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NEW DELHI, FRIDAY APRIL 22, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Guru Teg epitome of Indian tradition of sacrifice: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Reminding that the 9th Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur gave up his life for his ideals, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said his "balidan" should be seen as a continuation of great sacrifices made by "our Rishis and Gurus" to defend and preserve the "great heritage and tradition" of India and not as a separate event.

Addressing the nation from the Red Fort to mark the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the PM said, "In front of Aurangzeb's tyrannical thinking, Guru Tegh Bahadur became 'Hind di Chadar' and stood like a rock. This Red Fort is a witness that even though Aurangzeb severed many heads, but could not shake our faith."

The Red Fort was chosen as the venue for the event as it was here that Mughal ruler Aurangzeb had given orders for the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675.

As Shabad Kirtan like "Hari ko naam sada sukhdayi" wafted in the air, Modi wearing a Sikh turban looked immersed in the prayer. He later released a postal stamp and a commemorative coin on the Sikh guru.

Addressing the gathering of the devotees, Modi said,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays obeisance during the 400th Parkash Purab celebrations of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Red Fort in Delhi on Thursday

"When Guru Teg Bahadur was born, it was said that this child will eliminate sorrow of the marginalised. Gurdwara Shish Ganj Sahib, which is close to the Red Fort, is a symbol of Guru Teg Bahadur's sacrifice."

Seeing a "unity" in the sacrifices made by the Gurus and the "millions" others, Modi said all of them laid down their lives so that Indian heritage

lives on. He said Guru Teg Bahadur lived and sacrificed himself for his ideals.

India, he said is "not only a country but a great tradition which is 'nursed' by thousands of Rishis and Gurus and that sacrifice of Teg Bahadurji "cannot be seen separately".

The PM recalled the tremendous services of ten Gurus and specifically referred

to Guru Nanak whose travels unified the country.

"Guru Nanak Dev ji united the whole country in one thread. Guru Tegh Bahadur's followers are everywhere. Patna Sahib in Patna and Rakabganj Sahib in Delhi, we see 'Ek Bharat' everywhere in the form of Guru's wisdom and blessings," he said.

Continued on Page 2

SC raps mayor for demolition drive after stay order

Supreme Court to hear Jahangirpuri anti-encroachment case after 2 weeks
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday extended the status quo until further order on the anti-encroachment drive in the violence-hit Jahangirpuri area and expressed displeasure against the NDMC Mayor for uprooting structures with the use of bulldozers even after the SC passed an order to stay it on Wednesday.

Issuing notice to Centre and others, bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and BR Gavai asked the matter to be listed after two weeks and said it will take a serious view of the demolition which was carried out for more than two hours after the stay order was passed and communicated to the Mayor.

"Status quo to be maintained till further order...List after two weeks and pleadings to be completed till then," the court said on the petition filed by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind that claimed that buildings of the Muslim riots accused were razed.



Lawyers Dhusynat Dave, Kapil Sibal, Prashant Bhushan and CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat's lawyer PV Surendranath informed the apex court that NDMC continued demolition for two hours even after the court's order was communicated to Mayor.

"We will take a serious view of the demolition which was carried out even after the Supreme Court orders, even after NDMC Mayor was informed. We will take that up later," the bench said.

Initiating the arguments, Dave, appearing for Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, said this matter raises far-reaching questions of constitutional and national importance. The bench asked, "What is national importance in this matter? It is only pertaining to an area."

Continued on Page 2

PK for non-Gandhi as Cong president

Kishor presents Natraj model for revival of Cong, proposes 'India Deserves Better' campaign
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The fourth and perhaps the final round of the series meeting between poll strategist Prashant Kishor and batches of Congress leaders, including party chief Sonia Gandhi, is scheduled for Friday to give direction to the party as well as Kishor's much-awaited induction in the party.

According to some leaked reports claiming to be that of Kishor's 600 slides presentation to the Congress leaders spanning over five days, the poll strategist has advised a non-Gandhi to head the grand old party. Kishor has titled his five steps Congress revival plan as "Natraj", the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe.

As per the Kishor's Natraj model, Sonia can continue as UPA president and Rahul Gandhi can lead the party and leaders in Parliament, but Congress president should be



a non-Gandhi. He has also proposed a campaign like "India Deserves Better" by the usage of powerful social media tools.

He has suggested that the Congress should avoid mainstream media and that the party should create a powerful digital army that can take on the BJP. He recommended that the Congress should aim to bring 30 crore voters together to win the election. He has also suggested a topic like Gandhi vs Godse.

Kishor has suggested that the Congress has to take six fundamental resolutions to rebuild itself. Kishor has stated in his recommendation that the Congress is no longer a democratic organisation and 65 per cent of the district presidents and 90 per cent of the block presidents have not had any meeting with the Congress president or general secretary.

He also recommended internal reforms like one family one ticket, fixed tenure of Congress president and Congress Working Committee and prevention of manipulation in internal elections.

Continued on Page 2

India, UK to ink £1bn deals

India-Russia ties during Ukraine crisis to figure in Johnson-Modi talks
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India and the United Kingdom will further cement their strategic, defence and economic ties by inking deals worth over one billion pounds during Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ongoing visit.

Johnson landed in Ahmedabad on Thursday and will arrive in New Delhi for a summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday. This is the maiden visit by Johnson to India as the Prime Minister. He had to postpone his tour twice last year in the backdrop of a surge in corona cases in Britain and India. He will be accorded ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

India's ties with Russia in the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine sanctions will be discussed in the summit



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson climbs onto a JCB at the new JCB Factory in Vadodara on Thursday

with Modi, Johnson said on Thursday. The two leaders will meet in New Delhi on Friday.

Making this assertion in

Ahmedabad after arriving from the United Kingdom on a two-day visit, Johnson said, "As I think everybody understands,

India and Russia have historically very different a relationship, perhaps, than Russia and the UK have had over the last couple of decades. We have to reflect on that reality, but clearly, I'll be talking about it to Modi."

The conflict will figure in the summit with both sides exchanging their views. However, Britain is likely to maintain its stand that it is not in the business of lecturing or telling other countries what to do, sources said here on Thursday. The two leaders are also likely to review the long term consequences of the Ukraine crisis.

Giving details of his visit, the British High Commission said Johnson will announce a draft of commercial agreements and hail a "new era" in bilateral trade and investment ties.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

J&K EX-GUV MALIK GRAFT CHARGE: CBI FILES FIRS

New Delhi: The CBI has filed two FIRs in connection with corruption charges levelled by former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik in the awarding of contracts for a group medical insurance scheme for government employees and civil work worth ₹2,200 crore related to Kuru hydroelectric power project in the erstwhile State, officials said on Thursday.

CLERIC 'INSTIGATING' MOB IN HUBBALLI ARRESTED

Hubballi: A cleric was arrested on Thursday in connection with the violence reported in the city recently over an alleged social media post hurting the sentiments of a community.

THOSE IN OTHER JOBS CAN ENROLL WITH BAR: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday said that a person engaged in other professions can be allowed to provisionally enroll with a bar council but has to clear the All India Bar Examination and upon clearing the test, will get six months to decide whether he or she would like to be an advocate or continue with the other job.

Putin says Mariupol 'liberated', Ukraine scoffs at win claim



Russian President Vladimir Putin with Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu during their meeting in the Kremlin in Moscow on Thursday

AP ■ KYIV

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday claimed victory in the strategic city of Mariupol, even as he ordered his troops not to risk more losses by storming the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in the war's iconic battleground.

"The completion of combat work to liberate Mariupol is a success," Putin said in a joint appearance with his Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu. "Congratulations."

Ukraine jeered at the idea that a Russian victory in Mariupol was already achieved. Detailed report on P9

India slams US Congresswoman for visit to POK

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday condemned US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's visit to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and said it reflected her "narrow-minded" politics. She is on a four-day visit to Pakistan.

Criticising Omar for visiting POK, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "We have noted that she has visited a part of the Indian Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir that is currently illegally occupied by Pakistan. Let me just say that if such a politician wishes to practise her narrow-minded politics... That may be her business."

To a query on recent terror attacks in Afghanistan, the MEA Spokesperson said India has been looking at the developments in that country.

"We have seen some of the terrorist attacks. We have always been forthright in our condemnation of terrorist attacks. We are looking at what has been the developments there," Bagchi said.

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Delhiites get some respite from heat

Temperature in the national Capital dropped to 35.2 degrees Celsius, which is three notches less than the normal temperature for this time of the year

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The people living in Delhi on Thursday gets a major relief from the heat, as the city witnessed cloudy sky with light rain and dust raging wind, due to which the maximum temperature in the national capital dropped to 35.2 degree Celsius, which is three notches less than the normal temperature for this time of the year, according to the India Meteorological Department.

The minimum temperature in Delhi recorded was 25.8 degree Celsius, which is three

notches warmer than the normal for this season, stated the IMD data.

The relative humidity recorded at the Safdarjung observatory, in the morning at 8:30 A.M was 34 per cent and 36 per cent in the evening at 5:30 P.M.

The weather stations at Ridge, Ayanagar, Mungeshpur, Najafgarh, Pitampura, Palam, Lodhi Road and Jafarpur recorded maximum temperatures of 35.2 degrees Celsius, 43 degrees Celsius, 43.1 degrees Celsius, 44.3 degrees Celsius, 36 degrees Celsius, 35.2 degrees Celsius and 41.7 degrees Celsius respectively, showed the IMD data.

The IMD predicted that the Delhi on Friday will witness partly cloudy sky and the maximum temperature will go up to 38 degree Celsius.

“On the weekend, the city will witness the strong surface winds during the day time and

the maximum temperature will surge to 40 degree Celsius,” IMD predicted.

“The maximum temperature on Thursday decreased by two to seven degree Celsius over most parts of northwest and central India and by two to three degree Celsius over parts of east India and interior Maharashtra,” said IMD.

“Maximum temperatures more than 40 Deg. C reported over parts of west Rajasthan, Gujarat State, South Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh Chhattisgarh, interior Odisha, Jharkhand, Vidarbha, Telangana, interior Maharashtra and Rayalaseema,” said IMD.

According to the sources the power demand in the national capital cooked up to 5657 on Thursday which is less than the power demand recorded on Wednesday which created a history as it was 5761 MW, highest in the month of April till the date.

Gadchiroli cops arrest four hard-core Maoists from Nelgunda forests

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major success achieved as part of its ongoing Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC), Special Operation Squad (C-60) of the Gadchiroli police on Thursday arrested four hard-core Maoists, including a woman, carrying a total reward of Rs. 18 lakh on their heads, from the Nelgunda forests

Being seen as a significant breakthrough made after they gunned down 26 Maoists in the forests of Gyarpatti in Korchi taluka on November 13, 2021, the C-60 commandos brought off the arrests in the Nelgunda forests located within the limits of Dhodraj Armed Out Post (AOP), as part of an anti-naxal operation launched on the basis of the information that some CPI (Maoists) activists entering Nelgunda village area in plain clothes in order to execute their subversive activities.

Superintendent of Police Ankit Goyal said that of the arrested, two were area commanders, while the other two were members.

Goyal identified the four

arrested Maoists as Babu alias Ramji Doghe Wadde (30) Maruti alias Manik Sadhu Gawde (34), Suman alias Janni Komati Kudnami (24) and Ajit alias Bharat, all hailing from different villages in Gadchiroli.

An Area Committee Member (ACM) associated with company no 10, Babu Wadde had actively participated in the brutal killing of policeman Shri Dushyant Pandhari Nandeshwar at village Kothi on August 14, 2020. He was involved in 13 offences – comprising seven murders, three encounters, two robberies and one arson case.

Maroti Gawade, another ACM with Gatta LOS and also the member of Action Team of the naxalites, was involved in three major offences of encounter committed by the naxalites.

The arrested female Maoist Suman Kudiyami, who was operating with Permili LOS as a Member, was involved in 11 major offences — comprising three murders and 08 encounter) committed by the naxals.

The fourth arrested Maoist

Ajit @ Bharat Hichami had along with Maroti Gawade actively participated the brutal killing of two civilians -- Ashok @ Navin Peka Narote and Mangesh Masa Hichami under the limits of AOP Gatta (Ja.) on April 13, 2022.

In order to curb their violent activities, the Maharashtra government had declared a reward on Rs. 8 lakh on the head of Babu @ Raamji Wadde, Rs. 06 lakh on Maroti @ Anturam @ Manik Gawade, Rs. 02 lakh on Suman @ Janni Kudiyami and Rs. 02 lakh on the head of Ajit @ Bharat Mainu Hichami.

The Gadchiroli police are investigating the involvement of the arrested Maoists in the other offences.

Spurred by the success, the Gadchiroli police have intensified the anti-naxal operations against the Maoist organization to curb the naxalism in Gadchiroli district. Simultaneously, Gadchiroli SP Ankit Goyal has appealed to the active Maoists cadres to renounce the path of the violence and surrender in order to live their lives with dignity.

Delhi HC: Cannot force women living in ashram to live with parents

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Thursday said that while it cannot force the women living in a Rohini ashram under “shocking” conditions to live with their parents, no institution has the licence to conduct its affairs in a manner that violates the fundamental rights of the inmates.

A Bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi, which was hearing pleas concerning the state of affairs at Adhyatmik Vidhyalaya — founded by self-styled spiritual guru Virender Dev Dixit, said that it was inclined to direct the Delhi government to take over the institution’s management and asked the government counsel to seek instructions.

The bench, also comprising Justice Navin Chawla, observed that the ashram was run by a “baba” who has been charge-sheeted by the CBI for the offence of rape and is now absconding. The bench recollected an earlier report on the

matter which revealed a “shocking state of affairs” at the institution and claimed that the women inmates were living in “jail-like conditions”, without any doors on toilet cubicles.

The court also asked the counsel for CBI to file a status report on the state of the investigation in the matter. “There is very thorough indoctrination... How can we accept that any sane person would live in these conditions? Can we shut our eyes to it? Who is funding it? Who is managing? This is shocking that this is going on in the capital... We don’t want (that) in the garb of spirituality, the inhumane situation continues,” observed that court.

The court stated that it is not proposing that the ashram should be shut down but that it has to run in a manner which is consistent with the inmates’ rights to privacy and bodily integrity and it falls on the State to ensure that infraction of individuals’ fundamental rights is prevented and remedied.

Will issue orders on defaulting EV companies: Nitin Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With increasing incidents of electric two-wheelers catching fire, Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the government will issue necessary orders on defaulting companies after receiving the report of an expert panel that has been formed to enquire into the matter. In a series of tweets, Gadkari said several mishaps involving electric two-wheelers have come to light in the last two months.

“We have constituted an expert committee to enquire into these incidents and make recommendations on remedial steps.” Based on the reports, we will issue necessary orders on the defaulting companies,” the road transport and highways

minister said. Gadkari added: “We will soon issue quality-centric guidelines for Electric Vehicles.” The minister asserted that if any company is found negligent in its processes, a heavy penalty will be imposed and a recall of all defective vehicles will also be ordered.

Meanwhile, companies may take advance action to recall all defective batches of vehicles immediately, Gadkari tweeted. “Under the leadership of PM Shri @narendramodiji, our government is committed to ensure safety of each and every commuter,” he tweeted.

The government had ordered a probe last month after an e-scooter launched by ride-hailing operator Ola’s electric mobility arm caught fire in Pune.

Horticulture Dept imparting training to youth: Maurya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the direction of Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, the Horticulture and Food Processing department is imparting training and skill to young men and women in various disciplines to help in their self-employment or facilitate their employment in various institutions. According to an official communiqué, the training of the third batch of rooftop farming and value addition by Regional Food Research and Analysis Centre Lucknow will be held on April 23.

Director, Horticulture and Food Processing, Dr RK Tomar said that various types of employment training programmes for the general public such as mush-

room production and value addition, food processing, food safety, nutraceutical food products, probiotic food, jaggery based products, prevention of adulteration in food products, training for checking etc. were conducted. Tomar further said that training would be also given on how plants contribute to maintaining a clean environment, organic products, vegetables rich in nutritional elements, fruits, medicinal plants etc, especially to the people living in urban areas.

He said training would be given in this workshop on how to prepare various value-added products of crops produced in the participants’ own home along with technical knowledge on installing the apparatus on the roof or balcony of their houses.

Model district plans to be prepared for all dists of UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

For the overall development of Uttar Pradesh, the government has drawn a unique blueprint under which a ‘Model District Plan’ will be prepared for every district based on the problems that a particular district is facing.

A directive in this regard was issued by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a high level meeting on Thursday.

Under this ambitious plan, 18 teams, headed by cabinet ministers, would be sent to 18 divisions in the next 18 weeks. The teams will meet people and try to understand the problems at the ground level.

Delhi Police arrests 3 fake job racketeers for OTP fraud

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested three men who allegedly posted fake advertisements on social media regarding job vacancies in the Delhi Metro to dupe the aspirants.

A man was swindled out of over Rs 19,000 while he was paying the registration fee online to apply for a job that did not exist at all, said police.

The accused have been identified as Nitin Singh (30), Sumant Kumar (39), both residents of Noida in Uttar Pradesh, and Mohammad Shahnaaz (23), a resident of New Ashok Nagar, they said.

Bhupender Singh (21), a resident of Shastri Nagar,

lodged a complaint alleging that he saw an advertisement on social media regarding vacancy in the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), a senior police officer said.

After clicking that link, he received a WhatsApp message having another link to what he thought was a Delhi Metro website, police said.

The complainant then filled in the web form and also uploaded his debit card details for transaction of Rs 49 as required for the purported registration fee. After filling in the one time password (OTP), Rs 19,049 was deducted from his bank account, the officer said.

Meanwhile, another complaint with allegations of cheat-

ing through similar modus operandi was also received, they said.

According to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, North district, Sagar Singh Kalsi, during investigation, it was revealed that the accused had been running the racket from Noida. They were arrested on Tuesday.

Nitin revealed that he worked at call centres in Noida from where he learned different modus operandi to cheat job aspirants, the DCP said.

He further disclosed that he created a page on social media for job opportunities in the DMRC and uploaded link of his fake WhatsApp number on that page, police said.

South district poll office launches e-initiative

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The office of the District Election officer, South District on Thursday launched an e-initiative aiming to reach out to the voters to help them enroll online, complain or seek guidance with the help of varied form of mobile applications such as Voter Portal, Voter Helpline App or call on helpline number (1950) and cVIGIL among others.

A unique initiative, an “Electoral Literacy Club” has also been launched to engage school students through interesting activities and hands-on experience to sensitize them on their electoral rights and familiarize them with the electoral process of registration and voting. ELCs are also present in colleges and rural communities. Also, in order to facilitate the persons with disability, Election commission has developed an android based mobile application i.e., PwD App. “This is a pioneered application which provides the facility of informing the voter themselves as a person with the disability so that the same can be reflected in the electoral roll,” said a statement here.

AAP to hold survey to get opinion on BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Projecting itself as the lone alternative to the BJP, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday launched a nationwide survey seeking people’s opinion on the two parties. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters Aam Aadmi Party leader Atishi said the survey is being conducted as “the country has only two options left today”. She said that the latest example of BJP’s violence was seen in Jahangirpuri where local BJP leader Mohd Ansar was caught as the mastermind behind the communal clashes.

This comes amid the ongoing war of words between the AAP and the BJP which began after the latter felicitated eight Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) activists following their release on bail in a case related to the alleged attack at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s residence on March 30.

The slugfest between the two parties intensified after violent clashes broke between two communities during a Hanuman Jayanti procession in northwest Delhi’s Jahangirpuri area last week.

“The AAP is launching this countrywide survey and under this, we will pose two crucial questions to the people of Delhi as well as the nation. One, do you agree that the BJP has spread hooliganism and violence everywhere in the country? Second, do you agree that the AAP is a party of noble, honest, and educated people?,” said Atishi. The first option is the BJP, which is “engaged in engineering violence and riots and indulging in hooliganism”. The second is the AAP, which is “a party which opens schools, hospitals, provides free electricity, free water as well as facilitates bus rides for women, pilgrimage for the elderly.”

As part of the survey, Atishi said, people will be asked only two questions and they can answer with a yes or no. “The first question to people will be whether they believe that the BJP has become a party of goons and loafers, and that it is only engaged in orchestrating violence and riots,” she said.

“And the second question will be about the AAP, which is a party of decent, educated, staunch patriots and honest people,” she added.

No demolition....

From Page 1

Dave replied that this is going on everywhere wherever riots are taking place. “Is it an instrument of state policy to engage in fake encounters and now bulldozers, he asked? “They never did anything like this in 1984 and 2002 then why now. Delhi has an Act of 2011 which protected every illegal encroachment till December 2023. A particular section of society is being targeted. This is the warning constitutional framers gave us. I will read Sardar Patel and Dr B R Ambedkar on this. They spoke about this eventuality,” Dave said.

He said the Delhi Police registered an FIR against the VHP for carrying out procession despite their objection. “What happened there is a matter of inquiry by an appropriate judicial process but what you do is make large scale arrests from people of only one

community and start bulldozing,” Dave said.

“This is not confined to Jahangirpuri. If we allow this, there will be no rule of law or democracy left,” Dave said, adding, “How can a BJP leader write a letter that you demolish and NDMC demolishes it? Delhi Municipality Act has provision for notice and there is provision for appeals too.”

