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12 SPORTS



Prominent BJP MPs Axed in Second LS List

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

PARTY MARCHES AHEAD WITH ITS BEST FACES



Left to right: Nitin Gadkari, Manohar Lal Khattar, Piyush Goyal, Anurag Thakur, Anil Baluni, Pralhad Joshi and Tejasvi Surya

Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal, Anurag Singh Thakur, along with three former Chief Ministers Manohar Lal Khattar, Trivendra Singh Rawat, and Basavaraj Bommai, and BJP media chief Anil Baluni, made it to the second list released by the BJP on Wednesday.

The list includes 72 candidates from 11 States for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Of the 72 seats for which the party announced its candidates, 20 each are from Maharashtra and Karnataka, seven from Gujarat, six each from Haryana and Telangana, five from Madhya Pradesh, two each from Delhi, Uttarakhnd and Himachal Pradesh, and one each from Tripura, and Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. With the new list, 267 candidates have been announced by the party. Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur has been pitted from Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur seat, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari from Nagpur, Piyush Goyal from Mumbai North, Pralhad Joshi from Dharwad, Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje from Bangalore North. This is the first time that Goyal will be

contesting the Lok Sabha election. While Gadkari retained his Nagpur seat after there was a little uncertainty as his name did not feature in the first list of the candidates for the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Gadkari had won the seat consecutively in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls. A day before the BJP's second list was announced, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray asked Gadkari to leave the BJP if he was being "insulted". Thackeray said the Maha Vikas Aghadi will ensure Gadkari's victory in the Lok Sabha polls. Gadkari replied saying Uddhav's "offer" was "immature and ridiculous". Manohar Lal Khattar, who resigned as the Chief

DELHI: Six out of seven MPs dropped



HANS RAJ HANS HARSH VARDHAN MEENAKSHI LEKHI GAUTAM GAMBHIR PARVESH VERMA RAMESH BIDHURI

All former CMs accommodated

- Former Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar
- Former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai
- Former Uttarakhnd Chief Minister Trivendra Singh

Minister of Haryana on Tuesday, will contest the elections from Karnal constituency, Trivendra Singh Rawant from Haridwar and Basavaraj Bommai has been fielded from Haveri. Interestingly, hours before he was named as the BJP candidate for the Karnal Lok Sabha seat, former Haryana

Chief Minister Khattar on Wednesday announced he was resigning as the MLA from the Karnal Assembly segment. In Delhi, the BJP has dropped six out of its seven sitting MPs except Manoj Tiwari, who has been given Haryana, the BJP has fielded Banto Kataria from Ambala - S C parliamentary seat. The seat has been lying vacant since the death of her husband and former Union Minister Rattan Lal Kataria last year. The party re-nominated its sitting MPs in Gurugram, Bhiwani, Mahendragarh and Faridabad — Rao Inderjit

cricket. Malhotra is the former Mayor of erstwhile East Delhi Municipal Corporation. Chandolia, a former Mayor of North Delhi, was fielded by the BJP, dropping outgoing MP from North West Delhi reserved constituency Hans Raj Hans who is a famous Punjabi Sufi singer. In Uttarakhnd, the BJP has replaced two former Chief Ministers — Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Tirath Singh Rawat — who represent Haridwar and Garhwal (Pauri) seats respectively in the current Lok Sabha. BJP chief spokesperson Anil Baluni will also be fighting his first Lok Sabha poll as the BJP fielded him from Garhwal, replacing former Uttarakhnd Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat. Former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Ashok Tanwar will contest as BJP candidate from Sirsa. In Haryana, the BJP has fielded Banto Kataria from Ambala - S C parliamentary seat. The seat has been lying vacant since the death of her husband and former Union Minister Rattan Lal Kataria last year. The party re-nominated its sitting MPs in Gurugram, Bhiwani, Mahendragarh and Faridabad — Rao Inderjit

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Haryana new CM Saini wins trust vote in Assembly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH



Nayab Singh Saini-led BJP Government in Haryana on Wednesday won the trust vote by voice vote in the State Assembly here, a day after he took oath as the new Chief Minister.

The Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) MLAs left the House when the trust vote was taken up. The JJP had issued a whip, asking its 10 legislators to remain absent from the Assembly during voting on the confidence motion. Speaker Gian Chand Gupta put the trust vote for voting by voice vote which the Saini Government won. Former State Home Minister and senior BJP leader Anil Vij was present in the House. During the voice vote, besides JJP's 10 MLAs, lone legislator of the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) was also not present in the House. Congress members asked Speaker Gupta to conduct voting through secret ballot but he refused saying there was no provision in the rules for the same.

Continued on Page 2



File Photo: Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

Metro corridors set to reduce travel time in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved two new corridors of Delhi Metro Phase-IV project — Lajpat Nagar to Saket G-Block and Inderlok to Indraprastha. The total project cost of the two corridors is estimated at Rs 8,399 crore, which will be sourced from the Union and Delhi Governments, and international funding agencies. These two lines will comprise 20.762 kms. The Inderlok — Indraprastha corridor will be an extension of the Green Line and will provide interchange with the Red, Yellow, Airport Line, Magenta, Violet and Blue Lines, while the Lajpat Nagar - Saket G Block corridor will connect the Silver, Magenta,

Pink and Violet Lines. The Lajpat Nagar — Saket G Block corridor will be entirely elevated and will have eight stations. The Inderlok — Indraprastha corridor will have 11.349 kms of underground lines and 1.028 kms of elevated lines comprising 10 stations. The Inderlok — Indraprastha Line will provide enhanced connectivity to the Bahadurgarh region of Haryana as commuters from these areas will be able to travel on the Green Line to directly reach Indraprastha as well as various other areas of central and east Delhi. These new lines will provide direct connectivity and reduce travel time for passengers, eliminating the need for long detours.

Continued on Page 2

Electoral bond details to be disclosed in time: CEC

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The office of the Election Commission of India is set to witness hectic activity on Thursday as the Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar will be first analysing the data related to the electoral bonds before sharing the details in the public domain as per the directions of the Supreme Court of India.

The State Bank of India (SBI) has already submitted the data related to the electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India on March 12. The deadline to upload the data in the public domain is March 15.

"The SBI was supposed to submit the data by March 12. They have given us the details in time. I will go back and look at the data (and) would disclose it in time," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told reporters here in Jammu after reviewing the poll preparedness ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

The SBI is the authorised financial institution to issue electoral bonds. The SBI on Wednesday told the SC that a total of 22,217 electoral bonds were purchased by donors between April 1, 2019 and February 15 this year, out of which 22,030 were redeemed by political parties. The poll panel arrived in Jammu on Wednesday to review preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha and much-awaited Assembly polls in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir after holding consultations with the political parties in Srinagar. Sharing his assessment before leaving



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar addresses a Press conference on poll preparedness for the upcoming Lok Sabha election, in Jammu, on Wednesday

for New Delhi, Rajiv Kumar said, "The Commission is concerned about holding Lok Sabha and Assembly elections but the final call on whether to hold two elections concurrently will be taken after thorough consultations with the security agencies and political parties." He, however, said elections will be held soon without much delay. "The majority of political parties we met in Srinagar and Jammu demanded that Assembly and Lok Sabha polls be held simultaneously," Kumar told media persons at Jammu.

"Regarding holding Lok Sabha and Assembly polls simultaneously, we will take a final call after a thorough security review and consultations with the political parties."

Continued on Page 2

Congress woos women voters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

From ₹one lakh cash transfer to 50 per cent quota in jobs for women: The Congress on Wednesday announced five big poll promises to woo the women voters.

Under the ambitious 'Nari Nyay Guarantee' which has promised financial assistance of ₹1 lakh to women from poor families every year, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the party's guarantees were "pathar ki lakeer" and not a "jumla".

At a women specific event in Maharashtra's Dhule district, the 'Nari Nyay Guarantee', outlined five key announcements — 'Mahalaxmi', 'Aadhi Aabadi Poora Haq', 'Shakti Ka Samman', 'Adhikar Maitri', and 'Savitribai Phule Hostel'.

Kharge said announcement of the 'Nari Nyay' guarantee will set a new agenda for the country's women. He said prior to this, the Congress has announced its guarantees on participatory



justice, farmer justice and youth justice. "Needless to say, our guarantees are not empty promises and statements," he said in his post in Hindi on the microblogging platform. "Our words are set in stone. This is our record from 1926 till now, when our opponents were being born, we have been making manifestos, and fulfilling those declarations," Kharge said.

Continued on Page 2

Pakistani Hindus in India prepare citizenship applications under CAA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With the Centre opening the platform for verification regarding the notification of the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), Pakistani Hindus living in India have now started filing online citizenship applications in Delhi, Nagpur, and elsewhere, according to sources in the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

About 2,000 Pakistani Hindus living in Nagpur are preparing to seek Indian citizenship, with a similar number documented in the national Capital. The migrants from the neighbouring country are navigating the intricacies of filing online applications that will enable

them to reside in India without the hassle of seeking visa extensions and other paperwork. While protests by certain sections against the CAA continue in Delhi, Assam, Karnataka, and West Bengal, leaders from Opposition parties question the CAA notification, alleging that only minorities are being targeted.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur lashed out at the Opposition, saying thousands of Dalit families from neighbouring countries now living in India were awaiting citizenship. "Do those who came from Pakistan and whose two-three generations have passed have no right to citizenship?" he asked. After the partition of the



country, then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru promised that minorities living in neighbouring countries would be protected, but Thakur

charged that the Congress did nothing for it in the last 75 years. Meanwhile, some relatives of beneficiaries who entered the country in recent years are

seeking relaxation in the cutoff date to accommodate them. The Centre implemented the CAA on Monday, notifying the rules four years after the law was passed by Parliament to fast-track citizenship for undocumented non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014. Vinod, who hails from the Sindh province of Pakistan, said he and seven of his family members crossed over to India through the Wagah-Attari border on a visit visa on December 31, 2014. He said they hadn't even dreamt about the 'life-changing' event that would unfold 10 years later, referring to the CAA. He is among those who have already submitted their online applications for Indian

citizenship. A resident of Nagpur's Jaripatka locality, which has a sizable population of Sindhis, Vinod mentioned that he was a cloth merchant in Pakistan when he came to India with his wife, two children, parents, and two other relatives. "We have been staying here on long-term visas. We are thrilled with the implementation of the CAA as we will now become citizens of India," said Anand, his colleague.

Both thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for making the CAA a reality. Sources said the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been receiving requests for relaxation of the cutoff date for some people who came to India six months after his entry.

Sensex tanks 900 points

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark index Sensex on Wednesday crashed over 900 points to sink below the 73,000 level due to widespread selling pressure amid a sharp fall in smallcap and midcap indices.

Besides, deep losses in utility, energy and metal stocks and recent selling by foreign investors added to the gloom, analysts said.

Benchmark indices started the session on a positive note, but the selling intensified during afternoon trade, with all sectoral indices ending in the red. The 30-share index tanked 906.07 points or 1.23 per cent to settle at 72,761.89. During the day, it dropped 1,152.25 points or 1.56 per cent to 72,515.71.

Opposition parties speaking lies about CAA, claims BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday accused Opposition parties of stoking communal passion by speaking "lies" about the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, as the Modi government came under attack over its implementation. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva hit back at Arvind Kejriwal, charging he has hurt the sentiments of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Christian refugees living in the country. Kejriwal on Wednesday said the

implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act ahead of the Lok Sabha polls was "dirty vote bank politics" of the BJP and asserted that people want this law to be repealed. With this law, the BJP-led government at the Centre has opened the floodgates for the arrival of a large number of poor minorities from Pakistan and Bangladesh into India, he said at a press conference. The Union Home Ministry on Monday notified the rules for the implementation of CAA that was passed by the Parliament in December 2019. The law grants Indian

citizenship to the persecuted religious minorities — Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Christian and Parsi — from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who came to India before December 31, 2014. Even if 1.5 crore of the minorities in neighbouring countries come to India following the implementation of the CAA, a dangerous situation will arise, he claimed. "It will be a migration bigger than that of 1947... Law and order will go for a toss. There could be an increase in rape and dacoity," said Kejriwal who is also the convener of



the Aam Aadmi Party. There are 3.5 crore minorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, he said and alleged, "The BJP wants to

spend the money of our people in settling poor migrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh by giving them houses and jobs here."

