**OPINION 6** 

SUBDUE CHINA

BOOST DETERRENCE TO

the plant 1864 the contract of the plant 1864 the contract of the contract of

**WORLD 8** 

SUPER TUESDAY PRIMARIES

BIDEN AND TRUMP SWEEP

**MONEY 10** 

85 PER CENT PAYTM WALLET USERS

NOT TO FACE DISRUPTION: RBI

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY MARCH 7, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

Established 1864

Late City Vol.34 Issue 66 \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

INDIA TO PRESS FOR 4-1 AGAINST **ENGLAND** 12 SPORTS

# www.dailypioneer.com

# Sandeshkhali Women brief Narendra Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Abhinandan' programme, at Barasat in North 24 Parganas district, on Wednesday

**SUGAR SENGUPTA** ■ BARASAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with some victims of Sandeshkhali on Wednesday, where allegations of sexual abuse against TMC leaders have been

BJP sources said the PM assured them of help. "Some of the victims of sexual attack had come to Barasat, and they met the Prime Minister, and he assured them help," sources said.

The meeting took place after the PM's rally at Barasat, which is the headquarters of North 24 Parganas district where Sandeshkhali is located.

The women expressed their happiness at meeting the PM and said they requested him to ensure that the women of Sandeshkhali

Government for promoting atrocities against women, as seen at Sandeshkhali block

in North 24 Parganas. 'What happened to the mothers and sisters of Sandeshkhali- which hit the national headlines after women here recently rose up in revolt against landgrab and sexual assault against them- was a matter of shame," he said.

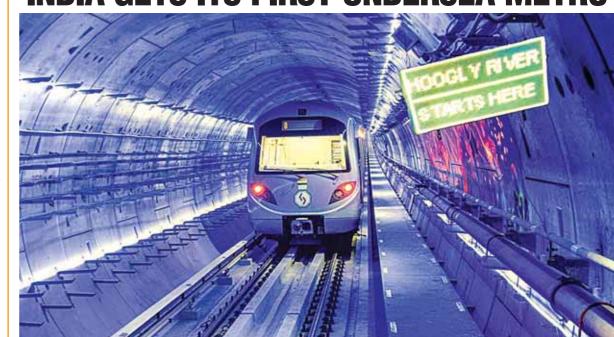
'The TMC has committed a big sin by protecting the people who had insulted our women. It is a matter of big shame, and I am sure the incident at Sandeshkhali has angered the women of Bengal.

'This anger will not remain limited to Sandeshkhali; the storm that brewed there will engulf the entire State," the PM said

Addressing an all-women's rally named Nari Shakti Vandan Abhinandan at Barasat in North 24 Parganas, Modi criticised how corruption and abuse of women had become the hallmark of the Indian Democratic National Inclusive Alliance and its constituent TMC.

Targeting the INDIA leaders the PM said, "Realising that get justice. the National Democratic Modi launched a scathing attack on the Alliance was coming back to

## **INDIA GETS ITS FIRST UNDERSEA METRO**



PM Modi inaugurates yet another sea link

power the leaders of INDIA alliance have lost their sleep and balance which is why they have started abusing Modi ... the corrupt people of INDIA are saying that I speak about dynastic politics because I have no family of my own ... but truth to be told the entire people of the country including those sitting in front of me are my

family."
The PM who on Wednesday inaugurated India's first under water metro railway service — that runs beneath the Ganges connecting Beti Padhao programme,

Howrah and Kolkata besides launching projects worth more than ₹15,000 crore accused the INDIA ruled States of impeding all the Central schemes whereas his Government was trying its best to implement them so that India could be taken forward. 'The Governments led by

the INDIA alliance are putting brakes on the schemes launched by the BJP Government ... like the TMC Government refused to implement the Beti Bachao

Ujjwala Gas scheme and drinking water projects," he said adding how "during the pronged TMC regime an eclipse had swallowed up Bengal." This was the PM's third rally in allegations Bengal in a week's time with the previous two being held at Arambagh and Krishangar on March 1 and 2. While

Modi who later proceeded to Bihar asked the people to throw out the TMC from power in order to ensure development in the State. Desperate to save women's vote bank the TMC

was prompt to react even as

the party took a twomeasure announcing women-centric projects and by countering Prime Minister's

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee went on the X to announce her Government's plans increase the salaries of ICDS and Asha workers, party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh attacked Modi for shedding "crocodile tears" when the women of the BJP ruled

States were crying. Continued on Page 2



ongress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is likely to make her poll debut from the Raebareli constituency in Uttar Pradesh for the Lok Sabha 2024 Elections which has been represented by her

mother former Congress President Sonia Gandhi who has now made inroads to Rajya Sabha. Posters of Priyanka Gandhi

have already come up in Rae Bareli while neigbouring Amethi too has been splashed with posters of Rahul Gandhi who lost the last Lok Sabha polls to BJP's Smriti Irani.

The Rae Bareli seat was won by Sonia five times in the past, including 2019, when she was the sole Congress leader to win a UP Lok Sabha seat. Posters seeking Priyanka's candidature

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI

from Raebareli, put up by Congress workers, read, "Take Congress' development work forward, Raebareli is calling... Priyanka, please come." Congress sources said Rahul is also likely to contest from both Amethi in desh and Wayanad in Keral which he is representing currently. The top leadership of the Congress will

meet in the national Capital on Thursday to finalise the party candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

"The first meeting of the Congress' Central Election Committee (CEC) that considers and decides on candidates for Lok Sabha polls is being held on March 7," AÎCC general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh said.

Top leaders, including president Mallikarjun Kharge and former chiefs Sonia and Rahul will be present at the meeting, besides other senior leaders who are part of the

panel. The Congress has not declared any candidate so

Last week, the BJP came out with its first list of 195 candidates for the Lok Sabha elections. Besides the seat-sharing

formula of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) of which the Congress is part for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls was also finalised in the meeting of its leaders in Mumbai on Wednesday. Maharashtra has 48 Lok Sabha seats

Continued on Page 2

# Despite BJP predictions, Amit Shah reaches Gandhis to set foot in UP out to Maharashtra



T N RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

The ruling BJP may contest at least 32 Lok Sabha seats in the elections forthcoming Maharashtra, leaving remaining 16 seats to its alliance partners Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-led NCP. Union Home Minister Amit Shah. who was on a two-day visit to the city, is understood to have agreed to allocate collectively 16 seats to the Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit

Pawar-led NCP. Shah, who held one round of talks with Shinde and Ajit Pawar at the State-run Sahyadri guest on Tuesday night, met them once again at the Jio world Centre on

Wednesday. NCP leaders Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare were also present at Wednesday's meeting. While the Shinde-led Shiv Sena had sought at least 13 seats, the Ajit Pawar-headed NCP had demanded as many as 10 seats. However, Shah made it clear to them that the

BJP could not allocate more than 16 seats to the two parties. Between the two ruling

alliance partners, the Shinde-led Shiv Sena may get "nine to 10 seats", while the NCP (AP) will have to remain content with the remaining "6 to 7" seats.

"Maha-Yuti, as the BJP-led ruling alliance called in the State, is likely finalise its seat-sharing

arrangement by either the end of this week or early next week. Of the seats allocated to the NCP, the BJP has set aside the

prestigious Baramati seat to deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar Sunetra will taking on rival NCP leader and three-time MP Supriya Sule, who is the daughter of Sharad Pawar. Similarly, the BJP has allocated

Raigad seat in coastal Konkan region for the NCP. State NCP (AP) chief Sunil Tatkare may himself contest Raigad seat in coastal Konkan region.

There has been a delay in the formalisation of Lok Sabha seatsharing arrangement in Maharashtra. The BJP announced its first list of 19 candidates on Saturday. However, it did not announce its candidates for Maharashtra, as the party had not formalised its seat tie-up with its

alliance partners — Shiv Sena

(Shinde) and NCP (AP). The State BJP leaders, including Devendra Fadnavis, wanted Shah to intervene and firm up the seat-sharing arrangement with the Shinde Sena and Ajit

During his two rounds of talks, Shinde hammered out a seat-sharing deal with the Shinde Sena and NCP (AP) on Tuesday night and Monday morning.

Pawar BJP.



Marine Commandos (MARCOS) leave after patrolling the Jhelum river ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kashmir valley, in Srinagar on Wednesday

### Modi to visit Kashmir, post Article 370 era

**MOHIT KANDHARI** ■ JAMMU

 $A^{ ext{head of the beginning of}}$  the poll battle on ground zero, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be arriving in Kashmir Valley, for the first time after the Abrogation of Article 370, on Thursday to participate in the 'Viksit Bharat Viksit Kashmir' Jammu

programme. Modi's visit to the valley is aimed at galvanising party cadre and bolstering the party's poll campaign.

The mass contact programme of the Prime Minister has also raised the hopes of residents in the valley as they are anticipating the conduct of the Assembly polls alongside Lok Sabha

By winning the hearts and minds of the people of Kashmir, the Prime Minister will be sending a firm message to the political opponents who often raise fingers questioning the Kashmir policy of the ruling

dispensation. welcome the Prime Minister, Srinagar city has been decked up with king-size hoardings hoardings and party flags along the fortified route leading to the venue of the public rally at Bakshi stadium. The

entire Bakshi stadium has been draped in colours of India. Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place to ensure an incident-

programme. Continued on Page 2

free culmination of the

# The NCR community enlarged with Metro connection

RAJESH KUMAR ■ MEERUT/AGRA

With the flagging off of 17-km Duhai-Modi Nagar North section of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor, the Namo Bharat train becomes operational on 34 km of the corridor, spanning eight stations from Sahibabad to Modi Nagar North. Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the additional section on Wednesday remotely from Kolkata.

priority Simultaneously the corridor of Agra Metro was inaugurated virtually by the Prime Minister as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other leaders took the inaugural train ride from the Taj Mahal station to Taj Mahal East station. With the launch of Agra Metro, Minister Narendra Modi, we could

Uttar Pradesh becomes the sixth State to have metro facilities in most cities, with services in Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida and Kanpur, he

The RRTS extension encompasses three stations - Murad Nagar, Modi Nagar South and Modi Nagar The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor, stretching over 82 km, is expected to reduce travel time between Delhi and

Meerut to less than an hour. Speaking at the inauguration, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said once the entire Rapid Rail Transit System is ready, it will be the "second largest metro system" in the country.

"Under the leadership of Prime



develop this corridor at such a fast pace. The work of RRTS and its quality is the finest in the country. Once the entire rapid rail transit system is ready, it will be the second largest metro system in the country," Puri said.

According to the National Capital Region Transport Corporation, or NCRTC, on the Murad Nagar Station, the work of Automatic Fare Collection (AFC) System, Platform Screen Door (PSD), CCTV installation, Customer Service Centre, Ticketing Counter, Railing and Washroom construction is over.

"Along with this, escalators and lifts have also been installed for movement from the concourse to the platform level. Presently the work of roof sealing, painting and

the final stage," the NCRTC said. The Murad Nagar Station has been connected with the Murad Nagar Bus Stand under multimodal integration to ease passenger movement. Modi Nagar has been given two stations - Modi Nagar South and Modi Nagar North under the project, in view of intractable traffic jams the stretch often witnesses The length of both these stations is approximately 215 metres, width

lighting of the station is going on.

For the convenience of passengers,

two entry and exit gates are being

built in the station, the construction work of which is in

approximately 25 metres, and the platform 16 approximately metres. **Continued on Page 2** 

# TMC leader and former Minister Tapas joins BJP

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

Senior Trinamool Congress leader and former Bengal Minister who had on Tuesday quit the party on Wednesday joined the BJP.

Angered at being ignored by the top leadership including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee post a raid by the Enforcement Directorate at his house Tapas Roy had quit not only his party but also his membership of the State Assembly.
One of the founder-members

of the TMC who is regarded for his integrity Roy had not been in good terms with TMC veteran and leader in Lok Sabha Sudip Bandopadhyay and had earlier alleged that Bandopadhyay was behind the

"I am joining the BJP today,' Roy who has a good deal of influence in the Kolkata North constituency said adding, "BJP's Amit Malavya, Suvendu Adhikari and Sukanata Majumdar had contacted me." He said, "at present the picture of Bengal is very grim ... the people are being killed as we saw at Bagtui and other places ... women are being insulted

and corruption is rampant ... this is not what we wanted after bringing the CPI(M) government down ... now I think the BJP can take Bengal towards the path of development."



On whether the TMC would be able to win the coming elections he said, "a Government of pirates and demons cannot stand ... they will crumble down soon."

A five-time MLA Roy has been a backer of the TMC's youth brigade led by Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee. According to inside sources it was due to Bandopadhyay that Roy had to leave the party. The difference between the two senior leaders is around the North Kolkata seat from where Bandopadhyay --- already into

MP for the past 15 years. As Roy backed Abhishek Banerjee in his efforts to infuse young generation in the party Bandopadhyay took it as a threat to his candidature from North Kolkata and apparently used his Delhi clout to send the

the seventies --- has been an

ED to his house, insiders said. Cut to Wednesday. When asked as to whether he would contest the parliamentary elections from the North Kolkata seat, Roy said he would if his party thought him fit to contest from the seat. "I am duty bound to do whatever my new party says," he said.

Meanwhile, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh rued the exit of a "senior and honest leader like Tapas Roy from the party," and appealed to the leadership to see that such exodus did not take place in future.

"It is unfortunate that a leader like Tapas Roy will go out of TMC and it is more unfortunate that he will join the BIP against which he and Mamata Banerjee together have stood for years ... the party has to see that such incidents do not take place again," he said.

# Supriya to take in Baramati

T N RAGHUNATHA

Pawars' home turf of Baramati in western Maharashtra is preparing itself for a battle royale between two prominent members of the family — Sharad Pawar's family — Sharad Pawar's daughter and three-time MP Supriya Sule and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar — in the forth-coming Lok Sabha polls.

While the candidature of NCP

(AP) leader Supriya Sule from Baramati was a foregone conclusion, the ruling NCP on Tuesday announced that it would field Sunetra Pawar as its candidate of the Ajit Pawarled NCP.

Baramati Lok Sabha constituency has been represented by the Sharad Pawar family for nearly four decades now. While Sharad Pawar was two-time MP, his nephew Ajit Pawar represented Baramati for one term, Supriya Supe has been a three-term MP from Baramati.

Sharad Pawar's writ would run in Baramati for nearly decades. However, political equations changed in Maharashtra's prestigious Lok Sabha constituency after his nephew Ajit Pawar rebelled against Sr Pawar, walked out of the NCP with a sizeable number of supporters and took oath as deputy chief minister

Sena-BJP alliance government in the state on July 2, 2023. In the Gram Panchayat elections held in November last vear, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP made inroads into the

in the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv

Baramati in the Gram Panchayat(GP) polls, when it walked away with 109 GP seats out of a total 231 seats followed among others by Sr Pawar-led NCP ( 27) and Congress (25). Even before the announce-

ment of the election schedule both Sunetra Pawar and Supriya Sule have held a series of meetings. Mobile vans (raths) of both Supriya Sule and Sunetra Pawar are going around the length and breadth of the constituency.

On her part, Supriya has played down the election against Sunetra, who happens to be her sister-in-law, by saying: "For me it is an ideological fight. There is nothing personal in the contest. Pawar Saheb has stood for a certain ideology and we are committed to it," Supriya said.

"How can you call this a family fight? Ányone can contest elections from any place in a democracy. I had said earlier that if they have a strong candidate, then I am ready to debate with that candidate. Whatever topic, time, or place they decide, I am ready to sit down and discuss," she said.

# Supriya to take | Bengal CID on Sunetra Pawar | hands over Sheikh Shahjahan to CBI



After initial hesitancy the Criminal Investigation Department of the Bengal Police finally handed over TMC strongman and don of Sandeshkhali Sheikh Shahjahan to the Central Bureau of Investigation and transferred the papers related to the case to the central agency.

Shahjahan is the prime accused in the case where his alleged goons on January 5 attacked a team of Enforcement Directorate officials who had gone to conduct search operations in his house in connection with the Rs 10,000 crore ration scam, in which senior TMC leader and Bengal minister, Jyotipriya Mallick has gone to jail.

Shahjahan was arrested by Bengal Police more than 55 days after the January 5 incident and days after the local

women rose up in revolt in a separate case of land grab and sexual assault by his men.

The transfer comes a day after the Calcutta High Court directed the Bengal Police to transfer the case to the CBI and on a day when a State Government appeal before a Division Bench of the same court was turned

The Police had on Tuesday refused to transfer the case and the accused to the CBI citing an appeal filed before the Supreme Court. However the Bench of Justice Harish Tandon on Wednesday ruled that mere filing of an appeal did not impede the process of transfer.

The contention of the central agency before the High Court was that since the police had obtained maximum remand --- of 15 days --- of the accused after the expiry of that time period there would be no scope left for the CBI to seek his remand if he was transferred

#### **Noida girl taking board exams** raped while on way to tuition

**PTI** ■ NOIDA

class 12 student, who is A class 12 student, who is taking ongoing board exams, was allegedly raped by a 25-year-old man from her neighbourhood in Noida Extension while she was on her way to tuition, police officials said on Wednesday.

The accused, who was at large since the incident on February 29, was held from Shahberi furniture market on Wednesday, the officials said.

"My daughter was on her way to a tuition class when the accused coaxed her into talking to him. He then administered an intoxicating substance to her, making her unconscious and took her to a flat where he forced himself on her," the girl's father said in his complaint to the police.

The accused also made objectionable videos and took pictures of the girl. He then threatened the girl of circulating the pictures and videos on internet if she told anyone about the incident, the father alleged.

'My daughter is having her board examinations but is very disturbed because of the incident. Somehow, she revealed her ordeal to her mother," he added. The local Bisrakh police station received an information about the incident on Tuesday and immediately an FIR was lodged under Indian Penal Code sections 376 (rape), 363 (kidnapping), 328 (administering poison with intent to harm someone), and 506 (criminal intimidation), the police said.

## Drone technology being harnessed to bolster healthcare

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $F_{ ext{Jharkhand to AIIMS}}^{ ext{rom AIIMS Deoghar in}}$ Jodhpur in Rajasthan, and AIIMS Rajkot in Gujarat to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences in Manipur and AIIMS Patna in Bihar, drone technology is being harnessed in a big way by the Government institutions to bolster healthcare initiatives

in the country.

The list is long. AIIMS
Bhubaneswar in Odisha,
AIIHPH Kolkata in West Bengal, the Central Leprosy Teaching & Research Institute Chengalpattu in Tamil Nadu, Regional Leprosy Training & Research Institutes in Bankura, West Bengal too is in the process of leveraging drones as a transformative tool to enhance healthcare across the nation.

Ankit Kumar, Founder & CEO of Skye Air Mobility which has tied up with these institutes for fast delivery of medical services through drones, said, "Drone technology is not merely a technological advancement but also serves as a strategic initiative towards revolutionizing healthcare in India. This is expected to reduce vari-

laborative efforts for a paraaccessibility," said Kumar. Similarly, TechEagle, a brain-Mukt Yojna.

Hindolakhal PHC, the drone kilogram to rural primary

ability, cost and error. . also underscores col-

digm shift in healthcare altitude gain of over 2.5 kiloachieved a groundbreaking milestone by completing one of the longest drone delivery flights in collaboration with announced a partnership AIIMS Rishikesh which successfully transported essential Tuberculosis (TB) medicine under the Pradhan Mantri TB

adeptly navigated through complex terrains and elevations, achieving an impressive

During its flight from AIIMS Rishikesh to secluded regions like Chamba CHC and

and AIIMS Rajkot Mangalagiri. " The quick implementation of BVLOS (Beyond Visual

Line of Sight) drone delivery services in 10 AIIMS & INI's hospitals ensures improving healthcare logistics with safe-ty and reliability," TechEagle founder and CEO Vikram Singh Meena said. Similarly, the Indian Council

of Medical Research (ICMR) has partnered with TSAW has partnered with 15Aw Drones, a drone logistics start-up, to deliver vital med-ical supplies using drones in three areas namely Yaddari Bhuvanagiri district (Telangana), Manipal (Karnataka), and Lahaul

(Himachal Pradesh). The aim is to connect various points, such as distribution centres and PHCs, to facilitate the supplies, tuberculosis samples, tissue specimens, and diagnostic samples.

Dr. Sumit Aggarwal, Scientist-D and Program Officer at ICMR, had hailed the initiative as a significant step, stating that, "by employing advanced drone technology, we're not just creating new avenues; we're dismantling barriers to healthcare access in India's most remote

Kishan Tiwari, Founder and CEO of TSAW Drones, expressed confidence in the initiative, noting, "Navigating challenging terrains and reaching high altitudes to assist underserved communities presents a formidable challenge, but we are wholly equipped to handle it."

It was during the coronavirus pandemic, several government agencies in India tested drones for potential logistical support. ICMR, for instance, had introduced its i-Drone programme to explore the feasibility of using drones to distribute Covid-19 vaccines and medicines in the northeastern region.

In fact, several private entities like Tata 1mg and SRL Diagnostics (now Agilus Diagnostics) are also explornostic samples and medications. Tata 1mg, a digital healthcare company, commenced drone deliveries of diagnostic samples and medications in Dehradun two years ago while SRL Diagnostics joined hands with Skye Air in April 2022 to use drones for sample collection and subsequent transportation to laboratories in Gurugram and Mumbai.

## Birla, Thakur address National Youth Parliament Festival 2024

राष्ट्रीय युवा संसद महोत्सव - २०२४

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI** 

ok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Land Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Anurag Singh Thakur on Wednesday addressed the National Youth Parliament Festival, 2024 on its concluding day in the Central Hall of the Parliament.

Addressing the gathering, Birla congratulated all the participants and the winners. He said that the Central Hall has a history and this hall was central in making of the constitution after the independence. Birla also said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi have huge expectations from the youth and in achieving nation's

He also said that Youth's thinking capability, ability to innovate and the zeal to work will be instrumental in making India 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.He further added that İndia will not only be a Viksit Bharat but will also show the path to the entire world. He added that India today is moving towards modernisation and at the same time is keeping its heritage



Speaking on the occasion Anurag Singh Thakur said that the deter-

mined voice of Youth shows the determination of India as a nation. He said that India has seen the positive use of technology and its movement from economies of the world.

He also said that India has moved from weak leadership to strong leadership and can today walk shoulder to shoulder with the world leaders. He also highlighted the fact that in last 10 years government under the leadership of Modi has moved around 250 million poor out of multi-dimensional poverty.

He also urged the participants

forms like YouTube to take the government policies to the people preferably in vernacular language. He also urged youth to focus on team led leadership and said that that the network created today will be

. The National Youth Parliament is being organised this year based on the theme of 'Young Voices: Engage and Empower for Nation's Transformation'. The National Youth Parliament Festival, 2024 has been organised from February 9, 2024 to March 6, 2024 across the country. This Youth Parliament has been organised at three levels covering 785 Districts of the

Government Arts and Science

College, Kasaragod, in a social

## **Modi to visit Kashmir, post...**

High-rise

buildings surrounding the venue have occupied, sharpshooters have been deployed to ensure a secure environment. In addition to ground

surveillance, strong aerial surveillance has been implemented to monitor the area. Drones and CCTV cameras are being used for surveillance while foot patrolling by the security forces has been intensified in a two-kilometre radius around the venue.

Marine commandos have been deployed in Jhelum River and Dal Lake to prevent the use of these water bodies for any subversive activities.

In Srinagar, several schools falling along the route to be taken by the Prime Minister have been closed for Wednesday and Thursday while board examinations scheduled to be held on have been Thursday postponed till next month.

Before addressing the public gathering, Prime the Minister is scheduled to unveil projects worth more than Rs 6,400 crore including Rs 5,000 crore for boosting the agri-economy in the Union Territory.

According to an official handout issued by the Press Information Bureau, the nationwide projects related to the tourism sector worth more than Rs 1,400 crore under the 'Swadesh Darshan' and 'PRASHAD' (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive) schemes, including a project for the integrated development of Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar.

He will launch the 'Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice Tourist Destination Poll' and the 'Chalo India Global Diaspora' campaign as well, besides announcing tourist destinations selected under Challenge-Based Destination Development

(CBDD) scheme. Modi will distribute appointment letters to nearly 1,000 newly recruited Government employees in Jammu and Kashmir and also interact with the beneficiaries of various Central schemes, including women achievers, farmers and entrepreneurs, the

statement said. In a step that will provide a major boost to the agrieconomy of the region under the 'Holistic Agriculture Development Programme' (HADP) to be launched by the Prime Minister, the statement said it will cover the full spectrum of activities in three major domains of

horticulture, agriculture and

Prime Minister will launch livestock husbandry.

The programme is expected to equip about 2.5 lakh with farmers development training and about 2,000 farmers' service centres will be established and robust value chains put in place for the welfare of the farming community.

meters in a single 47 km

journey. To put this feat into

tance would take more than 4

TechEagle has also

with AIIMS Jodhpur to deliv-

er healthcare essentials for

the tribal population mostly

living in inaccessible ter-

In a significant trial,

TechEagle transported a med-

ical payload of up to five

hours by road.

The tourism projects to be launched by Modi are in line with his vision to improve the overall experience of tourists and pilgrims visiting prominent pilgrimage and tourism sites across the country by building worldclass infrastructure and amenities at these sites, the statement said.

Besides the Hazratbal shrine project, the initiatives include tourism facilities in the Northeast Circuit in Meghalaya, the Spiritual Circuit in Bihar and Rajasthan, Rural and Tirthankar Circuit in Bihar and some other projects in states such as Telangana and Madhya Pradesh.