Pointing out that there are 731 unauthorised colonies in Delhi with 50 lakh people, Dave said, “If you want to act against unauthorised constructions, you go to Sainik Farms. Come to Golf Links, where I stay and where every second home is an encroachment. You don’t want to touch them, but target the poor people.”

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, also appearing for the Muslim body, said encroachment was a serious problem throughout India and it was increasingly being associated with Muslims.

India, UK to....

From Page 1

It said the UK and Indian businesses will confirm more than one billion pounds ((1 GBP= Rs 99.63) in new investments and export deals in areas from software engineering to health, creating almost 11,000 jobs across the UK.

“As I arrive in India today, I see vast possibilities for what our two great nations can achieve together. From next-generation 5G telecoms and AI to new partnerships in health research and renewable energy — the UK and India are leading the world,” Johnson was quoted as saying by the High Commission.

“Our powerhouse partnership is delivering jobs, growth and opportunities for our people, and it will only go from strength to strength in the coming years,” he said.

The High Commission said Johnson will use his visit

to India to “boost our collaboration with one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, slashing trade barriers for UK businesses and driving jobs and growth at home.”

It said the UK will confirm major new science and tech collaboration, including a digital health partnership and a joint investment fund for Indian deep-tech and AI start-ups, supported by the UK and Indian Governments.

“As he moves on to New Delhi on Friday, the Prime Minister will also use this week’s visit to drive progress in negotiations on the landmark UK-India free trade agreement, which is expected to help double our trade and investment by 2030,” the High Commission said.

It also informed negotiating teams will hold their third round of formal talks in India next week. Work is already progressing on cutting red tape for

businesses following the UK-India Enhanced Trade Partnership launched by both prime ministers last year, the High Commission said.

“And today our Governments will announce new measures to make it easier to export UK-made medical devices to India. This will support

UK jobs and create opportunities for British med-tech companies like Redcar-based Micropore Technologies to sell their lifesaving products in India, an import market worth 2.4 billion pounds,” it said.

In Gujarat, the British Prime Minister visited a new JCB tractor factory set up by a top British firm as well as a biotechnology university working in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh.

The new investments worth one billion pounds will include setting up a new Switch Mobility electric bus research and development (R&D) centre in the UK and the opening of their Asia Pacific headquarters in Chennai.

Guru Teg....

From Page 1

Modi said, “Whenever our civilisation faces a crisis, a new hero rises to the occasion” and that “Empires came and went, but India stood strong...India is moving ahead.” Modi said on this auspicious occasion he bows at the feet of all ten gurus. “I am happy that today our country is moving forward with full devotion to the ideals of our gurus. On this virtuous occasion, I bow at the feet of all ten gurus. Hearty congratulations to all of you on the occasion of Prakash Parv,” he said.

Sikh leaders sought a Sikh university in Delhi and wanted that an international airport be named after Guru Teg Bahadur. The event is seen as BJP trying to reach out to the Sikhs in Punjab ever since it decided to go it alone in the Punjab Assembly elections following the breakdown of the old alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal over the three farm laws.

The chief minister directed officials to intensify awareness activities and said, “We have to be vigilant about the health and safety of children and they should be made aware of Covid protocols in schools.”

The state government has also made wearing of masks and social distancing mandatory at all public places in the National Capital Region (NCR) districts and Lucknow.

Additional Chief Secretary Amit Mohan Prasad said that as per studies, the vaccinated population had nothing to worry about the new strain.

PK for non-Gandhi....

From Page 1

He has said out of 66 CWC members, only two members are below 45 years of age.

His presentation said in the last 25 years, the Congress did not have any national-level membership drive.

On the idea of alliances, Kishor has reportedly suggested that instead of forming UPA-III or going it alone, the Congress will have to look for Congress plus and recommended that the party joined hands with leaders and regional organisations who have carved a niche for themselves in the State.

Kishor is credited to have planned the electoral strategies of various parties, including the Trinamool Congress, AAP, DMK, and others.

His plan also includes the work of connecting one crore workers of the Congress party, out of which 50 lakh will be grassroots workers and the rest

will be in the form of electoral forces.

Describing Kishor as a brand with proven credentials, Congress general secretary Tariq Anwar said the poll strategist is willing to join the party without any preconditions and his induction would certainly help the party. Congress president Sonia, Anwar said, wanted to take senior leaders into confidence and seek their opinion before taking a decision on Kishor’s role in the Congress.

Amid the ongoing intra-party deliberations to evolve a long-term strategy and discuss the plan presented by Kishor, former Rajasthan deputy Chief Minister

Sachin Pilot met Sonia on Thursday. Pilot’s meeting with Sonia comes a day after she met Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh — Ashok Gehlot and Bhupesh Patel.

Jahangirpuri wears deserted look amid tight security

The media and politicians who came to meet residents were stopped from entering by cops

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) carried out a demolition drive in communal riot-hit Jahangirpuri, the area's C block continued to wear a deserted look as several shops remained closed and residents preferred to stay indoors as tension prevailed in the locality.

There was heavy security deployment in the area including personnel of Delhi Police, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Reserved Armed Force (RAF).

Police also carried out surveillance of the area the entire day using drones. Over 500 police personnel and six companies of additional forces have been stationed and police teams with their riot gear, including tear gas munitions and shields have been maintaining law and order in the

area since Thursday morning. The media and several politicians who came to meet the locals were not allowed to enter the area by the police.

Amid heavy security presence and barricading, the residents of C block were allowed to move in and out only after security clearance. Even the media was barred from entering the block's residential area. Though students were seen going to schools in the morning, most of the other residents stayed home.

A shopkeeper, who did not wish to be named, said that this was the first time the area had witnessed so much unrest. "Earlier, we had celebrated each and every festival together. There was no Hindu or Muslim among the people; we have always stayed together no matter what," he lamented.

"Since the last five days it has become hard to sustain my

livelihood as my grocery shop is closed and it is the only source of livelihood for my family," he said.

Another shopkeeper said that they had been living in Jahangirpuri for the last 15 years and they had never seen the area so tense. "For the last five days, we have been unable to open our shops properly, which has affected our earning. Before this incident there was no discrimination on the basis of caste and religion, we all live here like a family and I hope that the situation gets back to normal as soon as possible," he said. A few shops opened in the afternoon in G block which is meters away from the violence-hit area. Though the police has barricaded the entire block the residents were seen moving about and spending time in their lanes.

Though the movement of residents is restricted at C Block, a man was seen pasting documents over the shutter of his shop at Kushal Chowk. The shopkeeper was stopped by the police and asked to return to his residence. Replying to the policemen, the shopkeeper said he was concerned about the shop getting bulldozed and

hence he was pasting the papers. The police officials present in the area confirmed that CCTVs have been installed in view of the sensitive situation. On Wednesday, the BJP-ruled NMC's bulldozers razed several "illegal" structures in violence-hit Jahangirpuri during an anti-encroachment drive. But it was stopped fol-

lowing a Supreme Court order. Clashes erupted between two communities during a Hanuman Jayanti procession in Jahangirpuri on Saturday with both Hindus and Muslims accusing each other of triggering the violence. At least nine people, eight of them police personnel, were injured during the clashes.

Will follow Supreme Court's order on Jahangirpuri demolitions: NMC Mayor

Will ask SDMC, EDMC Mayors to remove illegal encroachments by Bangladeshis, Rohingyas living there, says Delhi BJP chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the Supreme Court ordered status quo to be maintained until further orders on the razing of buildings in violence-hit Jahangirpuri area on Thursday, the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh said that they will follow the apex court's order and not conduct the anti-encroachment drive in the area. However, he asserted that demolition drives would continue in other areas under its jurisdiction.

"I also want to clarify that the civic body will keep taking action against encroachers. We will identify illegal encroachments and send notices to them and take action," Singh said. "The Supreme Court has asked for status quo to be maintained for another two weeks," Singh added. As many as 20 structures, including the exterior gate of a place of wor-

ship, were razed on Wednesday in Northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri, after the NMC ordered an "anti-encroachment drive".

To stop the anti-encroachment drive in the area, the top court had to intervene twice, after it took cognizance of a petition filed by the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind against the demolition. Addressing the media, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Delhi unit chief Adesh Gupta said, "I am also going to write letters to South and East MCD Mayors to remove illegal encroachments by Bangladeshis and Rohingyas living there." He also slammed Opposition parties, including the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), saying they were trying to protect "rioters" in Jahangirpuri. "Congress and Left leaders have gone to Jahangirpuri to appease the rioters. I have also learnt that Mamata Banerjee (TMC chief) is also coming to meet them," he said.

Clashes erupted between two communities during a Hanuman Jayanti procession in Jahangirpuri on Saturday with both Hindus and Muslims accusing each other of triggering the violence. At least nine people, eight of them police personnel, were injured during the clashes.



Indian National Congress party general secretary Ajay Maken visits the violence-hit Jahangirpuri area, in New Delhi on Thursday, RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIONEER

Congress leaders make abortive bid to reach demolition spots

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A delegation of Congress leaders led by former Union Minister Ajay Maken, AICC in-charge of Delhi affairs Shaktisinh Gohil and State president Anil Choudhury visited violence-hit Jahangirpuri on Thursday. However, they were stopped by the police from going to the area where an anti-encroachment drive was conducted by the NMC a day before.

After the BJP sent its fact-finding committee to Bagtui, Trinamool Congress leaders including Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, Sajda Ahmed, Aparupa Poddar, Mala Roy and Satabdi Roy will visit Delhi's Jahangirpuri. A five-member delegation of the Samajwadi Party will go to Jahangirpuri on Friday to get a ground report. Talking to

reporters, Ajay Maken said that the drive was an attack on the poor and their means of livelihood. Citing court judgments, he said the drive was conducted by violating the rules. "This demolition is illegal. I was an urban development Minister too, and I know how laws work. They cannot do this without any prior notice."

"The BJP leaders are lying," Maken said. When Congress leaders were not allowed to visit the area, they sat on a dharna but were asked by the police to move.

Maken said that the poor street vendors were suffering consequences of the intervention of BJP politicians in MCD administration. He said that Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act-2014 was enacted to protect livelihood of these poor people. Gohil also

hit out at the BJP, saying the anti-encroachment drive was an attempt to divert attention from the rising inflation in the country. Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar asked why the Chief Minister had not visited the area.

"How come bulldozers are being allowed when there's Section 144 imposed here? One-sided action is being taken. They are targeting Muslims. We are here to ensure they get justice," he said.

The demolition drive conducted by NMC to remove encroachments was stopped following a Supreme Court on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Indian Youth Congress (IYC) activists were detained by police while staging a protest near Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri's residence against anti-encroachment drive in Jahangirpuri.



Water being sprayed in a locality a day after an anti-encroachment drive in the violence-affected Jahangirpuri area in New Delhi on Thursday, RANJAN DIMRI/THE PIONEER

As cases spike, experts hint at rise of new Omicron variants

As per scientists, BA.2.12.1 is the dominant variant, which is causing case surge in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of the sudden spike in the number of Covid cases in the national Capital in the last few days, health experts have not ruled out the possibility of the emergence of new variants of the Omicron which are being sequenced.

Of 2,380 Covid-19 cases that India reported on Wednesday half were from Delhi itself, the highest since February 10, while the positivity rate has jumped to 5.7 per cent against 4.42 per cent on the previous day. In the past few days, Delhi has reported more than 1,000 Covid-19 cases in the national Capital in a single day.

Explaining the surge in Delhi, a senior scientist said Omicron's reproductive number is 10, which has the highest transmissible level, so its derivatives will also have the same transmissibility and will

spread in absence of hand hygiene, social distancing and masks. The Delhi Government has already made masks mandatory in a bid to check the spread of the infection.

Experts said that there are eight variants of the Omicron and one among them is dominant, which can be held responsible for the surge in cases.

Omicron sub-lineage BA.2.12 has been detected in a majority of the samples sequenced from Delhi in the first fortnight of April and it could be behind the recent surge in cases in the city, sources said on Thursday.

However, an Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) source has claimed that Omicron variant derivative BA.2.12.1 has also been found in a few samples in Delhi which is said to be contributing to the recent rise in cases in the US. Dr SK Sarin, Director, Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) in Delhi told a news agency that there is a possibility of new variants of Omicron in Delhi while adding that the samples at the ILBS lab have been sequenced.

He further said that there are eight variants of Omicron and one among them, one is dominating. "I think by today

at our institute ILBS many samples have been sequenced and I think there are eight variants of which one is now dominating, we will come to know slowly," he said.

As per scientists, BA.2.12.1 is the variant, which is a sibling of Omicron, and is also responsible for the case sudden surge in Delhi.

Dr Sarin warned and said that people need to be careful. "I would suggest people should be very careful. There is a fear that children may get infected because they are not adequately vaccinated."

People must wear masks," he added. Since the beginning of April, India has been continuously registering a rise in Covid cases daily. However, on Monday, the country recorded about a 90 per cent jump with 2,183 cases.

The number of active cases has also surged to 2,641, out of which 1,578 patients are being treated in home isolation. With 314 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries has gone up to 18,41,890.

The fresh Covid infection has taken the cumulative case-load tally to 18,70,692, while the death toll has risen to 26,161. The Covid fatality rate stands at 1.4 per cent, as per the bulletin.

Vijay Kumar Dev takes oath as new State Election Commissioner



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev on Thursday took the charge of the State Election Commission, which conducts municipal polls in Delhi and Chandigarh. Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajaj administered the oath to Dev at Raj Niwas. Dev will hold the office for a term of six years from the date he assumes charge or till he attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

Bajaj also took it to twitter and wrote, "Administered the oath of office to Vijay Kumar Dev, IAS (Retd.) as new Election Commissioner of the State Election Commission of the National Capital Territory of Delhi at a function held at Raj Niwas." Dev's appointment comes after the retirement of S K Srivastava from the post on Wednesday.

SEC orders MCD polls in Capital to be put on hold

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

The State Election Commission (SEC) has issued an order putting on hold the elections of the Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCD) in the national Capital, as the Bill to unify the corporations was passed by Parliament.

The elections to the MCD were deferred last month after the Ministry of Home Affairs conveyed to the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi informing that the Centre was bringing an amendment for integration of the three MCDs.

"As the Central Government has now notified 'The Delhi Municipal (Amendment) Act 2022' and which has been duly published by Ministry of Law and Justice, Govt. of India in the gazette of India on 18th April and wherein three municipal corporations in Delhi, have been reconstituted to have a unified single municipal corporation with a maximum of 250 municipal wards instead of existing 272 wards in all three Corporations, stated order."

"Pursuant to enactment of The Delhi Municipal (Amendment) Act 2022, whereby three municipal corporations in Delhi have ceased to

exist and have been replaced by a unified single municipal corporation," said the order. "I. S. K. Srivastava, SEC of N.C.T. of Delhi, under powers conferred upon me under Articles 243 ZA of Constitution of India read with Section 7 of Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, do hereby keep on hold all preparatory steps for conduct of general election to three Municipal Corporations of Delhi, and rescind following notifications with immediate effect," order stated.

"The Commission has made all preparations for conduct of general election to the three municipal Corporations, e.g. appointment of District Election Officers, Observers, Expenditure Observers, Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, purchase of election material, adoption of Electoral Roll and symbol order, development of Web based Software and mobile Apps, training, EVMs arrangement on loan basis from Election Commission of India and their preparation through ECU, requisition of polling and counting staff from the Govt. of India and Delhi Govt, logistical arrangements for transport," order further said.

UNHEALTHY PACKAGED FOOD CONTAINING HIGH FAT, SUGAR AND SALT

7 out of 10 Indians favour red warning label



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Seven out of 10 Indians are in favour of a "red warning label" on packaged food containing high fat, sugar, and salt. A survey showed that 31 per cent of the 11,439 consumers approached were in favour of

a "red warning label" on such packaged products. The survey conducted by Local Circles, a community social media platform revealed that another 39 per cent said that in addition to red sign, "there should be a green or orange sign on healthy products" while 20 per cent said

every product should have a star rating based on its contents. Only 8 per cent of respondents said that "none of the above is needed, packaged food products must continue to be sold without any warnings or signs."

There has been a significant rise in consumption of junk food, especially, packaged and processed food, among Indians over the last two decades.

This has led to an adverse effect on public health as most of these foods contain a high amount of sugar or salt and bad fat ingredients, which result in an increase in non-communicable disease (NCDs) like obesity as well as diabetes and

heart disease. "It is estimated that nearly 5.8 million people in India die due to NCDs every year. One of solutions to address this fast-growing problem is introduction of regulations that will help consumers make informed choices when they are planning to consume processed foods," the survey said.

People should be able to distinguish between packaged and processed foods and ones that contain a high amount of salt, sugar, fat (HFSS) content, it said.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has proposed a plan to introduce Health Star Rating (HSR) for packaged food products.

'Use Mumbai's gas sucking model to curb landfill fire'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday said that the city Government has issued orders to adopt Mumbai's gas sucking model to curb escalating fire breakouts in the landfill sites.

On Wednesday a fire also broke out at the Ghazipur landfill in east Delhi. There were eight fire tenders at the spot to bring blaze under control. This is third fire that broke out at site since March 28. Meanwhile, Rai said that a high-level joint meeting was held at Delhi Secretariat with experts from the DPCC, MCD, IIT Delhi, department of environment, TERI, CSE, IGL,

GAIL, and other concerned departments, where the gas sucking system built at Mumbai's dumping site was chosen. Rai further said that biggest cause of fire in landfill sites is continuous release of methane gas, which not only promotes fire incidents but is also harmful to atmosphere.

"With the installation of this gas sucking system, emission of methane gas from waste can be regulated to an extent. Taking these factors into consideration, orders have also been issued by ministry to send combined teams of DPCC and MCD to Mumbai to get information about working model of gas sucking system," said Rai.

NCR PULSE

METRO TRAIN SERVICES AFFECTED ON BLUE LINE

New Delhi: The train services on the Blue Line which connects Dwarka Sec-21 to NOIDA Electronic City and Vaishali on Thursday were affected from 09:10 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. due to intermittent signaling issue resulting into movement of trains with restricted speed in manual mode with full safety, said the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.

ASOSE HOST PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

New Delhi: The BR Ambedkar Schools of Specialised Excellence (ASoSE) hosted their first mega parent-teacher meetings on Thursday during which innovative report cards were handed over to parents highlighting the details of a student's learning level along with marks. To know the experiences of parents and students, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio in the Delhi government, visited four ASoSEs in Rohini.

PROTEST AT JMI AGAINST NMC DEMOLITION DRIVE

New Delhi: Around 150 members from various students' organisations staged a protest at Jamia Millia Islamia here on Thursday demanding compensation for those who were left homeless following the anti-encroachment drive conducted by North MCD in violence-hit Jahangirpuri a day before.

STEEL SPAN INSTALLED AT DELHI-GHAZIABAD-MEERUT CORRIDOR

New Delhi: The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has successfully installed a 73-metre-long special steel span for the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor to cross the main road of the Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE) near Duhal on the main carriageway of Delhi-Meerut Road. So far, five special steel spans have been installed for the Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor -- a 73-metre bridge at Vasundhara on the main railway line, a 150-metre steel span near Ghaziabad station, two 45-metre spans for RRTS viaduct leading to Duhal Depot and the 73-metre span constructed to cross the EPE

3 DAY TRAINING SESSION ORGANISED: MIN GAUTAM

New Delhi: Delhi Cooperatives Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam inaugurated the training session organised by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies on Thursday. On this occasion, he congratulated all the officers for organising this training session. This 3 day training session will be covering 25 administrators/officers per batch. Addressing officials, Gautam said that from this training session, all the officers will be able to settle all the pending cases at the earliest. This will also reduce the workload on the department.

NOTICE ISSUED ON USE OF FAKE JUDGE STICKERS

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Thursday issued notice on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed against those using printouts or stickers of 'Judge' in a fraudulent way on their vehicles. A division bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Navin Chawla sought the stand of court authorities-- Registrar General of the High Court and the Principal Judge of the Tis Hazari Courts in the matter.

NDMC GIVEN PM AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ADMIN

New Delhi: The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Thursday has been awarded Prime Minister's Award for excellence in Public Administration, 2021 for seamless end to end delivery of services without Human Intervention in the national capital. On the occasion of 15th Civil Services Day, Prime Minister presented the Award for the best performance in district category to NDMC. The award was received by NDMC Chairman, Dharmendra.

E-TRANSPORT TO MAKE AIIMS A GREEN CAMPUS: GULERIA

New Delhi: AIIMS, Delhi became more greener on Thursday with the addition of four e-vehicles in its transport initiative with the help of CSR contribution from corporates Concord Biotech Ltd, Ahmedabad and. CTBC Bank India Ltd, Delhi. Dr. (Prof.) Randeep Guleria, Director AIIMS, said e-transport will create environment friendly, clean and green intra-campus mobility systems for patients, attendants, staff and students. Among those present on the occasion were Dr. (Prof.) Neerja Bhatla, HoD, Obst. & Gyne. Dr. Anoop Daga, Addl. Prof. Hospital Administration and Faculty In-charge CSR, AIIMS, Neeraj Sharma, Sr. Financial Advisor, AIIMS.