He claimed that the BJP stands to gain in the coming elections as poor minorities from the neighbouring countries settling in India will become its vote bank. Implementation of the CAA ahead of the Lok Sabha polls was a "dirty vote bank politics" of the BJP, Kejriwal said. The country demands scrapping of CAA, he said and asked people to vote against the BJP if the law is not repealed. Kejriwal said that had the BJP government at the Centre done its work in its 10-year rule, there would have

been no need for it to implement CAA ahead of the polls. Kejriwal said today the biggest problem facing the country is inflation and unemployment. It is becoming difficult for anyone to run a household; inflation is at its peak. On the other hand, our youth are running from pillar to post to get employment. They are being beaten up. On one hand there is a huge army of unemployed in the country and the BJP government in Haryana is sending youths to die in Israel where a war is going on. On the other hand, the BJP wants

to settle Pakistanis in India and provide employment to their children." "What kind of nonsense is this to bring people from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan to India and give the rightful employment of our children to them," Kejriwal charged, adding, "In the last 10 years, 11 lakh industrialists and businessmen left India. If the BJP must bring people to the country, it should bring them back to provide jobs." The AAP supremo appealed to the citizens to demand the revocation of the CAA.

Traffic curbs in city for farmers Mahapanchayat at Ramlila today

SAMAR PANDEY ■ NEW DELHI

With the Delhi Police granting permission to a 5,000 member group of protesting farmers under Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) for holding the 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' at the Ramlila ground in Delhi on Thursday, the Delhi Police has made elaborate security arrangements at borders so that no heavy vehicles including tractors are 'sneaked' inside the city. The traffic police have issued an advisory for the commuters to avoid roads leading to Central Delhi. Deputy Commissioner of Police (central) M Harsha Vardhan said that farmers have been allowed to hold the 'mahapanchayat' with the gathering to not significantly exceed 5,000. He said the farmers have given them the undertaking where they were asked to not come with tractors, without any weapon and also promised that they will not hold any march in Delhi. Individuals travelling to ISBT, Railway Station or Airport



have been advised to plan their journeys with sufficient time in advance. A senior police official advised the general public to allocate ample time when scheduling road trips via the diverted routes. The majority of farmers are expected to arrive by trains, while buses and four-wheelers will be adorned with window stickers and organisation flags to facilitate hassle-free transportation to and from Delhi. Once the farmers are dropped off, the vehicles will be parked in designated spots. According to the SKM, more than 50,000 farmers from Punjab are expected to attend

the event where a resolution will be passed to intensify the fight against policies of the Modi Government. The umbrella body of farmers' organisations, which had spearheaded the 2020-21 farmers' protest at Delhi borders against the three central agriculture laws, stressed that it would be a peaceful gathering. The Police released a traffic advisory concerning the farmer's protest, indicating that traffic flow at city borders will be impacted by picketing and checkpoints, and urged commuters to make appropriate arrangements.

IIT BHU graduate held in fake cancer drug racket case

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

An IIT-BHU graduate was arrested for his alleged involvement in a 'fake' cancer drug racket on Wednesday, a day after the Delhi Police nabbed seven people in connection with the case. Aditya Krishna (23), who was arrested from Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, worked as a supplier of spurious cancer drugs in Pune and the NCR region, police said. The Delhi Police on Tuesday arrested seven people, including Neeraj Chauhan (38), from several locations in the national capital for allegedly manufacturing and supplying spurious 'life-saving' cancer chemotherapy drugs. According to police, Krishna, a BTech graduate from IIT-BHU, operated a chemist shop in Muzaffarpur and used to purchase the fake cancer drugs from Chauhan. Krishna was brought to Delhi and was produced before a court, the official said. 'He will be taken in

police custody for further investigation.' The police on Tuesday arrested seven people, who were allegedly involved in manufacturing and supplying spurious 'life-saving' cancer chemotherapy drugs. According to police, Chauhan, a native of Uttar Pradesh's Baghat, has done a vocational course in medical transcription from a private institute in Delhi. 'He has worked as a manager in the Oncology Department of several reputed hospitals in Delhi and Gurgaon from 2006-2022,' police said in a statement. "In 2022, he started working with the mastermind of the racket Viphal Jain. Since then, he has grown exponentially," they added. Chauhan also runs his own medical tourism company and lured foreigners who come to India for cancer treatment on the pretext of providing affordable chemo injections and leveraging his medical sector expertise. He would then mint money from them in Dollars, police said.

Former Congress, AAP leaders join BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

Some political leaders, including former Congress MLA Balram Tanwar, former AAP MLA from Badarpur Narayan Datt Sharma, former Councillor Ramesh Ambawat and chairman of the Delhi Government's OBC Commission on Wednesday joined the BJP. They joined party in the presence of Union Minister Anurag Thakur, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva and Leader of Opposition South Delhi Lok Sabha candidate Ramvir Singh Bidhuri. Thakur and Sachdeva welcomed everyone into the party by garlanding with party scarf. Union Minister Thakur, welcoming everyone into the party, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" campaign has brought holistic development to the country, and the central government assigns responsibilities based on an individual's merit, rising above caste and religion. He said this time also, the lotus will bloom in Delhi, and due to the developmental policies of



Prominent former Congress MLA Balram Tanwar, along with other Councillors, join BJP in the presence of Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur

the Modi government across the country, it is certain that Narendra Modi will become Prime Minister for the third time. Thakur said when Arvind Kejriwal entered politics, he

swore not to form an alliance with Congress, not to take a bungalow, not to take a car, but today, he has built a palace worth 100 crore rupees, and a swimming pool worth 10 crore rupees in his house.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI

Office of The Executive Engineer, (M-II)
3rd Floor, Narela Zone, Narela, Delhi-110040

No. EE (M-II)/NZ/2024/D-1139 Dated : 26.02.2024

NOTICE

Sh. Narender Singh S/o Sh. Hukum Chand, Nalla Beldar in EE(M-II)Narela Zone has been unauthorized absent from his duty since w.e.f 18.06.2018. He is hereby directed to appear before Sh. Manoj Gupta, Ex. Engineer/M-II, Narela Zone within 07 days of the publication of this notice failing which action as deemed fit under the relevant rules will be taken against him without any further notice.

Ro No. - 97/DPI/MCD/2023-24 Executive Engineer, (M-II) Narela Zone



AFTER ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE TO THE FESTIVAL SPECIAL HOUSING SCHEME, 2023, DDA NOW OFFERS SEVERAL CATEGORIES OF FLATS ACROSS DELHI

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SCs, STs, OBCs my Government biggest beneficiaries, says Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that people from disadvantaged sections like SCs, STs and OBCs are the biggest beneficiaries of his Government's welfare schemes as he accused the previous Congress dispensations of neglecting them and never appreciating their role in the country's progress.

Speaking at the launch of the PM-SURAJ national portal, he cited the election of Ram Nath Kovind and Droupadi Murumu, who come from Dalit and tribal communities respectively, as president to assert that the BJP's efforts to ensure that those from deprived sections reach top positions will continue. The opposition made every effort to ensure their defeat, he said. Taking a swipe at the

cooking gas have benefited deprived sections of society. "SCs, STs, OBCs are the biggest beneficiaries of government welfare schemes for the poor," he added. The Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan and Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan (PM-SURAJ) national portal aims to provide credit support to eligible individuals across the country, including Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes, and sanitation workers. This initiative is set to facilitate financial empowerment and enable entrepreneurship opportunities for the most disadvantaged sections of society. Modi said one lakh beneficiaries from deprived sections have been given Rs 720 crore assistance till now.

Hyderabad Liberation Day befitting tribute to freedom fighters, says Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Wednesday the decision to celebrate September 17 every year as 'Hyderabad Liberation Day' is a befitting tribute to freedom fighters and will ignite the "flame of patriotism" among youth. The central government had issued a notification on Tuesday on the commemoration. In a post on 'X', Shah said it is a historic day as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has decided to celebrate September 17 every year as Hyderabad Liberation Day in honour of the martyrs of the Hyderabad liberation movement. He said the decision is a befitting tribute to the freedom fighters and the martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice to remain a part of Bharat by liberating the Hyderabad

region from the brutal Nizam rule. "I welcome Modi Ji's landmark decision, which will ignite the flame of patriotism among the youth and immortalise our icons of the freedom movement," he said. In the notification, the Union Home Ministry said Hyderabad did not get independence for 13 months after the Independence of India on August 15, 1947, and was under Nizam's rule. The region was liberated from Nizam's rule on September 17, 1948, after a police action named 'Operation Polo'.

The 'Razakars', a private militia, had committed atrocities and defended the erstwhile Nizam rule in Hyderabad. When India gained independence, the Razakars called for Hyderabad state to either join Pakistan or to become a Muslim dominion while resisting its merger with the Union of India. The people of the region fought valiantly against the atrocities of the 'Razakars' to merge the region into the Union of India. On September 17, 1948, the then Hyderabad state was annexed into the Union of India following military action, initiated by the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Modi government has been holding an event on September 17 for the last few years to commemorate 'Hyderabad Liberation Day'. Home Minister Amit Shah has also attended the event in the past.

कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ (छ.ग.)
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना पत्र
नगर पालिक निगम, रायगढ़ द्वारा चलेसमेंट के लिए टेंडर नं. क्रमशः 154023, 154016, 154042, अकायिग शौचालय निर्माण कार्य हेतु टेंडर नं. 153979, 154012 एवं पाईप लाईन विस्तार एवं ओवर टैंक निर्माण कार्य हेतु टेंडर नं. 154031, 154035, 154039, 154041 कुल 09 कार्यों के लिए की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापित, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।

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Notice Inviting e-Tenders
Dated: 13.03.2024
Online lumpsum bids for the following works under "sbm (u) - 2.0" (estimated on uadd isrr (w.e.f. - 02.08.2021) are invited from registered contractors and firms of reputed fulfilling eligibility criteria.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, JEYPORE (R&B) CIRCLE, JEYPORE
Invitations for Bids (IFB)
No. 1165
Bid Identification No. C.C.E.J.C (R&B) - 40/2023-24
Date: 12.03.2024
1. Nature of the work: BUILDING WORK
2. Total No. of Works: 01 (One) No.

Rajnath okays NCC expansion with three lakh cadet vacancies

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified to the general public that I ANISH UNIVAL, residing at PROPERTY BEARING NO. WZ- 189, KHASRA NO. 64/14/1, SADH NAGAR PALAM COLONY NEW DELHI, I am one of the rightful owners (legal heir) of the property located at WZ- 189, KHASRA NO. 64/14/1, SADH NAGAR PALAM COLONY NEW DELHI.

It is to inform to the public at large that Mr. Mohd Amir is Recorded Owner of ONE BUILT UP TWO ROOM SET AT THIRD FLOOR, WITH ROOF RIGHTS, AREA MEASURING 90 SQ.YDS, I.E. 41.805 SQ. METERS, PART OF PROPERTY BEARING NO. J-330-C, OUT OF RECT. NO. 54, KILLA NO.19, SITUATED IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE KHUREJI KHAS, ABADI OF JEXTN, LAXMI NAGAR, ILLAGA SHAHARA, DELHI-92, from Mr. Anasuddin S/o Mr. Raisuddin who is owner through Sale Deed dated 19.01.2023 Vide Duty Registered As Vide Document No. 423, Volume No. 2876, In Book 1, On Page No. 26-36, On 19.01.2023, SR-VIII A, Preet Vihar, New Delhi, and same to be financed & mortgaged by Aditya Birha Housing Finance Ltd. any Person having any type of claim/right/lien/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 15 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, etc. LUCEN LEGAL LLP Office No. B-93B Second Floor, Opposite SBI Bank Sector-2, Noida, UP-201301, Contact# 0120-4269379

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for expansion of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) with the addition of three lakh cadet vacancies. This expansion is expected to cater to the increasing demand for the NCC from educational institutions throughout the country, defence ministry said here on Wednesday. Giving details, officials said from just 20,000 cadets in 1948, the NCC will now have a sanctioned strength of 20 lakh cadets on its roles making it the largest uniformed youth organisation of the world. With NCC being offered as an elective subject as per the National Education Policy 2020, the expansion will be a step towards meeting the aspirations of the youth towards playing a pivotal role as future leaders of the nation. The far reaching impact of this expansion will lead to proportionate distribution of vacancies across all States and Union Territories and would reduce the waiting list of institutions aspiring for the NCC.

