**OPINION 6** 

LK ADVANI:

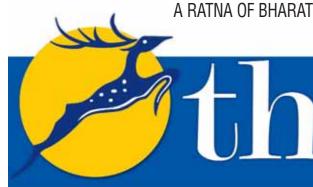
**WORLD 8** 

WAITING FOR AID, 100 KILLED

ISRAELI FORCES FIRE ON CROWD

RNI No. 53466/91, REGD. No. DL (C)-05/1219/2021-23 Posted at DRMS Delhi 6

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NEW DELHI, FRIDAY MARCH 1, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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RAHUL RULED OUT, BUMRAH RETURNS: BCCI

# Sandeshkhali Shaitan Shackled

n an apparent damagecontrol Trinamool exercise, the Congress expelled Sheikh Shahjahan, the don of Sandeshkhali, a day after his arrest.

This action comes about two months after his men attacked raiding team Enforcement Directorate officials and, notably, a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Hooghly Arambagh in district of Bengal.

Speaking about the decision, TMC MP Derek O'Brien and State Minister Bratya Basu Shahjahan suspended from the party for six years and challenged the BJP leadership to take similar action against their leader and MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who is accused of assaulting women wrestlers.

"There are two types of parties... One type of party talk, talk and talk while the other types like the Trinamool Congress... Walk the talk," O'Brien said.

Basu alleged that, taking advantage of some stray incidents "against which the TMC always takes a truthful decision," the Opposition parties like BJP were out to malign the Government.

Alleged to be the "fund manager and rigging expert" of his party in large parts of North Parganas, Shahjahan was arrested on

Wednesday night about two months after he hit the national headlines when his men beat up and seriously injured a raiding team of Enforcement Directorate officials. Apart

masterminding the attack on the ED team, Shahjahan, a Trinamool Congress leader and district board member of North 24 Parganas, is also charged with mass landgrabbing and alleged sexual assault on women in Sandeshkhali and neighbouring riverine islands of the district.



Supratim Sarkar, said Shahjahan was arrested late on Wednesday night from the Basirhat court. The TMC leader has been remanded to 10 days police custody, sources said.

A few of his cronies, including local TMC leaders Shibu Hajra, Uttam Sardar, and Ajit Maity, had already been arrested earlier.

Earlier, the Calcutta High Court had instructed the police to arrest him without Sandeshkhali has been in the

national news Shahjahan's men attacked the ED on January 5.



Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan, accused of sexual violence and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali village, being

Minakhan area, adding that Subsequently, after about a he had been forwarded to month, emboldened by his absence from the area, hundreds of women rose up in revolt, complaining of land grab, sexual assault, and surrounded the local police station.

> Since then, the area has been on the boil with successive visits of national commissions for women, SCs, and STs, almost all of whom have demanded the imposition of President's Rule in the area. Regarding the leadership's claim that they are the real party with a difference that acts against

> corrupt members, Bengal BJP president Sukanto Majumdar said, "It is all drama being enacted by Mamata Banerjee... to save her face... Shahjahan had been under TMC's protection for the past two months.

> The CPI(M) also said Shahjahan was an asset of the TMC and "the party could not afford to expel him... Not only because his goons rig polls, but also because he knows too much about TMC's money laundering." Meanwhile, the ED has

moved the court, saying Shahjahan could tamper with the evidence for which the agency had raided his house.

The agency could soon seek his custody in the ₹10,000 crore ration scam that has landed senior TMC leader and former Bengal Minister Jyotipriya Mallick in jail.

# **BJP suggests names of Lok Sabha Contestants**

From External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to late Sushma Swaraj's daughter Bansuri Swaraj, and Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, were among the names that circulated in the BJP's Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting on Thursday as the party convened to release its first list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Sources said the meeting discussed the seats lost in the 2019 General Elections and the margins of victory and defeat to decide on the various sets of names proposed by the ruling party. Prior to the CEC meeting, a five-hour-long session was held at the Prime Minister's residence at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg, attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the party's national president IP Nadda.

As per the first list to be released Modi will be the obvious contestant from his term Varanasi constituency, Union Home Minister Amit Shah from Gandhi Nagar, Rajnath Singh from Lucknow, Smriti Irani from Amethi, while former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh



Ram Meghwal from Bikaner, Gajendra Sekhawat from Jodhpur, Sambit Patra from Puri, Jyotiraditya Scindia

from Gwalior, Pratima Bhoumik from Tripura west, Pandey Saroj from Korba, BD Sharma from Khajurao, Ajay Bhatt from Nainital, Ravi Kishan from Gorakhpur, Manoj Tiwari

from North East Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma from West Delhi, Ramesh Bidhuri from South Delhi, Annapurna Devi from Koderma, Sunil Kumar from Chatra, Nishikant Dubey from Godda, Arjun Munda from Khunti, Kailash Chaudhary from Barmer, Om Birla from Kota, Rahul from Churu, Kaswan Dushyant Singh from

Jhalawar, CP Joshi from

A decision on candidates for the States of Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu has been put on hold. Alliance discussions are in progress in all three States — with Akali Dal in Punjab,

Telugu Desam Party and Jana Sena in Andhra Pradesh and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu. Former Rajasthan Chief Minister

Vasundhara Scindia, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, Devendra Fanavis, Prakash Javadekar, Mansukhbhai Mandaviya, Pushkar Dhami, Pramod Sawant, Bhupendra Yadav, Scindia, Jyotiraditya Keshav Maurya, Yogi Adityanath and others

attended the meeting.

### **NEWS BREAK**

#### **India blasts Pakistan for** raising Kashmir at UNHRC

UNITED NATIONS/GENEVA: In a strong retort to debt-trapped Pakistan after it raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir at the UN Human Rights Council, India has said it cannot pay any attention to a country which is soaked in red due to the bloodshed from terrorism

that it sponsors around the work First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN in Geneva Anupama Singh exercised India's Right of Reply at the ongoing high-level segment of the 55th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Wednesday. India exercised the Right of Reply to respond to Turkiye and Pakistan after the two countries made references to Kashmir in their statements at the highlevel segment.

### **Cancellation of protesting** farmers visas sought

Chandigarh: In a development regarding the ongoing farmers' protest, DSP Ambala Joginder Sharma has revealed that efforts are underway to cancel the passports and visas of individuals allegedly involved in violence. "We have identified involved in violence coming to Haryana from Punjab in the name of farmers' protest. We have identified them with CCTV cameras and drone cameras. We will request the Ministry and embassy to cancel their Visas and passports. Their photos, name and address will be given to the passport office. We are working on canceling their passports", DSP Ambala Joginder Sharma

### India's infrastructure friendly GDP Soars to 8.4 per cent



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**T**ndia's growth economic accelerated to 8.4 per cent in the October-December quarter of this fiscal, mainly due to double-digit growth in manufacturing and good showing by mining & quarrying and construction sectors.

The GDP (gross domestic product) growth was 4.3 per cent in the October-December 2022 quarter, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Thursday.

The manufacturing sector's output, as per the gross value added in the third quarter of this fiscal, grew by 11.6 per cent compared to a contraction of 4.8 per cent in the year-ago period. Mining and quarrying grew at 7.5

per cent in the third quarter, up

from 1.4 per cent a year ago. The construction sector kept the growth momentum at 9.5 per cent against the same growth rate in the

year-ago period.

However, the output of the farm sector declined by 0.8 per cent during the quarter compared to a growth of 5.2 per cent a year ago. The national accounts data showed electricity, gas, water supply, and other utility services segment has

grown by 9 per cent year-on-year

against an 8.7 per cent rise. The GVA growth in the services sector — trade, hotel, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting — was 6.7 per cent during the third quarter against 9.2 per cent.

Financial, real estate and professional services grew by 7 per cent in the third quarter over 7.7 rate of 10.1 per cent, it stated.

Public administration, defence and other services posted 7.5 per cent growth against 3.5 per cent in the

third quarter of the last fiscal. SO also released the sec advance estimate for the current fiscal and pegged the economic growth at 7.6 per cent against 7.3 per cent estimated in the first advance estimate released in

January. "Real GDP or GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in the year 2023-24 is estimated to attain a level of ₹ 172.90 lakh crore, against the first revised estimates of GDP for the year 2022-23 of ₹160.71 lakh crore. The growth rate of GDP during 2023-24 is estimated at 7.6 per cent compared to the growth rate of 7.0 per cent in 2022-23," the NSO

statement said. According to the statement, the nominal GDP or GDP at current prices in 2023-24 is estimated to attain a level of ₹293.90 lakh crore against ₹269.50 lakh crore in 2022-23, showing a growth rate of 9.1 per

It stated that the GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in Q3 of 2023-24 is estimated at ₹43.72 lakh crore against ₹40.35 lakh crore in Q3 of 2022-23, showing a growth rate of 8.4 per cent. The GDP at current prices in Q3 of 2023-24 is estimated at ₹75.49 lakh crore compared to ₹68.58 lakh crore in O3 of 2022-23, showing a growth

### **Congress survives Himachal Tremor**

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI

With Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi's defeat in the Rajya Sabha polls, Priyanka Gandhi, a member of Congress first family, once again proved to be the saviour for the party in preserving the Government

in the state. After intense deliberations within the party, the nominated central observers, and Priyanka, who serves as general secretary without any specific charge, Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania on Thursday disqualified six Congress MLAs who had

cross-voted in the recent Rajya Sabha polls for the lone seat in the state." They had also abstained from voting on Budget in the

Assembly, defying a party whip to vote in favour of the Government on the Finance Bill. The ruling Congress had sought their disqualification on this ground. Following the Shimla, party observers



Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, former Harvana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, HP Congress Committee (HPCC) president Pratibha Singh with central observers and others during a Press conference in Shimla on Thursday

legislators, the effective strength of the House has reduced from 68 to 62 while the number of Congress MLAs has

shrunk from 40 to 34 and the Government is safe as of now though Opposition Leader Jairam Thakur maintained that the Government will fall any day

due to the disgruntled legislators and intense internal fighting.

Addressing the media in

disqualification of the rebel Bhupinder Hooda, D K Shivakumar said after oneto-one meetings with the Congress MLAs and deliberations with Sukhu and State Congress chief Pratibha Singh, differences have been ironed out. He also said it has been decided to form a coordination committee to sort out all internal matters and no leader would go to the press. The political crisis in Himachal Pradesh was triggered by cross-voting by six Congress MLAs in Rajya Sabha elections.

Continued on Page 2

#### India expands footprint in Indian Ocean region

Tndia and Mauritius are natural I partners in the maritime domain to combat traditional and nontraditional challenges in the Indian Ocean region, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday after virtually inaugurating a new airstrip, a jetty and six community development projects in the island nation.

The India-assisted projects in Agalega island of Mauritius are seen as significant as they are expected to boost connectivity as well as maritime security and surveillance in the strategic waters in the region.

After inaugurating the projects along with Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, Modi

announced that Mauritius will be the first country to join India's Jan Aushadhi scheme, which is an initiative aimed at providing quality medicines at affordable În his remarks, Modi flagged

concerns over challenges in the Indian Ocean region and said India and Mauritius are "natural partners" in the maritime domain to deal with them.

"Many traditional and nontraditional challenges are emerging in the Indian Ocean Region. All these challenges affect our economy. India and Mauritius are natural partners in the field of maritime security to deal with the challenges," he said at the virtual

ceremony. "We are actively working to ensure

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritian counterpart Pravind Jugnauth jointly

inaugurate several India-assisted development projects at the Agalega Island in Mauritius, via a video conference, on Thursday

security, prosperity and stability in the Indian Ocean Region. We are cooperating together in all areas like monitoring of exclusive economic zone, joint patrolling, hydrography, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief," he said. Modi's comments came amid increasing concerns in New Delhi over China's growing military forays into the Indian Ocean region which is largely considered as the backyard of the Indian Navy. He said the inauguration of the airstrip and jetty at Agalega island will further advance cooperation.

The Prime Minister described Mauritius as an important partner under India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and that the bilateral

development partnership has been

an important pillar of the strategic relations. "Our development partnerships

are based on the priorities of Mauritius. Be it Mauritius's needs related to EEZ (exclusive economic zone) security, or health security, India has always respected the needs of Mauritius," he said. Modi said the basic objective of India's efforts is to bring about meaningful changes in the lives of common people in Mauritius. Today holds a special significance

for our development partnership. I am extremely happy that today we are seeing the completion of the commitment I had made in 2015. In India these days it is being called 'Modi's Guarantee," he said.

The Prime Minister also talked about the "vibrant, strong and

and Mauritius, adding the island nation is New Delhi's special partner under its vision of SAGAR' (Security and Growth For All in the Region). "Our relations have gained

unprecedented momentum in the last 10 years. We have achieved heights new cooperation," he said. The inauguration of these projects

came weeks after the launch of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) systems and RuPay card services in Mauritius.

"We are making history today on the island of Agalega with the inauguration of a new airstrip, a new jetty and several other development projects," Jugnauth said at the event.

### Stop segregating prisoners on caste, religion basis: MHA to States

**⊣**he Centre has asked states and Union Territories not to segregate prisoners on the basis of their caste and religion and to stop assigning duties like managing prison kitchens according to the discriminatory approach.

In a communication, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said the jail manuals of some states provide for segregation of prisoners based on their caste and religion and they are being assigned duties in the prisons accordingly. "It may be noted that the

Constitution of India prohibits any kind of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, or place of birth. The Model Prison Manual, 2016 prepared by the Ministry of

DMK allots two LS seats

each to CPM, CPI

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN** 

The DMK on Thursday Completed its first round

of allocation of Lok Sabha seats to fringe outfits like the CPI(M) and CPI, two constituents in the front led

by the former. The CPI(M)

and CPI have been allocated

two seats each by the

allocation process was a

smooth affair as both the

Communist parties expressed satisfaction and happiness

over the kindness of Big

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election too, the CPI(M) and

the CPI had been allocated

two seats each and both the

parties won the seats. The

DM K also allocated one seat

each to the Muslim League

and Kongu Desiya Murpokku

Kazhakam. A release from

allocation of seats was a

smooth affair and all the

constituents in the front

(Secular Progressive Alliance)

were confident of repeating the 2019 show. In the 2019

Lok Sabha polls, the DMK

and its allies had whitewashed

the AIADMK front by

winning 37 out of the 38 seats

which were at stake from

The DMK is yet to finalise

seat deals with the Indian

Tamil Nadu.

major.

Dravidian

Brother DMK.

to all states and UTs in May 2016 explicitly prohibits caste religion-based discrimination of prisoners in the management of kitchen or cooking of food on caste or religious

communication said.
"The manual also provides that any special treatment to a group of prisoners belonging to a particular caste or religion is strictly prohibited,"

The MHA said the prison manual also provides that no classification of prisoners shall be allowed on grounds of socio-economic status, caste or class.

All states and Territories are requested to take note of the above and ensure that their prison manual or prison act should contain

National Congress, Makkal Neethi Mayiam (led by actor Kamal Haasan) and some other fringe outfits like VCK. The Pattali Makkal Katchi led

by Dr S Ramdoss and DMDK

launched by late actor

Vijayakanth are yet to decide

on which front to align with. A senior PMK leader who is

close to party founder Dr Ramdoss said there is a strong

anti-incumbency wave blowing across Tamil Nadu against the DMK

Government. "People are sad

and shocked over the kind of

corruption and favoritism of

the Stalin government. We

will take a decision taking into all accounts all these

issues," said the PMK leader.

AIADMK leader who is the

Semmalai,



discriminatory provisions, it said. The MHA said in case any such provision exists, immediate steps must be taken to amend or remove the discriminatory provision from the manual or the act. It is reiterated that there should be no caste-based assignment of duties or work

in the prisons, it said. The MHA said it has been the constant endeavour of the central government to reach

out to the prison authorities of the country and provide them assistance in the form of financial aid for technologydriven projects as well as sharing contemporary best practices and guidelines on varied aspects of efficient prison administration from

As part of this exercise, the MHA said, the medical care of prisoners is one of the significant concerns of prison

time to time.

The MHA said it has been advising the states and Union Territories from time to time

to ensure that due importance is given to the physical and mental well-being of prisoners. To maintain uniformity in the process of medical check-ups

of prisoners, the Model Prison Manual 2016 provides for the procedure to be followed by the states and Union Territories.

The MHA said health checkups of prisoners especially those who are old and specially-abled should be

conducted regularly.
Special health check-ups of women prisoners and transgender prisoners should also be conducted besides check-ups periodic screening of inmates for their mental well-being, it said.

Srinagar and Baramulla Lok Sabha seats along with a Lok Sabha seat from Ladakh while

A senior Congress party leader claimed the constituents of the INDIA bloc are expected to finalize the seat-sharing arrangement in the next meeting to give a tough fight to the BJP candidates. On the other hand, the Peoples Conference Chief Sajad Lone is also going to fight Lok Sabha polls from the Baramulla seat making it a

### Seat sharing deal in JK by next week: Congress

Amid hard bargain by the National Conference, the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee Chief Vikar Rasool Wani is hopeful of formalizing a seat-sharing arrangement by the end of the first week of March 2024. "After holding internal dialogue within the party, talks are going on with the constituents of the INIDA bloc. We are hopeful of finalizing the seat-sharing

finalizing the seat-sharing arrangement by the end of the first week of March", the J&K Unit Chief of the Congress party said.

The National Conference leadership has toughened its stand ahead of the second round of discussions with the Congress party.

Party Vice President and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has made it clear on several occasions that the party was in no mood to surrender the three Lok Sabha seats it won during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

A senior Congress leader privy to informal discussions so far disclosed talks are on to arrive at a consensus on giving three seats to the National Conference, two to the Congress party, and one to PDP.

Under this arrangement, the National Conference is expected to contest from multi-corner contest.

the Congress party is expected to contest two Lok Sabha seats from the Jammu region and PDP would be asked to contest Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat.

### Former Intel India chief Saini killed in accident

T N RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

Noted chip designer and former Intel India chief Avtar Saini was killed after his bicycle was rammed into by a speeding taxi in the adjoining satellite township of Navi Mumbai.

The incident took place at the last link between party Nerul Junction and the NRI-Seawoods Estate Signal in founder MG Ramachandran and the present day leadership, said the DMK-led Navi Mumbai on Wednesday, resident of Chembur in incumbency wave remains intact and this has made the north-east Mumbai was cycling along with a group of odds in favor of that party. Unless and until there is a cycling enthusiasts. Saini was rushed to the D Y revolt among the alliance partners, the DMK is in Patil Hospital but pronounced

dead on admission.

strong wicket though it is not as safe as in 2019," Semmalai Immediately after accident, cab driver Hrishikesh Khade tried to flee cab driver told The Pioneer. The next two weeks will see the fronts led by the DMK, AIADMK and the BJP giving the spot but was caught and handed over to the police by those present at the mishap finishing touches to the



A member of the Chembur Saini is survived by a son and a daughter, who live in the United States, Saini's wife had passed away three years ago. During his tenure in Intel from 1982 to 2004, Saini-who held a master's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Minnesota -

was instrumental in the design of several processors including Intel 386, Intel 486, Pentium, and more. . He held seven patents related to

microprocessor design. "At Intel, we are deeply saddened by the demise of former country manager and director Intel South Asia, Avtar Saini. He played a key role in setting up the Intel R&D centre in India. Avtar will be remembered as a inventor, outstanding leader and a valuable mentor," Gokul V Subramaniam, Intel India Client Computing Group, Platform Systems Sustainability Strategy at Intel Corporation, posted

Saini's death comes after runner Rajalakshmi Vijay, the Chief Executive Officer of Business Altruist Technologies Pvt. Ltd, a BPO company, was killed after being run over while cycling on Worli Sea Face, on March 19 last year.

intends to encourage voter

informational material, and

motivate voters to exercise

their right to vote in

collaboration with

disseminate

LinkedIn.

#### Kashmir police along with the Border Security Force with a hefty cash incentive of Rs 3

Pakistani drone in the Ramgarh sector of Samba district on Thursday. The reward was given as a part of J&K Police's policy recently announced by DGP J&K.

lakhs for raising a timely alarm

leading to the recovery of a

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

On January 18, 2024, a resident of the village Nandpur alerted the jawans of the BSF that an object (drone) was lying in his field located close to the Chamliyal border outpost of the BSF in the area. Acting swiftly on the information, the security forces recovered a Pak surveillance drone fitted with a camera from the field of the

Speaking on the occasion, SSP Samba Vinay Kumar sought cooperation and support from the general public living near the International border in curbing the menace of narcoterrorism sponsored by Pakistan. SSP Samba further apprised the general public about different types of rewards recently announced by DGP J&K for people who will provide information & intelligence on trans-border tunnels, drones, narcotics,

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Presidential assent to the controversial Lok Ayukta Bill enacted by the

Kerala Government has upset

the civil society in the State. With the Bill getting the assent of the President, the

Kerala Government would be

able to reject and dismiss the findings of Lok Ayukta in

corruption charges against

servants,

minister, ministers and

Kerala Legislative Assembly. The Governor had referred

the Bill to the President for

With the President giving

green signal to the amended

version of Lok Ayukata, the

Governor has to sign the Bill

and publish the same in the

Government Gazette. The

Presidential assent has come

taking a final decision.

public

MLAs.

society shocked

chief



terror activities, and terrorists. Inspector General BSF Jammu Frontier DK Boora also interacted with the local public and urged them to remain alert and extra vigilant and ensured full cooperation of BSF to the people especially those who cultivate land near the International Border. Under the new policy, J&K

Local awarded for raising alarm

leading to Pak drone recovery

Police has recently announced different types of cash reward which includes a Cash reward of Rs 5 lakh for those who provide information about trans-border tunnels used by Anti-National elements to transit terrorists, explosives and contraband consignments. A cash reward of Rs 3 lakh to those: a) who sights a drone flown from across the border to drop narcotics or explosive material and which leads to the recovery of the said dropped material, b) who gives actionable intelligence about a person connected receiving drone deliveries and/or transporting arms/ammunition/narcotics

border/LoC hinterland or Punjab and the intelligence corroborated during further action. Cash reward of Rs 2 lakh each has been announced for people providing information about inter-state narcotics modules, people talking to Pakistan-based terrorists and separatists in jails and persons talking to or communicating with terrorist handlers across the border or with their agents within J&K and branding citizens as informers. Police also announced Rs 1 lakh cash reward for persons providing information about those inciting and encouraging people to join terrorist ranks and to pick up guns. Rs 2 lakh to Rs 12.50 lakh reward has been announced for those giving specific information about the presence of terrorists, resulting successful operation leading to arrest or combat, and cash rewards will be provided as per the category of A, B and C.

