



IMD warns of scorching heatwave in five States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A mid a punishing heatwave building up in large parts of India, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an "orange" alert for Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and the national Capital region. The IMD has predicted a rise of another two degrees Celsius in the northwest region.

Large parts of India have been recording higher than normal temperatures since the second week of March, with weather experts attributing it to the absence of periodic light rainfall and thundershowers, which typify this time of the year, due to the lack of active western disturbances. The national Capital on Thursday recorded almost 44 degrees Celsius at Safdarjung base station, about 5 degrees above normal.

As per the IMD data, seven cities in India have recorded over 45 degrees Celsius while 30 cities recorded over 44 degrees Celsius. There is a possibility that the maximum temperature may touch over 48 degrees Celsius in Barmer on May 1. At least 58 years ago, Barmer has recorded 48.3 degrees in April.

The IMD predicted that the heatwave would continue over northwest and central parts of the country during the next five days. Similarly, it would continue during the next three days over eastern parts of the country and abate thereafter.

"Rise by about 2 degrees Celsius in maximum temperatures very likely over most parts of northwest, north, central and east India during next



Girls shield their faces from the heat with scarves in Gurugram on Thursday

PTI

three days and fall by about 2 degrees Celsius thereafter," it said. The weather department has also issued an advisory for vulnerable people, including children, the elderly, and people with chronic diseases to avoid heat exposure, wear lightweight, light-coloured and loose cotton clothes.

According to IMD scientist RK Jenamani, the severe conditions are likely to persist till the first week of May after which chances of rain increase. The most heatwave-prone areas, known as the core heatwave zone, are Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, West Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh,

Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Vidarbha in Maharashtra, parts of Gangetic West Bengal, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Heatwave spells last four to 10 days and the ones going to be in May are longer than those in April and June because of no rainfall.

According to experts, having recorded three prolonged heatwave spells, it could be one of the hottest April in the history of the country. The maximum temperatures were 3.1 degrees Celsius to 5 degrees Celsius above normal in Jharkhand, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh on Thursday with the mercury hitting 45.6 degrees Celsius at Raigarh in Madhya Pradesh. Temperatures may even leap to 47 degrees Celsius in parts of northwest India, weather experts said.

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Power demand tops 6,000 MW in Delhi, to increase further

With the mercury shooting up in Delhi, the power demand on Thursday crossed 6,000 MW mark for the first time in the month of April. The peak power demand of the city was 6,000 MW at 3.31 pm, according to realtime data of State Load Dispatch Centre. It was 4,469 MW on April 1.

"For the first time in April, Delhi's peak power demand clocked 6,000 MW. It was 3.7 per cent more as compared to 5,769 MW on Wednesday afternoon," said a discom official.

Detailed report on Page 3

Tit for tat! MEA justifies no tourist visas for Chinese

Amid Covid-19 fear, Beijing too hasn't issued visas to Indians

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With corona cases rising in cities like Shanghai, India on Thursday justified its decision not to issue visas to Chinese nationals and said China has also not issued visas to Indians since 2020.

Making New Delhi's stand clear, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said here, "We are aware of the Covid situation in Chinese cities like Shanghai...Not the opportune time for resumption of issuance of tourist visas for China".

He also said China has not issued visas to India and has suspended visa issuance to India since 2020. "It's not the right time to discuss the issuance of tourist visas for China," he said.

Bagchi made these observations when asked for his reaction to reports that India suspended tourist visas issued to Chinese nationals after Beijing blocked the entry of



around 22,000 Indian students studying in Chinese universities.

India was also awaiting a response from Beijing to its request for issuing visas to Indian students who have been facing difficulties.

This issue of the Indian students was discussed during talks between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi last month.

Two days ago reports referring to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said India did not allow tourist visas to Chinese nationals.

Experts believe that the visa row is the outcome of standoff between armies of the two countries at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh for the last two years.

CAPSULE

50KG HEROIN SEIZED FROM SHAHEEN BAGH

New Delhi: In one of the biggest drug hauls in recent times, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has seized 50 kg "high quality" heroin, another 47 kg "suspected" narcotics, ₹30 lakh drug money in cash, cash counting machines and other incriminating material from a residential premises in Shaheen Bagh, Jamia Nagar, on a tip-off. **P4**

1,490 COVID-19 CASES, TWO DEATHS IN DELHI

New Delhi: Delhi's fresh Covid-19 cases rose by nearly nine per cent in last 24 hours as the city recorded 1,490 infections on Thursday and two deaths while the positivity rate stood at 4.62 per cent, according to data shared by the health department.

EFFORTS ON TO REVOKE AFSPA FROM NE: MODI

Diphu/Dibrugarh/Guwahati: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday while speaking at a rally at Diphu, 250 kms east of Guwahati, said efforts are on to remove AFSPA completely from the northeast region. **P5**

NO CHANGE IN INDIA'S PAK APPROACH, SAYS MEA

New Delhi: Over a fortnight after Shehbaz Sharif became Pakistan's new Prime Minister, India on Thursday asserted there is no change to its approach that talks between the two sides can only take place in an atmosphere free of terror and insisted that the onus is on Islamabad to create such an environment.

Will soon take call on dispute over services control in Delhi: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would decide on the Centre's submission that the dispute about the control over services in the national Capital be referred to a five-judge bench. AAP-led Delhi Government strongly opposed Centre's demand.

"We will consider and take a call as early as possible," a bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli said after hearing Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Central Government and senior advocate AM Singhvi who was representing the Delhi Government.

"This court is not here to refer every time the slightest thing is pointed out. How does this matter, if there were three



or five judges? It is not about why not, it is about why," said Singhvi.

He said though there was no ambiguity in the previous 2018 constitution bench judgment, but, if there was any, even then it can be decided by the present bench.

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India saw highest 106 internet shutdowns in world last year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With 106 shutdowns of the internet in 2021, India has emerged as the leading country with the highest number of internet shutdowns for reasons ranging from curbing protests to preventing online fraud for the fourth straight year.

Apart from India, the others at the top of the list include Myanmar (at least 15 times), Sudan and Iran (both at least five times each). In 2020, India saw the highest number of internet shutdowns at 109 out of the overall 155 instances across the world.

According to Access Now report released on Thursday, of the 106 shutdowns, 85 were found in Jammu & Kashmir alone. Internet shutdowns topped in Jammu & Kashmir, where authorities continue to impose intentional disruptions that last for extended periods due to cross-border terrorism

threats. "Authorities continue to impose intentional internet disruptions that last for long periods, disrupting and endangering people's lives for months on end," it said.

"The Indian Government has been reluctant to create and maintain a centralised repository of data on the shutdowns authorities order across the country. This represents a failure to meet the requirements of the 2017 Suspension Rules and the Supreme Court order backing them.

The lack of a centralised repository continues to make it difficult for civil society and other actors to effectively monitor and document shutdowns, and some are likely to go unreported," the report said.

Data compiled for the report also shows that Governments across the world imposed internet shutdowns some 182 times in total in 34 countries, a slight uptick compared to at least 159 shut-

downs in 29 countries in 2020.

The report further said that the shutdowns Indian authorities imposed in 2021 drew international attention and condemnation.

The Government cut internet access in a clear attempt to suppress the farmers' protests, a movement opposing Parliament of India's passage of three farm acts the previous year.

Authorities plainly sought to prevent protesters from communicating with one another, and to obstruct press reporting. Despite the disruptions, the Government was not able to conceal its violent.

There has been a constant trend in the number of internet shutdowns in the country, usually for law and order, or security considerations, as requested by the home secretaries of States, or the Union Home secretary.

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Ukraine war stresses need for self-reliance in def: Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of a Russia-Ukraine conflict, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday underlined the urgent need for self-reliance in defence manufacturing to maintain operational readiness.

He made this observation against the backdrop of the apprehensions about delay in supply of weapon systems and spares from Russia, which could impact the modernisation drive of the Indian armed forces. However, Russia has assured of all possible help in maintaining the delivery schedules.

Addressing the Navy Commanders' conference here, Rajnath said coming to the prevailing security environment in the world, the ongoing Russia and Ukraine conflict has once again highlighted that being self-reliant without dependen-



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addresses the Naval Commanders Conference 2022 in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

cies is a vital necessity.

The Indian Navy, which has been at the forefront of "AatmaNirbhar Bharat" must continue to lead the way and remain a necessary guarantor of India's maritime trade, security and national prosperity, he said.

The Minister said it was heartening to note that in consonance with the

"AatmaNirbhar Bharat" initiative, the Navy has re-invested over 64 per cent of its capital budget into our own economy.

"I am told that the percentage share of the modernisation budget is bound to grow up to 70 per cent towards indigenous procurement, in this current financial year," he said.

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Ready to back Kyiv for years in war against Russia, says NATO

Brussels: NATO is ready to maintain its support for Ukraine in the war against Russia for years, including help for Kyiv to shift from Soviet-era weapons to modern Western arms and systems, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Thursday.

He spoke after the Kremlin warned that Western arms supplies to Ukraine, including heavy weapons, posed a threat to the security of the European continent "and provoke instability".

"We need to be prepared for the long term," Stoltenberg told a youth summit in Brussels. "There is absolutely the possibility that this war will drag on and last for months and years."

The NATO chief said the West would continue to put maximum pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a "special military operation", through sanctions and economic as



well as military aid to Kyiv. Stoltenberg said, "Up to date, NATO allies have pledged and provided at least 8 billion US dollars in military support

to Ukraine. And we see the importance of further stepping up our support to Ukraine."

Related reports on P9



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being greeted by people as he arrives to address the 'unity, peace and development rally' at Loringthepe in Karbi Anglong district on Thursday (Photo). Addressing a rally at Dibrugarh in Assam after inaugurating seven cancer care centres and laying the foundation stone for seven others across the State, Modi said the Government is committed to strengthen the health infrastructure to provide the best and the cheapest treatment to the ailing people, particularly those suffering from cancer (See P5)

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Kamal Nath quits as MP LoP amid infighting in Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BHOPAL

Amid rumours of infighting in the Madhya Pradesh Congress, Kamal Nath resigned as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) on Thursday.

He will no longer be the Leader of the Opposition in the MP Assembly, but he will continue to be the State PCC chief.

Party president Sonia Gandhi accepted Nath's resignation with "immediate effect". Making the announcement of his resignation at a press conference in Bhopal on Thursday, Nath said, "Hum sab mil ka aane wala chunotiyo ka saamna karenge (Together, we will face the challenges ahead)".

Dr Govind Singh, a senior Congress leader and MLA from Lahar constituency in Madhya Pradesh, has been appointed as the Leader of the



Congress Legislature Party.

In a letter dated April 28, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal wrote to Nath saying, "This is to inform you that the hon'ble Congress president has accepted your resignation from the post of Leader, Congress Legislature Party, Madhya Pradesh, with immediate effect. The party wholeheartedly appreciates your contribution as the CLP Leader, Madhya Pradesh."

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No shortage of coal at power plants: UP Min

Thermal units closed due to technical reasons: Sharma

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid reports of power situation in the State getting worse with each passing day, Energy Minister AK Sharma denied paucity of coal as a reason for drop in electricity generation, saying many power plants were closed due to technical reasons.

In a tweet on Thursday, Sharma said that a few power plants were closed due to technical reasons for the last many weeks because of which there is a drop in electricity generation. He said the 660 MW each thermal power units of Harduaganj, Meza and Bara were closed while 605 MW

Harduaganj unit was damaged in storm.

“Efforts are being made on a war footing to repair these power units so that they start generation at the earliest,” the minister said in his tweet.

Sharma said that the availability of coal for power generation should be maintained continuously.

“Right now we do not have any shortage of coal. Coal should be supplied according to the demand. For this, maintain constant dialogue with the Government of India,” he told senior officials.

With reports pouring in from across the state about frequent power cuts, officials admit that the power situation in UP is alarming. The average load shedding in villages is 7:57 hours, 6:17 hours in semi-urban towns, 6:2 hours in tehsil-level towns and 6:51 hours in Bundelkhand.

“So far big cities and industries are being exempted from rostering, but increase in power consumption in cities has led to voltage drop and frequent power cuts,” an official said.

In a review meeting, the energy minister said the power demand had created a new record due to intense heat conditions.

“Minimise load shedding by carrying out immediate repairs. There should not be unnecessary power cuts whether it is in a village or a city. Make arrangements to purchase additional electricity if needed,” he said.

The minister also directed that the process of installing smart meters in cities should be expedited. He said the houses which still did not have electricity connection should be given connection under the Saubhagya scheme as per eligibility.

Safdarjung observatory records 43.5 degree C temperature

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid intense heatwave in the national Capital, the Safdarjung observatory recorded a maximum temperature of 43.5 degrees Celsius, highest in April in the last 12 years. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has also issued an orange alert, warning the city residents of a severe heatwave on Friday.

The national capital had recorded a maximum temperature of 43.7 degrees Celsius on April 18, 2010. The all-time high temperature for the month was 45.6 degrees Celsius recorded on April 29, 1941.

The mercury leaped to 46 degrees Celsius at Sports Complex, making it the warmest place in the capital. Ridge (45.1 degrees Celsius), Mungeshpur (45.8 degrees Celsius), Najafgarh (45.4 degrees Celsius) and Pitampura (45.2 degrees Celsius) recorded the maximum temperature at least five notches above normal.

The mercury at the Safdarjung observatory is expected to breach the 44-degree mark on Friday, it said.

Delhi may also see a partly cloudy sky, light rain and a dust storm with winds gusting up to 50 kilometres per hour on Friday and Sunday, which may provide temporary respite.

The city has recorded nine heatwave days in April, the highest since 11 such days witnessed in the month in 2010.

The IMD said the heatwave could lead to “moderate” health concerns for vulnerable people — infants, elderly people and those with chronic diseases.

“Hence, people of these regions should avoid heat exposure, wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose cotton clothes and cover the head with a piece of cloth, a hat or an umbrella,” it said.

There is an “increased likelihood of heat-illness symptoms in people who are either exposed to the sun for a prolonged period or doing heavy work”, an IMD advisory read.

Skywalk linking Sector 52 Blue Line with Sector 51 Aqua Line to be built soon

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A skywalk linking the Sector 52 station of Delhi Metro's Blue Line to the nearby Sector 51 station of Noida Metro's Aqua Line will be built within a year. The Noida Metro Rail Corporation made this promise two days after its Board meeting.

During its 31st Board meeting, the NMRC also deliberated upon expediting the Centre's approval of a detailed project report for extending the Aqua Line from Sector 51 station in Noida to Knowledge Park V in Greater Noida (West) by May this year, the NMRC said.

The meeting was held on Tuesday during which the Board also approved a budget of Rs 287.62 crore for the financial year 2022-2023 and gave its go-ahead for an internal audit report, it added.

“The Board meeting was convened for standard statutory compliance, like approval of the budget for the financial year 2022-2023 amounting Rs 287.62 crore (net) and approval of internal audit report,” NMRC Managing Director Ritu Maheshwari said in a statement.

“The Board also discussed expediting the Centre's approval of DPR from Sector 51 to Knowledge Park V, positively by May 2022 for ease of commuters and ridership enhancement,” she added.

“The Board was also informed that the FOB between sector 51 and 52 metro stations will now be built by the Noida Authority and the work will be completed within a year,” Maheshwari, who is also the CEO of the Noida Authority, said.

The FOB will work as an interchange station between the two metro rail lines. The Blue Line is operated by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation while the Aqua Line, which connects Noida and Greater Noida in the Gautam Buddha Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh, is run by the NMRC.

The Sector 52 and 51 metro stations are just 300-metre apart with a walkway but due to the lack of a connected inter-change facility passengers currently have to exit one station and re-enter the other, going through the security check and frisking twice.

Built for Rs 5,503 crore, the 29.7-km long Aqua Line was opened for passengers in January 2019. A “skywalk” or an FOB to cover the 300-metre stretch between the two stations has been in the proposal since 2019.

Noida and Greater Noida residents have often lamented this hassle and demanded an FOB or seamless interchange facility between the two stations, like those at Botanical Garden, Hauz Khas or Sikandarpur metro stations of the DMRC.

NSA invoked against three in intermediate English paper leak case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two days after the suspension of former director of secondary education, Vinay Pandey, the Ballia police on Thursday invoked the National Security Act against three persons for their alleged involvement in the leak of the Uttar Pradesh Board's Class 12 English question paper.

The three accused were identified as Ravindra Nath Singh, Rajiv Pratap alias Raju and Nirbhay Narayan Singh. They were arrested by the police on April 3.

“It may be mentioned here that the intermediate English paper examination of UP Board of Secondary Education, Prayagraj, held on March 30 had to be cancelled in 24 districts after its question paper was leaked on social media platforms.

Following the question paper leak, the government cancelled the exam in 24 districts, including the Ballia district. However, the examination was conducted in the other 51 districts on the same day while re-examination was held in 24 districts on April 13.

A case was registered in this regard at Bhimpura police station in Nagra after which the NSA provisions have been slapped against the accused,” the police said in an official statement.

BJP men barging into shops, taking ₹10 K bribe: AAP alleges

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) people had barged into 200 shops in Delhi's Kalyanpuri to demand Rs 10,000 rupees as monthly bribe from shopkeepers.

The senior AAP leader and MCD in-charge, Durgesh Pathak said that BJP threatened Kalyanpuri shopkeepers saying if you don't pay 20 lakhs rupees we'll get your shops bulldozed.

“The Market Association has filed a complaint to the

Delhi Police that after refusing to pay the ransom, the BJP got bulldozers to run over about eight shops,” said Pathak.

“We sincerely hope that the police take immediate and strict action against BJP's misgovernance and corruption. This is the plight of every single market throughout Delhi, be it Lajpat Nagar, Rohini Market, or Sarojini Nagar — shopkeepers and owners in all corners of the state are being bullied into extortion. The BJP goons are ransacking the entire Capital, and terrorising innocent Delhi residents just to fill their own pockets,” said Pathak.

EIB vice-prez visits Agra Metro Project

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The European Investment Bank's (EIB) vice president, Christian Kettel Thomsen, along with five team members visited the Agra Metro Project on Thursday.

Agra is the sixth urban metro rail project that EIB supports in India. EIB has approved commitments to the sector to over 3 billion euros, of which over 2 billion euros have been signed.

The Managing Director, UPMRC, Kumar Keshav took Thomsen and his team to various construction sites in Agra Metro Project including recently commenced underground work at Agra Fort Metro station and explained the scheme of construction and progress. Keshav thanked EIB for their continued support to

various Metro projects in Uttar Pradesh and conveyed commitment of UPMRC team towards timely completion of this prestigious project.

Thomsen said that the EIB is proud of its contribution to this project because it will improve the quality of life for the citizens and visitors of the historic city of Agra, and will help India in achieving its climate goals.

Will soon take....

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Solicitor General Mehta said that the matter needed to be sent to a Constitution bench on grounds including that the earlier judgments of the five-judge bench did not give “any roadmap” to decide as to whether the Union or the Delhi Government will have the competence to deal with the subject under dispute. There has been a finding of the bench that there was no consideration on certain aspects by the larger Constitution bench and hence the dispute needed to be referred, Mehta said.

The Centre on Wednesday had told the bench that it needed to have control over administrative services in Delhi as it is the national Capital and the face of the country. SG had also said the model of governance of the NCT of Delhi would invariably require the Union Government to play a Central role, even if a Legislative Assembly or council of Ministers is introduced. It was not meant to be about any particular political party, he had said.

The case arises out of a split verdict of February 14, 2019, in which, a two judge bench of Justices AK Sikri and Ashok Bhushan, both retired since then, had recommended to the Chief Justice of India that a three-judge bench be set up to finally decide the issue of control of services in the national capital in view of its split verdict. Justice Bhushan had ruled the Delhi Government had no power at all over administrative services.

Justice Sikri, however, made a distinction. He said the transfer or posting of officers in top echelons of the bureaucracy (joint director and above) can only be done by the Central Government and the view of the Lieutenant Governor would prevail in case of a difference of opinion on matters relating to other bureaucrats. In the 2018 judgment, a five-judge Constitution bench had unanimously held that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi is bound by the “aid and advice” of the elected Government, and both needed to work harmoniously with each other.

IMD warns....

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The IMD also forecast dust storms over Punjab, Haryana and around national capital Delhi, as well as parts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. “Isolated heavy rainfall very likely over Arunachal Pradesh (Saturday) and Assam, Meghalaya (Saturday to Monday),” the IMD said.

Mahesh Palawat of Skymet weather also predicted that parts of northern India may get slight relief from the ongoing heatwave between May 4 and 7. According to a tweet by Palawat, a pre-monsoon dust storm, thunderstorms and rain is possible in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and west Uttar Pradesh. Northwest India has recorded the hottest March in 122 years, with an average maximum temperature surpassing the previous record of 30.67 degrees Celsius set in 2004.

The mercury maintained an upward trend in central India with temperatures in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh crossing 45 degrees Celsius. Vidarbha in Maharashtra and west Rajasthan have consistently reported maximum temperatures in the range of 40 degrees Celsius to 45 degree Celsius for the past two months.

India saw highest 106 ...

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The report also stated that Governments in the Asia-Pacific region implemented at least 129 internet shutdowns in seven countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Pakistan.

Recently, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology in its report highlighted the misuse of internet shutdowns and the impact on rights and freedoms. Taking into account countries that have shut down the internet during protests, the report highlighted that India is among such countries too.

“India is also among at least 18 Governments that imposed mobile internet shutdowns during protests, including in a clear attempt to suppress the large-scale farmers' protests. The continued trend of long shutdowns (in Ethiopia, Myanmar, India, Pakistan, and elsewhere) is an agonizing indicator of the willingness of the Government authorities to disconnect and deepen the suffering of their own people”, the report said.

BRIEFS

SISODIA REVIEWS ROAD WORK IN EAST DELHI

New Delhi: The Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia on Thursday reviewed the ongoing works related to strengthening of roads in the East Delhi District area. There are 12 roads in the area which are being revamped by PWD. The process involves relaying of the road using latest techniques to increase their strength for the longer run, at the cost of Rs 9.39 crores.

