

OPINION 6
REBOOT BUREAUCRACY
TO MAKE IT EFFECTUAL**WORLD 8**
CHINA SLAPS SANCTIONS AGAINST
PELOSI FOR TAIWAN VISIT**MONEY 10**
DAS: UNACCEPTABLY HIGH
INFLATION LED TO HIKE

DEHRADUN, SATURDAY AUGUST 6, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹2

the pioneer

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INDIA TO FACE
WEST INDIES IN
4th T20I TODAY
12 SPORT**CAPSULE****DELHI RECORDS 2,419
COVID CASES, 2 DEATHS****New Delhi:** Delhi on Friday recorded 2,419 Covid cases, the highest in six months, with the positivity rate rising to 12.95 per cent, while two more people died due to the disease, according to health department data. It was the third consecutive day that the daily count of Covid-19 cases crossed the 2,000-mark.**SEER ENDS LIFE, BJP MLA
BOOKED FOR ABETMENT****Jodhpur:** A seer committed suicide in Rajasthan's Jalore after he was allegedly pressured by a BJP MLA to give way through his hermitage to the land where the legislator wanted to build a resort, according to police. Police also recovered a suicide note from the spot but did not disclose its content.

Cong hits streets on price rise, unemployment, GST

**Rahul, Priyanka
detained with
60 Cong MPs
and workers****PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI**

The Congress on Friday staged a countrywide protest against price rise, GST and unemployment, but the party leaders were more vocal on criticising the Centre alleging that the Government unleashed the Enforcement Directorate against the Gandhis in the National Herald case.

The epicentre of the protest was Delhi where Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi led from the front, but the party also mobilised its cadre in several States to give it a shape of pan-India agitation against the policies of the Modi Government.

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi led the protest inside Parliament premises but did not attend the march due to health issues.

Wearing black outfits, Rahul, Priyanka, and nearly 60 Congress MPs from both Houses of Parliament and hundreds of Congress work-

ers were detained when they tried to march to Rashtrapati Bhavan from Parliament.

Ahead of the protest, Rahul addressed a Press conference during which he alleged that India is witnessing the "death of democracy" and anybody who stands against the onset of dictatorship is "viciously attacked".

He said the Gandhi family is attacked because it fights for democracy and for communal harmony.

He charged that the sole agenda of the Government is that people's issues such as price rise, unemployment and violence in society must not be raised.

"What we are witnessing is the death of democracy. That is what India is witnessing. What India has built brick by brick, starting almost a century ago, is basically being destroyed in front of your eyes," said Rahul, who was flanked by party leaders Jairam Ramesh and Ashok Gehlot.

Asked about the questioning by the Enforcement Directorate of Congress president Sonia and him in the National Herald case, Rahul said, "Question all you want, there is absolutely nothing there, everybody knows it. We are not going to be intimidated by such tactics."



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi during a protest in New Delhi on Friday PTI

RBI hikes repo rate by 50 bps, EMLs to rise

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday hiked the key lending (repo) rate by 50 basis points. This is the third increase since May to tackle rising inflation. The rate hike will mean home, auto and other loan EMLs will rise further.

The hike by 50 bps to 5.40 per cent is 25 bps higher than the pre-pandemic repo level.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das indicated that this may not be the end of the tightening regime. The RBI, however, did not revise its existing economic growth or inflation forecast despite indications of a global slowdown. **See P10**

Away from Delhi stir, Mamata calls on PM

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI**

While her party has been attacking the Modi Government over actions by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against the TMC leaders in West Bengal, State Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the national Capital on Friday and raised a host of issues concerning her State, including GST dues and the timely release of funds by the Centre under various schemes.

Mamata's meeting with the Prime Minister and later with President Droupadi Murmu came a day ahead of

the Vice President's election in which her party has broken ranks with the Opposition and decided to abstain.

The meeting came against the backdrop of the arrest of her Minister Partha Chatterjee by the ED.

The Prime Minister's Office shared a picture of the meeting, which lasted about an hour. In a memorandum to the PM, Mamata said she had repeatedly sought his intervention for urgent release of funds due to the State on account of the implementation of MGNREGA, PM Awas Yojana and PM Gramin Sadak Yojana. The amount due under these schemes stood at ₹17,996.32 crore, she said.

Cong's stir subtle message of its appeasement politics: Shah

**BJP calls Cong drama a
ploy to shield Gandhis****PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

While the BJP called the Congress protest on Friday a ploy to shield the Gandhis from the National Herald corruption probe, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath linked the agitation by

Congress leaders in black clothes to the "appeasement" politics alleging the protest was planned on the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation of Ram Janambhoomi temple in 2020.

"The Congress chose this day for protest and wore black clothes because they want to give a subtle message to further promote their appeasement politics," said Shah.

**Only sick mind can link
protests to Ram temple
foundation day: Cong**

New Delhi: The Congress hit back at the BJP saying only a sick mind can link the protests to the Ram temple foundation day. "It's only a sick mind which can produce such bogus arguments. Clearly the protests have hit home!" tweeted party leader Jairam Ramesh.

New VP today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Members of Parliament will vote on Saturday to elect the next Vice President of India in an election where NDA candidate Jagdeep Dhankhar is pitted against Opposition pick Margaret Alva. With numbers stacked in favour of the NDA, Dhankhar, a former Governor of West Bengal, is set for an easy win.

Cracks were visible in the Opposition camp as Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress decided to abstain from voting alleging lack of consultations in deciding on the name of Alva.

Foreign powers ruled us by belittling our feats: HM

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said foreign powers could keep India under their rule as they succeeded in creating an inferiority complex among Indians which should be uprooted to achieve Independence in its truest sense.

He said that the foreign rulers created a myth that Indians were illiterate, ignoring the fact that the Gita, the

Vedas, astronomy, and zero were given to this world by our country. Shah was speaking after the launch of a mega serial "Swaraj — Bharat Ke Swatantrata Sangram Ki Samagra Gatha", produced by Doordarshan to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence. The 75-episode mega show chronicles lesser-known tales about Indian history and would be telecast from August 14 on Doordarshan in Hindi and regional languages.

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Five arrested for attacking jeweller and making extortion call

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The police have arrested five persons accused of first attacking then demanding Rs 50 lakh extortion from the owner of Mora Tara jewellery shop here. The police also recovered arms and mobile phones used in carrying out the criminal activities by the accused. The arrested accused are all natives of Bijnor district in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh and not connected to any big gang. The men have been identified as the main accused Pradeep Chauhan along with Sachin Prajapati, Kaushal Kumar, Arun Kumar and Anshul Kumar. The main accused is an MSc in industrial chemistry and was also accused in another bank robbery at Moradabad during 2015.

The Haridwar senior superintendent of police Yogendra Singh Rawat informed that an attempt was made to shoot Nipun Mittal, the owner of Mora Tara jewelers about a week ago. However, the bullet got lodged in

Mittal's laptop. He had discovered the bullet on the next day and had filed a complaint in the Jwalapur Kotwali. After that, Mittal got an extortion call for Rs 50 lakh.

Rawat said that four teams were formed to investigate the attack and extortion call. After investigating various aspects, the police arrested the five men who are all educated persons. The main accused Pradeep Chauhan had hatched the conspiracy targeting Mittal in order to meet the expenses he needed for the settlement of a past case. Preparing for the crime, Chauhan had re-connoitered the jewellery shop while posing as a customer shopping for his wife. He had also spent a total of Rs six lakh on renting two flats in Haridwar and one in Delhi, where the five men had planned to hide after committing the crime. The SSP has announced a cash reward of Rs 25,000 for the team which cracked this case.

Samples collected to check quality & safety of pulses

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Food Safety department conducted a sampling drive in Dehradun and Pachwa Doon areas in view of the festive season. The district food safety officer of Dehradun, PC Joshi informed that Food Safety Standards Authority of India had undertaken a sampling drive in 250 cities across India on Friday to check the quality and safety of pulses. The district food safety authority team in Dehradun conducted sampling in the markets of Dehradun and Pachwa Doon. Twenty samples of local and all-India brands were collected by the team.

According to the officials, about 90 per cent of the pulses in Dehradun's markets are supplied from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan while less than 10 per

cent is locally produced and supplied. All variants of the pulses' samples collected will be checked on all parameters under the food safety standards regulation. Among the safety parameters, heavy metals, aflatoxin contaminants, pesticides and adulteration will also be checked. The report of the sample tests will be uploaded within six weeks on the portal of the Food Safety Standards Authority of India. The campaign is expected to ascertain pulse adulteration hotspot. Along with Joshi, the sampling team also comprised senior food safety officer of Vikasnagar Manju Rawat and senior food safety officer of Municipal Corporation of Dehradun Ramesh Singh and Satish Purohit among others.

AAP demands resignation of state govt on UKSSSC scam

Resignation of UKSSSC chairman proves corruption in the selection commission- Bisht

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand unit of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has demanded that the Uttarakhand government should own the moral responsibility of the recruitment scam of Uttarakhand Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UKSSSC) and resign. The convenor of state unit of AAP, Jot Singh Bisht said that a cover up operation is going on in the scam of USSSC and all those who are arrested are small fries. He said that the resignation of the UKSSSC, S Raju clearly shows that the state government is involved in corruption in the process of recruitment and it has no right to remain in power. Bisht said that the dreams of thousands of youngsters lie shattered due to large scale irregularities and corruption in recruitment examinations.

Officials discuss single-use plastic ban with traders

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

Chief development officer Prateek Jain presided over a meeting with Vyapar Mandal representatives regarding the ban on single-use plastics. Jain and municipal commissioner Dayanand Saraswati gave detailed information about the single-use plastic items banned including disposable plastic cutlery, items with plastic sticks polystyrene (thermocool) for decoration, plastic straws, disposable plastic plates, cigarette packets with film wrapping, PVC banners of less than 100 microns and polythene carry bags among other items.

CDO Jain said that there was some confusion among the traders regarding single use plastic. The authorities expect necessary cooperation from the members of the business fraternity, he added. For this purpose, the meeting was held to provide them correct information. The officials also appealed to the traders to spread awareness regarding the ban on single-plastic items.

Jain further said that alternative items like steel glasses, glass bottles and clay bottles should be used in place of the banned plastic items. He said that in the next few days, the administration will undertake a publicity campaign regarding single-use plastic, after which the action of issuing challans and confiscating the banned items will be initiated. Office bearers of the Vyapar Mandal assured the officials that they will fully cooperate with the district administration in discouraging the use of single-use plastic.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE							
Tender Notice No: 16/2022				Date: 05.08.2022			
S N	Name of work with its location	App. Cost of the work (In Rs.)	Address of the office from where the tender form has been issued	Bid Security to be deposited (in Rs.)	Completion period of the work	Date & Time for submission of tender & opening of tender	Website particulars & Address of office
1.	11/SrDEE/G/MB/2022 (IInd Call):- Repair and improvement of Electrical Amenities over Moradabad Division.	1,42,45,440.90 (Including GST)	Electrical Branch, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, Moradabad	2,21,200.00	6 (Six) Months	Tender will be received upto 15/00 hrs and opened at 15/00 hrs on 29/08/2022	Website www.ireps.gov.in Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, Moradabad
2.	02/SrDEE/G/MB/2021 (IIInd Call):- Balance work for Essential attention of major Defects/ Shortcomings and upgradation of 33/11 KV/415 V sub Station over MB Division.	72,19,901.78 (Including GST)		1,44,400.00	4 (Four) Months		
2027/22							
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE							



Department of Social Justice and Empowerment

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Government of India

Vayoshreshtha Samman

Inviting nomination for National Award,2022

The last date for receipt of nominations is 29th August, 2022

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India invites nominations on the National Awards portal (<https://awards.gov.in/>) for conferment of "Vayoshreshtha Samman (National Award)", 2022 for eminent senior citizens and institutions involved in rendering distinguished services for the cause of elderly persons, especially indigent senior citizens.

- Detailed eligibility criteria, proforma for nomination for the Awards and the procedure for nomination etc., are available on the website of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment as indicated : <http://socialjustice.gov.in>.
- Nominations in the prescribed proforma complete in all respects with the requisite supporting documents of the nominee, photograph and bio-data of the nominee (in the case of individual category), may be uploaded on <https://awards.gov.in/>. No physical applications shall be entertained.
- The last date for receipt of nominations is 29th August, 2022. Self nominations and applications from individuals or institutions not recommended by the prescribed agencies/individuals will not be entertained and shall be liable to be summarily rejected.

CBC 38101/11/0020/2223

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. 117-DRM-MB-22-23 closing date 30.08.2022 16:00 hrs. Name of work: Pre and post tamping track measurement survey using Gedo Vorsys trolley system under ADEN/II/HRI (RAC-SPC section) in the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/II/MB. Tender closing date/time: 30.08.2022 16:00, Cost of work: Rs. 5997994.10, Earnest money Rs.: 120000.00; Tender Cost : NIL, Bidding start date: 16.08.2022 and Period of Completion: 05 Months, Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. For detail information please log into www.ireps.gov.in Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc, are not allowed. No.: 117-DRM-MB-22-23 Dated: 04.08.2022 2000/22	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. 110-DRM-MB-22-23 closing date 30.08.2022 16:00 hrs. Name of work: Heavy repair to the store and office of SSE P.Way (SSE/P.Way/SPC, BLM, SAFIPUR) under ADEN/II/HRI. Tender closing date/time: 30.08.2022 16:00, Cost of work: Rs. 6999479.74, Earnest money : 140000.00; Tender Cost : NIL, Bidding start date: 16.08.2022 and Period of Completion: 06 Months, Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. For detail information please log into www.ireps.gov.in Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc, are not allowed. No.: 110-DRM-MB-22-23 Dated: 05.08.2022 2025/22	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

Sector Headquarter Bareilly ITBP Force, Notice Inviting e-Tenders

The Commandant (Engr), Sector Headquarter Bareilly Bukhara Camp Distt.-Bareilly (U.P) on behalf of President of India invites online item rate tender on two bid system of following work:-

1. **NIT NO.- ITBP/SHQ(BRLY)/ENGR/237(T-14)/2022-6440-52** Dtd-01.08.22 Tender ID- 2022_ITBP_704233_1 **Name of Work:-** C/o Coy office with Ops room, Semi permanent tubular shed for SO's living accommodation, Kitchen cum dining hall for Jawans, WT station & Store buildings at **Dung** Post of 14th Bn. ITBP Pithoragarh (UKD). **Estimated Cost** Rs. 2,34,84,806/- **Earnest Money** - 4,69,696/- **Period of completion** 03 (Three) working season or 36 months, **Last date and time of submission** of bid 22.08.2022 upto 1030 Hrs.

The bid forms (Tender form) and other details can be obtained from the website www.eprocure.gov.in

COMMANDANT (ENGR)
SHQ(BLY) ITBP

CBC - 19112/11/0072/2223

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My name in my son's class 10th and 12th certificate is Tula Ram whereas my correct name is **Tula Ram Painuly**. In future I should be known by Tula Ram Painuly. In the passport of my son my name should be written as **Tula Ram Painuly**. Tula Ram Painuly s/o Bachspati Painuly, address H.No 38, ward No 8, Rajeev Gram, Dhalwala, PO Muni Ki Reti, Narender Nagar, Tehri Garhwal

NOTICE

Bhatta Fall & Resorts Private Ltd. (CIN: U24239DL2003PTC121654) has not Authorised anybody to Sell/ Transfer of land measuring 26 Bigha and/or part hereof situated at Khevat No. 65, Kharsa No. 3186, Village Kyarkuli Bhatta, Pargana Centradoon, Tehsil & District Dehradun, owned by the company. Any such sale/Transfer shall be illegal. **Arun Kumar Goel, Director**



कार्यालय नगर निगम, देहरादून

सार्वजनिक ई-निविदा सूचना

नगर निगम कार्यालय परिसर ग्राउन्ड, गांधी रोड व पुराना कबाड़ी बाजार स्थित पण्डित दीन दयाल उपाध्याय पार्किंग (पार्क की दीवार के साथ) दो वर्ष हेतु पार्किंग संचालित करने हेतु दिनांक 01.09.22 से दिनांक 31.08.24 अपरान्ह 2.00 बजे तक तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय ई –निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। इच्छुक व्यक्ति / फर्म निविदा प्रपत्र www.uktender.gov.in तथा www.nagarnigamdehradun.com से डाऊनलोड कर प्रतिभाग करने से पूर्व निविदा दस्तावेज का अवलोकन करें। निविदा स्वीकार /अस्वीकार करने का अधिकार नगर आयुक्त में निहित होगा। अन्तिम तिथि दिनांक 26.08.22 समय 2.00 बजे तक ई–निविदा पोर्टल www.uktender.gov.in पर उपलब्ध करायी जायेगी। निविदा सम्बन्धी सम्पूर्ण विवरण नगर निगम की वेबसाईट www.nagarnigamdehradun.com पर भी उपलब्ध है।

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पत्रांक:- 1208/भूमि-2022 दिनांक 05.08.2022



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For complete details [including qualifications, experience, age etc.] and online Application Form, please visit Company website: <http://careers.ecil.co.in> or www.ecil.co.in

Advt. No. 18/2022
CBC 48138/12/0012/2223

DGM-HR(Rectta)

Sector Headquarter Bareilly ITBP Force, Notice Inviting e-Tenders

The Commandant (Engr), Sector Headquarter Bareilly Bukhara Camp Distt.-Bareilly (U.P) on behalf of President of India invites online item rate tender on two bid system of following work:-

1. **NIT NO.- ITBP/SHQ(BRLY)/ENGR/238(T-14)/2022-6453-65** Dtd-01.08.22 Tender ID- 2022_ITBP_704251_1 **Name of Work:-** C/o 03 Nos Semi permanent buildings for Qtr Guard Tradesman Shop, MI Room, Misc Store, Ration Clothing Store at **Dung** BOP of 14th Bn. ITBP Pithoragarh (UKD). **Estimated Cost** Rs. 1,75,15,979/- **Earnest Money** - 3,50,319/- **Period of completion** 03 (Three) working season or 36 months, **Last date and time of submission** of bid 22.08.2022 upto 1030 Hrs.

The bid forms (Tender form) and other details can be obtained from the website www.eprocure.gov.in

COMMANDANT (ENGR)
SHQ(BLY) ITBP

CBC - 19112/11/0074/2223

Sector Headquarter Bareilly ITBP Force, Notice Inviting e-Tenders

The Commandant (Engr), Sector Headquarter Bareilly Bukhara Camp Distt.-Bareilly (U.P) on behalf of President of India invites online item rate tender on two bid system of following work:-

1. **NIT NO.- ITBP/SHQ(BRLY)/ENGR/243(T-14)/2022-6427-39** Dtd-01.08.22 Tender ID- 2022_ITBP_704269_1 **Name of Work:-** C/o 05 Nos Semi permanent structure for Jawan Barracks at **Dung** BOP of 14th Bn. ITBP Pithoragarh (UKD). **Estimated Cost** Rs. 2,50,89,270/- **Earnest Money** - 5,01,785/- **Period of completion** 03 (Three) working season or 36 months, **Last date and time of submission** of bid 22.08.2022 upto 1030 Hrs.