The Prime Minister will also launch 43 projects that will develop a wide range of pilgrimage and tourist sites across the country.

He will also launch the firstever countrywide initiative to identify the pulse of the nation on tourism in the form of 'Dekho Apna Desh People's Choice 2024', the

#### **Despite BJP predictions...** From Page 1

The MVA constituents Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) headed by Uddhav Thackeray

and the NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar led by Sharad Pawar have been holding hectic parleys for several days to reach a consensus on seat-sharing. Prakash Ambedkar of the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) will also be part of the seat-sharing talks.Seat sharing as part of INDIA Bloc strategy has already been announced for major States Uttar Pradesh and Delhi and is to be announced by this weekend for

Maharshtra and Jharkhand. Seeking to woo the country's youth ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress will for the first time ever offer them the "right to employment" as part of its poll promise for the Lok Sabha elections. The party's manifesto committee, which is headed by former Finance Minister P Chidambaram and has senior leaders like Priyanka, Shashi Tharoor and Anand Sharma, among others, has sealed the manifesto after a marathon meeting on Tuesday and will be announced after the poll dates next week.

#### Sandeshkhali Women...

From Page 1 The Chief Minister said, "Asha workers are our pride as they work very hard. They support us in all the bad times. I am happy to announce that their salaries have been increased by Rs 750 from the month of April. The Anganwadi workers get Rs 8,250. Their salaries have been increased by Rs 750 (from April). The ICDS helpers get about Rs 6000. Their salaries have been increased by Rs 500 from April 1."

#### The NCR community enlarged...

From Page 1

"There is usually a traffic jam in Modi Nagar from Modi Mill till Raj Chowpla. Many times, it takes hours for people to cross this area. "In view of the dense population of people in this area, the NCRTC has decided to build two stations here, Modi Nagar South and Modi Nagar North. With these two stations, Modi Nagar will get relief from the problem of severe traffic jams," the NCRTC said. The newly-added 17-km

stretch of the Namo Bharat

train extends the coverage of

the Delhi-Meerut RRTS

corridor beyond its initial

operational 'priority section.'

The RRTS boasts a design speed of 180 kmph and operation speed of 160 Agra Metro services on the

6-km corridor will be available to commuters from Thursday onwards, with stops at Taj Mahal East station, Captain Shubham Gupta station, Fatehabad Road station, Taj Mahal station and Mankameshwar Temple station. Speaking at the flagging off

ceremony at the Taj Mahal station, Yogi said Agra Metro would provide world-class public transport to locals and tourists visiting the city. "Agra is one of the oldest cities of Uttar Pradesh. It is a

part of 'Braj bhoomi'. This city is associated with stories of bravery and valour of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj," the chief minister said.

Yogi appreciated the Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation (UPMRC) for timely completion of the first phase of Agra Metro, and said it has become operational nine months aĥead of schedule. Modi had laid the

foundation stone of the metro on December 7, 2020 and it was completed in 23 months, the Chief Minister said even as he lauded the UPMRC for "maintaining the quality" of the project.

#### Skeletons of SFI high handedness tumbling out Prof Rema, former principal,

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Closely on the heels of the suspicious death of J S Sidharth, the second year B V Sc student of Kerala Veterinary and Agricultural Science University at Wayanad, the former principal of Government Arts and Science College, Kasaragod has come out with startling disclosures about how the student wing of the CPI(M) promotes drug abuse and sexual anarchy in the campus.

Sidharth was found dead in his hostel room in the University and it is widely reported that he was murdered by the SFI leaders of the college after a three-night long trial. He was mur-dered by the student leaders and his body was hanged by the killers to look it like a suicide. The vice-chancellor and dean of the College have been put under suspension by Governor Arif Mohammed Khan after interacting with Sidharth's parents and colleagues.

The death of Sidharth is attributed to his dancing in the campus with a Muslim student which was not liked by his seniors belonging to the Muslim community. The SFI has a considerable followers among the Muslim community as the students wing always dance to the tune of the

media message said that there was nothing shocking in the death of Sidharth. "The SFI is a cabal of criminals. I had challenged their activities while I was the principal of the college. They are drug pushers and well experienced in sexually abusing girl students in the college. When I took strong measures to check the spread of narcotics and sexual abuses of girls, the SFI leaders approached the minister for higher education Bindu and got me transferred to a college in Malappuram district," said Prof Rema in the video message. She also named Immanuel, a former student of the college who had made the campus his "favorite hunting ground" for young girls. Since other teachers and staff members are afraid of the high-handed behavior of SFI goons, they fall in line and keep silence," said Prof Rema. She is getting retired on 31 March and according to sources in the department of higher education, minister Bindu (wife of CPI(M) polit bureau member Vijayaraghavan) has left word to put Kema under suspension so that she would not be able to draw her post-

retirement allowances and pen-

# HC annuls suspension of seven BJP MLAs Farmers protest: Capital

#### Says punishment not sustainable

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court 1 struck down on the State Wednesday Assembly speaker order suspending seven BJP MLAs for interrupting Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena customary address to the Budget session, holding that the punishment awarded was in "excess" of the rule invoked by the chair. It allowed the MLAs to attend the session forthwith, saying the penalty was not "sustainable".

In a relief to the BJP MLAs, Justice Subramonium Prasad said the punishment was not in accordance with the legal framework and there was no independent application of mind by Speaker Ram Niwas Goel in referring the matter to the Privileges Committee.

"The decision of the House to send the issue before the Committee of Privileges without the Speaker independently applying his mind as postulated under Rule 70 of Chapter XI (of rules of procedure and conduct of business of the Delhi assembly) and the decision of the House to suspend the Petitioners till the Committee of Privileges takes decision both



are in violation of the procedure prescribed under the Fifth Schedule (pertaining to Code of Conduct) and Chapter XI," the court said. "Since the petitioners have already undergone the suspension of 14 sittings, this court is of the opinion that the Petitioners should be permitted to re-join the House forthwith," it added.

The seven Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs -- Mohan Singh Bisht, Ajay Mahawar, O P Sharma, Abhay Verma, Anil Bajpai, Jitender Mahajan and Vijender Gupta -- moved the court last month, challenging their suspension from the assembly till the conclusion of the proceedings pending before the privileges com-

The judge said the petitioners have been "given a punishment in excess of what could have been given under the

rule invoked' Justice Prasad said they have actually been awarded the punishment of indefinite suspension as per another provision without even being heard which has been held to be invalid by the Supreme

The MLAs had contended that their suspension till the conclusion of the proceedings before the privileges committee was in violation of the applicable legal provisions.

The assembly authorities had, on the other hand, told the court that their suspension was not an attempt to stifle dissent but a "self-discipline" mechanism in the face of a 'series of misdemeanours" by the opposition legislators.
In the judgement, Justice

referred to the Committee of Privileges.

cation of mind by the Speaker in referring the matter to the Committee of Privileges and in view of the fact that the petitioners have not been heard while being given punishment of suspension till the Committee of Privileges decides the matter and since the punishment under Rule 77 of Chapter XI can be prescribed only after a Member is heard, the direction for sus-pending the Petitioners till the Committee of Privileges takes a decision cannot be sustained," the court said.

The BJP lawmakers had interrupted Saxena multiple times during his address on February 15 as he highlighted the achievements of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the national cap-

ings. The session was extended till

"In the absence of any appli-

AAP MLA Dilip Pandey had subsequently moved a resolution in the House for their suspension. The resolution was adopted and Speaker Ram Niwas Goel referred the issue to the privileges committee. Barring Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, all BJP lawmakers barred from attending the proceed-

the first week of March due to a delay in finalisation of the

# borders face traffic jams

**NEW DELHI** 

In the backdrop of a call to reach Delhi on Wednesday by agitating farmers, traffic was affected at borders of the national Capital, police said. The Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), the two umbrella bodies that are spearheading the farmers' agitation, had on Sunday called on farmers across the country to reach Delhi on Wednesday. The call was made by farmer leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal.

A huge jam was witnessed at Delhi-Haryana's Singhu border and Delhi-Noida border due to heavy deployment of the security personnel.

Police have installed barricades at borders and other parts of the city and intensified checking on roads leading to central Delhi. The Delhi Police said it will be keeping a strict vigil at the Tikri, Singhu, and the Ghazipur borders, as well as railway and metro stations and bus stands.

"We have stepped up security at all three borders. However, we are not shutting any border or route but vehicle checking will take place," an officer

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Jimmy Chiram

and forces have been deployed.

said force is already deployed at the Delhi-Harvana border. 'We are keeping a tab on the situation in the wake of this call given by the farmers." Another officer said, "We had

temporally removed barriers for commuters at the Singhu and the Tikri borders. The deployment of police and paramilitary personnel is still there and (they) will ensure strict, round-the-clock vigil."

Additional police and paramilitary forces have been deployed at railway and metro stations and bus stands as the farmers would also be coming in public transport like trains and buses. "Section 144 is already imposed in Delhi. We will not allow any gathering or assembly anywhere here," the officer said. Additional

Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Rajeev Kumar said, "As per the inputs, the farmers may start marching towards Delhi from today. Therefore, security has been tightened

Besides, we are trying to ensure that it doesn't affect the traffic.' Security has been mounted at ISBT Kashmere Gate, Anand Vihar, and Sarai Kale Khan. "No one will be allowed to breach the law," the officer said. Pravesh Kumar, a resident of central Delhi, witnessed a very heavy traffic as he approached Singhu border. "I was going to Chandigarh for some personal work. There was heavy traffic near Azadpur and at Singhu border. It took me hours to cross Delhi," Kumar said.

The Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) have also called for a four-hour countrywide 'rail roko' agitation on March 10 in support of several of their demands, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price for

The leaders said the farmer's sacrifice will not go in vain and their struggle will continue until their demands are met.

#### DU likely to extend validity of two MPhil courses

New Delhi: The Delhi University is likely to table a proposal to extend the validity for two of its MPhil courses in Clinical Psychology and Psychiatric Social Work till the academic session in 2025-26, in partial relaxation to the UGC's notification to discontinue MPhil courses as per the recommendations of NEP 2020.

The proposal is likely to be

placed before the varsity's Executive Council for consideration in a meeting slated for March 8. According to the agenda for the meeting, the varsity last vear had written to the University Grants Commission (UGC) for resumption of MPhil at the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) as an interim arrangement in the interest of students and patient care till necessary final decision is taken by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI).

#### ED files fresh complaint against Kejriwal for skipping summons

PTI NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has filed a fresh complaint before a Delhi court seeking prosecution of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for skipping its summonses in a money

laundering investigation, official sources said Wednesday. The latest complaint pertains to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor not honouring the summons no 4 to 8, they said

The court of ACMM Divya Malhotra has listed the master to be heard on Thursday. The ED had earlier moved a local court seeking Kejriwal's prosecution for not attending the first three summonses issued to him in the money

took stock of the situation and

always kept you informed about the problems. I have

been doing this for the last

one and a half years and will

continue to do so in future

also," he said in his post in

The lieutenant governor ear-

lier slammed the city govern-ment for "depriving" the peo-

ple of basic public facilities after he visited Sangam Vihar,

Posting about his visit, he

said, "Yesterday evening, in

this connection, I went to

Kalandar Colony in Shahdara,

North-East Delhi and saw

the condition worse than hell.

"It is not possible to express

It is not possible to express in words the plight of the peo-ple living amidst potholes, clogged drains, heaps of garbage and foul smell in the name of roads. Local people said that 35,000 to 40,000 people live a hellish life in about four thousand houses

about four thousand houses

"It is the responsibility of DUSIB, of which you yourself

are the chairman, to provide

basic public facilities in this

slum, and cleanliness is under

the MCD," Saxena said in

Kirari and Burari areas.



Delhi excise policy. The court has listed this matter for hearing on March 16. Kejriwal, 55,

had called all these eight ED summonses as "illegal" and informed the federal agency last time that he can be questioned via a video conferencing link after March 12.

The ED has filed the fresh complaint under section 174 IPC (non-attendance in obedience to an order from public servant) read with section 63(4) of the PMLA that speaks about "a person who intentionally disobeys any direction" apart from some other sections of the law.

#### DDA notice to Hindu refugees living in Yamuna floodplain area as per direction of the NGT to vacant the area by Wednesday.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has issued notices to Hindu refugees from Pakistan who live near Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tilla in the Yamuna floodplain area asking them to vacate the place, locals claimed on Wednesday.

Prasad said the suspension of the petitioners till the

Committee of Privileges has

taken a decision was not one

of the prescribed punish-

ments and the rule invoked

does not stipulate suspension for an "indefinite period".
"For a breach of Code of Conduct, the petitioners

could have been given only any one of the punishments provided under Clause 44 of

the Fifth Schedule which does

not stipulate a suspension for an indefinite period.

Since the suspension can be

only for a specific period and

not indefinitely i.E., till the Committee of Privileges takes

a decision on the question of

breach of privilege, the sus-

pension of the Petitioners till

the Committee of Privileges

takes a decision is, therefore,

beyond the purview of Clause

44 of the Fifth Schedule and

is, therefore, unsustainable,"

It said Rule 70 of Chapter XI

gives power to the speaker,

and no one else, to exercise

the discretion to refer the

matter to the Committee of

Privileges for examination

but the provision was not

'Rule 70 of Chapter XI has

not been followed in this

case. The Speaker who is an

impartial arbitrator and con-

ducts the House has not taken

any decision independently

and has not held that the mat-

ter is one that requires to be

observed the court.

adhered to.

A DDA official confirmed that it is proposed to organise a demolition drive against the encroachment on March 7 and 8 following the National Green Tribunal's order.

However, the drive has been postponed due to unavailability of police force, sources said. Sona Das, another Pakistani Hindu refugee from Majnu Ka Tila, said the whole camp has been informed and notices have been served to all.

"We have been given time to

sible. The whole camp has been informed and notices have been served to all of us. We just recovered from the losses we faced during the Delhi floods and now they are about to run a bulldozer here. How are people supposed to vacate in such a short notice and where are they supposed to go?" Das asked.

We haven't been offered any alternate place, although some of them have been offered to move them to shelter homes. If they want us to vacate, they should give us an alternate option and ample time to move. My family and I moved from Pakistan to India in 2011 for some relief and now, we are facing similar problems here too," she added.

According to a public notice, which was issued on Monday, the DDA, the Yamuna floodplain area under the jurisdiction of the DDA should be made free from all encroach-

"In the compliance of the order, it is proposed to organise a demolition drive against the encroachment in the Yamuna floodplain area near south of Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tilla (western bank) on March 7 and 8," the notice stated. The notice further stated, citing a High Court order of August 2022, that the effected families can take the benefit of temporary shelter of the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) in night shelters at Gurudwara, Geeta Colony, Dwarka Sector-3, Phase-I, and Dwarka Sector-1. "Hence, the residence of the area is hereby requested to Otherwise they will be self responsible for any loss held due to any demolition drive against the encroachment on Thursday or later," the notice added. Kanhaiya Lal, Pakistani Hindu refugee who resides at Majnu Ka Tila, said, "We were informed just yesterday that demolition will take place here. Some officials came here on

Tuesday and pasted notices

outside our houses. Almost all

of them in this area received

notice on Tuesday night.

Nobody vacated their houses Earlier in November 2019, the NGT while hearing the matter regarding the encroachment of the Yamuna floodplain by slum dwellers near Majnu Ka Tila Gurudwara directed the DDA and the Delhi government to

clear the illegal occupation.

#### SUV with red beacon seized over reckless driving

PTI NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Wednesday said a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) was seized and its driver booked for reckless and dangerous driving in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden

Police alleged that the driver, who is at large, drove the vehi-cle fitted with a red and blue beacon in a zig-zag manner for an Instagram reel and shared the clip on the social media platform

to increase followers. The clip uploaded on February 22 has garnered more than 5 lakh 'likes', they said, adding that the driver had removed the vehicle's number plate during

A police officer said the owner of the vehicle, Piyush Sharma, claimed that he had lent the car to a friend who shot the stunt

after a late-night party. Sharma's version is being verified, he added.

The matter came to light when a resident welfare association of Rajouri Garden submitted a

police complaint on February 27, highlighting reckless driving and stunts by the vehicle. Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Vichitra Veer said, Videos of these stunts were

proudly posted on Instagram to garner social media followers, misguiding impressionable

Taking cognisance of the video, a team of officials from the Rajouri Garden police station seized the Toyota Fortuner car, he added. The man involved in the reck-

less driving incident is said to be the son of a Delhi Police officer. However, senior officials refused to comment on it and stated that the accused was yet to be arrested. A case under section 279 (rash driving) of the IPC has been registered and teams have been formed to nab the car owner's friend, the officer added.

# LG flags poor living conditions in Shahdara

L t Governor V K Saxena on Wednesday flagged the poor conditions in which people were living in a colony in Shahdara in north-east Delhi, a day after he drew Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's attention to similar problems in other areas of the national capital.

Saxena shared pictures of his visit to Kalandar Colony in Shahdara on microblogging site X and said that the people are living in "pathetic conditions". There was no immediate

response from the AAP government. Replying to the LG's post on Tuesday, Chief Minister Kejriwal had hit back saying Saxena is "playing the role of the opposition' despite holding a constitutional post.

Taking to X on Wednesday, the LG told Kejriwal that it was his constitutional duty to draw the chief minister's attention to the problems being faced by the people and expressed the hope that the CM will show "positivity". "Dear @ArvindKejriwal sir,

being the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, it is my constitutional responsibility and duty to highlight the issues of the people before the Chief Minister of my government and draw your attention towards the problems being faced by the people of Delhi."

"This is nothing new. From the first day of taking charge till today, I have walked more than 1600 km in different areas of Delhi in 650 days and



**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

elhi Lieutenant Governor Delni Lieutenani Governa (LG) V K Saxena on Wednesday directed Delhi State Industrial Infrastructure development Corporation (DSIIDC) to grant an extension of six months to allottees in industrial areas of Narela, Bhorgarh and Bawana under the relocation

The LG also expressed his displeasure over the failure of DSIIDC to comply with his direction to place before him the action taken report relating to basic services in the areas, even after the lapse of four "LG has directed DSIIDC to

grant an extension of six months to the allottees in industrial areas of Narela, Bhorgarh and Bawana in the North West Delhi under the relocation scheme for depositing the balance cost of plot and for applying for NOC for con-struction of factory building," a statement from LG office said. The proposal of DSIIDC for giving extension for four months was overruled by Saxena.

"If allottees are not taking possession of plots or not constructing units over them despite having paid the amount for allotment, it is a clear indi-cation that lack of basic services are deterring them from doing so," Saxena noted in the file. In October 2023, the LG had given a slew of directions to DSIIDC to make infrastructure conducive for ease of doing business as no upgradation work was undertaken for the last 10 years, the statement

from LG office said.

### Photographer injured after being stabbed by visitor at India Gate

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old man, who works as a photographer at the India Gate, was injured after being attacked by a visitor with a knife on Tuesday afternoon, police said on Wednesday. The injured, identified as Nepal Singh, has received a cut in his neck and fingers, they said.

According to a police officer, the accused identified as Srimalla Yohan, (27) had come to visit Delhi's India Gate from Telangana on Tuesday afternoon. "While visiting India Gate, Yohan and Singh indulged in an argument over an issue after which Yohan attacked Singh with a knife," the officer said. Singh told the police that Yohan wanted to know the direction of the New Delhi Railway station

"When he denied knowing about it, Yohan attacked him with a knife," the officer said. The reason of the fight is still being verified, police said. Another police officer said that Singh was taken to the hospital

by other photographers from where he was discharged after treatment. He has received stitches in his neck and fingers, the officer said. Yohan was alone during the time of incident. He was overpowered by the other photographers and visitors and handed over to the police, police

Yohan, a native of Hyderabad, has already been facing a case of attempt to murder in Telangana and was released from jail last month, they said.

The police suspect that Yohan procured knife from a vendor at the India Gate. A case of attempt to murder has been registered against him at the Kartavya Path police station and further interrogation is on, the officer said.

### Man shoots self in Neb Sarai, family alleges murder

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

38-year-old man died A 38-year-old man died after he allegedly shot himself at his friend's house in Neb Sarai area of south Delhi, police said on Wednesday. The matter is being investigated from all angles, including murder, they said.
The deceased, identified as

Bharat Sachdeva, was an autorickshaw driver by profession who had recently lost his

job, police said. Meanwhile, Bharat's father has alleged that his son was murdered.

"On Tuesday at 10.36 pm, a PCR call was received wherein the caller informed that a person named Bharat came to his house to meet his brother Deepak, but his brother was not at home. The caller told the police that Bharat has



is lying in the room," Deputy Commissioner of Police (south) Ankit Chauhan said. A police team was rushed to the spot and found Bharat lying. A country-made pistol along with one live round and one fired round was recovered from there, he added.

The police said it was revealed on inquiry that Deepak runs a parantha shop in Hauz Khas and Bharat used to supply the goods to him using an auto-rickshaw.

## Expedite NOC for MCD schools: HC to fire department

 $T^{\text{he Delhi High Court on}}_{\text{Wednesday directed the}}$  Department of Delhi Fire Services (DFS) to expedite the process of no-objection certificate sought by the municipal corporation regarding its 92 schools.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora also asked the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to expedite the civil and electrical work pending in its schools and to either vacate or reconstruct or strengthen the two school buildings which have been termed as dangerous.

The court was hearing a public interest litigation by advocate Kush Kalra who has claimed that many schools, both private and governmentrun/aided, have not complied with fire safety and building stability norms. The bench perused a status

report filed by the MCD in which it was stated that out of 1,185 schools, fire no-objection certificate (NOC) was issued to 705 schools, NOC applied for 92 schools and civil work is pending in 119 schools and both civil and electrical works are pending

in 116 schools. "MCD is directed to expedite the civil work pending in 119



cal work pending in 116 schools. The DFS is directed to expedite the process of NOC filed by MCD qua 92 schools. The two schools that have been termed as dangerous buildings should either be vacated, reconstructed or strengthened forthwith," the

of MCD states that approach road to 101 schools is very narrow and thus NOC cannot be issued qua them.
"MCD is directed to explore

the options of either widening the approach road or shifting the schools or providing fire safety measures within the school itself," the bench said and directed the MCD to file and directed the MCD to file a fresh status report in the matter.

The high court listed the matter for further hearing on May 2.

Kalra, in his plea filed in 2017, has claimed that the Supreme Court had in 2009 issued directions to all the

safety and stability certificates, but these were not being complied with. He has alleged that the Delhi government's Directorate of

Education, the Department of Fire Services and Public Works Department are being negligent in performing their duties to take steps to ensure that the schools are complying with building stability and fire safety norms. The lawyer has also claimed

that authorities, including the municipal corporation, were clueless as to whether any school under their jurisdiction is actually complying

# Modi calls Lalu, his family biggest offenders in Bihar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday called RJD president Lalu Prasad and his family "the biggest offenders of Bihar", accusing them of ushering in jungle raj in the state during its more than a

state during its more than a decade-long rule.
Addressing a rally in Bettiah, West Champaran district, Modi alleged that the youths of Bihar had been compelled to migrate in large numbers due to the misrule of the RJD-Congress combine. He asserted that it combine. He asserted that it was only after the NDA took charge that the state began to witness improvements.

Modi also unveiled projects worth Rs 12,800 crore in the State. Governor Rajendra V Arlekar, Deputy CMs Samat Chaudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, and state minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary of the JD(U) were among those present at the programme. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was, however, not present at the pro-

gramme.
"The family responsible for jungle raj...They are biggest offenders (sabse bade gunahgar) of Bihar. Their misrule imperilled the future of an entire generation. Youths were forced to migrate to other parts of the country, while only one family prospered", said Modi. The PM also reacted to Prasad's barb that his attacks on dynastic politics stemmed from his having "no family" and said "had people like Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Karpoori Thakur been alive, these people would have attacked them, too, for not promoting their own families". Their main grouse against me seems to be that I have no fam-



sees itself as Modi Ka Parivar",

Notably, leaders and support-ers of the BJP have suffixed 'Modi Ka Parivar" to their social media handles, in an obvious rebuff to the RJD supremo and in a show of solidarity with the PM.

Idarity with the PM.

In an apparent reference to DMK leader A Raja's controversial remarks, the PM said, "West Champaran is the land of Sage Valmiki, where Goddess Sita took shelter and Luv-Kush were born. The people here will not forgive the insults being heaped on Lord Ram by INDI alliance leaders. The people are also taking note as to who are encouraging such attacks on our culture and tradition". The Prime Minister also

renewed the pitch for a "400 plus tally" for the BJP-led NDA asserting that it was "needed to make India the third largest economy in the world and to pull people out of the clutches of poverty"

The PM inaugurated the 109km-long Muzaffarpur-Motihari LPG pipeline of Indian Oil, which will not only provide cleaner cooking fuel to the people of Bihar but also to

neighbouring Nepal.
He also inaugurated Indian
Oil's LPG bottling plant and
storage terminal at Motihari. It would also act as a strategic supply point for the export of petroleum products to Nepal, besides the eight districts of north Bihar. The PM laid the foundation stone of the city gas distribution project in East Champaran, West Champaran, Gopalganj, Siwan and Deoria, and grain-based ethanol projects at HCPCL Biofuels Ltd's facilities at Sugauli and Lauriya. He also inaugurated the twolaning of the Piprakothi-Motihari-Raxaul section of NH-28A and the Sheohar-Sitamarhi section of NH-104. He laid the foundation stone for a six-lane cable bridge over the Ganga, parallel to Digha-Sonepur rail-cum-road bridge, and the four-laning of the Bakarpur Hat-Manikpur section of NH-19 bypass.