LG CHAIRS MEET TO REVIEW MANAGEMENT OF E-WASTE

New Delhi: The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Anil Bajjal on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the development of the project for E-Waste Management, ‘Eco-Park’ in Delhi for scientific and environmentally safe and sustainable dismantling, refurbishing, recycling and disposal of E-Waste. In the meeting Chief Secretary of the state, Vice chairman of the Delhi Development Authority, ACS (Environment), Divisional

Not dreaming of becoming Prez: Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati, on Thursday hit back at Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav over his allegation that she was dreaming to become the president of the country with the support of Bharatiya Janata Party.

She even categorically stated that Akhilesh Yadav was responsible for the BJP's victory in the UP polls and now he could flee from the country after his party's 2022 debacle.

In a statement released here

on Thursday, Mayawati held the Samajwadi Party responsible for the formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party government in Uttar Pradesh again.

DOCUMENT LIST

I, Bankat Lal Soni, S/o Late Sh. Durga Lal Soni, Punjab & Sind Bank, 3rd, floor, Ranjita Nagar Delhi-110006 do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I have lost my Original General Power of Attorney Executed By Punjab & Sind Bank, New Delhi 27.01.2001 in Favour of my self, Bankat Lal Soni. I was Carrying my General Power of Attorney in polybag which forgot to carry along with me when I De-Boarded From the Train. That I hereby assure that if the Power of Attorney is found, I Surrender it and shall not be put to any use, that I have Lodged L R Vide no. 237466/2022 dated 21.03.2022 by online.

Deponent

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

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I A Muralitharan has lost my original property paper i.e. Allotment & Possession pertaining to Flat no. 107, UGF, Supertech Residency, Plot No. 5/6A, Vaishali, Ghaziabad. If found please contact 9212026771

PD(9190)A

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Deepak, S/o Sh. Hetram, r/o 119/F, Street-6, Garhi, Delhi - 110065, declare that my name in my son's educational documents is wrongly written as Deepak Choudhary. My actual name is Deepak which may be amended accordingly.

PD(9191)A

I, Piyanshi Sharma D/o Shri Yogesh Sharma R/o E-73 Sector-51 Noida UP 201301 have changed my name to Samidha Sharma for all future purposes.

PD(9192)A

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
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.	A27P90TMC2022	Electronic, Electrical, Hydraulic Accumulator and Hydraulic motor	05 items	23.05.2022 at 11.30 hours

Note:-1. The complete information of above E-Procurement tenders are available on website " www.ireps.gov.in ". The 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-III digital certificate from certifying agencies authorized under IT Act 2000, by Govt. of India. Manual offers against E-Tenders will not be accepted.

Tender Notice No. 219-S/I/TMC/16/2022-23 Dated.28.04.2022 988/22

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Govt Industrial Training Institute Rajnandgaon
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TENDER NOTICE
Office of the Principal/Secretoiy IMC of Govt. Industrial Training Institute Rajnandgaon (C.G.) invites sealed Tenders under Project- STRIVE from Reputed Manufacturers/ Authorized Distributors in the prescribed Tender Form for supply & installation of Tools/ Equipment/ Machinery of Trade Fitter. Tender form can be obtained from the Principal/Secretary IMC of Govt. Industrial Training Institute Rajnandgaon vill-Pendri Rajnandgaon (C.G.) 491441 on any working day till 30.05.2022 by 05.00 PM, or the tender documents can be downloaded from website www.rajnandgaon.nic.in.
Sale of Tender Document: From date of release of advertisement up to 30.05.2022 by 05.00 PM.
Tender Fee: Rs. 500/-
Eamest Money Deposit: Rs. 40000/-
Last date of Receipt: 31.05.2022 upto 2.00 PM
Date of opening of Tender: 31.05.2022 at 3.00 PM

Principal
Govt Industrial Training Institute
Rajnandgaon C.G.

Ukraine war stresses....

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On the operational aspect, Rajnath said India's maritime character and its vital geo-strategic location have played a primary role in our growth as a nation and evolution as a civilisation. With increasing dependence on the seas for national development and engagement with the world, the

Indian Navy continues to protect India's maritime interests and enables a safe and secure environment in the region, he said.

The Navy has maintained a high tempo of operations and has also established a credible and responsive presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) through mission-based deployments.

Check dams and ponds changing picture of parched Bundelkhand

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Check dams and water-filled ponds have drastically changed the picture of the parched Bundelkhand region as the Minor Irrigation depart-

ment of the Ministry of Jal Shakti has completed the construction of 317 check dams and the renovation of 218 water ponds under the third phase of the Bundelkhand package.

“Due to the construction of new check dams, the agricultural yield has been enhanced in the area. Not only this, the green cover is also increasing around the ponds. Water is being made available to farmers for irrigation and the renovated ponds are quenching the thirst of animals,” a government spokesman said. He said these rain harvesting structures and the check dam together had also managed to raise the groundwater table, benefiting crop intensification.

The Yogi Adityanath government started a campaign for making water available for drinking as well as irrigation to Bundelkhand, which was suffering from drought under the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party governments.

**कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल**
केन्द्रीय भण्डार स्वास्थ्य
डीजल टैंक परिसर पंचशील नगर के सामने लिंक रोड क्र.-03 भोपाल (म.प्र.)
क्र. 55/क.भ./स्वा./2022
नगर पालिक निगम भोपाल केन्द्रीय भण्डार स्वास्थ्य के द्वारा वर्ष 2022-23 के लिये वार्षिक दर पर साफ सफाई सामग्री क्रय किये जाने हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदा www.mptenders.gov.in पर आमंत्रित की जाती है, जिसका विवरण निम्नानुसार है।

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1	2022_UAD_199669_01 Date 27.04.2022	साफ सफाई कार्य हेतु लकड़ी व लोहे के उपकरण क्रय किये जाने हेतु	रु 90,00,000/-	रु 10,000/-	रु 67,500/-	180 दिन
2	2022_UAD_199832_01 Date 27.04.2022	साफ सफाई कार्य हेतु रसायन साफ सफाई सामग्री क्रय किये जाने हेतु	रु 1,00,00,000/-	रु 10,000/-	रु 75,000/-	180 दिन

निविदा से संबंधित अन्य विस्तृत जानकारी वेबसाइट www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखी एवं केन्द्रीय भण्डार स्वास्थ्य से कार्यालयीन समय में प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

उपायुक्त
केन्द्रीय भण्डार स्वा
नगर निगम भोपाल
नि.क्र. 109/022/023

Possible shortage of coal in city power plants worries Govt

Jain urges Centre to give coal as mercury continues to rise

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the mercury continues to rise, the Delhi Government has expressed concern over the possible shortage of coal in power plants that supply electricity to the national Capital.

After reviewing the situation, Delhi Power Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday wrote to Central Government requesting it to provide enough coal for power plants supplying electricity to city. He also held a meeting to take stock of situation.

"The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)'s Dadri-II and Jhajjar (Aravalli), plants that were established primarily to meet power requirement of Delhi are left with very little stock of coal," said Jain adding that if steps are not taken in time, there may be problems in round-the-clock power supply in Delhi Metro and hospitals. "The Dadri-II, Unchahar, Kahalgaon, Farakka and Jhajjar power plants in Delhi supply 1,751 MW of electricity per day.



THE HEAT IS ON: People shield themselves from the hot summer sun in New Delhi on Thursday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

Delhi gets maximum supply of 728 MW from Dadri-II Power Station, while it gets 100 MW from Unchahar Power Station. Due to disruption of supply from these two power stations, there may be a problem in 24-hour power supply to many essential institutions including Delhi

Metro and Hospitals," said an official. "At Dadri-II power plant, a day's worth of coal stock is left while in Unchahar, two days' worth of stock is left. The power plant at Kahalgaon has three to five days worth of coal stock left while Farakka power plant has five days coal stock left," the official added.

Jain said the city Government is monitoring situation and making every possible effort to ensure that people do not face power outages in some areas of Capital.

"At present, 25-30 per cent of electricity demand in Delhi is being met through these power

stations, which are facing a coal shortage. They play an important role in preventing blackouts in some parts of Delhi and are also essential to ensure continuous supply of electricity to DMRC, hospitals, and to the people of Delhi in the summer season," said Jain.

As heat rises, peak power demand crosses 6,000 MW

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital's power demand on Thursday crossed the 6,000 Mega Watt (MW) mark for the first time in April. According to real time data of the State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC), the peak power demand was 6,000 MW at 3.31 p.m. Power demand is likely to soar further this summer, breaching the all-time high of 7,409 MW recorded on July 2, 2019.

In a statement, discoms said that Thursday's peak power demand was 3.7 per cent more as compared to 5,769 MW on Wednesday afternoon. The demand was 4,469 MW on April 1 and has gone up by 34 per cent since then. "On four occasions this month, Delhi's peak power demand clocked the highest-ever in April, each breaking the previous record in quick succession.

On April 19, it was 5,735 MW, 5,761 MW on April 20 and 5,786 MW on April 27 and 6,000 MW on April 28," sources informed. "In 28 days of April this year, the peak power demand has been higher on 100

per cent of the corresponding days that of April 2021. In the first 28 days of April, Delhi's peak power demand had clocked 4,372 MW in 2021 and 5,552 MW in 2019," sources said.

"Peak power demand in BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) area of South and West Delhi, which had clocked 3,118 MW and 2,815 MW during the summers of 2021 and 2020 respectively, is expected to reach around 3,500 MW this summer," sources said.

"In BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) area of East and Central Delhi, the peak power demand, which had reached 1,656 MW and 1,439 MW during the summers of 2021 and 2020 respectively, is expected to touch around 1,800 MW this year," they said.

To meet the increasing demand the BSES is tirelessly working on strengthening its network, to avoid any inconvenience to the people.

A BSES official said, "Delhi's ever-increasing peak power demand is expected to cross 8,200 MW this summer. Apart from adequate power, the

strength of the network is also critical to ensure reliable supply. BSES discoms have ramped-up the network capacity by deploying both conventional and innovative solutions."

"Apart from preventive maintenance, BSES also does extensive predictive checks to identify hot-spots or to pre-determine potential faults and to take remedial measures. This is done through thermal scanning, partial discharge measurement, and health assessment of power and distribution transformers.

Online load monitoring system is also in place for tracking the power transformers and 11KV feeder load, especially during the summers," he said.

"Important steps undertaken include, load balancing at the sub-stations, setting up of dedicated teams for monitoring of complaints, deployment of mobile transformers and Quick Response Teams to tackle exigencies, establishment of war room to review complaints and their quick resolution and strengthening of the call centre," he informed.

DPCC fines NMC ₹50L for Bhalswa landfill fire

Fire officials say it would take at least another day to put the blaze out completely

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Delhi's Environment Minister Gopal Rai asked the anti-pollution body to probe the fire at the Bhalswa landfill and submit a report within 24 hours, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) on Thursday slapped a fine of Rs 50 lakh on North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) for being negligent and not taking proper steps to prevent the blaze.

Meanwhile, the firefighters struggled to douse fire at landfill for third straight day on Thursday, with fire officials saying that it would take at least another day to put it out completely.

pletely. Local residents said on Wednesday that thick, noxious smoke was choking them. "Currently, four fire tenders are

working at site. It will take at least one more day to douse fire. Our teams are working round-the-clock to put it out," a fire official said.

Money allocated for landfill garbage disposal stolen by BJP, says AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the Bhalswa landfill continued to burn for the third continuous day, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and in-charge of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Durgesh Pathak visited the site on Thursday.

Pathak alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders are busy extorting money from Delhiites even in this situation.

"Toxic smoke from fire is making it difficult to breathe and children are feeling suffocated. The AAP will file an FIR

against the BJP, we will go to the court if needed," said Pathak. He also alleged that all money allocated for disposal of garbage from this landfill, has been stolen by BJP leaders and councilors of saffron party-ruled MCD.

"There is an entire residential colony in close proximity of this landfill, including a school, but no measures are being taken to tackle problem and entire area is now engulfed in smoke as a result of blazing fire which has been burning for past three days now. But not a single BJP leader or councilor has visited area," he said.



Fire tenders at the site of the blaze that broke out at Bhalswa landfill, in New Delhi on Thursday

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cial said. "The residents have started complaining of sore throat, itchy eyes and breathing problems," the official said. According to an official, "The NMC did not take proper steps to prevent and contain fire. As per standard operating procedure, the MCD should have kept water tankers on standby to deal with such a situation." The fire started in a small area on

Tuesday, but it spread due to negligence of civic officials and engulfed entire mountain of garbage, he said. Rai on Wednesday said Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled municipal corporations should have used bulldozer to clear mountains of garbage in Delhi and that repeated incidents of fire at landfills in Capital are a result of corruption in the civic bodies.

3 more held in Jahangirpuri riots case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested three more persons in connection with the communal clashes that took place in northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri area early this month. While two people were nabbed from Delhi, one of the most wanted accused in the riots was apprehended by the Special Cell from West Bengal.

The two accused have been identified as Jaffar (34) and Babuddin alias Babu (43), both residents of Jahangirpuri, from where they were arrested on Wednesday by the Delhi Police's Crime Branch, which is probing the case.

Farid alias Neetu (35) who was nabbed from West Bengal on Thursday has six cases registered against him, including that of robbery, snatching, burglary and under the Arms Act, since 2010 and he is a history-sheeter in the Jahangirpuri area, police said.

SDMC cancels Sarita Vihar, Jasola anti-encroachment drive

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Thursday cancelled its anti-encroachment drive scheduled at Jasola and Sarita Vihar, due to the unavailability of an adequate police force on Thursday.

According to SDMC officials, the drive was planned to remove permanent and temporary encroachments from roads and Government land and was scheduled a day after SDMC Mayor Mukesh Suryan visited these areas.

"The area SHO informed us that adequate police personnel cannot be provided for the drive due to the pre-engagement of the police staff in other law-and-order duties. The drive will be rescheduled accordingly," said the Mayor.

In a letter to the SDMC, Delhi Police said due to the pre-engagement or preoccupation of the staff and personnel of the Sarita Vihar police station in other law-and-order or investigative duties, it was not possible to provide sufficient personnel to assist the SDMC staff in carrying out the anti-encroachment drive in ward number 101-S (Sarita Vihar).

"It is requested that prior intimation of at least 10 days may be given to fix the date for the encroachment removal drive in the area of Sarita Vihar police station so that sufficient staff may be given to assist the SDMC staff," it said.

Encroachment drives are being planned in the SDMC areas after Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta wrote to the Mayor on April 20, urging him to remove encroachment by "Rohingyas, Bangladeshis and anti-social elements."

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation came under fire from Opposition parties and civil rights groups last week, after it bulldozed structures during an anti-encroachment drive at Jahangirpuri soon after communal clashes took place there.

NDMC to build bus terminal-cum-commercial area



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to facilitate the people and to provide commercial space in the heart of the capital city following the vision of Prime Minister "Ease of Doing Business", the New Delhi Municipal Council

(NDMC) will construct a new modern and eco-friendly "Bus Terminal cum Commercial Complex" at Shivaji Stadium, in national capital. Addressing media, the Vice Chairman of NDMC, Satish Upadhyay said that the framed structure of the building will comprise of

ground floor plus two stories and two basements. While giving the technical details of the project, Upadhyay said that the total height of the building is 14.85 mtr. and has a capacity of 113 Number of cars parking in two basements with multiple e-charging stations.

"On ground floor, space will be created for the movement of buses efficiently. Pick-and-drop points for multimodal transport facilities, such as auto-rickshaws and cabs, will also be created on ground floor," he informed.

"The total covered area of commercial and office space on first floor and second floor is 2757 sq mtr., which will be provided on rent.

Min: Covid cases up but situation not serious

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister, Satyendra Jain on Thursday said that Covid-19 cases have increased in the Capital but the situation is not serious as people are not developing severe disease and hospitalisation rate is low.

The Health Minister attributed the low hospitalisation rate to vaccinations and naturally acquired immunity. The Minister also said there is no need to panic about cases among children with several serosurveys showing that they are not at high risk for severe Covid though the infection rate among children and adults is almost the same.

"Though Covid cases have increased in Delhi, people are not developing severe disease and the hospitalisation rate is low. This is because our population is fully vaccinated and a large number of people have had the disease in the past. So, the situation is not serious," Jain told reporters here.

Earlier, when Delhi would have 5,000 active cases, 1,000 people would require hospitalisation, he said. Of the 9,390 beds available for COVID-19 patients in various hospitals, only 148 (1.58 per cent) are occupied.

"We have around 1,000 beds at present. We will ramp up their number if needed," Jain said. With the national capital witnessing an uptick in coronavirus infections over the past few days, the number of active cases on Wednesday stood at 4,832, up from 601 on April 11, according to health department data. However, the hospitalisation rate so far has been low.

Delhi Govt provides ₹1 cr each to kin of Covid victims' kin

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Thursday provided financial assistance of Rs one crore each to the families of two frontline workers who contracted Covid-19 on duty and died fighting it.

In a tweet, Delhi Health Minister, Satyendra Jain said, "Late Munish Devi died due to COVID-19 on duty. On the orders of Arvind Kejriwal, I met her family members today, gave them an honourarium of Rs 1 crore, and assured them of all help in the future."

Jain also provided a financial aid of Rs 1 crore to the family of Dr Mithilesh Kumar Singh who succumbed to the viral disease while working at a hospital. "The nation will forever be indebted to him for his services," he said. In 2020, the Delhi government had announced that it would provide financial assistance of Rs 1 crore to the families of all the frontline workers who contracted COVID-19 on duty and died.



A health worker administers a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to a beneficiary in a vaccination centre on Thursday,

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

accounting for less than 3 per cent of the total active cases, the health department's bulletin said on Wednesday.

As many as 129 COVID-19 patients are admitted to Delhi hospitals while 3,336 are recuperating in home isolation, it said. According to the Cowin dashboard, 1,47,01,155 people in Delhi have been fully vaccinated, while 7,18,788 have taken the third or precautionary

dose. The Central government authorised a third dose of the same vaccine for healthcare and frontline workers, and the people aged above 60 from January 10 to mitigate the severity of infections, hospitalisation, and death. On April 10, the administration of the precautionary dose to the 18-plus population through private vaccination centres started across the country.

Boards amid Covid, heat: Make good arrangements, CBSE tells exam centres

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following spike in Covid cases and heatwave across the country, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Thursday issued directions to the Board examination centres to make proper arrangements.

The CBSE Class 10 and 12 board exams for the second term began on Tuesday in the country and abroad after two years of pandemic-induced disruptions.

In a letter to superintendents of examination centres, the CBSE Exam Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj stated that board has paid Rs 5,000 fixed and Rs five per candidate per day for the examination day to

make proper arrangements to avoid spread of COVID. "It is requested that full proof arrangements may be made at the examination centre and COVID protocols may be followed strictly as given in guidelines for centre superintendents and as instructed by the concerned state government," the letter stated.

"The CBSE has also decided to pay Rs 2 per candidate per day for making available potable water, hence proper arrangements for drinking water may be made at examination centre. Your personal intervention for making arrangements in matter and otherwise will help in maintaining better health index of students and staff," said Bhardwaj.

1,490 fresh Coronavirus cases recorded, 2 deaths in past 24 hours

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital on Thursday recorded 1,490 fresh coronavirus cases and two deaths in the past 24 hours while the positivity rate stood at 4.62 per cent, according to data shared by the health department. It was the seventh consecutive day that the national capital recorded over 1,000 daily new cases.

The infection tally in the national capital rose to 18,79,948 and the death toll was 26,172, the bulletin stated. A total of 32,248 COVID-19 tests were conducted in the city on Wednesday, it said. Delhi had reported 1,367 fresh COVID-19 cases and one fatal-

ity on Wednesday, while the positivity rate stood at 4.50 per cent. On Tuesday, it recorded 1,204 cases and one death while the positivity rate was 4.64 per cent. The Delhi government had on Friday made masks mandatory at public places with immediate effect, and imposed a fine of Rs 500 for any violation as covid cases rise in the city again.

However, those travelling together in a private four-wheeler are out of the purview of the new rule, according to an order issued by the city's Health and Family Welfare Department. Coronavirus cases and positivity rate have been on the rise for the past few days in national Capital.

NCB seizes 50 kg heroin, ₹30L cash from Shaheen Bagh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In one of the biggest hauls in recent times, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has seized 50 kg “high quality” heroin, another 47 kg “suspected” narcotics, Rs 30 lakh drug money in cash, cash counting machines and other incriminating material from a residential premises in Jamia Nagar, Shaheen Bagh on a tip off.

The seizure is remarkable as it was made from a residential area. Besides the seizure, the NCB also arrested an Indian national in the case as it busted an international heroin trafficking network.

The suspected narcotics seized during the search operation here has been sent to a laboratory for testing.

The NCB said several raids were conducted and are still going on to bust the entire network. The syndicate was found to be connected with drug



traffickers of the entire north region including states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi.

The contraband was stored in travel bags, backpacks and jute sacs. The seized heroin originated from Afghanistan and the drug money was suspected to be channelled through Hawala, the agency said on Thursday.

“The seized heroin was packed in the packaging of

Flipkart (e-commerce major). During the ongoing investigations, it has been revealed that an Indo-Afghan syndicate based in Delhi/NCR or neighbouring states seems to be connected in the case. These syndicates have expertise in manufacturing/adulterating heroin locally,” the agency said in a statement.

These syndicates have been smuggling goods to India through maritime as well as land border route and the con-

traband heroin was smuggled in with various legitimate goods. Heroin was later extracted from those goods by the Indian counterparts with the help of some Afghan nationals, it said, adding further investigation is on.

The “kingpin” of the syndicate is based in Dubai and the agency is probing the case further. The arrested accused did not stay in the raided apartment at Shaheen Bagh and had taken it on rent, a senior official said.

The seizure of the high quality heroin originating from Afghanistan also exposed interstate gangs assisting Pakistani drug traffickers. The illicit trafficking was being done in the garb of textiles, spices and other goods, officials said.

The Indo-Afghan syndicate manufactured heroin locally and also smuggled the contraband through international borders, including maritime and land borders.

Nadda meets Shivraj, senior leaders in MP to gear up party for 2023 polls

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

With a sharp eye on the Madhya Pradesh Assembly poll in 2023, BJP president JP Nadda on Thursday held a meeting with senior leaders of the State unit, including Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and sought them to gear up the State organization to avoid a repeat of the poll result of 2018 when it narrowly missed power to the Congress before ousting it in 2020 by roping in Jyotiraditya Scindia and his loyalists.

While elections are due in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat by this year end, the assembly polls will be held in seven other key states namely Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland in 2023.