#### Kerala Lok Ayukta Bill gets assent, civil Kharif rice production to increase by 9.46 MT: Ministry

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Agriculture Ministry on Thursday released the second advance estimates of 2023-24, estimating 1541.87 lakh million tonnes (LMT) of Kharif foodgrains and 1551.61 lakh million tonnes of Rabi foodgrains. According to the second

advance estimates, Kharif rice production is estimated at 1114.58 LMT as compared to 1105.12 LMT in 2022-23, showing an increase of 9.46 LMT. Production of Rabi Rice is estimated at 123.57 LMT. Production of Wheat is estimated at 1120.19 LMT, as compared to previous year production of 1105.54 LMT. Production of Shree Anna (Kharif) is estimated at 128.91 LMT and Shree Anna(Rabi) is estimated at 24.88 LMT. The production of Jowar (Kharif) and Jowar (Rabi) is estimated at 15.46 LMT and 24.88 LMT respectively, which is higher by 0.66 LMT and 1.66 LMT respectively, than the previous year. Further, Production of Nutri/Coarse Cereals (kharif) is estimated at 356.11 LMT

The ministry said production LMT which is approximately Further the Tur harvesting is

Production

successive estimates. Production of Gram is estimated at 121.61 LMT which is marginally lower from previous year's gram production but higher than the average (2018-19 to 2022-

Deo Sai, Uttarakhand's Pushkar Singh Dhami and Goa's Pramod Sawant, were among those who arrived at the BJP headquarters for the meeting. State leaders attend the CEC meeting when candidates for constituencies falling in their respective states discussed.The BJP's candidate lists have often been as significant for those missing out as for the new faces given a chance and all eyes will be on whether it drops some wellknown names or does some

#### This was one of the Bills rendered to a Kochi based which was held back by sand baron Governor Arif Mohammed R S Sasikumar, the one-man Khan against whom the army fighting and challenging CPI(M) led Government the misdeeds of the CPI(M) Court complaining that the approach the High Court former was delaying all key legislations enacted by the

at a time when the Chief

Minister and some of his

corruption charges in many

deals. The Serious Fraud

Investigation Agency of the

Central Government has already launched a probe into

the murky affairs of Exalogic,

a company owned and operated by Veena Vijayan, the chief minister's daughter. The allegation is

that the company used to charge hefty fee of Rs 1.7

crore per month for services

cabinet colleagues

questioning the legality of the controversial law. executive or legislature do not have any authority to overturn the findings of a judicial body like Lok Ayukta. If the executive and legislature are given authority to over turn the findings of a judicial body like Lok Ayukta, what is the relevance of judiciary in country?" this

Sasikumar in a release.

senior leaders to "foil" the

BJP's 'operation Lotus'. Besides

HP Congress remains in full

majority power in Karnataka and Telangana while a

Priyanka swung into action

along with senior party

leaders Hooda, Shivakumar

"When the decision was taken

coalition in Jharkhand.

#### Congress survives... Nutri/Coarse Cereals (Rabi) is estimated at 144.61 LMT," it Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu and

While longest serving party president Sonia Gandhi has taken a break from day to day affairs of the party Rahul Gandhi visiting abroad currently, Priyanka was instrumental in arresting the crisis similar to the one she used her acumen to consolidate the Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance for INDIA Bloc last week.

Sources in the party said Priyanka who in recent times maintained distance from major programmes including her brother led Bharat Nyay Yatra until she joined for couple of days last week, played a "pivotal" role in protecting the Congress Government in Himalayan State by remaining in constant touch with

and Baghel who were sent as observers on her instruction for the crisis management. Rahul was mid-air to London.

who took a break from his yatra to be there for a lecture in Cambridge University," party sources said. Priyanka was the face of the Congress' campaign in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections in 2022.

of Tur is estimated at 33.39 similar to last year's production of 33.12 LMT. still progressing, which may result further changes in

23) Gram production. The production of Lentil is estimated at 16.36 LMT which is higher by 0.77 LMT than the previous year's production of 15.59 LMT

estimated at 125.62 LMT and production of Rapeseed & Mustard is estimated at 126.96 LMT which is approximately similar to last year's production however higher by 20.57 LMT from average production. The production of Cotton is estimated at 323.11 Lakh Bales (of 170 Kg each) and production of Sugarcane is estimated at 4464.30 LMT.

The production of Soybean is

"While preparing the kharif crop production estimates the Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) based yield has been considered. However, States are still under the process of compiling results of Kharif CCEs."

### Delhi Government likely to present Budget on March 4

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

 $T^{\text{he Delhi government is}}_{\text{likely to present its budget}}$  for the 2024-25 financial year on March 4, sources in the AAP dispensation said on Thursday. The Economic Survey and the Outcome Budget for the financial year 2023-24 are likely to be presented on Friday.

"The budget is likely to be tabled in the Assembly early next week. It will in all probability be presented before the Assembly on Monday," a source said. The source also said that with 2024 being an election year, the government could make some major announcements. "This is the election year. Expect some major announcements in the budget," said the source.

This will be Atishi's first budget as Finance minister after she was inducted into the cabinet last year in March The Budget session of the Delhi Assembly commenced on February 15 and was supposed to end on February 21. The session was extended till the first week of March with Atishi citing a delay in budget finalisation due to certain reasons.

### **Trader body writes to EC over** active cooperation in LS polls extensive network, CAIT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

With 35003 traders' in Del organisations in Delhi across and over 48,000 across the country, which represent more than 9 crore traders and indirectly employing around 25 crore people in domestic trade, the top traders body has approached the Election Commission ( proposing active cooperation from traders' organisations in upcoming Lok Sabha polls. In a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, the Confederation of All

From Page 1

The meeting focussed on Uttar

Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya

Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala,

Telangana, Rajasthan, Goa, Gujarat, West Bengal, Tripura,

Madhya Pradesh and other

Many MPs like Jagdambika Pal

are likely to be dropped due to

age factor and those having

represented multiple times the

India Traders (CAIT) said there are approximately 3,500 traders' organisations in Delhi and over 48,000 across the country, representing more than 9 crore traders and indirectly employing around 25 crore people in domestic trade and this extensive network of these organisations reaches every corner of the country, from cities to remote villages to encourage them to cast their votes to increase the voting percentage.

CAIT national president, BC Bhartia, and secretary general Praveen Khandelwal said therefore, traders' body

stagnancy like former Union

Ministers Jayant Sinha, Rajiv

The announcement of the first

list of candidates is likely to be

in similar fashion as was during

the last General Election in

2019 also, when the BJP had

announced 164 candidates

weeks before the elections were

Modi has set a target of 400

Pratap Rudy.

announced.

same constituency resulting in seats in the Lok Sabha elections,

has proposed cooperation Election with the Commission for traders' support in enhancing the voting percentage. Khandelwal mentioned that the extensive network of the trading community across the country has a direct contact with every individual in every state and as such country's 140 crore people reaches out to a traders shop for their necessities. Due to the good relations

between traders and customers, any campaign encouraged by them has a significant impact. Taking advantage of this

with the BJP will win at least

370 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, and the National

Democratic Alliance will cross

The target has been scaled up to

370 plus seats in the Lok Sabha,

by adding 370 more votes in

each polling booth. To achieve

this target, UP is the most important State for the saffron

party. Uttar Pradesh, which

sends the largest chunk of members to the Lok Sabha,

formed the backbone of the

BJP's sweeping victories in 2014

and 2019, especially in north

the 400 mark.

Election Commission. According to traders, many restaurants, hotels, travel agencies, salons and even medical practitioners may also offer some discounts for voters and reach out to people to encourage a high voter turnout.

awareness,

Even housing societies may offer some incentives to their residents if they cast their

The BJP won 71 seats in 2014 (73 with allies), its highest tally so far, and 62 (64 with allies) in 2019. The most impressive Lok Sabha performance in UP has been by the Bharatiya Lok Dal in 1977, when it swept all the 85 seats in the state at the time. More than 96 crore voters across the country will be eligible to vote in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls for which the Election Commission will set up approximately 12 lakh

polling booths. In 2019, the BJP won 303 seats bagging close to 23 crore or

management has been one of the hallmarks of the new BJP under Shah and Modi. Using both online and offline affordances, the party has optimised the turnout of its support base on the polling day. The Gujarat model, replicated Chhattisgarh Assembly polls last year, is a case in point.

including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Gujarat's Bhupendra Patel, Madhya Pradesh's Mohan nearly 37 per cent of the total Yadav, Chhattisgarh's Vishnu

Leaders from various states,

votes polled. Effective booth Madhya Pradesh and Yogi Adityanath,

fresh experiment in selecting its

# BJP launches campaign to gather Delhiites feedback

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

➡he Delhi BJP on Thursday launched a door-to-door campaign for gathering suggestions of the people for its manifesto and seeking their views on 'Viksit Bharat' ahead of Lok Sabha polls. In a press conference, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said the campaign will continue till March 15 in which the party workers will visit every household, markets and public places across the city carrying a form and boxes to gather feedback from the people. He said the party workers will also seek suggestions of separate groups like chartered accountants, professionals, sports persons, teachers, professors and theatre actors among others during the campaign.

The party workers will provide a small form to the people in which they will write down their suggestions on developed India, a better Delhi and their expectations from Prime Minister Narendra Modi before depositing it in the

A phone number (9090902024 ) was also released by the party for

by recording their voice. People can also given their feedback through downloading NaMo app, Sachdeva said. Apart from party workers, social media influencers will also join the campaign, he said. An LED van will also visit different areas of the city to encourage people to give their suggestions for developed India and a better Delhi, Sachdeva said, and added "the manifesto 2024 will be peoples' manifesto based

on their expectations". The Delhi BJP president claimed that the party fulfilled 529 of 530 suggestions provided by the people that were included in the manifesto for 2014 Lok Sabha polls. "In 2019, we delivered on 95 per cent or 222 of the 234 suggestions from people included in the manifesto," he said.

Sachdeva emphasised on the role of election manifesto saying it was a game changer for the BJP in recent Assembly polls in Chhattisgarh, "In Chhattisgarh, everyone wrote off the BJP but the manifesto did the magic in the assembly polls. Our workers collected suggestions from door to door. The manifesto drafted on the people to give their suggestions suggestions from the people paved



Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva & LoP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on the Viksit Bharat Modi Ki Guarantee Rath address a press conference

the way for the formation of the BJP government in the state," he

In the press conference, State Secretary Harsh Malhotra, State Media Chief Praveen Shankar Kapoor and Media Relations Head Vikram Mittal were present. Earlier, senior Delhi BJP leaders

including Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri discussed the party's preparations for the elections in Delhi. The BJP currently holds all the seven Lok Sabha seats.

The process of candidate selection on the seven seats is underway. The Delhi BJP election committee has submitted a list of around 25-30 probables to the central leadership for consideration in ticket distribution for the Lok Sabha seats in Delhi.

Sabha seats in Delhi.

The Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely also said that the party will gather feedback on people's problems in Delhi and added that its manifesto for the Lok Sabha polls is likely to be released in a week. "Though we are contesting on just three seats, we are focusing on making a we are focusing on making a downtrodden and expl manifesto for Delhi. This entire exercise will be completed in a downtrodden and expl sections, industrial workers contract workers and others."

week, after which we will release a people's manifesto," Lovely said. Rahul Gandhi held direct discussions with the common people of Delhi such as labourers, homeless people, teachers, youngsters, women, farmers and RWAs (Residents' Welfare Associations) to get first-hand information about their problems, he added.

Through the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Gandhi understood the problems of the common people and took up their issues with the authorities for solutions, the Congress leader said.A manifesto is the soul of any party, it is the vision and a mirror of its thoughts. The Congress has always worked for the welfare of the people and addressed their problems, Lovely further said.

He added, "The 50 issues in the Congress' manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections will be based on the five pillars of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra — youth, women, bhagidari, workers and farmers — to give justice to the lower and the middle classes, the downtrodden and exploited sections, industrial workers and

### LG approves delayed lease BBA student killed by friends, body buried in farmland deeds for workers housing

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has paved the way for execution of lease deeds between the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC) and original allottees of the flats under various Workers' Housing Schemes at Bawana and Narela in North-West Delhi which was initiated almost two decades ago.

The LG, who approved the uniform draft lease deed, slammed DSIIDC and noted on file that it was baffling to observe that even after a lapse of about two decades since the initiation of the first housing scheme in 2003-2004, the lease format is vet to be finalized. The RGHS-I was initiated in Bawana in 2003-04 and RGHS-II at Narela and Bawana in 2006-07.

He said it is disturbing to note despite explicit instructions predecessor in 2019 to explain the reason for delay in execution of lease deeds in respect of workers' housing to cause another inexplicable delay of approximately 5 years before placing the matter for finalization of lease deed.

He directed that no further delay can be allowed in the matter and the entire exercise of execution of lease deeds which would benefit around 5311 allottees has to be undertaken in a time bound manner.

The matter pertains to the allotment of flats under various schemes - Rajiv Gandhi Housing Scheme (RGHS)-I (2820 allotments made in 2006-07 to individual industrial workers), RGHS — II (150+405 allotments made in 2014 and 2017 to individual industrial



through MoU with Pragati Power Corporation Ltd (PPCL) in 2010, Institutional Allotment of 512 and 1040 flats through MoU with Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in 2012 and

It is important to note that in pursuance of the directions of Simultaneously, Saxena said ated to industrial areas ie. Bawana & Narela. In order to provide functional and economical residence to the industrial workers and to avoid clustering of JJ Colony in and around those areas, Low-Cost Housing Schemes were introduced by the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development

Corporation (DSIIDC). Saxena in his noting on file also said, that it was only after the persistence of other organizations like Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Pragati Power Corporation Ltd (PPCL) who were allotted flats through MoU, that the department was woken up from its slumber and this case reflects a deep sense of apathy and allotments made.

organization as a whole.The LG directed the administrative department to responsibility officials/officers for causing delay in processing the instant matter and take stringent action against them as per extant rules/guidelines.

Supreme Court in 1996, the Administrative Secretary industries running in non- is directed to take a conforming areas in Delhi comprehensive review of such ers in the departmen which have been delayed inordinately and process the same expeditiously and the matter may be resubmitted

within three weeks. The ACS (Industries) while endorsing the proposal has submitted that the draft lease deed has been prepared on the pattern of DDA lease deed and has been vetted by the Law Department.Allotments were made by the Department on the basis of allotment-cum-demand letters and possession letters. Further, allotments to CISF & PPCL were made on mutually agreed terms & conditions with the condition that a lease deed shall be executed subsequently in respect of the

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

A 20-year-old BBA student in Greater Noida was allegedly strangled to death by four friends after an argument broke out and buried his body 6 ft deep inside a farmland in Amroha Three of the accused were arrested on Wednesday evening after a gunfight with the police in Greater Noida in which the trio suffered gunholt injuries on their legs, officials said. The victim and the accused belonged to the Gajraula area in Amroha district, Uttar Pradesh, where the murder took place on Tuesday night, the officials

The student, who belongs to a business family, was enrolled

for a Bachelor in Business on the phone," Khan said. Administration (BBA) degree at a private university in Greater Noida. When he did not return to the university hostel after leaving it on Monday, an FIR was lodged at the local Dadri police station and an investigation was initiated, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Greater Noida)

Saad Miya Khan said.
"On February 27, the police received information that Bennett University student Yash Mittal had not returned to the hostel since February 26. Immediately, police teams were formed to investigate this case. When CCTV footage was reviewed, it was found that he left the university campus safely in a car while talking to someone

Later, as part of the probe, call data records were also checked, leading police to some suspects, including his friend Rachit Nagar who told the police about a party in Gajraula where Mittal was invited by his friends, the officer said."

During the probe, Rachit Nagar told police that he, Yash Mittal, Shivam Singh, Shubham Singh, Sushant Verma and Shubham Chaudhary, who lived in Gajraula (Amroha), are friends with each other since November 2023," the DCP said.

"On February 26, they had called Yash Mittal for the party in Gajraula. He went there during which an argument broke out between him and others after which he was killed and his body was buried inside a farmland in Gajraula. We recovered the body from the farmland on Wednesday," Khan said. The argument broke out

between the accused — all in their late 20s and financially weak — and Mittal, whose family is in the electronics business, after he told them that they were "surviving and having parties on his money", according to a police source privy to the probe. On Wednesday evening, the

police here got to know that the accused were in Greater Noida's Dadri area. During a combing operation, a gunfight broke out during

Shubham Chaudhary — is at large and efforts are underway to arrest him, police said.

"The accused told the police that they had killed Yash on February 27 but to mislead the police and his family, they sent ransom messages on February 28," DCP Khan said. The police said they have lodged two FIRs against the accused — first for murder, criminal conspiracy, and evidence destruction, and the second after the encounter for an attempt to murder and under the Arms Act. Further legal proceedings in the case are underway, the police added.

### DDA offers temporary house to tunnel rescue hero

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after razing his house in a demolition drive, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) offered to move Wakeel Hassan, a rathole miner who was part of the Silkyara tunnel rescue operation, and his family to a temporary accommodation but he declined the offer The authority has that removal of encroachments from its land has been a constant, regular and routine activity of authority, and they were no aware about his contribution in the rescue operation. "However given the contributions made by Hassan in the rescue operation it will still continue with its efforts to provide its help to his family," it said. Northeast Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari on Thursday also assured the miner that he will be given a house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana very soon. Hassan's house was razed in a demolition drive carried out by the DDA in northeast Delhi's Khajoori Khas area. Several other houses were demolished during

Hassan has earlier said that DDA officials also told him that he would soon be provided a house in the Govindpuri area but he refused to



workers trapped in Uttarkashi's Silkvara tunnel, at Khaioori Khas Ranian Dimri / The Pioneer

accept the offer as it was only a "verbal

assurance". Standing by its action, the DDA later in a statement said that "in its role as an authority, it cannot allow encroachment on its land or unauthorised constructions in its development areas". The DDA also said Hassan was aware of his house's "status of encroachment" as it had been previously removed in 2016 and was encroached upon again in 2017. Having come to know about the contributions of Hassan in the rescue operation in Uttarakhand, the DDA

"extended its hand of support" to the family but it was refused, the DDA

said in a statement. The DDA, however, clarified that "at no point of time before or during the demolition exercise, were the DDA officials aware of Hassan's role in the rescue operation in Uttarakhand. On Wednesday, the DDA said the demolition drive was carried out on land that was "part of planned development land".

"Late in the evening, when this fact came to light, officials of DDA, after having made alternate arrangements for shelter to Hassan and his family, went on site and contacted him. "However, Hassan refused to avail any

relief measure so offered and demanded a permanent house either at the same location or at any location in the same vicinity. To break the impasse, Senior officers of DDA also intervened and went to the site late at night which was of no avail,"the DDA

Some TV channels showed Hassan and his family sitting and having dinner amid the rubble of what used to be their home. He spent the night on a footpath with his wife and their two children. The family's neighbours' provided them with food and other necessary items.

"It is again reiterated that the family was in the know of their status of encroachment. Hassan was also aware of his encroachment removed earlier in 2016 and he re-encroached on the land in 2017. However, this was a routine encroachment removal drive and DDA has not targeted any particular individual. Having come to know about the contributions of Hassan in rescue operation of the workers entrapped in Silkyara-Barkot tunnel, DDA extended its hand of support to the family which was not availed," it added.

### Two days flower festival from March 2 | Shastri Park gets Convention Centre

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has announced a two-day-long flower festival called "Palaash 2024" on March 2 and March 3. The event will be hosted at DDA Greens at Shivaji Marg, Rohtak Road in Delhi. The festival will be inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena

The festival will present a stunning array of flowers, plants, and floral arrangements. Visitors can explore different varieties of flowers from indigenous to exotic, beautifully arranged to create captivating displays.

It would be an opportunity for flower enthusiasts to appreciate the beauty and diversity of nature's creations. "Alongside the floral displays, the festival will feature entertainment avenues such as DJ play, ceremonial band performance, interactive selfie points and ride attraction for kids to tickle their hearts. These attractions will be adding vibrancy and



festival, allowing visitors to adds immerse themselves in the dimension, complementing saga of dance, music and joy. the visual and cultural To tantalize the taste buds of experiences on offer," the visitors, the festival will offer a DDA said in a statement. selection of delicacies from DDA's flower festival is our rich street food. From organised annually as an snacks to desserts, attendees exhibition-cum-competition can indulge in a culinary journey while enjoying the Hortic floral extravaganza. This Delhi

gastronomic

event amongst all Horticulture Divisions of Development upkeep of greens. The

Authority, Authority, vying for recognition as the foremost custodians of DDA Parks. The objective of the festival is to promote and encourage residents of city to collaborate with DDA towards the betterment of greens, also to foster the passion of horticulture enthusiasts

towards the scrupulous

grassroot level workers get an opportunity to display their skills while a healthy competition amongst them is promoted. The event is named Palaash

after the flower of Butea monosperma, which blooms in the capital during this time. In February last year, the inaugural flower festival was held at Swarn Jayanti Park Rohini.

"The Greens at Shivaji Marg constitute of three parts readily accessible from Shivaji Marg & Rohtak Road. Spanning acres meticulously manicured grounds, the park offers a respite from the hustle and bustle of city life, inviting visitors to reconnect with nature and rejuvenate their senses. The city residents can experience lush greenery with rich landscaping which features elements like Duck Pond, nurseries, herbal garden, seasonal garden, amphitheatre,

playfields, lawns etc. along

with other public amenities,

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Thursday inaugurated the Convention Centre at District Centre at Shastri Park, in north east Delhi.

The Convention Centre will serve as a vital hub for public gatherings, cultural, religious activities and marriage functions and will facilitate the general public of the densely populated area of Shastri Park, Seelampur, Gautampuri, Ghonda Chauhan, and Brahmpuri. The total cost of the project is Rs 6 crore. BJP MP Manoj Tiwari, was also present during the event.

Speaking at the inauguration, Lt Governor said, "Earlier, people living in the colonies here had to travel long distances for weddings, parties or any other functions, and had to spend a lot of money for the same. He hope that the construction of this convention centre will help a lot in reducing this problem.' Saxena further said, people



Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Vinai Kumar Saxena inaugurates the Convention Centre, District Centre, in Shastri Park Ranian Dimri / The Pioneer

living in this part of Delhi should also get all the facilities which residents of other areas of Delhi are getting. "Through DDA, every effort is being made to prepare a development model for Yamuna crossing," he

added. The total area of the ground floor of the convention centre is 1928 sqm and it comprises various facilities like multi purpose hall for approx 1000 people with separate toilets for males and females, a

restaurant, kitchen and a

booking room. Besides, there is a basement of the total area of 2628 sqm. In the recent past, several

initiatives have been taken by DDA to provide ease of living to the residents of Delhi. Last year, Utsav Pandals were

inaugurated at Dakshinpuri and Dwarka built by DDA, allowing people to book them at economically reasonable prices for their family events. This was a boon for those who are not able to afford expensive hotels

# Modi to launch ₹22,200 crore projects in West Bengal

rime Minister Narendra Prime Millister March 1 and 2
Bengal on March 1 and 2 launch multiple development projects worth over Rs 22,200 crore, a visit which becomes politically significant as well as it comes amid the BJP's sharp attack on the state government over the Sandeshkhali issue.

An official statement said that on March 2 Modi will launch many development projects, worth over nearly Rs 1.83 lakh-crore, from Bihar for across the country in his first visit to the state after Chief Minister Nitish Kumar quit joined hands with the BJP.

the opposition bloc and While the projects to be launched from Bihar are meant for regions spread across the country, a sizeable part of them will be based in the state. The prime minister will inaugurate and lay

development projects worth over Rs 35,700 core in Iharkhand too on March 1, the statement added.

In Bengal, he will attend public programmes in Arambagh on March 1 and Krishnanagar on March 2, while in Bihar he will visit Aurangabad and Begusarai, it

His visit to Bengal comes amid rising political heat in the state after many women in Sandeshkhali accused ruling Trinamool Congress strongman Shajahan Sheikh and other members of the party of land grab and sexual assault, an issue seized by the

Giving details of the project, the PMO said Modi will inaugurate the Sindri fertiliser plant of the Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Ltd (HURL) in Jharkhand.

BJP to corner its rival.