Among the railway projects he inaugurated were the doubling of the 62-km line from Bapudham Motihari to Piprahan, and the gauge con-version of the Narkatiaganj-

Gaunaha section. The PM also laid the foundation stone for the doubling and electrification of the 96-kmlong Gorakhpur Cantt-Valmiki Nagar rail line, and the redevelopment of the Bettiah railway station. He flagged off two new trains on the Narkatiaganj-Gaunaha and

@ NamoinKannada,
@ NaMoinTamil,

@NaMoinTelugu and @NaMoinMarathi. Some of

these handles also have the

PM's addresses from last

month.

The BJP is known to be among the first among political parties in its adoption of technology. From its IT cell and leveraging of social media, especially WhatsApp, to the use of Narendra Modi's

# BJP slams TMC for not handing over Shahjahan to CBI after court order

The BJP on Wednesday dubbed it as a matter of "great shame" that the Trinamool Congress govern-ment in West Bengal was opposing the Calcutta High Court order to hand over the custody of suspended TMC leader Shajahan Sheikh to the CBI in the ED officers attack

Addressing a press conference, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the state government's decision to move the Supreme Court against the high court order reflects its "value system".

The BJP leader said the TMC is not denying the offence and has gone on to provide "political cover" to Sheikh. It is not the accused but the state that has gone in appeal to the Supreme Court, he said.

"The state government allows such incidents to happen and then does this," the minister said, adding that it was a matter of "great shame". The high court had on Tuesday

a mob attack on ED officials when they went to search the premises of Sheikh in Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district on January 5 in connection with a ration scam probe - to be transferred to the CBI.It also asked the state police to give the custody of the accused to the CBI. Sheikh has also been accused by many women in Sandeshkhali of running a ring of criminals, allegedly linked to him and to the TMC, who captured land and sexually assaulted them. The West Bengal police on Tuesday refused to give his cus-

directed the investigation into

tody to the CBI, claiming that the state has filed an appeal in the Supreme Court against its order. On Wednesday, the high court again ordered the West Bengal government to hand over Sheikh to the CBI by 4.15 Puri also quoted from the high

court's Tuesday order which criticised the "biased" state police for "making every effort to delay" the investigation. BJP spokesperson Shazia Ilmi said it is shameful that such a development is happening in a state ruled by a woman chief minister, a reference to TMC president Mamata Banerjee.

Taking a swipe at the state government, she asked what is the reason that it is trying to "protect" Sheikh and asserted that the agitation has been spearheaded by women in Sandeshkhali.

To a question on whether the Centre may impose the President's rule in the state, Puri said it is a "political call" and "beyond" his "pay grade". "Everybody knows that there is a breakdown in law and order in Bengal," he said, noting that the BJP normally allows democratically-elected governments to continue, unlike the Congress which had dismissed over 100 of them. People will surely give a reply to the TMC,

The West Bengal government is, however, reinforcing the public perception that there is a "total breakdown" of law and order, he said, adding that BJP workers were earlier violently targeted after elections.

Most victims in Sandeshkhali are from SC and ST communities, he said while accusing the TMC of trying to shield a

## BJP to translate Modi speeches in eight languages to reach out to voters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The BJP is planning to translate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches in eight languages in an effort to reach out to voters in the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls. The party will use artificial intelligence for dubbing the speeches in Kannada, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Odia and Marathi in

Targetting 370 Lok Sabha seats to win on its own, the BJP is focusing on states where it did not perform well in the last general elections, sources said here.

The fact that four of the eight languages are southern is no accident, they said. In 2019, the BJP had won only 29 of the 129 Lok Sabha seats (130 including Puducherry) in the southern states and most of these had come from Karnataka, where the Congress swept to power in the last Assembly polls.
The technology had been used during the Kashi Tamil



Sangamam in December last year as well, when Prime Minister Modi's speech were translated into Tamil. He had said it is new beginning and it makes him easier to reach out to them.

The choice of the other languages is also strategic. Maharashtra and Bengal send the second- and third-highest number of MPs to the Lok Sabha, respectively, and the party has been putting a lot of effort into bettering its num-

to the use of Narendra Modi's holograms for campaigning as early as 2014, the party has left no stone unturned to ensure its messaging reaches every possible voter. The party has also used the NaMo app to get feedback from the ground, build data-In 2019, it had won 23 seats in Maharashtra, while its ally Shiv Sena had achieved victory in 18. In Bengal, it had

bases and even help pick candidates for constituencies. managed to win 18 of the The app is also being used to state's 42 seats, which was seen as a big victory. In Odisha, the party had won 8 collect donations for the party under the 'Donation For Nation Building' campaign. A website called Modi Story of 21 seats and it had bagged 2 of the 13 seats in Punjab. is also run by the party to share inspiring stories about Narendra Modi, told by peo-The translated speeches will be available on certain hanple who have interacted with him. dles on X, including @ N a M o I n B e n g a l i,

#### Naval Base INS Jatayu commissioned at Minicoy island



Naval base INS Jatayu was commissioned at Minicoy island, Lakshadweep in presence of Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar, and Administrator of Lakshadweep Praful K Patel amongst others on Wednesday,

officials said here.

Giving details, they said this milestone event strengthens Indian Navy's foothold in the Lakshdweep island while extending capacity building, operational reach and sustenance in the region. Establishment of Naval Base at Minicoy will augment connectivity with the main land focusing towards comprehensive development of the islands. INS Jatayu will be functioning under the operational control of Naval (Lakshadweep), Southern Naval Command.

INS Jatayu will play a significant role in Indian Navy's operational surveillance while embracing the vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region). Addressing the gathering at Minicoy after the commissioning of INS Jatayu, Admiral Kumar said the unit was named after the mythical creature in the epic Ramayana who tried to stop the abduction of Sita, according to PTI.

"In the Ramayana, Jatayu was the 'first responder', trying to stop the abduction of Sita ji, even to the peril of his own life, exemplifying service before self. So the naming of this unit as Jatayu is an apt recognition of this spirit of providing security surveillance and selfless service,' he said.

The navy chief said the information Jatayu relayed to Lord Ram provided crucial situational awareness, leading to the successful quest that followed. "Similarly, we expect that this unit will provide situational awareness to the Indian Navy in maintaining good maritime domain awareness of the entire region. INS Baaz to the east in the Andamans and now the INS Jatayu in the west will serve as eyes and ears to the Navy to safeguard our national interest,'

He said it was crucial to recognise the pressing need for heightened surveillance amidst the prevailing geopolitical developments, which underscores the strategic significance of Lakshadweep to India.

"The Indian Ocean region is witnessing an upsurge in maritime terror, crime, and piracy. The Indian Navy has respond ed with an assertive posture in the west and north Arabian Sea, undertaking anti-drone, anti-missile, and anti-piracy operations to safeguard merchant traffic in the region," he said. Lakshadweep Island Administrator Praful Khoda Patel, who was the chief guest on the occasion, said approval for

an airstrip at Minicoy is in the final stages, and that the 24hour operational chopper hanger at Kavaratti will start soon. He also said land has been allotted to set up a radar base in Lakshadweep for the Indian

### Murmu virtually inaugurates | EC asks Rahul to be cautious visitor facilitation centre

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday inaugurated the visitor facilitation centre (VFC) virtually at the Rashtrapati Nilayam in Telangana, a step to connect people with the rich heritage of Speaking on the occasion, the

president said various historical attractions at the Rashtrapati Nilayam, including a 120-feet replica of a historic wooden flagpost, a Jai Hind stepwell, a maze garden, a children's park, and Shiva and Nandi bull sculptures in the rock garden, will give visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in the cultural richness of the country. The VFC is another significant

step to connect people with the rich heritage of the country, Murmu was quoted as having said in a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Rashtrapati Nilayam

remains open for the general public throughout the year,



except during the president's southern sojourn. Visitors can book their slot online on visit.Rashtrapati bhayan.Gov.In. President Murmu expressed confidence that the VFC will further enhance visitors' experience at the Rashtrapati Nilayam by serving as a onestop facility for all visitors.

The president said the goal behind developing these attractions is to nurture a community of young, enthusiastic change-makers who will carry forward the rich legacy of the nation. She urged youngsters to seize the opportunity to explore and understand the country's history.

The president also asked all to reaffirm their commitment to unity and development of the country while continuing to preserve and celebrate rich her-

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, State Minister Transport Ponnam Prabhakar, officials of the President's Secretariat and the National Informatics Centre (NIC) were among those present on the occasion.

# after controversial PM jibe

The Election Commission Rahul Gandhi to be more careful and cautious in his public utterances in the wake of his "panuti" (bad omen) and "pickpocket" jibes at Prime Minister Narendra

Acting on a Delhi High Court directive of December last year, the poll panel also asked the Gandhi scion to follow its recent advisory for star campaigners and political leaders in the right earnest during election campaign.

In the advisory dated March 1, the Election Commission (EC) had warned that parties, candidates and star campaigners will face stern action, rather than just 'moral censure' for any violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

It also said that the star campaigners and candidates who have received notices in the past will face stern action for repeat violation of the model

The EC had issued a notice to Gandhi last year after the Congress leader used terms like "panauti" and "pickpocket" for the prime minister.

The commission was also

asked on December 21 by the Delhi High Court to décide on the notice it had issued to Gandhi for these comments, saying the statement made by the Congress leader during a speech delivered in November 2023 was "not in good taste". Disposing off the court directive, the EC has asked Gandhi "to be more careful and cau-

tious in his public utterances in the future", sources said. "After considering all facts in the matter related to remarks such as 'jebkatra' (pickpocket) and 'pannauti', including the court order and Gandhi's reply, the Election Commission has advised Gandhi to be more careful

The commission has further directed Gandhi, as a star

source said.

and cautious in future," a

notice its March 1 advisory for all parties, star campaigners and candidates in right earnest while making

public utterances. The poll panel had issued a notice to Gandhi on November 23 seeking his stand about his speeches during his campaigns for the assembly elections in

Rajasthan. The former Congress president took the "pickpocket" dig at Modi during his poll speech, alleging that the prime minister diverts people's attention while industrialist Gautam Adani picks their pockets. This is how pickpockets operate, he had

alleged. The court order followed a petition that had also objected to certain other statements by Rahul Gandhi referring to the prime minister as "panau-

A Hindi slang, "panauti" loosely refers to someone who brings bad luck.

## IMHANS roped in to frame guidelines on online gaming

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

oncerned at the growing Caddiction among youngsters to online gaming, the Union Consumer Affairs Ministry has roped in the Bengaluru's National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans) to conduct an extensive research in the issue to help frame guidelines to protect consumer interest and streamline the content offered by the industry in the sector.

The study on the "disruptive impulse control behavioral patterns of online gaming that may cause vulnerabilities," will aim to build a predictive and preemptive model for the protection of the growing number of digital consumers on the internet of online gaming, the

ministry said in a statement here following a meeting chaired by Consumer affairs secretary Rohit Singh with Nimhans Director Pratima Murthy among others on

The report will also help the industry ensure the optimum use of technology to minimize risk, Singh said, adding that online gaming often involves compulsive behaviour that can have detrimental effects on mental and physical health. It can consume significant amounts of time and money, leading to neglect of other important activities and financial strain.

The study is aimed at building a responsible digital consumption model based on knowledge, consumption, and practices. Initially, the study will focus on online gaming



only, but later digital social media or any other online platform will also be brought under its ambit

The Nimhans will provide valuable insights into the prevalence and impact of internet addiction, especially con-

cerning online gaming, among young people. It will gather comprehensive data and conduct rigorous analysis, so as to help identify key factors contributing to internet addiction and its associated consequences on mental well-being.

and pre-emptive model for the protection of the growing number of digital consumers on the internet of online gam-

The aim is to build a predictive

Dr. Priyanka Yadav, Consultant and psychiatrist, Fortis Hospital Greater Noida called the Ministry's move a muchneeded one as "Internet addiction is associated with high rates of depression, stress, anxiety, substance abuse and many other psychiatric disorders." She said "We have seen a rise in online gaming among youngsters as well as the ado-

lescent population. "So, yes, a lot of youngsters are becoming addicted to online games and the internet as a whole. If it is only for entertainment and it is not at the cost of other activities that a youngster is supposed to do at

his or her age, there is nothing concerning. But if as parents or as caregivers, you feel that the youngsters are spending a lot of time at the cost of other healthy activities in online gaming platforms, then it warrants an assessment by a psychiatrist and timely intervention because it can be helped with. So, just stay aware of the downsides of online gaming and make an intervention as soon as possible." In fact, Nimhans researchers

had in 2022 conducted a small study "Effectiveness of Multimodal Psychotherapeutic Intervention for Internet Gaming Disorder" which had called for a larger study to understand the gravity of the gaming online disorder as it can lead to social isolation and personality problems besides congenital issue.



# Police close to cracking Café blast case: Minister

-arnataka Minister Parameshwara Wednesday said the police are pursuing vital clues and getting close to cracking the March one Rameshwaram Café low-intensity blast incident.

clues in the past two days, which were promising, he told reporters here.

Some vital information was received yesterday and daybefore-yesterday, which we have taken very seriously. If we proceed this way then we complete the investigation, Parameshwara said.



No arrests have been made in connection with the case. Based on suspicion, some people were summoned by who gathered 'information" from them, the Minister said.

Paramameshwara said the National Investigation Agency (NIA) was supposed to take over the case on Tuesday but "they have not arrived vet". Ten people were injured in the blast at the popular eatery at Brookefield area near Whitefield here.

The National Investigation (NIA) Wednesday announced a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh for information about the suspected bomber in the March 1 Rameshwaram Cafe blast case in Bengaluru. On its official X (formerly

twitter) handle, the NIÁ posted a picture of the suspected bomber wearing a cap, mask and glasses while entering the cafe. The agency shared phone numbers and emails where people can send information about the unidentified person, who has emerged as a prime suspect. The NIA assured that the identity of the informants will be kept confidential. The

cafe was handed over to the NIA earlier this week. At least 10 people were injured in the blast at Rameshwaram Cafe in Brookfield in East Bengaluru on March 1.

The explosion is suspected to have been carried out through an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Soon after the blast, the Karnataka Police registered a case under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Explosives Substances Act.

The NIA is a specialised probe agency to investigate terror related cases. The agency was created in 2008 following the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

EUBLIC NOTICE

I is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Ajay (umar is purchasing the Freehold Residential Flat to. 1, on Upper Ground Floor, without roof/ errace rights, area measuring 40 Sq. Vás. Built in Property Bearing No. RZ-337-A/Z, out of Knasra No. 847/499 & 848499, situated in the evenue estate of Village Nasirpur, Delhi Stale Delhi, Colony Known as Kailash Puri, Gali No. II-D, New Delhi-110045 from Mrs. Krishna Devi Wio (in Mr. Naresh Kumar Vide Notarized General Power of Attorney along with ATS & Will Dated 19.12.2003 executed by Mr. Raghburi Sharma S/o Mr. Suraj Bhan in favour of Mrs. Krishna Devi Wio fiv. Naresh Kumar vide Notarized General Power of Attorney along with ATS & Will Dated (in Complex) in requirements of BANKNBFC, we jive this public notice that if any Person having any poe of claim right/tellifentes/bureating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lienetc. LUCEM LEGAL LLP

PUBLIC NOTICE It is informed to the Public at large that The Jamia Co-op. Bank Ltd., Sarai Jullena Branch, New Delhi, is desirous of sanctioning Housing Loan Facility in favour of (i) Mr. Faraaz Ahmed Shah S/o Facility in favour of (j) Mr. Faraaz Ahmed Shah S/o Mr. Mir Ahmed Shah, and Mrs. Nazia Assad W/o Mr. Faraaz Ahmed Shah, for purchasing DDA built-up freehold SFS Category-II Flat No. 1263, on Third Floor, along with scooler garage, situated at Sector-A, Pocket B&C, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, from Sh. Shakti Kumar Bhardwaj, S/o Late Sh. Prithi Chand Shardwaj, (presently the owner), R/o D-167, Sector 27, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P. II anvone has any objection or claim the titles. U.P. If anyone has any objection or claim the titles rights of the said property, please contact the ndersigned, within 10 (ten) days of this Public

THE BRANCH HEAD. THE JAMIA CO-OP. BANK LTD. G-3, SURYA PLAZA, K-185/2, SARAI JULLENA

PUBLIC NOTICE t is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Kap Jain who is purchasing the Upper Grour Floor & First Floor Without Roof Rights, Built u Jain who is purchasing the Upper Ground Floor & First Floor Without Roof Rights, Built up property bearing no. C-275-A area measuring 44 ac, yards i.e. 36.78 sq. meters, out of Khasra no. 407 Situated at Village Ghonda Gujran Khaddar In Gall No. 13, Bhajanpura Illaga-Shahdara Delhi, from Mrs. Neeraj Jain & Mr. Sachin Kumar who is owner through Sale Deed dated 03.05.2023, Vide document no.1343, book no. 1, vol no. 5614, pages 133 to 145 dated 03.05.2023, SR-IV Seelampur., executed by Mrs. Rekha Rathore and same to be financed a mortgaged by Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd. If any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc. LUCEM\_LEGAL LLP Office No. B-338, Second Floor,Opposite SBI Bank Sector-2, Nolda, UP-201301, Contact# 0120-4269379

PUBLIC NOTICE
To Whomsoever it may concern This is to inform the general public that following share certificate of KEC international Ltd Having its registered office at RPG House 463 Dr. Annie besant road worli Mumbai -40030 registered in the name of the following share holder/s have been Ram Nath Bali Folio no. R011265, R011266 number/s 9928776-9929245, 9929246-9929720 No. Of Shares 470, 475. The public are hereby cautioned against purchasing or dealing in any way with the above referred share certificate. Any person who has any claim in respect of the said share certificate/s should lodge such claim with the company or its registrar and transfer agents link Intime India Pvt. Ltd., C 101, 247 Park, L.B.S. Marg, Vikhroli (West), Mumbai, Maharashtra,400083 Tel: 022 49186270 within 15 days of publication of this notice after which no claim will be entertained and the company shall proceed to issue Duplicate share certificate/s Place: New Delhi Date: 06/03/2024 Name of Share holder: Ram Nath Bali

#### IN THE COURT OF LEARNED **DISTRICT JUDGE RAMBAN**

IN THE MATTER OF: SHUBAM GUPTA S/O- LATE SANJAY GUPTA, R/O WARD NO.07 MAITRA RAMBAN TEHSIL RAMBAN AND DISTRICT-RAMBAN, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

#### **VERSUS**

THREE SIXTY FIVE GADGETS AND ANOTHER IN THE MATTER OF: SUIT UNDER ORDER XXXVII OF CPC FOR RECOVERY OF RS-10.00000 (TEN LACS) **PUBLICATION UNDER ORDERS** RULE 20 CPC.

#### NOTICE THREE SIXTY FIVE GADGETS

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT SERVICES PRIVATE LIMITED ADDRESS 20/26 GROUND FLOOR DDA FLATS DAKSHINPUR NEW DELHI DL-110062IN. DALIP KUMAR DIRECTOR THREE SIXTY FIVE GADGETS ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT SERVICES PRIVATE LIMITED ADDRESS 20/26 GROUND FLOOR DDA FLATS DAKSHINPUR NEW DELHI DL-110062IN.

Whereas, it has proved to the satisfaction of the court that the defendants above mentioned cannot be served in the ordinary way of service. Hence this proclamation under order 5 Rule 20 . CPC is hereby issued against them and should personally or through their counsel on 20.03.24 at 11 AM before this Court. Take Notice that in default of their appearance on the as mentioned above before this Court, the above case will be heared and determined in their absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Court on 20th Day of

(Ranbir Singh Jasrotia)

0-2742

#### **GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA** OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, ANGUL

1st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Road Online-AGL-05/2023-24

Due to some unavoidable circumstances the last date of Online for bidding and opening of the date has been extended as follows in respect of the tender for Road works invited in Tender Call Notice Bid Identification No. Road Online-AGL- 50/2023-24

vailability of Tender on-line for bidding			
То	Technical Bid		
2	3		
16.03.2024 upto 4.30 PM	16.03.2024 At 5.00 PM		
	To 2 16.03.2024		

OIPR-25180/11/0086/2324

Chef Construction Engineer. **Rural Works Circle Angul** 

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM** OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER PWD BUILDING ASSAM CHANDMARI GUWAHATI-3

No CE/TB-II1/42/2023/ pt /6 PRESS NOTICE

The Spl Chief Engineer. P.W.D. (Building), (Health & Education) Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf f the Governor of Assam invite bids through Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode-1 etenders in two bid system for the following work from eligible contractors having experience of similar natur

Detail of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www. assamtenders. gov.in

		The bloders must be enrolled in <u>www.assamtenders.gov.in</u>					
	SI. Name of Work Bid Value		Bid Security	Tender Cost	Time of completion		
	No		(in Rs.)	(in Rs.)	(in Rs.)		
	1	Construction of 10 Bedded		(2% for General,			
		Ayush Hospital at Bajali	7,04,52,837.00	and 1% for	14,090.00	24 months	
- 1			l	Decembed setement			

Note - 1. All terms and conditions will be as per the bidding document. Press Notice will be a part of bidding

2. The Bid Price may be vary at the time of uploading of DNIT for which no claim will be admissible

Spl. Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Bldg.) (Health & Education) Chandmari, Guwahati-3

Janasanyog/C/17530/23/7-Mar-24

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM** OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER PWD BUILDING **ASSAM CHANDMARI GUWAHATI-3** No. CE/TR-VII/12/2024/5

#### **PRESS NOTICE**

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D. Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids from Govt. registered eligible Contractors having expreience in similar nature of works for the following

Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal www.assamtenders.gov.in

The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in **Bid Security** Cost of bid SI. Name of Work Approx value 2% of Bid value for General category, and 1% of Bid value for Reserved category Construction Of Circuit House Building at Silchar Rs.23,73,95,803.00 20(Twenty Rs. 47,47,916.00 Rs. 20,000.00 Cachar District Assam for General Category and Rs. Rs. 23,73,958.00 for Reserved Category Construction Of Circuit Rs.30,16,17,138.00 20(Twenty Rs. 60.32.343.00 Rs. 20.000.00 House Building at for General Dibrugarh, District. Category and Rs Rs.30,16,171.00 Assam for Reserved Category

1. Value of work may vary according to the detail NIT. 2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document

Chief Enginfeer, P.W.D. (Bldg), Assam

Janasanyog/C/17535/23/7-Mar-24

Chandmari, Guwahati-3 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER

M.P. STATE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING BOARD 26- Arera Hills Jail Road Bhopal

No./Const./P.Cell/KSN/Morena/23-24/3267 Bhopal, Dated: 06.03.2024

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER** Online Percentage Rate E-Tenders are invited from contractors registered with the Office of the

Engineer in Chief, M.P. Public Works Department, Government of Madhya Pradesh (Centralized Registration Cell) for Construction of Farmer Auditorium cum Training Center At Mandi yard Morena Distt. Morena Tender Number: 2024\_MPSAM\_341976 (PAC amount Rs. 638.29 Lakh), Construction of Main gate and Check Post with Aluminum Paneling, Office Building, Farmer Rest House, C.C. Road, High Rise Shed, E auction hall, Public Toilet, Bank Building, R.C.C. Drain at Grain yard & Main Gate With Check Post at Vegetable campus At Mandi yard Morena Distt. Morena Tender Number: 2024\_MPSAM\_341977 (PAC amount Rs. 1375.39 Lakh), Maintenance of 2 Nos. Shop cum godown and 2 Nos 500 M.T. godown, Maintenance and Floor Uplifting work 4 Nos Covered Shed and 5 Nos trolley Shed, Maintenance and extension of Existing compound wall. Maintenance and renovation work for Rain basera and common toilet vegetable campus, Maintenance of Shed at Vegetable campus, Maintenance and renovation work for Post office and side Building at Vegetable campus & Maintenance of 2 Nos. Open Platform At Mandi yard Morena Distt. Morena Tender Number: 2024\_MPSAM\_341979 (PAC amount Rs. 171.66 Lakh) & Installation of 2 Nos High Mast, Transformer & maintenance of Existing High mast & Electric Pole At Mandi yard Morena Distt. Morena Tender Number : 2024\_MPSAM\_341980 (PAC amount Rs. 45.57 Lakh). The following works Tender to be received online up to 5:30 PM on 15.04.2024. Technical bid documents with EMD & Financial Offer to be received online only as per Detailed NIT. The tender documents can be obtained online on the http://mptenders.gov.in as per the Notice Published on the above Portal and detailed information can also be seen on website www.mpmandiboard.gov.in.