BJP has mobilized its organizational machinery for Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat-both the party-ruled

states but also kept a keen eye on the geographically largest state of Madhya Pradesh which is at the heart of BJP’s ‘Hindibelt’ politics.

The Madhya Pradesh government under Kamal Nath was toppled by the BJP with senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia crossing over to the BJP with 20-odd loyalist MLAs in 2020. MP sends in 29 Members of Parliament to the Lok Sabha.

In the 2018 Assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP had lost the elections narrowly and the Congress initially went on to form the Government.

The meeting, which was held at 11 Ashoka Road, the BJP’s old headquarters, took stock of poll preparations and sought to strengthen booth-level penetration of the party vis-à-vis the Congress, the principal opponent.

Besides Chouhan, the meeting was attended by BJP’s state president VD Sharma, senior minister in the state gov-



ernment Narottam Mishra and the party’s national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya.

BJP’s poll in-charge for the state Muralidhar Rao and the party’s national general secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh were also present in the meeting.

Nadda, who has recently visited Swai Madhopur in Rajasthan and later held over a four-hour meeting at his residence here with the state leaders, including former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, to put an end to ‘factionalism’ in the state has also been holding meeting with leaders from

states which are slated for polls, next year.

The BJP president visited Karnataka and attended the state executive meet and took an overview of election preparations for 2023 under Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

The party president this month also went to Himachal Pradesh, his home state which would go to polls this year-end, and interacted with Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur whom he declared as the Chief Ministerial face for the November 2022 Assembly polls.

Be ready for short-intense Op at short notice: IAF chief



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of persisting stand-offs at the border in Ladakh and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, IAF chief V R Chaudhari on Thursday urged the force to be ready for intense and small duration operations at a short notice as well as long drawn out face-offs.

Sounding this note of caution here, he said, “In the force, space and time continuum, there would be a need for us to prepare for short swift wars as well as be ready for a long drawn standoff akin to what we are seeing in eastern Ladakh.”

Chaudhari also said the recent experiences of IAF as well as the evolving geopolitical scenario mandates it to be

operationally and logistically responsive at all times. He made these observations in an address in a seminar.

“The current geopolitical situation necessitates IAF to prepare for intense and small duration operations at a short notice. This new paradigm of high-intensity operations, coupled with minimal build-up time would require major changes in terms of operational logistics,” he said.

The IAF chief said logistics support in such a scenario would be extremely challenging considering the fact that the force has a fairly vast and diversified inventory. There will be a need to cater for “resources bridging” and transportation for such contingencies, he said.

Chaudhari stressed on a focused action plan for indigenisation of all critical components in order to achieve the

nation’s mandate of ‘Atma-Nirbharata’ (self-reliance).

He said logistics have been identified as a critical tool for the nation’s economic progress, noting that there would be a need to cater for resource bridging.

The Chief also pitched for formalising an “integrated road and rail management plan and explore the feasibility of increased containerisation and use of civilian wide-bodied aircraft.”

Highlighting various aspects of military preparedness, the IAF chief observed that the way forward would be to have a serviceability linked inventory management system. Elaborating upon it, he highlighted the need for re-evaluating the demand for forecasting methods and stockpiling for issues like availability of spares.

“Flexible stocking policies

with modern forecasting techniques would help in demand sensing and prepositioning of items at bases. We must also review our procurement strategies in order to reduce lead time for supplies and preempt problems of supply chain obsolescence,” the IAF Chief said.

India relies heavily on Russia for the supply of military hardware including spares. There have been apprehensions in the military establishment about the possibility of inordinate delays in the supply of critical spares and other equipment by Russia in view of its conflict in Ukraine.

Chaudhari said to standardise logistical functions and provide a blueprint for the future, there was a need to look at a vision document for operational logistics that would define the foundational precincts of logistics support in the IAF during combat.

NE States see 80% reduction in insurgency incidents in 8 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There was an 80 per cent reduction in incidents of insurgency in the northeastern States in the last eight years while casualties of security forces went down by 75 per cent and civilian deaths by 99 per cent.

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the security situation in the northeastern states has improved substantially since 2014 and the year 2020 recorded the lowest insurgency incidents and casualties among the civilians and security forces during the last two decades.

The year 2020 saw a decline of about 27 per cent in insurgency incidents (223 incidents in 2019 and 162 incidents in 2020) and 72 per cent in casualties of civilian and secu-



rity forces personnel (25 in 2019 and 7 in 2020) compared to 2019.

The report said counter insurgency operations led to neutralisation of 21 insurgents, arrest of 646 insurgents and recovery of 305 weapons in 2020 in the region.

As many as 2,644 cadres of insurgent groups of the northeastern states surrendered their arms in 2020 and joined the

mainstream.

While Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura remained by and large peaceful, there is a marked improvement in the security situation in other states of the region. In 2020, insurgency-related violence declined by 42 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh, 12 per cent in Assam, 23 per cent in Manipur and 45 per cent in Nagaland compared to 2019, the report said.

Health Ministry’s eSanjeevani registers record 3.5 lakh teleconsultations in 2 days

76 lakh avail of OPD services provided by flagship scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A record 3.5 lakh teleconsultations were registered on two consecutive days, April 26 and April 27, through the flagship telemedicine scheme of the Union Health Ministry, “eSanjeevani”, at the Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) across the country.

This is the highest number of teleconsultations ever done at the AB-HWCs on a single day, surpassing the earlier record of three lakh, the Ministry said on Thursday.

In addition, more than 76 lakh patients availed of the services provided by eSanjeevani OPD telemedi-

cine on April 26 and April 27, it added.

With around one lakh AB-HWCs registered as spokes seeking consultation and more than 25,000 hubs providing teleconsultations, the eSanjeevani portal has been facilitating access to healthcare services across the length and breadth of the country, the ministry said in a statement.

The steady rise in the number of teleconsultations to seek quality healthcare marks a big step towards “antyyodaya”, where people living in the far-off and remote areas of the country are able to get quality and affordable healthcare. Teleconsultations have emerged as a boon to assure timely specialist services to the poorest across the remotest parts of the country, the statement said.

National Curriculum Framework ‘mandate document’ today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is all prepared to launch the mandate document of National Curriculum Framework (NCF) on Friday following the recommendations in the National Education Policy 2020 that aims towards Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), teacher education, and adult education.

For providing inputs for the development of these, four curriculum frameworks, and 25 themes based on the perspectives of the NEP, 2020 have been identified under the three categories, viz curriculum and pedagogy, cross-cutting issue, and other important areas of NEP, 2020 focus on systemic changes and reforms.

The mandate document to be launched by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan describes the development process of the NCF, its expect-

ed structure and objectives, and some of the basic principles from the NEP 2020 that will inform the development of the four NCFs.

The NCF is being drafted through a collaborative and consultative process, starting from district to state level and then National level. The ‘Guidelines for position papers for the development of the national curriculum framework’ is an integral part of this mandate document.

The entire process of curriculum framework is being done in a paperless manner with very wide consultation at the school/district/state level with the help of a tech platform and mobile app.

Sajjan Kumar gets bail, but remains in jail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Convicted former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar got bail in another case related to 1984 anti-Sikh riots for murder of two people. Special CBI Judge MK Nagpal allowed the reprieve on a bail bond of Rs 1 lakh. Kumar, however, will remain in jail as he is undergoing life-term imprisonment in another case pertaining to the pogrom.

The Court refused to accept the apprehensions raised by prosecution such as Kumar influencing or threatening witnesses, or tampering with the evidence, or absconding, if released on bail. “Moreover, as already discussed, the accused will not come out of custody

merely on grant of bail to him by this court in the present case because he is already undergoing life imprisonment in the above CBI case,” said Judge Nagpal.

The present case pertained to the killing of a father-and-son duo, namely, Jaswant Singh and Tarun Deep Singh, by a mob, which was reportedly led by Kumar. He allegedly instigated and abetted in the burning of the two victims besides causing damage, destruction and loot of their household articles and inflicting injuries on their family members.

Kumar is currently serving life imprisonment in Tihar jail after the Delhi High Court convicted him in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots case on December 17, 2018.

J&K delimitation panel likely to submit report post settling 400 objections

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delimitation Commission, mandated to redraw the Assembly constituencies of Jammu & Kashmir, is likely to submit its report to the Government any time now after settling over 400 objections/suggestions received by it to its draft report published on March 14.

The panel would also make public its ‘award’ detailing the number of constituencies and their size by bringing out a gazettee notification after the report is submitted to the government. “The Delimitation could submit its final recommendations to the Union Law Ministry anytime now,” sources

said, adding the Commission has deadline for submission of report till May 6.

While the report will be a much detailed document, the award will deal with basic details such as number of constituencies and their size. The objections/suggestions were given by major political parties, social organizations and individuals pertaining to both Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies.

There were indications that the panel might accept some objections/suggestion received by it from political parties, organizations and individuals just it had done in the case of five Associate Members, whose some of the complaints were entertained.

IndiGo pilots being probed for using expletives during flights op

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

At least seven IndiGo pilots are being investigated by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for using expletives on 121.5 MHz while operating flights in protest against the delay in restoring their pre-Covid salaries.

If proven guilty, the pilots may lose their commercial pilot licence. The 121.5 MHz frequency during radio transmission is used as a “guard” frequency, to be used only in an emergency and it has to be compulsorily monitored by the air traffic controllers who are in the vicinity of the aircraft.

According to sources, officers of the Air Traffic Control have informed the DGCA about the incident following which the probe has been launched.

Devgn’s Hindi comment stirs controversy; Bommai, Omar back linguistic diversity

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Bollywood star Ajay Devgn’s comment on Hindi being India’s national language snowballed into a major debate on Thursday with leaders across the political spectrum, including Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and NC leader Omar Abdullah, among those backing linguistic diversity.

What started off as a Twitter exchange between Devgn and Kannada actor Kichcha Sudeep on Wednesday took a political turn as Bommai joined his predecessors and political rivals, Congress’ Siddaramaiah and JD-S’ H D Kumaraswamy in stressing that Hindi is like any other language in India and not the national language.

“Whatever Sudeep has said is correct. After the formation of states on linguistic basis, languages got importance there (in those regions). That is supreme. The same has been said by

Sudeep, which is right. Everyone should accept and respect it,” Bommai told reporters in Hubballi.

As the hashtag ‘HindiIsNotNationalLanguage’ trended on Twitter and several film personalities spoke up too on the volatile issue, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Abdullah said in Srinagar that India is too diverse a country to have one national language and everybody must get their space.

“The idea of India is that it gives space to everybody. When you pick up an Indian currency note, how many languages do you find on it?”

“The currency note gives space to all the languages and if the Indian currency note gives space to all the languages, then obviously it is understood that we are more than just one language, more than just one culture, more than just one religion,” he told reporters in response to a question.

Sudeep had said last week that “Hindi is no more our

national language”. To this, Devgn responded with a tweet in Hindi on Wednesday: “My brother, according to you if Hindi is not our national language then why do you release your mother tongue movies by dubbing them in Hindi?”

Hindi was, is and always will be our mother tongue and national language. Jan Gan Man. Taking objection to the post by Devgn, who usually stays away from controversy and too many social media posts, Siddaramaiah said “Hindi was never and will never be our National Language”.

“It is the duty of every Indian to respect linguistic diversity of our country. Each language has its own rich history for its people to be proud of. I am proud to be a Kannadiga!”

Kumaraswamy followed up on the theme to term Devgn a “mouthpiece of BJP’s Hindi Nationalism” and “hyper in nature”. In a series of tweets on Thursday, Kumaraswamy said Sudeep was “correct” in saying

Hindi was not a national language and there is “nothing to find fault in his statement”.

“Just because a large population speaks Hindi, it doesn’t become a National Language. Less than 9 States, Kashmir-Kanyakumari, have Hindi as 2nd, 3rd language or not even that. This being situation, what is the truth in Ajay Devgn’s statement? What do you mean by not to dub?” the politician said. He also slammed the Congress and the BJP for destroying regional languages by trying to impose Hindi.

Joining the debate, filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma said north Indian stars are simply “insecure” of their colleagues from South.

Varma, who worked with Devgn on films like “Company” and “Bhoot”, voiced his support for Sudeep and said whether the star intended or not, he was glad he made the statement at a time when “there seems to be a war like situation between Bolly(north)wood and Sandal(South) wood”.

कार्यालय उपसंचालक कृषि जिला दक्षिण बस्तर दंतेवाड़ा

कार्यालय: 07856-0252360, फ़ैक्स 252360, निवास 252360, ई-मेल: dddadante.cg@inc.in

क्रमांक / टी-4/NMDC/2022-23/262

दंतेवाड़ा, दिनांक : 22 / 04 / 2022

TENDER NOTICE

Deputy Director Agriculture, DANTEWADA (C.G.) (herein after referred to as DDA) invites sealed tender for the supply and Installation Small Mill Processing Unit in the district from Manufacturer / Authorized dealer (hereinafter referred to as "Bidder" or "Bidder").

The Tender form can be downloaded from website www.dantewada.gov.in. AH interested bidders are required to submit their bid in the form of technical proposal and financial proposals in two separate envelopes. The technical proposals will be accompanied with Security Deposit (SD) amount of the Amount of Rs. 1,00,000/-. The SD should be included in the same envelope containing the Technical Proposal. The technical and financial proposals along with SD must be delivered to the office of Deputy Director, Agriculture, DANTEWADA (C.G.) either by hand or through Speed Post on or before the due date for submission of proposals mentioned below.

The bids will be opened on the specified date and time in presence the Purchase committee and in presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to attend.

The summary of various activities with regard to this Invitation of bids are as given below

1. Website for downloading tender forms	www.dantewada.gov.in
2. Last Date and Time for Submission of Proposals	10.05.2022 up to 5:00 PM
3. Date and Time of Opening of Technical Proposals	11.05.2022 at 12:00 PM
4. Security Deposit (SD)	Rs. 1,00,000/- in the form of a DD drawn in favor of Deputy Director of Agriculture payable at Dantewada
5. Address for Submitting bids	Office of Deputy Director of Agriculture, Near Agriculture PIN: 494449, Phone No: 07856-252360
6. Place of Opening Tender	Office of Deputy Director of Agriculture, Dantewada

Ro.No. 90679/3
Dated 28/4/2022

Deputy Director of Agriculture
South Bastar Dantewada

Efforts on to revoke AFSPA completely from NE: Modi

PTI ■ DIPHU (ASSAM)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday while speaking at a rally at Diphu, 250 kms east of Guwahati, said efforts are on to remove AFSPA completely from the northeast region.

Later, addressing a rally at Dibrugarh in Assam after inaugurating seven cancer care centres and laying the foundation stone for seven others across the state, Modi said that he does not want anyone to fall ill but if they do, "we have built hospitals for them to get the best treatment without any financial burden."

Addressing a 'Peace, Unity and Development' rally, he said the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act could be withdrawn from various parts of the region as the law and order situation has improved in the last eight years.

"As the (law and order) situation improved with 75 per

cent decrease in violence in the region, there have been changes in the imposition of laws. The AFSPA was first revoked in Tripura and then in Meghalaya," he said.

The previous Governments in Assam in the last three decades had extended it again and again as there was no improvement in the law and order situation, Modi said.

"Due to the proper control of the situation in the last eight years, the AFSPA has been removed from most parts of the state. We are trying to withdraw it from the remaining parts too.

"The Act is applicable in some areas of Nagaland and Manipur, and we are working speedily to revoke it completely," he said.

Earlier this year, the Centre had announced reduction of the disturbed areas imposed under the AFSPA in Nagaland, Assam and Manipur from April 1. Prime Minister Modi also said

the effect of the BJP's "double engine" government is evident in the return of permanent peace and speedy development in Assam.

The term "double engine" is used by BJP leaders to refer to the party being in power at the Centre as well as in a State.

The Government has entered into peace agreements in Assam's Karbi Anglong and in Tripura, while efforts are on to ensure permanent peace and speedy development in the entire region, he said.

"Several outfits of Karbi Anglong returned to the mainstream to march forward in the path of peace and development. The Bodo Agreement in 2020 paved the way for peace in the region and in Tripura, the NLFIT also came forward for the peace, while the two-and-a-half decade long Bru-Reang issue was resolved," he said.

Permanent peace returned to the region, and speedy devel-

opment in the northeastern states was ensured due to a collective effort of the Centre and the state governments, Modi said. He stated that this process is "on and will continue in the future."

"Earlier, the northeast was known for bomb blasts and violence and the worst sufferers were our mothers, sisters and children. Now as I see the smile on their faces when the youths have given up their arms, I feel God is showering blessings on me," the Prime Minister said.

The Centre has always tried to resolve difficulties of people in Karbi Anglong and other tribal areas with the policy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas' (with everybody, for everyone's development and with everyone's belief), he said.

Besides, efforts have been made to solve border disputes among states in the region in a cordial manner, he said.

Assam cancer care centres will make treatment accessible to all: Ratan Tata

PTI ■ DIBRUGARH (ASSAM)

Tata Trusts chairman Ratan Tata on Thursday said that a network of 17 cancer care centres in Assam will make treatment accessible to all as it is not a "rich man's disease".

Speaking at the inauguration of seven such centres, Tata said with these facilities, Assam will be recognised as a state equipped to provide world-class cancer treatment.

"Today is an important day in the history of Assam. Higher level healthcare facility for cancer treatment which was earlier not available in the state is being brought here. Cancer is not a rich man's disease," he said.

"Assam can now say that even a small state of India has been equipped with world-class cancer treatment facilities," Tata added.

Seven cancer care centres were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion, while he also laid the foundation for seven more



during the programme.

These centres are being developed by Assam Cancer Care Foundation (ACCF), a joint venture of the state government and Tata Trusts. Another three hospitals under the network will be opened later this year.

The foundation for the project was laid in June 2018 while a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the state government during the 'Advantage Assam' -- Global Investment Summit that year, giving shape to it.

Tata said the network of cancer care centres was a culmination of many months of hard work and praised Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for his foresightedness.

'Shelf life of hybrid terrorists less than 3 months in J&K'

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The shelf life of 'hybrid' terrorists involved in most of the targeted killings of security personnel and members belonging to the minority community has been reduced to less than 3 months in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The life span of terrorists active in the valley has also been reduced due to regular operations based on pinpointed information about their suspected movement in the general area.

According to Vijay Kumar, Inspector General of Police Kashmir range, "since January 1, 2022 a total number of 62 terrorists have been neutralised in different anti-terrorists operations across Kashmir valley. Out of these 32 were those who were eliminated within three months of joining the ranks of different terrorist outfits".

Vijay Kumar said, the high-est number of 39 terrorists were linked with terror outfit

LeT, 15 with JeM, 06 with Hizbul Mujahideen & 02 with Al-Badr. Out of these 47 were local terrorists and 15 foreign terrorists.

On the other hand, statistics shared by the Kashmir range police chief also revealed the holy month of Ramzan too witnessed sudden surge in terrorist violence in different parts of Kashmir valley since April 3.

Around one dozen operations were conducted by the joint team of security forces in which 23 terrorists were eliminated, including two in Sunjwan area of Jammu.

The security forces also suffered fatal injuries during the same period. Significantly, only one Army personnel was killed in action during the operation while no major collateral damage was suffered by the men in uniform.

The security personnel were targeted by the 'hybrid' terrorists during naka/patrol duty or from behind with pistols from a close range leading to fatal injuries and subsequent death.

Out of 27 eminent artists, 15 have vacated Govt accommodations: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following the eviction of 90-year-old Padma Shri awardee and Odissi dancer Guru Mayadhar Raut from his Government accommodation in Delhi's Asian Games village, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Thursday said there were 27 such allotments under the eminent artists' category and of them 15 have vacated. It pointed out how the Delhi High Court (HC) not just dismissed the petitions of the artists thrice but also imposed fines on them.

Elaborating further the Ministry said it had issued guidelines dated 24.10.1985 for allotment of Government accommodations under the eminent artists' category on the basis of a decision taken by Cabinet Committee on Accommodation (CCA) on 12.09.1985, subject to certain

conditions including that 'duration of allotment would be three years and cases of allotment to be reviewed once in a three years'.

"Since then allotments are made to artists and the CCA had allowed retention to them upto 31.07.2014. Thereafter, CCA regularised their unauthorised occupation period from 01.08.2014 to 30.09.2020 and further three months' retention was granted upto 31.12.2020 for making alternative arrangement" it said.

"The artists filed a WP(C) No.9346/2021 before the HC, which in its judgement on 25.02.2022 dismissed the application and gave two months grace period to the artists.

"After that the Directorate of Estates started eviction proceedings. The artists again filed a plea before the HC and it was dismissed with a fine of Rs.50,000," the Ministry said.

Didi slams Centre over high LPG, fuel prices

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day ahead of her visit to Delhi where she was likely to join a meeting to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday attacked the Centre blaming it for rising fuel prices and demanded immediate reduction of LPG prices.

Alleging that the Centre was trying to shift the blame on the States instead of addressing the real issue of inflation, Banerjee said, "the price of cooking gas should immediately be slashed at least by Rs 300 and the price of petrol and diesel should also be brought down ... instead of doing that the Centre is always trying to shift the blame on the States."

Her statement came hours after Union Minister Hardeep

Singh Puri attacked the opposition ruled states for not reducing the value added tax on fuel.

She said that she was apprehending a fresh rise in fuel prices and "so the Prime Minister made an excuse by asking the States to reduce VATs ... instead of doing so they should concentrate on the real issues." She said that "even the Union Government pays even half the amount that is due to us then we will give bigger relief on VAT than the BJP-ruled States."

Bengal had a total GST dues from the Centre to the tune of Rs 95,000 crore she claimed.

On whether she would write to the Centre on rising fuel prices she said, "I have given several letters to the Centre on the issue but they have never given me a reply"

adding "you (Centre) raise prices, cut the pockets of the common man, slash the legitimate financial dues of the States and then blame the state governments," this cannot go on indefinitely," Banerjee further said that the "Centre has earned Rs 3 lakh crore by looting the people on account of rising fuel prices and not they are shifting the liability on us."

On whether she was likely to meet the Prime Minister on this issue during her stay in Delhi, Banerjee said would not be able to make it this time round as she had to attend the Eid festivities in Bengal. "As you know I attend the programmes of all the religions ... this time also I will have to attend the Eid celebrations of the minorities who constitute 33 percent of the State's population," Banerjee said.

