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Centre approves 'One Nation, One Election'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has geared up to realise the dreams of having simultaneous polls as it went ahead in approving the high-level panel's recommendations on "one nation, one election" plan for holding of the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and Local Bodies elections simultaneously in a phased manner after a countrywide consensus-building exercise. The recommendations could be tabled in the Winter Session of Parliament and sources indicate that the Government would implement it in its current tenure.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it was an important step towards making our democracy more vibrant and participative, Opposition parties shared a mixed response. The high-level committee approached 62 political parties, of which 42 responded -- 32 voicing support to holding simultaneous polls and 15 opposing it. Fifteen political parties did not submit a response. "I compliment ex-President Ram Nath Kovind for spearheading effort," Modi expressed through social media after Cabinet nod for simultaneous polls recommendation.

Among the national parties, the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Bahujan



President Droupadi Murmu being presented a report on simultaneous elections in the country by former President Ram Nath Kovind who heads High-Level Committee (HLC) on 'One Nation, One Election', and Home Minister Amit Shah, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi

Samaj Party (BSP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) opposed the proposal, while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the National People's Party (NPP) supported it. The country had simultaneous elections between 1951 and 1967 but thereafter, polls started getting dispersed due to various reasons, including mid-term elections. Holding all polls simultaneously will require a lot of manoeuvring,

including advancing some elections and delaying some others. While the Lok Sabha polls were held in May-June this year, States like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh also went to polls along with the parliamentary election. The Assembly election process for Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana is currently underway, while Maharashtra and Jharkhand are also scheduled to go to polls later

this year. Delhi and Bihar are among the States that are scheduled to go to polls in 2025. The terms of the current assemblies in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry will end in 2026, while the terms of the Goa, Gujarat, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand assemblies will end in 2027. The terms of the State assemblies in Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland, Tripura and

Telangana will end in 2028. The terms of the current Lok Sabha and the State assemblies that went to polls together this year will end in 2029. Asserting that several political parties are already on board, the Union Government said even those parties that are opposed to it may now feel pressure from within to change their stand due to the widespread support on the issue from the people of the country.

About 60 per cent voting in J and K

This is first Assembly election after removal of Article 370

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Close to 14 lakh electorate (around 60 per cent), belonging to different age groups and political beliefs, dressed in their traditional attire, demonstrated the superiority and priority of 'ballot over the bullet' on Wednesday as they queued up outside the polling stations. The voters exhibited the vibrant colors of Indian democracy, for the first time after the Abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, to elect their public representatives after a gap of 10 years in 24 Assembly constituencies spread across seven districts of Jammu and Kashmir amid unprecedented security arrangements. Barring a few incidents, the polling passed off peacefully across Jammu and Kashmir. Briefing media persons, Chief Electoral Officer PK Pole said that approximately 60 per cent voter turnout was recorded till 6 pm.

During the 2014 Assembly polls, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed 65.91 per cent voter turnout. PK Pole said the overall polling percentage may witness marginal correction as several polling parties from remote areas were yet to report to their headquarters. Overall voter turnout of



Shopian: Voters wait in a queue at a polling station during the first phase of Assembly elections, in Shopian district of south Kashmir, Wednesday

S. No.	DISTRICTS	No. of ACs	Approximate Voter Turnout %
1	Anantnag	7	54.17
2	Doda	3	69.33
3	Kishtwar	3	77.23
4	Kulgam	3	61.57
5	Pulwama	4	46.03
6	Ramban	2	67.71
7	Shopian	2	53.64
Above 7 Districts 24			58.85 (Figure upto 6pm)

58.46 percent was recorded across five Parliamentary segments in Jammu and Kashmir in May 2024. CEO PK Pole said after the 2008 Assembly/ Lok Sabha polls, the voter turnout across 24 Assembly constituencies was the highest so far. Kashmiri migrants also participated in the voting across different polling booths in New Delhi and Jammu.

The fate of Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP Chief and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, Shagun Parihar, daughter of BJP leader Ajeet Parihar killed by terrorists in Kishtwar, former JKPC Chief and Minister GA Mir from Dooroo, Sunil Sharma, BJP general secretary contesting from Padder Nagseni is sealed in the EVMS.



Four die, 14 injured as building collapses in Bapa Nagar

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Four people died including two teenagers, two are in critical condition and 12 others suffered injuries following the collapse of a six-storey house in central Delhi's Bapa Nagar on Wednesday morning with the rescue operation lasting for more than eight hours.

Delhi Chief Minister-designate Atishi announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each for the families of the four people who died and visited the RML Hospital where the injured are undergoing treatment. During her visit, Atishi stated, "The families of the deceased will be provided a compensation of Rs 10 lakh by the Delhi Government," adding that the compensation will also be given to the injured based on the severity of their injuries. She said that strict action will be taken against those responsible for this tragedy. Meanwhile, New Delhi BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj also visited the victims. The rescue operations were initiated by local police and other agencies like Delhi Fire Services. However, later NDRF was also called to join the rescue operations which ended around 5:30 am. DCP M Harsh Dhandan said the building was old and located in narrow lanes of a residential locality in Bapa Nagar of Prasad Nagar. "We cannot take heavy machines or cranes inside for the operation but the teams of fire department, local police and NDRF are conducting the rescue work," he said.

Government announces Chandrayaan-4, Venus Orbiter missions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Buoyed over the success of earlier Space missions, the Centre on Wednesday approved a new moon mission "Chandrayaan-4" to develop and demonstrate technologies needed for landing of Indian astronauts on the moon and safely bring them back to Earth. The Government also approved the development of Venus Orbiter Mission for exploring and studying the planet. Chandrayaan-4 mission will achieve the foundational technologies for the landing of Indian astronauts on the moon (planned by year 2040) and return safely back to Earth, a Government statement said. "Major technologies that are required for docking/undocking, landing, safe return to earth and lunar sample collection and analysis would also be demonstrated," it said.



FILE PHOTO

While the total fund requirement for the technology demonstration mission "Chandrayaan-4" is Rs 2,104.06 crore, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has allocated Rs 1,236 crore for the mission, of which Rs 824 crore will be spent on the

development of the spacecraft by the Indian Space Research Organisation. ISRO will be responsible for the development of spacecraft and launch. The mission is expected to be completed within 36 months of approval with the

participation of industry and academia. All the critical technologies are envisaged to be indigenously developed. The 'Venus Orbiter Mission' to be helmed by the Department of Space will involve placing a scientific spacecraft in the orbit of Venus for better understanding of its surface and subsurface, atmospheric processes and influence of the Sun on the Venusian atmosphere. Venus, the closest planet to Earth and believed to have formed in conditions similar to Earth, offers a unique opportunity to understand how planetary environments can evolve very differently, a statement said. The study of the underlying causes of the transformation of Venus, which is believed to be once habitable and quite similar to Earth, would be an invaluable aid in understanding the evolution of the sister planets, both Venus and Earth, it said.

Doctors refuse to work, say two demands still not met

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The junior doctors of Bengal refused to end their cease work even two days after their talks with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee bringing "fruitful results" that included among other things removal of two senior IPS officers and health department directors who allegedly misled the investigation in RG Kar Medical College rape and murder case. The doctors' Wednesday morning demand of meeting with the State Government -- was readily granted by Chief Secretary Manoj Pant. Doctors said that the administration had not fulfilled all their demands including the removal of State Health Secretary NS Nigam and ensuring an atmosphere free of fear inside the Government hospitals and medical colleges. A letter written to the Chief Secretary read, "We were assured in the meeting (held on Monday), that a special task force presided by you will be formed to address these



A delegation of junior doctors leaves for Nabanna (State Secretariat) by bus to meet West Bengal Chief Secretary Manoj Pant for a discussion on certain 'key unresolved issues' like security in hospitals, from their 'dharna' site outside Swasthya Bhawan in Kolkata, Wednesday

issues and further discussions with us would take place regarding its formulation and function. We would like to sit in a meeting with you and other members of the task force today regarding the same."

India serves notice to Pakistan for review of Indus Water Treaty

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has served a formal notice to Pakistan seeking a review of the Indus Water Treaty inked in 1960, arguing that "fundamental and unforeseen" changes in the circumstances require a reassessment of the pact. The notice was issued to Pakistan on August 30 under Article XII (3) of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT). Government sources said on Wednesday. India and Pakistan signed the IWT on September 19, 1960 after nine years of

negotiations, with the World Bank being a signatory to the pact, which sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two sides on the use of the waters of a number of cross-border rivers. India's notification highlights a fundamental and unforeseen changes in circumstances that require a reassessment of obligations under various articles of the treaty, the sources said. Among various concerns, the important ones include a change in population demographics, environmental issues and the need to

accelerate the development of clean energy to meet India's emission targets, they said. India has also cited the impact of persistent cross-border terrorism as one of the reasons for demanding the review. "The notification was issued in the background of a separate prolonged controversy with respect to the Kishanganga and Ratle hydro projects," a source said. "In this regard, the World Bank has simultaneously activated both the neutral-expert mechanism and the Court of Arbitration on the same set of issues," the source added.

EAC report on relative economic performance of states reflects Vaastu

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Country's Vaastu seems to be reflected in a report titled "Relative Economic Performance of Indian States: 1960-61 to 2023-24" by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) which clearly shows that western and southern Indian States are more prosperous. The report says western and southern States -- Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka "performed notably better" than the rest of the country in over six decades. Authored by EAC-PM member

Sanjeev Sanyal, the paper 'Relative Economic Performance of Indian States: 1960-61 to 2023-24' said the development of eastern part of the country remains a concern. Ancient Indian tradition mentions that south corner, even of the cities flourish more when compared to other periphery. "Maharashtra and Gujarat have consistently demonstrated strong economic performance over the years. Goa's relative per capita income has doubled over the period of study. Additionally, the southern States have significantly outpaced others after economic liberalisation, with the five States collectively

accounting for approximately 30 per cent of India's GDP." "In the north, States like Delhi and Haryana also stand out. Delhi has one of the highest per capita incomes throughout the study period. The divergent performance of Haryana and Punjab warrants further investigation to understand the underlying policy implications. Punjab's relative per capita income has declined after 2000s, while Haryana, which was once behind, has surpassed Punjab on both economic indicators. The eastern part of the country remains a concern," paper noted.



Unnecessary honking becoming growing nuisance in Doon, difficult to regulate

PURNIMA BISHT ■ DEHRADUN

Dehradun is grappling with a surge in noise pollution caused by unnecessary honking on its roads. Despite traffic laws discouraging such behaviour, individuals continue to honk excessively, often getting away with it due to gaps in law enforcement. There are few stringent legal measures to regulate or penalise unnecessary honking, making it difficult for authorities to take action against those who perpetuate this nuisance. While modifications like pressure horns are banned and penalised, regular loud honking often goes unchecked. According to the regional transport officer (RTO) of Dehradun, Sunil Sharma, the challenge lies in the lack of solid evidence to hold offenders accountable. "Though authorities impose penalties or take action against pressure horns, which are usually installed through vehicle modification, there is no prominent way of taking action against loud honking. If we approach the person responsible, they can easily deny it. Without clear evidence, it is hard to prove that the person was honking unnecessarily," he added.



sure horns is easier to regulate, regular honking falls into a grey area. "In most cases, it is difficult to prove the offence when it comes to simple honking. For such situations to stop occurring, people need to develop a civic sense and a kind attitude," the RTO said. Whether on narrow lanes, highways or even at traffic signals, the sound of blaring horns is an ever-present reality in the city. Some people even honk while speeding through roads, expecting others to make way for them, adding to the chaos and increasing the risk of accidents.

A daily commuter, Akshay Rawat, shared his frustration, "Every day on Rajpur Road, I encounter unnecessary honking. Even at red lights, people seem to think honking will make the signal change faster. It is not just irritating, it is ex-

hausting." A Dharampur resident Shobhit Verma said, "Honking seems like a deeply ingrained habit for many drivers in Dehradun. The lack of proper law enforcement makes it challenging to address this issue comprehensively. Even in hospitals located near main roads, you can constantly hear honking." He said that the consequences of this unchecked honking are far-reaching.

It is not just a matter of noise pollution, it also compromises road safety. "Sudden and loud honking often startles other drivers, leading to confusion and accidents. Overspeeding drivers rely on honking to clear their way, creating a hazardous environment for other drivers and pedestrians," he said. A resident near Balliwala, Babita Bhatt said, "It is impossible for

my in-laws and my six months old baby to rest during the day because of the constant honking. People speed through residential areas and keep honking as if it is a race track." However, the problem extends beyond mere annoyance. Women in Dehradun have reported instances where men use honking as a form of harassment or teasing on the streets. A college student Anjali Gusain explained, "It is not just about the noise. Some men deliberately honk when they pass by women, making us feel uncomfortable. It is intrusive and disturbing." "And by the time we try to complain about them to the police personnel nearby, they escape in their bikes," another student Preeti Dwivedy added.

The officials also said that while the authorities continue to explore ways to curb unnecessary honking, the solution ultimately lies in fostering a sense of responsibility among drivers. Without the development of civic consciousness and mutual respect on the roads, honking will remain an ongoing issue, affecting the well-being and safety of Dehradun's residents. Many locals also opined that the government needs to initiate more awareness campaigns while also finding more effective ways to enforce existing laws to address this issue.

All healthy people should donate blood: Joshi

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Cabinet minister Ganesh Joshi has said that blood donation plays an important role in saving precious lives. He said that donating one unit of blood benefits many people. The minister inaugurated

awareness is needed about blood donation and every healthy person should be encouraged to donate blood at regular intervals. Joshi also appealed to the people to donate blood and contribute in



a multi-purpose camp at Atmaram Dharamshala at Kishan Nagar chowk on Wednesday. A voluntary blood donation camp was also organised on the occasion. The minister said that social

making a healthy society. Large number of people donated blood in the camp. Ayushman and labour cards of many people were also made on the occasion.

Eco Task Force of TA plants 10 K saplings in Yamkeshwar, Pauri

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The 127 Eco Task Force of the Territorial Army, Dehradun organized a special plantation event "Ek Ped Maa ke Naam" at Devi Danda, Kasyali in Yamkeshwar block of Pauri district on Wednesday. The event was

bra, Bissi, Chopra and Banchuri village, students of government inter college, Banchuri and 100 troops of 127 Eco Task Force participated in the event. "The participants were encouraged to adopt a tree and were also



held to commemorate the occasion of the platinum jubilee of the TA to be held in October this year. A communiqué of the TA claimed that about 10,000 saplings of mixed varieties were planted. A total of 250 villagers from Kasyali, Kho-

told about the importance of sustaining environmental health and combating climate change," the communiqué said.

DAV College students stage secretariat march to press demands

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

DAV PG College students took out a rally and marched towards the secretariat on Wednesday, protesting against the administration sitting on their long-standing demands. They later submitted a memorandum to the secretary, higher education, urging his prompt intervention in the matter.

Sharing this, the president of the student union Sidharth Aggarwal said that the students had been staging a stir at the college premises for the past nine days.

"However, till now, the col-

demands they have been staging agitation over, he said that the authority must fill the vacant posts of teachers and other staff at the earliest. "Currently, out of 185 teaching positions, only 132 have been filled while out of 56 and 94 positions for third and fourth-class staff, only 27 and 47 have been filled respectively. This aside, the students demand the installation of a 100-ft high national flag promised by the cabinet minister Ganesh Joshi in 2023. We are also demanding a revamp of the existing infrastructure of the college," he added.



lege management has not taken any action. Nor have they provided an assurance that their demands would be seriously looked into. This has left us with no option but to organise the rally. We served a memorandum to the secretary, higher education, asking for his initiative to break the deadlock," he added.

Queried about the principal

He warned that in case the education and the college administrations continue dithering regarding their demands, they might resort to indefinite stir at the college and finally an indefinite hunger strike.

To recall, the DAV PG College students recently conducted a signature campaign to press their demands.

Dumroo – the dynamic soundtrack of Sector 36-streaming on Netflix

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Dumroo- the latest track from the highly anticipated crime thriller Sector 36, starring Vikrant Massey and Deepak Dobriyal-has started streaming on Netflix

Mohit Chauhan, who lends his voice to this fierce track, shared, "The powerful beats of Dumroo and the tribute to Lord Shiva filled me with such a powerful



from September 13. Produced by Jio Studios and Maddock Films, singer Mohit Chauhan brings an unmatched intensity to the track 'Dumroo, blending with the fresh vocal power of Anupam Amod, those privy to the production details said. The lyricist-composer Dhunkey builds the momentum, infusing modern elements into devotional roots, they further said, adding that the song reverberates with raw energy, propelling one into an exhilarating journey of musical intensity.

Sharing his thoughts, the lead star Massey said: "It mirrors the high-octane excitement and intense atmosphere of the film. Every time I hear it, the track instantly lifts my energy and I believe audiences will feel that same adrenaline when they listen to it."

sense of energy and devotion that I felt like a powerhouse of energy. The music is so energising and the lyrics are incredibly motivating that every time I sang it I felt that rush of inspiration and drive. I hope it gives listeners that same spark of motivation and excitement as they dive into the track."

The lyricist and composer Dhunkey said that Dumroo is a call to the inner fire within all. "Through its melody and rhythm, I wanted to capture the unstoppable energy of Lord Shiva and channel it into a track that feels both timeless and modern. It is about awakening that unrelenting power inside you," he added.

Growing use of AI affecting competition exam success rates, say experts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The fast-developing technology and its tools which include Artificial Intelligence (AI) and smartphones have indirectly impacted the success rates of competitive exams. There is a noticeable trend where students and young adults preparing for competitive exams are increasingly relying on AI and their smartphones for study purposes. The education experts based in the city, however, cautioned that excessive dependence on mobile phones and AI might not yield the best results in the competitive exams.



He further said that with the advancements in AI and internet telling upon the success rate of competitive examinations, the authorities of the educational institutions and parents should ensure that the students refrain from using technology too much for exam preparation.

Further, a senior eye specialist at the Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) Dr Sushil Ojha expressed concern over the deteriorating eye health of the students who study by their phones rather than books. "Increased screen time while studying on a phone can lead to dryness in the eyes and often affects eyesight. Therefore, I, on my part, would advise the children to study through books rather than phones. If they study by phone, they should follow the 20-20-20 rule- taking a 20-second break after every 20 minutes to blink their eyes 20 times," he said.

Sharing his experiences over the years as an educator and senior manager at ALLEN Institute Awadesh Dixit said that technology-based examination preparation has more drawbacks than benefits. "The trend of preparing or studying through the phone or internet emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic. What we observed after this is that the ability to comprehend among the students has been negatively impacted. What happens often is that while using phones for study, they tend to divert to various social media feeds and content which hinders their focus on studying," he added.

A student Saksham Chauhan who is currently preparing for the UPSC examination admitted that he has been using the internet for exam preparation. "Studying through the net for exam purposes costs much less than buying numerous books. The Internet as a study tool has become a much more affordable alternative," he said, adding that he even took important notes for exams using his mobile phone and the internet.

An educator in a coaching institute Subodh Dobhal flagged the negative aspects of internet-based study while admitting its obvious advantages. "There is no gainsaying the fact that the advancement in technology in the form of AI and mobile phones has provided easy access for children to study a variety of content from a

single source instead of purchasing numerous books some of which are exorbitantly priced. However, these AI aids help students in preparing for specific subjects and preparing answers for specific questions. Given the trend discernible now, I caution them against depending solely on the internet and AI for exam preparation," he said.

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Children & parents informed about benefits from NPS Vatsalya Yojana

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In order to raise collective awareness, provisions of the NPS Vatsalya Yojana were presented in details to children and their parents at events held in Pauri and Uttarkashi on Wednesday. The National Pension Scheme (Vatsalya) was officially launched by the Union Finance and Corporate Affairs minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi the same day.

In addition to the principal programme in New Delhi, related events took place simultaneously in approximately 75 locations across the coun-



Delhi through video conferencing. The Centre had extended invitations to local residents, school children and parents to attend the launching event of the NPS Vatsalya Yojana.

Aside from the detailed briefings on the NPS Vatsalya Yojana provided to the children and their parents who attended, painting competitions and street plays were held

as part of the programme. The participants from Uttarkashi and Pauri in Uttarakhand remotely joined the event in New



CM Dhama lauds 'one nation one election' plan endorsement by union cabinet

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama has welcomed the decision of the Union cabinet in which it approved the proposal of 'one nation, one election'. Dhama took to social media to express his gratitude to the Union cabinet on Wednesday. He said that the decision will help in making Indian democracy more powerful and effective. The CM averred that the step will help in reducing the government money and time spent in the elections. The money saved in the elections can be spent in development activities such as education, health and infrastructure development, he said.

The union cabinet in its meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved the proposal to hold simultaneous elections in the

country.

It is pertinent to mention here that a high level committee headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind had submitted its report to the union government on 'one nation one election' in March this year.

The report was presented before the cabinet on Wednesday. It lays a roadmap for implementation of the plan to hold simultaneous elections in the country. The Kovind report has recommended simultaneous elections of Lok Sabha and State Assemblies in the first phase. The proposal aims to streamline the electoral politics and procedures in the country by simultaneous holding of the elections which at present are staggered.

