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MONEY 10 ED, SEBI, RBI ON TRAIL OF THREE TOP BROKERS FOR FRAUDULENT TRADE



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Kharge to take call on next K'taka CM

Congress may opt for rotational chief ministership to keep both hopefuls Siddaramiah, Shivakumar happy

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

As anticipated the newly-elected Congress MLAs on Sunday authorised party president Mallikarjun Kharge to pick the next Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Sources within the top leadership of the party told The Pioneer that the Congress has no choice but to adjust by opting for rotational Chief Ministers for two-and-a-half-years each, in the five-year tenure of the Government. "Both are important — former Chief Minister K Siddaramiah for being the old warhorse and an acceptable caste leader while Karnataka Congress chief DK Shivakumar burnt the midnight oil to wrest power from the BJP in the just-concluded polls," confided a leader who is privy to the discussions.

Amidst sloganeering by party workers loyal to the probables — Siddaramiah and Shivakumar — the scheduled Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting at a private hotel in Bengaluru passed a unanimous resolution authorising the party chief to pick its leader. Sources also said both the factions — Siddaramiah and Shivakumar — are also discussing the relevance of rotation postings as the commitment made on the same lines in Chhattisgarh was never fulfilled.

When Bhupesh Baghel was appointed the CM in 2018 then rival TS Singh Deo, who is a Cabinet Minister in Chhattisgarh, is believed to have been promised elevation to the CM's post after two-and-a-half-years but that did not happen and the State is now preparing for the term-end Assembly polls.

Hiccups were reported at the end of the half tenure when Deo and Baghel had to camp in Delhi and at one point the Government was in jeopardy. This has been a precedent in the Congress for decades that in the process of formation of Governments, the CLP ultimately authorises the party president to nominate the CM. The Congress scored a thumping win in the May 10 Assembly polls as it secured 135 seats out of 224, while the BJP bagged only 66.

Earlier in the day Congress central observers, along with AICC general secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal held a meeting with the Leader of Opposition in the outgoing Assembly Siddaramiah and Shivakumar.

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Senior Congress leaders Randeep Surjewala, KC Venugopal, Siddaramiah, DK Shivakumar and others during the Congress Legislature Party meeting, in Bengaluru, on Sunday

Will brainstorm poll debacle, says Bommai

Bengaluru: Karnataka BJP has decided to do a detailed analysis of the overall poll results and also constituency-wise outcomes to find out the reasons for the party's debacle in the Assembly election, outgoing Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said on Sunday. In the May 10 elections to the 224-member Assembly, the Congress scored an emphatic victory with 135 seats, while the ruling BJP and the former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda-led Janata Dal (Secular) secured 66 and 19, respectively. Rejecting the Congress's claim that it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's defeat, he said multiple factors have contributed to the party's performance and they will all be analysed. A meeting of all newly-elected members and candidates will be held soon in this regard. Some BJP leaders including Bommai met under the leadership of State BJP president Nalin Kumar Kateel at the party headquarters here on Sunday and held discussions. "We have had informal discussions regarding the results and regarding getting information from various regions."



MVA to fight 2024 LS, Assembly polls as team

Seat sharing talks soon

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having decided to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls as a grand alliance, the three constituents of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress — will be holding seat-sharing talks soon. At a joint meeting held at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's south Mumbai residence the leaders of the three MVA constituents decided to contest the forthcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls as an alliance. Also, they decided to initiate seat-sharing talks among them in the coming weeks.

Interacting with media persons along with State Congress president Nana Patole and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, State NCP chief Jayant Patil said at the meeting that the leaders discussed the Congress' victory in Karnataka, the Supreme Court verdict on the crisis in Shiv Sena in June last year and future plans of the three MVA constituents in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls in the State.

Patil said the three MVA parties would hold seat-sharing negotiations for the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in the coming weeks. "As it happened in Karnataka, we expect to perform well in both the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Maharashtra," Patil said. While the Lok Sabha polls will be held



Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray, Nana Patole, Balasaheb Thorat and others during a meeting at Pawar's residence, in Mumbai, on Sunday

in May next year, the State Assembly will in the normal course be held in October 2024. Patole said there is a lot of anger against the ruling BJP among the people. "The people vented their anger against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the Assembly polls in Karnataka... We intend to hold a fourth Vajramuth (iron fist) rally in Pune where we intend to felicitate the Chief Minister of Karnataka," Patole said.

Raut denied that there is any rift within the MVA and said, "The Karnataka Assembly poll outcome should be seen as a victory of the Opposition parties in the country.

"The Congress' victory will have a positive impact on polls in Maharashtra. The BJP will suffer a massive debacle in Maharashtra as well. The MVA constituents will soon arrive at seat-sharing arrangements for both Lok Sabha and Assembly polls."

Cong-TMC lock horns over who will lead Opp in 2024

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Karnataka election results have triggered a fresh war of words over the leadership issue in 2024 between the Congress and the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

While the Congress Lok Sabha Leader Adhir Chowdhury has claimed that

no party other than the Congress can lead a united Opposition against the BJP and that "only the Congress being a pan-Indian party can unite the Opposition," the TMC continues to insist on its "one against one" theory implying regional parties will have to be given upper hand in areas where they are stronger. (P5)

CAPSULE

SHERPA EQUALS MOUNT EVEREST GUIDE RECORD Kathmandu: A Sherpa guide scaled the summit of Mount Everest on Sunday for the 26th time, equalling the record set by Nepalese guide Kami Rita for the most ascents of the world's highest peak. Pasang Dawa Sherpa, 46, reached the summit (8,849-m peak) on Sunday morning along with a Hungarian climber. This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest in 1953 by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay.

CYCLONE MOCHA HITS B'DESH, MYANMAR Dhaka: Super cyclone Mocha made landfall along the Myanmar-Bangladesh coasts on Sunday after intensifying into the equivalent of a category-five storm, causing extensive damage to the southeastern coastlines and forcing the evacuation of over five lakh people in low lying areas. The Cyclone Mocha, one of the most powerful cyclones seen in the country in nearly two decades - made landfall shortly after midday on the Teknaf shorelines before making its way through the Nat River that divides Bangladesh and Myanmar.

IOA TO TAKE CHARGE OF WRESTLING BODY New Delhi: The protesting wrestlers on Sunday termed the Indian Olympic Association's (IOA) decision to take charge of all the activities of the Wrestling Federation of India as the "first step" in their fight against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the former WFI chief. The country's top wrestlers, including Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat among others, have been protesting at the Jantar Mantar for the last 22 days demanding the arrest of Brij Bhushan for alleged sexual harassment.

Globalisation is the reality of our times, says EAM in Stockholm

Multipolar world feasible only by multipolar Asia, asserts Jaishankar

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/STOCKHOLM

Underlining the importance of Asia in global affairs, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said a multipolar world is feasible only by a multipolar Asia. He also said the more the European Union (EU) and Indo-Pacific deal with each other the stronger will be their respective appreciation of multi-polarity.

Addressing the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial meeting at Stockholm, Jaishankar called on the leaders to consider six points, which include globalisation, Indo-Pacific and leveraging of market shares. On globalisation, he said, the EU



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Defence Minister of Sweden Pál Jonson during his visit to Sweden on Sunday

has major stakes in Indo-Pacific developments, especially as they pertain to technology, connectivity, trade and finance and it has to, in respect for, and observance of (the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) UNCLOS. The Minister said India and EU need a regular, comprehensive and candid dialogue, especially with regard to the Indo-Pacific. He stressed that talks are not just limited to the crisis of the day. He said

transformations underway in India will merit the EU's attention. Highlighting that Indo-Pacific is increasingly central to the direction of global politics, Jaishankar said, "The EU and the world is better off with additional drivers of production and growth."

Noting that the leveraging of market shares, production capacities and resources are issues that can no longer be overlooked, he said a strategically more aware Europe should not limit its consciousness geographically.

Calling Indo-Pacific a complex and differentiated landscape, the Minister emphasised that the EU and Indo-Pacific will become stronger if they deal more with each other. In such an engagement with the Indo-Pacific, the External Affairs Minister hoped that the EU would naturally seek like-minded partners. India is certainly among them, he added.

Centre pushes DPSUs, India Inc towards Atmanirbharta

Import of 928 items banned to promote domestic Defence industry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a push to Indian public sector undertakings (PSUs) and the industry to attain self-reliance quickly, the Government has banned import of 928 items thereby saving Rs 715 crore. These items will be procured from the Indian industry.

This was the fourth such list of items to be issued in the last two years restricting import of weapons and or systems or sub-systems, Defence Ministry officials said here on Sunday. Giving details of the latest ban, they said the fourth list is in continuation of the previous three that were released in



December 2021, March 2022 and August 2022 respectively. These lists contain 2,500 items which are already indigenised and 1,238 (351+107+780) items which will be indigenised within the given timelines.

Of 1,238, some 310 items (1st list- 262, 2nd list- 11, 3rd list - 37) have been indigenised, so far. They said in order to promote 'Atmanirbharta' in Defence and minimise imports by Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), the Ministry of Defence has approved fourth Positive Indigenisation List of 928 strategically-important Line Replacement Units (LRUs)/Sub-systems/Spares & Components, including high-

end materials and spares, with import substitution value worth Rs 715 crore.

The DPSUs will undertake indigenisation of these items through different routes under 'Make' category and in-house development through the capabilities of MSMEs and private Indian industry, thereby providing impetus to the growth in economy, enhanced investment in Defence and reduction in import dependence of DPSUs. In addition, this will augment the design capabilities of the domestic defence industry by involving academia and research institutions. The DPSUs will soon initiate procurement action for these notified items.

The four lists restricting imports covers sensors, ammunition, towed artillery guns, short-range surface-to-air missiles, cruise missiles and offshore patrol vessels, next-generation corvettes, airborne early warning systems, tank engines and radars.

Govt to do ₹300 cr equity infusion in Alliance Air

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is set to make an equity infusion of Rs 300 crore in regional carrier Alliance Air, which is facing financial headwinds, according to a senior official. Alliance Air, earlier part of Air India, is now owned by AI Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL), a special-purpose vehicle formed by the central Government.

The disinvestment-bound Alliance Air operates around 130 flights daily. In recent months, there have been instances of strikes by pilots to protest against non-restoration of salaries to the pre-Covid level and non-payment of allowance, among other issues. The Finance Ministry has approved an equity infusion of ₹300 crore into Alliance Air, the senior Civil Aviation Ministry official said. Specific



details could not be immediately ascertained. Flights under 'Alliance Air' brand are operated by Airline Allied Services, which changed its name to Alliance Air Aviation Ltd. The company's authorised capital is ₹2,000 crore and the paid-up capital is ₹402.25 crore, as per the latest data available with the Corporate Affairs Ministry.

Alliance Air, which saw its net loss widen to ₹447.76 crore in fiscal 2021-22, has been grappling with financial woes. The carrier's cash loss widened to ₹224.18 crore in the financial year ended March 2022.

CISCE results: 98.94% students pass in Class 10, 96.93% in 12th

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CISCE on Sunday declared the Class 10 and Class 12 results with 98.94 per cent and 96.93 per cent of students, respectively, clearing the Board examinations.

Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) Secretary Gerry Arathoon said the Class 10 (ICSE) examination was conducted in 63 written subjects, of which 21 were Indian, 14 foreign and two classical languages. "The Class 12 (ISC) examination was conducted in 47 written subjects of which 12 were Indian languages and three were foreign languages and one classical language," he said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits 'Jana Shakti', an exhibition at the NGMA, in New Delhi, on Sunday. This exhibition contains works by India's top artists on themes covered in 'Mann Ki Baat' such as Swachhata, water conservation, agriculture, space, India's northeast, Nari Shakti and Yoga, and Ayurveda

Google to expand its Dark Web monitoring tool to all mail users

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Google has announced that it will expand its Dark Web monitoring to all Gmail users in the US and later to international markets. The Gmail users will now be able to run scans to see if their Gmail address appears on the Dark Web and receive guidance on what actions to take to protect themselves.

Previously, only available to Google One subscribers in the US, the Dark Web scan feature will be available to all Gmail users in the next few weeks. "We'll soon be expanding access to our Dark Web report to select international markets," the company informed. Google Core services SVP, Jen Fitzpatrick, said that the com-



pany protects Gmail users from nearly 15 billion unwanted messages daily, blocking more than 99.9 per cent of spam, phishing and malware. "Now, we're further expanding spam protections in Google Drive by introducing a new view that makes it easier to separate and review your files, decide what you might view as spam, and stay safe from potential unwanted or abusive content," he announced. Drive will also automatically classify content

into a spam view just like Gmail does, protecting users from seeing dangerous or unwanted files. The company is also launching a new tool to help people evaluate the reliability of visual content they find online. 'About this Image' will provide users with important context like when an image or similar images were first indexed by Google, where it may have first appeared, and where else it's been seen online like a news, social or fact-checking site.

Google recently became the first major tech company to enable passkey sign-in on its own platform. Passkeys combine the advanced security of 2-Step Verification (2SV) with the convenience of just unlocking the device.

K'taka DGP Sood is CBI's new Director

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday appointed Karnataka Director General of Police (DGP) Praveen Sood as the next Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

"Approval of the Competent Authority is hereby conveyed to the appointment of Praveen Sood, IPS (KN:86) as Director, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a period of two years from the date of assumption of charge of the office vice Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, IPS (MH-85) consequent upon completion of his tenure," reads an official order of the Personnel Ministry issued on Sunday. The incumbent CBI Director Jaiswal completes his tenure on May 24.

CM opens Farmers Interest Waiver Scheme-2023

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that our government is the government of farmers. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi, works for the welfare of farmers are being done in the whole country. The old government cheated the farmers in the name of loan waiver and made them defaulters.

They announced loan waiver of farmers in 10 days and waived only 6 thousand crore loan out of 48 thousand crore loan in 15 months. This was a big fraud with the farmers. A bundle of debt was brought on the heads of the farmers and they became defaulters. This stopped them from getting crop loans. Our government will pay the interest amount of each

such farmer, so that they do not remain defaulters and they can get the benefit of crop loan scheme at zero percent interest.

Chouhan formally inaugurated the Chief Minister Farmer Interest Waiver Scheme-2023 in Sagar today. With this, the work of filling the application forms of the scheme has started in all the 4536 farmers' primary cooperative societies of the state. Chief Minister Chouhan also personally filled the loan waiver forms of some farmers including Pancham Lal Patel and gave them interest waiver certificates. Farmer Mr. Panchmalal Patel's interest amount of Rs. 8782 and Mr. Jugendra Chirar's interest amount of Rs. 40 thousand 303 was waived. The interest amount of Panchamal of Rs. 8782 and that of Jugendra Chirar of Rs. 40 thousand 303

Rs. was waived. The Chief Minister said that a list of names of all those farmers who have become defaulters due to non-payment of interest amount has been published in all the primary cooperative societies. Farmers should visit their society, see the list and fill the free application.

They should also get the acknowledgment of the application. The government will pay the interest amount of all such farmers and with this the defaulter farmers will also start getting crop loans for the next crop at zero percent interest.

Chouhan said that the short-term crop loans of farmers whose crops were damaged were converted into medium-term crop loans. The government is also getting the interest amount of such farmers waived. This amount is approximately

Rs 2123 crore.

Chouhan said that our government has put an amount of Rs 2 lakh 31 thousand 322 crore in the accounts of farmers in the last 3 years under various schemes. In this, 94 thousand 394 crore rupees for crop procurement, 47 thousand 188 crore rupees for electricity supply subsidy for agriculture, 15 thousand 541 crore rupees for Chief Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi, 7 thousand 963 crore rupees for Chief Minister Kisan-Kalyan Yojana, 4 This includes Rs. 82 crore for crop compensation, Rs. 115 crore for subsidy on solar pumps and Rs. 4375 crore for agricultural infrastructure development.

The Chief Minister said that our government always stands with the farmers. Even in times of crisis like Covid, the government continuously did

farmer-welfare work and put a huge amount in their account. The farmers have also been given the amount for the recent crop loss. If any farmer has been left out of compensation, he will also be given proper compensation after getting the survey done.

Cooperative Minister Arvind Singh Bhadoria said that today is a historic day for the farmers of the state. The scheme for waiving the interest amount of farmers who defaulted due to the false announcement of loan waiver by the old government has been started in the state today. Under the scheme, interest of Rs 2200 crore will be waived off for about 11 lakh farmers of the state. With this, farmers will also be able to take advantage of the government's crop loan scheme at zero percent interest.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan addressing a programme during inauguration of CM Farmers Loan Interest Waiver Scheme-2023 in Sagar district on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Bhopal records 43.3 degree, Khargone hottest at 44.8

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The State capital recorded highest day temperature of season at 43.3 degree celsius while whole state continues to witness scorching temperatures.

Khargone remained the hottest at 44.8 degree celsius. There are chances of getting some relief from the scorching heat in Madhya Pradesh after two days. Presently most of the cities are burning like a furnace. Saturday's day temperature in Khargone reached 46 degrees. This is the highest temperature here in the last 7 years. Last year on May 10, the mercury of Khargone was recorded at 45.8 degrees. Khargone was the fourth hottest city in the world after Nawabshah, Sibi city of Pakistan and Dammam in Saudi Arabia.

However, due to the activation of Western Disturbance, there may be light drizzle with thunder and lightning after May



16 to 20 in Gwalior, Rewa-Chambal division. Rest of the places, the heat wave will remain sharp. Especially Malwa-Nimar will be very hot. The temperature here can remain around 44 degrees. The effect of heat will also be seen in Bhopal-Narmadapuram

Met told that there will be light clouds in the Gwalior-Chambal division of the northern

region of the state on Sunday. Rest of the weather will be clear. In Gwalior, Chambal and Rewa divisions, between May 16 and 20, there may be a situation of drizzling and thunder. Rest of the weather will remain dry. Currently a Western Disturbance is active, but it does not have much effect. Another Western Disturbance, Khargone of Madhya

Pradesh was the hottest in the country. After this, 46 degree temperature was recorded in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. Apart from Jaisalmer, the heat was more in Barmer, Akola, Churu, Kota, Bikaner, Jhansi, Phalodi and Jalgaon. The temperature was recorded here from 45 to 45.7 degrees. For the first time in the month of May, the mercury crossed 44 degrees in Gwalior, Khargone, Dhar, Guna, Ratlam, Shajapur, Ujjain, Damoh and Khajuraho.

In Khargone, the temperature rose up to 4 degrees in a single day. Earlier, Ratlam had the highest temperature for 9 consecutive days. That is, Ratlam was the hottest in the state. For the first time in Gwalior on Saturday, the mercury was 44.5 degree Celsius. At the same time, the mercury reached 43.2 degrees in Bhopal with an increase of 2 degrees. It was 42.7 degrees in Indore and 41.1 degrees in Jabalpur.