MNS chief Raj congratulates UP Govt for removing loudspeakers

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

MNS chief Raj Thackeray — whose call for removal of loudspeakers from mosques has triggered a massive "Hanuman Chalisa" controversy in Maharashtra by May 3 — on Thursday congratulated Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath for removing loudspeakers from the religious place of his state, "specially the masjids".

In a statement put out in Marathi and English on twitter and Facebook, Raj said: "I wholeheartedly congratulate and stand grateful to the Yogi Government for having removed loudspeakers, specially the masjids (mosques)".

"Unfortunately in Maharashtra, there are no such 'Yogis' (hermits), but only 'Bhogis' (hedonists). Here's hoping and praying good sense prevails," Raj said.

The MNS chief was react-

ing to news reports originating from Lucknow quoting the UP government that it had removed over 10,900 "illegal" and "unauthorised" loudspeakers across the state by 4.30 pm on Wednesday following directions from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to implement guidelines laid down by courts on the issue.

Raj's statement came ahead of his public rally organised at Aurangabad on May 1 to galvanise his party cadres to carry out his threat of reciting "Hanuman Chalisa" in front of mosques five times a day in loudspeakers are not removed from mosque by the stipulated deadline of May 3.

Meanwhile, preparations are going in full swing to ready the Samnkritik Mahamandal ground at Aurangabad for Raj's public rally on May 1. Interestingly enough, the MNS workers began to make preparations for their president's

rally at the ground even before they Aurangabad Police Commissioner granted them necessary permission to hold the rally at the Samnkritik Mahamandal ground.

However, the grant of permission for Raj's rally is a mere formality considering that Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil himself indicated on Wednesday that the Aurangabad Police Commissioner would be giving a go-ahead for Raj's public rally on May 1.

The MNS workers are readying a massive stage admeasuring 30 feet X 60 feet and a 50 feet D-Space area in front of the state. They have called for 15,000 chairs for the audiences, while the organisers are making a sitting arrangement for another 5,000 people on the ground. They have already procured 20,000 flags and organised invitation yatras for the May 1 public rally.

J&K's Faesal excited to start afresh in GAD

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Shah Faesal, former IAS officer who had quit Government service in January 2019 to don the political hat, is all set to occupy the 'hot seat' soon after receiving the formal posting orders. Faesal had resigned to protest 'unabated' killings in Kashmir and marginalisation of Muslims.

According to the website of the Jammu and Kashmir General Administration Department (GAD), "Shah Faesal is currently awaiting orders of posting in the GAD".

The website was updated recently. Earlier, the website claimed, "The officer has submitted his resignation which has been forwarded to the DOPT, GOI for acceptance". There was no mention whether his resignation had been

accepted or not.

Till date no one in the Department of Personnel Training had clarified on the reasons behind not accepting his resignation for so long. In between RTI applications were moved to know the status of his resignation but no concrete reply was given to the applicants either.

Interestingly Shah himself dropped clear hints late Wednesday evening about his possible homecoming as he posted a series of comments on his twitter timeline.

In one of the tweets Shah wrote, "I turn 39 next month. And I'm really excited to start all over again".

Recollecting his previous actions, Shah also posted, "8 months of my life (Jan 2019-Aug 2019) created so much baggage that I was almost fin-

ished. While chasing a chimera, I lost almost everything that I had built over the years. Job. Friends. Reputation. Public goodwill. But I never lost hope. My idealism had let me down".

In another tweet he wrote, "But I had faith in myself. That I would undo the mistakes I had made. That life would give me another chance. A part of me is exhausted with the memory of those 8 months and wants to erase that legacy. Much of it is already gone. Time will mop off the rest I believe".

"Just thought of sharing that life is beautiful. It is always worth giving ourselves another chance. Setbacks make us stronger. And there is an amazing world beyond the shadows of the past. I turn 39 next month. And I'm really excited to start all over again".



Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav during an iftar party for party workers in Lucknow on Thursday

Omar expresses displeasure as authorities impose restrictions on religious gatherings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

J&K former Chief Minister Jand National Conference Vice-President Omar Abdullah Thursday reacted strongly to the restrictions announced by the authorities in Kashmir valley disallowing religious gatherings to mark Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida at the historic Jamia Masjid Srinagar.

Sharing his angst over such restrictions Omar told reporters at the party headquarters in Srinagar, the present situation in Kashmir was "far from normal".

"If the claims of normalcy in the valley by the government are true, why are Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida prayers barred at historic Jamia Masjid?"

He maintained, "either it is an artificial normalcy or the

one being portrayed by the government itself. The fact is that the situation is far from normal".

Referring to the increasing number of tourist footfalls in different parts of Kashmir valley Omar said that "linking tourist arrivals with normalcy won't do".

"Tourism can't be linked with normalcy. The government, if not by its words but by its action, is proving that the situation is too far from normal."

Over the prevailing power crisis, Omar said the pesky power cuts during Sehri and Iftaar time "is either a deliberate attempt by the government or just its incompetence and it the government that can explain what it was".

He said power breakdown is also at its peak in Jammu region.

Kerala's Silver Line mother of all scams: Railways' ex-engineer

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Semi High Speed Silver Line Rail Project (K-Rail as it is known) connecting Thiruvananthapuram with Kasaragod in less than four hours suffered a setback on Thursday as Alope Kumar Verma, the former chief engineer of Indian Railways who led the team of experts that prepared the feasibility report, termed it as the mother of all scams the country has seen.

"This is the most unprecedented unimaginable professional dishonesty of the highest magnitude India has not seen in the past. The report submitted by the Government of Kerala is a bogus one and is full of discrepancies and suppression of facts," Verma told *The Pioneer* on Thursday.

The original proposal of the Kerala Rail Development Corporation Ltd (K-Rail) to the Railway Board was for the Broad Gauge Line. After the Railway Board gave the green

signal to begin the planning process, K-Rail hired a consultancy firm SYSTRA and asked it to prepare the preliminary feasibility report and instructed the latter to use broad gauge system. "The K-Rail misinformed the consultants that it had the approval of Railway Board for the same," said Verma.

The 529.45 long Railway Line to be executed and owned by a special purpose vehicle to be formed by the Government of Kerala at a cost of Rs 64,000 crore in five years is already in the eye of a storm as experts like E Sreedharan, the legendary engineer of the Indian Railway who masterminded the Delhi Metro terming it as a technological as well as economical disaster.

Environmentalists like C R Neelakantan (a former scientist/engineer with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, has warned Kerala of the environmental and ecological disaster waiting to hap-



pen once the Government launches the project works.

Verma said that though the project reports submitted by Kerala Government to the Indian Railways envisaged the laying of broad gauge track for the K-Rail, the former changed it surreptitiously to standard gauge. "This means that the K-Rail would remain as a stand alone rail system and would not be compatible with the Indian Railways. High Speed Trains like Vande Bharat Express or Ghatiman Expresses could

not be operated in the standard gauge because the rest of the country has broad gauge system of rail tracks," said Verma.

The decision to shift the system to standard system has been taken at the instance of the Japanese consortium that provides technology and financial assistance to the project, said Verma. He also disclosed that the project would take a minimum of 25 years to complete and the cost would exceed Rs 1,40,000 crore as per the Niti Aayog studies.

Kerala's whistle blower P C George, the seven term MLA has said that the Silver Line Technology is an outdated one and could be considered as a scrap.

Facing severe resistance from all sides, the Government of Kerala held on Thursday a live debate at the capital city. Only R V G Menon, himself a CPI(M) fellow traveller, was allowed from the panel of critics of the project.

Though Verma too was invited as a participant in the debate, he was unceremoniously kept away. The official panelists could not answer even the small points raised by Menon about the need of a costly rail project like this when Indian Railways could have brought down the commuting time with the existing infrastructure and altering the signal system," said Neelakantan who too agreed with Verma that the project is shrouded in corruption and scam.

Maha records 165 fresh Covid cases

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra recorded 165 fresh Covid-19 cases and two deaths on Thursday, a day after Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray appealed to wear masks at public places and take necessary precautions to prevent a possible fourth wave.

Though the total number of daily Covid-19 cases dropped from 186 to 165, there was understandable anxiety among the state health authorities who are taking all measures to ensure against the fourth pandemic wave in the state. With 165 fresh infections, the total number of Covid-19 cases in the state rose from 78,77,264 to 79,77,429.

With two fresh deaths, the total number of deaths registered in the state since the outbreak of Covid-19 in the state in March 2020 went up from 1,47,838 to 1,47,840.

Of the total 165 fresh cases, Mumbai accounted for a

maximum of 90 cases. With the fresh cases, the total number of cases in Mumbai mounted from 10,59,545 to 10,59,635. While the recovery rate stood static at 98 per cent, the overall growth rate of Copvid-19 cases in the metropolis for a period from April 21 and 27 stood at 0.007 per cent.

As 157 Covid-19 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March 2020 increased from 77,28,471 to 77,28,628. The recovery rate in the state stood static at 98.11 per cent.

The number of "active cases" in the state rose from 955 to 961. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.87 per cent. The active cases in Pune dropped to 6722. The active cases in Mumbai dropped from 563 on Wednesday to 562 on Thursday, while the number of active cases in the neighbouring Thane rose from 76 to 83

during the last 24 hours.

The active number of cases in Pune dropped from 219 on Wednesday and 217 on Thursday, while districts of Ahmednagar, Raigad and Dhule accounted for 17,16 and 13 caws respectively.

Of the 8,01,36,614 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 78,77,429 have tested positive (9.83 per cent) for COVID-19 until Thursday.

On Wednesday, speaking at a review meeting with revenue divisional commissioners across the state, appealed to people to wear masks while stepping out of their homes and take necessary precautions to prevent a possible fourth wave of the Covid-19.

The chief minister's appeal to the people had come in the backdrop of an uptick in Covid-19 cases in the state, especially in Mumbai where more than 100 new cases were reported for the second straight day on Wednesday.

West and peace

Ukraine conflict cannot be a proxy war between the West and Russia

India's foreign minister S Jaishankar said at the Raisina Dialogue in Delhi that the best way forward in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is to "focus on stopping the fighting, getting them talking and finding ways of moving forward". Inherent in Jaishankar's statement is the question: What is the West doing to stop the war? It is time the United States and Europe and Nato are made to answer. This is no longer about western issues like sanctions and gas supply and about pressuring India to condemn the Russian invasion. The very existence of Ukraine as a sovereign nation is at stake. If the West continues to find ways to provoke Vladimir Putin and the latter continues to attack Ukraine until he gets somewhere with his war aims, there will be nothing left for the Ukrainian people to call their home. Millions have already fled their country. If the conflict continues, they may never be able to return. So, who in the West will explain to the Ukrainian people why they are being forced to become refugees? The principle of the rule of order and rule of law works both ways. Before the war began, the West went to all lengths to provoke Russia. Not once was dialogue given a chance. After the war began, sanctions were imposed on Russia. Apart from the military aspect of the sanctions, nobody was serious about the rest of the sanctions, especially about the oil and gas supply from Russia.



The motive was ulterior - the Americans knew Europe was dependent on Russian supplies and they had to continue. With the European needs thus taken care of, the western emphasis shifted to arming Ukraine but not encouraging both sides to talk. No offensive weapons were supplied as that could have provoked Russia to threaten to explore non-conventional methods or even turn its attention to

the West. To date, Ukraine has received military supplies worth \$3 billion. President Joe Biden wants to see a "weakened" Russia. At what cost and when? What if Ukraine does not exist in its current form by then? There is no question of armed intervention by the West, in the form of a Nato strike, as that has the potential to spark a world war. But there is the question of the West asking Russia for a ceasefire as a prelude to talks. The West is not interesting in talking to Putin at all. Recall that they tried the dialogue route successfully in Serbia in the 1990s. Getting Putin to the talking table is the only option. And that means Ukraine getting ready to talk on all issues, whether it is about Luhansk and Donetsk regions or Russia's fears over Nato. Putin is so far adamant about war. What about the West? Would it prefer to depend only on its sanctions and a regular supply of arms to Ukraine to try to undercut the Russian military someday?



Tourists taking off a hill at Koksar in Lahaul

PTI

Language row

Ajay Devgan stir a hornet's nest by chirping supremacy of Hindi

In the midst of the ongoing bitter controversy over Azaan and Hanuman chalisa, a simple tweet by actor Ajay Devgan has revived the simmering discontent between South and North over the status of Hindi. The row erupted when Devgan came out with a tweet implying that Hindi is India's national language. In the wake of Home Minister Amit Shah recently singing paeans for the Hindi language, Devgan's remarks acted like fuel to fire. What started off as a Twitter exchange between Devgn and Kannada actor Kichcha Sudeep took a political turn when two former Karnataka Chief Ministers played Devgan asserting that Hindi is not India's national language. Former Karnataka CM HD Kumaraswamy said, Ajaya Devgan's blabbered as a mouthpiece of BJP's Hindi nationalism of one nation, one tax, one language & one government. Another former state CM Siddaramaiah also slammed Devgn's tweet saying Hindi was never and will never be our national language, and every Indian must respect the linguistic diversity of our country. At the same time, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and NC's Omar Abdullah also backed linguistic diversity in the country.



Sudeep had said that "Hindi is no more our national language". To this, Devgn responded with a tweet in Hindi on Wednesday: "My brother, according to you if Hindi is not our national language then why do you release your mother tongue movies by dubbing them in Hindi? Hindi was, is and always will be our mother tongue and national language. Jan Gan Man." At the core of the controversy is suspicion among a section of non-Hindi speaking people both from South and Northeast that the Centre wanted to impose Hindi as a national language, thus relegating their own mother tongues to the third spot behind English and Hindi. In South India where the majority of the people are fanatically obsessed with their language and culture, any such remote attempt could ignite passion. India does not have not an official national language. The states may adopt one or more of the 22 languages listed in the Indian constitution's eighth schedule — Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Marathi, Meitei, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. As the hashtag 'HindisNotNationalLanguage' trended on Twitter, it's time for everyone to remember that india's beuty lies in its diversity.

The political times are changing

In the recent times, India is changing. The family-centric Indian politics has given way to person-centric politics

Now, this is what Winston Churchill had to say about Indian politics. "Power will go to the hands of rascals, rogues, freebooters; all Indian leaders will be of low caliber & men of straw. They will have sweet tongues and silly hearts. They will fight amongst themselves for power. India will be lost in political squabbles."

Perhaps, the biggest statesmen of his times said so for disdain he had for the colony that was wriggling out of the control of the British Empire. Nonetheless, he had some serious insight into the Indian polity. After all, his country ruled India for almost 200 years.

The 75 years of independence have been tumultuous. We have seen the good, bad, and ugly of Indian politics. The next 25 years to 100 are going to be challenging to say the least.

In the last ten years, the polity of India has changed. For 65 odd years, all political parties played by the rules set during the independence movement, irrespective of their ideology. It did not matter if they were left, right, or center. They showed allegiance to the constitution, respected the freedom movement, did not question Gandhi and his methods, and did not disrupt the basic nature of the society. The religious or regional idiosyncrasies or cultural fallacies were left alone. Though the system was not great, it worked.

But the last 10 years have been different. Nothing is sacrosanct anymore. Everything is under the scanner, there is a doggedness to rewrite, rephrase, and rebuild everything. From the scratch. From monuments to institutions, history to polity, textbooks to basic values everything is a candidate for revamping.

The biggest and most discernible change has been a paradigm shift in the perception of the people. The family-centric Indian politics has given way to person-centric politics. The BJP found in Narendra Modi an articulate and bankable leader; AAP was built around. The congress, Samajwadi Party, RJD, DMK, Shiv Sena, and many



other parties are still embroiled in their legacy, yet to come to terms with the new politics.

The rise of two nascent parties is a turning point. One, of course, is Narendra Modi-led BJP - the BJP's new avatar, and the second is Aam Aadmi Party led by Arvind Kejriwal. AAP started its journey in 2012, whereas BJP that we have today was incarnated when Modi took over its control in 2013. So it took ten years to bring a storm in the teacup.

The two political parties have very different takes on contemporary issues. Yet they are very similar in their approach and have caught the people's fancy. The way these parties conduct themselves is indeed new to India. The Prime minister in his early day used to say that he was an outsider in Delhi. He changed it inside out. Thanks to him political landscape looks and feels completely different. AAP started with its call to change the politics while Modi's BJP changed the rules of the game and the game itself.

For new politics, a new narrative and new symbols had to be invented. The infusion of nationalistic fervor in politics, a deadly combination that Tagore warned about is back but with a twist. It does



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE LOOT OF SAND

Sir —Sand mining is one of the most lucrative and commercially viable businesses across the world. However, its unregulated extraction on the shorelines, beds of rivers, and lakes are posing grave threats to its ecology. The problem is rooted in sand mining's political clout that paves the way for illegal extraction even as the demand for sand rises due to the burgeoning population pressure. Riverine ecosystems are falling prey to their evil designs.

The wanton destruction of Aravallis in Haryana and Rajasthan at the hands of the sand and construction mafia is a case in point. The Rajasthan government's recent decision to lease 60 sites across the state for legalized sand mining has come as a shot in the arm for protected areas. Similar steps need to be replicated elsewhere. Enhanced scrutiny, ban on over-exploited areas, and switching over to alternative sources of extraction of sand and gravel are the only way out.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

OPTION FOR CHILD EDUCATION

Sir — Indian parents start thinking about their child's early learning and education as soon as the child attains the age of 2 to 2.5 years. With plenty of options to explore online, parents start searching for the best pre-schools or nursery schools close to their living areas. (editorial, "The right age", Apr. 27). Defining a chronological age for school entry is therefore imperative in educational planning.

In fact, child development specialists have reservations on whether teaching at an early stage really gives the child any long-term advantage. On the contrary, they caution about the dangers that such an early introduction to formal learning may entail. Faced with a choice of putting a child in an earlier or later class, wise parents would always choose the latter. Weighing all options, therefore, the ideal age of a child's entry to LKG should be four years and class-1 should be six years. A mistaken impression amongst parents is that their children will "lose

SC against communal hate



The Supreme Court should be commended for directing BJP-ruled Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh to act against hate mongers, even though it has only performed its constitutional duty. The apex court's denunciation of the peddling of communal hate in dharam sansad events should deter the right-wing, rabble-rousing religious fanatics from spewing and spreading the poison of religious hatred. It should defang them. It should be a salutary warning to all those who make hate speeches, described as a 'product of intolerance, ideological dominance and prejudice' by the top court, and incite people to communal violence.

a year" if they are put in a class lower than what they are officially eligible for. But the truth is that these children are "gifted an extra year" - a year in which they dramatically increase their chances of being successful in their lives.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

PAK DEGREES DISALLOWED

Sir — Going to Pakistan for higher education would be futile now as those degrees won't be valid in India anymore. UGC (University Grants Commission) and the All India Council for Technical Education have advised students not to travel to Pakistan for higher studies.

Only migrants and their children who have obtained higher education degrees in Pakistan and who have been granted citizenship by India will be eligible for employment in India. It's a welcome move and a big blow to Pakistan.

Khushi Rathore | Ujjain

lence. It has come as a whiff of fresh air when 'hate' is sought to be sanctified or normalized on some pretext or other. By coming down heavily on communal hate and rant, the Supreme Court has underlined its wrongness and immorality. The Supreme Court has rightly intervened to ensure that nothing is said or done to disturb religious amity, a prerequisite for the country's progress and prosperity.

Then, as citizens too have to play our part. We have to rise to the challenge to safeguard the country's secular fabric from e communal forces. It falls on us to fight religious intolerance with religious tolerance and hate with love and co-exist peacefully with compatriots of all religious persuasions. After all, we are all of the same species. Humanity is the true test of true religion and true patriotism. Religious identity should pale beside biological identity. The scourge of communalism will vanish from our body-politic when we all imbibe this profound truth and learn to live accordingly.

G. David Milton | Tamil Nadu

THE FUEL BLAME GAME

Sir —Prime Minister Narendra Modi blamed the opposition-ruled states for not reducing VAT on fuel, but the statement was indeed a 'shameful' one. BJP IT cell head Amit Malviya also accused the Opposition-ruled state governments of charging high taxes on petrol and diesel and then blaming the central government for the high fuel prices.

The fact of the matter is that the fuel price shouldn't be more than Rs.40m, but Malviya cited figures to show the Centre's expenditure since 2014 is more than the revenue earned on fuel. In the last few years, the Centre has earned huge revenue from crude oil. The centre and the states can keep on passing the buck, but then it's the common man who suffers.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

tions are fought on no issues or at best 'non-issues' which have nothing to do with people's problems. The political parties are setting their agenda and fixing the narrative it has and brushing the people's concerns under the carpet.

The BJP and AAP have discovered that it is easier to woo people with freebies rather than real development. Way back Jayalalitha started it in Tamil Nadu but AAP took it to the next level in Delhi and now the BJP is doing it on a national level. Thanks to the free ration distribution the BJP won the UP elections and AAP sweeps Delhi. Both use the exchequers' money to win voters.

Yet another new reality of new India is communal overtures in mainstream politics. The fringe elements and hate mongers are in the centerstage, inciting violence, creating a rift in the society, and getting away with it. Demonizing a section of society on one pretext or the other is now almost a routine.

Can India prove the fat old man wrong who also said at the time of the Bengal famine, "Why isn't Gandhi dead," some resonance there with the party in power in India today! (The writer is a columnist and documentary filmmaker. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUND BITE

Don't underestimate Congress. It will come back. Without Congress' role, you cannot think of a change of guard in Delhi



Congress leader — AK Antony

"Pakistan cannot afford to have enmity with the US at all".



Prime Minister — Shehbaz Sharif

Someone said that a *pan* India film ('KGF: 2') was made in Kannada. I'd like to make a small correction. Hindi is no more a national language.



Actor — Ajay Devgan

Arshdeep is holding on to his nerves brilliantly, he's doing well in death overs.



Former India Cricket coach — Ravi Shastri

It's better to engage with the world on the basis of who we are rather than trying to be a pale imitation of what they are.



