF STATE		
1.	Jitin Prasada	Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
2.	Shripad Yesso Naik	Minister of State in the Ministry of Power; and Minister of State in the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
3.	Pankaj Chaudhary	Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance.
4.	Krishan Pal	Minister of State in the Ministry of Cooperation.
5.	Ramdas Athawale	Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
6.	Ram Nath Thakur	Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
7.	Nityanand Rai	Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs.
8.	Anupriya Patel	Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
9.	V Somanna	Minister of State in the Ministry of Jal Shakti; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways.
10.	CS Pemmasani	Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications.
11.	SP Singh Baghel	Minister of State in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
12.	SS Karandlaje	Minister of State in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
13.	Kirtivardhan Singh	Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; and Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs.
14.	BL Verma	Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
15.	Shantanu Thakur	Minister of State in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
16.	Suresh Gopi	Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism.
17.	L. Murugan	Minister of State in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
18.	Ajay Tamta	Minister of State in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
19.	Bandi Sanjay Kumar	Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs.
20.	Kamlesh Paswan	Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development.
21.	Bhagirath Choudhary	Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
22.	Satish Chandra Dubey	Minister of State in the Ministry of Coal; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Mines.
23.	Sanjay Seth	Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence.
24.	Ravneet Singh	Minister of State in the Ministry of Food Processing Industries; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways.
25.	Durgadas Uikey	Minister of State in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
26.	Raksha Nikhil Khadse	Minister of State in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
27.	Sukanta Majumdar	Minister of State in the Ministry of Education; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.
28.	Savitri Thakur	Minister of State in the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
29.	Tokhan Sahu	Minister of State in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
30.	RB Choudhary	Minister of State in the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
31.	Bhupathi RS Varma	Minister of State in the Ministry of Heavy Industries; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Steel.
32.	Harsh Malhotra	Minister of State in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
33.	NJ Bambhaniya	Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
34.	Murildhar Mohol	Minister of State in the Ministry of Cooperation; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
35.	George Kurian	Minister of State in the Ministry of Minority Affairs; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
36.	Pabitra Margherita	Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Textiles.

With coffers running dry, Chandrababu as CM faces huge task to deliver super six promise

PTI ■ AMARAVATI (ANDHRA PRADESH)

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu who is set to take the reins of power in Andhra Pradesh shortly will have the daunting task of making bleak coffers ring to fulfill the “Super Six” that his party promised during the run-up to the recently concluded Assembly polls. Naidu is scheduled to be sworn in as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on June 12. As a precursor to his journey of financial challenges, Naidu needs over Rs 4,500 crore to disburse social pensions to about 65 lakh beneficiaries by July 1. As part of his “Super Six”, Naidu promised to hike the monthly pension to Rs 4,000 from the existing Rs 3,000 along with a backlog of Rs 3,000 (Rs 1,000 for April, May and June) from July. All together it would cost the exchequer Rs 4,500 crore in July, besides salaries to employees and pensioners which is pegged at another Rs 6,000 crore.



The new TDP government will have to mop up over Rs 10,000 crore to fulfill the financial requirements for July, a retired senior bureaucrat said. According to him, the state government has a committed expenditure of nearly Rs 1.30 lakh crore annually to meet

the requirements of salaries, pensions, loan repayments and interests. According to the Reserve Bank website, the Andhra government offered to sell securities worth Rs 2,000 crore on June 11 through auction. The state needs Rs 2,600 crore

every month to meet the social pension alone. Similarly, as part of the manifesto, the Telugu Desam Party promised free travel to women in government-run buses. An official of Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation said the APSRTC earns about Rs 450 to Rs 500 crore through ticket revenue monthly and women passengers are expected to be in the range of 35-40 per cent. He, however, said there was no study on women travellers done so far in the state. According to him, the Telangana RTC which implements a similar scheme estimated that women constitute nearly 50 per cent of the total commuters. Towards the free travel scheme, the new government will have to reimburse nearly Rs 2,000 crore annually to the APSRTC. Under “Super Six,” the TDP also promised Rs 15,000 to every school-going child per annum. The outgoing YRS Congress Party government had earmarked Rs 6,500 crore

towards a similar scheme called “Amma Vodi.” With Naidu removing the cap on the number of beneficiaries, the amount may go up substantially. The party also promised three free cooking gas cylinders to every household per year and Rs 20,000 annual financial assistance to every farmer, among others. According to the government budget document 2023-24, the state has Rs 4.83 lakh crore public debt (33.3 per cent of GSDP), besides Rs 1.39 lakh crore government guarantees and Rs 26,296 crore of loans from the Centre. The total Revenue Receipts in the Budget (vote-on-account) for 2024-25 are estimated at Rs 2,05,352.19 crore while the expenditure was pegged at Rs 2,30,110.41 crore. While launching the YSRCP manifesto during the run-up to the recently concluded Assembly polls, the outgoing Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy alleged it will cost an exorbitant Rs 1.21 lakh crore per annum to fulfil the TDP’s poll promises.

People from Manipur taking refuge in Assam after fresh violence

PTI ■ SILCHAR (ASSAM)

People affected by fresh incidents of violence in Manipur have started arriving in Assam’s Cachar district in search of safety, the local MLA said on Monday. Security along the inter-state border has been tightened, a police officer said. Two police outposts, a forest beat office and at least 70 houses were torched in Jiribam by suspected militants on Saturday, leading to fresh tension in the neighbouring state which has been witnessing ethnic violence since May last year. Residents of the bordering areas claimed that about 600 people have taken shelter in various parts of Lakhipur in Cachar district, entering the state by crossing the Jiri river over the last four days. They are taking shelter in villages at Jirighat and Lakhipur, though no government relief camp has been opened for them, they said. “The people who have come from Manipur are being allowed to stay here safely.



The local administration is taking all steps to ensure no spread of any violence here,” Lakhipur MLA Kaushik Rai told PTI. Cachar Superintendent of Police Nomal Mahatto said that police and other security forces have been deployed in the border areas. “There are no reports of any untoward incident in Cachar so far. Police patrolling in Jirighat on the border as well as along the national highway and nearby villages is being conducted,” he told PTI. The SP added that the situation on the Assam side is completely under control and the police are keeping a strict

vigil following the violence in Jiribam. Jiribam, which has a diverse ethnic composition of Meiteis, Muslims, Nagas, Kukis and non-Manipuris, had so far remained unaffected by the ethnic strife that has been raging in the northeastern state since May last year. The MLA said that most of the people who have entered Cachar are Kukis and Hmars. The ethnic conflict between Imphal valley-based Meiteis and hill-based Kukis began in May last year and led to the deaths of over 200 people, besides rendering thousands of people homeless.

Naxal problem now confined to only five Jharkhand districts: DGP

PTI ■ RANCHI

Coordinated and concerted offensives against Naxalites in Jharkhand have restricted their activities to only five of the 24 districts, with Chaibasa being the most affected, DGP Ajay Kumar Singh said on Monday. Continuous operations are underway to minimise the threat posed by the rebels, and their impact is evident in the state, Singh added. He made these remarks while speaking to reporters after a review meeting on key issues including law and order, the Naxal menace, and crime control. The DGP expressed confidence that the success of anti-Naxal operations would soon lead to a significant reduction in incidents. Police have detailed information about Naxalites’ movements and hideouts, and operations have been intensified accordingly, he added. Over 400 Naxalites were arrested last year, he said. Singh also mentioned that



special campaigns are ongoing to curb drug trafficking and actions have been taken against peddlers under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, resulting in substantial opium recoveries. The Jharkhand High Court recently criticised the state government for its failure to effectively tackle drug trafficking. Other issues discussed at the meeting included the recent Lok Sabha elections, crime

control, law and order issues, and the registration and disposal of cases under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. “The Lok Sabha elections were incident-free. Discussions also covered the upcoming Assembly elections scheduled for later this year,” Singh added. The meeting was attended by SPs from various districts, DIGs, IGs, and other senior officials.

Congress to face consequences in Maharashtra polls for opposing interests of Marathas: Jarange

PTI ■ JALNA (MAHARASHTRA)

Quota activist Manoj Jarange on Monday claimed the Congress was speaking against the interests of the Maratha community and would face consequences in the Maharashtra assembly polls due later this year. Newly-elected Jalna Congress MP Kalyan Kale met Jarange at Antarwali Sarathi village, where the activist continued his indefinite fast for the third day, and said he supports the agitation for Maratha quota. The Congress MP also acknowledged the influence of the Maratha reservation movement in his victory in the recent Lok Sabha polls. Notably, Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar had opposed reservation to the Maratha community from the share of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Asked about Wadettiwar’s comments, Jarange told reporters, “The Congress took votes from the Maratha people in the recent Lok Sabha elections and now they are speaking against our interests. They will face the consequences in the Vidhan



Sabha elections.” In the recently held Lok Sabha polls, the Congress won 13 out of 17 seats it contested in the state as part of the opposition alliance. After meeting Jarange, Kale said, “Wadettiwar should not talk like this. I do not endorse his statement.” “Because of Jarange, I have been elected from the Jalna Lok Sabha constituency,” he added. In February this year, the Maharashtra legislature unanimously passed a bill

providing 10 per cent reservation for the Marathas in education and government jobs under a separate category. Jarange on Monday reiterated his demand for implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as “sage soyare” (blood relatives) of Maratha community members and sought a law to identify Kunbis as Marathas. Kunbi, an agrarian group, falls under the OBC category, and Jarange has been demanding

that Kunbi certificates be issued to all Marathas, thus making them eligible for quota benefits. Jarange on Monday also demanded implementation of the Hyderabad Gazette for the Kunbi records of Marathas. e said 57 lakh documents have been received proving that Marathas and Kunbis are the same. He also demanded withdrawal of cases against protesters seeking Maratha quota. Before this, the activist held the agitation over the quota issue between February 10 and 26. Political analysts believe unrest among the Maratha community members as well as farmers, and lack of major development projects in the Marathwada region contributed to the defeat of BJP-led Mahayuti candidates in the general elections. The Bharatiya Janata Party lost all four seats it contested in the region, including Jalna and Beed, where Union minister Raosaheb Danve and former state minister Pankaja Munde suffered defeats, respectively.

Telangana Govt to soon form farmers, education panels

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday announced that his government would soon constitute panels to deal with issues relating to education and farmers. Speaking at an event here, he said the minorities and women’s commissions receive complaints and makes recommendations and directives to the governments to address problems (of minorities and women). “Our government has specially identified two areas. One is education and the other is farming. Our government has decided to appoint a mechanism to continuously work towards addressing your problems through an education commission,” Reddy said. The proposed farmers commission would address the grievances of ryots with regard to spurious seeds, fertilizers and others and make recommendations for their welfare.

Bengaluru court sends Revanna to 14 days judicial custody

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A court here on Monday sent former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing charges of rape and sexual abuse against several women, to 14 days judicial custody. He was produced before the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) court as his Special Investigation Team (SIT) custody ended today. The court on May 31 remanded him to SIT custody till June 6, and later extended it till June 10. While in their custody, the SIT conducted a detailed investigation, including gathering evidence and interviewing witnesses, and questioned Revanna extensively about the allegations. The court, taking into consideration the gravity of the allegations and the evidence presented by the SIT, decided to remand him to judicial custody for 14 days, till June 24. The 33-year-old grandson of JD(S) patriarch and former PM H D Deve Gowda had failed in his bid to retain the Hassan parliamentary constituency in the recent polls. SIT officials arrested Revanna soon after he landed at Bengaluru’s Kempegowda International Airport from Germany on May 31. He had left for Germany on April 27, a day after Hassan went to the polls. A ‘Blue



Corner Notice’ seeking information on his whereabouts had earlier been issued by the Interpol, following a request by the SIT via the Central Bureau of Investigation. A Special Court for Elected Representatives issued an arrest warrant against Revanna on May 18, following an application moved by the SIT. He was arrested in a case registered against him in Holenarasipura in Hassan district on April 28. He was accused of sexually harassing a 47-year-old former maid. He is listed as accused number two, while his father and MLA, H D Revanna, is the primary accused. Prajwal Revanna has been booked in three cases of sexual assault. There are also charges of rape against him. The cases of sexual abuse came to light after pen-drives containing explicit videos allegedly involving Prajwal Revanna were reportedly circulated in Hassan, ahead of Lok Sabha polls there on April 26. JD(S) suspended

Karnataka Congress leader takes dig at NDA for not inducting from State any BCs/Dalit MP in Cabinet

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister and senior Congress leader G Parameshwara on Monday took a dig at the NDA government for not inducting any MP from backward classes and Dalit communities from the state into the union council of Ministers. He said it was evident that these communities have been “neglected” in the government formation exercise. “It looks like they (BJP/NDA) don’t want backward classes and Dalit communities. There are several people from such communities who have got elected in the state from that party,” Parameshwara told reporters here. “They could have considered them, but it is left to their discretion. But it is evident that these communities have been neglected,” the former president of the party’s state unit said.

Five Members of Parliament from Karnataka were part of the council of Ministers of the NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sworn in on Sunday. Nirmala Sitharaman (representing Rajya Sabha) and Pralhad Joshi of the BJP and JD(S) H D Kumaraswamy were sworn in as Cabinet Ministers, while BJP’s Shobha Karandlaje was inducted as Minister of State along with V Somanna. While Sitharaman and Joshi are Brahmins, Kumaraswamy and Karandlaje are from the dominant Vokkaliga community. Somanna hails from another dominant community in the state — Lingayats. The NDA got 19 out of 28 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka, with BJP winning 17 and JD(S) two. The ruling Congress in the state has won nine seats. Congratulating the five MPs who have become Ministers, Parameshwara said there are several State issues pending for

resolution before the Central government, like GST share and irrigation projects requiring its nod. “I’m confident that as the representatives of the state they will take them up on priority and try to resolve them,” he said, adding that in case they fail, it is a set back to them and their party. “We will wait and watch....If our issues are not resolved, naturally we will have to blame them.” On whether there were discussions in the ruling Congress in the state about appointing more Deputy CMs on the basis of communities, Parameshwara said: “There is no such thing, no such discussions have happened. Just because someone speaks it cannot be a party issue.” Whatever the party leadership decides is final, he said, adding, if they feel there is a need for such a move, they will decide. D K Shivakumar from the Vokkaliga community is the only Deputy CM in the Siddaramaiah-led Cabinet now.