Ukraine to figure in Modi-Boris talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's ties with Russia in the backdrop of ongoing conflict in Ukraine even while several western nations are imposing sanctions will be discussed in the summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Thursday. The two leaders will meet in New Delhi on Friday.

Making this assertion in Ahmedabad after arriving from the United Kingdom on a two-day visit, Johnson said, "As I think everybody understands, India and Russia have historically very different a relationship, perhaps, than Russia and the UK have had over the last couple of decades. We have to reflect that reality, but clearly I'll be talking about it to Narendra Modi."

The conflict will figure in the summit with both the sides exchanging their views. However, Britain is likely to maintain its stand that it is not in the business of lecturing or telling other countries what to do, sources said here on Thursday. The two leaders are also likely to review the long term consequences of the Ukraine crisis.

The first British Prime Minister to visit Sabarmati



Ashram from where Mahatma Gandhi led the freedom struggle against colonial rule, he also touched upon India's views on the conflict and said "Well, they've already raised Ukraine, as you can imagine with Prime Minister Modi. And actually, if you look at what the Indians have said, they were very strong in their condemnation of the atrocities in Bucha."

The British Prime Minister termed Mahatma Gandhi an "extraordinary man" who mobilized the principles of truth and non-violence to change the world for better. Johnson wrote in the visitors' book there "It is an immense privilege to come to the ashram of this extraordinary man and to understand how he mobilised such simple principles of truth and non-violence to change the world for the better."

Meanwhile, his remarks about Ukraine came in the backdrop of India, time and again, calling for dialogue and diplomacy to end the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities Modi also urged Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to hold one on one to put an end to the war. India, has so far, refrained at least 11 times from voting against Russia in the United Nations Security Council(UNSC)and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

In his remarks, Johnson also said "India and UK both share anxieties about autocracies around the world, we're both democracies and we want to stick together."

On relations between the

two countries, he said "there's also the opportunity for us to deepen our security and defence partnership. As you know, the UK is making an Indo-Pacific tilt in our integrated review of our national defence and security strategy."

Regarding economic ties, the British Prime Minister said both the countries are hoping to complete another free trade agreement "by the end of the year, by the autumn."

On the nuances of the summit, sources said here it will focus on the centrality of India in the rise of the Indo-Pacific, in keeping with the priority attached to India in the UK's integrated review of defence, security and foreign policy in 2021. The two sides may also discuss the issue of economic fugitives such as Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi. Britain is also likely to discuss the issue of pro-Khalistan elements there as it is determined to counterextremism, sources said.

Starting his two-day visit to India, Johnson arrived in Ahmedabad on Thursday morning. On the first day of his tour, Johnson met industrialist Gautam Adani. The visiting Prime Minister began his visit with a roadshow from the Ahmedabad airport to his hotel on Thursday morning.

CBI registers 2 FIRs related to bribery charges by J&K ex-Guv

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered two FIRs in connection with corruption allegations levelled by former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik in the award of contracts for group medical insurance scheme for Government employees and civil work related to Kiru hydro-electric power project in the erstwhile State.

After registering the FIRs, the CBI conducted searches on Thursday at 14 locations in Jammu, Srinagar, Delhi, Mumbai, Noida in Uttar Pradesh, Trivandrum in Kerala and Darbhanga in Bihar, the CBI said.

The agency has named Reliance General Insurance and Trinity Re-Insurance Brokers Limited as accused in its FIR related to a controversial health insurance scheme for Jammu and Kashmir government employees reportedly cleared by Malik in the State administrative council meeting on August 31, 2018.

"...Unknown officials of Finance Department of Government of Jammu and Kashmir by abusing their official position in conspiracy and connivance with Trinity Reinsurance Brokers Ltd, Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd and other unknown public servants and private persons have committed the offences of criminal con-

spiracy and criminal misconduct to cause pecuniary advantage to themselves and caused wrongful loss to state exchequer during the period 2017 and 2018 and thereby in this manner cheated the Government of Jammu and Kashmir," the FIR alleged.

It was alleged in different quarters that there were glaring deviations from the government norms in the contract awarded to Reliance General Insurance like absence of an online tender, removal of an original condition that the vendor should have experience of working in the state and companies having turnover of Rs 5,000 crore among others.

After allegations of irregularities surfaced, the scheme, which was rolled out on September 30, 2018, was scrapped, they said.

The case was registered on the request of Jammu and Kashmir Government on the allegations of malpractices in award of contract of J&K Employees Health Care Insurance Scheme to private company and release of Rs 60 crore in 2017-18, the CBI said in a statement.

"The governor has approved foreclosure of the contract with M/s Reliance General Insurance Company (RGIC) for implementing group mediclaim health insurance policy for the employees and pensioners in the state," a Raj Bhavan spokesper-

son had said on October 27, 2018.

He had said the matter was referred to the Anti-Corruption Bureau for examining the entire process to see whether it was conducted in a transparent and fair manner.

In the scheme which was initially signed up with RGIC for one year, the employees and pensioners would have got Rs 6 lakh cover for themselves and five dependant family members by paying an annual premium of Rs 8,777 and Rs 22,229 for employees and pensioners, respectively.

In its FIR relating to the alleged malpractices in the award of contract for the civil works package of Kiru Hydroelectric power project, the CBI said guidelines related to e-tendering were not followed. The agency has booked IAS officer and former chairman of Chenab Valley Power Projects (P) Ltd, Navin Kumar Chaudhary, former MD, M S Babu besides former directors and Patel Engineering Ltd. M K Mittal and Arun Kumar Mishra. The agency has also named Patel Engineering as an accused in this case.

"Though a decision was taken in 47th Board meeting of CVPPPL (Chenab Valley Power Projects (P) Ltd) for re-tender through e-tendering with reverse auction after cancellation of ongoing tendering process, same was not implemented (as

per decision taken in 48th board meeting) and tender was finally awarded to Patel Engineering Ltd," the FIR alleged.

Malik, who was the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir between August 23, 2018 and October 30, 2019 had claimed that he was offered a Rs 300 crore bribe for clearing the two files.

After going to Kashmir, two files came to me (for clearance), one belonging to Ambani and another to an RSS-affiliated man who was a minister in the previous Mehbooba Mufti-led PDP-BJP coalition government and claimed to be very close to the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi), he had said.

"I was informed by secretaries in both the departments that there is a scandal and I accordingly cancelled both the deals. The secretaries told me that 'you will get Rs 150 crore each for clearing the files' but I told them that I have come with five kurta-pyjamas and will leave with that only," Malik had told a gathering at an event in Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan in October last year.

The civil works package of Kiru Hydroelectric power project was registered at the behest of Jammu and Kashmir government and entailed allegations of malpractices in award of the contract worth Rs 2,200 crore to private company Patel Engineering in 2019, the CBI said in a statement.

Rajnath invites US defence firms to set up JV in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With growing strategic and defence ties between the two countries, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday invited US defence manufacturing companies to set up joint ventures and carry out research and development facilities in India.

He urged the US companies to take advantage of the policy initiatives taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government in India in deence manufacturing to achieve the vision of 'Make in India, Make for the World.' India and the US have a growing convergence of strategic interests and both sides seek a resilient and rules-based international order that safeguards the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, Rajnath said.

He also said the recent India-US '2+2' dialogue and fruitful conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden have created the ground for a more ambitious and strategic engagement between the two sides.

He made these points here while addressing the members of American Chamber of Commerce in India (AMCHAM India) through video conferencing during its 30th annual general meeting.

Rajnath invited the US companies for co-production, co-development, investment promotion and development of maintenance repair and over-



haul facilities in India.

He listed out a number of initiatives taken by the government to facilitate partnerships between major Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEMs) and Indian companies.

Rajnath pointed out that the US companies have not only been a source of Foreign Direct Investment(FDI)and employment in India, but are also contributing to India's defence exports, totalling around \$2.5 billion to US in last five years. He said it is 35 per cent of total exports achieved during the period.

He termed the recently held 2+2 dialogue as positive and fruitful, saying the defence sector is a strong and growing pillar of the bilateral relationship.

The defence minister emphasised on the need to move from a buyer-seller relationship to one of partner nations and business partners. India and the US are uniquely poised to leverage each other's strengths for a mutually beneficial and bright future, he said.The AMCHAM-India is an association of American business organisations operating in India. Established in 1992, AMCHAM has over 400 US companies as members. The principal objectives include promotion of activities that would encourage and stimulate investment by US companies in India and increasing bilateral trade.

Prepare for security challenge, Army told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has unraveled a new kind of warfare, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday asked the Army top brass to prepare for every possible security challenge that India may face in the future, including that of unconventional and asymmetric warfare.

Underlining this point while addressing the Army Commanders' conference, Rajnath stressed upon the present complex world situation which effects everyone globally.

"Unconventional and asymmetric warfare, including hybrid war will be part of the future conventional wars. Cyber, information, communication, trade and finance have all become an inseparable part of future conflicts. This necessitates that Armed Forces will have to keep all these facets in consideration while planning and formulating strategies," he said.

Touching upon the situation on the Line of A c t u a l

Control (LAC)facing China, the defence minister expressed confidence that while troops are standing firm, the ongoing talks for peaceful resolution will continue and disengagement and de-escalation, is the way forward.

Referring to the situation along the Western borders facing Pakistan, he complimented the Army's response to cross border terrorism but said the proxy war by the adversary continues.

The commanders carried out an extensive review of India's national security challenges along the borders with China and Pakistan as well as assessed possible geopolitical implications of the Russia-Ukraine war for the region. The five-day conference will come to an end on Friday.

The conclave is an apex level biannual event held in April and October every year. The conference is an institutional platform for conceptual level deliberations, culminating in making important policy decisions for the Indian Army.

PM exhorts civil servants to make decision putting 'nation first'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asking civil servants to make transforming the life of common people their foremost goal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday exhorted them to evaluate every decision in the context of "nation first".

Speaking on the Civil Service Day when he also conferred the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration here at Vigyan Bhawan, Modi stressed on improving the governance and knowledge sharing.

He suggested all the training academies can virtually share the process and experiences of the award winners on a weekly basis. The Prime Minister said from the award-winning projects, one scheme may be chosen for implementation among few districts and the experience of the same may be discussed in the next year's Civil Service Day.

In his address , Modi listed three goals that he said they should be keeping before themselves while serving the democratic set up of the country."The first goal is that there should be a change in the life of the common people in the country, their life should be easy and they should also be able to feel this ease. The first goal is that there should be a change in the life of



the common people in the country, their life should be easy and they should also be able to feel this ease.

"Common people should not have to struggle in their dealings with the government, benefits and services should be available to them without hassle," he said. This apart, the Prime Minister sought public Servants to be in step with global changes and developments lest the focus of their decisions is lost.

"Secondly, given the growing stature and changing profile if India, it is imperative that whatever we do, that should be done in the global context. If we don't follow the activities at the global level, it will be very difficult to ascertain our priorities and focus area.We need to develop our schemes and governance models keeping this perspective in mind, Modi said.Thirdly, he said "Wherever we are in the system, our prime responsibility is the unity and integrity of the country; there cannot be any compromise".

Even local decisions should be measured on this touchstone, he emphasized. "Every decision of ours should be evaluated on its capacity to provide strength to the country's unity and integrity. 'Nation First' should always inform our decisions", said Prime Minister while driving his point home to the Civil Servants. Union Minister Jitendra Singh, Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, P K Mishra, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba were among those present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister recalled that he has been interacting with Civil Servants for last 20-22 years, first, as Chief Minister and later, as the Prime Minister. It has been a mutually learning experience, he said.

Modi underlined the significance of this year's celebration as it is taking place in the year of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.' He asked the administrators to call past district administrators in this special year to the district.

Similarly, he said Chief Ministers of states can call former Chief Secretaries, Cabinet Secretaries from the state in this landmark year to commemorate and take benefit from the flag-bearers of administrative machinery that have contributed significantly in the journey of Independent India.

BJP bags 82% of ₹258.49 cr 7 electoral trusts, says ADR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) in a new report said seven electoral trusts received a total amount of Rs 258.49 crore from corporates and individuals, and the BJP bagged more than 82 per cent of it.

According to the ADR, 16 out of the 23 electoral trusts submitted details of their contribution for the financial year 2020-21 to the Election Commission of India, of which only seven declared to have received donations.

Electoral trust is a non-profit organisation formed in India for orderly receiving of contributions from corporate entities and individuals to political parties. It aims at improving transparency in the usage of funds for election-related expenses.

"Seven electoral trusts which have declared receiving contributions during FY 2020-21, have received a total amount of Rs 258.4915 crore from corporates and individuals and distributed Rs 258.4301 cr (99.98 per cent) to various political parties," it said.

Doctors urge Prez, PM to postpone NEET PG 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Several doctors have urged President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to postpone the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET PG 2022) exam, citing insufficient gap to prepare for the May 21 NEET PG 2022 exam, as the NEET PG 2021 counselling is scheduled to be over only on May 3, and some States' counselling will start afterwards.

"As per the policy of National Medical Commission (NMC), there needs to be a sufficient gap between Counselling of one session and

next examination. But this year the all-India counselling will be over by 3rd May,2022 and State counselling will start afterwards which might go till mid or may end. The examination is scheduled on 21st May, just a few days after completion of All India counselling. This stands unfair," they said in a letter to the President and the Prime Minister.

Stating that they were in a Catch-22 situation as far as appearing for the NEET PG 2022 exam is concerned, the doctors wrote, " We are in a dilemma if we should attend counselling or prepare for the exam because of this insuffi-

cient time gap. The counselling schedule was changed nearly 7 times by MCC this year , also the mop up round was cancelled both at all India and state level. How could we study amongst these uncertainties created by these exam bodies."

The letter also referred to the previous postponement order, where Union Health Minister, Mansukh Mandaviya, had clearly directed NBE to give a 6-8 week gap between counselling and exam. The doctors requested the President, Prime Minister and other concerned authorities to postpone the medical entrance by at least two months. "I

request you to kindly intervene in this at the earliest keeping in mind the life of thousands of doctors, whom you once called COVID WARRIORS," the letter concludes.

While senior Congress leaders Omomen Chandy and Srinivas BV took up their cause on the Twitter, Member of Parliament Tejasvi Surya wrote a letter to Mandaviya, pointing out that more than 5,000, interns from Kerala, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand are ineligible to write the NEET PG due to a delay in completion of their internship owing to the Covid19 pandemic.

Covid behavioural change: Kids glued to gadgets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly a year into the coronavirus crisis, parents across India—and the world—are watching their children glued to the digital world. This has also been indicated by a survey conducted between December 2020 and February 2021 that covered 10,112 primary/secondary caregivers and 2,916 front-line workers across 11 States in the country.

The survey by Niti Ayog painted a gloomy picture of how Covid-19 pandemic changed the world of the kids who were restricted in the four walls of their houses which prompted them to take to the digital gadgets. The outcomes were scary as shown by the report 'Evidence-based response to

ECD during the Covid-19 crisis.'

It noted that one third of children surveyed started watching videos/ playing games on the TV / phone / computer for the first time following the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Ditto was the case with children less than 2 years of age, when screen exposure, especially passive tech usage is known to be harmful for the cognitive development and psychosocial health of children.

Digital life is driven by urban households, with 41% of urban parents reporting their child started watching TV/phone/computer compared to 26% of rural parents. Conversely, 50% of rural parents reported their child continued to watch TV/ phone/ computer compared to 38% urban parents.

In-depth interviews also revealed that parents used phones and videos as a distraction to reign in their children. 1 in 4 households reported children spending less time with other children including siblings, cousins or neighbors' children of their age. A greater proportion of urban households (29%) reported this than did rural households (23%). Additionally, parents high-light children feeling more isolated and agitated; secondary research suggests higher usage of tech products and less interaction with peers may be a cause.69 During in depth interviews, parents recalled their children becoming agitated due to a lack of routine, lack of social interaction, and staying indoors.

Shah: Terrorism biggest form of human rights violation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said terrorism is the biggest form of human rights violation and action against terrorism cannot be contradictory to human rights. Addressing the 13th foundation day of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) here, Shah said strong action has been taken against terror funding in Jammu and Kashmir and against those who had helped terrorism and were living respectfally in society.

Terrorism is the biggest curse for society, he said, adding that if there is any country which bore the maximum brunt of terrorism, it is India. "I have some differences with human rights organisations. Whenever there is an anti-terror action, some human rights groups come forward to raise the issue. But I strongly believe that there cannot be a bigger human rights violation than terrorism. It is the biggest form of human rights violation.

"Action against terrorism cannot be contradictory to human rights. It is absolutely necessary to root out terrorism to protect human rights," Shah



said amid big applause from officers of the NIA and other ecurity organisations. Home Minister said the Narendra Modi government has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and was working to root out the menace from India. He said the NIA had registered terror funding cases and these cases helped to a great extent to root out terrorism from Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah said that earlier, there was no proper action against terror funding. In 2018, cases were registered against terror funding for the first time, and because of that, there is no smooth road for funding terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, he added. "In 2021-22, the NIA registered many cases which helped in destroying sleeper cells in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speak truth to political executive: Naidu to babus



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over the perceived rising "nexus" between politicians and civil servants, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Thursday asked bureaucrats to stand up for what is right and speak the truth to the political executive.

He also said that instead of preferring to be indecisive and evasive and defer a decision, every civil servant has to be dynamic, initiative-bearing and problem-solving. "This calls for reorienting bureaucracy into meritocracy. Mediocrity should be disincentivised," the vice-president asserted.

Naidu made these remarks while addressing officer trainees from various services on Civil Services Day in Hyderabad. According to the text of his speech made available by the Vice-President's Secretariat, he said, "I can assure you all that the politicians are wise and receptive to good suggestions if they are presented to them convincingly and rationally."

"This is because no minister would like to risk being punished for wrongdoing or a bad decision. The growing nexus between the political class and civil servants being widely referred to as a matter of deep concern," Naidu said.

The vice-president was of the view that civil servants need not take an adversarial position "on all matters". "When you are instructed to present a particular issue in a certain manner that suits the political executive, all you need to do is to speak for the right and, if required, do so in writing. "If you are overruled, the authority concerned would be taken to task. The political and permanent executive should work in tandem and in the right manner. The political executive should definitely change," he said.

All that the officials have to do, Naidu said, is to show up their character and be on the right side of the law. "If not, you will be conceding ground to your political masters from which neither of you will benefit. On the contrary, the country and the people will suffer that much. So, I advise you to strictly stand up for the right," he advised them. Citing his experience, the vice-president said 'yes sir' types are not respected in the long run while 'speakers of truth' are.

Longest-surviving LeT terrorist, aide eliminated in Baramulla

LeT Commander was involved in killing of several civilians and security personnel, including the recent killing of SPO & his brother, one soldier and a civilian

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces on Thursday achieved a major success by eliminating one of the longest-surviving Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terrorists along with his accomplice in Malwah area of Baramulla district.

Till the time of filing the report the operation in the area was still going on. According to a police spokesman, "three more terrorists were still inside cordon and exchange of fire was going on".

Meanwhile, one of the slain terrorists has been identified as Yousuf Kantroo. He figured in the list of top 10 most wanted

terrorists in the Kashmir valley.

Inspector General of Police, Kashmir range Vijay Kumar said, "it's a big success for us".

The LeT Commander was involved in several killings of civilians and security personnel including the recent killing of JKP's SPO & his brother, one soldier and one civilian in Budgam district.

According to police records, "Yousuf Kantroo was an overground worker (OGW) of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit and was arrested in the year 2005. Later, he was released in the year 2008 but he again joined terrorist rank in the year 2017 and started killing innocent civilians, policemen and political workers. Later on he switched from HM to LeT terrorist outfit". However, the identification of the other killed terrorist is being ascertained.

According to a police spokesman, "a special team of

Budgam Police along with Army (62RR) initially launched a joint cordon & search operation in Malwah area of Baramulla on Thursday. During the search operation as the joint search party reached the suspected spot, the hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon them in which four (04) soldiers including one officer received minor injuries. The fire was effectively retaliated leading to an encounter. Later on Baramulla Police headed by SSP Baramulla also joined in the operation. One policeman from Baramulla district also got injured in the encounter who was later on shifted to Army's base hospital in Srinagar.

As per police records, "terrorist Yousuf Kantroo was involved in dozens of civilian atrocities and security personnel killings including killing of SPO Mohd Ishfaq Dar and his brother Umer Ahmad Dar resident of Chatabugh Budgam on 26/03/2022, killing of BDC

Chairman Late Sardar Bhupinder Singh on 23/9/20 in his own native place in Khag, killing of NC Block president at Natipora Chanapora Srinagar and several other cases.

According to police Kantroo was also involved in grenade throwing incidents, abduction and killing of police and security personnel. Moreover, he was also involved in snatching 4 AK rifles from the residence of Legislature Muzafar Parry at J-13 Jawahar Nagar Rajbagh.

Furthermore, on his directions Abrar Nadeem (neutralized terrorist) carried out an attack on CRPF at Lawaypora Srinagar in which 3 CRPF personnel attained martyrdom on 25/03/2021. According to a police spokesman, the killed terrorist was also involved in recruiting innocent/gullible youth into terror folds including recruitment of Faisal Hafeez Dar of Aaripanth Magam into terrorist ranks.