External Affairs Minister — S Jaishankar

FIRST COLUMN

INDIA EU TECH
TRADE COUNCIL

Dialogue on technology partnership
that will glue future relationships



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The West has been knocking at Delhi’s doors of late, given the sudden change in the geopolitical landscape, with the Ukraine crisis still raging. Delhi is cautious in its approach, acknowledging the constraints of domestic politics of Europe, the US, the UK and Australia, while not upsetting ally Russia. However, there is a new tilt in the bilateral/multilateral relations between India and the western powers. This is a pivot for India to choose its allies in the new global order where technological capabilities will decide the fortunes and survival of nations. EU president Ursula von der Leyen was in India along with senior ministers from Europe to announce setting up of the Technology and Trade Council (TTC) with New Delhi. The TTC is a “strategic coordination mechanism to allow both partners to tackle challenges at the nexus of trade,



trusted technology and security, and thus deepen cooperation in these fields between the EU and India”. This is the first time India has signed a bilateral trade facilitation agreement within a critical and emerging technology architecture. The TTC is the second for EU, after it signed similar deal with US last year. Its proposed agreement with Japan along the same lines is pending. The writing on the digital future smart screen is clear, it is the centrlicity of technology-related negotiations in any future trade and investment deal with strategic allies. The second takeaway is the Ukraine crisis, along with growing China Russia intimacy, is forcing Europe, the US and the UK to rekindle their strategic engagements in the Indo-Pacific region (where India geographically is at the centre) to build a trusted allies network, preferably with democracies. The third takeaway is that the West realises the need to diversify their sphere of friends and allies and preferably blunt aggressive China tactics on marine pathways and coercive inland infrastructure policy.

The TTC between India and EU will take a couple of months to have a secretarial structure. There will be working groups, as in the EU-US TTC, to deal with cooperation and coordination on Technology Standards in critical and emerging technologies such as Artificial intelligence. The other WGs’ focus is on data governance tech platform regulations, secure supply chains, misuse of technology threatening security, export controls, investment screening, challenges to global trade, promotion of small and medium sector enterprises for using digital technologies, ICT industry security and competitiveness and climate and green technology. The US has nominated secretary of state Antony Blinken, secretary of commerce Gina Raimondo and USTR Katherine Tai as co-chair while EU has two executive vice president ranking officials as their senior most representatives. It gives India a glimpse of what can be expected when the final contours of the TTC are solemnised. India can expect similar WG structures where most of the agendas from the US TTC can be duplicated. It could be a challenging for India to totally convince the political constituency regarding the effectiveness of having negotiations on sensitive technology related issues in such bilateral trade and investment forums. It would not be surprising if vested lobbies start blacklisting the entire process as a threat to India’s sovereignty. External affairs minister S Jaishankar and Commerce minister along with Minister of Information Technology are likely to be India’s nominees to the TTC with EU and lot will depend on their coordination as a team to convince the parliament. It would also help the bureaucracy look at the issues as a whole, and not bunch it in their departmental silos. A lot can be achieved with EU, and rest of the world with close cooperation and coordination domestically and abroad.

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

Noida Land Scam, a throwback — Part II



NOIDA Authority evaluated applicants’ net worth overlooking the fact that the builders had applied for many plots in different schemes during the audit period

The C&AG has observed that allotment of two plots (GH 01 & 02, Sector-143) of more than two lakh sqm worth ₹471.57 crore was made to Logix group of companies promoted by Shakti Nath in 2011, who failed to even qualify the technical eligibility criteria of a turnover of ₹200 crore from real estate development and construction activities. In both cases, the bids should have been outright rejected. The Authority also failed to examine whether Logix group consortium had the requisite aggregate Net Worth to qualify for allotment of multiple plots.

It was further noted that the Authority had already earlier been allotted 3 commercial builder’s plots (A-1/124, C-03/105 and CC-04/32) of 143250 sqm to ineligible Logix Group consortiums at the cost of ₹1680.93 crore a few months ago in 2010-2011 even when they failed to meet the mandatory technical eligibility criterion of minimum turnover of ₹200 crore from real estate development and construction activities and aggregated Net worth required for the plots. In addition, the Authority allotted another much bigger plot of sport city of 224 acre (907988 sqm) in Sector 150 in May 2011 to the ineligible Logix group consortium at the cost of ₹1094 crore, overlooking the mandatory technical eligibility criterion of minimum turnover of Rs 200 crore from real estate activities during the previous three years (2007-2010). The Lead member of each Logix Group consortium was a software development company namely Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd. It has paid up capital of ₹14 crore and turnover of ₹9.70 crore in 2009-10. Thus, the Authority allowed the Logix Group consortiums led by a small software company to grab six large plots aggregating more than 300 acres valuing ₹3246 crores in 2010-11.

Note: The Company had the paid up capital of ₹1.00 lakh. ** None of the participants in any consortiums had turnover in real estate development and construction activities.

The filings of Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd with MCA/GOI claimed that they became the holding company of 22 newly incorporated subsidiaries in 2010-2011. As per the Audit report, the modus operandi followed of Logix group was to submit bids for each plot through a Consortium (of 5-10 subsidiary /associate companies) and after allotment of the plot, the key members of consortium would exit and plots would be divided into sub-plots and allotted to subsidiaries, who in turn would sell/transfer the sub-plots to third parties. Mr Shakti Nath had constituted more than 50 subsidiary companies during 2009-12 in which Meena Nath and/or Vikram Nath were also directors. Shakti Nath is presently director in 33 companies, Meena Nath in 43 companies and Vikram Nath in 16 companies.

Three C (3C) group of companies on the strength of Three C Universal Developers Pvt Ltd, incorporated in March



OVER THE YEARS, NOIDA AUTHORITY RELAXED MANY IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS LIKE FINANCIAL QUALIFICATION S CRITERION OF NET WORTH, SOLVENCY AND TOTAL TURNOVER, PROVISIONS OF ESCROW ACCOUNT, BANK GUARANTEE, ETC.

(The writer is a retired DG of the C&AG of India and a member of RERA, Bihar between April 2018-December, 2021. The views expressed are personal.)

MULTIPLE ALLOTMENTS MADE TO LOGIX GROUP DURING 2010-11					
Types of Plot	Plot No/ Sector/ Area of the Plot	Date of Allotment/ Cost of the Plot	Lead Member (LM)	Name & DOI of Allottee	Number of Participants** in Consortium
GH	GH-01/ 143 100112 sqm	17.8.2011 Rs 236 Cr	Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd	Logix Infratech* 13.5.2010	4
GH	GH-02/ 143 100081 sqm	08.4.2011 Rs 236 Cr	Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd	Logix City Developers* 7.3.2011	6
Coml	A-1/124 64550 sqm	21.12.2010 Rs 841 Cr	Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd	Logix Realtech* 7.7.2010	5
Coml	C-03/105 28720 sqm	23.6.2010 Rs 283 Cr	Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd	Logix Estates* 17.5.2010	5
Coml	CC-04/32 50000 sqm	28.3.2011 Rs 556 Cr	Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd	LogixBuildwel* 4.3.2011	6
Sport City	SC-01/ 150 907988 sqm	04.5.2011 Rs 1094 Cr	Logix Soft Tel Pvt Ltd	Logix Infra Developers* 7.3.2011	6



2007, were allotted 3 GH plots of 3,84,295 sqm of ₹860.66 crore, 4 Commercial builder’s plots of 138286 sqm at the cost of ₹1548.27 crore and two Sport City plots of 20,32,747.72 sqm (502.29 acre) at the cost of ₹3428.58 crore. If this was not enough, a national newspaper has reported that the directors of 3C group of companies and their family members- Nirmal Singh, Surpreet Singh Suri, Vidur Bhardwaj and wife Richa Bhardwaj were also allotted 8 farm houses plots of 10,000 sqm each in prime sectors of the Noida city at throw-away prices in 2010-11. The 3C group had the outstanding dues of ₹4694 crores as on 31st March 2020.

In all biddings, 3C Group used the parameters of Three C Universal Developers Pvt Ltd (DOI-7th March 2007, Turnover- ₹155.6 cr & Net-profit- ₹8.92 cr in 2009-10) to meet the technical eligibility criteria to grab multiple plots. The 3C group of companies also followed the same route of bidding through consortium of subsidiaries companies in grabbing the plots. The Directors- Vidur Bhardwaj, Surpreet Singh Suri and Nirmal Singh had constituted large number of subsidiaries/associate companies dur-

ing the period 2008-2012, bid through consortiums led by different subsidiaries and have since resigned from most of them. As per MCA records, Vidur Bharadwaj is presently a director in 4 active companies only but during the 2008-2012, he was director in more than 100 companies. Surpreet Singh Suri and Nirmal Singh were also directors in more than 100 companies during this period.

Undue favour to builders by using net worth for multiple allotments.

In course of processing the bids, NOIDA Authority evaluated the net worth of the applicant companies case-wise, overlooking the fact that the builders had applied for many plots in different schemes during the audit period. As a result, the Authority failed to determine requirement of the net worth in aggregate in case of multiple applications of an applicant company/builder. Resultantly, several allottees/companies obtained more than one allotment of plot by leveraging their net worth multiple times. In a test check of GH plots, the C&AG found that 10 applicants were allowed to use their net worth more than once to garner 26 (sub-

divided into 43 plots) allotments worth ₹4,293.35 crore. The beneficiaries were: Supertech Ltd and Gaursons Ltd obtained 4 plots each, Ultra Homes and Gulshan HomZ got 3 plots each, Prateek Buildtech, Amrapali Homes, Unitech Ltd, Ajnara India, Agrawal Associates and Bihariji Ispat one each.

Over the years, Noida Authority relaxed many important terms and conditions like financial qualifications criterion of net worth, solvency and total turnover, provisions of escrow account, bank guarantee etc. The Authority also kept on reducing the payment of upfront allotment money from 40 per cent of the land premium in 2006-07 in phases to as low as 10 per cent in 2009-10. In 2009, Noida Authority took further steps viz. rescheduling of eight-year repayment term with two-year moratorium, sub-division of plots (above 40,000 sqm), transfer of sub-plots, deposit of 10 percent of lease premium till execution of lease deed, etc., to provide relief to the allottees ostensibly to combat the 2008 recession/economic conditions. The Authority however continued these rebates/ relaxations indefinitely. As a result, the allottees were required to make the payment of lease premium/cost of the plots over a period of ten years from the date of allotment. This reduction substantially reduced the financial commitment of the developers and enabled them to garner more or bigger plots and launch more and more projects without completing the existing ones. Further these plots were sub-divided and illegally transferred/sold to third parties on premium through changes in the share-holding of the subsidiaries companies. **(To be continued)**

POINT COUNTERPOINT




“I REQUEST THESE STATES TO DO NOW WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE IN NOVEMBER. BY REDUCING VAT YOU CAN LOWER (PEOPLE’S) BURDEN ...”
— PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



“THE CENTRE IMPOSED MULTIPLE CESSES. THE STATES DON’T GET ANY SHARE. AND NOW, YOU ARE BLAMING THE STATES...”
— WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE

Struggling for water in the Himalayan foothills

Walking for long hours to collect water is a backbreaking task that takes a toll on women’s and girls’ health



KUMARI MAHESHWARI

Lamchula is a picturesque hilly village nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas overlooking the beautiful Lahur Ghati river in Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand. Located approximately 20 km from the district headquarters, there is no motorable road to the village and one has to trek for about thirty minutes to reach the settlements. Inhabited by approximately 143 families, this region is blessed with natural resources and water bodies. The residents of this remote village, however, continue to struggle to access one of the most basic facilities required for survival- clean drinking water. Agriculture and livestock are the two main occupation in this village, which require a hefty amount of water on a reg-

(The writer is a student of Class 12 from Lamchula, Bageshwar. Courtesy Charkha Features. The views expressed are personal.)

ular basis. Not to forget, the household chores and personal hygiene equally stand in need of water. The majority of their water consumption, including drinking water, is supplied by Lahur and Naldhura rivers, which are 6 and 5 kilometres apart, respectively, and nearby springs. During summer, there is always a high possibility of the springs drying up, forcing the residents to fetch drinking water from these rivers.

Neetu Devi, a 28-year-old woman from the village, walks 5 km every day to fetch water from Naldhura river. She mentioned how it is extremely difficult to walk while carrying water on the unpaved hilly terrain during monsoons and winters. “There is always a risk of slipping. Many have



encountered accidents and injured themselves,” said Neetu. As the villagers are deprived of functional household tap connections, they are bound to take such risks. Although the concerned departments have taken certain steps to address the issue of the

scarcity of clean water, there has been no long-lasting solution. Referring to the existing gaps, Neetu further informed that a water pipeline has been laid in the village, but it often breaks during the monsoons. By the time it gets repaired, the monsoon season arrives again.

As a consequence, the villagers continue to be involved in this danger, and the larger onus falls on women and adolescent girls. The lack of water has a direct impact on the education and health of adolescent girls. Walking daily to fetch water before or after school often takes a lot of time and effort of these girls. In the process, they are often left with little strength to focus on their education. On the other hand, walking for long hours to collect water is a backbreaking task that takes a toll on women and girls’ health, especially during menstruation and pregnancy.

Recounting the struggles adolescent girls face, Kavita, 17, from the village, said, “I have fetched water during menstruation, even in unbearable pain.

It gets difficult for us to maintain menstrual hygiene as we don’t have enough water. School dropouts are also on rise as there is no water in the schools.”

Motima Devi, an elderly of the village, while describing the issue of water as serious, questions the use of laying a water pipeline in the village, when they have to go far off and fetch water from the streams and river? “I have spent my years collecting water. How long do we fight to get access to this basic need. We have been managing so far by using different ways to fulfil our various water needs. For example, we collect rainwater for the cattle, but clean water is required for the members of the household,” expressed Motima.

While updating on the

measures taken by the Panchayat in reducing the water woes of the villagers, Balwant Ram, 35, a member of the Panchayat, emphasized, “The Panchayat understands the seriousness of this problem; therefore, we are in constant touch with the concerned department. It seems like it will take more than six months to provide functional water connections to village households.”

Perhaps the centrally sponsored scheme, ‘Jal Jeevan Mission’ which aims to provide clean drinking water to all households in the country by 2024, is the only beam of hope for the residents. The only way to turn their dream of having easy access to household tap connections into a reality is to properly implement and execute this scheme in the village.

UK delays post-Brexit border checks until end of 2023

AP ■ LONDON

Britain announced on Thursday that it is postponing until the end of 2023 some checks on imports from the European Union that are required under post-Brexit trade rules, citing economic disruption caused by the war in Ukraine.

It's the fourth time the UK has delayed checks it agreed to as part of its divorce deal with the EU. The two sides have been bickering since Britain left the 27-nation bloc about the new arrangements, with a set of special rules for Northern Ireland proving a particularly tough sticking point that risks sparking a trade war.

Since Britain left the EU's single market at the end of 2020, imports from the bloc are supposed to be subject to the



same checks as goods from everywhere else in the world. But while some controls have been introduced by the U.K., others have been delayed.

The British government said measures that were due to take effect from July 1 - including physical checks on fresh food and a ban on EU sausages and chilled meats - "will no longer be introduced this year." It said "Russia's illegal invasion

of Ukraine, and the recent rise in global energy costs, have had a significant effect on supply chains that are still recovering from the pandemic," and checks would put a further burden on struggling businesses.

Britain said it would aim to bring in the new measures "in an improved way" at the end of 2023.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman, Max Blain, said Britain was "not introducing the checks as planned" and was "working on a new model" that would use the latest data and technology to ease burdens on businesses.

Like other countries, Britain has experienced months of sporadic supply problems, with gaps on supermarket shelves, fast-food outlets running out of chicken and some pubs running dry of a full

selection of beer. Experts cite a perfect storm of factors, including Brexit and COVID-19, leading to worker shortages in key areas such as trucking.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has driven up cost of essentials including fuel and cooking oil, has made things worse.

UK-EU talks on resolving differences over trade rules have made limited progress. Britain's Conservative government has accused the

27-nation bloc of being needlessly "purist" in its approach to the rules for Northern Ireland, while the EU says Britain is failing to honor a legally binding deal that Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed to Britain has threatened to act unilaterally to suspend parts of the divorce deal if progress is not made.

Finland, Sweden could join quickly: NATO chief

AP ■ BRUSSELS

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday that Finland and Sweden would be embraced with open arms should they decide to join the 30-nation military organization and could become members quite quickly.

Stoltenberg's remarks came as public support in Finland and Sweden for NATO membership mounts in response to Russia's war in Ukraine. Media speculation in the two countries suggest the two might apply in mid-May.

"It's their decision," Stoltenberg said. "But if they decide to apply, Finland and Sweden will be warmly welcomed, and I expect that process to go quickly."

He gave no precise time frame, but did say that the two could expect some protection should Russia try to intimidate them from the time their membership applications are made



until they formally join.

Stoltenberg said he's "confident that there are ways to bridge that interim period in a way which is good enough and works for both Finland and Sweden."

NATO's collective security guarantee ensures that all member countries must come to the aid of any ally under attack. Stoltenberg added that many NATO allies have now pledged and provided a total of

at least \$8 billion in military support to Ukraine.

Before launching the war in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded that NATO stop expanding and pull its troops back from Russia's borders. So the prospect of neighboring Finland, and Sweden, joining the trans-Atlantic alliance is unlikely to be welcomed in Moscow. Finland has a conflict-ridden history with Russia,

with which it shares a 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) border. Finns have taken part in dozens of wars against their eastern neighbor, for centuries as part of the Swedish Kingdom, and as an independent nation including two fought with the Soviet Union from 1939-40 and 1941-44.

In the postwar period, however, Finland pursued pragmatic political and economic ties with Moscow, remaining militarily non-aligned and a neutral buffer between East and West. Sweden has avoided military alliances for more than 200 years, choosing a path of peace after centuries of warfare with its neighbors.

Both countries put an end to traditional neutrality by joining the European Union in 1995 and deepening cooperation with NATO. However, a majority of people in both countries remained firmly against full membership in the alliance - until now.

Pak agencies probing Karachi varsity blast suspect presence of more female BLA suicide bombers



PTI ■ KARACHI/LAHORE

Pakistani investigators probing the suicide attack by a woman at the Karachi University that killed three Chinese teachers have not ruled out the presence of more female suicide bombers at sleeper cells of the outlawed Baluchistan Liberation Army, even as police in Lahore have arrested a suspect from Punjab University in connection with the bombing.

On Tuesday, an explosion triggered by a burqa-clad woman suicide bomber from the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) ripped through a van of the Confucius Institute at the prestigious University of Karachi, leaving three Chinese teachers dead and one injured, in the latest targeted attack against Chinese citizens in Pakistan. Following the inci-

dent, the banned BLA took to social media to claim responsibility and announce that the bomber was a woman named Shaari Baloch who was highly educated mother of two young children, belonging to a well-established family and working as a school teacher in her native Turbat, Balochistan.

The Anti-Terrorism Department of the Sindh Police also identified the bomber who was born in Turbat in 1991 but settled in Kech district of the restive Baluchistan province. "Initial investigations confirmed she was part of the banned Majeed brigade, a part of the BLA which has brainwashed these suicide bombers," an official of the Anti-Terrorism Department said.

"We are looking into possibilities that there might be more female suicide bombers brainwashed to become part of

the Majeed Brigade and waiting in sleeper cells," he said. He confirmed that initial

investigations had shown that Shari Baloch did not carry out the attack independently and was guided and helped by her handlers/facilitators, including a woman who met her at the entrance of the university and apparently briefed her before she went to the entrance of the Confucius Institute where she detonated herself as soon as the coaster van carrying the Chinese academics came.

"We suspect this operation was carried out with inside information," the official said. On Wednesday, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab Police have arrested a suspect from Lahore's Punjab University in connection with the suicide bombing at the Karachi University.

The intelligence agencies tracked down a suspect with whom Shari Baloch remained in contact by cellphone in Lahore and arrested him during a raid at a hostel of the Punjab University, a source in CTD told PTI on Thursday.

The suspect has been identified as Begabri Imdad, a student of the seventh semester of English Literature in Numl, Islamabad. He also belongs to the area where Shaari Baloch lived.

China asks its firms in Pak to heighten security for staff after Karachi suicide attack

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Thursday asked thousands of its nationals working on the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in Pakistan to increase their security and watch out for terrorist risks following a deadly suicide blast in Karachi that killed three Chinese and wounded another.

"The Pakistani government has promised to strengthen security for Chinese personnel projects and institutions, and will not allow any force to undermine our friendship and cooperation," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here.

Asked about the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), the militant group whose woman suicide bomber carried out the attack at the Karachi University targeting the Chinese teachers, warning more attacks if China and Pakistan don't vacate from Balochistan province, he said, "we believe Pakistan will take earnest and concrete measures to ensure the safe and smooth progress of bilateral cooperation."

Want to keep growing ties with India for Network of Liberty: UK Foreign Min

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK wants to keep growing its ties with India as part of efforts to work more closely with allies to create a so-called Network of Liberty, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said in a major foreign policy speech in London.

The minister used her keynote address at the Lord Mayor's Easter banquet on Wednesday to issue a stark warning to Russia and China on its aggressive stance as the UK prioritises "security and respect for sovereignty over short-term economic gain".

With reference to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, the minister declared that victory for Ukraine was now a "strategic imperative" for the West.

"Our prosperity and security must be built on a network of strong partnerships. This is what I have described as the Network of Liberty," said Truss.

"In a world where malign actors are trying to undermine multilateral institutions, we know that bilateral and plurilateral groups will play a greater role. Partnerships like NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), the G7 and the

Commonwealth are vital," she said. "And we want to keep growing our ties with countries like Japan, India and Indonesia. We also should build on the strong core that we have in the G7."

During the UK's Presidency last year, I was pleased to bring friends like Australia, Korea, India, South Africa and ASEAN to the table," she added.

The senior Cabinet minister laid out the UK government's various measures to cut off funding for Russian President Vladimir Putin's "war effort" and also investment ties with Russia, by banning all new outward investment and ending the investor visa.

"We are showing that economic access is no longer a given. It has to be earned. Countries must play by the rules. And that includes China," she warned.

"Beijing has not condemned Russian aggression or its war crimes. Russian exports to China rose by almost a third in the first quarter of this year... But China is not imperious. By talking about the rise of China as inevitable we are doing China's work for it. In fact, their rise isn't inevitable."