Village in Beed grapples with poor road infrastructure, transportation

PTI ■ LATUR

For residents of Tat Borgaon in Beed, stepping out for work or to school every day means walking 3 km to the nearest bus stop, as services of the Maharashtra State Roads Transport (MSRTC) have not reached the village. With a population of 1,500, Tat Borgaon falls under the Ambajogai tehsil and borders Latur, Beed, and Dharashiv districts. According to villagers, the Zilla Parishad school in the village is equipped to teach students up to Class 4, and after that, children have to walk at least 3 km to schools in other villages to continue their studies. Talking to PTI, college lecturer Dr Pandurang Shitole, a native of the village, said, “Lack of a motorable road was one of the major issues. But now, under the leadership of Sarpanch

Vitthal Shitole, road construction is underway. Villagers have been waiting for bus services for many years.” Residents claim that local politicians came to the village for poll campaigns over the years, but the issues of road infrastructure and transportation remain unaddressed. Shubhangi Kaldate, a pharmacy student, said, “I have to walk 3 km daily to catch a bus to my college in Latur. This journey is arduous.” Meanwhile, a spokesperson of the MSRTC said the corporation operates buses up to Aapegaon, a few kilometres away from the village, as the road ahead is not motorable. The transport body has not received any demand for bus service from the village, he said. The MSRTC will send a traffic inspector to survey the road to the village before deciding to start the service, the official said.

LS polls: BSP’s vote share rose in Madhya Pradesh

PTI ■ BHOPAL

The Bahujan Samaj Party failed to win a seat in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls but its vote share increased marginally in Madhya Pradesh, with its candidates getting more than one lakh votes in several constituencies. While the Mayawati-led BSP had garnered 2.38 per cent votes in Madhya Pradesh in the 2019 polls, it rose to 3.28 per cent in 2024, data from the Election Commission showed.

Despite drubbing in LS polls, Mann says AAP won 3 seats, vote share also increased

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Despite his party facing a drubbing in the Lok Sabha polls, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday said the AAP won three of the total 13 seats and its vote share also increased as compared to the 2019 general elections. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the Congress dealt a blow to the ruling AAP and the opposition BJP and SAD, winning seven of the 13 Lok Sabha seats in the high-stakes polls in Punjab even as two independents registered a surprise victory. The AAP could manage to win only three seats -- Anandpur Sahib, Hoshiarpur and Sangrur -- as against the target of winning all 13 Lok Sabha constituencies in the just-concluded general elections. Replying to a question on the AAP’s performance in the Lok Sabha elections, Mann said that his party had won only one seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and its vote share was just 7.50 per cent. “This time, we won three seats. We wrested the Sangrur seat, which is our stronghold,” Mann told reporters in Mohali after offering prayers at a gurdwara on the occasion of the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev. He said the AAP’s vote share also increased to 26 per cent in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Mann said while the Congress got 35.50 lakh votes, the AAP polled 35.20 lakh votes in the



elections. Commenting on the rival parties’ performance, the chief minister said the Congress party’s vote share declined from 40 per cent in 2019 to 26 per cent this time. The BJP, which drew a blank, lost its stronghold Hoshiarpur, he said. Mann said many of the candidates of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) lost their security deposits. The AAP leader said his party is reviewing the poll outcome and added that wherever there were shortcomings, they will be removed. Responding to a question, Mann slammed the BJP for its slogan of ‘400 paar’, saying the saffron party fell short of the majority mark. “Now they (BJP) do not call the Modi government. They have started saying the NDA government. They have realised that they fell short of the majority mark. Now the dictatorship, which they earlier did, will not work now,” he said. Mann further said big faces in the BJP like Smriti Irani and Arjun Munda lost the elections.

Restive Valley

There has been a sudden uptick in terror incidents, coinciding with the plans to hold elections in J&K

Terror-mongers in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) don't share the enthusiasm and optimism of the local population and political parties, nor of the Election Commission's, to hold polls in the Union Territory anytime soon. There has been a noticeable increase in terror attacks in the region aligning with the conduct of the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. The stability and security of the region, which has a protracted history of conflict and violence, are seriously threatened by this escalation. There have been several insurgency stages in the area, especially since the late 1980s, when militant organisations wanted to combine Kashmir with Pakistan or grant it independence. A turning point was the Indian Government's abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, which gave J&K special autonomy. This action resulted in heightened tensions and an upsurge in militant activity. There are various reasons for the revival of militancy in the strife-torn region, which had only recently started



limping back to normal. Militant groups have been actively seeking new members, frequently using social media to draw in young Kashmiris. Furthermore, despite intense surveillance, cross-border infiltration continues to be a problem. For their part, militant organisations frequently seek to sabotage elections in order to cast doubt on the authority of the State machinery and to express opposition to the democratic process that the Indian Government wants to nurture in the region. The J&K security and administration are severely impacted by the rise in the incidents of terror attacks.

Additionally, these accidents cause disruptions to daily life, which hinders the growth of the region by impacting tourism, education and economic activity. In response to the increase in violence, the Indian Government and security services have taken a number of initiatives. In an effort to drive away militants, there has been a rise in cordon-and-search operations. These activities are intended to reduce collateral damage and are frequently predicated on particular intelligence inputs. Also, increased efforts have been made to win over the hearts and minds of the local population. Conversations with local authorities, youth involvement initiatives and development projects that enhance livelihoods and infrastructure are among other similar initiatives. In terms of politics, the Government is eager to hold elections in J&K to install a local Government, which it views as essential to ensuring long-term peace and stability. However, the current state of security presents considerable obstacles to this undertaking. Even while the Government and security services are working hard to pacify the area, there are still many obstacles in the way of long-term development and stability. In order to achieve enduring peace in J&K, it is imperative that the underlying reasons of alienation are addressed, effective governance is ensured and a sincere dialogue with all stakeholders is fostered.

PICTALK



Clouds hover over the skyline, in Bastar district

PTI

Sunshine on shoulders, a spring in my step!

We still have time to take a step back to pause, reflect and act, to leave a better world for the generations to come

Summers have been harsh this year. I do not recall Delhi temperatures shooting to 50 degrees plus in the 26 years since we shifted to the national capital. Advisories have been issued by the state governments to avoid venturing out in the afternoons. However, a month down the line, we would forget the harrowing days; and long for a glimpse of sun as monsoon clouds darken the skies. A few months back, I looked out of my window one morning. The sun was struggling to light up the day with just a pale glimmer of its full-blown glory. It transported me back a few decades when I was posted in a railway production unit in east India. One afternoon in March or April, while driving me back to the office after lunch, the driver commented, "Sir, I don't like this month. The days are so sad." His observation was a revelation to me. The afternoon during the two months is often dull in the eastern part of the country, with a haze of moist air shrouding everything. I have travelled to England a couple of times for vacations.



We were chilled to the bones during the first visit as we braved the heavy rains lashing us. We walked with a spring in our steps as bright sunshine greeted us the second time. We noticed that on such rainy days, even the locals longed for the sun to peep out of the clouds. This welcome respite would be enough for the parks to be filled with screaming children, sedately walking adults, and sprinting health enthusiasts. Sun plays an important role in our lives in other ways also. My wife, and even others, insist on drying clothes under the sun. I have also witnessed this in other countries. I have often wondered about the reasons despite the availability of devices serving the same purpose. The argument

is that no equipment can impart the antibacterial properties or the fresh smell and crisp feeling that exposure to sunlight does. I would tend to agree, as even I do not like the smell of moist clothes left indoors to dry under the fan during rainy months. There are health benefits too. We are told to spend a few minutes under the sun to get the sunshine vitamin, most essential for our health. Sunshine is also celebrated through numerous phrases that compare the people in our lives or even their attributes to the bright light. A friend calls an octogenarian friend, 'sunshine', simply because the older person is ever smiling. There are several other similar compliments like 'You are the sunshine that brightens my world with love'

or 'Smiles are little rays of sunshine' and many more. Eulogies have been paid to other celestial bodies as well, but they pale when compared with the brightest star in our firmament. Sun Temple in Konark is a testament to the importance accorded to the life-giver. Many cultures, religions, and earlier civilizations were based around sun worship.

All these myriad thoughts flitted through my mind as I sat sipping my tea that pale morning. I realised that the feeble sunlight was also due to our self-serving desires without paying heed to the need to create a pollution-free environment. We still have time to take a step back to pause, reflect, and act, to leave a better world for the generations to come! They also have the right to hum the timeless opening lines of the beautiful song by John Denver, "Sunshine on my shoulders makes me happy. Sunshine, almost always, makes me high." (The writer conducts workshops on creative writing for young adults and corporate executives. Views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

What would Prime Minister Narendra Modi be feeling? So little recognition for doing so much! Why? Did he err somewhere to have endured the reduction to 240 seats from the erstwhile 303? Was aspiring for his country to join the First World by 2047 wrong? Or was promising that Bharat would enlarge its GDP to be the third largest in the world before long, a mistake? Or introducing the GST, which laid the foundation of transforming the national economy? Indirect tax collection is rising and reducing the transport time by 40 per cent. Isn't that a gift to the economy? Maybe asking for beyond 400 was misunderstood as having already won the election and therefore no pressing need to go out to cast one's vote, especially when the weather is very hot. Perhaps the schedule of seven phases of voting was phased out over too long a period of 43 days, enough time for possible mischief. Some might have resented the abrogation of Article 370, but the economy of Jammu & Kashmir has prospered substantially. Modi's Government over the last 10 years has pulled out some 25 crore out of poverty. Whatever was given to them was directly to the individuals, not through village headmen. According to the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, only 15 paise of a rupee reached the poor people, while 85 paise were eaten away by the middlemen. Such corruption significantly explained the contemptuous expression coined by the Nehruvian acolytes "Hindu rate of growth". India's economists used to proudly claim that 40 per cent of the Indian economy was black or 'informal' and 60 per cent was white or 'formal'. The back of this black economy began to be broken on the night of November 8, 2016, when Modi demonetised ₹1,000 and ₹500 currency notes. The measure was not confided even to his Finance Minister for the sake of secrecy. Public opinion in India was divided down the middle; those who lost money con-

demned the measure. Those who did not lose, praised the move as having taught the tax evaders a lesson.

What most people did not know was that a former regime was getting Indian currency notes printed by the same supplier who printed Pakistan's and Bangladesh's currency notes as well. These neighbours could thus import India goods without spending any foreign exchange, in fact any money, except the purchase price of the fake notes. Until this demonetisation, our neighbours were financially comfortable. Not long after November 8, 2016, news came that Pakistan was moving towards shambles. Later, we had to loan Bangladesh \$9.5 billion. One cannot deny there is still black money in the economy today, but at least half the original quantum is gone. Implementation of GST and digitalisation has also helped in this objective. White money is wealth that can be invested, lent out; it can be used for expanding the economy. Black money, on the other hand, is largely unproductive and, in private hands, a source of fear from thieves and income tax raids. It cannot be lent with confidence or even a minimal lack of worry.

What actually upset the Modi applecart

There is a long list of people-centric achievements, both at home and abroad, that defines Modi 2.0. But then, public perception inexplicably turned against him



PRAFULL GORADIA



MAYBE ASKING FOR BEYOND 400 WAS MISUNDERSTOOD AS HAVING ALREADY WON THE ELECTION. PERHAPS THE VOTING SCHEDULE WAS PHASED OUT OVER TOO LONG A PERIOD

Do all these deserve only 240 seats? This is indeed a painful question. While voting, many Hindus forgot that it is this Government and this Supreme Court that enabled them to see the magnificent temple of Shri Ram Lalla at Ayodhya become a reality, considering five centuries had run their course since Mughal invader Babar's henchman Mir Baqi had destroyed the original temple that had immortalised Shri Ramjanmabhoomi. The splendid new temple has been built in the flash of a year. This was a revival, recovery and replacement of a lost temple and civilisational ethos. This Government has also made history dance. I doubt whether any religion has enabled another religion to build its place of worship in its own country. This Government has been able to charm the Sultan of Abu Dhabi to donate 27 acres of land on the main highway to Dubai for Hindus to build a grand temple in what most Muslims would consider a violation of the forbidding of *butparasti* or idol worship. This was the Sultan's celestial endeavour to atone for all the temples desecrated in India over the centuries. As a wag

put it, this was a magnificent reconciliation that should have gifted, as it were, a thousand seats. All Hindus should pray for having overlooked this unique sacrifice on behalf of Islam. The only excuse that can hold was yet another omission, like many others. Only two days ago, an acquaintance from Lucknow dropped in to explain why the Lok Sabha seat that contains Ayodhya was lost. A number of shops and houses was demolished to broaden the main street. Compensation was offered, although at the old rates. With the rapid construction of the temple, real estate prices went up much faster than expected. As a result, the old rates seemed like peanuts and, therefore, unacceptable to the old-time residents and shopkeepers. Meanwhile, lakhs of pilgrims had come, gone and enriched the shopkeepers, who weren't really short of money. In the process, they not only protested but also voted for the opposite side. When asked by journalists what they gained by voting against the temple, they had no answer. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WATER CRISIS IN THE CAPITAL

Madam — Apropos the editorial "Parched Capital," published on June 10, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, it's alarming to witness Delhi's worsening water crisis. The refusal of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh to supply water during these scorching months significantly impacts millions in the NCR. The Supreme Court's directive for these states to uphold water-sharing agreements is crucial, but enforcement appears weak. The Delhi BJP's call for a special Assembly session is a necessary step to prioritise this dire issue. Delhi's 35 million residents face severe water shortages, exacerbating public health risks and forcing reliance on unreliable private tankers. This situation demands a multi-faceted approach: strict adherence to water agreements, improved infrastructure and public education on water conservation. Investing in treatment plants and reservoirs, along with enhancing wastewater recycling and rainwater harvesting, could provide long-term relief. It's imperative for states to cooperate and ensure a stable water supply to prevent further hardship and potential health crises.