CH. CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY, MEERUT (NAAC ACCREDITED with A++ Grade)
RECRUITMENT NOTICE
Online applications are invited from eligible candidates (As per UGC notification 18 July 2018 and subsequent UP Government order no. 1190/सस्तर-1-2019-16(114)/2010 dated 15 October 2019 and first Statutes of University as amended from time to time) for appointment in the various departments in the University.
Online submission of application start from 06.03.2024 to 06.04.2024
Last date of submission of the printout of online filled form (downloaded) is 12.04.2024.
Link for the form and other details: http://www.cesuniversity.ac.in/ccsu/recruitment for further details and eligibility conditions. Registrar

Office of the Superintending Engineer 1st Circle, Public Works Department, Almora
Phone/Fax: 05962-230295 Email: sepwdalm@rediffmail.com
Letter No.: 1215(I)/Nivida-01/2023-24 Dated: 12/03/2024
SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

SALE NOTICE
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-
ICICI Bank Vs Sandeep Kumar, RC NO. 90/2019, IN OA/ 43/2017
Vehicle No.- UP16BE5195, Make and Model - RENAULT FLUENCE, Manf. Year - 2015
Auction Date: March 27, 2024 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Place of Auction:- Godara Yard, Khatwa No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chowk, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec- 17, Sukhrali, Gurugram- 122022
Contact Person:- Swapnil Upadhyay (8126013708)/ Rohit Shrivastava (8657476284)

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Bhawani Singh S/o Shri Arvind Singh Tomar R/o F-11, Pushpanjali Farm Bijwasan, New Delhi-110061, I have changed my name from Bhawani Singh to Bhawani Singh Tomar for all future purposes.
PD(300)C

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general public is informed that the cars with the following car numbers which have completed their life Patrol Cars 15 Years Diesel Cars 10 Years. The MCD drive was confiscated by Pine View Technology Pvt Ltd and has not been claimed by anyone till now. All these vehicle owners are informed to come to the company's office and claim the scrap value of the vehicle. Otherwise, all these vehicles will be scrapped in the next three days.

Table with 7 columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Cost of Tender Form, Earnest Money (Rupee in lakh), Validity of Tender, Time of Completion, Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering. Contains 5 tender entries for road works in Almora.

राज्य निर्वाचन आयोग, उत्तराखण्ड
(निर्वाचन भवन, लाडपुर, मसूरी बाईपास, रिंग रोड, देहरादून) फोन नं-0135-2662254
विज्ञापित संख्या-573/राजनिआ-स्टोर/4156/2024 दिनांक-13 मार्च, 2024
[अल्पकालिक ई-निविदा-मतपत्र मुद्रण (कागज सहित) हेतु]
राज्य निर्वाचन आयोग, उत्तराखण्ड द्वारा नागर निकाय सामान्य निर्वाचन 2024 में लगभग 1272 पदों हेतु 70 जी.एस.एम. ग्रेड-1, सफेद, हवा, गुलाबी एवं नीले रंग के कागज पर अलग-अलग प्रकार के विभिन्न चुनाव चिन्हों के लगभग 6400000 (षोडश लाख) फोटो रजिस्ट्रार मतपत्रों (कागज सहित) के मुद्रण हेतु अनुमती फार्म, जिनके पास पूर्व में उपरोक्त कार्य का अनुभव हो तथा ई-निविदा में उल्लिखित शर्तों को पूरा करते हों, से ही ई-निविदा के माध्यम से ऑनलाईन (Online) तकनीकी बिड (Technical Bid) एवं वित्तीय बिड (Financial Bid) निम्न कार्यक्रमानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है:-



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Peaceful coexistence

Tension over Ladakh calls for diplomacy; confrontation will be detrimental for the region

In recent years, Ladakh has emerged as a flashpoint for territorial control among India, China and Pakistan. Nestled in the Himalayas, the region has witnessed heightened tensions and military standoffs, casting a shadow over peace and stability. Amid this backdrop, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has reiterated the pressing need for constructive engagement among all stakeholders. He is not off the mark: The landmass has the potential of triggering a war among three nuclear weapon States, not to mention the possible involvement of other superpowers with interest in the region. Dr Jaishankar's remarks underscore a fundamental reality: The ongoing tension in Ladakh serves neither India nor China. Instead, it perpetuates a cycle of mistrust and escalatory actions that undermine the prospects of peaceful coexistence and regional prosperity. The Galwan Valley military standoff in 2020 highlighted the fragility of status quo and the urgent need for effective mechanisms to manage and



de-escalate crises. Central to Dr Jaishankar's statement is the recognition that the resolution of tension in Ladakh requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond conventional military posturing. While maintaining a robust defence posture is essential to safeguarding national interests, sustainable peace hinges on dialogue, diplomacy and mutual respect for territorial integrity. To put things in perspective, the Ladakh dispute has roots in history, with the main cause being an ill-defined, 2,100-mile-long border. Rivers, lakes and snow-caps along the frontier mean the line can shift, bringing soldiers face to face at many points, this sparking a confrontation.

The LAC is the de facto border between India and China, but vaguely defined. In this scenario, it is difficult to resolve the deadlock and ascertain the territorial boundary. India's stance on Ladakh aligns with its broader foreign policy objectives, characterised by a commitment to upholding the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of disputes. By emphasising the importance of dialogue and diplomacy, India seeks to create an environment conducive to constructive engagement with all stakeholders. The External Affairs Minister's remarks also highlight the critical role of Pakistan in the regional dynamics. Pakistan's support for cross-border terrorism and its destabilising activities pose significant challenges to regional peace and security. Addressing the issue of terrorism is not only a prerequisite for normalising relations between India and Pakistan but also a vital step towards fostering stability in the South Asian region. As a responsible member of the international community, India advocates for concerted efforts to eradicate terrorism. By advocating constructive engagement and mutual respect, India seeks to pave the way for a stable and prosperous future for the region. Everyone involved should heed rational voices; the last thing anyone wants to hear is the sound of a nuclear explosion.

PICTALK



Artists perform 'Katha Raghunath Ki' during the Nritya Sanrachna, in Guwahati

The menace of paper leaks and cheating



JS RAJPUT

Amid accolades on the global stage, the Indian education system faces critical hurdles, most notably the rampant issue of exam malpractices

Independent India began its journey under extremely painful conditions. It was only because of the legacy of ancient democratic practices and the strength of equal respect for all religions and faiths that it could gradually create a place for itself in the global community of nations. During the last decade, India has acquired a place of adulation and admiration on the global platform. The inherited system of education was in tatters, and the literacy rate was just around 18 per cent.

In spite of the tragedy of partition, rampant poverty, and challenges of food security as well as external security, India slowly and gradually stabilised its democratic practices and that attracted the attention of those who had prophesied that India was not a nation; and after independence, it would collapse! The initial leadership consisted mostly of the freedom fighters who had made great sacrifices for the nation. It created new institutions and strengthened academic and professional centers, institutions and establishments with an eye on the future. It was an insightful initiative established by the young graduates who established themselves as the most sought-after group of young professionals in the best scientific research and technical institutions in developed countries. These young professionals established their intellectual superiority in the NASA-National Aeronautics and Space Agency - of the USA. Subsequently, as is well known, Silicon Valley practically stands 'taken over' by Indian professionals.

India formulated the first national policy on education in 1968 and the next one in 1986/92. After nationwide intensive consultations for over 4 years, the national education policy - NEP 2020 - was finalised and presented to the nation for implementation. This policy has received global appreciation for its insights as well as for pragmatic stipulations and realistic targets. There, however, are several concerns that threaten the smooth implementation of the policy. These require urgent effective remedial measures. One is particularly worried about the ever-increasing practices of



copying and paper leakage. I still remember the touching statement by the girl who topped the Bihar School Board Examination in 2016: 'I only wanted a second division but Chacha ji made me top the Boards!' The latest reports from the Nuh district of Haryana, clearly indicate how unconcerned, insensitive and inefficient our systems are towards this nefarious practice. How could one ignore the recent paper leak in the UP police recruitment examination in which over 48 lakh young aspirants appeared, then to their shock, found that the exam had been cancelled because of the paper leak?

In Rajasthan, 14 police sub-inspectors along with others have been arrested as details of a paper leak and copying during their recruitment exam have appeared recently. In Rajasthan, after 2019, on average, 3 instances of paper leaks per year have been reported. An analysis of paper leaks in 15 states during the last 5 years has brought forth shocking details that 1.4 crore young persons have suffered because of paper leaks. There are no details available on how many culprits and members of the mafia have attracted any serious punishment.

There are reports in circulation that the nakal mafia and paper leak mafia have strengthened

themselves over the years to such an extent that some of them continue to indulge in these nefarious practices on a serial basis.

Obviously, either the establishment is in collaboration, or it is the total incompetence and indulgence in corruption of those agencies that are interested in conducting these examinations. It is worth investigating whether any senior officer has ever been sacked for paper leaks in any of the examinations conducted by the school boards or those by the recruitment agencies. How silently the systems have allowed another shocking practice to flourish - solvers being arranged in Board exams and also in recruitment examinations.

Imagine a doctor appearing for a medical aspirant, and being allowed to continue in the profession. It could happen only in India! Recently, the central government has brought about a modal act in this context. Some state governments have also promised strict steps to prevent nakal and paper leaks. The past record is so bleak that people have no trust in pronouncements and assurances. If the concerned agencies were really keen to eradicate these aberrations, they could have done so even with the existing provisions of law. Suspending or merely transfer-

ring an officer is in fact a mockery of the seriousness of the crime that is being repeatedly committed. Why can't all those responsible be sacked within a couple of days? There is a way out for long-term reforms and it has been indicated in the NEP-2020 which recalls the recommendation of Justice JS Verma Commission, first made in 2012, that over 10,000 teacher training institutions are selling degrees. Imagine the presence of lakhs of 'trained' teachers in the system having 'purchased degrees!' They did not get any training and are giving lessons on values, morals and characters in our schools. The nation must focus on a war footing in improving its teacher education institutions. These are not the places for investments and dividends. Once the right culture is generated in teacher training institutions, under sincere and committed teacher-educators, it would flow to schools and then to various professions. This is the only way out, India can no more neglect its teachers, their genuine professional education and continuous upgradation and Inservice education. Once achieved, it could provide a ray of hope.

(The author works in education, social cohesion and religious amity, views are personal)



THERE ARE REPORTS IN CIRCULATION THAT THE NAKAL MAFIA AND PAPER LEAK MAFIA HAVE STRENGTHENED THEMSELVES OVER THE YEARS TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT SOME OF THEM CONTINUE TO INDULGE IN THESE NEFARIOUS PRACTICES ON A SERIAL BASIS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUMP'S ELECTION GIMMICKS

Sir — The character and face of pseudo-nationalist Donald Trump has been exposed. Anyway, the character of nationalists is such that they work on the lines of 'like the country, like the disguise'. Yesterday we say one thing and today we are forced to say something else. Everything about them moves and changes according to electoral mathematics. Their ideology and viewpoint are also never permanent. Now, from 2017 to 2019, Trump administration considered the Chinese app TikTok as the biggest threat to Americans. Chinese company ByteDance was accused of spying on Americans. TikTok filed a lawsuit, arguing that such actions would violate free speech and due process rights. However, Trump was shocked by the court at that time because he could not present any evidence of espionage before the court. That is why just before the elections to be held in November, he had changed his attitude towards TikTok. Now he has started worrying about the likes and dislikes of the youth. According to Trump, TikTok is loved by many people, including a large number of young children, who would be greatly affected by its absence. Is this change of heart of Trump a surefire recipe to capture the White House?

Bal Govind | Noida

OPPENHEIMER AT THE OSCARS

Sir — The 96th Academy i.e. the Oscar Award night made Oppenheimer a cynosure for the evening. From the categories of Best Director to Best Actor to Best Supporting Actor, the movie captured seven honours in its name. This award night is a much-awaited ceremony from the performers across the globe. From the Indian perspective, the point to cherish is the honouring of Indian Art Designer, Nitin Chandrakant Desai. However, Priyanka Chopra Jonas backed the Indian documentary "To Kill a Tiger," and just lost to booking its trophy of Best Documentary featured to "20 Days in

Ignore misconceptions on CAA



Eventually, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) rules were announced. This law was approved by Parliament in December 2019. One explanation for the delay in enacting this law appears to be its widespread opposition. This protest was the result of malicious propaganda claiming that if this law is adopted, the citizenship of the country's Muslims will be jeopardised. This propaganda was carried out not only by members of the so-called civil society but also by numerous political parties. They were purposefully aggravating the Muslim community by bringing it to the streets, even though this law has no-

ting to do with any Indian person. This law grants citizenship to minorities who were persecuted for their religion in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Bangladesh who arrived in India before 2014. Afghanistan is indeed almost devoid of Hindus and Sikhs, while Hindus, Sikhs, and other minorities face severe persecution in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

They are fighting a losing battle to save their lives. They have no choice but to die, flee or adopt Islam, even if they do not want it. It is imperative that, even after 2014, consideration be given to providing relief to tormented people who fled to India after being looted in three adjacent nations. The fact that certain state governments passed resolutions against the Citizenship Amendment Act in the Assembly demonstrates how some political parties engaged in petty politics about it. Due to cheap and corrupt vote bank politics, this operation was purposefully done against the federal framework, even though state governments had no responsibility in giving citizenship.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

Mariupol," which is a bit sad point for India. However, the award gala celebration is always awaited. At this time, the award Oppenheimer, which was the story of an Atomic Bomb, pictures the bitter battle between countries in the erstwhile Cold War Era. It's time for all the winner to cherish their hard efforts and celebrate their success.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

SLEEPING ON THE JOB

Sir — A plane in Indonesia strayed off its course after both pilots of the aircraft fell asleep for 28 minutes, according to a report released by the National Transportation Safety Committee (KNKT), a government agency. The Indonesia Transport Ministry will launch an investigation into the incident that took place on January 25. According to the KNKT preliminary report, both the pilot and the co-pilot of the Batik Air BTK6723 fell asleep during a flight from A Kendari

in Southeast Sulawesi province to the Indonesian capital Jakarta. However, none of the 153 passengers and four flight attendants on board the plane were injured during the flight, and the aircraft did not suffer any damage either. The flight—which lasted two hours and 35 minutes—successfully landed in Jakarta. During the flight preparation in Jakarta on January 25, the co-pilot notified his pilot that he had not had proper rest. After the plane cruised at an altitude of 36,000 feet, the pilot asked the co-pilot to take a rest, and he slept for about 30 minutes inside the cockpit. The co-pilot also known as the second-in-command pilot woke up before the plane began descending to Kenderi. It was indeed a miraculous escape for the 153 passengers and the crew members.