Kushwaha community is patriotic, hardworking: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the construction of Luv Kush Temple and Dharamshala at a cost of Rs 10 crore at the divisional conference of Kushwaha Samaj in Sagar on Sunday. Rs 5 crores for the temple and Rs 5 crores for dharamshala will be given by the state government.

The Chief Minister handed over the responsibility for site selection to the Kushwaha Samaj. A hostel will also be built at the same place which will be selected. Along with this, Chief Minister Chouhan also announced the formation of Kushwaha Samaj Welfare Board in Madhya Pradesh. He said that the chairman of the board will be given the status of a minister. Chief Minister Chouhan attended the divisional level conference and

felicitated All India Kushwaha Samaj in Sagar today.

Chouhan said that places are being fixed for such youths who have not got employment after studies, to learn work, so that they can get engaged in some industry after learning work. They will be given Rs 8,000 per month while learning work.

The Chief Minister performed bhoomi-pujan of 3 tap-water schemes worth Rs 865 crore 91 lakh for Sagar district during the Sammelen. Through the Nal-Jal group scheme, water will be delivered to every house by laying pipelines in 520 villages. These include Rs 202 crore 99 lakh Sanaudha-Madhyha water supply scheme, on completion of which 77 villages will be benefited. Houses of 56 villages will be benefited from the Sanaudha-Banda water sup-

ply. The cost of the scheme will be Rs 166 crore 67 lakh. 387 villages of the area will be benefited by the Deori-Kesli water supply scheme, whose cost is Rs 496 crore 25 lakh.

The Chief Minister said that the Kushwaha community is hardworking and laborious and work really hard to earn their livelihood. The history of the community is glorious. There were many empires of this community, who worked with the spirit of service for the welfare of all communities. Apart from contributing to the freedom struggle, they also got rid of Britishers.

The community left no stone unturned in sacrificing everything in the service of the country. In fact, Kushwaha community is a patriotic community, which has also worked for the welfare of other communities.

Chouhan said that our government has taken initiative to open a Horticulture College in Rahli, the process of which is going on. He called upon the Kushwaha community to make efforts towards better education of their talented children.

The state government is paying the fees of talented poor children for admission in medical and engineering colleges. Medical and engineering studies have also been started in Hindi.

Now CM Rise Schools better than private schools are being built in Madhya Pradesh. The government has now decided to reserve 5 percent seats for the children passed out from government schools for admission in medical colleges.

The government has also done many things in the direction of the upliftment of women.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during a Jat Mahasabha at BHEL Dussehra Ground in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Orthopaedics deptt, AIIMS organizes CME on Pediatric Ortho Trauma

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Department of Orthopaedics, AIIMS Bhopal organised the IOA Paediatric Ortho Trauma CME under the aegis of the Indian Orthopaedic Association (IOA) Paediatric Orthopaedic sub-committee and MP chapter of IOA in collaboration with the Bhopal Orthopaedic Surgeons' Society on May 13 and 14, 2023.

As a part of it, the main CME event was conducted on Sunday. Faculty for the CME were from Delhi, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Kolkata, Patna, Deogarh, Rishikesh, Indore and Bhopal.

More than 90 doctors, post graduate students and senior residents from different medical colleges and orthopaedic surgeons practicing in different hospitals (government and private),



participated in the CME.

Prof (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Bhopal, who is the Chairman of the Paediatric Orthopaedic Sub-Committee of the IOA led the deliberations. He highlighted the need for understanding the principles of management of trauma in children which

are different from those in adults. Adhering to the principles is important for achieving satisfactory outcomes.

He suggested that super-specialty course (MCh.) in Paediatric Orthopaedics should be started at AIIMS, Bhopal. He also highlighted the need for management of trauma in children which

interested Paediatric Orthopaedics.

The discussions in the CME covered traumatic conditions of the upper and lower limb with well drafted sessions of fractures that Orthopaedic surgeons have to manage in their day-to-day practice. Debates on common traumatic conditions for which there are controversies in scientific literature for deciding optimal treatment generated a lot of discussion. Post-graduate quiz was organized as part of the CME. It drew a lot of enthusiasm from the participants.

The team from AIIMS Bhopal of Dr. Swasti Prasad and Dr. Aravind won the first prize in the quiz. Dr. Mohit Issrani won the first prize in the poster presentation. The session on 'how to approach a paediatric case in post-graduate exam' was another highlight of the CME.

Deptt of Health Research approves Rs 80 lakhs grant to AIIMS for Kavacervi testing

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Screening for cancer is known to reduce mortality by early detection and treatment. First, screening must advance the time of diagnosis of cancers that are destined to cause death. Second, early treatment of these cancers must confer some advantage over treatment at clinical presentation. Unlike other cancer types, cervix cancer can be subjected to screening for early diagnosis and treatment.

Based on this Govt of India criteria, Department of Health Research (DHR) under the prestigious Grant-in-Aid (GIA) (Project ID: 2022-1988) research grant is sanctioned to Dr Rashmi Chowdhary (PI), Additional Professor AIIMS Bhopal and her team for testing of developed Mass-screening Cervical Cancer Device; KayaCervi in collaboration with her USA research partner Dr Sulatha Dworkanath, CEO Kaya 17, USA.

This grant will be for three years. Research team of eminent clinicians and scientists will conduct study in the community settings of Bhopal. There are 36 villages (clusters)

There are 36 villages (clusters) to be selected using Probability proportionate to size sampling (PPS) method according to the study's inclusion and exclusion criteria

to be selected using Probability proportionate to size sampling (PPS) method according to the study's inclusion and exclusion criteria. KayaCervi device has produced encouraging results in its pilot study in the AIIMS Bhopal hospital setting (2019-2020).

Researchers believe that this study will be a milestone in the early diagnosis of the cervical cancer especially through mass-screening in the rural area; device can be kept at the primary healthcare center, easy to perform test, it can work with the USB mode as well. Results of the test will be generated within 30 minutes once sample is collected.

Summer special train from Mumbai to Varanasi

Bhopal: A special weekly train from Mumbai to Varanasi will ply from May 15 to June 6 to clear additional passenger traffic during summer.

Lokmanya Tilak Terminus - Banaras Weekly Express Special Train will halt at Kalyan, Nashik Road, Bhusaval, Khandwa, Itarsi, Pipriya, Jabalpur, Katni, Maihar, Satna, Manikpur and Prayagraj Chhivki stations in both the directions, said an official statement.

Train number 01053 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus - Banaras Weekly Express Special Train will depart from Lokmanya Tilak Terminus at 12.15 hrs on May 15, May 22, May 29 May and June 5, 2023 (Mondays). It will reach Itarsi at 00.20 hrs the next day, leave Itarsi at 00.30 hrs and will reach Varanasi at 16.05 hrs.

Similarly, train number 01054 Banaras - Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) Weekly Express will depart from Banaras station at 20.30 hrs on May 16, May 23, May 30 and June 6, 2023 (Tuesdays). It will reach Itarsi at 10.10 hrs the next day, will leave Itarsi at 10.15 hrs and will reach LTT at 23.55 hours.

The train will have 22 coaches including 6 air conditioned Third Class, 8 Sleeper Class, 6 General Class, 1 Generator Car, 1 SLRD.

DGP convenes crime and law and order review meeting at PHQ

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Police is continuously working to strengthen law and order and control crimes across the state on the basis of the guidelines given by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan and in this sequence, DGP Sudhir Saxena made a detailed review of the crimes committed in Narmadapuram zone, the action being taken by the police to control them and the law and order situation of the zone in the review meeting of law and order.

During the review meeting, DGP Saxena took complete information of Narmadapuram zone as well as comparative review of the crimes and preventive action taken so far in the year 2021, year 2022 and year 2023.

He also made a comparative review of the action taken against the mafia and the conviction and acquittal in the identified crimes during the same period.

In the meeting, the DGP took information from the officials about the status of

DGP Sudhir Saxena reviewed of the crimes committed in Narmadapuram zone, the action being taken by the police to control them

cybercrime in the zone and the available expertise related to their interpretation, as well as reviewed the actions taken in the year 2022 and 2023 in the direction of narcotics and de-addiction.

During this, he said that the complaints received in the CM Helpline should be taken seriously and resolved satisfactorily immediately.

He instructed to lay special emphasis on solving crimes against women and children. Safety of women, children, scheduled castes and weaker sections is the top priority of the MP Police and all police officers should pay special attention to the crimes committed against them.



Municipal Corporation employees greet Mayor Jagat Bahadur Singh during a programme on his birth anniversary in Jabalpur on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Chief minister invited to attend Shri Sitaram Mahayagya

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was called on by a delegation of citizens of Baktra district Sehore and they invited him to attend Shri Sitaram Mahayagya.

This Mahayagya is being held in the premises of Shri Ram Janaki Temple, Baktra during the period from May 20 to 28. Along



with the Yagya, the Ram Darbar and Shiv Parivar Pran Pratishtha Mahotsav will also be organised. Those who met Chief Minister Chouhan includ-

ed Mahant Girish Das, former minister Rajkumar Patel, along with Sarvshri Lal Singh Patel, Mahesh Patel, Ganesh Patel, Mangal Singh, Uday Patel, BL Chouhan and Vinod Chouhan etc. In view of the suggestions given by the delegation, Chief Minister Chouhan directed the district administration Sehore to make necessary arrangements.

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AMPRI should become the engine of innovation of the state: Guv

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Governor Mangubhai Patel has said that the "One week-one laboratory" programme is a worthwhile initiative to build a self-reliant India. The programme will inspire the future generation to contribute in the efforts of nation building.

Laboratory" at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research's Advanced Materials and Processes Research Institute (CSIR AMPRI) auditorium today. Film focusing on the activities of AMPRI was screened and One Week One Lab booklet was released. The document for technology transfer was also exchanged by the institute with the enterprise.

Kisan-Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan has created a strong environment for science and research in the country. He has done revolutionary work of promoting holistic, research, discussion and analysis based education system through new education policy.

CSIR and scientists in developing scientific outlook and rational thinking is a commendable initiative. Governor Patel said that the Amrit Utsav of Independence is a pledge to acquaint the youths with the glory of the nation's past and prepare the future generation committed to building the future of the nation on the completion of 100 years of independence.

He told that the institute was established in New Delhi on May 14, 1981 as Regional Research Laboratory, which was shifted to Bhopal in the year 1983. The institute was restructured in the year 2007 with a futuristic outlook. The team of 100 scientists and technicians of the institute is continuously doing research and exploration work for effective discharge of its role in digital and green changes.



Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel goes through an exhibition after its inauguration during a week-long laboratory programme at Advanced Material Process Research Institute (AMPRI) in Bhopal on Sunday.

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. Corporate Office: Unit No. 802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V. Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400069. Ashok Nagar Branch: Office No. - 3/206, Bachpan School Complex, Near Over Bridge, Ashok Nagar - 473331, (Madhya Pradesh)



An ophthalmologist checks a patient during a free health check-up organised by Guru Nanak Charitable hospital at TT Nagar Gurudwara in Bhopal on Sunday.

Terrorism will not be allowed to flourish in MP

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that religious conversion will not be allowed on the land of Madhya Pradesh. Effective action has been taken against organizations involved in religious conversion. No stone will be left unturned to crush terrorism.

district of the state. Members of such organizations have also been arrested from Telangana. Prompt action has been taken by ATS. Such elements will be rooted out. Their pattern is to spread religious conversion and terrorism. They will not be allowed to succeed in such an endeavour.

Veer Tejaji Welfare Board will be formed in Madhya Pradesh: Chief Minister

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the Jat community is a courageous, hardworking and brave community. This community also does the work of stocking the grain store for the country. The Jat Regiment has been inducted in the Indian Army.



ends will also be included in the school curriculum, so that the younger generation can get inspiration and guidance. Chief Minister Chouhan was addressing the Jat Mahakumbh at BHEL Dussehra ground in Bhopal today. Former Union Minister Vikram Verma, Agriculture Minister of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Patel, MLA Neena Verma, Abhay Chautala and Yashpal Malik from Haryana, President of Mahila Morcha Madhya Pradesh, Maya

Chief Minister Chouhan while welcoming the representatives who came to the Jat Mahakumbh said that Veer Tejaswi Tejaji Maharaj made unrelenting efforts to stop cow slaughter and protect the cow progeny. It is believed that the Jats originated from the Jatas (hair locks) of Lord Shiva.

and Indore in Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Chouhan also talked about taking necessary steps after examining the other suggestions given by the Jat community. He said that he got a lot of affection from the Jat community in his childhood. At the beginning of his public activities, he was guided by senior leader Vikram Verma.

Five persons drown in two separate incidents in Jabalpur and Harda

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Five persons, including a BJP leader's son and three teenage boys, drowned in two incidents in Jabalpur and Harda districts of Madhya Pradesh in past 24 hours. In Jabalpur, a group of five boys went to Tilwara Ghat to bathe in river Narmada, about 12 km from the district headquarters, Bargi area City Superintendent of Police Ananta Khatkar said.

were identified as Sonu Baghel, Tilak Chauhan and Mohit Bamne. In Jabalpur, Atul Patel (23), the only son of former BJP district rural president Shiv Patel, along with his friends went to Tilwara Ghat to bathe in river Narmada, about 12 km from the district headquarters, Bargi area City Superintendent of Police Ananta Khatkar said.



Congress MLA PC Sharma addresses Akhil Bharatiya Narmadiya Brahmin Mahasabha's first executive body meeting at Narmada Mandir in Bhopal on Sunday.

Court deprecates investigating officer in case related to 2020 riots

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Court has deprecated the Investigating Officer in a case related to the 2020 northeast Delhi riots for his "casual and unprofessional conduct", and referred the matter to Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora for appraisal of the investigation.

investigation done by SI Vipin Kumar in this case as well as...conduct of misreporting the facts to his higher officer," the judge said in an order passed last week. Ten complaints are clubbed in the case and the court had earlier on May 1 sought clarification from the Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast) regarding the time of each incident along with the relevant evidence.

admissible piece of evidence, the time of each such incident, and the basis of pointing out the finger towards the accused persons for each of these incidents," the court said in its earlier order. During the subsequent proceedings on May 10, the judge said according to the DCP's report, the officer had called for a report from the IO and as it was not found specific, the present station house officer (SHO) and Kumar were directed to provide the court with a more specific synopsis.

igation by another IO, the judge said noting the report. The judge said SI Kumar had mentioned in his report to the superior officer that one of the complainants Sameja had said a mob had torched houses on February 25, 2020, at 11 am. The judge noted although 10 complaints were clubbed in the case, the charge sheet and the statement of witnesses did not mention the time of several incidents.

being an example of a "casual approach" to the investigation, also points to the "manner in which complaints of various complainants were hushed up" by Kumar. "The objectionable approach of SI does not end here. He ventured to report wrong facts to the DCP, so as to say that complainant Sameja mentioned the time of 11:am in her complaint," the judge said. "Since SI Vipin Kumar is not working in the control of DCP (northeast) now and since his continuation of casual and unprofessional conduct is being witnessed by this court, I deem it fit to refer this matter to the Commissioner of Police," the judge added.

DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH RULE 3 (1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. (AHFL) under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act).

Table with columns: S. No., Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower & Guarantor, Demand Notice Date & Amount, Description of secured assets (immovable property).

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to AHFL as aforesaid, AHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under the Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of AHFL.

State polls will keep political pot boiling till 2024 LS battle

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Assembly elections in Karnataka may be over, but a series of other State polls this year will keep the political pot boiling till the 2024 Lok Sabha battle.

At least three assembly election could also take place alongside the Lok Sabha polls. After Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram would go for polls this year.

The northeastern states of Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya were the first to have assembly polls in 2023.

The last part of 2023 would witness a series of assembly polls with terms of legislative assemblies of Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana ending on different dates in



December this year and January 2024.

While the term of the 40-member Mizoram assembly ends on December 17, the tenures of the Chhattisgarh and the Madhya Pradesh legislative assemblies conclude on January 3 and January 6, 2024, respectively.

The tenures of the

Rajasthan and Telangana assemblies end on January 14 and January 16, 2024, respectively.

Polis in these five states being held together cannot be ruled out at this stage.

Besides the scheduled polls, assembly elections in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir can also not be ruled

out this year.

Sources had earlier said that elections in Jammu and Kashmir may be held in the summer of 2023 after winter conditions subside, and the timing would depend on the security scenario.

After the conclusion of the 62-day long Amarnath Yatra from July 1 to August 31, a possible window sometime in October this year could be available for polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

The terms of the legislative assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Odisha are ending on different dates in June next year.

Since Lok Sabha polls are usually held in April-May, there is a likelihood that assembly elections in the three states could be held simultaneously with the parliamentary exercise.

Indian Navy test fires BrahMos missile



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The indigenously designed and manufactured guided missile destroyer INS Mormugao on Sunday successfully test-fired the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile. It hit the 'bulls eye' when the ship undertook its first firing of the BrahMos missile, navy officials said here.

Giving details, they said the firing from the frontline warship demonstrated the navy's fire-power at sea.

"INS Mormugao, the latest guided-missile destroyer, successfully hit 'bulls eye' during her maiden BrahMos supersonic cruise missile firing," a Navy official said.

Odisha's Millet Mission may go global soon

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Odisha Government's much-touted Odisha Millet Mission (OMM) launched in 2017 may go global soon with the World Food Programme identifying it as one of the best practices that can be replicated in other States in India and other countries in Africa as part of South-South collaboration.

Back home, it recently added yet another feather in its cap with the UNDP and Niti Aayog hailing it as 'Model of Millets in India'. It has been included in the compendium 'Best practices in social sector: A compendium, 2023' jointly prepared by the UN body and the country's top think tank. The document was released recently.

The Compendium also notes that "World Food Programme identified OMM as one of the best practices that can be replicated in other states and



other countries in Africa as part of South-South Collaboration."

The OMM, which was launched with an aim to revive millets on farms and plates, simultaneously focusing on production, processing, consumption, marketing and inclusion of millets in government schemes, was initiated in 30 blocks covering 7 districts in 2017, then extended to 84 blocks covering 15 districts by 2021.

This is further scaled up to 143 blocks in 2022 covering 19 districts, reaching out to 1.18

Lakh farmers covering 54,495 hectare.

Tribal development Cooperative Corporation Ltd has been chosen as nodal procurement agency which partners with Farmers Produce Organisations (FPOs) and Women Self Help Groups) to procure finger millet (ragi) to be distributed in PDS and ICDS. Involvement of WSHGs and FPOs which are considered to be the backbone of any rural economy make the OMM fit for the case for being a game changer in the social sector.

SC to hear plea of lawyers body for action against VP, Rijiju over remarks on judiciary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of Bombay Lawyers Association (BLA) against Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar over their remarks on judiciary and the collegium system for appointment of judges.

The lawyers' body has moved the top court challenging the Bombay High Court's February 9 order dismissing its plea on the ground that it was not a fit case to invoke the writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution.