The statement said the PM will inaugurate and lay the

foundation of numerous foundation stone of several rail projects worth more than Rs 17,600 crore in Jharkhand. Another key project to be inaugurated in the state is the Unit 1 (660 MW) of North Karanpura Super Thermal Power Project (STPP) in Chatra.

> In Arambagh in West Bengal, he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone developmental

developmental projects related to sectors like rail, ports, oil pipeline, LPG supply and wastewater treatment. He will inaugurate Indian Oil's 518-km Haldia-Barauni crude oil pipeline developed at a cost of about Rs 2,790 crore. This pipeline passes through Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal and will supply crude oil to Barauni, Bongaigaon and Guwahati refineries in a safe, cost-efficient, environment-friendly manner, the statement said.

He will also launch multiple



projects for strengthening of infrastructure at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Prasad Mookerjee Kolkata worth about Rs 1000 crore. In Krishnanagar, the statement said he will lay the foundation Raghunathpur Thermal Power Station phase II (2x660

located Raghunathpur in Purulia district.

This coal based thermal power project of the Damodar Valley Corporation employs highly-efficient super critical technology. The new plant will be a step

towards strengthening the energy security of the country, it said.

Among other projects, he will inaugurate the flue gas desulfurization (FGD) system of the unit 7 & 8 of the Mejia thermal power station developed at a cost of about Rs 650 crore and the road project for four laning of Farakka-Raiganj section of NH-12 developed at a cost of about Rs 1,986 crore.

In Bihar's Aurangabad, he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for several national highway projects worth more than Rs 18,100

He will also lay the foundation stone of the sixlane bridge across Ganga that will be developed as a part of the Patna ring road. It will be one of the longest river bridges in the country and halp decoragest traffic through help decongest traffic through the capital city and provide faster and better connectivity between the north and south regions of the state.

He will also inaugurate 12 projects under Namami Gange in Bihar that have been developed at a cost of about Rs 2,190 crore. In Begusarai in Bihar, the

projects to be launched will

the energy sector in the country as he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for multiple oil and gas projects worth about Rs 1.48 lakh-crore. The projects are spread across the country in various states like Bihar, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka along with KG

Basin. The oil and gas sector projects worth about Rs 14,000 crore will be taken up in Bihar. This includes foundation stone laying of the expansion of the Barauni refinery with project cost of more than Rs 11,400 crore.

He will also inaugurate the HURL's fertiliser plant in Barauni which has been developed at a cost of over Rs 9,500 crore. The prime minister will launch several railway projects worth about Rs 3,917 crore as well, the statement said.

### Deployment of 3.4 lakh CAPFs for polls to begin from today

PNS NEW DELHI

The first phase of deployment of more than 3.4 lakh central armed police forces (CAPFs) for the upcoming general elections in the country and Assembly polls in few States will begin from Friday. According to the plan, about 2,000 companies will be mobilised as part of the pre-poll deployment in sensitive and hyper-sensitive constituencies beginning March 1. About 1.5 lakh personnel will move through roads and rail as part of this mobilisation, sources in the government said.

The first CAPF units will start reaching the states affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), apart from West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir, later this week, they said. The second phase of inducting the poll companies will be initiated from March 7, followed by some last units moving in their designated locations in the second and third week of March, they

The commanding officers of these units have been issued the movement orders and

The Centre has expressed

strong concerns about five

States not signing MoUs with the Education Ministry for

PM SHRI schools and Punjab

not implementing it despite

continuing to take funds under the Samagra Shiksha

scheme, sources said on

Thursday.
Odisha, West Bengal, Tamil
Nadu, Kerala and Delhi have

Understanding (MoU) with the Union Ministry of

Education, while 30 states and

union territories (UTs) have

The scheme targets to upgrade

14,500 schools and is expected

to benefit 1.8 million students.

It also aims to ensure these

schools serve as model

institutes and encapsulate the

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NEW DELH

signed

PNS NEW DELHI

not yet

Memorandum

troops about the areas they are going for polls duty apart from the general instructions issued by the Election Commission, a senior CAPF

officer said. In the first phase, companies deployed for law and order duties in various states and those in reserve like training exercises are being sent. Some units deployed for regular duties like border guarding and security will be withdrawn and deployed during the later phases, the sources said. The troops of these CAPF companies are drawn from the CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF and SSB.

As many as 3,400 companies of the CAPFs and state police forces have been requisitioned by the EC for ensuring free and fair polls during the upcoming general elections and assembly polls Andhra Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim. The poll panel is expected to announce the phases and poll dates in March. It has also directed the railway board to ensure "smooth and hassle-free" train movement for the troops and officers of these

### India trying for discharge of 20 nationals working as Russian Army support staff

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday said it is trying its best for an "early discharge" of around 20 Indian nationals who are working as support staff to the Russian army.
"It is our understanding that there are

20-odd people (Indians) who have gone their to work as support staff or as helpers with the Russian army," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing here.

We are trying our level best for their early discharge," he added.

Jaiswal said the "20-odd people" contacted the Indian embassy in

According to media reports, many

Indians recruited as security helpers in the Russian military, have been forced to

even fight with Russian soldiers in certain areas along Russia's border with

"We are trying our best to get them out. We are trying to get them discharged and support them," Jaiswal said.

They are at various places and our embassy is in touch with the Russian authorities," he added.

Jaiswal said India is in regular touch with Russian authorities, both in New Delhi

and Moscow, to ensure the return of the Indians. "We told people not to venture into the war zone or get caught into situations which are difficult. We are deeply committed for the welfare of all our people," he said.

On Monday, the MEA said several Indians who worked as support staff to the Russian army were discharged following India's demand. It said India representations

It said India remains committed, as a matter of "top priority", to actively pursuing with the Russian authorities all the relevant cases of Indian nationals for an early discharge from the Russian

army.
On the safety of the Indians going to Israel, Jaiswal said nobody has gone to that country after the provision of a recent inter-governmental framework for mobility of people.

humanitarian missions.

# Telangana BRS MP

# Ramulu joins BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

 $\mathbf{B}^{\mathrm{RS}}$  MP from Telangana Pothuganti Ramulu joined the BJP here on Thursday, quitting his party ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Along with Ramulu, his son Bharat Prasad and several other BRS leaders from Telangana, also joined the BJP in the pres-

Chandrasekhar and party incharge for Telangana Tarun Chugh. BJP national vice president D K Aruna and the party's OBC Morcha chief K Laxman were

ence of senior party leaders,

including Union Minister Rajeev

also present at the BIP headquarters on the occasion. Welcoming the politicians to the BIP fold, Laxman called Ramulu, a BRS MP from Nagarkurnool Lok Sabha constituency, the "most dedicated Dalit

leader" in Telangana. "I welcome

Ramulu to the BIP on behalf of

BRS joining the BJP along with him. All these leaders have quit BRS and joined the BJP," Chugh told at a press conference at the party headquarters here. He said the leaders joined the BJP as they were impressed by

welcome other leaders of the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies and work that his government has done for the development of the country. "From Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Kutch to Guwahati, every day some or the other big

leaders, social workers, doc tors, engineers, who have dedicated their lives for the society, are joining the BJP," Chugh added. Chandrasekhar said, am happy and grateful that they have joined Team Modi." "In Prime Minister Modi's

efforts, vision and 'sankalp' (resolve) to create a viksit bharat (developed India), we all will work together as party workers and leaders to deliver on that goal of our prime minister," the

### Civilian team reaches Maldives to replace military staff: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

ndia on Thursday said its first civilian team of technical experts has reached the Maldives to replace the military personnel operating an advanced light helicopter in the island nation.

President Maldivian Mohamed Muizzu had set March 10 as the deadline for the withdrawal of the first group of Indian military personnel from his country.

personnel to operate the advanced light helicopter has reached the Maldives. It will replace the existing personnel who were operating this platform," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing.

Following a second meeting of the high-level core group that was set up to address the issue of withdrawal of the Indian military personnel, the Maldivian foreign ministry had said India will replace all its military personr

The second meeting of the core group took place in Delhi on February 2.

The two sides decided to set up the core group following a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Muizzu on the sidelines of the COP28 summit in Dubai in December last year. At present, around 80 Indian

military personnel are in the Maldives, primarily to operate two helicopters and an aircraft that have carried out hundreds

The ties between the two countries came under some strain since Muizzu came to power in November last year. Widely seen as a pro-China leader, Muizzu maintained after assuming charge as the president that he will keep his election promise of evicting Indian military personnel from his country.

Muizzu, 45, defeated Indiafriendly incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the presidential runoff held in

# Work is done anonymously in CBI: Sood

their choice in the next four-five years.
"Noting that most of the officers are from technical background, he underlined that the knowl-

edge and learning acquired during academics and during the training, will come handy as the officers embark on real part of their learning process when they assume charge," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

The director said that as CBI officers, the new inductees are going to be the brand ambassadors of the organization as their conduct and work will always be up for scrutiny by the court and public which will reflect upon the agency.

"Calling upon the officers to maintain good conduct throughout the service, the director emphasized that CBI is a place where work needs to be done anonymously and silently, staying away from seeking recognition through external platforms," the statement said.

### Indian scientists develop wound dressing material with banana fibers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Scientists at the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST), under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have developed an innovative cost-effective wound dressing material using banana fibers, a byproduct of the extensive banana farming industry in the country.

Led by Prof. Devasish Chowdhury and Prof. (Retd) Rajlakshmi Devi, along with research scholar Mridusmita Barman, the team has repurposed banana pseudostems, typically discarded as agricultural waste, to create an eco-friendly wound dressing solution. By combining banana fibers with biopolymers such as chitosan

#### Air India fined ₹30 lakh for not providing and guar gum, the researchers engineered a versatile patch with superior mechanical strength and antioxidant prop-Additionally, the patch is loaded with an extract from the Vitex negundo L. plant, showcasing its actions taken to prevent the recurrence of potential as an effective drug such incidents in the future." "Accordingly, a financial penalty of Rs. 30 lakh has been release system and antibacterial agent in vitro. Importantly, all

components used in manufacturing the dressing material are natural and readily available locally, ensuring a straightforward, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly production The development of this sustain-

able wound dressing material not only addresses the need for effective wound care solutions but also presents a novel application for banana plants, potentially benefiting farmers and reducing environmental impact.

#### **PM SHRI schools: Centre concerned** over five States not signing MoU accept funds under Samagra



draconian for the Hindus to led Government at the Centre

spirit of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. government has already selected 6,448 schools from 28 states and UTs for the upgrade in the first round.

"Despite taking funds from Centre for Samagra Shiksha government officials said. Scheme, the refusal of five States/UTs, namely Odisha, the States/UTs, where they

Places of Worship Act must

be repealed, says historian

West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Delhi to sign MOUs for PM SHRI schools reflects a troubling pattern. Punjab, after initially signing the MoU, stopped the implementation of PM SHRI,"

Shiksha but resist signing an MoU for PM SHRI," the source added. Asked about if the Centre can

halt funding under Samgra Shiksha scheme for these states, the source said "nothing can be ruled out". The Samagra Shiksha Scheme is the largest Central government scheme for school education for universalisation of education. The scheme also supports the states in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009; and Strengthening and up-gradation of State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and other agencies for teacher training. In the financial year 2023-23, the Centre set aside Rs 37,453 out of Rs 68,804 allocated for the school education in its budget.

BI Director Praveen Sood Central probe agency is a place where work needs to be done anonymously and silently while staying away from seeking recognition through external platforms,.

Addressing investiture ceremony of sub-inspectors at the CBI Academy in Ghaziabad, Sood said young officers must strive to do their work by employing out-of-the-box thinking and looking for achieving better results through approaching their tasks differently. "This will do away with the mundane work by replacing the same with smart work which will yield better results," he said.

The officers have been inducted after a 38-week training in different disciplines and specialisations. Among the 30 passouts, Sood awarded medals and trophies as well.



for Best All-Round SI Trainee, Vicky Raj got 'DCBI Trophy for Indoor Studies' and 'Trophy for Cyber Crime Investigation. While Sudhanshu was selected for the 'John Lobo Trophy for Best Outdoor' and Ankit Tanwar received the 'CBI Academy Trophy for Dedication and Exemplary Conduct'. The CBI chief told the new

recruits that the agency offers multiple specialisations in investigations of various crimes like anti-corruption, cyber crime, economic offences, special crime and they should work in a manner that they are equipped with specialization of

> The regulator further said that an advisory had also been issued to all airlines to ensure that an adequate number of wheelchairs are available for passengers who require assistance during embarking or disembarking from the aircraft during their journey. Issuing an official statement, the airline had

### wheelchair to elderly passenger who died PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI (DGCA) has imposed a penalty of Rs 30 lakhs on Air India after an incident of non-

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation

availability of a wheelchair to an 80-year-old passenger who collapsed and died after walking from the aircraft to the airport terminal at Mumbai. The incident occurred on February 12, when a passenger requested a wheelchair upon arrival in Mumbai. While his wife was already using a wheelchair, Air India allegedly asked the elderly passenger to wait due to "heavy demand" for wheelchairs. The passenger reportedly opted to walk instead, ultimately collapsing and passing away during the immigration



"However, the airline failed to show compliance of the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) as the airline did not provide any wheelchair to the elderly passenger," the regulator said. "Further, Air India did not inform about any action taken by the airline against the erring employee(s) and the airline also failed to submit any corrective

imposed on Air India as per Aircraft Rules 1937 for violating the provisions of the aforementioned CAR," the DGCA said.

said that the passenger's wife had been provided a wheelchair and staff had asked him to wait while they arranged another one. But he instead chose to walk to the terminal with

#### repealed in the light of the findings by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) in the Gyan Vapi Mosque on the order of the court. The historian has also stated that the law enacted by parliament in the backdrop of Ramjanmabhoomi

Historian Vikram Sampath has demanded that the Places of Worship (special provisions) Act, 1991 must be

reclaim their places of worship in the country. In his book, 'Waiting for

Shiva; Unearthing of the Truth of Gyan Vapi, Sampath writes: "Draconian laws like the Places of Worship Act, 1991, precent Hindus from even seeking peaceful, legal reclaim of what has been forcibly snatched away from them. Which justice-abiding democracy in the world would have made such provisions?"

The Places of Worship movement of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and (Special Provisons) Act, 1991 against the Babri Mosque is was enacted by the Congress-

which was headed by former Prime Minister PV Narsimha The Bharatiya Janata Party-

led Government at the Centre has left the 1991 law untouched even while the splotlight from within the saffron outfits is now shifting to Kashi and Mathura after the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Sampath also made reference

to Turkey converting historic churches into mosques to argue for a revisit of the 1991 law which calls for status quo in matters of religious places.

# Temple Bill passed in Karnataka Assembly again after its defeat in Council

bill that sought to collect funds from temples with over Rs 10 lakh annual income, which was defeated by the opposition BJP-JD(S)combine in the legislative council last week, was taken up for reconsideration and passed by the legislative assembly once again on

Thursday.
The Karnataka Hindu Religious
Tractitutions and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Bill, 2024, will now be sent to the Governor directly for his assent, following which it will become law.

The bill was defeated by a voice vote in the upper house, where the opposition has a majority, on February 23, after it was passed by the assembly on February 21. Piloting the bill in the assembly on Thursday, Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy said: "the bill was passed by the assembly earlier, but was defeated in the council, I request the assembly to once gain pass

The much awaited Socio-Economic and Education

Survey report, generally

known as the 'caste census',

was submitted to Chief

Minister Siddaramaiah by

Chairman of the Karnataka

The report comes amid

objections to its findings by

certain sections of society and

even within the ruling Congress. "We don't know

The government has received

the report, it will be placed

before the cabinet, and will be

what is in the report.

**PTI** CHHATRAPATI

private

currently

sovre"

Kunbi

Maharashtra's

Quota activist Manoj Jarange on Thursday

claimed that if he is arrested,

crores of Marathas will stage a

Talking to reporters at a

Sambhajinagar, where he is

treatment after ending his fast

at his native Antarwali Sarati

village in Jalna three days

back, Jarange said the Maratha

community is fighting for its

rights.
The government still has a

chance to implement the "sage

notification. The community

The draft notification was issued in January for issuing

certificates to eligible Kunbi

Jarange has reiterated his

opposition to the 10 per cent quota granted to the Maratha

community recently by the

Maharashtra legislature under

The activist has been under

fire for using intemperate

language against Maharashtra

Chief Minister

will appreciate it, he said.

(OBC) Marathas.

a special category.

was trying to kill him.

A-1627

Type of Work

Procurement officer

Total No of Works

Amount put to tender

Period of completion

Deputy

(blood relatives of

Marathas) draft

hospital

Chhatrapati

undergoing

Backward

Thursday.

Jayaprakash

Commission

Classes

Hegde



Caste census report submitted amid objection by Lingayats, Vokkaligas

demanded that it be rejected

and a fresh survey conducted.

successive governments have

been shying away from

releasing the report as the

g it findings of the survey are have allegedly contrary to the

vote. 'Muzrai' refers to grants made by the government for religious and charitable purposes as well as the upkeep of religious and charitable institutions, according to the Karnataka Government Gazetteer. The department of Religious and Charitable Endowments is, hence, popularly known as the Muzrai department. It administers about 35,000 Hindu religious institutions "Speaker U T Khader then put the bill which receive grants from the for vote and it was passed by a voice Government of Karnataka Opposition

BJP and JD(S) were not present in the assembly when the bill was passed on Thursday, as they had staged a walkout earlier in the day, demanding government's "inaction" in Congress resignation for its nabbing the culprits who allegedly shouted the 'Pakistan zindabad' slogans, after Congress member Syed

The Muzrai department's amendment bill had created a huge controversy, as

"traditional perception" of the

numerical strength of various

castes in Karnataka, especially

the Lingayats and Vokkaligas,

making it a politically sticky issue. Deputy Chief Minister

D K Shivakumar, who is also

the state Congress President, is

He was a signatory, along with

a couple of other ministers, to

a memorandum submitted by

the community to the chief

minister, requesting him to

reject the report along with the

The All India Veerashaiva

Mahasabha, the apex body of

also expressed its disapproval

over the survey, calling it unscientific, and demanded

But contesting elections is

Veerashaiva-Lingayats,

community.

Vokkaliga

Naseer Hussain was declared elected

to the Rajva Sabha.

it angered the opposition, especially the BJP, which has claimed that the ruling Congress was trying to fill its "empty coffers" with temple money. The Congress then sought to turn the tables on the saffron party, pointing out that it had effected an amendment in 2011 to seek funds from highincome Hindu shrines.

The bill among other things, proposes to collect five per cent from temples whose gross income is between Rs 10 lakh and less than Rs one crore and 10 per cent from temples whose income is above Rs one crore, to be put into a Common Pool Fund, administered by 'Rajya Dharmika Parishath', which is proposed to be used for Archakas' (priests) welfare and upkeep of 'C category temples (state controlled) whose annual income is less than Rs five lakh.

The act that was earlier amended in 2011 had made way for five per cent of the net income of temples with annual income between Rs five lakh and Rs 10 lakh and 10 per cent of the net income of temples with annual income of over Rs 10 lakh to come

conducted.

### Protection bund coming up along IB for safety of border farmers in JK: IG BSF

PTI SAMBA/JAMMU

Encouraging border tresidents to cultivate their land ahead of border fence, a top BSF officer on Thursday said the Home Ministry has approved a plan for the construction of a protection bund along the International Border for the safety of farmers and it will be completed within next five years.

Inspector General of Border Security Force (BSF), Jammu frontier, D K Boora was speaking at a function organised at Chamliyal village near the zero line in Samba district to hand over a cheque of Rs 3 lakh to a villager who helped in the recovery of a grounded Pakistani drone in January.

Samba Senior Superintendent of Police Vinay Kumar and other prominent people

attended the function. 'We want the farmers to tend their land ahead of the border fence as the BSF is there for your protection. We will provide you with all the assistance and if you are concerned that you won't be able to cultivate your produce, we will not allow such a situation to develop in the first place," the BSF officer said. Boora, however, said in case the farmers on the Indian side

are not able to reap their produce, the BSF will not allow the other side to cultivate as well. He said the home ministry has already approved a proposal for the construction of a

protection bund along the IB for the safety of the farmers working in their fields ahead of the border fence. 'The protection bund will be completed within the next four to five years, depending on the

out your work easily without any threat (from the enemy), he said.

place while moving ahead of the border fence and "we need to follow those rules. BSF is deployed on the borders in J-K, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Assam. Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram and all these areas are protected by border fences and the rules are the same everywhere."

Boora said the central government has announced many schemes for the development of border villages and the impact of these schemes will be visible on the ground in the next five years. Highlighting the importance border residents in safeguarding the country, border security is incomplete without the cooperation of the border population.

We are proud of our border population in Jammu region who are nationalist by core," he said, adding that in neighbouring Punjab, drug smuggling from across the border is a major challenge.

'The drugs are coming by drones and other means in Punjab because there are some elements who are promoting the business. When our own people are involved in such criminal activities, it becomes

Notice is hereby given that my client Kapil Goyal is in process to purchase the LHS portion, area measuring 277.5 Sq. Yds (Portion) Freehold Residential Plot No. 7, area measuring 555.55 Sq. Yds, Block-D, Balram Nagar extension-I, Khasra No. 20218 min Village Ahmed Nagar Nawada Pargana Loni Tehsil & Distri. Ghaziabad lavailing loan from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd) from Deepak Kumar Jain, Mr Naveen Kumar Jain, Mr Praveen Kumar Jain, and Mr Umesh Kumar Jain all are the legal heirs of late B. S. Jain, whereas Shri B. S. Jain purchased the entire plot measuring 555.5 Sq yards vide Sale deed dated 21.09.1988 executed by Mrs Balram Land and Company through Mahavir Prasad (doc. No. 6550) All personly having any claim against or in respect of in respect of in respect or in the respect or in the

oeed otack 2 r.O.s. December 19 years did not company through Mahavir Prasad (doc. No. 6550). All persons's having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, passession, lease, sublease, tenancy, licenses, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, ralling which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandonad. Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate). Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahaluxmi Metro Tower Sec. 4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob. 9810063351

difficult (for the law enforcing agencies to tackle the situation)," he said, adding that when the border residents are nationalists, the entire focus of the border guarding forces remains on the front rather than looking behind.

Highlighting the cooperation of the border residents in securing the borders of the country, he said Dass had done a very good job for which he was rewarded.

SSP Sharma said the police headquarters had announced rewards to anyone sharing information regarding antinational activities and Dass was handed over the cheque of Rs 3 lakh for helping in the recovery of enemy drones in January this year.

He said there is also a reward of Rs 5 lakh for anyone who locates the trans-border tunnel, used by anti-national elements to tranship terrorists, explosives, and contraband consignments into Jammu and Kashmir from across the border.

"People have always been supportive in providing information to the forces. The rewards were announced just to glorify, certify and celebrate such people," he said. Dass thanked the BSF and the

police for rewarding him and said it is the duty of every individual to expose the enemy conspiracies and safeguard the country alongside the forces.

