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LET STATECRAFT REPLACE VICIOUS PROPAGANDA

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UNSC ADOPTS GAZA CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION

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SENSEX, NIFTY SETTLE ALMOST FLAT AMID VOLATILE TRADE

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Capital sizzles, goes off the grid

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In what could be called as a triple whammy for the people of Delhi on Tuesday reeling under the scorching impact of an unprecedented heatwave and a severe water crisis, they faced a major power outage caused by a fire at the Mandola power grid in Uttar Pradesh, a critical supplier of electricity to the national Capital, providing approximately 1,500 megawatts of power.

As temperatures soared to 42 degrees Celsius, the power cut for varying lengths exacerbated the hardships of the residents of Delhi in various pockets, including the area housing Delhi LG Secretariat and Chief Minister's residence.

Amid IMD forecasts that heatwave conditions are likely to prevail for the next five days, Delhi Power Minister Atishi termed the incident as a matter of concern. She said, "There has been a major power cut in many parts of Delhi since 2:11 pm today. A power grid in Mandola, UP, which supplies 1,500 MW of electricity to Delhi, has caught fire. We are linking it to our other power sources." She said she has sought time to meet the newly appointed



Representational photo

Union Energy Minister (Manohar Lal Khattar) and the chairperson of PGCIL (Power Grid Corporation of India). The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader, criticising the Centre, said, "It is worrying that the national-level power infrastructure has come to a standstill today. The failure of the national grid in the country's Capital is quite worrying. There was no power cut even when Delhi's peak power demand reached 8,000 MW. This power cut happened due to the failure of the national infrastructure."

In a post on social media X, Atishi said the fire at a sub-station of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd

(PGCIL) in Mandola near Loni (Ghaziabad) in Uttar Pradesh had led to power outages in many parts of the national Capital.

The power restoration process has begun and electricity is now gradually returning to different areas, Atishi said.

"Delhi is the national Capital. If the power infrastructure in the country's Capital fails like this on behalf of the national grid, then it can have very serious consequences. Delhi has always tried to provide electricity 24x7. A few weeks ago, when the peak power demand reached 8,300 MW, Delhi fulfilled it without any blackout or major power failure.



We need answers: SC to Centre, NTA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stay the counselling for admissions of students to the medical colleges over alleged paper leak and irregularities in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) undergraduate (UG) examination 2024.

The apex court has also issued notice to the Centre and NTA and listed the matter for consideration on July 8, after the summer vacation which commenced on May 20 comes to an end.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said the "sanctity has been affected" and "we need answers". However, the court refused to stay the counselling process for admission of those who have cleared the exam. "Let the counselling start. We

are not stopping the counselling," said Justice Nath as Senior Advocate Mathews J Nedumpara urged the court to stay the counselling.

Besides the Centre and the NTA, which conducts NEET-UG, the bench also issued notices to the Bihar Government. There were allegations of malpractice in holding the exam in the State. "How much time do you want...Immediately on the reopening? Otherwise, the counselling will start," the bench said.

It tagged the plea filed by Shivangi Mishra and nine other MBBS aspirants with a pending petition and asked the NTA to file the response in the meantime.

NEET-UG, 2024, was held on May 5 and results were declared on June 4. It was expected to be declared on June 14.

Nadda in Cabinet, hunt on for new BJP chief

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the induction of Jagat Prakash Nadda in the Modi 3.0 Cabinet, speculation among party workers and leaders is about whom the party will fall back on as the next president. Nadda's tenure is ending by the end of this month. There is some possibility that the party could continue with Nadda for some time till the new party president is appointed.

Besides Nadda, the BJP also is set to kickstart soon the process of organisational changes with the launch of a fresh membership drive followed by an internal poll across States leading up to the election of a new party president.

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha, speculations were doing the rounds that former Haryana Chief Minister Manoharlal Khattar, Madhya Pradesh BJP chief Vishnudu Sharma, Gujarat BJP president Chandrakant Raghunath Paatil, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhupendra Yadav. Leaders like Khattar, Chauhhan, Pradhan and Yadav have been inducted in the Cabinet.

After that several names are doing the rounds which include the party's general

Union Health Minister JP Nadda
Photo: Ranjan Dimri

Results a reality check, says RSS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In its first reaction to the BJP's below par performance in the high decibel just concluded general elections, the ruling party's ideologue, RSS, has apparently come out in defence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he was being criticised for winning less than majority LS seats and blamed on the party workers for the kind of show which has forced Modi to be on toes given the coalition needs.

In an obvious reference to the BJP's remarks mid way elections that the party does not need RSS to contest elections, RSS in an article noted that though the RSS is not a "field force" of the BJP, the party leaders and workers did not reach out to its 'swayamsevaks' (volunteers) seeking their cooperation in electoral work. The LS poll results have come as a reality check for "overconfident" BJP workers and many of its leaders as they were happy in their "bubble" and enjoying the glow of Modi's aura but not listening to the voices on the streets.

VIP security system set for major overhaul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Depending upon the new threat perceptions by the central intelligence agencies, the Modi Government 3.0 is likely to undertake a significant overhaul in the VIP security setup in the coming months, leading to the transfer of security duties for over a dozen high-risk individuals from the National Security Guard (NSG) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to other paramilitary forces. This exercise will cover political figures, ex-Ministers, retired bureaucrats and some others.

However, officials said on Tuesday that there was no such proposal for the time being.

The plan to interchange security duties of high-risk individuals has been in the making since 2012. It is expected hat around 450 'black cat' commandos are expected to be freed once NSG is withdrawn from VIP security duties.

The plan envisages "restructuring" the role of a security agency and using its manpower to raise and station strike teams of commandos in some high-risk areas and around some critical assets located in different parts of the country. Top four Ministers of the Modi Government — Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Foreign Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman who were Ministers in the previous Modi 2.0 Government, will retain their 'Z' plus security.

Sources said, it has been decided to completely withdraw the 'black cat'

commandos of the National Security Guard (NSG) from VIP security duties. All its nine Z-plus category protectees will be handed over to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) VIP security unit.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will review the current list of allottees, which may result in the modification, reduction, or enhancement of security cover for various political figures, former ministers, retired bureaucrats, and others," sources added.

The CRPF and the CISF VIP security wings secure more than 200 persons at present.

In addition, some of the VIPs secured by the personnel of the border guarding force Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) may be transferred to the CRPF or the VIP security wing of the CISE, known as the Special Security Group (SSG).

In 2012, it was first proposed to relieve the NSG from VIP security duties when the commanders of the elite group foresaw an event where simultaneous terror attacks could be witnessed at one time across multiple places. In such a situation, the commandos will have to be rushed into various directions.

Those protected by the close protection force of the National Security Guard (NSG) commandos include Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, his predecessor and BSP supreme Mayawati, Union defence minister Rajnath Singh, veteran BJP leader and former deputy prime minister L K Advani, Union shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal, BJP leader and ex Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh.

BJP's Majhi new Odisha CM, will have 2 deputies



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR/AMRAVATI

BJP's tribal leader Mohan Bcharan Majhi will be the new Chief Minister of Odisha, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced here on Tuesday. KV Singh Deo and Pravati Parida were made Deputy Chief Ministers of the State, he said.

The new Government will take oath at Janata Maidan on Wednesday which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and some of his Cabinet members who are also scheduled to grace the oath ceremony of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu's swearing in ceremony as Chief Minister in Andhra Pradesh.

The TDP legislators, Janasena and BJP as part of NDA constituents elected Naidu as their leader in the Assembly. Along with Naidu as CM, some leaders from Janasena and BJP could swear-in on June 12.



Congress MPs Rahul Gandhi, Kishori Lal Sharma and party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during a public meeting in Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday

Priyanka would have crushed Modi: Rahul

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ RAEBARELI

Rahul Gandhi, in a fiery address at a thanksgiving rally in Raebareilly on Tuesday evening, targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, claiming that Modi narrowly escaped defeat in Ayodhya. Rahul said if his sister, Priyanka Gandhi, had contested from Varanasi, Modi would have lost that seat as well.

He said Priyanka might have won by a margin of over 2 to 3 lakh voters. "Modi and Shah were playing with the foundation of the nation, hence the nation united against them in this election. For the first time, I saw that the Prime Minister of the country is doing politics of violence, spreading hatred amongst the public, and extending benefits to three industrialists," said Rahul.

The rally saw the presence of KL Sharma, who defeated Union Minister Smriti Irani in Amethi. The venue for the rally was shifted from Amethi to

Raebareilly only on Monday morning. Highlighting the BJP's loss in Ayodhya, Rahul remarked, "You all saw that they lost the Ayodhya seat. The temple was built in Ayodhya, but they did not invite any poor people to its inauguration. They even barred the President of India from attending. Not only in Ayodhya, but even in Varanasi, the Prime Minister somehow survived a near-certain defeat. If my sister Priyanka had contested there, Modi would have lost by a margin of 2 to 3 lakh votes," he asserted.

Priyanka also addressed the rally, sharing her efforts in the election campaign. "When I came to Raebareilly, I asked everyone to utilise the remaining 300 hours and sleep for just 2 hours daily. Now, the results are before you. This is not just the victory of Rahul or KL Sharma but the victory of the people of Raebareilly and Amethi. We feel proud to continue serving you."

Frenzy builds up for Speaker's election



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the allocation of ministerial portfolios in the new BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government completed, the focus has now shifted to electing the Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha. After a pro-tem or temporary Speaker administers the oath to newly-elected MPs during a Special Session, the Speaker will be the presiding officer of the Lower House of Parliament.

The Special Session of Parliament is slated to commence on June 24 to elect the Lok Sabha Speaker. Sources said for the first two days new Members of Parliament will be taking their oaths followed by election of the Speaker. The session will go on till July 3. The Lok Sabha Speaker's post has become a prized catch as the NDA parties, both TDP and JD (U), are eyeing the chair. In the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, the BJP was only able to bag 240 seats, and fell short of the 272 mark. Former Lok Sabha Speaker

Sumitra Mahajan said the presiding officer of the Lower House should have experience in handling parliamentary work as well as ability to conduct proceedings smoothly by coordinating with both the ruling and Opposition benches.

"The Lok Sabha Speaker's job is to smoothly run the House in coordination with the ruling party and the Opposition. In my opinion, the Lok Sabha Speaker should be a little experienced. S/he should have experience in handling parliamentary work. If such a person is found for the post, it will be a very good thing," she said.

As the BJP lacks a majority in the new Lok Sabha, it will need to get its allies, especially the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Janata Dal (United), on board to decide on the Speaker's post. Congress led INDIA Bloc constituent, AAP, asked the TDP and JD(U) on Monday to ensure the Lok Sabha Speaker is from one of the two parties, and said this would be in their interests as well as that of the Constitution and democracy.

Animal laws need more teeth, say activists

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A case in Pune last year saw a dog being beaten brutally by a local resident, resulting in severe injuries to the animal. Despite the seriousness of the offense, the perpetrator was only fined Rs 50 under the current law. "In addition to the Pune case, there have been other instances such as the merciless killing of a stray dog in Mumbai and Jagtapuri, Delhi to name a few. These cases illustrate the severity of animal cruelty and the inadequacy of current penalties to serve as a deterrent where some people have been brutal to these innocent animals.

"But the lenient penalty does not reflect the gravity of the crime, effectively allowing offenders to get away with minimal consequences," rued Alokparna Sengupta, Managing Director of Humane Society International/India.

Sengupta, along with other animal activists, has now written to the new Government to ensure passage of the long pending proposed Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill 2022 in the upcoming Monsoon session of Parliament. In 2022, over 180 parliamentarians had demanded such an



amendment. At least 50,000 emails and letters were sent last year by animal advocates and the general public to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to amend the 1960 Act. The draft Prevention of

Cruelty to Animals (Amendment) Bill, 2022 proposes substantial changes, including fines up to Rs 75,000, a significant jump from the current maximum of Rs 50, and imprisonment

for severe offenses.

Such brutal cases call for strict legislative action, Gauri Maulekhi, trustee of People for Animals (PFA), said, as she pointed out, "Amending the PCA Act is imperative and long overdue. It is well known that violence against animals is a precursor to violence against other vulnerable members of our society, be it women, children, or our elders. "Strengthening this law protects animals and serves as a pivotal step towards cultivating empathy and respect, fostering a society where compassion thrives, and brutality finds no haven."

UGC nod to two admission cycles

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian universities and higher education institutions will now be allowed to offer admissions twice a year on lines of foreign universities with the University Grants Commission giving a go ahead to the plan, UGC chief Jagadesh Kumar said.

The two admission cycles will be July-August and January-February from the 2024-25 academic session. "If Indian universities can offer admission twice a year, it will benefit many students such as those who missed admission to a university in the July-August session due to a delay in the announcement



of board results, health issues, or personal reasons," Kumar told PTI. "Biannual university admissions will help students maintain motivation since they do not have to wait one full year to be admitted if they miss admission in the current cycle. With biannual admissions in place, industries can also do their campus recruitment twice a

year, improving employment opportunities for the graduates," he added.

The UGC chief explained that biannual admissions will also enable the higher education institutes (HEIs) to plan their resource distribution, such as faculty, labs, classrooms and support services, more efficiently, resulting in a better functional flow within the university.

"Universities worldwide already follow a biannual admission system. If Indian HEIs adopt the biannual admission cycle, our HEIs can enhance their international collaborations and student exchanges."

Haryana informed me water being provided to city as per allocated share: LG

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the water crisis gripping the Capital, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday said he has spoken to Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini who informed him that water was being provided to the national Capital as per its allocated share despite the constraints imposed on Haryana in terms of water supply due to the weather.

The ruling AAP dispensation has during the past fortnight repeatedly accused the BJP-ruled Haryana of stopping Delhi's share of water. The national capital has been experiencing severe water shortage amid the unprecedented summer heat. Over the weekend, Delhi Water Minister Atishi wrote to the Haryana chief minister alleging inadequate release of water from the Munak Canal, on which the seven Water Treatment Plants in Delhi are dependent for the generation of potable water, by his state government.



Speaking to reporters later, Haryana CM Saini had denied these allegations. Atishi on Tuesday once again slammed the Haryana government and alleged that it was "deliberately" and "illegally" halting the water supply to the capital. In a press conference here, Atishi alleged that the Haryana government was releasing less

water to the city because of which Delhi is unable to meet the daily water requirement. Following an inspection of two sub-canals fed by the Munak Canal in Northwest Delhi's Bawana, Atishi alleged that Delhi should ideally receive 1050 cusecs of water per day but was receiving just 840 cusecs.

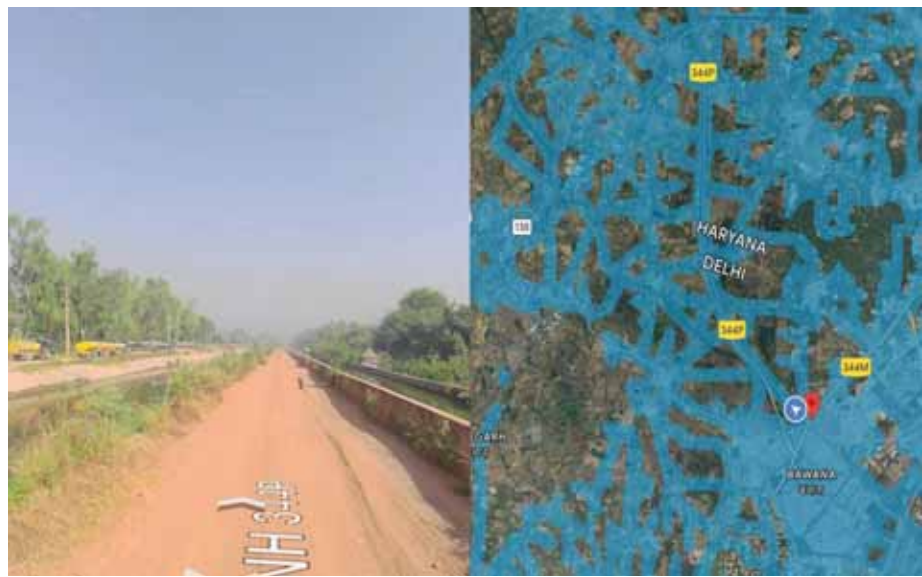
Citing an affidavit submitted by the Haryana government in the Supreme Court, the minister said, "The Haryana government has been lying that they have released adequate supply water to Delhi. Their affidavit filed in the Supreme Court presents the data on actual discharge of water which has exposed their lie."

and 283 cusec. The water released by Haryana reduces further by the time it reaches Delhi. We will also submit all these data to the Supreme Court tomorrow. We have filed an additional affidavit in the Supreme Court. I will also write a letter to the CM of Haryana regarding this," Atishi added. The Water Minister shared that now that Delhi has been facing a water crisis for the last week and the matter is going on in the Supreme Court, Haryana is reducing the water of the Munak Canal. According to Haryana's data, on 7, 8, 9 and 10 June, Haryana was supposed to release 719 cusecs of water in CLC, instead of which only 675 cusecs of water were released, and in DSB, instead of 330 cusecs, 310 cusecs of water was released. The minister also said that she will write a letter to Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini regarding this and also approach the Supreme Court to present before it the data in the affidavit.