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, दन्तेवाड़ा (फोन / फॅक्स नं० - 07856 253262, ई मेल - eedan-phe-cg@nic.in)						
// ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट शुद्धिपत्र //						
एकीकृत पंजीयन व्यवस्था प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से प्रपत्र "ए" प्रतिशत दर पर निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु (online) निविदा (सिंगल बिलेज / रेड्रोफिटिंग) आमंत्रित की गयी थी। जिसमें किसी भी ठेकेदार द्वारा भाग नहीं लेने तथा एकल निविदा होने के कारण उक्त निविदा की तिथि आगे बढ़ाई जाती है एवं ठेकेदार /फर्म के एक से अधिक कार्य हेतु बिड केपासिटी देखा जावेगा।						
निविदा क्रमांक	शुद्धिपत्र क्रमांक	सिस्टम टेंडर क्रमांक	ग्राम / विकासखण्ड	अनुमानित लागत (लाख में)	रिमाक	
139 / 22.02.2022	04	93580	अरनपुर / कुआकोण्डा, सिंगल बिलेज	72.03		
140 / 22.02.2022	04	93581	अरबे / कुआकोण्डा, सिंगल बिलेज	60.02		
141 / 22.02.2022	04	93582	बालेगपाल / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	59.33		
142 / 22.02.2022	04	93596	बेरपाल / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	54.54		
143 / 22.02.2022	04	93597	फुण्डरी / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	76.19		
144 / 22.02.2022	04	93634	भातुलाला / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	71.37		
160 / 28.02.2022	03	94017	उपेट / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	73.17		
161 / 28.02.2022	03	94018	करसमदुर / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	43.97		
162 / 02.03.2022	03	94019	मुटौली / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	65.84		
163 / 02.03.2022	03	94141	हारला / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	50.64		
164 / 02.03.2022	03	94142	कान्दाकरवा / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	6.33		
165 / 02.03.2022	03	94143	कटुलनार / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	120.85		
167 / 02.03.2022	03	94145	रेवाली / कुआकोण्डा, सिंगल बिलेज	77.50		
168 / 02.03.2022	03	94146	उदेनार / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	56.00		
170 / 04.03.2022	03	94421	गुमियापाल / कुआकोण्डा, सिंगल बिलेज	121.18		
173 / 04.03.2022	03	94426	पेण्डोली / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	70.95		
194 / 14.03.2022	02	95287	एडपाल / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	51.42		
195 / 14.03.2022	02	95295	बडेगोडरे / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	47.87		
196 / 14.03.2022	02	95296	झोडियाबाजम / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	105.20		
197 / 14.03.2022	02	95297	माहराकरका / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	117.48		
198 / 17.03.2022	02	95591	चिकपाल / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	59.40		
199 / 17.03.2022	02	95593	किडरीरास / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	18.02		
200 / 17.03.2022	02	95594	नडेनार / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	27.70		
201 / 17.03.2022	02	95595	नयानार / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	21.97		
202 / 17.03.2022	02	95602	भेराबंद / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	36.20		
203 / 21.03.2022	02	95694	भोगाम / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	103.70		
204 / 21.03.2022	02	95695	मोलसमनार / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	118.95		
205 / 21.03.2022	02	95730	कोडेनार / कुआकोण्डा, सिंगल बिलेज	118.77		
206 / 23.03.2022	02	95921	ब्रिजाम / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	151.33		
207 / 23.03.2022	02	95923	डुगाम / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	76.16		
209 / 25.03.2022	02	95984	चिलालपुर / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	113.12		
211 / 25.03.2022	02	95986	कुर्देली / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	67.27		
212 / 25.03.2022	02	95987	मुतुली / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	88.10		
213 / 25.03.2022	02	95988	मेतापुर / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	76.77		
01 / 04.04.2022	01	96421	सुरनार / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	87.57		
02 / 04.04.2022	01	96447	आलनार / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	86.75		
03 / 04.04.2022	01	96448	गुदपाल / दन्तेवाड़ा, रेड्रोफिटिंग	102.11		
05 / 04.04.2022	01	96450	कोरलापाल / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	80.85		
07 / 07.04.2022	01	96899	बाबेट / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	154.99		
08 / 07.04.2022	01	96901	चिलालका / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	272.83		
09 / 07.04.2022	01	96902	रामपुर / गौदम, सिंगल बिलेज	169.40		
10 / 07.04.2022	01	97069	छोटेगाम / कटेकल्याण, सिंगल बिलेज	13.74		
12 / 13.04.2022	01	97410	बातुल / दन्तेवाड़ा, सिंगल बिलेज	329.74		
निविदा की सामान्य शर्त अन्य जानकारी वेबसाईट पोर्टल http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in पर दर्शित है। टीप :- निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 04.05.2022 है।						
R. O. No. 906477 Dated : 28/4/22			हस्ता / - कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड दन्तेवाड़ा			

Kenya mediates Congo peace talks, but breakthrough elusive

AP ■ KAMPALA (UGANDA)

Some Congolese armed Sgroups in peace talks in Kenya asked for more time before laying down their weapons, Kenyan authorities said on Thursday, signalling the talks had not yet made a breakthrough.

"A few" of more than 30 armed groups with representatives at the talks "requested to be given more time to appraise themselves with the set conditions but expressed willingness to join hands in building their country," a statement from Kenya's presidency said.

Many other groups at the talks accepted efforts by Congo's government to demobilise former rebels and integrate them into the national army, it said. The statement gave no details on which groups had not committed to the peace process, which Kenya is trying to mediate under the



banner of the seven-nation East African Community trade bloc. It cited Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi urging the rebels to accept demobilisation and integration into the national force as part of efforts to build a strong army.

Even as talks proceeded in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, fighting erupted in eastern Congo near the Uganda border as government troops battled the M23 rebel group. Fleeing gunfire, hundreds of Congolese civilians regularly seek shelter in Uganda. Representatives of

Hindu, Muslim promote communal harmony in Bangladesh

Dhaka: Two men of different faiths - a Hindu and a Muslim - in Bangladesh's Khulna division have been delivering a lesson in communal harmony through their acts of charity towards each other's religion.

Pranab Kumar Ghosh, an assistant professor at Fakirhat Azhar Ali Degree College in Bagerhat district, donated land for the construction of a mosque, and Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, a local Awami League leader, gave away a piece of his land to be used as a cremation ground for the Hindus to promote communal harmony in their locality, Bangladesh's

bdnews24.Com reported on Thursday. Ghosh, a landowner in Fakirhat, donated land for the construction of a mosque as locals sought his help because there was no mosque in the area.

According to the media report, initially, a small prayer house was built in the area, which was later replaced by a two-storey building constructed on nearly 40 acres of land.

Gaus Sheikh, an official at the mosque, said Ghosh "did not just give us the land", but also came and ate with us when invited to the mosque. "He has given as much

Donate land for mosque, crematorium

land as needed for an Eidgah [open air enclosure] and a separate space for women to pray," he added.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, who owned land next to a Sanatan Dharma crematorium on the banks of river Bhairab, gave away his own land for the construction of a new cremation ground as the old one was washed away.

Mizanur, a former vice chairman of Fakirhat Union Council, said he was deeply moved by the thought that a community did not have any land to conduct the funeral rites for their dead. PTI

Pak PM Shehbaz Sharif leaves for Saudi Arabia on his maiden three-day official visit

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday left for Saudi Arabia on his maiden three-day official visit abroad during which he will hold wide-ranging discussions with top Saudi leadership, with particular focus on advancing economic, trade and investment ties.

The 70-year-old leader was sworn in as Pakistan's 23rd prime minister on April 11 after his predecessor Imran Khan was ousted in a no-confidence vote. Sharif, who has been invited for trip by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is accompanied by a high-level delegation including key ministers.

"Today I am embarking on a visit to Saudi Arabia to renew & reaffirm our bonds of brotherhood & friendship. I will have wide-ranging discussions with Saudi leadership. KSA is one of our greatest friends & as Custodian of Two Holy Places, has a special place in all our hearts," Sharif tweeted.

In a separate video message issued shortly before departure, Sharif expressed his delight for going on first visit to Gulf Kingdom for which he thanked crown prince. "This reflects high importance that Pakistan attaches to its special relationship with Saudi Arabia, which is historic in nature and strategic in significance," he said.

"Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are bound by deep-rooted and abiding fraternal ties which are built on a solid foundation of mutual trust and support," he said. "We are profoundly grateful to Saudi Arabia for its consistent support to Pakistan in its difficult hours. For its part,



Pakistan has always stood by Saudi Arabia and will always stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Saudi brethren," he said. "I look forward to my interaction with Saudi leadership to review our multi-faceted bilateral cooperation and to take this special relationship to unknown heights," the prime minister said.

He expressed good wishes for expatriates in kingdom, saying they contributed enormously to country's economic development. "They are a key partner in further fortifying Pakistan-Saudi brotherly relations," he concluded.

The Gulf Kingdom is also home to more than two million Pakistanis. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, Narcotics Control Minister Shahzain Bugti, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Federal minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain and lawmakers MNAs Mohsin Siddiqui and Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui are part of the PM's delegation.

On Wednesday, the Foreign Office said that PM Sharif will have bilateral interaction with Saudi leadership during visit, with focus on advancing economic, trade and investment ties and creation of greater opportunities for Pakistani workforce in Saudi Arabia.

Ukraine says Russian offensive in east picks up momentum

AP ■ POKROVSK

Ukraine said Thursday that Russia's offensive in the east picked up momentum, with several towns coming under intense attack as Moscow's forces attempt to surround Ukrainian troops.

In a reminder of the horrific toll the war has taken since it began February 24, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres visited towns outside the capital of Kyiv where evidence of mass killings of civilians was found after Russia's retreat from the area.

The fighting gathered pace after Russia suddenly cut off natural gas to two NATO nations on Wednesday, in what was seen as a bid to punish and divide the West over its support for Ukraine ahead of the potentially pivotal battle in the eastern industrial region of the Donbas.

The General Staff of Ukraine's military said Russian forces were "exerting intense fire" in several places as they pushed on with the second phase of their invasion. The most intensive action was around Donetsk and close to Kharkiv, which lies outside the Donbas but is seen as key to Russia's apparent bid to encircle Ukrainian troops there.

Tatiana Pirogova spoke of the intense fear of living under constant bombardment.

"It's not just scary. It's when your stomach contracts from pain" the Kharkiv resident said. "When they shoot during the day, it's still OK, but when the evening comes, I can't describe how scary it is."

The General Staff said that over the past 24 hours, the Ukrainian forces have repelled six attacks in the Donbas, control of which is now Moscow's primary focus ever since its initial offensive faltered and failed to take the Ukrainian capital.

Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai said the Russian army shelled the residential area in his region "29 times by aircrafts, multiple rocket launches, tube artillery and mortars."

Satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press also showed evidence of intense Russian fire on Mariupol in recent days. The images show how concentrated attacks have greatly damaged a central facility at the Azovstal steelworks, the last redoubt of Ukrainian fighters in the key battleground city.

An estimated 1,000 civilians are sheltering along with about 2,000 Ukrainian fighters in the steelworks, a massive Soviet-era complex with a warren of underground facilities built to withstand airstrikes.

Russia, meanwhile, said a city under its control in the south also came under fire.

With the war now in its third month, Guterres on Thursday toured towns outside



Kyiv, including Bucha, that have seen some of the most horrific attacks of the war.

"Citizens always pay the highest price," he said as he visited the bombed out suburb of Irpin. "And this is something everyone should remember, everywhere in the world. Wherever there is a war the highest price is paid by civilians."

Evidence of atrocities was discovered in the towns

Guterres visited on Thursday after the Russians retreated from the area in the face a fiercer than expected Ukrainian resistance, bolstered by Western arms.

In what could be a further Ukrainian counterattack, a series of explosions boomed near the television tower late Wednesday in southern Ukraine's Kherson, which has been occupied by Russian forces since early in the war.

The blasts at least temporarily knocked Russian channels off the air, Ukrainian and Russian news organizations reported.

Ukraine has urged its allies to send even more military equipment so it can continue its fight.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday that "up to date, NATO allies have pledged and provided at least 8 billion US dollars in military

support to Ukraine. And we see the importance of further stepping up our support to Ukraine."

While Russia's initial blitz was stunted - and it suffered the humiliating loss of a massive warship - Britain's Defense Ministry said the Russian navy still has the ability to strike coastal targets in Ukraine.

In an intelligence briefing posted Thursday morning, the ministry says that about 20

Russia naval vessels, including submarines, are currently operating the Black Sea zone.

But the ministry says Russia isn't able to replace the guided-missile cruiser Moskva, which sank earlier this month in the Black Sea, because the Bosphorus Strait remains closed to all non-Turkish warships. Russia also lost the landing ship Saratov, which was destroyed by explosions and fire on March 24.

While it presses its campaign in the east, Moscow has also piled on the pressure by leveraging its biggest export product - energy, cutting off NATO members Poland and Bulgaria from its natural gas on Wednesday.

European leaders blasted that decision as "blackmail," saying the move and the Kremlin's warning that it might cease shipments to other countries is a failed attempt to divide the West over its support for Ukraine.

The tactic against the two EU countries could eventually force targeted nations to ration gas and deal another blow to economies suffering from rising prices. At the same time, it could deprive Russia of badly needed income to fund its war effort.

The gas cuts do not immediately put the two countries in any dire trouble. Poland, especially, has been working for many years to line up other

suppliers, and the continent is heading into summer, making gas less essential for households.

Gazprom said it shut off the two countries because they refused to pay in rubles, as President Vladimir Putin has demanded of "unfriendly" nations. The Kremlin said other countries may be cut off if they don't agree to the payment arrangement.

European countries have balked at Russia's demand for rubles. Moscow has since proposed a system that it says satisfies its demand - but that the Europeans say means they are still paying in either euros or dollars.

"Europe (and) Germany will make payments in euros and others may pay in dollars, and not in rubles," Germany's Economy Minister Robert Habeck said Wednesday. "The conversion, once the payments have been made, is a matter for Gazprom. We have discussed this with the European Union. We will continue down this path."

Still, the cutoff and the Kremlin warning that other countries could be next sent shivers of worry through the 27-nation European Union. Germany is the world's biggest buyer of Russian energy, and Italy is also a significant consumer, though they, too, have been taking steps to reduce their dependence on Moscow.

A chilling Russian cyber aim in Ukraine: Digital dossiers

AP ■ BOSTON

Russia's relentless digital assaults on Ukraine may have caused less damage than many anticipated. But most of its hacking is focused on a different goal that gets less attention but has chilling potential consequences: data collection.

Ukrainian agencies breached on the eve of the Feb 24 invasion include the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which oversees the police, national guard and border patrol. A month earlier, a national database of automobile insurance policies was raided during a diversionary cyberattack that defaced Ukrainian websites.

The hacks, paired with prewar data theft, likely armed Russia with extensive details on much of Ukraine's population, cybersecurity and military intelligence analysts say. It's information Russia can use to identify and locate Ukrainians most likely to resist an occupation, and potentially target them for internment or worse.

"Fantastically useful information if you're planning an occupation," Jack Watling, a military analyst at the U.K. Think tank Royal United Services Institute, said of the auto insurance data, "knowing exactly which car everyone drives and where they live and all that."

As the digital age evolves, information dominance is increasingly wielded for social control, as China has shown in its repression of the Uyghur minority. It was no surprise to Ukrainian officials that a pre-war priority for Russia would be compiling information on the citizenry.

"The idea was to kill or imprison these people at the early stages of occupation," Victor Zhora, a senior Ukrainian cyber defense official, alleged.

Aggressive data collection accelerated just ahead of the invasion, with hackers serving Russia's military increasingly targeting individual Ukrainians, according to Zhora's agency, the State Service for Special Communications and Information Protection.

Serhiy Demediuk, deputy



secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, said via email that personal data continues to be a priority for Russian hackers as they attempt more government network breaches: "Cyberwarfare is really in the hot phase nowadays."

There is little doubt political targeting is a goal. Ukraine says Russian forces have killed and kidnapped local leaders where they grab territory.

Demediuk was stingy with specifics but said Russian cyberattacks in mid-January and as the invasion commenced sought primarily to "destroy the information systems of government agencies and critical infrastructure" and included data theft.

The Ukrainian government says the Jan. 14 auto insurance hack resulted in the pilfering of up to 80% of Ukrainian policies registered

with the Motor Transport Bureau.

Demediuk acknowledged that the Ministry of Internal Affairs was among government agencies breached Feb. 23. He said data was stolen but would not say from which agencies, only that it "has not led to significant consequences, especially when it comes to data on servicemen or volunteers." Security researchers from ESET and other cybersecurity firms that work with Ukraine said the networks were compromised months earlier, allowing ample time for stealthy theft.

The data collection by hacking is a work long in progress.

A unit of Russia's FSB intelligence agency that researchers have dubbed Armageddon has been doing it for years out of Crimea, which Russia seized in 2014. Ukraine says it sought to infect more than 1,500 Ukrainian government computer systems.

Since October it has tried to breach and maintain access to government, military, judiciary and law enforcement agencies as well as nonprofits, with a primary goal of "exfiltrating sensitive information," Microsoft said in a Feb 4 blog post.

Germany top buyer of Russian energy since war began

AP ■ BERLIN

Germany was the biggest buyer of Russian energy during the first two months since the start of the war in Ukraine, an independent research group said Thursday.

A study published by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air calculates that Russia earned 63 billion euros (USD66.5 billion) from fossil fuel exports since February 24, the date Russian troops attacked Ukraine.

Using data on ship movements, real-time tracking of gas flows through pipelines and estimates based on historical monthly trade, the researchers reckoned Germany alone paid Russia about 9.1 billion euros for fossil fuel deliveries in the first two months of the war.

Claudia Kemfert, a senior energy expert at the German Institute for Economic Research who was not involved in the study, said the figures were plausible given the recent sharp increase in prices for fossil fuels. Last year Germany paid about 100 billion euros in total for imports of oil, coal and gas - a quarter of which went to Russia, she said.

The German government said it couldn't comment on estimates and declined to pro-

vide any figures of its own, saying these would need to come from companies that procure the coal, oil and gas.

Germany has faced strong criticism for its reliance on Russia fossil fuels despite warnings from allies that this could endanger its own and European security. Then-Chancellor Angela Merkel pushed back last year against U.S. efforts to sanction a Russian gas pipeline to Germany, a decision strongly backed by her successor, Olaf Scholz, whose Social Democratic Party have long advocated energy cooperation with Russia.

PUBLIC NOTICE

DESTRUCTION OF MEDICAL RECORD OF PATIENTS

Notice is hereby given that Max Multi Speciality Centre, Panchsheel Park will be destroying medical records related to the treatment and/or test performed of its patients at the Centre pertaining to the period January/ 2009 to December/ 2018.

In addition the Centre will be destroying the Death records from Jan- 2009 to Dec - 2018.

Any patient who wishes to acquire Certified True Copy of his/her Medical Records pertaining to above stated period may request in writing to the contact person mentioned in the table below, between 10.00am 5.00pm (Monday to Saturday). All such request applications must reach the concerned person as mentioned below, within 3 (three) month from the date of publication of this notice. The request for medical records should be submitted in the prescribed format along with the self-attested copy of the photo identity proof of the patient. The patient can also authorize any other person to apply for and/or collect the Medical Records on his/her behalf with a valid authority letter/power of attorney for the same along with the self-attested copy of the photo identity and signature proof of the Patient and authorized person. In case of deceased patients, the attendant recorded in the Medical Records may apply/authorize someone to apply for the same. Please note that standard charges shall be applicable for supplying such records.

Name of the Hospital	Contact person Details	Date of medical records to be destroyed
Max Multi Speciality Centre Panchsheel Park, NIT10, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi - 110017	Mr. Rakesh Kumar Sharma E Mail - rakesh.sharma@maxhalthcare.com MOB: 9811298534 OFFICE: 011-46097200	Immigration Medical Documents - 2010 - 2016 OPD & IPD Documents - 2009 - 2018
Max Institute of Cancer Care 26A, 2nd Floor, Ring Road, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi -110024	Mr. Rakesh Kumar Sharma E Mail - rakesh.sharma@maxhalthcare.com MOB: 9811298534 OFFICE: 011-46097200	OPD & IPD Documents - 2016 - 2018

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. **VEHICLES FOR SALE**

1) EICHR_VECVVE1110FB UP81CT5745- YOM 2019 **MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 819573**

2) HR_VECV2PRO 5040 HR38Y3994- YOM 2018 **MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 716121**

3) TATAMOTORSLPT1412 UP17AT5844- YOM 2018 **MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 725137**

4) CB_TATA LPT 1518 UP17AT6198- YOM 2018 **MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 854071**

5) ASHOK_LEVAL1616FBGD HR55V2314- YOM 2015 **MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 429327**

6) TATA 909 DL1MA4418- YOM 2019 **MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 819975**

UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/ OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 13.05.2022 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).

BRANCH ADDRESS:
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313 OR CONTACT : RAJESH ANTIL KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 09711173320 EMAIL-rajesh.antil@kotak.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. **VEHICLES FOR SALE**

1) FORCE TEMPO TRAVELLER REG.NO. HR55AE3726-YOM-2018

2) ECHER 5025 REG.NO. UP14GT5555-YOM-2017

3) TATA 709 REG. NO. HR67C3436-YOM-2018

4) TATA MOTOR 2518 REG. NO. HR55T7696- YOM- 2014

5) VE1059FB REG. NO. DL1LAB1663-YOM-2018

6) TATA LP 407 BUS REG. NO. DL1VC3726-YOM-2019

7) TATA ACE REG. NO. UP15ET9861-YOM-2021

8) TATAWINGER REG. NO. UP81CT8369-YOM-2019

9) SUPRO_MINI- CHASSIS. NO. MA1FN2LHRMGK63155-YOM-2021

10) CB_TATA ACE REG.NO. UP16HT2507-YOM-2021

UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS WITH IN 15 DAYS AT

BRANCH ADDRESS:
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., 3RD FLOOR, PLOT NO 7, SECTOR 125,NOIDA-201313 OR CONTACT : RAJESH ANTIL KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 9711173320

US: Ukraine war 'screams' need to reject Russian energy

AP ■ ATLANTIC CITY

US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said Wednesday that Russia's war on Ukraine "screams" that the world needs to stop importing oil and gas from Russia and instead move toward other forms of energy.

At an international forum on offshore wind energy in Atlantic City, Granholm said the U.S. As well as its energy industries "are on a war footing," and called for a rapid acceleration of renewable energy including offshore wind power.