"I was doing spray in my agriculture land on January 17 when I found a drone lying on the ground. I immediately informed BSF who later gave me Rs 50,000," he said, thanking police for the reward

Any person(s) claiming any right, interest having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No.8826546380 within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director, LAB(H) or Director (H)-1, D- Block, 3rd Florr Vikas-Sarlan INA New Publi-11009.

he trade name "KB Mart (UPRERAPRJ151218)". Our activities are spread in the Vational Capital Region (NCR), more particularly in District Gautam Buddha Nagar. It has come to our notice that certain Company(ies) / Real Estate Agent(s) mauthorised use of our Company, Brand Name, Logo details in their own omotional advertising material (Digital/Print), without prior approval from u which is detrimental to our interest.

circulated by above said Agency(ies) in the market. The said wrongful use on normation is also not as per the guidelines laid down under the Real Estat (Regulation and Development) Act. 2016.

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apart from us under the impression that they are connected with us shall be doin so at his / her / their own risk, responsibility and consequences. Our Company Group shall not be responsible for any such act or representation Please also take notice that unauthorised use of the name of our Company, Bran

Name, Logo details would amount to infringement of our rights.

Our Company / Group shall contemplate serious action, as may be advised und

Ashish Kumar Gupta (Director

Email ld.-shreekbgroup@gmail.com Mob :- 9811267073

Picici Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This is to bring to your notice that ANIL KUMAR/ ARCHANA (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number LBFDB00005031247 located at FLAT NO 208, FLOOR 2, TOWER A-5, SECTOR 78, HABITAT 78, FARIDABAD. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement.

The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated 2024 informing that CONSCIENT INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATE LIMITED has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the

builder within 7 days from the date of this publication. Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the

said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder. Dated: March 01, 2024 Place: Delhi/ NCR

For ICICI Bank Limited Sd-

Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

PUBLIC NOTICE: Builder Cancellation
This is to bring to your notice that ANIRUDHA SEN GUPTA/ SUBHRA

SEN GUPTA (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility reement number LBFDB00005231030 located at FLAT NO-A1-1205 FLOOR-12 HABITAT 78, TOWER A-1, SECTOR-78, FARIDABAD 121001. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement.

The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated eb 21, 2024 informing that CONSCIENT INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATE LIMITED has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication.

Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any

other allotment done by the builder

Dated: March 01, 2024 Place: Delhi/ NCR

For ICICI Bank Limited Sd-

### **DECLARATION**

Place of publication

(Whether citizen of India)

Publisher's Name (Whether citizen of India)

Editor s Name (Whether citizen of India)

Resident Editor

Name and address of Individuals who own the newspaper and

Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi - 110002 Daily Narendra Kumar

E-4, Greater Kailash, Part-2, New Delhi-110048 Narendra Kumar

E-4, Greater Kailash, Part-2, New Delhi-110048 Viiav Prakash Singh 224, Mahatma Gandhi Road, lucknow

Cant, P. O. Dilkusha-226002 Ravi Shanker Kapoor (1) IDBI Indian Red Cross Building Society

2, Opinion Express Communication

3, Sanchar Holding Pvt. Ltd. H-33A, Sainik Farms, Lane W 10C, New Delhi-110062

Narendra Kumar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief

Place: New Delhi **PUBLISHER** Dated: March 1st, 2024

#### **Additional Chief** 13.03.2024, ACE,RBB(BNID) 816.91 Engineer, Rushikulya Bahuda 10.00 A.M. to 27.03.2024. 5.00 P.M. Date of opening of the Technical Bid:- 28.03.2024 at 11.30 A.M.

**Bid Identification** 

Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersodisha.gov.in Additional Chief Engineer, OIPR-32411/11/0030/2324 Rushikulya Bahuda Basin, Berhampur.



Karnataka's two dominant According to some analysts,

If I am arrested, crores of Marathas

Vokkaliga

calling

have

the state government to set up a special investigation team and conduct a

Siddaramaiah told reporters

after receiving it. People of

expressed reservations about

communities -

Lingayat

comprehensive inquiry into the Jarange's remarks against Fadnavis. 'The Maratha community and I will not give up the demand

of quota for the relatives (of Marathas who have Kunbi certificates), even if I am put in jail. It seems the report (of SIT) is about to get ready before the inquiry. No matter wherever they keep me, I am ready to go anywhere," he said. "I am not greedy even for a single rupee. Let them arrest me. The route by which I will taken to jail, they (government) will find crores Maratha community members sitting on hunger strike along the route," Jarange

Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday added. The activist claimed nearly 1.5 as he alleged the BJP leader crore persons have got Assembly speaker Rahul reservation till now as about 57 lakh records of 'Kunbis' Narwekar on Tuesday directed

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** 

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer,

Rushikulya Bahuda Basin, Berhampur - 760004

e-mail id: se\_sicbam@yahoo.com

e-Procurement Notice No. ACE,RBB - 23/2023-24

: - Rs **816.91** Lakh

:- 01 (One) No.

:- Flood Protection Work.

:- 12 (Twelve) calendar months

**Bid Amount** 

(Rs. in lakh)

have been found so far, and that he has been demanding reservation for the remaining people.

(those in They government) expect that we should talk to them respectfully. When our people are getting arrested without any fault, why should we? What was the reason that curfew was imposed in Antarwali Sarati?" he asked. Jarange said the 10 per cent reservation for the Maratha community is acceptable if facilities for the SEBC (Social Economic Backward Class) are included in it.

'This 10 per cent reservation should be included in the OBC quota," he added.

On the Prakash Ambedkarled Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi's proposal that Jarange contest the upcoming Lok Šabha poll from Jalna, the activist said he respects the VBA chief as he has supported their agitation

Availability &

Submission of Bid On-

line

From

not my way. I will keep working for my community,"

PUBLICADE
To be known to all, SHUBH LATA GUPTA W/C
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JASHOK VIHAR, DELHI-110052 have applied
for certified copies in DDA.The origina
documents i.e. DEMAND-CUM-ALLOTMENT
LETTER, POSSESSION LETTER, NOC FOR WATER
AND ELECTRICITY CONNECTION, SITE
POSSESSION SITER DOCUMENTS of
the above said flat has been lost. An LA NO.145
the above said flat has been lost. An LA NO.145 POSSESSION SUP & OTHER DOCUMENTS of the above said flat has been lost, An IR NO.149 9646/2024 dated 29/02/2024 to this effect has been lodged in P.S.Crime Branch, Delhi Amp person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 8700711705 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (I.A.B.-Housing)-I.I.G. Delhi Development Authority. Vijas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

#### Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023. PUBLIC NOTICE

Public hereby is informed that Smt. Subha: Rani, W/o Sh. Subhash Chand Arora R/o WZ-2246 Raja Park, Rani Bagh, ShakurBasti Delhi-110034 is the lawful, absolute own and in possession of property bearing E-5 First Floor, Back/ Left Side Portion, Bal Nagar, Delhi-110015. The original Sale Deed bearing Registration No. 7970, Book No:01 Vol No: 11533 on pages: 130 to 136 registered on 30-04-2004 before the Sub-Registrar-II, Delhi of the property bearing no. E-5, First Floor, Back/ Left Side Portion Bali Nagar, Delhi-110015 have now beer misplaced/not- traceable. An NCR dated 02-06-2018 with LR no. 1429527/2018 to this effect has been lodged. All people are hereby informed not to deal or carry out ar transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing documents. If any person(s claiming any right, interest, having ar objection or found in possession of original documents, kindly informed the undersigne n writing on the below mentioned addres within 30 days, from the date of publication of this notice. ROHIT YADAV (Advocate

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public hereby is informed that Sh. Subhash Chand Arora S/o Sh. Bhawana Dass Arora R/o WZ-2246 Raja Park, Rani Bagh, Shaku Basti, Delhi-110034 is the lawful absolute owner of property bearing Plot no. 58 admeasuring 200 sq yards, out of khasra No. 547 & 561 situated at Vill. Mundka Delhi State, Abadi, Rajdhani Park Block-on Rohtak Road, Delhi. The original Sal Deed bearing Registration No. 5119, Book No:01, Vol No: 1986 on pages: 152 to 154 registered on 19-04-1973 before the Subegistrar, Delhi of the property bearing Plo No. 58, out of khasra No. 547 & 561 situated at Vill. Mundka, Delhi State, Abadi, Rajdhani Park, Block-D, on Rohtak Road, Delhi have now been misplaced/not-trace able. An NCR dated 26.02.2024 with LR no 1486918/2024 to this effect has bee odged. All people are hereby informed no documents. If any person(s) claiming ar right, interest, having any objection o found in possession of original documents kindly informed the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 30 days from the date of publication of thi

otice. **ROHIT YADAV (Advocate)** Chamber No. 402, Civil Wing, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

MLAs too have raised objections to the survey and its findings, putting the Congress government in a tough spot. In 2015, the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government of 2013-2018 had commissioned the 'caste census' in the state at an estimated cost of Rs 170 crore.

that a fresh survey be

The Lingayat body is headed

by veteran Congress leader and MLA Shamanuru

Shivashankarappa. Moreover,

several Lingayat ministers and

Karnataka Commission for Backward Classes under its then chairperson H Kantharaju was tasked with preparing the Socio-Economic

availability of the funds. After the completion of the protection bund, you can carry Education Survey Report.

Boora said there are rules in

rospective Buyers at large are warned to beware of any such publication

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PAPER WITH PASSION-

### **Upmanship**

Both TMC and BJP rush forth to claim credit for fugitive Sheikh Shahjahan's arrest after 55 days

The arrest of Trinamool Congress strongman Sheikh Shahjahan, who was wanted for the Sandeshkhali infamy involving the charges of gang rape and landgrab, is likely to further muddy political waters in West Bengal and intensify the bitter war of words between the Mamata Banerjee-led State Government and the BJP. On the run for 55 days following a mob attack on Enforcement Directorate officers during a raid at his house on January 5 in a ration scam case, Sheikh was finally taken into custody within 24 hours of the Calcutta High Court stating that the CBI, ED or State police could arrest him. However, the delayed development has opened a can of worms in political circles. While the ruling TMC maintains that Sheikh was apprehended now since the High Court had cleared the ambiguity on a stay on his arrest, the Opposition BJP claims that the accused was being shielded by the police and his arrest was "scripted" because of the "intense pressure brought on the Government by us". As the drama



unfolds in West Bengal, one thing remains clear: Sheikh's arrest has ignited a firestorm, with both the main players vying for supremacy in the State's everevolving political milieu. While the development has sent shockwaves across the State, the political manoeuvrings have understandably quickened as both the TMC and BJP seek to capitalise on the situation, especially since the Lok Sabha elections are very much in sight, and Sandeshkhali and its aftermath could be a game changer for both parties. For the TMC, it presents an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to combating corruption and upholding the rule of law. The party has wasted no time in touting the arrest as a testament to its dedication to clean governance and accountability.

On the other hand, the BJP has seized upon the arrest as evidence of its growing influence in West Bengal's political arena. The party sees it as vindication of its anti-corruption stance and validation of its claims of rampant corruption within the TMC-led Government. However, under the surface lies a deeper struggle for supremacy in the State's tumultuous political arena. The fierce battle for electoral dominance has only intensified with Sheikh's arrest, with each party seeking to leverage the situation to bolster its poll prospects. However, amid the political grandstanding, it is important not to lose sight of the broader implications of the fugitive strongman's arrest. Beyond being a mere pawn in the State's political underbelly, Sheikh's case underscores the pervasive issue of corruption that continues to plague governance in West Bengal. His arrest serves as a stark reminder of the challenges facing the State in its quest for clean and transparent governance, irrespective of political affiliations. Amid the cacophony of competing claims and counterclaims, the true test lies in the ability of Bengal's political class to address the underlying issues of corruption and criminalisation of politics, which continue to undermine the State's progress and development.



A local artiste with long mustache poses for photos, in Bikaner

# LK Advani: A Ratna of Bharat



From attacking pseudo-secularism to pan-India moderation, it was as if Advani had given up his yesterday for the sake of the BJP's and the country's tomorrow

he biggest sacrifice Lal Krishna Advani made was to distance himself from the culmination of the Babri edifice at Ayodhya. Understandably, the Hindu public was disappointed; Advani's followers were heartbroken. Many of them went to the extent of alleging that he had let down the cause. For a conscientious leader, this was like cutting his nose and throwing it away. During the spring of 1991, Advani told me that it was Ayodhya that had made him a national figure. Until his leading the Rathyatra from Somnath to hopefully reach the birthplace of Shri Ramchandra—which was intercepted by Lalu Prasad Yadav at Samastipur in 1990-Advani was merely a senior party apparatchik

It was his taking up the cause of the Ramjanmabhoomi that catapulted him to the gallery of national figures. When, therefore, Advani spoke to the press saying that December 6, 1992, was the darkest day of his life, he knew what he was throwing away. Soon thereafter, accompanied by friends, I called on him at the Irrigation Department's guest house near Jhansi, where he along with a few other senior BJP leaders had been kept under house arrest, following the demolition of the Babri edifice on that fateful day of December 6 that year. Advani told me that after seeing my letter published in the Pioneer, wherein I had in rejoinder to his remark written that "There have been darker days", he knew I had come to protest against his statement. It took him quite a while before he came around to believing my denial. He was right to the extent that I continued to hold the view (which I of course, still do) that the Babri edifice was a baggage of dacoity and had to be confis-

Advani then went on to explain: Whatever my explanation, I had to realise that party unity, regardless of anything else, was our uppermost duty. Atalji (Vajpayee) vas our seniormost leader, and no party member should differ with him publicly on such a matter of policy. Should party members flagrantly violate their party's

commitment made to the Supreme Court, that the edifice would be safe? Its future was for the court to decide. First, who then would ever again have faith in the word of a BJP leader?

Secondly, the opposing parties would go to town saying that the BJP was a party ridden with factions. Its top leader does not believe in masjidhunting while one of its chief ministers practices the exact

Thirdly, an upright party is a united party, and we are known as a party with a difference. Becoming a factionridden party is not the difference between our aspirations. Fourthly, discipline has been our hallmark. Did the karsevaks at Ayodhya behave in a disciplined way, by going against the leader-ship and demolishing a place of worship of another community?

In April 1998, I became the party's Member of the Rajya Sabha through a bye-election. Among members generally, it seemed that interest in Ayoanya naa wanea. 1 ne case lay in court without active hearings. When I thought of the vanished edifice, I did wonder whether at that rate



'IF THERE IS TO BE ANOTHER LEADER IN THE FUTURE, HE SHOULD HAVE THE WIDE ACCEPTANCE AND LOYALTY THAT ATALJI COMMANDED. THAT IS WHAT A **DIVERSE COUNTRY** LIKE OURS NEEDS', ADVANI OPINED

the Congress with a clever leader might just snatch the issue out of the BJP's hands and use it for electoral benefit. How popular the issue was kept becoming clear over and over again. Meanwhile, many more pil-

grims continued to visit the holy city.One day in July 1999, Advani called me to his room in Parliament House for a chat over toast and coffee. He opened up by showering praise on Vajpayee's tactful leadership of a coalition of so many parties with so many different political ideologies ranging from the Shiv Sena on the one hand to the DMK on the other. There was no doubt that

Vajpayee was running a complex government very successfully. Advani was full of praise for his leadership. If there is to be another leader in the future, he should have the wide acceptance and loyalty that Atalji commanded. That is what a diverse country like ours needs, Advani opined. All of us in our party should give up small differences and think of large policy issues. Automatically, such a leader and his party would attract votes as well as an ongoing folHe went on to say that India's future lies in the integrity of politics.Rather than recommending any shift towards moderation or 'soft secularism', Advani stressed the unity of thought, policy and leadership. By implication, he was asking for a united party under a broadminded leader. He was repeatedly emphatic about parties rather than the

Even dynastic parties are not free of factions and breakups, and it is the BJP alone that has admirably avoided going that way. It seemed as though he wanted to give up all he had stood for earlier and espouse a new cause, not only for the BJP but for the sake of the country.

As I knew him, I can state that this was no mere shift but a sacrifice. From his eloquence of attacking pseudo-secularism to pan-India moderation, it was as if Advani had given up his yesterday for the sake of the BJP's and the country's tomorrow. It could not have been easy for him, but that is what he is.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

### Empowering grassroots innovation for progress

BIJU **Dharamapalan** 

Science and technology stand as the twin engines propelling our nation towards progress, but they must address the needs of society

Science and technology serve as the driving force propelling our nation forward, akin to the wheels of progress. However, the efficacy of these wheels determines the speed of our journey. Since independence, Bharat has experienced significant advancement, largely attributable to strides in scientific innovation undertaken by our scientific community. This progress is evident across various sectors crucial to human life, including agriculture, food, healthcare, infrastructure, and communication. Yet, the translation of scientific innovations into societal benefits often encounters challenges, primarily due to a disconnect between scientific research and grassroots needs. While many innovations orig-

inate from peer-reviewed publications, often authored by Western scientists, they may lack relevance to local contexts. Consequently, solutions to everyday challenges remain elusive, despite remarkable achievements in space and technology. This reliance on external sources creates a bottleneck in developing disruptive discoveries

tailored to local needs. Historically, groundbreaking innovations were not solely

the domain of trained scientists but also arose from the keen observations and creativity of untrained natural-Preceding the advent of mod-

ern science, human civilizations thrived for millennia, leveraging state-of-the-art technologies of their time. Many contemporary innova-tions find their roots in ancient technologies, underscoring the contributions of our forebears.

However, the contemporary scientific community often falls short in generating truly novel ideas, frequently resorting to replicating concepts from Western literature. This approach results in innovations primarily catering to exemplify the government's

industrial needs rather than addressing societal issues. The critical distinction between invention and utility underscores the necessity for originality and societal relevance in innovation.

Grassroots innovators emerge

as pivotal agents in bridging this gap, offering solutions rooted in local contexts and addressing specific community needs. These individuals possess an intimate understanding of their environment, enabling them to develop tailored interventions that resonate with the realities of daily life. Their localized approach ensures solutions are not only relevant but also sustainable, addressing root causes rather than superficial symptoms.

By empowering grassroots innovators, communities can leverage their inherent knowledge, creativity, and resourcefulness to solve their challenges. This bottom-up approach fosters ownership and collective responsibility, driving more effective and sustainable solutions. Initiatives such as those facilitated by the National Innovation Foundation-India

commitment to promoting grassroots innovation and integrating it into the main-

While India has made significant strides in fields like space science, vaccine development, and agriculture, persisting societal challenges necessitate a collaborative approach between scientific institutions and grassroots innovators.

Celebrating National Science Day under the theme 'Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat' provides an opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of grassroots innovators. Their selfless dedication to improving their communities exemplifies the spirit of innovation and underscores the potential for transformative change when science aligns

with grassroots needs. In conclusion, the journey of progress propelled by science and technology requires not only scientific excellence but also a deep-rooted connection to societal needs.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, views are personal)

#### **14 BANK HOLIDAYS IN MARCH**

Sir — People who are planning to visit banks in the first week of March and thereafter will have to plan very well in advance. Locker operation for the marriage will have to gear up early. The banks across the country will remain closed for 14 days on various counts due to holidays and the end of the financial year at the fag end of March. According to the bank calendar released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the coming weeks of March and April will witness over seven days of holidays.

These include all Sundays, the second and fourth Saturdays, public holidays, and regional holidays. In the state of Maharashtra, the bank is closed on March 8 as well for Mahasivarathiri, March 25, Monday for Holi second day, and March 29 for Friday. People with pending work related to the banks also need to note that there will be only two days when the banks will continue their services between March 27 and April 4 will remain shut as it will be the last day of the financial year (FY 24). In April, the banks will be shut down to close their yearly accounts. April 2 will be a holiday on account of Good Friday while the services will be affected further.

Jayanthy Subramaniam | Mumbai

#### **RARE DISEASES**

Sir — Autoimmune disorders, inherited cancers and congenital conditions are not uncommon. Across the globe, some three fifty million people live with about seven thousand of what are called "rare diseases". A disease is "rare" when it affects fewer than one in two thousand people. More than seventy per cent of these diseases begin in childhood. Insufficient knowledge on the part of the doctor and lack of awareness among the patients render these rare diseases challenging. That more than seventy-five per cent of rare diseases are of genetic origin, and fifty per cent are present from birth further complicates things.

Besides misdiagnosis leading to inadequate treatment, crippling pain and discomfort are unpleasant companions of the patients with rare diseases. 'Rare Diseases Day' on

#### **Reservations rendered ineffective**



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** 

-he struggle for reservation is carried forward by many castes. A few individuals whip the sentiments of the concerned people and involve them in a struggle by which the individuals gain fame and benefits. Reservations are sought to get admission to educational institutions and to gain jobs in government institutions. But everyone talking about reservations should, first of all, analyse how many vacancies

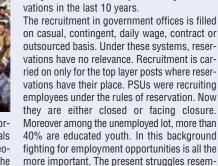
February 29 aims at achieving "true equity" for those afflicted by rare conditions. Equity in health access, treatment, and social opportunities is crucial for patients with rare diseases. In India, one in twenty suffers from rare diseases. All this said, the biggest difficulty that arises in the management of rare diseases is their treatment, which takes a heavy financial toll on the patients as well as their relatives. Moreover, treatment is long and tiring, so patience and equanimity among all stakeholders can go

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

#### THE HUMAN COST OF UKRAINE WAR

Sir — Ukrainian President Zelensky told reporters on February 22, in the second year of the Russian invasion, that Ukraine had lost more than 31 thousand soldiers in the war. The lives of civilians would have been even greater than this. On Monday evening, French President Emmanuel Macron indicated that he was willing to send his troops to Ukraine. But immediately after his statement, almost all EU and NATO member countries distanced them-

in government institutions are filled and how many have been recruited permanently on reser-



vations is struggling for non-existing jobs. AG Rajmohan | Anantapur

selves from Macron's suggestion. All refused to deploy their troops in Ukraine. Whereas just two days ago, US President Joe Biden's views were being read on his social media platform 'X' in which he wrote, "When Putin ordered his tanks to enter Ukraine, he thought the world would bow

ble searching for fuel sticks in a desert land.

Leaders and followers should think before

embarking upon a struggle. Struggling for reser-

To provide "so that the Ukrainian troops have the necessary weapons and ammunition to defend themselves". The Second World War also ended only when all the Allies entered the field together, otherwise before that the German victory campaign was uninterrupted. Was moving forward. According to the latest data, Ukraine is losing more and more of its territory to Russia. Kyiv is facing a shortage of military equipment as well as trained combat soldiers. In such a situation, if Ukraine has to save its existence, then NATO's soldiers will have to be fielded in the region to fight Russian

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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### **FIRST COLUMN**

### **DOMESTIC POLITICS AMID GLOBAL AGENDA**

India advocates for a balanced voice in shaping a multilateral world order



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

s elections draw closer, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been frequenting India's south more than championing the causes of the global south across available diplomatic platforms. One reason is that his party seems to have a weaker presence down south. Earlier, as a strategic choice, PM Modi chose to inaugurate a Hindu temple in a Muslim country during his last foreign trip in the current tenure. Even as he did so, statements regarding continuity of policies and outlook were subtly delivered when PM Modi confidently told his audience that he already has invitations from several foreign governments for the middle and latter part of 2024, indicating confidence in his potential third term.

A third term for Modi would have wider ramifications for a whole bunch of issues, not to mention foreign policy, given India's rising economic clout and confidence, making it a significant player in global affairs. India is expected to be the third-largest economy after the US and China in PM Modi's next term, which, besides putting a couple of stars on the shoulder, will also mean a heavy lift of responsibilities

One of the significant achievements for Mr. Modi, particularly during his second term, has been uplifting the India-US relationship and situating it in the Indo-Pacific context. While the India-US bilateral is by far at its strongest ever in history, the two nations have managed to work through several plurilateral platforms, the most important being the QUAD (a grouping of the US, India, Australia, and Japan), each having significant stakes and interests in the Indo-Pacific, while also wary of the dragon in the region, never stopping short of using any overt or covert means to push its assertive agenda.