Note: Any corrigendum in this NIT, if required, shall be displayed only in our above portal regarding any matter included in this NIT or otherwise. Other details of Construction/ Development works and locations & key dates can also be seen on our website www. mpmandiboard.gov.in

M.P. Madhyam/114160/2024

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PROJECT CELL)** 

#### **GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM** FLOOD AND RIVER EROSION MANAGEMENT AGENCY OF ASSAM, (FREMAA)

Address: 4th Floor, Assam Water Centre Basistha Chariali, NH 27 Guwahati, Assam-781029, Phone/Fax-(0361)2309896, Email:- ceo-fremaa@assam.gov.in, Website:- www.fremaa.assam.gov.in

No. FREMAA(P)/TECH/WB/80/2023/5030

REQUEST FOR BIDS (RFB) **National Competitive Bidding** 

(Two-Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)

The State of Assam through Government of India has received financing from the World Bank

towards the cost of Assam Integrated River Basin Management Program (AIRBMP) Project. Under the project, Chief Executive Officer, Flood & River Erosion Management Agency of Assam (FREMAA) invites Request for Bids (RFB) under National Competitive Bidding (NCB) from reputed firms/company/registered contractors having experience in construction of LGSF Structures as follows:

Name of Works	Approximate Value
truction of Light Gauge Steel Framed Structure at Assam Water	Rs. 2,80,97,000/-
re (AWC) Building	

Complete RFB documents shall be available on website https://fremaa.assam.gov.in and https://assamtenders.gov.in from 07.03.2024. A pre-bid meeting for the aforementioned works is scheduled to be held on 15.03.2024 at 2 PM (14:00HRS) in the Conference Hall of FREMAA.

Govt. https://assamtenders.gov.in and participate through e-tender portal only. The last date and time of submission of bid is on 09.04.2024 at 2PM (14:00HRS)

Const

Centre

Janasanyog/CF/6285/23/07 March 2024

Chief Executive Officer, FREMAA

#### Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal Allahabad

The police got some vital

"Our officers are getting close (to crack the case).

### **Amravati MP Rana receives** death threat on WhatsApp

PTI AMRAVATI

n FIR was registered against unidentified Appersons for allegedly threatening to kill Amravati MP Navneet Rana by sending an audio message on her WhatsApp number, police said on Wednesday.

The sender of the message also used objectionable words against the Independent MP, as per the FIR.

"Rana received the threat message on her phone number on March 3 following which her personal assistant lodged a complaint with the police. The FIR was registered on Tuesday," police said.

The audio clip also contained objectionable words against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Amit Shah, and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Volice is hereby given to the General Public if W.Fradeep Kumar Só Mr.Tikha Singh is the owr of RESIDENTIAL PLOT NO. 268K & NEW NO. 20 REREA MEASURING 50 SQ. YARDS IE 41 RS METER. SITUATED AT MOHALLA: RAM NAG EASTERN PORTION OF AMBEDICAR ROA PARGANA: LONI, TEHSIL & DISTRICT: GHAZIABA PARGANA: LONI, TEHSIL & DISTRICT: GHAZIABA

insidered binding with respect to the sail

FORM No. 5

THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, ALLAHABAD

Allahabad- 211 002. U.P.) (Area of Jurisdiction, Part of Utar Pradesh)

Summons for Filing Reply &

(Summons to defendant under

section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with

Rule 12 and 13 of the Debts Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.

T.A. No. 3 of 2022

Versus

To, 1. Mr. Ankit Behl S/o. Shri Anand Kishor Behl, Resident of House

No. 355,1st Floor, Palam Vihar, Gurgaon-122 001(Haryana). Also. Flat No. 202, 2nd Floor,

Manhar Garden, Near Harish NA Khasra No. 839, 831, 832, 383, 838, 833, Mauja Sikandra,

Bahisstabad Tehsil, Dist. Agra

282 001 (U.P).

2. Shri Anand kishor Behl S/o.

Shri Kishan Kishor Behl, Resider of House No. 355, 1st Floor, Palam Vihar, Gurgaon 122 001

(Haryana). Also. Flat No. 202, 2nd Floor, Manhar Garden, Near Harish NA, Khasra No. 839, 831, 832, 383,

Bahisstabad tehsil Dist. Agra- 282 001 (U.P).

3. M/s. Gayarti Develowell Pvt.
Ltd., Reg. office at 1, Vth Floor,
Ramnan Tower, Near ICICI Bank

Sanjay Place, Agra, U.P- 282 002

In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in Pape

Book form in four sets alongwith documents and affidavits (if any),

personally or through your dul

authorised agent or legal practitioner in the Tribunal, after

serving copy of the same on the

applicant or his counsel/duly

authorised agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to

appear before the Tribunal on

15/04/2024 at 10.30 A.M., failing

which the application shall be

heard and decided in you

...Applicant

ICICI BANK LIMITED

M/S. MR. ANKIT BEHL & OTHERS

Appearance by Publication b... Date: 31.01.2024

ail: accounts@lvnorth.in



#### कार्योलय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, एफ0आई०यू०, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान,

हरिपुर ग्राम कालसी Mail ID- eewbfiu@gmail.com

पत्रांक : 1100 / निविदा सचना / 2023-24 दिनांक : 05/03/2024 अति अल्पकालीन निविदा सूचना

मुख्य महाप्रबन्धक, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान की ओर से देहरादून जनपद में अधिशासी अभियन्ता, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, कालसी, देहरादून अन्तर्गत विश्व बैंक पोषित अर्द्धनगरीय क्षेत्रों के लिए उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत चयनित जीवनगढ़ पेयजल योजनान्तर्गत स्टोर रूम निर्माण एवं तत्सम्बन्धी कार्य हेतु सीलबन्द निविदायें आमन्त्रित की जाती है जो कि दिनांक 07.03.2024 से 13.03.2024 को अपरान्ह 3:00 बर्जे तक कार्य दिवसों में उल्लेखित दरो पर प्राप्त की जा सकती है। यह निविदायें दिनांक13.03.2024 को अथवा वर्णित तिथि को अवकाश हो तो अगले कार्य दिवस के सांय 3:00 बजे तक शाखा कार्यलय में जमा करवाये जा सकते हैं, जो कि उसी दिन सांय 3:30 बजे उपस्थित निविदादाताओं या उनके प्रतिनिधियों के समक्ष खोली

	7.11.					
ī.	कार्य का नाम		निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य (₹)		कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	ठेकेदार की न्यूनतम श्रेणी
	अधिशासी अभियन्ता, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, कालसी, देहरादून अन्तर्गत जीवनगढ़ पेयजल योजनान्तर्गत स्टोर रूम निर्माण कार्य		1500.00	180.00	तीन माह	डी० श्रेणी या उच्चत्तर

अधिशासी अभियन्ता

Locker no. (Rs) with GST

6726.00/-

56640/

20650/

28320/

5310/-

Sd/- Branch Head, Karur Vysya Bank

41120025011

ROHINI (4104) : C-3/10, Ground Floor, Sector

Sd/- Branch Head, Karur Vysya Bank

NOTICE INVITING TENDER  Azadi (2) Amrit Mahotsav				
		t-65-T-2023-24-E3, Electrical Work in Connection with tion of Driveway of Rail Bhawan premises.		
Approx cost of the works in		Rs. 30.29 lacs	l l	
Address of the office		Sr. Divil Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.	١,	
Bid Security		Rs. 60600.00	l F	
Date & time of submission of tender		02.04.2024, 12.00 Hrs	l	
Opening of tender		02.04.2024, 12.00 Hrs		
Website & notice hoard		www.irens.gov.in & Sr. Divil Elect Engineer/General New Delhi	Ιľ	

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SAFE DEPOSIT LOCKER BREAK OPEN PUBLIC NOTICE The following hirers have availed safe deposit locker facility from PITAMPURA branch and

failed to renew the same within the stipulated time, in spite of repeated notices issued to

we are constrained to break open of the said locker on 27.03.2024, at the concerne

This Public Notice is to the hirers/legal heirs of the hirers if applicable. Further, The Karu

Vysya Bank Ltd has the authority to change the Break Opening Date without any prior notice.

SAFE DEPOSIT LOCKER BREAK OPEN PUBLIC NOTICE

he following hirers have availed safe deposit locker facility from ROHINI (4104) branch and

failed to renew the same within the stipulated time, in spite of repeated notices issued to them by The Karur Vysya Bank Ltd. Since the hirers have failed to pay the locker rent dues, we

ire constrained to break open of the said locker on 21.03.2024, at the concerned branch

his Public Notice is to the hirers/legal heirs of the hirers if applicable. Further, The Karu

lysya Bank Ltd has the authority to change the Break Opening Date without any prior notice.

41040028081

4104007F015

4104003D119

4104006F015

4104002B061

Hirer/s Name

Date : 07 03 2024 | Place : DELHI

emises at 4:00 PM.

Mr. Pankaj Chauhan S/o-Mr. Netra Pal Singh

Mrs. Tulsi Chauhan W/o-Mr. Pankaj Chauhan

9999234373 | Email id : pitampura@kvbmail.com

Near Gulab Sweets, Pitampura, Delhi-1100 Contact No: 011-27315993, 011-27315994.

om a muse deem company Limited (Formerly Fulleton Ir Credit Company Limited), if anybody has any chargefinter title in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address wi 07 days of the present. Mgs. Prasoon Lata, Advoc

In SMP Gindia Credit Company Limited), if anybod sa any charge/interest/ title in the said property or an of dispute kindly inform the undersigned i riting on the below mentioned address within days of the present. SA sociates (Law Firm 18, Lous Pond Plaza Valbhar Khand, Andrayauman, Chausbeau Via mail: sqassociates (Samallicom, Pr. 7011/1276, 81320868) PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that Mr. Aditya
Verma & Mrs. Jaya are the owners of Back side
flat on first floor without its roof/upper floor rights,
built-up property bearing no. 33/19, area
measuring 65 sq. yds i.e., 54.34 sq. mtrs., situated
at Shakti Nagar, Delhi. They acquired the flat
through a Sale Deed dated 24.06.2023 vide doc.
no.7350 executed by Mr. Praveen Kumar Jain in
favour of Mr. Aditya Verma & Mrs. Jaya.
The above-said owners have misplaced the
Original Sale Deed dated 13.12.2004 vide doc. no.
8173 executed by Mr. Lakhmi Narain in favour of
Mrs. Manju Gupta. Anyone who finds the abovementioned documents, kindly handover the same to
the Manager of Tata Capital Limited, Preet Vihar.
Mr. Aditya Verma & Mrs. Jaya are currently in the
process of mortgaging the alorementioned flat
with Tata Capital Limited. Any objections or
concerns regarding this transaction should be
raised within a period of 07 days from the date of
this public notice. Any objections submitted after

<sup>operty</sup> Raghav Tiwari, Advocate Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts New Delhi - 110001 Mob.: +91-8076188328

this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 07-days period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 07-days period by contacting Law Veritas: North (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. 4-44A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301; Landline(s): +9101203101683, e-mail: accounts@Wnorth.in

I, Ahmad Yusuf Shaikh, S/o.

L-2, Ghaffar Manzil Extn. Part-2, Jamia Nagar, Okhla, New

## CHANGE OF NAME

Mohammad Anzar Azmi, R/o.

Delhi-110025, declare that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Passport No. Z6375002 as Ahmad Yousuf instead of Ahmad Yusuf

Shaikh.

Note:

#### Date: 06.03.2024 | Place: DELHI PD(297)A

#### **GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM** OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD **CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION, DISPUR, GUWAHATI-6**

Mr. PARVEEN GUPTA

Mr. MALIK PP

Mr. RAMKISHORE

Mrs. SANCHITA GARG

Mr. HARMINDER SINGH

PRESS NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, P.W.D, Capital Construction Division, Dispur, Guwahati-6 on behalf of the Governo of Assam invites bids for the following works having experience of similar nature of work from APWD registered Class-I (A/B) contractors. Details of the bids may be seen at e-procurement portal website: www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours. The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.aov.in for participating in the bidding process

Name of work	Approx. Value of Work (Rs.)
Post Constructional Anti-Termite Treatment Works at inside and outside of New Assam Legislative Assembly Building including RCC Overhead Water Tank Treatment Work and Servicing and Functioning of existing Bio tank and changing of Duct Pipe lines of New Assam Legislative Assembly Building at Dispur, Guwahati-06	3,85,04,452/-

Any modification of tender may be seen in the portal www.assamtenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer, P.W.D. Capital Construction Division Janasanyog/C/17484/23/7-Mar-24 Dispur.Guwahati

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi- 110005.

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general

that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the belowmentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited. Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number otice/ Amoun in Demand Notice (Rs.) Branch Flat No-T-3, Third Floor, Plot No-I-22 and I-23, Out Delhi/ February Vishwas Arora/ NCR

of Killa No. 59/21, 59/22/2, Laxmi Nagar, Khureji Khas Shahdara, New Delhi/ March 02, 2024 Rs. 62,12,578/-The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ quarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else

Date: March 07, 2024 Place: Delhi/NCR

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

Pr. District Judge Ramban.

Intending bidders are required to register in the e-tender portal of the Assam

by the Procurement officer Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul

www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

-PAPER WITH PASSION-

# Missing nationalism

DMK's A Raja courts controversy, claims that India is not a nation but a subcontinent

■ormer Union Minister and DMK leader A Raja has stirred up a controversy by suggesting that India is "not a nation but a subcontinent". The remark, not the first such coming from the Dravidian party's stables, has not only reignited discussions on nationalism and diversity but also brought into focus the complexities of India's historical, cultural and geographical realities. Geographically, the Indian subcontinent is a vast landmass bounded by the Himalayas in the north and surrounded by the seas on three sides. It encompasses a diverse array of cultures, languages, religions and ethnicities, making it one of the most heterogeneous regions in the world. However, the question of whether it is a nation or a subcontinent is a matter of interpretation. According to Merriam-Webster, a nation is a "group of people who share one or more nationalities and have a defined territory and Government". Seen in this light, nation refers to people, not to geography. But it is often defined by a common identity, shared history and



a sense of belonging among its people. From the ancient civilisations of the Indus Valley and the Vedic period to the Mughal Empire and British rule, India's history is a saga of conquests, assimilation and cultural exchange. Upon Independence in 1947, India emerged as a sovereign nation-State with a democratic system of governance and a commitment to secularism and pluralism. The framers of the Indian Constitution sought to forge a nation out of the diverse strands of Indian society, enshrining principles of equality, liberty and fraternity.

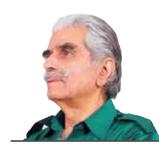
However, despite these efforts, the idea of India as a nation is often contested. The legacy of colonialism,

coupled with enduring fault lines of caste, class and religion, has led some to question the unity and coherence of the Indian nation. The rise of regionalism has further complicated the picture, challenging the notion of a monolithic Indian identity. However, going by the definition of a nation, when the above argument is given, it is actually about ethnic communities and not a nation. A nation can be formed by diverse groups. A Raja's remark has struck a chord precisely because it touches upon these fault lines. But this is exactly the path we must not take as such controversies are anathema to nation building and have in them seeds of Balkanisation. Some people may make political capital out of it but they cause irreparable damage to the idea of India. By characterising India as a subcontinent, Raja highlights the fissures and fault lines that run through the fabric of Indian society. Some may see it as an acknowledgement of India's rich diversity and pluralism while, for others, it may be interpreted as a negation of the nation-State idea. This, therefore, is an unacceptable formulation. India's strength lies in its ability to embrace its diversity while forging a common destiny based on the principles of justice, equality and fraternity. After all, in the words of Rabindranath Tagore: "The unity of India is not to be found in uniformity but in diversity.'



An artiste dressed as Lord Shiva takes part in a religious procession ahead of the 'Maha Shivratri,' in Jalandhar

# Boost deterrence to subdue China



#### Foreign Minister S Jaishankar calling China a bully and seeking support from the US is likely to further strain relations with Beijing

arlier this month former Army Chief Gen Naravane at a literary festival in Ajmer called China India's primary threat adding confrontation along the LAC was a good thing as it exposed this ground reality that Delhi was shy to admit. Last week EAM S Jaishankar and Defence Secretary Giridhar Armane called a spade a spade which will infuriate Beijing.
In 1998 India gave China as the

reason for carrying out nuclear tests which annoyed the Chinese so much that then foreign minister Jaswant Singh had to travel to Beijing to "untie the knot". I was witness to the repair exercise in Beijing even as our Army was retaking Tololing Heights, Kargil. Singh had to say that China was not a threat. Sometime later than defence minister George Fernades called China the number one threat though it was misreported as the "No. 1 enemy". This caused a diplomatic furore as China is acutely sensitive to being seen as or worse a threat by any country. The government hopes to secure full disengagement of Chinese intrusions diplomatically though the gloves came off last week in February. EAM S Jaishankar speaking at the Raisina dialogue said that China should not be allowed to play mind -games to counter which India must use other means (implying US help) to seek better equilibrium. His comments came a day after Armane at the INDUS-X FORUM in Delhi called Beijing a bully adding "We expect our friend US will be there in case we need their support". Not since 1962 have we sought US military support. Calling China a bully will incense China.

tary equipment worth USD 20bn and another USD in the pipeline. During the PLA incursions in Ladakh and later in Tawang, the US provided critical real-time intelligence, and high altitude equipment for India's counter deployment. Whether combat contingencies on LAC and US neip; and indias assistance to the US in a Taiwan conflict have been discussed is not known though boots on the ground are unlikely. In 1962 Jawaharlal Nehru is that border issues and bilat-

US help so far is high-tech mili-

sought military assistance from President John Kennedy when Se La and Bomdi La had fallen. 12 squadrons of fighters manned by US pilots, and two squadrons of B47s to take out PLA bases in Tibet were sought. Nehru wrote: "Chinese invasion threatened the survival of India. We are confident that your great country will help us in our fight". Armane's plea indicated a "strong resolve that we will support each other in face of common threat". This brings the centrestage question of US reliability as a partner given India's historical experience of US sanctions/embargos. It recalls that when Delhi signed a contract with the UK for Hawk trainer aircraft, a clause was inserted that there would be no US parts in the aircraft. The US similarly questions India's reliability given its close ties with the USSR/Russia and strategic autonomy. At the Munich Security Conference last

Jaishankar says that China has broken protocols and faith wnich nave violated a peace ful and tranquil border that is essential for normal bilateral relations whereas China's line

month Jaishankar was asked

whether the US is happy and

comfortable with India doing whatever it wanted whenever

it wanted. His reply: "India is

smart enough to exercise mul-

tiple choices".



CHINA'S CONTINUED **COERCIVE** BEHAVIOUR IS INCREASING. **JAISHANKAR** PROUDLY TALKS OF INDIA'S SWIFT COUNTER-**DEPLOYMENT** 

ALONG THE LAC. WHICH IS TANTAMOUNT TO **CLOSING THE** STABLE DOOR AFTER THE HORSE HAS **BOLTED** 

eral relations are two separate issues. Its spokesperson reminds India ad nauseum that the border problem "is leftover from history and not whole of China-India relations" lately adding "It is unwise and inappropriate for the Indian side to insist on linking border with bilateral relations".

Two video clips reflect how seriously and diligently China diplomacy is being pursued. The first video shows Prime Minister Modi rising from his dining table accompanied by an interpreter during the Bali G20 summit, walking up to President Xi Jinping and engaging in conversation without his two shadow aides, NSA Ajit Doval and Jaishankar.

This video was soon blanked

out. The other video is more recent at the Munich Security Conference where Foreign Minister Wang Yi is speaking and Jaishankar is in the audience. As soon as Wang finishes, Jaishankar walks up to him for a 'chance encounter' and conversation. Neither side has reported the contents of the conversation. Indian aim is to keep dialogue and diplomacy alive even if the Chinese have closed the door to further demilitarisation in Depsang and Demchok, two key launchpads for offensive operations by India. Jaishankar has not yielded about seeking

tions even as successive Army Chiefs have sought restoration of the status quo ante April 2020. He is buying time until the elections ensuring the word 'China' does not figure during the election campaign. The Chinese fired the last salvo during the Raisina Dialogue last month when Jaishankar said that the biggest opponent to Security Council reforms is not a Western country alluding to China. Its spokesperson Mao Ning retorted, "Reform should benefit all member states rather than serving selfish interests of a few". That puts paid to India's prospects for reforms at the UN. The 1988 modus viven-di has expired. China's continued coercive behaviour is increasing. Jaishankar proudly talks of India's swift counterdeployment along LAC which is tantamount to closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. Unless India substantially enhances deterrence vis a vis China-the military modernization budget in real terms is less than the previous

'equilibrium' in bilateral rela-

bully Delhi. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander. IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and a jounaer member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. Views are personal)

year's—Beijing will continue to

#### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

## Microinsurance boosts financial inclusion



It not only protects vulnerable populations from financial risks but also contributes to the overall socio-economic development of the country

rith the rising aware-ness around insurance in the country, it is evident that individuals are recognising the pivotal role it plays in safeguarding the financial aspect of our lives. The sector is poised to grow at an unprecedented rate in the coming years. With growing income giving the desired impetus to the sector, it is expected that the Indian insurance industry will reach a US\$ 222 billion market by 2026, as per the report by

However, the industry faces the challenge of low insurance penetration, standing at 4%, owing to the major population of underserved communities finding it difficult to avail of insurance plans. Therefore, to bolster the prospects of the industry, it is essential to diversify and expand the insurance offering to the group to ensure the maximum number of people are insured in the country. Looking at the insurance gap in low-income households,

microinsurance has been

introduced to improve the

accessibility and affordability

of insurance among the



deeper into poverty. Offering affordable insurance products comes with the ability to help the groups cope and recover from difficult financial situations. Consequently, by empowering the communities, microinsurance drives the socio-economic development of the group, which invariably contributes to elevating their living standards. 1) Boosting crisis recovery In an attempt to alleviate the poverty of the country, the government has been continuously working towards improving the risk-handling capacity of the group.

To achieve this purpose, the policies under microinsurance are in alignment with providing insurance cushioning from any unfortunate event. Offering compensagroup. Specifically tailored tion for a wide array of risks

entailing health, term life, death, disability, crop insurance, livestock/cattle insurance, accidents, natural disasters, etc. contributes to the resilience of economically marginalised groups. Government Schemes namely Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), enabling free access to health insurance, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) providing life and accident coverage respectively, further support the cause of boosting crisis recovery in the group. 2) Fostering financial inclusion: Microinsurance, offering coverage at low premiums, encourages deeper penetration of insurance among

marginalised groups. It serves the purpose of promoting the financial inclusion of the community, who otherwise were unable to avail of traditional insurance products due to high costs. Consequently, bringing the marginalised section into the formal financial system can play a crucial role in convert-

ing them into valuable assets.

thereby contributing to the

larger cause of augmenting

the economic growth of the country.

3) Encouraging women's empowerment: In rural India, women play an integral part in managing the household, and along with this, they actively participate in income generation.

To further drive the empowerment of women, government schemes such as Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) can invariably contribute to creating agriculture-based livelihoods for women belonging to rural areas. Specifically devised to cater to the unique needs of women, innovating and introducing more ground-breaking microinsurance programmes for women can bolster their financial independence.

Along with this, the awareness created around microinsurance can help women improve the health outcomes of their families by availing healthcare services and timely facilitation of medical treatment. It can immensely assist them in making informed decisions for driving the wellbeing of their families.

(The writer is a financial advisor, views are personal)

#### **CHALLENGES FOR THE PAK GOVERNMENT** Sir — The recent Pakistani general election

held in February 2024 has brought deepseated fractures within the nation's political landscape to light. With no decisive winner, allegations of widespread electoral irregularities, and the exclusion of Imran Khan's PTI party, Pakistan's democratic process faces significant challenges. Against a backdrop of economic adversity and public discontent over military interference, the country's future appears uncertain. Despite Shehbaz Sharif's appointment as Prime Minister through coalition-building efforts, the government must navigate internal tensions, restore public faith in democratic institutions, and prioritise economic revitalization to address widespread hardship. Pakistan's socio-economic challenges exacerbate political tensions, with high inflation and stalled growth amplifying public

The international community is crucial to supporting Pakistan's stability by promoting economic development initiatives and electoral transparency. Given Pakistan's status as a nuclear-powered nation, stability in the region is paramount, with implications extending to neighbouring countries like India. Pakistan stands at a pivotal juncture, and concerted efforts from domestic leadership, the international community, and the military are essential to steer the country towards stability and prosperity.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

#### **BEEF SMUGGLING**

Sir — Referring to news of Beef Smuggling in our country it is very sad to observe that despite so many laws, awareness programmes and other things that have been introduced to protect animals from this illegal hunting and smuggling, our country in which animals are worshipped is killing innocent animals for just some money. Recently, Bajrang Dal has thwarted an illegal smuggling of beef at Paradip port. Bajrang Dal activists intercepted a truck which originated from Andhra Pradesh. The truck was laden with vegetables and other goods but emitted a foul smell which

#### **SC** removes immunity cover



he unanimous verdict from the seven judges bench of the Apex Court on Parliamentary privileges for the members is a progressive one. It says there is no immunity to the member from criminal proceedings who commits the crime of taking a bribe for asking a question or casting

led to suspicion among the activists and law enforcement officials.

Afterthought the whole search operation truck was detained and the police started its investigation process to find out the real culprits behind this inhuman act. The discovery has laid many questions. Though the government has been overseeing these issues it has to work more effectively to stop this cruel act. Just like humans animals also have a life how can one kill them just for some amount of money? A human being cries a lot when a knife slightly cuts his finger how he can not feel the pain of such innocent animals who also have the feelings? Not only government need to be strict in this case but also the citizens must be aware of all these cruel acts and must report this incident immediately.

Aarushi Pathania | Kangra

**DEFORESTATION ON A GLOBAL LEVEL** Sir — Humans have started clearing forests in many places for development, agricultural space etc. This session is going on globally. According to a report, Brazil alone cut down 43 per cent of the world's forest in 2022. As much as 1.77 million hectares of huge forests were cut down and destroyed. Followed by Congo. Bolivia, and Indonesia. Peru, Colombia,

his vote in his legislative body. The parliamentary privileges granted to him under Article 105 and Article 194 are meant to discharge his duties without fear but not to indulge in illegal gratifications. The previous verdict of the five judges' bench in 1998 in a similar case had extended immunity for all deeds in the House.