Abrogation of Article 370 ushers in new wave of development in J & K: Dhama

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama has said that after abrogation of article 370, a new wave of development has arrived in Jammu and Kashmir and the people of Jammu and Kashmir are getting its direct benefit. He was addressing a public meeting in support of BJP candidate from Bani assembly constituency Jeevan Lal on Wednesday. He said that Shyama Prasad Mukherjee gave the supreme sacrifice for 'Ek Desh, Ek Vidhan and Ek Nishan' and his dream was fulfilled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The CM said that the Vidhan Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir are historic. He said work in the fields of road, health, education, railways and power is being done at a fast pace in Jammu and Kashmir. Dhama said that the union minister Jitendra Singh is representing the people of Bani in centre and the victory of Jeevan Lal from the constituency will help in formation of a double engine government in Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed confidence that people will vote BJP



to power in Jammu and Kashmir. The CM added that the number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir has increased two and half times. Now there is 'minimum terrorism and maximum tourism' in Kashmir. He said that on one hand PM Modi is giving guarantee of safe and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir and on the other the Congress, PDP and National Conference (NC) will bring back article 370 and fan separatism in Kashmir. These parties have pushed

Jammu and Kashmir in the slush of corruption.

Cautioning the people from casting their votes for independent candidates, Dhama said that the elections are between three families and youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

The union minister Jitendra Singh, BJP candidate Jeevan Lal, district in charge Jagvir Singh and other leaders accompanied Dhama in the public meeting and the road show.

CS seeks report on utility of collection centres of Agriculture department

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Secretary Radha Raturi has said that a report regarding the actual utility of all the collection centers of the agriculture department in the State should be prepared. She sought a detailed report on the location mapping of all the collection centers, their operational status, and the actual utilization. The CS chaired the fourth high powered committee (HPC) meeting of REAP (Rural Enterprise Velocity Growth Project) held at the Secretariat on Wednesday.

In the meeting the CS approved the proposal for revision of unit rates for construction of wayside amenities and collection centres under REAP. She directed the Agriculture department to make arrangements for certified seeds of crops, pulses and



millet grown in mountainous areas.

Raturi also instructed the officers to complete the target of preparing 400 entrepreneurs under REAP.

She said that the 500 entrepreneurs should be prepared in Bhimtal and Okhalkanda blocks by employing scientific methods of value addition in Bay leaves. Approval was

also given to proposals worth Rs 60.33 crore for preparing 300 entrepreneurs under silk heritage conservation, preparing 503 entrepreneurs through establishment of mother unit and rearing unit for poultry farming, preparing 402 entrepreneurs under mushroom compost and production unit. Raturi also approved the plan to distribute 2,400 Pashu Sakhi kits by training more and more local women as health workers of domestic animals under the REAP project. She said that priority to gender sensitization should be given in the implementation of all schemes.

Secretaries Radhika Jha, Dhiraj Garbhal, additional secretary Manuj Goyal and other officers were present on the occasion.

Congress holds protest against unsavory comments of BJP leaders on RaGa

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Congress workers held vehement protests in all district headquarters of the State on Wednesday against the unsavory comments made by some BJP leaders against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. In Dehradun the Congress workers assembled at Astley hall on the day where they shouted slogans against the BJP leaders and government. An effigy of the BJP government was also burnt on the occasion.

The president of the Mahanagar Congress Jaswinder Singh Gogi said that it has become a habit of the BJP leaders to make unsavory and derogatory comments about leader of opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. He said that recently union minister Ravneet Bittu and UP minister Raghuraj Singh had termed Rahul Gandhi as a top terrorist. Now some other leaders of BJP are giving comments which threaten violence on Rahul Gandhi. Gogi added that rebel MLA of Shiv Sena, Sanjay Gaekwad, who is a BJP sup-



porter, has promised to pay a sum of Rs 11 lakh to the person who will cut the tongue of Rahul Gandhi.

He said that the top BJP leadership has maintained a stoic silence on such heinous and derogatory comments

of some of its leaders which shows that such statements are being given at their behest. Congress vice President Puran Singh Rawat, Manish Nagpal, Urmilla Thapa, Abhinav Thapar and others attended the protest.

BJP calls Congress's Kedarnath Pratishtha Raksha Yatra a political stunt

PNS ■ RUDRAPRAYAG

The Bharatiya Janata Party has condemned the Congress's Kedarnath Pratishtha Raksha Yatra, labelling it as a political charade aimed at promoting a specific leader. The BJP's suspicions about the pilgrimage being a political tool have been confirmed after revelation made by the State Congress president Karan Mahara in a recent interview, the state media in-charge Manveer Singh Chauhan said. He said that Mahara's comments in the interview exposed the true nature of their Yatra, which was organised for personal political gains rather than religious purposes and had no genuine connection to the reverence of Sanatana Dharma or Baba Kedarnath. He said that the controversy took a political turn when allegations were made by a potential candidate for the Kedarnath by-elections, accusing another leader of promoting himself through the Yatra. In response, the Congress president dismissed the accusations, stating that a former legislator could only walk three kilometres during the journey,

further exposing the political motives behind the event. Chauhan asserted that while the Congress is free to organise its events, it is unacceptable to tarnish religious sanctity for personal gain. Throughout their Yatra, the Congress party continuously disrespected sacred sites, causing deep hurt to Sanatana followers. He also pointed out the timing of the Congress's Yatra, which coincided with heavy rainfall and ongoing rescue operations at Kedarnath. He said that despite the BJP's request to postpone the journey out of respect for the disaster-struck area, the Congress refused. Instead of engaging in relief work, the Congress postponed it after facing public backlash, he added. Chauhan said that the Congress party's actions in disrespecting Baba Kedarnath for electoral purposes will not be forgiven by the public or by Baba Kedarnath. The Congress' strategy of exploiting religion and culture for political gain has already cost them dearly, and this time, their misdeeds will once again result in severe consequences, he added.

2nd anniversary of Ankita murder: Congress observes fast, demanding justice

PNS ■ HALDWANI

Marking the second anniversary of the gruesome murder of Ankita Bhandari, the opposition Congress observed a fast in silence stir in Haldwani on Wednesday, demanding justice for the family of the deceased. Later, the party activists led by the MLA Sumit Hridayesh torched the BJP in effigy over what they dubbed as vituperative attack on the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on the 'baseless' reservation comment row.

Firing a salvo at the BJP and its government in the State, Hridayesh said that despite two years having passed since Ankita Bhandari had been brutally murdered, justice kept eluding the bereaved family. "The saffron party has been ignoring the

people's demand for a CBI inquiry into the murder case while shielding the VIPs allegedly involved in it.

said that this had revealed the true character of the BJP. "This is not just an attack on a popular leader but an



However, we as members of the principal opposition party will never allow the issue to die down. We organised the silent fast today to express solidarity with the family and the people of the State who have been impatiently awaiting justice," he added

On the vitriolic attacks and threats made by BJP leaders against Gandhi, he

attempt to gag the voice of democracy. But such a vicious ploy to stifle the voice of the opposition will never succeed. Our party will see it, fighting tooth and nail against the strong-arm tactics of the saffron camp," he said.

Members of the frontal organisations of the party gathered in large numbers and took part in the silent fast and effigy-torching rally.

SCPCR seeks medical & police reports in minor rape/pregnancy case

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Following an alleged rape of a minor resulting in the premature birth and death of her baby, the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) has summoned the police and medical officials concerned to present the investigation report involving the case. This direction was issued during an inspection conducted by SCPCR officials at the Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya district hospital (Coronation) on Wednesday.

Informing this on Wednesday, a member of the SCPCR, Vinod Kaparwan said that they had failed to meet the victim. "By the time we

reached the hospital, she had already been discharged. During the

inspection, we noted with concern that the DNA test of the child had not been

the required measures under POCSO to ensure justice for the survivor.



SCPCR asks CS to revise children safety policy in U'khand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Taking note of the spurt in crimes against children, the chairperson of the State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) Geeta Khanna asked the chief secretary Radha Raturi to hold a meeting with the departments concerned to update the policies to ensure fool-proof safety of children in the State. She expressed her concern and

anguish over the recent case of alleged rape of a minor resulting in the premature birth and death of her baby. She added that such crimes happening frequently expose the vulnerability of the minors. "So we have written to the chief secretary urging her to revise safety policies for children to make the State a safer place for them," she said.

conducted nearly a week after the incident, raising suspicion. Besides, we were informed that upon the request of the victim's family, the child was transported to Tehri under police supervision to facilitate the completion of the legal procedures," he said.

He further said that the Commission had conveyed its deep anguish over the delay in taking appropriate actions. "The investigating officer must explain this delay. Besides, we demand the law enforcers to take

She must be medically taken care of as she keeps suffering from health issues," he added.

Further, the commission took strong exception to the medical superintendent of the district hospital, Dr V S Chauhan having allowed the survivor's discharge before she fully recovered. "This is what prompted the commission to summon officials concerned with the medical as well as police investigation reports about this case," Kaparwan added.

Rawat asks for proposals concerning NCC expansion in Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State education minister Dhan Singh Rawat has directed the officials concerned on Wednesday to prepare a proposal for the full-fledged implementation of National Cadet Corps (NCC). This proposal will be discussed in the NCC expansion meeting slated on September 23 in New Delhi. He informed that a high-level meeting of the representatives from the States and Union Territories is all set to take place on September 23 in New Delhi to be chaired by the Union minister of state for Defence. "The meeting to be focused on the expansion of NCC will be attended by the education

in the State, expansion, implementation and the need for financial support, would be strongly presented at the meeting.

"In view of this, the officials concerned have been instructed to prepare new proposals for this purpose. As far as the State government is concerned, it is committed to expanding NCC, enhancing training and improving infrastructure and logistics. Efforts are being made to address the demands for NCC expansion at the state level, too," the minister said. Underscoring the importance of establishing junior and senior divisions of



ministers from all States and Union Territories," he said, adding that the main agenda of this meeting is to devise a plan for the implementation of the NCC expansion and to discuss the strategies involving both the Centre and the states in this regard. Rawat further said that all aspects, including specific problems facing NCC

NCC in government schools and colleges in the State to provide more youth with the opportunity to join NCC, he said that this issue would figure prominently in the course of the high-level meeting. "It is essential to expand the scope of NCC in schools and colleges spread across the State," he averred.

Chamoli DM orders permanent treatment for the landslide-prone areas in Badrinath highway

PNS ■ JYOTIRMATH

The Chamoli district magistrate Sandeep Tiwari instructed the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) officials to expedite efforts to restore normal traffic flow on the

solution at the landslide zone near Chatwapipal and widen the road by at least six metres in this area. He also stressed the need for warning signs to be placed on both sides of the landslide-prone zones and to install



Badrinath National Highway and implement permanent treatments for the landslide-prone areas to prevent further inconvenience to pilgrims visiting the Char Dham and to the local residents. Tiwari conducted an inspection of the landslide-affected areas on the Badrinath Highway at Komeda, Chatwapipal, and Nandprayag on Wednesday along with NHIDCL officials. He directed the NHIDCL officials to install a gabion wall as an immediate

drums and reflectors along the edge of the highway for safety purposes to avoid any accidents. Besides this, he called for the deployment of extra manpower and machinery near the landslide-affected zones. The DM further instructed the officials concerned to conduct a technical survey to develop a permanent solution for the landslide zones as the landslides in these areas have disrupted the Char Dham Yatra for the past four days.

Opposition opposes 'One Nation, One Election' proposal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Wednesday opposed the "one nation, one election" proposal as a report of a panel on simultaneous elections, headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind, was approved by the Union Cabinet.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said "one nation, one election" is not practical and alleged that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) comes up with such things to divert attention from real issues when polls approach.

"It is not practical, it will not work. When elections come and they (BJP) do not get any issue to raise, they divert attention from real issues," Kharge told a press conference here.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Derek O'Brien called it a "cheap stunt" of the BJP and questioned why the Maharashtra polls were not announced with those in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir if the government wants simultaneous elections.

"One nation, one election is just another cheap stunt by the anti-democratic BJP. Why were the Maharashtra elections not announced along with the elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir?" he asked.



government announced the Ladki Bahin scheme in the Budget in June. The first tranche reached the bank accounts of women in August and the second tranche will reach the beneficiaries in October," he said. "You cannot do three states in one go and you talk about one nation, one election," O'Brien said.

"He also sought to know how many Constitution amendments and curtailments of the terms of state Assemblies would be required for the implementation of the proposal.

"And also tell us, how many Constitution amendments, including curtailing or extending terms of state

Assemblies, will be done! Classic Modi-Shah jumla," the TMC leader said in a statement. He also took to social media to share a letter written by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in January, opposing the proposal. 'All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asadudin Owaisi said the proposed move will destroy federalism. "I have consistently opposed One Nation One Election because it is a solution in search of a problem. It destroys federalism and compromises democracy, which are part of the basic structure of the Constitution," he said in a social media post. Owaisi said multiple elections are not a problem for anyone

except Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah as they want to campaign in every election.

"Multiple elections aren't a problem for anyone except Modi and Shah. Just because they have a compulsive need to campaign in every election. "Congress leader Harish Rawat said the BJP has realised that it is going to taste defeat in the ongoing and upcoming state polls, including in Maharashtra, and thus, is scared.

"The BJP has realised that it will be defeated in the elections in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. After losing one state after another, the BJP is not in a position to sustain that pressure that

and Jammu and Kashmir. "They were incapable of holding simultaneous polls in four states and managed to hold elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir. My submission is that when they are unable to hold simultaneous polls in four states, how is one nation, one election even possible?" he asked.

"Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) MP Mahua Maji alleged that the BJP is pushing for simultaneous polls as it wants to be the only party to rule in India.

"The BJP has been trying this since long. It wants only one party to rule the country. Recently, it broke the NCP and the Shiv Sena while the BJD has nearly been wiped out in Odisha. Similarly, it is trying to destroy the JMM in Jharkhand and it will try to destroy the regional parties using one nation, one election," she said.

"Congress leader Harish Rawat said the BJP has realised that it is going to taste defeat in the ongoing and upcoming state polls, including in Maharashtra, and thus, is scared.

"The BJP has realised that it will be defeated in the elections in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. After losing one state after another, the BJP is not in a position to sustain that pressure that

would result in the collapse of their coalition government (at the Centre). That is why the 'ghabrayi hui' (worried) government has opted for the one nation, one election formula," the former Uttarakhand chief minister said.

"Senior Congress leader T S Singhdeo said, "It is only a strategy of political convenience, and what I can see is nothing beyond that. The same party which is governing the country as part of the NDA has been talking about this for the past few years."

"You see their intent. Had they really been proponent of this view that this will be a great benefit to the country and the society...What attempt did they make to ensure that Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand elections take place at the same time," he said.

"The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the proposal for "one nation, one election" as recommended by the Kovind panel, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

"The high-level committee has recommended simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies as the first step, followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days.



Over 5.56 lakh FIRs filed under new criminal laws

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Over 5.56 lakh First Information Reports (FIRs) have been registered across the country under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) ever since its introduction on July one, a senior official said on Wednesday.

For smooth implementation of the new criminal laws, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has also developed several mobile applications, including e-Sakshya for capturing, storing and retrieving evidence through videography and photography.

The app has been adopted by 22 states and Union Territories and tested by 24 states and UTs. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act

replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 respectively.

"Since July one till September three, a total of 5.56 lakh FIRs have been registered in the country under the BNS, the officer said, highlighting the achievements of the home ministry in the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 government.

"Software patches have been designed and deployed in the Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) pillar applications to incorporate the new criminal laws.

The key changes in the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems) include e-Prisons, e-Forensics, e-Prosecution, use of audio-video electronic means and electronic communication among others as per the new criminal laws.



India faces second hottest summer since 1970, one third population at risk

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Between June and August, India endured its second-hottest summer since 1970, with extreme heat impacting over one-third of the population, disrupting not only daily life and claiming countless lives but also posing serious risks to public health across the nation, according to a report by Climate Central.

This analysis coincides with official data revealing 41,789 suspected heat stroke cases and 143 heat-related deaths during one of the longest and most intense heat waves in the country's history.

Analysing temperature impact on more than one billion residents in 72 countries that recorded their hottest June-August since at least 1970, the report by the Climate Central found that in India alone, over 426 million people encountered extreme heat for at least a week. It said, temperatures exceeded 90% of usual highs from 1991 to 2020. Over 20.5 million experienced high temperatures for at least 60 days.

Scientists say that human-caused climate change and the El Niño natural weather phenomenon both have pushed temperatures to record highs in the year so far.

Climate Central's latest analysis sheds light on the local impacts of rising temperatures, detailing how states and cities are confronting an alarming increase in dangerous heat days.

For instance, in India, several cities witnessed many days where temperatures were heavily influenced by climate change. Cities such as Thiruvananthapuram, Vasai-Virar, Kavaratti, Thane, Mumbai, and Port Blair were among the hardest hit, each enduring over 70 days of temperatures significantly intensified by climate change. Mumbai alone recorded 54 days of extreme heat linked to these changes.

Additionally, Kanpur and Delhi faced prolonged spells of dangerously high

temperatures, with average readings exceeding 39 degrees Celsius, a scenario made four times more likely due to climate change, the report indicated.

Globally, more than 2 billion people worldwide faced at least 30 days of climate-change attributable temperatures above established health risk thresholds.

These temperatures were made at least three times more likely by climate change. "High temperatures that were clearly influenced by climate change jeopardised the health of billions around the world during the past three months," said Andrew Pershing, vice president for science at Climate Central.

Vaibhav Pratap Singh, Executive Director, Climate and Sustainability Initiative (CSI), warned that the impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly evident for people and businesses across the country. "Each year, we are experiencing more severe climate-related events such as floods, droughts, and heat waves, which are causing significant harm to lives and livelihoods.

"It is crucial to conduct assessments of how different levels of global warming are affecting our environment and combine this with an understanding of how it impacts people, jobs, and industries, including agriculture. This will help us identify the specific adaptation needs for different regions," he said.

According to a few reports, the extreme heat has jeopardized the health of billions, with India recording 41,789 suspected heat stroke cases and 143 heat-related deaths this summer.

As the world grapples with increasing weather extremes, the combined effects of human-caused climate change and phenomena like the El Niño are expected to elevate temperatures globally, as per the report.

Israel Ambassador condemns Khamenei remarks on Indian minorities as hypocritical

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Israel's Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, on Wednesday strongly condemned Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's comments on the treatment of minorities in India, calling the remarks "ridiculous" and hypocritical.

Azar pointed out that while Khamenei lectures other nations, Iran itself is accused of suppressing freedoms and violating human rights.

"It is really ridiculous that this radical leader is trying to lecture others while he is killing his own population oppressing freedoms like freedom of religion, freedom of speech, human rights that

is completely outrageous and we hope Iranian people are going to be free one day from such oppression and tyranny coming from Khamenei," Azar told PTI.

The Iranian leader, addressing a gathering of clerics in Tehran on Monday, talked about what he described as "suffering" of Muslims in Gaza, Myanmar and India.

"The enemies of Islam have always tried to make us indifferent with regard to our shared identity as an Islamic Ummah. We cannot consider ourselves to be Muslims if we are oblivious to the suffering that a Muslim is enduring in #Myanmar, #Gaza, #India, or



any other place," he posted on 'X' as part of series of posts on the event.

India on Monday strongly deplored the comments made by Iran's supreme leader on the condition of minorities in India, calling the remarks "misinformed and

unacceptable".

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the countries commenting on minorities in India should look at their "own record" before making any observations about others.

Azar briefly touched on the incidents reported in Lebanon on the use of pager blasts all over the country, stating the Israeli government is committed to ensuring the safe return of citizens displaced by recent Hezbollah attacks. "We are securing a diplomatic solution with the help of the US and other partners," he said.

He was speaking on the sidelines of the India Water Week where he noted that the collaboration between India and Israel has become increasingly critical, particularly as India continues to tackle water scarcity and boost agricultural productivity.



ICGS Sujoy to strengthen ties with Indonesian Coast Guard

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) ICGS Sujoy with integral helicopter made a port call at Bali, Indonesia on Wednesday as part of its ongoing overseas deployment to East Asia, officials said here.

Giving details, they said during the three-day visit, while undertaking the Operational Turn Around (OTR), the crew of ICGS Sujoy will engage in professional interactions with BAKAMLA (Indonesia Coast Guard), focusing on Marine Pollution Response (MPR), Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR) and Maritime Law Enforcement. "Activities include professional interactions with BAKAMLA, cross deck training, joint yoga sessions and friendly sports events. The visit aims not only to strengthen ties between the Indian Coast Guard and their Indonesian counterparts but also to showcase India's ship building capabilities, supporting the concept of 'Atamnirbhar Bharat'.



Centre sanctions ₹12,554 crore to States for disaster relief, fire services

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has sanctioned Rs 12,554 crore to various states this year so far for providing relief and rehabilitation to people affected by different natural disasters, officials said on Wednesday.