AAP seeks farmers' support in K'taka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday kicked off the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) campaign in Karnataka and said his party will form its third Government in the southern State after being elected to power in Delhi and Punjab.

Speaking at a rally at National College grounds, Kejriwal sought the support of farmer organisations to topple the "40% Government", a reference to the corruption allegations hurled at the BJP Government by the Karnataka State Contractors' Association. The rally was organised by various farmers' body, led by the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS). KRRS convenor Kodihalli Chandrashekar also joined the AAP and called upon the members to extend full support to the party. "We have to close the 20% and 40% commission accounts of these governments," Kejriwal said, adding that a corruption-free Government could offer several services for free to the people.

Kejriwal congratulated farmers for their massive agi-

tation in the national capital earlier, which forced the Centre to scrap the three farm laws 13 months after their promulgation.

Kejriwal said even after 75 years of independence farmers' condition has not improved, though 45 per cent of the population depended on agriculture, the children of farmers don't wish to take up farming.

Kejriwal said the previous Congress government in Karnataka had a 20 percent share in commission from corruption while the present BJP government leads 40 percent commission.

"We, the common people, were challenged to get into politics when we demanded a law against corruption. We formed a political party. Our first government was formed in Delhi and then in Punjab (this year). Now, we will form our next government in Karnataka," said Kejriwal.

"Delhi has zero per cent commission government because there is a hardcore honest government in Delhi. Not a paise is taken as bribe," said the AAP chief.

"I have gotten a certificate from our country's Prime Minister, Modi ji that Kejriwal

is the most honest man. The CBI, Income Tax and Delhi police raids were carried out against me, Manish Sisodia and 17 MLAs but the agencies could not find anything concrete to 'frame' them," said Kejriwal.

Referring to the riots in Delhi and elsewhere in Karnataka, Kejriwal said all the rowdies, rogues, uncouth and corrupt across the country go to "one political party".

"A Minister's son murders farmers by driving his jeep over them, but his father is rewarded with a ministerial position. Whoever commits rape gets a housing welcome. A small girl was raped, they took out a 'Shobha Yatra'. In such a scenario how can the country prosper," Kejriwal said.

"We don't know about engineering riots. There are riots across the country. Who is doing this? Which party does riots? People of the country do not want riots. They want peace, they want to live peacefully," said Kejriwal.



The Delhi CM also said AAP does not know anything about rowdism because his party is of gentle people, patriots and honest citizens who want schools, hospitals, roads, potable water, electricity and free transport.

"Two crore people of Delhi enjoy free healthcare. We supply free electricity in the state too. People get zero bills. All of this is possible because of our honesty and faith in progressive governance. It is because of our commitment to honesty that we are able to give five essential services like education, healthcare, water, electricity and bus transport for women," said Kejriwal.

BENGAL GLOBAL BUSINESS SUMMIT

₹3.42 lakh cr investment, 40 lakh jobs expected in Bengal: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday claimed that the two-day Bengal Global Business Summit had attracted a whopping Rs 3.42 lakh crore investment proposals from the visiting industrialists.

"It makes me extremely happy to announce that we have received investment proposals worth Rs 3,42,375 crores during the Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) 2022, a visibly happy Chief Minister said, adding the business proposals were expected to generate around 40 lakh jobs.

"The BGBS was a remarkable success," she said insisting a task force would soon be set

up under the chief secretary for speedy implementation of these projects.

If materialized the investments were likely to generate as much as 40 lakh jobs, the Chief Minister claimed.

Banerjee also said that about "37 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and letters of intent (LoIs) were signed in these two days," adding around 4,300 participants from 42 countries, "including more than 500 international delegates, attended the summit".

Among the noticeable proposals were the one made by Adani Group chief Gautam Adani who announced an investment plan of Rs 10,000 crore in the coming ten years. The JSW Group too



announced investment in a 900 MW pumped storage hydel power project. A strong delegation from the United Kingdom and Bangladesh also expressed interest in investing in Bengal, sources said.

Earlier Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu

Munshi who was leading a 10-member delegation said that his country too was interested in investing in Bengal. Praising the Chief Minister for her remarkable abilities the minister said that the summit would go a distance in promoting India-Bangladesh border trade.

This was the sixth BGBS organized by the TMC Government to promote investment. In the past five summits the State had attracted investment proposal of Rs 12 lakh crore.

Banerjee's claims notwithstanding questioning the ability of the State Government to convert MoUs and LoUs into actual investment BJP national vice president said "before

bragging about the investment proposals of Rs 3 lakh crore the Chief Minister should first make clear that how much of Rs 12 lakh crore proposed in the past five summits have been converted into real investment ... the answer is in fact zero."

CPI(M) central committee member said that the "party that has driven away the Tatas from Singur and chemical hub at Nandigram will never be trusted by investors ... particularly when the State is overwhelmed by syndicates and TMC's extortionists." On Adani's investment proposal he said "this is the same Adani who is the best friend of Narendra Modi with Mamata Banerjee feigns a fight."

CBI files chargesheet against NSE ex-CEO Chitra & GOO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a chargesheet against former NSE MD and CEO Chitra Ramkrishna and former Group Operating Officer Anand Subramanian in connection with its probe into a co-location scam case. Ramkrishna and Subramanian are both currently undergoing judicial custody following their arrest by the CBI on March 6 and February 25 respectively.

In its charge sheet filed before a Special Court here, the CBI has alleged that Ramkrishna allegedly abused her official position in key decisions among other charges.

The SEBI on February 11 had charged Ramkrishna and

others with alleged governance lapses in the appointment of Subramanian as the chief strategic advisor and his re-designation as group operating officer and advisor to MD. The CBI which expanded its probe in the co-location scam, after SEBI report surfaced, has arrested both of them and told the court that formless Yogi is none other than Subramanian who was alleged beneficiary of her decisions.

Ramkrishna, who succeeded former CEO Ravi Narain in 2013, had appointed Subramanian as her advisor who was later elevated as group operating officer (GOO) at a fat pay package of Rs 4.21 crore annually. Subramanian's controversial appointment and subsequent elevation, besides other

crucial decisions, were guided by an unidentified person who Ramkrishna claimed was a formless mysterious yogi dwelling in the Himalayas, a probe into her email exchanges in an audit had revealed.

Ramkrishna got elevated as MD and CEO on April 1, 2013 and left the bourse in 2016. During this period, co-location was started by NSE, the CBI has alleged in the charge sheet.

In the co-location facility offered by NSE, brokers could place their servers within the stock exchange premises giving them faster access to the markets. It is alleged that some brokers in connivance with insiders abused the algorithm and the co-location facility to make windfall profits.

Mumbai cops detain brother of Arjun Rampal's girlfriend from Goa

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Mumbai police on Thursday detained South African national Agisilaos Demetriades, brother of Bollywood actor Arjun Rampal's girlfriend Gabriella and an accused in the Sushant Singh Rajput death-related drug case, from Goa in connection with a Supreme Court order rejecting his bail application in the three drug cases being handled by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

A visiting team of the Mumbai police executed the detention order issued against Demetriades in the aftermath of the rejection of his bail application by the Goa bench of the Bombay High Court on March 28, 2022 and subsequently by the Supreme Court on April 19, 2022.

Demetriades will be brought to Mumbai and lodged

at the Arthur Road Central Jail (ARCJ).

The detention order had been issued against Demetriades On September 21, 2021 under Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PITNDPS) Act in view of involvement in multiple cases under NDPS Act.

Demetriades is being prosecuted in three cases of the NCB – the first registered in connection with the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput in October 2020, the second one cocaine smuggling case Nigerian drug and the third case in which he was arrested with a small quantity of Charas from Goa for which he spent two weeks in judicial custody.

It may be recalled that Demetriades was arrested for the first time by the NCB from Lonavala near Pune on

October 19, 2020.

Demetriades is alleged to be a part of a larger drug syndicate operating in Bollywood, which is being investigated after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The NCB's investigations have revealed that Demetriades was in touch with Omega Godwin, a Nigerian national who had earlier been arrested for supply of cocaine in Mumbai. During his custodial interrogation, Godwin had named Demetriades and others in connection with the Sushant death-related drug case. Among other things, 47-year-old Rampal is being investigated for his links with Demetriades and Australian-architect friend Paul Bartel, both of whom were arrested earlier with the Bollywood-drug mafia nexus case. He had been questioned twice – once for eight-long hours on

November 13, 2020 and once again on December 21, 2021. Rampal was questioned after live-partner Gabriella was subjected top two rounds of questioning by the NCB subjected.

The NCB had earlier carried out searches at the Rampal's Bandra residence on November 9, 2020.

Incidentally, the raid on Rampal's residence had come a day after the NCB officials carried out searches at film producer Firoz A. Nadiadwala's residence along Gulmohar Cross Road at Juhu Vile Parle Development (JVPD) Scheme in north-west Mumbai. During the searches, the NCB sleuths seized a total of 717.1 gm of Ganja, 74.1 gm charas and 95.1 gm MD (Commercial Quantity) along with Rs 3,58,610. They also seized 10 gm of Ganja from another accused Wahid Abdul kadir Sheikh @ Sultan.

CPM serves notice on Power Min of Kerala

Minister is known for his closeness to B Ashok, the IAS officer who is the chairman of the Board

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M) has put on notice the CPI and K Krishnankutty, Kerala's Minister for power and the representative of the Janata Dal (S) in the Left Democratic Front Government.

The COI(M), heading the LDF is not amused by the way Krishnankutty is handling the controversies in Kerala State Electricity Board. The minister is known for his closeness to B Ashok, the IAS officer who is the chairman of the Board in his battles with the trade unions, especially the CITU.

Ashok, known for his integrity and uprightness has taken action against three senior officers of the Board for gross indiscipline. The officers got the disciplinary actions

nullified by the Kerala High Court. But the three were transferred from the head quarters of the Board at Thiruvananthapuram to thye districts and this deteriorated further the relation between the chairman and the officers.

Minister Krishnankutty has been supporting the chairman in the latter's bid to clean the Eugen Stable the Board has become. On Thursday the Board asked M G Suresh Kumar, executive engineer, to pay Rs 6.5 lakh for misusing the official car for trade union works. Suresh Kumar was the de facto Board Chairman during the tenure of M M Mani (Krishnankutty's predecessor in the department of power).

The CPI(M) party secretariat which met on Wednesday reportedly expressed unhappiness over Krishnankutty's infatuation with Ashok and asked the minister to either toe the CITU line or get ready to be ousted from the council of ministers. JD(S) has just two mem-

bers in the House and Krishnankutty knows well that the other MLA is waiting in the wings to become minister. The minister said on Thursday that all issues related to the chairman and the officers owing allegiance to the CITU would be resolved in a week's time.

The CPI, the second largest constituent of the LDF was shocked by an invitation extended by E P Jayarajan, the newly appointed convener of the Front, to Muslim League. "We are in the process of expanding the base of the LDF by bringing in like-minded parties under one umbrella. We would love to have Muslim League among us in our mission to dethrone the BJP from the Centre in the 2024 Lok Sabha election," Jayarajan told reporters on Thursday. He reminded them of the resolution adopted in the 23rd Party Congress at Kannur early this month that the CPI(M) would forge alliance with all secular,

democratic and liberal forces to defeat the "communal" BJP once and for ever.

The new convener waxed eloquence at P K Kunhalikutty, the Muslim League strongman and termed him as the best political strategist in the country.

Kanam Rajendran, the Kerala secretary of the CPI, reacted to Jayarajan's initiative by making it known that there was no agenda in front of the LDF to bring in new allies. "It may be his personal view," said Rajendran, who looked visibly upset over the development.

"The CPI leader knows well that their prominence would be eclipsed with the entry of Muslim League to the LDF. But there is no need to give any importance to Jayarajan's statement. He is the new convener of the LDF and wants to make his presence felt. Till 2024, nothing is going to happen in Kerala politics," said P Sujathan, veteran commentator.

Yogi for setting up special agency on lines of CBI

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stressing the urgent need for using modern techniques in both policing and investigation, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, directed the officials to prepare the UP Special Police Establishment Act (UPSPEA) on the lines of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

He asked the officials to initiate the process in this regard within 100 days.

To enhance the professional skills of the Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) in crime investigation its personnel should be imparted training by various institutions in India besides foreign investigative/intelligence agencies like FBI, Homeland Security, the chief minister added.

This directive was given by the chief minister during the presentation of the action plan of Home, Prison, Home Guard, Secretariat Administration and Appointment and Personnel

departments before the council of ministers. He said energetic, skilled and dedicated personnel should be selected in the next 100 days for the new Special Police Operation Team (SPOT) and they should be trained in collaboration with the Central Police Force/Indian Army. Sniper training should also be given to them, as well as special adventure courses should also be imparted to increase their confidence, he said.

The chief minister said that in the last five years, Uttar Pradesh had presented a model of strong law and order. "Organised crime has ended in the state. Illegally acquired assets worth Rs 2,081 crore have been confiscated. In future also, action against the mafia and criminals will continue. Our police should be ready 24x7 for the safety and to protect the honour of the 25 crore people of the state," he said.

Yogi said that all cabinet ministers would now go to the field. "Under the chairmanship

of cabinet ministers, 18 teams for 18 divisions are being formed and a programme is being prepared for 18 weeks. These teams will stay for 72 hours in each division and will travel to different districts. They will meet people, investigate the system, examine the possibilities, after which the nodal officers of 75 districts will take the report of these teams and submit the plan of implementation within 15 days," he added.

It was also decided to select land for the Commando Training Centre in Rampur and like the men's team, form a skilled team of women commandos in the state. Besides for the next 100 days, a unit of Special Task Force (STF) would be formed in Ayodhya district.

New field units of ATS are being formed in many districts, including Deoband, Bahraich, Aligarh, Kanpur Nagar and Bahraich. The availability of necessary human resources, buildings etc. would be ensured for the new units.

Shivpal to remain in alliance: Rajbhar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Playing down the news about sulking Shivpal Singh Yadav, Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party president Om Prakash Rajbhar said that the Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief was a part of the alliance and would remain in the alliance in future too.

"There is news about Shivpal Singh Yadav claiming that he is angry and will leave the Samajwadi Party alliance. This is all false news. He is still part of the alliance and will remain so," Rajbhar told reporters here on Thursday.

He said that SP, SBSP and PSPL would contest the next Lok Sabha elections together. "He is part of the family and all kinds of things happen in a family. Shivpal Yadav was angry even before the election and there is nothing new," Rajbhar said.

When specifically asked whether Shivpal Yadav would be joining Bharatiya Janata Party, Rajbhar said that he had candid discussions with Shivpal

Singh Yadav and he was not joining any party. "You journalists speculate too much. No one is going anywhere," he said. After Akhilesh Yadav was elected leader of the opposition in the UP assembly, the political grapevine was pregnant with rumours that Shivpal Yadav would be joining BJP. The rumours got further credence after Shivpal Yadav dissolved all the executive committee of Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) after his meeting with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Some political pundits even predicted that he would be joining the BJP by the end of this month.

"You read too much between the lines," Rajbhar said. On the issue of bulldozer, he said that shanties of the poor were being demolished while the actual guilty had been given political patronage.

"Through this bulldozer drive attention is being diverted from the real issues of inflation and unemployment," Rajbhar said.

Body of girl found in Hardoi; 'honour' killing suspected

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a suspected case of 'honour' killing in Hardoi, a 17-year-old girl was found brutally murdered behind her house on Thursday.

The victim's throat had been slit with a knife.

The family members lodged a report against unknown miscreants but the circumstantial evidence pointed to the hand of some insider in the killing. The police sent the body for post-mortem and were investigating the case.

Superintendent of Police (Hardoi), Rajesh Dwivedi, said, "The murder took place sometime on Wednesday night when the victim's throat was slit. The police are investigating the murder but there is no evidence of honour killing yet."

The victim, Goldie, was the daughter of a local resident, Deshraj, of Jakhwa village. Her body was found lying in a pool of blood behind her house on Thursday morning. After the locals spotted the body they

raised an alarm and also called the family members. Later the police were informed about the murder.

The local police inspected the spot and also enquired from the family members and the relatives about the possible reasons for the victim's murder. In addition to finding a blood-stained knife, the police also recovered a pair of slippers, a mobile phone and mustard oil from near the body. Blood stains were also found on the terrace of the house.

Police are investigating the case apprehending that the killing took place over some 'love affair'.

In another tragic incident in Farrukhabad, a four-year old boy was killed when a stray bullet hit him on the head at a pre-wedding tilak ceremony on Wednesday night.

The boy was identified as Dinesh. A probe has been initiated but no one has been arrested so far in connection with the murder.

The incident happened at

the house of Kishan Pal Jatav in Khimsepur village under Mohammadabad police station in Farrukhabad district where a pre-wedding tilak ceremony was going on. People in a mood of jubilation started firing from their guns and the boy was accidentally hit on his head which caused his death. He was rushed to a nearby hospital but he died on the way.


According to the police, the boy was the son of Tinku Jatav, one of Kishan Pal's relatives who stayed in nearby Kuberpur village. Police rushed to the spot and a probe was initiated.

"The minor child sustained gunshot injuries in his head and based on the complaint further action will be initiated," said Inspector Dilip Kumar Bind, who was at the spot to investigate the matter.

Meanwhile, in a bizarre case in Etah, a teacher made an attempt on the life of the principal for opposing him to sign attendance register for the days he was absent.


FIRST COLUMN

THE INDIA-UK
TRADE AGREEMENT



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

UK Prime minister Boris Johnson has added momentum to the trade agreement negotiations between the two countries. In March, India and UK officials concluded their second round of negotiations on the proposed Free Trade Agreement. The third round of negotiations will have some officials from UK travelling to Delhi in the last week of April and others joining virtually. The pace of progress of recent trade agreement negotiations between India and the underscores the importance of agile and technologically future-fit for governments in the current work environment. India has recently concluded two mini-trade agreements with UAE and Australia within a year of the announcement. The UK on its part has concluded FTAs with Japan and renegotiated its deal with EU. Most of these trade agreements for India and



UK with their respective economic blocks have been concluded during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. India and the UK have a shaky economic partnership, given their historical contexts. An independent India has never been able to completely shed the hatred towards its erstwhile coloniser, while many powerful lobbies in the UK haven't been able to give up their "rulers of the region" attitude. The political relations between both have punctured pursuit of any significant economic cooperation, even though, both sides maintained a fairly upwardly mobile bilateral trade relation. The colonial ghosts from the past including geopolitical issues such as Kashmir, Pakistan and Partition always shadowed any bilateral economic ties. The UK, after severing ties with the European Union and facing threats to its liberal economy from China, decided to steer its focus towards the Indo-Pacific for strategic and bilateral reasons. It has already entered into amilitary alliance with Australia along with the US (AUKUS) that focusses on security in the region. The growing closeness between China and Russia, along the current aggression in Ukraine has forced the UK to make the Indo-Pacific a key element of its foreign, trade, political and economic agenda. The only country from the QUAD group with whom the UK doesn't have a significant economic partnership such as a trade agreement is India. A trade deal with the aim to double bilateral trade between India and UK to about \$100 billion by 2030 seems a focus area for "Global Britain".

India has been dragging its feet on pulling together an economically beneficial trade agreement for nearly a decade. This was primarily a result of its FTAs with ASEAN group and Korea, both of which have competitive rather complementary domestic services and goods, on which limited trade benefits could be achieved by India. A bunch of reforms in India such as the GST regime, cashless toll access, and single-window clearances needed some years of careful alignment of domestic policies with global best practises, before India could boldly negotiate trade agreement terms with new partners. India has shown interest to quickly round up couple of lucrative deals with EU, Canada, Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council besides the UK. Every mini-deal or full-fledged free trade agreement would be stepping stone for the next one in line. India did get a taste of negotiating on sensitive matters such as access to agriculture and dairy products, wine and spirits, etc., when it closed the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement with Australia last month. The UK is a powerful player from the European region with centuries of history of having excelled in trade negotiations. Already business centres from the UK have red flagged "Ease of Doing Business" as key to any proposed India-UK trade deal. This will have to be looked into carefully and significant alignments with benchmarked global practices will have to be done.

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

Pragati Bhavan and
Raj Bhavan's ties

Chief Minister KCR's attitude towards Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan depends on his relations with the Government in New Delhi



RAMACHANDRA MURTHY
KONDUBHATLA

Governors in India over the decades were talking less and conducting themselves with regal finesse. Chief Ministers and State Governments were treating them with due respect and diligence. After the BJP came to power in 2014 for the second time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose persons with RSS background or BJP leaders for the titular positions. The Modi-era Governors, unlike the ones appointed by Atal Behari Vajpayee, are at loggerheads with non-BJP Chief Ministers.

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee have running battles since his appointment. Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray are not pulling along well. Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi and Chief Minister M K Stalin don't see eye to eye on many issues. Tamilisai Soundararajan, the Telangana Governor, has joined the band of activist Governors who thrive on controversies.