Water crisis deliberate conspiracy by AAP Govt: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Tuesday here claimed that the water crisis in Delhi is a deliberate conspiracy by the Delhi government. He accused the government of turning the situation into a revenue generating avenue in connivance with its Ministers and MLAs. Making this assertion in a news conference, he also said if Delhi residents are struggling for every drop of water today, the responsibility lies with the Water Minister, the Jal Board, its officials, its chairman, and the Delhi government.



pipeline leakages. Sachdeva presented some technical images and video clips revealing the theft of water by tanker mafias from the Munak Canal, facilitated by the Kejriwal government. The BJP President demon-

strated how the water released by the Haryana government for Delhi is stolen by tanker mafias between Munak Canal and Kakori with the Delhi government's support. Sachdeva showed images of tankers lined up along the canal, filling up water and selling it at exorbitant prices in water-scarce areas of the city. He alleged that the proceeds are probably going to the Delhi Chief Minister, Water Minister, and various officials. He demanded

answers from Ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj about the presence of water tankers along the canal. Sachdeva pointed out that on June 9, Delhi government ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj inspected the Munak Canal area, where Jal Board officials confirmed that Haryana is supplying more than enough water. Despite this, the ministers continue to blame the Haryana government. Sachdeva remarked that Atishi repeatedly mentions additional water from Himachal, but the reality is that the Delhi government lacks storage and treatment facilities for this water. He noted that the Delhi Jal Board can treat only 900 MGD of water, and any additional water will exacerbate theft, increasing it from 25% to 40%. He showcased another video depicting a decade-long leakage in Delhi Jal Board pipes, which has not been repaired to date.

Chariot statue to adorn city junction in Diplomatic Enclave

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Giving an aesthetic look to the national capital, an imposing and painstakingly carved horse-driven chariot of Parthasarthi Krishna with Arjuna, handpicked by Lt Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena, now adorns the junction of Sardar Patel Marg and the Simon Bolivar Marg in the Diplomatic Enclave of the Capital. Giving details, officials said here on Tuesday, this sculpture was handpicked by Saxena during his visit to Dausa in Rajasthan last year. It was planned to be installed in the Capital as part of LG's initiative to adorn the city with artefacts, sculptures and fountains.



NDMC. The horse-driven chariot was originally planned to be installed in the run up to the G-20 Summit. However, during its installation, the LG observed that the horses in the original sculpture were disproportionately small. Accordingly, the sculpture was remade and installed recently. Many more such aesthetic artefacts and sculptures will be coming up in different parts of the city in coming days. Installed on a platform of 22ft diameter, this striking sculpture is surrounded by coloured geyser fountains with 25 nozzles spread over 60ft. Reaching up to 6ft, these fountains in 08 warm colours provide a delightful experience to passers-by in the evening. Plantation has been done all around the chariot. Total size of platform is 86x37 feet.

There will be no flooding in Yamuna this year: Bharadwaj

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj asserted on Tuesday that there will be no flooding in the Yamuna this year as the river will get a clear channel for its flow. Bharadwaj inspected the Yamuna Barrage near ITO during the day. According to an official statement, the minister was apprised of the measures being taken to manage potential flood scenarios. Last year, the barrage caused significant flooding in the Yamuna, leading to water logging and severe inconvenience for residents living nearby. Bharadwaj said the amount of rainfall received last year and the volume of water released into the Yamuna from Haryana were unprecedented in decades and that resulted in the flood situation. "Although this barrage falls under the jurisdiction of the Haryana government and its operation is their responsibility, this time, the Delhi irrigation and flood control department has coordinated with the Haryana government to prepare for potential issues," he said. "The department has made preparations so that even if the same amount of water as last year flows into the Yamuna, there will be no flooding in Delhi and the Yamuna's water will not reach the roads," Bharadwaj added. The minister said work has been ongoing for the past three months and a significant amount of silt around all the barrages has already been removed. All barrages have been opened, he said, adding that some could not be opened and had to be cut and removed to ensure that there is no obstruction in the water flow. To prevent water accumulation in the Yamuna and avoid a flood situation, a new experiment has been conducted



by the Delhi irrigation and flood control department, Bharadwaj said. "This experiment is called 'Pilot Cut'. Under this experiment, small channels are dug from the accumulated soil in front of the barrage extending far beyond. During this process, small islands of soil are formed between the artificial channels created in the Yamuna. "When rainwater will be released from Haryana, it will flow swiftly through these artificial channels, carrying with it the small soil islands, thereby eliminating any possibility of water stagnation and allowing the water to flow swiftly ahead," he said. This procedure ensures that there will be no likelihood of water accumulating in the Yamuna, terminating all potential flood scenarios due to unimpeded water flow, the Aam Aadmi Party leader said. During the last flood in the Yamuna, there were incidents of regulators breaking at some places, he said. "This time, to prevent such situations, all regulators have been repaired. Broken regulators have been replaced... All regulators have been tested," the minister said. Water accumulation in urban areas has various causes which fall under the responsibility of different departments such as the DDA, PWD and the MCD, he said. Delhi battled one of its worst flood-like situations in several pockets last year because of heavy rain, with more than 25,000 people evacuated from inundated areas.

BJP Mahila Manch stages protest outside Atishi residence

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Mahila Manch members staged a protest outside Delhi Finance Minister Atishi's residence here on Tuesday and demanded the AAP government to fulfill its budget announcement to provide Rs 1000 honorarium to the women of the city. The protesters raised slogans outside the minister's residence on Mathura Road here. "The AAP government announced Rs 1000 per month honorarium for women in its budget. It was not some poll promise. So, the government should now provide the money to the women," said one of the protesters Safia Faheem. A police officer said the protesters were dispersed and



no one was detained. "Some women protested in front of the house of minister Atishi. No one was detained as they were protesting peacefully," said a senior police officer. Addressing a press conference later in the day, Atishi said that the protest was staged by the opposition BJP's women wing showing their "desperateness" to clinch votes. "It was the BJP's women wing who staged the protest. This shows the BJP's desperateness. They know the people of Delhi want to see Kejriwal as the chief minister again, they know the chief minister will fulfil his promise of giving Rs 1,000. That's why they are staging such protests to scrap a few votes here and there in his name," she said. Faheem said that she was not part of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was out on bail from the Tihar jail during campaigning for the Lok Sabha polls, repeatedly assured that he will provide Rs 1000 per month to the women of Delhi. The AAP government had in its budget 2024-25 presented in the Assembly announced to provide Rs 1000 to adult women of Delhi per month under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana. Atishi had said in an interview earlier that the scheme was likely to be notified after the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha polls was lifted. She expected the scheme to be rolled out by September-October this year.

Gurugram cops use drones to bust illegal alcohol making den



Using a drone for surveillance, police in the Aravali range of Rithoj village of Gurugram have busted an illicit country liquor-manufacturing den and arrested 7 accused including a minor, police said. They also seized 500 litres of country liquor, 1600 litres of chemicals and other equipment. According to police, they conducted checking on Tuesday using a drone equipped with a high-definition camera for surveillance to bust illicit country liquor manufacturing dens and nab the accused. ACP (Sohna) Vipin Alahawat said, "A team of the Bhandsi police station conducted a special campaign for surveillance of illicit country liquor manufacturing dens in the region and busted an illegal liquor manufacturing den and nabbed the seven suspects." The arrested accused have been identified as Sacche, Ganga, Manoj, Anil, Khemchand, Munshiram and one minor. A case under relevant sections of the Excise Act at the Bhandsi police station. "Usually, those involved in manufacturing country liquor do in the Aravali range. They also make sure that these dens are near any garbage disposal spot outside the villages to hide the stench from the country liquor. With drone surveillance, we focused on the Aravali region," Alahawat said.

Ensure necessary facilities for Kanwariyas, Atishi directs DMs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Revenue Minister Atishi has directed the district magistrates to ensure waterproof tents, furniture, toilets, water, medical and other necessary facilities for the Kanwariyas. In a statement, the government said it has begun preparations for the Kanwar Yatra one-and-a-half months in advance. Atishi met the district magistrates and senior officials for a review meeting to discuss the meticulous arrangements for the Kanwar camps. This year, approximately 200 camps will be established across Delhi, with a focus on East Delhi, North East Delhi, and Shahdara districts --- the primary entry-exit points for Kanwariyas, the statement added. Atishi said that like every year, this year too, the Kejriwal government will set up Kanwar camps for the convenience of Kanwariyas across Delhi, where all the necessary facilities will be ensured for them. Waterproof tents, furniture, toilets, water, medical and other necessary facilities will be available in the camp for Kanwariyas, she said. "In this regard, instructions have been given to all the district administrations to ensure every necessary step for the safety and facilities of Kanwariyas," she added. In the month of 'Savan', lakhs of devotees go to Haridwar to collect water. The minister mentioned that in this holy month of 'Savan', the government is making all necessary arrangements for the service, convenience and security of 'Shiv Bhakt Kanwariyas' and has instructed all the district administrations to remain alert so that Kanwariyas do not face any kind of problem. East Delhi, North East Delhi and Shahdara districts are the entry-exit points of Kanwariyas



in Delhi. In such a situation, most of the camps will be set up here so that the crowd can be easily managed even after the arrival of a large number of Kanwariyas. The administration will connect local dispensaries to the camps for the convenience of the Kanwariyas, the statement added. CAT ambulances will be available for any emergency. Also, hospitals will be instructed to make special arrangements for the treatment of Kanwariyas, it said. Regarding the preparations related to the Kanwar camp, Atishi has instructed all the district magistrates that from now till the organisation of the camp, they must submit a report related to the preparations every week. The DU modified its eligibility criteria for the recruitment of assistant professors in colleges, introducing an additional layer of 'presentation'. The move has drawn flak from the teachers' community which has demanded a rollback. The varsity has raised its minimum eligibility from the earlier 50 to 55 points with a relaxation of five points for SC/ST/PwD candidates in its recently notified Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for teacher recruitment. As per the new rules, the process for the final selection of candidates will be conducted in two stages - assessment through presentation and interview with the selection committee. The presentation will be assessed based on several factors, including 'humility, passion and zeal for teaching,' the notification read. Candidates will also be asked to write an essay on the day of the presentation for the assessment of their writing skills, the June 3 notification said.

DU modifies eligibility criteria for recruitment of Assistant Professors

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Anti-social elements involved in Balodabazar arson: Home Minister

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, who also holds the Home portfolio, on Tuesday said that anti-social elements were involved in the arson at the Collectorate and SP offices in Balodabazar. They have defamed the Satnami community, he said. Sharma directed stern action against those who were involved in the matter. The police have launched a crack-down on rioters and arrested over 200 persons.



committed arson during Monday's protest," he said. A government official said Sharma along with Revenue Minister Tank Ram Verma and Food Minister Dayaldas Baghel on Tuesday morning visited the violence-hit Balodabazar city. The visit came a day after a mob set fire to govern-

ment offices and vehicles during a protest called by the Satnami community against the alleged vandalism of a Jaikhamb (religious pillar) in Girodपुर. More than two dozen cars, around 70 two-wheelers and a government building were torched at the district office premises on

Monday. Several police personnel were also injured in stone-pelting. As the protest led to arson and stone-pelting, the Balodabazar-Bhatapara district administration imposed curbs prohibiting the assembly of four or more people in Balodabazar city till June 16.

24-member police team to probe Balodabazar incident

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Police on Tuesday formed a 24-member team to probe the arson at the Collectorate and the Superintendent of Police offices in Balodabazar district following damage to a revered pillar of 'Jaikhamb' in Girodपुर dham. The police will probe the matter under the supervision of Janjgir-Champa Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Vijay Paikra, Durg DSP Satyaprakash Tiwari and Bemetara DSP Manoj Tirkey, Balodabazar-Bhatapara Superintendent of Police Sadananand Kumar said. As many as seven cases have been lodged against the accused. So far, the police have arrested more than 200 persons. A mob set fire to government offices



and vehicles during a protest called on by the Satnami community against the vandalism. More than two dozen cars, around 70 two-wheelers and a government building were torched at the district office on Monday.

Maoists' urban courier arrested



STAFF REPORTER SUKMA

An urban courier of the Maoists was arrested and explosives and medicines were seized from him on Tuesday in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh. Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan identified him as Krishna Kumar Kanti alias Joga of Bomed village in Bijapur district. A search operation was launched by the police person-

nel following a tip that some goods had been brought to supply it to the Maoists. He was apprehended from a forest near Devarpalli village when he was collecting a bag of explosives and medicines to be handed over to the Maoists. After arrest, he told the police an unknown man came to a fixed place with the goods to be supplied to the Maoists. The police seized five detonators, 20 gelatin rods, five glucose bottles and Maoist literature from him.

Chhattisgarh to start delimitation work of wards

Ahead of urban body elections

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government is set to do delimitation work of wards before the urban bodies elections to be held this year. The government has asked all district Collectors to complete the process of delimitation as soon as possible so that voter lists can be prepared before the deadline of urban body elections, an order said on Tuesday. The delimitation work will be done afresh keeping in view the increase in the pop-



ulation in each ward as per the census of 2011. After the delimitation work, the reservation of each ward will be carried out.

Modern methods to enhance engineers' efficiency: Sao

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao said on Tuesday that imparting training of modern techniques will boost the efficiency of engineers. He said this while addressing the inaugural day of a four-day training organised by the Indian Academy of Highway Engineers and Public Works Department in Raipur. The training will introduce the engineers of the Raipur and Durg divisions to new methods of design, construction and maintenance of culverts as well as small and medium bridges. Experts from a variety of institutions and construction agencies will also teach them the nuances of quality control.



"This will be highly beneficial in ensuring quality construction and maintenance," Sao said. "In order to stay relevant, we have to keep pace with new technologies and new standards," he added.

Committee formed to honourarium hike, regularization of contractual doctors



STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Health Minister Shyam Bahari Jaiswal on Tuesday called for forming a committee to redress the demands of doctors on contractual service of the state government to hike their honorarium and regularize their service. This decision was taken by the Minister at a meeting of his department held under the chairmanship of Speaker Raman Singh.

Home Minister Vijay Sharma was present. The committee will be headed by the Special Secretary Health. The committee will comprise officials from the finance and health departments as well as the Dean and Senior Professors of Medical Colleges. The Chhattisgarh Junior Doctors Association (JDA) and the United Doctors Front Association (UDFA) have been demanding the government to consider their demand to hike their honorarium.

Congress forms panel to probe Balodabazar arson

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

The Congress in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday constituted a seven-member team to probe the arson at the Collectorate and the Superintendent of Police offices in Balodabazar district following the damage to a revered pillar of 'Jaikhamb' in Girodपुर dham. The team will be headed Shiv Kumar Dahariya and will include Guru Rudra Kumar, Sandeep Sahu, Janak Ram Dhruv Dhruv, Padma Manhar, Shailesh Nitin Trivedi and Hitendra Thakur. Meanwhile, Congress state chief Deepak Bajaj said the offices of the Collector and the Superintendent of Police were set ablaze for the first time in the country. He said the law and order situation in the state was out of control. He sought the resignation of Home Minister Vijay Sharma.