The bid forms (Tender form) and other details can be obtained from the website www.eprocure.gov.in

COMMANDANT (ENGR)
SHQ(BLY) ITBP

CBC - 19112/11/0073/2223

PUBLIC NOTICE



Registered office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai- 400051

Corporate Office: ICICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059

Branch Office: Showroom no. 301, 3rd floor, Shri Ram Arcade, Old Municipal No. 74, Rajpur Road, Dehradun Pin: 248009

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ("ICICI HFC") and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Mamta Dua (Borrower), Harvinder Dua (Co-Borrower), Chowk No.3 Bagi Koti Athhoorwala Uttarakhand 248001 Uttarakhand 248001. LHDEH00001282638	Khata No.01118 Kharsa No.710 Ka at Mauja Chowk No.2 Baagi Kothi Athoorwala Dehradun-248001. Bounded By- North: 20 Ft Wide Road, South: Land of Sudesh Dna, East: Land of Sudesh Dna, West: Gul Than Land of Bisht Ji.	29-07-2022 Rs. 12,62,937/-	02-06-2022

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitization and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : August 06, 2022
Place: Dehradun

Authorized Officer
ICICI Home Finance Company Limited

U'khand's mangoes, honey & kidney beans to reach markets in USA & UAE

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami flagged off the first consignment of mangoes, honey and kidney beans from Uttarakhand for sale in international markets from his residence on Friday. The consignment from the state is being exported by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) which is an agency of the government of India. The consignment had 1.5 tonnes of mangoes, 28 tonnes of kidney beans and 80 tonnes of honey.

Speaking on the occasion CM Dhami appreciated the initiative of sending local products to foreign destinations by the medium of APEDA. He expressed confidence that one would witness a big increase in the export of local products from the state now.

The CM said that the state government is consistently working in ensuring better marketing for the local produce and for it special focus on branding, packaging and marketing of local products is being done. He said that more efforts need to be put into promotion of local products. The CM said that the state government has prepared an agriculture calendar for increasing the income of farmers and making effective planning and arrangements for them. He said that efforts with the help of agriculture, cooperative



and horticulture departments are being made for development of clusters for augmenting the income of small farmers. He said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken a resolve to double the income of farmers and the Uttarakhand government is committed to fulfil this resolve. Dhami said that the schemes of the state and union government related with agriculture development and welfare are being taken to the persons standing last on the social ladder. The CM further said that the agriculture, irrigation, horticulture and

other related departments should prepare plans for increasing the income of farmers of the state on 25th anniversary of creation of the state and they should start pilot projects for it. Dhami added that the state government would come out with the Kisan Protsahan Scheme for farmers.

The Agriculture minister Ganesh Joshi said that many schemes are being operated in the state for doubling the income of farmers. He said that the agriculture and horticulture departments set a target

to double the production of the state in the year 2025.

The Agriculture secretary Shailesh Bagauli said that for the first time Chausa and Langda varieties of mangoes are being exported to Dubai from the state. Similarly the honey and kidney beans would be sent to the USA.

The additional secretary of Agriculture, Ranvir Singh Chauhan, Horticulture director HS Baweja, Agriculture director Gauri Shankar and others were present on the occasion.

PCU to collect & sell Ganga Jal in India and abroad

Many decisions taken in the board meeting of the Provincial Cooperative Union (PCU) of Uttarakhand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN



The water of the holy river Ganga collected from its origin in Gangotri would now be available in the stores of the country and overseas locations. The Provincial Cooperative Union (PCU) of Uttarakhand would bottle and sell this water. This was one of the many decisions taken in the board meeting of the PCU held in Dehradun on Friday. The meeting was chaired by its president Ramakrishna Malhotra and 14 points were discussed in it.

Apart from sale of Ganga Jal, it was decided that stationery in the office of government and non government cooperative offices would be purchased through the PCU. It was decided that the employees of the cooperative banks would be trained by the experts and an institute of cooperative management research and training centre would be set up in the state.

It was told to the members that understanding between

PCU Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand has been reached for distribution of assets and soon a high level meeting between the two sides would be held.

On the orders of the cooperative minister Dhan Singh Rawat, it was decided in the meeting that selection of 15 children of poor farmers would be done every year and free coaching for competitive examination of medical and engineering entrance would be provided to them.

An understanding that the PCU should be allotted a centre for purchase of paddy and for it a facility of overdraft should be provided to it from the district cooperative banks was also reached in the meeting.

The meeting was attended by vice president Shailendra Singh Bisht, managing director Man Singh Saini, director Subhash Ramola, Pradeep Chaudhary and others.

U'khand administration to get 17 new IAS officers

CM Dhami has cleared the file of promotion of 17 PCS officers to IAS cadre

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Paving the way for the long awaited promotion of 17 officers of Provincial Civil Services (PCS) to Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the chief minister Puskhar Singh Dhami has given his nod to the proposal. The CM office has now sent the file of promotion to the department of personnel (DoPT) which would act on it. The list sent by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) after the meeting of its Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) had the names of 18 officers but it is learnt that one PCS officer, Girdhari Singh Rawat has declined his proposed elevation to the elite cadre of IAS officers. Rawat is scheduled to retire in 2028.

The officers who would get the promotion are Lalit

Mohan Rayal, Anand Srivastava, Harish Kandpal, Meherban Singh Bisht, Alok Pandey, Banshidhar Tiwari, Ruchi Rayal, Jharna Kamthan, Dipti Singh, Ravneet Cheema, Prashant Arya, Prakash Chandra, Ashish, Vinod Giri Goswami, Sanjay and Navneet Pandey. It is pertinent to mention here that the promotion of PCS officers to the cadre of IAS is pending from the last 11 years due to dispute between the direct recruits and promoted PCS officers. In February this year the dispute ended when the Supreme Court (SC) ruled in favour of officers recruited directly in PCS cadre. The promotion of the PCS officers would provide a big relief to the state government which is reeling under shortage of IAS officers in its ranks.

Heavy rainfall likely in three districts today

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Heavy rainfall is likely to occur in parts of three districts on Saturday. The State meteorological centre has issued a warning regarding the possibility of heavy rainfall likely to occur at isolated places in Bageshwar, Pithoragarh and Nainital districts today. Apart from this, light to moderate rainfall/thunderstorms are likely to occur at most places in Kumaon region and at many places in Garhwal region with intense showers likely at isolated places in the districts.

The provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to witness partly to generally cloudy skies. Light to moderate rain-

fall / thundershowers are likely to occur, which may be intense in some areas. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 31 degrees Celsius and 24 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun today. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in various parts of the State on Friday were 31.4 degrees Celsius and 24 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 33.1 degrees Celsius and 25 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 20 degrees Celsius and 15.3 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 24.2 degrees Celsius and 18 degrees Celsius respectively in New Tehri.

Minister pulls up officials for substandard works at Mahasu temple

Maharaj announces State fair status for Jagda Mela to be held at Hanol

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State's Tourism and Culture minister Satpal Maharaj pulled up officials of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for the inferior quality of construction works at the Mahasu Devta temple in Hanol. While attending a meeting regarding the Jagda (Hariyali Mela) to be held at Hanol on the last day of his tour programme, the minister declared State fair status for the traditional fair. Thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the minister said that



the PM mentioning Mahasu Devta's Jagda in his Mann Ki Baat programme has brought prominence to this area. He further said that the State government will prepare a master plan for the entire temple complex and give it a systematic form.

Maharaj further directed officials to

Draining sewage into Ganga matter of concern- HC

PNS ■ NAINITAL

Stating that draining of sewage in the Ganga river is a matter of concern, the Uttarakhand high court has directed the Irrigation secretary, chief engineer and superintendent engineer to submit their replies in court while hearing a public interest litigation regarding alleged anomalies in sewage treatment plant works in Haridwar and untreated sewage being drained in the Ganga river. The court has asked what steps are being taken to complete the sewage treatment plant projects and what action has been taken against the officials responsible for anomalies in the projects.

The PIL filed by Ratanmani Dobhal was taken up for hearing by the division bench of chief justice Vipin Sanghi and justice RC Khulbe. The petitioner has stated that budget was released for three sewage treatment projects under the Irrigation department in the Haridwar district. The peti-

tioner stated that these include Rs 2365 lakh project approved by NABARD and Rs 2260 lakh for the project under the Central government's Ganga Flood Control Commission (GFCC). The petition further states that the Subhashgarh irrigation canal has to be constructed at a cost of Rs 695.98 lakh under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) in the Haridwar district. However, these projects are still incomplete despite the funds having been spent and the sewerage is being drained in the Ganga, the petition states. The petitioner also submitted a probe report regarding two of the projects which shows that the engineers at that time along with others had orchestrated irregularities in the execution. The inquiry by the chief engineer also confirms this, said the petitioner. After hearing both the sides, the high court has directed the government and others to submit their replies within four weeks.

HC questions why UEPPCB permission not taken for opening new treks & expedition routes

PNS ■ NAINITAL

The Uttarakhand high court has asked the State government why the permission of the Uttarakhand Environment Protection and Pollution Control Board (UEPPCB) had not been taken before opening new treks and expedition routes. During hearing on a public interest litigation filed by Almora resident Jitendra Yadav, by the high court division bench of chief justice Vipin Sanghi and justice RC Khulbe, the chief justice expressed dissatisfaction and pulled up the district magistrates on the subject of solid waste management. None of the district magistrates had submitted any report on solid waste management which shows the contempt of court orders. The government counsel informed the court that some of the district magistrates had sent their report. However, these reports are not in the format in which they can be submitted in the court. Further time was also sought



for submitting status reports.

Taking strict cognisance of garbage disposal in Haldwani, the court directed the Haldwani municipal commissioner to remain present in the court personally on the next date of hearing.

Meanwhile, the counsel of the petitioner, Dushyant Mainali informed that the 10 new treks and 30 expedition mountains in the high Himalayan region of the State lacked proper arrangements for garbage management. He said that the State government does not have any action plan to ensure effective garbage disposal in the high Himalayan regions of the State.

Cong protests against price rise, unemployment & Agnipath

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand Congress organised a massive protest against rising prices, increasing unemployment and Agnipath scheme in the provisional state capital on Friday. The leaders and workers of Congress party assembled in large numbers at Rajiv Bhawan on the day and headed towards the governor's residence as per the plan. The protest was part of the all India protest call given by the central leadership of the party. The agitated slogan shouting Congressmen led by the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara were stopped by the police at Hathibadkala.

The Congress leaders were arrested by the police when they remained adamant on moving forward. They were detained and taken to the Police lines where they were released in the afternoon.

The PCC president Karan Mahara said that in eight years of rule of BJP, the general public is feeling neglected and cheated. He said that the common person is reeling under an acute spike in the prices and the petrol, diesel, cooking gas and food items have become dearer by more than 50



per cent in the last three years. The LPG cylinder has become costlier by 115 per cent. Mahara said that the Modi government has rubbed salt on the injury by imposing GST on the items of daily use.

The Congress leaders also dispatched a memorandum to the governor in which it said that the unemployed youth were hoping that the BJP government would solve the

problem of unemployment when its leaders had shown a dream to them that it would provide two crore jobs every year. The Congress leaders alleged that selected industrialists were given loans of Rs ten thousand crores for doing overseas business. Launching a scathing attack on the state government the Congress leaders said that the double engine government has failed completely in Uttarakhand.

The state government has failed to prevent migration, provide employment and check corruption.

The leader of opposition (LoP) in state assembly Yashpal Arya, former PCC president Pritam Singh, Ganesh Godiyal, deputy leader of Congress legislature party Bhuwan Kapdi, MLAs, former MLAs and other leaders took part in the agitation.

Cong protest a political stunt to divert attention- BJP Attempts to divert focus away from ED action on Sonia Gandhi & family will never succeed- Chauhan

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party has stated that the Congress is indulging in a political stunt by staging protest against price rise. The protest is an attempt by the party to divert public focus away from its own deeds, said the BJP State media in-charge Manveer Singh Chauhan.

He said that the protest by the Congress is an attempt to divert focus away from the action being taken by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on the Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her family. This diversion tactic will not succeed, said the BJP State media in-charge. Chauhan said, "When the Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman accepted the opposition's proposal for debate on price rise in the parliament and just when she started speaking, all the parliamentarians

of the Congress staged a walk out from the Lok Sabha. The Congress is not serious about inflation and is simply playing politics on it. During the Covid-19 pandemic the government tried to ensure that people living in all areas received additional assistance. The nation is moving ahead even in difficult circumstances."

Chauhan further opined that the Congress leaders should avoid showing the nation in bad light in its efforts to protect a particular family. The Central government is providing Rs 200 subsidy on a cooking gas cylinder to beneficiaries under the Ujjwala Yojana. This is facilitating the availability of cheap cooking gas to these citizens. To relieve the farmers of the effects of costly fertiliser, the government has decided to provide an addi-

tional Rs 1.1 lakh subsidy in addition to the Rs one lakh crore allocation made in the union budget for subsidy. This measure is expected to provide relief to the farmers. Further, keeping the interests of the poor in mind, to control the rising prices of cooking oil the government has decided to facilitate 20 lakh tonnes of crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil in the current and next financial year without import duty. Chauhan further alleged that price rise is at a peak in Congress governed States and the party should take cognisance. "When it comes to corruption, the Congress will break all records. The Congress has established so many records in corruption in independent India that the governments of any nation have not set such records," added the BJP State media in-charge.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount In Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Atul Sharma/ Anubha Gusain/ LBDEH00003132632	Flat No-308, Third Floor, The Artigo Residency, Mauza Malsi, Mussoorie Road, District Dehradun, Uttarakhand/ August 03, 2022	March 17, 2022 Rs. 44,97,126/-	Dehradun

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

Date : August 06, 2022 Place: Dehradun

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

India warns China against violating airspace near LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has asked China to refrain from violating airspace close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh to avoid escalation of tension in the region. This issue was flagged during a meeting between military delegations of the two sides at the border earlier this week.

The Indian team comprising Army and IAF officers expressed concern over recent flying activities by Chinese air force near the LAC on its side in late June and early July, sources said here on Friday adding the parleys took place on Tuesday.

The need for raising this matter by New Delhi came after one Chinese jet reportedly came very close to the LAC and the IAF had to scramble its jets to thwart any possible threat.

These violations took place during the annual Chinese military exercise in the Tibetan plateau region in the last two months.

Sources said India and China discussed ways to better establish understanding to manage air space and avoid air space violations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This was discussed during the routine Confidence Building Measures (CBM) talks on the ground held on Tuesday. The Indian delegation was led by a Major General.

The two sides also promised to adhere to the pacts between the two countries as part of confidence building measures to avoid any escalation at the LAC.

As per existing agreements between India and China, operation of fighter aircraft and armed heli-



The Indian team comprising Army and IAF officers expressed concern over recent flying activities by Chinese air force near the LAC on its side in late June and early July, sources said here on Friday, adding the parleys took place on Tuesday

copters is restricted to a distance of ten kms on each side of the LAC.

According to the 'Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the LAC in India-China Border Area' of 1996, "combat aircraft (to include fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, military trainer, armed helicopter and other armed aircraft) shall not fly within 10 km of the LAC."

The LAC is not fully demarcated and there are differences of perception on the alignment due to which such incidents keep happening, they said.

Given the continuing face-offs at some friction points at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh for the past two years and violent incidents in May 2020, the IAF has activated nearly all its forward bases facing China. Moreover, it has deployed most of its front line jets including SU-30,Mirage and even the recently inducted Rafales to meet any challenge.

Incidentally, the latest talks termed as confidence building measure efforts came nearly a month after the Corps Commanders of the two armies held the 16th round of talks in Ladakh. The issue of airspace violations by China was raised even then.

CBI raids 30 places, books 33 in J&K SI recruitment scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/JAMMU

The CBI has registered a case against 33 accused including then Medical Officer of BSF and Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board officials besides an owner of a coaching centre and conducted searches at 30 locations in connection with alleged irregularities in the recruitment of Sub-Inspector in J&K police.

Searches were conducted today at 30 locations, including at Jammu, Srinagar and Bengaluru at the premises of the accused persons and entities, the CBI said.

The accused persons and entities are Dr Karnail Singh, Medical Officer, BSF Frontier Headquarters, Paloura, Ashok Kumar, ASI, Jammu and Kashmir Police and Ashwani Kumar, former CRPF official.

Avinash Gupta, owner of 'EDUMAX Classes, Akhnour, Akshay Kumar, Manager of 'EDUMAX Classes, Roshan Bral, teacher, Narayan Dutt, then member Jammu and Kashmir Administrative

Service (JKKAS), , Bishan Dass, then Under Secretary, JKSSB, Anju Raina, then Section Officer, JKSSB and MeritTrac Services Private Limited, Bengaluru have also been named as accused in the case.

The case was registered on the request of Jammu and Kashmir government against the 33 accused on the allegations of irregularities in written examination for the posts of Sub-Inspectors in the Jammu and Kashmir police on March 27, conducted by J&K Services Selection Board (JKSSB), it said. The results were declared on June 4. There were allegations regarding malpractices in the examination. The J&K government had constituted an Inquiry Committee to look into the same.

"It was alleged that the accused entered into conspiracy amongst officials of JKSSB, Bengaluru-based private company, beneficiary candidates and others, and caused gross irregularities in conduct of written examination for the posts of SIs," the agency said in

Crypto exchange WazirX director raided in PMLA probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted searches against one of the directors of Zanmai Lab Pvt Ltd which owns the popular crypto-currency exchange WazirX and issued an order to freeze their bank balances to the tune of Rs 64.67 crore on money laundering charges.

The ED is conducting money laundering investigation against a number of Indian NBFCs and their fintech partners for predatory lending practices in violation of the RBI guidelines by using telecallers who misuse personal data and use abusive language to extort high interest rates from the loan takers.

Various fintech companies backed by Chinese funds could not get NBFC license from RBI for carrying out lending business. So they devised the MoU route with defunct NBFCs to piggyback on their license. After the criminal investigation against such entities, many of these fintech APPs have shut shop and diverted away the huge profits earned using this modus operandi.

The fund trail investigation by the ED found that large amount of funds were diverted by the fintech companies to purchase Crypto assets and then launder them abroad, the agency said in a statement. These companies and the virtual assets are untraceable at the moment. Summonses were issued to the Crypto-

exchanges. It is seen that the maximum amount of funds were diverted to WazirX exchange and the crypto-assets so purchased have been diverted to unknown foreign wallets.

The ED probe revealed that Zanmai Labs Pvt Ltd., the company owning WazirX Crypto Exchange, has created a web of agreements with -- Crowdfire Inc. USA, Binance (Cayman Islands), ZettaiPte Ltd Singapore -- to obscure the ownership of the crypto exchange.

Earlier, their Managing Director Nischal Shetty had claimed that WazirX is an Indian Exchange which controls all the crypto-crypto and INR-crypto transactions and only has an IP and preferential agreement with Binance.

ED raids six places in TN in Chinese visa scam case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at half-a-dozen locations in Tamil Nadu in connection with its money laundering probe connected to alleged irregularities in the issuance of visas to 263 Chinese nationals in 2011, in

which Congress MP Karti Chidambaram is also an accused.

Officials said the premises of some companies and their promoters are being searched in Chennai and nearby areas. The ED had initiated a probe in May and filed a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after taking cogni-

sance of a CBI FIR in the same case. The case relates to allegations of Rs 50 lakh being paid as kickbacks to Karti and his close associate S Bhaskararaman by a top executive of Vedanta group company Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd. (TSPL), which was setting up a power plant in Punjab, according to the CBI FIR.

The CBI had then

searched the premises of the Chidamabram family and arrested Bhaskararaman even as Karti Chidambaram was questioned by it. Karti Chidambaram, 50, a Congress MP from the Sivaganga constituency in Tamil Nadu, has denied the allegations and said in a statement that "if this is not harassment, not a witch hunt, then what is."

Designated smoking areas, ads tacit approval to smoke: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Health experts and activists on Friday here called for strengthening the tobacco control law, saying that the continuation of designated smoking areas (DSAs) and ads of tobacco products at Point of Sale (PoS) in the country were like "a tacit approval from the authorities stating that it is ok for the tobacco users and youth to consume the deadly product which every year claim over 13 lakhs lives."

The stringent COTPA

(Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act) Amendment Bill will not only help save several lives but also reduce burden on the healthcare system, said the experts including Dr Shalini Singh, a cancer specialist and Director, ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research, Shweta Shalini, activist and BJP spokesperson from Maharashtra and Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj, a fertility expert.