Rs 890.69 crore has also been sanctioned to five states by the Union Home Ministry to help them in expansion and strengthening of their fire services under the Scheme for Expansion and Modernisation of Fire Services.

"Approximately Rs 12,554 crore has been sanctioned so far from the National Disaster Mitigation Fund, National Disaster Response Fund, State Disaster Mitigation Fund and State Disaster Response Fund to various states for urban flood management, fire services, glacial lake outburst flood risk mitigation and other disaster mitigation, a senior official of the Union Home Ministry said listing the highlights of the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 government.

"Besides, under the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood Mitigation Programme for four states, Rs 150 crore has been given to Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh to adopt various structural and non-structural mitigation measures to address the risks of GLOF

(Glacial Lake Outburst Flood).

An amount of Rs 2,514.36 crore has been sanctioned under the integrated urban flood management project and urban flood risk management programme to help the states in preparing the integrated solutions for urban flood management in cities and urban areas, the official said.

"The Central government has also approved 'Yuva Aapda Mitra Scheme' as an extension of existing programme of 'Upscaling of Aapda Mitra Scheme' with an outlay of Rs 470.50 crore.

"As part of an ambitious plan, 2.31 lakh volunteers exclusively from the National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and Bharat Scouts and Guides (BSG) and 1,300 trainers will be given training in disaster response under 'Yuva Aapda Mitra Scheme', another official said.

"Major outcomes under the ongoing schemes are: approximately 1,00,000 community volunteers will be trained and equipped in 350 multi-hazards disaster prone districts covering all the states and UTs under 'Aapda Mitra Scheme'.

"The Central government has also provided geographical based, instant alert on impending emergency and disaster through mobile phones.

CDS General Anil Chauhan: India's position is of a Vishwa Mitra, Vishwa Bandhu in global world order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan has stated that India's position is of a 'Vishwa Mitra' and a 'Vishwa Bandhu' in the global world order.

He made this assertion while addressing a conclave for Foreign Service Attaches (FSAs) hosted by the Defence Intelligence Agency of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff here on Wednesday. The CDS articulated the importance of Military Diplomacy, wherein the FSAs have a pivotal role to play.

"In the most violent decade since World War II, there is a growing propensity amongst nations to use force to contain conflicts. The growing uncertainty and insecurity is



leading nations to renew their National Security Strategy and increase expenditure on Defence", the CDS said while highlighting four distinct areas of India's Defence viz operational preparedness, modernisation and indigenisation.

"He emphasised the significance of Data Centric Warfare and the role of

Artificial Intelligence in revolutionising warfare. The CDS gave an insight into India's Atmanirbharta for defence capability development and strategic autonomy.

'Director General Defence Intelligence Agency (DG DIA) Lt Genral D S Rana appraised the FSAs that India's Defence Diplomacy was expanding steadily in terms of the nature of activities as well as geographic coverage wherein security cooperation was a key component.

'He highlighted the vision of Atmanirbharta and indigenisation in Defence and implored upon FSAs to gain first-hand experience in modernisation programmes. A holistic overview of India's strategic perspective was given to the FSAs by Defence Subject Matter Experts.

Congress files complaint against NDA leaders targeting Rahul Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday filed a police complaint over the recent statements of leaders belonging to the ruling NDA targeting Rahul Gandhi, alleging that they were aimed at jeopardising his security and disturbing peace in view of the polls in Jammu and Kashmir, and Haryana.

In the complaint submitted to the SHO of the Tughlaq Road police station here by AICC treasurer and general secretary Ajay Maken, the Congress cited the recent remarks by BJP leaders Tarvinder Singh Marwah, Ravneet Singh Bittu and Raghuraj Singh, as well as that of Shiv Sena MLA Sanjay Gaikwad.

Maken sought registration of



FIRs against the leaders. "Speaking with the media after filing the complaint, Maken said, "We all know that late Indira Gandhi ji and late Rajiv ji have sacrificed their lives for the country. Even after that, they are giving such threats."

"Politics in India cannot stoop to a lower level than this, he said. Not just one BJP leader, but many leaders have said such things, but BJP did not take any action, he said.

"Rahul Gandhi talks about SC, ST, OBC, tribal and minority people. That is why BJP people do not like his words. This is the reason why they are threatening him," he said. "But let me tell you -- this is the Congress party and we are not going to be scared or cowed down," Maken said.

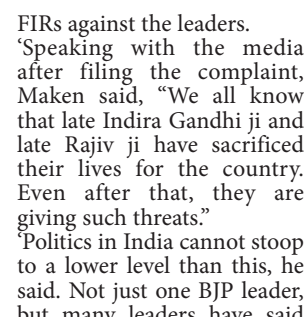
"In the police complaint,

"It also cited Sena MLA Gaikwad's announcement of a bounty of Rs 11 lakh for anyone who will cut the tongue of the Leader of Opposition. The complaint cited Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Bittu's remarks, calling the Leader of Opposition the "number one terrorist of the country".

"Bittu deliberately made the statement to provoke public hatred and outrage against Mr Gandhi, with the aim to incite violence and breach of peace. The said statement was widely publicised on TV channels and social media," the complaint said.

"It cited Uttar Pradesh government minister Raghuraj Singh's remarks that Gandhi was the "number one terrorist of India".

Maken said, "On September 11, Marwah in a BJP event openly issued an assassination threat against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, wherein he said that 'Rahul Gandhi baaz aaja, nahi toh aane wale time mein tera bhi wohi haal hoga jo teri dadi ka haal hua (you better behave, or you will meet the same fate as your grandmother)".



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India to spend ₹31,000 crore to fence entire India-Myanmar border

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The entire 1,643 km porous India-Myanmar border, known for the smuggling of arms, ammunition and narcotics, will be fenced at a cost of Rs 31,000 crore, officials said on Wednesday. On Tuesday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said fencing work had been completed in 30 km of the border, which he termed the root cause of the ethnic violence in Manipur. The Cabinet Committee on Security has, in principle, approved the construction of border fencing and roads along the 1,643-km international border between India and Myanmar at an approximate cost of Rs 31,000 crore. About 10 km of fencing



Representative Photo

has already been completed near Moreh and work is underway to fence another 21 km of the border in other areas of Manipur. The India-Myanmar border

passes through Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. The Central government has already scrapped the India-Myanmar Free Movement Regime (FMR), which allows people residing close to the border to venture 16 km into each other's territory without any documents. It was implemented in 2018 as part of India's Act East policy. Home Minister Shah has been regularly reviewing the security situation in Manipur and necessary actions are being ensured, said officials. Two battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have already been deployed in Manipur. In addition, around 200 companies (about 100 personnel in one company) of central police

forces were deployed in the restive states. The Manipur Government has started using 25 mobile vans as shops to provide essential commodities at fair prices to the general public. These shops on wheels are operating in all districts of Manipur, sources said. As a new initiative, the Kendriya Police Kalyan Bhandars (KPKB, police canteens) have been opened from Tuesday to provide essential commodities to the people of Manipur at fair prices, they said. In addition to the 21 existing such police canteens, 16 new stores are being opened. Of the 16 new police canteens, eight will be in the valley districts of Manipur, and the remaining eight in hilly areas.

Indian army inks MoU with TMR to boost rescue operations in mountains

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army on Wednesday sealed a pact with a premier organisation as part of efforts to boost its rescue and survival operations in mountainous terrains. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked with Tiranga Mountain Rescue (TMR) at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) in the presence of Army Chief General Upendra Dwiwedi. "This understanding marks a pivotal step in advancing the Indian Army's rescue and survival operations in mountainous terrains," an official readout said. "The MoU stipulates that TMR will collaborate with the Indian Army in conducting customised training programmes for Army instructors, aimed at improving their ability to mentor troops in avalanche rescue and survival skills," it said.

In his remarks, the Army Chief commended the efforts of TMR and appreciated its collaboration with his force. General Dwiwedi acknowledged the TMR's efforts by awarding Chief of Army Staff Commendation Cards to two team members of the organisation. This MoU builds on the initial agreement made with the Northern Command in 2016 that established dedicated avalanche and rescue support by the TMR. Subsequent agreements with Eastern and Central Commands in 2021 and 2024 further expanded this collaboration, the Army said in the readout. The latest MoU will further utilise the TMR's expertise to boost the Indian Army's capabilities in executing effective rescue operations under demanding conditions, it said. "This partnership highlights a commitment to further enhance the readiness of personnel operating in mountainous terrain besides

enhancing the standards of training and rescue operations in high-altitude environments," the Army said. Major General Manish Luthra, Additional Director General Military Operations, signed the MoU on behalf of the Army, while Hemant Sachdev, a dedicated mountaineer inked it for the TMR. Lt Gen Tarun Kumar Aich, the Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy), lauded the collaboration as a mutually advantageous agreement for both organisations. He further said for the past nine years, the TMR has done yeoman service in saving numerous lives by providing unwavering support in training and rescue efforts. In his remarks, Sachdev highlighted that 15 teams of TMR are already deployed in various regions alongside the Indian Army. He also mentioned that the rescue teams of TMR have been able to save a large number of precious lives in avalanche-prone areas.

Centre created manmade flood in Bengal: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday slammed the Centre for creating a "man-made" flood in Bengal even as she complained how the Damodar Valley Corporation had released huge amount of water inundating several districts of South Bengal. Banerjee who travelled extensively the Hooghly district said how "the Centre is responsible for this man made flood I have repeatedly told them for dredging the river bed instead of doing that they release water when the barrages in Jharkhand brim over ... this time they have released 3.5 lakh cusecs of water which is unprecedented this is clearly a man made flood ... the lower regions of Hooghly, Howrah and Burdwan are going under



water due to this." Many areas of Howrah, Hooghly, East and West Midnapore districts had been flooded following the release of water by DVC. The worst-affected blocks are Amta and Udaynarayanpur in Howrah, Pursura in Hooghly, Ghatat in West Midnapore and Panskura in East Midnapore, sources said. Eastern parts of India including Bengal and Jharkhand had been

witnessing heavy rains for the past one week or so leading to the rivers and barrages in the higher regions in Jharkhand to brim over. As a result the DVC which controls a network of dams released 3.5 lakh cusec of water. Though the rains had stopped on Wednesday the waters continued to flood the Bengal districts. "I have requested the DVC to release water slowly when they 79 or 80 percent full ... but they wait till the waters rich the danger level and then release them at once without warning they save their own States but inundate Bengal," an angry Chief Minister said. Meanwhile, several thousand people had been shifted to the safer areas including schools and other government offices, Chief Advisor to Chief Minister Alapan Bandopadhyay said.

Yogi slams Congress, SP for dividing people on caste lines

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Wednesday slammed the Congress and the Samajwadi Party, accusing them of dividing people on caste lines for narrow self-interests and harbouring intention to trigger conflict among classes. Addressing a programme here, he also hit out at the two parties for being only concerned about their "families" at the cost of the country and its people. "Be it Congress or Samajwadi Party, they are neither bothered about the country nor the society. They are not concerned about your faith, or the youth, they are just concerned about their families. These family-based parties have no responsibility and left towards the country, towards the society. They will divide the society, make people fight on the basis of caste just to secure their



narrow self-interests. They will create situation for class conflict and then allow rioters to loot, compromise safety of people," Adityanath alleged. Without naming Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi, he also criticised Congress and Samajwadi Party, saying "Do ladkon ki jodi" (two boys) is talking about development in Uttar Pradesh and they have forgotten the history of the last 10 years when 'gunda' and 'mafia raj' were prevailing in the state. "Now UP is turning into a new Uttar Pradesh in which the businessmen and women

are secured. Youths are getting employment. Now Ghaziabad has become a smart city having airport, metro, rapid rail and better atmosphere of security due to which mafias have left the district or hooliganism," he said. The chief minister also accused the Samajwadi Party of cowering down to mafia and criminals during their rule in the state and "for calling religious leaders" as "mafia", referring to SP president Akhilesh Yadav's recent statement where he said "there is not much difference

between mathadheesh (head of a mutt) and mafia". "Samajwadi Party members used to rub their noses in front of notorious mafias and criminals. As per their culture, they call religious leaders mafias... Look at their nature, Aurangzeb's spirit has literally entered inside them," the CM said, addressing an event here. "They exploited the youth, forced farmers to commit suicide and traders were forced to migrate and incidents like the Kairana (exodus) happened because of them. Hindu traders had to move out of Kairana because of them. The safety of women was in danger," he added. But today, he said, the daughters and the traders are safe while there is employment for youth and at the same time farmers are living with dignity. "Aur humne pehle bhi kaha hai ki agar koi yuvaon ke bhavishya ke saath khilwad karega to Sarkar uske

bhavishya ke saath khilwad karegi (And we have said this in the past also, if anyone plays with the future of the youth, then the government will play with their future)" Adityanath said. He said his government has started works to establish new businesses in the state through initiatives like 'One District One Product'. "In the coming few years, the government will provide interest-free loans of up to Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh to encourage young businessmen," Adityanath said. He participated here in a programme as part of his government's 'Mission Employment' initiative and to district job letters to over 10,000 youth and distribute tablets, smartphones to 6000 others besides disbursing loans worth Rs 327 crore to 632 young entrepreneurs. He also laid the foundation stone of 111 development projects worth Rs 757 crore, officials said.

Three BJP candidates in Gurgaon never attended college

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Three candidates fielded by the BJP from Gurgaon, Sohna and Pataudi assembly constituencies in Gurugram district have never attended college, according to the affidavits they submitted at the time of nomination. Also, two Congress party candidates from Sohna and Badshahpur have also not attended college, as per their affidavits. A total of 47 candidates are now in the fray for four assembly seats in the upcoming Assembly elections in gurugram as 15 nominations were withdrawn on Monday. BJP candidates Mukesh Sharma from Gurgaon seat has only 12th pass, Tejpal Tanwar from Sohna seat in his affidavit that his highest educational qualification is class 10 from a govt school in Badshahpur and Bimla Chaudhary from Pataudi assembly constituency is also Metric pass from an open school. The trio candidate have never



attended college. Likewise, Congress candidate Vardhan Yadav from Badshahpur seat has 12th pass from DPS School and Rohtash Khatna from Sohna seat has only passed Class 9, which he completed in 1973-74 at a govt school in Rithoj village. The main contest on the Gurgaon seat between BJP's Mukesh Sharma who is a dropped out after passing Class 12, Mohit Grover of Congress went overseas to

study MBA. While analysis of Gurgaon seat candidate affidavits found that six of them have master's degrees, five are graduates, and the remaining did not pursue higher education. Mukesh Sharma a native of Dundahera village here in Gurgaon is the co-convenor of Haryana BJP's sports cell. Sharma's key rival and Congress candidate Mohit Grover (31) has a postgraduate degree in business management from

the International Management Institute of Brussels, Belgium. Grover's affidavit showed that he got the degree in 2014. Naveen Goyal who quits BJP over denial of ticket and contesting the elections as an Independent from Gurgaon seat is a graduate from the University of Rohtak. Among others candidates Ankit Alag of Jan Sewak Kranti Party holds an MBA degree from the Indian Institute of Planning and Management (IIPM) and Independent candidate Akshat Gait is also an MBA postgraduate from Management Development Institute (MDI) in the city. Another Independent, Narender Kumar, is a retired post-graduate teacher (PGT). Sanjay Lal, an Independent who is fighting the election on behalf of a group of RWAs. Lal has a master's degree in history from the University of Mumbai. He is an entrepreneur and consultant. However, there is no law that the candidates have higher education qualification to contest and assembly

elections but people said parties should consider and check candidates past before selecting a candidate for an urban seat. Residents have expressed concern over the candidates' educational qualifications. "The Gurgaon city also known is cyber hub which also have offices of several IT companies, startup, corporate sectors and export houses. The city has also represented several international events here in the city. If a candidate who is not even a graduate how he can represent the city in future. Parties should check qualification before finalising candidates ticket," Nishant Verma, an IT professional said. "Education is important in life no doubt. BJP and Congress has fielded candidates which having never been to college and studied only upto school level which is quite shocking. Gurgaon district is much developed then other districts in Haryana here educated candidates should represent assembly constituencies," said Yug Vyas, a resident.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian scientists have developed a sustainable pheromone dispenser with a controlled release rate which could act as an innovative solution to substantially reduce the costs of pest control and management. To ensure that the innovation benefit farmers directly on a large scale, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research JNCASR, Bengaluru and ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (ICAR-NBAIR) have entered into a Know-how license pact with Krishi Vikas Sahakari Samiti Ltd. (KVSSL), Haryana, recently. JNCASR is an autonomous institution under the Department of Science and Technology. Prof. M. Eswaramoorthy from JNCASR and Dr. Kesavan Subaharan from ICAR-NBAIR led the signing of the pact. Prof. Eswaramoorthy said, "This exercise will enable the



spread of technology across the country and at global level too. The benefit of the research moves from the lab to the field to benefit the farming community for pest management." "Currently, emphasis is laid on developing technologies that are clean and green. On this line, the technology developed on controlled release of semiochemicals (signalling substances such as pheromones) on transfer to firms will be able to scale up the production to cover a large area," Dr. Subaharan

added. Sustainable organic pheromone dispensers are not a new concept. In fact, polymer membrane or polypropylene tube dispensers that release pheromones already dominate the market. The released pheromones alter the behaviour of the target insect species and attract them to sticky traps. Their main drawback, however, is that the rate at which the pheromones are released into the air is not stable, said a statement here.

Thrissur's tiger dance: A visual feast for Onam

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The main thoroughfare in Thrissur, Kerala's cultural capital came alive on Wednesday evening as hundreds of artists masquerading as tigers danced to percussion instruments to mark the grand finale of Onam 2024. Pulikali (tiger dance) is the iconic art form of Thrissur and it matches the splendour of Thrissur Pooram, the biggest cultural extravaganza of the State held in the month

of May every year. If it is elephants that enthral the Pooram, Pulikali, a visual treat makes Onam in Thrissur unique. There are many Pulikali Sanghams in Thrissur and suburbs. What made the Tiger Dance 2024 unique is the participation of women dressed up as tigresses, described as the first such incident in the 300 year old history of Pulikali. R Bindu, Kerala minister for higher education and spouse of A Vijayaraghavan, polit bureau member of the ruling

CPI(M) claims it was she who played a major role in elevating Pulikali to the global arena. Bindu herself is known as the CPI(M) tigress of Thrissur who is feared by the RSS activists. Though it was announced by the Kerala Government that there would not be any State sponsored tourism festival and celebrations this time on account of the Wayanad natura disaster, by the time Onam festivities began the government's decision vanished into thin air. The



tigers who started their make-up by 7 am showed no signs of exhaustion and tiredness when they hit the roads accompanied by percussionists. Pulikali has nothing to do with Onam. It is an art form imported into Thrissur by Islamic soldiers of the British army. The region's residents assimilated the same as their own. Now you cannot visualize a Thrissur sans Pulikali," said Nandakishor, film artist, stand-up humorist and the local

historian. The artists paint their bodies like tigers with stripes of yellow, red and black and dance to the rhythm of traditional percussion instruments such as thakil, udukku and chenda. Raju Raphael, media person who is a movie maker says it is Pulikali which makes Thrissur distinct from other places in the State. By 8 pm, the tigers retreated to their dens, only to reappear for next year's Onam.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The next gen chief minister

By naming Atishi as Delhi's new CM, Kejriwal seeks to appeal to women voters and refresh the party's leadership

In a surprising but strategic political manoeuvre, Atishi, the dynamic and well-regarded education reformist, has taken over as the youngest Chief Minister of Delhi. This shift marks a significant moment not only in Delhi's political history but also in the larger context of Indian politics. Arvind Kejriwal's decision to pass the baton to Atishi is being viewed as a calculated move, one that signals both a generational shift and a fresh approach to governance. Kejriwal's choice of Atishi is rooted in multiple factors, each with its own political and administrative logic. Atishi has been one of the brightest stars in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) since its inception, known for her innovative ideas and hands-on approach to public administration, especially in the education sector. Her work as the education minister has drawn national attention, with Delhi's government schools undergoing a transformative makeover under her leadership. Kejriwal's decision to elevate her comes at a time when AAP is facing multiple challenges. From managing Delhi's growing urban infrastructure needs to balancing the delicate relationship with the central government, the city requires fresh energy and innovative solutions. Atishi, with her administrative experience and public image as a reformer, presents a candidate who is capable of steering Delhi through these complex issues. Moreover, Kejriwal's move signals his willingness to let the younger generation of AAP leaders take charge. By elevating Atishi, he is not just preparing for Delhi's immediate future, but also laying the groundwork for the party's long-term vision, positioning AAP as a progressive and youth-centric force in Indian politics.