Ayurveda college administers immunity booster to 1,802 children

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

The Government Ayurveda College in Raipur administered an immunity booster called Suvarnaprashan to 1,802 children under the age of 16, an official communiqué on Tuesday. Suvarnaprashan coordinator Dr. Lavkesh Chandravanshi said the booster is very beneficial for the all-round development of children. The medicine also protects children from respiratory diseases and boosts their concentration and memory. Under the National Ayush Mission, the college holds camps for this on every Pushya Nakshatra date. A total of 7,587 children were given the medi-



icine in the previous camps this year. The future camps are scheduled for July 8, August 3 and 30, September 26, October 24, November 20 and December 18.

South East Central Railway E-Tender Notice. Tender Notice No.: DMM/ELS/BIA... NAME CHANGE. It is informed to the general Public that I, JAGMEET BHATIYA D/O PARAMJEET SINGH, RESIDENT WARD NO 08 MARAR PARA, BALOD, DIST- BALOD, C.G. 491226, have changed my old name JAGMEET BHATIYA D/O PARAMJEET SINGH, so in future I should be recognized by my new name that is NIKHAT FATIMA in all other Government and documents.

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक निर्माण विभाग (भ/स) कांकेर संभाग-कांकेर. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना. क्रमांक-1954/NIT-1/2024-2025/ व ले लि दिनांक : 10/06/2024. निविदा प्रपत्र क्रय करने हेतु आवेदन :- 19/06/2024 अपरान्ह 5.30 बजे तक प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि. टेकेदारों द्वारा प्रस्तुत निविदायें प्राप्त :- 24/06/2024 अपरान्ह 5.30 बजे तक करने की अंतिम तिथि. निविदा खोलने की तिथि :- 25/06/2024 पूर्वाह्न 11.30 बजे. निविदाकारों की श्रेणी :- ई-पंजीयन के अंतर्गत श्रेणी "द" से "अ" तक.

FORM G INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR SUN PETPACK JABALPUR PRIVATE LIMITED OPERATING IN MANUFACTURING OF PLASTIC AND PAPER MOULDS AT JABALPUR AND MANDLA - MADHYA PRADESH. (Under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 36A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016).

Preventing child labour a collective responsibility: CM. World Day Against Child Labour Today. "We are committed to liberating children from the shackles of child labour, to preserve their future hopes and aspirations".

GOVERNMENT POLYTECHNIC, BILASPUR शासकीय पॉलिटेक्निक, बिलासपुर. Government Engineering College Campus, Koni Bilaspur (CG) शासकीय इंजीनियरिंग महाविद्यालय परिसर कोंनी बिलासपुर (छ.ग.) Phone/Fax: 07752-291842 Mobile: 9826148323 E-Mail: principal.gpb28@gmail.com, Web: www.govtpolybsp.ac.in TENDER NO.: GPB/SECURITY/2024/565. Date 10/06/2024 Notice Inviting Tender for Providing "Round The Clock Contractual Security Services" for The Girls Hostel Campus & Institute at Government Polytechnic, GEC Campus, Koni, Bilaspur.

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Modi 3.0 Cabinet: New Government signals both change, continuity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Several Ministers including Amit Shah, S Jaishankar, Manohar Lal, JP Nadda and Ashwini Vaishnav among others on Tuesday assumed charge of their respective Ministries. The new government signalled both change and continuity. A day after the much anticipated portfolios were announced and two days after Modi and 71 ministers were sworn in at a grand ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhavan, there were flowers and felicitations aplenty in the corridors of power. In a seamless transition from the previous government to the present one, the four big front-line portfolios stay the same - Amit Shah for Home, S Jaishankar for External Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman for Finance and Rajnath Singh for Defence. 'Bharat First and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (The world is one family) will be the two guiding axioms of Indian foreign policy, Jaishankar said shortly after taking over. On ties with China going forward, Jaishankar said some issues remained along the border with that country and efforts will be made to resolve them. "Our focus with regard to China will be on how to

resolve the remaining issues," he told reporters. BJP president J P Nadda assumed charge of the Health as well as the Chemical and Fertilisers ministries. Several ministers made initial statements as they took charge of their ministries. Ashwini Vaishnav who continues to hold the key portfolios of Railways and Electronics and Information Technology, assumed charge as Information and Broadcasting minister in the presence of senior officials, including Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made service to the poorest of poor the motto of his life and the main aim of the government. He has taken measures for welfare of the farmers, youth and empowerment of women," Vaishnav told reporters. Donning his MeitY hat as he resumed charge of the ministry, he said the government will push ahead with its tech-driven agenda of cementing India's global lead in semiconductor and electronics manufacturing and as a technology and digital hub. Jitendra Singh, who took office as Union Minister of State (MoS) for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions at his North Block office, said



All photos by Ranjan Dimri & Pankaj Kumar

good governance reforms undertaken in the last decade will continue to increase citizen-centricity and ensure ease of living for every citizen. Modi is in charge of the ministry. "Last 10 years have witnessed a series of revolutionary governance reforms happening under the guidance of PM Modi, which were basically inspired by the spirit of 'minimum government, maximum governance' and increasing citizen centricity to bring ease of

living for every citizen of the country," Singh told reporters. Jyotiraditya Scindia, appointed Communications minister, said both the telecom sector and the India post division have key roles to play at the global as well as local stage. The minister recalled his previous tenure as the Minister of State for Communications about one and half decades ago. "It is also a little bit like coming full circle for me. I worked as a junior minister in this

department many many years ago in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Therefore for me it is also a department with which I have had tremendous emotional ties," Scindia said. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, also given the responsibility of Minority Affairs, said he will make all efforts to take everyone along to ensure smooth functioning of Parliament. There was no need to pull each other down on the basis of numerical

strength, he added. "We need not pull each other down on the basis of numerical strength. People use muscle power outside Parliament, but inside the House, we should use vocal power for good debate," he said after assuming charge in the presence of his predecessor Pralhad Joshi and Ministers of State Arjun Ram Meghwal and L Murugan. Annapurna Devi, the country's new Women and Child Development minister, said

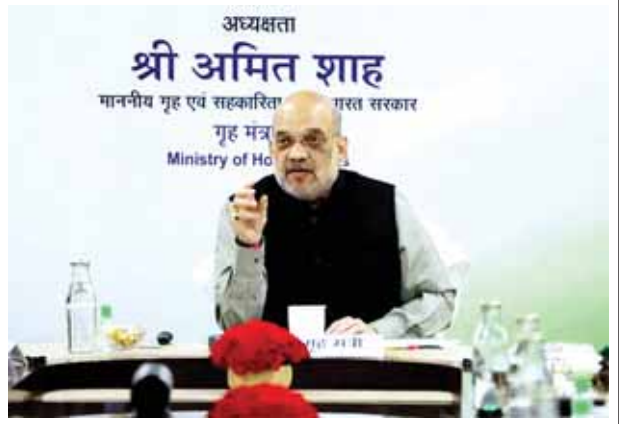
she will work towards fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of a Viksit Bharat. Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat echoed her and said his ministry will contribute towards the vision of making a Viksit Bharat. Senior BJP leader from Karnataka Pralhad Joshi took over as minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and said his priority would be to implement the 100-day agenda of the government and further strengthen the food security system. "I am thankful to the prime minister who has given me the responsibility of this important department which is linked to the common people, where we provide free foodgrains to 80 crore people," Joshi told reporters. Rashtriya Swayam Sangh (RSS) pracharak, Haryana's former chief minister and now Union Power minister Manohar Lal met heads of public sector undertakings in the power sector and other top brass of his ministry to understand the dynamics of the sector. Chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram" were heard from party supporters when the BJP's Gujarat unit chief Chandrakant Raghunath Patil took charge of the Jal Shakti ministry.

Before doing so, he took to social media to state that the conservation and enhancement of the country's water resources is a "sacred goal". Promising continuity, new Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said the Modi government will continue to balance development with environmental protection and conservation. Listing the major achievements of the Modi-led government, he said, "India met the quantitative and qualitative targets set under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) - the national climate plan to achieve Paris Agreement goals - nine years ahead of schedule." All eyes were also on the allies of the BJP who were given ministerial berths. There were jubilant scenes when Chirag Paswan, the two-time MP from Bihar and chief of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), took office as minister of Food Processing Industries after a small religious ceremony in the presence of his mother and other family members. "There is huge potential in the food processing sector, and the 100-day plan will be ready after discussion with ministry officials," Paswan said, underscoring the sector's importance in directly benefiting farmers.

Shah assumes charge as HM for second consecutive term

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Amit Shah on Tuesday here took charge as the Union Home Minister for the second consecutive term. Shah, who has been holding the portfolio since 2019, has returned to the Modi 3.0 government in the same capacity. Before taking charge of the ministry, Shah visited the National Police Memorial in the city's Chanakyapuri area to pay homage to policemen who had laid down their lives while serving the nation. The 59-year old Shah was elected from Gandhinagar constituency in Gujarat in the Lok Sabha election. Shah has also retained his other portfolio in the Ministry of Cooperation. In the fresh tenure as home minister, the immediate priority of Shah will be the implementation of the three newly enacted criminal laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023. These laws, scheduled to come into effect from July 1, are set to replace the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, marking a significant shift towards a more



efficient and effective legal framework. Aimed at reshaping the landscape of the country's criminal justice system, Shah brought the three laws last year aimed at modernising and replacing outdated British-era legislation. As Union home minister in the second Modi government in 2019, Shah had played a pivotal role in shaping key policies, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Known for his meticulous approach, Shah's tenure has been marked by proactive decision-making and a commitment to strengthening national security and justice systems, exemplifying his enduring influence in Indian politics. Shah has also been instrumental in quelling Maoist violence and restoring peace in the northeastern states through strategic peace accords. Known as the second most influential figure in the country after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a person dedicated to the saffron ideology, Shah rose as the BJP's master organiser when its alliance secured 73 seats from Uttar Pradesh in 2014 under his leadership as the party's general secretary. Recognised for his political acumen and strategic prowess, Shah has played a pivotal role in the phenomenal growth of the saffron party.

Oman, Qatar congratulate Modi on securing third term

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Oman and Qatar on Tuesday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for securing third term. Oman's Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq has spoken to Prime Minister Modi to congratulate him as he began his third term in office, the PMO said on Tuesday. The Sultan emphasised the centuries-old ties of friendship between Oman and India and conveyed his best wishes for the progress and prosperity of the people of India, it added. Modi thanked him for his warm wishes and spoke of his historic visit to India in December 2023 which led to deepening of bilateral cooperation in all areas. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening and strengthening India-Oman partnership for the mutual benefit of both countries, it added. Modi also extended warm greetings to him and the people of Oman on the upcoming Eid Al Adha festival. Modi spoke with Amir of



Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on Tuesday during which the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to advance India-Qatar ties to unprecedented heights. "Pleased to speak with my friend, the Amir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani. I thank him for his warm wishes and positive sentiments towards India," Modi said in a post on X. "We reaffirmed our commitment to advance India-Qatar ties to unprecedented heights," the prime minister said. Several world leaders have extended their wishes to Prime Minister Modi after he took oath for a third term in office.

Modi to undertake first official trip to Italy after assuming office

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake his first foreign official trip to Italy this week after assuming office. He will attend the annual summit of G-7 advanced economies there and meet several world leaders, it was learnt here on Tuesday. The G7 summit, to be held in the luxury resort of Borgo Egnazia in Italy's Apulia region from June 13 to 15, is likely to be dominated by the raging war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza. US President Joe Biden, his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are among the top leaders attending the summit. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is also scheduled for a session on the Russian invasion of his country. Modi is likely to leave for Italy on June 13 and will return late on June 14, adding it will be his first trip abroad after taking charge as the prime minister for the third consecutive term. He will be accompanied by a

high-level delegation that is likely to include External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, sources said. The prime minister is set to hold a number of bilateral meetings including with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Modi had attended the previous G7 summit in Hiroshima in May last year. On the sidelines of the summit, he had held talks with Zelenskyy and a number of other leaders. The G7 comprises the US, the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Japan. Italy is holding the current presidency of the G7 (Group of Seven) and is hosting the summit in that capacity. A key focus of the Italian presidency has been to defend the rules-based international system. Russia's military action in Ukraine has undermined its principles and triggered growing instability, with multiple crises unfolding worldwide, according to Italy. The G7 will give equal importance to the conflict in the Middle East, with its consequences for the global agenda, it says.

Modi appeals to people to make yoga integral part of their lives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the International Day of Yoga on June 21, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called upon people to reiterate their commitment to making yoga an integral part of their lives and also encourage others to do the same. In 10 days from now, the world will mark the 10th International Day of Yoga, celebrating a timeless practice that celebrates oneness and harmony, he said on X. Yoga has transcended cultural and geographical boundaries, uniting millions around the globe in the pursuit of holistic well-being, the prime minister said. Modi said, "As we approach this year's Yoga Day, it is essential to reiterate our commitment to making Yoga an integral part of our lives and also encouraging others to make it a part of theirs." "Yoga offers a sanctuary of calm, enabling us to navigate life's challenges with calm and fortitude," the prime minister said and also shared a set of videos showing various forms of yoga and their benefits.

CBI to seek Interpol Red Notice against three accused in human trafficking network

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will seek Interpol Red Notice against three accused for their alleged involvement in the human trafficking network that pushed Indians into the Russia-Ukraine war zone in the garb of lucrative employment opportunities in Moscow, officials said Tuesday. The central probe agency wants the custodial interrogation of alleged hawala operator Ramesh Kumar Palanisamy, Mohammad Moinuddin Chhipa, both understood to be in Russia, and Faisal Abdul Mutalib Khan, believed to be in the UAE, to unravel the conspiracy, they said. An Interpol Red Notice is a request to law enforcement agencies of 196 member countries to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender or similar legal action. The CBI seeks to extradite the three accused to face legal action and join the investigation. The CBI had busted major human trafficking networks operating across the country in March which were allegedly pushing the Indian youths to the Russia-Ukraine war front in the garb of providing



ports to Cosmo Travels Pvt. Ltd, which arranged tourist visas for them on the promise that it would be converted into a work visa. These job seekers were asked to reach the Chennai Airport, where their passports were handed over to them. They were then given the contact numbers of Nijil Jobi Bensam and Ramesh Kumar Palanisamy, both based in Moscow. The duo received the candidates in Russia and kept them in a house there, according to the CBI findings. These victims were "deceptively" made to sign contracts for the Russian Army and handed over to them to be sent to the Russia-Ukraine War zone, the CBI has found. In Russia, Moinuddin also started extorting money from the victims for not sending them to the war zone. The agency has found 35 instances of youth being taken over to Russia lured through social media channels like YouTube, etc., and also through their local contacts and agents for highly paid jobs in Russia, they said. "They were being trained in combat roles and provided with Russian army uniforms and batches. After that, these Indian nationals are being deployed at front bases in the War Zone against their wishes and put their lives in grave danger," the CBI FIR said.

Promotion of violence never acceptable in Canada: Envoy to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Promotion of violence is never acceptable in Canada, Canadian envoy to India Cameron MacKay said on Tuesday, two days after display of a float depicting former prime minister Indira Gandhi's assassination at an event in Greater Toronto triggered fresh tensions in bilateral ties. India has already taken up the issue with Canadian authorities. "The Government of Canada is aware of further imagery displayed in Brampton on Sunday. Canada's position is clear: The promotion of violence is never acceptable in Canada," MacKay said on X. The float glorifying Indira Gandhi's assassination was part of a parade that was taken out in Brampton to mark the 40th anniversary of Operation Bluestar. Operation Bluestar was an India Army operation carried out in June 1984 to flush out militants including their leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. India has been asking Canada to come down hard on pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil. The ties between the two countries came under severe strain fol-



lowing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd". India has been maintaining that the main issue between the two countries is that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil with impunity. There have been instances of pro-Khalistani elements threatening to harm Indian diplomats. Days after Trudeau's allegations last year, India asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country to ensure parity. Canada subsequently withdrew 41 diplomats and their family members from India.