As per the apex court website, the appeal of the BLA is listed for hearing before a bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Ahsanuddin Amanullah.

The Bombay Lawyers Association (BLA) had claimed that Rijiju and Dhankhar showed lack of faith in the Constitution with their remarks and conduct. It had sought orders to restrain Dhankhar from discharging duty as the vice president, and Rijiju as the cab-



inet minister for the central government.

In an appeal, the lawyers body said the "frontal attack not just on the judiciary but the Constitution" by the two executive officials has lowered the prestige of the Supreme Court in public.

Rijiju had said the collegium system of appointing judges was "opaque and not transparent". Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar had questioned the landmark 1973 Kesavananda Bharati judgement that gave the basic structure doctrine.

Dhankhar said his verdict set a bad precedent and, if any authority questions Parliament's power to amend the Constitution, it would be difficult to say "we are a democrat-

ic nation".

"It is submitted that the Petitioner herein filed the PIL before the High Court of Judicature at Bombay praying therein to declare the Respondent no 1 and 2 as disqualified candidates to hold any constitutional posts of Vice President and Minister of the Union Cabinet, respectively, based on their behaviour, conduct and utterances made in public," the petition has said.

The two constitutional functionaries, it said, showed lack of faith in the Constitution by their conduct and utterances made in public and by attacking its institutions, including the Supreme Court, and showing scant regard for the law laid down by the Supreme Court.

"The conduct of Respondent Nos 1 and 2 appeared to have shaken public faith in the Supreme Court and the Constitution," it said.

The plea said the vice president and the Union minister have affirmed oaths that they will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution. "However, their conduct has shown lack of faith in the Constitution of India," it said assailing the high court's order dismissing its PIL.

They have launched a frontal attack on the institution of judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, in most derogatory language without any recourse which is available under the constitutional scheme to change the status quo as per the law laid down by the Supreme Court, it said. The BLA quoted the statements of the dignitaries made at certain functions. The high court had on February 9 dismissed the public interest litigation (PIL).

"We are not inclined to grant any relief. The petition is dismissed. Reasons would be recorded later," the high court had said.

Jaipur serial blasts: Apex court to hear appeal of families of victims against acquittal of accused



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear on May 17 an appeal by some of the family members of those killed in the 2008 Jaipur serial blasts challenging the Rajasthan High Court verdict acquitting four men, who were handed down death penalty by a trial court in the case.

Jaipur was rocked by a series of blasts on May 13, 2008 when bombs went off one after another at Manak Chawk Khanda, Chandpole

Gate, Badi Chaupad, Chhoti Chaupad, Tripolia Gate, Johri Bazar and Sanganeri Gate.

The explosions left 71 people dead and 185 injured

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Rajesh Bindal considered the submissions of senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for some of the families of the victims of the blasts. The senior lawyer also sought a stay on the high court's judgement.

The Rajasthan government had on April 25 filed an appeal challenging the high court verdict in the case.

The top court on May 12 permitted family members of the victims of the blast to file an appeal against the verdict and listed the petition with that of the state government for hearing on Wednesday.

"Diary No...Is taken on board. Permission to file SLPs (Special Leave Petition) is granted. Leave granted. Liberty is granted to file an application for early hearing after respondents are duly served. List on May 17...Along with SLP(Crl)...(of Rajasthan government)," the bench ordered on Friday.

SC to hear Navlakha's plea for shifting out from Mumbai public library under house arrest



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is likely to hear on Monday a plea of activist Gautam Navlakha, who is under house arrest in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, that he be shifted from a public library in Mumbai to some other place.

A bench of Justices K M Joseph and B V Nagarathna had on April 28 directed the CBI to file its reply within two weeks on Navlakha's petition seeking to be shifted from the public library to some other place in the city as the facility needs to be vacated.

Besides, the top court also directed Navlakha to deposit another Rs 8 lakh toward expenses for making available police personnel for his security.

Shah to inaugurate training programme on legislative drafting

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate a training programme on legislative drafting here on Monday.

The programme is being organised by the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) in collaboration with the Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies (PRIDE), an official statement said.

It is aimed at creating an understanding of the principles and practices of legislative drafting among officers of Parliament, state legislatures



and various ministries, statutory bodies and other government departments, it added.

Legislative drafting has a major impact on the interpretation of policies and the regulations implemented for the welfare of the society and the state, the statement said.

Since legislative draftsmen are responsible for producing legislation which promotes democratic governance and gives effect to the rule of law, it is necessary that they are im p a r t e d training from time to time to sharpen their skills, it added.

Navies of India, Indonesia begin 6-day exercise



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kavaratti arrived at Batam, Indonesia to participate in the 4th edition of India-Indonesia Bilateral Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' from May 14-19, navy officials said here on Sunday.

They also said an Indian Navy Dornier Maritime Patrol aircraft and Chetak helicopter is also participating. The Indonesian Navy will be re-presented by KRI Sultan

Iskandar Muda, CN 235 Maritime Patrol Aircraft and AS565 Panther Helicopter.

Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' is aimed at enhancing interoperability, jointness and mutual cooperation between both the navies.

The Harbour phase will comprise Cross deck visits, professional Interactions, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, and sports fixtures. During the Sea Phase, weapon firing, Helicopter Operations, Anti-submarine warfare and air defence exercises and boarding operations are planned.

Bats' proteins can play key role in fighting inflammatory diseases, ageing: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A protein called ASC2 in the bats that helps it develop extraordinary immune defense against pathogens like Covid-19 and Ebola can play a key role in fighting inflammatory diseases and ageing in humans, a team of scientists has said.

The research, published in the journal Cell, is focused on multi-protein complexes called inflammasomes that are responsible for the overactive inflammation that causes serious symptoms in many diseases.

The team discovered that a bat protein called ASC2 has a powerful ability to inhibit inflammasomes, thereby limiting inflammation.

Bats have attracted great attention as a likely reservoir of the SARS-CoV-2 virus responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic. But this unique ability to host yet survive viral infections could also



have a very positive impact on human health if we can understand and exploit how they achieve this," said Professor Wang Lin-Fa, at Duke-NUS Singapore's Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) Programme.

The study "suggests that the high-level activity of ASC2 is a key mechanism by which bats keep inflammation under control, with implications for their long lifespan

and unique status as a reservoir for viruses," explained Dr Matae Ahn, Adjunct Researcher at the EID Programme.

The bat protein, tested in mice, showed good results. Expression of the bat protein in genetically-modified mice dampened inflammation and reduced the severity of the diseases driven by various triggers, including viruses, the team said.

Examination of the ASC2 protein in detail identified four amino acids in the molecule that were key to making the bat protein more effective at dampening inflammation than its corresponding human protein.

This provides valuable insight for the development of drugs that can mimic the anti-inflammatory effect of the bat protein.

The next step for the team is to investigate the potential of their findings for treating humans.

"We have filed patents based on this work and are exploring commercial partnerships for drug discovery. We are hoping to develop a new class of anti-inflammatory drugs for inflammatory diseases," Prof Wang said.

Prof Wang strongly believes that it is time to focus on the more promising aspects of what makes bats special "to help fight the human diseases of the future."

छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल
प्राथमिक भवन, नारथ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नया रायपुर, अटल नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.) 492002
सर्व संबंधित को सूचना
भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली की अधिसूचना दिनांक 14.09.2006 (यथा संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता कि (1) मेसर्स गुरुश्री मिनरल्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, (छिन्तापड़रिया डोलोमाईट खनारी डायरेक्टर- श्री मुकेश बसल), (छिन्तापड़रिया डोलोमाईट खनारी डायरेक्टर- श्री मनमोहन शर्मा), (छिन्तापड़रिया डोलोमाईट खनारी डायरेक्टर- श्री मनमोहन शर्मा), (छिन्तापड़रिया डोलोमाईट खनारी डायरेक्टर- श्री मनमोहन शर्मा), (छिन्तापड़रिया डोलोमाईट खनारी डायरेक्टर- श्री मनमोहन शर्मा), (छिन्तापड़रिया डोलोमाईट खनारी डायरेक्टर- श्री मनमोहन शर्मा), (छिन्तापड़रिया डोलोमाईट खनारी डायरेक्टर- श्री मनमोहन शर्मा)

Health Min notifies standards of healthcare institutions 7 yrs after RPwD Act
ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI
Almost seven years after the passage of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, the Union Health Ministry has now notified the standards of public and private healthcare institutions to ensure accessibility of healthcare facilities and services to the persons with disabilities (PwDs).
The RPwD Act, 2016 mandates the Central government to formulate rules laying down standards of accessibility inter alia for facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas as well as in all parts of government and private hospitals and other health-care institutions and centres
Now, the Union Health Ministry has framed the guidelines themed 'Accessibility'
homes, private clinics, and others such as sub centres, primary health centres, community health centres, sub-district hospitals, district hospitals, first referral units, dispensaries, medical laboratories and diagnostic centres should be made accessible, says the guidelines. A notification signed by Rajiv Majhi, Joint Secretary in the Ministry was issued on May 4.
The standards have been framed by a panel headed by Dr Anil Kumar Gaur, director of All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Mumbai. The other members include Dr Naveen Kumar, Additional Professor (PMR) from JIPMER, Puducherry, Dr Sanjay Kumar Pandey, Additional Professor (PMR), AIIMS Patna and Abhishek Bose, architect from CPWD, Union Urban Development Ministry. However, there is no representation or any activist from the disability sector in the panel.
The Standards calls for providing universal access i.e. the facilities are designed ensuring that the environment, facilities, services and products including the information and communication technology services and products can be used by everyone regardless of his ability or disability. It includes building structure guidelines such as parking, ramps, staircases, lifts, washrooms and drinking water facilities that are applicable to all kind of healthcare facilities including in say ophthalmology, gynecology and cancer covered under the Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India, 2021.
Medical equipment and furniture, including the examination tables and chairs, lifts for shifting persons with locomotor disability, gynaecological examination table, radiological diagnostic equipment, mammography equipment and chairs, densitometer and adjustable height stretcher, weighing scales, commodes and shower transfer benches, among others have been defined.

War of words between Cong-TMC over 'who will lead Opp in 2024'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Karnataka election results have triggered fresh war of words over the leadership issue in 2024 — between the Congress and the Trinamool Congress

While Congress Lok Sabha Leader Adhir Chowdhury has claimed that no party other than the one he represents can lead a united opposition against the BJP and that “only the Congress being a pan-Indian party can unite the Opposition,” the Trinamool Congress continues to insist on its “one against one” theory implying the regional

parties will have to be given upper hand in the areas where they are stronger.

“The Karnataka election results have proved beyond all doubt that it is only the Congress which as a national party can lead the fight against the BJP ... there is no alternative to the Congress in national politics,” Chowdhury, who is also the Bengal Pradesh Congress president, said.

In an apparent jab to the TMC he said that it was irrelevant as to which small group said what about how things should be in the national politics.

Like Mamata Banerjee took no cognizance of the



Congress in her Saturday speech by refusing to congratulate its leaders for their landslide victory in the southern State Chowdhury too ignored the existence of TMC in the

national political map saying, “it is irrelevant as to what the tiny groups say ... after the Karnataka elections it is clear that no party other than the Congress can take on the BJP ... it is the Congress that is going to take the centre stage.”

Reacting to posers he said, “there are only two fronts in the country now. One is the communal front of the BJP and another is the secular front led by the Congress ... Only the Congress and no one else has the power to defeat the Narendra Modi government.”

On Mamata Banerjee’s claim that “the road to Karnataka started from Bengal in 2021 when the TMC roared

back to power with overwhelming majority,” the PCC president said that Banerjee had “betrayed the cause of opposition unity both inside and outside Parliament ... she has betrayed the cause of opposition unity in Meghalaya, Goa, Tripura and all other places ... hence it is irrelevant what they say now.”

The TMC which had last month lost its national party status had strongly been pushing for the Bengal Chief Minister’s right to prime ministership until the party lost the Tripura and Meghalaya polls.

He said that the TMC which has been playing a “B Team” to the BJP for the past

several years should now think of winding up. “This party of thieves will not survive the 2024 elections ... so the honest people in the TMC should start thinking of joining the Congress,” Chowdhury said.

TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh reacted to the PPC president’s statement saying the Congress was the C Team of CPI(M) which itself was the B Team of the BJP in Bengal. “The Congress should think of bare survival in Bengal instead of getting TMC men to join its ranks ... The Karnataka victory has made them over ambitious ... they should remember that they are just another party in the

opposition ranks.”

He called upon the Congress to join the fight against the BJP instead of building up hegemony once again.

Meanwhile, in an eye-catching development various local committees of the CPI(M) continued to take out small area-wise processions celebrating the Congress victory in Karnataka. When asked to comment on his rally at Jadavpur, CPI(M) central committee member Sujana Chakrabarty, a strong votary of Left-Congress alliance in Bengal said more than anything else his party was celebrating the fall of BJP

Manipur violence: CM in Delhi to meet PM, Shah

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh and four members of his cabinet have gone to Delhi to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday to discuss the situation in the northeastern state shaken by violence for the past several days, a source said.

The issue of the ongoing suspension of operation (SOO) with militant organisations of the state is also likely to be discussed, the source said.

The chief minister’s visit to Delhi also followed the demand by 10 tribal MLAs belonging to the Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi group in Manipur for a “separate administration” for their region in the wake of recent violent clashes between the Meiteis and tribals.

Of the 10 legislators, 7



Violent clashes broke out in the north-eastern state after a ‘Tribal Solidarity March’ was organised in the 10 hill districts on May 3 to protest against the Meitei community’s demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

The clashes were preceded by tension over the eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had led to a series of smaller agitations.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur’s population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals -- Nagas and Kukis -- constitute another 40 per cent of the population and reside in the hill districts.

The chief minister had on Monday said that 60 people were killed, 231 injured and 1,700 houses including religious places burnt in the ethnic violence that rocked the northeastern state for the past few days.

along to the BJP, two are from Kuki People’s Alliance (KPA) and one is an Independent. The two KPA and independent MLAs are also part of the NDA led by the saffron party.

Four cabinet ministers - Th Biswajit, Y Khemchand, K Govindas and Th Prasanta - accompanied the chief minister to Delhi.

BJP state president A Sharda Devi also went to Delhi with them, the source said.

CBI visits Bengal board head office in school jobs scam

PTI ■ KOLKATA

As part of the ongoing court-monitored investigations into the “irregularities” in secondary school job recruitments by central agencies, CBI on Sunday visited the headquarters of West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE).

A senior WBBSE told PTI that a CBI officer visited Nivedita Bhavan, the headquarters of the board, at Salt Lake township in the afternoon and went through some documents.

“Our staff extended all cooperation to them. It was not that a CBI team raided our office. One CBI officer came, apparently as part of the ongoing probe, and went through some papers after unlocking a few rooms. He then left,” the official said.



He said WBBSE stood for transparency in the system.

“Investigations are continuing and if there has been any irregularity in the past, the board will do whatever is asked by agencies to correct them. We have nothing else to comment on this,” he said.

Several people were arrested by CBI and ED in connection with alleged irregularities in the recruitment of teaching

Cong weak in several parts of country, BJP needs to be countered State-wise: Vijayan

PTI ■ THRISSUR

The Karnataka assembly poll result is the people’s “reply” to the BJP and the Sangh Parivar that they cannot continue to do whatever they feel like in the country, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said here on Sunday.

At the same time, Vijayan said the Congress should also realise that it is not as strong as it was in the past and batted for a “state-wise” strategy of uniting anti-BJP forces to take on the saffron party.

“The BJP, RSS and Sangh Parivar’s stand was that they can do anything they want in the country. It is to this stand that the people of Karnataka have given a resounding reply. They have shown they will not allow them to continue like this,” Vijayan said.



In all the southern states, except Karnataka, it was non-Congress parties that were in power, the chief minister said after inaugurating a public meeting organised by the LDF as part of its second anniversary celebrations.

“We should work according to the changing scenario on the ground and the Congress needs to realise that. It needs to realise that is not the same Congress that was in power in the country for several years. It is weak in several parts of the country.

K'taka template can be implemented in other States: Pawar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Communist Party of India (CPI) leader D Raja on Sunday met NCP president Sharad Pawar at his residence in Mumbai and discussed providing an alternative to BJP, a meeting coming a day after the saffron party’s drubbing in Karnataka elections.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, Pawar indicated that the Karnataka template needs to be implemented in other states, and for that, like-minded parties will have to work on a common minimum programme (CMP).

“The Karnataka assembly elections have given a message. We need to work on creating a situation like Karnataka in other states. The Congress alone gave an alternative to the BJP in Karnataka, but in other states, like-minded parties will have to work on a common minimum programme (CMP),” the NCP chief said.

We will work on both fronts (of creating a strategy



like Karnataka and the CMP) and we are starting this process, he added.

Raja spoke about a common understanding to defeat the BJP.

“The state-level strategy can be worked out. We may find some time to interact in Delhi now. The BJP can be defeated and it will lose the 2024 parliamentary as well as state (Maharashtra) elections. The myth of the party being invincible has been broken,” he said referring to the Karnataka poll outcome.

In Karnataka, the Congress won 135 seats out of 224, while the ruling BJP and the former prime minister H D Deve Gowda-led Janata Dal (Secular) secured 66 and 19 seats, respectively.

On day 4, Pilot's Jan Sangharsh Yatra gets 'overwhelming response'

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Former Rajasthan deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot’s “Jan Sangharsh Yatra” on the issues of corruption and government recruitment exam paper leaks continued to draw support from people on its fourth day on Sunday.

On Sunday, the dissident Congress leader resumed his foot march from Mehla town in Jaipur district and moved towards Mahapura, where he is scheduled to stay the night.

He covered a distance of around 25 km on Sunday.

On Monday, Pilot will hold a public meeting near Kamlia Nehru Nagar along the Ajmer highway on the culmination of his five-day yatra.

“The yatra is getting overwhelming response from people. Be it the youth or the elderly, all are attending the padayatra,” an aide of Pilot said.

Pilot began the foot march from Ajmer on Thursday, challenging Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and



the party’s top brass as assembly elections in Rajasthan approach. The yatra mounts further pressure on the party leadership as it hopes to retain the state in the elections at the end of the year.

The march comes days after Gehlot accused the MLAs involved in the 2020 revolt of taking money from the BJP. Pilot and 18 other

Congress MLAs had then sought a leadership change in Rajasthan.

He was sacked as the party’s state unit president and the deputy chief minister.

The two Congress strongmen in Rajasthan have been at loggerheads over the post of chief minister ever since the party formed the government in the state in 2018.

Farmers should keep pace with changing times: Vice President

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said farmers should keep pace with changing times and move ahead with a progressive thought.

During a programme in Rajasthan’s Nagaur, he also said “rising drug addiction among young farmers, the tendency to flout rules for easy short-term gains and involvement of youngsters in criminal activities” are matters of concern.