Atishi's rise to the position of Chief Minister brings with it a new wave of expectations. Her track record suggests that education and public welfare will remain key priorities. Delhi's residents can expect an expansion of the initiatives that have already borne fruit, such as the Mohalla Clinics, water and electricity schemes and the focus on improving healthcare and education. One of the most significant aspects of Atishi's leadership could be her ability to bring a new perspective to governance—one that is less confrontational and more collaborative. Atishi's rise to the highest political office in Delhi is a momentous event. But make no mistake, the real power still remains with Arvind Kejriwal. He is the one who would be making all the key decisions. But Atishi's rise in the party is for real. It does not matter that she would be the chief minister for only a few months as Delhi elections are round the corner and her tenure would be a talking point with women voters. Besides, for Delhi, it signals a continuation of the reforms initiated over the past decade, with the added promise of new energy and ideas that could redefine the city's future. It would indeed be a test of Atishi's leadership quality as she will be under constant scrutiny, with both her supporters and detractors closely watching her every move. Her ability to navigate these pressures will be crucial in determining the success of this bold experiment by Kejriwal.

PICTALK



People perform 'pind daan' rituals at the bank of Falgu river on the first day of the Pitra Paksha, in Gaya

Showdown over Rahul's remarks in the US



KALYANI SHANKAR

Rahul Gandhi's recent trip to the US has reignited the debate over whether Indian leaders should criticise their government while abroad



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent he United States has provoked a war of words between the ruling BJP and the main opposition Congress in India. Should the Indian leaders refrain from bad-mouthing the ruling BJP while abroad? Is there a red line, and has Rahul crossed it while he was in the US? The BJP claims yes, and the Congress says no. Rahul has taken potshots at the Indian government and PM Modi. Congress claims that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also bad-mouthed the Congress not once but continuously since he took over in 2014 and visited over 80 countries. The Congress cites many examples. Also, the BJP has misrepresented Rahul's statements. Rahul aims to engage the Diaspora through programs with the Diaspora, students, officials, and lawmakers in the US, demonstrating the strategic nature of his approach. Why does he want to woo the Diaspora? Modi also has never missed an opportunity to address the Diaspora in whichever country he visits. Rahul, too, wants to connect with the Indian American community. The influence of the Indian American community has increased. A decade ago, there was one Indian-American in the House of Representatives; now, there are five and one senator. The US has

an Indian-origin Presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, and a vice-presidential candidate, JD Vance, who has an Indian wife. Education, affluence and awareness of the influence in the past two decades are behind the rise of Indian Americans, whose population is one per cent, and their representation in US Congress is now one per cent. Rahul commented on the RSS, India's democracy, Modi's China policy, and religious freedom in India, among other things. On the RSS, Gandhi said that the BJP's parent organisation believes India is "one idea", but the Congress considers it a "diversity of ideas." This criticism of the RSS, a critical ideological force behind the BJP, upset the BJP. In India, the BJP slammed Rahul's adverse comments and meeting with anti-India US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar. The BJP claims that it can be used for anti-India propaganda. Gandhi counters that she was part of the lawmaker's delegation, and how he could have declined to meet with the delegation. Rahul noted that Indian democracy has struggled for the past ten years but is improving. He also observed that 90% of India's population, including OBCs, Dalits, and Adivasis, are



IN INDIA, THE BJP SLAMMED RAHUL'S ADVERSE COMMENTS AND MEETING WITH ANTI-INDIA US CONGRESS WOMAN ILHAN OMAR. THE BJP CLAIMS THAT IT CAN BE USED FOR ANTI-INDIA PROPAGANDA

not able to take an active part in the democratic process. This has upset the BJP. While Rahul agreed with Modi's policies on Pakistan and Bangladesh, he felt Modi's China policy was flawed. Rahul pointed out, "We've got Chinese troops occupying land the size of Delhi in Ladakh. I think that's a disaster." The BJP fielded top leaders to refute Rahul's allegations, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh leading the response. He rubbished Rahul's claim on China policy. He observed it was "extremely shameful" that the LOP is hurting the dignity of India by saying "misleading, baseless and factless things." Another controversial subject was the caste census. Rahul Gandhi supported the caste census and claimed that BJP was trying to end the reservation. Union Minister Amit Shah quickly responded that they would not allow anyone to abolish reservations or undermine the nation's security. Countering his remarks about the status of Sikhs in India, Senior Minister Hardeep Puri said, "I am a proud Sikh. I have been wearing a turban for over six decades and a kada for even longer..." The BJP takes Rahul's statements seriously, given that he is the LOP. His increased stature after leading the Bharat

Jodo' yatra and the Leader of the Opposition cannot be wished away. In the 2024 elections, much to the dismay of the BJP, Congress doubled its number. Second, after the 2024 polls, the opposition coalition INDIA was strengthened. The BJP had to form the government with the help of allies. Third, Rahul visited the US before Modi's scheduled visit on September 22. His trip was well received, which did not please the BJP. But Modi would have a grand welcome at the official and the community levels. At the end of his visit, Rahul clarified, "The fight for democracy in India is an Indian fight. It has nothing to do with anybody else. It's our problem. And we'll take care of it. We will make sure that democracy is secure." This clarification prevented the idea that he was inviting a foreign power to resolve Indian problems. There is some merit in the BJP saying dirty linen should not be wasted abroad. On an earlier occasion, foreign minister S. Jaishankar said, "I don't think taking national politics out of the country is in the national interest." But this is good for both sides, and both should follow it. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MYANMAR: CHALLENGES FOR INDIA

Madam — Apropos of the well analysed article 'Myanmar Junta on the Blackfoot' (18th Sept), India faces multiple challenges in the existential crisis of the military junta in Myanmar for more than a decade. The worst crisis of refugee influx, the consequential fallout, unrest and instability in North Eastern states particularly Manipur and security threats from China along its North-eastern borders need top priority from security angle as diplomatic channels with the National League for Democracy or the Junta have not served our country's strategic interests. UNO does not appear and is no more an International Organisation capable of dealing with the crises in the countries having multiple stake holders. All its permanent members in Security Council have substantial stakes in all the wars and coups presently. The refugees crisis emanated from Myanmar is the most disturbing and destabilising factor for India. India is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. India has chosen not to sign the refugee conventions and protocol, and has historically cited national security interests and challenges to its sovereignty as key concerns. India, along with the governments of other South Asian countries, asserts that migration is a matter of bilateral and not multilateral relations, which should not be governed by international agreements. Sometimes it appears that refugee influx in India is a deliberate outcome of military coup in neighbouring countries. Peace and political stability in Myanmar appears a distant possibility and multiple stake holders namely China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar itself know the vulnerability of Indian borders and some strategic areas sandwiched between some of these countries. Therefore, for the time being till political normalcy is restored in Myanmar, military options should be prioritised over diplomatic adventures.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Atishi is the new Delhi CM



The selection of Atishi Marlena Singh as Delhi's new chief minister does not come as a surprise. Infact, any name as chief minister would not have turned heads because it is amply evident that the man holding all the aces, is still Arvind Kejriwal. Make no mistake, Kejriwal may have just returned from prison, but the clever former bureaucrat intends to turn the politically tricky situation into a massive support of strength. Since the Delhi assembly elections

are only a few months away, Kejriwal aims to divert the excise policy corruption issue by pitch-forking a party leader, with no real mass base, as the executive head of the state. However, Atishi's comparatively clean image, administrative experience and fighting spirit should come in handy for the AAP supremo who is sure to go the whole hog to retain power for the party in Delhi. That way, Kejriwal can intensify focus on the election campaign with little to answer on a "corrupt chief minister" holding on to his chair. Of course, the opposition will vociferously target the former chief minister who is perhaps the principal vote-getter for his party besides a handful of leaders like Manish Sisodia. The chief minister's seat will beckon Kejriwal if the party wins, and Atishi shall be relegated to the list of those chief ministers who held the post of chief minister for a few months.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

ONE HUNDRED DAYS OF MODI GOVT

Madam — For a government in power for the past 10 years now talking about its feats in 100 days is incorrect. It gives room for posing questions like why such actions were not done in the last 10 years and how just allocation of funds can be claimed as a feat and so on. If any assessment be made on the performance of the present government it should be for the period in power since 2014. Because nothing could be achieved in a short period of time like 100 days. In the case of the present government the claim on employment is not correct. Because it is only a matter of allocation of funds and announcement of a project. The working and success of the project needs to be assessed only after its completion. It is also to be noted that it is only a project to improve the skill and not a project to provide employment. Farmers' basic woes are not addressed and they continue to feel let down and the consumers also feel the same with the growing food inflation. Healthcare continues to be a commodity.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

TRAGEDIES AT GANESH VISARJAN

Madam — Ganesh immersion in the country turns tragic in several parts of India. Similar incidents have occurred throughout the country. While immersing an idol of Lord Ganesh, devotees got swept away by the river's powerful currents. Divers recovered his body afterwards but it was a sad end to a religious celebration. In another incident in Gujarat's Gandhinagar, eight people drowned while taking a dip in the Meshwo River. It is time for the people to exercise caution during religious events like Ganesh Visarjan. This tragic series of events serves as a reminder of the importance of safety precautions during religious ceremonies. It is crucial to take necessary measures to avoid such incidents in the future. Let us not take undue risks in the name of God and pay heavy price for that. Besides, there must be adequate security arrangements by the government to avoid such accidents.

Nikhil CK Maniam | Mumbai

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Ozone: The earth's protective shield but also a threat

Ozone is a paradoxical element — it shields life from harmful UV radiation in atmosphere but is also a big pollutant on the ground

People often think of two different things when they hear the word "ozone": on the one hand, an essential shield in the atmosphere that protects life on Earth from the Sun's dangerous ultraviolet radiation; on the other, a pollutant that causes health problems and damage to the environment. Ozone is indeed a double-edged sword because its effect on human life depends on where it is and how much of it there is.

The "good" ozone in the upper atmosphere is significant, but the "bad" ozone at ground level is very bad for people and the world. This dual nature needs immediate care, new ideas, and cooperation worldwide so that people can continue to live. Ozone creates the well-known ozone layer high in the stratosphere, between 10 and 30 miles (16-48 km) above the surface of the Earth. This protective layer absorbs the bulk of the Sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation UV-C and UV-B. Ecosystems would almost certainly be unable to survive as they do now without this natural shield, which exposes life on Earth to haz-



ardous radiation levels. Although life depends on the ozone layer in the stratosphere, ground-level ozone, found in the troposphere, is a hazardous contaminant. This ozone, created by sunlight-induced chemical interactions between nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), is mainly caused by human activity, including certain chemicals, industrial processes, and automobile emissions. This ozone will affect crop productivity and ecosystem dynamics. In the mid-20th century, scientists discovered that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were causing the systematic depletion of the ozone layer. In response to the pressing need, a global accord, the Montreal Protocol, was

adopted in 1987 to gradually eliminate the manufacturing of chemicals that cause the depletion of the ozone layer. The main objective of this accord was to eliminate progressively chemicals that cause erosion of the ozone layer, notably chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are extensively used in refrigeration, aerosols, and other industrial uses. India is also a signatory to this accord. Indian industries, especially those in the refrigeration, air-conditioning, and foam production sectors, were compelled to transition to ozone-friendly alternatives. The phasing out of CFCs initially led to the adoption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), but attention soon shifted toward more environmentally friendly solutions, such as natural refrigerants, hydrofluoroolefins (HFOs), with lower global warming potential. Since the implementation of the Montreal Protocol, global emissions of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) have dramatically decreased. The ozone layer has shown signs of recovery, particularly over Antarctica, where the famous

"ozone hole" is gradually closing. This recovery is essential for shielding the planet from harmful UV radiation. In addition, the phase-out of CFCs and other ODS has had a measurable impact on global temperature regulation. This is significant when considering the urgency of limiting temperature rise to avoid catastrophic climate impacts. The Protocol has become a symbol of what international cooperation can achieve if people unite and work together to protect the environment. The illegal production of CFCs and incomplete phase-outs in some regions could slow progress. While ozone protects life and poses risks, its dual nature demands vigilant global action. Striking the right balance between preserving the protective ozone layer and mitigating harmful ground-level ozone is essential for humanity's and the planet's health. We can ensure a safe future only through international cooperation and innovative solutions.

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



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

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FIRST COLUMN

EMBRACING DIVINE SHELTER

God can help us succeed in life but we must seek his shelter by adhering to dharma



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

What a wonderful prospect! Yes, it is possible, if we take shelter of God and remain in it. Because God is everything. (Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Geeta 7.19) For that, we have to be engaged in activities according to the instructions of God. And we will benefit in many ways. How else can one remain motivated to pursue the spiritual path? In this process, God is pleased but does not benefit personally in any way, because God is 'purna' (complete in all respects).

I will cite three examples and a few reasons to substantiate this. But I will begin with some of the benefits of taking shelter from God and remaining there. God's instructions promote 'dharma' (highest moral and religious principles). Because dharma is the bedrock upon which the Creation is based. God even incarnates when there is a decline in dharma. (4.7) Those, who follow dharma in their behavior are rewarded by God's Divine Authority.

This is done according to the 'Karmaphala Principle', which is: "What we sow we reap." If one pleases God by spiritual practices additionally, God gets personally involved in the life of His devotee. His very first act is to begin guiding. I am experiencing it. It is simple. I face a challenge /problem. I pray for guidance and help. God gives me intuitions. As the connection with God becomes stronger, God begins helping too. This is a quantum jump because God is omnipotent. Problems get solved and life can go on smoothly. (18.58) Sometimes, we face non-cooperation from others; God even changes the hearts of people. Further progress on the spiri-



tual path helps us to qualify for becoming 'nimitta' (instruments) of God, as Arjuna did in the Mahabharata. (11.33) God, as Karta, begins to micromanage the lives of His dear devotees. Reformations begin; because we must help ourselves. And credit for success must also come to us; God does not need it.

Only rarely did God intervene directly, as Lord Krishna did to protect Draupadi from getting humiliated; no one had come forward. Similarly, Lord Krishna had to protect His devotee and friend (4.3) Arjuna after he was about to enter the fire for not being able to kill Jayadratha before sunset, as vowed him.

Lord Krishna brought the sun back and Arjuna was able to kill Jayadratha before the sunset. In these two instances, though the Lord got credit, He did not gain anything, Draupadi and Arjuna gained. God has a plan for whoever takes His shelter. How did the Lord help Goswami Tulsi Das? His wife opened his eyes when she told him, "You will attain success in life if you become devoted to Shri Rama instead of to me." Because Tulsi Dasji was at the threshold of becoming great by writing epics like Ramacharitmanasa. The conclusion is: get linked with God urgently.

There is so much to gain from God, who has plenty to give. Isn't God the owner of everything? God is self-sufficient. He creates without any help from anyone. God never gets attached to anyone. If He did, God would become dependent on others to do what He must to keep the Creation going.

I am gaining everything desirable. I could not have imagined what God can and does for me. The quality of my life is steadily improving. Please get started on the spiritual journey; you will never look back.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views expressed are personal)

Reclaim water bodies to ward off water crisis



SRIRAJ KOTA

India's lakes and wetlands, once lifeline for its cities, are vanishing at an alarming rate, driven by rampant corruption and unchecked construction



Urban lakes and wetlands are an integral part of our ecosystem. They perform critical environmental, social, and economic functions as they are a source of drinking water, recharge groundwater and support biodiversity besides providing livelihoods. But the life of these indispensable water bodies is ebbing under the relentless onslaught of population, corrupt administrations, and construction mafia. A study by Wetlands International has shown that two out of every five wetlands in India have been lost in the last 30 years, and of the remaining water bodies 40% are unable to support aquatic life due to loss of water quality. But this plunder of water bodies of India did not happen overnight but over some time.

Take the case of Bengaluru for instance. In the late 18th century, a British expedition tasked by Governor General Cornwallis to find an alternative route between Madras and Srirangapatna stumbled upon Bengaluru which was full of lakes and water bodies.

The captain heading the expedition thereafter referred to it as the Land of Thousand Lakes in his reports. However, today Bengaluru is a pale version of its once illustrious past. In 1960 Bengaluru had 262 lakes but today only 10 of them hold water.

The city saw a shocking decline in its water bodies as exploitation and population grew in equal measure. Lakes and water bodies are disappearing at an alarming pace at the city level and state level as well. According to the Union Jal Shakti Ministry report, Karnataka lost an astounding 13,000 water bodies in just one year between 2021 and 2022.

This is the case with every city in India. Ahmedabad for instance had 137 lakes in 2001 but as per recent reports, construction has been seen on 65 of them now. The national capital Delhi too is being robbed of its water bodies. According to a Delhi government report, nearly half



TODAY BENGALURU IS A PALE VERSION OF ITS ONCE ILLUSTRIOUS PAST. IN 1960 BENGALURU HAD 262 LAKES BUT TODAY ONLY 10 OF THEM HOLD WATER

(49.1%) of Delhi's official water bodies do not exist anymore – they have either gone "missing" or have been encroached upon.

The entire nation more or less presents the same depressing scenario. But recently a state government sat up, took notice, and acted. The Telangana state government's Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) initiative to reclaim encroached land of water bodies in Hyderabad and surrounding areas has made national headlines. The HYDRAA team created in July this year and headed by an IPS officer was given a clear-cut mandate by the state chief minister Revanth Reddy to free the city water bodies of illegal encroachments and construction.

The Full Tank Level (FTL) was kept as the parameter by HYDRAA and any construction or encroachment within 30 meters of FTL was made subject to demolition. The agency has been given a free hand and made immune to political pressures with zero tolerance being practiced even if the encroachment belongs to prominent politicians or businesspeople of the city. Notably, even the chief minister's brother was served notice for demolition.

This drive conducted diligently and without bowing to any pressure was able to remove 262 unauthorised encroachments built-in water bodies, government lands, urban canals and parks in 23 locations in the city have been removed and 111.72 acres of land have been reclaimed to date. The state government has issued further instructions making it compulsory to take

HYDRAA NOC before commencing any construction near lakes.

The actions of HYDRAA have instilled a sense of confidence among the environmentalists not only in Telangana but also across India and are being seen as a case study in governance especially about safeguarding environmental assets such as water bodies. But as is expected with any groundbreaking initiative, the step taken by the Telangana government too has off late been soundly criticised for being inhuman due to the demolishing of houses of the poor and those who were paying loans for the same. Given this adverse feedback, the state government has issued clarifications to the effect that occupied houses will not be demolished.

The HYDRAA initiative is an example and a clarion call for the rest of the nation to wake up rescue and reclaim its water bodies. This is crucial in light of reports released by the United Nations and Niti Ayog which state that water demand will reach twice the available supply, and 40 per cent of India's population will not have access to clean drinking water by 2030. To prevent a grim and parched future, the central government in collaboration with state government and local environmental groups must establish a Wetland Task Force for every state.

The state-specific task force must have a clear mandate to reclaim every water body in its jurisdiction by clearing out encroachments, demolishing illegal construction and preventing changes in land use. Apart from enforcement duty, the task force must also have an enabling role that is

focused on replenishing and rejuvenating the wetlands and water bodies in its jurisdiction. For instance, the task force can encourage urban households and businesses to implement rainwater harvesting practices on their premises. The water harvested can be channelled towards improving the groundwater table and recharging the aquifers. Additionally, the government can, through the task force regulate the borewells in the urban areas. Indiscriminate and unregulated drilling for water in metropolitan areas has caused the drying up of the groundwater table. The task force team can save the city's water resources by ensuring that prior permissions are taken to drill borewells.

Furthermore, the task force team can install water meters to ensure that water extraction is done in a measured and quantified manner. Currently, there have been many instances where local leaders, with political affiliations "adopt" lakes and water bodies in the name of preserving them and slowly encroach the property.

After that, in connivance with builder mafia construction is done on the property which is then sold to unsuspecting citizens. The wetland task force can prevent this and play a pivotal role in ensuring that no individual or commercial company is entrusted with safeguarding the lakes and water bodies as this can result in manipulation.

Water bodies are India's lifelines. Reclaiming the lost ones and preserving the remaining can alone ensure a water secure future for our nation.

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

India's untapped ocean energy: A blueprint for powering the future

India's 8,000 km coastline holds the potential to generate a staggering 9.2 lakh TWh of clean energy annually

The 8000 km long Indian coastline has the potential to generate 9.2 lakh Trillion Watts hour per annum (TWh/annum) electricity, which is a manifold of what is generated as of date. This is at a time when India is struggling to meet its requirement of 4.5 Lakh MW power utilizing all sources of energy production.

According to Ocean Energy Atlas prepared by Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), a premier research and development organization under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are the nation's



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Akshayapatra of energy. "The Exclusive Economic Zone lying within the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal has oceanic energy potential of 9.2 lakh TWh/annum. This is the first time in the history of India the oceanic energy potential has been assessed and an atlas of this kind has been prepared," Dr T M Balakrishnan Nair, Group Director and lead sci-

entist, INCOIS, told The Pioneer. A bouquet of offshore renewable, offshore solar, offshore wind, wave, tidal, ocean thermal energy conversion, and salinity gradient represent the hitherto untapped potential of renewables. India's Ocean Energy Atlas has been released following the International Renewable Energy Agency's finding that the G-20 countries collectively account for 81 per cent of total renewable energy and about 100 per cent of ocean energy.