Her comments were echoed by Kadri Simson, the European Commissioner for Energy, who noted that Europe recently committed itself to a large-scale move away from Russian fossil fuel imports, and considers wind energy an important part of that transition.

Her comments came as Russia cut off natural gas to NATO members Poland and Bulgaria on Wednesday and threatened to do the same to other countries, dramatically escalating its standoff with the West over the war in Ukraine. European leaders decried the move as "black-mail."

Germany and Italy are among Europe's biggest consumers of Russian natural gas, but have already been taking steps to reduce their dependence on Moscow.

"Russia is waging a war in Ukraine and the imperative to move away from Russian oil and gas, for the world to move away from Russian oil and gas screams that there is an imperative that we electrify," said Granholm, the former Michigan governor. "Offshore wind is just a huge component in that. This is a time to accelerate because we are on a war footing, because you are the army we need, because this is the battle for our nations," she told a conference room filled with offshore wind developers and suppliers. "This is a war of good against evil, and we are all enlisted."

NORTHERN RAILWAY

OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Approx cost of work	Earnest Money to be deposited	Cost of tender document	Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen
1.	Improvement of station building in the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN-III/DLI.	Rs. 63,27,308.51 (Rupees Sixty Three Lakh Twenty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Eight and Fifty One Paise Only)	Rs. 1,26,600/- (Rupees One Lakh Twenty Six Thousand Six Hundred Only)	Rs. 0.00/-	24.05.2022 @ 15:00 Hrs.	www.ireps.gov.in

• The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. **No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT/08/2022-23/W-3 Dated: 28.04.2022** 991/22

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जिला-बेमैतरा (छठगो)
मो.नं. 07821-292198, E-mail ID-itiprd@rediffmail.com Website-www.itiparpoori.com

क्रमांक-औषस/पर/महादर/क्रय/निविदा/2022/205 /परपोड़ी, दिनांक 25-04-2022

निविदा सूचना
शासकीय औद्योगिक प्रशिक्षण संस्था परपोड़ी जिला बेमैतरा द्वारा व्यवसाय कोषा, वेल्डर, नैकेलिक डीजल, फिट्टर एवं सिटिंग टेक्नालॉजी के लिए औद्योगिक एवं वायुमयन क्रय करने हेतु सीलबंद लिफाफे में आवेदन आमंत्रित किया जाता है। निविदा प्रति, संस्था में दिनांक 28.04.2022 से दिनांक 27/05/2022 तक उपलब्ध रहेगा। इच्छुक निविदाकर्ता दिनांक 27/05/2022 दोपहर 1.00 बजे तक निविदा, निविदा राशि 3000/- (तीन हजार रुपये) के साथ जमा कर सकत है, निविदा की प्रति एवं नियम/शर्त राज्य स्तरीय वेबसाइट www.cgstate.gov.in एवं जिला स्तरीय वेबसाइट www.bemetara.gov.in तथा www.itiparpoori.com से जानकारी देखा जा सकता है। दिनांक 27/05/2022 दोपहर 1:00 बजे के बाद निविदा स्वीकार नहीं किया जावेगा। निविदा शास, औद्योगिक प्रशिक्षण संस्था परपोड़ी, बेमैतरा में दिनांक 27/05/2022 को 2:00 बजे निविदा/क्रय समिति के समक्ष खोला जावेगा।

हस्ता/-
(ए.के. टेम्बकर)

प्राचार्य

R.O. No. 90617/4
R.O. Dated 27/04/22

शासकीय औद्योगिक प्रशिक्षण संस्था परपोड़ी जिला बेमैतरा (छ.ग.)

Survey shows rising trend in organised sector jobs

New Delhi: As many as 3.14 crore workers were employed in nine industries in the December quarter of 2021, indicating a rising trend in employment in the organised sector, according to a Labour Bureau survey.

In the September quarter of 2021, the number of workers stood at around 3.10 crore. The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) on Thursday released the report of the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) for the period October-December 2021 period.

"Happy to inform the report on 3rd Round (Oct –Dec, 2021) of Quarterly Employment Survey shows a rising trend in employment in organised sector, employing 10 or more workers, of the selected 9 sectors," Union Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav said in a tweet.

Citing the survey, he said the number of workers employed stood at 314.54 lakh

(3.1454 crore).

QES captures employment data in respect of establishments employing 10 or more workers in nine sectors -- Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transport, Education, Health, Accommodation & Restaurants, IT/ BPOs and Financial Services.

These sectors accounted for about 85 per cent of the total employment in units with 10 or more workers in the 6th Economic Census.

According to the report, manufacturing sector is the largest employer accounting for around 39 per cent of the estimated total number of workers followed by education sector at 22 per cent.

Citing the survey, the ministry said that the manufacturing sector had the maximum number of workers during the period at 124 lakh, followed by education at 69.26 lakh.

They were followed by IT/BPOs (34.57 lakh), health (32.86 lakh), trade (16.81 lakh),

transport (13.20 lakh), financial services (8.85 lakh), accommodation and restaurants (8.11 lakh), and construction (6.19 lakh).

Almost all (99.4 per cent) establishments were registered under different statutes.

Overall, around 23.55 per cent of units provided on-the-job training to their workers.

Among the 9 sectors, 34.87 per cent of units in health sector provided on-the-job training, followed by IT/BPOs at 31.1 per cent, the ministry said in a statement.

The survey is done by the Labour Bureau to provide frequent (quarterly) updates about the employment and related variables of establishments in both organised and unorganised segments of the nine select sectors, which account for a majority of the total employment in the non-farm establishments.

The Labour Bureau comes under the ministry. **PTI**

Fertiliser subsidy may go up 55% to record ₹2.5 lakh cr in FY'23

New Delhi: India's fertiliser subsidy bill is likely to shoot up by 55 per cent to record Rs 2.5 lakh crore this fiscal as the government will provide additional funds to make up for the spike in cost from higher import price, top sources said on Thursday.

The government will ensure that there is no shortage of fertilisers in the country during the kharif (summer-sown) and rabi (winter-sown) season and it is already in talks with major global producers to import key soil nutrients, they added.

According to the sources, Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya is likely to visit many countries, including Saudi Arabia, Oman and Morocco, soon to secure imports on both short and long term basis.

"The government is working hard to ensure there is no shortage of fertilisers in the country," said a top government functionary, and added that the

country has sufficient stocks for the ongoing kharif season, and there would be no problems during the rabi season as well. It is to be noted that fertiliser consumption during rabi season is 10-15 per cent more compared to the summer crops.

The government will not increase retail prices of urea and also provide adequate subsidies to ensure that the maximum retail prices of non-urea fertilisers remain at the present level, the sources said.

The government has taken the historic decision on the fertiliser front that it will not pass on the burden to farmers, the sources said, adding that due to higher subsidy, selling price of both urea and DAP (Di-Ammonium Phosphate) are significantly lower in India compared to countries, like US, China and Brazil.

On Wednesday, the Union Cabinet approved a subsidy of ₹ 60,939.23 crore for phosphatic and potassic fertilisers, including DAP. **PTI**

Sensex, Nifty rally over 1% on gains in energy, IT, banking shares

Mumbai: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded by over 1 per cent on Thursday, propelled by buying in index majors Reliance Industries, HUL and Infosys along with an overall positive trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 701.67 points or 1.23 per cent to end at 57,521.06. During the day, it zoomed 971.46 points or 1.70 per cent to 57,790.85 amid the expiry of the derivatives contracts.

The NSE Nifty rallied 206.65 points or 1.21 per cent to 17,245.05 as 45 of its stocks ended in green.

"Markets rebounded sharply and ended the monthly derivatives expiry session with decent gains. In continuation to the prevailing trend, upbeat global cues triggered a firm start which further strengthened with healthy buying in select index majors from FMCG, energy, banking and IT space," Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd



said.

Among Sensex scrips, Hindustan Unilever spurted the most by 4.55 per cent after the company posted better-than-expected financial results for the fourth quarter of FY22.

HUL posted an 11 per cent growth in domestic business on a flat volume growth due to a high base effect.

Reliance Industries rose by 1.49 per cent after a tripartite partnership of investment venture Bodhi Tree Systems, Viacom18 and Reliance Projects & Property Management Services Ltd was announced on Wednesday.

Reliance also became the first Indian company to cross a market valuation of USD 250 billion. **PTI**

Gold declines by ₹442; silver tumbles ₹950

New Delhi: Gold in the national capital on Thursday fell by Rs 442 to Rs 51,010 per 10 grams in line with decline in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 51,452 per 10 grams.

Silver also declined by Rs 950 to Rs 64,167 per kg from Rs 65,117 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,885 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.25 per ounce.

"Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading at USD 1,885 per ounce on Thursday. Gold prices fell to a two-month low as the dollar rallied on expectations of aggressive monetary policy tightening by the US Federal Reserve," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities), HDFC Securities. **PTI**

RBI modifies norms for banks on short-term crop loan scheme

Mumbai: RBI on Thursday modified norms for banks to claim the amount of interest subvention provided to farmers under the short-term crop loan scheme through Kisan Credit Card (KCC) during the last fiscal.

Pending claims for the 2021-22 financial year can be submitted by June 30, 2023 and those have to be duly certified by the statutory auditors "as true and correct", Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a circular.

In order to provide short term crop loans up to Rs 3 lakh to farmers at an interest rate of 7 per cent per annum, the government offers interest subvention of 2 per cent annually to banks.

An additional 3 per cent interest subvention is provided to farmers who pay their loans

promptly. For such farmers, the effective interest rate is 4 per cent.

As per the circular on 'Modified Interest Subvention Scheme for Short Term Loans for Agriculture and Allied Activities' availed through Kisan Credit Card (KCC) during 2021-22, banks are required to submit their claims on annual basis duly certified by their statutory auditors as true and correct, within a quarter from the close of the year.

"Any remaining claim pertaining to the disbursements made during the year 2021-22 and not included in the claim as on March 31, 2022 may be considered separately and marked as an 'Additional Claim' and submitted latest by June 30, 2023 duly certified by the Statutory Auditors as true and correct," it said. **PTI**

Hygge Energy, Think Gas sign MoU to set up zero emission electric mobility solution

New Delhi: Hygge (pronounced 'hoo-guh') Energy, a global player offering cleantech solutions to the marketplace, has signed an MoU with THINK Gas, a leading operator of CNG stations in India to set up Hygge's "Zero Emission Electric Mobility" solution at the latter's CNG stations.

Hygge's software solution, which maximizes usage of renewable energy for the purpose of EV charging, will be installed at THINK Gas's CNG station in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, followed by other locations under consideration. The solution comes with the Hygge EV mobile app that enables planning and management of EV charging stations, as well as tracking of payments and carbon credits. **PNS**

Twitter revenue climbs to \$1.2B, daily users grow 16%

San Francisco: Twitter on Thursday posted quarterly earnings of \$513 million days after it agreed to be sold to billionaire Elon Musk.

The social media company said Thursday that revenue rose 16% to \$1.2 billion in the three months to March compared with the same period last year.

Twitter, based in San Francisco, reported an average of 229 million daily active users in the quarter, up 16% from last year.

Musk's \$44 billion deal to buy Twitter was announced earlier this week and the deal is expected to close later this year.

Twitter canceled the conference call with executives and industry analysts that usually accompanies its results, so there will be little further insight into the company's current financial condition. **PTI**



THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

Twitter, which has agreed to be sold to billionaire Elon Musk, is due to report its first-quarter earnings Thursday before trading opens on Wall Street.

The report will provide

STPI ex-DG takes over as new Startup Odisha chief

New Delhi: Dr Onkar Rai, former Director General (DG) Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India took over as the Executive Chairman of Startup Odisha.

Startup Odisha is the state Agency of MS&ME Department, Govt. of Odisha to develop the Startup Ecosystem in the state.

Since 2016, Startup Odisha has been pivotal in nurturing innovation & entrepreneurship by recognising more than 1200 Startups, 21 Incubators, 75 Entrepreneurship cells under the initiative.

Recently, Startup Odisha has come up with a World-Class Incubation Centre (O Hub) comprises of state-of-the-art, plug-n-play infrastructure to incubate, accelerate Startups within the state of Odisha. **PNS**

Rupee settles 4 paise higher at 76.53 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee pared initial losses to settle 4 paise higher at 76.53 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, tracking positive domestic equities.

The appreciation bias in the local unit is likely to be capped in the near term amid strong American currency, inflationary concerns and fears about an aggressive pace of the US rate hikes, traders said.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 76.60 against the greenback and moved in a range of 76.43 to 76.71 in the day trade. It finally closed at 76.53, registering a rise of just 4 paise over its previous close of 76.57.

On Wednesday, the rupee

had settled almost flat at 76.57 against the US dollar.

"Rupee weakened in the first half of the session but rose in the latter half despite broader gains in the dollar. The dollar has been rising on the expectation that the Fed could raise rates at the next week's meeting," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Inflation remains a concern for the central bank and it could continue to hold a hawkish stance.

"Major crosses Euro and Pound continued to remain under pressure against the US dollar. Today's focus will be on the advance GDP number from the US and weaker-than-esti-

mated data could keep gains capped for the dollar," Somaiya said. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 776.72 points or 1.23 per cent higher at 57,521.06, while the broader NSE Nifty jumped 206.65 points or 1.21 per cent to 17,245.05.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.23 per cent to USD 105.56 per barrel. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, surged 0.44 per cent to 103.41. Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Wednesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 4,064.54 crore, as per stock exchange data. **PTI**



Director of Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Rahul Jain (R), LIC Managing Director Mini Ipe (C) with LIC MD BC Patnaik (L) during a press conference in Bengaluru on Thursday. The LIC IPO is opening on May 4, 2022 **PTI**

SBI Life Mar qtr net rises 26% to ₹672 cr

New Delhi: SBI Life Insurance (SBI Life) on Thursday reported a 26.3 per cent rise in its net profit at Rs 672 crore for quarter ended March 2022.

The life insurer had posted a net profit of Rs 532 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Total income of the company during the January-March quarter of 2021-22 rose to Rs 21,427.88 crore, from Rs 20,896.70 crore in the same period of 2020-21, SBI Life said in a regulatory filing.

Net premium income in Q4FY22 stood at Rs 17,433.77 crore, up by 12.07 per cent from Rs 15,555.74 crore in the year-ago period.

For the full year 2021-22, the company's net profit grew to Rs 1,506 crore, as against Rs 1,456 crore in 2020-21. Income

during the year rose to Rs 83,027.20 crore from Rs 82,084.89 crore a year ago.

SBI Life said it registered a growth of 39 per cent in the value of new business (VoNB) to Rs 3,700 crore in FY22.

VoNB is the present value of expected future earnings from new policies written during a specified period. It reflects the additional value expected to be generated through writing of new policies during a specified period.

The insurer said it maintained private market leadership in individual rated premiums of Rs 12,870 crore, with 23.4 per cent share.

There was strong growth in individual new business premium of 32 per cent to Rs 16,500 crore in 2021-22. **PTI**

Reliance plans bid for UK retail major Boots: Report

London: Mukesh Ambani led Reliance Industries is considering a joint bid with US buy-out firm Apollo Global Management for Britain's well-known retailer Boots, according to a UK media report on Thursday.

According to 'The Financial Times', the American private equity firm is working with one of India's richest businessmen on a bid for the Nottingham-headquartered health and beauty retail chain. If successful, it is expected to result in Boots expansion into India, South-east Asia and the Middle East.

The newspaper said people familiar with the matter said Reliance and Apollo Global would own equity stakes in Boots under the plan, but it is not clear whether their stakes would be the same size.

So far, Apollo declined to comment and Reliance Industries is yet to respond on the queries.

Boots' US parent company, Walgreens Boots Alliance, put



the business up for sale in December last year to focus on healthcare in its domestic market. It has set a deadline of May 16 for bids, one of the people told the newspaper.

Boots, a popular pharmacy chain in the UK, has more than 2,000 stores across the country and reportedly gets about 45 per cent of its estimated GBP 6 billion in annual revenues from providing services such as prescriptions and vaccinations to the UK's state-run National Health Service (NHS).

Ambani's other major UK acquisition in recent years was in 2019, when he bought the famous toy retailer Hamleys for an undisclosed sum. **PTI**

TRIFED organises national conclave on 'Wild and Forest Honey'

Beekeeping activity has been recognised as one of the important activities by Government of India for its promotion and development to achieve "Sweet Revolution" in the endeavour of enhancing the income of bee farmers and honey gatherers. I am happy that TRIFED has joined hands with Ministry of Agriculture and National Bee Board to accelerate the implementation of such new and key initiatives that will go a long way in empowering the underprivileged tribals," said Arjun Munda, Minister for Tribal Affairs, while delivering the key note address at the National Conclave on "Wild and Forest Honey" on April 28, 2022.

Munda thanked TRIFED for organising the event and said, "I hope TRIFED as an implementing agency for formation of 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) will assist in taking ahead the vision of our hon'ble Prime



Minister in making country Atmanirbhar. The formation of Honey FPOs will prove to be a boon for tribal beekeepers and honey gatherers by bringing a MadhuKranti".

He also emphasised the need for sustainable development of the sector.

The conclave was organized by TRIFED, Ministry of

Tribal Affairs, in conjunction with National Bee Board (NBB) as a part of campaign of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare's "KisanBhagidari,PrathamiktaHa marni".

The campaign is a part of the AzadiKaAmritMahotsav celebrations and will run from 25 to 30 April, 2022.

Bajaj Auto shares decline nearly 2% after Q4 earnings

New Delhi: Shares of Bajaj Auto dipped nearly 2 per cent on Thursday after the company reported a 2 per cent decline in consolidated net profit for the fourth quarter ended March 2022.

Bajaj Auto stock declined 2.58 per cent to Rs 3,804.80 during the day on the BSE. It finally ended at Rs 3,833.50 apiece, lower by 1.85 per cent.

On the NSE, the stock dipped 2.57 per cent to Rs 3,805 during the day and later settled at Rs 3,828.70 apiece, down 1.97 per cent. The company's market valuation tumbled Rs 2,096.15 crore to Rs 1,10,928.85 crore on the BSE.

Bajaj Auto on Wednesday reported a 2 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,526 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2022, as sales in both domestic and export markets were hit by weak demand and semiconductor shortage. **PTI**

Comm Min makes case for encouraging domestic manufacturing of 102 items to cut imports

New Delhi: The commerce ministry has made a case for encouraging domestic manufacturing of 102 items like chemicals, electronic products and insulin injection as their share in the country's total imports are high.

According to an analysis of imports by the ministry, the 102 items are in huge demand in the country and are imported because domestic supplies are not adequate.

"Based on the study results, it is suggested that items showing high growth and/or high share i.e. A total of 102 items with share of 57.66 per cent in total import may be prioritised for immediate interventions for domestic production opportunities," the report said.

It has recommended that industry associations, manufacturers and business leaders may consider exploring domestic capacity expansion in these items with a view to meet the domestic demand, which in turn will fuel economic growth and create employment opportunities.

The study was conducted to identify items which are consistently being imported, and have significant share in value of imports. The objective is to enhance their domestic production capacity and reduce import dependence.

As many as 88 items such as gold, natural gas, crude palm oil, integrated circuits, parts of telephonic/telegraphic apparatus and personal computer have shown increase in imports in the short, medium and long run.

India's imports have touched USD 611.89 billion in 2021-22 as against USD 394.44 billion in 2020-21. **PTI**



CLOSER TO PARIS

Liverpool beat Villarreal 2-0 in 1st leg of Champions League semis to put one foot in the final

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool are on the brink of a third Champions League final in five seasons after breaking Villarreal's resistance to win the first leg of their semi-final 2-0 at Anfield on Wednesday.

Two goals in two minutes undid Villarreal boss Unai Emery's defensive game plan as Pervis Estupinan deflected Jordan Henderson's cross into his own net before Sadio Mane slotted in a second.

The Reds remain on course for an unprecedented quadruple of Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup.

And barring a huge upset when the sides meet again in southern Spain in six days' time, Liverpool's season will finish in Paris on May 28.

The population of Villarreal would fit inside Anfield but the 3,000 travelling support did their best to match the noise of the home support early on.

In stark contrast to the free-flowing thrills of Manchester City's 4-3 win over Real Madrid in the other semi-final on Tuesday, Emery's men followed the same tactic that saw them past Juventus and Bayern Munich by retreating behind the ball.

However, the Yellow Submarine could barely lay a glove on Jurgen Klopp's men as Liverpool just had to bide their time to make their dominance count.

The Reds have now scored 135 goals this season, but were held scoreless in a frustrating first 45 minutes.

THE REDS REMAIN ON COURSE FOR AN UNPRECEDENTED QUADRUPLE OF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE, PREMIER LEAGUE, FA CUP AND LEAGUE CUP. AND BARRING A HUGE UPSET WHEN THE SIDES MEET AGAIN IN SOUTHERN SPAIN IN SIX DAYS' TIME, LIVERPOOL'S SEASON WILL FINISH IN PARIS ON MAY 28

Mane headed wide Mohamed Salah's pinpoint cross with the best opening.

The Senegalese also saw a deflected effort fly just wide and Villarreal goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli escaped unpunished with some sloppy handling from a number of speculative efforts.

Another long-range strike was the closest Liverpool came to breaking the deadlock before the break as Thiago Alcantara's sweet strike

clipped the post.

The six-time European champions started the second half at a higher tempo and quickly began to punch holes in Villarreal's rear-guard.

Fabinho's goal was ruled out for offside against Virgil van Dijk in the build-up.

Moments later, Anfield erupted as the error-prone Rulli finally cost the Spaniards with a feeble attempt at parrying Henderson's deflected cross.

The last thing the visitors could afford was the floodgates opening, but they were powerless to stop the waves of Liverpool attacks.

Salah was the architect with a perfectly weighted pass for Mane to prod past Rulli on 55 minutes.

The offside flag came to Villarreal's rescue once more to rule out Andy Robertson's strike.

Emery was hailed the "king of the cups" by Klopp for his stunning Europa League record, with one of his four triumphs in that competition coming as Sevilla boss against the German during his first season at Liverpool in 2016.

However, Liverpool are a different beast six years on and the limitations of a side sitting seventh in La Liga were shown up as they struggled to mount any sort of response to going behind.

Luis Diaz smashed across the face of goal as Liverpool threatened to kill the tie off with a third.