While some of the world's finest diplomats, policymakers, and think tanks were deliberating on global issues last week, EAM Jaishankar found some time to speak to a whole bunch of policy strategists on the relevance of QUAD and the way forward. EAM highlighted the changing nature of India's foreign policy outlook over the last decade when he mentioned "remarkable changes in India's bilateral relationships with its three Quad partners. With the US, we put behind ideological hesitations of history. With Japan, we gave longstanding goodwill much more practical shape. And with Australia, we actually made a real beginning in seriousness." Even though there hasn't been a QUAD leaders summit since May last year, backroom meetings between foreign ministers from the member countries to discuss issues of regional and global importance haven't taken a backseat. Given the political compulsions, it might be difficult for India to host the QUAD leaders summit this year, as it will be too close to the US elections by the time the new Indian government is in place. However, the significant targets India aims to achieve through the QUAD group, as highlighted by EAM, namely, "it reflects the growth of a multipolar order. Two, it is a post-alliance and post-Cold War thinking. Three, it is against spheres of influence. Four, it expresses the democratizing of the global space and a collaborative, not unilateral, approach. And five, it is a statement that in this day and age, others cannot have a veto on our choices," shall remain in focus. It is this message of continuity of policies that the Indian government is highlighting to the domestic and international audience at a time when instability is the norm for most, including powerful nations in the world.

India has effectively managed the QUAD as a non-military arrangement, unlike NATO, with shared interests of all members in the region. Mr. Jaishankar highlighted in his address, "Among Quad countries, there is a growing comfort in working with each other given the strong consensus we have in our strategic outlooks. India's bilateral partnerships with each of these three Quad countries have also transformed in recent years." The message is clear: India will continue to push for a multilateral world order with a fair share of voice on international forums.

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

# Protests stress need for climate-smart agriculture-



There is a pressing need for proactive measures aimed at protecting both farmer livelihoods and national food security



he ongoing farmer protests that began on February 13th have already claimed five lives and resulted in Delhi bearing the brunt of economic losses to the tune of 300 crores as nearly five lakh traders who did regular business in Delhi from adjoining states suspended their businesses given the unrest. Since 2020, farmer protests have unfortunately assumed a regular frequency not only in Delhi and Punjab but across India. According to consultancy firm Verisk Maplecroft estimates, India has accounted for the biggest global share of farmer protests in the past three

The farmer protests 2.0 again highlight the fault lines in India's agricultural viability and this time the farmers are demanding conclusive government action. The protesting farmers want a firm minimum support price (MSP) that is backed by a legal guarantee for all crops. Another demand is to implement the recommendations of the MS Swaminathan committee on agriculture which will enable increasing MSP to 50 per cent above the weighted average cost of proauction. Other demands include better sugar cane prices and a pension of Rs 10,000 a month for every farmer above the age of

The government is engaged in feverish negotiations with the farmer unions to break the impasse. However, a breakthrough achieved may be short-lived, as the government would have only successfully attended to the symptoms and not to the problem itself. India's agri sector contributes only 15 per cent to the GDP but engages 58 per cent workforce. This lopsided proportion is made worse by the fact that 85 per cent of the farmers operate in less than five acres of land half of which in many parts of India may be dry and barren. This translates to low yields, low earnings and high debt and when combined with increasing challenges of climate change on agriculture, the problem assumes a much larger and

ominous proportion. Climate change whether it is unseasonal rain, hailstorms, floods, or drought, India's agri-sector has seen it all. The lingering uncertainty due to environmental issues

farming.

**FARMING PRACTICES** NEED TO BE **PROMOTED** ACROSS THE SECTOR TO ENSURE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

keeps the farmers on their toes leading to income insecurity and mounting debt. An example is the casualty in the current protests of a marginal farmer whose 8-acre agri-cultural land had 8 lacs of debt on it, making it virtually impossible for the farmer to pay it off and continue with another crop. Climate change-driven issues such as these have made the farmers demand an MSP law to act as a safety net for the time, effort and risk they invest in

The perennial shortage of water resources is the first symptom of climate change's impact on the agri sector. According to Rainfed Atlas, it is estimated that between 52% and 55% of the farming community have no means of irrigation and are dependent on rain-fed agriculture. But due to climate change temperatures are spiralling and rainfall has become more erratic, with longer dry spells resulting in droughts and shorter periods of more intense rainfall causing floods. This results in a domino effect whereby crop yield is adversely impacted while high Co2 levels cause low nutritional value of crops. This translates to low marketability of the produce therefore causing financial distress and rising debt for the farmers.

The impact of climate change on the agri-sector and the sluggish government response in managing its fallout has come as a double whammy for the farmer community. The lack of robust insulation measures that seek to protect the sector from the vagaries of climate extremities is now having a telling impact on productivity. The cereal crop productivity of most cereals is slated to decrease due to an increase in temperature and CO2 levels, and the decrease in water availability. According to estimates, there will be a projected loss of 10-40% in crop production by 2100 if no climate change adaptation measures are taken. A one-degree Celsius increase in temperature may reduce yields of major food crops by 3-7%. Given these troubling projections, the government must extricate the agrisector from the clutches of climate change. This alone can ensure the best interests of farmers, safeguard national food security and protect livelihoods. An audit of the agri-sector at the

micro-level is essential to identify and remove processes that are detrimental to natural resources. This will ensure weeding out of inefficient water-intensive practices and allow optimal use of the precious resource. Similarly, best farming practices need to be promoted across the sector to ensure climate change adaptation and mitigation in the sector. For example, the raisedbed planting of wheat in the Indo-Gangetic plains enables 20-25% savings in irrigation water and also helps in reduced herbicide use. Measures such as these combined with water accounting methodolo gies can build long-term sustainabil-ity, efficiency and resilience of the agri-sector besides immensely benefiting the marginal farmers.

The government must also initiate climate-smart agriculture strate-gies which aim at adapting agriculture to climate change. This can be done by implementing technologies that help farmers plan crops by considering the climate specifics of their area through easy-to-use apps on their smartphones. This can be done by prioritising botanical research to develop crop species that are more tolerant to water deficiencies and extreme temperatures. Additionally, ecologists can evolve effective soil management methods that reduce the depletion of topsoil, promote carbon sequestration, and reduce chemical application. Advanced farm irrigation technologies can also help proper water saturation levels in the soil, prevent water flooding,

and help avoid top-soil runoff. The government must focus on specially developed software solutions

for agriculture that can help in realtime monitoring of the crops and allow farmers to accurately calculate the required inputs, which reduces costs in the short term and protects nature in the long term. Technology-assisted cover crops for instance can not only help prevent soil erosion, and promote water retention and nitrogen fixation but also serve as organic manure for fodder. Smart agrisoftware can help farmers implement differentiated applications of fertilisers which can help decrease soil pollution and increase crop nutrient levels. The software can also have in-built weather-related tools that provide timely alerts of extremities, elaborate weather forecasts to schedule farming events and enable prediction of general climate change tendencies by analysing historical weather data.

Currently, the agri-sector prob-lems and farmer grievances are dealt with on a reactive basis; this is evident in the form of chronic farmer agitations that come back every year. The government must realise that a lasting solution is only possible if actual problems, including the impact of climate change on agriculture, are addressed with the participation of all stakeholders of the sector. The collaboration of farmers, policymakers, environmentalists, botanical scientists and technology experts can help chalk out longterm strategies and solutions and ensure a robust agri-sector that is resilient against climate change onslaughts. Farmer protests are a symptom of climate change's impact on agriculture. Protecting the sector from adverse impacts will automatically ensure farmer well-being and prosperity.

(The author is a policy analyst.

### New India: Roti, kapda, makaan, vigyan and aatmasamman

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has prioritised inclusive growth and sustainable development, empowering every section of society

**¬**he Modi government's comprehensive strategy for tackling fundamental aspects of development such as food security (Roti), clothing (Kapda), housing (Makaan), science and technology (Vigyan), and selfrespect (Aatmasamman) stands as a remarkable example of effective policymaking. These initiatives have not only brought about socio-economic transformation but have also significantly contributed to the nation's advancement. The Modi government has aimed to uplift and empower every section of society. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government of India has prioritised inclusive growth and sustainable development. Through numerous flagship ward, it is imperative to build Initiatives aimed at uplifting



schemes, significant strides have been made towards building a stronger, more resilient India.

As we reflect on the journey of India's transformation over the past decade, it becomes evident that the Roti, Kapda, Makaan, Vigyan, and Aatmasamman initiatives have played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's socio-economic landscape. Moving for-

upon these foundations and continue striving towards a more prosperous and equitable future for all. Through revolutionary initiatives, the government has aimed to enhance agricultural productivity and bolster the textile industry, thereby encouraging research in science and technology, stimulating economic growth, and creating employment opportunities Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

A pivotal aspect of the Modi government's initiatives has been the empowerment of Bharat, ensuring self-reliance and dignity for every citizen. This vision extends to promoting social justice, gender equality, and skill development, encapsulating the ethos of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat."

marginalised communities exemplify the government's commitment to fostering an inclusive society.

**Roti: Transforming Food** Security in India

The Modi government has taken a multifaceted approach to food security, encompassing macro and micro levels. Initiatives like PMGKY and ONORC have bolstered vulnerable groups' food access, provided relief during crises, and built resilience. Prioritising nutrition through POSHAN Abhiyaan demonstrates a commitment to tackling defi-

Kapda: Enhancing Textiles and Khadi

The remarkable growth in Khadi's turnover, from Rs. 31,154 crores in 2013–14 to Rs. 1,34,630 crores in 2022–23, underscores its economic revitalization. This surge in demand has propelled production and employment opportunities, reflecting the government's commitment to nurturing indigenous industries. India's textile exports have increased from \$12 billion in 2010-11 to \$39.2 billion in 2017–18. The textile industry in India is currently a \$75 billion industry and is expected to grow to \$300 billion by 2025-26. Makaan: Revolutionising

Housing

In a nation as vast and diverse as India, characterized by historical socioeconomic disparities, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) has emerged as a transformative force. This initiative transcends mere

profound change. Through Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), expansive coverage underscores the unwavering dedication of the Modi government and the vision of converting mere structures into cherished homes and dreams into tangible realities, marking a testament to the government's commitment to the well-being and prosperity of its citizens nationwide. The "Housing for All" scheme represents a multifaceted approach to address the critical issue of housing in India. The Light House Projects (LHPs) stand as a pioneering initiative under the visionary Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India), spearheaded by the Government of India housing provision; it catalyses since its launch in 2019.

#### Vigyan: Advancing the **Space Sector**

India has emerged as a prominent space power in the world, with significant glob-

implications. Chandrayaan-3 hailed as India's lunar triumph, reaffirms India's technological prowess and solidifies its position as a leader in space exploration, paving the way for future lunar endeavours, including human exploration. Aditya-L1, a state-of-the-art coronagraphy spacecraft meticulously crafted by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), embarked on a pioneering mission to explore the mysteries of the sun's atmosphere, particularly focusing on the corona and chromos-

#### **Aatmasamman: Empowering** Bharat

Once an individual has secured all the necessities for a comfortable life, the concept of "Aatmasamman," or selfrespect. Beyond material needs, self-respect becomes the cornerstone of emotional and psychological well-being, encompassing a profound sense of dignity, worth, and integrity. Stand Up India Scheme, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme, Skill India Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) have been supportive of empowering numerous

sections of society.

(The author is a Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, views are personal)

### **Israeli forces fire on crowd** waiting for aid, 100 killed

Palestinian deaths in Gaza pass 30k

AP RAFAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli troops fired on a crowd of Palestinians waiting for aid in Gaza City on Thursday, witnesses said. More than 100 people were killed, bringing the death toll since the start of the Israel-Hamas war to more than 30,000, according to health officials. Hospital officials initially reported an Israeli strike on the crowd, but witnesses later said Israeli troops opened fire as people pulled flour and canned goods off of trucks.

Israeli officials acknowl-

edged that troops opened fire, saying they did so after the crowd approached in a threatening way. The officials insisted on anonymity to give details about what happened, after the military said in a statement that "dozens were killed and injured from pushing, trampling and being run over by the trucks". Gaza City and the surrounding areas in the enclave's north were the first targets of Israel's air, sea ground offensive, launched in response to Hamas' Oct 7 attack. The area has suffered widespread devastation and has been largely isolated during the conflict. Trucks carrying food reached northern Gaza this week, the first major aid delivery to the area in a month, officials said



Palestinians living in Lebanon hold placards and their national flags during a protest to demand a ceasefire and support Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, in front of the headquarters of U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut, Lebanon on Thursday

Aid groups say it has become nearly impossible to deliver humanitarian assistance in most of Gaza because of the difficulty of coordinating with the Israeli military, ongoing hostilities and the breakdown of public order, with crowds of desperate people overwhelming aid convoys. The UN says a quarter of Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians face starvation; around 80% have fled their homes.

Kamel Abu Nahel, who was being treated for a gunshot wound at Shifa Hospital.

said he and others went to the distribution point in the middle of the night because they heard there would be a delivery of food. "We've been eating animal feed for two months," he said.

He said Israeli troops opened fire on the crowd. causing it to scatter, with some people hiding under cars. After the shooting stopped, people went back to the trucks, and the soldiers opened fire again. He was shot in the leg and fell over, and then a truck ran over his leg as it sped off,

### UK descending into mob rule: Sunak Critics accuse him of undermining protest rights

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said Britain is descending into "mob rule" because of the pressures created by protests against the Israel-Hamas war words criticised as alarmist by a human rights group. Sunak told a meeting of police leaders on Wednesday that there was a "pattern of increasingly violent and intimidatory behaviour" that's intended to "shout down free debate and stop elected representatives doing their job".

"There is a growing con-sensus that mob rule is replacing democratic rule," he said, according to a transcript released by the prime minister's office. "And we've got to collec-tively, all of us, change that urgently. Tom Southerden of

Amnesty International said Thursday that talk of mob rule wildly exaggerates the issue and risks delegitimising the rights of peaceful protest." Mass protests have drawn hundreds of thousands of people to central London almost weekly to call for a cease-fire in a conflict that has killed more than 30,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory. Israel says Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, and abducted roughly 250, in the Oct. 7

The protests have been overwhelmingly peaceful, though there have been dozens

Sunak calls on police chiefs to get tough on 'mob' protests

London (PTI): British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has called on the country's police chiefs to use the full spectrum of their powers to ensure that protests are not allowed to descend into

The British Indian leader was speaking after a meeting at 10 Downing Street on Wednesday during which ministers and senior police chiefs agreed to sign up to a new "democratic policing proto-

It comes in the wake of rowing security concerns for British MPs and some violent incidents during large-scale marches on the streets of the UK in protest over the raging Israel-Hamas conflict.

of arrests over signs and chants allegedly supporting Hamas, a banned organisation in Britain. Jewish organisations and many lawmakers say the mass marches have created an intimidating atmosphere for Jewish Londoners — though members of the Jewish community have been among those on procease-fire marches.

Divisions over the conflict in Gaza have convulsed British



politics, with some lawmakers saying they fear for their safety after receiving threats over their positions on the war. Reports of both antisemitic and anti-Muslim abuse in Britain have soared since Hamas' Oct 7 attack on Israel, which triggered Israel's invasion of Gaza. A debate last week in the House of Commons on whether to call for a cease-fire descended into chaos amid allegations the speaker of the house had bent parliamentary rules in response to pressure from pro-Palestinian activists.

During the debate, protesters projected "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" a slogan some see as calling for the destruction of Israel onto Parliament's Big Ben clocktower. On Saturday, Sunak suspended Conservative law maker Lee Anderson from the

party for saying London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who is Muslim, was controlled by Islamists and had allowed them to take charge of the city.
Pro-Palestinian demon-

strators protested at the house of a Conservative lawmaker earlier this month, while environmental activists have targeted Sunak's family home in northern England.

The prime minister met police chiefs after announcing a 31-million-pound (\$40-mil lion) fund to step up security for lawmakers after politicians reported threats and intimidation connected to the war.

At Wednesday's meeting, the government told police chiefs that protests at politi-cians' homes "should generally be cosidered to be intimidatory." Sunak told officers to take a "robust approach...to protect our democratic processes from intimidation, disruption, from subversion

British lawmakers have a tradition of meeting regularly with constituents in their local communities, but security has been tightened after several attacks in the last decade.

In 2016, Labour lawmaker Jo Cox was killed by a far-right extremist, and Conservative David Amess was murdered in 2021 by an attacker inspired by the Islamic State group. Sunak's comments follow several years of increasingly stringent restrictions on peaceful protest by the Conservative government.

It has passed new laws to

defined "public nuisance," punishable by up to 10 years in prison, and giving police more powers to restrict protests judged to be disruptive. Hundreds of environmental activists have been arrested and sometimes jailed for blocking roads and other nonviolent

acts.
"Freedom of expression and assembly are absolutely fundamental rights in any free and fair society," said Southerden, law and human

rights director at Amnesty UK. "The UK has undergone a major crackdown on protest rights in recent years, with peaceful protest tactics being criminalised and the police being given sweeping powers to prevent protests taking place,"

Voters in the town of Rochdale in northwest England went to the polls Thursday to elect a lawmaker, after a chaotic special election campaign dominated by the Gaza war. The Labour Party disowned its candidate, Azhar Ali, for claiming that Israel allowed Hamas' Oct 7 attack to happen as a pretext to invade Gaza. His name remains on the ballot, alongside candidates including George Galloway, a former Labour lawmaker who is campaigning against Labour's stance on the Israel-Hamas war, and Simon Danczuk, yet another former Labour legislator who now represents the right-wing

#### **White House: Biden** doing everything to improve visa process

**PTI** WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden is doing everything he can to improve the process related to the sought-after H-1B visa, Green Card backlog and other issues related to the country's issues related to the country's legal immigration system, the White House has said. The H-1B visa is a non-

immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India

"One of the steps, if we look at the H-1B visa process, we have taken action to improve that and the process and backlog for lawful permawho are eligible to become US citizens," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters at her daily news conference on Wednesday.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently.

Jean-Pierre was responding to questions about the feeling among a section of Indian Americans that the president is not putting as much effort into addressing the woes of legal immigrants as he is doing for illegal immigrants.

Biden heads to the southern border with Mexico in Texas on Thursday."Just last month, for example, as a part of our efforts to strengthen the integrity of our immigration system and reduce the potential for fraud, the Department of Homeland Security pub-

promised "good news" last

week to reward Polish Prime

Minister Donald Tusk for his

efforts to overturn a series of

measures imposed by the pre-

vious conservative government

that went against EU judicial

cornerstones. Thursday's move

cemented a sea change in rela-

tions. Both sides had openly

lished a final rule relating to H 1B visa," Jean-Pierre said.

"So, the changes promote fairer and more equitable outcomes and, so, we will continue our work to improve the system within our authorities and that has certainly been a priority," she said and added that the administration takes that "very seriously" and is continuing to do everything that it can to improve the visa process.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced the launch of myUSCIS organisational accounts that will allow multiple people within an organisation, as well as their legal representatives, to collaborate on and prepare H-1B registrations, H-1B petitions and any associated Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service.

account is required to participate in the H-1B Electronic Registration Process starting in March 2024, the USCIS said.

'We are working expeditiously to address any technical issues that may arise for legal representatives whose accounts migrated when they logged into their online account on or after February 14, 2024, including impacts on cases other than H-1B filings,"

The initial registration period for FY 2025 H1B cap will open at noon Eastern on March 6, and run through noon Eastern on March 22.

During this period, prospective petitioners and their representatives, if applicable, must use a USCIS online account to register each beneficiary electronically for the selection process and pay the associated registration fee for each beneficiary, its media alert

### SC sets April arguments over whether Trump can be prosecuted for election interference

**AP WASHINGTON** 

 $T^{\text{he Supreme Court on}}_{\text{Wednesday agreed to}}$  decide whether former President Donald Trump can be prosecuted on charges he inter-fered with the 2020 election, calling into question whether his case could go to trial before the November election. While the court set a course for a quick resolution, it maintained a hold on preparations for a trial focused on Trump's efforts to overturn his election loss.

The court will hear argu ments in late April, with a decision likely no later than the end of June. That timetable is much faster than usual, but assuming the justices deny Trump's immunity bid, it's not clear uled and concluded before the November election. Early voting in some states will begin in September. The court's decision to

intervene in a second

major Trump case this term, along with the dispute over whether he is barred from 18 being president again because of his actions following the 2020 election under scores the direct role the

justices

in the outcome of the election. Trump's lawyers have sought to put off a trial until after the election. In the end, the timing of a possible trial could come down to how quickly the justices rule. They have shown they can act fast, issuing a decision in the Watergate tapes case in 1974 just 16 days after hearing arguments.

The decision in Bush v. Gore came the day after arguments in December 2000. By taking up the legally untested question now, the justices have created a scenario of uncertain-

ty that special counsel Jack Smith had sought to avoid when he first asked the high court in ately intervene. In his latest court filing, Smith had suggested arguments a full month ear lier than the late April timeframe. Trump wrote on Truth Social that legal scholars "are extremely thankful" the court stepped in to decide on immunity. "Presidents will always be concerned, and even paralyzed, by the prospect of wrongful prosecution and retaliation after they leave office," he wrote.

A Smith spokesperson declined to comment. The trial date, already postponed once by Trump's immunity appeal, is of paramount importance to both sides. Prosecutors are looking to bring Trump to trial this year while defense lawyers have been seeking delays in his crim-

#### died off Senegal's northern coast trying to reach Europe' Dakar (Senegal) (AP): At accident has been opened, he least two dozen people died

'At least two dozen migrants

off Senegal's northern coast and many others were injured when their boat capsized, officials said, underscoring the danger of the route used by an number of increasing migrants seeking to reach Spain from West Africa. The boat was bound for

Europe and capsized near the town of Saint-Louis, where bodies washed ashore Wednesday afternoon and the fire department was alerted said Alioune Badara Sambe, the ed boats. local governor.

The injured are being treated in a hospital in Saint-Louis and an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the

The number of migrants

leaving from Senegal on rickety wooden boats surged last year, and nearly 1,000 people died while trying to reach Spain by sea in the first six months of 2023, according to the Spanish migration advocacy group Walking Borders.

Factors such as youth unemployment, political unrest and the impact of climate change push migrants to risk their lives on overcrowd-

Senegal has been thrown into turmoil as elections meant for February were delayed by the president, sparking deadly protests.

### US Pres continues to be fit for duty, says his physician

**AP** WASHINGTON

Joe Biden "continues to be fit for duty" and "fully exe-cutes" all of his responsibilities, his physician has said after an annual health checkup, asserting that the 81-year-old US President does not have any major health concerns. The White House on Wednesday shared a memo with President Biden's "current health summary" following his annual rou-tine physical at Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre. Biden, whose health has been under scrutiny ahead of November's presidential election, underwent the assessment on Wednesday. "He continues to be fit for duty and fully executes all of his responsibilities without any exemptions or accommodations," Dr Kevin O'Connor, physician to



the US President, wrote in a memo shared with reporters. Biden's annual medical checkup included speciality consultation with several Presidential Specialty Consultants.