India's offshore wind energy remains untapped even as countries like Denmark, Britain and China have made giant strides in this sector. Dr Nair says there is wide scope to set up renewable energy power stations to tap salini-

ty gradients. Dr. T. Srinivasa Kumar, director, of INCOIS, said that the atlas would serve as a key resource for guiding policy and investment decisions in the energy sector.

An important element in this form of energy generation is that there would not be any kind of apprehension in the minds of the people about land acquisition, pollution and discharge of effluents. "This is the cleanest form of energy and many public and private sector enterprises have shown their interest in setting up renewable energy units," said M Ravichandran, secretary, ministry of earth sciences, Govt of India. INCOIS is playing a major role in the country's blue



economy sector by providing information to fishers about potential fishing zones and sharp weather forecasts. Dr Srinivasa Kumar and his team have developed a state-of-the-art tsunami warning system with which they alert countries along the rim of the Indian Ocean. Since its inception in 1999, INCOIS has been contributing to India's blue economy through its flagship pro-

grams like Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ), Ocean State Forecasts (OSF) and Tsunami Early Warning Services (TEW). INCOIS has also been the national and regional warehouse for oceanographic data spanning in-situ platforms, satellite sensors, and model-simulated products.

Taking advantage of the availability of such long-term scientific datasets, INCOIS has taken up the challenge of estimating the ocean energy potential from the Indian EEZ and prepared an Atlas for the first time in the country. The satellite data collected through hi-tech sensors about the regions where there are good catches are disseminated to fishers and this has made the job of fishermen

quite easy. All they have to do is rush to the areas identified as fishing zones by the INCOIS scientists. The Integrated Ocean Energy Atlas prepared by Team INCOIS is the first of its kind in the world.

Ocean energy assumes significance as scientific reports are galore about the fluctuations in solar power generation capabilities because of climate change. G M Pillai, director general, of the World Institute of Sustainable Energy (WISE), Pune, says that as of this date, solar power output is not encouraging because of changes in rain patterns. "The Rajasthan deserts could have been the powerhouse of states like Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat but the solar power

potential has come down and the deserts are becoming evergreen garden," said Pillai. The thorium-based nuclear reactor is yet to take off and the picture from nuclear power reactors is dismal. There was a time when former directors of the Indira Gandhi Center for Atomic Research (IGCAR) at Kalpakkam had claimed that India was the world leader in Fast Breeder Reactor technology, it all ended up as chest beating. The only hope is integrated ocean energy. India has a vast coastline of nearly 8000 km and this could offer a permanent solution to our energy needs.

(The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer; views expressed are personal)

'Exploding pagers were manufactured in Hungary'

AP ■ TAIPEI

A company based in Hungary was responsible for manufacturing the pagers that exploded in Lebanon and Syria in an apparent Israeli operation targeting Hezbollah's communications network, another firm whose brand was used on the devices said Wednesday. Pagers used by the militant group Hezbollah exploded near-simultaneously a day earlier in Lebanon and Syria, killing at least 12 people, including two children, and wounding nearly 3,000. Hezbollah and the Lebanese government blamed Israel for what appeared to be a sophisticated remote attack. An American official said Israel briefed the United States on Tuesday after the attack, in which small amounts of explosive hidden in the pagers were detonated. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the information publicly. Hezbollah and Israeli forces have exchanged fire nearly daily since Oct 8, the day after a deadly Hamas-led attack in southern Israel triggered a massive Israeli counteroffensive and the ongoing war in Gaza. Since then, hundreds have been killed in the strikes in Lebanon

and dozens in Israel, while tens of thousands on each side of the border have been displaced. Tuesday's attack — and the fact that Hezbollah blamed Israel — renewed fears that the two foes could lead to all-out war. Despite periodic cycles of escalation, the two have carefully avoided that so far, but Israeli leaders have issued a series of warnings in recent weeks that they might escalate operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon. The AR-924 pagers used the attack were manufactured by BAC Consulting KFT, based in the Hungarian capital of Budapest, according to a statement released by Gold Apollo, a Taiwanese firm that authorized the use of its brand on the pagers. BAC appeared to be a shell company. "According to the cooperation agreement, we authorise BAC to use our brand trademark for product sales in designated regions, but the design and manufacturing of the products are solely the responsibility of BAC," Gold Apollo said in a statement. The company's chair, Hsu Ching-kuang, told journalists Wednesday that the firm has had a licensing agreement with BAC for the past three years. BAC Consulting

Kft, a limited liability company, was registered in May 2022, according to company records. It has 7,840 euros in standing capital, the records showed, and had revenue of \$725,768 in 2022 and \$593,972 in 2023. At the headquarters in a building in a residential neighbourhood of Budapest, Associated Press journalists saw the names of multiple companies, including BAC Consulting, posted on pieces of paper on a window. A woman who emerged from the building and declined to give her name, said the site provides headquarter addresses to various companies. BAC is registered to Cristiana Rosaria Bársony-Arcidiacono, who on her LinkedIn page describes herself as a strategic advisor and business developer. Among other positions, Bársony-Arcidiacono says on the page that she has served on the board of directors of the Earth Child Institute, a sustainability group. The group does not list Bársony-Arcidiacono as among its board members on its website. The AP has attempted to reach Bársony-Arcidiacono via her LinkedIn page and has been unable to establish a connection between her or BAC and the exploding pagers. The attack in Lebanon started Tuesday afternoon,

when pagers in their owners' hands or pockets started heating up and then exploding — leaving blood-spattered scenes and panicking bystanders. It appeared that most of those hit were members or linked to members of Hezbollah — whether fighters or civilians — but it was not immediately clear if people with no ties to Hezbollah were also hit. Hezbollah said in a statement Wednesday morning that it would continue its normal strikes against Israel as part of what it describes as a support front for its ally, Hamas, and Palestinians in Gaza. "This path is continuous and separate from the difficult reckoning that the criminal enemy must await for its massacre on Tuesday," it said. "This is another reckoning that will come, God willing." At hospitals in Beirut on Wednesday, the chaos of the night before had largely subsided, but relatives of the wounded continued to wait. Lebanon Health Minister Firas Abiad told journalists during a tour on hospitals Wednesday morning that many of the wounded had severe injuries to the eyes, and others had limbs amputated. Journalists were not allowed to enter hospital rooms or film patients.

China sanctions US firms selling arms to Taiwan

Beijing (AP): China on Wednesday announced sanctions on American companies selling arms to the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory and threatens to annex by force. Chinese state media made the announcement, citing the Foreign Ministry, but gave no details on the companies involved. Taiwan is awaiting deliveries of F-16 fighter jets, Abrams tanks and a range of missiles from the US. China has been upping its threats to attack Taiwan, whose 2.3 million citizens overwhelmingly favour their current status of de-facto independence. Despite their lack of formal diplomatic ties, the US has long been a key provider of armaments and is legally bound to ensure the island can defend itself. Along with buying weapons from the US, Taiwan has also been reviving its domestic arms industry. A fleet of submarines is underway, while mandatory military service for men has been extended to one year. China has previously demanded US companies end cooperation with Taiwan's armed forces, with no apparent effect.

Portugal declares calamity as wildfires spread

AP ■ LISBON

More than 100 wildfires stretched thousands of firefighters to the limit in northern Portugal on Wednesday, with seven deaths since the worst spate of fires in recent years spread out of control over the weekend. Portuguese Prime Minister Luís Montenegro declared a state of calamity for the hardest-hit areas late on Tuesday, invoking powers to mobilise more firefighters and civil servants. He also called on police investigators to redouble their efforts to find those who started the fires and pledged help for those who have lost their homes or have been evacuated. "We are well aware that these difficult hours are not over yet," Montenegro told the nation in a televised address. "We have to continue to give everything we have and ask for help from our partners and friends so that we can reinforce the protection of our people and property." The hot, dry conditions behind the outbreaks in Portugal coincided this week with flooding in central Europe. The European Union said Wednesday that the juxtaposed extreme weather phenomena are proof of a "climate breakdown." Fellow European Union members Spain, France, Italy and Greece have committed two water-dropping aircraft each to



help Portuguese firefighters. Spain's military is also sending 240 soldiers and vehicles from its emergency response battalions specialised in combating fires across the border to its neighbour. Montenegro made a special call for security forces to pursue both arsonists and any individuals who started a fire out of negligence. Portuguese national police said that they have arrested seven men suspected of having started wildfires in recent days. Authorities have prohibited the use of heavy farming equipment to reduce the risk of inadvertently starting a blaze. Among the hardest hit areas is the district of Aveiro, south of the northern city of Porto, but several major blazes were also raging out of control in other wooded areas. Authorities have yet to release figures for property damage or the number of

evacuees, but Portuguese state broadcaster RTP has shown charred houses in rural villages and local residents trying to battle flames with buckets of water, hoses, and even large tree branches. Other televised images showed visibility reduced to a few metres as orange smoke enveloped the terrain. Three firefighters died in their vehicle on Tuesday, while another had succumbed to what authorities called a "sudden illness" while on duty over the weekend. Three civilians have also perished, according to civil protection authorities. Portugal was devastated by massive fires in 2017 that killed over 120 people. Experts link the fires to both climate change and the abandonment of traditional farming and forestry professions that helped keep rural areas clear of underbrush that is now fuel for fires.



Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris is greeted as she during an unscheduled stop to make remarks at Community College of Philadelphia, Tuesday in Philadelphia. AP/PTI

Donald Trump calls Modi 'fantastic'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON/ NEW YORK

Former president Donald Trump has said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet him next week during his upcoming three-day visit to the US. While the Republican presidential candidate slammed India as an "abuser" on the issue of import tariffs, he described Modi as a "fantastic man". PM Modi will be visiting the US from September 21 to 23. Speaking on Tuesday at his first public appearance following the recent apparent assassination attempt, Trump said Modi will meet him next week when he is in the US. "So when India, which is a very big abuser. He (Modi) happens to be coming to meet me next week, and Modi, he's fantastic. I mean, fantastic man. A lot of these leaders are fantastic," Trump said, reiterating that India imposes heavy tariffs on imports.

The former president revealed the information as he spoke about trade and tariffs while responding to a question at a town hall meeting in Flint, Michigan. He went on to say, "These people are the sharpest people. They're not a little bit backwards... You know the expression, they're at the top of their game, and they use it against us. But India is very tough. Brazil is very tough... China is the toughest of all, but we were taking care of China with the tariffs." "So we're going to do a reciprocal trade. If anybody charges us 10 cents, if they charge us USD 2, if they charge us a hundred per cent, 250, we charge them the same thing. And what's going to happen? Everything's going to disappear, and we're going to end up having free trade again. And if it doesn't disappear, we're going to take in a lot of money," he said. In New Delhi, when asked about Trump's comment, the Ministry of External Affairs did not respond. Modi will begin his trip with the Quad Leaders' Summit being hosted by President Joe Biden in Wilmington, Delaware.

Secret Service again faces scrutiny after another gunman targets Trump

AP ■ WASHINGTON

For the second time in more than two months, the Secret Service that protects the highest echelon of American leaders is under scrutiny - this time after a gunman hid in the shrubs along the fence of former President Donald Trump's golf course for 12 hours. The man didn't get a shot off, but critics question how he could be just several hundred yards away from Trump - especially after the Republican presidential candidate's security was beefed up after his near-death experience in July. Biden administration officials praised the agency's response, and former Secret Service agents say there are key differences between what unfolded Sunday and the security lapses at an outdoor rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, in which a gunman climbed onto an unsecured roof nearby and opened fire, clipping Trump's ear and leaving a spectator dead. Authorities say Ryan Wesley Routh camped with food and a rifle just outside the 27-hole Trump International Golf Course in West Palm Beach, Florida, where the former president was playing Sunday. A Secret Service agent ahead of Trump spotted the rifle's muzzle poking through the fence and opened fire. Routh fled and was later apprehended. It's long been known to law enforcement that places along the edge of the property leave Trump visible to those behind the fence, and some have questioned why it was not protected. But a sprawling golf course poses specific challenges, especially for a last-minute round, even with Trump's bolstered security, former Secret Service agents say. "A 400-acre golf course with miles of fence line is breachable. And the systems put in place to mitigate those threats worked. That's not to say they couldn't do more. But there are limits to what

Ex-US Pres holds first event post-assassination attempt; Harris gives rare interview

Flint (AP): Former President Donald Trump on Tuesday made his first public appearance since Sunday's second apparent assassination attempt against him with an overflow crowd chanting "God bless Trump!" and "Fight, Fight, Fight" as US Secret Service agents surrounded the stage to protect the Republican presidential nominee. "It's been a great experience," Trump said in an evening town hall in Flint, Michigan, about holding events with thousands of supporters. But he also went on to call running for president "a dangerous business" akin to car racing or bull riding. "Only consequential presidents get shot at," he said. Earlier in the day, Vice President Kamala Harris struck a measured tone, even steering clear of mentioning Trump by name in an interview with Black journalists that starkly contrasted with the former president's own highly contentious appearance before the same group. The two candidates briefly put their differences aside in a phone call Trump described as "very, very nice" even as crowds booed when he mentioned Harris by her first name. "It was very, very nice, and we appreciate that," Trump told his supporters. Harris said earlier in the day that she told Trump "there's no place for political violence in our country." Both sides are ramping up campaigning with no changes to Trump's calendar despite the apparent assassination attempt at one of his Florida golf courses, which has renewed accusations by Republicans that Democrats' criticism against Trump is inspiring violent attacks. Democrats have accused Trump in the past for his long history of inflammatory campaign rhetoric and advocacy for jailing or prosecuting his political enemies.

is possible," said Paul Eckloff, a retired Secret Service agent who served on details protecting three presidents during his 23-year career. The Secret Service is trying to protect a growing number of high-profile people, from presidents to visiting dignitaries, in a vitriolic political environment. President Joe Biden and some Republicans are pressing for more resources for the agency still facing several investigations and whose director resigned after the first attempt on Trump's life. Acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe Jr. said Sunday's golf game was not on a formal

schedule or advertised ahead of time. That means agents may find out about it the day before or even minutes before it happens. Rowe emphasized that the gunman never had a line of sight on the former president and that security worked as it should. He said the edge of the property wasn't monitored ahead of time because Trump "wasn't supposed to have gone there in the first place." Rowe described how agents spread out in front of and behind Trump, looking for threats. Trump and his campaign have routinely praised the agents pro-

tecting him while expressing concerns about the agency more broadly, including that his detail isn't large enough given the threat level. But some have raised questions. During an interview Monday on Sean Hannity's Fox News show, Trump's son Eric questioned how the gunman was able to stay in that location for so long without being detected. "Those agents on the ground, they are remarkable," he said. "But there is a breakdown." Rowe a day earlier said, "The agent's hypervigilance and the details swift action was textbook." It's not possible for the Secret Service to shut down all traffic around the golf course, said Eckloff, who protected Trump while he was president, including at two of his golf courses in Florida. This course is in the middle of the city and taking such a step would have huge effects on residents. Trump loves to golf and owns three courses in Florida. Trump International is closest to his Mar-a-Lago home and is a place he likes to go with friends. While Trump was president, news photographers were often able to capture images of him on the green by finding gaps in the shrubbery. Security around Trump was dramatically beefed up after the July shooting. Trump now speaks from behind a bulletproof glass enclosure at outdoor rallies, and long guns are often spotted near locations where he's staying. The agency doesn't release specific information about his protection but Secret Service spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said Trump's detail now includes countersurveillance, a counter-sniper and counterassault resources. Before the Pennsylvania shooting, some of those assets were used depending on the event but now they're permanently part of his detail, Guglielmi said.

Trudeau: More work to do, after by-election loss

AP ■ VANCOUVER

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Tuesday he's focused on the work ahead after the ruling Liberals lost in another by-election, raising more questions about his ability to lead the party into the next federal election. For the second time in recent months the Liberals lost in a former stronghold when the Bloc Quebecois won the vote in the electoral district of LaSalle-Emard-Verdun Monday in Montreal in a tight three-way race with the New Democratic Party. "Obviously it would have been nicer to be able to win... but there's more work to do," Trudeau said in Ottawa.

"The big thing is to make sure that Canadians understand the choice they get to make in the next election," Trudeau said. "That's the work we're going to continue to do." Election Canada results show the Bloc candidate Louis-Philippe Sauve finished with 28% of the vote. Liberals' candidate Laura Palestini collected 27.2% and finished just 248 votes behind the winner. The NDP collected 26.1% and was about 600 votes behind the winner. It's the second time in three months that Trudeau's party has lost a by-election in a riding they held for years. In June, the Conservatives narrowly defeated the Liberals in Toronto-St. Paul's.

The Liberals won every seat in Toronto and almost every seat on the Island of Montreal in the last election. Monday's loss "is a major blow for the Liberals," said Daniel Beland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal. "This is a riding we would expect them to win under normal circumstances," Beland said in an email. "Not only did this not happen, they lost by nearly 16 percentage points in popular votes compared to their score in the riding back in 2021, when they had easily won there." Andrew Perez, a longtime Liberal supporter and strategist, posted on social media that the loss is "yet another nail

in Justin Trudeau's coffin." "If Trudeau's Liberals can't hold this safe seat, it will spell even bigger trouble for the party's prospects in Quebec and across Canada in a critical election year," Perez said in a statement before the final vote. Beland doesn't believe Trudeau will step down as party leader before the next election, which is scheduled for next fall. "Some Liberals might try to convince him to step down but it's not sure at all he would," said Beland. Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne was asked Tuesday if Trudeau should remain as prime minister. Champagne said there is "concern, there's anxiety" among Canadian voters. "They're

ready for a positive vision of the country," he said. "I think if there's someone who can really inspire Canadians, it's Justin Trudeau. Most polls show the federal Conservatives well ahead of the Liberals. Trudeau is also very unpopular with many Canadians. The NDP recently ended its supply and confidence agreement with the Liberals that helped keep the minority government in power. That led to speculation there could be an early federal election. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has said his priority is to put forward a non-confidence motion "at the earliest possible opportunity" in hopes of bringing down the Liberal government.

Dutch govt, led by hard right, seeks to opt out from EU migration rules

Brussels (AP): The new Dutch government dominated by the far-right party of Geert Wilders officially asked the European Commission for an exemption from its migration obligations on Wednesday, seeking to fulfil a campaign promise to drastically reduce the number of immigrants in the nation. Dutch Migration Minister Marjolein Faber of Wilders' party wrote to the European Commission that the Netherlands wants out of regulations for accepting refugees. "I have just informed the EU Commission that I want a migration opt-out within Europe for the Netherlands. We need to be in charge of our own

asylum policy again!" Faber wrote in a letter Ylva Johansson, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, posted on social media. On Tuesday, the government, which came to power in July, announced its policy blueprint for the coming year, including stricter policies to hold back or kick out migrants who don't qualify for asylum. The announcement came just a day after party leaders were publicly bickering over their plans, underscoring divisions within the four-party governing coalition. Even before the plan was made public, the European Commission warned the Dutch government that its

approach wouldn't work. "We have adopted legislation. It's adopted. You don't opt out of adopted legislation in the EU," spokesman Eric Mamer said last Friday. Earlier this week, the Dutch refugee settlement agency COA announced it was expecting a shortage of beds at the overcrowded asylum centre in the tiny village of Ter Apel in the northeastern Netherlands. The government is planning to declare an "asylum crisis" to pave the way for tougher measures, including reining in visas for family members of people granted asylum and making it easier and quicker to deport migrants.

Imran's crime enough to keep him jailed: Khawaja Asif

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Imran Khan's crimes alone are enough to keep him behind bars, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said, as he dismissed the former prime minister's accusation that the government was pushing to amend the constitution to keep him in prison.

Khan, 71, has been in jail since August last year after being convicted in some of the nearly 200 cases slapped on him since his ouster in April 2022.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder on Monday rejected the anticipated constitutional changes, claiming that it was an effort to keep him in prison by controlling the judiciary.

Responding to the allegation, Asif on Tuesday said, "Given PTI founder's long list of crimes, constitutional amendments won't be necessary."

"The incarcerated former premier wants to attach himself not just to constitutional amendments but to everything (that's happening) in Pakistan as he considers himself the centre of everything,"

Geo News quoted Asif as saying.

Khan should reflect on what chaos he created in the last four years, he said, adding there was an attempted rebellion against the state on May 9 last year.

Khan is facing several cases in connection with the May 9 violence in which supporters of his party allegedly attacked military installations following his arrest.

Asif said, "Since the PTI founder has been in custody, he has repeatedly — like three to four thousand times — said that he will talk to the establishment."

He also rejected the opposition parties' allegations of keeping the constitutional amendments under wraps, saying that the draft legislation was "a public document whose contents are not a secret". Despite Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government's failure to get the required number to pass the amendments which led to the indefinite postponement of its tabling on Monday, Asif was optimistic about the passage of new legislation through the parliament, come

what may.

Defending the coalition government's move to make judiciary-centric constitutional amendments, Asif said that the changes are aimed at maintaining a balance of power among institutions, not just at ensuring accountability. Claiming that the PTI was willing to support the constitutional package, he said that "the former ruling party has requested the government to postpone the amendment until December."