Now the fresh judgement has nullified the previous one and has come clear about the misuse of immunity. The malpractices like cash for queries or votes for notes would make democracy a mockery by snatching away the trust of people which should be discouraged. At the same time, the members should be given protection from wrong allegations with mali mentions.

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

Laos, etc. have also done massive deforestation. This news was read recently. India is no exception to this. Even in India, a large amount of forest resources have been destroyed for widening roads, making new roads, industrialization, and

New trees are not being planted as much as trees and forests are being destroyed. Due to this, the balance of nature will be disturbed, with unseasonable and heavy rains, and increased heat and temperature. These are the symptoms. Many birds have been destroyed or are on the verge of extinction due to this deforestation. If the forests are destroyed, there will be a big crisis in front of the human being and they will also be on the way to being destroyed by the earth. This is such a tragedy that organisations like the United Nations should pay attention to this. So it will come to some extent. Different nations should also look at this deforestation as a future destruction. Let's hope that in the next few years, humans will wake up to this and reduce deforesta-

Shantaram Wagh | Pune

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com the pioneer



#### THE CONSEQUENCES OF **WORKPLACE STRESS**

Do not ignore warning signs and adopt strategies to combat stress-induced issues



raroshi was a successful Japanese entrepreneur, educated at the Lakeland College and the International University of Japan, who Lakeland College and the international chiracists, of the possessed a Midas touch and magically amassed trillions of Yen. As a youngster he was fearless, but soon his mind gave way to the lucre of money; indulging in forbidden activities, he perilously ignored the tenets of Shinto and soon succumbed to Karoshi.

Karoshi is a Japanese word that signifies sudden death by cardiac arrest or stroke, triggered by overwork. "The present moment is inevitable," is a sutra that has been articulated by several enlightened Masters. Only by living in the present moment can an individual annihilate the cobwebs of fear and stress which mushroom in the mind. It is prudent to live and traverse purposefully and mindfully, rather than think about the past or the future and lose track in the Byzantine labyrinths and consequently misplace precious peace of mind.lt should not be forgotten that the Japanese entrepreneur became deceitful and snuffed out his life. Stress over a period acquires a negative connotation. However, some high-end achievers rekindle their passion to excel in high-pressure conditions.

Tension or stress in these individuals increases tautness or stretch in the mind, which makes them deliver on the world stage. Even if they are girdled with negative emotions, their minds are robust and resolute enough not to capitulate and instead blossom like a lotus in a lake that is otherwise overflowing, and live in the present moment to accomplish their Holy Grail. Those not blessed with such an attitude flounder while clambering to the summit and accumulate stress due to the constraints and demands they face.



This occurs when high expectations do not match with the desired results. In an organisational setup, an excellent performance review normally triggers a jump in emoluments or even a promotion, while a below-par presentation review may be interpreted as a lackadaisical performance which can even amount to being fired from the placement. An organisation is akin to an organism which has its limitations and can lead to

An employee can also suffer from family, economic or personality misadventures which may disorient his performance and thus result in a tardy result. Many times privation of an adequate social support system or hostility and perceived malevolence of co-workers affect the performance of employees and thereby lead to stressful situations.

The tragic consequences of such situations are dangerous as they often lead to physiological disorders like migraines, insomnia, spondylitis, diabetes, obesity, infertility, and hypertension/hypotension which can result in cardiac problems or strokes.

Dreaded psychological symptoms can also arise in the form of anxiety, depression, and diminishing interest in the job at hand, which leads to enormous vexation. They are a demotivated set of personnel whose productivity is singularly low and the organisation is plagued by a high percentage of absenteeism and turnover. Organisations need to follow a twopronged strategy to win the problem. Actuate the employees by offering suitable apertures and resort to mid-course corrections by stimulating the mind through proper time management, prioritising activities, rescheduling work, and offering packages of mental diversion. Alternatively, employers could set up gyms and swimming pools on the premises, which exhort employees to do physical exercise to soothe frayed nerves and undertake wellness programmes such as the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living or the Vipassana breathing techniques. Know your enemy, know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster," wrote Sun Tzu.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd and is a faculty of the Art of Living. Views are personal)

# Clarify the MSP legal guarantee confusion



As tensions mount and disruptions escalate, the urgency for decisive action to safeguard farmers' interests and stabilise the agricultural economy increases

he resurgence of protests by farmers has brought attention to their longstanding struggle for sustainable profitability in the agricultural sector. Although their demands are diverse, their primary request is for a legal guarantee for MSP (Minimum Support Prices). Farmers believe that the government has not shown genuine interest in effectively implementing MSP, which has led to distrust, frustration, and the need for a legal guarantee. These issues have forced them to leave their homes and farms and take to the highways in protest, resulting in the death of three farmers a couple of injuries, and a disruption of normalcy that has affected the commuters and business activities.

In September 2020, the government introduced three controversial farm laws that were met with widespread protests and demands for their repeal. While the laws were eventually repealed in November 2021, there has been no interim report from the Committee on MSP formed to address farmers' concerns. This delay in decisionmaking perpetuates uncertainties in the agricultural sector and undermines the effectiveness of the present MSP as a stabilising force.

MSP was introduced in 1966-67 to ensure food security amid food scarcity. Despite broad political support for a legal guarantee for MSP, successive governments have failed to formalise this issue, leaving the agricultural sector in a state of uncertainty. However, it is high time to address the weakening of the decades-old MSP policy, remove the complexities surrounding its legislation, and recognise the potential benefits of legalising MSP to fuel the wholesome growth of the agriculture sector, which is the country's lifeline. The Modi government has demonstrated its commendable ability to revamp decades-old mechanisms with various robust reforms such as the amendments to Indian Penal Codes and the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir, and now they must take bold steps to address this pressing issue.

Why farmers asking for legal guarantee: The MSP is an administered advisory price for 23 crops and is determined annually by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) as a key government intervention to insulate farmers from price volatility when the market prices fall below the MSP as well as of consumers against corrupt manipulative market inflation and maintains food security. It has been in existence in India for more than five decades. Why, then, are farmers asking for a legal guarantee? Only 6% of farmers benefit from MSP, and it procures just 11% of total agricultural output in the country, according to the latest available NITI Aayog data.

Over 90 % of crops are sold at prices that are 20-30% lower than the declared MSP, leading to average losses of Rs 20,000 per acre and about Rs 10 lakh crore annually for farmers. A study by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development found that Indian farmers have been suffering losses since 2000 due to ineffective policies. The report revealed that Indian farmers lost Rs 45 lakh crore during 2000-2017 due to low prices.

Misconceptions in legalising: The legalisation of MSP has been hindered by exaggerated claims about its fiscal costs. These claims have misled successive governments, and it is essential to clarify that legal-



THE POTENTIAL BOYCOTT OF FARM PRODUCE IN PLACES WITH MSP LEGAL REGIMES BY THE TRADERS IS AN **IRRATIONAL** ARGUMENT **BECAUSE THE** 

COMMODITY'S SUPPLY IS TIGHT AGAINST THE **DEMAND FOR** FARM PRODUCE ernment procuring all agricultural produce. The apprehensions over excessive fiscal requirements are unfounded and should not prevent the legalisation of MSP.

To make MSP a legal guarantee, necessary amendments are needed in the Agricultural Produce & Livestock Market Committee (APMC) Act by incorporating a clause that 'auction of farm produce in APMC's markets is legally not permitted below the declared MSP prices. The apprehensions on the operation of MSP legal guarantee are that most of the sales of farm produce are not in APMCs, and traders may boycott the purchases of farm produce. The government does not have physical and economic resources to purchase, store, and market the procured farm produce, which is an irrational argument. Government intervention is necessary only when market prices fall below MSP, and it does not require the procurement of the entire marketable surplus.

The potential boycott of farm produce in places MSP legal regimes by the traders is an irrational argument because the commodity's supply is tight against the demand for farm produce. First, this was also evident from the fact that the government could manage to procure only 26 million tonnes of wheat at MSP against the target of 44.4 million tonnes fixed for the 2023 season. Second, the government's expenditure on procurement and imports of farm produce like edible oil and pulses, and on procurement of food grains on MSP in 2022-23, has already surpassed Rs 5 lakh crore and Rs 2.28 lakh crore, respective-

Claims that the MSP legal guarantee will create fiscal disasters for India are baseless. According to gov-

ernment estimates, the MSP values of the total production of the 23 crops worked out to be around Rs 17 lakh crore, and some studies worked out to be around Rs 10 lakh crore. Furthermore, only 70% of the

farm produce comes to markets as a marketable surplus, and farmers' families consume the rest for household purposes. The MSP legal guarantee will cost the government about Rs 5 lakh crore if traders or big corporations engaged in processing boycott the APMC's markets, which is an unlikely scenario. It is time to dismiss the misconceptions surrounding the legalisation of MSP and focus on the merits of providing a legal guarantee for MSP. Merits of legalising MSP: Farming is inherently risky, influenced by factors such as weather conditions, pest

attacks, and market dynamics. Establishing a legally binding framework for minimum floor prices across all crops, will mitigate the current challenges and safeguard farmers from unpredictable fluctuations in the prices of their produce. However, the government has proposed buying cotton, maize, tur, urad and Masur for five years directly from the farmers at the MSP without any quantitative limit. Notably, these crops are grown outside Punjab and Haryana, the home states of the protesting farmers. From this, can it infer that small pulses growing farmers all over the country stand to benefit? Legalising MSP for a wider variety of crops ensures that the benefits of price stability are not limited to specific segments of the farming community. Small and marginal farmers cultivating diverse crops can access the protective shield of MSP, contributing to inclusive agricultural growth,

and playing a pivotal role in ensur-

ing food security for the nation by

maintaining a stable production

tributing to the overall food security of the country.
A legal framework enables the gov-

ernment to conduct strategic operations in domestic and international markets. By selling procured produce at minimal markups during times of higher market prices, the government can manage inflation surges, ensuring price stability for consumers.

MSP reduces the vulnerability of farmers to market fluctuations, ensuring a minimum income for their produce. Farmers can navigate uncertainties more confidently, knowing that the government is legally bound to intervene when market prices fall below the MSP. A guaranteed MSP leads to increased rural income. This, in turn, stimulates the rural economy by boosting demand for goods and services, creating a positive ripple effect in var-

The way forward: Policymakers can pave the way for a more secure and prosperous future for farmers by dispelling misconceptions and addressing concerns. Replacing the decades-old and inefficient MSP policy with a legislatively guaranteed MSP offers a comprehensive solution to the challenges faced by the agricultural sector. It not only ensures consistent implementation but also promotes diversification, inclusivity, and economic resilience, contributing to the wholesome well-being of farmers and the prosperity of the rural economy. This will help to fuel the dream of a 'Viksit Bharat'.

(The author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy & Planning Board and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council; views expressed are personal)

# Philanthropic collaboratives: A new paradigm for social impact

These collaboratives are reshaping the philanthropic sector, offering efficient solutions and paving the way for long-term systemic change

ndia's philanthropic landscape has shifted signifi-Lantly in recent years, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic four years ago. In early 2020, The Bridgespan Group, a reputed research group published a report on philanthropic collaboratives in India, delving into how and why philanthropists and other stakeholders were working together to address social challenges at scale. It was an early signal of the change

that was to come When the pandemic hit, the collaborative model gained momentum. During the early months of the lockdown, diverse NGOs, philanthropists, CSR organisations, and the private sector came together to reach vulnerable communities—particularly to enable Growing from 20 NGOs in achieving social impact, using



access to healthcare, nutrition, and education. The need for prompt relief meant that grassroots NGOs, working alone, could have only limited reach and impact, especially in far-flung rural communities. This is how the Responsible Coalition for Resilient Communities (formerly the Rapid Community Response), RCRC, was started.

May 2020, RCRC now has more than 98 member organisations united by a desire to help India's rural population. From facing crisis to building

In its 2020 research, it tracked 13 philanthropic collaboratives across the country, which were defined as entities co-created by three or more independent actors, including at least one philanthropist or philanthropist. As we note in our latest report, The Growing Momentum of Philanthropic Collaboratives in India, the number of collaboratives in India has grown at least threefold since, with capital invested in them having grown more than sixfold. These collaboratives pursue shared visions and strategies for common resources and agreed-upon governance mechanisms.

While the pandemic was key in uniting diverse stakeholders for humanitarian and relief causes, there have been other reasons behind the recent rise in collaborative initiatives. Chief among them is the ability to share risk across many players, making it easier to build solutions at scale. EdelGive Foundation's Grassroots, Resilience, Ownership, and Wellness (GROW) Fund brings together Indian and international funders-including philanthropic institutions, individual philanthropists, eminent businesspersons, and changemakers. Together, they build the capabilities, resilience, and

future-readiness of 100 grass-

roots organisations across India, by investing up to Rs 100 crores across them over two years.Additionally, when collaboratives enable funding for early-stage, innovative initiatives, the risk is divided so it does not fall upon a single funder. The India Climate Collaborative is a case in point, having launched in 2019 with more than 10 funders coming together.

Philanthropic collaboratives also tend to have greater credibility with governments: Having several organisations and individuals united in collective thinking can assuage and influence those in the public sector wary of individual, vested agendas. Another growth driver is the community-level lens many collaboratives undertake, bringing

together partners with complementary skills to deliver integrated solutions that aim to lift entire communities or demographics, rather than solve one challenge at a time. Anamaya, the tribal health collaborative, and the Dasra Adolescents Collaborative, each aspire for populationlevel change for specific communities.

The research also pointed to how collaboratives are now forming across a wider set of issue areas. While most of them addressed near-term pandemic needs in healthcare and education in 2020, collaboratives are now working on environment, rural transformation, climate, equity, and other issues. The power of the collective

Collaboratives offer efficient initiative formed at the height

solutions because of how they approach their work-most notably how they set goals for field strengthening, scaling impact, and supporting promising organisations. Field strengthening, also known as ecosystem building or field building, is critical in a country like India, where entire ecosystems with multiple stakeholders need to evolve to drive sustainable impact. It involves the often-unseen work of coordinating across diverse actors to pursue shifts in policy and institutional practices, strengthening relationships, enhancing funding, or changing public narratives around an issue.

The Migrants Resilience Collaborative (MRC) a grassroots-led multi-stakeholder

of the pandemic to provide relief to migrant workers, it now focuses on building resilience by fixing broken social protection delivery systems across India for these communities. They hold the potential to address complex social challenges across the Sustainable Development Goals-such as gender inequalities, poverty, WASH, and climate change—over the long term. This offers domestic philanthropies—corporations, family foundations, and wealthy individuals-many untapped opportunities to have an outsized impact on India's development through joining forces with other mission-aligned stakeholders.

(The author writes on philanthropic subjects; views are

# **Biden and Trump sweep Super Tuesday primaries**

President Joe Biden from the Democratic Party and his Republican predecessor Donald Trump have swept in their parties' presidential nomination primaries held in 15 states across the US, paving the way for a rematch between them in November and putting pressure on Indian-American candidate Nikki Haley to quit the race despite her surprise win in Vermont.

After Super Tuesday's election results, Trump, 77, has established a commanding lead in the delegate count over his only Republican opponent, Haley, 52. Trump secured impressive victories in Texas, California and 11 other states, although Haley denied him a full sweep by winning Vermont.Though the 15 states that voted on Tuesday didn't have enough delegates for Trump to clinch the party's nomination, he moved much

More than a third of all the Republican delegates were at stake on Super Tuesday, the



biggest haul of any date on the 2024 primary calendar.

To win the presidential nomination of the Republican party, either of the two candidates needs 1,215 delegates, who are elected during the primaries. After Super Tuesday, Trump had 244 delegates in his kitty, while Haley had just 86.

Seeking re-election, Biden, 81, swept almost all the Democratic primary states.

Biden was handed his first defeat so far in the Democratic primary by Jason Palmer in American Samoa, While

primaries timed to occur on the same date. Almost all the results were one-sided in favour of Trump except for Vermont, where the winning difference

multiple states cast ballots in

was about one per cent. Speaking from Palm Beach, Florida, Trump claimed that "we have a very divided country," and vowed to unify it soon.

"This was an amazing night and an amazing day, it's been an incredible period of time in our country's history," Trump said at his election night watch party at his Mara-Lago resort in Palm Beach.
"We have a very divided country. We have a country

[where] a political person uses weaponisation against his political opponents," he said.

He compared the state of the US political system to "third-world countries".

"Never happened here. It happens in other countries, but they're third-world countries. And in some ways, we're a third-world country." Talking up some of his achievements from his time in office, notably the half-built border wall

between the US and Mexico. Trump claimed he delivered "the safest borders in the history of our country" and went on to rail against what he described as "migrant crime", without citing any evidence.

"And so the world is laughing at us, the world is taking advantage of us," he said.

He goes on to describe his aims to make the US "energy independent and energy dom-

"All the ... tragedy, you will not have to think of it. All of the problems we have today, we would not have had any of them," he said

'You would only have success and that is what ultimately going to unify this country and unify this party," he added.

Trump again recited a familiar list of grievances, insisting that the nation was descending toward chaos under Biden's leadership and raising doubts about election integrity. Earlier, Biden touted the work his administration has accomplished in its first term in office while issuing a stark warning that a second Trump term would mean a return to "chaos, division, and darkness."

Four years ago, I ran because of the existential threat Donald Trump posed to the America we all believe in," Biden wrote in a statement, highlighting progress under his administration on jobs, inflation, prescription drug prices, and gun control.

He then warned that if Trump returns to the White House, the progress his administration has made will be at risk.

"(Trump) is driven by rievance and grift, focused on his own revenge and retribution, not the American people," Biden noted.

Haley, the former South Carolina governor, said she has not made a final decision as to whether or not she would endorse her ex-boss Trump if she ends her presidential bid, but her campaign is receiving a lot of feedback on the subject, sources familiar with recent discussions told CNN.People who are close to Haley have different opinions. Some believe that it would be good for her to back Trump because she would be viewed as a team player. Others ardently oppose her endorsing him because that would give Haley the freedom to be critical of Trump and build her own movement. They have shared those opinions with Haley and her campaign in recent days and weeks, sources said, CNN said.

Haley herself has recently said she is not focused on endorsing anyone because she is focused on winning herself.

Trump, however, in an interview on Tuesday bashed Haley, saying she was angry because her campaign is "just getting nowhere.

Haley's campaign said on Tuesday that it was "honoured" by her win in Vermont's Republican presidential primary."We're honoured to have received the support of millions of Americans across the country today, including in Vermont where Nikki became the first Republican woman to win two presidential primary contests," Haley spokesperson Olivia Perez-Cubas said in a statement. "Unity is not achieved by simply claiming 'we're united."

## Nikki Haley to suspend

Campaign
New York (AP): Nikki Haley
will suspend her presidential
campaign Wednesday after being soundly defeated across the country on Super Tuesday, according to people familiar with her decision, leaving Donald Trump as the last remaining major candidate for the 2024 Republican nomina-

Three people with direct knowledge who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to speak publicly confirmed Haley's decision ahead of an announcement by her scheduled for Wednesday morning.

Haley, a former South Carolina governor and UN ambassador, was Trump's first significant rival when she jumped into the race in February 2023. She spent the final phase of her campaign aggressively warning the GOP against embracing Trump, whom she argued was too consumed by chaos and personal grievance to defeat President Joe Biden in the general elec-

Her departure clears Trump to focus solely on his likely rematch in November with Biden. The former president is on track to reach the necessary 1,215 delegates to clinch the Republican nomina-tion later this month. Haley's defeat marks a painful, if pre-dictable, blow to those voters, donors and Republican Party officials who opposed Trump and his fiery brand of "Make America Great Again" politics. She was especially popular

among moderates and collegeeducated voters, constituencies that will likely play a pivotal role in the general election. It's unclear whether Trump, who recently declared that Haley donors would be permanently banned from his movement, can ultimately unify a deeply divided party. Haley is not planning to endorse Trump in her Wednesday announcement, according to the people with knowledge of her plans. Instead, she is expected to encourage him to earn the support of the coalition of Republicans and independent voters who supported her. Trump on Tuesday night declared that the GOP was united behind him, but Haley spokesperson said, "Unity is not achieved by simply claiming, We're united."

## Sunak: I'm proud of our diversity as nation

PTI ■ LONDON

Rishi Sunak has spoken of his pride at being Britain's first Prime Minister of South Asian heritage, but also that it is "just not a big deal" because of the diversity of the country. He was addressing an annual awards ceremony organised by the Asian Media Group (AMG) in London on Tuesday evening, which marked the release of the 'GG2 Power List 2024' profiling the UK's 101 most influential and powerful South Asians in Britain – with Sunak topping the rankings for a third year in a row. "What an honour it is to be at the top of this phenomenal list.

But I must tell you that there's been a mistake; as the dad of two daughters, I'm not the most powerful Asian in the country, I'm not even the most powerful Asian in my home," joked Sunak, evoking laughter.

He also shared memories of his grandparents who had migrated to the UK many years ago and reiterated his

resolve to uphold their values.
"It is a reminder of the incredible contribution of

South Asian people to our economy and our society. It's a reminder too of the values we share: hard work, family, education and enterprise.

There is so much for us to celebrate," Sunak said.

Reflecting upon AMG creating a platform in the 1960s to fight prejudice and discrimination, Sunak reiterated his anti-extremism message from a speech last week. He noted: "Now many of us at some point in our lives have experienced hatred because of Today, as tensions are run-

ning high, we must dedicate ourselves once again to the fundamentals that our parents fought for by standing together for freedom of speech, against prejudice of all kinds, proud both of our heritage and our Britishness because in modern Britain they are the

same thing. "I'm proud of our diversity as a nation. I'm proud

to be the first British Asian Prime Minister, but even prouder that it's just not a big deal." The event entitled GG2 Leadership & Diversity Awards, now in their 25th year, saw British Indian peer Lord Jitesh Gadhia receive the highest honour named GG2 Hammer Award for over three decades of public and commu-

ritory - where fewer than 100

people participate in the cau-

cus - it will not slow Biden's

commanding march to the

major competition in the pri-

mary cycle, and has won all the

Democratic contests so far

tonight, CNN projects, as he gears up for a likely rematch

with Trump in November,"

CNN said.Super Tuesday is an

important phase of presidential

primaries when the early con-

tests are over, and voters from

"Joe Biden isn't facing any

Democratic nomination.

nity service. "These awards were created in 1999 to celebrate and recognise achievements of all ethnic talent, especially those who have broken through glass ceilings and succeeded through adversity," said AMG group managing editor Kalpesh

Among some of the other winners of the evening included Jaswant Kaur Narwal, a chief prosecutor at the UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) who received the Inspire Award, cardiologist Professor Kiran Patel who was named Man of the Year, and State Bank of India as the Bank of

## Suspected attack by Houthi rebels damages ship in Gulf of Aden

A suspected attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels damaged a ship in the Gulf of Aden on Wednesday, authorities said, the latest in a campaign of assaults by the group over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The attack came as a US destroyer separately shot down drones and a missile launched by the Houthis and as the Indian navy released images of it fighting a fire aboard a container ship earlier targeted by the rebels. Meanwhile, Iran announced Wednesday it would confiscate a \$50 million cargo of Kuwaiti crude oil for American energy firm Chevron Corp. aboard a tanker it seized nearly a year earlier. It marks the latest twist in a yearslong shadow war playing out in the Mideast's waterways even before the Houthi attacks

The attack Wednesday in the Gulf of Aden targeted a Barbados-flagged bulk carrier called True Confidence, which an aid ship later bound for earlier had been hailed over radio by individuals claiming to be the Yemeni military, officials said. The Houthis have been hailing ships over the radio in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden since launching their attacks, with analysts suspecting the rebels want to seize the vessels.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center described the True Confidence as reportedly being hit in the attack and sustaining damage. The extent of the damage to the Liberian-flagged ship remained unclear. The Houthis did not immediately claim the attack, though it typically takes several hours for them to acknowledge an assault. Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea and surrounding waters over the Israel-Hamas war. Those vessels have included at least one with cargo bound for Iran, the Houthi-controlled territory.

Despite more than a month and a half of US-led airstrikes, Houthi rebels have remained capable of launching significant attacks. They include the attack last month on a cargo ship carrying fer-tilizer, the Rubymar, which sank on Saturday after drifting for several days, and the downing of an American drone worth tens of millions of dol-

It was unclear why the Houthis targeted the True Confidence. However, it had been listed as being owned by Oaktree Capital Management, a Los Angeles-based fund purchases vessels and sells them back to firms on installments. Oaktree did not immediately respond to a request for comment.Meanwhile, a separate Houthi assault Tuesday apparently targeted the USS Carney, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer that has been involved in the American

Carney on Tuesday involved bomb-carrying drones and one anti-ship ballistic missile, the US military's Central Command said. The US later launched an airstrike destroying three anti-ship missiles and three bomb-carrying drone boats, the Central Command said.Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, a Houthi military spokesperson, acknowledged the attack, but claimed its forces targeted two American warships, without elaborat-

campaign against the rebelsThe Houthi attack on the

campaign

ing.
The Houthis "will not stop until the aggression is stopped and the siege on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip is lifted," Saree said.

Saree did not acknowledge the later US airstrikes. The Houthis have not offered any assessment of the damage they've suffered in the American-led strikes that began in January, though they have said at least 22 of their fighters have been killed.