At a webinar held by the Tobacco-Free India, a citizens group, Dr Shalini

Singh focused on the need to spread awareness about tobacco related cancers and plethora of other diseases while Shweta Shalini, youth BJP leader elaborated on the urgency and the immediate need for action to fight against the lobby engaged in trashing out the tobacco products health, India can never become world Guru," she said.

During the discussion, Dr Singh also revealed that the tobacco industry is now trying to trap youth through 'synthetic nicotine' which is as harmful

and addictive as the nicotine but does not come under the legal purview.

Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj, a well-known gynaecologist focused on tobacco-induced infertility among couples, which, she said, is rising at a disturbing rate in the country. "Smoking and tobacco use can have a serious impact on the fertility of both men and women, and consequently the quality of life in pregnancy as well as negative health on the unborn and borne child, miscarriage, and death," she added.

IN SHORT

MODI, PHILIPPINES PREZ MARCOS DISCUSS BILATERAL COOPERATION

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday spoke with Ferdinand Marcos Jr., President of the Philippines and discussed bilateral cooperation, the PMO said. Modi congratulated Marcos on his election as the 17th President of the Philippines.

MAHA GOVT SEEKS RECALL OF SC ORDER ON CIVIC BODIES POLL

New Delhi: The Maharashtra Government has moved the Supreme Court seeking recall of its order by which it had directed the State Election Commission (SEC) not to re-notify the poll process to 367 local bodies, where it has already commenced, in order to provide reservation to OBCs.

HOPE APPOINTMENT OF NEXT CJI GOES SMOOTHLY: RIJUJU

New Delhi: Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday said formalities are being carried out ahead of the appointment of the next chief justice of India and hoped that everything will go smoothly because the government is "always particular" about rules and conventions.

RLYS HAS GIVEN EMPLOYMENT TO 3.5 LAKH BETWEEN 2014 AND 2022

New Delhi: The Indian Railways has provided employment to 3,50,204 people so far between 2014 and 2022 and the process of recruiting 1.4 lakh more people is currently underway, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told Rajya Sabha.

SC RESTRAINS STATES FROM COERCIVE ACTIONS AGAINST TV NEWS EDITOR

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday protected TV News editor Rajnish Ahuja and restrained authorities in various States from taking any coercive actions against him in connection with multiple FIRs for playing a doctored clip of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the telecast of a programme on July 1.

SC SEEKS CENTRE'S REPLY ON RISING ATTACKS ON CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday allowed the Centre to file a preliminary response to a plea alleging the rising number of attacks on Christian institutions and priests across the country and seeking implementation of its guidelines to curb hate crimes.

'NOT HAPPY WITH CENTRE'S REPLY ON PLEA SEEKING GUIDELINES TO AGENCIES'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said it is not satisfied with the Centre's affidavit filed on a plea seeking suitable guidelines for the investigative agencies with respect to seizure, examination and preservation of personal digital and electronic devices and their content.

'STATUS QUO EXISTS ON AAREY COLONY SITE OF MUMBAI METRO'

New Delhi: The status quo against felling of trees at Mumbai's Aarey Colony, the site for a contentious metro car shed project, exists and no trees have been cut since October 2019, the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) told the Supreme Court on Friday.

कार्यालय मुख्य अभियन्ता (कुमाऊँ), उत्तराखण्ड पेयजल निगम, हल्द्वानी

पत्रांक: 3016 / निविदा / 286 दिनांक : 05.08.2022

ई-टेंडरिंग/निविदा सूचना

कार्य का नाम:- जल जीवन मिशन में टू-बिड सिस्टम के अनुसार काशीपुर एवं जसपुर विकासखण्ड के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित पेयजल योजनाओं के उच्च जलाशय, वितरण प्रणाली, राईसिंग मेन, एफ.एच.डी.सी. एवं पम्प हाउस आदि निर्माण कार्य मय सामग्री टेस्टिंग/कमीशनिंग आदि सहित कार्य:

विकासखण्ड काशीपुर (1)- गिन्नीखेड़ा ग्राम समूह पेयजल योजना (2)- नूरपुर ग्राम समूह पेयजल योजना।

विकासखण्ड जसपुर (2)- किशानपुर पेयजल योजना

1 निविदा आमंत्रण की तिथि	05.08.2022
2 ऑनलाइन प्रकाशन की तिथि	08.08.2022 17:00 बजे
3 दस्तावेज डाउनलोड : प्रारम्भ तिथि 08.08.2022, 17:00 बजे एवं अन्तिम तिथि 22.08.2022, 17:00 बजे	
4 प्री बिड बैठक	12.08.2022 13:00 बजे
5 बिड अपलोडिंग: प्रारम्भ तिथि 16.08.2022, 10:00 बजे एवं अन्तिम तिथि 22.08.2022, 17:00 बजे	
6 दस्तावेजों को ऑफलाइन जमा करने की तिथि	23.08.2022 17:00 बजे तक
7 तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि	24.08.2022 13:00 बजे

निविदा की पूर्ण जानकारी, शुद्धि पत्र एवं निस्स्वीकरण आदि हेतु www.uktenders.gov.in वेबसाइट पर लॉग-इन करें। मुख्य अभियन्ता (कुमाऊँ)

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

N.I.T. No.	S.N. 13-A, B, C, D & E-2022-23-W-V
1 Name of work with its location	A) Provision of RPF barrack of 20 bedded at Ballabgarh on New Delhi-Palwal section. B) Provision of RPF barrack 10 bedded at Gurgaon on DLI-Rewari section. C) Provision of RPF barrack of 20 bedded at new washing line at HNZM on NDLS-PWL section. Similar nature of work: Construction of buildings/quarter. D) Improvement of Track Machine Maintenance Depot, Tughlakabad in the section of SSE/WM/TKD under ADEN/HNZM. Similar nature of work: Any civil work other than track work. E) Defective Layout correction work including Signalling and OHE shifting work under section of SSE/IF/Way/FDB under ADEN/TKD. Similar nature of work: CTR/TRR/TFRR/TTR including raising of track, screening, distressing of track, pre & post works for track maintenance machine like tamping machines/ballast screening/regulating machines & TTR by T-28.
2 Approx. Cost of work	A) Rs. 37,91,199.89, B) Rs. 37,21,510.67 C) Rs. 72,51,384.35, D) Rs. 1,91,71,673.64 E) Rs. 65,00,355.67
3 Earnest Money Deposit	(It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway Only. Note:- FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter no. 201025/CE-I/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016) A) Rs. 75,800.00, B) Rs. 74,400.00, C) Rs. 1,45,000.00 D) Rs. 2,45,900.00, E) Rs. 1,30,000.00
4 Completion period of Work	A) 6 Months, B) 6 Months, C) 6 Months, D) 6 Months, E) 6 Months
5 Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender: Upto 15.00 hrs. on 30.08.2022. Opening of tender at 15.00 hrs. On 30.08.2022	
6 Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.: Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in	

No.: 128-W/280/OET/2021-22W-V/NT-13-A, B, C, D & E-2022-23-W-V Date: 05.08.2022 2016/22

Serving Customers with a Smile

Office of the Superintending Engineer
3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh
E-Mail : sepwdp@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 5215/58 C-03/2022 **E-Tender Notice** **Dated : 04/08/2022**

The Superintending Engineer, 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (**Two Bid System**) in anticipation of Sanction on behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from date **16-08-2022 at 5.00 Pm** onward on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (in Lac)	Cost of Tender (in Rs.)	Validity of Tender (days)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	New construction of Banderlima Harhkhola motor road (Stage II work) in constituency Didihat of District Pithoragarh under State Sector year 2022-23. (Length 4.00 Km.)	4.10	5000.00 + 18% GST	120	12	Category 'B' and Above for Road works in any State Govt./ Govt. of India/ Govt. undertaking

7 die in Bihar hooch tragedy

PTI ■ CHHAPRA (BIHAR)

At least seven people died and 15 others fell ill with some of them even losing their eyesight in a suspected hooch tragedy in Saran district of dry Bihar, officials said on Friday.

It is, however, not known when the spurious liquor was consumed as the family members of victims are not ready to share information.

Saran District Magistrate Rajesh Meena said all the cases were reported from villages falling under Maker police station area and more than 10 people among the seriously ill have suffered loss of vision. "Prima facie it appears that the villagers had consumed spurious liquor.

Five people died here while two deaths occurred at Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) where those who have fallen seriously ill were referred on Thursday," he said.



Jan Adhikar Party president Pappu Yadav meets family members of victims, after several people died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Saran district of Bihar, in Patna on Friday

Saran Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar said "We are conducting raids in Maker, Marhaura and Bheldi police station areas to nab the suspected bootleggers. We will be able to state the number of arrests after the operation is over."

Asked when the deceased

and the ill had consumed the liquor, the SP said that it will be known after investigation. "Family members are not forthcoming with the information," he said. To another query, Kumar said that two victims died at PMCH on Thursday. "We are not sure of the other

deaths as the bodies were cremated without informing the police or a post mortem". Local residents said on condition of anonymity that the drunken revelry began on Tuesday night and continued through the early hours of Wednesday. They said consumption of intoxicants like cannabis has been a custom during Nag Panchami festival, which fell on August 2 this year, and some took alcohol for intoxication.

State minister Ashok Choudhary, a key aide of Nitish Kumar, told reporters in Patna that all the accused will be apprehended and brought to justice. "Action will also be taken against those police personnel whose laxity, or even complicity, may have led to the incident".

Asked about questions being raised over feasibility of prohibition law in the light of hooch cases being reported regularly, Choudhary shot back

"Dowry deaths have not stopped, nor have rapes. But that does not mean we scrap laws against these crimes".

More than 50 people have died in hooch tragedies in the state, declared a dry state over six years ago, since November 2021. Saran itself had reported five hooch deaths in January this year. In July two persons had died after consuming spurious liquor in Patna.

Sale and consumption of liquor were completely banned in Bihar by the Nitish Kumar government in April, 2016, following an electoral promise the chief minister had made to the women of Bihar ahead of state polls held in the previous year.

However, implementation of the stringent prohibition law has often been criticised by the opposition parties, the courts and also ruling alliance partners like former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi.

14 days' judicial custody for aide, Partha; ED fears for Arpita's life

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Former Bengal Minister and Trinamool Congress secretary general Partha Chatterjee and his close aide Arpita Mukherjee arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with school level recruitment scam and money were on Friday remanded in 14 days' judicial custody by a special PMLA court.

While Chatterjee was sent to high security Presidency Jail, Mukherjee was taken to women's prison amid fears of threat to Arpita's life expressed by the ED.

Subsequently the jail authorities have been directed to arrange special security for Arpita, sources said adding even food and water for the accused would have to be pre-tasted. Contesting Chatterjee's bail plea the ED told the court that whatever had been recovered

from the accused persons' houses were just tip of the iceberg and hence they would be required to be grilled again.

The court subsequently allowed the ED to interrogate the duo in jail. Chatterjee and Mukherjee have been in ED remand since July 23 when they were arrested after Rs 22 crores, jewellery and documents were recovered from her apartment.

Chatterjee is also facing charges of illegal appointments — for cash — of teaching and non-teaching staff in Bengal schools. Chatterjee a former number two in Mamata Banerjee Cabinet handling a number of important ministries was subsequently relieved of his ministerial duties by the Chief Minister.

Meanwhile, even as Chatterjee denied any connection with the money and property documents recovered from



Arpita's house the ED on Friday told the court that Arpita had told the investigators that the mountain of cash recovered from her house belonged to Chatterjee.

Rs 50 crore and jewellery and property deeds worth tens of crores were recovered from Arpita's two apartments.

The ED also told the court that during a face-to-face grilling Chatterjee denied close acquaintance with Arpita. When the ED asked as to how his name figured as a nominee in as many as 31 LIC policies of Arpita the former minister kept quiet.

Maha protest: Police detain Cong leaders

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Hundreds of Congress leaders — including State party president Nana Patole, leaders Prithviraj Chavan, Ashok Chavan, Balasaheb Thorat, Varsha Gaikwad and Chandrakant Handore — were detained by police on Friday, ahead of their scheduled demonstration in front of Raj Bhavan in south Mumbai in protest against price hike, GST on essential commodities, unemployment and also manner in which their leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi were treated in Delhi.

While Patole, Ashok Chavan, Thorat, Handore, Varsha Gaikwad were picked up from Vidhan Bhavan area,

Prithviraj Chavan, Manikrao Thakre, Nitin Raut, Aslam Sheikh, Mumbai Congress President Bhai Jagtap and others were detained at Malbar Hills in neighbourhood of Raj Bhavan. In a statement issued

later in the evening, the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) claimed that more than 10,000 party activists were detained from various parts of the metropolis and surrounding areas.



Infighting causes leaders of Kerala BJP to quit; Chand joins CPM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Thanks to infighting in the Kerala BJP and the craving for positions in Central Government, party workers as well as hardcore Sangh Parivar activists are leaving the organisation in search of greener pastures. On Wednesday, Subhas Chand, the standing counsel of the Central Government ended his association with the Sangh Parivar and joined the CPI(M) to work for "socialism, secularism and communal amity" which he says has been jeopardized by the RSS and the BJP.

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Subash Chand who was the president of the Ernakulam

district unit of Viswa Hindu Parishat till Wednesday said that the CPI(M) was the only political entity in the country which could preserve socialism and secularism in India. "I had a meeting with the State leaders of the CPI(M) and they wholeheartedly welcomed me," he said.

It is expected that Subash Chand's entry to the CPI(M) would strengthen the public image of the party as the present leadership in Ernakulam district has not succeeded in mobilising support. This was discernible in the recent assembly by-poll held at Thrikkakkara where the party candidate was trounced by

Uma Thomas of the Congress. The BJP candidate lost the security deposit. Many close followers of Chand too would join the Marxists and this is certainly a setback for the Sangh Parivar, according to K Jayashankar, political critic.

"It is surprising to note that it took Chand eight years to understand that secularism was facing a threat from the BJP Government at the Centre," said Jayashankar. He said the Sangh Parivar leader got a much needed enlightenment after eight years. "It is like a homecoming for Subash Chand. He was a leader of the CPI(M) before he fell out with the then leadership.

Army chief visits forward areas along LoC



Jammu: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Manoj Pande Friday visited forward areas along the Line of Control and formations in the hinterland in the area of operation of White Knight corps. During his visit,

he was briefed by the local commanders on the existing security situation. "General Manoj Pande, COAS visited Whiteknight IA and was briefed about the prevailing security situation. He visited

the forward areas and complimented the commanders & troops for their professional standards, operational preparedness & ability to thwart any threat", spokesman of the Indian army said in a written statement.

Meanwhile, an army jawan and a civilian were injured during an encounter in the South Kashmir district of Kulgam.

According to police, a cordon and search operation was jointly launched by the security forces in the Redwani area of Kulgam district following information about the presence of terrorists in the area. *PNS*

FTII student found hanging in hostel, suicide suspected

PTI ■ PUNE

The decomposed body of a 32-year-old student of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) here was found hanging in his hostel room on Friday, police said. Police suspect it to be a case of suicide, but no suicide note has been found so far.

The student, identified as Ashwin Anurag Shukla, was found hanging in his hostel room this morning. The body was in a decomposed state," Murlidhar Karpe, senior inspector of Deccan Gymkhana police station, said. "Prima facie, it is a case of suicide. But no suicide note has been found so far and our investigation is on," he added.

Yogi inaugurates AirAsia service from Lucknow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In another step towards easing air travel in the most populous state, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, inaugurated AirAsia India's air services connecting state Capital Lucknow with Bengaluru, New Delhi and Goa.

AirAsia's flights from Lucknow to Kolkata and Mumbai will commence in September. Emphasising importance of seamless air connectivity in ensuring state's development and inclusive growth, Yogi Adityanath reiterated his resolve to present Uttar Pradesh as the best state in terms of connectivity, which would also open up new employment opportunities for youth in state.

On occasion, congratulating people of Lucknow for getting better air services, Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia lauded efforts of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for improving air connectivity in state.

"To develop UP according to its potential, as many as 63 new routes have been added recently which will also be to about 108 routes," he said.

The chief minister said that Uttar Pradesh had benefited immensely from 'UDAN' scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The rapid expansion in air connectivity is a testament to Prime Minister Modi's commitment where he said that even those who wear slippers should be able to travel in flights," he said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee during a meeting in New Delhi on Friday

Thousands celebrate 3rd anniv of Abrogation of Article 370

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ SRINAGAR

Thousands of youth, including sportsmen from different parts of the Kashmir valley on Friday converged at the newly renovated Bakshi Stadium to celebrate the third anniversary of Abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A.

The atmosphere inside stadium was electrifying. Players representing different games participated in march past amidst thunderous applause from audience. Earlier, the Bakshi stadium, refurbished at a cost of over 50 crore, was thrown open by Lieutenant

Governor Manoj Sinha. After its formal inauguration world class sports facility would be thrown open to sportsmen to take advantage of best training facilities. Outside stadium, normal life remained peaceful throughout day even as elaborate security arrangements were made to prevent any untoward incident. The main city centre of Lal Chowk also witnessed hectic activity despite 'hartal call'.

On the other hand, regional political parties in Kashmir valley including Peoples Democratic Party and National Conference registered their token protest.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sunayna Singh W/o Late Bipin Kumar Choudhary (age 51 years) R/o RZ-M 31A, M-Block, New Roshan Pura, Najafgarh, South-West, Delhi-110043, have debarred/disowned my son namely Amulyadeep (age 26 years) S/o Late Bipin Kumar Choudhary & and his wife namely Chandni Kumari (age 27 years) from my all moveable and immovable properties and severed all their family, social and financial relations with them due to their misbehavior for all intent and purposes. Anybody dealing with him shall do the same on his/her own responsibilities.

Sunayna Singh.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Sh. Mahendar Singh Chauhan S/o Late Ramchandar Singh Chauhan R/o M-61, Sector-12, Noida G.B. Nagar (U.P) whose the original allottee of Plot No. B-45, Sector-12, Noida Dist. G.B.Nagar (Area 202.5 Sq.Mtr) had registered the said Plot on Special Power of Attorney basis to the following person (s). SPA was executed in favour of Suresh Singh Chauhan S/o Late Ramchandar Singh Chauhan. Which is registered at Sub Registrar Noida Book No. IV Vol. No.57 on Page No. 685-688 at Document No.1740 Dated 16.09.1997. The agreement to sell was not registered or not executed. So it is informed to all concern that the said plot is going to be transferred in favour of Manoj Singh Chauhan S/o Suresh Singh Chauhan R/o B-30, Sector-12, Noida (U.P) if anyone has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Manoj Singh Chauhan

CORRIGENDUM

ICICI Bank
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005
The sale proclamation was issued dated Aug 02, 2022 in **The Pioneer (Eng)**, for Loan Account No. **LBGUR00002372750**, with applicant as **Kanishka**, Please read Earnest Money Deposit as **Rs. 3,50,000/-**. Rest all term and conditions remains the same.
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited
Date : August 06, 2022
Place: Delhi NCR

SVP HOUSING LIMITED
(Formerly Known As MAHABIR METALLEX LIMITED)
Registered Office: A-3, NDSE, Part-1, New Delhi-110049 CIN: L70100DL2003PLC118413
Phone: 011-41070148 Email Id: info@svphousing.com Website: www.svphousing.com

RESULT OF E- VOTING & POLL

It is hereby informed that in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rules made there under, the Company had dispatched the Notice of E- Voting for seeking approval of Shareholders as on cut off date i.e. 22.07.2022 through E-Voting and poll for Special Business listed therein.
Based on the Scrutinizer (Ankit Singhal & Associates , Company Secretaries) Report dated 29th July 2022, the Chairman declared the Results of E- Voting & poll as under:

S. No	Brief Particulars of the Resolution	Number of Total, Valid or Invalid votes received by the Scrutinizer	Number of Shares and % age of total Votes cast in favour of the Resolution	Number of Shares and % age of Total votes				
		Total number of Votes Resolved	Total number of invalid votes	Total Number of valid Votes	Number of Shares	% age of Total votes	Number of Shares	% age of Total votes
1	Appointment of M/s KPMC & Associates, Chartered Accountants (FRN-05359C) as the statutory auditors of the company	4894400	NIL	4894400	4894400	100%	-	-

Accordingly, the above Resolutions have been passed by the Shareholders of the Company with requisite majority.