In response to Asif's statement, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said: "Neither have we been involved in any discussions with Asif, nor has PTI assured support for the government's constitutional amendments until December," he said. He categorically rejected Asif's claims, asserting that any statement about PTI's approval would be false, as the "draft, suggestion, or package has not yet been disclosed."

HC BARS COURT FROM ISSUING VERDICT AGAINST IMRAN, WIFE

A Pakistani high court on Wednesday restrained a trial court from delivering its verdict in a case of alleged corruption against former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi. The move comes after Khan and his wife petitioned the Islamabad High Court to stay the proceedings of the Al-Qadir Trust case and acquit them. An anti-corruption court has been hearing the Al-Qadir Trust case against the former first couple which is based on the charges that Khan caused a loss of over Rs 50 billion to the national exchequer.

During the hearing, a two-member bench headed by Chief Justice Amir Farooq rejected the plea to stay the legal proceedings against Khan and his wife. However, in a relief to them, the High Court restrained the accountability court hearing the case from delivering its final verdict. The lawyers of the accused had taken a position in the court that after the amendments in the anti-corruption laws, the case of alleged corruption against the former prime minister and his wife did not arise. They argued that the approval of the federal cabinet was taken

in this matter and this is clear in the new amendments that the National Accountability Bureau cannot investigate the decisions made in the federal cabinet. The lawyers of Khan and Bibi said that they should be acquitted from the case on which the court has issued notices to the parties made in these petitions. The trial of the case is currently in progress and so far statements of 35 witnesses have been recorded in the case and only the investigating officer has to be cross-examined by the accused's lawyers. The case is based on a probe by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) into the Al-Qadir University Trust in March 2023. It accused that Khan and his wife acquired substantial sums of money and large tracts of land for real estate tycoon, Malik Riaz Hussain of Bahria Town, in exchange for Rs 50 billion. The amount had been paid as part of a settlement with the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) and was subsequently adjusted against a fine imposed on Riaz by the Supreme Court.

Bangladesh's interim govt gives Army magisterial powers

AP ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government has granted magisterial powers to the Army for two months to improve law and order in the violence-hit country and prevent "subversive acts".

The Ministry of Public Administration issued a notification on the government's decision on Tuesday, saying it will be applicable with immediate effect.

The powers will be given to commissioned officers of the Army. The order will remain in force for the next 60 days.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd.) Md. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said on Wednesday that the people will get the benefit of bestowing magistracy power upon the army, state-owned BSS news agency reported.

"Police officials who are yet to join the services, won't be allowed to join anymore," he said, adding that the "people of Bangla (Bangladesh) will reap the benefit of bestowing the magistracy power upon the commissioned officers of Bangladesh Army." Responding to questions from the media after the closing ceremony of the basic training for 40th BCS

(Ansar) officers and 25th batch sepoy recruits at the Bangladesh Ansar and VDP Academy in Safipur, Chowdhury said, "The Army has been given the magistracy power to ensure public service and maintain the law and order." He said that the law enforcement agencies lack manpower and the magistracy power has been given to the Army to fill up the gap.

"Bangladesh Army is a disciplined and people-friendly force. The commoners have no problem communicating with them as well as taking help from them," he said in response to another question. Section 17 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, or CrPC, which awards Army officers the status of special executive magistrates, says these officers shall be subordinate to the district magistrates, or deputy commissioners, bdnews24.com reported. This authority including arrest and dispersal of unlawful rallies has been conferred upon commissioned officers of the Army.

In self-defence and extreme need, the officer can open fire, said an adviser to the interim government on Tuesday, The Daily Star newspaper reported. "We are witnessing subversive

acts and disrupted stability in several places, especially in the industrial areas across the country. Given the situation, Army personnel have been given magistracy power," Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said. He added that he believed the army personnel would not misuse this authority.

Another adviser, requesting anonymity, said, "Police are yet to be properly functional. Subversive activities are taking place..." Many police personnel in Bangladesh have been absent on the streets since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5 amid a mass uprising.

Before and immediately after the ouster of Hasina, police faced unprecedented public fury as mobs set fire to their vehicles and properties and ransacked police facilities in reprisal for the law enforcers' use of excessive force on demonstrators. Following the attacks, Bangladesh Police Subordinate Employees Association announced an indefinite strike on August 6. The strike was withdrawn on August 10, following a series of meetings with the then adviser to the home ministry Brig Gen (retd.) M Sakhawat Hussain.

Chinese aircraft carrier comes closer than ever to Japan

Tokyo (AP): A Chinese aircraft carrier entered Japan's contiguous waters for the first time on Wednesday, leading Tokyo to convey its "serious concerns" to Beijing over China's increasingly assertive military actions around Japan, officials said.

The Chinese carrier Liaoning, accompanied by two destroyers, sailed between Japan's westernmost island of Yonaguni and nearby Iriomote, entering the country's so-called "contiguous zone," the Defense Ministry said. That's an area of sea beyond a country's territorial waters in which it can still exercise some control over maritime traffic, reaching up to 24 nautical miles offshore. The Liaoning's transit was part of a fleet movement Tuesday and Wednesday, during which Chinese warships also passed off the western

coast of the disputed Japanese-controlled islets it calls the Senkakus, the ministry said. China claims the same islets, calling them the Diaoyus. Japan's Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshi Moriya told reporters that "the latest incident is absolutely unacceptable from the perspective of the national and regional security." Last month, Japan said that a Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance airplane violated Japanese airspace. Days later, a Chinese survey ship breached the Japanese territorial water just off the southern prefecture of Kagoshima. Moriya said the Japanese government expressed "our serious concerns" to China through diplomatic channels on Wednesday. "China has increasingly expanded and intensified military activities around Japan in recent years," Moriya said.

Russia's Dy PM Overchuk in Pakistan on two-day visit

Islamabad (PTI): Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Overchuk on Wednesday arrived in Islamabad on a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with Pakistan's top leadership and discuss ways to enhance bilateral ties. According to the Foreign Office, a high-level delegation is also accompanying the Deputy Prime Minister during the visit on September 18-19. It said that Overchuk will hold meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. The discussions will centre on boosting cooperation in various critical sectors, reflecting the growing trust and goodwill between the two nations. "Pakistan and Russia enjoy cordial relations based on goodwill, amity and trust, which is reflected in the multi-faceted bilateral cooperation including in trade, energy and connectivity," FO said.

Maldives' ruling party team embarks on China visit

Male (PTI): A delegation of the Maldives' ruling party on Wednesday embarked on an eight-day visit to China to seek the strategies utilised by the communist state to achieve its current economic development and enhance bilateral ties. The team from the People's National Congress (PNC) is visiting on the invitation of the Chinese ruling party, the Communist Party of China (CPC), state-run Public Service Media (PSM News) said. The PNC team, which will be led by Transport and Civil Aviation Minister Mohamed Ameen and includes ministers, MPs and officials of the President's Office, will meet Liu Jianchao, China's Minister of International Department of the CPC.

Ever since President Mohammad Muizzu assumed charge in November last year, China has increased its stake in the archipelagic nation. Muizzu himself visited China in January going against the precedent of Maldives president making India as the first

port of call. "PNC revealed that the primary objective of the trip is to seek the strategies utilised by China, to achieve its current economic development, all while enhancing the bilateral ties between the two countries," the PSM News said. The team will visit five Chinese cities and hold talks with senior officials of CPC and will observe the developmental works of the cities. PNC's secretary general Zeenad Adnan and Mohamed Firzul, Under Secretary for Public Policy at the Presidential Office are also part of the delegation that has over a dozen members.



A supermoon rises behind a horse statue atop of Triumphal Arc during a partial lunar eclipse in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, AP/PTI

SL's bankruptcy officially to end today, says President Wickremesinghe

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday said that the island nation's bankruptcy is officially due to end on Thursday, remarks aimed at boosting his re-election chances on the last day of the presidential election campaign.

A discussion between the government and international sovereign bondholders would take place on Thursday following which Sri Lanka's bankruptcy will officially end and support from all countries will be restored, he said while addressing a rally at Matara, a southern town. "We have given light to the country which was in darkness, eradicated the hunger of the people and restored our beloved motherland... So give me your valuable vote," he said in a post on X. As many as 38 candidates have been contesting the election, with over 17.1 million registered voters eligible to elect a president for five years. The campaigning for the

election would end tonight and no election propaganda work would be permitted from midnight in terms of election laws. The Election Commission has said that this would mark the beginning of a silent period that will last until the election day on September 21.

All candidates are having a series of rallies in different parts of the island leading to the grand finale of campaigning. Wickremesinghe is entangled in a three-way contest with his main challengers Marxist JVP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake and main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, putting up impressive shows. Speaking at a campaign rally, Premadasa pledged to bring those responsible for the Easter Sunday attacks to justice, if elected. "We are committed to finding the truth about the Easter attacks. Not only the masterminds but all the individuals and groups involved in the Easter attack will be brought to justice," said

Premadasa, the presidential candidate of Samagi Jana Balavegaya (SJB). He assured the bishops' conference, led by Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, that his government would impose the maximum punishment on those responsible. Premadasa criticized the spread of misinformation for political gain, particularly during the election period. He condemned the use of "dirty politics" and urged the public not to be misled by false accusations.

Wickremesinghe became the crisis prime minister in May and when a popular uprising ousted the incumbent Gotabaya Rajapaksa he became the president for Rajapaksa's balance term in July 2022. He steered the economy through the IMF bailout ended long lines for fuel and essentials and ended long hours of power cuts. He engineered reforms based on recovery by recording positive growth for the first time after six quarters of successive minus growth.

मध्य प्रदेश पुलिस आवास एवं अधोसंरचना विकास निगम
कार्यालय परियोजना ग्रंथी, संभाग क्र. 1, भद्रभद्रा रोड, भोपाल
क्र./1145/तशा/प.चं./2024 दिनांक : 14.09.2024

विज्ञप्ति

इस कार्यालय द्वारा गुजरबंदरिया (मंदसौर), मल्हारगढ़ (मंदसौर), साबाखेड़ा (मंदसौर), डिंडोरी एवं बड़नगर (उज्जैन) स्कूल में फर्निचर प्रदाय एवं स्थापित करने का कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा क्रमांक 2024_MPPHC_369947_1 दिनांक 21.09.2024 समय अपरान्ह 17:00 बजे तक खरीदी जा सकती है। निस्तृत निविदा सूचना एवं अन्य विवरण Portal : www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखे जा सकते हैं।
म.प्र. माध्यम/116476/2024 परियोजना ग्रंथी

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

LOST & FOUND

It is for general information that I, Ajay Kumar Vishwakarma S/o Hansnath Vishwakarma R/o B-139, Gali No.-2, Jhandapur, I.E. Sahibabad, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh-201010 declare that name of mine has been Wrongly written as Ajay in my minor son namely Virat Vishwakarma aged 16 years in his educational documents. The actual name of mine is Ajay Kumar Vishwakarma which may be amended accordingly.
PD(75)C

I, Mrs. Santosh Kumari W/o Mr. Manohar Lal has to inform that I have misplaced the Original Share Certificate of 56, Sudarshan Apartments, Plot No.82, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092 and is not traceable by my best efforts.
PD(75)C

PUBLIC NOTICE

Reg-Upper Ground Floor (without roof/terrace rights), (with one reserve Car Parking at left side still area) "said floor", Built up Property Bearing No. 11, area measuring 55 sq.yds., out of Khassa No. 1061/0, Situated in the area of Village Palam, Delhi State, Delhi, colony known as in Block-E, Vishwas Park, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059. (Hereinafter referred to as the "Said Property").

Be it known to all that our clients, Mr Govind Singh and Mrs. Rekha Devi (hereinafter called the "Purchaser") intend to purchase the said floor from Mrs. Jyoti Sharma and Mr. Jugal Kishore Sharma (hereinafter called the "Seller"). In this connection, the seller has informed the purchaser that they are the joint owners in respect of the said floor. The seller further informed the purchaser that the said floor was inherited by his legal heirs viz., Mrs. Savitri Sharma, Mr. Uditi Sharma, Ms. Savitri Sharma and Mrs. Jyoti Sharma, Later on, Mrs. Savitri Sharma, Mr. Uditi Sharma, Ms Savitri Sharma executed a Relinquishment Deed in favour of Mrs. Jyoti Sharma in respect of the said floor is not mortgaged anywhere and the said floor is free from all encumbrances and any other person shall not bind our clients/Purchaser, in any manner whatsoever. Shivkant Arora, Advocate M/s Intelective Law Offices A-74, LGF, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

BSES BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

TENDER NOTICE Date: 19.09.2024

Sealed tenders under two parts (Un priced & priced) are invited for the supply of following materials from all bidders:-

NIT No.	Brief Tender Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/24-25/FK/PPR/MS/1224	RATE CONTRACT FOR REPLACEMENT OF Old CEILING FANS OF BRPL CONSUMERS WITH BEE 5 STAR RATED SUPER ENERGY EFFICIENT BLDG (26W & 28W) FANS in BRPL	4.50 Crores	9,00,000/-	25.09.2024 15:00 HRS	25.09.2024 15:30 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹1180/-

For any query call on 011-49107235 or e-mail on Brol.Eauction@relianceada.com
For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submition of tender documents etc. please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com

Head (Contracts & Materials)
Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527
Telephone No.: +91 11 4910 7235 | Website: www.bsesdelhi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that our client Sh. Arun Goyal has paid off all dues towards home loan availed from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance LTD (formerly known as DHFL LTD). Home loan account number U10 12900001272 App number 00816047. The above mentioned Home loan was taken for property located in Gurgoan, Flat No. 1222, 12th Floor, Lower 18, Soire Woods, Sector-103, Gurgoan, Haryana 122005. Mr. Arun Goyal was a co-applicant both in the property and home loan application along with his father Late Sh. Arun Kumar Goyal. His father had died on 09-09-2013 at Delhi AS per surviving member certificate no. 0060000245478 the only heirs are Suman Goyal, Anmol Goyal and Divya Goyal, & Death was registered at MCD bearing regd no. MCDOLR-013-040610129. Deceased was known by two names i.e. ARUN KUMAR GOYAL AND ARUN GOYAL; both were same person. All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said property or any part thereof by sale, transfer, mortgage, inheritance, family arrangement, possession, or otherwise are hereby requested to notify the same us in writing with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date thereof. Failing which, the claims/claims of the said persons will be considered to have been waived or abandoned.

Dhan Singh Nagar (Advocate)

PUBLIC NOTICE

We at Eye 7 Hospital Pvt. Ltd. Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi-110024 are going to destroy all medical record with us Date 01/10/2013 to 31/08/2019. If anyone needs a copy of the same, Please collect at the hospital within next 30 days.

M.S. Eye 7 Hospitals Pvt. Ltd. Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi-110024

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Karun Mahesh Dhingra D/o Late Sh. Himmat Ram & W/o Late Sh. Mahesh Kumar Dhingra R/o H-42, GF, Kalkaji, New Delhi - 19 is the owner of DDA Janta Flats J-4/G/6B, Kalkaji, New Delhi - 19 vide DDA File no. F-31 (B2)/75. The original Allotment Letter, DDA Possession Letter, NOC, Set Position of the above said property has been lost or misplaced by me and is not traceable insight of my best efforts. An F.I.R./N.C.R. to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi, LR No.2016620/2024 dated 10.09.2024.

Any person(s) claiming any rights, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No.9810066107 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

ELECTRICAL WORKS AT NEW GUWAHATI

E-Tender Notice No. EL-GH-959R1 of 2024-25 Dated: 07-09-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works:
Name of work: At New Guwahati: Electrical work in connection with construction of additional 3 nos. pit lines with cover shed, 4 nos stabling lines, 02 nos. automatic washing plant-Phase I. **Tender Value:** ₹6,47,71,293/- **Earnest Money:** ₹4,73,900/- **Date of closing of tender:** 15:00 hrs. of 30-09-2024. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DEE, Guwahati
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

Karnataka Bank Ltd.

Plot No. 13, Near Sai Mandir, Main Road, Savita Vihar Delhi - 110092
CIN : L8510KA1924PLC0011228
Website www.karnatakabank.com

CORRIDGENDUM

With reference to "Notice Regarding Locker Operation" advertisement of Karnataka Bank Ltd. Published in Pioneer (English & Hindi) Delhi Edition Newspaper - on 20-06-2024. In the advertisement it is wrongly mentioned as Locker Number 283 instead of 282. All other matter of the advertisement will remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Date : 19.09.2024 Karnataka Bank Ltd
Place : Delhi Savitha Vihar Branch

UP GRADATION OF EXISTING POWER SUPPLY SYSTEM

Tender Notice No. : Dy. CEE/PS/MLG/HQ/22R/24-25, Dated: 16-09-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Tender No. : DYCEEP-PS-MLG-HQ-22R-24-25. Name of Work:** At CH(Maligaon) : Up gradation of existing power supply system for Central Hospital, Maligaon. **Advertised Value :** ₹. 98, 17, 71, 71/- **Earnest Money :** ₹. 1,96,400/- **Date and time of closing of tender at 15:00 on 08-10-2024.** For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. CEE/PS/MLG/HQ
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

THE SECOND SCHEDULE (See Section 47b) Form No.4

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED (See Sec.82)

HON'BLE SMT. S.R.BADVE (14TH JOINT C.J.J.D. AND J.M.F.C. COURT, PUNE)

S.C.C No.29667/2019

M/s Industrial Electronic & Allied Products Complainant

Mrs. Nirmala Mehrotra and Anr. Accused

Whereas complaint has been made before me that 1. Mrs. Nirmala Mehrotra and 2. Mr. Uday Mehrotra both having last address E 484, Ground Floor, Greater Kailash II, New Delhi- 110048, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence of Dishonour of Cheque punishable under 138 section of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said 1. Mrs. Nirmala Mehrotra and Mr. Uday Mehrotra cannot be found, and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said 1. Mrs. Nirmala Mehrotra and 2. Mr. Uday Mehrotra have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant);

Proclamation is hereby made that the said 1. Mrs. Nirmala Mehrotra and 2. Mr. Uday Mehrotra of E 484, Ground Floor, Greater Kailash II, New Delhi- 110048, is required to appear at Hon. J. J. D. and J. M. F. C. Court, Pune Joint C. J. J. D. and J. M. F. C. Court, Pune before this Court (or before me) to answer the said complaint on the 22nd day of October Dated, this 9th day of September 2024.

(Signature) (S.R.Badve)
(Seal of the Court) 14' JMFC

CANCELLATION OF TENDER

Corrigendum for Tender Notice against E-Tendering of works contract vide **Notice No. : 12-AMC-ETP-NJP-24, Dated: 04-09-2024** against the work- Comprehensive Operation and AMC of ETP with capacity 50 KLD at ROH/NEW Jalpaiguri for a period of 02 (Two) years treated as cancelled on administrative ground. For details please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DME/Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General public is hereby informed that my clients- Shakti Chand Chandel s/o Late Shri Amil Chand Chandel and Lata Devi Chandel w/o Shakti Chand Chandel, have severed all relations with their son-Vishal Chandel aged 26 years, due to his adamant attitude & his acts and decision are beyond the control of my clients. Hence they disowned and disinherited him from all movable and immovable properties and ceased their all relations with him. Anybody dealing with him in any manner whatsoever may be, may do so at their risk. My clients are in no way responsible for his any acts and agreements or deeds.

Sudhir Kumar Sangal, Advocate
151, 3rd Floor, Vinoba Puri, Lajpat Nagar-2, New Delhi-110024.
Enrolment: D/6653/2024

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system.

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for the supply of the following items:-

S.No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	14240839	METAL CUTTING GAS	108458 KGS	09-10-24
02	77245628	MANUFACTURING AND SUPPLY OF 11200 MM CURVED THICK	20 SET	22-10-24
03	08241521	PROCUREMENT OF SSD AC	118 NOS/SET	22-10-24
04	08240027	PROCUREMENT OF SHUNT LED SIGNAL	3476 NOS	25-10-24
05	08240026	PROCUREMENT OF ROUTE LED	4878 NOS	28-10-24

Note:1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.
Tender Notice No. 52/2024-2025 Dated: 17/09/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2899/24

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-Auction Notice

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PS, Northern Railway Delhi Division invites bids through e-Auction through IREPS (<http://www.ireps.gov.in>) for the allotment of under mention contracts at following Railway stations/locations:

E-Catalogue No.	Date & Time of bidding	Railway Stations/Locations/Lots
Parking-17-2024	04.10.2024 at 11:00 Hrs	Badali 2nd Entry, Kunkhacheta Site-1, Tuglakabad = Total 3 Sites

Website particulars where complete details of E-Auction can be seen <https://ireps.gov.in/>

All contractors who intend to participate in the e-auctions conducted through E-Auction Leasing module of IREPS should fulfill following mandatory requirements before they can submit their bids :- Registration on IREPS for E-Auction Leasing module -Active IREPS User Account for E-Auction Leasing Module. - Payment of One Time Registration Fee. - Current Account in State Bank of India. - Integration of SBI Bank Account with IREPS Account. - Lien Marking of Funds. - Updation of Turnover Details. - Contractors who do not have IREPS account for any module of IREPS can submit their online request for registration by clicking on New Vendors / Contractors (E-Tender /E-Auction Leasing) link on IREPS Home page.