Rahul targets Modi Government over dynastic politics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday targeted the Modi government over dynastic politics and dubbed the NDA ministry a "parivar mandal" as he pointed out several ministers in the Modi 3.0 government who hail from political families. "Those who call the tradition of struggle, service and sacrifice of generations as nepotism are distributing the will of power to their 'sarkari parivar' (government family)," Gandhi said in a social media post in Hindi. "This difference between the words and actions is called Narendra Modi," he added. In his post, Rahul Gandhi named H D Kumaraswamy, son of former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, Jyotiraditya Scindia, son of former Union minister Madhav Rao Scindia, Kiren Rijiju, son of first pro tem speaker of Arunachal Pradesh Rinchin Khuru, Raksha Khadse, daughter-in-law of former Maharashtra minister Eknath Khadse, Jayant Chaudhary, grandson of former prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, Chirag Paswan, son of former Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, and J P Nadda, son-in-law of former MP and Madhya Pradesh minister Jaysree Banerjee as part of



NDA's "Parivar mandal". To the list, he added Ram Nath Thakur, son of former Bihar chief minister Karpoori Thakur, Ram Mohan Naidu, son of former Union minister Terren Naidu, Jitin Prasad, son of former MP Jitendra Prasad, Rao Inderjit Singh, son of former Haryana chief minister Rao Birendra Singh, Piyush Goyal, son of former Union minister Ved Prakash Goyal, Ravneet Singh Bittu, grandson of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, Anupriya Patel, daughter of Apna Dal founder Sonelal Patel, and Kirti Vardhan Singh, son of former Uttar Pradesh minister Maharaj Anand Singh. Rahul Gandhi's post came in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi accusing the Congress of practising "dynastic politics" during the election campaign for the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls.

Chandrababu poised to take over as Andhra Pradesh CM

PTI ■ AMARAVATI
TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu is set to take oath as the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday, marking his fourth term in that role.



son Nara Lokesh and Janasena leader N Manohar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several other dignitaries are expected to attend the swearing-in ceremony.

off for Bhubaneswar at 12.45 pm. Naidu first became the chief minister in 1995 and went on to have another two terms.

Winning Vikravandi bypoll may turn out to be cakewalk for ruling DMK

PTI ■ CHENNAI



Though the opposition AIADMK has a strong presence and could turn out to be a tough contender in the Vikravandi assembly by-poll scheduled for July 10, the BJP's ally, the PMK and ruling DMK's trusted ally, the VCK, could upset AIADMK's winning prospects.

contest from here just as the Congress contested and won from Vilavancode assembly by-poll that was held along with the Lok Sabha elections, he said.

Kannada film actor detained in murder case



Leading Kannada film actor Darshan Thoogudeepa has been arrested in an alleged murder case, police sources said on Tuesday.

Why Manipur being given such treatment when it is integral part of India: Sule

PTI ■ PUNE



NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule on Tuesday expressed concerns about the violence in Manipur and wondered why the north-eastern state was being given such a treatment when it is an integral part of the country.

elected MP, raising the issue of unemployment will be her priority in the Parliament. She reiterated that the issue of companies leaving Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park in Hinjawadi was worrying, and said that the Maratha Chambers of Commerce has requested NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar to convene a meeting and urge firms not to leave Maharashtra.

LDF Govt claims no shortage of plus one seats in Malabar region

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



The Kerala government on Tuesday claimed in the state assembly that there was no crisis in plus one admission in the northern Malabar region, a contention refuted by the Congress-led UDF opposition which accused the Left administration of making inaccurate statements in the House.

In view of the submission made by the minister, Speaker A N Shamseer denied permission for the adjournment. As it was denied, the opposition staged a walkout from the House in protest.

additional batches or permitting a marginal increase in strength of classes was not a solution. The only solution would be to give permanent batches, he said.

Periyar fish death due to low oxygen in water; no chemical waste discharged in river: Kerala CM

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said in the assembly that the recent mass death of fish in the Periyar river resulted due to less dissolved oxygen in the water and there was no discharge of chemical waste from factories into the river.

Five newly elected BJP MLAs take oath in Gujarat

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD



Five MLAs of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), who won in the recent bypolls in Gujarat, took oath of office in Gandhinagar on Tuesday. The newly-elected legislators, including four Congress turncoats, were administered oath by assembly Speaker Shankar Chaudhary in his office in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, an official release stated.

Vaghodia seat, while the remaining four had won on Congress ticket in the 2022 assembly polls by defeating their closest BJP rivals.

subsequently, joined the BJP, necessitating the by-election in the Porbandar, Vijapur, Manavadar and Khambhat assembly constituencies. The BJP fielded those who joined the party from their respective seats in the by-election held on May 7.

Women in Karnataka avail free rides in Govt buses in one year, says Minister

PTI ■ BENGALURU



Women in Karnataka have availed themselves of 227 crore free rides in government non-luxury buses under the 'Shakti' guarantee in the last one year, costing the state exchequer Rs 5,526.64 crore, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said on Tuesday.

Reddy said several measures have been taken to improve the public transport system such as approval for the induction of 5,800 new buses. In addition, 2,438 new buses have been inducted across the four transport corporations in recent times.

Chhattisgarh Deputy CM Vijay Sharma visits violence hit Balodabazar

PTI ■ BALODABAZAR



Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma along with two cabinet colleagues on Tuesday visited Chhattisgarh's Balodabazar city, a day after a mob set fire to a government office and scores of vehicles during a protest called by the Satnami community against the alleged vandalism of a religious structure.

Satnami community, near the holy Amar Gufa at Giroudpuri Dham in the district on the intervening night of May 15 and 16. Police subsequently arrested three persons in connection with the incident.

section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, prohibiting assembly of four or more people in Balodabazar city till June 16. To take stock of the situation, Deputy CM Sharma, Revenue Minister Tank Ram Verma and Food Minister Dayaldas Baghel visited the district office in the wee hours of Tuesday.

damage to 'jaitkham', Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai ordered a judicial inquiry. People of the community expressed satisfaction over it and said they would submit a memorandum expressing gratitude to the CM, but some anti-social elements committed arson during Monday's protest, he claimed.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The road ahead

The depleted BJP's decision to retain key Ministries is a double-edged sword

There are a number of ways to look at the depleted-in-strength BJP decision to hold onto important Ministries within the Union Government, despite pressure from coalition partners like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal United (JDU) for a larger share of the pie. For its part, the BJP has sought to guarantee itself centralisation of power over significant policy choices by holding onto important ministries. This will obviously support upholding a constant course for policy and governance, besides facilitating the quick execution of its agenda and cutting down on red tape. Sitting in significant Ministries enables the party to present its accomplishments and capacity for governance to the public, which is essential for retaining and growing its support base. On the flip sides, disagreements within the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) may arise from coalition partners feeling excluded. Relationship tension could result from this being seen as a lack of respect or trust by powerful regional parties like the TDP and JDU. The partners may utilise their ability to bargain to obtain greater sway, which could spark arguments or even inspire threats of abandoning the relationship. This might cause the partnership to become unstable, particularly since the BJP does not have the numbers to prop a Government on its own. On the other hand, it also means that the coalition will not be able to take use of the variety of perspectives and knowledge that its partners can offer. Policies as a result may be less sensitive to local quirks or inclusive. Sometimes, having all the authority in one place results in lack of accountability.



Sharing Ministries within a coalition can encourage a more balanced Government and serve as a check on decisions made by one person. In the long run, political instability could result from coalition partners feeling consistently ignored. In maintaining control, the BJP must make sure that its coalition partners are respected and feel included. However, the BJP's chances in States where these allies have sizeable support bases may suffer if coalition members leave over discontent. This might be harmful in elections that are hotly contested. Even if they do not hold important Ministries, the BJP is still able to include coalition partners in significant decision-making processes. This may lessen feelings of isolation. Keeping a stable alliance and addressing coalition partners' concerns can be achieved by regular consultations and talks. Providing them with strategic ministries or other types of political recompense might assist maintain coalition members' commitment and satisfaction. Maintaining important Ministries, therefore, is a two-edged sword for the BJP. It can guarantee policy continuity and improve governance efficiency, but it also runs the danger of upsetting coalition partners, which could result in political instability. The outcome will mostly depend on how the BJP humours its alliances and strikes a balance between inclusiveness and shared authority and centralised control.

PICTALK



Competitors at the annual dragon boat race in Hong Kong

PTI

Let statecraft replace vicious propaganda

The BJP poll machinery's aggressive narrative proved to be counterproductive; it's now time to change the nature of dialogue from confrontation to consensus



SIDHARTH MISHRA

The seamless swearing in of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the third term, given the fractured mandate handed out by voters in the Lok Sabha elections in 2024, must have come as big relief for those who invest in the Indian market. The investor could be a small-time shareholder or a rich corporate professional. The economic reforms launched by Dr Manmohan Singh, the Finance Minister in the Narasimha Rao Government in 1991, have tumbled on through the regimes of another five Prime Ministers, who followed Rao, including Manmohan Singh himself. The importance of the continuity of these reforms can be gauged from the fact that in the past three decades, it has lifted more than 50 crore Indians out of mortifying poverty.

From the economic point of view, the Narendra Modi Government's biggest shortcoming during its second term, which had a very strong mandate, was its inability to carry out farm reforms. It faltered in communicating to the farmers the benefits of the new agriculture laws and the profits it could accrue to the farm hands. The negative narrative perpetuated by the communication machinery of the Modi regime, which was largely taken over by the IT Cell of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), proved to be an impediment not just in the implementation of the farm legislations but also failed to immerse the spirit of Hindu pride in the months following the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. An aggressive narrative, borrowed from the cantankerous television debates and not necessarily backed by facts, on the social media platforms prove to be counterproductive. With the rise of the fact-checking tools, the decisions to let Jawaharlal's Nehru's love stories and propaganda of similar genre overshadow the Narendra Modi Government's achievements proved to be one of the biggest deflating factors in the BJP's campaign of 2024, with the



party falling way short of the halfway mark. The communication battle on the farm laws, instead of focusing on the merits of the reforms, became a fight between the Hindustanis and Khalistanis. The attempt to paint those opposed to the reforms as espousing the agenda of Balkanisation was ill thought of, and the BJP has paid a heavy price for it electorally not just in Punjab but across the farmlands of the country. Several other initiatives which could have welded people strongly in the support of the Modi 2.0, got undone by the showing of the brute power of large numbers, not as much on the ground, as in the narratives floated by the establishment's publicity arm. The whole attitude to run down the 'Argumentative Indian', an expression borrowed from the title of the bestseller by Amartya Sen, as anti-national in the event of s/he not agreeing with the Government only helped firm up the anti-Government stand than making them fall



FROM THE ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW, THE NARENDRA MODI GOVERNMENT'S BIGGEST SHORTCOMING DURING ITS SECOND TERM, WHICH HAD A VERY STRONG MANDATE, WAS ITS INABILITY TO CARRY OUT FARM REFORMS

in the Government's line. The biggest question which must be haunting the BJP leadership is that when the residents' of Uttar Pradesh took an "overwhelming" part in the celebration of the consecration of the Ram Temple, why did it not endorse the party as enthusiastically when it came to the electoral battle? Once again, the propaganda machinery only helped turn a happy moment into an instant of loyalty test. It was seen that handing out an invitation to the Opposition leaders to a 'quasi-political' function was to get them to refuse and get branded as 'anti-Hindu'. No communication expert would ever prepare a model which would spend time in their hour of glory on the rivals. The narrative so floated in the end created a situation where the 'homecoming' for Ram Lalla got overtaken by 'Ayodhya-coming' of the Opposition leaders. Today, the BJP Government is perched on the support of Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party and Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United).

Both the leaders did not come to Ayodhya but have come to the support of Narendra Modi 3.0. In the past, they have even called the Ramjanambhoomi Movement as a 'political project' of the BJP. The latest narrative of the open denouncement of the voters of Uttar Pradesh by the BJP's extended family will certainly not find traction with either Kumar or Naidu. The castes and communities who did not vote for the BJP voted for Kumar and Naidu in their respective States. The call of the hour is to change the nature of the dialogue from confrontation to consensus, not only among the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners but among all the stakeholders of India, that is Bharat. The demand of the situation is to push the economic and strategic agenda as statecraft than a tool to demonise and belittling those opposed to the Government. (The writer is an author and president of the Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice; views are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SUNLIGHT'S INFLUENCE ON LIFE

Madam — Apropos the news story "Sunshine on shoulders, a spring in my step!", published on June 11, this is my response. Summers have been harsh this year. I do not recall Delhi temperatures shooting to 50 degrees plus in the 26 years since we shifted to the national capital. Advisories have been issued by the state governments to avoid venturing out in the afternoons. However, a month down the line, we would forget the harrowing days and long for a glimpse of the sun as monsoon clouds darken the skies. The sun's impact on our lives is undeniable. Reflecting on a hazy morning in east India and contrasting vacations in England highlight how sunlight influences our mood and activities. Sunshine's warmth and brightness are universally cherished, sparking joy in parks and bringing health benefits like the essential 'sunshine vitamin.' Despite modern conveniences, nothing rivals the sun's antibacterial properties for drying clothes. Beyond practical benefits, the sun inspires language and culture, as seen in phrases celebrating people as 'sunshine.' However, this fleeting sunlight also reminds us of the urgent need to combat pollution. By prioritising a cleaner environment, we can ensure future generations enjoy the sun's life-giving rays.

Siya Bhatia | Mangalore

OPEN ACCESS TO GREEN ENERGY

Madam — Apropos the news story "India's green power policies come of age," published on June 7, this is my response. As a daily reader of the newspaper, it's encouraging to see the strides being made towards green energy in India. The MNRE's Surya-Ghar initiative and other regulatory reforms highlight a significant shift towards renewable energy (RE) accessibility. The Surya-Ghar scheme aims to provide affordable electricity through rooftop solar installations, potentially benefiting millions of households by 2027. This is a commendable step towards sustainable energy for all. The recent amendments to the Electricity

Surge in numberplate violations



Apropos the news story "Traffic Police Books 16,800 People for Defective Number Plates This Year," published on June 10, this is my response. As a regular reader of the newspaper, the recent spike in penalties for defective number plates in Delhi is quite striking. The Delhi Traffic Police have booked over 16,800 people this year, a stag-

gering 286 per cent increase from last year. This sharp rise underscores the intensified efforts by the authorities to enhance road safety. Defective number plates are more than a minor infraction; they pose significant risks, from impeding law enforcement to contributing to traffic violations. The focus on high-traffic areas and the detailed breakdown of top violator zones, like Mayur Vihar and Nand Nagri, highlights the strategic approach taken by the police. It's commendable that alongside enforcement, there are awareness campaigns aimed at educating vehicle owners about the importance of compliant number plates. This holistic approach not only aims to correct current issues but also to prevent future violations, ultimately contributing to a safer and more orderly city.

Saanvi Jain | Jamshedpur

Rules, 2005, highlight the government's dedication to enabling consumers to establish and maintain dedicated transmission lines, enhancing energy efficiency. The Green Energy Open Access Rules of 2022 aim to simplify approval procedures, fostering transparency and consistency nationwide. Judicial interventions are vital for ensuring proper interpretation and enforcement of laws. These efforts signify significant advancement in India's renewable energy drive towards a greener, more sustainable future.

Reyansh Tiwari | Tirupati

ATTITUDE SHAPES HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

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

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

Aarush Kapoor | Vijayawada

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

India's green energy rise, including 'Green Coal'

Green coal projects reduce pollution, groundwater contamination, promote sustainability, carbon neutrality and spur economic growth

The Reserve Bank of India's latest report reflects a surge in global optimism regarding India's economic prospects, particularly in the energy sector. This year alone, green energy projects valued at approximately Rs 700 billion are set to commence, marking a significant investment milestone. By 2025-26, further project investments are anticipated to reach Rs 765.2 billion, supported by progressive policies promoting sustainable energy. India's power sector has now achieved full electrification and is integrated into a unified national grid, providing rural areas with 20 hours of electricity daily and urban areas with 23.5 hours. Additionally, India has ascended to become the world's third-largest producer of renewable energy, underscoring its commitment to sustainable development.