For and on behalf of SVP Housing Limited

Sd/-
(Vijay Kumar)
Managing Director

Date: 29.07.2022
Place: New Delhi

ESAF
ESAF SMALL FINANCE BANK
GOLD AUCTION NOTICE
Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold ornaments pledged with ESAF Small Finance Bank and not redeemed by borrowers, despite repeated reminders and notices, of our branches, are listed below. This will be auctioned as per the details given below:

DATE OF AUCTION	TIME
: 09-08-2022	: 10 AM TO 4 PM

AUCTION VENUE	
: THROUGH E-AUCTION	

AUCTION ADDRESS	
: https://gold.matxnnet.org/	

To register as bidder for the e-Auction with terms and conditions, and full details of e-Auction please visit the above site

BRANCHES & LOAN ACCOUNT NUMBERS	
New Delhi- Paschim Vihar: 63210000968332, New delhi-Mayur Vihar: 63210000947942, New Delhi-Rohini: 63210000946254, 989192, 938320, 984901	

Customers who are interested to release the ornaments by paying the total due amount may do so, at the respective branches, on or two days before the date of the auction.
Bidders who wish to participate in the auction shall produce their KYC documents. GST No. is mandatory for registered firms/companies. Bidders shall deposit a sum of Rs.50,000 as EMD before participating in the auction.
Thirssur
Date: 06-08-2022
Sd/-
Authorized Signatory

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI : 110001

SA DY NO 925/2020	DATE: 22.04.2022
AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LTD.	APPLICANT
M/S BANK OF INDIA & ORS.	RESPONDENT
To, DEFENDANT	
1. BANK OF INDIA A-6, MEERA BAG NEW DELHI 2. SH. SANJIV ANAND S/O SH. LAL KASHMIRI P-164, GALI NO.7 BIHARI COLONY SHAHDARA NORTH EAST DELHI - 32 ALSO AT: PLOT NO. 361, NEAR TANK PATPARGANJ INDUSTRIAL AREA DELHI - 92 3. MS. NIDHI ANAND W/O SH. BED RAM P-164, GALI NO.7 BIHARI COLONY SHAHDARA NORTH EAST DELHI - 32	

Whereas the above named applicant(s) has/ have instituted a case for recovery of **Rs 23.44,886/- (RUPEE TWENTY THREE LAKH FORTY FOUR THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED EIGHTY SIX ONLY)** against you and where it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **25.08.2022 at 10:30 A.M.**
Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.
Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-
(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application/software:
(ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-I and Recovery Officer-II shall be displayed in the daily cause list itself at DRT Official Portal i.e. **drt.gov.in**
(iii) In any exigency qua that the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 23744878.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal this the 22nd day of April, 2022.
BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL. ASSISTANT REGISTRAR DRT-II, DELHI.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

On expected lines

RBI hikes repo rate by 50 basis points, taking it to 5.4 per cent, which is higher than pre-COVID level

The Reserve Bank of India's repo rate increase on Friday by 50 basis points (bps) to 5.4 per cent was not surprising, given the persistence of inflation—remaining above 7 per cent in the last three months. The stock market had already factored in the rise, so the Sensex ended at 58,388, 89 points or 0.15 per cent higher. Throughout the day, it moved in a range of 405 points. The third rate hike in a row this fiscal suggests that the central bank will remain hawkish for some time. In fact, the recent hike is more than what the market had expected. In all the three revisions, the RBI's monetary policy committee has increased the repo rate by 140 basis points, which is above the pre-pandemic rate of 5.15 per cent. The central bank expects the retail inflation to slide downward as 2022-23 progresses. It estimates inflation for the entire fiscal at 6.7 per cent—7.1 per cent in Q2, 6.4 per cent in Q3, and 5.8 per cent in the last quarter. The RBI's tolerance brand for inflation is 4-6 per cent. Even as the RBI revised the repo rate upwards, it has retained GDP growth projection at 7.2 per cent; it is lower than the International Monetary Fund's 7.4 per cent though. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das blamed the global economic situation for the downturn in the Indian economy.



He went on to highlight the robustness of the Indian economy, calling it “an island of macro-economic and financial stability” in “an ocean of high turbulence and uncertainty.” It has withstood two black swan events and multiple shocks, he added. A black swan event is an absolutely unpredictable incident. Apparently, he was referring to Covid-19, which killed millions and badly damaged the global economy, and the Russian-Ukrainian war; while wars are not unprecedented, few expected one Eastern Europe. In his interaction with the media, Das tended to paint a rosy picture about the economy: inflation has peaked and will go down even though it is very high at this moment; the current account deficit (CAD) can be managed; and the forex reserves are adequate. A few good things did happen. The fiscal situation is improving—the fiscal deficit is estimated to be 6.5 per cent in 2022-23, against 6.7 per cent in 2021-22—despite the shocks of the coronavirus and the ensuing lockdowns. Gross non-performing assets or GNPA's of scheduled commercial banks have come down a six-year low of 5.9 per cent, and are estimated to decline further. Evidently, the economic situation in the country is not as bad as it is made out to be by some people; we surely are not a Sri Lanka in the making. But there is still a lot that needs to be done at the monetary and policy levels. The RBI has to ensure that inflation is reined in soon and GNPA's continue to move southwards. And the government must expedite economic reforms to maintain the momentum.



Followers of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr attend open-air Friday prayers at Grand Festivities Square, in Baghdad, Iraq

God's country faces His wrath

Kerala is facing monsoon fury like never before, and only human intervention is to blame

Monsoon fury has peaked in Kerala claiming at least ten lives across the State. The impact of the Monsoon was not unexpected as the situation in Kerala is conducive to flash floods, landslides, and heavy downpours. Though politicians describe it as the consequences of global warming, many local factors have contributed to the transformation in the pattern of the Monsoon. The unique weather pattern enters the subcontinent through Kerala which has become the Gateway of Monsoon. Gone are the rain forests in the Western Ghats passing through the western border of the State. Uncontrolled exploitation of the pristine forests in the Ghats for mining and cutting down of trees has played havoc with the fragile weather system. The switching over to cash crops which command a premium in the global market led to the clearing of forest lands that were notified as no-go areas by environmentalists and ecologists. Vast stretches of paddy fields that were home to three crops every year have disappeared altogether. The land sharks enjoying political patronage have usurped the farmlands to build concrete jungles, jungles of five-star grade apartments, and shopping complexes.

Since the malls and residential apartments are owned by the financiers of political parties, persons in power find some easy excuses for nature's fury. A note by the Government says that in the

1970s farming was done on 9 lakh hectares of land and this has come down to less than 2 lakh hectares by 2021. What has happened is that many tributaries that brought water to the main rivers have disappeared. The Flat mafias' decision to construct penthouse apartments along the river banks and build roads along the river stretch has swallowed rivers. The rainwater received by the State does not have an exit route. This year is not an exception and the years to come would see the same phenomenon. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan blames the weather forecasting system in the country for not correctly predicting the pattern of rain. Those who follow the advisories of INCOIS, the Indian Meteorological Department, and the Department of Atmospheric Studies of Cochin University know well that the weathermen's forecasts are sharp and to the dot. The fact is that the State Government has failed to evolve a mechanism to mitigate floods and natural disasters. Kerala has not conceived a plan to counter floods. The nature's fury is here to stay.

Reboot bureaucracy to make it effectual

The mantra to make bureaucracy pro-people and proactive is, 'Refurbish, reform and restructure'

The dilemma perpetual has of late affected the mandarins critically, posing the conundrum worst confounded. Being targeted from most corners as inefficient, corrupt, and negative-minded; Indian bureaucracy has exhibited signs of wilting under the pressure of diatribes and vitriolic sophistry. More so it has prompted both insiders and outsiders to question what ails the bureaucracy.

The incisive comments may not be fair for all the officers, as still, some officers maintain the cardinal virtues of administration like sincerity, honesty integrity, and alacrity but it can't wipe off the smeared image that has engulfed the mandarins labeling that they are seldom pro-people, pro-poor and proactive and as such are a bunch self-centered officers more interested in in-service (plum postings and sundry benefits) and post- retirement benefits rather than growth of the nation or people.

A little in-depth study would discern that the imbroglia as to responsiveness to people's cause vis a vis personal materialistic aspirations has left the civil service at the crossroads. Needless to say that a significant number of bureaucrats are still industrious and sincere but it is revealed that the steel frame has begun wilting under the pressure of unscrupulous aspirations. If merit is relegated to the background and excellence is rendered unexpected or unwanted by the 'own senior tribesmen i.e the senior officers, then the young lots lose the direction and succumb to bureaucracy's first ever malady which is corruption. As an insider, I have felt that the concept of camaraderie has vanished. No support is forthcoming for the honest officers when needed as unethical ones marvel at others' sufferings!

Not surprised when John Kerry states that Indian bureaucracy lacks internal cohesion. The formation of small power groups at the highest level has left the young ones in quandary.

With fast changing societal



values, and intrusion of materialistic aspirations-driven visions, the standard (especially moral) of administration has seen many a subversion (paradigm shift from value-based administration to vice-imbuéd governance). The result is that the cardinal principles of administration like honesty, integrity, sincerity, etc have started taking the backseats. It is astonishing that even some young bureaucrats are falling prey to the lures of material comforts and lucrative postings.

The intricate social calculus and material morbidity have also come to affect young mandarins minds. The most deplorable aspect is that some young officers are starting their careers with a touch of corruption, whether in form of malfeasance misfeasance, or nonfeasance. Then who is responsible for this unhealthy and insalubrious trend?

A tryst with the prevailing conditions would reveal that the bureaucracy has to squarely take the blame for losing its sheen. Some of the senior mandarins have forgotten the golden commandments of ethics of civil services and at the same time have ceased to be the philosopher, guides, and pathfinders for

BEND IT TO CHANGE AND CHANGE IT TO PERFECTION. BUREAUCRACY TODAY SHOULD LEAD AGAIN WITH SERVICE TO PEOPLE KEEPING SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL ASPECTS IN MIND

young entrants. The Achilles heel is exposed. Multiple factors like lack of appropriate and relevant training so as to adapt to changing circumstances, lack of proper posting policy, absence of the concept of reward and punishment, the role of political dynamics and power, and materialistic aspirations are responsible for its denigration.

Attitudinal /emotional ramifications and skewed cognitive perception held by some of the senior bureaucrats have resulted in its distorted image projection on the silhouette of societal expectation. The paradigm shift (negative) ushering in the attitudinal crisis and perceptual blunder associated with aspiration for material comfort of bureaucracy have already witnessed the rust and wilt in the steel frame.

Though easier to tell than to give effect to it, it is time for the bureaucracy to mend itself to return to the golden era and rewrite the saga of its own glory. A little change in mindset can usher in a plethora of positivity for the civil services. Other factors would fall in line as nothing deters or hinders a positive mind to initiate a change. The bureaucracy should never forget to understand that they all are

functioning in a democracy, where people are the masters however illiterate or simple they might be. Public servants are servants to serve the cause of people (taking salary money) and never their masters. The sooner mandarins become pro-people, proactive, and pro-poor the better.

The civil servants are appointed to implement laws not hinder them. Yes, when there are illegalities they can raise voices. Sans ego, sans lure for plum postings (and post-retirement benefits) they should work with dedication to salvage the lost glory.

All the sermons or solutions can't be delineated in a short space but as an insider, I want to profess that it is time for the bureaucracy to mold itself for the new role to gain the confidence of the system and of the people. The saying 'bend it like Beckham' from the soccer world may be applied to administration as it may have relevance. It can be said, to bend it to change and change it to perfection. Bureaucracy today should lead again with service to people (sans ego) keeping spatial and temporal aspects in mind.

(The author is a superannuated senior IAS officer. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CHINESE BUILD-UP IN SRI LANKA

Sir —As per the report, the Chinese research and survey ship has left and is expected to reach the China-run Hambantota Port in southern Sri Lanka on August 11, which is a very serious and dangerous issue and India must closely monitor the situation and must be on alert. The report quoted Sri Lanka's Defence Ministry media spokesman Colonel Nalin Herath have confirmed that it is the cause for concern for India as the ship is capable of monitoring military installations. Naval ships from India, China Russia, Japan, and Malaysia from time to time have requested Sir Lanka but they have granted permission to China. with this China is trying to enter Sri Lanka like Pakistan, Nepal, Taiwan, and Indian territories in eastern India to corner it from all sides. It is high time the Indian leadership seriously concentrate on these issues for the safety of the country.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN IN DENIAL MODE

Sir — It is quite surprising to see that everything appears quite well for our finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The common man is most worried about the rise of prices and GST on food items, the common man facing the brunt of inflation but still, our finance minister is not accepting that the prices of food items have increased.

It is ridiculous that she is comparing current prices of tomatoes, onion, potatoes, etc with the rates in 2013, but she has forgotten that the rates of other commodities have raised ten times more than in 2013. Boasting that Centre has collected more than 1.49 crores in July on GST proves that how common man has been forced to pay this amount on GST. We are having an ignorant finance minister. When the price of onions rose, she said that she doesn't eat onions. Unemployment, joblessness, and frustration among our youth are increasing, and food inflation is hurting the poor

STOP BRIBING PEOPLE WITH FREEBIES

Thanks to the Supreme Court's earnest intervention in recent days, the topic of political parties offering 'freebies' to voters has been gaining significance and weight. The culture of freebies practiced and perfected by various political parties in India, feigning as 'populist schemes', has largely indoctrinated the rural voters and has affected a well-rounded welfare ideology. ('Freebies lead to eco-disaster, Centre tells SC', Aug. 4). Dole-outs are nothing short of bribes, and a government has no imperium to create private assets out of public funds. Free distribution of goods is not a substitute for a truer welfare model that seeks to achieve growth through enhancing productive resources in the economy. Conventional wisdom dictates that unbribed populism and widespread corruption are not only endemic to politics but are antithetical to economic growth and human development. States in India



need higher per capita income, not higher per capita usage of free goods and services. And, we need politicians and political parties to view us as 'citizens' and not just as 'voters' willing to reward those who offer maximum 'muff' schemes. The Election Commission of India must prohibit political parties from announcing freebies in their election manifestos and treat them as a violation of the model code of conduct.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

with the rise of prices but our Finance minister and Government is least bothered. The Opposition parties are protesting and saying that Government is helping Ambanis and Adanis and the common man is suffering. The opposition leaders are getting suspended from both houses still all is well for our finance minister and the Government.

Zeeshaan | Kazipet

CJI RAMANA IS A BOON FOR INDIA

Sir — Progressive CJI Ramana and team are a boon to India. His forward steps include speedier justice to people, friendly courts, modern solutions suitable to modern needs, etc. Now CJI is right in saying 'setting of the expert body' for regulation of freebies.

Our first request to CJI is that many nations of Europe have free education for the poor ... provide various scholarships to poor and middle-class students. Also, they provide many comforts and care to citizens. In many European nations, rich people voluntarily do not accept freebies

SOUNDBITE

They can't silence our voice by pressuring us. Whatever Modi and Amit Shahji are doing is against democracy.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

It's become clear to all of us that we're at a critical inflection point, dictating the need for additional solutions to address the rise in (Monkeypox) infection.

US Food & Drug Commissioner —Dr Robert Califf

I think all the negativity around Laal Singh Chaddha is skillfully curated by mastermind Aamir Khan Ji himself. This year, no Hindi films have worked.

Actor —Kangana Ranaut

We look up to Mirabai for inspiration. We feel so proud of her when she won the silver at the Tokyo Olympics.

Pakistani Weightlifter —Nooh-Dastagir Butt

My entire family was heartbroken. It was a 'Biswasgathi' to the Bengali people. Why can a Bengali not be a Cabinet Minister in Delhi? I don't need any acknowledgment. I have been elected from Asansol twice.

TMC Minister —Babul Supriyo

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

INFLATION-LED STRONG DOLLAR WILL SOON SLIDE

Once global turmoil subsides, the dollar will cool off fast



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

The Indian rupee has depreciated, as it went from the level of Rs 74.5 per dollar in February 2022 to almost Rs 80, before appreciating again to Rs 78.69 on August 2, 2022. Due to this weakness, there is a natural concern among the policy makers. If we calculate from 1991 till now, the rupee has been depreciating against the dollar at an average rate of 3.03 percent annually. Significantly, the rupee has depreciated by 7.28 per cent in the last 5 months. In the past, the rupee had been weakening not only against the dollar, but also against many important currencies, including the euro, pound, yen, yuan. Since 1991, the rupee has depreciated 137 per cent against the pound sterling, 489 per cent against the euro, and 241 per cent against the yen, while the depreciation against the dollar has been 252 per cent. This means that in the long run, the rupee has weakened against all the important currencies. But there has been a change in the depreciation trend of the rupee in the last five months till July 2022. While the rupee has weakened by 7.28 per cent against the dollar, it has gained 6.31 per cent against the pound sterling, 10.77 per cent against the yen and 4.72 per cent against the euro.



When the dollar is getting stronger against all the major currencies of the world, the question arises whether the winning streak of the dollar will continue in future also? The US economy is the most indebted in the world. Today, the US has an external debt of \$30.4 trillion, China and the UK hold \$13 trillion and \$9.02 trillion, respectively. External debt on India is only \$614.9 billion, which is hardly 20 per cent of our GDP. America's foreign debt is 102 per cent of its GDP, while that of England is 345 per cent. History is witness that whenever there is turmoil in the world, the dollar gets stronger. This is because investors around the world believe that the US is the safest destination for them. This process is called 'run for safe haven' in business parlance. It is being said by market experts that since inflation is on rise across the world, worries about growth have increased and interest rates are also rising, hence the dollar is strengthening. Dollar has risen by 10 per cent in the past one year and has reached an all-time high in 20 years. Countries, especially smaller ones, who have borrowed heavily, are finding it difficult to repay interest and principal. But countries producing oil and exporting countries or which are suppliers of agricultural commodities have more stable currencies. Russia's ruble continues to get strengthened. The reason for this is the increasing export of oil and gas by Russia and the control on capital flows imposed by the Russian government. The USD is strengthening due to global turmoil and rising interest rates in the US, but it may not last long. Such situations in the world are considered to be short-lived. In such a situation, when there will be an uptick in other currencies of the world and the investors who have deserted India in search of safe havens will again come back in search of markets, then a downfall of the dollar would be inevitable. All the global institutions are expecting India to be the fastest growing economy in the world. Global investors will be compelled to turn to India. The ever-increasing foreign direct investment and strong fundamentals have the potential to propel the rupee towards strength. *(The author is a professor at DAV College, Delhi University)*

Peace in Palestine still remains an elusive dream

The Western world continues to aid and abet Israel making it aggressive, which undermines lasting peace in Palestine



KC TYAGI

Israel is all set to go for the unprecedented fifth election in three years as the ruling coalition is no more ready to run the joint government. The Arab League, which was a part of the current government, withdrew its support citing Israeli aggressive settlements over the Palestinians land. This is not the only reason but one important among others. Naftali Bennett had ousted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last year, ending his 12 years in power. The right-wing leader and former Netanyahu ally's eight-party coalition consisted of his own nationalist party, as well as right-wing, centrist and leftist parties and of course an Arab-Israeli party for the first time. The Bennett government before taking over Israel had been showcasing itself as a government for change but its stand on many fronts remained the same as that of Netanyahu; be it the issue of expansion of West Bank settlements or the opposition to Palestinian State, the new government walked the Benjamin's way. There were hopes that the new governments in the USA and Israel will seriously think over the crisis in West Asia but nothing changed. In a report released last week, the UN Commission set up for the Israel-Palestine conflict reiterated that Israel wants 'complete control' of the land owned by Palestinians. Israel has been occupying Palestine in bits and pieces after its initial occupation in 1967. The Commission also highlighted that Israel has been 'acting to alter the demography through the maintenance of a repressive environment for Palestinians and a favourable environment for Israeli settlers'. This is certainly not the first report by an intentional human rights entity or watchdog underlining the Israeli zeal to occupy areas inhabited by Palestinians. Any individual with an elementary school learning of geopolitics understands that it is not Israel that itself is the central power working behind the redundant mission to occupy Palestine, rather the source of power lies in the West, especially in the USA. The world knows that the policies of Washington DC are largely made on the streets of Tel Aviv - this is how mighty the Jewish lobby in the USA is! From corporate to politics and from academia to cinema, the Jewish lobby dominates almost every field in the USA. If truth be told, the USA was one of the very first countries to publicly express its sympathy and tacit support for the Jewish state when it began to be created in 1948. By being the first country to officially recognise Israel, it played cunningly to further its interests in the MENA region. Additionally, it has also provided a few hundred billion dollars as aid to the rogue nation and has provided the very base of its economy by roughly accounting for almost one-fourth of imports and half of its exports.