Railway Authority Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Commercial to contact, in case Branch, State Entry Road, New Delhi 110055. of any enquiry Email: pkg.delhidivision@gmail.com Tel: 011-23743084

No. 23AC/393/E-Auction/2022 Dated: 17.09.2024
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2904/24

PM-AASHA scheme extended with ₹35,000 crore outlay

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI
The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved continuation of the PM-AASHA scheme, with an outlay of Rs 35,000 crore, to provide better prices to farmers and also control price volatility of essential commodities for consumers. "The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation of schemes of Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshana Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) scheme till 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs 35,000 crore. Welcoming the decision of subsidy on P&K nutrients, Chouhan said in a social media post on X, "this will ensure availability of fertilisers to farmers at affordable rates." "The Integrated scheme of PM-AASHA will bring in more effectiveness in the implementation which would

be Rs 35,000 crore during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle up to 2025-26, it added. The government has converged the Price Support Scheme (PSS) and Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) schemes in PM-AASHA to serve the farmers and consumers more efficiently. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan welcomed the Cabinet's approval to continuation of Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshana Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) scheme till 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs 35,000 crore. Welcoming the decision of subsidy on P&K nutrients, Chouhan said in a social media post on X, "this will ensure availability of fertilisers to farmers at affordable rates." "The Integrated scheme of PM-AASHA will bring in more effectiveness in the implementation which would



not only help in providing remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce but also control the price volatility of essential commodities by ensuring their availability at affordable prices to consumers," the government said. PM-AASHA will now have the components of Price Support Scheme (PSS), Price Stabilization Fund (PSF), Price Deficit Payment Scheme

(POPS) and Market Intervention Scheme (MIS). Under the PSS, the procurement of notified pulses, oilseeds and copra at MSP will be 25 per cent of national production from 2024-25 season onwards. This would enable states to procure more of these crops at MSP from farmers to prevent distress sale. "However, this ceiling will not be applicable in case of tur, urad and masur

for 2024-25 season as there will be a 100 per cent procurement of tur, urad and masur during in 2024-25 season as decided earlier," the government said. The Centre has renewed and enhanced the existing government guarantee to Rs 45,000 crore for procurement of notified pulses, oilseeds and copra at MSP. This will help in more procurement of pulses, oilseeds & copra whenever prices fall below MSP in the market. The purchases will be undertaken by the Department of Agriculture from farmers at MSP including pre-registered farmers on eSamridhi portal of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) and eSamyukti portal of National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF).

Indian economy size will double by 2030: NITI Aayog CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India could easily double the size of its economy by 2030, NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said on Wednesday. At an event organised by the Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI), Subrahmanyam added that climate change is an opportunity for India to become a leader in climate technology. "Our economy should easily double by 2030...India's ambition to become the third-largest economy by 2026-2027 necessitates a cohesive grand strategy," he said. Currently, in US dollar terms, India is the fifth largest economy with a size of about USD 3.7 trillion in nominal terms. "India will be a big dominant player, it already matters and it will matter much more in global affairs, by 2047," he said. Subrahmanyam said by 2047, India will be among the world's youngest nations demographically, poised for prosperity, with a projected per capita income of around USD 18,000 to USD 20,000. "This growth is significant as India is expected to emerge as a major global player, building on the substantial progress made over the past decade in addressing challenges such as natural disasters and poverty," he said.



Further, he said that there is a need to look at the green economy, and the Aayog is working on developing a pathway for net zero carbon emissions by 2070. "We have formed a task force and are working with the Central and state governments to achieve our targets," he added. The CEO of NITI Aayog stressed the importance of Global Value Chains (GVCs). He said that the government is working across sectors and services to build better strategies. Subrahmanyam added that urban development and infrastructure are crucial, with cities designed as economic hubs to drive growth. According to him, the private sector must lead in innovation and investment, supported by an enabling environment that attracts both portfolio and direct investments.

Diamond industry faces severe crisis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's diamond sector is facing a severe crisis as both imports and exports have sharply declined in the past three years, which has triggered defaults, factory closures, and widespread job losses, think tank GTRI said on Wednesday. It said that while export returns have surged, a large inventory of unprocessed rough diamonds is piling up due to reduced orders and growing competition from lab-grown diamonds. "This has triggered defaults, factory closures, and widespread job losses. Tragically, more than 60 people in Gujarat's diamond sector have committed suicide, reflecting the severe financial and emotional strain India's diamond sector is facing," Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Founder Ajay Srivastava said. He said that immediate action is essential to address these problems and safeguard the future of the sector. According to the think tank data, a 24.5 per cent drop in rough diamond imports from USD 18.5 billion in 2021-22 to USD 14 billion in 2023-24 shows weaker global markets and fewer processing orders. After adjusting for re-exported rough diamonds, net imports declined by 25.3 per cent, from USD 17.5 billion to USD 13.1 billion, indicating reduced demand for processing in India. Exports of cut and polished diamonds fell by a higher margin of 34.6 per cent, from



USD 24.4 billion in FY 2022 to USD 13.1 billion in FY 2024, it said. "Additionally, the share of unsold diamonds returned to India increased from 35 per cent to 45.6 per cent during this period," it said adding the net exports of cut and polished diamonds dropped by 45.3 per cent, from USD 15.9 billion to USD 8.7 billion, reflecting a weak market and rising unsold inventory. The gap between net rough diamond imports and net cut and polished diamond exports widened significantly, from USD 1.6 billion in FY 2022 to USD 4.4 billion in FY 2024, signalling a large inventory buildup and a lack of sufficient export orders. It added that some challenges of the sector stem from regulatory issues and internal inefficiencies within the industry. It said the demand for polished diamonds has dropped sharply in key markets like the US, China, and Europe due to economic uncertainty, inflation, and geopolitical tensions, leading to reduced consumer spending on luxury goods,

including diamonds. "Fluctuations in global diamond prices have caused uncertainty, with buyers hesitant to purchase rough diamonds in anticipation of further price drops," Srivastava said. He added that the Russia-Ukraine conflict has also disrupted the global diamond supply chain, with sanctions on Russia, a major rough diamond producer, further complicating trade and slowing down the global diamond trade. Shifting the consumer preferences towards lab-grown diamonds, which are more affordable, ethical, and sustainable, are also impacting the demand for natural diamonds. On internal factors, the think tank said that many polishing units have large unsold inventories of polished diamonds, which discourages them from importing fresh rough diamonds as they cannot afford to take on more stock without selling their existing inventory. "Rising operational costs, including labour, energy, and materials, along with reduced margins in the global diamond trade, have made it difficult for many polishing units to remain viable, leading to shop closures and layoffs, especially in Surat," he said. The industry also heavily depends on financing, but tighter credit conditions and reduced lending from banks have made it difficult for companies to purchase rough diamonds, further stalling production, he said.

Food ministry to boost wheat allocation under PMGKAY

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday announced an increase in wheat allocation to beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) from October onwards, in a bid to stabilise prices. Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra, while highlighting achievements in 100 days of Modi 3.0 government, said a committee of ministers has approved an additional 3.5 million tonne of wheat under PMGKAY. This increased allocation will continue until March 2025, potentially making efforts to restore the wheat-rice ratio under the scheme, he said at a press conference. Asked if this increased quantity restores the wheat-rice ratio, the Secretary said, "It will still be lower by 1-2 million tonne from the normal quantity."



He also stated that the allocation could be reviewed based on future developments. In May 2022, the government reduced wheat allocation to 7.1 million tonne from 18.2 million tonne and increased the rice allocation under PMGKAY because of tight supplies due to lower domestic production. Chopra highlighted the current "ample wheat" availability, citing last year's

bumper production of 112.9 million tonne. "Even by conservative and industry estimates, it was at least 40-50 lakh tonne higher than the previous year," he noted. The government's procurement stands at 26.6 million tonne against the actual production of 112.9 million tonne last year. Addressing market concerns, Chopra said there are no immediate plans to sell wheat under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS), given the stability in wheat and wheat product prices. However, he didn't rule out future OMSS sales. PMGKAY, which covers 80 crore poor beneficiaries, provides 5 kg of free foodgrain per person monthly. This enhanced allocation aims to address issues faced by beneficiaries following the previous reduction in wheat supply.

Food secretary assures stable food prices during festive season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra on Wednesday said prices of essential commodities like sugar and edible oils are stable, and no spike is expected during the upcoming festival season. Chopra assured consumers that the recent hike in basic customs duty on some edible oils, aimed at supporting domestic oilseed farmers, would not lead to significant price rise. "We have been able to maintain prices at a reasonable level for consumers," Chopra said at a press conference. "The upcoming festival season is looking good. We are not anticipating

any kind of spike in prices of essential commodities." Effective September 14, the government raised the basic customs duty on crude soyabean oil, palm oil, and sunflower oil to 20 per cent from nil. The duty on refined variants was increased to 32.5 per cent from 12.5 per cent. Chopra explained that 1.3 million tonne of edible oils imported at zero duty are still in stock. The industry has been directed to sell this inventory at current prices until exhausted. "Even after this stock exhausts, the prices need not rise by 20 per cent with an increase in duty. International prices will come down slightly," Chopra added.

RBI unlikely to cut interest rate in 2024: SBI Chief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank is unlikely to ease the benchmark policy rate during 2024 given the uncertainty over food inflation, State Bank of India (SBI) chairman C S Setty has said. The US Federal Reserve's first cut in interest rates in more than four years is expected soon, triggering central banks in other economies to follow suit. "On the rate front, a lot of central banks are taking independent calls. While Fed rate cut would influence everyone, RBI would be mindful of the food inflation before taking a call on interest rate cut," Setty, who took over the reins of the bank recently, told PTI in an interview. "That is what our view is, and our view is also that the rate cut during the current calendar year may not happen, probably we may have to wait for Q4 (January-March 2025) unless there is a good improvement in terms of food inflation," he said. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das is scheduled to meet during October 7-9 and take a call on interest rate. Retail inflation, which is being taken into consideration by the rate-setting panel MPC for its decision, rose marginally to 3.65 per cent in August, from 3.54 per cent in July. While the overall inflation is

below the RBI's median target of 4 per cent, the rate of price rise in the food basket was 5.66 per cent in August. The RBI kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent in its August bi-monthly review amid risks from higher food inflation. This was the ninth consecutive MPC meeting which decided to maintain the status quo on the rate front. The Reserve Bank has kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged since February 2023. In the last meeting, four of six MPC members voted in favour of the status quo while two external members pitched for a rate cut. Earlier this week, Reserve Bank Governor Das also said the decision on interest rate moderation will be based on long-term inflation trajectory and not on the basis of monthly data. On monetisation of SBI's stake in some of its subsidiaries, Setty said, there was no thinking in terms of divestment of stake of any of the subsidiaries presently. "If these subsidiaries require (growth) capital, we will definitely examine," he said. At this point in time, he said, none of the large subsidiaries require capital from the parent to scale up their operations. The bank in fiscal 2023-24 had infused an additional capital of Rs 489.67 crore in SBI General Insurance Company Ltd.

IP university identifies Indian rice varieties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Scientists of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha (IP) University have identified Indian rice varieties and their genes for high phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) use efficiency. Finding one variety for both N and P use efficiencies is a great advantage, as farmers prefer all efficiencies to be delivered together in the same crop variety. A press statement by the IP University on Wednesday said in a discovery that could help save both fertilizer costs and pollution due to leftover fertilizers in croplands, Indian biotechnologists have identified rice traits and genes for both phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) use efficiency (PUE and NUE). They compared three popular rice varieties from different parts of India for both NUE and PUE and found 12 common 'phenotypic' traits and 5 common genes for both, facilitating crop

improvement. They also found that CR Dhan 301 from Eastern coastal India has the highest NUE and PUE, followed by Panvelli and Samba Mahsuri (BPT 5204) from Western coastal and Southern India respectively. This research was carried out by Bhumika Madan and led by Professor Nandula Raghuram, founder-Head of the Centre for Sustainable Nitrogen and Nutrient Management (CSNNM), Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. Their findings have just been published as a research article in the international peer reviewed journal, 'Plants.' Their novel finding that over half of all the phenotypic traits are common for PUE and NUE is good news for anyone interested in crop improvement for sustainable agriculture, they informed. N and P are the largest and most expensive components of NPK fertilizers and cereals

consume most of them in India. NUE or PUE in cereals is measured as the grain yield per kg of N/P fertilizer supplied. India spends about Rs two lakh crores on NPK fertilizers, most of which being government subsidy. "Only 25-30% of the applied fertilizers are converted into harvested outputs, while the rest are lost to air and water pollution, affecting our health, biodiversity and climate change threatening our planet" said Professor Raghuram. "While some of this wastage can be reduced by legume-based crop rotations and better manure management, we must also undertake genetic improvement of the crop for nutrient use efficiency. India being a centre of origin of rice biodiversity, we have tens of thousands of rice varieties and our findings help in developing better cultivars through selection and breeding," he added.

Steel Ministry to curb steel imports, in talks with Finance Ministry: HD Kumaraswamy



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The steel ministry is in discussions with the finance ministry to explore policy measures aimed at curbing the rising imports of steel, including imposition of a minimum import price and protecting the domestic industry, Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy said on Wednesday. Acknowledging that tackling imports of steel was the "main issue," the steel minister said efforts are also being made to strengthen the domestic alloy industry. Asked if we can expect a Minimum Import Price on steel, the minister said: "Definitely, we will convince the finance ministry. Already preliminary discussion is

going on. I have confidence we will convince. To strengthen (the industry) how we have to implement the duties that (decision) we will take." He also asserted that he is determined to breathe life into Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited, which has been facing protests from various parties against the proposed privatisation of its Visakhapatnam steel plant. "RINL challenge is there. The protest is going on in RINL since last 1.5 years but I'm trying to give re-life to RINL. I am not going to let down," said Kumaraswamy. The minister for steel and heavy industries was speaking on the sidelines of an event here.

CIABC calls for Government aid to boost alcohol exports

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Support from the Centre and state governments will help the country to achieve USD 1 billion worth of alcoholic beverages exports in the coming years, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) said on Wednesday. CIABC Director General Anant S Iyer also said that promoting ease of doing business for the sector is key at both the Central and state government levels. Easy and timely permissions for bottling and branding; transport permits; and promoting online paperwork are some of the areas which need special attention for the growth of the sector. "We need ease of doing business across the operations, besides easy tax structures and market-determined prices to boost the exports."

INBRIEF

HUBNER'S NAMMA FACTORY ACHIEVES MILESTONES
BENGALURU: HÜBNER Group has today announced that its Namma Factory in Bengaluru has achieved a milestone of the production and delivery of 2,000 gangways since the factory was commissioned at the beginning of 2023.

GOVERNMENT ACCORDS APPROVAL FOR ASHVINI
NEW DELHI: The Government accorded approval to the Anushakti Vidhyut Nigam Ltd. (ASHVINI), a Joint Venture (JV) of NTPC Ltd. to build, own & operate nuclear power plants in India in accordance with provisions of the Atomic Energy Act.

NEW DELHI: The Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India, in collaboration with National Design Centre (NDC), is organizing the "Special Handloom Expo" themed "Sutraratnam - Gems of Threads" at Handloom Haat, Janpath.

PFC RECEIVES RECOGNITION FROM UNION MINISTER OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEW DELHI: Power Finance Corporation (PFC) received notable recognition from Shri Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy at RE-INVEST 2024 for its outstanding contribution to India's renewable energy sector.

UNIT OF INDIAN TEAM HELPED THEM PREVAIL IN ASIAN CHAMPIONS TROPHY FINAL: HARMANPREET

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Skipper Harmanpreet Singh credited India's recent success to strong team camaraderie, emphasising that their deep bond and willingness to "die for one another" helped them overcome China to win the Hero Asian Champions Trophy for a record-extending fifth time. India rode on Jugraj Singh's late strike to defeat China 1-0 in a tense final in Hulanbuir on Tuesday. Pakistan won the bronze medal with a 5-2 win over South Korea. "The final was really intense; the Chinese were breathing down our necks throughout the game and made it really difficult for us to create a clear goal scoring chance," Harmanpreet said in a Hockey India release. "But the team over the last year has built immense trust in each other. We are willing to die for one another. It was this sense of unity reassuring us that we will find a way to win the game together." Harmanpreet said India's successful run in last year has instilled a strong belief among players. "The gold medal in last year's Asian Champions Trophy in



Chennai, the gold medal in the Hangzhou Asian Games and the bronze from the Paris 2024 Olympics have instilled a deep camaraderie within the team. Harmanpreet, who has been shortlisted for FIH's Player-of-the-Year Award after scoring 10 goals at Paris, once again led from the front as the team remained unbeaten in the competition. Out of India's 26 goals in the competition, Harmanpreet scored seven and all were

from penalty corners. Harmanpreet said it is now crucial for India to keep building on the success. "We are proud to have retained our title but the work doesn't stop now," he said. "We have areas we need to improve; we need to build depth in our squad as well. The team will head back to camp after a short break and start preparing for the tournaments ahead to make our supporters proud again," he added. India vice-captain Vivek Sagar Prasad said the Olympics bronze medal made India the "team to beat" in the tournament. "All the teams in the group stage were tough to play against. The bronze medal from the Olympics painted a target on our backs; we were the team to beat," he said. "But every single person on the team stepped up to make it seem like we were cruising past our opponents. The youngsters slotted in seamlessly, Krishan and Suraj alternated to bail us out of tricky situations." "The defenders remained reliable, and the midfielders and forwards ran riot on the pitch. All in all, it was very enjoyable," he added.



Man United routs third division Barnsley 7-0 in English League Cup

AP ■ MANCHESTER
Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag savored the "perfect night" after routing third-division Barnsley 7-0 in the English League Cup. It was United's biggest margin of victory under the Dutchman, who has been in charge for more than two years. Marcus Rashford, Alejandro Garnacho and Christian Eriksen all scored two goals each in the third round match at Old Trafford, with Antony also on target. "Not for me, but for the team, this is the perfect night. I think we could do everything that we planned to do. We won, (we are in) next round, scored some great goals, entertained the fans and we worked on our game model, so we are happy," Ten Hag said. The size of the victory surpassed United's previous best under Ten Hag: 4-1 wins against Real Betis and Chelsea in his first season at the club. It was the biggest since a 9-0 win over Southampton under former manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer in 2021. Encouragingly for Ten Hag, Rashford's scoring touch appears to have returned after a troubled season last year when he managed just nine goals. Rashford's double came after he ended a 12-game barren run with a goal against Southampton over the weekend. "Football is football. Sometimes you have ups and sometimes downs, but we have to use these games to get momentum and consistency," Rashford said. Garnacho also scored in that 3-

Harry Kane scores 4 goals in Bayern's 9-2

AP ■ MUNICH
Harry Kane broke Wayne Rooney's record for the most Champions League goals by an English player when the Bayern Munich striker scored four times against Dinamo Zagreb. It was one of several records broken as Bayern routed Dinamo Zagreb 9-2 in one of the highest-scoring games in Champions League history — and an emphatic start to European competition for new coach Vincent Kompany. "Amazing game, a bit of a crazy game for sure," Kane told broadcaster DAZN. "To score all those goals in the end was a great night." Kane took his tally to 33 in the competition by scoring in the 19th, 53rd, 73rd and 78th minutes - three of the goals were penalties - to surpass Rooney's record of 30. "To be honest, after the second

(penalty) I didn't really know what to do with the third one, but thankfully I was able to put it away," Kane said. Kane opened the scoring from the penalty spot to give Bayern the lead over the Croatian club after his teammate Aleksandar Pavlovic was fouled by Ronaël Pierre-Gabriel. That drew Kane level with Rooney's record of 30, and he scored his 31st on a rebound after goalkeeper Ivan Nevistic parried Joshua Kimmich's shot in the 57th. Kane scored two more from the penalty spot to extend his record. Four other Bayern players scored in the emphatic win and there were two goals for new signing Michael Olise on his Champions League debut after signing from Crystal Palace. Leon Goretzka's header in stoppage time made Bayern the first team to score nine goals in the Champions League era. Some teams, including Bayern, achieved that feat in the old



European Cup. It was the highest-scoring game in the competition in terms of total goals since Borussia Dortmund beat Legia Warsaw 8-4 in 2016, according to UEFA. The 31-year-old Kane has scored 12

Champions League goals since moving to Bayern a year ago and scored 21 before that for Tottenham. Kane now has 53 goals in 50 games in all competitions since moving to Bayern. Kane has scored nine goals in his last three games for club and country including two for England against Finland in his 100th international game and a hat trick Saturday for Bayern against Holstein Kiel in the Bundesliga. Kane and Kylian Mbappé were joint top scorers in last season's Champions League with eight goals each. Another record was broken when Thomas Müller came off the bench to play his 152nd Champions League game for Bayern. That's the most for a player for one club, breaking a tie with former Barcelona player Xavi Hernandez. Müller has made the joint fourth-most appearances in the competition of any player.