# Farmers, angrier than before, stage larger protest against EU policies

**AP** WARSAW

 $P^{\text{rotesting Polish farmers on}}_{\text{tractors blocked highways}}$ leading into Warsaw on Wednesday while thousands of their supporters gathered in front of the prime minister's office. Some trampled a European Union flag and burned a mock coffin bearing the word "farmer".

The protesters are demanding a withdrawal from the EU's Green Deal, a plan meant to fight climate change with measures that farmers denounce as excessively costly. They also want the Polish-Ukrainian border closed to stop the imports of Ukrainian food products."I want to be a farmer, not a slave to Brussels," one banner read.

Such protests have occurred across the 27-member EU, and this one seemed to be



angrier than earlier demonstrations in the central European nation. Farmers were joined by miners, foresters, hunters and other supporters. They blew horns and set off firecrackers and smoke bombs, despite police warnings that the use of pyrotechnics was banned. Some

protesters burned tires. The protest increased pressure on the government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a former president of the European Council who is strongly pro-EU and seeks to support Ukraine as it fights Russia's invasion. Tusk

demands, calling their frustrations justified. He has said he plans to propose amendments Green Deal.

"Environmental protection cannot and does not have to be in conflict with food production," he said this week. Tusk is also trying to address the anger caused by an influx of Ukrainian grain and other food, which Polish farmers say drive down market prices and put Poland's agricultural sector in jeopardy. They seek a ban on the Ukrainian imports and are angry at the EU for lifting tariffs on them while Ukraine a major food producer sought ways get its food to global markets.

Despite Tusk's overtures to farmers, the protest had a strongly anti-government feeling, with slogans on some posters denouncing him.

#### Pope's health issues take their toll on

**Vatican City:** Lingering respiratory and mobility problems are continuing to take their toll on the Pope. Pope Francis again asked an aide to read his remarks and was unable to get back onto his popernobile Wednesday, as lingering respiratory and mobility problems continued to take their toll on the 87-year-old pontiff. Francis presided over his weekly general audience, held outside for the first time this year in a chilly St Peter's Square. But he had an aide read his catechism lesson, as he has done for the past several days. Last Wednesday, Francis went to the hospital for unspecified diagnostic tests, the results of which have not been released. He has been suffering on and off this winter from what he and the Vatican have said was a cold, bouts of bronchitis

## Sudan's conflict risks creating world's largest hunger crisis

ruinous conflict raging for A ruinous conflict raging tor about a year between rival generals in Sudan risks creating the world's largest hunger crisis, the top U.N. food official warned Wednesday as global attention has been focused on the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Cindy McCain, head of the World Food Program, said the fighting in Sudan, which pits the country's military against a violent paramilitary group, has shattered the lives of millions across the northeastern African

'The war in Sudan risks triggering the world's largest hunger crisis," McCain said as she wrapped up a trip to neighboring South Sudan, where hundreds of thousands of Sudanese have fled the fighting in their home country. The UN food agency said some 18 mil-

acute hunger, with the most desperate trapped behind the front lines. They include 5 million who face starvation, it said. Sudan plunged into chaos in mid-April when clashes erupted in the capital, Khartoum, between the country's military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary group known as Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo.

The fighting quickly spread across the nation, especially urban areas but also the restive western Darfur region. Thousands of people have been killed, including between 10,000 and 15,000 people, when paramilitary forces and allied Arab militias rampaged through a Darfur town last year. Two decades ago, Darfur became synonymous with

ticularly by the notorious Janjaweed Arab militias, against populations that identify as Central or East African. It seems that legacy has

returned, with the International Criminal Court's prosecutor Karim Khan saying in late January there are grounds to believe both sides are committing possible war crimes, crimes against humanity or

genocide in Darfur.

"Twenty years ago, Darfur was the world's largest hunger crisis and the world rallied to respond. But today, the people of Sudan have been forgotten," McCain said. The conflict has uprooted more than 10 million people either to safer areas inside Sudan or to neighboring countries, according to U.N. agencies. South Sudan received 600,000 people who fled the fighting in Sudan.

### Musk agreed ChatGPT should be for-profit entity, says Open Al

Washington (AP): OpenAI shot back at accusations from Elon Musk that the ChatGPT maker betrayed its founding goals of benefiting humanity and chose to pursue profits, vowing to get his lawsuit thrown out. The first comments from OpenAI since the Tesla CEO sued last week have escalated the feud between the San Franciscobased artificial intelligence company and the billionaire that bankrolled its creation years

The mission of OpenAI is to ensure AGI benefits all of humanity, which means both building safe and beneficial AGI and helping create broadly distributed benefits," OpenAI said in a blog post late Thursday from five company leaders, including CEO Sam Altman. "We intend to move to dismiss all of Elon's claims." AGI refers to artificial general intelligence, which are general purpose AI systems that can perform just as well as — or even better than humans in a wide variety of tasks. Musk's lawsuit said that when he funded OpenAI as it was launching, he secured an agreement that the company would remain a nonprofit developing technology for the benefit of the public. His lawsuit claims breach of contract and seeks an injunction preventing anyone — including Microsoft, which has invested billions in OpenAI — from benefiting financially from its technology. Musk recognized the need for the company to become a forprofit entity, posting screen-shots of emails between the Tesla CEO and OpenAI leaders Open AI CEO said.

# has sought to meet the farmers'

**AP** ■ RAFAH

# 'Canada to restore funding to embattled UN agency in Gaza'

Gaza's Health Ministry says the Palestinian death toll **AP** ■ TORONTO from the Israel-Hamas war has climbed to 30,717. It said on Wednesday that 86 bodies were brought to local hospitals in the last 24 hours, in addition to 113 wounded people. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and maintains detailed casualty records. Its figures from previous wars have largely matched those of the United The Nations, independent experts Gaza. and even Israeli counts.

The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its tallies, but says women and children make up around two-thirds of those killed. It says the real toll is higher as there are bodies buried in the rubble from Israeli airstrikes and in areas that paramedics cannot access. It says over 72,000 people have been wounded in the war. Israel says it has killed over 10,000 Hamas fighters, without providing evidence.

anada will restore funding to the United Nations relief agency for Palestinians, a government official tells The Associated Press, weeks after the agency lost hundreds of millions of dollars in support following Israeli allegations against some of its staffers in Canadian Broadcasting Corporation first reported that Canada will restore funding and that International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen would decision announce the Wednesday. But the government official told the AP the

announcement has been

delayed, speaking on condition

of anonymity as they were not

authorized to comment on the

matter. Canada's foreign min-

ister is currently in the Middle

East and plans to visit Israel.



Palestinian death toll tops 30,700 in latest count

ven 80% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million Palestinians from their homes, and UN officials Israel accused 12 of its say a quarter of the population is starving as access to the enclave is restricted. The UN

is on the brink of financial col-

employees of participating in the Oct 7 Hamas attacks on Israel that killed 1,200 people agency known as UNRWA is and left about 250 others held the main supplier of food, hostage in Gaza. In response,

more than a dozen countries including Canada suspended funding to UNRWA worth about \$450 million, almost half its budget for the year. UNRWA, which employs roughly 13,000 people in Gaza, is the biggest aid provider in the enclave. Two UN investiga-tions into Israel's allegations were already underway when the European Union said Friday it will give 50 million euros (\$54 million) to UNRWA after the agency agreed to allow EU-appointed experts to audit the way it screens staff to identify extremists.

Israel now alleges that 450 UNRWA employees were members of militant groups in Gaza, though it has provided no evidence.

Philippe Lazzarini, the head of UNRWA, said Monday that he has "never been

informed" or received any evi-

dence of Israel's claims. Every year, he said, UNRWA provides Israel and the Palestinian Authority with a list of its staff, "and I never have received the slightest concern about the staff that we have been employ The only allegation com-

municated to him verbally was

about the 12 UNRWA staffers

alleged to have participated in the Oct 7 attack, he said, and they appeared so serious that they were fired. UNRWA in a statement has accused Israel of detaining several of its staffers and force

treatment, into giving false confessions about the links between the agency, Hamas and the Oct 7 attack. The attack sparked an

ing them, using torture and ill

Israeli invasion that Gaza's Health Ministry says has killed more than 30,000 Palestinians.

# Pak Army chief calls on new PM Shehbaz

Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir on Wednesday called on newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the first time and discussed professional and security issues with him, a day after the powerful military congratulated him on assuming the post. Chief of Army Staff Gen Munir called on PM Shehbaz at the prime minister's house in Islamabad to felicitate him and expressed his best wishes to the latter for assuming office as the country's 24th chief executive.

Shehbaz formally assumed office on Monday, nearly a month after the February 8 general elec-

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), during the meeting, "views were also exchanged on professional matters of the Pakistan Army and security affairs". It also said that important matters including national secu-

ing. On the occasion, the army chief congratulated the premier on his newly assumed position and expressed good wishes.

Shehbaz was elected as the prime minister on Sunday, retaining the post after his 16-monthlong stint in the top position from April 2022 to August 2023.

The meeting comes a day after Pakistan's top military brass expressed "dismay" that some small segments of the polity and media, especially social media, were "maligning" the armed forces with "unsubstantiated allegations" of interference in the process of elections.

Presiding over the 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference held at Rawalpindi, Munir said that rather the security force provided a secure environment for the conduct of polls, according to a statement by the Army.

The powerful army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 75-plus years of exis-tence, has wielded considerable

foreign policy.

The meeting noted that the armed forces, at great peril to their primary responsibility, provided a security environment for the conduct of elections on February 8 as per the given mandate, and had nothing to do with the electoral process.

"However, the forum expressed dismay that some vested small segments of polity and media especially social media have been maligning Armed Forces of Pakistan with unsubstantiated allegations of interference which is highly deplorable,'

According to the statement, it is unfortunate that rather than focusing on real issues such as good governance, economic recovery, political stability and public well-being, the "entire focus of such vested elements is on creating political instability and uncertainty by attempting to scapegoat others for their own failings".

## Executed ex-Pak PM Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto did not receive fair trial: SC

Former Pakistan prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, executed by the military regime of Gen Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in 1979, did not receive a fair trial and due process, the Supreme and due process, the Supreme Court opined unanimously on Wednesday in a much-anticipated review of the high-profile case. Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa announced the opinion of a nine-member larger bench of the apex court during the hearing of apex court during the hearing of a presidential reference related to the death sentence given to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) founder.

It is based on a special case sent in 2011 by then president Asif Ali Zardari to the Supreme Court to revisit his father-in-law Bhutto's conviction for abetment in a murder case and his eventual hanging on April 4, 1979. On March 18, 1978, the Lahore High Court sentenced Bhutto to death for allegedly ordering the assassination of Ahmed Reza Kasuri, one of the founding members of the

Pak court bars oath taking for candidates allotted reserved seat

Peshawar (PTI): In yet anoth- women and minorities. A total er post-poll legal complication, a Pakistan court on Wednesday of Parliament were up for grabs barred till Thursday the oathtaking of those candidates who were allotted reserved seats in the National Assembly that the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) has claimed should have been given to it. Post February 8 polls, almost all 93 independently elected candidates backed by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had joined the right-wing SIC to receive its share of reserved seats for

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Announcing the unanimous opinion, Isa said, "The proceedings of the trial by the Lahore High Court and the appeal by the Supreme Court of Pakistan of Parliament were up for grabs out of the 336 while 60 seats were reserved for women and 10 for minorities. The reserved seats are allotted proportionately to the winning parties based on their numbers. On Monday, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) ruled that 71year-old Khan's PTI-backed SIC is not eligible for the reserved seats allotted to women and minorities in Parliament and their share of seats should be allocated to other parties.

do not meet the requirements of the fundamental right to a fair trial and due process enshrined in Articles 4 and 9 of the Constitution and later guaranteed as a separate and fundamen-

tal right under Article 10A of the Constitution." The apex court voiced its opinion but also ruled that the verdict of Bhutto's death sentence could not be changed as the Constitution and law did not allow so, and it would be maintained as a verdict. As the opinion was read out, the late Bhutto's grandson, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and could be seen wiping his face with a handkerchief.Bilawal, former foreign minister and chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) described the court's views "historic", adding that they were awaiting the detailed opinion.He hoped that, 44 years later, the apex court's opinion would allow Pakistan to progress, and that the "system" would finally be put on the right path. "The stain of this decision made it difficult for the people of Pakistan to have faith in the court, and get justice from in the court, and get justice from this court, especially if someone like the prime minister did not get justice," Bilawal said. He thanked the judges and amici curiae for hearing and fighting

#### Resolution in Pak Senate seeking release of Imran, Qureshi

Islamabad (PTI): Jailed ex-Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's party has submitted a resolution in the Senate calling for the release of the incarcerated leader, his wife Bushra, his close aide, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and other leaders, saying "political vendetta" has destroyed the country's economy and reputation.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaf (PTI) founder Khan, 71, and senior party leader and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, 67, have been lodged at the high-security Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi in various cases.
Submitted by party Senator

Falak Naz Chitrali, the resolu-tion calls for the release of the PTI party leaders, alleging that they were convicted under "false cases", the Dawn newspaper reported.
"Political vendetta has

destroyed the country's econ-omy and reputation," the resolution read.

It also called for the release of PTI stalwart Dr Yasmin Rashid, Khan's wife Bushra Bibi and other women leaders of the party, as well as journal-

The party submitted a similar resolution in the National Assembly on Tuesday.Last month, Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, were sentenced to seven years imprisonment in an "un-Islamic" marriage or Iddat case. In January, the PTI founding chairman and his wife were sentenced to 14 years imprisonment each for corruption on charges of illegally selling state gifts. Earlier, the former-cricketer-turned-politician was also sentenced to 10 years in prison by a special court for leaking sensitive state

Khan and Qureshi were also handed down a jail term of 10 years in the cipher case. The cipher case pertains to a piece of paper, purported to be a diplomatic cable — the cipher

that Khan had waved at a public rally on March 27, 2022, and naming the US, had claimed that it was 'evidence' of an "international conspiracy' to topple his government.

## Muizzu: Maldives-China defence pact to obtain non-lethal weapons

PTI MALE

The Maldives will get free "non-lethal" military equipment and training from China's military under a newly inked agreement with Beijing, President Mohamed Muizzu has said, underlining that it would further strengthen the Indian Ocean island nation's independence

autonomy.Muizzu also met Major General Zhang Baoqun, Deputy Director of the Office for International Military Cooperation of China, and President of the Export-Import Bank of China, Ren Shengjun separately. Earlier on Monday, the Maldives Ministry of Defence

announced that a military assistance agreement has been signed by Defence Minister Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon and Major General Zhang. However, it did not reveal any

Previously, China had been exclusively known for its assistance towards urban and economic development of the Maldives, news portal Sun.mv

Speaking late on Tuesday evening with residents of Dhaalu atoll Meedhoo as part of his ongoing trip to the atoll, President Muizzu, who is widely seen as a pro-China leader, shared some details as he said that China and Maldives had always maintained military cooperation and that the only new development with this agreement is the assistance Maldives will be receiving to strengthen its military capacity. "To obtain the different forms of training required by the Maldives' military, and to be granted various non-lethal mil-

additional details. This is the first time Maldives has signed a deal with China for military cooperation of this level. itary equipment free of charge, that is what this agreement is about. This will increase the technical capacity of the defence forces," news portal Edition.mv quoted the President as saying.

We will then be able to further strengthen the defence forces. These things are being done so that we can stand on our own two feet so that we can have our autonomy and independence," Muizzu added.

Sun.mv further quoted the President as saying that the non-lethal weaponry would include tear gas, pepper spray and similar articles of weapons

Meanwhile, a release from the President's office said Ren Shengjun paid a courtesy call on Muizzu on Tuesday morning. Muizzu emphasised (on) China and Maldives' close ties, noting that Maldives receives considerable support from EXIM Bank, the release said, adding, "Furthermore, the President

highlighted several key develop-mental initiatives from China to the Maldives, including the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge and several social hous-

ing projects."

During the meeting, the President of EXIM China stressed the historical ties, cooperation, and mutual respect between China and the Maldives and also acknowledged the Maldives' early participation in the Belt and Road Initiative. Ren affirmed the EXIM China's readiness to foster positive collaborations with the Maldives, the statement said, adding that Muizzu and Ren Shengjun concluded the meeting with renewed commitment for future engagements In another statement, the President's Office said, Major General Zhang Baoqun paid a courtesy call on President Muizzu at the President's Office on Tuesday evening.

### Russia & China 'seriously' considering to install N-reactor on Moon: Official

PTI ■ MOSCOW

Russia and China are "seriously" considering a project to install a nuclear reactor on the Moon in the next decade, the official media here quoted the head of the Russian space corporation as saying. Yury Borisov, CEO of Roscosmos, Russia's State Space Corporation responsible for space flights, cosmonautics programmes, and aerospace research, said such a mission will have to be automated, with the necessary technological solutions almost ready for it. "Today, we are seriously considering a project to deliver to the Moon and mount a power reactor there jointly with our Chinese partners somewhere between 2033 and 2035," state-run Tass news agency quoted Borisov as saying at the World Youth Festival being held at the



Sirius federal territory on Tuesday.

Earlier in March 2021, Roscosmos and the China National Space Administration (CNSA) signed a memorandum of mutual understanding on behalf of their governments on cooperation in creating the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS). Under the project, China plans to send three

missions: Chang'e 6, Chang'e 7 and Change 8.

The first lunar missions would test key technology to create a roadmap for building a robotic base for experiments and research that could be operated remotely. The first lunar mission is scheduled for 2026, and the

project should be wrapped up in 2028, TASS said.

# **'Navalny died of** natural causes'

Russia's spymaster said on leader Alexei Navalny died of natural causes, a statement that appeared to reflect the Kremlin's efforts to assuage international outrage over the death of President Vladimir Putin's fiercest foe. Sergei Naryshkin, the director of the Foreign Intelligence Service, the top spy agency known under its Russian acronym SVR, made the statement in an interview broadcast by Russian

state television. He didn't name the cause of Navalny's death in a remote Arctic penal colony or give any

other details.

"Sooner or later life ends and people die," he said. "Navalny has died of natural causes." Navalny died on February 16 at Penal Colony No. 3 in the town of Kharp, in the Yamalo-Nenets region about 1,900 kilometres northeast of Moscow where he was serving a 19-year sentence on charges of extremism.

Russian authorities still haven't announced the cause of his death at age 47 and many Western leaders blamed it on Putin, an accusation the Kremlin angrily rejected.

Navalny's mother, Lyudmila Navalnaya, had spent eight to get authorities to release her son's body as officials claimed that they need ed to conduct post-mortem tests. She made made a video appeal to Putin to let her bury her son with dignity. Navalny was buried Friday in a Moscow suburb in a funeral that drew thousands of mourners amid a heavy police presence. His team said several Moscow churches refused to hold the funeral. Navalny had been jailed

since January 2021, when he returned to Moscow to face certain arrest after recuperating in Germany from nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin. His Foundation for Fighting Corruption and his regional offices were designated as "extremist organisations" by the Russian government that same year.

Meanwhile, The widow of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died in an called on his supporters on Wednesday to join a protest of this month's presidential election that Navalny devised shortly before his still-unexplained death. Yulia Navalnaya asked

Russians opposed to President Vladimir Putin to get in line at voting stations on March 17, the last and main day of vot-Putin is certain to win a

fifth term in office, potentially extending his rule to 2030, in the election that includes only token opponents. Navalnaya acknowledged that in a video message on X, formerly Twitter, saying "Putin will imagine any result that he likes, even 80, even 180 per-

But the gathering "will help millions of people see like-minded people and realize that we are not alone, we are surrounded by people who are also against war, against corruption and against lawlessness," she said.

"We need to use election day to show that we exist and there are many of us, we are actual, living, real people and we are against Putin. ... What to do next is up to you. You can vote for any candidate except Putin. You could ruin your ballot," Navalnaya said.

Navalny had floated the noontime concept on Feb. 1 saying it was a "completely legal and safe" way to protest and that authorities would have no way of countering it. Mass protest actions in Russia have become effectively impossible under Putin's intensifying crackdown on dissent and criticism in recent years.

Navalny was reported dead on Feb. 16. Authorities said that he became ill after a walk at his prison colony, but have otherwise given no details. Navalny had been imprisoned since returning to Moscow in early 2021 from Germany, where had been recuperating from nerve-agent poisoning that he blamed on

**AP** ■ ABOARD BRP

The Philippines will not allow China to remove a Philippine military outpost in a fiercely disputed South China Wednesday, a day after four Filipino navy personnel were injured in a confrontation between Chinese and Philippine ships. Philippine officials summoned a Chinese Embassy diplomat in Manila to convey a strong protest over the confrontation Tuesday off Second Thomas Shoal. A small Filipino navy contingent has stood guard on a longmarooned warship that has served as an outpost in the shoal since the 1990s.

Washington issued a warning after Tuesday's hostilities that it is obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under an armed attack anywhere in the South China Sea. Philippine Commodore Roy Trinidad also said Filipino forces will not allow any structure to be erected in another hotly contested South China Sea area, Scarborough Shoal. China surrounded the vast fishing atoll northwest of the Philippines with coast guard and suspected militia ships in



Philippine resupply vessel Unaizah May 4 is hit by two Chinese coast guard water canons as they tried to enter the Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin Shoal, in the disputed South China Sea on Tuesday. AP/PTI

2012 after a tense standoff between Chinese and

Philippine ships. These are red lines for the Philippines, to the armed forces," Trinidad said at a news conference in Manila when asked what Chinese actions would be unacceptable to the Philippines in the disputed waters. Trinidad said the administration of former President Rodrigo Duterte, who preceded current President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, established those "red lines,"

which delineate actions by China and any other rival claimant state that would spark fierce Philippine resistance in the disputed sea. The latest flareup in the long-simmering disputes began when Chinese coast guard and suspected militia ships shadowed, surrounded and blocked two Philippine coast guard ships which were escorting two civilian motorboats manned by Filipino navy personnel.They were on the way to deliver supplies and replacement navy

BRP Sierra Madre, a navy warship that was deliberately grounded by the Philippine military in the late 1990s in the shallows of Second Thomas Shoal to serve as a territorial

and marine personnel to the

China also claims the area and has surrounded the shoal with coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships to prevent Filipino forces from delivering construction materials to reinforce the Sierra Madre, which is encrusted with rust and slightly tilting but remains an actively commissioned navy ship, meaning any attack on it would be considered by Manila as an act of war. After dawn on Tuesday, a Chinese coast guard vessel sideswiped one of the Philippine coast guard ships, the BRP Sindangan, where crewmen scrambled to lower rubber fenders along the side to avoid damage to the hull. Two Associated Press journalists and other media who were invited to travel on the patrol ship witnessed the tense confrontation.Inviting journalists to join trips by Philippine ships to the area is part of a strategy adopted last year by the government to publicize China's aggressive actions in one of the world's most hotly contested water-

Sindangan had rammed its ship, although the journalists aboard the Philippine coast guard vessel saw the Chinese ship approach dangerously close before the collision. Later, another Chinese coast guard ship blocked and then collided with a supply boat being escorted by the Philippine coast guard, Filipino officials said. The supply boat was later hit by water cannon blasts from two Chinese coast guard ships. Philippine navy Vice Admiral Alberto Carlos was aboard the boat and witnessed the water cannon assault, which he said caused minor injuries to four navy personnel."The pressure was really intense," Carlos said. "It shat-tered the windshield of the boat and caused some injuries."The damaged boat immediately returned to the western Philippine province of Palawan. The other supply boat managed to evade the Chinese coast guard blockade and delivered supplies to the Filipino forces guarding the shoal, Philippine officials said. The two-decade-long ter-

'Philippines won't allow China to remove its military outpost in SCS' ways. China has reacted by ritorial standoff sparked a series providing its coast guard per- of confrontations between sonnel with video cameras to Chinese and Filipino forces contest Manila's version of the last year, with the Philippines confrontations. The Chinese protesting dangerous maneucoast guard said in its account vers by Chinese coast guard of the incident that the BRP vessels and China demanding that the away by the Philippines. The Chinese coast guard said in a statement that "it took control measures in accordance with the law against Philippine ships that illegally intruded into the waters adjacent to Ren'ai Reef," the name Beijing uses for Second Thomas Shoal. Washington condemned the Chinese coast guard's actions, and its ambassador in Manila, MaryKay Carlson, said the US stands with the Philippines.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ceneral Public is hereby informed that My Client Mr. Brij Raj Kumar S/O Late Mr. Shir His his has a ged about 7.2 years 1.409, Haveli Hadder Quli, Chandin Chowk, Delhi — 110006 have severed all relations with his elder son namely Anriudh Kumar (Goel) S/O Brij Raj Kumar aged about 4.8 years and his wife namely Rashi Goel My A Anriudh Kumar (Goel) Syed Brig Riy Kumar aged about 4.8 years and his wife namely Rashi Goel My A Anriudh Kumar (Goel) Baged Bout 4.1 years (approx.), including their lateralment of Mr. Clienth, bad habits and ill-treatment of Mr. Clienth, bad habits and ill-treatment of Mr. Clienth, bad habits and son and daughter-in-law, including their legal Heirs and any future Heirs, from all his movable and immovable properties. Further, it is put to notice that Anriudh Kumar (Goel) has My Clienth, services, signatures on his electronic systems, and otherwise, which he may use without the consent of My Clienth, therefore, and with Mr. Anriudh Kumar (Goel) or Rashi Goel, including their Legal Heirs and future heirs, will do so at his/her/ter own risk and responsibilities and My Client will not be responsible for any, act, deed, or dealing done by Mr. responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Mairindh Kumar (Goel) or Rashi Goel. Consequently, Mairindh (Goel) or Rashi Goel (Goel) or Rashi Goel) or Rashi Goel (Goel) or Rashi Goel) or Rashi Goel or all purposes. Harshita Aggarwal, Advocate (Enrol. no: D/2431/201)

119A, Il™ Floor, Jangpura Extension New Delhi-110014

# UN atomic watchdog's head in Russia to discuss safety of Ukrainian nuclear plant

AP MOSCOW

The UN's atomic watchdog agency chief is visiting Russia amid concern about a Ukrainian nuclear power plant caught in the crossfire since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in 2022 and seized the facility shortly after.

IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi arrived at the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Tuesday evening, according to Russian state news agency RIA Novosti for talks on nuclear safety in Ukraine. Grossi announced the trip on Monday, the first day of a reg-ular meeting of the agency's 35-

nation board of governors in Vienna. The International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly expressed alarm about the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest, amid fears of a potential nuclear catastrophe. The plant's six reactors

have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features. Speaking to reporters in Sochi on Wednesday, the IAEA chief said he had a "very inten-

sive and exhaustive working

session" with Russian officials,

including from Russia's state

and the foreign and defence ministries."This gave me, and gave us, I think, an opportunity to evaluate the situation at the nuclear power plant," he said. The Kremlin said Wednesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin will also meet with Grossi during his visit. Grossi visited Ukraine in February and crossed the front line to visit the Russianheld plant as part of the IAEA's efforts to prevent a nuclear disaster amid ongoing hostilities. He also held a meeting with President Ukrainian Volodymyr Zelenskyy.The

IAEA chief last met with Putin

nuclear energy agency Rosatom

in October 2022 Before heading to Russia, Grossi told reporters in Vienna that he considered it important to maintain a dialogue with both sides and added that the situation with the Zaporizhzhia plant "continues to be very fragile." He said that he expect ed to discuss "technical issues" related to "the future operational status of the plant" in Moscow.

He also said if the plant is to be restarted, he would need to discuss "what kind of safety evaluation" would be need ed and that he planned to dis cuss the issue of external power supply lines.

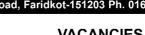
**PPGCL** 

Regd Office: Shatabdi Bhawan, B12 & 13, Sector 4, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-20130 Plant Adress: PO- Lohgara, Tehsil-Bara, Prayagraj (Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh-212107 Phone: +91-120-6102000/6102009 CIN: U40101UP2007PLC032835

**NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST** Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for "Procurement of Main Steam Strainer for HP Stop Valve and HRH Steam

Strainer for IP Stop Valve" for 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power General Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may





Sciences, Faridkot Sadiq Road, Faridkot-151203 Ph. 01639- 256232, 256236 Advt. No. BFU-24/

**VACANCIES** Online applications are invited on or before 07/03/2024 to 31/03/2024 upto

05:00 PM from eligible candidates for the recruitment to the posts of stend ypist (English & Punjabi)-02 (UR-1, SC-1) and Senior Scale Stenographe (English)-2 (UR- I, SC-I) on regular basis at Baba Farid University of Healtl

Sciences, Faridkot For Application form, fee, detail of posts, terms & conditions, visit University site: www.bfuhs.ac.in.

REGISTRAR

00/12/219/2023/33315 Dated CHD :- 3/6/2024

the pioneer

# Sensex, Nifty scale lifetime highs

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty rebounded from early lows and settled at fresh record high levels in a volatile trade on Wednesday following buying in private bank and select IT shares

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 408.86 points or 0.55 per cent to settle at a new record high of 74,085.99. During the day, it went up by 474.14 points or 0.64 per cent to hit an all-time high of 74,151.27. The index had opened lower and later fell to a day's low of 73,321.48 in the first half.

The broader Nifty climbed 117.75 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at a lifetime high of 22,474.05. During the day, it jumped 140.9 points or 0.63 per cent to reach its record high of 22,497.20.

The benchmark indices traded lower in the first half of the session but gains in private banks and pharma shares and firm European markets helped erase losses, analysts said.

Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank rose the most by 2.47 per cent. Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, Sun HCL Technologies, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan and Tata Consultancy Services were among the major gainers.

UltraTech Cement, NTPC, Maruti, JSW Steel, Power Grid and Tata Motors were among the laggards. "Global markets witnessed mixed Broking Ltd, said.

Intra-day on March 6, 2024 117.75 22,497.20 (0.53%)Previous 22,356.30 Close: 22,474.05

signals ahead of the US FED chair's testimony to Congress. The domestic market exhibited a smart recovery in the second half, reversing initial losses as buying picked up in large-cap stocks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. The tone was negative in the first half, tracking weak global cues, however, resilience in banking combined with sharp recovery in the IT and FMCG majors completely changed the mood as the day progressed, Ajit Mishra, SVP — Technical Research at Religare



In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 1.91 per cent and midcap index fell by 0.65 per cent. Among the indices, bankex climbed 0.99 per cent, teck jumped 0.87 per cent, IT (0.66 per cent), consumer durables were among the gainers. Services declined 2.03 per cent, realty

dipped 1.40 per cent, power (1.07 per cent), oil & gas (0.85 per cent) and commodities (0.76 per cent). Shares of JM Financial closed nearly 11 per cent lower after the Reserve Bank imposed restrictions on group firm JM Financial Products Ltd. IIFL Finance Ltd tanked 20 per cent to hit the lower circuit at Rs 382.80 on BSE, extending losses for the second day after RBI action against the company.
Indian-Canadian billionaire Prem

Watsa-backed Fairfax announced its commitment to provide up to USD 200 million (about Rs 1,650 crore) liquidity support to IIFL Finance after the Reserve Bank of India barred the non-bank lender from disbursing gold loans.

Sun Pharma, on the other hand, hit a 52-week high before closing at Rs 1603.90, up by 1.89 per cent, after reports said that the USFDA has classified its Ankleshwar unit as No Action Indicated.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled lower while Hong Kong ended with gains. European equity markets were trading in the green. The US markets ended lower on Tuesday

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.80 per cent to USD 82.59 a

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 574.28 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange

Taking a breather after a record-breaking rally, the BSE benchmark declined 195.16 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 73,677.13 on Tuesday. The Nifty dipped 49.30 points or 0.22 per cent to 22,356.30.



### Ministry seeks feedback on coal gasification scheme

PTI NEW DELHI

 $M_{\text{Wednesday said it has}}^{\text{inistry of Coal on}}$ feedback interested government as well as private entities for establishment of coal gasification plants in the country

The ministry said it has issued three draft request proposals (RFPs) proposals consultation on

gasification scheme. Issued three draft RFPs to feedback interested government PSUs and private investors for the establishment gasification plants in India," it said in a statement.

The stakeholders can provide their feedback and suggestions until March 20, it

The Union Cabinet had earlier approved allocation of Rs 8,500 crore for incentives towards coal gasification having projects, categories

Draft RFPs have been issued separately for each of the three categories.

Category I of the scheme allocates Rs 4,050 crore to the PSUs to support up to 3 projects, offering a lump-sum grant of Rs 1,350 crore or 15 per cent of the capital expenditure, whichever is

In Category II, Rs 3,850 crore is earmarked for both the private sector and PSUs, private sector and F30s, providing each project with a lump-sum grant of Rs 1,000 crore or 15 per cent of the capital expenditure.

Additionally, at least one project in this category will undergo a tariff-based bidding process. Category III includes Rs 600 crore for demonstration projects and small-scale gasification plants, offering a lump-sum grant of Rs 100 crore or 15 per cent of the capital expenditure to entities with a minimum capex of Rs 100 crore and minimum production of 1,500 normal meter cubed per hour of synthesis gas (syngas).

In a separate statement, the ministry said coal plays a pivotal role in India's energy system, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of the total electric generation.

It is also a critical input in various industries such as steel, sponge iron, cement, and paper, the ministry said adding various measures have been taken to promote usage of clean technology in the coal sector.

National Gasification Mission aims to gasify 100 million tonne of coal by 2030 through surface coal/lignite gasification projects.

Thé government has also approved the investment proposal by Coal India Ltd in JVs of CIL-GAIL and CIL-BHEL.

The joint venture (JV) agreement has been formally signed between CIL and Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited for setting up an ammonium nitrate through surface gasification (SCG).

The government is also actively engaged in clean coal initiatives such as extraction of coal bed methane (CBM) gases, exploring Coal to Hydrogen, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), coal beneficiation through washeries to mitigate emissions and enhance environmental sustainability.

**IIFL** Finance shares tumble another 20 per cent



Chares of IIFL Finance Ltd Continued their slide for the second day in a row on Wednesday, falling another 20 per cent, post the Reserve Bank's action against the company. The stock tanked 20 per cent to settle at Rs 382.80 — its lower

At the NSE, it tumbled 20 per cent to Rs 382.20, hitting the lower circuit limit as well as 52week low

circuit limit as well as 52-week

low — on the BSE.

Shares of IIFL Finance Ltd had slumped 20 per cent on Tuesday as well after the Reserve Bank barred the firm from disbursing gold loans, with immediate effect following multiple supervisory concerns, including serious deviations in assaying and certifying the purity of the yellow metal.

In two days, the company's market valuation eroded by Rs 8,395.83 crore to Rs 14,603.17

In a statement on Monday, the

RBI said it has directed IIFL Finance Ltd "to cease and desist, with immediate effect, from sanctioning or disbursing gold loans or assigning/ securitising/ selling any of its gold loans". The company can, however, continue to service its existing

gold loan portfolio through the usual collection and recovery processes, it added. IIFL Finance offers a range of

loans and mortgages. The latest directions from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) pertain to only the gold loan business. Indian-Čanadian billionaire Prem Watsa-backed Fairfax India on Wednesday announced its commitment to provide up to

USD 200 million (about Rs 1,650 crore) liquidity support to IIFL Finance after the RBI barred the non-bank lender from disbursing gold loans.

## 85 per cent Paytm wallet users not to face disruption: RBI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

s many as 80-85 per cent APaytm wallet users will not face any disruption because of regulatory actions, and the remaining users have been advised to link their apps to other banks, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday. The Reserve Bank of India on

January 31 barred Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) from accepting deposits, credit transactions, or top-ups in any customer accounts. The deadline for linking the

wallet attached with PPBL with other banks has been fixed for March 15, the governor said, ruling out any further

The time given up to March 15 is sufficient and there is no need for further extension, he said, adding that 80-85 per

 $F_{\text{Competition Commission}}^{\text{air trade regulator}}$ 

can now impose penalties on

companies based on their glob-

al turnover for violations, with

the government notifying the

amended competition norms.

Till now, the Competition

Commission of India (CCI)

has been deciding penalties on

the basis of a company's

turnover from a particular busi-

ness segment where violations

The corporate affairs ministry

has notified the provisions

have been found.

cent Paytm wallets are linked to other banks, and the remaining 15 per cent have been advised to move on to other banks.

He said that the RBI has taken action against a regulated entity, which in this case is PPBL and has nothing against Fintech companies. Instead, Das stressed that the

RBI favours innovation in the

financial technology sector and has even introduced Sandbox for testing new tools. "RBI is and remains fully supportive of Fintech...RBI is all for Fintech to grow," he said in an interview with ET Now. Giving an analogy, he said, one may own and drive a Ferrari but still one has to obey the traffic rules to avoid accidents. Asked by when the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) will take a decision on

the Paytm payment app

CCI can now impose fines

Vaibhav Choukse, Partner and

Head of Competition Lawa at

JSA Advocates and Solicitors,

said the amendment empowers the CCI to impose a penalty on

the global turnover of a compa-

ny derived from all the products

This amendment is likely to

have major implications on

multi-product companies and

those with global operations and

may lead to unfair and discrim-

inatory outcomes between (I)

domestic companies and the

based on global turnover

from March 6.

and services.



licence, Das said it has to do its internal due diligence.

"So far, as RBI is concerned, we have informed them that we have no objection if NPCI considers the Paytm payment app to continue because our action was against the Paytm payment bank. The app is with the NPCI...NPCI will take a call...I think they should be taking a call shortly," he said. Following regulatory actions, promoter Vijay Shekhar Sharma last month stepped

part-time nondown as executive Chairman of Paytm Payments Bank Limited and the board of the bank has been reconstituted.

Former Central Bank of India chairman Srinivasan Sridhar, former Bank of Baroda Executive Director Ashok Kumar Garg, and two retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers were inducted on the board of the bank.

On growth, Das said, "Our sense and understanding of the

growth in the fourth quarter "And when that happens, obviously, the annual growth will be more than 7.6 per cent. There is quite a good chance of the GDP number for the

high-frequency indicators and

the momentum of economic

activity tells us that 5.9 per cent

current year being very close to 8 per cent," he said.

He also said the latest policy has projected a 7 per cent growth for the next financial On the price rise, Das said the latest inflation print of 5.1 per cent is still 110 basis points away from the target of 4 per

However, he said, the trend of inflation is on the decline and the RBI is now focused on taking inflation to the target of

4 per cent on a durable and

sustainable basis.

## JM Financial shares settle 11 per cent lower

Shares of JM Financial on Wednesday ended nearly 11 per cent lower after the Reserve group firm JM Financial Products Ltd after finding that the company indulged in various manipulations

The stock tumbled 19.99 per cent to Rs 76.43 — its lower circuit limit — during the day on the BSE.

It later recovered some of the early lost ground and ended at Rs 85.28, down 10.73 per cent. It plummeted 19.95 per cent to hit the lower circuit limit of Rs 76.40 on the NSE. Shares of the company ended at Rs 85.50, lower by 10.42 per cent. The company's market capital-

crore. The Reserve Bank on Tuesday finding that the company indulged in various manipulations, including repeatedly helping a group of its customers to bid for various IPOs by using loaned funds.

In a major regulatory action, the central bank has barred the systemically important nondeposit-taking NBFC from providing any kind of financing against shares and debentures, including sanction and disbursal of loans against Initial Public Offering (IPO) of shares as well as against subscription to deben-

isation (mcap) declined Rs The restrictions are with imme-979.03 crore to Rs 8,149.13 diate effect.

Besides directing the entity to "cease and desist" from financly examining any possible regulatory violations and deficien cies on the part of the banks concerned.

JM Financial Products has been allowed to continue to service its existing loan accounts through the usual collection and recov

ery process. In a statement, the RBI said the actions were "necessitated due to certain serious deficiencies observed in respect of loans sanctioned by the company for IPO financing as well as NCD (Non-Convertible Debentures) subscriptions".

### Gold rises ₹150; silver declines ₹400

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices on Wednesday rose by Rs 150 to Rs 65,150 per 10 grams in the national capital amid strong global cues, according to HDFC Securities.

Extending gains for the second straight day, the precious metal touched a fresh lifetime of Rs 65,150 per 10 grams. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 65,000 per 10 grams.

However, silver prices declined by Rs 400 to Rs 74,500 per kg. In the previous close, it had settled at Rs

74,900 per kg.
"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 65,150 per 10 grams, up by Rs 150, taking bullish cues from the overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets,

spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,122 per ounce, up by USD 12 from the previous close.

Helped by continued strong buying momentum on the expectations of a Fed pivot in business travel and improving June, spot gold hit a fresh airport infrastructure, it said.



per ounce before it settled with a gain of 0.61 per cent at USD 2,128 on Tuesday.

The yellow metal posted its fifth consecutive gain as the key US macroeconomic data fell short of forecast," Praveen Singh — Associate Vice President of Fundamental Currencies and Commodities at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

However, silver was quoting lower at USD 23.75 per ounce against its last close of USD 23.88 per ounce.

participants are "Market closely monitoring the testimony of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Wednesday, as it is expected to provide further insights into the Fed's projection regarding monetary policy interest rate cuts in the US.

#### Icra: Domestic air passenger traffic to surpass pre Covid levels this fiscal to expand business PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PTI MUMBAI Icra also projected a significant national air passenger traffic,

13 per cent, credit ratings

agency Icra said on Wednesday.

Home appliances maker Haier is "buoyant" about the fast-growing

Indian market where it aims to

become the second largest player in

the next five years, with increased

investments in manufacturing and product portfolio expansion, the company's India President N Satish

Haier Appliances India, a part of the Chinese multinational Haier Group, is

investing around Rs 800 crore on

capacity expansion here this year, and

has also lined up future expansion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

said on Wednesday

ucts, on Wednesday said it will invest around Rs 850 crore to set up three plants in Gujarat to expand its business and achieve target of Rs 5,000 crore annual revenue by 2028. The company will also invest another Rs 150 crore to establish a water treat ment plant in Gujarat. HyFun Foods has five potato

processing plants in Mehsana district of Gujarat with an annu-

He said the construction of potato flakes plant has started and will be operational this year while the other two will come up by 2025-end.

The domestic air passenger traffic is expected to surpass the pre-Covid levels of 141.2 million and reach 150-155 million this fiscal, registerterm headwinds. ing an estimated growth of 8-

reduction in industry's net loss for the next two fiscals and was also of the view that supplychain challenges and engine failure issues may remain near-

Icra maintains a "stable" outlook on the domestic aviation industry, amidst the continued recovery in domestic and inter-

markets.

FY25.

Annual Growth Rate) for the last six

years, expects to close this fiscal with a

topline of Rs 8,500 crore and expects

to touch the Rs 10,000 crore-mark in

'Last fiscal, we closed at around Rs

7,000 crores and our expectation this

year is to do Rs 8,500 crore and next

fiscal year is Rs 10,000 crore," Satish

and relatively stable cost environment, it said. The momentum in traffic growth is expected to contin-

ue in FY2025 as well, with a similar estimated year-on-year growth, aided by rising demand for both leisure and

#### Haier aims to become second largest player in India market. The overall economics look local souring to contribute up to 80 per cent across products in next two years. Haier India is also increasing exports from its Indian operations to other countries and is scouting for new markets in the Middle East and African countries, besides expanding its retail business in the domestic Haier India, which is growing with a 25 per cent CAGR (Compound increase. According to Satish, this is one of the

India is the third largest market for Haier Group globally, after China and the US. The company operates in the country with two manufacturing units at Pune, Maharashtra and at Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh.

"We are very buoyant about the Indian

very positive for the industry and the business here. We see a lot of positivity among the consumers," said Satish With the growth of the Indian economy, the company expects demand for consumer durables, which currently has a very low penetration in comparison to other countries, to also

"triggers" for demand growth here and young demography with new-age consumers, who are ready to pay for convenience and comfort, would create a market for high-end, valuefor-money products.

"Our target is to be the number two brand in India in the next five years,"

**BUSINESS BRIEF** 



#### POWERGRID PRESENTS INTERIM DIVIDENDS CHEQUE

**NEW DELHI:** Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power, paid ₹2067,68,20,860 as second interim dividend for FY 2023-24 to Government of India on March 5, 2024 at Ministry of Power, New Delhi. A cheque was presented to Cabinet Minister of Power, New and Renewable Energy RK Singh in the presence of Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary (Power), Government of India, RK Tyagi, CMD, G Ravisankar, Director (Finance), Abhay Choudhary, Director (Projects), Dr Yatindra Dwivedi, Director (Personnel), Chetan Bansilal Kankariya, Independent Director, Ram Naresh Tiwari, Independent Director and Executive Directors of POWERGRID.

#### GOYAL TAKES OVER NHPC CHAIRMAN, MD ADDITIONAL CHARGE NEW DELHI: Rajendra Prasad Goyal



Director (Finance), NHPC has taken over the additional charge of the post of Chairman and Managing Director of NHPC Limited, India's premier hydropower company and a Schedule 'A' Enterprise of Government of India on March 1, 2024. Goyal joined NHPC on 18th November 1988 as Finance Professional and he has

risen the professional ladder by virtue of utmost sense of responsibility, ethics and dedication to the Company. He has vast experience of more than 35 years in NHPC in the core areas of Finance, coupled with indepth understanding of Financial, Contractual and Regulatory issues.

### HyFun Foods to open three plants

TyFun Foods, which manu-

and single product company. To avoid steep penalties, the amendment would encourage companies under investigation, especially big techs, to opt for the settlements or commit-

under the amended the one with global operations and

tical restraint cases or, leniency in cartel cases. The amendment also requires

ments mechanism in abuse/ver-

the CCI to publish detailed penalty guidelines to provide clarity regarding the methodology for computing penalties, which is also expected to be published soon, he added.

al capacity of 2.5 lakh tonne. It sells more than 20 ready-to-cook frozen snacks such as french fries, aloo tikki, burger patties and nuggets to HoReCa (hotel, restaurants and canteens) segment, Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) and also in retail markets. It supplies to Burger King and 'We are setting up three new plants in Mehsana for potato flakes, french fries and potato speciality products," HyFun Foods MD and CEO Haresh Karamchandani said at a Press conference.

plans, he said. The company is also increasing indigenisation, which is a key "thrust area" for the company, where it expects

# imposed restrictions on JM ing activities, the Reserve Bank Financial Products Ltd after of India (RBI) said it is separate-

# Nishant makes winning start at Olympic Qualifier

PTI BUSTO ARSIZIO (ITALY)

rorld Championships bronze medallist Nishant Dev started his campaign at the 1st Olympic Boxing Qualifier with an exciting 3-1 win against pugilist British Richardson but the seasoned Shiva Thapa lost here on Wednesday.

Competing in the men's 71kg category, Nishant didn't take much time to settle in against the Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Richardson and went into the attacking mode from the word go, winning the first round 4-1.

The 23-year-old Indian became even more dominant in the second round with the help of his long reach and delivered some effective right hooks to win it 5-0.

He produced a controlled performance in the third round as well and avoided multiple attacks from his opponent while trying to



protect his lead and ultimately won the bout with a split decision.

Asian Six-time Thapa

Ruslan, living up to his reputation with his pinpointed punches, penetrated Shiva's defense multiple times which forced the Indian pugilist to go on the defensive from the start. The defensive approach didn't before the referee stopped the contest in the first round.

against former Asian Championships silver medallist Iran's Gheshlaghi former

Meysam. After going down 2-3 in the first round, Lakshya

Jaismine (60kg) also bowed out of the competition with a 0-5 loss against Japan's Ayaka Taguchi.

Later Wednesday night, youth world champion Ankushita Boro (66kg) will face Sonvico Emilie of France while national champion Sanjeet (92kg) will square off against Aibek Oralbay of Kazakhstan.

The first World Olympic Qualifier is hosting over 590 hovers and will offer a total of

boxers and will offer a total of 49 quotas, including 28 for men and 21 for women, at the

2024 Paris Olympics. Between 45 and 51 boxers will qualify for the second World Qualification Tournament, to be held in Bangkok from May

23 to June 3. India have already secured four quotas for Paris 2024 with Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti

(54kg), Parveen Hooda (57kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) confirming their berths with impressive performances at the

Pune in January, while the

sports ministry-constituted

conducted a similar exercise in

Jaipur from February 2-5. The WFI has also said that

wrestlers competing in a weight category on March 10 - the first day of the trial -- can

also compete in a different

weight category on the second

day in another weight

five shots respectively.
Two other Indians, Sohang
Har Kantor (79) and Ved Sai

Machiraju (85) were T-7 and

behind

Michael Lumy of Indonesia

(39) while another Indian

Ruslaan Alam Khan (44) was third in Boys 8 and Under

Clifton

committee

tournaments available outside LIV Golf and hope to earn enough points and then keep his fingers crossed for a Paris berth.

to represent my country. I have been at the Olympics a couple of times, both times I've played well below my potential and it's

points. Unfortunately, that is the only qualification system even though, in my opinion, that shouldn't be the case. "But because that is the way it is, I am actually trying to play as many tournaments as I can

The former world no. 33 had made the switch to the rival LIV Golf within months of his greatest achievement of finishing runners-up at the The

including the Indian Open later this month, to earn points and be in contention for Paris.

Oman two weeks ago, I'm playing the Indian Open. Most likely, add one-two more tournaments in May before the (Olympic qualification) deadline of second week of June. "So, I'm going to do

Will do everything in my power to earn

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Having played "well below his potential" in the last two Olympics, Indian golfer Anriban Lahiri said he will do everything in his power to qualify for the Paris Games and make a bid for a dream podium finish at the second national title. quadrennial showpiece.

points for Olympic

qualification: Lahiri

Lahiri, who switched to LIV Golf from the USPGA in 2022 and shifted his base from Florida to Dubai, has been handicapped in his endeavour to secure a Paris berth because the new rival entity cannot grant world

ranking points to qualify for the Olympics.
The 36-year-old will have to compete in the limited

"It's very important for me something that I would love to change," said Lahiri during an interaction facilitated by FanCode.

"To be able to do that, I need those world ranking outside of the LIV Golf schedule," said Lahiri.

annual tournament on the PGA Tour, in 2022. Lahiri said he will play a few tournaments in Asia,

"I am playing in Macao next week, I played in

everything in my power to myself opportunity to earn those points however it is possible," said the 2015 Indian Open winner, who will be seen at the DLF Golf & Country Club from March 28-31 after nearly five years bidding for his

"And that's (performance) all I can really control. I can't control the outcome, I can't control whether I do make it to the team but I can put in the effort and my commitment, which is 110 per cent."

After a phenomenal 2015, which saw him win twice on the European Tour, and the T5 finish at the PGA Championship aiding his elevation to the PGA Tour, Anirban had

comparatively quiet year, until he finished runner-up at The Players Championship in 2022. Lahiri would hope luck

shines on him again as he begins the crucial phase of his Olympic qualification journey. He is currently ranked 350 in the world, while Shubhankar Sharma (201) and Gaganjeet Bhullar (229) are the front runners to make the cut for Paris.