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

An astrologer's take on polls and predictions

Even prominent figures, known for their rationalist stance, sought astrological counsel in significant moments of uncertainty

Elections are a busy time for bureaucrats, politicians and the media. It is also a busy time for astrologers, something that the public may not be aware of. Many leaders and candidates visit astrologers to discuss their electoral prospects. There are politicians who reject astrology and dress in progressive garb for the media while consulting astrologers in private.

Durga Das, in his book "India: From Curzon to Nehru and After," writes that, upon the advice of the then Planning Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda, Pt. Nehru consulted an astrologer in the year 1962. When the astrologer predicted a Chinese aggression, an irritated Nehru told the Jyotishi "you are talking bilge." A Chinese aggression followed soon after, and Pt. Nehru "was in a mood to listen to the astrologer," writes Durga Das. The Jyotishi, this time, warned about Pt. Nehru's health. Durga Das writes, "Fifty learned priests were engaged by his admirers to perform the prescribed rites at a temple in Kalkaji, a suburb of Delhi." Another Parliament election



is here. I must disclose that the purpose of this note is to present a few observations based on astrology. The questions about the election that an astrologer faces, even from an astrological viewpoint, are complicated, and precise analyses are tough. It is difficult to analyse the charts of all the candidates. Besides, astrologically too, there are numerous things that might influence an election — from the candidates' birth charts to the exact time at which the nomination is filed. Though ours is a data-centric culture, these details are hard to collect and collate. Despite these difficulties, astrologers attempt to study elections. One way to do this is to examine the chart of the current premier and other leaders. What do those charts say? So, here is a short analysis of our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's chart.

Modi was born on a Shuklapaksha Shashti, and his birth star is Anuradha. He is under the planetary period of Mars which started in the year 2022 and runs till 2029. It is the sub-period of Jupiter presently for him. This started last January and runs till January 2025. The lord of the ascendant, Venus, has Vargottamamsha and is positioned in the 11th house along with Saturn. Mars is positioned in its own house along with Moon and confers a Sasimangalayoga. Jupiter's transit in the month of April 2024 will also be beneficial for him.

Shri. Modi's chart, and the current time, are astrologically very good, and it can be said that he will come back without a break and lead the nation once again. The current period — the planetary period of Mars — would be the best time in his life. He can and will execute his pet plans and projects at this time. He will win his goals and will not step back. Most likely, we will see a shift in Shri. Modi's style and focus after March 2026 as, at that time, the sub-period of Saturn is coming to an end. He

might contemplate a change in his ways at this time. There is also a possibility of major allegations coming up against him with an intention to defame him. From the horoscope, it can also be said that he will be active in his political career till he turns 79, that is till the period of Mars comes to an end.

The position of Jupiter suggests that he will be inclined towards a spiritual life at the later stage of his life. This inclination will get stronger after he turns 79. These are general points that one can arrive at from Shri. Modi's chart. Of course, one will have to analyse many other charts and aspects to get a clearer astrological picture. But the question is, is such a thorough examination warranted in public interest? One may say that astrological analyses are not scientific and hence should be discarded at face value.

I would urge them to look at the 'scientific' predictions from our psephologists. One can easily see that we, astrologers, are much more accurate than them. (The writer is a vedic scholar, views are personal)



PARAPPANANGADI UNNIKRISHNAN PANIKKAR



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CULTIVATE TOLERANCE TO FOSTER HARMONY

The root cause of predicaments lies in the erosion of moral and human values



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Lately, there has been a growing realisation among a number of people that most of the problems in our lives have arisen due to lack or infringement of moral, spiritual or human values. It is now also being felt that our ultra-materialistic outlook, especially our craze for machine culture has resulted in our present predicament. We have gradually lost the human aspect of our lives and have become more or less like machines, as a result of which there is no spirit of friendship, fellow feeling and love in our lives. There are of course many values, which we must observe for a harmonious and peaceful living. Out of those tolerance is one such value, that can change a lot in our life, of course positively.

We must know that many of our troubles, turmoil and traumas are due to intolerance. Though people have become aware of this fact there is still a lot more need for educating people to cultivate this value which, when lost, makes human behaviour uncivilised and barbaric and makes a hell of one's family, professional and community life. Just imagine, if a nation has leaders, who are intolerant, they can land their country in great conflicts and conflagration, or embroil their country in a war or can lead it even to disintegration. For, when tolerance is lost, temper is also lost and the loss of both means the loss of mental balance, calm judgement and composure.

Today we see people killing people in the name of Religion, but has any religion ever taught its followers to kill innocent people? The chronicles of mankind or of various civilisations or nations bear witness to the truth that property is worth inestimable and incalculable amount, and millions of men have been lost in the slaughterhouse of intolerance during the last 2000 years or so because of intolerance that ensued from a hurt ego, an unfulfilled selfish motives or narrow-mindedness that could not stand the existence of different views, different lifestyles, different cultures and different self-interests.



If only this virtue, called Tolerance, had been sustained—all or many other virtues also would have survived, for, when tolerance is lost, man loses his patience, self-control, spirit of non-violence, etc. Therefore it is not too late in the day, for, if even now those who are mercilessly killing innocent people begin to observe this virtue, which is greater than valour and all weapons of war put together, mankind can be saved from the scourge of wars, bloody ethnic strife, communal riots and conflict. Tolerance is a virtue and a fruit of wisdom that can come and stay if we firmly believe that all have the basic right to live peacefully, enjoying their own culture, tradition or religion. If we are self-righteous and think that our own culture and religion are the best of the whole lot and the beliefs of others are of low grade, then we develop narrow-mindedness, hatred and intolerance, resulting in conflicts of various sorts. So, if we wish to have peace and harmony, then we have to learn to respect others and adjust ourselves with them to co-exist. Along with this, we should also learn to forget and forgive some lapses and shortcomings of others in the spirit of friendliness or brotherhood, or else we cannot have goodwill, amity, cooperation and peace.

Lastly, it has been found that the role of education, media and religion becomes very important in propagating tolerance in society. For, unless and until education is value-based and media, especially electronic and film media and religion make their contribution to creating awareness for values like tolerance, humility, and mutual respect, there will not be any peace and harmony in society nor will there be tolerance, humility or family-love.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

AI is revolutionising waste management



UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

AI is reshaping waste management practices, driving the transition towards a circular economy and propelling us towards a more sustainable future



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have garnered increasing attention in recent years. Today, the pivotal role of technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), in achieving these goals is gaining prominence, sparking deeper discussions. As the world strides towards sustainable development, smart cities are embracing cyberinfrastructure to foster holistic economic growth, enhance the quality of life, and optimise resource management. However, the mounting challenge of waste management looms large over many urban areas due to the inefficiencies of traditional methods. Yet, smart cities are proactively harnessing innovative technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, and AI to revolutionise waste management, paving the way for a circular economy (CE). This transition demands a paradigm shift towards a more sustainable supply chain ecosystem.

Innovative applications of AI, from converting waste into valuable resources to reshaping societal perceptions of resource utilisation, are unravelling the complexities surrounding environmental issues. They underscore the potential of collaborative innovation and the boundless opportunities that arise from a unified global community. However, embarking on this transformative journey requires caution, for once initiated, there is no turning back. The revelations unearthed along this path could fundamentally alter our worldview.

At the core of every challenge lies an opportunity for innovation—a chance to redefine the boundaries of what's achievable and ignite human creativity. Serving as a compass through uncharted territories where waste management, AI and the UN's 17 Sustainable



PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS, FUELLED BY DATA AND MACHINE LEARNING, HOLDS IMMENSE POTENTIAL IN OPTIMISING WASTE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES, REDUCING COSTS AND ENHANCING EFFICIENCY

Development Goals converge, "Sustainable Solutions" charts a course towards a new planetary future. Central to this journey is the evolution of waste management, emphasising the imperative to minimise landfill-bound waste through the principles of a circular economy - reduce, reuse, and recycle. This necessitates innovative approaches from environmental service providers in recycling waste materials.

Predictive analytics, fueled by data and machine learning, holds immense potential in optimising waste management processes, reducing costs, and enhancing efficiency. As projected by the UN, the influx of people into smart cities by 2050 necessitates a radical shift in urban management strategies. With current approaches inadequate to address such growth amidst the backdrop of climate crises and strained urban infrastructure, the rise of smart cities becomes imperative. Efficient waste management emerges as a cornerstone of this transformation.

Innovation and investment serve as catalysts for economic prosperity worldwide, but realising their full potential requires conducive public policies. Establishing a supportive regulatory framework, simplifying bureaucratic processes, and safeguarding intellectual property rights are pivotal in fostering innovation-friendly environments. Additionally, investing in STEAM education, research infrastructure, and promoting collaboration between academia and industry acceler-

ates innovation ecosystems. Financial incentives such as tax credits and subsidies play a crucial role in driving innovation and investment in waste management AI tools. Public-private partnerships offer avenues for co-financing R&D projects, incubating startups, and deploying venture capital. Moreover, nurturing entrepreneurship through mentorship programmes and providing access to seed capital fosters a vibrant startup culture essential for sustainable economic growth. Infrastructure development, especially in transport and communication networks, is essential for facilitating innovation clusters and attracting investments.

Collaboration and clustering emerge as linchpins in fostering innovation and competitiveness. National policies that encourage the formation of innovation clusters drive knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and collaborative research, thereby creating specialised centres of excellence. However, integrating AI and robotics into waste management poses formidable challenges, including data diversity, accurate waste classification, and effective recycling methods.

Transitioning towards a circular economy necessitates radical shifts in waste management practices to combat the escalating environmental threats posed by mounting waste. While smart enabling technologies offer promising solutions, numerous obstacles hinder their widespread adoption. Waste management

software integrated with AI and computer vision streamlines sorting processes, significantly improving waste separation accuracy. Geographical indications (GIs), often overlooked in favour of major inventions (MIs), play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development. Examples include community energy production, organic food, and local waste management initiatives, which contribute significantly to sustainability.

Addressing the surging global waste generation requires comprehensive strategies leveraging AI and sustainable practices. As AI continues to evolve, ensuring its sustainability and environmental friendliness is paramount. While sustainable AI solutions hold promise in mitigating environmental challenges, careful consideration of potential unintended consequences is imperative.

In conclusion, the intersection of AI, waste management, and sustainable development offers a pathway towards a more resilient and prosperous future. Embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and implementing conducive public policies are essential to realising this vision. By harnessing the transformative power of technology and sustainability, we can pave the way for a more equitable, prosperous, and environmentally sustainable world.

(The writer is an Associate Professor at the School of Management, Presidency University Bengaluru; views are personal)

RUSA and PM-USHA: Making higher education future ready

Education, serving as the bedrock for holistic growth, empowers individuals, society and nations alike

Sustained growth in the sphere of knowledge enrichment is an essential factor for the advancement of human civilization. Needless to say, education is the backbone of holistic growth for individuals, society, and the nation. Quality contemporary education promotes economic, intellectual, and social growth by empowering youth with attributes such as critical thinking, creativity, skill development, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

These attributes are essential for inclusive growth, social harmony, and horizontal and upward mobility. Moreover, quality education fosters scientific advancement and helps create a rational and just society. With a superb demographic dividend, India's com-



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

mitment to providing high-quality 21st-century education to its youthful population will determine the future of the country. In this context, Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), an overarching centrally sponsored scheme, has become a key driver for promoting equity, access, and excellence in higher education. The sole objective of RUSA is

to create an ecosystem for the best quality higher education by strategically funding higher education institutions under state governments and union territories.

RUSA also focuses on ensuring equity in higher education by promoting the inclusion of women, tribals, minorities, differently-abled persons, socially disadvantaged, and economically weaker sections. Additionally, it also aims at quality assurance, infrastructure development, faculty recruitment, and research and innovation.