These specialities included Optometry, Dentistry, Orthopedics (Foot and Ankle), Orthopedics (Spine), Physical Therapy, Neurology, Sleep Medicine, Cardiology, Radiology and Dermatology, Soon after his return from Walter Reed, Biden told

reporters that doctors told him he looked too young. The think you look too young," he said amidst laughter. "No, there is nothing different than last year. Everything is great," the president said, responding to questions on his health checkup.

It is a White House tradition to publicise the annual health checkup of the US President in the form of a memo from the president's

The White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters at her daily news conference that Biden's doctors decided against a cognitive

Idaho halts execution by lethal injection

test. Such a test is being demanded by several of his political opponents, including Indian-American Republican presidential candidate Nikki

Haley.
"The President doesn't That is need a cognitive test. That is not my assessment. That is the assessment of the President's doctor. That is also the assessment of the neurologist who has also made that assessment as well," Jean-Pierre said.

The President's doctor has

said, if you look at this, the President, who is also the Commander-in-Chief, passes a cognitive test every day, as he moves from one topic to another topic, understanding the granular level of these topics," she said 'You saw him talk about a

fighting crime today. Tomorrow, he's going to go to

the border. Next week, he's going to give a State of the Union Address," she added.

Asserting that this is a very rigorous job, she said that Biden has been able to do it every day for the past three years. "And let's not forget, he is also leading a historic presidency, which is also important to note in everything that we've been able to do — he's been able to get done over the past three years," the press secretary

Biden is the oldest president in the history of the United States.

The president's health was in the news earlier this month after a special counsel investigating Biden for improperly storing classified documents suggested he was suffering from mental decline due to his

with unknown training are

#### **12U2** continues to be priority for Biden admn Washington (PTI): The

grouping of India, Israel, the UAE and the US continues to be a priority for the Biden administration and is not on the back-burner due to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the White House has said, underlining that the President is "deeply committed" to making sure that the I2U2 initiatives make

progress.

The I2U2 grouping was conceptualised during the meeting of the foreign ministers of the four countries held on October 18, 2021. The I2U2's first summit was held on July 14, 2022, to establish

the group.
The grouping remains critically important, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters at the White House here on Wednesday.

Asked if the grouping is now on the back-burner or no longer active because of the

cally important and the president is deeply committed to making sure that we continue with the I2U2, obviously with our partnership among our four countries and beyond through innovative,

inclusive and science-based solutions to advance... let's not forget, enhance food and advancing projects on water conservation, waste management and other areas," Jean-Pierre said. So, there is a strong future for the I2U2 and 'we're looking forward to continuing that partnership" tainly continues to be a priority," Jean-Pierre said.

#### Macron says he will **EU** to release billions of frozen swim in River Seine euros to Poland

Paris (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron boldly Brussels: The European Union's powerful powerful promised to swim in the River Commission announced on Seine being cleaned up for the Thursday that it will begin Paris Olympics as he toured the releasing billions of euros to new complex that will house Poland that were frozen over athletes on Thursday. Macron the previous government's policies that the bloc said cited pollution-reduction in the Seine as one of the Games' positive long-term impacts. He noted "extraordinary" publicamounted to widespread backsliding on fundamental democratic principles. funded investments being The move had been expected after Commission poured into making the river — largely off limits to bathers President Ursula von der Leyen since 1923 — swimmable

Asked by a journalist whether he would bathe in it, Macron replied, "Me, yes, I'll

ing when. "I'm not going to you the date: There's a risk

you'll be there," he said.

But he refrained from say-

Regardless of whether he does indeed don trunks, builders.'

Macron's visit to the future high-security Olympic village served to highlight how the Paris Games are helping to transform some disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the French capital's poorer suburbs.

The eco-friendly village

led to nearly 2,000 jobs being created, with 1,136 going to local residents. It cost about 2 billion Euros (USD 2.2 billion), most of it investment by property developers but also including 646 million Euros (USD 700 million) from public funds. The Olympic construction company, Solideo, transferred the village to Paris Games organizers on Thursday, symbolically handing over a large key, with Macron watching.

"It's a very big day," Macron said. "It's a demonstration that France is a nation of

#### after 8 failed attempts to insert IV line the execution at 10:58 a.m. The corrections depart-AP KUNA $\mathbf{I}$ daho halted the execution of serial killer Thomas Eugene Creech would expire, and that

Creech on Wednesday after medical team members repeatedly failed to find a vein where they could establish an intravenous line to carry out the lethal injection. Creech, 73, has been in prison half a century, convicted of five murders in three states and suspected of several more. He was already serving a life term when he beat a fellow inmate, 22-year-old David Dale Jensen, to death in 1981 — the crime for which he was to be executed.

Creech, one of the longestserving death row inmates in the US, was wheeled into the execution chamber at the Idaho Maximum Security Institution on a gurney at 10 a.m.



bers tried eight times to establish an IV, Department of Correction Director Josh Tewalt told a news conference afterward. In some cases, they couldn't access the vein, and in others they could but had concerns about vein quality. They attempted sites in his arms, legs, hands and feet. At one point, a medical team member left to gather more supplies. The warden announced he was halting ment said its death warrant for

it was considering next steps. While other medical procedures might allow for the execution, the state is mindful of the 8th Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment, Tewalt said.Creech's attorneys immediately filed a new motion for a stay in US District Court, saying "the badly botched execution attempt" proves the department's "inability to carry out a humane and constitution al execution." The court granted the stay after Idaho confirmed it would not try again to execute him before the death warrant expired; the state will have to obtain another warrant if it wants to carry out the execution."This is what happens when unknown individuals

assigned to carry out an execution," the Federal Defender Services of Idaho said in a written statement. "This is precisely the kind of mishap we warned the State and the Courts could happen when attempting to execute one of the country's oldest death-row inmates." Six Idaho officials, including Attorney General Raul Labrador, and four news media representatives, including an Associated Press reporter, were on hand to witness the attempt — which was to be Idaho's first execution in 12 years. The execution team was made up entirely of volunteers, the corrections department said.

Those tasked with inserting the IVs and administering the lethal drug had medical training, but their identities were kept secret.

Israel-Hamas conflict, the official said, "No, not at all, still a priority".
"The I2U2 remains criti-

energy security space operations and other ventures, and it has not taken on the back-burner, the White House official said. "It cer-

### Pak's newly-elected lawmakers sworn in

 $P^{\text{akistan's newly-elected law-}}_{\text{makers were sworn in on}}$  Thursday during Parliament's maiden session after President Dr Arif Alvi summoned the National Assembly after delaying the process for several days. The National Assembly was summoned after Alvi's initial refusal due to differences with the caretaker government over the issue of former prime minister Imran Khan's partybacked candidates being allotted the reserved seats.

The opening session of the 16th Parliament, headed by the outgoing Speaker of the previous Parliament, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, began after a delay of more than an hour. Ashraf administered the oath to the newly-elected lawmakers amidst unruly scenes as 71-year-old Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed lawmakers chanted slogans against alleged vote rigging in the February 8 general elections. After the oath-taking, the lawmakers signed the register roll of the National Assembly to officially become members.

The new oath-taking law-makers included the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-chairman Asif Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

Early on Thursday, Alvi approved a move from the caretaker parliamentary affairs ministry to summon the newly-elected National Assembly's first session on February 29, according to a statement posted by the president's X account.

"Subject to some reservations, President Dr Arif Alvi has summoned to convene the Assembly on National February 29 in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 54(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the statement said.

It said that the president accorded his approval keeping in view "the mandate and implications of the timeline given in Article 91 (2) and sub-

PTI ISLAMABAD

not provided its list of mem-

bers for the reserved seats, it

Sunni Muslim sect came to

prominence after the Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party

of former jailed prime minis-

ter Imran Khan asked its inde-

pendently elected members to

join SIC to claim its share in

the 70 seats reserved for

women and non-Muslims in

the 266-member National

Assembly. However, the

Election Commission of

Pakistan (ECP) has been refus-

ing to allocate the reserved

seats to the party, prompting

the PTI to express outrage

and protest at the maiden ses-

Thursday.

sion of Parliament on

the Assembly, Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PML-N)

senior leader Khawaja Asif

questioned how the PTI could

demand reserved seats when

the SIC had not submitted a list

of its members on reserved

provide before elections a list

of members it wants to be

Wednesday reserved its judg-

elected on reserved seats.

Legally, every party should

Separately, ECP on

seats before the ECP.

Speaking on the floor of

The religious party of the

emerged on Thursday.



iect to some reservations and expecting the resolution of the issue of the reserved seats before the 21st day [after the general elections]

The late-night statement also took issue with the tone of the summary sent to Alvi by the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, adding that the president was calling the session as he expected that the issue of reserved seats would be settled by the 21st day after the polls, as envisaged in

According to constitutionprovisions, the meeting of the National Assembly must be convened within 21 days of the elections, and February 29 is the mandated date under Article 91. The newly-elected National Assembly will elect the new speaker and deputy speaker. The election for the post of prime minister is expected on Saturday, and former premier Shehbaz Sharif is poised to be elected as the new leader of the House under a post-election deal between the PML-N and the PPP.

On Monday, Alvi, a close aide of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and a former senior member of his party, rejected a move from the caretaker parliamentary affairs ministry to summon the National Assembly's first session, maintaining that all reserved seats be allocated before its summoning.

Winning independent candidates of former-cricketerturned-politician Khan's PTI joined the rightwing Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) to receive the party's share of reserved seats for women and minorities in the national and provincial assemblies. Candidates of the PTI fought as independents after the party could not directly participate in the February 8 elections due to the non-allotment of its iconic electoral symbol - the cricket bat.

A five-member bench of the Election Commission of Pakistan began the open hearing on the SIC's plea seeking allocation of reserved seats and the counter-pleas filed against it earlier this week.

The House was already meeting at 10 am on Thursday as National Assembly outgoing Speaker Ashraf decided to convene the lower house of parliament session after Alvi's denial

Alvi's statement said that returning the move for a National Assembly session was very much in accordance with the provisions of Article 48(1)" of the Constitution.

"It is not understood on what grounds it has been taken as a partisan act, though it was also aimed at the completion of the National Assembly in accordance with Article 51 of the Constitution," it said. Alvi's decision not to summon the session was heavily criticised by the PML-N and the PPP parties, whose leaders on Tuesday warned that it might lead to "legal consequences".

The PTI had alleged massive rigging in the election and vowed to raise their voice inside and outside the

'Sending Western troops to Ukraine risks global N-conflict'

contingent to Ukraine".

"We remember the fate of

 $R^{ussian\ President\ Vladimir}_{Putin\ vowed\ on\ Thursday}$  to fulfil Moscow's goals in Ukraine and sternly warned the West against deeper involvement in the fighting, saying that such a move is fraught with the risk of a global nuclear conflict.

Putin's warning came in a state-of-the-nation address ahead of next month's election he's all but certain to win, underlining his readiness to protect Russian gains in Ukraine. In an apparent reference to French President Emmanuel Macron's statement earlier this week that the future deployment of Western ground troops to Ukraine should not be "ruled out", Putin warned that it would lead to "tragic" consequences for the countries who decide to do that.

Putin noted that while accusing Russia of plans tp attack NATO allies in Europe, Western allies were "selecting targets for striking our territory and selecting the most efficient as they think striking assets and talking about the

those who sent their troop contingents to the territory of our country," the Russian leader said. "Now the consequences for the potential invaders will be far more tragic."

Speaking before an audi-

ence of lawmakers and top officials, Putin said the West should keep in mind that "we also have the weapons that can strike targets on their territory, and what they are now suggesting and scaring the world with, all that raises the real threat of a nuclear conflict that will mean the destruction of our civilisation".

"Don't they understand it?" he said, alleging that Western leaders are playing with options of deeper involvement in the conflict, as in a simulation. "Those people haven't been through any tough challenges and they have forgotten what war means."

The strong statement followed earlier warnings from Putin, who has issued frequent reminders of Russia's nuclear might since he sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022 as he sought to discourage the West from expanding its military support for Kyiv.

Putin emphasised that Russia's nuclear forces are in "full readiness," saying that the military has deployed potent new weapons, some of them tested on the battlefield in Ukraine. The Kremlin leader said they include the new Sarmat heavy intercontinental ballistic missile that has entered service with Russian nuclear forces, along with the Burevestnik atomic-powered cruise missile and the Poseidon atomic-powered, nucleararmed drone, which are completing their tests.

He added that the Kinzhal and Zircon hypersonic missiles have proven their efficacy on the battlefield in Ukraine. At the same time, he rejected Western leaders' statements about the threat of a Russian attack on NATO allies in Europe as "ravings" and again dismissed Washington's claim that Moscow was pondering the deployment of space-based nuclear weapons. Putin charged that the US allegations were part of a ploy to draw Russia into talks on nuclear arms control on American terms even as Washington continues its efforts to deliver a "strategic defeat" to Moscow in Ukraine.

"Ahead of the US election, they just want to show their citizens, as well as others, that they continue to rule the world," he said, "It won't work,"

In his speech that focused heavily on economic and social issues ahead of the March 15-17 presidential vote, Putin argued that Russia was "defending its sovereignty and security and protecting our compatriots" in Ukraine, charging that the Russian forces have the upper hand in the fighting. He hailed Russian soldiers and honoured those who were killed in fighting with a moment of silence.

Putin has repeatedly said that he sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022 to protect Russian interests and prevent Ukraine from posing a major security threat to Russia by

allies have denounced it as an unprovoked act of aggression. The Russian leader has repeatedly signalled a desire to negotiate an end to the fighting but warned that Russia will hold onto its gains.

Putin, 71, who is running as an independent candidate in the March 15-17 presidential election, relies on the tight control over Russia's political system that he has established during 24 years in power. Prominent critics who could challenge him have either been imprisoned or are living abroad, while most independent media have been banned, meaning that Putin's reelection is all but assured. He faces token opposition from three other candidates nominated by Kremlin-friendly parties represented in parliament.

Russia's best-known oppo sition leader Alexei Navalny, whose attempt to run against Putin in 2018 was rejected, died suddenly in an Arctic prison colony earlier this month, while serving a 19-year sentence on extremism charges.

#### Russian rocket successfully puts Iranian satellite into orbit

Moscow (AP): A Russian rocket on Thursday successfully put an Iranian satellite into orbit, a launch that underlined increasingly close cooperation between Moscow and Tehran. Russia's state-run Roscosmos corporation said that a Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Vostochny launch facility in the country's far east to carry the Iranian satellite and 18 Russian satellites into orbit. The Iranian state TV said the 110-kg (242-pound) satellite has three cameras to take images for environmental, agricultural and other purposes. Iran's state TV said the satellite will be put into orbit around the North and South Poles, synchronised to be in the same fixed position relative to the Sun, and will be fully

## Russian onslaught targets more Ukrainian towns and villages

Russian forces are pushing hard against more Ukrainian towns and villages in eastern and southeastern Ukraine as Moscow tries to press its current advantage in weapons and troops, Kyiv officials said Thursday. Despite Russia's apparent offensive momentum on the ground, Ukraine claimed it has shot down 11 Russian warplanes in less than two weeks as the Kremlin's forces pushed forward.

With the war starting its third year, Russian forces have been bludgeoning some Ukrainian defensive positions into submission, deploying overwhelming amounts of artillery and troop numbers in an effort to punch through defensive lines at targeted points. Though Russia's gains have been small, slow and costly, Ukraine doesn't have enough reservists and has a severe shortage of artillery

shells as the supply of military aid from Western partners has waned. The Russian army is trying to seize the towns and villages of Tonenke, Orlivka, Semenivka, Berdychi and Krasnohorivka in the eastern Donetsk region, Ukraine's army chief Col Gen Oleksandr Syrskyi

said on social media.

Those are places where Ukrainian military officials had said they would form a new line of defence after Ukrainian troops pulled out of Avdiivka on Feb 17. In the southeastern Zaporizhzhia region, Russian forces are focusing on retaking Verbove and Robotyne, towns that Ukraine won back in last

summer's counteroffensive in 2023, Syrskyi said.

Syrskyi, who was appointed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to lead the country's military on Feb 8, accused some of his commanders of making "miscalculations" in assessing the enemy and taking countermeasures. Meanwhile, Ukraine's air

force commander Mykola Oleshchuk said his units shot down two Russian Su-34 jets overnight. That made a total of 11 warplanes, including an early warning and control A-50 plane, that Ukraine claims to have downed since Feb 17.

"The enemy has increased

its air presence in the east. Our top military leadership reacted accordingly," air force spokesman Yurii Ihnat said on national television. A major question for Kyiv officials is how they can unlock further military help from their partners. Emergency US national security funds for Ukraine are still on hold amid a political dispute in Washington.

The Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, Ruslan Stefanchuk, addressed an open letter to US House Speaker Mike Johnson asking him to put to a vote the Biden administration's proposal to send \$60 billion of aid to Ukraine.

### orbit the Iranian Khayyam satel-Sunni Ittehad Council faces | Pakistan National Assembly to meet after session summoned by Prez

functional after a calibration of

its systems. Thursday's launch

comes after Russia put into

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Thursday for its maiden session as President Dr Arif Alvi finally summoned the Assembly after differing with the caretak er government over the issue of former prime minister Imran Khan's party-backed candidates being allotted the reserved seats.

Early on Thursday, Alvi approved a move from the caretaker parliamentary affairs ministry to summon the newlyelected National Assembly's first session on February 29, according to a statement posted by the president's X account.

"Subject to some reservations, President Dr Arif Alvi has summoned to convene the National Assembly on February 29 in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 54(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," the state-

ident accorded his approval en session amidst a row over **D**akistan's newly-elected keeping in view "the mandate the alleged rigging of votes. ations of the timeline given in Article 91 (2) and subject to some reservations and expecting the resolution of the issue of the reserved seats before the 21st day [after the general elections

The late-night statement also took issue with the tone of the summary sent to Alvi by the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, adding that the president was calling the session as he expected that the issue of reserved seats would be settled by the 21st day after the polls, as envisaged in the law. According to constitutional provisions, the meeting of the National Assembly must be convened within 21 days of the elections. and February 29 is the mandated date under Article 91. The newly elected Parliament will

ment said. It said that the presmeet on Thursday for its maid-

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, the outgoing Speaker of the previous Parliament, would administer the oath to the new members and adjourn the session for the next Assembly to elect the new speaker and deputy speaker

The election for the post of prime minister is expected on Saturday, and former premier Shehbaz Sharif is poised to be elected as the new leader of the House. On Monday, Alvi, a close aide of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and a former senior member of his party, rejected a move from the caretaker parliamentary affairs ministry to summon the National Assembly's first session, maintaining that all reserved seats be allocated before its summoning.

Office of the Superintending Engineer

3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh Email: sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Dated: 29/02/2024

#### National Competitive E-Tender Notice

The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand" for following works. All other information will be available online from date 05-03-2024 at 5.00 PM onward on website Earnest Cost of Validity Period Contractor's

No.	Name of Work	Money (in Lac)	Tender	of Tender (day)	of Completion (months)	Category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Construction of (03 no.), 24.00 mtr. Span R.C.C. Bridges, reconstruction of damaged walls & other protection work in Tanakpur-Jauljivi Motor road along Indo-Nepal Border in District Champawat of Uttarakhand State. (km. 12.000 to 55.000).		5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	12	Category 'A' & higher for Road & Bridge works, in State Govt./ Govt. of India

verka

RATIVE MILK PR

#### Kishida vows no more fundraising parties **AP** ■ TOKYO when the five implicated

Tapan's beleaguered prime minister renewed his apology over his governing party's corruption scandal, promising to not hold any more parties himself as leader during a political ethics committee Thursday. Fumio Kishida has fought against plummeting support ratings since his governing party's corruption scandal rocked the government. The scandal, considered the biggest in decades, centres on political funds raised through party event tickets bought by individuals, companies and organisations. It led to 10 people — lawmakers and their aides — being indicted in January

While Kishida himself is not the focus of the scandal and was not even invited to the hearing, the surprise announcement of his personal appearance broke a deadlock between the opposition lawmakers and his governing party Wednesday

attendants refused to go public, holding up a hearing. Kishida expressed a "sense of crisis" that the deadlock on the hearing would further deepen the public's distrust in politics.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party's resistance to have a fully open session fuelled public criticism that Kishida's party is taking the corruption lightly and trying to hide something. Kishida's action could

help ease criticisms that he was too slow and lax in addressing the public's distrust and taking anti-corrup-tion measures. In his opening statement, Kishida renewed his apology for triggering public distrust in politics, and promised to take leadership in reforming his party, saying seniority-based tradi tion, lack of compliance and a sense of privilege among lawmakers need to be removed if they were part of the problem.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY MARINE DEPARTMENT
No. MD/AACTS/WK/R-07/2023/247 Date: 26.02.2024 e-Tender Call Notice (e-TCN) No.MD/ ACCTS/WK/R-07/2023/74 dtd.16/01/2024

Name of the work: Engagement of 01 no. A leather Steel Hull Vessel along with Manning frew on hire for a period of 5 (five) years fo leployment at Paradip SPMs on round the clock 4x7 basis Pollution Response-cum-SPMs ecurity Duties. Estimated cost put to tender is 42,91,10,000/-. Last date & time o etails, please log on to the website ttps://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app Sd/- Deputy Conservator,

Paradip Port Authority PPA/PR/92/2023-2024 dtd.28.02.2024

#### **GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR** Advertisement No. 1/2024

Online applications are invited for the various Teaching and Non-Teaching posts in the University Online registration of application for these posts will start w.e.f. 04 03-2024 and end on 25-03-2024 Last Date for submitting Hard Copy of the Online submitted application is 02-04-2024. For further details visit Universit Website: http://www.gndu.ac.in Amritsar 29.02.2024

NA/12/22431/2023/33022 Dated CHD :- 2/29/2024

#### Notice Inviting Tende 2023-24 to 2025-26 For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Empanelment of statutory auditor for Verka Jalandhar Dairy. For Verka Chandigarh Dairy ) Sealed tender for hiring of five seater Tata Xenon / Mahindra Bolero Pickup or equivalent vehicle along with driver. For Verka Mohali Dairy a) Hiring of:-02 No's(no. may Passenger vehicle/taxi for officers in Delhi area Insulated vehicles of minimum 01 MT capacity for 2<sup>nd</sup> leg delivery of verka milk and milk products Insulated and refrigerated vehicles for the supply of Verka milk and milk products in Punjab, Tricity & adjoining areas and Rai (Sonipat) area. in Delhi-NCR area. For Verka Bathinda Dairy a) Manpower required for job Contract. Annual One year with dension up to one year/ 05 No's. a) Manpower required for job Contract. b) Hiring oft Insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products in Milk shed area Vehicles for Sale Depot, Bathinda & Verka Bathinda Dairy for Supply of Ghee, Butter, Powder Panjiri, Tetra Pack & other Products all Punjab & other Sates. Road Milk Tankers for transportation of Milk within/outside Punjab. For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy Disposal of the unserviceable material. As per requirement Capacity 15 tons One time Basis For Verka Amritsar Dairy Sealed tender for hiring of godown for storage of skimmed milk powder 01 No. e-tender for hiring of :-Deep freezer (Cold Store) for storage of White Butter at -18°c or below Annual/01No. Refrigerated Containoner. Steam Coal. Fabrication of incubation room (including door) with puf panel and Supply, installation, testing 01 No. 1500 MT omplete Job commissioning of heating units. Outsourcing of Manpower. - Tender for the purchase of: - Electronic weighing balance capacity 200kg. Ventilation fan for Dairy Barn. Construction of: - Boundary Wall approx. 600 feet. Record Room approx. 20x6. 35 mtr. 02 Years Record Room approx. 20x6. 35 mtr. For Verka Jalandhar Dairy 3 Steam Coal having calorific value not less than 5500kcal/kg. 5) Job contract for: Pest and Rodent Control services. Providing labour through service provider who is having is having EPF/ESI no. and Labour providers. 2000 MT For Verka Sangrur Dairy diring of:-SS Road Milk tankers Cap. 15, 18, 20, 23, 25, 30 kL for transportation of mi Dairy to other plants of Punjab and outside punjab. Diesel Car. Mahindra Bolero Camper or equivalent to lift milk product from milk plant/st 02 No's 02 No's 01 No. Diesel Car for Marketing Section Insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and Butter ASC Ferozepur and ASC Fazilka Milk in Annual on Supply of freshly cut firewood for boiler For Verka Ludhiana Dairy Supply, Installation and Commissioning of GLC Machine. 550 Tons One time purchas 01 No. 01 No. For Verka Mega Dairy, Bassi Pathana Engaging of outsource agency for providing of Security Supervisor/Guards For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering porta i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Incharge (Purchase)

#### ment on the petitions relating to the allotment of reserved seats to the SIC after hearing arguments from the parties. A five-member commission headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja heard the petitions. The News International

reported that during the hearing, CEC Raja handed over a letter written to the ECP by the SIC to PTI lawver Senator Barrister Ali Zafar and said they don't want reserved seats and you are forcing it.