India is a country of farmers and it is because of the “sweat and blood” of a farmer that the economy of the country is progressing, Dhankhar said.

Referring to advancements in farming across the world, including Israel, which has climatic conditions similar to Rajasthan and has partnered with the state in the agriculture sector, he said farmers should keep pace with changing times as well as move ahead with a progressive thought.



“We must go beyond what is happening in Israel, we must go beyond what is happening in the world in agriculture and animal husbandry,” the vice president said.

Farmers have always been proactive in adopting changes, he said.

On the issue of drug addiction and flouting of rules by youngsters in rural areas, Dhankhar said, “Playing with the law will not only cost them dearly but also bring disrepute to the rural farming community.”

“No one is above the law, sooner or later the noose of the law will surely tighten

(around them),” he said.

The vice president also unveiled a statue of former parliamentarian and freedom fighter Nathuram Mirgha.

Earlier, Dhankhar offered prayers at the Brahma temple in Pushkar town in Ajmer district and visited Veer Tejaji’s birthplace in Kharnal in Nagaur.

The vice president along with his wife Sudesh Dhankhar reached Pushkar in a helicopter where they were received by Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) chairman Dharmendra Rathore, the divisional commissioner and other officers.

From the helipad in mela ground, they reached the temple amid tight security arrangements and offered prayers.

They later reached the famous Tejaji temple in Kharnal in Nagaur and offered prayers to the folk deity Veer Tejaji.

One killed, 8 injured in Maha's Akola clash

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

One person was killed and eight others were injured, while several two-wheelers and two fire brigade vehicles were set on fire, when a violent clash broke out between members of two communities over an offensive social media post at Akola in eastern Maharashtra late on Saturday night.

Uneasy calm prevailed in Rajarajeshwar Sethu of Harihar Peth locality in Akola city on Sunday, after district collector Neema Arora enforced section 144 of Indian Penal Code in Akola city, banning unlawful assembly of people with deadly weapons.

The police detained more than 26 persons in connection with the rioting that took place in the old town areas of Akola, where groups belonging to two communities clashed over a controversial post put out by a youth on Facebook. The rioting mobs indulged in stone pelting, arson and efforts to unleash



an atmosphere of intimidation in the affected locality.

In the rioting that lasted for one and a half hours, irate mobs set ablaze several two-wheelers and a couple brigade vehicles. The rioters also attempted to set a few houses on fire.

Confirming one death and injuries sustained by eight persons, including two policemen, Akola’s Superintendent of Police Sandeep Ghuge said that trouble broke out after a social media post went viral. There was stone pelting. Several vehicles were damaged.

We have deployed heavy

police bandobast in and around the affected locality.

Apart from detaining 26 persons in connection with the clashes, the Ramdaspath police have registered an offence against the youth who had uploaded an offense post on Facebook.

Meanwhile, Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis - who holds the State Home portfolio and who incidentally is Guardian Minister of Akola district - has been monitoring the situation at Akola ever since the violence broke out in the east Maharashtra city at 11.30 pm on Saturday.

George slams Stalin for 'Dravidian land remark'

PNS ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

PC George, seven time member of Kerala Legislative Assembly who is an undisputed leader of the Kerala Congress and a farming leader has issued a stern warning to parties like the CPI-M and DMK for speaking about secessionism from the Indian Union.

Reacting to statements issued by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin that the concept of Dravidian land is round the corner following the debacle of the BJP in Karnataka election, George said it was highly improper of the DMK leader to say so. “It shows his ignorance of Indian Constitution and how narrow minded the Dravidian concept is. I heard some of the CPI-M leaders of Kerala too speaking in terms of separatism and this does not augur well for the concept for India,” George told *The Pioneer*.

He said the defeat of the BJP in Karnataka was the fall out of local issues. “The Government failed to address



the problems faced by the farmers and they en masse voted in favor of the Congress. Lets see how the Congress Government tackles the issue,” said George who also ruled out the observation by political commentators that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lost the Midas Touch.

Reacting to the statement by some Christian leaders who had floated the National Progressive Party to bargain with the BJP that they would reconsider their decision to align with the Hindutva Party, George said that the party was yet to be formed. “We have seen some persons who remind us about migratory birds coming together to nestle with the dreams of becoming governors and similar positions. They may not win even 1000 votes in any of the constituencies,” said George who

expressed confidence that Modi would make it for the third term.

RV Giri, former president of the Consortium of Indian Farmers Association, said that the farming community has been let down by the BJP Government in Karnataka as well as the DMK Government in Tamil Nadu. “This together with the high handed behavior of some BJP leaders resulted in the failure of the party. Whoever rules India and the State, should never ignore the interests of the farmers. They should get the price recommended by the M S Swaminathan Commission for the products they cultivate. It is a reasonable demand,” said Giri.

He said that similar result was waiting for the DMK as the Government has not paid the price of sugar cane to hundreds of thousands of sugarcane farmers in the State. “This is in gross violation of the order issued by the Sugarcane Commissioner that the price of sugarcane should be paid within 14 days of cutting the crop.

Five die in TN hooch tragedy

PTI ■ VILLUPURAM

Five persons, including a woman, died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in the district, police said on Sunday.

Four police personnel were suspended in connection with the incident, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin said.

All the five were admitted to a government hospital late on Saturday where three of them died initially. Two others, including the woman, died on Sunday without responding to treatment, police said.

One person has been arrested in connection with the incident and the police are on the lookout for some more individuals.

The incident occurred at Makkiyarkuppam at Marakanam near here on Saturday night.

Underlining his government’s resolve to eradicate the menace of hooch and drugs, chief minister Stalin said four police personnel, including two inspectors, have been sus-



pending in connection with the incident. He had announced Rs 10 lakh as relief to each of the families of the three men who died earlier.

AIADMK general secretary and Leader of Opposition, K Palaniswami, said during his party-led 10 year rule (2011-21), there was no place for illicit liquor in the state and blamed the ruling DMK’s “inefficiency” for the deaths.

“Steps should be at least taken now against illicit liquor” he said in a social media post.

PMK founder Dr S Ramadoss sought against officials concerned over the sale of hooch and reiterated his party’s demand for ending nationalisation of liquor sales in the State as well as implementation of prohibition.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Satraps matter

Congress won handsomely in Karnataka but this may not have a great impact on 2024 general poll

The biggest takeaway from the Bharatiya Janata Party's defeat in the Karnataka election is that strong state leadership is important in Assembly polls. It is true that the BJP has won without a chief ministerial face in the past but it does not mean that it can happen all the time. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah make an excellent election-winning duo, but the saffron party must realise that it cannot rely on Modi all the time. The problem, however, is that the big two are not very fond of all state leaders. This was the reason that they ensured the exit of the BJP's strongest state leader, BS Yediyurappa. This was despite the fact that Yediyurappa was the architect of the saffron party's rise in Karnataka—the only southern state where the BJP is a party of some consequence. His forced exit did not go down well with his own community, Lingayats. With about 17 per cent of the state's population, they are a big vote bank, and have been favourably inclined towards the BJP. Other Lingayat stalwarts like former chief minister Jagdish Shettar and former deputy chief minister Laxman Savadi were denied tickets. Shettar rebelled and joined the Congress. Though he lost the election, such developments were not taken kindly by the community. The community is said to have a major influence in 78 Assembly constituencies. The Congress reportedly won in 54 such constituencies.

Another takeaway is about the diminishing appeal of divisive issues that political parties espouse frequently—the issues like those of hard Hindutva and of Mandalite leaders. Former Karnataka chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, apparently in a bid to establish his Hindutva credentials, focused on hijab, halal meat, love jihad, land jihad, etc. The BJP top brass also tried to conflate Bajrang Dal with Bajrang Bali. But everything, including emotive issues, has a use-by date. Besides, the governance deficit is not very easy to be filled with an excess of sanctimoniousness and sentimentalism. There were serious charges of corruption against the Bommai government; sloganeering and red herrings could not whitewash its alleged misdemeanours. It must be mentioned here that the lessons must be learnt from the result of Karnataka election by not just the BJP but also the Congress and other Opposition parties. The high command culture can damage all parties. Similarly, recourse to high-flown rhetoric, mindless populism, and social justice divisiveness can be harmful to not just the nation but also the parties and leaders espousing them. As for Karnataka election's on the general poll next year, BJP detractors would like to call it the beginning of the end of the Modi regime. But just as one swallow doesn't make a summer, a loss in a state doesn't mean that the BJP's election machine has become rickety: 2024 will be another year.

PICTALK



Fishermen return after encountering rough sea owing to Cyclone Mocha, in Thiruvananthapuram

SCO must be free from Chinese influence

To be effective, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation needs to come out of Chinese influence and push its own cherished goals, writes **Sumit Jha**

The meeting of the foreign ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the Indian city of Goa took place on 4-5 May to review the progress of the grouping. In doing so, Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar proposed the New Delhi declaration and four joint statements on cooperation on de-radicalisation strategies, promotion of millets and sustainable lifestyles to address climate change and digital transformation.

True, since its creation in 2001, SCO has expanded its size by inducting more countries as members and observers. Efforts have also been taken to institutionalize the grouping. In turn, SCO has become the largest organisation in terms of geographic scope and population, covering approximately 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world population. Moreover, with the presence of three major world powers – China, Russia, and India – as well as some oil and gas rich countries – Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, the eight-member organisation is seen to play a crucial role in shaping the nature of regional and global politics.

However, even a cursory glance at the functioning of SCO reveals some fundamental limitations facing the organisation. One such structural problem is China's intent to dominate SCO. After all, the creation of SCO lies in China's desire to improve ties with Asia to achieve its interests in the post-cold war era. Thus, the Shanghai Five (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan) was formed in 1996 to enable China to resolve border problems with its Central Asian neighbours, Beijing's political, security and economic interests led to the creation of SCO. More to the point, China's foreign policy objectives have had a profound impact on the philosophy and objectives of SCO.

For example, while the idea of promoting cooperation among member countries to fight against the evils of terrorism, separatism, and extremism is a major objective of SCO,



China is interested only in protecting itself from the menace of terrorism. More to the point, since there is an increasing concern in the Chinese strategic community that a close historic, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious proximity between a majority of people in the Xinjiang and Uighurs residing in neighbouring Central Asian countries can pose a serious security threat to China, Beijing has taken initiatives to prevent the influence of foreign terrorism and separatists in Xinjiang.

Furthermore, with the return of the Taliban, the Xi Jinping regime has become more anxious about security situations in the Xinjiang province, given the nexus between Uighur separatists and the Taliban terrorist organisation. Consequently, China lost no time in recognising the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Beijing is also contemplating the possibility of including Kabul as a member of SCO.

On the other hand, China has remained hostile to SCO taking tough efforts to eradicate terrorism. This is evident from the fact that China has openly supported Pakistan and other countries



THE CREATION OF SCO LIES IN CHINA'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE TIES WITH ASIA TO ACHIEVE ITS INTERESTS IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

which are protector of terrorist organisations. Moreover, China has consistently thwarted global efforts to deal with the menace of terrorism.

China has also brazenly violated the SCO charter that talks about respecting sovereignty, territorial integrity of member states, non-use of force or threat of its use in international relations and seeking no unilateral military superiority in adjacent areas. One example in this regard is its efforts to undermine India's sovereignty over the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. But China's bullying behaviour is not limited to only SCO member countries.

Another limitation facing SCO is the uneven economic benefits that China has succeeded in garnering from other member countries. More to the point, China enjoys surplus trade with all member countries of SCO. China's imports and exports with other member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) touched a new high of \$250 billion in 2021-2022. This trend confirms the imperialistic tendency of China.

China's assertive posturing contradicts SCO aims to move towards developing a democratic and equitable international political order. In fact, one issue on which Beijing can easily be cornered is the lake of democratic space in China and the Chinese Communist regime's attempt to undermine the liberal-democratic international order.

Of course, other member countries of SCO are fully aware of China's clandestine purpose. India has in fact questioned China's move to undermine SCO's fundamental principles. But New Delhi finds itself alone on this matter in the grouping. The dependence of Russia on China due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has further strengthened China's position in the SCO.

Hence, amid high expectations from this region grouping towards promoting peace, security, and development in Eurasia and beyond, the immediate challenge facing SCO is to free itself from China's clutches. Only time will tell if it will happen or not.

(The writer is Assistant professor, Dept of Political Science, DU)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HANGING SWORD OF ARREST

Sir — Al Qadir Trust for the study of the Sufi sect, Al Qadir University was to be built in Punjab province in Pakistan in 2019. In the same case, Imran Khan is accused of having scammed 50 billion rupees. On behalf of Imran, the lawyers have requested the High Court to consolidate all the cases and their hearings. In one corruption case, Imran was granted bail for two weeks by the Islamabad High Court, but in many other cases, Imran is under remand. During the hearing, Imran's lawyer told Imran it is true that they left the court in a panic by shouting slogans, but the judge got angry and left the court. After that, the court started after Friday prayers, Imran's bail was granted, but after two weeks, the hanging sword of arrest will be on Imran. This political instability in Pakistan is evident.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

REMOTE CONTROLLED GOVT

Sir — All public policies of Bhagwant Mann's government in Punjab are being controlled through the remote control of Delhi's Kejriwal government. This was an allegation of all opposition parties in Punjab. However, AAP's Lok Sabha bye-election win for its candidate Sushil Rinku has proved them wrong. In all nine legislative constituencies of Jalandhar, congress has lost. The people of Jalandhar have given a huge mandate to AAP due to their pro-people policies like monthly 300 free units of electricity per household, immediate compensation to farmers for crop loss due to recent untimely rains, accessibility of their MLAs to common people, and frequent visits of CM Bhagwant Mann and Kejriwal to all sects of society. Though Jalandhar is a traditional seat of Congress but still it fails to unite its MLAs. Sidhu Moosewala's father though campaigned against the AAP party but he too failed to convince voters for the Congress party. The SAD-BSP alliance

Congress wins hands down in Karnataka



With the poll predictions for Karnataka coming true to the hilt, proving the Congress with a landslide victory on 135 seats in a 224-member assembly and thereby placing it in a cosy position to form the government as well, besides leaving the ruling BJP, and JD(S) with 66 and 19 seats in their kitties respectively, the scenario comes across as a clear indication that Rahul Gandhi-led 3500

km long 'Kashmir to Kanyakumari foot-march paid the party high dividends. However, for the BJP's consolation, the party retained its vote share of 36%. Interestingly, many political pundits are also of the view that the Karnataka results will have a huge bearing on and, simultaneously, decide the direction for the next year's much-hyped Lok Sabha polls also. What it all boils down to is that the elections are and should be contested on the real issues the common people are generally faced with given that leading them up the garden path with promises of freebies galore might fleetingly distract their attention but at the end of the day, it is the real issues that matter to them. On the face of it, Lady Luck is smiling at the Congress but as they say that politics is an unpredictable game replete with a lot of indecision and, hence, what happens next is an exciting question. Let's wait and watch the way this political cookie crumbles next!

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

too failed to garner any votes as anti-incumbency against SAD continues especially in rural areas. The BJP failed to make even entry into rural Punjab as farmers still remember the controversial farm bills and the death of 700 farmers. Overall AAP's victory proves their great efforts of outreach to the common man through mohalla clinics and better education facilities in schools etc.

Harvinder Singh, | Jalandhar

MATERNAL DEATHS

Sir — Globally, in 2020, there was one maternal death every two minutes. Most of the deaths were in low and lower middle-income countries. In 2020, there were 223 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, and one of the United Nations (UN) lofted SDG achieving less than seventy maternal deaths per one lakh live births by 2030 looks tough though not impossible. The latest report from the UN has said

that India leads the countries that have the highest number of maternal deaths, stillbirths, and neonatal (newborn) casualties. Notwithstanding the fast pace of development of health care and infrastructure in India, the maternal mortality rate remains a cause for concern. It is incumbent upon the Centre to upgrade India's primary health centres with investment by way of personnel and funds. The WHO mandate of 8 antenatal checks of a pregnant woman has to be scrupulously adhered to. Care of a mother and child does not end in staff and medicines. Potable water and an uninterrupted supply of electricity are essential for unhindered care. As the nation has successfully recovered from the pandemic, it is time for healthcare personnel to focus on mother and child.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Agritech farm inputs give higher yield

AgriTech platforms provide high-quality input for farmers which has proven to be instrumental in driving up crop yields

The screen flashes, and Bimal Roy's 'Do Bigha Zameen' comes to life with an opening scene of farmers anxiously looking at the sky. As the clouds gather, so do the farmers, expecting the rains to bestow their fields. It has been 70 years since Roy's classic, and this scene is as true of Indian farmers today as it was just after Independence, looking upward for innovations to empower them.



mediaries to procure such input, resulting in low valuation. Increasing intermediaries and other factors in this chain engender a reduction in transparency. As we head into our Amrit Kal, accompanied by their innovative digitized designs, AgriTech platforms emerge as the much-needed relief clouds, safeguarding farmers against unadulterated input. AgriTech platforms enable farmers to procure dependable and superior quality input by harnessing technological advancements such as data analytics and machine learning.

These platforms safeguard farmers against the aforementioned malpractices by bridging the last mile between the suppliers and farmers via doorstep delivery, providing input from the fac-

tory to the farmer. Directly working with peer partners, retailers, and farmers, negotiating prices and dispatching goods, these platforms circumvent the involvement of intermediaries and local suppliers.

Often classified under disruptive tech for having revolutionized the agriculture sector and existing procurement arrangements, AgriTech platforms procure high-quality input for farmers, including high-yielding varieties (HYV) seed, which has proven to be instrumental in driving up crop yields. In addition to providing farmers access to authentic and high-quality input, AgriTech startups offer knowledge support by connecting them to experienced agronomists from the industry. By leveraging their expertise, AgriTech platforms guide farmers on the optimal selection of seed and agro-practices suitable for Indian and specifically regional farming conditions, thereby improving the likelihood of a successful harvest.

The accessibility to such expert advice has been crucial in enhancing the efficiency



RAJ YADAV

and effectiveness of farming practices, enabling farmers to make informed decisions and optimize their crop yields.

Amidst a considerable emphasis on technology adoption in our contemporary era, Agritech Platforms have emerged as a catalyst in the endeavour to neutralize the effects of substandard inputs on farming.

The potential for growth in the Indian Agrotech markets has become increasingly apparent, with an increasing number of startups entering the industry and building seamless digital platforms that can fully integrate value chains and fruitful harvests.

With government support and the introduction of cutting-edge technologies such as 5G, these platforms have ripened a fertile ground for disruptive innovation in the agriculture sector. We may have come a long way from Do Bigha Zameen but aided with these platforms, the relief clouds may not be far away, and we might be looking at another revolution in India: one bought about by AgriTech

(The writer is the Founder and CEO, of Gramik)

FIRST COLUMN

BE LIKE BUTTER ON WATER

Humans should be like the lions of self-control, kicking frogs of weakness



RAVI VALLURI

Aeons ago once someone posed a question to Buddha, the enlightened one. The query was as to how his followers and disciples, who lived a plain sailing manner and lead an uncomplicated life partaking only one meal a day, were always suffused with jollity and appeared radiant and tranquil. Buddha paused and then calmly replied, "They do not repent the past, nor do they brood over the future. They merely live in the present. Thus, they are radiant. By worrying over the future and brooding over the past, fools dry up like green reeds cut down in the sun."