Meera Rao | Raipur

VIGILANCE FOR FOOD SAFETY

Madam — Apropos the news story "Protecting health through food safety," published on June 10, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, I'm alarmed by the state of food safety today. We often overlook the quality of what we eat, leading to chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Street food stalls, which are popular in many places, frequently lack hygiene standards and even supermarket food is not always trustworthy. The inconsistency between food labels and actual ingredients is troubling. The WHO's statistics are staggering: 600 million people fall ill annually from contaminated food, with 420,000 deaths. This year's World Food Safety Day theme,

Modi's historic third term



Apropos the news story "Narendra Modi sworn in as Prime Minister for the third consecutive time," published on June 10, this is my response. As a daily reader of the newspaper, it's clear that Narendra Modi's third consecutive term as India's Prime Minister marks a significant chapter in the nation's political history. Mirroring the legacy of Jawaharlal

Nehru, Modi's repeated electoral success underscores his enduring popularity and political acumen. The swearing-in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan was a testament to India's vibrant democracy, drawing participation from key political figures and foreign dignitaries. This underscores India's growing influence on the global stage. However, the BJP's reduced Lok Sabha seats highlight a more complex political landscape, necessitating greater reliance on NDA allies. The strategic inclusion of allies like the TDP and JDU in ministerial positions suggests a pragmatic approach to coalition politics. As Modi 3.0 unfolds, it will be interesting to see how the government balances internal dynamics while continuing developmental policies. The next few years will be crucial in determining the trajectory of Modi's legacy and India's future.

Saanvi Jain | Jamshedpur

"Prepare for the Unexpected," highlights the urgent need for robust food safety measures. The globalisation of our food supply chain complicates these efforts, making contamination harder to trace. Technological advancements like blockchain for traceability and IoT sensors for real-time monitoring can help. Ensuring food safety is a proactive commitment necessary for public health. We must innovate and stay vigilant to protect humanity from foodborne illnesses.

Vihaan Sharma | Udaipur

ATTITUDE SHAPES HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Madam — Apropos the news story "Factors that influence our attitudes," published on June 10, this is my response. Reading about the *Mahabharata* and its timeless narratives offers profound insights into human nature. The epic, attributed to sage Veda Vyasa and transcribed by Lord Ganesha, vividly portrays the complexities of human attitudes. It showcases a spectrum of emotions and standpoints that drive actions, often influenced by external factors.

Duryodhana, a prominent character, exemplifies how arrogance and anger, fueled by his uncle Shakuni and others, lead to destructive behaviour. This mirrors historical atrocities like the Nazi genocide, highlighting the dangers of prejudice and hatred. Conversely, the story of the Zen Master and the Thief underscores the transformative power of compassion. The Master's forgiveness and understanding helped the wayward student reform, illustrating that empathy can foster positive change. Human attitudes, shaped by social interactions and experiences, can lead to either constructive or destructive outcomes. The continuous learning process underscores the importance of compassion and understanding in shaping a better society. Harold S Geneen aptly encapsulates this, emphasising that leadership is reflected in attitudes and actions, not just words.

Aarush Kapoor | Vijayawada

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A TREASURE TROVE OF TIMELESS WISDOM

The Puranas, with their vast and varied content, are living texts



SWAMI CHARNASHRIT

The Puranas are a vast genre of ancient Indian literature that holds a significant place in the cultural, religious, and philosophical tapestry of India. These texts are not merely historical or mythological accounts; they are rich repositories of wisdom, encompassing a wide array of subjects that continue to resonate with and inspire people across generations.

Origin and Structure of the Puranas

The term "Purana" is derived from the Sanskrit word "pura," meaning "ancient" or "old." Traditionally, the Puranas are attributed to Vyasa, the sage who is also credited with compiling the Mahabharata and the Vedas. There are eighteen major Puranas, known as the Mahapuranas, and an equal number of secondary Puranas, known as Upapuranas. Each Purana varies in length and content but generally follows a similar structural format comprising five main topics: the creation of the universe (Sarga), the secondary creation (Pratisarga), genealogies of gods, sages, and kings (Vamsa), the reigns of Manus (Manvantara), and the history of dynasties (Vamsa Charitra).

Cosmology and Metaphysics

The Puranas offer a profound exploration of cosmology and metaphysics, detailing intricate theories about the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe. The concept of cyclical time, as opposed to linear time, is a central theme, with the universe undergoing endless cycles of creation and dissolution. This perspective provides a holistic view of existence, emphasizing the impermanence of the material world and the eternal nature of the soul.

Ethical and Moral Teachings

At their core, the Puranas are repositories of ethical and moral teachings. They emphasize the principles of Dharma (righteousness), Artha (prosperity), Kama (pleasure), and Moksha (liberation). Through various narratives and parables, the Puranas highlight the importance of living a virtuous life, the consequences of actions (karma), and the ultimate goal of attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Theistic Devotion

The Puranas are rich in devotional content, promoting Bhakti (devotion) towards various deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and the Goddess. They provide detailed descriptions of the forms, attributes, and stories of these deities, fostering a personal and emotional connection between the devotee and the divine. This devotional aspect underscores the idea that sincere love and devotion can lead to spiritual enlightenment and liberation.

Social and Cultural Insights

The Puranas play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting the cultural and religious traditions of ancient India. They serve as encyclopaedic texts, containing information on rituals, festivals, pilgrimages, and social customs. By doing so, they have helped maintain continuity in cultural practices and have provided a sense of identity and continuity to generations.

The Arts and Sciences

The Puranas are remarkable for their integration of art and science. They include discussions on astronomy, astrology, medicine, architecture, and even the performing arts. For instance, the Vishnu Purana and the Bhagavata Purana provide elaborate accounts of cosmology, while the Agni Purana offers insights into various scientific disciplines, reflecting the comprehensive knowledge system of ancient India.

(The writer is a spiritual guide, views are personal)

The long and short of Modi's welfarism



UTTAM GUPTA

The Govt is doing a good job of supplying food, fuel and fertiliser at subsidised cost but the largesse recipients are unlikely to make space for other deserving people

An overarching policy instrument Prime Minister Narendra Modi uses in relentless pursuit of a welfare State is his unflinching commitment to ensuring adequate supply of three essential items, namely fertilisers, food and fuel, to the target beneficiaries/consumers at 'throwaway' price or even for free.

In fact, he tells them about his intentions in this regard well in advance. Look at these facts: Urea is a widely used fertiliser that supplies primary nutrient nitrogen or 'N' and constitutes nearly half of India's total fertiliser consumption. To make it affordable to farmers, the Union Government controls its maximum retail price (MRP) at a low level unrelated to the cost of production/import and distribution, which is much higher. The excess cost over MRP is reimbursed to the manufacturer/importer as subsidy which varies from unit to unit, depending on its cost.

During its first term, under a comprehensive New Urea Policy 2015 announced on May 13, 2015, the Modi Government had frozen the urea MRP of ₹268 per 50 kg bag for a period four years till 2019-20. Even thereafter, the price remained unchanged at ₹242 per 45 kg bag (currently, urea is sold in 45 kg bag; so on pro rata basis, the price is the same as earlier). This price is nearly one-tenth of the cost of making it available leading to huge subsidy payout. On June 28, 2023, Modi announced its continued availability to the farmers at this price for three years, up to FY 2025-26.

As for food, the National Food Security Act (NFSA) enacted by the erstwhile UPA Government in 2013 had provided for giving wheat, rice and coarse cereals to eligible beneficiaries at a throwaway price of ₹32/1 per kg respectively. The excess of minimum support price (MSP) paid to farmers plus handling and distribution costs over this price (read ₹32/1 per kg) was reimbursed to the State handling agencies such as the Food Corporation of India (FCI) as subsidy.

Even as the NFSA had frozen the price to be paid by beneficiaries for three years, ie till 2016, the then Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Ram Vilas Paswan, announced that the price won't be increased for three years. In 2020, due to the Corona pandemic, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Government also started giving 5 kg of rice or wheat per person per month for 'free' to all the 820 million beneficiaries under the NFSA.

Meanwhile, the pandemic-induced PMGKAY was withdrawn from January 1, 2023. However, from the same date, the Government started giving regular supplies under the NFSA for 'free' (instead of ₹32/1 per kg charged earlier). This modified scheme was renamed as PMGKAY. Later in the year, in November 2023, addressing a poll rally in Chhattisgarh, Modi announced extension of the PMGKAY for another five years, ie till 2028.

In case of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), ever since 2015, the Government remains committed to making it available for household consumption at a low price although unlike in fertilisers and food, Modi hasn't announced as to 'for how long'. At present, over 100 million poor households who have been provided free gas connection under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) are eligible to receive subsidy at the rate of ₹300 per cylinder (14.2 kg) for 12 fills per annum.



WE COULD END UP WITH A SCENARIO WHERE CRORES OF PEOPLE DON'T NEED TO EARN THEIR LIVING AND SIMPLY WAIT FOR THE STATE FREEBIES TO TAKE CARE OF ALL THEIR NEEDS

If the welfare scheme beneficiaries are assured that they will continue to receive the benefits perpetually, all the more when these concern essential items such as fertilisers, food, fuel and that too with zero or near-zero price tag, they couldn't have asked for more. They can use the money thus saved for spending on other things, say education, health etc that can help them enhance their productive capacity and improve the quality of living. But, this may not happen in all cases. What if they fritter away the savings on unproductive stuff?

A bigger risk has to do with complacency that this could give rise to amongst the recipients of the benefits. When the Government arranges their basic needs for free (in Delhi, the State Government gives electricity and water free), it could trigger a feeling as to 'why should they work at all?' We could end up with a scenario where crores of people don't need to earn their living and simply wait for the State freebies to take care of all their needs.

Such an approach also comes in the way of extending the benefit of welfare schemes to other deserving persons who are currently not included in beneficiaries list. For instance, the current list of PMGKAY beneficiaries being based on the Census of 2011, over 100 million persons who became eligible post-2011 don't have access to

free food. Giving them access without deleting equivalent number from existing list will require more allocation for food subsidy. If fund constraints don't permit hike in the budget, those 100 million will continue to be denied access.

Under the current system of giving fertiliser subsidy, farmers are prone to excessive use of urea leading to imbalance in fertiliser use, drop in crop yield, deterioration of soil health and adverse impact on the environment. Even as there is a dire need to reduce imbalance by curbing excess use of urea, its availability at throwaway price won't let that happen.

For this very reason, there is rampant leakage/diversion of urea for industrial uses. Further, because manufacturers and importers get full reimbursement of the excess of cost over the MRP as subsidy on 'actual' basis, there is no incentive to reduce cost and improve efficiency in operations. The existing system of giving food subsidy also suffers from leakages, misuse and inefficiency in operations.

When Modi says the supply of fertilisers and food for free or at throwaway prices will continue perpetually, dubious operators too get to continue with their illicit gains. To address these anomalies, the Government needs to drastically restructure its welfare schemes. First, there should be an exit clause

for a beneficiary under the scheme. The clause can be triggered when she crosses the poverty threshold. For instance, 250 million persons who have come out of poverty shouldn't be eligible for free food under PMGKAY.

Two, our political brass should do away with the 'free' tag to any item even if it is food. While no one can deny the need for some subsidy to make it 'affordable' to the poor, insisting that the commodity be given for free or at small fraction of the cost (as in case of urea) is a risky idea. It is an invitation to all kinds of wrongs such as fictitious claims, diversions, inflated cost and so on. Three, instead of delivering a commodity at a low price, the Government should deposit the subsidy in the account of the beneficiary. The latter can buy her needs from the market where prices are determined in a competitive manner, thereby ensuring that the gains of efficiency improvements and cost reduction accrue to all consumers. In this scenario, there won't be any scope for misuse or diversion.

Four, a plethora of subsidies under different heads can be merged and given as a single lump sum amount as income support. This can save a lot of administrative work and associated costs involved in running multiple schemes.

(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)

Canada in covert talks with India over Nijjar's killing

India and Canada share a complex relationship, shaped by historical ties, diaspora influence and geopolitical interests

In the intricate dance of international diplomacy, Canada's intelligence chief, David Vigneault, embarked on clandestine visits to India earlier this year, delving into the shadowy realms of the Khalistani activist's controversial demise. These covert exchanges, veiled in secrecy, unfold against the backdrop of heightened tensions between the two nations, as a parliamentary report unveils India's ranking as the second most significant foreign threat to Canadian democracy, closely trailing behind China. With Prime Minister Trudeau's pledge to confront foreign interference head-on, Canada grapples with safeguarding its democratic integrity amidst the swirling currents of global power struggles.



SANTOSH MATHEW

India and Canada share a complex relationship, shaped by historical ties, diaspora influence, and geopolitical interests. The Indian diaspora in Canada, particularly the Sikh community, has played a significant role in shaping Canadian society and politics. However, issues related to Sikh separatism and human rights in India have often been contentious points in bilateral discussions. Nijjar's assassi-

nation has brought these issues to the forefront once again, reigniting debates about the treatment of minorities in India and the extent of Canada's involvement in addressing these concerns. The Indian diaspora in Canada is significant and steadily growing. It's estimated that there are over 2 million people of Indian origin in Canada, making the Indian community one of the largest and most influential ethnic groups in the country. Over the years, the Indian diaspora has made significant contributions to various sectors of Canadian society, including business, politics, academia, and culture. This demographic's influence is a testament to the deep-rooted connections between the two nations.