RUSA is being implemented in mission mode to fund state government universities and colleges to achieve educational objectives. This has helped state governments with strategic planning and execution for

completely revamping the higher education ecosystem to address issues of access, equity, quality, and related concerns.

After the completion of the first phase, it was extended as RUSA 2.0 until March 2020, with further extension provided until March 2021 under the same programmatic and financial frameworks.

RUSA, a norm-based and outcome-dependent scheme, has significantly contributed to sectoral outcomes through various focused components. In the first phase, RUSA covered a total of 2,107 institutions across different components with a budgetary outlay of 8,118 crore for infrastructural grants. Under the second phase of RUSA, around 1,050 institutions received funding,

with a total allocation of 6,475 crore, of which infrastructure grants accounted for a 35% share and quality and research initiatives constituted a 31% share. Better achievement of targets in certain areas has been observed under the second phase, indicating maturity in implementation and processes.

An independent performance review conducted by IIT Bombay in 2017 found that GER increased from 19.4% in 2013 to 25.2% in 2018, and the teacher-student ratio also significantly improved after the implementation of RUSA. While the number of accredited institutions during the scheme period has increased, a large number of institutions are still unaccredited. Despite the high focus of the

scheme on infrastructure augmentation, some surveys conducted in the past highlight gaps in infrastructural availability and the quality of infrastructure in a few institutes. Limited usage of ICT-based classroom transactions has also been observed in some sampled institutes.

This new avatar of RUSA targets to reach out to the unserved, underserved areas, remote and rural areas, difficult geographies, LWE areas, the North-eastern region, aspirational districts, tier-2 cities, areas with low GER, etc., and to benefit the most disadvantaged areas and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. It also aims at revamping and re-energising the learning system for the delivery of quality higher education

in tune with the key recommendations of NEP-2020. The focus of strategic funding under PM-USHA, apart from improving equity, access, and quality, has shifted to transformative reforms such as gender inclusion, multidisciplinary education and research, ICT, and enhancing employability through vocationalisation, skill upgrading, and innovations. This would support around 1,600 projects worth Rs 12,929.16 crores, with a 60:40 sharing arrangement with the state governments.

PM-USHA is the central government's commitment to meet the promises held by the rich expanse of India's state universities. The country's future lies in empowering these campuses to enhance quality learning, and transfor-

mative research, and promote skill development, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

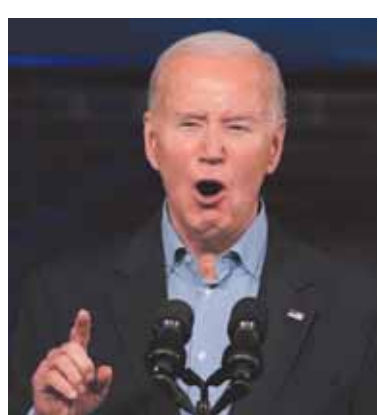
As a centrally sponsored scheme, the vision of RUSA is loud and clear that at times the most important lessons of life are learned outside the classroom. This will also strengthen the bond between education and employment by bridging the skill gap and satisfying the entrepreneurial hunger of youth. Finally, it will empower youth with life skills to contribute meaningfully towards the economic, intellectual, and social imperatives of Bharat and thus realise PM Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

(The writer is Vice Chancellor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; views are personal)

Biden, Trump clinch nominations

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump clinched their parties' presidential nominations Tuesday with decisive victories in a slate of low-profile primaries, setting up a general election rematch that many voters do not want.



Biden, who would be 86 years old at the end of his next term, is working to assure a skeptical electorate that he's still physically and mentally able to thrive in the world's most important job.



Trump, Biden said, "is running a campaign of resentment, revenge, and retribution that threatens the very idea of America."

The outcome of contests across Georgia, Mississippi and Washington State was never in doubt. Neither Biden, a Democrat, nor Trump, a Republican, faced major opposition. But the magnitude of their wins gave each man the delegate majority he needed to claim his party's nomination at the summertime national conventions.

serious threat to democracy. Trump, Biden said, "is running a campaign of resentment, revenge, and retribution that threatens the very idea of America." He continued, "I am honored that the broad coalition of voters representing the rich diversity of the Democratic Party across the country have put their faith in me once again to lead our party — and our country — in a moment when the threat Trump poses is greater than ever."

Both candidates dominated Tuesday's primaries in swing-state Georgia, deep red Mississippi and Democratic-leaning Washington. Voting was taking place later in Hawaii's Republican caucus. Despite their tough talk, the road ahead will not be easy for either presumptive nominee.

China says boundary issue with India does not represent entirety of bilateral ties

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday said the Sino-India boundary issue does not represent the entirety of the bilateral ties and called for enhancing mutual trust between the two countries to avoid misunderstanding and misjudgement.

bilateral relations and managed properly," Wang said. While responding to a query from a Chinese diplomat at the 'Express Adda' on Monday, Jaishankar said, "I think it is in our common interest that we should not have that many forces on the Line of Actual Control (LAC)."

Ready to use nuclear weapons if sovereignty threatened: Putin

AP ■ MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if its sovereignty or independence is threatened, issuing another blunt warning to the West just days before an election in which he's all but certain to secure another six-year term.

ly lamented that the West too often constrains itself with self-imposed "red lines" regarding Russia. He also welcomed a comment by French President Emmanuel Macron that the possibility of Western troops being sent to Ukraine couldn't be ruled out.

ly lamented that the West too often constrains itself with self-imposed "red lines" regarding Russia. He also welcomed a comment by French President Emmanuel Macron that the possibility of Western troops being sent to Ukraine couldn't be ruled out.

China has stressed multiple times that the boundary question does not represent the entirety of the China-India relations, which should be placed appropriately in the bilateral relations and managed properly, he said. "We hope that India will work in the same direction with us and approach the bilateral relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective," he said.

Russia says it killed 234 fighters while thwarting Ukraine incursion

AP ■ MOSCOW

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday night that Moscow's military and security forces killed 234 fighters while thwarting an incursion into Russian border regions earlier in the day.

was unfolding in Russia's Kursk and Belgorod regions. Cross-border attacks in the area have occurred sporadically since the war began and have been the subject of claims and counterclaims, as well as disinformation and propaganda.

assault also weakened President Vladimir Putin's argument that life in Russia has been unaffected by the war, though he remains all but certain to win another six-year term after eliminating all opposition.

MORE HOLI FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2024

For the convenience of the passengers, Northern Railway will run the following additional Holi Festival Special Trains during the upcoming Holi festival season. The details are as under: -

Table with columns: Spl. Train No., Station From, Dept. Time, Station to, Arr. Time, Days of Run, Period, Accommodation, Stoppages. Contains detailed train schedules for Holi festival.

Nepal PM Prachanda wins vote of confidence in Parliament

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Wednesday secured a vote of confidence in Parliament, as the country struggled to maintain political stability amid the shifting of alliances.

won the vote of confidence," announced Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire. The vote comes days after the Maoist leader dumped the Nepali Congress and forged a new alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist).

Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML) led by former prime minister K P Oli, who was regarded as a top critic of the Maoist leader.

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Retail investors F&O play for quick profits a worry: CEA

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said he is "worried" over retail investors' play in risky Futures and Options (F&O) segment in search of instant profits. Speaking at a conference organised by capital markets regulator Sebi and NISM, Nageswaran said the biggest threat to sustainable capital formation and also sustainable economic growth is the "short-termism" in attitudes that the country is afflicted with. Bemoaning the "furor" caused every time, there is a discussion on allowing corporate groups to promote banks despite the need for capital in a growing economy, Nageswaran said India Inc needs to reflect on the state of

corporate governance practices and analyse its own conduct. "The biggest risk for sustained capital formation and sustained economic growth is... In our short-termism," he said. He added that it is "puzzling" to see that a country otherwise blessed with a "deep spiritual heritage and wisdom" is actually interpreting mindfulness and living in the present in the wrong way. Nageswaran rued that even now, people are mentioning handsome growth in F&O volumes, despite Sebi's own studies suggesting that 90 per cent of trades in the riskier segment leading to losses for investors. "Our actions make me worry that we may be interpreting mindfulness and living in the present as being myopic," he



said, making it clear that those two concepts stress on performing one's duty and obligations without thinking about the fruits of the actions.

He said there is a need to change the outlook from a behavioural perspective to achieve goals like long-term capital formation and growth.

Nageswaran rued that there is an "adversarial" attitude among many stakeholders when it comes to regulators, wherein people overlook the

fact a regulator's job is to have a long-term view of things and "providing counterbalance for instant gratification or myopia." "The underline focus that the regulators have is to ensure that we stay stronger for longer rather than get caught up in the immediate euphoria of our growth rates, market valuations," he said. Amid concerns that the activity in the F&O segment is fuelled by those seeking quick profits, he said the rising exposure of small investors in the segment "is a worry because we don't want to go through boom and bust cycles again and again". Nageswaran said the economy is likely to grow 7 per cent in FY25 as well, which will make it the third year in a row when the GDP has grown at over 7

per cent. Stating that capital formation and economic growth are interdependent, wherein one feeds into another, he said the only mantra for policymakers in such times is not to be conventional and described India's prudent response to the Covid crisis as a case in point. However, sustaining high growth performance has been "elusive" for India, which has had short periods of high growth that are typically followed by a long period of balancesheet repair, dud loan cleaning for lenders, etc, he said, reminding that "we need to keep in mind that China grew around double digits for three decades". "There is a need to ensure that we don't indulge in excess lending or excess borrowing in the current cycle as well," he

said, adding that we need to make detailed plans with projections on growth, capital required, how it will come, how much as debt and how much as equity. Banks also need to be adequately capitalised to fund the growth needs of the economy, and corporate ownership of banks will have to be allowed if the banks are to get the capital, he said. "Why is it a taboo to even discuss corporate ownership of banks? The fact that a mere discussion of the idea of licensing of banks to corporate houses creates such a backlash or a furor is indeed a cause for reflection on the part of the corporates too," he said. "It is also unfortunately a reflection on the overall state of corporate governance in the country," Nageswaran said.



Review your gold loan portfolio, PSU banks told

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The finance ministry has directed all state-owned banks to review their gold loan portfolio as instances of non-compliance with regulatory norms have been noticed by the government. The Department of Financial Services (DFS) in a communication addressed to heads of public sector banks has asked them to look at their system and processes related to gold loan. "We have asked banks to undertake comprehensive review of the gold loan business," Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi told PTI. A directive in this regard was issued last month advising them to fix anomalies relating to collection of fees and interest and closure of gold loan accounts. The letter flagged various concerns, including disbursement of gold loans without requisite gold collateral, anomalies regarding collection of fees and repayment in cash. The DFS urged banks to undertake a thorough review of the last two-year period from January 1, 2022 to January 31, 2024 so as to ensure that all gold loans were disbursed in compliance with regulatory requirements and internal policies of banks. It is to be noted that the price of the yellow metal has surged to a record level. Price of 10 gm gold in the last one month has jumped from Rs 63,365 to Rs 67,605.

According to the letter, the department has come across instances of non-compliance regarding the gold loan portfolio and hence issued the advisory. The country's biggest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) alone has a gold loan portfolio of Rs 30,881 crore as of December 2023. Punjab National Bank's gold loan exposure stood at Rs 5,315 crore while Bank of Baroda was at Rs 3,682 crore at the end of third quarter. As per the RBI norms, banks or gold loan finance firms can provide only 75 per cent of the value of the jewellery. However, relaxation was provided during the COVID-19 period to mitigate hardship. The RBI had increased the permissible Loan to Value (LTV) for loans sanctioned by banks against pledges of gold ornaments and jewellery for non-agricultural purposes to 90 per cent from 75 per cent in August 2020. This relaxation was available till March 31, 2021. Last week, the RBI barred IIFL Finance Ltd from disbursing gold loans, with immediate effect following multiple supervisory concerns, including serious deviations in assaying and certifying the purity of the yellow metal. RBI said the supervisory restrictions will be reviewed upon completion of a special audit to be instituted by it and after rectification by the company of the special audit findings and the findings of RBI inspection to the satisfaction of the central bank.