In united Andhra Pradesh there were occasions when Governors played questionable politics. Ram Lal who dethroned NTR for a month became notorious and the movement for restoration of democracy spearheaded by the TDP founder ended only after Ram Lal was replaced by a thorough gentleman like Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma who gave the oath of office to NTR after restoring him as Chief Minister. NTR himself had no respect for Governor Kumudben Joshi but he followed protocol. NTR had problems with Krishan Kanth who decided in favour of Chandrababu Naidu but the actor-turned-politician was not in a position to fight.

The relations between Raj Bhavan and Pragati Bhavan (residence of Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao) deteriorated suddenly. Tamilisai went to Delhi and met Modi on April 6 and Union Home Minister Amit Shah the following day. She also spoke to the media without any inhibition ventilating her frustration with the attitude of KCR. Till some months ago, they were on the best of terms. When she did not sign the file pertaining to Kaushik Reddy's nomination to Legislative Council under the Governor's quota, the trouble started.

In the meanwhile, KCR changed his policy and started attacking the BJP government and Modi directly. He is also meeting non-BJP Chief Ministers like Uddhav Thackeray and Stalin to form a non-BJP and non-Congress front. KCR's efforts were slowed down after the BJP retained all the four States with handsome majorities. But he raised the paddy bogey demanding the Centre to buy paddy, not rice, as it has been doing in Punjab. He asked for one nation, one procurement policy.

Governor Tamilisai has a number of grievances. First and foremost, she has not been shown normal courtesies that are mandatory for a Governor. When she visited Yadadri, the renovated temple of Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, even the Executive Officer was not present to welcome her. No minister and no district collector cared to receive her. Additional Collector Deepak Tiwari was there to greet her with a sapling. When her mother died at the Raj Bhavan, the President of India and the Prime Minister called to say condolences, but KCR did not care to pay floral tributes to the departed soul. He did not even call her. She said her request to provide a special flight to take her mother's body to Chennai was turned down by the Chief Minister. She said all her tours in the State in the last six months were either by road or by train even if it was a distant destination. She has not been invited by the Government to public functions for some months. She travelled to the forest area in Mulugu district on her own to see Sammakka, Saralakka Jaatara where neither the district collector nor Superintendent of Police was present to receive her. She was not invited to address the joint session of legislature before the budget was presented. Had the relations been good, the CM would have personally invited the Governor to address the joint session.

Though KCR did not say anything openly against the Governor, his son K. Taraka Rama Rao, the working president of TRS and Minister for Municipal Administration and Information Technology, Jagadish Reddy, energy minister, and others criticized the Governor for airing her views in Delhi. KTR asked when a Tamil

Nadu BJP leader Tamilisai could be nominated as Governor what was wrong in nominating Kaushik Reddy as an MLC? Jagadish Reddy said she visited Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple as a BJP person. Tamilisai took serious objection to this comment. "I visited the temple as a devotee along with my husband. Did I take BJP flag or BJP leadership to the temple? I did not even care whether the protocol was followed," said Tamilisai in Delhi after meeting Amit Shah. She, in turn, challenged the ministers to show one instance where she used Raj Bhavan for promoting BJP interests. "I am prepared to reveal the appointments given in the last two years" she volunteered. The Governor said she is entitled to respect as a woman if not as a Governor. She used to call CM 'Anna (brother)' and she deserved to be treated well even as a sister.

Tamilisai said she felt ignored and insulted by some actions of the government. She said the ministers and officials have been skipping important events at Raj Bhavan and they should understand that the invitation was not from an individual. The latest cut was on Ugadi day when not a single TRS leader or government official accepted her invitation to visit Raj Bhavan. Even in Delhi, the Commissioner of Telangana Bhavan reportedly did not receive her or met her although she was at Sabari block in the Bhavan for two days.

The Governor went on to lambast the State government. She spoke of the drugs mafia and neglected Government hospitals and universities where 60 percent of faculty positions are lying vacant. 'As a mother I feel bad for the youth in the State who are becoming drug addicts,' she said. She is understood to have given her report on drugs and corruption to the Prime Minister and Home Minister.

KTR, however, asserted that they have great respect for the constitutional post of Governor. He said, "Why should we have any disharmony with the constitutional head." The TRS leaders have taken objection to the Governor making allegations of corruption.

The attitude of the Chief Minister towards the Governor depends on the relationship he has with the Prime Minister and the BJP. KCR was friendly with the NDA dispensation till recently supporting all the Bills, including the three controversial farm Bills, introduced by Modi government in Parliament. KCR probably imagined, as did Chandrababu Naidu in 2018, that the BJP would lose in UP and other three States in the 2022 assembly elections and there would be room for him to play a national role in mobilizing regional parties on one plank. In spite of the solid win by the BJP, the TRS continues to be belligerent and the agitation to force the Centre to buy paddy goes on unabated. How would KCR manage the contradictions and find a way to normalize the relationship with the BJP and the Prime Minister remains in the realm of imagination.

KCR WAS FRIENDLY WITH THE NDA GOVT TILL RECENTLY SUPPORTING ALL THE BILLS INTRODUCED BY THE MODI GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT. KCR PROBABLY IMAGINED, AS DID CHANDRABABU NAIDU IN 2018, THAT THE BJP WOULD LOSE IN UP AND OTHER THREE STATES IN THE 2022 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND THERE WOULD BE ROOM FOR HIM TO PLAY A NATIONAL ROLE

(The writer is a senior journalist and Editor, primepost, a news website based out of Hyderabad. The views expressed are personal.)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

ANOTHER PHASE OF THIS OPERATION IS BEGINNING. I'M SURE IT WILL BE A VERY IMPORTANT MOMENT. — RUSSIA'S FOREIGN MINISTER
SERGEI LAVROV



THE RUSSIAN TROOPS HAVE BEGUN THE BATTLE FOR THE DONBAS... WE WILL FIGHT. WE WILL DEFEND OURSELVES. — UKRAINE PRESIDENT
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the defender of Hindustan

The Guru decided to resist the nefarious act of forcible conversion of Hindus even at the cost of his life



JAGMOHAN SINGH RAJU

The year-long celebrations to commemorate the 400th birth anniversary (Prakash Purab) of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur concluded on April 21 with an address by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the Red Fort in Delhi. Prime Minister Modi has all along shown great reverence for the Sikh Gurus.

The Prakash Purab serves an ideal opportunity to recall atrocities and persecution suffered by our forefathers at the hands of Muslim rulers and the supreme sacrifice made by the Sikh Guru to protect their freedom and dignity. Hindus, and later the Sikhs, suffered the worst of violence and religious persecution by the Mughals. Guru Nanak's agony over brutal tyranny of Babur, the first Mughal invader, is echoed in his

own words: "Khurasan Khasmana Kiya Hindustan Draya. Apey Dos Na Deyi Karti Jum Kar Mugal Chareya. Eyti Mar Pyee Kurlanney Tain Ki Dard Na Aiyaa".

Hindus and Sikhs also suffered the worst brutality during fifty years of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's reign (1658-1707). Aurangzeb was a cruel bigot who wanted to establish Muslim theistic state, Dar-ul-Islam, in India by the power of the sword. With this sinister design, he ushered a reign of terror and tyranny on Hindus. They were coerced to choose between Islam and merciless oppression. He ordered heavy-handed implementation of ruthless Islamic fundamentalist programs on Hindus and Sikhs. Religious tax (jazia) was imposed exclusively on Hindus



to curtail their economic sustenance. Celebration of the most popular Hindu festivals, Diwali and Holi, were forbidden. Many sacred Hindu Temples were demolished, and mosques erected in their place. Forced mass conversion of Hindus and Sikhs to Islam became the first and foremost function of the Indian Islamic state. Resistance to these atrocities meant loss of life and dignity. Under this genocidal tyranny, millions of Hindus, most in Kashmir, were massacred and their property looted.

According to the earliest historical narrative relied on by the SGPC and other historical literature, Hindus of Kashmir, unable to withstand the tyranny unleashed by Aurangzeb, approached Guru Tegh Bahadur for support. The Guru accepted their prayer and agreed to defend their freedom to religion and religious right to wear their 'sacred threads and frontal marks.' He decided, even if it cost him his life, to resist the nefarious act of forcible conversion of Hindus. On his instructions, a communication was sent to the emperor asserting that if the Sikh Guru could be persuaded to accept Islam, the Hindus would convert as well. Hearing this, the Guru was summoned by Aurangzeb to Delhi, and, when he refused to forsake his faith, he was publicly decapitated on November 11, 1675 and his followers were butchered for their refusal to abandon their faith. Thus, the Guru led a stubborn but non-violent resistance against zealous proselytization and bigotry of Aurangzeb and willingly sacrificed his life to protect Hindustan. But for his sacrifice, Hindustan would have been Islamised.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was the second Sikh Guru to be executed by the Mughals for their unyielding commitment to freedom of religion. Seventy years before his execution (1675),

Guru Tegh Bahadur's grandfather, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606), was tortured by emperor Jahangir. He was chained and thrown into the river Ravi on May 30, 1606 at Lahore. The resistance against religious persecution demonstrated by Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur and his son and successor, Guru Gobind Singh, invited the wrath of the Mughal empire. While the two elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh died in battle against Mughals, his two younger sons were bricked alive for refusing to embrace Islam and protecting the persecuted.

The Hindu-Sikh bond has been cemented in perpetuity by the blood and sacrifice of the Sikh Gurus. And there is universal acknowledgement and gratitude of the Hindu community towards the Sikh Gurus and the Sikhs on account of the sacrifices made by them for the protection of Hindu faith. In recognition of this, Prime Minister Modi arranged worldwide celebrations of the 550th Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and the 350th Prakash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh with immense reverence and fervour. To honour Chote Sahibzadas, December 26 will be celebrated annually as Veer Bal Diwas all over the country.

But some anti-national elements attempt to sow the seeds of division between Hindus and Sikhs. To achieve their nefarious designs, they project fake threat to the Sikh identity. These evil designs must be frustrated. Guru ka Khalsa is invincible. There is no threat to it, least of all from Hindus.

(The writer is a former IAS officer. The views expressed are personal.)

Lanka Opp for constitutional amendment to end presidential system



Sri Lankans shout slogans at the ongoing protest site against the economic crisis outside the president's office in Colombo, Sri Lanka

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's main Opposition SJB on Thursday presented a constitutional amendment bill that among other provisions seeks to abolish the presidential system of governance, in existence in the country since 1978, and replace it with a system that reinforces constitutional democracy.

The move by the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) party came in the backdrop of massive protests demanding the

resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his Sri Lanka Podujana (Peramuna) led government over the country's worst economic crisis.

The SJB presented the draft 21st constitution amendment bill to the secretary-general of parliament with proposals including the abolition of the current executive presidential system. "We have handed over to the Speaker our proposal to abolish the executive presidential system," main Opposition leader Sajith

Premadasa told Parliament. The SJB document proposes to "abolish the executive presidential system and replace it with a system that reinforces constitutional democracy".

While the president will remain the head of state and the commander in chief, the president has no personal discretion in appointing or dismissing the prime minister, according to the proposal. The prime minister shall be the head of the Cabinet of ministers and the ministers are to be

appointed by president on the prime minister's advice, it adds. The amendment, while seeking to annul 20th Amendment adopted in 2020, aims to restore 19th Amendment to Constitution to curb the powers of the president and empower Parliament.

The 19A adopted in 2015 pruned presidential powers by empowering the 225-member Parliament above the executive president.

However, the 19A was scrapped after prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa won the November 2019 presidential election. The powerful Rajapaksa family tightened their grip on power after their massive victory in the general elections in August 2020 which allowed them to amend the Constitution to restore presidential powers and install close family members in key positions.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa is under pressure to quit along with his family as street protests have raged over the government's mishandling of the island nation's worst-ever economic crisis. The demand is to set up an interim cabinet of all parties and restore the 19A which would deprive Gotabaya Rajapaksa of the full powers of the presidency.

RAJAPAKSA PROMISES JUSTICE TO EASTER SUNDAY ATTACK VICTIMS

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government will not rest until justice has been served to the guilty behind the 2019 Easter terror attacks, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa vowed on Thursday as the island nation marked the third anniversary of the worst terror incident that killed 270 people, including 11 Indians.

"Today we remember with grief, the tragic events that transpired 3 years ago on that fateful #Easter morning. We mourn the loss of innocent lives and the lives that were impacted. #GoSL has since made every attempt, to bring those responsible to justice," Rajapaksa tweeted.

Nine suicide bombers belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three Catholic churches and as many luxury hotels on April 21, 2019, killing nearly 270 people, including 11 Indians, and injuring over 500. The attack stirred a polit-



ical storm as the then government headed by President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe were blamed for their inability to prevent the attacks despite prior intelligence being made available. "Thus far 735 persons have been taken into custody, 27 cases against 79 persons have been filed under 25,653 charges.

The govt. Will not rest until justice has been served to the guilty with strict adherence to rule of law and due process," Rajapaksa said in another tweet. The victims' families led by the head of the local church, Archbishop of Colombo

Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, have been critical of the slow pace of the investigations which they claim is a political ploy for cover up.

On Sunday, hundreds of people staged a silent protest in Sri Lanka's capital, demanding justice for the victims of the Easter terror attacks. The protesters joined hundreds of people camping near the President's Office in Colombo seeking resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and all members of his family from the government over the worst economic crisis that has caused critical shortages of fuel, food and medicines in the country. Displaying banners and placards, protesters called for justice for the victims of the Easter attacks.

"3 years and still no justice," read a banner carried by protesters who walked a 5-mile stretch to the site to be joined by thousands who have been carrying out the protest since April 9 demanding President Gotabaya's resignation over the unprecedented economic crisis - the worst-ever in the country's history.

A special presidential probe found then president Sirisena himself along with a host of other top defence officials guilty of ignoring prior intelligence.

The panel report had recommended criminal action against them. Archbishop Ranjith has been regularly expressing disappointment over the police investigation and its slow nature.

In November last, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had asked his detractors to be careful while demanding quick action against the perpetrators of the deadly Easter terror attacks, warning that his government can "act tough" on the critics if he needs it.

He had said the judicial proceedings were underway and his government will not interfere in them. President Rajapaksa is the younger brother of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. The two brothers led a decisive campaign that helped end the island nation's three decade long civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Explosion in north Afghanistan kills at least 10, injures 40

AP ■ KABUL

A series of explosions across Afghanistan on Thursday killed at least 10 people and wounded scores more, according to police and hospital officials.

No one immediately took responsibility for the deadly explosions, but they mostly targeted the country's minority Shiite Muslims and had all the hallmarks of a deadly Islamic State affiliate known as Islamic State in Khorasan Province, or IS-K.

The worst of the three attacks occurred in northern Mazar-e-Sharif where at least 10 worshippers were killed as they knelt in prayer, said Dr. Ghawusuddin Anwari, head of the main hospital in northern Mazar-e-Sharif. Another 40 were injured. They were brought in ambulances and private cars.

The explosion at the Sai Doken mosque in northern Mazar-e-Sharif occurred as Muslims mark the holy month



of Ramadan, when the faithful fast from sunrise to sunset. Earlier Thursday in the capital, Kabul, a roadside bomb exploded and injured two children. That bomb also targeted the country's minority Shiites, striking in the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood of Kabul, dominated by Afghanistan's minority Shiite Muslims.

Two days earlier in the same area, multiple explosions targeting educational institutions killed at least six people, mostly children, and wounded 17 others. A third explosion Thursday, this one in northern

Kunduz province, struck a vehicle carrying mechanics contracted by the ruling Taliban, according to Matiullah Rohani, head of information and culture in Kunduz province.

Thursday's series of deadly explosions comes after months of relative calm in Afghanistan and after a crackdown against the IS-K by the country's Taliban rulers in the first months following their sweep to power.

The IS affiliate, which has been operating in Afghanistan since 2014, is seen as the greatest security challenge facing the country's Taliban rulers. Following their August takeover, the Taliban launched a sweeping crackdown against IS headquarters in eastern Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, advocates for minority Hazaras called for a stop to killings. Hazaras, who make up around 9% of the population of Afghanistan's 36 million people, stand alone in being targeted because of their ethnicity distinct from other ethnic groups.

In a veiled attack, Imran Khan blames Pakistan Army chief for his ouster

PTI ■ LAHORE

In a veiled attack on Pakistan's Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, former prime minister Imran Khan has alleged that "some elements" in the powerful establishment who indulged in "bad practices" were responsible for his unceremonious ouster from power.

According to experts, Khan, who was ousted from power on April 10 after National Assembly passed a no-confidence motion against him, had apparently lost support of Army after he refused to endorse appointment of ISI spy agency chief last year. Finally, he agreed but it soured his ties with Army. Addressing party workers on Twitter at night, Imran said: "There are also humans in institutions. If one or



two individuals do something wrong, the entire institution is not responsible. If one person (in an apparent reference to Army chief Gen. Bajwa) makes a mistake, this does not mean that whole institution is at fault." Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry told a news channel on Wednesday that relations between the establishment and Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government strained for months.

China calls for truce as Pakistan, Afghan Taliban ties turn violent

PTI ■ BEIJING

A worried China on Thursday called on Pakistan and the Taliban-led interim government in Afghanistan to resolve their "concerns" through talks after Pakistani air raids reportedly killed 47 Afghans, prompting Kabul to lodge a "strong demarche" to Islamabad.

"Afghanistan and Pakistan are close neighbours with traditional friendship with China," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here when asked about recent border skirmishes between close allies sparked by recurring terror attacks on Pakistani troops allegedly from across borders in Afghanistan. "I believe countries can properly settle their concerns through dialogue and consultation and joint-

ly maintain peace and tranquility," Wang said, declining to elaborate on Beijing's apprehensions over its trilateral initiative of forming a China, Pakistan, Afghanistan alliance.

The Pakistani air raids on Afghanistan came about a fortnight after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held the third meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan comprising Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan at Tunxi in China on March 30-31 for which interim Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi was invited.

Wang later held a meeting of Foreign Ministers of China, Pakistan, Afghanistan which was attended by the then Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

Tensions over race, religion in France's presidential election

AP ■ PARIS

From attacks on "wokeism" to crackdowns on mosques, France's presidential campaign has been especially challenging for voters of immigrant heritage and religious minorities, as discourse painting them as "the other" has gained ground across a swath of French society.

French voters head to polls on Sunday in a runoff vote between centrist incumbent Emmanuel Macron and nationalist rival Marine Le Pen, wrapping up a campaign that experts have seen as unusually dominated by discriminatory discourse and proposals targeting immigration and Islam.

With Le Pen proposing to ban women from wearing Muslim headscarves in public, women like 19-year-old student Naila Ouazarf are in a bind. "I want a president who accepts me as a person," said Ouazarf, clad in a beige robe and matching head covering. She said she would defy the promised law should Le Pen become president, and pay the eventual fine.

Macron attacked Le Pen on the headscarf issue in their presidential debate on Wednesday, warning it could stoke "civil war". Polls, however, put Le Pen closer to Macron than she was in their last runoff five years ago.

And in the first round, far-right candidates Le Pen and Eric Zemmour together collected nearly a third of votes.

France has no hard data on voters' race or religion because of its doctrine of colour-blindness, which sees all citizens as universally French and encourages assimilation.

Le Pen's National Rally party, formerly called the National Front, has a history of ties with neo-Nazis, Holocaust deniers and militias who opposed Algeria's war for independence from colonial France.

Le Pen has distanced herself from that past and softened her public image, but a top priority of her programme is to prioritise French citizens over immigrants for welfare benefits, which critics see as institutionalising discrimination.

She also hopes to ban Muslim women from wearing a headscarf in public, toughen asylum rules and sharply curtail immigration.

She has gained ground among voters since 2017, when she lost badly to Macron. This time around, Le Pen has put a greater emphasis on policies to help the working poor.

Le Pen can also thank the rabble-rousing Zemmour, who came in fourth in the first-round vote, for boosting her popularity by making her seem softer. Zemmour has been repeatedly convicted of inciting racial or religious hatred.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is brought to the notice of general public that ownership of 3 Trolleys No. 74, 75 & 76 and Two Tray NO. 77 & 78 at Ghaziabad Railway Station is held by Late Smt. Murti Devi who had expired on 28th December 2021. The vending contract is being considered to be transferred in the name of Ms. Srishthy Solanki granddaughter of Smt. Murti Devi, R/o If, Mehar Chand Market, Lodhi Colony, Lodhi Road, Central Delhi, Delhi-110003. If any person has objection to this, it may be recorded in writing to the office of Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PS State Entry Road, New Delhi - 110055 within 21 days from the publication of this notice.

Sd/-
Firoz Ahmad (Advocate)
Room No. 619, Patiala House, New Delhi-110001

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Rajeev Bansal
Name(s) of holder(s) / Applicant(s)
Place: Mumbai Date: 21.04.2022

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice
Tender Notice No. 219-S/IT/MC/14/2022-23 Dated: 20.04.2022

Chief Engineer/TMC, Northern Railway, Headquarters office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites 01 Nos tenders through e-Procurement system for supply of the following items:

S. No.	E-Tender No	Description of item	Qty.	Due date, Time
1	A26P90TMC2022	Lub Oils & Transmission Oil	02 items	12.05.2022 at 11:15 hours

Note:- 1. The complete information of above E-Procurement tenders are available on website "www.ireps.gov.in". In firms, who desire to participate against E-Tenders, are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would be required to have a class-IIT digital certificate from certifying agencies authorized under IT Act 2000, by Govt. of India. Manual offers against E-Tenders will not be accepted.