The CEC said the Council

submit member list head wrote a letter to the ECP on February 26 and said they The allocation of reserved seats to Pakistan's Sunni don't have a list of reserved seats since no one contested Ittehad Council may be in the election from the SIC platieopardy after it was revealed that the right-wing party has

uncertainty over failure to

Barrister Ali Zafar expressed ignorance about the letter and said that the SIC did not inform the PTI about any such letter and asked the ECP to consider the extraordinary situation faced by the PTI and allot reserved seats to the SIC after independent members joined it.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) lawyer Farooq H Naek started his arguments and said that no SIC member won the general seat, and the Council did not submit any priority list to the ECP. Under Section 104 of the Elections Act, the new list could not be submitted after the expiry of the nomination papers date and the existing list could be changed. He also maintained that if

a name was deleted from the current list for reserved seats, the political party could give more names. The ECP could not issue a directive to ask the SIC to seek a priority list at this time. According to the formula given in Article 51 of the Constitution, seats were allotted. "If the stipulated time passes, then the list cannot be given," Naek added. PML-N lawver Azam

Nazeer Tarar said the SIC did

not participate in the general

elections. The ECP wrote a let-

ter to all political parties about

the implementation of election

rules, but the Council replied

that their party did not field

any candidates

Tarar said, "The Section 104 clearly states that whoeyer is participating in the elections, under Section 104, must have a priority list for reserved seats. If a political party has been rejected by the people, then how can independent members go and ask for reserved seats." The ECP bench reserved its verdict on the petition after hearing the argu-

ments of the parties.

# Cabinet nod to ₹1.26 lakh crore chip making units

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

⊣he Union Cabinet on Thursday approved setting up three semiconductor-making units by firms, including Tata Group and Japan's Renesas, at an investment of Rs 1.26 lakh crore as part of an attempt to cut India's dependence on imports to meet requirements of chips.

The units which will make chips for sectors including defence, automobiles and telecommunications, will begin construction within the next 100 days, Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told

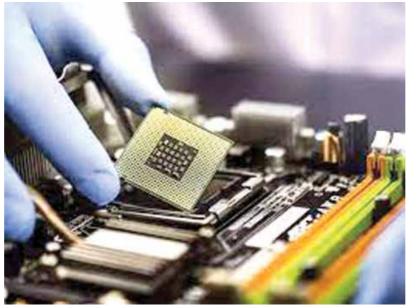
reporters after the cabinet meeting. The three units will be set up under the 'Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem' programme that provides government support of up to Rs 76,000 crore.

Tata Electronics Pvt Ltd will set up a semiconductor fab in partnership with Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp at Dholera in

Gujarat. The plant will have a capacity to produce 50,000 wafers per month and will involve an investment of Rs 91,000 crore. Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test Pvt Ltd (TSAT) will set up a semiconductor unit in Morigaon, Assam, at an investment of Rs 27,000 crore. CG Power in partnership with Renesas Electronics Corp and Stars Microelectronics of Thailand will set up a unit in Sanand in Gujarat at an investment of Rs 7,600 crore.

In June last year, the Cabinet approved a proposal of Micron for setting up a semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat. The approvals are part of the Modi government's ambitions to make India a chipmaker for the world and cutting reliance on countries like Taiwan.

Vaishnaw said the Tata plant at Dholera will produce high-performance compute chips with 28 nm technology for electric vehicles (EV), telecom, defence, automotive, consumer electronics, display and power electronics.



The unit in Assam will have a capacity of manufacturing, industrial manufacturing, 48 million per day for automotive, electric vehicles, consumer electronics, telecom, and mobile phones. The CG power semiconductor unit will manufacture 15 million chips for consumer, industrial, automotive and power applications.

"Within a very short time, India's semiconductor mission has achieved four big successes. With these units, the semiconductor ecosystem will established in India. India already has deep capabilities in chip design. With these units, our country will develop capabilities in chip fabrication. Advanced packaging technologies will be indigenously developed in India with today's announcement," he said adding the three units will generate direct employment of 20,000 advanced technology jobs and about 60,000 indirect

These units will accelerate employment creation in downstream automotive, and other semiconductor-consuming

Construction of Micron's Sanand unit is progressing at a rapid pace and a robust semiconductor ecosystem is emerging

near the unit, he said. Tata Electronics' partner PSMC is renowned for its expertise in logic and memory foundry segments. PSMC has 6 semiconductor foundries in Taiwan. Power management chips the two will manufacture are high voltage, high current applications.

TSAT semiconductor is developing indigenous advanced semiconductor packaging technologies including flip chip and ISIP (integrated system in package) technologies.

Renesas is a leading semiconductor company focussed on specialised chips. It operates 12 semiconductor facilities and is an important player in microcontrollers, analogue, power, and System-on-chip

### Sebi bans entities for manipulative trades in V Marc India

Sebi on Thursday barred 12 entities, including promoter of V Marc India Ltd, from the securities market for engaging in a fraudulent scheme to manipulate volumes and price of the company's shares.

Additionally, the regulator impounded wrongful gains of Rs 6.38 crore made by some of the entities from the manipulative scheme, according to an interim order. This case primarily deals with

fraudulent and manipulative turn, in addition to using his trading in the scrip of V Marc own and his connected India Ltd, listed on NSE's SME segment, prima facie engaged accounts of persons orchestrated by the promoter connected to Garg to and company management, along with connected parties. In its order, Sebi, prima facie, found that V Marc's promoter and MD Vikas Garg and Sandeep Kumar Srivastava, former Whole Time Director of the company-- engaged the services of Prijesh Kurani to

'operate the market'. It further noted that Kurani, in entities' trading accounts, connected to Garg to manipulate the scrip. Further, Garg and the company management channelled funds through their connected entities to Kurani for executing the fraudulent scheme.

The alleged fraudulent scheme was set in motion as soon as the scrip was listed on April 8, 2021. "The impact of this alleged fraudulent scheme is

surged and prices increased after which most of the entities -- PV Manipulators-- as well as the IPO subscribers - exited fully. The shares offloaded were purchased by public shareholders leading to the increase in their numbers as well," Sebi said.

Accordingly, Sebi has restrained 12 entities "from buying, selling or dealing in the securities market or associating themselves with the securities market, either

directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever until further orders". Apart from the other entities barred by Sebi are -- Sudhir Gupta, Dharini Kurani, Rekha Kurani, Surbhi Aggarwal, Vinod Vilas Sable, Seema Garg, Madhu Srivastava, Jai Kishorr Singhal and Seema Agarwal.

Sebi's examination which covered the period from April 9-30, 2021, was aided by data obtained from the mobile

following the 'search and seizure operation' carried out by the regulator at his Garg, Srivastava and Kurani, residence in May 2022, in the context of investigation into the matter of 'Front Running of Trades of Axis Mutual Fund. The data from the device, particularly messages exchanged on WhatsApp involving entities referred to in this order, including a copy of a signed agreement between certain entities, has served as important evidence in this

on March 15, 2022 and of 3 **PTI** ■ NEW DELHI critical minerals lithium,  $T^{\text{he Union Cabinet on}}_{\text{Thursday approved the amendment in the MMDR}}$ niobium and rare earth elements on October 12, 2023.

**Royalty rates for** 

critical, strategic

Narendra Modi, the Ministry

of Mines said in a statement.

"The Union Cabinet...

Approved the amendment of

Second Schedule to the

(MMDR Act) for specifying rate of royalty in respect of 12

and

minerals," the statement said.

The 12 critical and strategic

minerals are beryllium,

cadmium, cobalt, gallium, indium, rhenium, selenium,

titanium, tungsten, and

This completes the exercise of

the rationalisation of royalty

rates for all 24 critical and

strategic minerals, the

Act,

Minerals

strategic

tellurium,

Mines

critical

tantalum,

vanadium, it said.

Ministry said.

(Development

Regulation)

minerals approved

As per the statement, the Act to specify the royalty rate on 12 critical and strategic Mines and Minerals minerals, an official statement said. A decision in (Development Regulation) Amendment Act, this regard was taken at a 2023, which has come into meeting of the Union Cabinet force from August 17, 2023, chaired by Prime Minister had listed 24 critical and strategic minerals in Part D of

> MMDR Act. The amendment provided that mining lease and composite licence of these 24 minerals shall be auctioned by the central government.

the First Schedule of the

The approval for specification of rate of royalty will enable the Centre to auction blocks for these 12 minerals for the first time in

the country. Royalty rate on minerals is an important financial consideration for the bidders in auction of blocks, the

statement said. Further, manner calculation of Average Sale Price (ASP) of these minerals has also been prepared by the

Ministry of Mines, which will enable determination of bid parameters, it said. The Second Schedule of the

MMDR Act provides royalty

## Markets close higher, RIL gains after mega merger

 $B^{\rm enchmark\ stock\ indices\ Sensex\ and\ Nifty}_{\rm closed\ with\ gains\ on\ Thursday\ in\ a\ highly}$ volatile trade amid the scheduled monthly expiry of derivative contracts.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rebounded 195.42 points or 0.27 per cent to settle at 72,500.30. During the day, the benchmark oscillated between a high of 72,730.00 and a low of

The broader Nifty of NSE gained 31.65 points or 0.14 per cent to close at 21,982.80.

"Domestic benchmark traded near a flat-line trend throughout the session, but some buoyancy emerged by the end of the day. Investors adopted a cautious wait & watch approach on the verge of a heavy economic data week," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Among Sensex shares, IndusInd Bank. Mahindra & Mahindra, HCL Tech, Power Grid, Maruti, State Bank of India, Titan, Asian Paints, Nestle and UltraTech Cement were the major gainers.



Reliance Industries climbed nearly 2 per cent intra-day before closing more than half-a per cent higher after the company and Walt Disney announced the signing of binding pacts to

merge their media operations in India to create a Rs 70,000 crore behemoth.

Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors,

1.11 per cent to settle at 21,951.15. ITC, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank were

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

"Markets traded volatile on the monthly expiry

day but managed to end marginally higher," said

Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge

climbed 0.84 per cent and smallcap index went

up by 0.50 per cent. Among the indices, services

jumped 1.46 per cent, power climbed 1.01 per

cent, commodities (0.79 per cent), industrials

(0.74 per cent), metal (0.74 per cent) and capital

goods (0.65 per cent).

European markets were trading mostly in the green. The US markets ended marginally lower on Wednesday. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,879.23 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark fell by 790.34 points or 1.08 per cent to settle at 72,304.88 on Wednesday. The Nifty slumped 247.20 points or

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.43 per cent to USD 83.32 a barrel.

#### The government notified the royalty rate of four critical

#### minerals, namely glauconite, potash, molybdenum and platinum group of minerals rates for various minerals. Agritech startup Otipy joins ONDC to sell

fruits, vegetables

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

gritech startup Otipy on Affiles Startup Outpy on Thursday said it has joined Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to sell fruits and vegetables to consumers in Delhi-NCR and Mumbai.

In a statement, Otipy said this integration ensures catalogue is visible on various network.

through popular ONDC seller apps like Pincode (by PhonePe) and Paytm apps.

This move aims to strengthen the brand's presence in Delhi-NCR and Mumbai, the

statement said.

"As we join the ONDC Network, it helps us in expanding our reach to varied customer segments. Through the network, we not only plan to enrich buyer choices but also elevate the shopping facilitating experience, inclusivity in a dynamic ecommerce landscape," Varun Khurana, Founder and CEO

of Otipy, said. "With Otipy on the Open Network, it not only stands to benefit from an extensive reach of the network but also reinforces its commitment to fostering a sustainable and framework," T Koshy, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of ONDC,

#### **FDI** inflows decline in April, **December 2023**

PTI NEW DELHI

 $F^{\text{oreign direct investment}}_{(\text{FDI}) \text{ inflows in India}}$ declined 13 per cent to USD 32.03 billion in April-December 2023, dragged down by lower infusion in computer hardware and software, telecom, auto, and pharma sectors, according to the latest government data.

FDI inflows stood at USD 36.74 billion during the corresponding nine months of the preceding fiscal.

Inflows during the October-December quarter of the current fiscal, however, rose by 18 per cent to USD 11.6 billion as against USD 9.83 billion during the same quarter of 2022-23.

The total FDI — which includes equity inflows, reinvested earnings and other capital — declined by about 7 per cent to USD 51.5 billion during the period under review against USD 55.27 billion in April-December 2022, the data from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) showed.

During the nine-month period of this fiscal, FDI equity inflows decreased from major countries, including Singapore, the US, the UK, Cyprus and the Investments significantly from the Cayman Islands and Cyprus to USD 215 million and USD 796 million, respectively, during April-December 2023 as against the two comparative figures of USD 624 million and USD 1.15 billion recorded in the year-ago

period. However, inflows increased Mauritius, Netherlands,

### Protect investors in small, midcap schemes: Sebi to mutual funds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has asked mutual fund houses to put in place a framework to safeguard investors, who invested in smallcap and midcap schemes, amid a "froth building up" in these categories.

Also, the regulator has suggested steps such as restrictions on inflows in these segments, portfolio rebalancing, and laying guidelines to safeguard investors from the firstadvantage redeeming investors.

This came in the backdrop of strong flow in the small and midcap schemes of mutual funds over the last few

In a communication to Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) on Tuesday, Sebi asked the industry body to inform trustees of all the mutual fund houses to frame a policy to protect the interest of investors of smallcap and



midcap schemes.

"In the context of the froth building up in the small and mid-cap segments of the market and the continuing flows in the small and midcap schemes of mutual funds, trustees, in consultation with unitholder committees of the AMCs shall ensure that a policy is put in place to protect the interest of all investors," the regulator said.

The market regulator said that "appropriate" and "proactive measures" should taken by Asset Management Ćompanies (AMCs) and fund managers to protect investors.

### **Key infrastructure sectors growth** slows to 15 months low in January

PTI NEW DELHI

The growth of eight key infrastructure sectors slowed to a 15-month low of 3.6 per cent in January, on account of account of poor performance of sectors like refinery products, fertiliser, steel and electricity, according to the official data released on Thursday. The growth of eight core sectors — coal, crude oil, gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, refinery products cement and electricity was 4.9 per cent in December.

It was 9.7 per cent in January 2023. The previous low level of growth rate was recorded at 0.9 per cent in October 2022. Cumulatively also, the growth rate in the output of these sectors slowed down to 7.7 per cent as against 8.3 per cent in April-January

fertiliser was in the negative zone. And the pace of increase in the output of coal, steel, and electricity decelerated during the month under review.

However, crude oil, natural gas, and cement production recorded positive growth in January.

The eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to 2022-23. the country's Index of The output growth of Industrial Production (IIP).

# Lagged deposit growth to

**PTI** MUMBAI

Lagging deposit accretion poses the risk of Lposes the risk of constraining credit growth for banks in FY25, India Ratings and Research said on

Maintaining its "neutral" outlook on the banking sector for FY25, the agency said the deposit growth is likely to moderate to 12-13 per cent in

FY25 from the 13.8 per cent added that the same number estimated for ongoing fiscal year. The loan-to-deposit ratio for the sector is at a five-year book expansions, it said.

constrain credit growth for banks

credit growth to come at 20.5 per cent in FY24, including the positive impact of the HDFC twins merger, and

will come at over 15 per cent in FY25.

The loan book mix for banks high of 81 per cent, which is likely to change in FY25 due makes deposit growth as a to the dip in shares of crucial part in banks' credit exposures to the retail and non-bank lenders segments, The agency said it expects the agency said, adding that a revival in private capex will help increase the share of corporate lending in the

#### apps, making it easy to discover and enabling smooth transactions on the growing As Otipy onboards ONDC, it is set to expand its customer reach, making its products available to a wider audience

Moreover, Otipy will also

focus on bulk procurement directly from farmers and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

# Cabinet okays ₹75,000 crore rooftop solar scheme

PTI NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday The government on American approved a rooftop solar scheme, PM-Surya Ghar: Mufti Bijli Yojna, with an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore, to provide up to Rs 78,000 subsidy for the installation of solar plants and 300 units free power for one crore households.

Briefing media after the Union Cabinet meeting, I&B Minister

approval has been given for the scheme for installing rooftop solar and providing free electricity up to 300 units every month for one crore households.

"The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana with a total outlay of Rs 75,021 crore for installing rooftop solar and providing free electricity

Anurag Thakur informed that up to 300 units every month for one approval has been given for the crore households," an official statement said. The Prime Minister launched the

scheme on 13th February 2024. The scheme provides a central financial assistance (CFA) of 60 per cent of system cost for 2 kW systems and 40 per cent of additional system cost for systems between 2 kW to 3 kW capacity. The CFA will be capped at 3 kW.

At current benchmark prices, this will mean Rs 30,000 subsidy for 1 kW system, Rs 60,000 for 2 kW systems and Rs 78,000 for 3 kW systems or higher.

The households will apply for subsidy through the National Portal and will be able to select a suitable vendor for installing rooftop solar. The National Portal will assist the households in their decisionmaking process by providing relevant information such as appropriate system sizes, benefits calculator, vendor rating etc. Households will be able to access

collateral-free low-interest loan products of around 7 per cent at present for installation of residential RTS (rooftop solar) systems up to 3 kW.

Other Features of the scheme include a Model Solar Village to be developed in each district to act as a

role model for adoption of rooftop solar in rural areas. Besides, Urban Local Bodies and

Panchayati Raj Institutions shall also benefit from incentives for promoting rooftop solar (RTS) installations in their areas.

The scheme provides a component for payment security for renewable energy service company (RESCO) based models as well as a fund for innovative projects in RTS.

# New records, tales of grit emerge

### **Khelo India University Games 2023**

**PTI** GUWAHATI

t has been tales of grit and Chandigarh determination at the Khelo India University Games (KIUG) Ashtalakshmi 2023, which comes to an end on Thursday, with new meet records achieved and paths set for future star players of the country. The athletics section boosted

of at least four new KIUG records at the events played at the Indira Gandhi stadium

Pole vaulter M Gowtham of University of Madras cleared the distance of 5m to take home the men's pole vault gold medal.

Javelin thrower Jyoti of Chaudhary Devi Lal Chaudhary University, who had won the gold medal in the National Open Athletics meet in Bengaluru in October last year, came up with a throw of 53.16m in her fourth attempt to clinch the women's javelin throw gold, and also set a new meet record.

In the women's 800m event, University's Amandeep Kaur clocked

medal with a new Games record, while Vikash of University registered a new Games record in men's 1500 m clocking 3.50.70s to take the gold. Chandigarh University looks poised to top medals' tally with 28 golds in its kitty already, followed by Lovely Professional University with 17 golds and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, with 12 golds.

The KIUG 2023 were held in 18 venues across seven cities of North East, with Guwahati the opening which

attended by Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Anurag Thakur, among others.

More than 4,500 players from 200 universities competed in this fourth edition of KUIG.
The KIUG is a part of the

Indian government's Khelo India initiative that was launched in 2016, focussing on promoting grassroots sports and identifying young talents from across the country.

some like Mrinal



Professional University, a second spot in the Recurve men on debut at the KIUG

was no mean feat. With limited financial means

to pursue archery which involves high cost training equipment as his family depends on the earnings of his father's stationery shop, Mrinal's early struggles are

now nearly over. Support through the (Tagert

Podium) TOP scheme, a flagship initiative Jamshedpur. by the ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, meant that he

TOPS has allowed me to

take forward his passion, honing his skills at the Tata Archery Academy in

Jyoti hopes to keep

Olympics

Jyoti Kattimai of Karnataka

University may have failed to make a podium finish, but her story of fighting tough financial constraints to make

this far is an inspiration in

pursuing her game with her coach Shamla Patil being her Now, I don't have to dependent on my father for my financial needs as I get stipend every month," the 20-year-old said, adding that the biggest support, who also sponsors her university fees. The vital role of coaches in Games were also a vital shaping a player or a team preparation for the upcoming trials leading to the Paris cannot be stressed enough, and Bharati Vidyapeeth's rugby team credit their coach qualification for the show they could put

> Coming in as defending champions, the team did not have high hopes for a podium finish as the core of their team that won the gold in Lucknow last year had passed

With her father working as a scrap dealer and mother as a housekeeping staff in the same sports hostel in Dharwad where Jyoti trains, it has been a tale of long struggle for the 24-year-old. Jyoti's family of eight members (including four sisters) expanded to 13 after two of her elder sisters returned home with their children after a few years of marriage, and the family just

about pulling along.
She may have had to remain contend with the fifth spot in the 800m for women, but

out of the varsity. But the team with almost all new players was marshalled brilliantly by Prashant Arvind Singh, who works as a gym instructor in Mumbai, to clinch the bronze medal here. "It is a big thing for us because we reached here after only 15 days of preparation. We will return next year and win our third gold," said Prashant, who has also

represented India at the U-19 level and was part of the medal-winning Maharashtra team in the National Games held in Goa last year.

# Athletes to be issued digital certificates: Anurag

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Thursday that announced government will issue digital certificates to registered athletes across the country, a move which would ensure a transparent account of their participation The digital

performance. certificate will have dates of the athletes' participation in competitions and serve as proof of their achievements. "With athletes at the heart of

our progressing and growing sporting ecosystem, the sports ministry has made a crucial decision to promote the

'issuance of digital certificates to athletes," wrote Thakur on

The ministry has directed all National Sports Federations (NSFs) to only release merit and participation certificates through the DigiLocker.

The minister had first announced his plan to simplify things for athletes and National Sports Federations (NSFs) during the National Sports Day on August 29 last year.

On Thursday, the minister said, "Keeping up with our policy of 'athlete-first', NSFs have been advocated to issue certificates to athletes via DigiLocker, an initiative of



Ministry of Electronics and IT." He said the digital certificates will add a new administration management

sportspersons.
"This decision has been taken

to ensure the accessibility, security and veracity of documents and promote transparency and efficiency in the sports administration of the NSFs. This will further lead to ease of living for our

sportspersons across the

"From June 1 this year, only certificates issued by the (sports) federations through Digilocker shall be valid and no physical certificates issued will be recognised f be recognised for government and other benefits. We have advised the that federations their affiliated units must also start issuing the certificates through the DigiLocker from January 1 next year," added

Enumerating the benefits of issuing sports certificates through DigiLocker, Thakur said it will make access and sharing of certificates easy, eliminate the need for

secure environment for storing and documents and ensure their integrity and authenticity.