Nijjar's assassination has prompted a range of reactions from both Indian and Canadian officials. Canadian officials have condemned the act and called for a thorough investigation, while also reaffirming their commitment to dialogue and cooperation with India. However, the incident has undoubtedly strained relations between the two countries, with potential implications for trade, investment, and strategic partnerships. Some argue that Nijjar's death underscores the need for greater attention to human rights violations in India, while others caution against jumping to conclusions and emphasize the importance of evidence-based investigations. At the diplomatic level, the fallout from Nijjar's assassination



has led to increased scrutiny of Indo-Canadian relations. The alleged involvement of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and a close aide of Ajit Doval in covert operations underscores the complex interplay between intelligence, diplomacy, and geopolitics. As India seeks to assert itself on the world stage, it must navigate these challenges with

caution, ensuring that its actions are guided by principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for international law. For Canada, the incident has highlighted the delicate balancing act it must perform in managing its diverse population while upholding democratic values. The Canadian government's response has been measured, focusing on ensuring justice for Nijjar while maintaining diplomatic channels with India. This approach is crucial for preserving the multifaceted relationship that exists between the two countries. While differences may exist on certain issues, there are also areas of common interest where cooperation can flourish. Moreover, the tragic loss of Jaswinder Singh Nijjar serves

as a reminder of the importance of upholding democratic values and protecting the rights of all individuals, regardless of their beliefs or backgrounds. This commitment to justice will not only honour Nijjar's legacy but also reinforce the values that both nations espouse. Moving forward, Indo-Canadian relations will likely face challenges as both countries navigate the aftermath of this incident. However, with mutual respect, dialogue, and a commitment to shared values, there is hope that they can emerge stronger and more resilient than before.

In conclusion, the assassination of Jaswinder Singh Nijjar has cast a spotlight on the intricacies of Indo-Canadian relations, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities

that lie ahead. It is a pivotal moment for both nations to reflect on their shared history, reaffirm their commitment to justice, and work towards a future marked by cooperation and mutual respect. The road ahead may be fraught with difficulties, but with a concerted effort, India and Canada can continue to build a relationship that is both robust and resilient, benefiting not only their citizens but also contributing to global peace and stability. Indo-Canadian relations are like a symphony, where each note, no matter how different, contributes to the harmony of the whole. Let us play our parts with respect, understanding, and a commitment to peace.

(The writer is an associate professor, views are personal)

Far-right election surge shakes EU, prompting Macron’s snap polls

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Far-right parties rattled the traditional powers in the European Union with major gains in parliamentary seats, dealing an especially humiliating defeat to French President Emmanuel Macron, who called snap legislative elections. Some ballots in the vote for the European Parliament were still being counted Monday, but the outcome showed the 27-nation bloc’s parliament membership has clearly shifted to the right. Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni more than doubled her party’s seats in the assembly. And despite being hounded by a scandal involving candidates, the Alternative for Germany extreme right party still rallied enough seats to sweep past the slumping Social Democrats of Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Sensing a threat from the far right, the Christian Democrats of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had



French President Emmanuel Macron appears on television screen at the French far-right National Rally party election night headquarters, Sunday.

already shifted further to the right on migration and climate ahead of the elections — and were rewarded by remaining by far the biggest group in the 720-seat European Parliament and de facto brokers of the ever-

expanding powers of the legislature. But the surge by nationalist and populist parties across Europe will make it much harder for the assembly to approve legislation on issues ranging from

climate change to agriculture policy for the next five years. Undoubtedly however, the star on a stunning electoral night was the National Rally party of Marine Le Pen, which dominated the French polls to such an extent that Macron immediately dissolved the national parliament and called for new elections to start later this month. It was a massive political risk since his party could suffer more losses, hobbling the rest of his presidential term that ends in 2027. Le Pen was delighted to accept the challenge. “We’re ready to turn the country around, ready to defend the interests of the French, ready to put an end to mass immigration,” she said, echoing the rallying cry of so many far-right leaders in other countries who were celebrating substantial wins. Her National Rally won over 30% or about twice as much as Macron’s pro-European centrist Renew party that is projected to reach less than 15%.

European election dents German leader’s authority, boosts conservatives, far right

AP ■ BERLIN

Dismal results for Germany’s governing parties in the European Parliament election have dented Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s authority and could prompt even more of the infighting that just cost the government dearly. A clear win for Germany’s mainstream conservative opposition boosts its confidence as the country begins to look ahead to a national election expected in the fall of 2025, but raises questions about why it isn’t benefiting more from the unpopularity of Scholz’s government. And a second-place finish for the far-right Alternative for Germany, despite scandals and setbacks, underlines its enduring appeal to many unsettled voters and its strength in the formerly commu-

nist east — where it emerged as the strongest party and hopes to win three state elections in September. The defeat of the three parties in Scholz’s unpopular coalition “really wasn’t surprising, but the level they’ve dropped to is quite shocking for a governing coalition,” said Andrea Rommele, a political science professor at the Hertie School in Berlin. Scholz’s Social Democrats, the environmentalist Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats secured less than a third of the vote. Scholz’s party polled only 13.9 per cent, its worst post-World War II showing in a nationwide vote, while the Greens crashed to 11.9 per cent from a peak of 20.5 per cent five years ago. All were significantly below their performance in Germany’s 2021 national election.

Scholz’s coalition government set out to modernize Germany but has gained a reputation for constant discord and poor communication as the economy struggles to generate growth. The coalition partners argued through the campaign about how to put together a 2025 budget while adhering to Germany’s tight self-imposed rules on running up debt. That problem already forced a hasty, court-mandated reshuffle of the 2024 budget, complete with subsidy cuts that prompted protests by farmers. “The sense in Germany at the moment is that the current government is not getting things done,” Römmele said. “I do think they are getting things done, not all of them but quite a number of them, but they have to communicate that properly ... and they have to stop having these inter-

nal coalition fights.” Chances of that don’t look good. The Social Democrats’ co-leader, Lars Klingbeil, said Sunday night that “our people want to see us fight” for its priorities. The party’s general secretary, Kevin Kühnert, told Phoenix television that, with the Cabinet due to present a draft budget within weeks, “it isn’t plausible that everything will get quieter tomorrow if all just put themselves together.” Opposition leader Friedrich Merz celebrated his Union bloc’s win and described the outcome as “a serious defeat for the chancellor, who was on posters across the country.” Fellow conservatives suggested that Scholz should call a parliamentary confidence vote or that new elections might be needed — suggestions the governing parties dismissed.

Indian-origin man killed in Canada; targeted killing suspected

Ottawa (PTI): A 28-year-old Indian-origin man was shot dead in a suspected “targeted killing” in Canada’s British Columbia province, according to the police, who have arrested and charged four people with first-degree murder in connection with the case. The victim, identified as Yuvraj Goyal, was found dead by the police when they were responding to the call of a shooting in Surrey on Friday morning, the homicide unit of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said in a statement. Goyal worked at a car dealership in Surrey, Global News reported, quoting his sister, Charu Singha. She said the family had no idea why he was killed and that they had no indication that he had any ties to organised crime. Goyal’s brother-in-law, Bawandeap, said the victim was on the phone with his mother, who lives in India, just before he was shot.

“He came back from his gym, (his) daily routine, and he stepped out of his car, and he was shot,” Bawandeap said. Police arrested four suspects — 23-year-old Manvir Basram of Surrey, 20-year-old Sahib Basra of Surrey, 23-year-old Harkirat Jhutti of Surrey, and 20-year-old Keilon Francois of Ontario — shortly after the shooting. They have been charged with first-degree murder, CBC News quoted the police as saying. In a statement released on Saturday, the homicide unit said authorities were alerted to a vehicle fire shortly after the shooting. On Saturday, the four were charged with first-degree murder, the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team said. Police said that while initial evidence suggests it was a “targeted shooting, investigators are working to determine the reason that Mr Goyal, a 28-year old community member with no history of police contact, was killed.” The homicide unit also urged anyone with information or people driving in the area with dash-camera footage to contact the police.

UN food agency pauses aid work at Gaza pier over security concerns

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The director of the UN World Food Program said Sunday the programme has “paused” its distribution of humanitarian aid from an American-built pier off Gaza, saying she was “concerned about the safety of our people” after what had been one of the deadliest days of the war there. Saturday saw both an Israeli military assault that freed four hostages but left 274 Palestinians and one Israeli commando dead, and, Cindy McCain said, two of WFP’s warehouses in Gaza had been “rocketed” and a staffer injured. Sunday’s UN announcement of the pause appears the latest setback for the US sea route, set up to try to bring more aid to Gaza’s starving people. The US Agency for International Development described the pause as a step to allow for a security review by the humanitarian community in Gaza. USAID works with the World Food Program and their humanitarian partners in Gaza to distribute food and other aid com-



Smoke rises in the Palestinians Al Fara'a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank following an Israeli military raid, Monday, June 10, 2024. Israel’s military killed a 15-year-old Palestinian in an overnight raid on Al Fara’a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, according to Palestinian health officials. The military said Monday that it had begun what it described as a “counterterrorism” raid into the camp. It said soldiers killed one militant and injured two more with live fire and said the heavy exchanges of gunfire were ongoing.

ing from the US-operated pier. Completed in mid-May, the US pier was operational for only about a week before being knocked offline by storm damage for two weeks. After repairs,

it returned to operation again Saturday, bringing in 1.1 million pounds (492 metric tons) of food and other aid, before McCain said her agency was pausing its humanitarian work there.

The UN agency gave no further details, including how long the pause would last. WFP spokespeople did not respond to requests for further details. Asked about the pier operation during an appearance on CBS’s “Face the Nation” McCain said: “Right now we’re paused.” “I’m concerned about the safety of our people after the incident yesterday,” McCain said, without elaboration. “We also, two of our warehouses, the warehouse complex were rocketed yesterday.” “We’ve stepped back for the moment,” she said, and want “to make sure that we’re on safe terms and on safe ground before we’ll restart. But the rest of the country is operational. We’re doing ... everything we can in the north and the south.” USAID said in a statement to The Associated Press that it was working with other US government officials and with humanitarian groups in Gaza “to ensure that aid can safely and effectively resume movement following completion of the security review that the humanitarian community is currently undertaking.”

Hunter Biden’s gun trial enters its final stretch

AP ■ WILMINGTON

The criminal trial of President Joe Biden’s son heads into its final stretch Monday as the defense tries to chip away at prosecutors’ case laying bare some of the darkest moments of Hunter Biden’s drug-fuelled past. Hunter Biden’s lawyers could call at least one more witness when the case resumes in Delaware’s federal court — the first of two trials he’s facing in the midst of his father’s re-election campaign. It’s unclear whether prosecutors will call any rebuttal witnesses before the case goes to closing arguments, and then to the jury. Hunter Biden is charged with three felonies stemming from the October 2018 purchase of a gun he had for about 11 days. Prosecutors say he lied on a mandatory gun-purchase form by saying he was not illegally using or addicted to drugs. Hunter Biden has pleaded not

guilty and has accused the Justice Department of bending to political pressure from former President Donald Trump and other Republicans to bring the case and separate tax charges after a deal with prosecutors fell apart last year. Hunter Biden has said he has been sober since 2019, but his attorneys have said he did not consider himself an “addict” when he filled out the form. The case has put spotlight on a turbulent time in Hunter Biden’s life after his brother Beau’s 2015 death. First Lady Jill Biden has watched it unfold from the front row of the courtroom. President Biden was away in France much of last week, and heads to Europe again this week for the Group of Seven leaders meeting in Italy. Hunter Biden’s struggles with a substance addiction before getting sober more than five years ago are well documented. But defence lawyers argue there’s no evidence Hunter

Biden was actually using drugs in the 11 days that he possessed the gun. He had completed a rehab programme weeks earlier. Jurors have heard emotional and tawdry testimony from Hunter Biden’s former romantic partners and read personal text messages. They’ve seen photos of Hunter Biden holding a crack pipe and partly clothed, and video from his phone of crack cocaine weighed on a scale. His ex-wife and two onetime girlfriends testified for prosecutors about his habitual crack use and their failed efforts to help him get clean. One woman, who met Hunter Biden in 2017 at a strip club where she worked, described him smoking crack every 20 minutes or so while she stayed with him at a hotel. Hunter Biden hasn’t taken the witness stand and it’s unclear if he will. But jurors have heard him describe at length his descent into addiction through audio excerpts played

in court of his 2021 memoir “Beautiful Things.” The book, written after he got sober, covers the period he had the gun but doesn’t mention it specifically. A key witness for prosecutors is Beau’s widow, Hallie, who had a brief troubled relationship with Hunter after his brother died of brain cancer. She found the unloaded gun in Hunter’s truck on October 23, 2018, panicked and tossed it into a garbage can at a grocery store in Wilmington, where a man inadvertently fished it out of the trash. “I didn’t want him to hurt himself, and I didn’t want my kids to find it and hurt themselves,” Hallie Biden told jurors. From the time Hunter returned to Delaware from a 2018 trip to California until she threw his gun away, she did not see him using drugs, Hallie told jurors. That time period included the day he bought the weapon. But jurors also saw text messages Hunter sent to Hallie in October 2018 saying

he was waiting for a dealer and smoking crack. The first message was sent the day after he bought the gun. The second was sent the following day. The defence has suggested Hunter Biden had been trying to turn his life around at the time of the gun purchase, having completed a detoxification and rehabilitation program at the end of August 2018. “There is no evidence of contemporaneous drug use and a gun possession,” defense lawyer Abbe Lowell wrote in court papers filed Friday. “It was only after the gun was thrown away and the ensuing stress ... that the government was able to then find the same type of evidence of his use (e.g., photos, use of drug lingo) that he relapsed with drugs.” Hunter Biden’s daughter Naomi took the stand for the defence Friday, telling jurors about visiting her father while he was at a California rehab centre weeks before he bought the gun.