Found gross negligence by Byju's auditors: ICAI

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Chartered accountants' apex body ICAI has "found gross negligence on the part of the auditors" of the now-crippled edutech firm Byju's, said its president Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal on Wednesday. Besides, the top official also said the accounting body is also planning to inspect the books of payments major Paytm. "Our inspection has found gross negligence on accounting practices by individual auditors of Byju's and accordingly we have recommended to the Financial Reporting Review Board (FRRB) to take punitive actions on auditors concerned," Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal, the president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), told PTI here. When asked whether the ICAI will inspect the books of the payments major Paytm group now, he said, "As we have taken a suo moto decision to look into the role of the auditors of Byju's, we are now thinking about looking to the role of the

auditors of the payments major Paytm now". Following a slew of regulatory breaches, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has barred Paytm Payments Bank from doing any business from March 15. The RBI action first came in on January 31 when it asked the payments bank to stop nearly all its businesses except allowing already loaded payments from its wallets from March 1, but later extended the deadline till March 15. On crisis-hit Byju's, Agarwal said, "The FRRB will review our report on the conduct of the auditors of Byju's both individually as well as at the group levels, apart from the role of the board of the company. After this three-stage review will form an opinion on the role of the individual auditors and take appropriate action. After that, the report will be made public". For long the international auditing major Deloitte was the statutory auditors of Byju's. However, as the financial trouble mounted at the edutech major, it in June 2023 resigned midway, citing a long delay in preparation of the financial statement of the



company for FY22. Following the resignation of Deloitte, Byju's appointed another global firm BDO as its new auditors. BDO's audit arm is MSKA & Associates. The FRRB is a non-standing committee of the Council of the ICAI and was constituted in July 2002. The FRRB may determine whether any scrutiny of the books is necessary over allegations of regulatory lapses and their impact on the payment bank's accounting, Agarwal said, adding that it is the discretion of the board whom to review and when to do so.

"In cases of gross negligence, which we have found in the case of Byju's auditors, we will proceed with further investigation. If there are minor issues, we provide advisory guidance," Agarwal said at a function organised by industry body CII. Recently, the corporate affairs ministry had asked its field officers to expedite the inspection of the books of Byju's and submit the report. The ministry, which is implementing the company's law, will decide on a further course of action after receiving the report from its regional office.

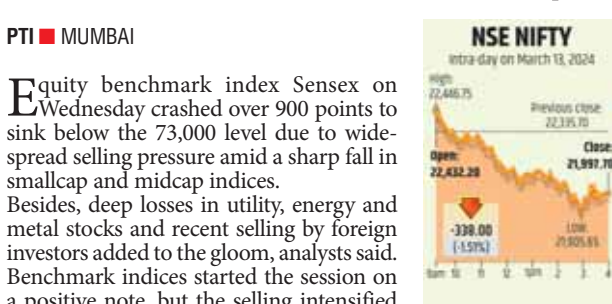
In July 2023, a month after Deloitte resigned as the statutory auditor of Byju's, the ministry had asked the office of the regional director in Hyderabad to conduct an inspection of the holding company Think & Learn, which is registered in Bengaluru. Last year, the ministry ordered the inspection in the wake of various developments at that time at the edtech company, including its inability to finalise the statements and the resignation of the auditor. On February 23, shareholders of Byju's voted unanimously to remove founder-CEO Byju Raveendran and his family members from the board over alleged "mismanagement and failures" at what was once India's hottest tech startup. However, the company had called the voting done in the absence of founders as invalid and ineffective. Raveendran, his wife and brother -- the only three members on the company board as of now -- stayed away from the extraordinary general meeting called by a group of six investors, who collectively hold more than 32 per cent of

Think & Learn. In the end, more than 60 per cent of the shareholders voted in favour of all the seven resolutions, which included removing the current management, reconfiguration of the board and a third-party forensic investigation into acquisitions done by the company, sources close to the investors had said. Meanwhile, delivering the keynote address at the CII event on financial reporting and governance framework Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey, the chairman of the National Financial Reporting Authority, called upon the auditors fraternity to do everything to increase public trust in them. "Everyone in the system, especially the auditors, have to ensure the five lines of defence to ensure there is trust in financial matters and corporate governance. These fine lines of defence are the management of the company, the audit committee and independent directors, auditors, investors and finally regulators. These are also the building blocks of sound corporate governance," Pandey said.

Sensex tanks 900 points, slips below 73k

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Equity benchmark index Sensex on Wednesday crashed over 900 points to sink below the 73,000 level due to widespread selling pressure amid a sharp fall in smallcap and midcap indices. Besides, deep losses in utility, energy and metal stocks and recent selling by foreign investors added to the gloom, analysts said. Benchmark indices started the session on a positive note, but the selling intensified during afternoon trade, with all sectoral indices ending in the red. The 30-share index tanked 906.07 points or 1.23 per cent to settle at 72,761.89. During the day, it dropped 1,152.25 points or 1.56 per cent to 72,515.71. The Nifty plummeted 338 points or 1.51 per cent to 21,997.70. Power Grid was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, sliding over 7 per cent, followed by NTPC, Tata Steel, Tata Motors, JSW Steel, Bharti Airtel, Titan, Reliance Industries and Hindustan Unilever. In contrast, ITC, ICICI

Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Nestle, Bajaj Finance and HDFC Bank were the gainers. "In contrast to the global uptrend, the unfavourable risk-reward balance of mid and smallcap stocks, fuelled by prolonged premium valuations, has aggravated the downfall. Meanwhile, FMCG and contrarian plays like gold are offering some refuge. Other than the premium valuation no fundamental issue is noticed to drawback the long-term growth image of domestic mid-caps," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research,



Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge tanked by 5.11 per cent, while the midcap index declined by 4.20 per cent. In Asian markets, Seoul settled in the green, while Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading mostly in the green. The US markets ended with significant gains on Tuesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 73.12 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.09 per cent to USD 82.81 a barrel. India's industrial production growth slowed to 3.8 per cent in January, while the February retail inflation at 5.09 per cent remained within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone for the sixth straight month, according to the latest government data. The BSE benchmark ended 165.32 points or 0.22 per cent higher at 73,667.96 on Tuesday. The Nifty ended flat at 22,335.70, up 3.05 points or 0.01 per cent.



First chip from Tata plant will be out in 2026: Vaishnav

PTI ■ DHOLERA (GUJARAT)
The first set of semiconductors will start rolling out from Tata Electronics' plant here in December 2026, union minister for communications and IT Ashwini Vaishnav said on Wednesday. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony of Tata Group and CG Power chip plants, Vaishnav said India will be among the top five chip ecosystems in the world by 2029. "The first chip from Dholera plant will be out in December 2026 and chip from Micron plant will be out by December 2024," the minister said. He said Tata's Dholera plant will make chips in 28, 50, 55 nanometer node. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday laid the foundation of three chip plants -- two units by Tata Electronics and the third by CG Power -- entailing total investment of Rs 1.26 lakh crore. The three plants include the country's first high-tech chip manufacturing plant of Tata Electronics which the company is setting up in partnership with Taiwan's Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp at Dholera's special industrial region. The plant will have the capacity to produce 50,000 wafers per month and involve an investment of Rs 91,000 crore. The Centre will contribute 50 per cent of the capex on pari passu basis. These chips driven by advanced technology will cater to multiple sectors -- power

management chips for electric vehicles (EV), telecom, defence, automotive, consumer electronics, display, and power electronics. Semiconductor is a "foundational" industry touching almost every aspect of life, powering everything from fridge to ACs and cars, aircraft to trains. PM also laid the foundation of another new assembly and test facility of Tata Electronics in Jagiroad, Assam. "Tata's Assam facility will be built with an investment of Rs 27,000 crore and is expected to generate over 27,000 direct and indirect jobs in the region. Notably, this will be India's first semiconductor unit in the Northeast. Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test (TSAT) will develop indigenous advanced semiconductor packaging technologies, including flip chip and ISIP (integrated system in package) technologies, with a capacity of 48 million chips per day. The target segments for these would be automotive, electric vehicles, consumer electronics, telecom, and mobile phones, among others. PM also laid the foundation of the semiconductor unit of CG Power, which is setting up in partnership with Renesas Electronics Corp and Stars Microelectronics of Thailand at Sanand in Gujarat at an investment of Rs 7,600 crore. Renesas is a leading semiconductor company focussed on specialised chips. It operates 12 semiconductor facilities and is an important player in microcontrollers, analogue, power, and system-on-chip products.

BUSINESS BRIEF



WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATED
International Women's Day was celebrated under the leadership of Zonal Manager AN. Singh in Punjab & Sind Bank, Zonal Office, Delhi-I. Forty three branches under Zonal Office Delhi-I participated in the event. On this occasion, all employees and officers participated in the event with great enthusiasm and discussed various points. Further, competitions were held in which all winners were honored with awards.

RITES CELEBRATES WOMEN'S DAY
RITES Ltd, a Navratna Public Sector Enterprise, celebrated Women's Day by hosting an interactive session at their corporate office, Shikhar, in Gurugram for its employees. Renowned administrator Usha Rangnani, Deputy Commissioner of Police, IGI Airport, Delhi Police, led the session as the guest speaker. Narrating her experience, Rangnani highlighted the challenges faced by women officers and spoke about the perseverance, the need to combat societal judgment, time management and work-life balance.

WARDWIZARD FOODS LAUNCHES #SHEVENTURES
In a bold initiative to celebrate Women's Day 2024 and extend the spirit throughout the year, Wardwizard Foods and Beverages Limited announced the launch of the "#SheVentures" initiative. Guided by a visionary leader, Sheetal Bhalerao, the Chairperson and Managing Director of Wardwizard Foods, the initiative aims to foster strength and confidence among women in various aspects of their lives, addressing their diverse needs.

Indian markets not in serious bubble territory: Kotak

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Amid widespread concerns over high stock valuations, including from the regulators, financial services industry veteran Uday Kotak on Wednesday said Indian markets are not in a bubble. There may be some "early froth", and it may be a "little bubbly" but the markets are not out of control, Kotak said, speaking in the presence of top officials from Sebi in a conference organised by the capital markets watchdog. The statement from Kotak, the founder and non-executive director of private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank, comes two days after Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch had said that there are pockets of froth in the small and mid-cap stocks and the regulator is looking into the same to come out with a possible consultation paper. "It may not be appropriate to allow the bubble to keep building, because when it

bursts, they impact the investors adversely. That is not a good thing," Buch had said. Reacting to it, Kotak quoted economist John Maynard Keynes who spoke about speculation to be not a bad activity per se and also mentioned about the bubble in Japanese stocks between 1980 and 1989, saying the benchmark Nikkei has been able to regain its peak, only 35 years later after the bubble burst. "I believe at this stage, we are nowhere near that risk and there are enough checks and balances in our system today to compare ourselves in serious bubble territory," Kotak said. There may be "early froth" in the market and it may be a "little bubbly", Kotak said, pointing to Buch who was seated close by, but added that things are not out of control. "As long as we keep watch and manage it well, we can create sustained capital formation going forward," he said.

ITC shares jump over 4 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Shares of ITC were in the lime-light on Wednesday, climbing over 4 per cent and adding Rs 22,890.82 crore to its market valuation, amid stake sale news. The stock of the FMCG player zoomed 8.59 per cent to Rs 439 during the day on the BSE. It ended at Rs 422.40, up 4.49 per cent. Shares of the company jumped 8.29 per cent to Rs 438 during the day on the NSE. The stock ended at Rs 422, a gain of 4.33 per cent. The company's market capitalisation (mcap) soared by Rs 22,890.82 crore to Rs 5,27,217.30 crore. It was the biggest gainer among the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty firms. In traded volume terms, 4,407.40 lakh shares of the company were traded at the BSE and over 1,016.12 lakh shares at the NSE during the day. British multinational BAT PLC on Tuesday said it plans to sell up to 3.5 per cent stake in India's ITC Ltd to institutional investors through a block trade. In a statement, British American Tobacco PLC (BAT), the single largest shareholder in ITC Ltd



(ITC), said its wholly-owned subsidiary Tobacco Manufacturers (India) Ltd (TMI) intends to sell up to 43,68,51,457 ordinary shares in the Indian diversified entity to institutional investors by way of an accelerated bookbuild process (block trade), subject to customary closing conditions. Based on Tuesday's closing price of Rs 404.25 per share, the value of the total ITC shares planned to be sold by BAT is around Rs 17,659.72 crore. "The block trade shares represent set up to 3.5 per cent of ITC's issued ordinary share capital," it said, adding, that following the completion of the proposed block trade, BAT will remain a significant shareholder of ITC, with 25.5 per cent holding. BAT's initial investment in ITC dates back to the early 1900s and the two companies have a long-standing, mutually beneficial relationship, the statement said.

Paddy to help Indian men hockey team in Paris Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

It's mind over matter for Hockey India as the sports body hired renowned South African mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton to assist the men's national team in the Paris Olympics. Upton, who played a role in India winning the 2011 Cricket World Cup, will be a part of the support staff of the country's men's hockey team in Paris. He was also there when the team won gold medals at the recent Asian Champions Trophy and Asian Games.

Indian men's hockey team chief coach Craig Fulton confirmed to PTI that Upton will be with his wards at the Olympics. "We have Paddy Upton, he will be with us in Australia (for Test series). We will be using him wisely. For sure he will be there for Olympics with us," Fulton said when asked about the mental conditioning coach's services.