894/2022

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As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Number (Loan Account Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN)	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Divya Gupta/ Kalpana Gupta (27300000332 & QZDWA00005014057)	Plot No.66-A (A-66-A), Upper Ground Floor, Without Roof Rights/ Terrace Rights, KH No. 159, Vill. Bindapur, Block-A, SIS Ram Park, Uttam Nagar, Delhi/ April 20, 2022	Aug 19, 2021 Rs. 13,76,603/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Amit Mohan Gupta/ Aarti Gupta (9600001485 & QZDEL00005026062)	Plot No. G-77, Upper Ground Floor Front Side, Block-G, Kharsa No. 109/13, Raja Puri, Uttam Nagar, Delhi/ April 20, 2022	July 08, 2021 Rs. 28,22,071/-	Delhi/ NCR

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: April 22, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

TATA STEEL LTD
Registered Office: BOMBAY HOUSE 24, MOHY MODY STREET FORT, MUMBAI-40000, MAHARASHTRA

Notice is hereby given that the certificate(s) for the undermentioned securities of the Company have been lost and the holder(s) of the said securities / applicant(s) has applied to the Company to issue duplicate certificate(s). Any person who has a claim in respect of the said securities should lodge such claim with the Company at its Registered Office within 15 days from this date, else the Company will proceed to issue duplicate certificate(s) without further intimation.

Name of the Holder(s)	Kind of Securities & face value	No. of Securities	Distinctive No.
LI. Sh. Raghunath Bansal	Equity Share of 10/-	50	224518871-224518920

Rajeev Bansal
Name(s) of holder(s) / Applicant(s)
Place: Mumbai Date: 21.04.2022

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Certificate(s) for 334343 Equity Shares Nos. 100 of Larsen & Toubro Limited standing in the name(s) of Sunil Kathuria (Deceased) Days Kathuria has / have been lost or mislaid and the undersigned has / have applied to the Company to issue duplicate Certificate(s) for the said shares. Any person who has any claim in respect of the said shares should write to our Registrar, KfN Technologies Private Limited, Selenium Tower B, Plot 31-32, Gachibowli, Financial District, Hyderabad-500032, within one month from this date else the company will proceed to issue duplicate Certificate(s).

Date: 21/04/2022 Name of Shareholder(s) Daya Kathuria

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Certificate(s) for 334332 Equity Shares Nos. 100 of Larsen & Toubro Limited standing in the name(s) of Diwakar Prasad Kathuria, Sunita Kathuria has / have been lost or mislaid and the undersigned has / have applied to the Company to issue duplicate Certificate(s) for the said shares. Any person who has any claim in respect of the said shares should write to our Registrar, KfN Technologies Private Limited, Selenium Tower B, Plot 31-32, Gachibowli, Financial District, Hyderabad-500032, within one month from this date else the company will proceed to issue duplicate Certificate(s).

Date: 21/04/2022 Name of Shareholder(s) Diwakar Prasad Kathuria Sunita Kathuria

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Invitation of Tenders through E-procurement system
Deputy Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway Central Hospital, New Delhi-110055, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. No.	E-Tender No	Brief description	Qty.	Closing date
1	82224982	Osteoporotic Fracture Fixation Set with Fenestrated Screws	20 Set	17.05.2022

Note: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. **2.** No manual offer will be entertained.

Tender Notice No. AMI/2022-23/NRCH/01 Dated: 20.04.2022 898/22

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, Invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:

1	Name of work with its location	Part A: Replacement of failure prone brazed joint Contact wire (28 Km.) 5th phase over Delhi Division. Part B: Replacement of failure prone brazed joint Contact wire (28 Km.) 6th phase over Delhi Division.
2	Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 9799160/-
3	Earnest Money Deposited	Rs. 196000/- (online payment mode available on IREPS website)
4	E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	29.04.2022
5	E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	13.05.2022 (15:00 hrs.)
6	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

E-Tender No. : 04-TRD-NDLS-2022-23 Dated : 20.04.2022. 889/22

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Putin tries to claim Mariupol win but won't storm holdout

AP ■ KYIV

Russian President Vladimir Putin tried to claim victory in the strategic port of Mariupol on Thursday, even as he ordered his troops not to storm the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in the war's iconic battleground.

Russian troops have besieged the southeastern city since the early days of the conflict and largely pulverized it - and top officials have repeatedly indicated it was about to fall, but Ukrainian forces stubbornly held on.

In recent weeks, they holed up in a sprawling steel plant, and Russian forces pounded the industrial site and repeatedly issued ultimatums ordering the defenders to surrender.

"The completion of combat work to liberate Mariupol is a success," Putin said. "Putting such an important centre in the south as Mariupol under control is a success."

But the Russian leader said that, for now, he would not risk sending troops into the warren of tunnels under the giant Azovstal plant, instead preferring to isolate the holdouts who have captivated the world's attention "so that not even a fly comes through."

His defense minster said the plant was blocked off, while giving yet another prediction that the site could be taken in days.

Putin's order may mean that Russian officials are hoping they can wait for the defenders to surrender after running out of food or ammunition. Bombings of the plant could well continue.

Even though Putin painted the mission to take Mariupol already a success and said the city had been "liberated," until the plant falls, he cannot declare a complete victory.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said about 2,000 Ukrainian troops remained in the plant, which has a labyrinth of tunnels and bunkers that spread out across about 11 square kilometers.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that about 1,000 civilians were also trapped there.

Russian-backed separatists in the area previously seemed bent on taking every last inch of the city, which has seen some of the most dramatic fighting of the war and whose capture has both strategic and symbolic importance.

The scale of suffering in the city on the Azov Sea has made

it a worldwide focal point, and its definitive fall would deprive Ukraine of a vital port, complete a land bridge between Russia and the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow seized in 2014, and free up Russian troops to move elsewhere in the Donbas.

Russian officials now say capturing the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, is the war's main goal.

This week, Moscow's forces opened a new phase of the war, in a deadly drive along a front from the northeastern city of Kharkiv to the Azov Sea. Detaching the region from the rest of Ukraine would give Putin a badly needed victory two months into the war, after the botched attempt to storm the capital, Kyiv, and amid mounting Russian losses.

Britain's Defense Ministry said that Russia likely wants to demonstrate significant successes ahead of Victory Day on May 9, the proudest moment on the annual calendar marking its critical role in winning World War II.

"This could affect how quickly and forcefully they attempt to conduct operations in the run-up to this date," the ministry said.



Retired British Rear Admiral Chris Parry described Putin's remarks as reflecting a change in "operational approach" as Russia tries to learn from its failures in the eight-week conflict, which

from initial hopes of a lightning fast invasion of a neighbour into a war of attri-

tion with ever mounting casualties and costs.

"It seems to me that the Russian agenda now is not to capture these really difficult places where the Ukrainians can hold out in the urban centres, but to try and capture territory and also to encircle the Ukrainian forces and declare a huge victory," Parry said.

In the meantime, Western powers are doubling down on their support of Ukraine, moving to push more military hardware in, heightening geopolitical stakes.

The latest in a long line of Western leaders venturing to Kyiv, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said Thursday: "One of the most

important messages today is that Denmark is considering sending more weapons. That is what is needed."

Several Western officials have promised similar in recent days.

With global tensions running high, Russia reported the first successful test launch of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, the Sarmat, on Wednesday. Putin boasted that it can overcome any missile defense system and make those who threaten Russia "think twice." The head of the Russian state aerospace agency called the launch out of northern Russia "a present to NATO."

The Pentagon described the test as "routine" and said it wasn't considered a threat.

On the battlefield, Ukraine said Moscow continued to mount assaults across the east, probing for weak points in Ukrainian defensive lines. Russia said it launched hundreds of missile and air attacks on targets that included concentrations of troops and vehicles. The Kremlin's stated goal is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking eastern region that is home to coal mines, metal plants and heavy-equipment factories.

In a video address,

Zelenskyy said the Russians were not "abandoning their attempts to score at least some victory by launching a new, large-scale offensive."

The Luhansk governor said Russian forces control 80% of his region, which is one of two that make up the Donbas. Before Russia invaded on Feb. 24, the Kyiv government controlled 60% of the Luhansk region.

Analysts have said the offensive in the east could become a war of attrition as Russia faces Ukraine's most experienced, battle-hardened troops, who have fought pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas for eight years.

Russia said it presented Ukraine with a draft document outlining its demands for ending the conflict - days after Putin said the talks were at a "dead end." Moscow has long demanded Ukraine drop any bid to join NATO. Ukraine has said it would agree to that in return for security guarantees from other countries. Other sources of tension include the status of both the Crimean Peninsula, seized by Moscow in 2014, and eastern Ukraine, where the separatists have declared independent republics recognised by Russia.

Some civilians manage to escape from Mariupol



AP ■ KYIV

Only four buses with civilians managed to escape from Mariupol after several unsuccessful attempts, Ukrainian officials said on Thursday, as thousands more remained trapped under relentless Russian attacks against the last pockets of Ukrainian resistance in the devastated southern port city.

Another attempt to evacuate civilians from Mariupol will be made on Thursday, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said.

In Kyiv, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and Denmark's Mette Frederiksen became the latest European leaders to show support with a visit to the capital.

They were due to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who warned in a video address overnight that the Russians were not "abandoning their attempts to score at least some victory by launching a new, large-scale offensive".

"The West stands together to support the Ukrainian people," Danish Prime minister Frederiksen said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said it submitted a draft of its demands for ending the war, and the West raced to supply Ukraine with heavier weapons to counter the Russians' new drive to seize the industrial east.

Britain's Defence Ministry said in an assessment that Russia likely desires to demonstrate significant successes ahead of its annual May 9 Victory Day celebrations.

"This could affect how quickly and forcefully they attempt to conduct operations in the run-up to this date."

As fears grew for the fate of civilians in Mariupol, the Kyiv regional police said on Thursday that two mass graves with nine bodies were discovered in the city of Borodyanka, northwest of the capital.

The findings added to thousands of civilians reported killed by Russian forces, who have been accused of wholesale abuses of Ukrainians.

Head of the Kyiv regional police Andriy Nebytov said two women and a teenager were among the "civilians killed by the Russian occupiers".

"I want to stress that these people are civilians. The Russian military deliberately shot civilians that didn't put up

any resistance and didn't pose any threat," Nebytov said, adding that some of the victims were apparently tortured.

With global tensions running high, Russia reported the first successful test launch of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile, the Sarmat.

President Vladimir Putin boasted that it can overcome any missile defence system and make those who threaten Russia "think twice".

The head of the Russian state aerospace agency called the launch out of northern Russia "a present to NATO".

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Russia said it launched hundreds of missile and air attacks on targets that included concentrations of troops and vehicles.

The Kremlin's stated goal is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking eastern region that is home to coal mines, metal

plants and heavy-equipment factories.

Detaching it from the rest of Ukraine would give Putin a badly needed victory two months into the war, after the botched attempt to storm capital Kyiv.

The UK Defence Ministry said Russian forces were advancing from staging areas in the Donbas toward Kramatorsk, which continues to suffer from persistent rocket attacks.

The Luhansk governor said Russian forces control 80 per cent of his region, which is one of two that make up the Donbas.

Before Russia invaded on February 24, the Kyiv government controlled 60 per cent of the Luhansk region.

Governor Serhiy Haidai

said the Russians, after seizing the small city of Kreminna, are now threatening the cities of Rubizhne and Popasna. He urged all residents to evacuate immediately.

"The occupiers control only parts of these cities, unable to break through to the centres," Haidai said on the messaging app Telegram.

Analysts have said the offensive in the east could become a war of attrition as Russia faces Ukraine's most experienced, battle-hardened troops, who have fought pro-Moscow separatists in the Donbas for eight years.

Russia said it presented Ukraine with a draft document outlining its demands for ending the conflict - days after Putin said the talks were at a "dead end".

Biden announces \$800M in new military assistance for Ukraine

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Thursday announced an additional USD 800 million in military aid to help Ukraine fight back against the Russian invasion, but he also warned Congress will need to approve additional assistance.

The new military assistance package includes much needed heavy artillery, 144,000 rounds of ammunition, and drones for Ukrainian forces in the escalating battle for the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. It builds on roughly USD 2.6 billion in military assistance that Biden had previously approved for Ukraine.

He said USD 13.6 billion approved last month by Congress for military and humanitarian assistance was "almost exhausted."

The new package includes much needed heavy artillery and ammunition for Ukrainian forces in the escalating battle for the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

Earlier this week, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also said his country will send heavy artillery to Ukraine.

And Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that the Netherlands will send more heavy weapons,

including armored vehicles.

A senior US defense official on Wednesday said training of Ukrainian personnel on American 155mm howitzers has begun in a European country outside Ukraine.

Biden on Wednesday lauded US military officials for "exceptional" work arming Ukraine as he gathered the nation's military brass for their first in-person group meeting at the White House of his presidency.

It's an annual tradition that had been put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic but is now being resurrected as the US arms Ukraine to help it fight back against Russia's invasion.

"I don't know about you, but I've been to Ukraine a number of times before the war ... And I knew they were tough and proud but I tell you what: They're tougher and more proud than I thought," Biden told military commanders. "I'm amazed at what they're doing with your help."

Biden brought together the Pentagon's top civilian and uniformed officials amid the most serious fighting in Europe since World War II.

Russia's nearly two-month-old invasion of Ukraine has been at the center of wide-ranging talks with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen

Hicks, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and combatant commanders.

Biden also used the gathering to reflect on his administration's efforts to diversify Pentagon leadership.

Hicks is the first Senate-confirmed woman to hold her role. Biden also chose Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost of the Air Force as commander of United States Transportation Command and Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson of the Army as commander of United States Southern Command. They are just the second and third women to lead combatant commands.

"It's an important milestone," Biden said. "I think that speaks to how we're harnessing the strength and diversity of our country." Following the meeting, Biden and first lady Jill Biden hosted the military leaders and their spouses for dinner in the White House Blue Room.

Such a gathering was last held in October 2019.

Donald Trump was president at the time and was facing a House inquiry that would lead to his first impeachment, which centered on allegations that he withheld military assistance from Ukraine as part of an effort to pressure the country's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to dig up dirt on Biden's adult son's business dealings in Ukraine.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL
HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax No. :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

Gist of e-tender
NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2022-23/09/e-tendering
Dated:-20.04.2022

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-
Name of Work:- Repairing work of Soffit at 500 bedded Paediatric Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar.
Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) :- 0.56, Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 200/-, EMD Amount (In rupees) :- 1100/-, Time of completion (in days) :- 3, AA
Accorded Vide No :- HME/Acctts/LP/14/2019, Dated: 19-08-2020, TS No. :- 246 of 03/22 (AEE-3")
1.Downloading of Bids:- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website **www.jktenders.gov.in** from **20.04.2022(18.00 hrs)** and can be downloaded from **20.04.2022(18.00 hrs)**.
2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site **21.04.2022 (10.00 hrs) to 26.04.2022(14:00hrs)** in two (02) covers.
3. Opening of Bids:- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on **26.04.2022 at 16.00 hrs** or any date convenient to the department in the office of **Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar**
No. DIPK-895/22 Dated:- 21.04.2022

Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi-110005

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Sanjeev Chandel (Borrower)/ Pallavi Chandel (Co Borrower) LBNOD00002114485	Flat No A-2103, 2nd Floor Tower A, Springview Floors, Crescent Parc Township, NH-24, Ghaziabad, UP area: 1243 Sq. Fts	Rs. 63.86,223/- as on April 11, 2022	Rs. 41,80,000/- Rs.4,18,000/-	May 5, 2022, From 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM	May 17, 2022, From 01:00 PM to 02:00 PM

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-<https://disposalhub.com/>) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagors/ noticees are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **May 13, 2022 before 05:00 P.M** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.
 The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **May 13, 2022 before 05:00 P.M** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005** on or before **May 13, 2022 before 05:00 P.M**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "**ICICI Bank Limited**" payable at **Delhi**.
 For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 8126013708** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/ 9810029926/ 01244233933**.
 Please note that Marketing agencies 1. **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augeo Asset Management Pvt Ltd** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.
 The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.
 For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: April 22, 2022 Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE
ALANKIT LIMITED

Notice is given to general public that Mr. Dinesh, S/o Sh. Harbans Lal having its correspondence address at H. No. 68, Harijan Mohalla Village, Hamidpur, Delhi-110036 and permanent address at 892, Sector 12, RK Puram, New Delhi-110022 has been absconding suddenly without any intimation from his employment from 20.04.2022. He is probably involved in some illegal activities. Hence, his service has been terminated immediately. He is no more in employment of the Company and the company is not responsible to anyone dealing with him.

For ALANKIT LIMITED
Sd/-
HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

Date: 20.04.2022
Place: New Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that "**INDEED FINCAP PRIVATE LIMITED**" ("**Company**") which is a RBI registered NBFC Company, incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at 13th Floor, Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan, 28 Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi -110001 has received the approval from the Department of Non-Banking Supervision, Reserve Bank of India, New Delhi vide their approval Letter bearing No. 553/CMS-/W/05.09.110/2021-22 dated 18th April, 2022, wherein they have given their no objection to the proposed change in control, which shall be arisen in the event of transfer of 5,64,000 (Five Lakhs Sixty Four Thousand) equity shares of the Company held by M/s Global Telecommunication Private Limited in favor of M/s Sigatureglobal (India) Limited (Formerly Known as Signatureglobal (India) Private Limited).

Any persons(s) who have any objection in this regard may submit their objections/comments to the Company at its Registered offices or to the Department of Non-Banking Supervision, Reserve Bank of India, New Delhi within 30 (Thirty) days of this publication.

For Indeed Fincap Private Limited

Sd/-
DHANANJAY SHUKLA
 DIRECTOR
 DIN: 01264947
Address: Flat No 337, Block-B, Type-A, Pocket-3 UDA Flat, Binda Pur, Uttam Nagar Delhi 110059

Date: 22.04.2022
Place: Delhi

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
 Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B Nagar, (U.P.)
 Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender are invited from firms / contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website : **www.noidaauthorityonline.com** & **<https://etender.up.nic.in>**. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes / amendments & corrigendum etc.
Rs. 30.00 Lacs to Rs. 1.00 Cr.

(A)	1.	31/CGM/AO/SM(JAL-OA)/21-22- M/o STP-54 (Two Year repair of PVC/M.S. Irrigation lines in different park & green belt of connected Sectors for STP-54) Noida. Cost. 47.64 Lac
	2.	32/CGM/AO/SM(JAL-OA)/21-22- M/o STP(S/F 500 KVA DG Set with shed & Platform for 54 MLD SPS in STP-Compound, Sector-54) Noida. Cost. 48.98 Lac

Which can be uploaded by date **29-04-2022 upto 5.00 PM**. Pre-qualification shall be opened / downloaded on date **02-05-2022 at 11.00 AM**.
Principal General Manager NOIDA
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

FinMin bars PSEs from buying state-owned cos

New Delhi: The finance ministry has barred public sector enterprises from bidding for other Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) which are on the block for privatisation, as it would defeat the very purpose of the disinvestment policy.

Stating that transfer of management control from the government to any other government organisation or state government may continue the "inherent inefficiencies" of state-run firms, the ministry said such transfer would defeat the very purpose of the new PSE policy.

"As a general policy, Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) (Central /State /Joint)/ State Governments/Cooperative Societies controlled by the Governments ... Are not permitted to participate in the strategic disinvestment/privatisation of other PSUs as bidders unless otherwise specifically approved by the central government in public interest," the Department of



Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) said.

PSEs controlled by the government include those where 51 per cent or more ownership is with the Centre/state governments or jointly with central and/or state governments.

In the past, the government has sold its majority stake in certain CPSEs to public sector companies operating in similar sectors -- which

helped it meet the disinvestment target set for a particular fiscal.

In 2001-02, 74 per cent government stake in Indo Burma Petroleum Co (IBP) was sold to Indian Oil Corp (IOC) for Rs 1,153 crore.

More recently, in January 2018 Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) bought the government's entire 51.11 per cent stake in HPCL for Rs 36,915 crore. **PTI**

Market rally: Investors richer by over ₹5.74 lakh cr in two days

New Delhi: Investors have become richer by over Rs 5.74 lakh crore in two days of market rebound, boosted by bargain-hunting and a supportive trend overseas.

The BSE benchmark Sensex zoomed 874.18 points or 1.53 per cent to finish at 57,911.68 on Thursday. Halting its five-day fall on Wednesday, the Sensex had closed 574.35 points or 1.02 per cent higher at 57,037.50.

In tandem with the recovery in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms jumped by Rs 5,74,427.92 crore in two sessions to stand at Rs 2,71,77,156.37 crore.

"Positive global clues lifted sentiments for the second straight day. The board-based rally saw buying across different sectors," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities.

M&M was the top gainer among the Sensex constituents on Thursday, climbing 3.50

per cent, followed by Maruti Suzuki, Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints, Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC and TCS.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.33 per cent while the midcap index gained 1.28 per cent.

As many as 2,303 stocks advanced, while 1,115 declined and 103 remained unchanged.