Islamic State militants kill dozens in Congo

Goma (Congo) (AP): Militants allied with the Islamic State group in eastern Congo have killed at least 41 people in several villages in North Kivu province, the national government said Monday, as residents openly wondered why security forces weren’t protecting them. The statement said Friday’s attacks were carried out by Allied Democratic Forces militants in the villages of Masala, Mahihi and Keme. Local civil society members asserted that the true toll was higher, with as many as 80 killed. Richard Kirimba, a civil society official in the area that was attacked, said the militants appeared to be expanding their operations and that local mines were drawing them in. “There’s no state authority in this area, and in many villages there are no police, no soldiers, no national intelligence agency,” he told The Associated Press.

“The population is worried because the enemy is roaming around the neighbourhood,” said Kambale Vunyatsi Kiongozi, who represents some civil society groups. Residents have long called on the Congolese army to protect the local population. The government statement said Congo’s government has launched an operation to pursue the militants responsible and has killed a number of them and freed hostages in the process, without providing figures. Eastern Congo has struggled with armed violence for decades as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities. Some armed groups have been accused of mass killings. The violence has displaced nearly 7 million people, many beyond the reach of aid.

Gen Z turning away from military service in Aus

Tasmania: The Australian Defence Force is facing an acute recruitment crisis. Only 80 per cent of the 69,000 personnel needed to meet future challenges have signed up. The government recently announced recruitment will be opened up to some foreign citizens to try to fill this gap. Not only is the Australian military failing to achieve planned growth, it is actually shrinking, as Defence Chief General Angus Campbell told a Senate inquiry in February. There are two fundamental reasons for the current recruitment impasse. One is economic – low unemployment and a perception of better opportunities, work conditions and future prospects in the private sector. The other reason is cultural: a declining willingness of Gen Z to identify with – and fight to defend – their nation.

Either way, the key to the recruitment crisis lies in understanding the motivations of this generation, the main pool of potential recruits today. We recently interviewed 19 serving Australian soldiers from a range of demographics (two were Gen Z) and across military branches in a study funded by the Australian Defence Force. We wanted to find out what makes Gen Z recruits tick, and what the force might do to persuade more of them to serve their country. Researchers study every new generation as a guide to the future, from the baby boomers to Generation X (like the authors of this article), and millennials. None is more distinctive than generation Z, or Zoomers – people born roughly between 1997 and 2008. They are the first generation to grow up with smartphones and social media. In his current bestseller, The Anxious Generation, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt outlines the cataclysmal effect: he claims a large increase in depression and anxiety in young people is

the direct effect of unsupervised social media use during adolescence. Zoomers’ mental health is a barrier to service, as US Marine Corps Lieutenant Matthew Weiss spells out in his book on Gen Z military recruitment. A military career can be detrimental to psychological wellbeing, as Australia’s Royal Commission into Veteran Suicide has demonstrated. The force’s rigorous mental health entry standards may have reinforced this perception. The soldiers we spoke to said mental health is an issue for recruitment. On one hand, they agreed that service is mentally challenging, and that younger soldiers are more psychologically vulnerable. On the other hand, interviewees said the force’s mental health support has been improving. This is a step in the right direction – it may well be that media coverage of veterans’ mental health issues worries Zoomers considering enlistment. Weiss argues

private sector jobs (and money) afford much more online currency than military service. The respondents in our interviews agreed younger recruits were very savvy about pay and conditions. But there may be another motivator: as shadow Defence Minister Andrew Hastie recently told the ABC: “People who join the Defence Force don’t just do it for economic reasons, they do it because they love their country.” This means if love of country falls from generation to generation, military recruitment falls too. Weiss suggests in the United States, low patriotism partly explains Gen Z’s reluctance to enlist. Our interviewees said traditional nationalism played only a modest role for enlisting for young people. They thought a lesser sense of obligation and service is one reason. Another is the fact that the black-and-white picture of “my

country right or wrong” has been muddled following media coverage of alleged Australian war crimes in Afghanistan. The evidence confirms waning national pride among young Australians. We analysed publicly available data from the World Values Survey, a wide-ranging poll of people’s values around the globe conducted since 1981. It shows in 1981, 70.3 per cent of Australians were “very proud” of their nationality. This fell to 60.8 per cent in 2018, the first year to feature Gen Z members in the survey. That year, only 41.6 per cent of twentysomethings (including some millennials) were very proud Australians – the lowest proportion of any Australian age group in any year since the survey began. All else being equal, older adults tend to be more nationalistic, as surveys in different periods and countries show. But the nationalism gap between old and young has opened up further with Gen Z.

Aus PM urges activists to ‘turn heat down’ after US Consulate vandalised

Sydney (AP) Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese urged activists on both sides of the Israel-Palestinian debate to “turn the heat down” after the US Consulate in Sydney was vandalized on Monday. Surveillance video showed a person wearing a dark hoodie using a small sledgehammer to smash nine holes in the reinforced glass windows of the building in North Sydney after 3 am, a police statement said. Two inverted red triangles, seen by some as a symbol of Palestinian resistance but by others as supporting Hamas, were also painted on the front of the building. Albanese urged people to have “respectful political debate and discourse.” “People are traumatized by what is going on in the Middle East, particularly those with relatives in

either Israel or in the Palestinian Occupied Territories,” Albanese told reporters. “And I just say, again, reiterate my call to turn the heat down and measures such as painting the US consulate do nothing to advance the cause of those who have committed what is, of course, a crime to damage property,” Albanese added. The consulate was closed on Monday because of a public holiday in New South Wales state but would reopen on Tuesday, a consulate statement said. New South Wales Premier Chris Minns said an overwhelming majority of Australians did not approve of such vandalism. “We can make our point in this country without resorting to violence or malicious behavior,” Minns said.

Bulgaria’s centre-right party sweeps in national polls

Sofia (AP): Bulgaria’s centre-right GERB party led by former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov has received most votes in the country’s parliamentary election but will need at least two partners to form a governing coalition. The country’s sixth vote for the National Assembly in three years was held Sunday parallel with European Parliament elections. Both votes were marked by apathy that kept turnout at a record low of about 30 per cent. The results produced one more deeply fragmented parliament, which does not offer many options for restoring political stability in the European Union’s poorest member country. Many observers suggest that the most likely scenario is another snap parliamentary election later this year.

South Korea says North installing own loudspeakers along border

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea's military on Monday said it's detecting signs that North Korea is installing its own loudspeakers along their heavily armed border, a day after the South blared anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts over its speakers for the first time in years as the rivals engage in a Cold War-style psychological warfare. The South's resumption of its loudspeaker broadcasts on Sunday was in retaliation for the North sending over 1,000 balloons filled with trash and manure over the last couple of weeks. North Korea has described its balloon campaign as a response to South Korean civilian groups using balloons to fly anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets across the border. Pyongyang has long condemned such activities as it's extremely sensitive to any outside criticism of leader Kim Jong Un's authoritarian rule. The tit-for-tat over speakers and balloons has deepened tensions between the Koreas as talks over the North's nuclear ambitions remain stalled. In their latest nuclear planning talks in Seoul, US and South Korean officials reviewed an undisclosed guideline map-



ping out their nuclear deterrence strategies to counter growing North Korean threats. They also discussed strengthening the allies' combined military training involving strategic US assets, the participants said in a news conference. Cho Chang-rae, South Korea's deputy defense minister for policy, and Vipin Narang, acting US assistant secretary of defense for space policy, refused specific comment when asked to assess the threat posed by North Korea's balloon activities. Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff didn't immediately comment on the number of suspected North Korean speakers or where along the border they were spotted being installed. It said the speakers were still silent as

of Monday afternoon. South Korea on Sunday activated its loudspeakers for an initial broadcast into North Korea, which reportedly included news, criticism about North Korea's government and South Korean pop music. Hours later on Sunday, Kim's powerful sister warned that the South created a "prelude to a very dangerous situation." She said South Korea would witness an unspecified "new response" from the North if it continues with the broadcasts and fails to stop civilian activists from flying anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets across the border. "I sternly warn Seoul to immediately case its dangerous activities that would further provoke a crisis of confrontation," Kim Yo Jong said through state

media. Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Kim's comments represented a heightened verbal threat from North Korea but he did not provide a specific assessment on the actions the North might take. Lee said the South was conducting broadcasts in sites where soldiers have sufficient protection and are equipped to swiftly hit back if attacked. "(We) don't think that they could provoke us that easily," Lee said during a briefing Monday. The Joint Chiefs of Staff didn't specify the border area where Sunday's broadcast took place or what was played over the speakers. It said that any additional broadcasts are "entirely dependent on North Korea's behaviour." The South withdrew loudspeakers from border areas in 2018, during a brief period of engagement with the North under Seoul's previous liberal government. In deciding to restart the loudspeaker broadcasts, South Korea's presidential office berated Pyongyang for attempting to cause "anxiety and disruption" in the South and stressed that North Korea would be "solely responsible" for any future escalation of tensions.

Pak PM vows to 'eliminate terrorism'

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday pledged to "relentlessly eliminate terrorism" from the country after seven soldiers, including a Captain, were killed in a terrorist attack in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province a day earlier.

The incident occurred when the convoy of security personnel heading towards Kachi Qamar, Sarband Post of the Lakki Marwat District, came under attack by the terrorists.

The terrorists blasted an improvised explosive device (IED) initially and later opened fire on the convoy. "Deeply saddened by the martyrdom of Pak Army personnel, including a Captain in a targeted attack in Lakki Marwat District," Sharif said in a post on X.

"The sacrifices of our brave soldiers and citizens is a debt on us that we must repay by relentlessly eliminating terrorism from our nation," he said, condoling the deaths.

Shehbaz, Nawaz wish Modi on taking oath as PM

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his elder brother and the ruling party supremo Nawaz Sharif on Monday wished Narendra Modi for taking oath as the prime minister for the third consecutive term. In his message posted on X, Nawaz, the former prime minister and chief of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), said that Modi's success in recent elections reflects the confidence of the people in his leadership and asked him to seize the opportunity to shape the destiny of the two billion people of South Asia. Modi was sworn in as prime minister on Sunday for a record-equaling third term, heading a 72-member Union Council of Ministers in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. Shehbaz, the only prime minister from India's neighbourhood



who wasn't invited to the swearing-in ceremony in New Delhi, took to X to wish his counterpart on his return from China, Pakistan's all-weather ally. "Felicitations to @narendramodi on taking oath as the Prime Minister of India," he said in a post. "My warm felicitations to Modi Ji (@narendramodi) on assuming office for the third time. Your party's success in recent elections reflects the confidence of the people in your leadership. Let us replace hate with hope and seize the opportunity to shape the destiny of the two billion people of South Asia," Nawaz said.

Top leaders from India's neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region, including Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Sunday graced the historic swearing-in ceremony. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay and Vice-President of Seychelles Ahmed Afif also attended the glittering ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Newly chosen Haitian PM discharged from hospital after spending a night

Port Au Prince, Haiti (AP): Haiti's newly selected Prime Minister Garry Conille was discharged from a hospital on Sunday after spending a night in treatment for an undisclosed condition.

In a video published on YouTube, Conille said he is now feeling well and is "ready" to continue to help steer the country out of its current security crisis by forming a government that will also prioritize issues like health care.

"The whole time I was at the hospital, I was thinking of something," Conille said in Sunday's video. "People that

need to go to the general hospital can't get there" due to security problems. "People who need health care" can't afford it. Conille arrived in Haiti on June 1 after a transitional council selected him as the nation's new prime minister. He had been working outside the country as UNICEF's regional director for Latin America. Gang violence is still surging in parts of Haiti's capital and beyond as Conille takes over the helm of the troubled Caribbean country awaiting the UN backed deployment of a police force from Kenya and other countries.

Missile attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels strike 2 ships in Gulf of Aden: US military

AP ■ MANAMA (BAHRAIN)

Missile attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck two ships in the Gulf of Aden, authorities said on Sunday, the latest assaults on shipping in the region. One anti-ship ballistic cruise missile hit the Antigua- and Barbuda-flagged cargo ship Norderney forward station late Saturday, starting a fire that those on board put out, the US military's Central Command said. It added that a second anti-ship cruise missile also hit the Norderney. The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations

centre similarly reported the attack and fire in the same area off Aden, saying "damage control is underway." Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed the attack in a prerecorded video message Sunday, saying the vessel had been targeted with both missiles and drones. Tracking data analysed by The Associated Press showed the Norderney was still in the Gulf of Aden on Sunday afternoon. In a second attack, a Houthi ballistic missile hit the Tavvishi, a Liberian-flagged, Swiss-owned and-operated container ship in the Gulf of Aden, Central Command. Saree claimed the

US, Poland launching group to help Ukraine counter Kremlin disinformation

Warsaw (AP): The United States announced on Monday that it is setting up an operation in the Polish capital to help neighbouring Ukraine counter Russian disinformation. The US State Department's Global Engagement Centre, which works to highlight disinformation by what it considers hostile states, said in a statement that the US and Poland have jointly launched a Ukraine Communications Group "to support Ukraine against Russia's aggression in the information space". Increasingly, Polish officials say Poland is also a target of sabotage and other disruptive measures by the Russian secret services. Poland is a member of NATO along the military alliance's eastern front. It has been a hub for Western weapons sent to Ukraine. It has also been a place of refuge for a significant number of Ukrainians who have fled Russia's full-scale invasion that began in February 2022. The State Department said the new group would bring together allies to "coordinate messaging, promote accurate reporting of Russia's full-scale invasion, amplify Ukrainian voices and expose Kremlin information manipulation". It asserted that the Kremlin "repeatedly uses lies and manipulation to peddle false pretexts for its unjustifiable invasion, obfuscate its war aims and attempt to fracture worldwide solidarity with the Ukrainian people".