THE UN COMMISSION SET UP FOR THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT IN ITS REPORT REITERATED THAT ISRAEL WANTS 'COMPLETE CONTROL' OF THE LAND OWNED BY PALESTINIANS. ISRAEL HAS BEEN OCCUPYING PALESTINE IN BITS AND PIECES AFTER ITS INITIAL OCCUPATION IN 1967

(The author is a senior JD(U) leader and former Rajya Sabha MP)



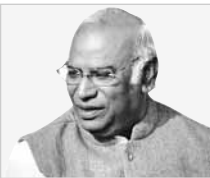
Another reason behind the failure of back-to-back optics is the acts of the international community, masquerading as efforts to secure the human rights of Palestinians, while most of the European Union nations have strong ties with Israel, mentored by the USA. After all, who can forget that these were the first few nations to recognise the Jewish State within a few months after its creation? The nation which suffers from 'Big Brother' syndrome and is super quick to impose unilateral sanctions on nations itself grossly violates the United Nations Charter and customary international law principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force by supporting Israel and poking nose into affairs of Palestine by use of force. The Israeli aggression has become graver with the increasing rift between the OIC countries, especially the Gulf nations. The tussle between the Saudi-led block and the Qatar-led group has pushed the Saudi and the UAE closer toward Israel, and the UAE along with a few other nations of the same block even went to the extent of establishing diplomatic ties with the Jewish nations just a few months ago. The desperation to prevent Iran's nuclear program and bulwark its dominance in the region has also compelled Saudi Arabia to play hands in gloves with its one-time foe, Israel. Besides, the entire world is aware of the rift between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, preventing the Muslim world to collectively call out Israeli aggression.

Given its geographic position, military might, and intelligence capabilities, Israel has become an irresistible ally for the Saudi-led alliance now. To secure their interests through a common minimum agenda, the nations led by Saudi Arabia have now turned their eyes away from the Palestinian massacre and have buried their heads in the sand like an ostrich to unsee the truth. Nevertheless, the Israeli aggression of 2021 after which the said UN Commission was constituted has reflected the delay and collective failure of the global community to solve the conflict. Out of many possible ways, the first prerogative for striking a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict is an outlook entirely based on human rights and not on interests. Through my personal observations and decades-long political career, I could confidently say that interest-based solutions are never sustainable, but human-centric ones certainly are. Further, the global community should urgently restrict the US from becoming a stakeholder or a party to the conflict, as it has always ignited it and added fuel to the fire without contributing even two cents. The USA should remember the quote by one of its brightest minds Wayne Dyer, who said, "conflicts cannot survive without your participation". Most importantly, the world will have to recognise and realise the fact that what has been done cannot be undone in a nuclear-weaponized world. The world should try to establish an environment of tranquility by striking

ing a seemingly perfect equilibrium between the Jewish and the Palestinian people and ensure that Israel keeps guns down, practices a ceasefire, and pledges not to further invade the remaining territory. Peace negotiations can then take place between the two nations, by involving deserving nations as parties to those negotiations. However, the most immediate requirement is to compel Israel to follow the 'Fourth Geneva Convention' by securing the human rights of the Palestinians, especially those trapped in the Gaza strip. Along with the Conventions, it should also abide by the 2004 ruling of the International Court of Justice that asked it to protect the rights of the citizens of Palestine under its occupation as per humanitarian and human rights law. Conclusively, the global North should come out of hypocrisy and stop defending Israel and refrain from giving it shelter and refuge to keep abusing the human rights of Palestinians under the Sun and ensure deniability at the same time. The North needs to own accountability as well as make the Jewish nation a state accountable for its actions. It is high time for the world to ask itself: has it done enough for the human rights of Palestinians? Has it handled the situation efficiently and with integrity? It is indeed a time to introspect and ponder over what Ronald Reagan had once said: "Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means".

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I MADE NO PERSONAL ATTACK AGAINST ANYONE. I DID NOT KNOW THAT KHARGEJI WILL START MAKING PERSONAL ATTACKS. —UNION MINISTER PIYUSH GOYAL



YOU (GOYAL) HAVE NOT WON A LOCAL ELECTION BUT WERE BROUGHT TO THE RAJYA SABHA AND MADE THE FINANCE MINISTER. — CONGRESS LEADER MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

Defence ‘Atmanirbharta’ key to robust Indian economy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for stepping up indigenous defence goods production is timely

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 25 July, while addressing a naval seminar Swavlamban, said that the national defence is no longer limited to borders, but has a broader ambit, and the armed forces and other stakeholders must work together to bolster the country's military capabilities. Attempts from within the country or abroad to harm India's interests must be thwarted effectively, cautioned Modi, asking the armed forces to be alert against new challenges, including disinformation campaigns. He batted for combatting a myriad of security challenges, saying they are no longer limited to land, sea and sky, and asserted that the armed forces must work together to bolster the country's military capabilities.



PK VASUDEVA

(The author is a retired professor of international trade)

ties. The seminar was organised by the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) and the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM). The NSA Ajit Doval, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar and Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar attended the seminar among others. The concern of the prime minister is very genuine but unfortunately he is not getting the support from the opposition parties even on national security and defence matters. A disintegrated opposition with poor leadership is a disaster for the nation. The Opposition's right and duty, if it believes the public interest is at stake, is to oppose the government's policies and actions by every legitimate parliamentary means. In doing so, the Opposition tries to convince the electorate that they should change places with the government, which is impossible unless it changes its attitude on issues of national interest. Highlighting the importance of self-reliance in the defence sector, the prime minister said dependence on imports for small requirements of the armed forces could pose serious strategic challenges. Cautioning the armed forces against new threats, Modi said contours of national security have become widespread and the challenges are moving towards space, cyberspace, social space and the economic sphere. We also have to intensify our war against forces challenging India's self-confidence, self-reliance, said Modi, adding as India is establishing itself on

the global stage, there are constant attacks through misinformation, disinformation and false publicity. Keeping faith, the forces harming India's interests, whether in the country or abroad, have to be thwarted in their every effort, he added. Defence is a principal component of national power. Defence policy is an integral part of national security policies. The role of the armed forces is to preserve the core values of survival and political independence against any external or internal threats by deterrence or by waging a war. In his address, the prime minister said his government has developed a new defence ecosystem in the country to boost domestic manufacturing. In the last 4-5 years, Modi said, the defence imports have come down by about 21

per cent and the country is moving fast from being the biggest defence importer to becoming a big exporter. The prime minister said Rs 13,000 crore worth of defence export was achieved last year and more than 70 per cent of it was from the private sector. Talking about long delays in defence acquisition, Modi said most of the procurement programmes kept facing questions and abusing politicians became very easy. Recalling the glorious maritime tradition of the country, Modi said that the defence sector of India used to be very strong even before independence. At the time of independence, there were 18 ordnance factories in the country, where many types of military equipment, including artillery guns, were made. He said India was an

important supplier of defence equipment in World War II. Referring to the importance of oceans and coasts in India's economy, Prime Minister Modi said that the role of the Indian Navy is continuously increasing and therefore self-reliance of the force is of critical importance. Today, a large part of the budget earmarked for the purchase of defence equipment is being spent on procurement from Indian companies, said Modi, while complementing the defence forces for preparing a list of 300 items that will not be imported. Modi's mission is to make the country Atmanirbhar so that the defence budget is further reduced and the benefits go to domestic industry. In the era of economic globalization with more interdependence among

the countries and the facilities of digital marketing and communication available, it is difficult to think that any country can survive in isolation. A country is said to be Atmanirbhar (self-reliant), if it produces sufficient amounts of goods and services for its domestic needs along with surplus for export to earn foreign exchange. An Atmanirbhar country need not necessarily manufacture each and every product required by it. Rather, it will prefer manufacturing and processing more such products which it can do with expertise at low cost and the demand of which is globally more. At the same time, it cannot indefinitely depend on such countries that are dumping their low quality goods and are destroying the industrial growth of the importing country.

China slaps sanctions against Pelosi, family for Taiwan visit

White House summons Chinese envoy

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Friday announced sanctions on US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her immediate family in retaliation to her high-profile visit to Taiwan this week and cancelled talks with Washington on defence, climate change and a range of other issues.

Meanwhile, White House summoned Chinese envoy over Taiwan provocations.

Pelosi, 82, the highest-ranking US official to visit Taiwan in 25 years, visited the island on Tuesday, which Beijing claims as part of it and vows to integrate with the Chinese mainland.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry, which stridently criticised her visit and lodged stern protests against the US by summoning its Ambassador to China Chris Burns and announced four-day high-intensity military drills in Taiwan Strait, issued a statement on Friday imposing sanctions against Pelosi and her family. "In disregard of China's grave concerns and firm opposition, Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi insisted on visiting China's Taiwan region," the statement said. "This constitutes gross interference in China's internal affairs. It gravely undermines China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, seriously tramples on the one-China principle and severely threatens peace and stability across the Taiwan



Strait," it said.

"In response to Pelosi's egregious provocation, China decides to adopt sanctions on Pelosi and her immediate family members in accordance with relevant laws of the People's Republic of China," it said. The sanctions against Pelosi were regarded as symbolic and it bans her and her family members from travelling to China. Earlier, China had imposed sanctions against 28 former Trump administration officials, including the then US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

In another statement, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced countermeasures against the US, which included cancellation of the China-US Theatre Commanders Talk, China-US Defence Policy Coordination Talks (DPCT), and the China-US Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) meetings.

The ministry also announced the suspension of the China-US cooperation on the repatriation of illegal immi-

grants, the China-US cooperation on legal assistance in criminal matters, China-US cooperation against transnational crimes, China-US counter-narcotics cooperation, and China-US talks on climate change.

The cancellation of the defence dialogue between the two countries was regarded significant here as the major powers currently involved in intense strategic rivalry held periodic consultations, which observers say helped in avoiding accidental conflicts in hotspot areas like the disputed South China Sea, where the US has stepped up naval and aerial expeditions to assert freedom of navigation.

China's claims to most of the South China Sea are closely contested by the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan.

China's sanctions against Pelosi and the other countermeasures came amid rare vocal criticism by the Chinese, especially in the local media, on Beijing's failure to stop Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

China summons European diplomats over statement on Taiwan

AP ■ BEIJING

China says it summoned European diplomats in the country to protest statements issued by the Group of Seven nations and the European Union criticising threatening Chinese military exercises surrounding Taiwan.

The Foreign Ministry on Friday said Vice Minister Deng Li made "solemn representations" over what he called "wanton interference in China's internal affairs".

Pelosi's visit was regarded as a setback for the image of Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is widely expected to get an unprecedented third-five-year term, unlike his predecessors.

He is expected to be endorsed in the once-in-a-five-year Congress of the ruling Communist Party of China in the next few months.

Besides the diplomatic offensive against Pelosi, China has announced four-day military drills since Thursday in which the Chinese military fired ballistic missiles and flew fighter aircraft into the Taiwan Strait in a major show of strength. Beijing also pressed its aircraft carrier group which included a nuclear submarine into the drills.

UK PM race: Sunak wins over voters in TV debate

PTI ■ LONDON

Former Chancellor Rishi Sunak convincingly won over an audience of Conservative Party members in a head-to-head television debate with rival Foreign Secretary Liz Truss in the leadership contest to elect a new Tory party leader and British Prime Minister.

The 'Battle for Number 10' on 'Sky News' on Thursday night brought the finalists face to face with Conservative members who are entitled to vote in the election but are mostly undecided on their choice. After the two contenders put forward their arguments for why they should replace Boris Johnson at 10 Downing Street, the audience members were asked who they thought had won the argument and they picked Sunak in a show of hands.

It will come as a boost for the British Indian ex-minister who has been trailing Truss in most recent opinion polls, with the last survey putting her around 32 percentage points ahead of Sunak among Tory members. He was asked by an audience member and potential voter if he planned to step aside in the race at any point, given the polling figures.

"The quick answer is no, and that's



because I'm fighting for something I really believe in and I'm taking my ideas around the country," Sunak replied.

"I'm going to fight incredibly hard until the last day of this campaign for each and every one of your votes. The stakes are really high," he declared. He was also asked why so many senior Tory ministers and figures were endorsing Liz Truss. "Every stage of the parliamentary process, I had the broadest and biggest support," Sunak pointed out. "We're all one team, we're all one family, we're going to come together

after this and we're going to take it to [Opposition Labour Leader] Keir Starmer and win the next election, because that's the real prize. Plenty of people sat around the Cabinet table also support me. I've been really humbled actually," he said.

The former finance minister stuck to his central plank and focussed his message on the need to get a grip on soaring inflation before cutting taxes. "But it all starts with not making the situation worse. Because if we just put fuel on the fire of this inflation spiral, all of us, all of you, are just going to end up with higher mortgage rates, savings and pensions that are eaten away, and misery for millions," he said.

It came just hours after the Bank of England warned of a looming recession as it hiked interest rates. Truss insisted a recession is "not inevitable" and promised "bold" action compared with her rival's caution. However, Sunak dismissed accusations that it is the tax burden which is causing the recession, saying: "That's simply wrong. What's causing the recession is inflation." Both candidates received a heavy grilling on their various policy planks, including Brexit, immigration and support for the state-funded National Health Service (NHS).

Cheney calls Trump 'coward' in ad for daughter Liz

AP ■ WYOMING

Former Vice President Dick Cheney excoriated Donald Trump in a new campaign video for his daughter Rep. Liz Cheney, calling the former president a "coward" and saying there has never been anyone who is a "greater threat to our republic."

The video was released on Thursday by Rep. Cheney's re-



election campaign, two weeks before a Republican primary election in Wyoming that the three-term congresswoman is bracing to lose.

Taliban: Two civilians killed in bomb blast in Afghanistan

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

A bomb hidden in a cart went off on Friday near a mosque in a minority Shiite neighbourhood of the Afghan capital, killing two civilians and wounding another three, a Taliban official said. According to Khalid Zadran, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kabul police chief, the attack happened in western Kabul, in the Sar-e Karez area. There were fears the casualty numbers could rise after further reports come in.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but blame is likely to fall on the Islamic State group, which has targeted Afghanistan's minority Shiites in large-scale attacks in the past.

The regional affiliate of IS, known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province, has increased attacks on mosques and minorities across the country since Taliban seized power.

Blinken: China drills 'significant escalation'

AP ■ PHNOM PENH

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that China's military exercises aimed at Taiwan, including missiles fired into Japan's exclusive economic zone, represent a "significant escalation" and that he has urged Beijing to back down. China launched the drills following a visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan that infuriated Beijing, which claims the self-governed island as its own territory.

Blinken told reporters on the sidelines of a meeting with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Cambodia, however, that Pelosi's visit was peaceful and did not represent a change in American policy toward Taiwan, accusing China of using it as a pretext to increase provocative military activity in and around the Taiwan Strait.

He said the situation had led to a "vigorous communication" during East Asia Summit meetings in Phnom Penh in which both he and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi took part along with the ASEAN nations, Russia and others.

"I reiterated the points that we made publicly as well as directly to Chinese counterparts in recent days, again, about the fact that they should not use the visit as a pretext for war, escalation, for



'China cannot stop US officials from visiting Taiwan'

AP ■ TOKYO

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Friday that China will not isolate Taiwan by preventing US officials from travelling there. She made the remarks in Tokyo on the final leg of an Asia tour highlighted by a visit to Taiwan that infuriated China.

The Chinese have tried to isolate Taiwan, Pelosi said, including most recently by preventing the self-governing island from joining the World Health Organization.

provocative actions, that there is no possible justification for what they've done and urge them to cease these actions," he said.

UN experts: North Korea paving way for new nuke tests

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

UN experts say North Korea is paving the way for additional nuclear tests with new preparations at its northeastern test site and continues to develop its capability to produce a key ingredient for nuclear weapons.

The experts also said in key excerpts from their latest report obtained late Thursday by The Associated Press that North Korea conducted two major hacks this year, resulting in the theft of cryptocurrency assets worth "hundreds of millions of dollars."

They said Pyongyang also continues illicitly importing oil and exporting coal in violation of UN sanctions, using the same companies, networks and vessels.

South Korean and US intelligence officials have said they detected North Korean efforts to prepare its northeastern Punggye-ri testing ground for another nuclear test. It would be



the North's seventh since 2006 and the first since September 2017, when it claimed to have detonated a thermonuclear bomb to fit on its intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The panel of experts' report to the UN Security Council provides some details of the work being carried out at the site by the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea, the country's official name.

The experts said they observed that the DPRK started re-excavation work in March at the entrance to Tunnel 3 at Punggye-ri "and reconstructed support buildings originally dismantled in May 2018."

"Satellite imagery showed increased numbers of vehicle

tracks around this secondary entrance from mid-February 2022, followed by construction of a new building adjacent to the entrance at the beginning of March," the panel said. "A pile of lumber, for possible use in the construction of the tunnel structure, was also detected around the same time."

It added that, "Piles of soil from the tunnel excavation around the entrance were observed during this period."

"Work at the Punggye-ri nuclear test site paves the way for additional nuclear tests for the development of nuclear weapons," the experts said, adding that this is an objective stated at the Eighth Congress of the country's ruling Workers' Party of Korea in January 2021.

In another aspect of the DPRK's nuclear program, analysts said satellite images last September showed that North Korea was expanding a uranium enrichment plant at its main

Yongbyon nuclear complex, a sign that it wanted to boost production of the key bomb material.

The UN experts said in the new report: "DPRK continued to develop its capability for the production of nuclear fissile materials at the Yongbyon site."

Nuclear negotiations between the United States and North Korea have stalled since 2019 over disagreements over the DPRK demand to lift crippling US-led sanctions and Washington's demand for significant steps by Pyongyang toward nuclear disarmament.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has expanded his ballistic missile programme amid the diplomatic pause, and analysts say another nuclear test would escalate his brinkmanship aimed at cementing the North's status as a nuclear power, and negotiating economic and security concessions from a position of strength.

Hundreds of thousands gather for mass prayer in Baghdad

AP ■ BAGHDAD

Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis heeded the call of an influential Shiite cleric to gather in a show of strength for a mass prayer in the heart of Baghdad's government zone on Friday.