Among BSE sectoral indices, auto jumped the most by 2.14 per cent, followed by consumer discretionary goods and services (1.60 per cent), finance (1.54 per cent), industrials (1.45 per cent) and IT (1.45 per cent). Metal index was the only laggard.

"Domestic equities witnessed a pullback rally after taking cues from its global peers and buying seen in Nifty heavyweights counter," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. **PTI**

Niti Aayog issues draft battery swapping policy

Moots incentives, rigorous testing protocol



New Delhi: Government think tank Niti Aayog on Thursday came out with a draft battery swapping policy for electric vehicles and suggested incentives as well as a rigorous testing protocol for swappable batteries. The draft policy also comes at a time when there are rising concerns over safety issues around electric vehicles in the wake of multiple instances of such vehicles catching fire.

The Aayog in its draft policy further said all major cities such as state capitals, UT headquarters and cities with population above 5 lakh will be covered under the second phase, given the importance of the two-wheeler and three-wheeler vehicle segments in growing cities.

The policy seeks a level playing field across business

models involving the sale of EVs with fixed or swappable batteries.

The draft policy also proposes that demand side incentives offered under existing or new schemes for EV purchase can be made available to EVs with swappable batteries eligible under this policy.

"The size of the incentive could be determined based on the kWh rating of the battery and compatible EV," it sug-

gested. As per the draft policy, an appropriate multiplier may be applied to the subsidy allocated to battery providers to account for the float battery requirements for battery swapping stations.

It is also proposed that a seamless mechanism for the disbursement of subsidies shall be worked out by the ministry or department concerned, the draft policy stated.

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET						
[See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets						
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.						
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder;						
Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s) /Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Vijay Grover (Borrower), Reena Grover (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002365295	Flat No B1 1301, JKG Palm Court, Plot No Gh 1d, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, UP. Super Builtup Area- 1765 Sq Ft	Rs. 83,56,239/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 49,42,000/- to Rs.4,94,200/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
2.	Vijay Grover (Borrower), Reena Grover (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002371601	Flat No B1 1302, JKG Palm Court, Plot No Gh 1d, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, UP Super Builtup Area-1765 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 83,22,023/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 49,42,000/- to Rs.4,94,200/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
3.	Himanshu Gupta (Borrower), Vandana Rani (CO-Borrower) LBGHZ00002313993	Flat No B1 1801, 18th Floor, JKG Palm Court, Plot No GH 1D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, UP. Super Builtup Area- 1765 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 86,14,975/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 49,42,000/- to Rs.4,94,200/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
4.	Neera Sharma (Borrower), Ankur Mohan (Co-Borrower) UBGUR00002313398	Flat No B1 1304, JKG Palm Court, Plot No Gh 1D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, UP Super Builtup Area-1635 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 82,25,846/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 45,78,000/- to Rs.4,57,800/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
5.	Sandeep Kumar A Upadhyay (Borrower), Shilpi Upadhyay (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002275165	Flat No B2 1704, 17th Floor, JKG Palm Court, Plot No GH 1D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, Up Super Builtup Area- 1635 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 77,60,763/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 45,78,000/- to Rs.4,57,800/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
6.	Sanjiv Lamba (Borrower), Ibadhu (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002935333	Flat No 1603, 16th Floor, A2 Palm Court, Plot No. GH-01d Sector-16c, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar 201301. Super Builtup Area 1185 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 63,20,451/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 34,36,000/- to Rs.3,43,600/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
7.	Vikrant Singh (Borrower), Ritu Singh (Co-Borrower) LBGUR00002386632	Flat No. B1-1802, 18th Floor, Jkg Palm Court, Gh-1D, Sector 16c, Greater Noida West, UP Super Builtup Area- 1765 Sq Ft	Rs. 85,48,481/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 49,42,000/- to Rs.4,94,200/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
8.	Ganesh Sharma (Borrower), Kamla Katwal (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002947887	Flat No 1804, (18th Floor), JKG Palm Court, Tower B2, Plot no. GH-1D, Sector 16 C, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh- 201307. Super Builtup Area- 1635 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 84,22,218/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 46,00,000/- to Rs.4,60,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
9.	Kanishka (Borrower), Santosh Kumar (Co-Borrower) LBGUR00002372750	B-2-1303, 13th Floor, JKG Palm Court, Plot No. GH/1-D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, UP. Super Builtup Area- 1395 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 73,08,681/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 41,00,000/- to Rs.4,10,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
10.	Vishal Khattar (Borrower), Bhawna (Co-Borrower) LBNOD00002261419	Flat No.- A2 1804, 18 Floor, JKG Palm Court, at Plot No. GH/1-D Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, UP. Super Builtup Area- 1185 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 56,23,830/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 34,00,000/- to Rs.3,40,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
11.	Surya Prakash Sharma (Borrower), Apar Sarkar (Co-Borrower) LBGUR00002430669	Appartment No. A2-1508, 15th Floor, JKG Palm Court, Plot No. GH/1-D, Sector 16C, Greater Noida West, UP Super Builtup Area- 1185 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 57,67,876/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 34,00,000/- to Rs.3,40,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
12.	Aditya Prakash (Borrower), Prem Shashank (Co-Borrower) LBGHZ00002441728	Flat No 1408, 14th Floor Tower-A2, JKG Palm Court, Situated At Plot No GH-1D Sector-16C, Greater Noida, Noida. Super Builtup Area- 1185 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 53,06,640/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 34,00,000/- to Rs.3,40,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
13.	Chintu Ghai (Borrower), Shilpi Ghai (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00002342824	Flat No 1805, (18th Floor), JKG Palm Court, Tower A1, Plot no. GH-1D, Sector 16 C, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh- 201307 Super Builtup Area- 1090 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 51,06,529/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 32,00,000/- to Rs.3,20,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
14.	Nisha Anand (Borrower), Asheesh Anand (Co-Borrower) LBGUR00002263446	Flat No-A2- 1605, JKG Palm Court, Tower A1, Wing 2, Sector 16 C, Greater Noida UP 201307) Super Builtup Area-1090 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 54,20,926/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 32,00,000/- to Rs.3,20,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
15.	Ashish Vashishtha (Borrower), Shobha Sharma (Co-Borrower) LBGUR00002872796	A 1-1801, 18th Floor, JKG Palm Court, Plot No. Gh-1D, Sector 16 C, Greater Noida West, UP Super Builtup Area- 1090 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 49,14,018/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 32,00,000/- to Rs.3,20,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards
16.	Himanshu Sikka (Borrower), Gulsan Kumar Sikka (Co-Borrower) LBNOD00002278735	Flat No 1802 18th Floor Tower A1 Palm Court Sec 16C Greater Noida Uttar Pradesh 201307 Super Builtup Area- 1090 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 52,26,829/- as on April 06, 2022	Rs. 32,00,000/- to Rs.3,20,000/-	May 07, 2022 From 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM	May 17, 2022 From 11:00 AM Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on website ([URL Link-https://disposalhub.com](https://disposalhub.com)) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagees/noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **May 14, 2022 before 05:00 PM** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi-110005** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **May 14, 2022 before 05:00 PM** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, incase prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi-110005** on or before **May 14, 2022 before 05:00 PM**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of "**ICICI Bank Limited**" payable at **Delhi**.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 8584874809** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/9810029926/01244233933**

Please note that Marketing agencies 1. **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augoe Asset Management Pvt Ltd** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: April 22, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Rupee gains 15 paise to end at 76.15 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee appreciated by 15 paise to close at 76.15 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday amid a weak greenback overseas and a rally in domestic equities.

However, surging crude prices and persistent foreign fund outflows capped the gains, forex traders said.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened slightly higher at 76.28 against the greenback and moved in a range of 76.36 to 76.09.

It finally settled at 76.15, higher by 15 paise over its previous close of 76.30.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 874.18 points or 1.53 per cent higher at 57,911.68, while the broader NSE Nifty jumped 256.05 points or 1.49 per cent to 17,392.60.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 1.02 per cent to USD 107.89 per barrel. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.43 per cent to 99.98. **PTI**

Investments through P-Notes decline to ₹87,979 cr in March

New Delhi: Investments in the Indian capital markets through participatory notes (P-notes) dropped to Rs 87,979 crore as of March-end, with experts believing that foreign investors will continue to adopt a cautious stance.

"We will see some liquidity drying up from global markets over the coming months resulting in the continuation of pressure in P-notes participation for a few months.

"However, we believe that the India story is intact and the world's leading economies are looking at trade partnerships with us," said Divam Sharma, founder at Green Portfolio, a Sebi-registered portfolio management service provider.

P-notes are issued by registered Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be a part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need to go through a due diligence process.

According to Securities and Exchange Board of India

(Sebi) data, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets -- equity, debt, and hybrid securities -- stood at Rs 87,979 crore at March-end, compared to Rs 89,143 crore at the end of February.

At the end of January, the investment level was Rs 87,989 crore.

Of the total Rs 87,979 crore invested through the route till March 2022, Rs 78,233 crore was invested in equities, Rs 9,593 crore in debt, and Rs 153 crore in hybrid securities. In comparison, Rs 79,747 crore was invested in equities in February and Rs 9,224 crore in debt. "With fear around a high probability of a recession in the USA and an inevitable rate cycle reversal in India, the FPIs have shredded their positions in equities as well as debt in the month of March," Sharma added.

According to him, the positive side is that we are witnessing an undercurrent from domestic investors pumping in money to the extent FPI exits are happening. **PTI**

Gold declines by ₹46, silver down by ₹103

New Delhi: Gold prices declined by Rs 46 to Rs 52,357 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday in line with weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, gold had finished at Rs 52,403 per 10 grams.

Silver also declined by Rs 103 to Rs 67,968 per kg from Rs 68,071 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,949 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 25.03 per ounce.

"Gold prices kept lower trading range on strong US bond yields despite a weaker dollar," Dilip Parmar, Retail Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. **PTI**

Bangladesh likely to export hilsa to India this Durga Puja as well

Kolkata: Continuing its 'hilsa diplomacy', Bangladesh is likely to export the prized silver fish to India during this year's Durga Puja as well.

Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi told PTI that his country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made a special exemption for India in the last couple of years from the blanket export ban on hilsa sale, which helps in conserving the fish and keeps prices from spiralling in the home market.

"Our prime minister made a special exemption during the Durga Puja festivities for India, because we know the fish is special during that season," said Munshi, who hails from Gopalganj -- known for its hilsa catch.

Besides the high demand



during the festive season, many 'Shakti' believers also make a sacrificial offering of hilsa to Goddess Durga.

Bangladesh exported about 2,500 tons of the fish during the last Durga Puja to India, most of which were snapped up in Kolkata's markets.

Munshi, who met West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee earlier this week during his trip to Kolkata, said she raised the issue of hilsa exports, pointing out that the

Bangladeshi reception to her demand has always been positive.

"Mamata-di told me, 'Hasina-ji ke ilish pathate bolben' (tell Sheikh Hasina to send hilsa -- this year too)," Munshi said, indicating that the Bangladeshi response would be considered in a positive spirit, given the good relations.

About 86 per cent of the global hilsa catch is found in Bangladesh waters. The fish, which travels upstream from the sea to breed, is a prized catch because of its taste. Connoisseurs consider the hilsa from the Padma river, a distributary of the Ganges which courses mostly through Bangladesh, to be the tastiest.

Hasina has used exports and gifts of hilsa as part of her

diplomacy toolkit with India since 1996 when she first became the prime minister of Bangladesh. Her first gift of hilsa was to Jyoti Basu, the then chief minister of West Bengal in what many saw as part of sweeteners to hasten the Farakka water-sharing agreement.

In 2013, when the then Indian President Pranab Mukherjee went to an official dinner during his trip to Dhaka, she laid out a large banquet where hilsa was the main offering, knowing fully well 'Pranab-da's' love for the fish.

In 2016, ahead of Mamata Banerjee's swearing in ceremony, a gift of 20 kg of the prized fish was specially flown in for her table as part of the congratulatory message. **PTI**

Kia to drive in EV6 electric crossover in India; bookings open next month

New Delhi: South Korean automaker major Kia is planning to foray into the electric vehicle segment in India with the launch of its high-end premium electric crossover EV6 later this year.

The company, which currently sells models like Seltos and Sonet in the country, will open the bookings for the electric model on May 26. Only 100 units of the EV6 would be on sale in the country. "We are embarking on the next level Kia experience in India. We are launching our most celebrated EV globally, the EV6 - a true game-changer, designed from the ground up to make electric mobility fun, convenient, and accessible by combining a highly impressive real-world driving range, ultra-fast charging capabilities, a spacious high-tech interior," Kia India MD and CEO Tae-Jin Park said at an event on Wednesday evening.

EV6 is the most hi-tech Kia ever made, he added. "With EV6, we don't just want to reach out to the customer who is in the market to buy an electric car, but we want to reach out to every potential customer who wants to own a premium car," Park stated. **PTI**

Man City reclaim top spot

Mahrez, Foden & Silva's strike in 2nd half secure 3-0 win over Brighton



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City held their nerve to move back above Liverpool at the top of the Premier League with a 3-0 win over Brighton on Wednesday.

Riyad Mahrez, Phil Foden and Bernardo Silva all struck in the second half as Pep Guardiola's men edged one point ahead in the title race with six games to go.

Guardiola recalled a number of key players he had left out for Saturday's 3-2 FA Cup semi-final defeat by Liverpool, but it took City time to break Brighton's resolve at a tense Etihad.

The Seagulls had won on the road at Arsenal and Tottenham in their previous two games and frustrated the English champions for the first 45 minutes.

Mahrez bore the brunt of the City support's nerves as he missed the best chance before the break when he passed up the opportunity to take a quick shot from Robert Sanchez's mishit clearance.

City captain Ruben Dias made his return from injury after a two-month absence at half-time.

The Portuguese's return might have come at the perfect time for Guardiola as John Stones limped off in the

second half just six days before the first leg of their Champions League semi-final against Real Madrid.

By the time Stones departed, City had the game won thanks to two goals in 12 minutes.

Kevin De Bruyne's driving run through the heart of the Brighton defence teed up Mahrez, who this time did not pass up the chance to slot in his 23rd goal of the season.

Any doubt over the outcome was removed once Foden's deflected effort from a corner worked to the edge of the box gave City a two-goal cushion.

Silva added a third eight minutes from time with an exquisite cushioned finish from De Bruyne's layoff at the edge of the area.

Nketiah's double sinks Chelsea

AP ■ LONDON

Eddie Nketiah boosted Arsenal's bid for a top-four finish in the Premier League as the striker's double inspired a dramatic 4-2 win against Chelsea on Wednesday.

Nketiah was released by Chelsea as a 16-year-old in 2015 and he exacted a measure of revenge with his first league goals this season.

The 22-year-old put Arsenal ahead early on at Stamford Bridge before Timo Werner equalised.

Mikel Arteta's side regained the lead through Emile Smith Rowe, only for Cesar Azpilicueta to draw Chelsea level again.

Nketiah settled a pulsating London derby when he punished shambolic Chelsea defending in the second half and Bukayo Saka bagged the fourth with a stoppage-time penalty.

After losing their last three games, Nketiah's crucial contribution lifted Arsenal back into the race to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top-four finish.

The Gunners are in fifth place, behind fourth-placed Tottenham on goal difference with both teams having six games to play.

Arsenal's hopes of returning to the Champions League for the first time since 2017 face another vital test against sixth-placed



Manchester United on Saturday. FA Cup finalists Chelsea remain in third place, but they are now only five points ahead of Arsenal and cannot take a top four place for granted.

Ten Hag to become Man Utd manager next season

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Erik ten Hag will leave Ajax to become Manchester United manager next season, the English giants confirmed on Thursday.

The 52-year-old, who has signed a three-year contract, faces a huge task to revive the Red Devils fortunes after a fifth consecutive trophyless season.

The Dutchman becomes the fifth permanent manager at Old Trafford since Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013 sent the 20-time English champions

into decline.

Ten Hag is on course to win his third league title with Ajax and took the four-time European champions to the semi-finals of the Champions League in 2019 for the first time in 22 years.

"It is a great honour to be appointed manager of Manchester United and I am hugely excited by the challenge ahead," said Ten Hag.

"I know the history of this great club and the passion of the fans, and I am absolutely determined to develop a team capable of delivering the success

they deserve.

"It will be difficult to leave Ajax after these incredible years, and I can assure our fans of my complete commitment and focus on bringing this season to a successful conclusion before I move to Manchester United."

United sit sixth in the Premier League, 23 points behind leaders Manchester City, and are unlikely to qualify for next season's Champions League.

The club have been looking for a permanent manager since Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was sacked in October.

Juve set up Cup final with Inter



AP ■ TURIN

Holders Juventus booked their spot in next month's Italian Cup final against Inter Milan with a 2-0 win over Fiorentina in their semi-final, second leg in Turin on Wednesday to advance 3-0 on aggregate.

Juventus lost their Serie A crown last season to Inter Milan and also fell to an Italian Super Cup defeat by their northern rivals in January.

Sitting fourth in Serie A, Juventus's hopes of avoiding a season without a trophy for the first time since 2011 will likely be played out at Rome's Stadio Olimpico on May 11.

Juve took control of the semi-final against their Tuscany rivals after Lorenzo Venuti's late own goal in the first leg in Florence.

On Wednesday, former

Fiorentina winger Federico Bernardeschi fired the hosts ahead after half an hour, with Danilo adding a second just before the final whistle.

Fiorentina could thank goalkeeper Bartlomiej Dragowski for denying ex-Fiorentina striker Dusan Vlahovic twice in the first half-hour, but Bernardeschi volleyed home the opening goal.

Juventus goalkeeper Mattia Perin saved headers from Arthur Cabral and Lucas Martinez Quarta either side of the break.

Denis Zakaria missed the chance to double Juve's lead on the night, hitting the woodwork after the interval.

An Adrien Rabiot goal was then ruled offside before Juan Cuadrado set up Danilo to score late on as Juve maintained their bid for a record-extending 15th Italian Cup.

PSG a point away from Ligue 1 title

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain won 3-0 away at Angers on Wednesday but will have to wait a little longer to be confirmed as Ligue 1 champions after nearest challengers Marseille beat Nantes 3-2.

PSG started the day 15 points clear with six games left and so knew they could clinch their eighth Ligue 1 crown in 10 years if second-placed Marseille slipped up.

Mauricio Pochettino's side got the result they needed, brushing aside struggling Angers despite being without the injured Lionel Messi and the suspended Neymar.

Kylian Mbappe put PSG in front as Ligue 1's leading scorer notched his 22nd of the season just before the half-hour mark at the Stade Raymond Kopa.

Sergio Ramos then marked a rare appearance by doubling the lead in first-half stoppage time when he headed in Angel di Maria's cross, and his central defensive colleague Marquinhos added a late third.

However PSG, who had young midfielder Edouard Michut sent off in stoppage time, were made to wait for the record-equalling 10th French title in their history as Amine Harit's strike gave Marseille victory at the Velodrome.

OM came from behind twice against Nantes through Dimitri Payet



penalties before Harit struck in the 75th minute to make it 3-2 and secure a precious win for Jorge Sampaoli's side as they chase Champions League qualification.

PSG remain 15 points clear with just 15 points left to play for and also boast a far superior goal difference.

They will be confirmed champions on Saturday with a point at home to Lens.

"It is really important for us to win the championship and I hope we can do it on Saturday," Pochettino told broadcaster Canal Plus.

A 10th title will see them equal the record set by the Saint-Etienne side of Michel Platini when they won their last championship in 1981.

Behind them Marseille are now six points clear in second place, with only the top two in Ligue 1 qualifying automatically for the Champions League and third place entering in the qualifying rounds.

Rennes remain third but are only above Strasbourg and Monaco on goal difference while Nice are two points back in sixth.

Strasbourg beat Rennes 2-1 in Alsace with Ludovic Ajorque grabbing their winner after Martin Terrier had cancelled out Habib Diallo's early opener for the home side.

Meanwhile Monaco have surged back into European contention and climbed above Nice by beating their Cote d'Azur rivals 1-0 on Wednesday thanks to a first-half strike by Russian international Aleksandr Golovin.

It was a fifth consecutive victory for the principality side.



Real Madrid win again

AP ■ MADRID

Karim Benzema missed two penalties in seven minutes on Wednesday but Real Madrid still had enough to defeat Osasuna 3-1 as they continued their march towards the La Liga title.

Benzema was looking for his 45th goal of the season but was twice denied by Osasuna goalkeeper Sergio Herrera, who both times dived to his right and both times made the save with Madrid leading 2-1 at El Sadar.

But Osasuna were unable to find an equaliser in the second half and Madrid added a third in injury time, Vinicius Junior teeing up Lucas Vazquez for an easy finish.

David Alaba's opener had earlier been cancelled out by Osasuna's Ante Budimir, before Marco Asensio restored Madrid's advantage on the stroke of half-time.

Madrid move 17 points clear at the top of La Liga, ahead of Atletico Madrid.

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti started Toni Kroos and Vinicius on the bench while Luka Modric was left out of the squad completely, with the first

leg of Madrid's Champions League semi-final against Manchester City less than a week away.

Alaba put Real Madrid in front in the 13th minute, bundling in the rebound after Benzema had tapped the ball across, but the advantage was brief as Budimir knocked in Chimy Avila's pass to the back post a minute later.