Ukraine's air force may keep some F-16 warplanes abroad

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine may keep some of the F-16 fighter jets it's set to receive from its Western allies at foreign bases to protect them from Russian strikes, a senior Ukrainian military officer said on Monday. Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway have committed to providing Ukraine with over 60 US-made F-16 fighter jets to help it fend off Russian attacks. Ukrainian pilots are currently undergoing training to fly the warplanes ahead of the deliveries expected to start later this year. Serhii Holubtsov, head of aviation within Ukraine's air force, said that "a certain number of aircraft will be stored at secure air bases outside of Ukraine so that they are not targeted here." Holubtsov told the US government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that those F-16s could be used to replace damaged aircraft as they undergo repairs as well as for training Ukrainian pilots abroad. "This way, we can always have a certain number of aircraft in the operational fleet that corresponds to the number of pilots we have," he said. "If there are more pilots, there will be more aircraft in Ukraine." Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that Moscow could consider launching strikes at facilities in NATO countries if they host the warplanes used in Ukraine. "If they are stationed at air bases outside the Ukrainian borders and used in

combat, we will have to see how and where to strike the assets used in combat against us," Putin said last year. "It poses a serious danger of NATO being further drawn into the conflict." In March, the Russian leader again warned Ukraine's Western allies against providing air bases from where the F-16s could launch sorties against the Kremlin's forces. Those bases would become a "legitimate target," he said. "F-16s are capable of carrying nuclear weapons, and we will also need to take that into account while organising our combat operations," Putin stated. The F-16s require a high standard of runways and reinforced hangars to protect them from attacks on the ground. It's not clear how many Ukrainian air bases can meet those requirements, and Russia would be certain to quickly target a few that could accommodate them once the jets arrive. Holubtsov noted that the F-16s will help protect front-line and border regions from Russian glide bombs that have inflicted significant damage to both troops and residential areas, including Kharkiv. Glide bombs are heavy Soviet-era bombs fitted with precision guidance systems and launched from aircraft flying out of range of air defences. "I think we will succeed, first of all, in pushing back the aircraft that drop glide bombs farther from the contact line," he said. "If we manage to push them back at least another 30-50 km

(19-31 miles), this can already be considered a turning point and an achievement, if not of superiority, then of parity in the airspace." Ukraine's Western allies are trying to bolster military support for Kyiv as Russian troops have launched attacks along the more than 1,000-km (620-mile) front-line, taking advantage of a lengthy delay in US military aid. Ukraine is currently fighting to hold back a Russian push near its second-largest city of Kharkiv, less than 30 km (less than 20 miles) from the border. The US and other NATO allies have responded to the latest Russian offensive by allowing Ukraine to use weapons they deliver to Kyiv to carry out limited attacks inside Russia. The decision could potentially impede Moscow's ability to concentrate its troops for a bigger offensive near Kharkiv and in other border areas. Last week, Putin responded by warning that Moscow "reserves the right" to arm adversaries of the West worldwide. "If they supply (weapons) to the combat zone and call for using these weapons against our territory, why don't we have the right to do the same?" Putin said. He didn't specify where such arms might be sent. The US has said that Russia has turned to North Korea and Iran to beef up its stock of relatively simple weapons, but Moscow could dip into its stock of high-tech missiles to share with adversaries of the West if Putin decides to fulfill his threat.

90 countries to attend Swiss-hosted Ukraine peace summit that Russia is snubbing

AP ■ BERN (SWITZERLAND)

Nearly 90 countries and organisations, half from Europe, have confirmed attending the Swiss-hosted Ukraine peace summit over the weekend despite Russia's refusal to participate in the conference, Switzerland's president said on Monday. Viola Amherd told reporters in the Swiss capital that the summit, on Saturday and Sunday, will aim to chart a path toward possible peace nearly 28 months after Russian forces invaded Ukraine and the war is grinding on. "This is not propaganda," said Amherd. "This is about the basis of humanitarian aid provided by Switzerland...and to initiate a dialogue." The Swiss president added that most participants — about half of which will be

represented at the level of head of state or government — are country leaders, but "a handful" are from organisations like the United Nations. Some, including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, are expected to attend the summit at the Buergenstock resort overlooking Lake Lucerne. About 160 invitations have been sent out and Amherd said it was not a "disappointment" for the Swiss government that fewer than 100 have so far announced participation in the first phase of the peace process. Swiss authorities said the final list of participants was expected by Friday, but key developing countries like Turkey, South Africa and Brazil haven't indicated whether they would attend. India they said, will

take part but it isn't clear at which level. Brazil and China said they wouldn't take part unless both sides — including Russia — were at the table, according to Swiss officials. Beijing has been one of the top supporters of Russian President Vladimir Putin since the war started. Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis also addressed reporters, saying Switzerland has repeatedly acknowledged that there cannot be a peace process without Russia. "The question is not whether Russia will be on board, the question is when." He also said Switzerland is in frequent contact with authorities in Moscow about the conference. Ukraine has helped coordinate the summit, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is expected to

attend. Cassis said Swiss officials had to balance considerations that Ukraine might not have attended if Russia was represented. Swiss officials say the conference aims to set a course toward "lasting peace" in Ukraine, to reach a "common understanding" toward getting there, and draw up the "roadmap" on how to get both sides involved in talks. Nuclear security, humanitarian aid and food security are also on the summit's agenda. As many as 4,000 military personnel will be deployed to provide security and support air transportation, surveillance and roll out security fencing and steel wire for the event, officials said, adding that an increase in cyberattacks in the run-up to the summit was noted, but didn't provide details.

Japan economy shrinking, although slightly less than previously thought

AP ■ TOKYO

The Japanese economy shrank at an annual rate of 1.8 per cent in the first quarter of this year, slightly better than the initial estimate at a 2.0 per cent contraction, according to revised government data on Monday. The revision was due to private sector investments, at minus 0.4 per cent, up from the previous minus 0.5 per cent. Seasonally adjusted real gross domestic product, or GDP, a measure of the value of a nation's products and services, remained in negative territory,

as exports and consumption declined from the previous quarter. Quarter-to-quarter, the economy slipped 0.5 per cent in the January-March period, according to the Cabinet Office, unchanged from last month's results. The annual rate measures what would have happened if the quarterly rate lasted a year. Wage growth has been slow, and prices on imports have risen amid a decline in the Japanese yen against the US dollar. The dollar is trading at nearly 157 yen lately, up from about 140 yen a year ago.

Apple poised for late start in AI race with big ambitions

AP ■ NEW YORK

Apple's annual World Wide Developers Conference on Monday is expected to herald the company's move into generative artificial intelligence, marking its late arrival to a technological frontier that's expected to be as revolutionary as the invention of the iPhone. The widely anticipated display of AI to be embedded in the iPhone and other Apple products will be the marquee moment at an event that traditionally previews the next version of software that powers the company's hardware lineup. And Apple's next generation of software is expected to be packed with an array of AI features likely to make its often-bumbling virtual assistant Siri smarter, and make photos, music, texting — and possibly even creating emojis on the fly

— a more productive and entertaining experience. True to its secretive nature, Apple hasn't provided any advance details about Monday's event being held at the company's Cupertino, California, headquarters. But CEO Tim Cook has dropped strong hints during the first few months of this that Apple is poised to reveal its grand plans to enter a space that has been fuelling an industry boom during the past 18 months. AI mania is the main reason that Nvidia, the dominant maker of the chips underlying the technology, has seen its market value rocket from about USD 300 billion at the end of 2022 to about USD 3 trillion. The meteoric ride allowed Nvidia to briefly surpass Apple last week as the second most valuable company in the US Microsoft earlier this

year also eclipsed the iPhone maker on the strength of its so-far successful push into AI. But analysts have been having increasingly worried that Apple may be falling too far behind in the rapidly changing AI space, a concern that has been compounded by an uncharacteristically extended slump in the company's sales. Both Google and Samsung already have released smartphone models touting AI features as their main attractions. That's why analysts such as Dan Ives of Wedbush Securities view Monday's conference as a potential springboard that catapults Apple into another robust phase of growth. Ives believes infusing more AI into the iPhone, iPad and Mac computer will translate into an additional USD 450 billion to USD 600 billion in market

value for Apple. Monday's conference "represents the most important event for Apple in over a decade as the pressure to bring a generative AI stack of technology for developers and consumers is front and centre," Ives wrote in a research note. Apple definitely could use the boost that AI may be able to provide, particularly for its 13-year-old assistant Siri, which Forrester Research Dipanjan Chatterjee now calls an "oddy unhelpful helper." Meanwhile, OpenAI's ChatGPT is getting increasingly conversational — so much so that it recently sparked accusations of intentionally copying a piece of AI software voiced by Scarlett Johansson — and Google last month previewed an AI "agent" dubbed Astra that can seemingly see and remember things. Besides using AI to spruce up

Siri, Apple may also team up with OpenAI to bring some elements of ChatGPT to the iPhone, according to a wide range of unconfirmed reports leading up to Monday's conference. This will be the second straight year that Apple has created a stir at its developers conference by using it to usher in its entrance into a trendy form of technology that other companies already had been making inroads. Last year, Apple provided an early look at its mixed-reality headset, the Vision Pro, which wasn't released until early this year carrying a USD 3,500 price tag that has been a major impediment to gaining much traction. Nevertheless, Apple's push into mixed reality, tweaked with a twist that it bills as "spatial computing," has raised hopes that what is currently a niche technology

will turn into a huge market. Part of the optimism stems from Apple's history of releasing technology later than others and then using sleek designs and services combined with slick marketing campaigns to overcome its tardy start to unleash new trends. "Apple's early reticence toward AI was entirely on brand," Forrester's Chatterjee wrote in a preview of the developers conference. "The company has always been famously obsessed with what its offerings did for its customers rather than how it did it." Bringing more AI into the iPhone, in particular, will likely raise privacy issues — a topic where Apple has gone to great lengths to assure its loyal customer base that it can be trusted not to peer too deeply into their personal lives.

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NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for **Fire Service for PPGCL Plant and Associates areas** of 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may be downloaded using the URL- <https://www.ppgcl.co.in/tenders.php> Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by **16th June 2024**.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

No. E-499218/3 Dated 10th June 2024

The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam, invites bids from registered appropriate class of contractor for 47 building works in different schools as per the detailed notice inviting tender which can be downloaded from the website <https://www.assamtenders.gov.in>.

The last date of submission of tender is 02-07-2024 upto 2:00 PM.

Sd/-Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha Axom
Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog/CF/150/24/11-Jun-24

Sensex, Nifty breach record levels but settle lower amid profit booking

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Monday after hitting their all-time high levels in early trade amid selling in blue-chip IT stocks and HDFC Bank. After breaching the 77,000-mark during the early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex came under selling pressure at the fag-end of the session and ended 203.28 points or 0.27 per cent lower at 76,490.08. During the day, the benchmark jumped 385.68 points or 0.50 per cent to hit a new record of 77,079.04. Halting its three-day rally, the NSE Nifty dipped 30.95 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 23,259.20. Intra-day, it climbed 121.75 points or 0.52 per cent to hit the lifetime peak of 23,411.90. Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister on Sunday for a record-equaling third term, heading a 72-member Union Council of Ministers that put emphasis on continuity, youth and experience, while also rewarding partners in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. Among the 30 Sensex companies, Tech Mahindra,



Infosys, Wipro, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, HCL Technologies and Tata Consultancy Services were among the major laggards. UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Nestle, NTPC, Tata Steel and Axis Bank were among the biggest gainers. “Volatility returned to markets, as Sensex slipped from its new high and fell sharply towards the close amid profit-taking in IT, metals and oil & gas stocks. Lacklustre sentiment also prevailed due

to weak global cues after recent data from the US indicated that rate cut may not happen soon,” said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 1.04 per cent and midcap index jumped 0.56 per cent. Among the indices, services rallied 1.61 per cent, realty jumped 1.34 per cent, commodities (1.28 per cent), utilities (1.11 per cent), healthcare (0.77 per cent) and industrials (0.49 per cent).

IT, auto, metal and teck were the laggards. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 4,391.02 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. “The Indian market currently lacks fresh catalysts following the formation of the new government at the centre, suggesting that some consolidation may occur in the near term. Institutional flows indicate a mixed trend, with FIIs gradually covering their shorts and DIIs booking profits after the market reached historic highs,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. In Asian markets, Tokyo settled in the green while Seoul ended lower. Markets in China and Hong Kong were closed for holidays. European markets were trading in the negative territory. US markets ended lower on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.18 per cent to USD 79.76 a barrel. The BSE benchmark ended at 76,693.36, up 1,618.85 points or 2.16 per cent, on Friday. The Nifty settled with a jump of 468.75 points or 2.05 per cent at 23,290.15.

Equity mutual fund inflow swells to ₹34,697 crore in May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Equity mutual funds witnessed a staggering growth with inflow reaching a record high of Rs 34,697 crore in May, marking a 83 per cent surge from the preceding month, propelled by contributions from thematic funds and intermittent corrections that provided buying opportunity to investors. This also marks the 39th consecutive month of net inflows in equity funds, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Monday. Moreover, monthly contributions from Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) rose to Rs 20,904 crore in May, from Rs 20,371 crore in April, marking the second consecutive month of inflows exceeding Rs 20,000 crore. Overall, the mutual fund industry has witnessed an inflow of Rs 1.1 lakh crore in the month under review as compared to Rs 2.4 lakh crore in April. The inflow was due to investment in equity as well as debt schemes. With these inflows, the industry's net assets under management rose to Rs 58.91 lakh crore in May-end from



Rs 57.26 lakh crore in April-end. As per the data, equity-oriented schemes witnessed an inflow of Rs 34,697 crore in May, way higher than Rs 18,917 crore in April. Except for the focused and equity-linked saving schemes (ELSS) categories, all the other categories witnessed good net inflows. Sector/thematic funds continue to attract investor attention with the highest net inflows of Rs 19,213 crores during the month. This was largely owing to the new fund offering (NFO) of the HDFC Manufacturing Fund, which collected around Rs 9,563 crore. “Intermittent corrections provided investors some buying opportunity in a market which has largely witnessed a secular uptrend for a long time now.