The gathering took place amid an escalating political crisis that has put the country's capital on edge.

The powerful cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, had called on his followers from across Iraq to come to pray inside Baghdad's Green Zone — a heavily fortified area in the heart of the city that houses government buildings and foreign embassies.

They arrived and stood outside in the scorching summer heat, with temperatures reaching 48 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, in the holy southern city of Najaf, the head of Iraq's U.N. Mission, Jeannine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with al-Sadr Friday.

She told reporters afterward that they discussed the importance of finding a solution to the political crisis.

Friday's mass prayer was the latest display of strength by the cleric, whose political power derives from his strong grassroots support base.



The crowds stretched for miles, spilling into the streets outside the square.

Several people fainted after waiting for hours for the prayer to start and were taken to hospital in ambulances.

Al-Sadr has used his large grassroots following as a pressure tactic against his rivals after his party was unable to form a government despite having won the largest number of seats in federal elections last October.

He abandoned efforts to form the next government in June.

His followers gathered facing the Victory Arch, a monument erected during Saddam Hussein's regime to commemorate the Iran-Iraq war and for holding military parades.

Farid Jaafar, 16, arrived from southern Babylon

province to show his support for al-Sadr. His transport was paid by al-Sadr's party.

"I love Muqtada," he said.

Holding the prayer within the highly restrictive zone closed off to most Iraqis points to the cleric's power and influence.

Last Saturday, thousands of his followers stormed parliament in a bid to derail attempts by al-Sadr's Shiite rivals to form a government.

Around 125 people were injured in the violence, most of them protesters and 25 members of the security forces.

Al-Sadr's followers camped out inside the parliament until he ordered them, after four days, to withdraw from the assembly building but maintain a sit-in outside. He's calling for the dissolution of parliament and early elections.

Unique 'Buddha pendant' discovered at Mohenjo-daro after heavy downpour



PTI ■ KARACHI

A unique antique object, termed "Buddha pendant", has been found very close to the archaeological site of Mohenjo-daro in Pakistan's Sindh province after the area was lashed by heavy rains, according to a media report on Friday.

Believed to be of archaeological importance, the object was found in the Dikshit South area of Mohenjo-daro after a downpour on August 3, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Irshad Ahmed Solangi, a private tour guide and a resident of Dhand village located very close to the archaeological

site, said on Thursday that he had found the object in a ditch that was developed during the recent rainfall on Wednesday.

After he discovered the object, he immediately reported it to site officer and conservator Naveed Sangah, the report said.

Ali Haider Gadhi, a senior conservationist at the archaeology department, reaffirmed that heavy rainfall led to the surfacing of the antique object. After examining the object, Mohan Lal, a former chief engineer of the department of archaeology and museums and currently working as project director of the Endowment

Fund Trust (EFT) identified it as "Buddha pendant" and suggested it to be a "unique antiquity."

"This rare discovery demands further studies to find out the missing history links," the report quoted him as saying.

An unnamed senior official at the culture department while describing the object said that it appeared like a pendant often worn around the neck by people.

He said further examination of the discovery will reveal more insights into the make and age of the object, and will help in knowing its historic and prehistoric value.

We have approached an expert working in the culture department to know about the object's make and age," he said.

Mohenjo-daro is an archaeological heritage site discovered by Indian archaeologist R D Banerji in 1922. It is located on the east of the Indus River in the semi-arid region of Sindh province. Extending over 618 acres, it is the largest and best-preserved urban centre of the Indus Civilisation (2600-1900 BC).

France going through its most severe drought ever, says PM



AP ■ PARIS

French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne warned that France is facing the "most severe drought" ever recorded in the country and announced the activation of a government crisis unit.

Borne said in a written statement on Friday that many areas in France are going through a "historic situation" as the country endures its third heatwave this summer.

"The exceptional drought we are currently experiencing is depriving many municipalities of water and is a tragedy for our farmers, our ecosystems and biodiversity," the statement said.

Weather forecasts suggest that the heat, which increases evaporation and water needs, could continue for the next 15 days, possibly making the situation even more worrying, the

statement stressed.

The government's crisis unit will be in charge of monitoring the situation in the hardest-hit areas and coordinate measures like bringing drinking water to some places.

It will also monitor the impact of the drought on France's energy production, transport infrastructure and agriculture.

The drought may force French energy giant EDF to cut power production at nuclear plants which use river water to cool reactors.

France now has 62 regions with restrictions on water usage due to the lack of rain.

The minister for ecological transition, Christophe Béchu, said during a visit to southeastern France that more than 100 municipalities are not able to provide drinking water to the tap anymore and need to get supplied by truck.

Lanka to hold crucial talks on formation of all-party Govt

To combat economic meltdown

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The crucial talks on the possibility of forming an all-party government to tackle Sri Lanka's economic meltdown will take place on Friday evening, officials and political leaders here said.

Sri Lanka's newly-elected President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday invited the political parties to form an all-party government to overcome the current economic crisis as the Parliament reconvened after a seven-day adjournment.

The talks will take place on Friday evening, officials and political leaders said.

"We expect the president to take a new approach, the country will get destroyed if there is no collective action," former president Maithripala Sirisena told reporters here.

Vasudeva Nanayakkara, a veteran leader from the ruling coalition's 10-party breakaway group, said they would be looking at Wickremesinghe's approach closely.

"Wickremesinghe has said that he was formulating a plan to find solutions to the economic and political impasse. He is going to seek our views, let's hope the talks will be successful," Nanayakkara said.

However, the main opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) said their approach is to form a common all-party programme rather than an all-party government.

"We are willing to strengthen the oversight committee system and make our contribution," SJB national organiser



Tissa Attanayake said.

Wickremesinghe, the leader of the United National Party (UNP), was elected president by lawmakers on July 20 - the first such occasion since 1978. The 73-year-old President was appointed for the rest of the term of Gotabaya Rajapaksa who fled the country and resigned on July 13 in the face

of a popular uprising against his government for mismanaging the island nation's economy.

The majority of his support in the 225-member Parliament came from Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party.

A constitutional amendment has been recently gazetted to make Parliament's role

Lanka protesters get court reprieve

Anti-Govt demonstrations can go on till August 10

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Defiant anti-government demonstrations near the Sri Lankan presidential office can go on for another week following an assurance by the Attorney General in a top court here on Friday that no action to remove the protesters from the Galle Face protest site will be taken until August 10. The development comes a day after protesters vowed to defy an order from the police to vacate the area by Friday evening.

The protesters said the police had not obtained a court order to remove them from the Galle Face area, which was the epicenter of anti-government protests here against the previous Rajapaksa regime. Three writ applications were filed at the Court of Appeal on Thursday on behalf of the protesters after the police ordered the protesters to leave the protest site.

The Attorney General told the court on Friday that the structures will not be removed without following the proper legal procedure.

The Sri Lankan police on Wednesday set an August 5 deadline for the protesters to remove all illegal tents and camps at Galle Face near the presidential office. The police claim the structures were illegal and need removing according to the law as the site is the property of the Urban Development Authority. Some of the structures were removed by the protesters on Wednesday and Friday following the police order to quit.

The protesters have been occupying the area, including the gate of the presidential secretariat, since April 9. They also claimed that the area was designated as an agitation site by the previous government headed by former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and there is no need for them to quit the protest site. Protesters in March began demonstrating against the Rajapaksa family and demanded the resignation of the entire Rajapaksa family, leading to the resignation of then-Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on



May 9, and his brother, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country on July 13 and resigned the following day from Singapore.

After the resignation of Rajapaksa and the appointment of his successor Ranil Wickremesinghe, the protesters were forcibly evicted from the presidential secretariat and the gate on Jul 22, drawing widespread international condemnation.

According to the Human Rights Watch group's statement, Sri Lankan security forces on July 22, Friday, forcibly dispersed people at a peaceful protest site near President's Secretariat, assaulted them leaving more than 50 persons injured. Sri Lanka has been witnessing one of the worst economic crises since Independence in 1948. They have defaulted on international loans as well. The United Nations has warned that 5.7 million people "require immediate humanitarian assistance," with Sri Lankans experiencing extreme shortages of essentials including food, fuel and medicines.

The new Sri Lankan government faces the task of leading the country out of its economic collapse and restoring order. Sri Lanka has seen months of mass unrest over the worst economic crisis, with the government declaring bankruptcy in mid-April by refusing to honour its international debt.

3 more ships with grain depart Ukraine ports under UN deal

AP ■ ISTANBUL

Three more ships carrying thousands of tons of corn left Ukrainian ports Friday, in the latest sign that a negotiated deal to export grain trapped since Russia invaded Ukraine nearly six months ago is slowly moving forward. But major hurdles lie ahead to get food to the countries that need it most.

The ships bound for Ireland, the United Kingdom and Turkey follow the first grain shipment to pass through the Black Sea since the start of the war. The passage of that vessel heading for Lebanon earlier this week was the first under the breakthrough deal brokered by Turkey and the United Nations with Russia and Ukraine.

The Black Sea region is dubbed the world's breadbasket, with Ukraine and Russia key global suppliers of wheat, corn, barley and sunflower oil that millions of impoverished people in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia rely on for survival.

While the shipments have raised hopes of easing a global food crisis, much of the grain that Ukraine is trying to export is used for animal feed, not for people to eat, experts say. The first vessels to leave are among more than a dozen bulk carriers and cargo ships that had been loaded with grain but stuck in ports since Russia invaded in late February. And the cargoes are not expected to have a significant impact on the global price of corn, wheat and soybeans for several reasons.

For starters, the exports under the deal are off to a slow, cautious start due to the threat of explosive mines floating off Ukraine's Black Sea coastline.

And while Ukraine is a major exporter of wheat to developing nations, there are other countries, such as the United States and Canada, with far greater production levels that can affect global wheat prices. And they face the threat of drought.

"Ukraine is about 10% of the international trade in wheat, but in terms of production it is not even 5%," said David Laborde, an expert on agriculture and trade at the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington.

The three ships left Friday with over 58,000 tons of corn, but that is still a fraction of the 20 million tons of grains that Ukraine says are trapped in the country's silos and ports and that must be shipped out to make space for this year's harvest.

Around 6 million tons of the trapped grain is wheat, but just half of that is for human consumption, Laborde said.

There is an expectation that Ukraine could produce 30% to 40% less grain over the coming next 12 months due to the war, though other estimates put that figure at 70%.

Grain prices peaked after Russia's invasion, and while some have since come down to



their pre-war levels, they are still higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Corn prices are 70% higher than at the end of February 2020, said Jonathan Haines, senior analyst at data and analytics firm Gro Intelligence. He said wheat prices are around 60% higher than in February 2020.

One reason prices remain high is the impact of drought on harvests in North America, China and other regions, as well

as the higher price of fertilizer needed for farming.

"When fertilizer prices are high, farmers may use less fertilizer. And when they use less fertilizer, they will produce less. And if they will produce less, supply will continue to remain insufficient," Laborde said.

The three ships that departed Ukraine on Friday give hope that exports will ramp up to developing nations, where many are facing the increased threat of food shortages and hunger.

"The movement of three additional vessels overnight is a very positive sign and will continue to build confidence that we're moving in the right direction," Haines said. "If the flow of grain from Ukraine continues to expand, it will help relieve global supply constraints."

The Turkish-flagged Polar net, carrying 12,000 tons of corn, left the Chornomorsk port destined for Karasu, Turkey. The Panama-flagged Navi Star left Odesa's port for Ireland with 33,000 tons of corn. The Maltese-flagged Rojen left Chornomorsk for the United Kingdom carrying over 13,000 tons of corn, the U.N. Said.

It added that the Joint

Coordination Center — run by officials from Ukraine, Russia, Turkey and the U.N. Overseeing the deal signed in Istanbul last month — authorized the three ships and inspected a ship headed for Ukraine. The Barbados-flagged Fulmar S was inspected in Istanbul and is headed for the Chornomorsk port.

The checks seek to ensure that outbound cargo ships carry only grain, fertilizer or food and not any other commodities and that inbound ships are not carrying weapons. The vessels are accompanied by Ukrainian pilot ships for safe passage because of explosive mines strewn in the Black Sea.

After Turkey, which has relations with both Russia and Ukraine, helped broker the food deal two weeks ago, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin later Friday in Sochi, Russia. That meeting follows another face-to-face meeting the two leaders had in Iran three weeks ago.

US, Russia, China take part in talks with SE Asian nations



AP ■ PHNOM PENH

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken joined the foreign ministers of Russia and China at a meeting on Friday with top diplomats from Southeast Asia that comes at a time of increased tensions between Washington, Moscow and Beijing.

The East Asia Summit of the ongoing Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings in Cambodia's capital was the first time the three men were scheduled to take part in the same forum.

It came a day after WNBA star Brittney Griner was convicted of drug possession and sentenced to nine years in prison by Russia in a politically charged case amid ongoing friction over the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

China, meantime, is furious at the US following House

Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit this week to Taiwan — a self-governing island Beijing claims as its own — and is in the middle of show-of-force military exercises in response.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi patted Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the shoulder as he entered the room and gave the already-seated Lavrov a quick wave before taking his own seat. Lavrov waved back in response.

Blinken, who entered the room last, did not even look over to Lavrov as he took his own seat about a half-dozen chairs away, or to Wang who was seated farther down the same table as Lavrov.

Ahead of the Phnom Penh talks, the US State Department indicated Blinken had no plans to meet one-on-one with either man during the course of the meetings.

Ukraine, Syria expected to top Erdogan-Putin talks in Russia

AP ■ MOSCOW

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan travelled to Russia on Friday for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin expected to focus on a grain deal brokered by Turkey, prospects for talks on ending hostilities in Ukraine, and the situation in Syria.

Last month, Turkey and the United Nations helped broker agreements between Russia and Ukraine clearing the way for Ukraine to export 22 million tonnes of grain and other agricultural products stuck in its Black Sea ports ever since Moscow sent troops into the country more than five months ago.

The deals also allow Russia to export grain and fertiliser.

Three more ships carrying thousands of tons of corn left Ukrainian ports Friday following the departure of the first vessel earlier this week.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday's talks in Sochi will allow Putin and Erdogan to review the implementation of the grain deal.

He noted that the two leaders will also discuss the situation in Ukraine and in Syria.

In March, Turkey hosted a



round of talks between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators who discussed a possible deal to end the hostilities.

But the talks fell apart after the meeting in Istanbul, with Russia and Ukraine blaming each other for the lack of progress.

NATO-member Turkey and Russia have a complex relationship. While the two countries support opposing sides in Syria and Libya, they cooperate closely on defense, energy and trade deals.

Their relationship has frustrated Turkey's Western allies, who were particularly annoyed by Ankara's purchase of a sophisticated Russian air defense system.

Turkey has provided Ukraine with drones, which

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 7, including senior militant

AP ■ GAZA CITY

Israel unleashed a wave of airstrikes in Gaza on Friday, killing at least seven people, including a senior militant, and wounding another 40, according to Palestinian officials. Israel said it was targeting the Islamic Jihad militant group amid days of heightened tensions following the arrest of a senior militant in the occupied West Bank earlier this week.

The strikes risk igniting yet another war in the territory, which is ruled by the Islamic militant group Hamas and is home to about 2 million Palestinians.

The assassination of a senior militant would likely be met by rocket fire from Gaza, pushing the region closer to all-out war. A blast could be heard in Gaza City, where smoke poured out of the seventh floor of a tall building on Friday afternoon.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said seven people were killed, including a 5-year-old girl, and at least 40 were wounded.

Islamic Jihad said a Gaza commander, Taiseer al-Jabari, was among those killed.



14 die in fire at pub in Thailand, many critically injured

AP ■ BANGKOK

Fourteen people were killed and dozens badly injured when a fire broke out early Friday at a crowded music pub in eastern Thailand, police and rescue workers said. At least a dozen survivors were in critical condition.

Videos on social media showed thick black smoke and then flames pouring from the front entrance as people attempted to flee, some with their clothing on fire. Police said the fire was reported around 12:45 a.m.

The Mountain B pub in Sattahip district of Chonburi province, about 160 kilometers southeast of Bangkok, was lined with flammable sound-proofing, and it took two hours for firefighters to put out the blaze, Manop Theprith of a private emergency rescue service group told Thailand's PPTV television news. His group said

40 people had been injured. Several witnesses described seeing smoke and fire on the ceiling near the stage, followed by explosions.

Thirteen people died at the scene and another person with burns over 90% of his body died later, police, rescuers and Queen Sirikit Naval Hospital said.

The hospital said 15 patients required intubation, with most suffering third-degree burns over more than 60% of their bodies. Two patients were transferred to a hospital in Bangkok for advanced treatment.

"All the patients are considered to be in critical condition," said Capt. Anucha Likitvong, chief of the hospital's medical team.

"In a medical sense, the situation for patients suffering from this degree of burns can change sharply in the next 48 hours."

RBI hikes interest rate by 50 bps to pre-pandemic level

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Friday raised the key interest rate by 50 basis points, the third straight increase since May in an effort to cool stubbornly high inflation and defend the rupee.

The repurchase rate was raised by 50 basis points to lift the interest rate to the pre-pandemic level. The 5.40 per cent repo rate was last seen in August 2019.

Announcing the rate hike, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das did not offer any indication of a change in the stance or a possible pause in the next policy due in late September.

The Reserve Bank of India's six-member rate-setting panel voted unanimously on the rate hike decision while sticking to its resolve to withdraw the accommodative stance.

It, however, retained GDP growth projection at 7.2 per cent for the current fiscal ending March 31, 2023, and kept the inflation outlook for the year unchanged at 6.7 per cent.

"Inflationary pressures are broad-based and core inflation remains elevated. Inflation is projected to remain above the upper tolerance level of 6 per cent through the first three quarters of 2022-23, entailing the risk of destabilising inflation expectations and triggering second-round effects," he said.



The RBI targets inflation at 2-6 per cent.

June was the sixth consecutive month when headline CPI inflation remained at or above the upper tolerance level of 6 per cent.

Stating that there has been some let-up in global commodity prices, particularly in prices of industrial metals, and some softening in global food prices, the governor said domestic edible oil prices are expected to soften further on the back of improving supplies

from key producing countries.

Further, the advance of the southwest monsoon is by and large on track and kharif sowing has picked up in the recent weeks.

"The shortfall in kharif sowing of paddy, however, needs to be watched closely, although buffer stocks are quite large. Household inflation expectations have eased but they still remain elevated," he said.

The central bank surprised markets with a 40 bps hike at an unscheduled meeting in May,

followed by a 50 bps increase in June, but prices have shown little sign of cooling off yet.

The latest increase mirrors the US Federal Reserve-led global tightening of interest rates to rein in spiraling prices, caused by supply snarls and energy price shocks following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The MPC believes "calibrated withdrawal of monetary policy accommodation is warranted to keep inflation expectations anchored and contain the second round effects,"

Das said.

On the rupee depreciating against the US dollar, he said at a 4.7 per cent decline, the rupee fared much better than several reserve currencies as well as many of its EME and Asian peers.

"The depreciation of the Indian rupee is more on account of the appreciation of the US dollar rather than weakness in macroeconomic fundamentals of the Indian economy. Market interventions by the RBI have helped in containing volatility and ensuring the orderly movement of the rupee," he said.

He said the RBI will remain watchful and maintain the stability of the rupee.

The Indian economy has been impacted by the global economic situation and is grappling with the problem of high inflation.

"Nevertheless, with strong and resilient fundamentals, India is expected to be amongst the fastest growing economies during 2022-23 according to the IMF, with signs of inflation moderating over the course of the year," he said.

The financial sector is well capitalised and sound while the foreign exchange reserves - supplemented by net forward assets - provide insurance against global spillovers. "Our umbrella remains strong," he said.