Those whose minds are cannonaded by thoughts of past events are bound to be fretful and woebegone and the ones who only think of the future are filled with anxiety and are trapped in the cesspool of consternation.

Now between "what was" and "what will be" there is a vast space which can be termed as "Now". This is our authentic sanctuary where we can dwell in silence and peace.

Most people do not know how to live in the present moment and they lose it. The present becomes the past and the future becomes present. Because they do not live in the present moment, they live either in the past or in the future. On average the human mind is bombarded by 60 to 70 thoughts a day and the majority of them are negative. We need to upend the pyramid and break false glass ceilings. Every tomorrow is determined by every today. One should undertake rigorous Sadhana and achieve freedom from the preponderance of past and future to attain eternal bliss by living in the present. And this state is eternal bliss.



One should remain a witness to whatever occurs in life. By adopting such an attitude, we provide room for divinity in the cosmic dance of life. The reality of life is the present moment and not the memories of the past which are dead and gone. A person who lives in the present moment lives an unalloyed life, and he is the happiest individual. It is akin to the breath we have exhaled or the mass of water in a river that has crossed us as we sat on the banks of the river. We merely need to focus on the present moment and try to appreciate the eternal truth, which is beyond time and space. During our stay here on planet Earth, humans should remember that we are only troupers. We may be called upon to play any kind of role, be it tragic or comic and we must enact it with aplomb.

Stars, planets, plants, animals, and human beings are all let loose on a beautiful cosmic stage, with each one playing an assigned part. Only very few people understand the meaning of the play because many of us do not pause to think deeply about it. The few exalted people may remain dutifully in the world; however, they are like butter on water and not like the easily-diluted milk which is not properly churned, since humans are mortals, we should not burden ourselves with earthly limitations. The only purpose of life is to get away from the delusion of the material world.

Humans should travel this world like the lions of self-control and ensure that the frogs of weakness do not kick us around. We should always perform small and important duties with deep attention, and mindfulness remembering that the almighty is guiding and stimulating every worthwhile effort we undertake to achieve a noble mission.

(The writer is the CEO of Chattisgarh East Railway Ltd, East West Railway Ltd and is a faculty of the Art of Living)

Pakistan faces multiple challenges



KS TOMAR

Imran Khan's confrontation with the army may end his political career and endanger his life



Pakistan is witnessing multiple levels of confrontations like the supreme court and president, Arif Alvi versus Shehbaz Sharif government and former prime minister, Imran Khan's head-on collision with the powerful army which may create a civil war-like situation leading to the imposition of either emergency or take over by the army.

Pakistan is heading towards chaos and a civil war-like situation which can be attributed to the confrontation between former prime minister, Imran Khan and the army which rules the roost and commands the authority to create or destroy any government or political leader in this country. Imran's supporters went on a rampage and the police could do nothing which is allowing the army to step in and control the violence.

IMPACT ON INDIA

The existing turmoil in Pakistan immensely affects India as instability may give an impetus to terrorist groups that are being given shelter by the Sharif government and army. Second, chaos in Pakistan may also give a fillip to the terrorists' activities in Kashmir and China can exploit such a grim situation to harm India.

ARMY MAY TRY TO REGAIN ITS PRESTIGE

It happened for the first time in the history of Pakistan when a politician like Khan dared to challenge the authority of the army which has endangered his life besides taking a hundred percent risk of ending his political career. Army chief, Asim Munir is playing safe though the present prime minister got full support from the army which may be called if the civil administration collapses. Army is confronting the terror attacks which have increased and people are feeling unsafe. It is a fact that such incidents of terror attacks have been gradually lowering the confidence of the public. Imran Khan's

onslaught on the army was an error of judgement as he may certainly face a vicious type of retaliation in future though the Shehbaz Sharif government may be kept at the forefront. Khan took on ISI which oversees the internal security and is known for infamous tactics to crush even political rivals.

THE BIGGEST BLUNDER COMMITTED BY KHAN PERTAINS TO HIS ASSESSMENT OF UNDERMINING THE ALL-POWERFUL ARMY WHICH WAS ACCUSED OF HATCHING A PLOT TO KILL HIM

(Writer is a political analyst and a senior journalist)

IMRAN'S BIGGEST POLITICAL BLUNDER

The biggest blunder committed by Khan pertains to his assessment of undermining the powerful army which was accused of hatching a plot to kill him. It has been solely responsible for the storming of rangers in the courtroom to arrest him though in a case related to a corruption case involving an allegation of earning billions of rupees through illegal land transactions. National Accountability, an anti-corruption body, arrested Imran with the help of rangers who whisked him away thereby resulting in violence by Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) workers who went on a rampage in several parts of the country.

THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF IMRAN IS UNCERTAIN

Analysts opine that entry into the army may endanger the political career of Imran who may be tried and jailed to keep him away from general elections. Khan may go Nawaj Sharif's way which will create a void in his Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) and new leadership will be required. Shehbaz Sharif seems to be scared of the popularity of Imran after he was ousted from premiership last year with the help of the army. But Imran Khan forgot that the army rules the roost

in Pakistan and he undertook a misadventure of lambasting army officials (ISI) for ensuring his defeat in parliament and later conspiring to kill him.

Imran had also accused America of helping Shehbaz in snatching the power from him and it had irked the army which keeps in touch with the US administration. Imran Khan was the creation of the army and former army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa played the main role but ex-Pm turned against Bajwa and tried to have a say in promotions of the army which was unacceptable hence lost his prime minister's post.

Khan has been demanding elections in Punjab province and the supreme court had fixed May 15 as a date to hold polls but the Shehbaz government refused to honour the verdict which led to open confrontation. Second, Imran is facing more than 140 cases including Toshakhana's expensive gifts of millions of rupees and a case was filed against him in August 2022 Third, EX PM stands disqualified by the Pakistan election commission on the charges of corrupt practices on Oct 21, 2022.

PAKISTAN'S WOES DO NOT END HERE

It is irony of circumstances that common people in Pakistan are fighting for survival as prices of essential commodities have gone sky high including 20 Kg Atta for Rs 2,100-Rs 2,599, Milk for Rs 120-Rs 130 per litre etc. but the Shehbaz Sharif government and main opposition led by former PM, Imran Khan are bloodthirsty of each other one former wants to stick to Chair and latter wants to snatch power which may force the public to come on the streets like Sri Lanka.

Pakistan is facing a serious crisis thereby endangering the survival of democracy which has been compounded owing to the confrontation between executive and judiciary besides the head-on collision of President Arif Ali with the Shehbaz Sharif government thereby putting the future of countrymen at stake. While helping bankrupt and economically depressed Pakistan, IMF has forced it to accept yet another retreat hence Shehbaz Sharif government had to agree to impose a 1 per cent poverty tax on firms earning Rs 15 crore, 2 per cent on those earning Rs 20 crore, 3 per cent on over Rs 25 crore and 4 per cent on Rs 30 crore and above. In the original budget, the government had set a 2 per cent poverty tax only on those earning Rs 30 crore and above. Pakistan's negotiating team led by Finance Minister, Miftah Ismail, agreed on an understanding on the 2022-23

budget after the authorities committed to generating Rs 43,600 crore more taxes. Moody's Investors Service has downgraded Pakistan's credit rating outlook to negative from stable due to its sinking economy and lack of resources mobilization. The IMF has not signed an agreement with Pakistan to restart a \$6.5 billion loan which has been stalled since Nov 2022 and has endangered economic survival.

Experts say that Pakistan is in deep soup and arson and looting by ex-PM, Imran Khan's supporters may push the country into anarchy which is not good for the entire region everything will depend upon the role of the army which needs to adopt restraint to save democracy in this troubled nation.

India needs to adopt smart protein to feed its growing population

With smart protein being the key to feeding 10 billion people by 2050, India must catch up with the global smart protein landscape

It's not every day that leaders from around the world sit together to share a meal. Yet, last year, at the United Nations COP27 conference, when senior officials from Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, and other countries gathered around the table to share some delicious chicken, it wasn't the company that made the dinner special - it was the food. It was Good Meat's cultivated chicken, grown directly from animal cells, that gave the officials their first taste of a future of food that underpins the climate goals that are at the very heart of the conference.

That clever piece of chicken is what we call smart protein - part of a category of pioneering foods made from plants, microorganisms, or



POORVASHA KAR

(The writer is Innovation Associate at Good Food Institute India)

cells that provide a viable alternative to animal-derived meat, eggs, and dairy. As of today, fermentation-derived and cultivated protein products (like the GoodMeat chicken) are not commercially available in India, the plant-based sector boasts 400+ products and 60 brands. While the sunrise sector is brimming with potential and optimism, there is a widening chasm in its startup ecosystem. On the one hand, a handful of entrepreneurs have been able to push through their challenges and bring a stellar product to the market - one that resonates with the mass market. On the other hand, some entrepreneurs continue to push forward in the industry one step at a time but are yet to build relevance

and a loyal customer base. While these entrepreneurs have different destinations, they encounter similar obstacles in terms of forming a strong founding team, accurately assessing market and technical viability, fundraising from investors, and developing a strategic business plan. For a first-time entrepreneur, it is daunting to unravel the legal, financial, and commercial processes of setting up a start-up on its own. This complexity only increases in a nascent sector like smart protein where the underlying ecosystem is still being built from the ground up. This often leads smart protein entrepreneurs to face unique industry challenges like unclear regulatory policies, shortage of skilled talent, and

lack of market sizing data. Yet, the most critical bottleneck is the lack of R&D infrastructure required at the lab, pilot, and large manufacturing scale to convert experimental solutions into market-ready products. While the food processing sector in India is well established, there is limited availability of equipment required for conducting novel food R&D and running pilot trials. Often, even the limited pieces of equipment are spread across universities and research parks and gated by levels of bureaucracy, complex partnership agreements, and high lab fees. Needless to say, as most startups at this stage are self-funded, they don't have the capital or volumes required to set up their facilities

or hire talent that can operate them. While this may paint a grim picture, let's not forget that the smart protein sector is already home to a rapidly growing cohort of resilient startups. To multiply this number and move towards a future of sustainable food, the need of the hour is to bridge the gap between the two kinds of entrepreneurs and create structures that can improve the ease of setting and scaling up smart protein startups. Ask any early-stage smart protein startup what they need and you'll get a similar laundry list: technical mentorship, infrastructure access, skill enhancement, capital from investors, and entrepreneurial support. Though this might feel like a big ask, several

organizations and industry experts have stepped up to embrace the challenge and are committed to providing a significant leg-up to these startups. There are nearly 900+ accelerator programs active in India with little to no focus on this growing industry. Their mandate is often restricted to fintech, healthcare, climate tech, SaaS and logistics startups. This leaves early-stage smart protein startups to compete for limited spots in sector-agnostic programs that aren't able to support all their requirements of technical expertise and food innovation infrastructure. One niche program that aims to fill this gap is the India Smart Protein Innovation Challenge (ISPIC). While these initiatives are a

good start, they are only that. With smart protein being the key to feeding 10 billion people by 2050, nearly a sixth of whom will be Indian, there's much work to be done to support the right innovators and bring India up to speed with the global smart protein landscape. To truly create an industry capable of transforming how the future of food is made, decision-makers in India too, need to gather around a table over a smart protein meal. They too, need to acknowledge food technology solutions to the ecological crisis and commit to turning 'food for thought' into actual food. After all, how exciting would it be to serve plant-based keema and biryani at COP28?

'Aim to liberate areas occupied by Russia'

AP ■ BERLIN

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that his country is preparing a counteroffensive designed to liberate areas occupied by Russia...

which are recognized internationally," Zelenskyy said. The Ukrainian president is visiting allies in search of further arms to help his country fend off the Russian invasion...

necessary," he said, adding that it is up to Russia to end the war by withdrawing its troops. After initially hesitating to provide Ukraine with lethal weapons, Germany has become one of the biggest suppliers of arms to Ukraine...

Putin. Zelenskyy first met with President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany's head of state, who was snubbed by Kyiv last year, apparently over his previous close ties to Russia...



Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, right, greets Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at Bellevue Palace in Berlin, Germany on Sunday.

Imran Khan slams Pakistan Army

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan hit out at the country's powerful army in his first address after an Islamabad court set him free, saying it should be ashamed of jumping into politics and could form its own political party.



General Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry's statement in which he called Khan a "hypocrite". "Listen to me Mr DG ISPR... you were not even born when I was representing my country in the world and earning a good name for it...

tion case and barred the authorities from arresting the former Pakistan prime minister in any case registered anywhere in the country until Monday. During Khan's address, video clips were shown of how army trucks dropped 'unidentified' plainclothesmen...

China, Russia increasing military collaboration, Japan FM warns

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi expressed concern on Saturday about Russian and Chinese military cooperation in Asia and said the security situation in Europe could not be separated from that in the Indo-Pacific region since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.



Moscow and blaming the US and NATO for provoking the conflict. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in March at the same time as Chinese President Xi Jinping met Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

"In addition, China and Russia are strengthening their military collaboration, including joint flights of their bombers and joint naval exercises in the vicinity of Japan," Hayashi said.

Suspected Islamic extremists kill over 30 civilians in Burkina Faso

AP ■ OUGADOUGOU (BURKINA FASO)

An attack by suspected Islamic extremists on a village in the west of Burkina Faso killed 33 civilians, the provincial governor's office said. The provisional death toll from the Thursday evening attack on the village of Youlou in Mouhoun province was announced in a press release.

Greece protests arrest of mayoral candidate in Albania

AP ■ ATHENS (GRRRCE)

The detention of a mayoral candidate belonging to the Greek minority in Albania has raised tensions between the two neighbouring countries. Greece's Foreign Ministry released a statement on Saturday demanding the release of Dionysis-Fredi Beleri, a candidate for mayor of the Albanian city of Himare...

US President Biden's re-election pitch faces daunting challenges

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A showdown with Congress that has the nation's creditworthiness at stake; a frenzied scene at the border as pandemic restrictions ease; a pivotal foreign trip meant to sustain support for Ukraine and contain a more assertive China in the Indo-Pacific.



Biden and lawmakers can't agree on a path to raising the debt limit. Biden wants Congress to raise it without precondition, equating Republicans' demands for spending cuts with ransom for the country's full faith and credit.

Guinea and Australia. Biden will try to marshal unity among Group of Seven leading democratic economies to maintain support for Ukraine as it prepares to launch a counteroffensive against Russia's invasion, and to invigorate alliances in the face of China's forceful regional moves.

Black youth shaken a year after Buffalo massacre

Buffalo (US) (AP): It's hard for Jamari Shaw, 16, to have fun at the park with his younger brothers in their East Buffalo neighborhood. He's too busy scanning for danger, an aftermath of a gunman's attack that killed 10 Black people at a local grocery store. Sometimes, 17-year-old Alanna Littleton stays in the car when her family drives to that supermarket from their home just down the street.

Syria's main insurgent group seeks to move away from al-Qaida past

AP ■ IDLIB (SYRIA)

The leader of an insurgent group that rules much of northwest Syria rose to notoriety over the past decade by claiming deadly bombings, threatening revenge against Western "crusader" forces and dispatching Islamist religious police to crack down on women deemed to be immodestly dressed.



armed opposition groups in Syria, has signalled a shift. This week, the Turkish foreign minister met with his Syrian counterpart in Moscow, the first such meeting since 2011.

Sherpa climbs Everest 26th time

AP ■ KATHMANDU

A Sherpa guide scaled the summit of Mount Everest on Sunday for the 26th time, equalling the record set by a Nepalese guide for the most ascents of the world's highest peak. Pasang Dawa Sherpa, 46, reached the summit (8,849-m peak) on Sunday morning along with a Hungarian climber, according to expedition organiser Imagine Nepal Treks.

Interestingly, Dawa equalled Rita's record in the year that also marks the 70th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest in 1953 by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay.



Nineteen mountaineers, including five foreigners, reached the summit of the world's highest peak this weekend. Sherpa guides fixed ropes and made paths for the hundreds of climbers who will attempt to scale the peak over the next few weeks.

Nepal reached the summit," said Yuvaraj Khatiwada, director at the Department of Tourism, Nepal. On Sunday, five foreigners climbed the summit of Mount Everest. They include Naila Kiani and Nadia Liakhosho from Pakistan, Jessica Rai Wadel from the USA, Marton Ceterper from Hungary, and Liansu Cui from China.

Israel-Gaza clash: Thaw after days of fighting

AP ■ GAZA CITY

A fragile ceasefire between Israeli forces and militants in the Gaza Strip appeared to be holding on Sunday after a five-day clash that killed 33 Palestinians and two people in Israel.

The latest round of Gaza fighting was sparked on Tuesday when Israeli jets killed three top commanders from the Islamic Jihad militant group in response to earlier rocket launches from Gaza. Those killings set off a barrage of militant fire and the conflagration threatened to drag the region into another all-out war until an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire took hold late Saturday.

While the calm appeared to bring a sense of relief to Gaza's 2 million people and hundreds of thousands of Israelis who had been largely confined to bomb shelters in recent days, the agreement did nothing to address the underlying issues that have fuelled numerous rounds of fighting between Israel and Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip over the years.

In Gaza, residents surveyed the latest damage caused to their surroundings, with gaping holes left in the apartments serving as what Israel said were hideouts for the six senior Islamic Jihad members killed during this round.

Gaza's main cargo crossing with Israel reopened Sunday after warnings that keeping it closed would force Gaza's sole power plant to shut down, deepening a power crisis.

Israel was gradually lifting restrictions on residents in southern Israel, which had borne the brunt of the rocket fire. Israeli officials expressed satisfaction with the latest battle, having killed at least six members of Islamic Jihad's top brass in what it says were pinpointed strikes based on solid intelligence.

But at least 13 of those killed in Gaza were civilians, among them children as young as 4 years old, as well as women. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the targeted attacks on the militants' hideouts would reverberate around the region.

"Israel's enemies in Gaza



Smoke rise from an explosion caused by an Israeli airstrike targeting a building in Gaza on Saturday. The building was owned by an Islamic Jihad official. AP/PTI

and much farther than Gaza know that even if they try to hide, we are able and prepared to reach them at any time," he told a meeting of his Cabinet.

Israel has faced criticism in the past from rights groups over the civilian casualties in its bombardments in Gaza.

Israel says it does its utmost to avoid harming civilians in its strikes and says militants operate from within the territory's

densely populated areas to fire rockets indiscriminately at Israeli communities.

Even if some of the strikes were precise, others destroyed the homes of uninvolved Palestinians.