A key innovation on the horizon is green coal, which is poised to revolutionize energy production in India. Green coal offers significant potential as a sustainable alternative to traditional coal, seamlessly integrating into existing



thermal power plants. For instance, a 1,000 MW power plant consuming around five million tonnes of coal annually could see a significant reduction in carbon emissions by replacing just 10 per cent of its fossil fuel with green coal, equating to half a million tonnes of sustainable fuel. It is estimated that using 1 kg of green coal instead of fossil coal can reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 2 kg per kg of coal replaced. India's largest state-run power generation company is making substantial strides in the green energy sector, including green coal initiatives. An Initial Public Offering (IPO) for NTPC Green, a subsidiary focused on green energy, is expected by the end of the year. NTPC, a major player in India's power sector, had previously planned to produce green coal, also known as torrefied charcoal, from municipal waste. This project, executed by its subsidiary NTPC

Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd and awarded to Macawber Beekay, boasts a plant with a capacity to process 600 tonnes of waste daily, producing 200 tonnes of green coal from municipal solid waste (MSW). The success of NTPC's Varanasi Harit Koyla Pariyojna, managed by Macawber Beekay Private Limited (MBL), Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while inaugurating the Varanasi Harit Koyla Pariyojna, praised the project as a testament to the government's dedication to environmental sustainability. The green coal project is a cornerstone of the "Make in India" initiative and represents significant progress towards the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" mission. MBL has successfully produced green coal for NTPC Ltd, one of India's largest coal consumers in the power sector. After demonstrating the technology in Varanasi, the CPSU has entrusted MBL with additional projects, including the establishment of the world's largest waste-to-green coal plant in Greater Noida. Indian companies have

increasingly diversified into green energy solutions, with MBL leading the way in transforming municipal solid waste into eco-friendly green coal. The inauguration of the world's first commercial green coal plant by Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the company's innovative capabilities. The technology not only converts waste into a viable alternative to fossil fuels but also addresses critical waste disposal challenges. The waste-to-energy process involves the meticulous collection and treatment of MSW, followed by moisture removal and the segregation of non-combustible materials. The refined waste is then processed to produce high-calorific charcoal powder that exceeds the energy value of traditional coal. This method reduces carbon emissions, promotes carbon neutrality, and provides economic benefits by lowering the costs associated with traditional coal usage and mitigating the health risks linked to mining and waste accumulation. (The writer is Chairman & Managing Director, Macawber Beekay; views are personal)



AJAY KUMAR GUPTA

FIRST COLUMN

BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

Every segment of society should work to fulfil the expectations of other segments



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

We all dream of a better world where there is peace, happiness and harmony, don't we? No one would like degradation of the environment, loss of human lives due to wars and murders, corrosion of human spirit by crime and corruption, dehumanisation through poverty and troublesome social, economic and political conditions, embroiled with high tension and turmoil that drain human energy and make life miserable. On the contrary, all would like life to be characterised by harmony and health, well being and wealth and heavenly happiness and purity.

But the question is, what are those values and how can such a socio-political-economic system be established which has those values and which will enhance human experience and enable men and women to have such lifestyle as can make such a society viable? If we conduct a survey among various groups of people, we will find that their opinion would most probably crystallise around 10 or 15 major points. They would say that a better world is one in which the following exist only in milder forms or to a lesser degree than we have in the present-day world.

These major problems or causes of sufferings are wars, violence and cruelty in any form --- poverty, unemployment and social, economic and political injustice, environmental pollution and ecological imbalance, corruption, crime, indiscipline and obscenity, disease, infirmity and high mortality rate, slavery, lack of freedom or deprivation of human rights, hunger, malnutrition or starvation, wrong attitudes towards the other sex and abuse of children, addictions, intoxications, tensions and lack of happiness, hatred, suspicion, fear, cut-throat competition,



rivalry and absence or lack of love and co-operation at various levels of society.

Post this survey, if we conduct another kind of survey, asking every segment of society about what efforts or improvements they expect from the other segments so that we may have a better world order, a fair enough consensus on the following lines would emerge. People would say that they want: Scientists to have an orientation of spirituality, religious leaders to have scientific temper, doctors to treat not only the body but also the mind or the soul, education to have spiritual and moral development also among its aims, women to be given proper social status and man's attitude and outlook towards them to be more spiritualised. The youth and the children should be given more love and they should give more regard and service to the elders. The society should have a balance of love and law and it should be based on the principles of justice, fair play and equality of opportunity.

Now these and such other aims can be fulfilled if every segment of society works for the fulfillment of what other segments expect of it. Each individual also has to contribute of his or her talent or time to work towards raising awareness of the people so as to realise the above goals. For this global task, global cooperation is required. Hence, a new kind of bank to which each individual or institution can offer its contributions so as to build a better world is the need of the hour.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views personal.)

The Garhwal Regiment's glorious military heritage



ASHOK K MEHTA

Lansdowne, steeped in military tradition since the establishment of the first Garhwal Battalion in 1887, tells a tale of valour and colonial legacy

The still air in June over the Bhawani Dutt Joshi Parade Ground carved out of Kaludanda (renamed Lansdowne after the then Viceroy) converts into an air pocket when the fourth batch of 251 Agniveers call out Jai Badri Vishal Ki Jai, the feared Garhwal regiment war cry. The raising of the first Garhwal Battalion was ordered in 1887 by C-in-C, later Viceroy, Lord Roberts. The British may owe India USD 49 Trillion as reparation but their payback was impressive: instruments of governance, strategic culture and infrastructure, including 5000 to 6000 feet high ridge-top cantonments, today's hill stations like Lansdowne whose Mall Road became the exclusive white's only- promenade, restricting locals to the windswept "Thandi-sadak" on the reverse slope.

Dotted with pine, oak and rhododendrons, the ridge lights up with the majesty of Nanda Devi towering among the distant Himalayas. The sprawling Bungalow No 6 amongst a hundred such, constructed in 1906 was home to Colonel Mainwaring commandant of 3/9 Royal Garhwal Rifles and was bought by MES for a princely Rs 10,053!

It was after Nepal's second invasion that Garhwal capitulated and through legendary Jung Bahadur Rana's progeny married into Garhwal's Sah ruling family. Scattered but indistinguishable descendants of erstwhile Nepalese can be found in Pathankot village as are remnants of 2/3 Gorkha Rifles also raised here which have an umbilical cord with the Garhwal Regiment. Originally Garhwalis and Kumaonis joined 5 Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force) whose first Colonel was Bobs Bahadur, Victoria Cross winner, Lord Roberts who gave Veer Garhwali a separate identity.

The nom de plume of the Garhwali soldier is valour: in World War I and Waziristan, it won three Victoria Crosses (Rfn Gabbar Singh Negi -posthumously; Naik Darwan Singh Negi and Lt David Kenny) and innumerable battle and theatre honours and gallantry awards till 1947 that would fill this page. After independence, the Regiment bagged one Ashoka Chakra, four MVC, 18 KC, 51 SC, 52 VrC, and 375 Sena Medals. The Regiment has 22 Infantry battalions, three Rashtriya Rifle battalions and two Territorial Army battalions. To commemorate its unique achievements in operations, the Regiment was conferred the Royal title: Royal Rassi (Lanyard) in 1921 and to honour its braves and martyrs, an iconic bronze statue was built in 1923 which was unveiled by C-in-C, Lord Rawlinson. Designed by makers of Victoria Memorial Calcutta, Martin and Co, the statue on green granite is the most unique and defiant image in the world of unknown soldiers, the Veer Garhwali. Added later was the epic shloka from Mahabharat. Lord Krishna to Arjun: 'Lament not the death of a warrior; for one killed in battle is honoured in heaven'. It was a silver replica of this Unknown Soldier that PM Modi presented to the PM of France in 2015 to commemorate the centenary of WWI.

The Darwan Singh War Museum is the grand repository of the history and achievements in war and peace of the Regiment. But the creme de la creme of Lansdowne is the Garhwali Officers Mess which is India's most spectacular, filled with collector's items. Officers and ladies



THE STATUE ON GREEN GRANITE IS THE MOST UNIQUE AND DEFIANT IMAGE IN THE WORLD — OF UNKNOWN SOLDIER, THE VEER GARHWALI

of the battalion who arrived in 1887 chose this ridge-top locale and declared it their mess which sprouted only in 1892. Its red slanting roof and miniature Victorian-style colonnades are draped with ivy and creepers.

In the middle of the lawn is the still functional Sun Dial measuring time by the position of the sun. Carved below is: "The shadow of my finger cast divides the future from the past; Before it stands the unborn hour in darkness and beyond thy power: Behind its unreturning line the vanished hour no longer thine: One hour alone is in thy hand, the now of which the shadow stands." Nearby is the ubiquitous Unknown Soldier, covered with bushwork. The Officer's Mess initially had three large rooms: the main hall, dining room and billiards room. Add-ons were the Card room, the Generals gallery, the indispensable bar and two libraries on either flank. Rooms are resplendent in silver trophies and walls covered by big and small game heads and skins that will draw ire from RSPCA. The Visitors' Book table is eye-popping and studded with memorabilia. The broken China-glass floor is laid out in a design that radiates towards four Maltese Crosses, the original crest of the

Regiment. Crocodile skin sofa sets glisten as no one sits on them. To insert the John Roberts and Co. made billiards table, the entire roof had to be uprooted while the piano from Chappells, Bond Street London (more famous for sartorial products) rests rhythmically in a corner. The glistening mahogany dining table adorning the dining hall is credited to makers C Lazarus also of Calcutta. Every room has a fireplace with brass railings and customised settings The Card room contains the letter by Field Marshal Bill Slim written in 1967 eulogizing the gallant Garhwali: "I have commanded Battalions of every Regiment of Indian Army but I never had a better one than 3 Garhwal-and that's something from a dyed in the wool Gurkha as me to say. But it is true". The bar has charming water-colour sketches made by a local Gorkha lad, a long-gone Gopal Chhetri that cheer your drinks. The quaint downtown market survives on a small but happy populace determined not to let Lansdowne be renamed either Jaswant Garh (after MVC awardee Jaswant Singh Rawat of 1962 war) or even Bipin Nagar (after late CDS Gen Bipin Rawat whose Shaun village is 30 km away). Soldiers and civilians are agnostic

about shedding colonial legacy and wish to retain Lansdowne. Locals say the state government is monumentally corrupt: so ex-servicemen and politicians don't mix. Still, two Generals made it good. Bhuwan Khanduri who became Chief Minister and TPS (Topsy) Rawat many times minister while highly decorated Ajay Kothiyal KC, SC, VSM and a double Everest lost his deposit during the last state elections. Subedar Major Shailendra Mohan Bhist located at Garhwal Regiment's Kotdwar detachment is look-alike brother of Ajay Bhist more famous as Yogi Adityanath! The clock has moved a full circle: Garhwali bhullas (brothers) are now again joining the depleting Gorkha Regiments and learning to speak Nepali. The Garhwal regimental legacy is protected by its three symbols: Lord Badrinath, the regimental deity, the iconic Unknown Soldier and the Royal Rassi. They help instil gumption and guile while invoking Jai Badri Vishal Ki Jai.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

Organic renaissance: India's rapid shift towards chemical-free farming

As consumer awareness of health and sustainability surges, India is witnessing an unprecedented rise in the organic food market

There was a time in the country when everything produced was organic, the farmers used natural manures like cow dung and compost fertilisers in their fields. The yield was low but it was healthy, tasteful and above all sustainable practice. Then came chemical fertilisers which no doubt increased the yield manifold but also led to several side effects. It is not sustainable and lacks the taste of organic products and above all not as healthy as it should be. Besides the farmers are also paying the price in terms of their health and overuse of Urea and other chemicals ruining the soil quality and depleting the water table. In this scenario, organic farming is the way to go. Now with



AJEET GODARA

newfound awareness people in large numbers are turning to organic products and getting healthy chemical-free products on their plates, India's organic product market has witnessed an unprecedented surge over the last decade, driven by growing consumer awareness about health, sustainability, and environmental impacts.

As urban populations increasingly seek out healthier lifestyle options, the demand for organic food products has soared. This trend is not just limited to a niche segment; it has permeated mainstream consumer preferences, pushing organic products to the forefront of the food industry. The organic food market in India, valued at \$1,582.2 million in 2023, is expected to

grow exponentially to \$8,918.5 million by 2032, showcasing an impressive growth rate of 21.19% per annum. This meteoric rise is indicative of a larger green wave sweeping across the country, where consumers are increasingly inclined towards sustainable and eco-friendly products. Consumers today are more inclined to buy products that are sustainable and environmentally friendly. This aligns with the broader trend towards sustainable and ethical consumption, making organic foods an appealing choice for consumers.

Today organic companies have impressive portfolio of hundreds of SKUs, including staples like pulses, millet, wheat, mustard, barley, rice,



and oils. The products of organic companies are available not only through its website but also on major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Bigbasket, making them accessible to a broad consumer base.

The brands have also expanded their product range into seed verticals, encompassing

wheat, barley, mustard, and other grains. By doing so, organic companies aim to ensure that their organic farming practices start from the very beginning of the agricultural process. What is interesting is that Organic companies are committed to sustainable farming practices and farmer welfare. They provide specialised

training programs to farmers to enhance crop management skills and boost yields. The farmers must be safeguarded from any potential contaminants in their food supply so that the end users get a real organic product. There is definitely a need to maintaining high-quality standards in organic farming else the consumer trust is broken and the industry as a whole suffers.

With online registration and certification processes in place most of the fraudulent practices in the segment have been wiped off. But the field is not without challenges. However, the transition from chemical to organic is not simple. It is a painstaking process but rewards are gratifying. Transforming agricultural land into organic farm-

ing takes around three years. And in places where chemical fertiliser use is rampant, it could go beyond three years. Besides, fraudsters often damage their reputations. Often prices are jacked up unrealistically.

The growth of organic products in India is a testament to the changing consumer landscape and increasing awareness about health and sustainability. Still, the market share of organic products is just one per cent but the growth is exponential. This sector is growing at the rate of 20 per cent which shows the growing demand for organic food and people's interest in them.

(The writer is cofounder of Natureland Organics; views are personal)

UNSC adopts Gaza ceasefire resolution

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The UN Security Council on Monday overwhelmingly approved its first resolution endorsing a cease-fire plan aimed at ending the eight-month war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. The US-sponsored resolution welcomes a cease-fire proposal announced by President Joe Biden that the United States says Israel has accepted. It calls on the militant Palestinian group Hamas to accept the three-phase plan. The resolution — which was approved with 14 of the 15 Security Council members voting in favour and Russia abstaining — calls on Israel and Hamas “to fully implement its terms without delay and without condition.”

Whether Israel and Hamas agree to go forward with the plan remains in question, but the resolution’s strong support in the UN’s most powerful body puts added pressure on both parties to approve the proposal.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Israel on Monday, where he urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to accept the plan for postwar Gaza as he pushed for more international pressure on Hamas to agree to the cease-fire proposal. Netanyahu has been sceptical of the deal, saying that Israel is still committed to destroying Hamas. Hamas said it welcomed the adoption of the resolution and was ready to work with mediators in indirect negotiations with Israel to implement it. The statement was among the strongest from Hamas to date, but it stressed the group would continue its struggle against Israeli occupation and work on setting up a “fully sovereign” Palestinian state. “Efforts are continuing to study and clarify some matters to ensure implementation by the Israeli side,” Hamas spokesperson Jihad Taha said Tuesday. He said Israel was “stalling and procrastinating and creating obstacles in order to con-

tinue the aggression.” A senior Israeli diplomat did not directly mention the resolution, telling the council Israel’s position is unwavering. “We will continue until all of the hostages are returned and until Hamas’ military and governing capabilities are dismantled.” “This also means that Israel will not engage in meaningless and endless negotiations, which can be exploited by Hamas as a means to stall for time,” Minister Counsellor Reut Shafir Ben Naftaly said. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield reiterated, however, that Israel has accepted the cease-fire deal, which is supported by countries around the world. The resolution’s adoption, she said, “sent a clear message to Hamas to accept the cease-fire deal on the table.” “The fighting could stop today, if Hamas would do the same,” Thomas-Greenfield told the council. “I repeat, this fighting could stop today.” US deputy ambassador

Robert Wood told reporters earlier on Monday that the United States sees the deal as “the best, most realistic opportunity to bring at least a temporary halt to this war.” Earlier Monday, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders met in Qatar to discuss the proposed cease-fire deal and said later that any deal must lead to a permanent cease-fire, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, reconstruction and “a serious exchange deal” between hostages in Gaza and Palestinians held in Israeli jails. Russia’s UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said Moscow abstained because details of the three-phase plan haven’t been disclosed and “we have a whole host of questions.” “Hamas is called upon to accept this so-called deal, but still there is no clear clarity regarding official agreement from Israel,” Nebenzia said. “Given the many statements from Israel on the extension of the war until Hamas is completely defeated... what specifically

has Israel agreed to?” Algeria’s UN Ambassador Amar Bendjama, the Arab representative on the council, said that while the text isn’t perfect, “it offers a glimmer of hope to the Palestinians, as the alternative is (the) continuing killing and suffering of the Palestinian people.” “We voted for this text to give diplomacy a chance to reach an agreement that will end the aggression against the Palestinian people that has lasted far too long,” Bendjama said. The war was sparked by Hamas’ surprise Oct 7 attack in southern Israel in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mainly Israeli civilians, and took about 250 others hostage. About 120 hostages remain, with 43 pronounced dead. Israel’s military offensive has killed more than 36,700 Palestinians and wounded more than 83,000 others, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. It has also destroyed about 80% of Gaza’s buildings, according to the UN.