Moreover, the expectation of the NDA-led government coming back to power also propelled buying from investors, as they would have expected the markets to rally further if the NDA government is indeed formed,” Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. Manish Mehta, National Head — Sales, Marketing & Digital Business at Kotak Mahindra AMC, said that record inflows were aided by NFO listings and investors taking advantage of volatility to add equity schemes to their investments through SIPs as well as lumpsum. “The record inflow in May came despite high volatility from FPI selling and general elections. Investors remained steadfast in their pursuit of

returns on the back of the Indian growth narrative, buoyed by confidence in the incumbent government securing a record third consecutive term, Gopal Kavalireddi, Vice President of Research at FYERS, said. Apart from equities, debt category schemes experienced net inflows of Rs 42,495 crore on preference for safety which drove the flow in the segment. Liquid funds recorded inflows of Rs 25,873.38 crore. “Given the uncertainty surrounding the interest rate cycle, most of the flows have flowed into categories having a duration profile of less than a year such as ultrashort and money market. Significant flows have also been received by overnight and liquid fund categories, but that is largely corporates and institution driven and usually of very short tenure,” Srivastava said. The categories which witnessed net outflows are short duration, medium duration, dynamic bond, credit risk, gilt fund and floater fund. Besides, hybrid category schemes attracted Rs 17,991 crore and index funds and other ETFs collectively garnered Rs 15,180 crore.

Rupee falls 10 paise to close at 83.50 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee settled for the day lower by 10 paise at 83.50 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, following a rising American currency in overseas markets and a sluggish trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the downside in the rupee was restricted by easing political uncertainties as Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister on Sunday for a record-equaling third term. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.48 and settled

for the day lower by 10 paise at 83.50 (provisional) against the American currency. On Friday, the rupee appreciated 13 paise to 83.40 against the US dollar. “We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on strong US Dollar amid rising expectations of a delay in interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve due to tight job market,” said Anuj Choudhary – Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, softening crude oil prices and optimism over a stable government may support the rupee at lower



levels. Traders may take cues from inflation data from India and the US. Investors may also watch out for the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting this week. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 83.80. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 105.27, higher by 0.37 per cent. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.21 per cent to USD 79.79 per barrel. Modi will be heading a 72-

member Union Council of Ministers putting emphasis on continuity, youth and experience, while also rewarding partners in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. Along with Modi, senior BJP leaders including Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman and S Jaishankar, all ministers in the Modi 2.0 cabinet, took oath as cabinet ministers at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. On the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 203.28 points, or 0.27 per cent, to close at 76,490.08 points. The

broader NSE Nifty settled 30.95 points or 0.13 per cent lower at 23,259.20 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Friday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 4,391.02 crore, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves jumped USD 4.837 billion to a new all-time high of USD 651.51 billion for the week ended May 31, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had dropped USD 2.027 billion to USD 646.673 billion.

Higher property prices, changes in law to boost debt recovery from stressed realty projects: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Recovery of debt from stressed residential realty projects is set to increase in the current financial year due to higher property prices as well as changes in rules, a report said on Monday. The bad loan recovery rate is estimated to touch 16-18 per cent at the end of FY25 from 11 per cent as on March 31, 2024, domestic rating agency Crisil said in a report. “This will be driven by improved viability of stressed projects due to healthy demand and price appreciation seen in residential real estate and greater investor and promoter interest in reviving such projects,” the agency said. It added that recent amendments to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) regulations for real estate



projects should also strengthen resolution of stressed real estate assets in the medium term. The agency said it analysed the performance of its portfolio comprising security receipts of Rs 9,000 crore from 70 stressed realty projects with a saleable area of 66 million square feet while arriving at the estimates. It said residential realty demand is set to increase by 10-12 per cent courtesy a healthy economic growth and

buoyant demand across housing segments in top-six cities. Additionally, it said low unsold inventories across major micro markets will also help ARCs (asset reconstruction companies) turn around stressed real estate projects faster with support from promoters or external investors. A bulk three-fourths of the projects it analysed turned non-performing assets (NPA) between 2019 and 2022, and were impacted by falling sales and slower collections during the Covid-19 pandemic. The remaining are pre-2019 NPA projects that faced liquidity issues due to weak demand, it said. Crisil's senior director Mohit Makhiya said 33 million square feet of unsold inventory is likely to be sold at appreciated market prices because of a significant

increase in prices over the last two fiscals and healthy demand for residential real estate. “The emergence of distressed asset credit funds is expected to improve the accessibility of last-mile funding for project completion, supporting faster restructuring of debt by promoters with ARCs,” he added. The agency further said the amendments in insolvency rule made in February this year enable resolution of individual projects by delinking them from the entire corporate entity involving multiple projects and group inter-linkages. Speaking of the necessity of the amendments, it said only 8 per cent of the admitted cases have been resolved under IBC and debt worth Rs 40,000 crore was stuck across 100 ongoing realty cases for more than two years.

Gold remains flat at ₹71,800/10 grams; silver rises ₹200

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 71,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday. According to Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, gold traded flat on Monday, after Comex spot gold declined as much as 3.45 per cent on Friday, the most since August 2021. However, silver prices rose Rs 200 to Rs 92,100 per kg. In the previous session, it had closed at Rs 91,900 per kg. “In the Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading flat at Rs 71,800 per 10 grams, unchanged from the previous close,” Gandhi said. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at



USD 2,293 per ounce, down USD 1 from the previous close. However, silver was quoted higher at USD 29.50 per ounce. It had ended at USD 29.15 per ounce in the previous session. “Gold prices traded within a narrow range, after a minor gap-down opening. This movement was mainly influenced by the strengthening US dollar, following strong nonfarm payrolls data,” Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

AI Express union flags concerns over charge sheet to cabin crew

PTI ■ MUMBAI

An Air India Express staff union has claimed the airline has issued charge sheets against 200 cabin crew members for reporting sick last month when the carrier faced significant disruptions. The Air India Express Employees Union (AIXEU) has termed the airline's move as unfortunate and unfair labour practice. In a letter to Air India Express chief Aloke Singh on Sunday, the union also warned the Tata Group-run airline's management that such actions could be detrimental to the interests of the company and its passengers. There was no comment from Air India Express. According to Union sources, the charge-sheet was issued to around 200 cabin crew members on June 5, with a deadline of 72 hours to file a response. Around 200 cabin crew members of Air India Express went on strike on May 7, to protest against the alleged mismanagement in the airline, resulting in cancellation of hundreds of flights. Consequently, the airline management terminated the services of 25 cabin crew members and warned the others to join work or else face the same action. Three days later, the strike was called off after a conciliation meeting between the representatives of cabin crew members and the airline management at the Office of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) in Delhi on May 9. “The charge-sheet was issued by the Chief of HR to many of the cabin crew members regarding their sick reports. It is very unfortunate and constitutes unfair labour practice to reopen the case and issue charge-sheets for



matters that have already been settled through conciliation. “The termination orders of the 25 cabin crew members were also withdrawn during conciliation based on the settlement agreement,” the Union, which is affiliated to the RSS, said in the letter. Requesting the management to refrain from reopening settled issues, AIXEU president K K Vijayakumar said in the letter, “Such actions could be detrimental to the interests of the enterprise and its passengers. Instead, I urge you to seek opportunities for cooperation to strengthen our industrial relations.” Stating that the entire issue was discussed between the Central Labour Commissioner (CLC) on May 9 and was amicably settled between the management and the union, it added, “Pursuing the charge-sheet and initiating punitive action against employees would only lead to unpleasant situations and worsen the already affected industrial relations.” “It was clearly stated in the last hearing held on May 28 in front of the CLC that no punitive action would be initiated against the employees in this regard,” the Union said. “Additionally, since the issue was settled on May 9, I believe that the employees were available for duty the following day.

Ras Al Khaimah eyes 20 per cent increase in tourists footfalls from India

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ras Al Khaimah, one of the seven emirates in the UAE, is eyeing over 20 per cent growth in tourist arrivals from India with targeted marketing campaigns and addition of new hotels, the emirate's Tourism Development Authority CEO Raki Phillips has said. “In 2023, we saw a significant increase in visitors from India, up 20 per cent compared with the 2022 numbers. This represents a strong recovery and growth compared to 2019. For 2024, we expect year-on-year growth exceeding 20 per cent, driven by targeted marketing campaigns and the introduction of new hotels and attractions that resonate with Indian travellers,” Phillips told PTI in an

interview through email. In 2023, he said, Ras Al Khaimah welcomed the highest numbers of overnight arrivals of 1.22 million visitors, surpassing the previous record of 1.13 million visitors in 2022. “This growth reflects our strategic efforts in enhancing our tourism offerings and promoting the Emirate globally. For 2024, we anticipate continued growth, projecting a 10 per cent increase in the number of arrivals as we introduce new hotels and experiences that cater to a diverse range of travellers,” he added. India is the fifth largest source market of Ras Al Khaimah after Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Kazakhstan, he said, adding that this steady growth of Indian tourists underscores



the growing appeal of Ras Al Khaimah as a preferred destination for Indian travellers. When asked about how much Indian tourists spend on an average, Phillips said, “while I cannot provide exact figures due to varying factors, however, I can confidently say that Indian tourists are among the top contributors to our tourism economy in the UAE.”

Indian travellers spend an average of USD 1,200 per trip to GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries, according to the latest data from Euromonitor International, he added. Further, Phillips said, the majority of Indian tourists visiting Ras Al Khaimah are families, adventure enthusiasts, and wellness seekers. However, there is a growing trend of young

couples and honeymooners choosing Ras Al Khaimah for its unique blend of adventure, luxury, and tranquillity, he stated. “In 2024, we aim to attract a diverse range of segments from India, including family vacationers, adventure enthusiasts, and luxury travellers. We are also focusing on promoting meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) tourism. Weddings are also an important segment for us, and we have seen a growing interest in destination weddings. Our Emirate offers a range of breathtaking wedding venues, from beachfront resorts to desert oases, and we work closely with our partners in India,” he added. Phillips said, the robust air connectivity between the

UAE and India will also help boost tourism from India with numerous direct flights which take just over three hours. “Ras Al Khaimah benefits from its proximity to Dubai International Airport, one of the busiest and most well-connected airports globally, located just 45 minutes away,” he added. To keep the current momentum of tourist footfalls from India, he said, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority is participating in roadshows, media events, fam trips, and exclusive events with leading wedding planners. “We have been forging strategic partnerships and implementing targeted marketing campaigns to enhance our tourism offerings,” Phillips added.

Demoralised Pakistan eye big win against Canada to keep T20 WC hopes alive

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Shocked by the USA and scarred by India, Pakistan have little to play for and everything to lose when they meet Canada in their penultimate group league encounter of the T20 World Cup here on Tuesday. If the Super Over loss against the co-hosts in their opening Group A match was not enough, Pakistan slumped to six-run loss at the hands of arch-rivals India in a low-scoring match here on Sunday. Pakistan's Super Eight qualification chance now hinges on winning big against Canada and Ireland, besides hoping that the Americans lose big to India and Ireland. Even in that scenario, both the teams will end on four points each and it will boil down to which team has a better net run rate. Hence Pakistan can only pray for divine intervention in best case scenario. USA after two wins enjoy a healthy run-rate of +0.626 and just a victory against Ireland would suffice while Pakistan with a dismal NRR of -0.150 would not only need to win but also by comprehensive margins. In the two matches so far, the 2009 champions never really looked the formidable side it was once known to be. There seems to be no clarity in Babar Azam's leadership. The two factions in the team -- one led by the skipper with his close friends Mohammed Rizwan and Shadab Khan while other including, recently



sacked Shaheen Shah Afridi is also making matters worse. Not a single department clicked for Pakistan in the two matches so far and they will need a more cohesive effort in the remaining matches to give themselves an outside chance. While Babar and Shahadab Khan scored 40 odd runs against USA to post 159 for 7, Pakistan failed to defend the target, losing the match in Super Over. And then while chasing an underwhelming 120-run target, none of the Pakistani batters could up the ante as they consumed 59 dot balls to be restricted 113 for 7. Pakistan's major concern going forward is the underwhelming

performance of their batters as the likes of Fakhar Zaman, Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed played loose shots to make life difficult for them against India. While Mohammed Rizwan took 44 balls to score his 31 runs, Wasim consumed 23 balls for his 15. The only bright sport for Pakistan on Sunday was the performance of their bowlers with Naseem Shah (3/21) and Mohammad Amir (2/23) leading from the front. But premier fast bowler Shaheen needs to take more responsibility upfront in the remaining two games to give Pakistan an outside chance. He has hardly been able to get

swing in conducive conditions. Going forward Pakistan will have to do some soul searching if they want to revive their faltering campaign. Canada, on the other hand, are placed third in Group A with one win out of two games. After the seven-wicket loss to USA, Canada bounced back in style to beat Ireland by 12 runs in their next match. In Navneet Dhaliwal, Canada have a veteran top-order batter who was a part of that 2019 victory over Ireland, and a lot will be riding on him. Canada will also take heart from the defeat against the USA because they had posted an imposing 194, albeit in a losing cause.

Pakistan lost the plot after 15 overs, players under pressure: Kirsten

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Perplexed by Pakistan's sudden disintegration in the T20 World Cup match against India here, the team's recently-appointed head coach Gary Kirsten said his batters "lost the plot" after 15 overs and are under pressure after failing to perform at their best. Pakistan are on the verge of being eliminated from the tournament after consecutive losses to debutants USA and arch-foes India. The loss to Rohit Sharma's on Sunday was a classic case of implosion with the side going from 80/4 in the 15th over to ending at 113/7 while chasing a modest 120. Kirsten emphasised the significance of strike rotation, particularly on challenging surfaces like the one here. He said his team failed to follow the strategy. "I think certainly on a pitch like that, it is really, really important to be able to rotate the strike. So, I agree with you that sometimes it's fun to watch a game like this where it's not only about hitting boundaries," Kirsten said in the post-match press conference. "But you also have to be able to use 120 balls really well. As I said, we did for 15 overs and then we lost the plot...We're losing too many wickets. "As a batting unit, you can't lose as many wickets as we are losing. Players have got to take responsibility when that opportunity comes," he added. Pakistan were guilty of consuming 59 dot balls during the chase. Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah did the most damage with figures of 3/14 in his four overs.