"If they want to target a house, let them target it alone. Why destroy the whole neighborhood? Why?" said Mai Sarson, whose house in Deir el-Balah was reduced to ruins in

an Israeli strike.

Throughout the fighting, Israel's repeated airstrikes targeting Islamic Jihad and its command centers and rocket-launching sites showed no signs of stopping the rocket fire, prompting Islamic Jihad to declare victory and sending cheering Palestinians out into the streets late Saturday.

The Israeli military reported over 1,400 launches throughout the fighting, with some rockets reaching as far as the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem areas.

Israeli jets struck more than 400 targets, according to a preliminary military tally, which also showed about a fifth of the rockets were misfired and landed in Gaza, while most of the rest were either intercepted or landed in open areas. An 80-year-old woman and a Palestinian labourer who was working inside Israel were killed by rocket fire. A Palestinian human rights group said three people, including two children, were killed in Gaza by errant rockets. It was the latest in a long series of battles between Israel and

Palestinian militants in Gaza since the Islamic militant group Hamas seized control of the seaside territory in 2007.

Israel and Hamas have fought four wars, and there have been numerous smaller flareups as well.

The more powerful Hamas has praised Islamic Jihad's strikes but remained on the sidelines during the latest round of fighting, limiting the scope of the conflict.

As the de facto government held responsible for the abysmal conditions in the blockaded Gaza Strip, Hamas has recently tried to keep a lid on its conflict with Israel. Islamic Jihad, on the other hand, a more ideological and unruly militant group wedded to violence, has taken the lead in the past few rounds of fighting with Israel. Saturday's deal did not address many of the causes of the repeated fighting, including Israel's ongoing blockade of Gaza, the large arsenals of weapons possessed by Hamas and Islamic Jihad and Israeli policies in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem.

Erdogan's leadership in balance as polls close in Turkiye



Youngsters stand next to giant election billboard of Turkish President and People's Alliance's presidential candidate Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a campaign rally in Istanbul, Turkey on Saturday. AP/PTI

AP ■ ANKARA

Election polls closed on Sunday in Turkiye, where President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's leadership of the NATO member country grappling with economic turmoil and the erosion of democratic checks-and-balances hung in the balance after a strong challenge from an opposition candidate.

The election could grant Erdogan, 69, a new five-year term or unseat him in favour of the head of an invigorated opposition, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who has promised to return Turkiye to a more democratic path. If no candidate receives more than 50 per cent of the vote, the race will be determined in a May 28 run-off.

Voters also elected lawmakers to fill Turkiye's 600-seat parliament, which lost much of its legislative power under Erdogan's executive presidency. If his political alliance wins, Erdogan could continue governing without much restriction. The opposition has promised to return Turkiye's governance system to a parliamentary democracy if it wins both the presidential and parliamentary ballots.

Opinion surveys indicated the increasingly authoritarian leader entered the election trailing a challenger for the first

time. Erdogan has ruled Turkey as prime minister or president since 2003. Pre-election polls gave a slight lead to Kilicdaroglu, 74, the joint candidate of a six-party opposition alliance who leads the center-left, pro-secular Republican People's Party, or CHP.

Voting began at 8 am (0500 GMT) and polls closed at 5 pm (1400 GMT). Under Turkiye's election custom, news organisations are barred from reporting partial results until an embargo lifts at 9 pm (1800 GMT). There are no exit polls.

More than 64 million overseas voters, were eligible to vote in the elections, which come the year the country will mark the centenary of its establishment as a republic. Voter turnout in Turkiye is traditionally strong, reflecting citizens' continued belief in democratic balloting.

Yet Turkiye has seen the suppression of freedom of expression and assembly under Erdogan, and it is wracked by a steep cost-of-living crisis that critics blame on the government's mishandling of the economy. Turkiye is also reeling from the effects of a powerful earthquake that caused devastation in 11 southern provinces in February, killing more than 50,000 people in unsafe buildings.

Opp favoured to win in Thailand

AP ■ BANGKOK

Vote counting was underway on Sunday in Thailand's general election, touted as a pivotal chance for change nine years after incumbent Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha first came to power in a 2014 coup. He is now running against the daughter of the politician who is the military's top nemesis. The polls closed at 5 pm and some results were expected in early evening, with a fuller picture coming later Sunday night.

Thai elections use paper ballots that are counted publicly at polling stations.

The opposition Pheu Thai Party, headed by Paetongtarn Shinawatra, is widely predicted to win at least a healthy plurality of the seats in the 500-member lower House.

After casting her ballot, Paetongtarn said every vote is important for effecting change

in Thailand and that she has high hopes for the final result.

who heads the next government won't be decided by Sunday's vote alone. The prime minister will be selected in July in a joint session of the House and the 250-seat Senate.

The winner must secure at least 376 votes and no party is likely to do that on its own. Pheu Thai won the most seats in the last election in 2019, but its archrival, the military-backed Palang Pracharath Party, succeeded in cobbling together a coalition with Prayuth as prime minister.

It relied on unanimous support from the Senate, whose members share the military's conservative outlook and were appointed by the military government after Prayuth's coup. Prayuth is running for reelection, although the military this year has split its support between two parties.

Prayuth is backed by the United Thai Nation Party; his deputy prime minister, Prawit Wongsuwan, another former general, is the standard bearer for Palang Pracharath.

Prayuth has been blamed for a stuttering economy, shortcomings in addressing the pandemic and thwarting democratic reforms, a particular sore point with younger voters. At his polling station, he also encouraged people to come out to vote. "The increased youth vote and general awareness of the damage caused by military rule are key factors likely to determine the results of this election," said Tyrell Haberkorn, a Thai studies specialist at the University of Wisconsin. "After nine years of military rule, people are ready for a change, even those who were not interested in rocking the boat before."

Pheu Thai is the latest in a string of parties linked to pop-

ulist billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted as prime minister by an army coup in 2006. Paetongtarn Shinawatra is his daughter.

Her aunt, Yingluck Shinawatra, who became prime minister in 2011, was toppled in the coup led by Prayuth.

Pheu Thai and Paetongtarn, the most popular of the party's three registered candidates for prime minister, are strides ahead of the competition in the opinion polls. But there is no sign that the country's military-backed conservative establishment has warmed to them. "I think the conservative-royalist side, underpinning the military, the monarchy, their backs are against the wall. Change is coming and they have to find a way to deal with it," said Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political scientist at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.



Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha poses as he casts his vote during a general election at a polling station in Bangkok, Thailand, on Sunday. AP/PTI

NYC converting hotels to emergency shelters for asylum seekers

AP ■ NEW YORK

The historic Roosevelt Hotel in midtown Manhattan shuttered three years ago, but it will soon be bustling again — reopening to accommodate an anticipated influx of asylum seekers just as other New York City hotels are being converted to emergency shelters.

Mayor Eric Adams announced Saturday that the city will use the Roosevelt to eventually provide as many as 1,000 rooms for migrants who are expected to arrive in coming weeks because of the expiration of pandemic-era rules, known collectively as Title 42, that had allowed federal officials to turn away asylum seekers from the US border with Mexico.

Across the city, hotels like the Roosevelt that served tourists just a few years ago are being transformed into emergency shelters, many of them in prime locations within walking distance from Times Square, the World Trade Centre memorial site and the

Empire State Building. A legal mandate requires the city to provide shelter to anyone who needs it.

Even so, Adams says the city is running out of room for migrants and has sought financial help from the state and federal governments.

"New York City has now cared for more than 65,000 asylum seekers — already opening up over 140 emergency shelters and eight large-scale humanitarian relief centres in addition to this one to manage this national crisis," the mayor said in a statement announcing the Roosevelt decision.

The storied hotel near Grand Central Terminal served as election headquarters for New York Gov. Thomas Dewey, who in 1948 was said to have wrongly announced from the Roosevelt that he had defeated Harry Truman for president.

As the city faces growing pressure to expand its shelter system, it is turning to vacant hotels for those who need a roof and a

place to bunk down as they sort out their lives. One of them is the Holiday Inn, located in Manhattan's Financial District. A few months ago, signs in the lobby windows of the 50-story, 500-room hotel said it was closed.

Scott Markowitz of Tarter Krinsky and Drogin, attorneys for the hotel's owner, said reopening as a city-sponsored shelter made financial sense.

"They rent out every room at the hotel at a certain price every night," Markowitz said, adding that it is bringing "substantially more revenue" than normal operations would have brought in. It's not new for the city to turn to hotels for New Yorkers without homes when shelters and other options weren't available. During the pandemic, group shelters made it difficult to comply with social distancing rules, prompting the city to rent out hundreds of hotel rooms as quasi COVID wards. As the pandemic eased, the city became less reliant on hotels.

Stained glass window shows Jesus Christ with dark skin, stirs questions about race

Warren (US): A nearly 150-year-old stained-glass church window that depicts a dark-skinned Jesus Christ interacting with women in New Testament scenes has stirred up questions about race, Rhode Island's role in the slave trade and the place of women in 19th century New England society.

The window installed at the long-closed St Mark's Episcopal Church in Warren in 1878 is the oldest known public example of stained glass on which Christ is depicted as a person of color that one expert has seen.

"This window is unique and highly unusual," said Virginia Raguin, a professor of humanities emerita at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, and an expert on the history of stained-glass art. "I have never seen this iconography for that time."

The 12-foot tall, 5-foot wide (3.7 meters by 1.5 meters) window depicts two biblical

passages in which women, also painted with dark skin, appear as equals to Christ. One shows Christ in conversation with Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, from the Gospel of Luke. The other shows Christ speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well from the Gospel of John.

The window made by the Henry E Sharp studio in New York had largely been forgotten until a few years ago when Hadley Arnold and her family bought the 4,000-square-foot (371-square-meter) Greek Revival church building, which opened in 1830 and closed in 2010, to convert into their home.

When four stained-glass windows were removed in 2020 to be replaced with clear glass, Arnold took a closer look. It was a cold winter's day with the sunlight shining at just the right angle and she was stunned by what she saw in one of them: The human figures had dark skin. AP

Serbia: 13,500 weapons collected in amnesty

AP ■ BELGRADE (SERBIA)

Serbian authorities on Sunday displayed many of around 13,500 weapons they say people have been handed over since this month's mass shootings, including hand grenades, automatic weapons, and anti-tank rocket launchers.

The authorities have declared a one-month amnesty period for citizens to hand over unregistered weapons or face prison sentences as part of a crackdown on guns following the two mass shootings that left 17 people dead, many of them children.

Populist President Aleksandar Vucic accompanied top police officials on Sunday for the weapons' display near the town of Smederevo, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the capital, Belgrade.

Vucic said the approximately half of the weapons collected were illegal while the



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (right) inspects weapons collected as part of an amnesty in Smederevo, Serbia. AP

other half were registered weapons that citizens nonetheless handed over.

He added the weapons will go to Serbia's arms and munitions factories for potential use by the armed forces.

"After June 8, the state will respond with repressive measures and punishments

will be very strict," he said of the post-amnesty period. "What does anyone need an automatic weapon for? Or all these guns?"

Serbia is estimated to be among the top countries in Europe in guns per capita. Many are left over from the wars of the 1990s and held illegally.

Obesity speeds up loss of immunity from Covid vaccines: Research

Cambridge (UK): COVID vaccines are very effective, but for some groups they don't generate as strong an immune response. These groups include older adults and people with weakened immune systems, for example due to cancer or other medical conditions. They tend to already be at heightened risk from COVID.

Likewise, obesity — and its association with several other conditions such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and chronic kidney disease — leads to an increased risk of severe COVID. The effect of obesity on COVID vaccine effectiveness, however, has not been well understood. But our new study in Nature Medicine finds obesity is linked to faster loss of immunity from COVID vaccines.

We know people with obesity have an impaired immune response to other vaccines including those for influenza, rabies and hepatitis.

COVID vaccines generate antibodies which recognise the spike protein, a protein on the surface of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID) that allows it to attach to and infect our cells. The vaccines also prime immune cells called T cells to protect against severe COVID if we do contract the virus.

Because immunity acquired after two doses wanes in the months afterwards, many countries have elected to administer booster vaccines to maintain immune protection, particularly in vulnerable groups.

Several studies have suggested that following COVID vaccination, antibody levels may be lower in people with obesity than in the general population.

Earlier in the pandemic, we assembled a team of researchers from the University of Cambridge and the University of Edinburgh to

investigate the effect of obesity on vaccine effectiveness over time.

Using a data platform called EAVE II, the University of Edinburgh team, led by Aziz Sheikh, examined real-time healthcare data for 5.4 million people across Scotland.

In particular, they looked at hospitalisations and deaths from COVID among 3.5 million adults who had received two vaccine doses (either Pfizer or AstraZeneca).

They found that people with severe obesity, defined as a body mass index (BMI) over 40, had a 76 per cent increased risk of hospitalisation and death from COVID after vaccination compared to those with a BMI in the normal range. The risk was also moderately increased in people who were obese (a BMI between 30 and 40) and those who were underweight (a BMI lower than 18.5).

The risk of severe disease



from breakthrough infections after the second vaccine also began to increase more quickly among people with severe obesity (from around ten weeks post-vaccination) and among people with obesity (from around 15 weeks) compared with people of a normal weight (from around 20 weeks).

INVESTIGATING FURTHER

Our team conducted experiments to characterise the immune response to a third dose, or booster, of mRNA COVID vaccines (those made by Pfizer and Moderna) in people with severe obesity. We studied 28 people with severe obesity attending

Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, and measured antibody levels and function as well as the number of immune cells in their blood post-vaccination. We compared the results to those from 41 people of a normal weight.

Although antibody levels were similar in samples from all participants before booster vaccination, the ability of antibodies to work efficiently to fight the virus, known as "neutralisation capacity", was reduced among people with severe obesity. In 55 per cent of people with severe obesity we either couldn't detect or quantify neutralisation capacity, compared to 12 per cent of people with normal BMI.

This might mean COVID vaccines induce lower quality antibodies in people with obesity. It's possible the antibodies are not able to bind to the virus with the same strength as in people of a normal weight. After a booster, antibody

function in people with obesity was restored to the same level as those of normal weight. However, using detailed measurements of B cells, which are responsible for antibody production and immune memory, we found that these immune cells developed differently in the first couple of weeks after vaccination in people with obesity. By repeating measurements of immune responses over time, we could see antibody levels and function declined more rapidly after the third dose in people with severe obesity.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

There were some limitations in both parts of the study. For example, BMI data was only collected once in EAVE II and therefore we cannot exclude changes in BMI over time. Also, the number of people included in our in-depth immunology study was relatively modest.

Nonetheless, immunity from COVID vaccines doesn't seem to be as robust or long-lasting in people with obesity.

With severe obesity affecting 3 per cent of the UK population and 9 per cent of the US population, these findings have important implications. First, COVID boosters may be particularly important for this group. Our study also highlights the need for more targeted interventions to protect people with obesity from severe COVID.

Evidence shows weight loss of at least 5 per cent can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and other metabolic complications of obesity. Interventions that can lead to a sustained reduction in weight (such as lifestyle modification, weight loss drugs, and bariatric surgery) could similarly improve COVID outcomes. Weight loss may likewise improve vaccine responses, but we need more research to investigate.

Adopt early warning system: NHB to HFCs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Regulator for housing finance firms NHB has asked housing finance companies with asset size of over Rs 1,000 crore to adopt an early warning signals (EWS) framework to check financial frauds and also to prevent accounts from turning into non-performing assets.

National Housing Bank (NHB), in a recent circular, said analysis of the frauds reported by the housing finance companies (HFCs) has revealed that the reasons behind accounts being identified as fraud accounts are seller impersonation, submission of fake income/ employment documents, submission of fake title deeds, a collusion of the builder and borrower. It has also been observed that such deficiencies are identified only when the borrower stops paying the EMIs after the disbursement of the loans, NHB said.

"It has been therefore decided that an Early Warning Signals (EWS) Framework should be adopted by the HFCs



so that an alert is triggered before the account turns into non-performing asset (NPA) or declared as a fraud account," it said.

NHB circular further said that tracking of the EWS must be integrated with the credit monitoring process in the systems of the HFCs so that it becomes a continuous activity. Through the EWS framework, HFCs will be encouraged to take into account fraud risks in their risk management practices. NHB has asked the housing finance companies to place the circular before their boards for information and to devise

an implementation strategy. "The mechanism needs to be put in place by April 1, 2024," it said. The NHB has provided an indicative list of EWS for individual borrowers (retail).

This includes 'disbursement of loan done without meeting all pre-disbursement conditions', 'occupation of the borrower has changed', 'adverse developments in the sector in which the borrower is employed', and 'company is unable to contact the borrower during credit monitoring'. The regulator has also suggested an indicative list of EWS for corporate and project loans.

NPCI seeks tie-ups for intl acceptance of RuPay debit card

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is exploring options for further tie-ups to strengthen the global acceptability of RuPay debit cards. Currently, RuPay cards are accepted at the points of sale (PoS) machine powered by Discover of the US, Diners Club, JCB of Japan, Pulse and Union Pay of China.

This needs to be strengthened, and NPCI is working in this direction so that users of RuPay cards are at par with those using Visa or Mastercard, sources said. In March 2012, RuPay went global by tying up with Discover Financial Services to bring international services to Indians.

It has strengthened its network capabilities by launching RuPay JCB Global Card in association with JCB International Co Ltd in July 2019. The RuPay JCB Global card can be used at RuPay card accepting points in India and JCB card accepting points out-



side India for PoS, E-Commerce and ATM. RuPay, a product of NPCI, is the domestic card payment network of India, with wide acceptance at ATMs, POS devices and e-commerce websites across India. Earlier this year, the Union Cabinet approved a scheme worth Rs 2,600 crore for the promotion of RuPay debit cards and low-value BHIM-UPI (Bharat Interface for Money- Unified Payments Interface) transactions.

Under the scheme, the banks are provided financial incentives to foster Point of Sale (PoS) devices and e-commerce transactions using RuPay and UPI. The scheme is aimed at building a robust digital payment ecosystem and promoting UPI Lite and UPI123PAY as economical and user-friendly digital payment options.

Changes in anti-money laundering law can hamper FDA facilitation: CAs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chartered accountants are seeking clarifications on the finance ministry's recent notification on extending the ambit of anti-money laundering law as it can adversely impact ease of doing business and facilitation of foreign investments.

According to industry sources, chartered accountants (CAs) and company secretaries often act as formation agents for foreign companies setting up businesses in India and often provide their own address for communication in the initial phase.

They also act as resident directors of the foreign company trying to establish presence in the country and also operate bank accounts on behalf of their clients.

Industry sources said there is no way that an accountant can know whether the money that an investor is bringing into India is bonafide or laundered money and verify its source. In view of the pending review by the global watchdog on terror financing and money laundering scheduled later this year, the



finance ministry has in recent months tightened and expanded the scope of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). As part of the exercise, chartered and cost accountants and company secretaries have been included in the ambit of the PMLA, if they undertake specified activities on behalf of their clients.