Madrid restored their lead at the end of the half as Asensio played inside from the right wing and continued his run into the penalty box.

Eduardo Camavinga chipped to the left side of the box, and while Dani Ceballos' effort was saved, Asensio's run was rewarded with a simple finish.

Benzema's pair of penalties came in the 52nd and 59th minutes, both won by Rodrygo, whose sharp turn tempted Avila into a handball on the ground before Nacho Vidal stumbled into the back of the Brazilian.

Vinicius came off the bench and should have added a third in injury time but side-footed wide before tearing away again and this time laying across for Vazquez to find the corner.

RB Leipzig in DFB-Pokal final

AP ■ BERLIN

Emil Forsberg headed RB Leipzig into their third German Cup final in four years when he struck the last-gasp winner to seal a 2-1 home victory over Union Berlin on Wednesday.

After an Andre Silva penalty had cancelled out Seraldo Becker's first-half header for Union, Forsberg headed in a cross in the second minute of stoppage time to seal the semi-final win.

Leipzig are through to the German Cup final on May 21 at Berlin's Olympic Stadium where they face Freiburg, who beat Hamburg 3-1 in Tuesday's other semi-final.

In a typically tense cup atmosphere, visitors Union took the lead with 25 minutes gone when Becker tucked a cross inside the far post to the delight of the travelling fans.

This was the first goal Leipzig have conceded in their run to the cup final.

It was 1-0 at the break, but Leipzig drew level when their top-scorer Christopher Nkunku was brought down in the area.

Portugal striker Silva converted the resulting penalty with clinical accuracy on 61 minutes.



Having failed to score three penalties this season against Paris Saint-Germain, Real Sociedad and Atalanta in Europe, Silva roared in celebration when his spot kick sailed past Union's Danish goalkeeper Frederik Roennow.

Extra time was beckoning when Swedish playmaker Forsberg rose above his mark-

er and guided his header into the corner.

It extended Leipzig's unbeaten run to 15 games in all competitions.

By a freak of the fixture list, Leipzig host Union this Saturday in the Bundesliga ahead of their Europa League semi-final at home to Rangers on April 28.

Granada hold Atletico Madrid

AP ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid were left frustrated by a goalless draw with Granada on Wednesday as Diego Simeone's side missed the chance to pull away in the race for La Liga's top four.

The stalemate means Atletico move up to second in the table but could be overtaken by both Barcelona and Sevilla on Thursday. Barca play away at Real Sociedad after Sevilla travel to Levante.

Real Betis, who were beaten by Elche on Tuesday, are four points behind Atletico in fifth.



After six consecutive victories between February and April, Atletico have now managed just one win from their last five in all competitions, bringing back some of the concerns that hung over the team earlier in the season.

Without Joao Felix, who will miss the rest of the season through injury, La Liga's reigning champions lacked the thrust needed to break down a determined Granada side, who were playing their first match under new coach Aitor Karanka.

Granada sit 18th, a point behind Cadiz, who have a game in hand.

AP ■ BELGRADE

Novak Djokovic hit out at the "crazy" decision by Wimbledon on Wednesday to ban Russian and Belarusian players from this year's tournament over the invasion of Ukraine.

The world number one said he disagreed with war, but said banning athletes was unfair.

"I will always condemn war, I will never support war being myself a child of war," he said at the ATP event in Belgrade. "I know how much emotional trauma it leaves."

"In Serbia we all know what happened in 1999. In the Balkans we have had many wars in recent history."

"However, I cannot support the decision of Wimbledon, I think it is crazy. "The players, the tennis players,

Djoker criticises 'crazy' Wimbledon ban on Russians, Belarusians

"I will always condemn war, I will never support war being myself a child of war. However, I cannot support the decision of Wimbledon, I think it is crazy."



the athletes have nothing to do with it (war). When politics interferes with sport, the result is not good."

The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), which runs Wimbledon, said it was acting to "limit Russia's global influence through the strongest means possible". But the ATP and WTA organisers have also criticised the ban, saying it was "unfair" and "very disappointing".

Russian Daniil Medvedev is Djokovic's closest rival in the world rankings and denied the 34-year-old a calendar Grand Slam in last year's US Open final.

Djokovic is playing in just his third tournament of the season in the Serbian capital after being deported from Australia ahead of the Australian Open over his Covid-19 vaccination status.



the pioneer

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

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We (Delhi Capitals) gave him (Kuldeep Yadav) confidence in the practice match and he was told that he would play all the matches and doesn't need to take tension about his performance

— AXAR PATEL

MSD kicks MI out of IPL

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

MS Dhoni's late flourish helped Chennai Super Kings defeat Mumbai Indians by three wickets at the DY Patil Stadium. Earlier, Mumbai Indians posted 155 for 7 as Tilak Varma top-scored for MI with 51 not out from 43 balls while Suryakumar Yadav chipped in with a 21-ball 32. For CSK, Mukesh Choudhary took three wickets for 19 runs while Dwayne Bravo got two. Mukesh Choudhary scythed through Mumbai Indians' top order to remove Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan for duck in the powerplay. He then removed Dewald Brevis for seven, reducing Mumbai to 23/3 in the first three overs. Mitchell Santner affected further damage by taking the prized wicket of Suryakumar Yadav (32). Kieron Pollard also perished cheaply but youngster Tilak Varma notched up a brilliant half-century to bail Mumbai out of a precarious position. Varma's fighting 51 powered Mumbai to 155/7 in 20 overs.

Pacer Mukesh Choudhary wreaked havoc with the new ball before Tilak Varma's responsible half-century lifted Mumbai Indians to 155 for seven in the IPL here on Thursday.

Invited to bat, Choudhary (3/19) accounted for Rohit Sharma (0) and Ishan Kishan (0) in the first over and then dismissed Dewald Brevis (4), leaving Mumbai reeling at 23/3.

However, Varma's unbeaten 51 off 43 balls, in which he struck three fours and two sixes, along with Jaydev Unadkat's blazing unbeaten 19, helped Mumbai cross the 150 run-mark.

While Rohit offered an easy catch to Mitchell Santner at mid-on, Kishan was undone by a swinging



yorker, which rattled his off-stump.

Brewis (4) became Choudhary's third victim. Brewis tried to chase a delivery outside the off stump, but ended up nicking to Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

Suryakumar Yadav (32) started with a boundary, an on drive. He creamed another drive off Choudhary and then launched into mystery spinner Maheesh Theekshana (1/35), sweeping him for a maximum.

► points table

Po.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	GT	6	5	1	0	10	0.395
2.	RCB	7	5	2	0	10	0.251
3.	RR	6	4	2	0	8	0.380
4.	LSG	7	4	3	0	8	0.124
5.	SRH	6	4	2	0	8	-0.077
6.	DC	6	3	3	0	6	0.942
7.	KKR	7	3	4	0	6	0.160
8.	PBKS	7	3	4	0	6	-0.562
9.	CSK	7	2	5	0	4	-0.534
10.	MI	7	0	7	0	0	-0.892

► boundary meter

4s 941

6s 489

Mumbai were at 42/3 after the power-play.

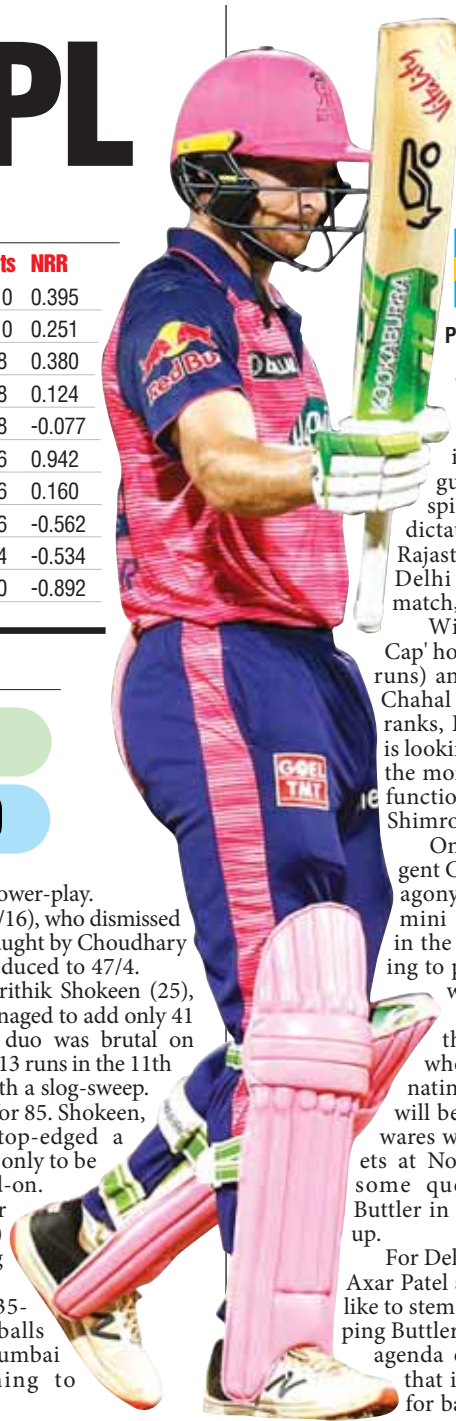
But it was Mitchell Santner (1/16), who dismissed Surya, whose sweep was easily caught by Choudhary at long-leg and Mumbai were reduced to 47/4.

Then Tilak and debutant Hrithik Shokeen (25), tried to rally the innings, but managed to add only 41 runs for the fifth wicket. The duo was brutal on Ravindra Jadeja (0/30), who bled 13 runs in the 11th over, with Varma hitting a six with a slog-sweep.

Mumbai lost half their side for 85. Shokeen, who had three boundaries, top-edged a Dwayne Bravo (2/36) short-ball only to be caught at Robin Uthappa at mid-on.

Wickets kept tumbling for Mumbai with Kieron Pollard (14) and Daniel Sams (5) also falling cheaply.

But thanks to a quick-fire 35-run eight-wicket stand off 16 balls between Tilak and Unadkat, Mumbai gave their bowlers something to defend.



Delhi face Royals in IPL today

Delhi vs Rajasthan
Live from 7:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Yuzvendra Chahal's bagful of tricks will meet its perfect match in Kuldeep Yadav's guile as the two wrist spinners are expected to dictate the narrative when Rajasthan Royals clash with Delhi Capitals in an IPL match, on Friday.

With current 'Orange Cap' holder in Jos Buttler (375 runs) and 'Purple Cap' holder Chahal (17 wickets) in their ranks, Royals are a team that is looking pretty formidable at the moment even with a dysfunctional middle-order, save Shimron Hetmyer.

On the other hand, resurgent Capitals are battling the agony that comes with a mini COVID-19 outbreak in the camp but are still trying to put their best foot forward to stay afloat.

In this backdrop, the two wrist-spinners, who are currently dominating the bowling charts will be itching to show their wares with Kuldeep (13 wickets at No 2) expected to pose some questions for in-form Buttler in case there is a match-up.

For Delhi, Kuldeep along with Axar Patel and Lalit Yadav would like to stem the run-flow but stopping Buttler will be on top of their agenda on a Wankhede track that is expected to be good for batting.

For Chahal, how he varies the pace against a rampaging David Warner or the ever-attacking Prithvi Shaw and skipper Rishabh Pant will be a delight for the fans.

In the past five years, life has come to a full circle for 'Kul-Cha' who were the 'taste' of the nation between 2017 and 2019 when wrist spinners were in vogue during the Ravi Shastri-Virat Kohli era.

While Chahal got a body blow after being dropped from the last T20 World Cup squad and was sporadically picked in white ball formats, Kuldeep also lost his way.

He got very little support from either erstwhile national team management or his previous IPL team (KKR) and also endured a career-threatening knee injury.

But now the smile is back and so is the guile. The left-arm wrist spinner's googly — the one that turns away from right-hander — is back and so is the conventional left-arm leg-break which comes into the right-hander.

However in these kind of games, the support cast becomes more important as they can create those little game-changing moments that impact the final outcome of the game.

Mustafizur Rahman's cutters and Khaleel Ahmed's clever change of pace could also trouble the likes of Sanju Samson and Riyan Parag.

Similarly, if Trent Boult gets one to tail in first-up, Shaw's response and technique will be tested in earnest.

But Royals have now got a calm death bowler in West Indies' Obed McCoy, who was brilliant while bowling the final over against KKR.

If middle-order non-performance is an issue for Royals, the DC doesn't seem to have found the second Indian batter in that middle-order slot apart from skipper Pant, who can take the bowling apart.



Pathirana replaces Milne in CSK squad

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Chennai Super Kings on Thursday named young Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana as replacement for injured Adam Milne in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

New Zealand's Milne suffered a hamstring injury in CSK's first match against Kolkata Knight Riders on March 26, which was also the season opener, weeks after which he has been ruled out of the tournament.

Pathirana, a young 19-year old medium pacer, was a part of Sri Lanka's U19 World Cup squads in 2020 and 2022.

"He will join CSK at the price of INR 20 lakh," the IPL said in a statement.

When you win, everything seems positive even if you commit mistakes: Lalit Yadav

PTI ■ MUMBAI

All-rounder Lalit Yadav, one of the blue-eyed boys of Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting, feels that a victory always creates a positive vibe despite the mistakes committed on the job.

The COVID-hit DC crushed Punjab Kings by nine wickets with 57 balls to spare. Lalit with figures of 2/11, which included the wicket of Shikhar Dhawan, contributed in the victory.

"It was a different vibe altogether. You know, when we win, everything seems to look positive, no matter how many mistakes we commit," Lalit said ahead of Capitals' next match against Rajasthan Royals on Friday.

"That's a really great thing for the team, especially when the next match is in two days. The momentum we've gained is really important, and we will go into the next game with confidence."

With six positive COVID-19 cases in the DC camp, there was an element of uncertainty but Lalit said that players were all focussed on the game.

"We just discussed to enjoy the game and give our 100%. We were just focusing on the match. We also had one training session the other day, so it's not that we didn't have any practice at all.

"It's just that we didn't know whether the match will happen or not, but overall, we were confident about our abilities," he said.

Speaking about the next match, the all-rounder said, "They (RR) have been one of the most consistent teams in the tournament so far, and have been playing quality cricket. However, we will focus on ourselves, we will go with our plans and try to execute them."



Having lost to RCB the other night, a comprehensive win was necessary to get the campaign back on track and that is precisely what happened against PBKS.

"We were looking for a momentum since the start, we've played good cricket so far but we were not consistent. In this game, we were consistent in all three departments, and that's what we were looking for. It has created a good atmosphere in the camp," he added.

Ponting's pep talk lifted our confidence following COVID outbreak: Axar Patel

PTI ■ MUMBAI

It hard by COVID-19 outbreak before their IPL game against Punjab Kings, Delhi Capitals all-rounder Axar Patel said a pep talk from head coach Ricky Ponting worked wonders in lifting the morale of the side, resulting in a comprehensive win.

DC showed remarkable resilience to overcome a COVID crisis in their camp and hand Punjab Kings a nine-wicket thrashing in an IPL game on Wednesday night.

The match, which was shifted to the Brabourne Stadium from Pune, was given a go ahead barely an hour before the start of play after DC wicketkeeper-batter Tim Seifert tested positive on Wednesday morning. But head coach Ponting did all in his capacity to help his side stay focussed.

"We were quarantined and we started practice two-three days after that, he (Ponting) told us we have two options. We have to play the match. You can think that there are positive cases, and the preparations aren't done.

"Or you can think all outside things are not in our hands and you should show commitment with regard to the effort and preparation," Axar said.

"We were focusing on our game (and) we did our planning (accordingly). So that's it, that was the speech and that was our mindset," added the left-arm spinner, who grabbed two wickets and played a key



role in bundling out Punjab for a sub-par 115. Delhi first bowled out Punjab Kings for 115 and then cantered to the target in just 10.3 overs, riding on David Warner's unbeaten 60.

Axar was also happy with teammate Kuldeep Yadav's return to form, saying the Delhi team management gave him the much needed confidence to prosper after a disappointing last IPL, where he represented Kolkata Knight Riders.

"Like you said, the atmosphere is very important. I had earlier said when he (Kuldeep) came, he needed confidence.

After you don't play well for a season or two, you are less confident, so Rishabh (Pant), I and the coaching staff - Ricky (Ponting) gave him the confidence, which was crucial," Axar said. "We gave him confidence in the practice match and he was told that he would play all the matches and doesn't need to take tension about his performance.

"When he knows that he is playing all the matches, he needs to focus on his bowling. And that is happening. He is now focusing on his bowling and the way he is taking wickets, it becomes easy for me to partner with him," he signed off.

Bumrah, Rohit among Wisden's five 'Cricketers of the Year'

PTI ■ LONDON

India captain Rohit Sharma and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah have been named among five players in Wisden's 'Cricketers of the Year' in the 2022 edition of the Almanack.

Besides the duo, the list also features New Zealand batter Devon Conway, England pacer Ollie Robinson and Proteas women star Dane van Niekerk.

England's Joe Root has been named leading cricketer in the world, while South African women's team batter Lizelle Lee has been awarded with the title of leading woman cricketer.

Besides, Pakistan wicket-keeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan has earned the title of leading T20 cricketer in the world. Bumrah starred for India in their visit to England last summer. Besides his exploits in India's historic win at Lord's, he also produced a match-winning spell at The Oval with the



latter handing India a 2-1 lead in the series that is to be concluded in July this year.

Rohit had an exceptional summer at the top of the order for India, scoring 368 runs in four Tests at an average of 52.57. The India skipper scored a match defining 127 at The Oval, his first Test century away from

home. Root was named leading cricketer of the year after an historic 12 months in which he scored 1,708 Test runs in a calendar year, the third most in history. Lee was named leading woman cricketer in the world after a dominant 2021, averaging 90.28 with the bat in ODI cricket.

Sarita, Sushma take Bronze at Asian Championship

PTI ■ ULAANBATAAR

Defending champion Sarita Mor was not at her best but still managed to win a Bronze medal while Sushma Shokeen also earned a podium finish at the Asian Wrestling Championship here on Thursday.

Competing in the five-wrestler 59kg category, Sarita, the 2021 World Championship Bronze medallist, began with two defeats -- against Mongolia's Shooovdor Baatarjav (1-2) and Japan's Sara Natami (VSU) -- but made a comeback by winning her last two bouts.

She first beat Uzbekistan's Dilfuza Aimbetova by technical superiority and then followed that up with a 5-2 win over Diana Kayumova.

"I could have won that bout against Mongolian girl. But since she was from home team, she got some favour from the

referees. She was fleeing the mat but was not given any caution, she benefitted from that," Sarita told PTI.

"That Japan wrestler was also beatable. It was just not my day. I could not perform the way I wanted to. Maybe because of weather. It is high-altitude city, I did not feel active on the mat. Plus, hardly there was any gap between my bouts," she added.

Also winning Bronze was Sushma in 55kg category, which also featured only five wrestlers.

She lost by technical superiority to Japan's Umi Imai but bounced back with a 5-0 win over Kazakhstan's Altyn Shagayeva in the next round. Then she enjoyed a stupendous bout against Uzbekistan's Sarbinaz Jienbaeva, winning by fall. However, she ended with a heavy defeat against local girl Otgonjargal Ganbaatar, to whom she lost by technical superiority.

14-year-old Unnati Hooda in Indian badminton team for Asiad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Teen sensation Unnati Hooda, 14, was on Thursday named in the Indian badminton team for the upcoming Asian Games as the national federation announced the squads for the major events this year, including the Commonwealth Games, Thomas and Uber Cup.

The teams were named by Badminton Association of India (BAI) following six days of selection trials at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here. Hooda is the youngest Indian badminton player to be part of the Asian Games squad. Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu will spearhead the women's challenge in both the Commonwealth and Asian Games while London Olympics Bronze winner Saina Nehwal did not expectedly feature in the squads. World Championships medallists Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth will lead India's medal



quest among men in the Birmingham CWG (July 28 to August 8) and Asian Games (September 10-25) in Hangzhou, China. Apart from the squads for the three major tournaments which are to be held this year, the BAI also finalised names of 40 players (20 men and 20 women) for the senior national coaching camp and core group for the 2024 Olympic Games, based on players' positions in trials.

For the Commonwealth Games, the men's team consists of Sen, Srikanth, Satwiksairaj

Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty and B Sumeeth Reddy while Sindhu will lead the women's squad which has Aakarshi Kashyap, Treasa Jolly, Gayatri P and Ashwini Ponappa. Sumeet Reddy and Ponappa made the cut in the men's and women's squads respectively for the Commonwealth Games after their top-place finish in the mixed doubles category. Hooda, the teenage sensation from Rohtak, caught the selectors' eyes as she secured a place for the Asian Games as well as Uber Cup by finishing third in the women's singles after Kashyap and Ashmita Chaliha, who claimed first and second positions respectively.

A 10-member women's team for the Asian Games and Uber Cup will comprise Sindhu, Kashyap, Chaliha, Hooda alongside Top-3 doubles pairs from the trials -- Treasa Jolly-Gayatri P, N Sikki Reddy- Ashwini Ponappa and Tanisha Crasto-Shruti Mishra.