Das: Unacceptably high inflation led to hike

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The "unacceptably high" inflation trending around 7 per cent marked the Reserve Bank of India to hike rates by an aggressive 0.50 per cent on Friday, according to Governor Shaktikanta Das.

Stating that there are signs that headline inflation, which has breached the 6 per cent upper threshold set for the RBI for six consecutive months, has peaked, Das on Friday said policy moves from here on will be "calibrated, measured and nimble" and will depend on unfolding dynamics.

The governor refused to spell out any guidance on the way forward, pointing out that we live in a dynamic world where things are changing very fast. He also noted that generally, guidance in a rate hiking cycle is difficult as compared to that in a rate cut cycle.

"... Inflation still remains at uncomfortably or unacceptably high levels and therefore, monetary policy has to act," he told reporters after the central bank's six-member rate setting panel decided to hike the repo rate at which it lends to the system by 0.50 per cent.

It can be noted that ahead of the policy announcement, many analysts had been of the view that the hike would be a calibrated 0.35 per cent while a few expected the RBI to



frontload by being aggressive with a 0.50 per cent increase.

"Monetary policy will be calibrated, measured and nimble depending on the unfolding dynamics of inflation and economic activity. The focus will remain on ensuring safe and soft landing for the economy," he added. He said steps have to be taken to contain inflation and inflation expectations in the economy.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) also took the growth aspect into consideration while taking its call, he added. The governor also mentioned that as per the RBI's assessment, Indian economy is an isle of macro-economic and financial stability in a turbulent ocean right now, and has braved two black swan events of the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Seeking to defend the deep rate cuts undertaken during the pandemic, Das said inflation does not have its roots in the monetary pol-

icy actions of the past but is led by supply-side factors and international events.

In what may come as a relief to many, he reiterated that inflation may have peaked and will moderate going forward. It can be noted that while the MPC retained the FY23 forecast at 6.7 per cent, it said the April-June 2023 quarter will see the headline number at 5 per cent. There was also a mention of the objective to achieve 4 per cent CPI target in Das' statement earlier in the day.

When asked about the role played by the depreciating rupee in the policy formulation, Das admitted that there is an impact of imported inflation but added that the MPC's deliberations were influenced by the overall inflation and growth aspects.

Without spelling out what constitutes "volatility" for the RBI, Das said the central bank does not have a level in mind for the rupee and intervenes only when it finds volatilities to ensure that the currency moves smoothly. The MPC also deliberated on the negative interest rates being earned at present, Das said, terming it as a "matter of concern".

Answering a query on whether we have hit the neutral rate yet, Deputy Governor Michael Patra, who heads the important monetary policy function and also sits on the rate setting panel, said, "the path to the neutral rate is a two milestone journey".

E-commerce platform can't allow third-parties to latch on to other sellers: Delhi HC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has said that an e-commerce platform permitting a third-party seller to "latch on" to the name or mark and product listings of another seller on its platform is "nothing but riding piggyback" and cannot be allowed. Justice Prathiba M Singh said that "latching on" is a mode of encashing upon the reputation of another entity and the consent and authorisation of the brand owner as well as the listing owner would be required before such conduct is permitted.

The court's observations were made on a lawsuit by an online clothes seller against an e-commerce platform. The plaintiff alleged that the defendant's platform allowed third-party sellers to "latch on" to its product listings. The court, in its interim order, said that prima facie, the defendant was permitting other third-party sellers to "latch on" to the best sellers in one particular segment of products and directed the defendant to disable the feature in relation to the plaintiff and restrained it allowing any third-party sellers from "latching on" to the mark and product listings of the plaintiff.

"In the opinion of this Court, permitting a third-party seller to 'latch on', in this manner, to the Plaintiff's name/mark and product listings is nothing but 'riding piggy back' as is known in the traditional passing-off sense. It amounts to taking unfair advantage of the goodwill that resides in the Plaintiff's mark and business," said the court in its order dated August 2.

"This Court is satisfied that such a feature



cannot be allowed to be used or offered, to the detriment of the owner of the brand or the person who has created the original product. Consent and authorisation of the brand owner and the listing owner would be required before such conduct by any seller is permitted," it said.

The plaintiff told the court that the defendant was "encouraging and allowing third-party sellers" to "latch on" and use its mark along with the photographs of its products.

It was the plaintiff's grievance that by doing so, several third-party sellers who are not connected to it were able to portray themselves as the plaintiff and ride on its popularity, leading to the loss of business to such small and medium entrepreneurs.

The court said that while e-commerce platforms provide an alternate platform for small and medium entrepreneurs to conduct their businesses in a profitable manner, certain features on these platforms can also cause damage to them.

Bank, realty, auto stocks end on mixed note post RBI policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Interest rate sensitive bank, realty and auto stocks ended on a mixed note on Friday, on a day when the RBI raised the key interest rate by 50 basis points. Among bank stocks, ICICI Bank climbed 2.26 per cent, AU Small Finance Bank advanced 1.66 per cent, Axis Bank (0.90 per cent) and Federal Bank (0.88 per cent).

However, Bandhan Bank declined 1.70 per cent, IndusInd Bank fell 1.30 per cent, Bank Of

Baroda (0.59 per cent), State Bank of India (0.42 per cent), HDFC Bank (0.27 per cent) and Kotak Mahindra Bank (0.08 per cent).

The BSE bank index ended 0.47 per cent higher at 43,550.81. Home, auto and other loan EMIs are set to rise further after the RBI on Friday raised the key interest rate by 50 basis points, the third straight increase since May in an effort to cool stubbornly high inflation. "RBI hiking repo rate by 50 bps is not surprising... Despite



rise in interest rates RBI retaining the projection of growth rate at 7.2 per cent should be the key takeaway for market partici-

pants," Siddarth Bhamre, Head of Research at Religare Broking Limited, said.

RBI expects India's GDP growth to remain strong at 7.2 per cent in FY23.

From auto pack, TVS Motor Company advanced 1.46 per cent, followed by Escorts Kubota (0.50 per cent), MRF (0.19 per cent) and Bajaj Auto (0.03 per cent).

Mahindra & Mahindra fell by 2.04 per cent, Eicher Motors (1.81 per cent), Maruti (1.50 per cent), Hero MotoCorp (1.33 per

cent), Tata Motors (0.70 per cent) and Ashok Leyland (0.69 per cent).

The BSE auto index ended 1.12 per cent lower at 29,365.58.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 89.13 points or 0.15 per cent higher at 58,387.93 after facing volatility during the fag-end of trade.

Among realty counters, The Phoenix Mills climbed 1.62 per cent, Indiabulls Real Estate (0.84 per cent), Sobha Limited (0.50 per cent) and Prestige Estates Projects (0.20 per cent).

Need to boost manufacturing to create jobs, take advantage of global factors: Mahindra

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mahindra Group chairman Anand Mahindra on Friday said there is a need to boost manufacturing to create jobs on a mass scale and take advantage of the global factors that are moving in India's favour.

Addressing shareholders at the company's 76th annual general meeting here, Mahindra said that there are some gaps that need to be filled in to take full advantage of the opportunities arising out for the country.

"The most important of these (gaps)



is jobless growth. The Indian unemployment rate is hovering around 7-8 per cent, according to CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy). This is because job growth has not kept pace

with GDP growth.

"Only 40 per cent of the labour force that is capable of working is actually working or looking for work. The biggest sufferers are youth and women," said Mahindra.

The country's unemployment rate in July fell to 6.80 per cent, the lowest level in the last six months, amid rising agriculture activities during monsoon, according to the latest CMIE data.

The unemployment rate dropped to 6.80 per cent in July from 7.80 per cent in June, as per the CMIE data.

"With one of the largest youthful

populations in the world, it's easy to imagine the potential for social unrest if jobs don't grow along with the youthful population," the Mahindra group chairman said.

"The government is trying to do its bit and has (also) announced plans to hire one million people in government jobs by 2023, given that the country has a 900 million strong workforce, there's a lot more to do," Mahindra said.

According to him, in the private sector, job creation is happening mainly at the lower end of the gig economy, which is not "enough".

RBI to widen Internal Ombudsman mechanism by including CICs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Friday decided to expand the scope of Internal Ombudsman framework by including Credit Information Companies (CICs) with a view to strengthening grievance redressal system.

The Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS) has improved the customer grievance redressal mechanism.

The turnaround time of grievance redressal under RB-IOS has declined considerably, RBI said in Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies.

"With a view to strengthen the internal grievance redress by CICs themselves, it has been decided to mandate CICs to have their own Internal Ombudsman (IO) framework," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said after unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy.

The RB-IOS 2021 covers Regulated Entities (REs) such as scheduled commercial banks including urban cooperative banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and non-scheduled primary co-operative banks with a deposit size of Rs 50 crore and above.

In order to make the RB-IOS more broad based, it has been decided to bring CICs also under the ambit of RB-IOS 2021, the statement said adding this will provide a cost-free alternate redressal mechanism to customers of REs for grievances against CICs.

Further, it said, with a view to strengthening the internal grievance redressal of CICs and to make it more efficient, it has also been decided to bring CICs under the Internal Ombudsman (IO) framework.

With regard to outsourcing, the RBI said REs are increasingly using outsourcing as a means for reducing costs as well as for availing expertise not available internally.

Although outsourcing of a permissible activity is an operational decision of REs, it exposes REs to various risks.

MSME lender Seeds aims ₹250 cr loan disbursement this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NBFC startup Seeds Fincap on Friday said it has completed loan disbursement of Rs 100 crore and aims to reach Rs 250 crore in the current fiscal. To fund its expansion plans, Gurugram-based Seeds said it has raised debt from financial institutions, such as UC Inclusive Credit Pvt Ltd (UCIC), InCred Financial Services Limited, Ananya, Northern Arc, and AU Small Finance Bank, among others.

Currently, it has 20 lending partners and plans to raise further funding in debt.

"With landmark of Rs 100 crore achieved in the early part of the financial year, we are confident of achieving our target of Rs 250 crore disbursement in this financial year," its co-founder, Managing Director and CEO

Subhash Acharya said.

The startup serving MSME customers has operations in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan with 34 branches in Tier 2 and 3 towns. It has about 13,500 customers in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. Among the 13,500 customers financed so far, 59 per cent of enterprises are rural-based and the rest semi-urban and urban. The company received its license from the RBI in April 2021.

However, owing to the second wave of COVID-19, it could commence its full-scale operations in July 2021, the company said. Seeds said it has also tied up with two financial services companies in some pockets on a Business Correspondent model basis.

In the current financial year, it plans to raise Rs 50-60 crore.

confidentially last week and unsealed in a filing late Thursday at the Delaware Chancery Court, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Musk had offered to buy the company earlier this year, then tried to back out of the deal by claiming the social platform was infested with much larger numbers of "spam bots" and fake accounts than Twitter had disclosed. Twitter sued to force him to complete the acquisition.

Musk responded by filing his countersuit.

Musk's attorneys argued that Twitter's own disclosures revealed that

it has 65 million fewer "monetisable daily active users," who can be shown digital ads, than the 238 million that Twitter claims, the Post and the Journal reported.

The filing also said most of Twitter's ads are shown only to a sliver of the company's user base, the Post said. In an unexpected twist, Twitter filed its response denying Musk's accusations before Musk's own counterclaims surfaced.

Twitter called Musk's reasoning "a story, imagined in an effort to escape a merger agreement that Musk no longer found attractive."

Rupee rises 17 paise to close at 79.23 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated by 17 paise to close at 79.23 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday after the Reserve Bank hiked interest rates by 50 basis points.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic currency opened at 79.15 per dollar. It hovered in a range of 78.94 to 79.29 during the session.

The domestic unit finally settled at 79.23, up 17 paise over its previous close of 79.40.

The Reserve Bank on Friday raised the key interest rate -- the third straight increase since May -- in an effort to cool stubbornly high inflation and defend the rupee.



The repurchase rate was raised by 50 basis points to lift the interest rate to the pre-pandemic level. The 5.40 per cent repo rate was last seen in August 2019.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up 0.25 per cent at 105.95.

Forex traders said foreign

fund inflows into capital markets and softening crude oil prices boosted the local currency.

Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital market on Thursday as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,474.77 crore, as per exchange data.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.20 per cent to USD 94.31 per barrel.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said the RBI will remain watchful and maintain the stability of the rupee.

"The depreciation of the Indian rupee is more on account of the appreciation of the US dollar rather than weakness in macro-economic fundamentals of the Indian economy.

HDFC raises ₹8,700 cr as 'social loan' to finance affordable housing segment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd on Friday said it has raised USD 1.1 billion (around Rs 8,700 crore) from a clutch of investors under 'Syndicated Social Loan Facility' to cater to the affordable housing segment in the country.

The country's largest mortgage lender by asset size said it has raised the amount by way of external commercial borrowings (ECBs).

"This landmark financing further promotes HDFC's longstanding mission

to be the leading provider of housing finance in India. Proceeds from the social loan would go towards financing affordable housing loans," the company said in a release.

MUFG Bank Ltd (MUFG) is the lead social loan coordinator for this transaction along with being one of the Mandated Lead Arranger and Borrowers (MLAB), it said.

CTBC Bank, Mizuho Bank, State Bank of India and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation are the other MLABs and joint social loan coordinators.

SREESHANKAR LONG JUMPS TO WIN SILVER

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Murali Sreeshankar clinched a silver in men's long jump event to give India a second medal in athletics at the Commonwealth Games here on Thursday.

The 23-year-old national record holder soared to 8.08m in his fifth attempt to finish second behind Laquan Nairn of Bahamas in a nerve-wrecking men's long jump final.

Nairn also had a best jump of 8.08m but his second best of 7.98m was better than 7.84m of Sreeshankar.

Under rules, if two jumpers are tied on same distance, the one who has a better second best effort will be ranked ahead.

Jovan van Vuuren (8.06m) of South Africa took the Bronze.

The other Indian in the fray, Muhammed Anees Yahiya ended at fifth with a best jump of 7.97m.

Sreeshankar's became the first Indian male long jumper to win a Silver at the CWG. Suresh Babu had won a Bronze in the 1978 edition.

Among women, Prajusha Maliakkal won a Silver in the 2010 edition in Delhi, while legendary Anju Bobby George bagged a Bronze in 2002.

Sreeshankar had gone into CWG as Gold medal favourite on the basis of his season's and personal best of 8.36m, which had put him in joint second ranking in the world this season.

But he struggled in his first four jumps regarding his landing on the foot board. He began with a 7.64m before jumping identical 7.84m in his second and third attempts. His fourth jump was a foul.

He was outside the medal contention at the end of the fourth round as he was at sixth place at that stage but his fifth attempt of 8.08m took him to the second place.

In a dramatic final round jump, he seemed to have crossed the 8m mark -- which would have given him a gold -- but to his and the Indian contingent's disappointment, his foot landed 2cm ahead of the line on the foot board.

The final attempt was thus ruled as a foul and Sreeshankar had to settle for a Silver.



Indian men's 4x400m relay team qualifies for final, Jyothi exits in 100m hurdles

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

The Indian men's 4x400m relay team qualified for the final at the Commonwealth Games after finishing second in its heat race here on Friday.

The Indian quartet of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Noah Nirmal Tom, Mohammed Ajmal and Amoj Jacob took the automatic qualification route, clocking 3:06.97s to finish second behind Kenya in heat 2.

India were fourth before the last leg bend but Amoj overtook two runners at the final stretch to finish second. He had suffered a hamstring injury while running

4x400m relay as part of the Indian quartet during the National Inter-State Championships in Chennai last month.

India finished sixth overall across the two heats with Botswana 3:05.11s being the quickest.

The final will be held on Sunday.

In women's 100m hurdles, national record holder Jyothi Yarraji crashed out in the first round heats with a below-par show. She clocked 13.18m to finish fourth in heat 2 and 10th overall. She holds the national record of 13.04s.

The heat races were held under windy conditions and Yarraji ran

with a tailwind of 2m/s. All the competitors ran with tailwind of 2m/s or above.

The 22-year-old Yarraji had bettered her national record thrice this season.

Ancy Sojan also failed to qualify for the women's long jump final. She was ranked 13th overall in the qualifying round with a best jump of 6.25m, which was wind-assisted (tailwind of 2.3m/s).

Those who touched 6.75m or at least 12 best performers across the two groups advance to the final.

The 21-year-old Sojan, who has a season and personal best of 6.55m, was seventh in Group A qualifying round.

On Wednesday, Tejaswin Shankar had won a Bronze in men's high jump to open India's medal account in athletics in this CWG.

It was Sreeshankar's first medal in a major international competition and a multi-sport event. Before this, he had won a Bronze in the 2018 Asian U-20 Championships in Gifu, Japan.

The medal will give him some sort of relief after his disappointing performance in the World Athletics Championships in Eugene, USA, where he had finished seventh in the final last month.

He had gone into the World Championships as a dark horse for a medal with a season's and personal best of 8.36m.

RUES MISSING GOLD

Commonwealth Games Silver medalist long jumper Murali Sreeshankar rued missing out on a Gold, saying his fourth jump, which was ruled a foul under laser-based new technology, would have been legal in earlier system and big enough to finish on top of the podium.

The 23-year-old Sreeshankar said he initially thought he had a big valid jump in his fourth attempt which would have given him a Gold. However, his jump was adjudged a foul under the new system.

"I was very surprised, you can't call it (fourth jump) a foul because I never overstepped the foul board but she (pit-side official) explained to me the exact jumping position, movement of my foot which was crossing the perpendicular plate," Sreeshankar said in a virtual interaction.

"If it was the previous system which we had in past years, it would not have been called a foul," said the national record holder (8.36m).

He said the conditions during the CWG long jump final was not ideal as it was a bit cold and windy.

"Performance on the particular day matters. In major championships, winning a medal is the priority.

"I completely messed up the first three jumps, trying to have safe jumps (by leaving good gap). My focus after that was to be on podium with good jumps in final three attempts."

Bajrang Punia defends men's 65kg Gold medal



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Star Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia was a class apart while defending his title as he conceded just two points en route the Gold medal show while birthday girl Anshu Malik grabbed a Silver in her maiden Commonwealth Games, here on Friday.

Such was Tokyo Olympics Bronze medalist Bajrang's dominance in the 65kg competition that he won three of his four bouts inside first rounds.

The 28-year-old defending champion beat Naurau's Lowe Bingham and Mauritius' Jean Guyliane Joris Bandou 'by fall' before winning by technical superiority against England's Geroage Ramm.

Canada's Lachlan Maurice McNeil fought well against Bajrang but the Indian was far superior in technique and stamina as he won the bout 9-2.

Bajrang has been struggling to play freely since last year and his over defensive tactics put a question-mark over his ability to extend his dominance in international arena but on Friday he made his moves without inhibition.

However, the CWG is not the best platform to judge if Bajrang has got his mojo back because of the inferior field quality.

Anshu, who has taken rapid strides in her career, reached the women's 57kg final with similar dominance but ended up second-best with a Silver medal.

The Nidani wrestler, who turned 21 on Friday, won by technical superiority against Australia's Irene Symeonidis and Sri Lanka's Nethmi Ahinsa Fernando Poruthothage.

It did not take Anshu much time to measure her opponents. Her trademark aggression and quality was too hot to handle for her rivals till

the gold bout.

The World Championship Silver medalist though could not breach the defence of Nigeria's Odunayo Folasade Adekuoroye, losing the gold bout 3-7. The Nigerian was strong with her defence and Anshu could not find a way to make her moves.

She left mat with tears in her eyes as it was not the birthday present she wanted to give herself.

For Sakshi Malik, who has been battling for relevance for long, it was an ideal opportunity to get some confidence back and she used it to optimum level in the 62kg contest. She began by pinning home team wrestler Kelsey Barnes and followed that with a technical superiority win against Cameroon's Berthe Emilienne.