French opposition parties seek alliances ahead of snap polls

AP ■ PARIS

Empowered by a stunning triumph at the European elections, France’s far-right National Rally on Tuesday hit the national campaign trail running with its star leader, Jordan Bardella, promising supporters “the largest possible majority” at the upcoming parliamentary elections. Opposition parties on the left and the right have been scrambling to form alliances and field candidates in the snap national elections called by President Emmanuel Macron after his party suffered a crushing defeat by the far right in the European Union vote on Sunday. While sharp differences between parties on both sides of the political spectrum remain, prominent figures calling for a united front in both camps appear to have one thing in common: They don’t want to cooperate with Macron. Despite their divisions, left-wing parties agreed late Monday to form a new alliance that includes the Greens, the Socialists, the

Communists and the far-left France Unbowed of Jean-Luc Melenchon. Leaders have not agreed on who will head the new coalition nor on its program. In light of the European polls, politicians on the left are focused on closing ranks to prevent a win for the National Rally that could result in the French far right leading a government for the first time since World War II. For now they have also vowed not to join forces with Macron’s centrists. In a joint statement, the alliance called on all forces on the left, including the influential labor unions, to unite behind a “new popular front” to form an “alternative to Emmanuel Macron and to fight against the racist project of the far right.” The National Rally leader Marine Le Pen is working to consolidate power on the right ahead of the two-round elections that will take place on June 30 and July 7. Le Pen’s niece, Marion Marechal, who won a seat in the European Parliament on Sunday as a member of the rival

Reconquer! party of Eric Zemmour, on Monday visited National Rally headquarters in Paris to negotiate a far-right alliance at the upcoming elections. Le Pen also met with members of the conservative Republicans party to discuss a united front. Some conservative lawmakers have supported some of Macron’s bills in the National Assembly since the president lost a majority in the lower house of the French parliament following the 2022 general election. “We have a historic chance to allow the national camp to put France back on track,” Le Pen said in an interview with the French public broadcaster on Monday evening. She said the National Rally and the conservatives could agree on several policy goals, including an economic recovery plan, boosting purchasing power and curbing immigration. Bardella, Le Pen’s 28-year-old protege and the face of the far right’s European triumph, also urged French conservatives to ride the wave of popularity with the National Rally.

Blinken meets Netanyahu in Israel

AP ■ JERUSALEM

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his latest trip to the Middle East, where America’s top diplomat urged approval of a cease-fire proposal that faced new uncertainty following Israel’s hostage rescue operation that killed many Palestinians and turmoil in Netanyahu’s government. With no firm public response yet from Hamas or Israel to the proposal they received 10 days ago, Blinken started his eighth visit to the region since the conflict began in October by meeting with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi of Egypt, a key mediator with the militant Hamas group. He then flew to Israel for talks with Netanyahu and other Israeli officials. Blinken once again called on Hamas to accept the plan, which he said has wide international support. “If you want a cease-fire, press Hamas to say yes,” he told reporters before leaving Cairo on the trip that also will take him to Jordan and Qatar.



Blinken said Israel has accepted the proposal, though Netanyahu has expressed skepticism. “I know that there are those who are pessimistic about the prospects,” Blinken said, putting the onus on Hamas. “That’s understandable. Hamas continues to show extraordinary cynicism in its actions, a disinterest not only in the well-being and security of Israelis but also Palestinians.” While President Joe Biden, Blinken and other US officials have praised the rescue of four Israeli hostages on Saturday, the

operation resulted in the deaths of 274 Palestinian civilians and may complicate the cease-fire push by emboldening Israel and hardening Hamas’ resolve to carry on fighting in the war that started with its October 7 attack in Israel. Blinken said the plan is the “single best way” to get to a cease-fire, release the remaining hostages and improve regional security. In his talks with el-Sissi, Blinken also discussed plans for post-conflict governance and reconstruction in Gaza. “It’s imperative that there be a

plan, and that has to involve security, it has to involve governance, it has to involve reconstruction,” Blinken said. Netanyahu and his government have resisted calls for any “day after” plan that would bar Israel from having some form of security presence in the territory. Blinken said he would urge Israel to come up with alternatives that would be acceptable. “It would be very good if Israel put forward its own ideas on this, and I’ll be talking to the government about that,” he said. “But one way or another, we’ve got to have these plans, we’ve got to have them in place, we’ve got to be ready to go if we want to take advantage of a cease-fire.” The three-phase plan calls for the release of more hostages and a temporary pause in hostilities that will last as long as it takes to negotiate the second phase, which aims to bring the release of all hostages, a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and “a permanent end to hostilities,” according to an American-drafted resolution put before the UN Security Council. The third phase calls for reconstruction in Gaza.

‘Israeli and Palestinian armed forces accused of war crimes’

GENEVA (AP)

The UN human rights office is citing possible war crimes by Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in connection with a deadly raid by Israeli forces that freed four hostages over the weekend. Office spokesman Jeremy Laurence expressed concerns about possible violations of rules of proportionality, distinction and precaution by the Israeli forces in Saturday’s raid at the urban Nuseirat refugee camp. Palestinian health officials say at least 274 Palestinians, including dozens of women and children, were killed in the operation. Laurence said Palestinian armed groups who are holding hostages in densely populated areas are putting the lives of nearby civilians and the hostages at “added risks” from the hostilities.

Suspect in custody for stabbing four US college instructors

BEIJING (AP)

Chinese police have detained a suspect in a stabbing attack on four instructors from Iowa’s Cornell College who were teaching at a Chinese university in the northeast city of Jilin, officials said Tuesday. Jilin city police said a 55-year-old man surnamed Cui was walking in a public park on Monday when he bumped into a foreigner. He stabbed the foreigner and three other foreigners who were with him, and also stabbed a Chinese person who approached in an attempt to intervene, police said. The instructors from Cornell College were teaching at Beihua University, officials at the US school said. The injured were rushed to a hospital for treatment and none was in critical condition, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said at a daily briefing Tuesday. He said police believe the attack in Jilin city’s Beishan Park was an isolated incident, based on a preliminary assessment, and the investigation is ongoing. Cornell College President Jonathan Brand said in a statement that the instructors were attacked while at the park with a faculty member from Beihua, which is in an outlying part of Jilin, an industrial city about 1,000 km (600 miles) northeast of Beijing. Monday was a public holiday in China. The State Department said in a statement it was aware of reports of a stabbing and was monitoring the situation. The attack happened as both Beijing and Washington are seeking to

expand people-to-people exchanges to help bolster relations amid tensions over trade and such international issues as Taiwan, the South China Sea and the war in Ukraine. An Iowa state lawmaker posted a statement on Instagram saying his brother, David Zabner, had been wounded during a stabbing attack in Jilin. Rep Adam Zabner described his brother as a doctoral student at Tufts University who was in China under the Cornell-Beihua relationship. “I spoke to David a few minutes ago, he is recovering from his injuries and doing well,” Adam Zabner wrote, adding that his brother was grateful for the care he received at a hospital. News of the incident was suppressed in China, where the government maintains control on information about anything considered sensitive. News media outlets had not reported it. Some social media accounts posted foreign media reports about the attack, but a hashtag about it was blocked on a popular portal and photos and video of the incident were quickly taken down. Cornell spokesperson Jen Visser said in an email that the college was still gathering information about what happened. Visser said the private college in Mount Vernon, Iowa, partners with Beihua University. A college news release from 2018, when the program started, says Beihua provides funding for Cornell professors to travel to China to teach a portion of courses in computer science, mathematics and physics over a two-week period.

‘Migrant boat sinks off coast of Yemen, leaving at least 49 dead, 140 missing’

CAIRO (AP)

A boat carrying migrants sank off the coast of Yemen, leaving at least 49 dead and 140 missing, the UN’s International Organization for Migration said Tuesday. The boat was carrying some 260 Somalis and Ethiopians from the northern coast of Somalia on the 320-kilometer journey across the Gulf of Aden when it sank Monday off Yemen’s southern coast, the IOM said in a statement. It said search efforts were continuing and so far 71 had been rescued. Among the dead were 31 women and six children, it said. Yemen is a major route for migrants from the East Africa and the Horn of Africa trying to reach Gulf countries for work.

ICC prosecutor seeks evidence of atrocities in Sudan

The Hague (Netherlands) (AP) :The International Criminal Court’s chief prosecutor appealed on Tuesday for information and evidence of atrocities in Sudan, saying his ongoing investigation “seems to disclose an organised, systematic and a profound attack on human dignity.” ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan released a video statement in the aftermath of an attack Sunday by the notorious Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group that forced the closure of a main hospital in the western Darfur region. The group fired shots and looted the hospital in al-Fasher, aid group Doctors Without Borders reported. The attack came as the RSF, which has been fighting the Sudanese army for a year, intensified its offensive seeking to wrest control of the city, the military’s last stronghold in the sprawling Darfur region. Two weeks of fighting last month in and around al-Fasher has killed more than 120 peo-

ple. “The terrible events in West Darfur, including El-Geneina, in 2023 are among our key investigative priorities,” Khan said. “In addition, I am extremely concerned about allegations of widespread international crimes being committed in al-Fasher and its surrounding areas as I speak.” A long-running conflict Sudan’s conflict began in April last year when soaring tensions between the leaders of the military and the RSF erupted into fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in the country. The war has killed more than 14,000 people and wounded thousands more, while pushing its population to the brink of famine. The UN food agency warned the warring parties last month that there is a serious risk of widespread starvation and death in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan if they don’t allow humanitarian aid into the region. “The war also created the world’s

largest displacement crisis as more than 10 million people have been forced to flee their homes, including over 2 million people who crossed into neighbouring countries, the UN migration agency told The Associated Press Monday. Khan said he is urgently investigating in Sudan. “The evidence my office has collected to date seems to show credible, repeated, expanding, continuous allegations of attacks against the civilian population, in particular, attacks directed against camps for internally displaced persons,” he said. “It seems to show the widespread, prevalent use of rape and other forms of sexual violence. It seems to disclose consistently the shelling of civilian areas, the looting of properties and attacks against hospitals,” he added, stressing that he was “particularly concerned by the ethnically motivated nature of these attacks against the Masalit and other communities.”

UK Conservatives attempt mood shift with election promises ahead of polls

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Rishi Sunak doesn’t know whether he’ll still be Britain’s prime minister the day after next month’s election. There’s nothing unusual about that. What is unusual is that he’s been forced to deny rumours he could quit even before polling day, amid alarm inside the governing Conservative Party over Sunak’s lackluster campaign. Sunak gets a chance — maybe one of his last — to change the narrative on Tuesday when he releases the Conservatives’ manifesto, a handbook of policies that forms each UK party’s blueprint for power. Despite gloomy polls and bruising headlines, Sunak insists the election is not a “foregone conclusion” and says resigning has not crossed his mind. “People are going to say what they’re going to say,” he told reporters on Monday. “The reality is I’m not going to stop going, I’m not going to stop fighting for people’s votes, I’m not



going to stop fighting for the future of our country.” The Conservative manifesto is likely to include promised cuts to personal taxes, a chance for Sunak to repeat his claim that a government led by Labour’s Keir Starmer would raise taxes while a Conservative one would lower them. The Labour Party points out that the tax burden has risen to its highest level in decades during 14 years of Tory

rule. On July 4 British voters will elect lawmakers to fill all 650 seats in the House of Commons, and the leader of the party that can command a majority — either alone or in coalition — will become prime minister. Sunak’s surprise decision to call a summer election — several months earlier than most people expected, even those in his own party — was intended partly to catch the opposition unpre-

pared. But it’s the Conservatives who have seemed off-balance from the moment Sunak stood outside 10 Downing St. in the rain on May 22 to announce the start of the campaign. The Conservatives were already on the defensive after jettisoning two prime ministers without an election in quick succession in 2022: first Boris Johnson, felled by scandals, then Liz Truss, who rocked the economy with drastic tax-slashing plans and lasted just seven weeks in office. The party’s prospects worsened last week when populist firebrand Nigel Farage announced that he would run for Parliament at the helm of the right-wing party Reform UK, vowing to be a “bloody nuisance” to the established parties. While Reform, with its anti-establishment and anti-immigration rhetoric, is aiming to attract disaffected voters from both Conservatives and Labour, it’s likely to take more votes from Sunak’s party.

NZ renews search for father who vanished into forest with children

AP ■ WELLINGTON

Zealand authorities offered a reward and immunity from prosecution on Tuesday to anyone who can help their search for three children who have been missing since their father vanished with them from a remote rural community more than two years ago. The December 2021 disappearance of Tom Phillips and his children — now aged 8, 9 and 10 — has confounded investigators. They are not believed to ever have travelled far from the remote rural settlement where they lived, but there have been no credible sightings of the family for months. Police officers converged on the township, Marokopa, population 69, to seek fresh leads in a case that has fascinated the country of 5 million people. Phillips is accused of

committing an armed bank robbery while on the run in May 2023. He allegedly shot at a member of the public and fled on a motorbike with a passenger who investigators believe was one of his children. Phillips no longer has legal custody rights for his children, Acting Detective Inspector Andrew Saunders said at a news conference in the city of Hamilton, south of Auckland, on Tuesday. “These are not the actions of a good father,” said Saunders. The children have not had access to formal education or healthcare since they went missing, he added, and police have concerns “for the welfare of the children who have been living in isolation for the past two and a half years, with no connection to others,” Saunders said that a reward of 80,000 New Zealand dollars

(USD 49,000) — large by New Zealand standards — and an offer of immunity from prosecution is targeted at people who already know the family’s whereabouts. The authorities have long said they believe that Phillips had help concealing his family. The reward, approved by New Zealand’s Commissioner of Police, expires in two weeks, Saunders said. “We don’t want them waiting months and months to decide,” he said. “Come forward and tell us where the children are.” It is not the first time Phillips prompted national news headlines after disappearing with his children. The family went missing in September 2021, provoking a 3-week land and sea search after Phillips’ truck was found abandoned on a wild beach near where he lived.

Malawi’s vice president, 9 others die in plane crash

Blantyre (Malawi) (AP): Malawi’s vice president and nine others were killed in a plane crash, the country’s president said Tuesday. The wreckage of the military plane carrying Vice President Saulos Chilima was located in a mountainous area in the north of the country after a search that lasted more than a day. There were no survivors of the crash, Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera said in a live address on state television. Hundreds of soldiers, police officers and forest rangers had been searching for the plane that also carried a former first lady after it went missing Monday morning while making the 45-minute flight from the southern African nation’s capital, Lilongwe, to the city of Mzuzu, around 370 kilometers (230 miles) to the north. Air traffic controllers told the plane not to attempt a landing at Mzuzu’s airport because of

bad weather and poor visibility and asked it to turn back to Lilongwe, Chakwera said. Air traffic control then lost contact with the aircraft and it disappeared from radar, he said. Seven passengers and three military crew members were on board. The president described the aircraft as a small, propeller driven plane operated by the Malawian armed forces. The tail number he provided shows it is a Dornier 228-type twin propeller plane that was delivered to the Malawian army in 1988, according to the ch-aviation website that tracks aircraft information. Around 600 personnel were involved in the search in a vast forest plantation in the Vipha Mountains near Mzuzu, authorities said. Chilima was serving his second term as vice president. He was also in the role from 2014-2019 under former President Peter Mutharika.