This, he said, would streamline the certificate issuance process and reduce administrative burden. 'These certificates are proof

of the athletes' commitment, effort, and accomplishments in their respective sports, and are currently distributed through outdated and conventional inefficient, methods," he said, adding that NSFs must put in place technology-based tools and solutions to serve the interest of sports, especially athletes.



### **Bajrang refuses to** appear in selection trials under WFI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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 $R^{\text{ejecting the Wrestling}}_{\text{Federation of India's}}$ invitation to compete in the upcoming national trials, ace Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia has moved an urgent joint petition in the Delhi High Court, seeking a stay the selection re on March tition h

It has been learnt from reliable sources that Bajrang, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and her husband Satywart Kadiyan moved the court on Wednesday and the matter will be heard on Friday. While Bajrang did not

confirm filing a petition, he questioned government's silence on the issues concerning Indian

wrestling. The Indian team for the Asian Wrestling Championships Olympic Qualifier in Kyrgyzstan next month will be selected on the basis of the trials at Delhi's IG Stadium.

Bajrang told PTI from Russia, where he is training for the last two months, that he has spent a fortune abroad but he won't compete in trials if they are conducted by the Sanjay Singh-led WFI.

T would not spend Rs 30 lakh on my training if I were to not compete in the trials, but how the suspended WFI is conducting the trials? I don't get what the government's compulsion is wrestlers have approached (on allowing WFI to the Delhi High Court.

conduct trials)?" Bajrang

"I don't understand how a sports body suspended by the Indian government issue a circular and announce the trials. Why is the government silent? We will appear in the trials only if the ad-hoc panel or the government conducts it. announce the trials?" he asked.

WFI president Sanjay Singh had appealed to the protesting wrestlers to

harassment. the Bajrang, Olympics bronze winner, said that not just him but Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat will also skip the trials. "This decision to not appear in trials is a joint decision taken by us. We are

contacted.

### Manchester Derby can further expose gulf between City and United

Tim Ratcliffe's determination to bring down Manchester City is abundantly clear. So is his admiration, it seems,

for the team he calls "the enemy." Since becoming coowner of Manchester United last week, Ratcliffe has spoken about the "driven and elite environment" that has been created at City in its Abu Dhabi-controlled regime.

He described City's 4-0 win over Real Madrid in last season's Champions League semifinals as "the best football I have ever seen."

He was even behind United's recent appointment of one of City's former top executives, Omar Berrada, as the new chief executive in what United said was the first step on a journey "to put football and performance on the pitch back at the heart of everything we

Ratcliffe acknowledged United was a "long way behind" City. Just how far might be placed into sharp focus this weekend.

It's the 192nd Manchester derby on Sunday, pitting two rivals at opposite stages of their modern development: City, the English, European and world club champion, vs.



United, a fallen giant looking to be kickstarted by the riches

one-sided in recent years.

and passion of a locally born billionaire.

Few are giving United a hope in the Premier League clash at Etihad Stadium - privately, maybe even Ratcliffe will not expect a win, either - but his recent investment in United, not forgetting his comments about knocking City and fellow local rival Liverpool "off their perch" within three years, provides the narrative and backdrop to a fixture that, for the most part, has been Take last season's match at the Etihad, for example, where Erling Haaland and Phil

humiliated in a 3-0 loss in

City comes into the derby following a 6-2 win at Luton in the FA Cup highlighted by a five-goal performance by Haaland. United has actually won seven of its nine games in all competitions in 2024 but barely ever convinces, which leaves Ten Hag under permanent pressure. Tellingly, Ratcliffe, in his round of posttakeover interviews, never gave his complete backing to

the Dutchman. March will also see United take on its other big foe, Liverpool, in the FA Cup quarterfinals. It's a month of great opportunity for Ten Hag and his players but also one of potential danger, if United was to lose to City - and therefore further jeopardize\_ Champions League qualification ambitions - and

Liverpool. points Fifteen second-placed City and sixthplaced United, and that could be 18 by Sunday evening.

More important for City is the points gap to leader Liverpool, which stands at one heading into the weekend. Liverpool plays first, a Nottingham Forest. first, away

### Kostyuk, Saville and Boulter advance to quarterfinals of Cymbiotika San Diego Open

Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine, Daria Saville of Australia and Katie Boulter of England advanced to the quarterfinals Cymbiotika San Diego Open. Kostvuk continued to build on the form that saw her reach her first major quarterfinal last month at the Australian Open. The sixth seed knocked off the last remaining wild card by beating 18-year-old Taylah Preston of Australia, 6-4 6-3

on Wednesday. For Kostyuk, 21, it was almost like facing a mirror image of herself.

"I was playing her for the very first time. She's still very young. She reminds me a little bit of me," said Kostyuk, who finished with 25 winners to 17 unforced errors, including nine double-faults. "I knew I had to fight and grind. It was very close?

Preston, who notched her first tour-level main-draw singles win in the opening round against Magdalena Frech, impressed with her natural power and clean groundstrokes. She has jumped from No. 819 to No. 153 in a matter of one year, and will reach yet another career high when the updated WTA rankings are released



on Monday

Saville, a qualifier, saved a match point to overcome Germany's Tatjana Maria in a dramatic 3-hour, 14-minute marathon, 5-7 7-6(2) 6-2. Serving to stay in the match at 4-5, 30-40 in the second set, Saville hammered a crosscourt forehand winner to keep her hopes alive. She eventually forced a third set in a tiebreak.

was anything but a comfortable matchup for the 29-year-old baseliner. "There was no comfort ever,

at all," said Saville, who avenged a quarterfinal loss to Maria in Barranquilla in

"I think I kind of experienced today, tonight, probably what I do to players. It was a fun match - only because I won in

the end. But it was a tough battle?

The 47th-ranked Maria's unconventional slice-anddice game repeatedly left Saville scrambling answers, but the 36-year-old managed to convert only six her 23 break-point opportunities in taking the "I needed two hours to adjust, three hours," said Saville of

facing her crafty veteran foe. "I think I'm going to have to readjust tomorrow, hitting with someone who hits with spin. I hit a lot of balls today. It's going to be really important for me to do the right recovery and get ready for the next round."

It marked the fourth win of the week for Saville including the qualifying rounds.

#### forget the past and appear for the trials. The trio had led a prolonged protest at Jantar Mantar, demanding the arrest of then WFI arrest of then WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who they had accused

together in this," he said. PTI tried to reach out Sakshi and Vinesh for confirmation but the former did not return calls and the latter could not be

Asked specifically if they have moved court against the trials, Bajrang denied the development but a source in the confirmed to PTI that four

### Praggnanandhaa commits blunder, loses second round match in Prague

**PTI** ■ PRAGUE

rndian Grandmaster ■Praggnanandhaa committed a time-pressure blunder as he suffered defeat at the hands of Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran in the second round of Prague Masters Chess tournament here. The defeat ended Praggnanandhaa's impressive 47-game unbeaten streak in

Classical Chess. 18-year-old Praggnanandhaa also lost the top ranking in live ratings among Indians -- a spot reclaimed by the legendary Viswanathan Anand who is also the brand ambassador of this event

Foden scored hat tricks in

City's 6-3 thrashing of United.

Or this season's match at Old

D Gukesh, meanwhile, came up with an impressive performance with black pieces to beat Nguyen Thai Dai Van of Czech Republic while the other three games in the 10-player round-robin event ended in a

With seven rounds still to GM Iranian Maghsoodloo is sitting pretty on two points, a half point ahead of Gukesh and Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan who played out a draw with

India's Vidit Gujrathi. Gujrathi, Praggnanandhaa,



Richard Rapport of Romania and David Navara of Czech Republic share the fourth spot on one point each while Vincent Keymer of Germany and Mateusz Bartel of Poland are on joint eighth spot with 0.5 point in their kitty. Van is the only player yet to open his Praggnanandhaa went down

fighting from a position he would have easily saved on another day. Playing the black side of a London System, the Indian did not have much trouble in equalizing and and steady improvement right Maghsoodloo kept on looking through and his tactic proved for ways to complicate the right as the Czech player fell

position.

At some point in the middle game, Praggnanandhaa even looked better but with the clock ticking away it was not an easy task to finish. Maghsoodloo by then had trained his eyes to go for the black king and all he needed was a blunder that created several threats. It was over in 38 moves.

Gukesh's perseverance paid off against Dai Van in a reverse Benoni game wherein the latter played white. Gukesh just kept himself in the game by slow

prey and gave up a rook for minor piece.

Wasting no time, Gukesh converted to an endgame and found a beautiful finish towards the end to force matters. The game lasted 52 moves.

Gujrathi accepted an early pawn sacrifice by Abdusattarov out a Four Knights opening. Playing black, the Uzbek never looked like in any real danger despite the material deficit and in the end drew in just 35 moves.

In other games, Bartel Mateusz had an easy game with Rapport while Keymer did not find any difficulty in signing peace with Navara. In the Challengers section, R Vaishali lost her second straight

game against Ediz Gurel of Turkey Results Round 2 (Indians unless stated): Parham

Maghsoodloo (Iran, 2) beat R Praggnanandhaa (1); David Navara (Cze, 1) drew with Vincent Keymer (Ger, 0.5); Nguyen Thai Dai Van (Cze, 0) lost to D Gukesh (1.5); Vidit Gujrathi (1) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattarov (Uzb, Richard Rapport (Romania, 1) drew with Bartel Mateusz (Pol, 0.5).

# RAHUL RULED OUT OF FIFTH TEST, BUMRAH RETURNS: BCCI

Senior India batter KL Rahul will not feature in the fifth and final Test against England in against England in Dharamsala owing to an injury while pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will return to the team, the BCCI said on

Thursday.
Rahul, who continues to feel sore in his right quadriceps, has travelled to London to get an expert opinion on his injury.

The wicketkeeper-batter became unavailable after the series-opener in Hyderabad in January and as per the BCCI, he was 90 per cent fit before the third Test in Rajkot earlier this month.

"Mr. KL Rahul, participation in the final IDFC First Bank Test was subject to fitness, has been ruled out of the fifth and final Test in Dharamsala. The BCCI Medical Team is closely him

**PTI** ■ WELLINGTON

that the

persistently

wicket".

Australian batting star Steve Smith has said

authorities should urgently

address the issue of pacers

bouncers to a leg side field,

as it restricts a batter's ability to hit the ball

"anywhere in front of the

The former Australia

just one or two such

deliveries, after which he

should be warned or the

"I think there could be some

slight rule changes in terms

of balls going down the leg

"You really can't hit the ball

anywhere in front of the

wicket really, and I feel like

it is almost like when a

(left-arm) spinner comes

over the wicket and they

get the warning down the

leg side and then they start getting 'wided," Smith was

quoted as saying by Sydney

"If you're bowling balls

consistently in that area down leg, it should be a

similar ruling to the spinner if that makes

sense. Basically bowl one

or two, then get a warning and then get wides called,"

Morning Herald.

side when you set that field.

delivery be called a wide.

cricketing

bowling

captain, who is playing the opening Test against New Zealand here, added a there. That would be the bowler should be allowed only change I wouldn't

Smith pushes for rule reform



London for further management of his issue," the Board said in a release.

Meanwhile Bumrah, who was released from the squad for the fourth Test in Ranchi in

Smith, who made a 31 in

Australia's first innings on

the opening day of the Test

here as Australia ended day

one at 279/9, added that if

the ball is drifting too

much down leg, it's

impossible for a batter to

play any kind of stroke. "To have those catchers

(fielders) there in position, it can be challenging for sure. The only thing I'd like

to see is if you get too

much down leg, you can't

mind seeing," added Smith.

Smith has found himself

getting bogged down by pace bowlers over the years

as they use the tactic to

stop the flow of runs, or

force him to play a hook

shot in frustration to one

praised

Zealand pace bowler Neil

Wagner, who announced his retirement from Test

cricket on Tuesday, for his

"Ultimately it is a good skill what Neil's been able

to do, the way he can get

the ball between throat and

chest height consistently, not bowl his two

(bouncers) for the over and

just carry on doing it,"

"It's a good skill and it can

be challenging, particularly

for guys that are pullers of the ball."

of the fielders

Smith

accuracy.

Smith said.

coordinating with specialists line with the team's workload management policy, will link with the squad in Dharamsala for the final Test, beginning March 7. India have already taken an

following the victory in the fourth Test in Ranchi Rahul's absence from the final Test means Rajat Patidar remained with the squad but the MP batter can't be sure of

lead, his place in the playing

Ranji Trophy side - for their Ranji Trophy Semi-final fixture against Mumbai, starting March 2nd, 2024. He will join the India squad after the completion of the

from the squad.

the completion of the domestic fixture for the fifth Test, if need be," the BCCI

only 63 runs in six innings. All-rounder Washington

Sundar has also been released

"He will join Tamil Nadu - his

Rahul needs to be fully fit before the IPL where he will lead Lucknow Super Giants and is expected to bat in the middle order to bolster his chances of making the India squad for the T20 World Cup the USA and the Caribbean.

It is the same quadriceps injury that had sidelined Rahul for almost four months last year.

Having got injured during the IPL, Rahul returned to action during the Asia Cup

instant impact. In the Test tour of South Africa last year, Rahul was the only century maker for India in the drawn

in September last and made

The BCCI also said senior pacer Mohammed Shami is recovering well after undergoing a surgery on February 26 for his right heel problem.

"He is recovering well and will soon head to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru to commence his rehabilitation process," the Board said of Shami.

India's updated squad for fifth Test: Rohit Sharma (C), Jasprit Bumrah (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Rajat Patidar, Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel (WK), KS Bharat (WK), Devdutt Padikkal, R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Kumar, Akash Mukesh



### **Even Rohit, Kohli** should play domestic cricket when free: Kirti

PTI NEW DELHI

Member of the 1983 World Cup-winning team Kirti Azad on Thursday backed the BCCI's directive for cricketers to play Ranji Trophy, saying it's a good move and the rule should be applicable to every India team player, including Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. The out-of-favour duo of

Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer were excluded from the list of were excluded from the list of centrally-contracted players after they ignored the directive to play Ranji Trophy. "It (directive) is a very good move. Everybody should be playing Ranji Trophy cricket, but currently the emphasis is on the IPL. It is good, it is entertaining but the real cricket is the (five) days' cricket Playing in domestic cricket. Playing in domestic cricket is good, it keeps you in touch.

But whenever you are free, even if you're a Rohit Sharma or a Virat Kohli, you should go back and play domestic cricket for the state. That (state) gave you the opportunity to be a player, get selected and then play for the country.

He felt that penalising just Ishan and Iyer wasn't right. "Just to penalise the two is not

correct, I think everybody should be penalised. Everybody should be seen with the same mirror," Azad told PTI Video. Azad declined to comment

on whether this was the potential end of the road for İshan and Iyer after their names were excluded from the list of centrallycontracted players.

'My question is, are they playing enough domestic cricket? They are playing T20

cricket, nowadays and every other state has a T20 cricket league. Back in the days when we were starting our careers, players like Bishan Singh Bedi, Madan Lal, Surinder Mohinder Amarnath, Amarnath, Chetan Chauhan, Sunil Gavaskar, Sandeep Patil, Karsan Ghavri played alongside youngsters like me and Ravi Shastri.
"All these senior Test team

players would play for their sides, would play for the pride of their state which seems missing in the youngsters nowadays," he added.

He questioned why India players had issues playing domestic cricket while England cricketers willingly played county cricket when not in the national side. "Look at county cricket; there

are 20-plus counties and there are numerous three-day and four-day games along with T20 cricket, but every player is involved there. If a player is left out of the Test squad, then he returns to play for his county.

'So why can't we have our players playing those domestic matches, that's the big question," he added. He praised players like Dhruv

Jurel and Sarfaraz Khan for finding the balance between T20 cricket for their IPL teams and playing Ranji Trophy.

"There are players like Jurel, Sarfaraz who do play T20 cricket but, at the end of the day, are also representing their states in the Ranji trophy. The bowlers also get into the rhythm of bowling longer spells when they regularly play domestic cricket. It (Ranji) is not a form of slam-bang and thank

# Irfan questions denial of contracts to Iyer, Kishan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



terminated Kishan and Iyer's central contracts, while Pandya, who has not featured in Tests since 2018, secured a place in Grade A. "If players like Hardik don't

want to play red ball cricket, should he and others like him participate in white-ball domestic cricket when they aren't on national duty?" he questioned BCCI's decision, in



achieve the desired results!" he added. The 25-year-old Kishan did not turn up for Jharkhand throughout team's campaign in Ranji Trophy despite not being on national duty since leaving from the tour of South Africa in December last, citing personal reasons.

He has instead focussed on

Tournament in Mumbai and will be turning up for the Mumbai Indians in the IPL. Iyer did not make himself available for Mumbai's Ranji quarterfinal against Baroda after being excluded from the Indian team following the

second Test against England,

citing a groin injury.

He, however, has been picked his post on X.

"If this doesn't apply to all, month. He is competing in the then Indian cricket won't ongoing DY Patil T20 back to lead Kolkata Knight

both Shreyas and Ishan. Hoping they bounce back and come back stronger," he said. The exclusion of Iyer and Kishan is being seen as a stern message to young players unwilling to put in the hard yards in first-class cricket, while chasing white-ball glory and lucrative IPL contracts.

Riders in the IPL beginning on

Irfan believes that the duo will

come back strongly.
"They are talented cricketers,

March 22.

On Wednesday, former India coach Ravi Shastri also backed the embattled duo.

"In the game of cricket, comebacks define the spirit. Chin-up, @ShreyasIyer15 and @ishankishan51! Dig deep, face challenges, and come back even stronger. Your past achievements speak volumes, and I have no doubt you'll conquer once again," Shastri had posted on X

# Australia 279-9 on Day 1 of 1st Test against New Zealand

AP WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND)

The sun came out around lunchtime at the Basin Reserve on Thursday. Its appearance at first breathed life into New Zealand's bowling performance on the first day of the first cricket Test against Australia. Then the tall West Australian

Cameron Green took the upper hand for Australia with an unbeaten 103, reaching his second test century in the last over of the day. At stumps Australia was 279-9 and Green appeared to have wrested control of the match from New Zealand at the last minute.

Green was reluctant to say so. "The match is pretty close," Green said

'They're probably just on top. They've got a quality batting lineup and we've got to bowl

well tomorrow. It's a lot about the overhead conditions and we've got to wake up tomorrow and see how the overheads are.

New Zealand had bowled unproductively on a cool, overcast morning and Steve Smith and Usman Khawaja had looked like carrying Australia to lunch without loss after it had sent in on a green pitch.

As the sun broke through the clouds and began to warm a capacity crowd at the inner-city oval, New Zealand's luck changed. After going 24 overs without a breakthrough in the morning, Matt Henry dismissed Smith (31) 10 minutes before lunch.

Marnus Labuschagne (1) fell just after the resumption, then Khawaja (33) and Travis Head (1) were out as Australia slipped from 61-0 to 89-4.



with counter-attacked partnership of 67 for the fifth wicket before and directly after tea. Marsh made 40 from 39 balls with six fours and a six but he also fell to Henry. Green went on to turn the tide of the first day with his century from 154 balls. He lashed three late boundaries Mitch Marsh and Green to do so, reaching his century Test cricket it was inevitable

from the penultimate ball of

the day When the covers came off at the Basin Reserve about 8 am Thursday after light rain overnight and in the early morning, the pitch looked bright green and moist. With the two teams captained by faster bowlers in a rarity for the team that won the toss would bowl. Pat Cummins called tails, it

was a head and Tim Southee said New Zealand would field, saving his batters from the need to face Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc and what looked like a green seamer.

As it turned out, the pitch was not as lively as it appeared, at least at first. There was a bit of grass to aid seam, a little swing in overcast conditions but not as much pace at it might have seemed.

Smith and Khawaja were bent on surviving the morning, not too concerned with runs and they came within minutes of doing before Henry struck just at the sun began to shine.

Henry had Smith caught by wicketkeeper Tom Blundell with a good length ball that just left the batter, sending total.

Blundell diving across first slip. Australia went to lunch at 62-1 and New Zealand may have felt the morning was less productive than it should have been.

The bowlers settled into more productive lengths after lunch and used variations more effectively which resulted in the quick wickets of Labuschagne, Khawaja and Head.

O'Rourke dismissed Head, first setting him up with a series of fuller balls then catching him out with a shorter one going across him which he followed and guided to Blundell.

Starc (9) and Cummins (16) fell before the second new ball which was taken in the last half hour. Hazlewood (0) will Green on Friday morning Australia attempts to add late runs to its

### Kiran opens new avenue for UP Warriorz

PTI BENGALURU

he added.

riran Navgire would not Khave opened but for a freak shoulder injury to Vrinda Dinesh and now her bruising fifty against the Mumbai Indians might just prompt UP Warriorz to rework their combination at the top in the ongoing Women's Premier League. Navgire struck a 31-ball 57 and combined with Alyssa Healy (33) to help UPW overhaul a 162-run target in just 16.4 overs against the defending champions last

worked around the far more traditional opening pair of Healy and Vrinda.

"When the innings ended the head coach (Jon Lewis) came up to me and said I had to open. I was happy, because I opened the batting in domestic cricket, and I had the chance to do that here," Navgire said in the postmatch press meet.

Range hitters are a rare breed women's cricket and Navgire has opened that option for the UP outfit. The Warriorz have

It could shake things up in the line-up, which has till now the WPL with their middleorder batters creaking under massive run-rate pressure.

In their first match against Royal Challengers Bangalore, UP made 36 for 1 and they were 21 for three against the Delhi Capitals in the second

But with Navgire coming in as opener, UP made 61 for no loss in the Power Play segment. It was their fastest start, for that matter any team's, in this edition of the

Navgire, a big fan of former Indian captain MS Dhoni, is



not new to opening the innings. She garnered instant attraction during the 2021-22 domestic season as a guest

player for Nagaland. She hammered 35 sixes in the Senior Women's T20 league that season, the most ever in the history of that tournament. The 29-year-old, who hails from Maharashtra, also became the first Indian woman to score a 150-plus score in T20 when she blasted 76-ball 162 against Arunachal Pradesh.

Her approach is as simple as the big shots she executes. "I just played the ball on merit (against MI), played my natural game. If the ball is in my arc, it should go into the stands - that is my natural thought," said Navgire.

Her assault on MI pacer Issy Wong in the third over of UPW's chase underlined Navgire's growth into an allground batter.

When Wong pitched short, Navgire stood tall and sent the ball to the mid-wicket boundary with a strong pull. In the next ball, the England pacer pitched the ball further up but Navgire muscled it through mid-off for a four. MI coach Charlotte Edwards admitted that they were not prepared for Navgire's

aggression. "Kiran Navgire played brilliantly and took the game away from us in the period that she batted and we never quite recovered.

Firstly, I don't think Navgire was going to open. The injury (to Vrinda), I guess, gave them a licence to put her up in the order. We weren't quite planning for her in the batting," said Edwards.

Now that Navgire has the licence to kill, the Warriorz can hope for a more productive WPL season.

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