Fulton, who is also a South African, believes that world ranked fourth India are still to reach their peak and there are plenty of bases to cover in the



coming months. "We are not complete yet but, in 4-5 months from the Olympics, we will be there. "Ideally any high-performing team wants to win any tournament. That's the ideal goal to be realistic. But realistically, we are ranked fourth in the world now, does that mean podium 'right now' but that's the beauty of hockey," he said.

"Realistically, we are not there yet but we still have time." The coach said the Indian team is currently in a development phase.

"We are in a development phase with the squad. We are trying to create some depths in different positions. That's important to do now because it really counts in crunch matches in Olympics," he said.

Talking about India's recent home campaign in the FIH Pro League, Fulton said he was neither satisfied nor disappointed.

"If you look at the four matches -- 2 against Holland, 2 against Australia -- I think we are disappointed with the second game against Australia, 5 minutes to go we

were 2-1 up and then we made a mistake which got punished and then we lost the shoot-out," he said.

"The first game was a strange one, we got to learn a lot of lessons there tactically, but to be 0-2 down after 90 seconds. "But the Dutch games I feel we were really organised. But 2-2 I felt was fair result for both games. They are the league leaders and they are the team to chase at the moment."

Fulton is in no mood to make any drastic changes in the style of play and said the upcoming Australia tour holds great significance for the side. "Now we are in Bhubaneswar for next three weeks for the training and then we go to Australia for five Test matches and that's really important, and then we come back to Bengaluru and after selection is done, we leave for the Pro League.

"We are just carrying on with our training, we are focussed on becoming very strong defensively, we need to improve our offence. We are not changing a lot, just focussing on getting better and consistent," he said.



Luca named Lecce new coach

AP ■ LECCE (ITALY)

Former Chelsea assistant Luca Gotti was named Lecce's new coach on Wednesday, two days after Roberto D'Aversa was fired for appearing to headbutt an opposing player.

Gotti was Maurizio Sarri's assistant at Chelsea in 2018-19 and was more recently the head coach at Udinese and Spezia.

Lecce said Gotti was given a contract until the end of the season that will be extended if the southern club avoids relegation.

D'Aversa lost control at the end of Sunday's 1-0 home loss to fellow struggler Hellas Verona.

Verona striker Thomas Henry was arguing with Lecce defender Marin Pongracic after the final whistle when D'Aversa went over to intervene, but instead ended up knocking Henry over with an apparent headbutt directly in front of one of the match officials.

Besides being fired, D'Aversa was given a four-match ban that he will have to serve if he is hired by another club.

Lecce sits a point above the relegation zone after an impressive start to the season when it was undefeated after five matches.

Gotti's debut will come at last-place Salernitana on Saturday.

There have now been 11 coaching changes in the 20-team Serie A this season - including two each at Empoli, Salernitana and Napoli.

Carlos advances to quarterfinals at Indian Wells

AP ■ INDIAN WELLS (US)

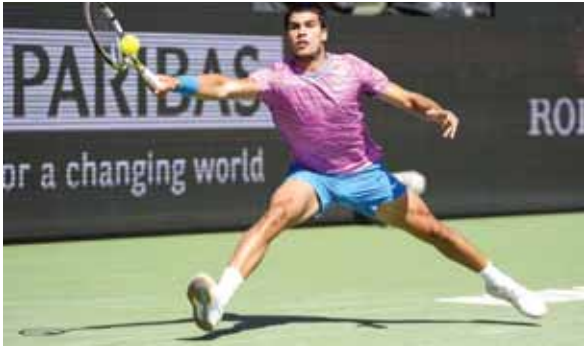
Second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz avenged a previous loss to Fabian Marozsan, winning 6-3 6-3 to reach the quarterfinals of the BNP Paribas Open as the top remaining seed in the men's draw.

A day after "lucky loser" Luca Nardi stunned No. 1 Novak Djokovic in the third round at Indian Wells, Alcaraz on Tuesday

advanced easily over the Hungarian who ousted him from the Italian Open in May.

Marozsan was a qualifier and the No. 135 player in the world when he upset Alcaraz - then on the verge of taking the top spot in the rankings - 6-3 7-6(4) in the third round in Rome.

"Honestly, I was nervous before the match. I'm not going to lie," Alcaraz said. "Playing against someone



that beat you. ... Today I knew what I had to do."

Australian Open champion Jannik Sinner beat Ben Shelton 7-6(4) 6-1 later Tuesday for his 18th consecutive victory. The third-ranked Italian has won 15 matches in a row to start 2024, claiming titles at Melbourne and Rotterdam.

It was the 150th hard-court victory for the 22-year-old Sinner, who became first player born in the 2000s to

reach that milestone.

Sinner had a set point, up 5-4 and 40-30 in the first, before Shelton was saved by a net cord. It then took Sinner another 15 minutes to close out the first set; in the second, he went up 3-0 and coasted to the victory.

Sinner advanced to the quarterfinals to play Jiri Lehecka, a 6-2 6-4 winner over Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Alcaraz, the defending champion at Indian Wells,

dropped the first set in his opening match this year but has lost just 12 games in the other six sets. He will face Alexander Zverev, who rallied after losing the first set to Alex de Minaur and won 5-7 6-2 6-3.

On the women's side, Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk beat Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4 6-1, and Anastasia Potapova defeated Jasmine Paolini 7-5 0-6 6-3.

Juventus advances to 2025 Club World Cup



AP ■ GENEVA

Banned by UEFA from European competitions this season for breaking financial rules, Juventus still qualified for the 2025 Club World Cup when Napoli went out of the Champions League.

Barcelona beat Napoli 3-1 in the second leg of the round of 16 on Tuesday to seal a 4-2 win on aggregate score that ensured Juventus advanced through a European ranking system to the revamped FIFA event.

Juventus is the 21st team to qualify for the inaugural 32-team edition of the Club World Cup that will be played in the United States in June-

July 2025 by the continental champions from 2021 through 2024 plus other high-ranked teams from those competitions.

Juventus advanced one day after its former player Cristiano Ronaldo's Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr fell out of contention on being eliminated in the Asian Champions League quarterfinals.

Barcelona is still not sure to be among Europe's 12 entries because it trails Spanish rival Atletico Madrid in the European rankings.

Champions League winners in the four-year period - Chelsea, Real Madrid and Manchester City so far - will be joined by eight or nine teams finishing highest in a table counting all results in the competition.

Countries also are limited to two entries unless they have more than two winners of the continental title.

Inter Milan, which reached the Champions League final last season, already secured its Club World Cup place by ranking and Napoli's exit Tuesday ensured Juventus cannot be overtaken as the second-best Italian team.

Juventus reached the Champions League round of 16 twice in the four-year span and also played in the group stage last season. It is currently No. 14 in the European ranking table though behind three teams from each of England, Germany and Spain which will reach their quota.

UEFA imposed a one-season ban on Juventus from its competitions in July in the fallout from a false accounting case that also saw the team deducted points in Serie A.

Juventus also was fined 10 million euros (\$11 million) by UEFA though should more than recoup that in Club World Cup prize money paid by FIFA next year. The June 15-July 13 tournament has the established World Cup format of eight four-team groups then a 16-team knockout bracket.

Bayern Munich, Paris Saint-Germain, Porto, Borussia Dortmund and Benfica also have qualified, and will be joined by either Atletico or Barcelona. Other teams still in contention include Arsenal, PSV Eindhoven and Salzburg.

Al Hilal wins 28th straight game to set record

AP ■ JEDDAH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Saudi Arabian team Al-Hilal set a world record for a top-tier team by winning its 28th straight game with a 2-0 victory over Al-Ittihad to reach the Asian Champions League semifinals.

Al-Hilal had also won the quarterfinals first leg by the same score to advance 4-0 on aggregate over its domestic rival.

The 18-time Saudi champion broke the previous recognised record of 27 straight wins set by The New Saints in the 2016-17 season. The Welsh team took the mark from the great Ajax team inspired by Johan Cruyff in 1971-72.

"Everyone at Al Hilal is delighted to achieve world football history by winning 28 consecutive matches," Al-Hilal coach Jorge Jesus said on Tuesday. "This is truly an incredible achievement and I want to thank everyone at the club for their part in this momentous winning record."

Al Hilal's dominating season follows the club spending about 350 million euros (USD 380 million) on player transfers after being effectively nationalized by the Saudi sovereign wealth operation, the



Public Investment Fund. It is controlled by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The last time the team did not win was on September 21 in a 1-1 draw against league rival Damac.

Al-Hilal, already champion of Asia four times, is 12 points clear atop the Saudi Pro League.

"As I have said throughout this period, however, records do not matter as much as trophies," Jesus said.

"It is up to everyone at Al-Hilal to ensure that we close out the season as Roshn Saudi League champions and meet our targets in the cup competitions. Only then can we truly celebrate."

Second-half goals from Yasser Al-Shahrani and Brazilian

winger Malcom sealed the win at Al-Ittihad, which had striker Abderrazak Hamdallah sent off late in the game.

Al-Hilal will face Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates in the semifinals in April. Al-Ain eliminated Al-Nassr on Monday, beating Cristiano Ronaldo's team in a penalty shootout.

In the eastern zone, Ulsan HD moved into the last four with a 1-0 second-leg win over Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors in this all-South Korean matchup. After the first leg ended 1-1, Seol Young-won scored to give Ulsan, champion in 2012 and 2020, a 2-1 aggregate victory.

Ulsan will meet either Yokohama F Marinos of Japan or China's Shandong Taishan in the semifinals.

Barcelona back in Champions League quarterfinals

AP ■ BARCELONA

Four years later, Barcelona is again celebrating a triumph in the knockout stage of the Champions League.

The five-time European champions returned to the quarterfinals with a 3-1 win over Napoli on Tuesday.

Fermin López, João Cancelo and Robert Lewandowski scored for Barcelona as it advanced 4-2 on aggregate after a 1-1 draw in the first leg in Italy three weeks ago.

Amir Rrahmani scored for Napoli, which couldn't repeat its last-eight appearance from last season, when it won a knockout round for the first time.

Barcelona had been eliminated in the group stage the last two years and hadn't

reached the quarterfinals since 2019-20, when it lost to Bayern Munich.

"It was an incredible night," Barcelona midfielder Sergi Roberto said.

"It had been four years since this club was where it deserves to be. We have to enjoy this moment."

In the other Champions League match on Tuesday, Arsenal eliminated Porto in a penalty shootout after a 1-1 aggregate draw.

The Champions League could be Barcelona's last realistic chance for a title this season. It was eliminated in the Copa del Rey and trails Spanish league leader Real Madrid by seven points.

Coach Xavi Hernández already announced he will leave at the end of the season.



"It was a great match, very complete," Xavi said.

"We have been criticised unfairly, and today we showed that this team is prepared to compete in Europe. We are among the best eight teams in Europe. We have to enjoy it."

The victory also means extra income for Barcelona, which has been struggling financially recently.

The Catalan club is unbeaten in six meetings with Napoli in all competitions.

It struggled to keep the Italian side from threatening after taking the early lead at Estadi Olímpic Lluís Companys. Goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen, making his 100th UEFA appearance, was tested often by Napoli's attack.

Barcelona had a few chances to increase its lead on counterattacks before

Lewandowski sealed the win from close range in the 83rd after an assist by substitute Roberto. Lewandowski has scored 13 goals in his last 13 knockout stage games in the Champions League.

López put the hosts ahead with a shot from the middle of the area in the 15th minute after a low cross by Raphinha, who also set up Cancelo's goal two minutes later. The Brazil forward hit the post from inside the area and the ball bounced back for an easy strike by Cancelo.

Napoli got on the board in the 30th with Rrahmani finding the net with a low left-footed shot for his first European goal.

"We gave them too much space, we lost possession often, we started with the wrong attitude and didn't

defend well," Napoli coach Francesco Calzona said.

Barcelona teenager Lamine Yamal had a goal disallowed for offside in the 68th.

The last time Barcelona played in the quarterfinals it had also eliminated Napoli 4-2 on aggregate in the round of 16.

Xavi still couldn't count on several players because of injuries, including Pedri, Frankie De Jong and Ferran Torres. He played with 17-year-old Pau Cubarsi as a central defender, and the teenager was named the man of the match as he helped contain Napoli's attack in his European debut.

The other teams that have advanced to the last eight include Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City.

ASHWIN REPLACES BUMRAH AT TOP OF ICC TEST RANKINGS

ROHIT RISES TO 6TH AMONG BATTERS



PTI ■ DUBAI
Nine-wicket haul in his 100th Test match helped Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin re-claim the top spot in the bowlers' list, while his captain Rohit Sharma was back in the top-10 at sixth in the batting charts of the latest ICC rankings on Wednesday.

Ashwin was at his best throughout the Dharamsala contest against England as the experienced right-arterm picked up four wickets in the first innings and then a 36th five-wicket haul in the second innings as India cruised to a dominant triumph in the fifth and final Test of their series. The big haul helped Ashwin move past teammate Jasprit Bumrah into the premier position that he previously held earlier this year, the ICC said in a statement.