At the Tokyo Games, Aditi Ashok was in contention for a medal until the 17th hole before falling short by a stroke to finish fourth.

The 25-year-old from Bengaluru had won the Asian Games silver in Hangzhou last year and also secured her second victory of the Ladies European Tour season, clinching the Costa del Sol

India's Asked about India's chances at the Paris Olympics, Lahiri said: Players Championship, an annual tournament on the PGA Tour, in 2022.

answer because golf is a sport which is very difficult to look at a personal best in terms of a swimmer or an athlete and say 'oh this guy has got a good chance.

Open de Espana.

'I do feel that Aditi has been playing really well and Gagan (Gaganjeet Bhullar) has been playing really well. Shubhankar (Sharma) has played very well on the golf course (in Paris, which will be used during the Olympics). I think Shubhankar should be a lock definitely on that flight to Paris.

Championships medallist Shiva (63.5kg), however, went down to reigning world champion last long as Abdullaev Uzbekistan's Ruslan Abdullaev. continued his attacking display

Meanwhile, national champion Lakshya Chahar (80kg) also made an exit from the competition after losing

fought back well in the second and was looking good in the final round as well. However, the Iranian knocked him out with just 20 seconds remaining on the clock.

Birmingham Commonwealth Asian Games.

#### **National will be** selection trial to pick new core probables: **Hockey India**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hockey India President
Dilip Tirkey on
Wednesday said the women's
national champion in national championship to be held from March 13 in Pune will double up as a selection trial to pick a new group of core probables.

The nationals will be held from March 13 to 23. The women's hockey team has endured an underwhelming run in the past few months, the lowest point being its failure to qualify for this year's Paris

Olympics.
"...We will have participation from 28 states and UTs, with members of the Indian team representing their respective states. Hockey India selectors will be closely watching the performances of all the players and based on their recommendation, a new core group will be selected," Tirkey said in a press release from Hockey

Īndia. Tirkey said no player can take her "place for granted". The national team is without a national coach after Dutchwoman Janneke Schopman resigned from the post citing a hostile work environment.

"Everyone will need to perform to their best potential to make the cut. We need to now focus on making the qualification for the FIH Women's World Cup in 2026 and build towards the LA Olympics with

optimism.
"There is plenty of talent in India, the National is ar Championship important platform to identify new talent and we need to further strengthen the domestic structure to bring them to the core," he said.

Hockey India secretary general Bhola Nath Singh revealed that a domestic league for women hockey players is also in the works. "We are putting our minds together to introduce a few new tournaments in the domestic calender,

particularly for development of women's hockey...

...We are also working on starting a domestic league for women that could further give opportunity for aspiring players to showcase their talent and make their way into the r programme," he said. national

# WFI to allow only genuine wrestlers to compete at trials

wrestlers from their original states to compete at the upcoming trials and one grappler will be allowed to participate in more than one category over two days of this," selection competition, starting March 10.

In its circular issued on Tuesday, the WFI, wrote, "Wrestlers participated in Senior National Championship held at Jaipur will bring their WFI Licence Book, Birth Certificate, Adhar

Khelo India medal

winners now eligible

for Government jobs

Medal winners in all sportspersons Khelo India government in all

"Several wrestlers, The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) would allow represented states like Pradesh Arunachal and Sikkim at the Nationals conducted by the ad-hoc committee in Jaipur. This is wrong and we will now allow a WFI source told

"Sikkim and Arunachal are not even affiliated state bodies. We will not stop anyone from competing but wrestlers has to come from his original state,. Even if a genuine wrestler comes from Arunachal, we will allow him as a special Card to verify the genuineness invitee," said the source.

'progressive revisions to the

government jobs."
"This groundbreaking step

University, Para and Winter

Games — to be eligible for

government jobs.
Additionally, games and events have been clearly defined to ensure in learning to the second seco

defined to ensure inclusivity

Thakur said in his post on X.

These revised rules mark a

across

various sports,



The trials are being held to select the teams for the Asian Championships and Asian Olympic Games Qualifiers, both scheduled to be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

With two sets of senior National Championships

taking place earlier this year, the WFI has told the grapplers coming for the crucial upcoming national trials to bring all necessary documents to prove their "genuineness".

"It will ensure that if a strong wrestler like Aman Sehrawat or Ravi Dahiya misses out on selection in Olympic weight category (57kg) then he can The suspended WFI had gets a chance in non-O organised the Nationals in weight category (61kg). gets a chance in non-Olympic

## Arshvant leads by 4 shots in USKG Malaysian championships

**PTI** ■ KUALA LUMPUR

eader Arshvant Srivastava Lof India blazed the Glenmarie Golf and Country of 3-under 69 in the Boys 13-14 age category on the opening day of US Kids Malaysian Championships competitions will now be eligible for government jobs as per a revised criteria, Sports Minister Anurag Thelwing side of Wolfschaft (Sports Wolfschaft). Thelwing side of Wolfschaft (Sports Wolfschaft) and will be government jobs. This groundbreaking step now extends eligibility to medal winners from the Khelo India Games — Youth, This work is the work of the work here.

It was a fine opening day for the seven-member Indian squad. While Arshvant led his group,

four other Indians were in Top-3 after the first day of the three-day event which carries WAGR points and grants priority points for entry into US Kids World Championships and European Championships later in the year.

whose coach Amit Dubey was birdies against two bogeys, the second of which came on

Arshvant birdied second, sixth, ninth, 13th and the 17th, while he dropped shots

boys Woosung Sun (73) and Geon Kang (74) by four and

with him, shot 69 with five the tricky 18th hole at the 6,256-vard course.

on eighth and 18th. Srivastava led two Korean

category. Jot Sarup Gupta (77) was four shots behind leader Aaron Zhang of China (73) in Boys 10 and under.

T-14 respectively.

In the Girls 13-14 category Kriti Parekh was lying second with a round of 83 and the leader was Wang Enxi (76). A total of 106 junior golfers from 16 countries, including 37 players from Malaysia, are competing in the three-day

### He said the department of personnel and training, in consultation with the sports ministry, has made significant stride in supporting our athletes in making Bharat a sporting superpower," he added. The 14-year-old Arshvant, Mbappé scores twice

AP SAN SEBASTIAN (SPAIN)

Thakur said on Wednesday. Thakur said the move is in

keeping with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "vision of a

robust sports ecosystem,

nurturing talent at grassroots

level and turning sports into a lucrative and viable career

He said the department of

option."

Kylian Mbappé led Paris Saint-Germain back to Champions League quarterfinals on Tuesday, scoring both goals in a 2-1 win over Real Sociedad that kept alive the French club's hopes of winning the hopes of winning the European title in its last season with the France forward.

PSG advanced 4-1 on aggregate, with Mbappé also scoring one of the goals in the 2-0 win in the first leg in Paris three weeks ago. Mbappé has already told PSG he will not stay with the club after this

Despite huge spending to try to win the Champions League for the first time, PSG had been eliminated from the last 16 five times in the last seven seasons, including the last two. It had made it to the semifinals in 2021 and was runner-up in 2020.

"We knew right away that we couldn't go to sleep," Mbappé said. "If they had opened the scoring, they would have pushed on with their fans' backing. We had to dampen their hopes early on. That's what we did, and we're very stopping in play so it could be fixed.

Mbappé's second goal came in the 56th with a run that started from near the midfield line. He sped to the open



happy to be back in the quarterfinals? Mbappé was the difference-

maker again on Tuesday, opening the scoring with a beautiful goal in the 15th minute after a couple of nifty moves inside the area to cut back from near the touchline and fire a firm right-footed shot into the far corner. The shot broke the netting by the far post, prompting a short stoppage in play so it could be

space to collect a long pass by Lee Kang-in and calmly found the net from inside the At 25 years and 76 days,

Mbappé became the secondyoungest player to reach 45 Champions League goals, from group stage to final. Lionel Messi reached that mark at 24 years and 257 days. Mbappé stands at 46 goals. Mbappé hadn't scored in his last two appearances with PSG but had eight goals in his last eight matches with the club. He had been replaced in the last two matches but played through the final whistle on Tuesday.

PSG had won 10 of its last 13 matches in all competitions but was coming off consecutive draws against Rennes and Monaco in the French league. Mikel Merino Mikel

Sociedad's lone goal in the 89th to give the home crowd some reason to celebrate. "We wanted to qualify, but we also wanted to win," Mbappé said. "We had a game plan

that was clear, and we

managed to score early. We

didn't come under too much

pressure, just a little at the

**AP** ■ RIYADH (SAUDI ARABIA)

The Great White Shark is waving the white flag when it comes to LIV Golf being recognized by the Official World Golf Ranking. Greg Norman, the CEO and commissioner of the Saudifunded league, has told his players that LIV has withdrawn its application. LIV Golf first applied for world ranking points in July 2022, about a month after the league launched with the same 48

players competing over 54 holes with no cut. The OWGR board formally rejected the application last October, saying it could not fairly measure a league with the same group of players against 24 other tours around the world that have fuller tournaments and a path to get

'We have made enormous efforts to fight for you and to ensure your accomplishments are recognized within the existing ranking system," Norman wrote to players in a

into them.



LIV Golf abandons its pursuit

letter reported by multiple media outlets. "Unfortunately, the OWGR has shown little willingness to productively work with us."

The four majors use the world ranking as part of their criteria. Representatives from the majors were the ones voting to reject LIV's application last fall. The stronger effect would be the Olympics, which also relies on the world ranking to determine eligibility. Players determine eligibility. Players like former British Open champion Cameron Smith of Australia and Tyrrell Hatton of

England are unlikely to qualify, depending on how they fare in the majors. Peter Dawson, chairman of the

OWGR board, had said in October that "we are not at war" with LIV. He said it was a technical decision, not a political one. Dawson said LIV did not have a format that allowed it to be ranked equitably with other tours and "thousands of players trying to

compete on them."
LIV now has 54 players, though it still has a team competition that

concurrently with individual play. Four players were able to qualify for the 2024 season, and the rosters are set for the 13 tournaments, barring the occasional alternate for injury. By now, it's almost a moot point. LIV has only four players in the top 50, and eight in the top 100. Those numbers are shrinking.
Two of the top 50 - Masters champion Jon Rahm at No. 3 and Hatton at No. 17 - joined

LIV only within the last few months. The others are PGA champion Brooks Koepka (No. 30) and Smith (No. 50). Even if LIV were to make

adjustments to create more open qualifying, the players would be so far removed from the top that it would be difficult for them to make up ground.

The only points LIV players get now are when they play the European and Asian tours. Joaquin Niemann (No. 76) won the Australian Open and had two other top-5 finishes in co-sanctioned European tour

# INDIA TO PRESS FOR 4-1 AGAINST ENGLAND

ndia's premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin will be Leyeing a memorable outing in his landmark 100th Test when the unassailable hosts face a fallen England in the finale of what has been a riveting five-match series, here on Thursday.

India maintained their envious record at home by sealing the series in Ranchi and now, they will be looking for another favourable result to extend their lead in World Test

Championships standings. The pitch and the cold weather, that is making the English feel at home, have been the two big talking points going into the game.

The maximum temperature is expected to hover around 10 degrees for the opening two days before rising over the weekend.

The pitch wore a flat look on the eve of the game but the moisture seeped underneath will keep the pacers interested in the early hours of play on all days. Though traditionally, the venue

favours fast bowlers, the role of spinners can't be discounted and they did play a big part in India's win over Australia in the one and only Test played here back in 2017.

In the recently held four Ranji Trophy games, the teams were able to score 300 plus on multiple occasions with the highest total of the season being 482 posted by Baroda. Ashwin and John Walls 100 plus 100 p

whom will make their 100th Test appearance on Thursday, expressed contrasting views on the surface going the match. Bairstow found the pitch 'nice' while Ashwin said both teams will be entering unknown territory considering the cold weather.

India are, however, unlikely to tinker with their bowling combination of

two pacers and three spinners.
Jasprit Bumrah will return to bolster the attack with Mohammed Siraj being the second pacer. Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav, who has been able to play only 11. Tests since making a successful debut back here in 2017, will share the duties in the spin department.

K L Rahul not regaining full fitness even for this game could provide another opportunity to the struggling Rajat Patidar, who has found bizarre ways to get out in his debut series, aggregating only 63 runs in six innings at number four. The game could be his one last chance to keep a place in the squad. Devdutt Padikkal, who is a top-order batter, is another option that the team management has in the middle-

Two-Test-old Sarfaraz Khan could



not score big in Ranchi after a stellar debut in Rajkot and he will be desperate to make it big before the red ball season comes to a close. The rest of the batters have also made

their presence felt over the course of five games especially Yashasvi Jaiswal, who is within touching distance of becoming the second Indian after the great Sunil Gavaskar to amass 700 runs in a series.

MENTAL FATIGUE HASN'T SET

IN AS ENGLAND AIM TO END TOUR ON A HIGH: England have already lost the series, their first in the 'Bazball' era, but there is still plenty to play for before they return

home after a long tour. Bairstow's 100th Test milestone will be celebrated through the week and by the looks of it, the England cricketers are enjoying in this scenic town with the cold weather adding to their comfort.

The right-hander has been well below par in the series and would be aiming to make his 100th Test outing an unforgettable one by regaining his lost form.

England fans have also arrived here in big numbers, giving the players another reason to come up with a special performance.

'Î don't think that anyone is thinking like that," Ben Stokes said on Tuesday when asked if players are already thinking about returning home.

for England is special. That's just our mentality and our mindset, regardless of where you are, or how long you've been away. But that shouldn't take away from the fact that this place is pretty special," the skipper told the travelling British

media. England, who went with only one specialist pacer at the start of the series and had two of them featuring in the last game, will continue with the latter formula here too.

Veteran James Anderson will partner Mark Wood, who will replace Ollie Robinson.

Shoaib Bashir, who is nursing a sore spinning finger, and Tom Hartley, have come of age in their debut series and will be the two specialist

INDIA: 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, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep

**ENGLAND XI:** Ben Stokes (C), Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Jonny Bairstow, Ben Foakes, Tom Hartley, Mark Wood, James Anderson, Shoaib Bashir.



### Rohit aces captaincy test

PTI DHARAMSALA

The contest against England's 'Bazballers' was probably the biggest Test of Rohit Sharma's captaincy at home and not only did the India skipper ace it, he also got to "learn a lot" about his leadership in what he described as a "series of comebacks"

India have been put under pressure in all the four Tests played thus far but after the Hyderabad debacle, the hosts managed to put the pressure back on the opposition to seal the series in Ranchi. The finale starts here on Thursday.

Rohit struggled to define the England but gave the opponents due credit.

"Honestly, I don't know what Bazball means... Whether it is to go and strike? whether it is to go and defend and wait for the loose ball? because I've not seen any wild swinging from anyone. I don't know exactly what this term means," Rohit said on

Wednesday. "But yeah clearly they've played better cricket than the last series they were here. And you've got to give credit to two of their batters who got big hundreds (Ollie Pope and

Ben Duckett," he added. Earlier, Duckett suggested that the series' leading run-getter Yashasvi Jaiswal learned a lot from the opponents' fearless approach. Rohit was amused when reminded of that remark.

"I think there was this guy called Rishabh Pant in our team. Probably Ben Duckett hasn't seen him bat," he quipped.

India are expected to win at home but what made the feat remarkable was that the home team bossed over 'Bazball' in the absence of senior players including Virat Kohli, Mohammed Shami and K L Virat Rahul, who only played the

series-opener.
It forced India to play four debutants in Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel, Akash Deep and Rajat Patidar.

Besides Patidar, all the rookies were able to make an impact and the MP batter would be desperate to make amends here.

On the eve of the final Test, Rohit was asked about his thoughts on the fiercely fought series and his learnings from it, and he had a lot to say.

...There are a lot of different challenges that came our way right from Test match No. 1 till now. During the series as well, as a captain, this was probably the series where I got to learn a lot about how to utilise the players I have at their best," said Rohit.

"And when the pressure is put back on you, how to respond to certain situations of the game. I am glad that I was captaining this series, it made me understand where I have lacked as a captain as well and what are the things I need to do differently.

'Well, learnings from this series are big. Obviously, there is one more (match) to well, but yeah different challenges are thrown at you, that is where the captain is looked up to.

Considering the recent past, rank turners were expected in the series but sporting tracks were laid out for the first four games and the Dharamsala surface too wore a flat look a day before the game.

Was the series win on good tracks more pleasing for the Indian captain?

"I have a different take on this because whether it is a rank turner or a good pitch, you have to win. Rank turner is not just for us but for them as well. So both teams play on that and both teams have an advantage or disadvantage.

"I won't say that I am satisfied to win on a pitch like this. It's good but a win is a win. The way we won is important for me because a lot of time, we were behind in the game and we bounced back from there,"

he said. "From the first Test to the Ranchi Test. We were ahead in Hyderabad but lost that Test. The Vizag Test went neck-to-neck. In Rajkot, we scored big but they came back to bat well and it was important for us to come back and we did. Basically, it has been a series of comebacks for us. We have come back from being down in one session to

dominating the next."
How the you youngsters, especially debutants, responded in tense situations

pleased Rohit the most. Throughout the series you must have seen that we have absorbed pressure and put it back on the opposition. This has been satisfying, especially with a group of boys, who have not been under such pressure situations," he said.



# Looks like absolute belter: Stokes on Dharamsala pitch

PTI DHARAMSALA

 $E_{\text{called}}^{\text{ngland captain Ben Stokes}} \\ \text{Ecalled} \quad \text{the Dharamsala} \\ \text{pitch an absolute belter and}$ that is the main reason why he did not pick an extra pacer for the fifth and final Test against India starting here on Thursday. Dharamsala is colder than

keeping the pacers interested but considering no grass has been left on the surface, the England batters are licking their lips. Bringing in Mark Wood for Ollie Robinson was the only

playing eleven. "Before we even got here, we were probably thinking it was going to be a three seamer one spinner attack but then when we saw the wicket and then saw it again today, I think

change England made to their

going with two seamers and two spinners is probably the right call," said Stokes in a pre-match press conference.

We felt there would probably a bit more grass on the wicket just because of where we are but overall the wicket looks an absolute belter. So playing two seamers and still having Bash (Shoaib Bashir) and Tom gives us a good mixture when you're a little bit unsure of what it will do as the Test goes on," he added.

India handed England their first series defeat in the 'Bazball' era heralded by Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum.

England would like to go back home with a 2-3 series result but Stokes was quick to admit that India played the key moments better than them after their comeback win in the series-opener.



"At 3-1, you think it's not been a success but I look at it with completely different angles to is great at the end of a long that and I think we've tour when you play five definitely progressed as a team even though we haven't got the results we wanted. You know, 3-2 sounds better than 3-1 or 4-1 and that's obviously what we're looking to do.
"It's not worked out that way

got one last push here which games. It's a great ground to do it at and a lot of Barmy Army are coming in to support us this week. So, very excited," he said.

Stokes also revealed that off-spinner Bashir and pacer

champions Mumbai in the

**BRIEF SCORES:** 

Vidarbha 170 & 402 in 101.3

overs (Aman Mokhade 59, Yash Rathod 141, Akshay Wadkar 77; Anubhay Agarwal 5/92) beat **Madhya Pradesh** 

252 and 258 in 81.3 overs (Yash Dubey 94, Harsh Gawali 67; Aditya Sarwate

2/56, Aditya Thakare 2/45,

Yash Thakur 3/60, Akshay

Wakhare 3/342) 62 runs.

final from March 10.

Ollie Robinson, who has not been picked for the game, have upset stomachs. They both woke up with

slightly upset stomachs and the day before the game you don't want to put anybody at risk so we've decided to keep them away from the team," said Stokes. There was a lot of talk England's aggressive batting approach before the start of the series and the shatter continued through the chatter continued through the first four Tests.

Following their maiden series defeat, Stokes was asked if Rohit outsmarted the entire England unit, Stokes was not amused. "I will let you decide," said

Stokes in a terse response and went on to add that he doesn't ask people to write about him. JIMMY IS PHENOMENAL:

At 41 years of age, James

of his game and is two wickets away from the 700-mark. Stokes can only doff his hat to Anderson. "Jimmy coming up to 700

wickets, it's phenomenal to think about, especially as a seam bowler. Amazing career to date, and I can't see him stopping.
"Being 41, showing that hunger and desire to get better every single day is

testament to his attitude and commitment to the game." Stokes also added that India have been the better team on

the skills front. The thing I look back on is when the game has been in the balance, India have been

better than us in those moments on more than one occasion. In the first game we needed to bowl India out for 220 and were a lot better than

## Mom said from hospital bed you should go back as Test match is on: Ashwin

PTI DHARAMSALA

Lying in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of a Chennai hospital, Chitra Ravichandran was slipping in go and I am sure I will | and out of consciousness but she had Ravichandran Ashwin when she saw him by her bedside — "Why did you

> Hours after becoming only the second Indian bowler after Anil Kumble to take 500 Test wickets, Ashwin rushed back to his home in Chennai during the third game

against England in Rajkot after coming to know that his mother had been hospitalised following a

blackout. "When I landed and got to the hospital, my mom was slipping in and out of first thing she asked me was, 'Why did you come?' The next time she was conscious, she said, "I think you should go back because the Test match is happening," Ashwin told 'ESPNCricinfo' on the eve of his 100th Test.

The off-spinner emotionally recalled



how his parents Ravichandran and Chitra worked their "backsides off" to help him realise their collective

and to facilitate my career. It hasn't "They have eliminated anything that them. It's been a big roller-coaster for them — going through the emotions and ups and downs that I myself do," the 37-year-old said. Ashwin, at times, did feel that the sport meant more to his family than

thirties and my dad still watches a game like he would watch my first international game. It means a lot to cricketing dream. them. Compared to what it means to them, it definitely means less to me. them. Compared to what it means to comes in the way of my c has been the sole purpose of their lives ever since I can remember," he

> Ashwin's father is an avid cricketwatcher and the former club cricketer is present even at the most nondescript grounds to watch TNCA first division league.

said.

Ismail bowls fastest

### Vidarbha defeat Madhya Pradesh by 62 runs, to meet Mumbai in final

The pace bowling pair of Aditya Thakare and Yash Thakur battered the Madhya Pradesh tail as Vidarbha defeated their rivals by 62 runs to set up a Ranji Trophy title clash with Mumbai, here on Wednesday.

Madhya Pradesh, who were in a precarious position at stumps on day four at 228/6 requiring 93 more runs to win, withered in the face of hostile bowling from the duo who shared the spoils in the first session of the final day to earn Vidarbha a memorable semifinal win.

Madhya Pradesh were finally bundled out for 258 in 81.3 overs as their hopes of entering the final for the third time in the premier domestic tournament were dashed. This is Vidarbha's third entry

into the Ranji final, and on

both the occasions they have

won the title, defeating Delhi (2017-18) and Saurashtra (2018-19) respectively. Chasing a target of 321 for victory, Madhya Pradesh, the 2021-22 Ranji champion, were still in the match despite losing six wickets, but

Thakare and Thakur were on



and movement.

Overnight batter Kumar Kartikeya, who had just taken guard when the stumps were called on Tuesday, fell for a duck, cleaned up by Thakare after facing just four balls. Anubhav Agarwal was the next to depart, clean bowled for a duck by Thakare, leaving virtually extinguishing their chances of making it to the Ranji final for the third time. Saransh Jain tried to keep the innings alive but could add just nine runs to his overnight score of 16 before Yash Thakur sent his stumps flying to bring more joy to the Vidarbha camp.

Kulwant Khejroliya too went cheaply to signal celebrations in the Akshay Wadkar-led MP tottering at 234 for 8 and

Vidarbha will take on 41-time

"I am in the second half of my

African Couth Shabnim Ismail created history by bowling the fastest delivery ever recorded in women's cricket, breaching the 130kph barrier for the first time since the introduction of

speed guns. Playing for Mumbai Indians in their Women's Premier League (WPL) match against Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Ismail shattered the record by clocking 132.1km/h (82.08mph), her thunderbolt smashing into the pad of former Australia captain Meg

Lanning.
It was the second ball of the third over of the match on Tuesday, prompting the MI players to appeal in unison, only to be turned down by the umpire.

Ismail, who appeared for South Africa in all eight previous ICC Women's T20 World Cups and only retired from international cricket following last year's tournament on home soil, had previously been clocked as bowling at 128km/h (79.54mph) against the West Indies in 2016 and at 127km/h twice during the most recent



edition of the Women's World Cup in 2022.

When asked during a postmatch interview breaking the record, Ismail played down the effort and indicated she "doesn't actually look at the big screen when I'm

bowling." Ismail, however, delivered four expensive overs to finish with figures of 1/46 as the Mumbai Indians went down to the Delhi Capitals by 29 runs. She was especially taken to the

cleaners by Shafali Verma, who smashed the bowler for three successive sixes in her third over. This was Delhi's fourth win on

the trot as they moved two points clear of Mumbai with eight points from five matches.

damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement befor responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisements Printed and published by Shobori Ganguli for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., Regd Office:-100k Milap Bhawan, 8/A Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455, Corporate Office:- 201-205, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-69342500 and printed at Jagran Prakashan Ltd, D-210, 211 Sector-63, Noida (U.P.). Editor-in-Chief Shobori Ganguli AIR SURCHARGE of ₹ 2.00 East: Calcutta, North: Leh West: Mumbai & Ahmedabad South: Bangalore & Chennai. Central: Khajuraho. Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226 016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any