Chinese premier to visit NZ, Australia and Malaysia

MELBOURNE (AP)

China’s leadership, in seven years. A Chinese premier hasn’t visited Malaysia since 2015. Li’s Australian trip follows a visit by Albanese to Beijing last November, when leaders agreed to resume key bilateral dialogues and further several areas of cooperation. China imposed a series of official and unofficial trade barriers that cost Australian exporters up to 20 billion Australian dollars (USD 13 billion) a year after Australia’s previous government urged an international inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of those barriers have been removed since Albanese’s government was elected in 2022. Albanese said he would push for barriers to Australian lobster to be lifted and for imprisoned Australian democracy

blogger Yang Hengjuno to be freed. “Premier Li Qiang’s visit to Australia is an important opportunity to engage directly on key issues for both our nations,” Albanese said. “Australia continues to pursue a stable and direct relationship with China, with dialogue at its core,” he said. New Zealand officials say their discussions with Li will focus on their aim to double the value of the nation’s exports to China in a decade. New Zealand has traditionally sought to balance its trade relationship with China with the interests of its Western allies in the Five Eyes intelligence sharing partnership, who have more assertively decried China’s growing influence in the region. Malaysia has similarly resisted taking sides in the US-China rivalry.

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India reports sixth strongest hiring outlook globally in September quarter, says survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India ranks sixth globally for its employment outlook for September quarter 2024, with 30 per cent of businesses planning to increase their staff over the next three months, according to a global survey by workforce solutions company ManpowerGroup.

India's Net Employment Outlook (NEO), calculated by subtracting employers planning reductions versus those planning to hire, stood at 30 per cent. It weakened from the previous quarter and the same time last year by 6 per cent, as employers are cautious in their hiring intent for the next three months.

India ranks sixth globally for its employment outlook, 8 points above the global average. The survey was conducted in 42 countries. Globally, Costa Rica reported the strongest hiring expectation for July-September at 35 per cent, followed by Switzerland (34 per cent), Guatemala (32 per cent), Mexico (32 per cent) and South Africa (31 per cent). On the other hand, Argentina and Romania reported the weakest NEO at 3 per cent. In the Asia Pacific region, the country has the strongest outlook, India (30 per cent) and China (28 per cent) continue to report the strongest outlook in the



region. Most cautious outlooks were reported by employers in Hong Kong (8 per cent) and Japan (12 per cent). In the latest edition of the ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey, 3,150 employers in India were asked about their third quarter hiring intentions. "The global slowdown has been impacting the IT sector in India for quite a while. Added to the circumstances, is the political uncertainty looming over the country due to general elections during data collection of this survey. Clearly, employers are being cautious in their short-term resource planning," said ManpowerGroup's India and

Hiring sentiments across all sectors however declined when compared to the same period last year. Going by the industry size, large organizations (with 1,000-4,999 employees) indicate strongest optimism in hiring with NEO of 42 per cent followed by small (50-249 employees) and medium (250-999 employees) organizations (34 per cent) and large enterprises (30 per cent). Sector-wise, the financials and real estate sector and healthcare and life sciences continue to dominate the market with strongest hiring intentions. The weakest outlook is indicated in communication services and transport, logistics and automotive, the survey said. More than 62 per cent of employers have adopted AI including generative conversational AI with 80 per cent of the senior leadership team optimistic about the positive impact of AI on overall business, as opposed to 68 per cent of frontline and factory workers. Contrary to common belief, almost 68 per cent of employers plan to increase headcount due to adoption of AI and Machine Learning over the next 2 years led by the communication services sector, Financial and Real Estate, Industrials & Materials and Information Technology.

Middle East Managing Director Sandeep Gulati. The real estate sector, however, has seen an increased investor interest with a capital inflow to the tune of USD 1.1 billion led by the residential sector. "We hope the gap between the demand of specific skills and supply is bridged with strategic long term talent planning in corporates in India. Hire, train and deploy is a strategy that can make a difference to mitigate this problem," Gulati said. Overall, the hiring intentions in North India stood at 36 per cent, followed by West (31 per cent), South (30 per cent), and East (21 per cent).

Sebi to hire 49 officers; invites applications

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets watchdog Sebi on Tuesday initiated the process to hire 49 officers in different departments this year, a move that will help in faster and more effective execution of its regulatory role. This came after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) invited applications in March for the 97 senior-level posts. The link for submitting the application online was originally scheduled to open on April 13. However, it was decided to postpone the same due to the schedule of the General Elections. Now, in a fresh notice on Tuesday, Sebi has invited applications for 49 posts of Officer Grade A (Assistant Manager) for General, legal, information technology, engineering electrical, research and official language streams. The link for submitting the application online will be open till June 30. The regulator is looking to fill 34 positions in the General stream, 10 in information technology, two in the legal team and one each in engineering (electrical), research and official language departments. Selection will be carried out in three phases beginning July 27. Sebi has been beefing up its headcount over the last few



years. In July 2022, the regulator invited applications for 25 senior-level executives in the information technology department. In January 2021, the markets regulator invited applications for the recruitment of 120 Officer Grade A (Assistant Manager) in different streams. In March 2020, the regulator invited applications for 147 senior-level officials and around 1.4 lakh people applied for these positions. Formed by the government in 1988, Sebi was given statutory powers following the passage of the Sebi Act in 1992 after the Harshad Mehta scam that hit the Indian markets. As per

its preamble, Sebi is mandated to protect the interests of investors in securities as well as promote and regulate the securities markets. It regulates business in stock exchanges and other securities markets, registers and regulates various market intermediaries, including brokers, merchant bankers, registrars, portfolio managers and investment advisers, as well as foreign portfolio investors, credit rating agencies, mutual funds and venture capital funds. Besides, Sebi is mandated to check fraudulent and unfair trade practices, insider trading and other manipulative activities.

Tyre exports at ₹23,073 crore in FY24



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The total tyre exports from India during 2023-24 stood at Rs 23,073 crore, matching previous year's figure on the back of a sharp recovery in the second half of the fiscal, the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) said on Tuesday. In the first half of the year, tyre exports were severely impacted by falling demand in view of slowdown in advanced economies, geopolitical uncertainties and inflationary pressures, the industry body said in a statement. "Tyre exports from India made a sharp recovery in the second half of FY2023-24 and went up by 12 per cent in value terms against the year-ago period," ATMA said citing data released by Ministry of Commerce. The total tyre exports from India during FY2023-24 stood at Rs 23,073 crore matching previous year's figure, it added.

Domestic passenger vehicle sales up 4 per cent in May: SIAM



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Automakers dispatched over 3.47 lakh passenger vehicles to dealers in domestic market in May, recording an year-on-year growth of 4 per cent over same month last year, industry body SIAM said on Tuesday.

The overall passenger vehicle (PV) dispatches from companies to dealers stood at 3,47,492 units last month, as compared to 3,34,537 units in May 2023. The dispatches were the highest ever for the month of May so far, driven by robust offtake of utility vehicles. Maruti Suzuki sold 1,44,002 units last month, as against 1,43,708 units in May 2023. Hyundai Motor India dispatched 49,151 units in May, as compared to 48,601 units in May 2023. Mahindra & Mahindra sold 43,218 units last month, as against 32,886 units in the year-ago period. All the segments -- passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers have posted growth in May, as compared to the same month last year, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM)

President Vinod Aggarwal said in a statement. "Passenger vehicles have only witnessed a moderate growth, primarily owing to a high base effect of the previous year," he noted. Two-wheeler sales rose 10 per cent to 16,20,084 units last month, as compared to 14,71,550 units in the year-ago period. Three-wheeler dispatches rose 15 per cent to 55,763 units in May, as against 48,610 units in May 2023. "With expectations of above normal monsoon and continued emphasis on economic development by the new government, as it pursues its goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, the auto industry is optimistic of steady growth in 2024-25 as well," Aggarwal stated. Elaborating further, SIAM Director General Rajesh Menon said PV dispatches last month were the highest ever in May so far. Two-wheelers saw a growth of 10 per cent last month but still remains lower than 2017-18 levels of May, he said. "Domestic sales of three-wheelers in May 2024 grew by 14.7 per cent compared to May 2023, posting the highest-ever sales in May," Menon said.

Sensex, Nifty settle almost flat amid volatile trade

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended almost flat on Tuesday after a record-breaking rally as investors preferred to remain on the sidelines awaiting further triggers. After trading in the positive territory for the most part of the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 33.49 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 76,456.59 due to fag-end selling. During the day, it jumped 370.45 points or 0.48 per cent to 76,860.53. In a volatile trade, the NSE Nifty ended marginally up by 5.65 points or 0.02 per cent to 23,264.85. Sensex and Nifty hit their all-time high levels in the early trade on Monday. "After a notable rebound, the domestic market has stabilised, awaiting further triggers. With the resolution of uncertainties in government formation, attention has shifted back to

global and domestic indicators. Concerns have risen regarding potential US rate cuts following last week's strong US job data, leading to an increase in US bond yields. "However, FIIs have been net buyers lately. Investors are now gearing up for this week's policy decisions from the US Fed and the BoJ, as well as key inflation data from the US and India, seeking insights into the trajectory of rate cuts," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. Among the 30 Sensex companies, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Asian Paints, Reliance Industries, ITC, Sun Pharma, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and JSW Steel were the major laggards. On the other hand, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Motors, Maruti, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra and UltraTech Cement were among the gainers. In the broader market, the



BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.95 per cent, and midcap index rallied 0.74 per cent. Among sectoral indices, telecommunication rallied 1.93 per cent, oil and gas climbed 1.84 per cent, realty soared 1.04 per cent, energy jumped 1 per cent, auto (0.89 per cent) and consumer

discretionary (0.60 per cent). In contrast, metal, FMCG and consumer durables were the laggards. "The markets remained range-bound and ended unchanged, continuing the Monday's trend. After a flat start, the Nifty gradually climbed higher, but profit-

taking in the latter half erased all gains, eventually settling at 23,264.85," said Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd. In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled higher, while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading lower. US markets ended in positive territory on Monday. "Global equities were mixed on Tuesday in a busy week that will bring some important reports on US inflation along with a policy meeting of the Federal Reserve. "The UK unemployment rate unexpectedly climbed to its highest level (4.4 per cent in February-April vs 4.3 per cent in the previous period) in two and a half years. European assets extended Monday's losses as nervousness over political upheaval in France continued," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities, said. Signalling continuity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

Monday retained Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmla Sitharaman and S Jaishankar in charge of the four high-profile ministries - Home, Defence, Finance and External Affairs - respectively, in his new government. The four ministers in charge of these portfolios make up the crucial Cabinet Committee on Security headed by the prime minister. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.32 per cent to USD 81.37 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,572.38 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. After breaching the 77,000 mark during early trade on Monday, the BSE benchmark Sensex came under selling pressure at the fag-end of the session and ended 203.28 points or 0.27 per cent lower at 76,490.08. Halting its three-day rally, the NSE Nifty dipped 30.95 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 23,259.10

Micro loans grew 27 per cent in March quarter, stress levels inch up: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The micro loans portfolio of various lenders grew by 27 per cent year-on-year for the March 2024 quarter, a report said on Tuesday. After remaining stable or improving over the last many quarters, the stress levels in terms of loan default inched up marginally during the quarter, the report by credit information company Crif High Mark said. At a time when the regulator is flagging concerns on unsecured loans, the data pointed out that personal loan

outstandings of microfinance borrowers witnessed the second fastest growth among other retail assets with a portfolio growth of over 38 per cent. The gross loan portfolio grew 28 per cent to Rs 4.42 lakh crore in December, the report said, adding that the growth was 8.5 per cent as compared to the preceding December quarter figure. The top 10 states account for 83.5 per cent of the Gross Loan Portfolio (GLP), it said, adding that West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh posted the fastest growth

during the January-March period. However, the proportion of loan assets overdue for the duration between 31 days and 180 days grew to 2.1 per cent in March from the 2 per cent level in December 2023, the report said. Tirunelveli district was the worst performer nationally on asset quality, followed by Coimbatore and Madurai, making Tamil Nadu home to the three top districts where microlenders are facing maximum stress. Tamil Nadu also topped nationally on the average

balances per account front, with an outstanding of Rs 62,200 per borrower. The report said borrowers with a higher number of active loans have higher delinquency and added that over 12 per cent of the borrowers have four or more active loans. Karnataka leads the states where borrowers have the maximum active loans. It said 14.2 per cent of the MFI borrowers have an active retail loan, which is marginally lower than the 14.9 per cent in the year-ago period.

Survey highlights need for streamlined FDI to propel India as global defence manufacturing hub

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Nexgen Exhibitions, organisers of the renowned International Police Expo, one of Asia's premier homeland security and defence expos, have released the findings of a comprehensive survey aimed at streamlining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and bolstering Defence Research & Development (R&D) and manufacturing capabilities. This initiative aims to propel India towards its ambitious \$5 billion defence exports target by 2024-25. The survey, conducted across 15 cities in India, saw participation from over 130 national and international arms, ammunition, and security equipment manufacturers, exporters, and start-ups. The key highlights underscored the need for streamlined FDI inflows, elevated technology integration with AI and other futuristic technologies, and a robust skill development ecosystem to create a large pool of industry-ready professionals. By enhancing R&D and manufacturing capabilities, India's homeland security and defence sector is poised to emerge as a global manufacturing hub. Additionally, increasing procurement categories is a

significant step toward boosting domestic defence manufacturing. Currently, India exports defence equipment to over 75 countries, demonstrating its growing footprint in the global defence market. The homeland security sector is crucial for maintaining internal stability and protecting national interests. Integrating advanced technologies and data analytics is paramount for effective threat detection, surveillance, and response. By leveraging AI and machine learning, security agencies can predict and mitigate risks more efficiently. Moreover, developing a robust disaster management mechanism ensures preparedness and swift response to emergencies, enhancing public safety and national resilience. Aadhars Bansal, Director, Nexgen Exhibitions said, "The increase in procurement categories and emphasis on quality and innovation have positioned India as a reliable defence equipment supplier on the global stage. The Government's supportive policies, coupled with strategic partnerships and collaborations, are driving the growth of India's defence exports, bringing the country closer to its \$5 billion target by 2024-25."

MSME loans will be focal point for growth over next 5 years: SBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

SBI, the country's largest lender, on Tuesday said small business lending will be the "focal point" for growth and profit for the next five years. The state-owned lender launched a product christened "SME (small and medium enterprises) Digital Business Loans", under which loans will be sanctioned in 45 minutes. "MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) advances have been identified as the focal point for the bank's growth and

profitability over the next five years," an official statement said. The bank is aiming to broaden credit accessibility for small businesses in the coming months by extending availability across all partner customer service point touchpoints and via QR codes at outdoor touchpoints in the coming months, the statement said. For the year ended on March 31, 2024, the bank's overall SME book grew by over 20 per cent to Rs 4.33 lakh crore and gross non performing assets in the book came down to 3.75 per cent from a peak

of 9.43 per cent in FY20. The newly launched product was termed as "a significant leap forward" in digitalisation by offering SMEs a digital loan journey with an end-to-end sanction turnaround time of up to 45 minutes. "By leveraging the rich data footprint of MSME units in the ecosystem, we aim to provide the fastest and most intuitive lending process, further solidifying our position as the leading MSME lender in the country," the bank's chairman Dinesh Khara said. The newly launched

proposition eliminates the need for traditional credit underwriting and lengthy appraisal processes, the bank statement said, adding that it offers simplicity, speed, and accessibility in MSME lending. The new platform relies on data footprints from sources such as ITR, GST returns, and bank statements, the statement said, adding, the bank has developed a data-driven credit assessment engine capable of providing sanction decisions within 10 seconds after submitting the required details.