Tvesa, Pranavi lead Indian challenge in Spain

PTI ■ DÉNIA (SPAIN)
Tvesa Malik and Pranavi Urs will spearhead the Indian challenge at the La Sella Open, starting Thursday, as the Ladies European Tour (LET) resumes action after a break for the Solheim Cup. Tvesa and Pranavi, who have had modest seasons, will be joined by Ridhima Dilawari and invitee Seher Atwal. Diksha Dagar has taken a break while Vani Kapoor and Amandeep Drall are playing on the domestic Hero WPG Tour. Seher, a winner on the domestic Hero WPGT like Tvesa, Pranavi and Ridhima, will go out with April Angurasanee of Thailand and Emily Penttila of Finland, while Tvesa plays with Blanca Fernandez of Spain and Tiffany Chan of Hong Kong at the La Sella Golf Resort. Pranavi tees off with Dortha Forbrigg of Norway and Agathe Sauzon of France from the first tee while Ridhima Dilawari with Linda Osala of Finland and Kim Metraux of Switzerland. After the Solheim Cup took place at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club in Gainesville, in the United States, the Tour returns to Europe.

Roma fires Daniele De Rossi after going winless in its opening 4 Serie A matches

AP ■ ROME
Roma fired coach Daniele De Rossi on Wednesday in a move that was surprising despite the Giallorossi going winless in their opening four Italian league matches. De Rossi, a former Roma captain, was hired in January to replace the fired Jose Mourinho and impressed so much during the second half of last season that he was given a contract extension in June through 2026-27. "The club's decision is made in the best interests of the team, to get back on the desired path as soon as possible at a time when the season is still in its early stages," Roma said. "A heartfelt thank you to Daniele, who will always be at home at the Giallorossi club, for the work done in recent months with passion and dedication." Roma added that "communication regarding the team's technical guidance will follow." Roma hosts Serie A leader Udinese on Sunday. One possible replacement for De Rossi could be former Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri, who was fired for his ugly outburst toward the referees in the Italian Cup final at the Stadio Olimpico in May. Former AC Milan coach Stefano Pioli, who was reportedly close to signing with Al-Nassr — the Saudi Arabian club that Cristiano Ronaldo plays for — could be another option. After opening with a scoreless draw at Cagliari, Roma was beaten 2-1 at home by Empoli. Draws at Juventus (0-0) and Genoa (1-1) followed - leaving Roma with only three points and in 16th place. De Rossi had transformed Roma into a better attacking unit than Mourinho's defensive teams but this season has produced only two goals. Next week, Roma opens its Europa League campaign against Athletic Bilbao at the Olimpico. Romelu Lukaku's loan spell at Roma ended after last season but talented striker Paulo Dybala stayed with the club after considering a move to Saudi Arabia. Roma's American owners Dan and Ryan Friedkin have often made surprising decisions.

FIFA teams up with UN health agency for campaign to educate world soccer about concussion

AP ■ GENEVA
FIFA teamed up with the World Health Organization on Wednesday for a campaign to educate the soccer industry about the risks of concussion injuries. "Concussion is a public health issue of concern at all levels of football, and many other sports, requiring greater levels of awareness and action," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement. Ten years after the alarming case in the 2014 World Cup final of Germany player Christoph Kramer, world soccer governing body FIFA is sending a toolkit to each of its 211 national federations to help teach at all levels of soccer that symptoms of a head injury can take up to 72 hours to appear. Kramer continued to play in the final against Argentina for 14 minutes after being injured despite being in clear distress. Match referee Nicola Rizzoli later said he alerted Germany players after Kramer asked if he was playing in the final. At the 2022 World Cup, Iran goalkeeper Ali Beiranvand was treated for several minutes on the field after clashing heads with a teammate, then continued to play on against England before finally being replaced. FIFA favors letting teams make an extra substitution to remove immediately a player with a suspected head injury. That lets team medical staff evaluate injuries at length without the pressure of trying to send players back into the game. At soccer's rules-making panel, known as IFAB, FIFA has consistently blocked proposals to allow temporary substitutions that would let injured players with a suspected concussion be assessed just for several minutes before potentially returning to the game. FIFA medical advice is that symptoms can take up to 72 hours to develop. "The symptoms of a concussion can change or evolve within the minutes, hours, days and even weeks after the traumatic event," FIFA said of the new "Suspect and Protect" campaign.

Asian Games medallist Kiran fails dope test



Punia missing from latest list of suspended athletes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Asian Games bronze-winner shot-putter Kiran Baliyan has been provisionally suspended by the National Anti Doping Agency (NADA) for testing positive for a banned substance as a slew of athletes across sports figured in the latest list of dope offenders. Surprisingly, Olympic medallist Bajrang Punia's name is missing from the latest update though he figured in a previous list issued by the NADA recently. The NADA had, on June 23, suspended Punia for a second time, three weeks after its Anti-Disciplinary Doping panel (ADDP) had revoked his suspension on the grounds that he was not served a "notice of charge" by the national body. NADA had on April 23 suspended the Tokyo Olympics bronze-medallist wrestler for his refusal to give his urine sample for dope test during the selection trials held in Sonapat on March 10. The sport's global governing body United Wrestling World (UWW) had also suspended him. Bajrang, who, along with Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik, spearheaded a long protest against ousted Wrestling Federation of India President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for allegedly sexually harassing women grapplers, had appealed against the provisional suspension and the ADDP had revoked it on May 31 till NADA issues the notice of charge. The 25-year-old Baliyan, who had become only the second Indian to win a medal in women's shot put in the Asian Games at Hangzhou last year, returned positive for metandienone, an anabolic androgenic steroid banned at all times. She had won gold at the 2023 National Inter-State Championships and a silver in the 2024 Federation Cup. She stares at a maximum ban period of four years, if she is proven guilty. Hammer thrower Manju Bala, who had won a bronze in 2014 Incheon Asian Games, also figured in the list. She tested positive for dehydrochloromethyl-testosterone (steroid) and SARMS (ligandrol). Shalini Chaudhary, who won silver at the Federation Cup this year, also tested positive for the steroid metandienone. Long-distance runner Chavi Yadav tested positive for drostanolone, an anabolic-androgenic steroid. Other top Indian track and field athletes like javelin thrower D P Manu, quarter-miler Deepanshi and middle-distance runner Parvej Khan have been serving provisional suspensions. In wrestling, 2023 U20 World Championships bronze medallist Arju tested positive for stanozolol. Badminton makes a rare entry with doubles player Krishna Prasad Garaga, a member of the Indian team that won gold in 2022 Thomas Cup, testing positive for Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (HCG). Wushu players T Menaka Devi, Manjinder Singh and Goutam Sharma figured in the list as the sport has seen a surge in doping cases recently. Bhupendra Singh Byadwal (pencak silat), Ashish Phugat (rowing) and Ribason Singh Ningthoujam (canoe) are also among those who have been provisionally suspended by the NADA.

India look to spin a new story but tricky Bangladesh no pushovers

PTI ■ CHENNAI
Littered largely with lopsided contests, India's hopes of walking down that familiar path will hinge on sorting an uncharacteristic batting infirmity against spin when they face Bangladesh in a two-Test series starting here from Thursday. Bangladesh, who are fresh from a recent 2-0 drubbing of Pakistan, are no pushovers this time and this will add to India's list of concerns as they look to take that bold first step into a long season that features 10 Tests, including a possible berth in the World Test Championship Final. India's 40-4 (win-loss) home record in the last decade is awe-inspiring but there is an ever-little crack, which is getting more pronounced in the past three years, particularly in the case of star batter Virat Kohli.

Kohli's extraordinary qualities as a batter, but it's an area that the champion cricketer himself will certainly want to improve upon. Skipper Rohit Sharma has also been prolific in dismantling spin, especially since his promotion as an opener in 2017 against South Africa. He averaged over 90 against twerkers. But since 2021, it has come down to a less flashy 44 in 15 matches. KL Rahul, a batter who is backed by Rohit as equally proficient against spin and pace, offers a slightly bleaker picture. In the last three years, he has played five Tests at home but against the slower kind, the elegant right-hander's average has taken a beating and stands at 23.40. Collectively, these stats need to be taken as an indication of waning skills but, perhaps, also as a reminder to refocus on perfecting the art of playing spin, often the core strength of batters from this part of the world. Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate had stressed on this point recently after India's debacle against Sri Lankan



spinners in a three-match ODI series which they lost 0-2. There are bright points too in Rishabh Pant (five matches, average 70), Shubman Gill (10

matches, average 56) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (five matches, average 115). However, the numbers of Jaiswal and Gill are constituted by their breakaway series against England earlier this year, but the Three Lions did not have an experienced spin attack to lean upon. In contrast, Bangladesh have much more potent spinners in left-armers Shakib Al Hasan, Taijul Islam and off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who can

hurt any opposition on their day. Here, India will bank on the firepower and innovative approach of Pant to unsettle and eventually take down the visiting spinners as the Delhiite is expected to return to Test cricket for the first time since his horrific car accident in 2022. In the bowling department, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are certain to figure in the first eleven, and it's as formidable a unit as one would get irrespective of conditions. India will ponder over whether to go with a third seamer in either Akash Deep or Yash Dayal, considering that the MA Chidambaram Stadium may offer a red-soil pitch, or field a third spinner in Kuldeep Yadav as is the prevailing trend in a home Test. India can also consider the option of giving another run to Axar Patel as it can give a fillip to late order batting against a Bangladesh attack that also has two express quicks in Nahid Rana and Hasan Mahmud. New head coach Gautam Gambhir too might have a small but significant personal goal in front of him, that is to start the first Test series under his tutelage on a winning note, after returning from Sri Lanka with a tad underwhelming 1-1 record from a white ball tour. An obsessed pursuant of victory, he will want to set it right. Rohit might carry a contrarian view on such individual targets and dress rehearsals, but India's effort in this series, first in six months for them in the traditional format, will certainly be a strong pointer to the course for the season ahead.



Rishabh Pant braces for Test return after 632 days

PTI ■ CHENNAI
A harsh sun beating down on him, Rishabh Pant was engrossed preparing for his first Test in two years, taking down net bowlers in that unmistakably Pant-ish way. From getting tossed up some 40m into air off a toppled car to getting back to cricket field at the highest level is nothing less than extraordinary. It was hard to believe that 632 days have passed since Pant has played a Test match, and, coincidentally, his last five-day game was also against Bangladesh in 2022. Now, the same opposition awaits him on his return to Test cricket come Thursday at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, and while the cricketing landscape around him remains largely unchanged, though some worthy contenders have come up in the interim. Dhruv Jurel has impressed all with a gritty outing in front and behind the stumps during the home series against England earlier this year. None could have faulted the team management if they continued with Jurel for this match, but head coach Gautam Gambhir underlined the value Pant brings to the table. "We all know how destructive he can be (as a batter) and what he can do in Test cricket. Obviously,

it gives him the freedom to go out there and express himself. He has got runs everywhere around the world. "It is always good to have someone like him who can open the game for us and more importantly can bring a lot of impact as well," Gambhir said in the pre-match press meet here. Of course, Pant has made his return to international cricket through the white ball formats, and was a part of India's T20 World Cup winning squad too but the long-format matches offer a vastly different challenge in terms of skills and the duration of concentration. Pant showed his readiness for the grind of red-ball cricket while playing for India B in the recent Duleep Trophy match at Bengaluru. After a rather nervy 10-ball seven in the first innings against India A, Pant showcased his full range with a 47-ball 61 that contained nine fours and two sixes. He tumbled, shuffled across and went deep into crease during that knock, but the management could have been more eager to see how he responded to the task of wicket-keeping. Pant acted that test with flying colours, taking seven catches, five alone in the second innings, in that match. The 26-year-old flew around behind the stumps to latch on to catches way down the leg side,

a telltale sign of a wicket-keeper's anticipation and agility, and was in the right position when the spinners operated. Jurel played for India A, but it was clear that the match was more of an audition for Pant ahead of his reintegration into Test cricket, which was supported by a quick assessment by the NCA physios. Gambhir delved on Pant's role as a wicketkeeper. "Not only with his batting, he has been excellent behind the stumps as well. Probably his batting overshadows his keeping many times. "But actually, see what he has done in Indian conditions...it is never easy to keep against people like Ashwin, Jadeja and Kuldeep. So, what he has done behind the stumps has been remarkable. "Obviously, he brings a lot of good things to the Test side. Not only from the batting point of view, but from the keeping point of view as well," Gambhir detailed. Above all this, Pant gives a different angle to the whole game of cricket with his attitude. Ricky Ponting, who worked with Pant at Delhi Capitals, gave an insight. "He's an infectious character to have around the group. He loves his cricket. He's a winner. He doesn't just play to make a few runs and be out there for the fun of it," Ponting recently told Sky Sports.

Important to build relationship with seniors to take Indian cricket forward: Gambhir

PTI ■ CHENNAI
Head coach Gautam Gambhir on Wednesday underlined the significance for him to build on the existing cordial relationship with the senior players like skipper Rohit Sharma and batting talisman Virat Kohli to take Indian cricket forward. Gambhir, who took over from Rahul Dravid after the T20 World Cup, has shared the Indian dressing room with the likes of Kohli, Rohit and Ashwin in the not-so-distant past. "It's still early days (for him as coach). But the good part is that I have played with those guys (seniors). At one stage we were sharing the dressing room as players, when they were younger, who

have now become experienced guys," Gambhir said in the pre-match press meet here. "When you have that kind of a relationship, sometimes it gets much easier than building a relationship. Obviously, now the roles are different. "The relationship we can build over a period of next couple of years. It's going to be very important, and now we should keep taking it a little bit forward because we've got massive challenges coming our way," he added. The spat between Gambhir and Kohli after an IPL match at Lucknow has often been portrayed in social media as an example of strained relation between them. But Gambhir did not buy those



assumptions. "Sometimes people have made a lot of hue and cry about these things. But that's not true. My relationship with everyone in the dressing room team has

been really, really good. "More importantly I think the heart needs to be in the right place. When the passion is there, I think a lot of things can ease. I think the desire to win each and every time when we walk onto the cricket field, it's there. So, I think we've started off really well," said Gambhir. To buttress his argument, the 42-year-old explained his rationale behind selecting the eleven for a particular match. Communication, for him, is the watch word here. "I think the most important thing is clear communication. See, we don't drop anyone. We only select the best playing 11. We think and do the job for that particular Test match."

Malvika stuns Paris Olympics medallist Tunjung in China Open badminton tournament

PTI ■ CHANGZHOU (CHINA)
India's Malvika Bansod pulled off a sensational straight-game victory over Paris Olympics bronze medallist Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia in the women's singles opening round of the China Open Super 100 badminton tournament here on Wednesday. The 22-year-old Indian, ranked 43rd in the world, displayed immense grit as she saved three game points in the opening game to defeat the world No. 7 Indonesian 26-24 21-19 in a 46-minute match, marking the biggest win of her career. Malvika, a B. Tech graduate in computer science from SRM University in Chennai, will next take on Scotland's Kristy Gilmour, a two-time Commonwealth Games medallist. She was the sole Indian bright spot in the women's singles as

compatriots Aakarshi Kashyap and Samiya Imad Farooqui exited in the first round. Aakarshi lost to Chinese Taipei's Chiu Pin-Chian 15-21 19-21, while Samiya was outplayed by Gilmour 9-21 7-21 in a one-sided contest. In other Indian results, the women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand went down 21-16 15-21 to Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Pei Shan and Hung En-Tzu. The mixed doubles duo of B Sumeeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy lost 10-21 16-21 to Malaysia's Tan Kian Meng and Lai Pei Jing. A left-handed shuttler, Malvika, from Nagpur, transitioned to the senior international circuit in 2019, winning the Maldives International title and finishing runner-up at the 2022 Syed Modi International. She has been in good form this year, claiming the Azerbaijan International title.



Malvika, once coached by former India junior chief coach Sanjay Mishra, made headlines in 2022 when she defeated 2012 Olympic bronze medallist Saina Nehwal at the India Open, breaking into the world's top 30. However, her progress was hampered by health issues as she contracted dengue and typhoid following her

participation in the Hangzhou Asian Games last year. After her recovery, Malvika consistently faced top-ranked players in early rounds of world tour events. Despite early exits, she managed to maintain her position in the world's top 50. She has played close matches against the likes of world No. 1 Akane Yamaguchi and former world champion Nozomi Okuhara. Currently training under coach Shrikant Vad at the Thane Badminton Academy, Malvika continues to push her game forward. "This is her biggest win, and she is extremely happy. She has been performing well, but lacks experience, and sometimes luck hasn't favoured her," her mother Trupti told PTI. "Sanjay sir was like a father figure to her, but once he took up his role as BAI secretary, we struggled to find a replacement."



Duleep Trophy: Iyer, Samson, Parag enter final round with point to prove

PTI ■ ANANTAPUR
The likes of Shreyas Iyer, Sanju Samson, Riyan Parag and Rinku Singh will get another opportunity to enhance their red-ball credentials when the final round of Duleep Trophy matches begin here on Thursday. No knockout games are scheduled for the season opening event and the team with maximum points will lift the trophy. With nine points from two games, India C sit at the top of the points table, followed by India B (7), India A (6) and India D (0). Table leaders India C, captained by Rituraj Gaikwad, will take on Mayank Agarwal led India A, while Abhimanyu Easwaran led India B will face India D, whose captain is under-pressure Iyer. After being ignored for the Bangladesh series, Iyer had a point to prove but he has not been able to lead from the front thus far in the competition. With his team yet to earn a point in the tournament, he will be fired up to put an inspiring performance. The performance of India D batter Samson and pacer Arshdeep Singh will also be tracked by the selectors. In the India B camp, Rinku will be aiming to get big runs after low returns in the previous game. In the India A versus India C contest, the selectors will be expecting more runs from Agarwal, Parag and Sai Sudharsan. Parag has batted confidently thus far but needs to stay longer in the middle. Pacer Prasad Krishna, making a comeback from injury in the

previous round, would be looking to log in a significant number of overs while Shams Mulani will be fancying another match-winning effort in the prevailing conditions. Ishan Kishan, who made a memorable return to red ball cricket by scoring a hundred for India C, will need another epic knock to garner more attention from the selectors. **SQUADS:** **India A squad:** Mayank Agarwal (C), Riyan Parag, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Prasad Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat, Pratham Singh, Akshay Wadkar, SK Rasheed, Shams Mulani, Aaqib Khan. **India B squad:** Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Navdeep Saini, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (WK), Suyash Prabhudessai, Rinku Singh, Himanshu Mantri (WK). **India C squad:** Rituraj Gaikwad (C), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abishek Porel (WK), Ishan Kishan, B Indrajith, Hrithik Shokeen, Manav Suthar, Gaurav Yadav, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Anshul Khamboj, Himanshu Chauhan, Mayank Markande, Aryan Juyal (WK), Sandeep Warrier. **India D squad:** Shreyas Iyer (C), Atharva Taide, Yash Dube, Devdutt Padikkal, Ricky Bui, Saransh Jain, Arshdeep Singh, Aditya Thakare, Harshit Rana, Akash Sengupta, KS Bharat (WK), Saurabh Kumar, Sanju Samson (WK), Nishant Sindhu, Vidwath Kaverappa.

Ponting joins Punjab Kings as head coach on four year contract

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Australian great Ricky Ponting was on Wednesday appointed head coach of Punjab Kings, replacing compatriot Trevor Bayliss in the underperforming IPL franchise. The former Australian captain has made the switch to Punjab Kings from Delhi Capitals, a team he was part of for seven years. "We are delighted to have Ricky on to guide and build our team for the next four seasons. His experience is crucial to help us develop a squad to deliver on-field success," franchise CEO Satish Menon said. An IPL source added that Ponting will take a call on the rest of the support staff. Under Ponting, Delhi Capitals became a force to reckon with though the elusive title never came. The team reached the final in 2020. He has also coached Mumbai Indians. Punjab too have never won the IPL since the league's inception in 2008 and the four co-owners will be hoping the World Cup-winning captain takes them all the way. Punjab's sole final appearance came way back in 2014 and they are one team which is often criticised for frequent chopping and changing. They have failed to finish even in the top five in



the last seven editions and ended ninth out of 10 teams earlier this year. In a team statement, Ponting promised a different style of play going forward. "I am excited to take up the new challenge. I had great conversations with the owners and the management about the way forward and was truly elated to see the alignment of our visions for the team. "We all want to repay the fans who have stayed with the franchise over the years and we promise that they will see a much different Punjab Kings going forward," he said. Bayliss was in charge of the side for the past two seasons with now-retired Shikhar Dhawan as its captain. Sanjay Bangar was head of cricket development, Charles Langveldt, the fast bowling coach, and Sunil Joshi took care of the spinners. Prior to Bayliss, Anil Kumble coached Punjab Kings but success eluded them. Punjab have had a strong core including Arshdeep Singh, Jitesh Sharma, Kagiso Rabada, Liam Livingstone, Sam Curran and Jonny Bairstow but the results have not come. Uncapped Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma were the standout players for Punjab Kings in an otherwise forgettable season this year.

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