Rohit, who smashed a hundred in Dharamsala, rose five places to sixth and within 108 rating points of No.1 ranked Test batter Kane Williamson.

Yashasvi Jaiswal (up two places to eighth) and Shubman Gill (up 11 spots to equal 20th) reached new career-best ratings following excellent individual series against Ben Stokes' side. Bumrah fell into a share of the second position with Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood following his six scalps in the second Test against New Zealand in Christchurch. Ashwin's teammate Kuldeep Yadav earned a new career-high rating and jumped 15 places to 16th overall on the



Kuldeep had inkling he will be my 700th Test scalp: Anderson

PTI ■ LONDON
Veteran England pacer James Anderson has revealed that Kuldeep Yadav had a hunch about being his 700th Test wicket when the two came face to face during the fifth and final Test against India in Dharamsala. Anderson became the first pacer and third bowler to take 700 Test wickets on March 9 with Yadav being his landmark scalp. It was Anderson's 187th Test appearance.

Anderson, however, said the moment would have been more joyous had England finished on the winning side in the series which they lost 1-4. "I didn't celebrate, there was nothing to celebrate. Obviously that was a nice moment to achieve the feat on a picturesque ground. I would have felt a bit more excited if we would have won," the 41-year-old pacer said. "I don't play cricket for milestones, I play cricket to win matches for my team." Anderson said despite the defeat, there was plenty of positives to take home from the away series. "I really enjoyed this tour, obviously we lost 4-1, the results weren't that great but we stuck together really well as a group. There were young spinners and batters who will learn so much from this tour," he said.

Vidarbha prolong Mumbai wait for 42nd Ranji Trophy triumph



PTI ■ MUMBAI

A dogged fightback from Vidarbha, led by Karun Nair (74) and skipper Akshay Wadkar (56 not out), prolonged Mumbai's wait for a 42nd Ranji Trophy title as the visiting side reached 248/5 in pursuit of a mammoth 538 on the fourth and penultimate day of the final here on Wednesday. Set an improbable target to win the summit clash after being outplayed since the first day afternoon, Vidarbha put up a resolute show with the bat to frustrate their hosts by resorting to stonewalling for the majority of the day. Nair, who joined the Vidarbha ranks only at the start of this season, was at the forefront of their resistance as he faced as many as 220 balls while batting for 287 minutes to keep Mumbai at bay. But the right-handed batter ultimately fell to the brilliance of Musheer Khan late in the day, with the 19-year-old producing a superb bowling show after setting up the game with 136 in the second innings. Nair's skipper Wadkar was batting on 56 with Harsh Dubey (11 not out) for company. The team required another 290 runs with five wickets in hand. Mumbai managed a couple of wickets each in the first two sessions and the vital scalp of Nair in the last. They took the second new ball in the 82nd over of the innings. Up until then, Mumbai had tried almost everything on what remained a placid pitch at the Wankhede Stadium. It had more on offer for the home team's spinners who remained persistent throughout. Mumbai's troika of right-arm pacers took turns to come around the wickets to try and bounce out Vidarbha, while spinners operated from both ends to challenge the batters' techniques. In the end, Vidarbha walked away with a moral win of sorts having not capitulated given the occasion and pressure of the final and the fact that a target of 538 is perceived as out of reach for most batting line-ups. The leader of the spin pack for Mumbai was Musheer, who remained nearly unplayable for

his figures of 17-3-24-2. He bowled a challenging line from both the sides of the pitch to keep troubling the Vidarbha batters. Musheer's dismissal of Nair, who was earlier dropped on four by Hardik Tamore off Kotian, was the one which stood out. Giving a nice loop to the ball to land it in front of middle and leg, Musheer got it to turn away sharply. It wasn't the first time in the day when Musheer had challenged Nair's defence this way, but on this instance, he found an outside edge which was grabbed sharply by Tamore. Tanush Kotian also played his part taking 2/55 from his 19 overs, having accounted for Dhruv Shorey (28) and Yash Rathod (7) after Vidarbha made their intentions clear earlier in the day. At no stage did the Vidarbha batters show intention to aim for the humongous target on Wednesday, but were discipline enough to ensure they had long hauls in the middle, barring Atharva Taide (32). Taide walked across the wickets to attempt a sweep off Shams Mulani (1/56) in the 19th over and was trapped leg-before, post which Mumbai struck again soon to send Shorey back in the shed. Aman Mokhadde (32) got a lifeline when a sweep shot went straight to Kotian at fine leg who spilled the catch with the batter on 15. Mokhadde, however, could not make the most of the lifeline when an on-field umpire's call for leg-before went against him despite reviewing. Wadkar appeared busier than his other teammates cracking six fours to make 56 not out from 91 balls, with his innings also including an upper-cut for the maximum with which he raised his fifty. The Vidarbha skipper also did well with Nair to add 90 runs for the fifth wicket, for which they consumed 173 balls.

BRIEF SCORES: Mumbai 224 & 418 lead Vidarbha 105 & 248/5 in 92 overs (Atharva Taide 32, Aman Mokhadde 32, Karun Nair 74, Akshay Wadkar 56*); Tanush Kotian 2/56, Musheer Khan 2/38) by 290 runs.

Ravindra becomes youngest recipient of Sir Richard Hadlee Medal

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

The biggest find of New Zealand's World Cup campaign in India, Rachin Ravindra on Wednesday became the youngest recipient of the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal after becoming the country's best male cricketer of the year. Among women, Melie Kerr grabbed the major prizes at the New Zealand Cricket Awards. Kane Williamson was recognised for his outstanding form in the Test arena with the ANZ Test Player of the Year Award, and winning the Redpath Cup for men's first-class batting. At 24, Ravindra is the youngest winner in the award's history, after a season that's seen him become a mainstay of New Zealand's red and white ball sides. After breaking into the 50-over side in March last year, Ravindra shone in the



ODI World Cup in India, scoring 578 runs at an average of 64, including three centuries and two half-centuries, including an unbeaten 123 in the tournament opener against

England in Ahmedabad. As a result, Ravindra was named as the ICC's Emerging Player of the Year for 2023, and also secured a USD 350,000 Indian Premier League

contract with Chennai Super Kings. The Sir Richard Hadlee Medal capped off a breakout season for Ravindra on the international stage, on which he contributed for the Kiwis across all three formats. Ravindra continued his meteoric rise in the Test arena, registering New Zealand's highest ever maiden Test century with 240 during the first Test against South Africa at Bay Oval, and playing a key role in the BLACKCAPS on the first ever Test series victory over South Africa. He also shone on the T20 international stage, featuring in 14 of the BLACKCAPS' 26 T20I matches over the season and scoring a blistering 68 from 35 balls in the first T20I against Australia at Sky Stadium. Kerr claimed a clean sweep of the major female awards, winning the Debbie Hockley Medal after being named ANZ ODI and T20I Player of

the Year, and the Dream11 Super Smash Women's Player of the Year. The leg-spinning allrounder was the WHITE FERNS' leading ODI run-scorer with 541 runs at an average of 67, notching her third and fourth ODI centuries along the way. She was also the team's joint leading T20 wicket-taker and second highest T20I run scorer with 252 runs at an average of 42 and a strike-rate of 118. Kerr's performances on the international front were recognised with selection in both the women's ODI and T20I ICC Teams of the Year for 2023. Kerr also led the way on the domestic front, captaining the Wellington Blaze to their fourth Dream11 Super Smash title in six years, topping the run-scoring charts with 437 runs at an average of 72, and the wicket-taking charts with 20 wickets at 8 and an economy of 4.47.

BLIND CRICKET T20



India take unassailable series lead with seven wickets win over Lanka

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India defeated Sri Lanka by seven wickets in the third T20 to take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match Samarth Championship for Blind Cricket here on Wednesday. Chandana Deshapriya (76) scored a fifty to help Sri Lanka post 162/3 after being invited to bat first at the Karnail Singh Stadium. Dinesh Rathva, Naresh Tumda, Lokesh and Pankaj Bhue, who was adjudged the Player of the Match, then contributed with the bat as India chased down the target with 27 balls to spare. India thus claimed the bilateral series with two more matches to go. Sri Lanka got off to a decent start but lost two wickets inside

the power play. In a must-win match, Deshapriya and skipper Damith Sandaruwan then started rebuilding the innings. While Deshapriya scored 76 runs in 63 balls, Sandaruwan struck 46 in 47 balls. For India, Bhue picked a wicket. Chasing 163, India started off well scoring 75 runs in the first eight overs. Pankaj and Dinesh laid the platform for the chase as the Men In Blue looked all set to claim the series. India lost Dinesh in the eighth over as Pankaj in 12th but that didn't derail the chase. Naresh Tumda and Lokesh ensured India got over the line in the 16th over, asserting their dominance over the visiting side in the series. India made 164/3 in 15.3 overs.

There is sense of calmness in this team: Perry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After guiding Royal Challengers Bangalore to the Women's Premier League knock-outs with a record breaking six-wicket haul, all-rounder Ellyse Perry said a calmer dressing room is behind the team's success this season. Perry ended with sensational figures of six for 15 against Mumbai Indians to qualify for the Eliminator here on Tuesday. "We started the game really well and that was probably our best bowling performance in the power play in the last three matches," said Perry in a media interaction on Wednesday. When asked if there has been a shift in the attitude in the dressing room and change in the mindset of the players compared to



last season, Perry said, "There is a sense of calmness and the team is enjoying themselves. "In the dressing room and as well as on the field there has been lots of smiles and huge focus to just go out there and enjoy because it's a pretty special tournament and the crowd has been amazing from five matches which were

super special and now being here in Delhi is just been a really great chance for the group to spend more time together." RCB finished fourth out of five teams in the inaugural season in 2023. Perry was all praise for RCB teammate and India international Richa Ghosh. "She is amazing, I absolutely love her, she is always smiling, laughing. She contributes so much to the team. She is so supportive of her team and plays phenomenal behind the stumps. "She has affected so many key moments across by stumping and catching and then with the batting. Scary to think that she is so young because I think she got an amazingly bright future ahead of her, not just in WPL but also in International cricket when she plays India."

Bairstow available for Punjab Kings for full IPL season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

England batter Jonny Bairstow will be available for the entire duration of the Indian Premier League, beginning March 22, despite returning home only recently following a long Test tour of India. On the sidelines of the Dharamsala Test, the BCCI officials were in talks with their England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) counterparts over the availability of their players for the IPL. Test regulars like skipper Ben Stokes, Joe Root and Mark Wood had already made themselves unavailable for the



lucrative T20 league as part of ECB's workload management following the five-Test series that ended in Dharamsala on Sunday. "Bairstow is expected to arrive in India on March 18 or 19 and will be available for the team's first game against Delhi

Capitals on March 23," said an IPL source. Bairstow, who played his 100th Test in Dharamsala, had a forgettable time with the bat in India and would be looking to be back among the runs in the IPL. **WASIM JAFFER RELEASED FROM BATTING CONSULTANT'S POSITION:** Sanjay Bangar, who was appointed as cricket director at Punjab Kings ahead of the 2024 edition, will double up as the batting coach of the side. Bangar was previously with RCB and has also been India's batting coach. Considering that, the franchise has parted ways with Wasim

Jaffer, who was the team's batting consultant last season. Punjab, whose only final appearance came in the 2014 edition, have been perennial under-performers in the IPL. Head coach Trevor Bayliss' contract expires after the season and Punjab will have to make the play-offs for him to have a shot at extension. **DHARAMSALA TO HOST TEAM'S TWO HOME GAMES:** Though the whole season schedule is not out yet, Punjab are expected to play their final two home games in Dharamsala like last season. The other five games will be held in the new stadium built in Mullanpur, Mohali.



Looking forward to next stage of my healing journey: Shami

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

His stitches removed after a surgery to fix an injured ankle, senior India pacer Mohammed Shami on Wednesday said he was looking forward to the next phase of his "healing journey". The pacer, who took 24 wickets in the 2023 ODI World Cup, missed the five-match Test series against England recently and will also sit out of the IPL after having undergone surgery for an ankle injury last month. "Hello everyone! I wanted to provide an update on my recovery process. It has been 15 days since my surgery, and I recently had my stitches removed. I am thankful for the advancements and looking

forward to the next stage of my healing journey," Shami wrote on 'X' along with three photographs. The 33-year-old Shami has been missing in action since the ODI World Cup last year. Shami, who was one of the architects of India's stupendous World Cup campaign, played through pain as he had problems with his landing but didn't let it affect his performance. Shami, who was recently conferred with the Arjuna Award, has 229 Test, 195 ODI and 24 T20 wickets in his decade-long career. Along with Prasidh Krishna, Shami was on Tuesday rule out of the upcoming Indian Premier League and is also set to miss this year's T20 World Cup.