IAS officer gets additional charge of Director General of ESIC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Additional Secretary and Director General, Labour Welfare in the Union Labour Ministry, Kamal Kishore Soan, a senior IAS officer from Jharkhand Cadre (Batch :1998) has been given the additional charge of Director General of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). With his extensive experience across multiple departments in the state of Jharkhand, he brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record in governance and management



to his new position. His background in areas such as land revenue management, district administration, agriculture, health, finance, and social justice underscores his versatility and capability to lead effectively in diverse fields, according to a statement here.

RIFLE, PISTOL TEAM FOR OLYMPICS ANNOUNCED; BHAKER PICKED IN TWO INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Women's pistol ace Manu Bhaker was the only one to be picked in two individual events after her excellent run of form in selection trials as the national shooting federation on Tuesday announced a 15-member Indian rifle and pistol team for the Paris Olympics.

The team was finalised during a selection meeting held virtually. The squad has eight rifle shooters and seven in pistol discipline. The selectors decided to give precedence to trial results, shutting the door on the likes of world champion Rudranksh Patil, who has been pleading to be considered despite underwhelming scores in his pet 10m air rifle event as he had won the quota.

In shooting, quotas are won by countries and not individual athletes. All the team members, along with the coaches and

support staff, are currently in a camp in Volmerange-Les-Mines, France, mainly aimed at "acclimatisation and hard-training" before they come back home for a two-week break.

The shotgun squad will be announced after the ISSF World Cup in Lonato, Italy, competitions in which start from Wednesday and go on till June 18.

The Paris Games will be held from July 26 to August 11. Indian shooters managed to secure a record 21 of the 24 possible quotas, including a full allocation of eight each in rifle and pistol events.

This is India's best-ever quota haul in shooting at any edition of the Olympics, eclipsing the 15 from Tokyo Games.

This means the athlete who clinched the quota can be replaced by another, leading up to the Games on the basis of scores in the selection trials conducted by the national federation.

Sharing his thoughts, National Rifle Association of

India's (NRAI) senior vice president Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo, said, "The selection committee met and deliberated at length. After deliberating at length, we feel we have selected the best team on current form as per merit and sticking to the policy."

"We are confident that everything has been put in place for the team to deliver. Given our depth in rifle and pistol, some very good shooters are not part of the squad. However, they will have a chance to make a comeback. We wish the squad all the very best."

Deo is right as the performance of the shooters in the trials underlined India's depth and bench strength in rifle and pistol shooting but that is no guarantee for a rich haul at the Olympics.

For proof, one can go back to the Tokyo and Rio Games, where India fielded 12 and 15-member teams and returned empty-handed on both occasions.



On behalf of the federation, Deo thanked the Government of India, the Sports Ministry, and the Sports Authority of India, who have "guided and supported us in every step of the preparations."

Besides all 16 possible shots at a medal, in eight individual rifle and pistol events, India will also have a record five starts across the four individual shotgun events. Additionally, India will also field five mixed teams, two each in rifle and pistol and one in shotgun.

K Sultan Singh, secretary general at NRAI, said, "The team is in good form and battle ready, consisting of as many as four Olympians and other senior shooters as well as a lot of extremely promising, confident and matured young talent."

"They have been training very systematically for a long time under the guidance and support of the entire training squad of the HPD (High-Performance Director), foreign coaches, national coaches, the sports science team, the physios etc. Who have been steadfastly and minutely working towards one goal and that is to have a successful podium finish."

The NRAI will also be looking to exchange the spare quota place which has freed up because of Bhaker making it to two events, appropriately as per ISSF (International Shooting Sport Federation) rules.

Indian rifle and pistol team for Paris Olympics:
Rifle: Sandeep Singh, Arjun Babuta (10m Air Rifle M), Elavenil Valarivan, Ramita (10m Air Rifle W), Sift Kaur Samra, Anjum Moudgil (50m Rifle 3 Positions W), Aishwary Tomar, Swapnil Kusale (50m Rifle 3 Positions M)
Pistol: Sarabjot Singh, Arjun Cheema (10m Air Pistol M), Manu Bhaker, Rhythm Sangwan (10m Air Pistol W), Anish Bhanwal Vijayveer Sidhu (25m RFP M), Manu Bhaker, Esha Singh (25m Pistol W).



India to host Junior Hockey World Cup in 2025

PTI ■ LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND)

India will host next year's Men's Junior Hockey World Cup, marking the event's return to the country after nine years, the Executive Board of the International Hockey Federation announced on Tuesday.

The tournament will be held in December and it will be the first time ever that a Hockey Junior World Cup will include as many as 24 teams.

This was announced by FIH President Tayyab Ikram who said: "Giving more opportunities to play to a larger and more diverse number of National Associations is one of the key pillars of our empowerment and engagement strategy."

"We saw at the FIH Hockey5s World Cup in Oman this year how more diversity brings a huge added value to our events."

"Therefore, I'm very happy that we've increased the number of participating teams for the FIH Hockey Junior World Cups and I look forward to seeing these 24 young teams, representing the future of our sport, next year!" he added.

The last edition of the tournament was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2023 with Germany emerging winners with a 2-1 win over France.

Spain and India took the third and fourth places respectively. India have, in the past, hosted the tournament three times in 2013 (New Delhi), 2016 (Lucknow) and 2021 (Bhubaneswar). India were the winners of the 2016 edition as well.

"At this stage, I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to Hockey India for their commitment to organise yet another fantastic event," Ikram added.

Extending his gratitude, president of Hockey India Dilip Tirkey said: "This prestigious tournament highlights India's growing importance in international hockey and shows our dedication to developing the sport for future generations."

"We're excited to share India's rich hockey history and provide a stage for young talent to showcase their skills."

Secretary general of Hockey India Bhola Nath Singh termed this a significant step for HI.

"We appreciate the FIH's trust in us. This event offers a fantastic chance to bring hockey to even greater heights, inspiring a whole new generation of players and fans in India and globally."

"We're committed to making this tournament a memorable experience that celebrates everything hockey is about," he added.

Poland's Kaczmarek wins 400m European title in 48.98

AP ■ ROME

American standout Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone is leading the way as expected in the 400 meters with the Paris Olympics less than 50 days away.

Jamaica's Nickisha Pryce and Poland's Natalia Kaczmarek are not far behind, though. Kaczmarek clocked 48.98 seconds at the European athletics championships on Monday to mark the third straight day that a woman has cracked the 49-second barrier. Pryce got it started with a 48.89 for Arkansas at the NCAA championships on Saturday. Then McLaughlin-Levrone responded with a 48.75 in New York on Sunday.



In Rome, Kaczmarek surged past Ireland's Rhasidat Adeleke in the final meters to smash Irena Szewinska's 48-year-old Polish national record of 49.28 and set the fastest time by a European this century.

"Coming to the start, I was dreaming about the Polish record but this 48.98 was something more than my imagination," said Kaczmarek, the silver medalist at the worlds last year.

Adeleke, who helped Ireland to gold in the 4x400 mixed relay, took silver in 49.07. Lieke Klaver of the Netherlands claimed bronze in 50.08.

In the men's 400, Alexander

Doom of Belgium also came from behind to win in a championship record 44.15 ahead of Charles Dobson of Britain (44.38) and Liamarvin Bonevacia of the Netherlands (44.88). There was an upset in the hammer throw when Sara Fantini of host Italy beat three-time defending Olympic champion Anita Wlodarczyk for gold. Then Timothe Mumenthaler of Switzerland silenced the home crowd when he edged Filippo Tortu - the anchorman from Italy's 4x100 gold at the Tokyo Olympics - to win the 200 in 20.28.

"It was a lost opportunity," Tortu said. "The gold was within reach. I just didn't run well. It's very upsetting and I can't celebrate this silver."

Sangram Singh set to be first Indian male wrestler to join MMA



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former Commonwealth heavyweight champion Sangram Singh is set to become the first Indian male wrestler to join mixed martial arts.

Sangram will be the second Indian overall after Puja Tomar to compete as a MMA fighter for which he has requisite skills

being a wrestler, stated a release on Tuesday.

"Wrestling has given me so much including the love from the people of my country and I hope that they will continue to do the same in my new endeavour," Sangram said.

"MMA is the future, its growing popularity in the last few years speaks for itself. India has one of the highest viewerships for the sport and I hope that the fans of the sport can support me in the same manner," he added.

The 38-year-old Sangram recently made his return to wrestling after six-year gap at the Dubai Pro Wrestling Championship, in which he defeated Pakistan's Muhammad Saeed in a largely one-sided affair.

AP ■ WARSAW (POLAND)

Strikers Robert Lewandowski and Karol Swiderski were in doubt for the European Championship after they were injured as Poland beat Turkey 2-1 in a warmup on Monday.

Lewandowski set up Swiderski for the opening goal in the 12th minute. But in his celebrations, Swiderski hurt his ankle and had to be replaced.

Captain Lewandowski, Poland's all-time leading goal-scorer, lasted until the 32nd when he hurt his right leg and was substituted.

The double blow was a nightmare for Poland. Arkadiusz Milik was to be up front with Lewandowski for the Euros until he damaged his left knee on Friday in the friendly against Ukraine. Milik returned to Juventus and had successful knee surgery on Monday.

Lewandowski and Swiderski have only until Sunday to recover when Poland opens its Euros campaign against the Netherlands in Hamburg.

Turkey threatened the equalizer in the second half. Arda Güler and Orkun Kökçü were saved but goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny was helpless when halftime substitute Baris Alper Yilmaz's shot from the edge of box deflected in.

After Turkey's Kerem Akturkoglu hit the crossbar from long range, Poland won in the 90th thanks to a beauty by Nicola Zalewski, who weaved past two defenders to the box and scored his maiden international goal.

Poland strikers Lewandowski, Swiderski injured in last Euros warmup



Turkey faces Georgia in its opener on Tuesday week in Dortmund, while Poland will be sweating on its strikers.

There was nothing wrong with the Dutch attack. They have warmed up with consecutive 4-0 wins.

Iceland was put to the sword in Rotterdam, with Virgil van Dijk and

Wout Weghorst scoring, just as they did against Canada last Thursday at De Kuip.

Xavi Simons' first goal for the Netherlands was teed up by Denzel Dumfries' header in the first half, then Nathan Ake's nod set up Van Dijk.

Substitute Donyell Malen scored thanks to Memphis Depay, but Depay was denied moments later when VAR ruled out his goal because of an earlier handball.

However, VAR overturned another on-field decision to allow Weghorst's goal in added time.

The Czech Republic struggled to subdue North Macedonia 2-1, needing two second-half penalties in Hradec Králové.

After Malta was ravaged 7-1 last Friday, the Czechs made nine changes to give their likely Euro lineup a run before facing Portugal in a week in Leipzig.

But nobody scored until the 60th when Patrik Schick converted a penalty for a foul on Tomas Soucek.

Just five minutes later, North Macedonia was level after Isnik Alimi headed in a rebound of Aleksandar Trajkovski's shot off the right post.

The Czechs needed all seven minutes of added time to find the winner, from a spot kick by Antonin Barak.

They suffered a setback on Sunday when midfielder Michal Sadilek, who captained the team against Malta, withdrew from the Euro 2024 squad after injuring his shin from falling off a bike on a day off.

Indore to host diving and water polo trials for National Junior Championships

RISHABH MALIK ■ NEW DELHI

Adhoc Committee, Delhi Swimming Association (Regd.) as appointed by the Swimming Federation of India will conduct trials on Saturday, 15 June 2024 at 10.00 am onwards at the Dr. SPM Sports Complex Swimming Pool, New Delhi, to select Delhi Water polo & Diving Teams of Junior Boys & Girls. These selected Teams will participate in the ensuing 40th Sub Junior & 50th Junior National Swimming Championship (Water-polo & Diving Events) - 2024 which will be held in Indore (Madhya Pradesh) from 7th to 11th July 2024 as informed by its Chairman Mr. Balraj Sharma. All interested players who wish to participate in these selection trials are required to reach the venue at the specified time with valid SFI UID Card renewed up to 31.03.2025.

Euro 2024 will not feature Europe's top striker: Who else is missing?

PTI ■ LONDON

Goalkeepers and defenders: GExhale.

The most feared striker in Europe won't be playing at the European Championship.

That's because Erling Haaland's Norway didn't qualify.

Haaland's goal-scoring statistics with both club and country are staggering: 90 goals in 98 matches across all competitions in two seasons with Manchester City, and 30 in 32 matches for Norway since his national team debut in 2019.

But Halaand produced "only" five goals in six qualifying matches for Norway, which finished third in Group A behind Spain and Scotland and didn't even reach the playoffs.

Norway's absence also means that Arsenal and Norway captain Martin Odegaard won't be at the tournament in Germany.

Norway won only three of eight qualifiers and finished six points behind group runner-up Scotland.

A look at some other top players who won't be at Euro 2024, which starts Friday:

THIBAUT COURTOIS Thibaut Courtois was healthy enough to

make two key saves during the first half of the Champions League final and help Real Madrid to another title.

But the Belgium goalkeeper announced in December that he would miss the Euros and has not backpedaled on his decision despite returning to full fitness for Madrid after a long-term knee injury.

There's also this: There are ongoing tensions between Courtois and Belgium coach Domenico Tedesco. Courtois questioned Tedesco's "reality" after the coach accused him of abandoning his teammates and faking an injury before a qualifier last year.

Without the Madrid 'keeper, Tedesco's choices in goal are: Matz Sels (Nottingham Forest), Koen Casteels (Wolfsburg) and Thomas Kaminski (Luton).

KARIM BENZEMA Benzema retired from France's national team the day after "Les Bleus" lost the 2022 World Cup final without the striker.

Then last year he left Real Madrid for Saudi Arabian club Al-Ittihad and now, at age 36, his days at the top seem finished.

Benzema was awarded the Ballon d'Or as the world's top player in



2022 but then missed the World Cup in Qatar that year after tearing a left thigh muscle in pre-tournament training.

He also didn't play in France's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign because he was still exiled from the national team for his alleged role in a sex-tape scandal with teammate Mathieu Valbuena.

France coach Didier Deschamps has plenty of options up front without Benzema, led by captain Kylian Mbappé. France's other forwards include Bradley Barcola, Kingsley Coman, Ousmane Dembélé, Olivier Giroud, Randal Kolo Muani and Marcus Thuram.

the club level and failed to make the cut for England coach Gareth Southgate's initial 33-man selection.

Rashford managed just eight goals for a United team that suffered its lowest-ever Premier League finish - eighth.

The omission comes only two seasons after Rashford had a career-best campaign, scoring 34 goals for club and country.

Jack Grealish, Harry Maguire and Jordan Henderson - who all played in the final when England lost to Italy in a penalty shootout in 2021 - were also left out by Southgate.

"These are difficult calls, you are talking about players who are very good players, who have been an important part of what we have done," Southgate said. "With Marcus, I feel players in the same area of the pitch have had better seasons, it's as simple as that."

MATS HUMMELS Reaching the Champions League final wasn't enough for Mats Hummels to make the squad for host Germany.

Hummels made a strong case for inclusion with his inspirational performances in Borussia Dortmund's run in Europe. But Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said there were "1,000 components"

to the decision not to include the veteran defender. Nagelsmann sees Real Madrid's Antonio Rüdiger and Bayer Leverkusen's Jonathan Tah as his preferred central defensive pairing - and anyone else would need to be content with a backup role.

Dortmund defender Nico Schlotterbeck is evidently content to take the reserve role and did make the squad.

Bayern Munich midfielder Leon Goretzka was also left out, despite a strong finish to the Bundesliga season.

SANDRO TONALI Newcastle midfielder Sandro Tonali is serving a 10-month ban for betting on teams he played for - ruling him out of consideration for defending champion Italy.

It leaves coach Luciano Spalletti without his top choice at playmaker but opens space for the likes of Jorgeinho and Lorenzo Pellegrini.

Tonali had seemed poised to inherit the role that once belonged to Andrea Pirlo by setting the pace and directing the attack for Italy's squad. Several other Italy players are out injured: Domenico Berardi, Nicolò Zaniolo, Francesco Acerbi and Giorgio Scalvini