In her two bouts, she did not concede a single point and will now clash with Canada's Ana Paula Godinez Gonzalez for her first CWG gold. She has a bronze and silver in her CWG collection.

Also making the gold medal round was Deepak Punia (86kg) who did not look his dominant and quick self but still won his bouts without giving a point to his rivals.

The wrestler from Chhara village began with technical superiority win over Matthew Clay Oxenham from New Zealand and beat Canada's Alexander Moore 3-1, setting up the Gold medal bout against Pakistan's Muhammad Inam. Divya Kakran though got a tough draw as she found Tokyo Olympic Silver medalist and 11-time African champion Blessing Oborududu from Nigeria.

The first round was worth a final though Divya was outplayed by the formidable Nigerian. The Asian Games Bronze medalist won her repechage round against Blandine Nyeh Ngiri by fall.

Sindhu, Srikanth sail into quarterfinals



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Star Indian shuttlers P V Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth had another easy outing as they stormed into the quarterfinals of the women's and men's singles events respectively with comfortable wins at the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

Sindhu, a Silver medalist at the 2018 edition, expectedly faced no resistance from Uganda's Husina Kobugabe, winning 21-10, 21-9 in her pre-quarterfinal match.

Srikanth, who had also finished second best at Gold Coast, too didn't break any sweat on his way to a 21-9, 21-12 win over Sri Lanka's Dumindu Abeywickrama in the men's singles.

Earlier, Indian women's

pairing of Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly had entered the last eight with a 21-2, 21-4 win over Mauritius' Jemimah Leung For Sang and Ganeshna Mungrah.

Double Olympic medalist Sindhu will face Malaysia's Goh Jin Wei in the next round for a place in the semifinals.

Sindhu had defeated Goh in two tight games in the final of the mixed team final and can ill-afford to lower her guard against the 22-year-old Malaysian, a winner of the World Junior Championships gold in 2015 and 2018.

Former world number one Srikanth will be up against England's Toby Pentty, who is ranked 54th in the world.

Gayatri and Treasa will meet Jamaica's Tahlia Richardson and Katherine Wynter next.

Sudhir wins Gold in para powerlifting men's heavyweight event at CWG

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India's Sudhir claimed the Gold medal in men's heavyweight para powerlifting event at the Commonwealth Games here on Thursday.

Sudhir, an Asian Para Games Bronze medalist, lifted 208kg in his first attempt before increasing it to 212kg in his second effort to gather 134.5 points and break the Games record.

The 27-year-old Sudhir, who has an impairment due to the effects of polio, thus opened India's para sports medal account in the ongoing CWG.

Ikechukwu Christian Obichukwu won the Silver with 133.6 points, while Micky Yule bagged the Bronze with 130.9 points.

Sudhir had won a Bronze in men's upto 88kg with a best lift of 214kg at the



World Para Powerlifting Asia-Oceania Open Championship in South Korea in June.

Sudhir, who had started powerlifting in 2013 in Sonipat, has also qualified for Hangzhou 2022 Asian Para Games, which was postponed to next year.

At 75, Scotland's George Miller becomes oldest Commonwealth Games medalist

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

George Miller, 75 years and 8 months old, on Friday became the oldest player to win a medal at the Commonwealth Games when he bagged the mixed pairs Gold in lawn bowls for Scotland.

The team, lead Melanie Innes, her director Miller and skip director Sarah Jane, scripted Scotland's 16-9 victory over Wales to win Gold in the para mixed pairs B2/B3 at Victoria Park



here.

"I think Rosemary is quite pleased," said Miller, while replacing teammate Rosemary Lenton as the oldest Gold medal winner in Commonwealth Games history:

On his message to older people who might want to get involved in the sport:

"Bowls is quite easy for older people but any sport, walking, football, rugby, you name it, get out there, exercise, play games. Competing is brilliant whatever age you are," he said.

India women's Lawn Bowl pair bows out

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

The Indian women's pair of Lovely Choubey and Nayanmoni Saikai were knocked out of the Commonwealth Games here on Friday after they went down in the quarter-final clash.

The Indian duo lost to England's Sophie Tolchard and Amy Pharoah 18-14.

Choubey and Saikai led on two occasions, first 5-2 after four rounds and 8-6 after end nine.

However, they squandered an early advantage and allowed the English pair of Tolchard (lead) and Pharoah (skip) to make a strong comeback.

After the 10th round, England surged ahead and kept increasing their lead and eventually emerged victorious.

England will now face New Zealand in the semi-final, while Australia will take on Malaysia in other last four clash.

Paddlers Manika, Sreeja storm into women singles quarters

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Indian paddlers Manika Batra and Sreeja Akula entered the women's singles quarterfinals in the table tennis event of the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

Batra steamrolled Australian Jee Minhyung 11-4, 11-8, 11-6, 12-10 to book her place in the quarterfinal.

The 27-year-old star paddler will now take on Singapore's Jian Zeng in the last eight-clash later tonight.

Sreeja, on the other hand, played out a nerve-wracking encounter against Charlotte Carey from Wales to secure herself a last eight berth.

The 24-year-old toiled hard but held her nerves to beat Carey 8-11, 11-7, 12-14, 9-11, 11-4, 15-13, 12-10.

Sreeja will lock horns with Canada's Mo Zhang in the quarterfinal which is also slated to be held later tonight.

Earlier in the day, both Manika and Sreeja also reached the mixed doubles quarterfinal events.

Batra and mixed doubles partner Sathiyan Gnanasekaran humbled Nigerians Olajide Omotayo and Ajoke Ojomu 11-7, 11-6, 11-7.

The two will face Malaysia's Javen Choong and Karen Lyne in the first quarter-final event on Friday.

Sreeja and her partner Achanta Sharath Kamal, on the other hand, came from behind to beat Malaysia's



Leond Chee Fang and Ho Ying 5-11, 11-2, 11-6, 11-5.

They will square up against home favourites Liam Pitchford and Tin-Tin Ho in the second quarterfinal clash on the same day.

Meanwhile, Reeth Tennison, bowed out in the women's singles event after she went down to Singapore's Feng Tianwei in a round of 16 game.

The Singaporean Tianwei proved too strong for Tennison and the latter was beaten 11-2, 11-4, 9-11, 11-3, 11-4.

Meanwhile, Kamal and Gnanasekaran stormed into the quarterfinals of the men's doubles event after easing past Bangladesh's Bawm

Ramhimlian and Ridoy Mohutasin Ahmed.

The Indian pair won 11-6, 11-1, 11-4 in three straight games in their round of 16 clash.

Kamal and Gnanasekaran will now take on English pair of Tom Jarvis and Sam Walker later tonight.

The pair of Harmeet Desai and Sanil Shetty also was through to the last-eight stage after they defeated Australian pair of Chambers Dillon and Yan Xin 3-1.

Desai and Shetty, who won 11-3, 9-11, 9-11, 7-11, will now lock horns with Singapore's Clerance Chew and Shao Feng Ethan Poh in the last eight round match, later in the day.

Men in Blue aim to seal T20I series

PTI ■ FORT LAUDERHILL

Shreyas Iyer's performance will be under intense scrutiny as India gear up for the back-to-back T20I games against West Indies, starting here on Saturday, with the twin objective of winning the series and also firming up squad for T20 World Cup.

India are currently leading the five-match series 2-1 and nothing would be more satisfying than a couple of thumping wins in front of the USA's Indian diaspora, which is anticipating an enjoyable weekend cricket carnival.

However in this current India set-up, if there is one man whose performance will be monitored more than anyone else, it has got to be Iyer.

Deepak Hooda, who has used most of the opportunities handed to him, looks good to outwit Iyer at the moment as far as the big ticket T20 World Cup berth is concerned.

With KL Rahul and Virat Kohli all set to be back in the playing eleven for the Asia Cup, time is certainly running out for the 27-year-old Mumbaier, who has had scores of 0, 10 (11 balls) and 24 (27 balls) in the three games so far in the ongoing series.

He looked distinctly uncomfortable against the fast and rising deliveries.

While the short ball is his main problem, watching Iyer gives a feeling that he is unable to decide at what pace and which gear would he bat in a T20 game, something that's not the case when he is taking strike in 50-over format.

In head coach Rahul Dravid's regime so far, no player has got a raw deal in terms of chances and are given long enough rope to succeed.

However in case of Iyer, his T20I game hasn't exactly yielded the results that one has seen him deliver in the ODI cricket.

Even then, Dravid has given Iyer nine T20I games in last two and half months, out of which, one in Bengaluru was a wash-out and there hasn't been a single fifty-plus score even when he got chance to come out within first 10 overs.

If Iyer gets a go in the last two games, he has no option but to put his best foot forward as the Asia Cup team, in all probability, will also be the likely team for the T20 World Cup.



West Indies vs India
Live from 8:00pm IST
DD SPORTS & FANCODE

Even if Iyer makes the cut for Asia Cup or T20 World Cup, there is a miniscule chance of him getting a first XI look-in in a jam-packed top-order.

ROHIT LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE

While Suryakumar Yadav's awe-inspiring shots left all and sundry wide-eyed, he is expected to have his skipper Rohit Sharma for company at the top of the order.

In the third game in Basseterre, Rohit was forced to retire hurt with a back spasm when he was batting on 11 and it was more like a precautionary measure with a three-day gap in between games.

The Indian captain would like to continue his recent good form and positive intent in the two remaining games but at the same time would have the best seat to judge the form of some of his batters.

Rishabh Pant has looked good in all his short stints at the crease and wouldn't mind having a big one in front of a packed audience at Central Broward Park Stadium.

PLAYING AVESH A COMPULSION

Avesh Khan has been taken to cleaners in the last two games but Dravid-Rohit pair has no other option but to continue with the profligate MP speedster as Harshal Patel hasn't fully recovered from his rib-cage injury.

Avesh throughout his career has been a bit one-dimensional with either bowling too short or too full giving batters ample time to work on the pace or play the full-blooded drive.

It will be interesting to see if Kuldeep Yadav gets a game in the series and India play an extra spinner in case Harshal doesn't get fit in time.

TEAMS

India: Rohit Sharma (C), Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Hooda, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant, Ishan Kishan, Dinesh Karthik, Sanju Samson, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Parel, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel
West Indies: Nicholas Pooran (C), Rovman Powell, Shamarr Brooks, Dominic Drakes, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Obed McCoy, Keemo Paul, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, Devon Thomas, Hayden Walsh.

Guardiola will not stop Bernardo joining Barca

AP ■ BARCELONA

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola will not stand in Bernardo Silva's way should he wish to join Barcelona before the end of the transfer window.

Guardiola said there has been no bid from his former club for the Portuguese midfielder, but would not keep Silva in Manchester against his will.

Despite debts of 1.3 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) Barcelona have embarked on a spending spree this summer and will reportedly turn their attentions to Silva should Frenkie de Jong depart the Camp Nou.

City have already let Gabriel Jesus and Oleksandr Zinchenko join Arsenal and sold Raheem Sterling to Chelsea this summer as all three sought more regular game time.

By contrast, Silva has been a vital player in City winning four Premier League titles in the past five seasons and would be difficult to replace in the final weeks of the transfer window.

"I was comfortable working with Oleks, Raheem, Gabriel, incredible characters that helped us achieve what we achieved," Guardiola said at his pre-match press conference ahead of the start of City's Premier League defence at West Ham on Sunday.

"Sometimes for the club, sometimes for the players, sometimes for the agent, sometimes you have to divide our path.



"Especially the desire of the player is the most important thing. Of course I would love Bernardo to continue here, he is a special player for us. But I don't know what is going to happen.

"What happens will happen and if he stays it is perfect and in the end if he has to leave it is because football is like this, the player has a desire. I will not be a person to stop a desire for the people."

Klopp wary of short-term solutions to injury problems

AP ■ LONDON

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp on Friday said he was reluctant to dip into the transfer market in order to solve "four-week" injury problems.

Reds centre-back Ibrahima Konate suffered a knee injury in the friendly against Strasbourg on Sunday which Klopp said will see the defender out "for a while".

Konate has joined a list of sidelined Liverpool players that already includes Kostas Tsimikas, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Diogo Jota, Curtis Jones and reserve goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher, with Naby Keita set to resume training on Friday after nearly a week out with illness.

None of the absentees are understood to be suffering with long-term injuries, however.

"We have too many injuries, that's true," said Klopp. "But in the moment nothing has changed (in terms of new signings). A lot of unlucky situations. Started with Caoimh and Diogo, pretty much one was injured and one had a re-injury.

"In a few weeks' time they will be back, but they've missed pre-season and that's not cool.

15 Aussie players offered AUD 700,000 to play in UAE League

PTI ■ SYDNEY

The International League (ILT20) in UAE has reportedly offered 15 top Australian players a whopping AUD 700,000 deals to ditch the Big Bash League (BBL), dates of which are overlapping, causing considerable tension in Cricket Australia (CA)'s ranks.

The Big Bash League will be played between December 13 to February 4 while the inaugural edition of ILT20 is scheduled from January 6 to February 12, making it virtually impossible for Australian players to take part in both the tournaments.

According to a report in Sydney Morning Herald, "As many as 15 Australian players have been offered contracts worth up to AUD 700,000 a year to abandon the Big Bash League and play in the UAE T20 tournament in January."

Most of the top Australian players have no obligation to play BBL under their existing central contract, with Warner not having played a single edition since 2014.

The BBL's highest payment till date from the draft has been D'arcy Short's \$258,000 (AUD 370,000) and the money com-

pared to what has been paid to marquee Australian players in IPL, has been significantly lesser.

But with Indian IPL owners investing in UAE and CSA T20 leagues, the BBL will need to revamp its pay structure to keep the best in the business interested.

According to Australian newspapers 'The Age' and 'The Sydney Morning Herald' by senior cricket sources, "the scale of the attempted raid on Australian players goes far beyond the threat of losing one player - David Warner - to the UAE because he does not have a BBL deal."

The paper also revealed: "UAE contract sizes so far above and beyond what has been on offer in the BBL have placed Cricket Australia and the Australian Cricketers Association under pressure to reassure players that they are not being left behind the rest of the world by remaining loyal to the game in this country."

However it is learnt CA in its bid to retain the sheen and quality of BBL, is keen on signing a lucrative one-off deal with Warner, which will prevent him from taking up the ILT20 offer.



Raza, Kaia centuries help Zimbabwe beat B'desh

AP ■ HARARE

Sikandar Raza and Innocent Zimababwe recovered from a disastrous start to stun Bangladesh by five wickets on Friday in the first match of a three-game ODI series.

The home team lost openers Regis Chakabva and Tarisai Musakanda with just six runs on the scoreboard as they chased a formidable Bangladesh total of 303-2 that included four half centuries.

A third Zimbabwe wicket fell after they lifted the score to 62 and then Raza and Kaia came together to put on 192 runs for the fourth wicket and set up a brilliant victory as Zimbabwe reached 307-5 with 10 balls to spare. Raza was unbeaten on 135, including six sixes and eight fours, while Kaia struck two sixes and 11 fours in his 110 before being caught by Shoriful islam at short fine leg.

Bangladesh, seventh in the ODI rankings and eight places above Zimbabwe, took advantage of being put in to bat by building what appeared to be a winning score.

Opener Liton Das led the way with an unbeaten 81 before being forced to retire hurt with a suspected hamstring injury.

He faced 89 balls and scored one six and nine fours.

Anamul Haque (73), captain Tamim Iqbal (62) and

Mushfique Rahim (52) were the other scorers of half centuries for a team fresh from a 3-0 ODI hammering of the West Indies.

But while the visiting batsmen scored freely, their bowlers had no answers to Pakistan-born Raza and Kaia at Harare sports Club.

The pair reached centuries within two balls of each other during the 39th over with Kaia scoring his maiden ton through a single while two runs from Raza gave him his fourth 100 in the 50-over format.

Victory continued a remarkable transformation of Zimbabwe since former batting star Dave Houghton began a second stint as coach after 3-0 ODI and T20 whitewashes by Afghanistan in June.

They hosted a T20 World Cup qualifying tournament last month and won all five matches to clinch a place at the main event in Australia from October.

Then, earlier this week, they edged Bangladesh by 10 runs in a thriller to snatch a 2-1 victory in a T20 series.

BCB TO INVESTIGATE SHAKIB'S POST

Bangladesh's biggest cricketing star Shakib Al Hasan has once again courted controversy as country's cricket board is set to investigate an alleged social media post from him endorsing a sports betting company.

Gauff beats Osaka to enter San Jose last 8



AP ■ SAN JOSE

American teenager Coco Gauff built a big lead early then had to dig deep late for a 6-4, 6-4 victory over four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka on Thursday (Friday IST) at the WTA hardcourt tournament in San Jose, California.

The 18-year-old, who reached her first Grand Slam final at the French Open in June, needed just one break of serve to seize the first set 6-4 in the blockbuster encounter.

With booming serves and matching ground strokes, she then roared to a 5-1 lead in the second set.

But the Japanese superstar, unseeded in her first tournament since an opening-round exit at Roland Garros, didn't go down without a fight.

She saved match points —

all on her own serve, before Gauff was finally able to serve it out. "Even though I was up 5-1 and 40-0 I knew I didn't have the match in the bag yet and obviously she proved that," Gauff said.

"Whenever you play Naomi she can play lights-out tennis. I feel like maybe two of the match points I had an actual shot on.

It was, and sixth-seeded Gauff advanced to a quarter-final clash with second-seed Paula Badosa of Spain.

In other second-round action, unseeded American Shelby Rogers toppled top-seed Maria Sakkari 6-1, 6-3.

Fourth-seeded Aryna Sabalenka and ninth-seed Veronika Kudermetova made it through to the quarters. Sabalenka beat American Caroline Dolehide 4-7, 6-1, 7-5 and Kudermetova topped American Claire Liu 6-2, 7-5.

Unvaccinated Djokovic officially out of Montreal ATP event

AP ■ MONTREAL

Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic, whose refusal to be vaccinated against Covid makes him unable to enter Canada, has officially withdrawn from the ATP hardcourt tournament in Montreal, organizers said on Thursday.

The Serb star's unvaccinated status made it unlikely he would play in the prestigious ATP Masters tournament, just as it means he will probably miss the US Open starting later in August as the United States also requires visitors to the country to show proof of vaccination.



Germany's Oscar Otto has also withdrawn from the tournament which starts Monday with Benjamin Bonzi of France and Australia's Wimbledon runner-up

it actually worked to his advantage.

Medvedev will face fourth-seeded serb Miomir Kecmanovic for a place in the final. Kecmanovic beat Brandon Nakashima 6-2, 6-4.

If he reaches the final here, Medvedev will be assured of taking the world number one ranking into his defense of the US Open title at Flushing Meadows later this month.

RADUCANU IN QFS

Washington: Reigning US Open champion Emma Raducanu of Britain advanced to the quarter-finals of the ATP and WTA Washington Open, refusing to wilt Thursday after a marathon match in sweltering heat.

The English 19-year-old outlasted Colombia's Camila Osorio 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/4) after two hours and 50 minutes for a gritty victory in the WTA's longest two-set main draw



match of the year.

She advanced to a Friday quarter-final against Liudmila Samsonova, who rallied past Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 at the US Open tuneup.

It will be only Raducanu's third quarter-final since her amazing Grand Slam title run last year at New York, having reached the last eight at Cluj-Napoca last October and Stuttgart in April.

She has yet to reach a semi-final since taking the trophy last September at Flushing Meadows.

On the men's side, British 16th seed Daniel Evans advanced to the last eight when US third seed Taylor Fritz retired with the Englishman leading 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 4-1.

Next up for Evans is world number 96 Yoshihito Nishioka of Japan, who edged seventh seed Karen Khachanov 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/1).