These transactions include buying and selling of properties; management of bank accounts or other assets; and management of the companies, limited liability partnerships or trusts. In another notification, the ministry said that entities and individuals working as 'formation agents', or acting as

director/secretary/partner too would be covered under PMLA provisions. It would also apply to individuals or entities who provide a business address or correspondence address for a company/LLP/trust.

According to industry sources, the activities mentioned in the notifications are performed by CAs for foreign companies trying to start their business in India. "Chartered accountants cannot check the money trail for companies bringing money to India to start business. It is the job of Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and RBI to check the source of investment," a source said.

According to sources, the chartered accountants are in touch with the finance ministry and seeking guidance on the recent changes in the anti-money laundering law.

At the most, a monetary penalty may be imposed on CAs and not the strict provisions of the PMLA law as several of these activities are part of the temporary hand-holding and accounting support required for facilitating foreign investment.

Strong macro outlook, good earning season bring FPIs to Indian shores

₹23,152 cr investment in May so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have shown strong buying interest in Indian equities in May and invested more than Rs 23,152 crore in the first fortnight due to lower chances of further rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve, a strong domestic macro outlook and a good earning season.

With this, now Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have become net buyers of equities in 2023 so far by attracting Rs 8,572 crore, data available with the depositories showed.

Going forward, FPI flows should remain robust for the rest of the month as the global risk on the environment continues for some more time given that major macro data like the US non-farm payroll numbers and CPI numbers have been mostly in line with market estimates, Manish Jeloka, Co-head of Products & Solutions, Sanctum Wealth, said.

"Since the rupee is strong and the dollar is expected to decline in the near term, FPIs are likely to continue buying in India. The improvement in India's macros also favours continued inflows into India," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

According to data from the depositories, FPIs invested a net sum of Rs 23,152 crore in Indian equities in the first fortnight during May 2-12. This came following a net infusion of Rs 11,630 crore in equities in April and Rs 7,936 crore in March. The March investment was mainly driven by bulk investment in the Adani Group



companies by the US-based GQG Partners. However, if one adjusts for the investments of GQG in Adani Group, the net flow is negative. Moreover, in the first two months of the year, FPIs pulled out over Rs 34,000 crore.

Sanctum Wealth's Jeloka said that intervention by governments globally seems to have brought some sense of stability to US regional banks that led to a risk-on environment after a turbulent period in March, leading to an improvement in FPIs flow in April and further in May.

"Lower chances of further rate hikes by the US Fed, strong domestic macro-outlook, and a good earning season have bought foreign investors towards Indian shores," Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, said.

Also, the rupee strengthening against the dollar has supported FPIs buying. Further, recent market volatility and sporadic correction have also provided some rationality to valuations, he added.

Apart from equities, FPIs have invested Rs 68 crore in the debt market in first fortnight of May. In terms of sector, financials continue to be the favourite sector of FPIs. Besides, they were buyers of capital goods and autos too.

Anarock: Housing sales up 48% in FY23 driven by higher volumes & prices



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales rose 48 per cent year-on-year to Rs 3,47 lakh crore during the last fiscal across seven major cities on higher volumes and better price realisation, according to Anarock.

Real estate consultant Anarock reported that sales of residential properties in value terms increased to Rs 3,46,960 crore last fiscal from Rs 2,34,850 crore in 2021-22.

In volume terms, sales grew 36 per cent to 3,79,095 units in 2022-23 from 2,77,783 units in the previous year. The data pertains to the transactions of primary (fresh sale) housing market. "India's residential real estate segment continues to show boundless forward momentum, and is setting unprecedented benchmarks," said Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group.

According to the data, housing sales in Delhi-NCR rose 42 per cent to Rs 50,620 crore last fiscal from Rs 35,610 crore in the previous year. In Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), sales grew 46 per cent to Rs 1,67,210 crore from Rs

1,14,190 crore. Housing sales in Bengaluru increased 49 per cent to Rs 38,870 crore from Rs 26,100 crore. In Pune, housing sales rose 77 per cent to Rs 33,730 crore from Rs 19,100 crore.

Sales in Hyderabad went up 50 per cent to Rs 34,820 crore from Rs 23,190 crore. Chennai saw a 24 per cent growth in sales to Rs 11,050 crore from Rs 8,940 crore. Housing sales in Kolkata increased 38 per cent to Rs 10,660 crore during the last fiscal from Rs 7,720 crore in the previous financial year.

Commenting on the trend, Gurugram-based luxury realty firm Krisumi Corporation MD Mohit Jain said the housing sector has undergone a transformation in recent years, becoming more mature and fundamentally robust.

"While there is significant demand from end-users, investors are also returning to the market," Jain said. Signature Global, which is into affordable housing, Chairman Pradeep Aggarwal said millennials are now actively investing in real estate, contributing to the overall rise in property sales.

Analysts: WPI inflation, global trends to drive domestic stock markets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic stock markets would be driven by inflation numbers, global trends, and the last batch of Q4 earnings this week, analysts said.

Markets will also react to industrial production data and consumer inflation numbers that were released after market hours on Friday.

"Participants will react to macroeconomic data viz. IIP and CPI first, which were released post-market hours on Friday. WPI inflation data is also scheduled on May 15. Apart from economic releases, global cues, especially the performance of the US indices and the trend of foreign flows will also be in focus for cues," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Retail inflation declined to an 18-month low of 4.7 per cent in April mainly due to falling prices of vegetables, oils and fats, and came closer to Reserve Bank's target of 4 per cent, showed government data released Friday.

India's industrial production growth slipped to a five-month low of 1.1 per cent in March from 5.8 per cent in February 2023, mainly due to poor performance of power and manufacturing sectors, according to official data released on Friday.

As the earnings season is in full swing, big names like Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ITC, IOC, JSW Steel and GAIL will announce their numbers during the week along with several others, Mishra added. The Congress returned to power on its own in Karnataka after 10 years, knocking the BJP off its only southern perch on Saturday as



voters decisively backed the grand old party desperately seeking electoral revival ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. "The recently-concluded Karnataka election has resulted in Congress emerging as the clear winner. While this may have a sentimental negative impact on the market, it is important to note that much of this outcome has already been factored in by investors."

"Therefore, it is unlikely that we will witness a significant reaction from the market in response to this development," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said. Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 973.61 points or 1.59 per cent.

"The overall market sentiment remains positive, however, it is important to note that the prices are currently trading near a crucial resistance level. Given this, there is a possibility of profit-booking or a correctional fall in the near future," said Arvind Singh Nanda, Senior Vice President, Master Capital Services Ltd.

"While global cues are relatively muted, market participants will be keeping a watchful eye on the direction of US markets, bond yields, and the dollar index, which could potentially impact Indian equities," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

ED, SEBI, RBI on trail of three top brokers for fraudulent trade

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Three top brokers of the country have come under the scanner of multiple regulatory and enforcement agencies, including for suspected money laundering and fraudulent trading activities amounting to several thousands of crores of rupees, senior officials said on Sunday.

The officials also said that the three brokers, whom they refused to identify citing the ongoing nature of the investigations, have also been found to have been connected to PEPs (politically exposed persons) and the role of a key family member of a senior political leader in a key industrial state is also being investigated.

The investigations have been underway for 4-5 years on multiple fronts against the three top brokers, who head organisations with businesses spread across multiple segments of the capital markets and the financial services sector including brokerage, investment advisory services, portfolio management, asset management fund and non-banking financial services.

The agencies and regulators involved in the investigations so far include the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), while these three have now made references for bringing in the CBI into the picture due to the suspected involvement of PEPs, the officials said. While suspected money laundering activities facilitated by the capital market brokers have always been under the scanner, this could be the first major case of some top-ranking brokerage

and financial services sector players being caught for the web of complex financial market transactions they weave to hide their money laundering activities, they added.

The investigations have involved scrutiny of multi-layered financial and banking transactions, transfer of funds to and from several tax havens, call data records and also social media conversations.

Requests were also sent to several foreign jurisdictions for administrative assistance on identifying the trail of fund transfers amounting to thousands of crores of rupees. While some such jurisdictions, including Switzerland, have already responded, the affected parties have challenged any information sharing citing confidentiality clauses.

As per the laws prevailing in various countries, the concerned banking or financial institutions give an opportunity to their respective clients before sharing the information with any foreign country.

The officials said the three brokers first came under the scanner for their role in a case involving a spot commodity exchange but soon they were found to be engaged in large-scale money laundering activities, including for their brokerage and fund management clients.

The scope of the investigation was expanded after some politically connected persons were found to be involved, they added. In most cases, it was Sebi that suspected a possible money laundering angle in the activities of these brokers and accordingly, the matter was flagged to other agencies and departments for further investigations.

Hero MotoCorp set to roll out record number of products this year: CEO

New Delhi: Hero MotoCorp is gearing up for highest ever model introductions this fiscal as it looks to consolidate market share especially in the premium bike segment, according to the company's CEO Niranjan Gupta. The country's largest two-wheeler maker plans to introduce new bikes, including the first product under the Hero MotoCorp-Harley Davidson tie-up, during the ongoing financial year.

The company has leadership in the budget bike segment (100-110cc) and is looking to enhance presence in the 125 cc and also drive in models to bring in volumes and enhance profitability in the 160-cc and above space. "We'll have product launches every quarter of this fiscal year. Probably this fiscal, we'll see the maximum number of launches ever seen in company's history," Gupta said in an analyst call. PTI

Let's build Twitter 2.0 together, new CEO Linda Yaccarino urges Musk

New Delhi: The soon to be Twitter CEO, Linda Yaccarino, former Chairman of Global Advertising and Partnerships at NBC Universal, on Sunday said she is prepared to build Twitter 2.0 and transform the business together with Musk and millions of platform users.

Yaccarino, who will start in six weeks in her new position, will focus primarily on business operations. "I've long been inspired by your vision to create a brighter future. I'm excited to help bring this vision to Twitter and transform this business together," she posted.

"I'm just as committed to the future of this platform. Your feedback is VITAL to that future. I'm here for all of it. Let's keep the conversation going and build Twitter 2.0 together," Yaccarino further commented. There have been some concerns too regarding Yaccarino's appointment as the new Twitter



CEO. A user posted that she is not here to improve the user experience but wants Twitter to be a 'safe space'. "She represents advertisers, and her natural inclination is to limit speech, and pander to those who push woke ideology on the world. You will have to watch her like a hawk. No doubt she'll bring in advertising revenue in the short term, but she's a long-term mistake," posted a user named Billboard Chris.

Musk replied: "I hear your concerns, but don't judge too early. I am adamant about defending free speech, even if it means losing money." IANS

SEBI floats consultation paper for regulating all web-based platforms

New Delhi: Capital markets watchdog Sebi has floated a consultation paper for regulating all web-based platforms offering fractional ownership of real estate assets to protect small investors.

Such fractional ownership of real estate assets is proposed to be brought as Micro, Small and Medium REITs under Sebi's Real Estate Investment Trusts rules. The proposed regulatory framework would help develop the real estate market, provide investor protection measures and lead to an orderly development of this sector and the market, Sebi said in its consultation paper.

Typically, fractional investment of real estate through fractional ownership platforms (FOPs) is an investing strategy in which the cost of acquisition of real estate is split among several investors, who invest in

securities issued by a special purpose vehicle (SPV) established by an FOP. Such SPVs purchase real estate assets. FOPs allow investors to own a certain percentage or fractional share in the real estate asset through the securities issued by the SPVs. Some FOPs are operated by real estate agents or brokers (before the property is purchased) and as property managers thereafter.

Sebi noted that there has been a mushrooming of web-based platforms offering fractional ownership of real estate assets in the past 2-3 years. These platforms provide investors with an option to invest in buildings and office spaces, including warehouses, shopping centres, conference centres etc. The minimum investment on these FOPs ranges from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25 lakh. PTI

Netherlands emerges as key trading partner of India in FY 2022-23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Netherlands has emerged as India's third largest exports destination after the US and UAE during 2022-23 on account of a surge in shipment of goods such as petroleum products, electronic items, chemicals, and aluminium goods, according to the data of the commerce ministry.

India's trade surplus with the Netherlands has also increased from USD 8 billion in 2021-22 to USD 13 billion in 2022-23. The Netherlands has taken over major destinations such as the UK, Hong Kong, Bangladesh and Germany, the data showed. India's exports to the Netherlands rose by about 48 per cent to USD 18.52 billion during 2022-23 as against USD 12.5 billion in 2021-22. In 2021-22 and 2020-21, the out-

bound shipments to the European country stood at USD 12.55 billion and USD 6.5 billion, respectively. The exports are registering healthy growth continuously since 2000-01, when India's exports to that nation was USD 880 million.

Further, in 2021-22, the Netherlands was the fifth largest destination for Indian exports as against ninth in 2020-21.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said the Netherlands has emerged as a hub for Europe with efficient port and connectivity with the EU through road, railways and waterways. In the calendar year, India's exports to the country increased to USD 18.1 billion in 2022 from USD 5.5 billion in 2017. IANS

Netflix plans to cut \$300 mn in spending this year: Report

San Francisco: Streaming giant Netflix is reportedly slashing its spending by \$300 million this year, including related to hiring.

According to a new report from The Wall Street Journal, one of the reasons behind the spending cut is that Netflix delayed its plans to crack down on password sharing from the first quarter to the second quarter this year. It means that the revenue Netflix expected from the move is now shifted to towards the second half of the year, the report said.

"The company urged staff earlier this month to be sensible with their spending, including in relation to hiring, but noted that there would not be a hiring freeze or additional layoffs," the report added. The streaming company launched its crack down on password sharing in Canada, New Zealand, Portugal and Spain earlier this year. IANS

MAN CITY CLOSER TO TITLE

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Ilkay Gundogan said Manchester City are showing their experience at the business end of the season after the German scored twice in a 3-0 win on Sunday that kept Everton looking over their shoulders in the relegation battle.

City moved four points clear of Arsenal, who are in action later at home to Brighton, with three games remaining for both sides.

The defending champions' superior goal difference means five points from their remaining matches will likely be enough for a fifth title in six seasons.

"We have a very experienced team and competing in the last few games of the season is not a new situation for us, and that helps us a lot," said Gundogan. "It's about staying calm and trust in your abilities."

Everton remain just one point outside the relegation zone and could slip into the bottom three if Leicester beat Liverpool on Monday.

By contrast to the Toffees' troubles, City are still well on course for a treble and could afford the luxury of an afternoon off for some of their stars ahead of Wednesday's Champions League semi-final, second leg against Real Madrid.

"It's a dream come true being here," said City coach Pep Guardiola. "The only team in Europe to be fighting in all competitions. Still it is not over, in the Premier League it is never over. We need two more wins to be champions."



Guardiola made four changes from the side that drew 1-1 in the first leg in the Spanish capital on Tuesday with John Stones, Bernardo Silva, Kevin De Bruyne and Jack Grealish left on the bench. It took the visitors 35 minutes to find their rhythm, by which point they should have been behind as Mason Holgate somehow spooned over a glorious chance to open the scoring after James Tarkowski headed down a corner.

Within three minutes of Holgate's sitter, the game was over as a contest.

GUNDOGAN ON A HIGH

Guardiola had stern words for Gundogan despite the German scoring twice in last weekend's 2-1 win over Leeds after the midfielder missed a late penalty having been given

the chance to complete his hat-trick by Erling Haaland. Gundogan made amends with a stunning touch to control and then flick home Riyad Mahrez's cross in one movement to break the deadlock. Moments later, he created the second with a floated cross

that invited Haaland to power home his 52nd goal of the season with just his third touch in 39 minutes.

Everton boss Sean Dyche showed he too was already thinking about his side's final two games of the season by replacing talismanic striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin, who has missed most of the season through injury, with Neal Maupay at half-time.

"He felt a tight groin, but a tight groin can become a damaged groin," said Dyche. "It would have been a harder call if it had been 0-0 but at 2-0 I had to make a call."

Guardiola could not have wished for a more serene second-half to prepare for the visit of the European champions in midweek as another moment of brilliance from Gundogan made it 3-0 six minutes after the restart.

The 32-year-old is probably into the final month of his seven-year stay in Manchester with his contract up at the end of the season and Barcelona reportedly ready to pounce on a free transfer, but looks set to go out on a high.

Gundogan curled a free-kick beyond the desperate dive of Jordan Pickford for his ninth goal of the season.

Goal difference could be decisive in the battle to beat the drop and Everton did at least manage to stop the bleeding at three.

Indeed the home side came closest to scoring in the final quarter when Amadou Onana's header came crashing back off the crossbar.

West Ham miss chance to seal PL survival



AP ■ LONDON

West Ham wasted a chance to seal their Premier League survival as goals from Bryan Mbeumo and Yoane Wissa clinched Brentford's 2-0 victory on Sunday.

within four points of the east Londoners if they beat Liverpool on Monday.

With games against relegation rivals Leeds and Leicester to come in their remaining fixtures this was a missed opportunity for West Ham to put their lingering relegation fears to bed.

David Moyes' side would have been guaranteed to avoid relegation with a victory in west London.

West Ham are dreaming of a first major trophy since the 1980 FA Cup after beating AZ Alkmaar 2-1 in the Europa Conference League semi-final first leg on Thursday.

But Mbeumo and Wissa netted in the first half to leave the Hammers still needing one win from their last two games to be sure of staying up.

But they have now only won one of the seven top-flight matches that have come within three days of them playing in Europe this season.

Chelsea agree on terms with Pochettino: Reports



AP ■ LONDON

Chelsea are on the verge of hiring Mauricio Pochettino as their new manager after agreeing terms with the former Paris Saint Germain boss, according to reports on Sunday.

2017 and the League Cup final in 2015, missing out on the silverware to Chelsea on both occasions.

Despite failing to end a Tottenham trophy drought that stretches back to 2008, Pochettino was widely admired by his players.

Tottenham striker Harry Kane recently bemoaned the change in the club's culture since the Argentine's exit.

Following his Tottenham stint, the 51-year-old took over at French side Paris Saint Germain in January 2021.

They finished second in Ligue 1 in 2022, winning the Coupe de France and the Trophee des Champions, which were the first trophies of Pochettino's managerial career.

Pochettino led PSG to the French title in his second season but departed after failing to make an impact in the Champions League, with a last 16 capitulation against Real Madrid especially damaging to his reign.

Considered for the Manchester United job before Erik ten Hag's appointment last year, Pochettino will arrive in west London to find a club in crisis.

Chelsea, who last won the title in 2017, are currently 11th in the Premier League in

Kerr strikes as Chelsea win FA Cup final

AP ■ LONDON

Sam Kerr's second-half goal proved the difference as Chelsea beat Manchester United 1-0 to win a third successive women's FA Cup final in front of a record-breaking crowd at Wembley on Sunday.