The side's next game will be at the same venue against Canada on Tuesday. It will be a virtual do-or-die encounter for the runners-up of the last edition. "These guys are all international players and they're aware that when they're not performing at their best that there's going to be pressure put on them. That's understandable," Kirsten, who has coached the 2011 ODI World Cup-winning Indian team, said. "...But a lot of these guys have played a lot of T20 cricket around the world over many, many years and it's really up to them to decide how they're going to take their games forward," the South African stated. Asked if the team lacks the ability to handle pressure, Kirsten stressed upon the importance of continual growth and adaptation in the fast-paced world of international cricket. "I'm having a look into the environment and looking at what the issues are. I look at these players, I've watched them play many, many years on TV and kind of getting to

know them, they're fantastic guys," Kirsten, who was appointed just a few weeks before the World Cup, said. "I mean, there's a lot of very disappointed guys in the change room now. I think for me the most important thing for every international player is that you continue growing..." he explained. "The game is changing pretty much every year. So, if you're not up to it and you're not improving, you're going to get found out somewhere." On what exactly was the team's strategy while chasing, Kirsten said the focus was on capitalising on loose deliveries and rotating the strike. However, he expressed disappointment over the team's loss of momentum during the crucial phase of the innings. "...I thought we did that brilliantly for 15 overs. We kept it at a run a ball, and then we lost wickets and then we stopped scoring ones and then we were looking for boundaries and once you've got to that point, it was always going to be hard. "So, the message was to do

what we executed on for 15 overs," the coach said. Amid the disappointment of defeat, Kirsten found solace in the team's bowling performance, especially in the death overs. "(It) got better and better and we've tracked their stats over the last 15 odd games, and they've been an incredible bowling unit from overs 10 to 20. I think our record between overs 10 to 20 as a bowling unit is up there with the best," he said. "We've got four fantastic seamers and Imad Wasim I thought bowled really well today as well. So, we've got some nice options on the ball with the team and I think we're going to be a difficult team to bat against if we bowl like that," he added. Kirsten diverged from the criticism aimed at the drop-in pitches of the Nassau stadium, refraining from joining the bandwagon of discontent. Despite witnessing a series of low-scoring matches, he remained diplomatic about Sunday's wicket and the chatter surrounding its uneven bounce, which has been dubbed dangerous in several quarters. "I think it wasn't dangerous, I mean the odd one rose up, but not many. Generally it kept a little bit lower, it was difficult to score from both batting sides and also a fairly slow outfield so it was never going to be a big total," said Kirsten. "I would have said 140 would have been a really good score on that pitch, so India didn't get that and so I thought we had the game," added the South African.

Year ago people asked if I am finished, now they say I am at my best: Bumrah

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Jasprit Bumrah couldn't help but laugh at how the narrative about him has changed in a year's time -- from being someone whose career is finished to the one who is at the peak of his prowess. In 2022, Bumrah underwent surgery for a lower back stress fracture and missed the T20 World Cup in Australia. Just before his comeback in a home bilateral series, he developed a strain and was out for more than 10 months. As a result, people became sceptical of his ability to handle the workload of three formats. But Indian cricket's rare gem sealed the lips of 'Doubting Thomases' with 67 wickets across three formats in the last one year, including a match-winning 3/14 against Pakistan in the low-scoring T20 World Cup thriller on Sunday. "See a year ago, the same people were saying that I might

not play again and my career is over and then now the question changed," he said taking a shot at all those who doubted his ability to fight back. India restricted Pakistan to 113/7 after posting a mere 119 here thanks largely to Bumrah's stupendous performance. He understands the fickle nature of criticism and knows that despite being a cliched phrase, controlling the controllables works best for him. "For me, I am not looking at whether I am bowling at the best of my ability. I try to solve the problem that is there in front of me. I know it's a cliched answer...But I was trying to focus on what is the best option over here on a wicket like this," the 30-year-old revealed. "How do I make shot-making difficult? What are the best options for me? So that way, I try to stay in the present and focus on what I have to do." **NO BAGGAGE OF IPL:**

Outside noise and pressure can gobble one up in a high-stakes game. But it's something that Bumrah successfully avoids by creating his own bubble. "Because if I look at the outside noise, if I look at people and pressure and emotion takes over, then things don't really work for me," the 30-year-old explained. The IPL-17, that concluded last month saw an unprecedented 1260 sixes being hit on tracks that resembled roadways. The 'Impact Player' rule also hurt top quality bowlers who were often dispatched to the stands with disdain. "When it's bat vs bat, I switch off the TV. I have been a fan of bowling since childhood. When there is a challenge between bat and ball, that is the game I like," Bumrah said. But the Indian bowling unit that has come for the T20 World Cup hasn't shown any scars of the IPL. "Obviously, the IPL that we played was not very bowler-



friendly but we are very happy that we didn't come here with that baggage and when we are getting help here, we were trying to use it. "I have played a lot of cricket in

my young years. - when the bat and ball challenge is good it is more interesting to watch the match." **ROHIT, BUMRAH AND THE 'MI TEMPLATE':**

Bumrah, the bowler, has played most of his franchise cricket under Rohit Sharma's captaincy. The captain-strike bowler combination was central to Mumbai Indians' five

title wins and Bumrah saidn he knew how to control low-scoring games. "So, once we started, we were very clear the message in the huddle was that now that is over, what is next? What are the things that are in our control? So, we will try to focus on that and not to create panic because yes, there will be boundaries here and there. "People might play good shots, but we'll have to try and be composed and try to hold our shape. So that was the biggest positive, not at any stage did I feel that the panic had spread in the team and we were looking too far ahead. So that's a really positive sign for us." **MAGIC DELIVERIES OFTEN DON'T WORK:** Low-scoring matches often force bowlers to try effort deliveries like yorkers or bouncers but Bumrah doesn't want anyone to overdo that stuff. "If we go for magic deliveries and try to be too desperate,

run-making becomes easy and they know the target. So, we had to be very mindful of not overdoing it," he said. "Whenever there is help, you can get excited. You can try pole hunting -- bowl bouncers, out-swingers, in-swingers. But you don't have to do that. I have learned that. "But this time, it was not happening a lot. The ball was not doing a lot. Yes, we did create pressure. A little bit of lateral movement was there but not too much, not as pronounced as the last game." **'JASSI JAISA KOI NAHIN':** As one of greatest pacers active currently, Bumrah could well be called the leader of 'Fast Bowlers' Union'. "I always advocate bowlers, but we're very happy with the appreciation that bowlers have received because our country is obviously a batsman-loving country and we understand but we are very happy that bowlers are coming up front," Bumrah said.

Lamichhane to join Nepal team in West Indies for last two league matches

PTI ■ KINGSTOWN (ST VINCENT)

Denied US visa, Nepal's most high-profile cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane is joining his team for its Caribbean leg of the T20 World Cup campaign, the country's cricket association said on Monday. Lamichhane, who had an eight-year sentence for rape overturned on appeal because of "lack of evidence", was denied US visa twice last month despite interventions from the Nepal government. The 23-year-old was initially included in Nepal's 15-member squad for the tournament last month. The T20 World Cup is being co-hosted by the United States and West Indies. "We would like to inform you that Nepali player Sandeep Lamichhane will be included in the Nepali national cricket team for the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in West Indies," the CAN said in a statement. Lamichhane also confirmed the development on X. "I am now joining the national team for the last two matches in the West Indies and looking forward to fulfilling my dreams and the dream of all cricket lovers," Lamichhane posted on X, formerly Twitter. He was arrested in October 2022 over allegations of



raping an 18-year-old woman, leading to his suspension by the CAN. But after he was acquitted by the Patan High Court in May, the player was reinstated by the country's apex cricket body.

Lamichhane's addition to the Nepal squad will have to be approved by the ICC's Event Technical Committee. Nepal take on South Africa on June 14 and play Bangladesh on June 16.

New Zealand looked rusty and disorganised: Ian smith

PTI ■ PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

Former New Zealand cricketer Ian Smith has questioned the readiness of his country's team in the T20 World Cup, saying it looked rusty and completely disorganised in the humiliating defeat against Afghanistan. New Zealand suffered an embarrassing 84-run loss to Afghanistan in their tournament opener here on Friday. They were dismissed for 75 in their chase of 159, with Rashid Khan and Fazalhaq Farooqi grabbing four wickets each. The Kiwis are placed fifth and last in Group C and will next play the West Indies in Trinidad on Wednesday with the negative net run rate making their task of qualifying for the knockouts an uphill task. "They've got to beat the West Indies, and hope that they (West Indies) get beaten by Afghanistan, because New Zealand's run rate situation is so poor - we're going to be very behind the eight ball when it comes to that," Smith, who has played 63 Tests and 98 ODIs, told Sen Radio on Monday. "I just don't know they're going to get up to speed from the flat performance they had the other day (against Afghanistan). What kind of team are they going to pick? Are they going to make any changes? The people they bring in haven't played any cricket either," he added. New Zealand had made it to the semifinals of the 2022 T20 World Cup after topping the group stage, riding on fine performances from Devon Conway, Kane Williamson and Daryl Mitchell, among others. But with Conway returning to the side after a long injury layoff and Finn Allen not quite hitting his straps, things are not looking great for the



Kiwis, known for their work ethics and competitive spirit. Besides, they have entered the World Cup having not played a single official warmup match. "He (Conway) looked decidedly rusty, in fact very average, he looked down

on practice with the gloves on. And he's been out of form with the bat for a little while," Smith said of the top-order batter who missed the entire IPL 2024 due to injury. "Apart from the fact that he's had injuries, Conway played no cricket in

the IPL even though he was contracted, and still they maintained they didn't need to have anything like a specialist wicketkeeper in this tournament." With Finn Allen going for a first-ball duck and Conway mustering just eight runs, the Kiwis didn't get the desired start in the chase against Afghanistan. "They missed opportunities to put pressure on Afghanistan early on, one partnership was all they needed to win the game. It was probably one of the worst performances I've seen, when you consider all aspects of the game, from a Blackcaps side that I can recall," Smith said. "It was underdone, it was rusty, it was disorganised -- they were so far not ready it was not funny." "Finn Allen has got a bit to prove, I've been saying this for a while -- they basically ended the career for Martin Guptill to make way for Allen. They couldn't pick him in the 50-over World Cup because he wasn't consistent enough at that point, and I don't see much difference between then and now," Smith added. Smith also lamented the poor Kiwi fielding, saying it was quite unlike the side that puts its heart and soul into every aspect of the game. "One thing New Zealand has always done over the years is field well as a unit. We've been able to answer (to that) pressure with some really good fielding performances, we aren't doing it at the moment. "Here again, we start with a poor performance, and I kept going back to Kane Williamson (in the post-match interview) and he said 'we lost it in the first ten overs' because that set the tone," Smith said. "The only way you get those things sorted is to play cricket."



संरक्षित जल सुरक्षित कल

नरेन्द्र मोदी
प्रधानमंत्री

जल स्रोतों के संरक्षण एवं पुनर्जीवन के लिए
मध्यप्रदेश सरकार की पहल

जल गंगा संवर्धन अभियान

5 जून - विश्व पर्यावरण दिवस से
16 जून - गंगा दशहरा तक

“ मां नर्मदा और क्षिप्रा सहित विभिन्न
पूजित नदियों और जल स्रोतों से संपन्न हमारा
मध्यप्रदेश जल संरक्षण और इसके बेहतर
प्रबंधन में सदैव श्रेष्ठ बने, यही हमारा
प्रयास होगा। ”

-डॉ. मोहन यादव, मुख्यमंत्री



- प्रदेश के हर शहर, हर गाँव में जल गंगा संवर्धन अभियान के तहत जल सम्मेलन का आयोजन
- जनसहभागिता से कुएँ/बावड़ी/नदी/घाटों/मंदिरों की साफ-सफाई एवं जीर्णोद्धार
- सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता से हो रहे हैं केंद्र / राज्य की जल संरचना उन्नयन के कार्य
- नालों के पानी के जल संरचनाओं में मिलने से पहले शोधन की व्यवस्था
- सामाजिक/धार्मिक महत्व की जल संरचनाओं के समीप कलश यात्राएं एवं निबंध/चित्रकला प्रतियोगिताओं का आयोजन

नागरिक ऐसे करें भागीदारी

- जल संग्रहण और संरचना के कैचमेंट में आने वाले अतिक्रमण या गतिरोधों को दूर करने में सहयोग
- अनुभव के आधार पर उपयुक्त जल स्रोत के चयन के लिए अपने नगरीय निकाय को दें आवश्यक सलाह
- अभियान में श्रम, सामग्री, मशीनरी या धन राशि के रूप में यथासंभव योगदान करें

- जल स्रोतों की गुणवत्ता जांच एवं बंद पड़े रेन वॉटर हार्वेस्टिंग सिस्टमों को बनाएंगे पुनः उपयोग लायक
- कैचमेंट क्षेत्रों की सफाई, डिसिल्टिंग, पौधारोपण, ड्रेनेज मैनेजमेंट, डिवीडिंग आदि कार्य
- जल संग्रहण संरचनाओं से निकाली गई मिट्टी व गाद का उपयोग कर सकेंगे स्थानीय किसान
- 16 जून को गंगा दशहरा के अवसर पर जल स्रोतों के समीप सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रमों एवं धार्मिक स्थलों पर साज-सज्जा के साथ अभियान का समापन
- प्रत्येक वर्ष होगा इस अभियान का आयोजन

आइये, सब मिलकर जल स्रोतों को बचायें

मध्यप्रदेश शासन