The English giants had to settle for a two-goal advantage, but they are yet to lose by a two-goal margin in 55 matches this season.



Barcelona to play 2023-24 season away from Camp Nou

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona will play the 2023-24 season away from Camp Nou while Europe's largest soccer stadium undergoes a massive overhaul, the Spanish club said Thursday.

The club said Barcelona will play its games at the municipally owned Lluís Companys Stadium. The stadium, which has a capacity of about 60,000 spectators, hosted the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1992 Olympics.

The club said its long-delayed project to remodel and modernize Camp Nou, which currently seats 99,000 spectators, will begin this year after it received the final go-ahead from the city.

Games will continue to be played at Camp Nou next season. After playing the following campaign away from Camp Nou, the club wants games to

return for the 2024-25 season, albeit with attendance reduced to 50% because of construction work. The club plans to finish the stadium work during the 2025-26 season.

The club wants to increase Camp Nou's capacity to 110,000 while also refurbishing its surrounding area, which includes a pavilion for the club's other sports, the museum and stores. It has budgeted 1.5 billion euros (\$1.57 billion) for the project.

Barcelona's crosstown rival, Espanyol, played at the Lluís Companys Stadium from 1997-2009. The stadium, whose field is ringed by an athletics track, sits atop a small hill that offers views of the Mediterranean city.

Barcelona had considered using its much smaller Johan Cruyff Stadium, which is located outside the city, as an alternative site.

Inter wastes chance to take Serie A lead

AP ■ ROME

For four months, Inter Milan had been pointing to its postponed match at Bologna as a chance to gain ground in the title race.

Yet a goalkeeping blunder handed Bologna a 2-1 win Wednesday as Inter wasted a lead and a chance to reclaim the Serie A lead.

Defending champion Inter was left trailing city rival AC Milan by two points with four matches remaining.

Reserve goalkeeper Ionut Radu was thrust into action for the first time in nearly a year following a back problem to Samir Handanovic and was to blame for Bologna's winner.

Attempting to clear following a throw in, Radu instead kicked the ball toward his own net and Bologna's Nicola Sansone had the final touch to make sure it went in.

Former Inter Milan striker Marko Arnautovic headed in the equalizer for Bologna after Ivan Perisic had put Inter ahead early on.

The match was postponed from January due to a coronavirus outbreak within Bologna's squad.

WASTED CHANCES



Fiorentina and Atalanta also wasted opportunities to boost their chances of qualifying for Europe in two other postponed matches.

Seventh-place Fiorentina was beaten 4-0 at home by Udinese -

marking a second consecutive defeat for the Viola.

Pablo Mari, Gerard Deulofeu, Walace and Destiny Udogie scored for Udinese, which is 12th.

Eighth-place Atalanta had to

scramble for a 4-4 draw at home against Torino, with Luis Muriel converting his second penalty of the night for an 84th-minute equalizer.

Torino is 11th.

Raiola angered at media reports of his death

AP ■ MILAN

Football "super agent" Mino Raiola shot back on Thursday at wide-spread media claims that he had died at the age of 54, taking to Twitter to say he was angered by the reports.

Reports of the death of Raiola, whose clients include Paul Pogba and one of world football's current hottest properties, Erling Braut Haaland, quickly spread from Italy.

It was the second time this year that speculation surrounding his health has been denied by Raiola or his entourage.

"Current health status for the ones wondering: pissed off second time in 4 months they kill me. Seem also able to resuscitate (sic)," Raiola's official Twitter account said.

Raiola's agency had earlier told AFP that reports of his death were "fake news" after Italian media widely claimed that he had passed away.

The Gazzetta Dello Sport, Italy's most prestigious sports daily, even published an obituary for Raiola, who was born in southern Italy but raised in the Netherlands.

When asked by AFP whether the reports were true, Raiola's agency said: "Mino is not dead, the stories are fake news".

The agency would not reveal Raiola's whereabouts nor whether he was sick.



Italian news agency ANSA quoted Alberto Zangrillo, the head of the intensive care unit at the San Raffaele hospital just outside Milan, as suggesting that Raiola was fighting for his life.

"I am outraged by phone calls from pseudo-journalists who are speculating on the life of a man who is fighting," Zangrillo said.

Raiola, whose clients also include AC Milan forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic, is one of the sport's most influential agents and most controversial characters.

He has been accused of inflating player salaries to unsustainable levels and has been embroiled in controversy over commissions made on transfers.

In 2016, former Juventus general manager Giuseppe Marotta said Raiola earned 27 million euros (\$28.3 million) from the sale of France international Pogba from Juventus to Manchester United that summer.

Football Leaks claimed that Raiola had received 49 million euros from three parties in the then world record 105 million-euro transfer.

Osaka wants go easy on herself entering clay season

AP ■ MADRID

Former No. 1 Naomi Osaka enters the clay-court season with the goal of not being too hard on herself.

Osaka made the final in Miami last month and will be playing as a wildcard entry when the Madrid Open begins on Thursday.

"I'm trying to embrace my mistakes compared to the previous years as well, so I'm not that hard on myself," she said Wednesday.

"If I make a mistake or if I don't move up to the ball fast enough - because I find on clay you actually have to move much more - but if I do stuff like that I just tell myself not to be mad."

Osaka withdrew from the French Open last year and took a break from competition after saying she "suffered long bouts of depression" and experienced "huge waves of anxiety" before speaking to the media.

The four-time Grand Slam champion has openly talked about working on her mental health since winning the 2018 U.S. Open over Serena Williams. She left last year's U.S. Open in tears and was brought to tears again by a comment from a spectator at Indian Wells earlier this year.

"I'm still a student so I should try to keep learning," she said ahead of her debut in Madrid.

Osaka said she hoped to learn from



some of the clay-court specialists who are playing in Madrid, including Rafael Nadal and the red-hot Carlos Alcaraz.

"Honestly, I've been wanting to watch the really good clay-court players practice because I feel like I'm the type of person that learns really fast if I see it up close, and honestly it's a bit of a waste to have all these really good professional tennis players and not watch them," the 24-year-old Japanese player said.

"I've kind of wanted to see Alcaraz, so it'd be cool to watch everyone practice."

Osaka said she "stole one of the things" that Nadal did and was practicing it, without elaborating.

"It'll either go really good or really bad. There's like no in between," she said.

"But I think as I've been doing it, it's been going pretty well."

Osaka took two weeks off after playing in Miami and said she "changed a couple of things" in her game to prepare for the clay season.

"I think you guys will be able to tell when I play."

"I don't want to spoil the surprise," she said.

"I would say I did change a couple of things to suit myself more for clay."

Osaka said she has set a goal of reaching the semifinals either in Madrid or in Rome.

Klopp signs new Liverpool contract until 2026

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has signed a new contract that will keep him at Anfield until 2026, the Premier League club announced on Thursday.

The German, whose previous deal was due to expire in 2024, said he was "delighted, humbled, blessed" to be staying for an extra two years.

"There is just so much to love about this place," he said. "I knew that before I came here. I got to know it even better after I arrived and now I know it more than ever before."

"Like any healthy relationship, it always has to be a two-way street; you have to be right for each other. The feeling we were absolutely right for each other is what brought me here in the first place and it's why I've extended previously."

He added: "When the owners brought the possibility to renew to me, I asked myself the question I've mused over publicly -- 'Do I have the energy and vibe to give of myself again what this amazing place requires from the person in the manager's office?'"

"I didn't need too long to answer in truth. The answer was very simple...I'm in love with here and I feel fine."



Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag enter Asia C'ship QF

PTI ■ MANILA (PHILIPPINES)

Star Indian shuttler PV Sindhu snatched up a straight game win over lowly-ranked Yue Yann Jaslyn Hooi of Singapore in women's singles competition to advance to the quarterfinals of Badminton Asia Championships here on Thursday.

The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also made it to the quarterfinals but it was curtains for London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and world championships silver winner Kidambi Srikanth.

Sindhu, seeded fourth, who had claimed a bronze in the 2014

Gimcheon edition, defeated Jaslyn Hooi, ranked 100th, 21-16 21-16 in 42 minutes to set up a clash against third seed Chinese He Bing Jiao, whom she had beaten for a bronze at the Tokyo Olympics.

World number 7 Sindhu, a double Olympic medallist, has a 7-9 head-to-head record against Bing Jiao, whom she has beaten twice in the last two meetings.

The third seeded mixed doubles duo of Satwik and Chirag too produced a fine performance to sail into the last-eight round with a 21-17 21-15 win over Japan's Akira Koga and Taichi Saito.

The world number 7 Indian



pairing will next face either fifth seeded Malaysian combination of Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik or Singaporean duo of Danny Bawa Chrisnanta and Jun Liang Andy Kwek.

However, Saina's dream of claiming her fourth medal in the prestigious tournament ended after she ran out of steam to eventually lose 21-12 7-21 13-21 to 22-year-old Chinese Wang Zhi Yi, ranked 16th in the world.

Saina is on a comeback trail after recovering from some nagging injuries and had skipped the selection trials for the upcoming major events such as Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and Uber Cup.

Srikanth, seeded seventh, too couldn't step up his game when it mattered, going down narrowly to China's Weng Hong Yang 16-21 21-17 17-21 in a men's singles second round match that lasted an hour and 17 minutes. Earlier, despite the huge difference in their rankings, it was a tight battle for supremacy between Sindhu and Jaslyn Hooi.

At one stage, the Indian was two-point behind at 7-9 against her opponent, who managed to take a slender 11-10 lead at the interval but Sindhu stepped up and levelled 16-16 before pocketing the opening game.

Punjab aim to stifle in-form KL Rahul against LSG

PTI ■ PUNE

Punjab Kings would be keen to put brakes on Lucknow Super Giants skipper KL Rahul's rollicking batting form and notch up a win when the two sides clash in an IPL game here on Friday.

Lucknow are currently in fourth spot, having five wins and three losses from eight games, while Punjab are at sixth, with four wins and as many losses.

Lucknow beat Mumbai Indians by 36 runs in their last game, while Punjab come into the game after defeating Chennai Super Kings by 11 runs. Rahul has been in sublime form at the top of order and has already hit two hundreds -- both against Mumbai Indians -- and a fifty-plus score this season.

With 368 runs, he is the second highest run-getter so far this season, just behind Rajasthan Royals' Jos Buttler and has been the batting mainstay for his team.

Punjab's balanced bowling attack, led by South African pacer Kasigo Rabada, would be keen to put the brakes on the stylish right-handed batter.

Rabada and the likes of Arshdeep Singh, who has been impressive in death overs, Sandeep Sharma, Rishi Dhawan and Rahul Chahar, would need to pose serious questions to Rahul at the MCA stadium, which has witnessed high-scoring thrillers.

Leg-spinner Chahar is the leading wicket taker for Punjab with 10 scalps but he would need to step up even more to help his team's cause. In the batting department, opener Shikhar Dhawan, who hit an unbeaten 88 in Punjab's previous matcg, is back among the runs and that is a big plus. But the form of skipper Mayank Agarwal is a cause of concern. He



has blown hot and cold with the willow, having a single fifty-plus score in the seven matches this season. He would be keen to find consistency and provide the thrust at the top with flamboyant Dhawan.

One-down Bhanuka Rajapaksa has played his part well against CSK the other night when he chipped in with 32-ball 42 and the Sri Lankan would be keen to put up another good show.

One of the top-order batters will need to come good again to set the stage for power-hitters like Liam Livingstone and Jonny Bairstow if Punjab have to post or chase a big total.

For Lucknow, captain Rahul needs support from other batters, including his opening partner Quinton De Kock, who failed in the game against Mumbai as he was dismissed for 10.

DELHI BEAT KKR BY 4 WICKETS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Delhi Capitals made rough weather of an easy chase due to a middle-order collapse before recording a comfortable four-wicket victory over a lacklustre Kolkata Knight Riders here on Thursday, keeping their IPL play-off qualification hopes alive.

Chasing an easy target of 147, DC were 84 for five and 113 for six at various stages of the innings before Rovman Powell (33 not out) once again displayed his big-hitting prowess to get DC past the target with an over to spare. The hero of the win was certainly Kuldeep Yadav, with a game-changing 4 for 14 when KKR batted.

While DC with 10 points are placed sixth, KKR remained at third from the bottom, and the chopping and changing in the side is a testimony that all is not well in the Shah Rukh Khan-owned franchise's camp.

Whether big bosses, coaching staff and captain Shreyas Iyer are all on same page is a million dollar question at the moment as they suffered a fifth straight defeat.

Defending a total of 146 wasn't easy but Umesh Yadav (3/24) did try his best as he started brilliantly with a diving return catch off the very first delivery of the DC innings to sent Prithvi



Shaw (0) back.

David Warner (42 off 26 balls) was in fine touch, adding 65 for the third wicket with Lalit Yadav (22 off 22 balls), as DC cruised along at 82 for two.

But it soon became 84 for five as both the set batters were removed in quick succession and skipper Rishabh Pant (2) played a rank bad shot to bring KKR back in the game.

Axar Patel's (24 off 17 balls) needless run-out after being well-set made it 113 for six, and more importantly, 34 to get in five overs.

KKR captain Shreyas Iyer had to get one over done from his non-regular bowler and Powell took advantage of that, dispatching Venkatesh Iyer for a six off the very first ball. The 17th over yielded 18 runs and it

changed the fortunes for Delhi. Earlier, KKR's much-vaunted batting line-up imploded, failing to get a grip of Kuldeep Yadav's deception and guile before Nitish Rana's half-century became a face-saver.

A host of changes in the playing XI did seem to have affected the balance of KKR as their innings lacked momentum, save Shreyas Iyer (42 off 37 balls)

and Rana (57 off 34 balls), who tried to get a move on.

Rana's partnership of 62 for the seventh wicket with Rinku Singh (23 off 16 balls) proved to be a saving grace after the two-time champions slumped to 83 for six at one stage.

Kuldeep, who is in the middle of a brilliant season, finished with 4 for 14 which included the wickets of Shreyas and the dangerous Andre Russell.

► **pointstable**

PO. TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1. GT	8	7	1	0	14	0.371
2. RR	8	6	2	0	12	0.561
3. SRH	8	5	3	0	10	0.600
4. LSG	8	5	3	0	10	0.334
5. RCB	9	5	4	0	10	-0.572
6. DC	8	4	4	0	8	0.695
7. PBKS	8	4	4	0	8	-0.419
8. KKR	9	3	6	0	6	-0.006
9. CSK	8	2	6	0	4	-0.538
10. MI	8	0	8	0	0	-1.000

► **boundarymeter**

4s	1140
6s	596

Stokes chosen as England Test captain

AP ■ LONDON

Star all-rounder Ben Stokes was named as England's new Test captain on Thursday, replacing Joe Root, who stood down earlier this month after a string of defeats.

The 30-year-old, who served as Root's deputy, was the overwhelming favourite to take charge of a struggling team that has won just one of their past 17 matches.

Stokes, whose career is peppered with staggering performances with bat and ball, has been a loyal lieutenant to Root and made a point of praising his friend and predecessor in a short statement. "I am honoured to be given the chance to lead the England Test team," he said. "This is a real privilege and I'm excited about getting started this summer. I want to thank Joe for everything he has done for English cricket and for always being a great ambassador for the sport all across the world. He has been a massive part of my development as a leader in the dressing room and he will continue to be a key ally for me in this role."

Root resigned after five years in charge following a 1-0 series loss in the Caribbean, which came hot on the heels of a humiliating 4-0 Ashes



defeat in Australia.

New managing director of England men's cricket Rob Key said: "I had no hesitation in offering the role of Test captain to Ben. He epitomises the mentality and approach we want to take this team forward into the next era of red-ball cricket."

"I am delighted that he has accepted, and he is ready for the added responsibility and the honour. He thoroughly deserves the opportunity."

Stokes already has a formidable workload as an all-format, pace-bowling all-rounder and only last year took a mental health break from cricket.

He has scored more than 5,000 Test runs and taken 174 wickets in 79 matches and is also one of the stars of England's white-ball teams.

Stokes's first match as the permanent England captain will come against New Zealand, the country of his birth, at the start of a three-Test series at Lord's on June 2.

He previously captained the Test side in a four-wicket defeat by the West Indies in Southampton two years ago when Root was on paternity leave -- his only first-class match in charge.

But he has long been regarded as a leading figure in the England dressing room and was praised for the way he led an inexperienced side in a 3-0 one-day international series win at home to Pakistan last year after a coronavirus outbreak ruled out the first-choice squad.

His promotion to the captaincy completes a remarkable turnaround for the player, whose career was in the balance when he was charged with affray following an incident outside a Bristol nightclub in 2017 before being found not guilty following a court case.

Key is still looking to appoint a permanent head coach, although he has said he will split the job into separate red and white-ball roles.

Bengaluru to host Ranji Trophy knock-out matches

RANJI TROPHY SCHEDULE

QUARTERFINALS:	June 4-8
First Quarterfinal:	Bengal vs Jharkhand
Second Quarterfinal:	Mumbai vs Uttarakhand
Third Quarterfinal:	Karnataka vs Uttar Pradesh
Fourth Quarterfinal:	Punjab vs Madhya Pradesh
Semifinals:	June 12-16
Final:	June 20-24



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bengaluru will host the Ranji Trophy knock-out matches, starting with the quarterfinals, from June 4 with the final set to be played from June 20.

The league stage of the Ranji Trophy was played before the start of the ongoing IPL and the BCCI had said that the knock-outs would be played after the lucrative T20 league.

PTI is in possession of the Ranji Trophy knock-out schedule.

It is understood that there will be no compulsory quarantine for the players but bio-bu-

ble will be maintained. The teams and the players will have to submit a negative RT-PCR report on their arrival to the venue.

The four quarterfinals will be played from June 4-8. Bengal will take on Jharkhand in the first quarterfinal.

Fourty-one-time Ranji champions Mumbai are up against Uttarakhand while

Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh will square off in the third quarterfinal.

The fourth quarterfinal will be played between Punjab and Madhya Pradesh.

The two semifinals will be played from June 12 to 16, while the summit clash of the prestigious domestic championship will be played from June 20.

Take Umran Malik to England for one-off Test: Gavaskar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The legendary Sunil Gavaskar has pitched for young pace sensation Umran Malik's inclusion in the Indian team for the upcoming England tour following his stunning five-wicket haul against Gujarat Titans in the IPL here.

The 22-year-old Sunrisers Hyderabad pacer from Jammu produced one of the most fiery spells of fast bowling in the IPL history, snapping five wickets for 25 runs on Wednesday night.

But his breathtaking effort went in vain as Rashid Khan (31 not out off 11 balls) and Rahul Tewatia (40 not out in 21 balls) scored 56 from the last four overs, including 22 from the final six deliveries, to take the Titans home in a last-ball thriller.

"The next for him, I think is the Indian team," former India skipper Gavaskar said during his commentary after the game.

"He might not play in the XI because India have got Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Umesh Yadav. So, he might not play."

"But just travelling with the group, travelling with the likes of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, sharing the dressing room with them... Just look what is going to happen to him!"

The young pace sensation has been clocking in excess of 150 kph consistently throughout the season and has picked up 15 wickets in eight matches at



15.93 average.

Introduced into the attack as late as the eighth over, Malik bowled devastatingly quick deliveries to scythe through the Gujarat Titans top-order, becoming the first IPL bowler to pick up all the first five wickets of an innings.

He rattled Shubman Gill's off stump for his first wicket, before removing Hardik Pandya with a combination of pace and bounce.

Next, he produced a perfect 153 kph thunderbolt yorker to smash the wickets of

Wriddhiman Saha, before cleaning up both David Miller and Abhinav Manohar to sign off with a five-for.

India's tour of England starts in June with the visitors playing the final Test of the five-match series, which was abandoned last year due to COVID-19, from July 1 to 5, before embarking on a three-match T20 series and playing as many ODIs.

India will begin the UK tour with two T20Is against Ireland in Dublin, starting June 26.

Kumar Kartikeya Singh to replace Arshad in MI squad

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians have roped in left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya Singh as a replacement for injured Mohd Arshad Khan for the remainder of the Indian Premier League.

The left-arm spinner will join Mumbai Indians for the price of Rs 20 lakh," the IPL stated in a media statement on Thursday.

Kumar Kartikeya Singh, who represents Madhya Pradesh in domestic cricket, has so far played nine first class matches, 19 List A games and eight T20s, picking 35, 18 and 9 wickets respectively.

Singh was with the Mumbai Indians as part of the support team. Mumbai Indians, who have suffered eight losses on the trot, are out of contention for a playoff berth. The Rohit Sharma-led side will now on Rajasthan Royals on April 30 at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai.



I've been working on my batting in last two years: Rashid



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Hitting three sixes in four balls, including the match-winning maximum from the final delivery, is a stupendous achievement for any batter but Afghan star Rashid Khan says he has the self-belief to execute such performances after working on his batting in the last two years.

Rashid (31 off just 11 balls), known more for his match-winning leg-spin bowling, pulled off a heist as he struck three sixes from four balls, bowled by pacer Marco Jansen, to hand Gujarat Titans a thrilling five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad on Wednesday night.

His partner Rahul Tewatia (40 not out off 21 balls) had hit a six from the first ball and ran a single after the Titans needed 22 runs from the final over while chasing a stiff 196 for a win.

"The feeling is good...You just have it in mind to go out there and have the self-belief, keep my shape strong and hit it," Rashid said after his batting heroics. "I was happy to do it against them (former club Sunrisers Hyderabad), but I was just trying to play my game and have the belief

in my batting which I've been working on the last two years."

Asked what transpired between him and Tewatia during the final over, Rashid said, "When it was 22 left, I just told Tewatia that we have given 25 in the last over with our best bowler (Lockie Ferguson). We just have to have that belief in ourself."

"If we have one missed ball, don't think about it and don't panic. Just stay strong and we need to finish it or get as close as possible because it might help us with run rate."

"But as long as we have that belief, anything is possible. Just stay there, keep your shape and hit it strong. So that was our plan and luckily we had those four sixes."

Tewatia also echoed Rashid's sentiments and said his earlier experience of finishing matches helped him in such situations.

"We needed 22 runs from last over. Rashid bhai said it was chaseable. I told him we can take the match closer (to a win) if I can hit six from the first ball. I said I will go all out for a six and let's see what happens," Tewatia said at the post-match press conference.