But it needed a desperate block from Chelsea goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger in the seventh minute of added-on time to deny United an equaliser in front of a crowd of 77,390 -- a world record attendance for a domestic women's football match.

Chelsea manager Emma Hayes's decision to bring on Pernille Harder just before the hour proved a turning point in a match where United had the better of the early exchanges.

It took United, in their first women's FA Cup final, just 20 seconds after kick-off to put the ball into the Chelsea net only for the goal to be disallowed for offside.

Chelsea, the reigning English women's Super League champions, failed to clear Ella Toone's cross from the right and Leah Galton swept the ball in.

But the flag had gone up, with VAR confirming Toone had moved a fraction too early.

Chelsea, who last won the title in 2017, are currently 11th in the Premier League in

Real Madrid beat Getafe in La Liga

AP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid warmed up for their decisive Champions League semi-final visit to face Manchester City with a 1-0 win over Getafe on Saturday in La Liga.



Marco Asensio broke the deadlock in the 70th minute with a deflected strike from distance, in a game of few chances.

Carlo Ancelotti rotated heavily to keep his key players fresh ahead of the second leg battle with Pep Guardiola's City, following the 1-1 draw last Tuesday in Madrid.

Ancelotti lined up with just three of the side that started the first leg -- goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, Eduardo Camavinga and Fede Valverde. Camavinga limped off in the final stages with knee pain

sustained in a clash with Juan Iglesias.

Ancelotti said the French midfielder would not take long to recover.

"He twisted his knee a bit, it's a blow, nothing more, he will recover very quickly," Ancelotti told reporters.

"Tomorrow he will rest like the others who played today and I think from Monday he will train with the team, he doesn't have a problem."

Ancelotti added: "The knee is stable, it hurts him a bit now, but the important thing is stability and he has that, 100 per cent."

PSG edge closer to title as Messi jeered on return

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain closed in on a record 11th French league title with a 5-0 home win over Ajaccio on Saturday as Lionel Messi received a mixed reception on his return from suspension.

determined to put in a proper display. They want to be champions and they realise that Lens aren't giving up and a misstep could raise the pressure," said PSG coach Christophe Galtier.

Fabian Ruiz opened the scoring on 22 minutes at the Parc des Princes and Achraf Hakimi added a second goal before Kylian Mbappe struck twice shortly after half-time.

Messi's name elicited a combination of whistles and applause when it was read out before kick-off after he was banned by the club for last weekend's match over an unauthorised trip to Saudi Arabia.

Mohamed Youssouf compounded a miserable night for the Corsicans with an own goal for PSG's fifth, while Hakimi and Ajaccio midfielder Thomas Mangani were sent off after a late bust-up.

The Argentine again drew jeers with his early touches in what was likely his penultimate appearance in Paris ahead of a reported move to Saudi Arabia for the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner.

PSG need four points from their final three games -- against Auxerre, Strasbourg and Clermont -- to secure the Ligue 1 title after restoring their six-point lead over second-placed Lens.

"So there are whistles but very quickly a large part of the stadium made sure to drown them out to support Leo," said Galtier.

But the flag had gone up, with VAR confirming Toone had moved a fraction too early.

"He stayed focused with the desire to live up to the game and create chances. He's used to it because he's been in difficult situations in his career."

"The players were very

the desire to live up to the game and create chances. He's used to it because he's been in difficult situations in his career."

Djokovic, Swiatek into Italian Open last 16

AP ■ ROME

Novak Djokovic reached the last 16 of the Italian Open on Sunday after winning a battle with Grigor Dimitrov 6-3, 4-6, 6-1, while blistering Iga Swiatek thrashed Lesia Tsurenko 6-2, 6-0.



Six-time Rome champion Djokovic initially looked in improved form compared to his sluggish tournament opener against Tomas Etcheverry but again had a fight on his hands against the former world number three.

However Dimitrov levelled the set at 4-4 with a break of his own, angering Djokovic who was convinced that the shot which won the game was long, and drew huge roars from the Foro Italico crowd when he claimed the set.

No longer wearing the elbow brace he had in Friday's second round match, Djokovic looked to have shaken off the injury which forced him to miss last week's Madrid Masters.

Djokovic served out to take the lead and in game three of the second set broke former world number three Dimitrov, who handed the initiative to the Serb

However Djokovic has reached at least the quarter-finals in each of his 16 appearances in Rome and a powerful third set display ensured his passage into the fourth round.

It was his 11th win in 12 meetings with Dimitrov.

Losing finalist in Madrid last weekend, Swiatek looked again in imperious form as she breezed into the last 16 of the women's draw.

Her bid for a Rome hat-trick will be helped by six of the world's top 10 women players being eliminated early.

Fifth-ranked Coco Gauff of the United States was defeated by Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic 4-6, 6-2, 6-2. It was Bouzkova's third career Top 5 win but first on clay.

Also heading for the exit was world number eight Maria Sakkari who was beaten 7-5, 6-3 by Marketa Vondrousova.

भारत का राजपत्र The Gazette of India. MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS NOTIFICATION New Delhi, the 2nd May, 2023. S.O. 2021(E).—In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, the brief description of which is given in the Schedule below, is required for building (widening/2-laning with paved shoulder), maintenance, management and operation of National Highway No. NH-752B in the stretch of land from Km. 22+800 to 29+567 Km. to (Khilchipur to Jirapur Road) (Jirapur- Bypass) in the district of Rajgarh in the state of MADHYA PRADESH, hereby declares its intention to acquire such land.

RCB CRUSH RAJASTHAN BY 112 RUNS

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Royals dished out one of the most inexplicable batting performances of the Indian Premier League as they were dismissed for just 59, suffering a massive 112-run defeat to Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Sunday.

Chasing 172 for a win, the Royals suffered a stunning batting collapse to be bundled out in just 10.3 over for the third lowest total in IPL history with only Shimron Hetmyer (35 off 19 balls) and Joe Root (10 off 15 balls) scoring in double-digit figures.

It was RR's second lowest total as they just about managed to go past their earlier lowest of 58 against the same opponents in 2009 by one run.

RR batters failed to give a fight as they kept on playing shots when the situation demanded to stick for a while on a slow and tricky wicket.

RCB bowlers exploited the lack of application by RR batters and game sense as all of them returned with wickets. Wayne Parnell was the pick of the bowlers with three wickets for 10 runs from his three overs. Michael Bracewell and Karn Sharma took two wickets each while Mohammed Siraj and Glenn Maxwell got one each.

With the win, RCB jumped to the fifth spot with 12 points from 12 matches to be in contention for a play-off berth while RR moved down to sixth with 12 points from 13 matches.



The Royals lost five wickets for 25 runs in the powerplay with Parnell taking two, including that of Jos Buttler (0) and captain Sanju Samson (4).

shot and offered a simple catch to Virat Kohli at mid-off in the second ball of the RR run chase.

It was a rare instance as both RR openers got out for ducks as Buttler departed in the next over off a short and wide delivery off Parnell.

Two balls later, Samson was out as he committed for a shot too early and the ball loomed up high in the air for Anuj Rawat to take a well-judged catch.

Three wickets down for 11 runs after two overs, the Royals survived the next two overs before Devdutt Padikkal, who came in as 'Impact Player' in

place of Yuzvendra Chahal, was dismissed for four off Bracewell as Royals' procession to the dressing room continued.

Root's first IPL outing with the bat also turned out to be a nightmare as he was trapped LBW decision, becoming Parnell's third victim.

RR batters threw away their wickets, match was lost in powerplay: Sangakkara

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Head coach Kumar Sangakkara feels Rajasthan Royals' batters threw away their wickets, adding that the IPL match was lost in the powerplay itself after half the side was sent packing by Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Sunday. "It was a poor batting performance. We bowled well to keep them under 170, which on this pitch was going to be a good chase," Sangakkara said.

"I think we got a little bit carried away in the powerplay, thinking that we had to score too many runs there and try to be ultra positive," he said at the post-match press conference.

"It was a case of trying to build partnerships but unfortunately we were five down coming out of the

powerplay that was probably the end of the game," the Sri Lankan legend added.

The RR batters were guilty of going for big shots instead of trying to settle in.

"They didn't really get us out but we got ourselves out, it was pretty obvious to see. So, it was not about one individual it's about the whole batting unit and we weren't good enough today," Sangakkara said.

The loss meant RR slipped to the sixth place with 12 points from 13 matches. With only one game left, their chances of reaching the play-offs look slim.

"We'll have to wait, have one game left, unfortunately, now other results will have to go our way, we got to play for some pride and make sure we win it," the coach said.

continued their strong form on a slower pitch but the Royals produced a disciplined bowling effort to stop RCB to a competitive total.

Anuj Rawat hit 29 not out off just 11 balls down the order to take the RCB total past the 170 mark as they added 51 runs in the last five overs.

Australian left-arm spinner Adam Zampa (4-0-25-2) and pacer KM Asif (4-0-42-2) were the most successful Royals bowlers while Sandeep Sharma got one wicket.

Kohli punished Sandeep for a boundary in the first over for bowling a short and wide ball, but he and du Plessis could not get too many boundaries after the introduction of spinners.

Zampa was introduced in the second over but was hit for a six by du Plessis in the fourth over. Ashwin and Chahal also did reasonably well as RCB could only score 42 for no loss in the powerplay.

The Royals got their first breakthrough in the form of Kohli (18 off 19 balls) in the seventh over with Asif claiming the prized wicket. The ball ballooned up in the air and Yashasvi Jaiswal took a fine catch.

RCB were unable to step up the gas as they were 78 for 1 at the halfway mark. But by then Maxwell had settled down and he began to impose himself on the RR bowlers.

Maxwell hit two fours off Sandeep in the 13th over and followed it up with a six off Ashwin in the next to push the scoring rate.

KKR beat Chennai to spice up last 4 race



PTI ■ CHENNAI

Crucial Fifties from Rinku Singh and Nitish Rana kept Kolkata Knight Riders' (KKR) playoffs hope alive as they registered 6 wickets victory over Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 match here at MA Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday.

Nitish played an unbeaten knock of 57 runs off 44 while Rinku scored vital 54 runs in 43 deliveries for KKR. For CSK, Deepak Chahar bagged a three-wicket haul, while other bowlers failed to grab any wicket for their team. Chasing a target of 145, Kolkata suffered early hiccups as Chennai Super Kings bowlers delivered fiery

boundary. KKR captain Nitish also brought up his stunning fifty in just 38 deliveries.

Moeen Ali's direct throw gave CSK a vital breakthrough as he run out well-set batter Rinku Singh for 54.

The right-handed batter Andre Russell then came out to bat. KKR needed 4 runs in 12 balls to victory. In the penultimate over Nitish Rana slammed winning four and clinched a 6-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings.

Earlier, Shivam Dube's crucial unbeaten knock of 48 (34)* powered Chennai Super Kings to a total of 144/6 in the first innings against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Dube's 48 included three sixes and a single four. His knock came when CSK were losing wickets at regular intervals. After a bright start to the game, CSK suffered a major blow as they lost the wicket of Ruturaj Gaikwad in the fourth over for a score of 17(13).

Varun Chakaravathy got the much-needed breakthrough and after this wicket, the flow of runs started to slow down for the hosts.

Ajinkya Rahane and Devon Conway kept the scoreboard ticking and pounced on every opportunity to find a boundary.

However, Chakaravathy once again struck the breakthrough as he claimed the wicket of Ajinkya Rahane tried to get things going for CSK as he charged down to the pitch and tried to go over long-on.

Chakaravathy once again struck the breakthrough as he claimed the wicket of Ajinkya Rahane tried to get things going for CSK as he charged down to the pitch and tried to go over long-on.

I don't have an answer for that performance: Samson

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Royals skipper Sanju Samson had "no answer" to the dismal performance his batters dished out in the match against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Sunday, getting bundled out for 59, the third-lowest innings total ever in the IPL.

Faf du Plessis' RCB won the match by 112 runs after posting 171 for five. The visitors finished off the opposition in just 10.3 overs with South African quick Wayne Parnell emerging the most successful bowler with 3/10 from three overs.

The famed Royals batting simply crumbled with the home team reduced to 5/28 in powerplay from which it could never recover.

On the floundering campaign in the second half of the IPL, Samson said, "That is a

great question, actually. I was thinking about it and where it went wrong. Sorry, I do not have an answer for that."

Four Royals batters, including openers Jos Buttler and Yashasvi Jaiswal, were out for duck, while Sanju Samson could only score four runs.

Samson, though, put up a brave front saying IPL is a tournament where a turnaround can happen within a couple of days.

"We all know the nature of the IPL. We know things can change in a couple of days. Funny, funny things happen at the end of the league stages. We have to be strong, be professional and think about the game we are playing in Dharamsala. You have to keep your hopes high and try your best," he added.

The margin of defeat means the Royals' net run rate has taken a severe beating



even as RCB leapfrogged them on the points table to be placed fifth with 12 points, while RR, stranded on 12 points, dropped to sixth.

The Royals skipper said their strategy to go hard in powerplays had come unstuck, adding that his batters had little choice but to take risks,

wicket will slow down.

"Today, it did not work out. That (match) could have gone to the wire, it could have been a tight match if we had a decent powerplay. I felt that (RCB's score) was a par score on this wicket."

RCB skipper du Plessis said the improvement in the net run rate (NRR) after the big win will do his side a world of good. He added the pitch was really difficult to bat on and that the later order batting by Anuj Rawat (29 not out) helped the team past 160.

"We needed it, in terms of the NRR. It was a really difficult pitch when we batted first. Even in the powerplay, the ball was keeping low and we felt that 160 would be a good score. Those hits towards the end pushed us to a very good score. We have not quite managed to do it (finish off strongly) well."

Gujarat Titans look to seal playoff berth against SRH

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans pride themselves on consistency and would be expected to produce a solid show against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL here on Monday after a rare 'flat' performance.

Another win should be enough for defending champions Gujarat Titans to seal a play-off berth while Sunrisers, who have only four wins from 11 games, are all but out of the reckoning.

Barring Rashid Khan, who starred with both ball and bat against Mumbai Indians, the bowlers had a forgettable outing and no one had answers to the special hitting ability of Suryakumar Yadav.

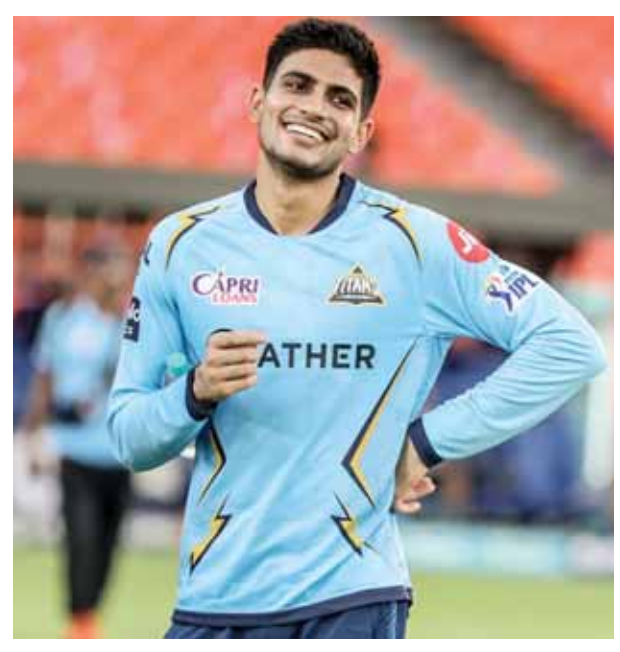
Gujarat remain the table leaders and tend to quickly learn from their mistakes.

"As a group we weren't there. In bowling also we were very flat. Didn't have clear plans or didn't execute," skipper Hardik Pandya had said after their fourth loss in 12 games.

With the bat, the prolific top-order could not get going and despite a blinder from Rashid Khan at number 8, the Titans fell short. The star spinner was back at his best with the bowl to end up with his best figures of the season.

The skillful Mohammed Shami had a rare off day and he would be expected to conjure up magic with the new ball. Mohit Sharma, who was used in the middle and death overs earlier in the season, bowled with the new ball against Mumbai but the move did not play off.

Sunrisers, on the other



A win should be enough for defending champions Gujarat Titans to seal a play-off berth while SRH, who have only four wins from 11 games, are all but out of the reckoning

hand, will be at the mercy of other teams after losing to Lucknow Super Giants from a winning position. They could not defend 80 runs off the last six overs with Nicholas Pooran playing a game changing innings.

Pakistan Tests feature in Oz domestic cricket summer

AP ■ SYDNEY

The Australia men's cricket team's home Tests in the coming summer will be crammed into an unusually narrow window in December and January.

Australia will meet Pakistan in three Tests and the West Indies in two in the traditional school holiday period.

The Pakistan series will begin with a Test in Perth from December 14 to 18 fol-

lowed by the traditional Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from December 26 to 30.

The New Year Test is set for the Sydney Cricket Ground from January 3 to 7, though Adelaide has also expressed interest in hosting the match.

Cricket Australia is expected to discuss hosting arrangement with the New South Wales state govern-

ment. Australia also will play the West Indies in three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 internationals in February.

Australia's world champion women's team will open the summer program on October 1 with a T20 international against the West Indies, the same day as the high profile National Rugby League grand final.

The women will also play a test against South Africa at Perth from February 15 to 18.

India lose to Chinese Taipei 1-4 in Sudirman Cup opening match



PTI ■ SUZHOU

Double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu's gallant fight ended in agony as India made a dismal start to their Sudirman Cup campaign, going down to the formidable Chinese Taipei 1-4 in their group C opening round tie here on Sunday.

There was, however, no lack of fight from the Indian players as Tanisha Crasto and K Sai Prateek started on a positive note in the mixed doubles contest but they ran out of steam in the end, losing 21-18, 24-26, 6-21 to world No. 30 Yang Po-Hsuan and Hu Ling Fang.

World Number 9 HS Prannoy then couldn't find his 'A' game, going down 19-21, 15-21 to world No. 5

Chou Tien Chen as India lagged 0-2 after the first two matches.

Sindhu was then handed the responsibility to bring India back into the tie but it was always going to be a tough task with her nemesis and former world No. 1 Tai Tzu Ying standing across the net.

The 27-year-old from Hyderabad, who hasn't been in the best of form lately, produced a gritty performance after the opening game reversal but couldn't go the distance with Tai Tzu Ying managing a 21-14, 18-21, 21-17 win in an hour and four minutes.

It allowed Chinese Taipei take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match tie.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty then fought hard before losing 13-21, 21-17, 18-21 to Lee Yang and Ye Hong Wei in the men's doubles match in a little over an hour as India further slumped to 0-4.

World No 17 Treasa Jolly and P Gayatri Gopichand then showed tremendous grit as they recovered from an opening game loss to eke out a 21-15, 18-21, 13-21 win over Lee Chia Hsin and Teng Chun Hsun in the final women's doubles tie to help India avoid a cleansweep.