

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

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY AUGUST 6, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

INDIA TO FACE
WEST INDIES IN
4th T20I TODAY
12 SPORTPublished From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADALate City Vol.32 Issue 216
* Air Surcharge Extra If Applicable

Cong hits streets on price rise, unemployment, GST

Rahul, Priyanka
detained with
60 Cong MPs
and workersPIONEER 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 workers

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.”

Continued on Page 2

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.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

CWG: BAJRANG, SAKSHI, DEEPAK CLINCH GOLD

London: Star Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia was a class apart while defending his title at Commonwealth Games in men's 65kg category, while his fellow wrestlers Sakshi Malik won gold in women's 62kg category and Deepak Punia won gold in men's 86kg category at the CWG.

P11**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.

P3

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.

*Continued on Page 2***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.

Continued on Page 2

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.

*Continued on Page 2***"I am committed to protect the health of each and every sister and her family, every day."**
Swami Ramdev**PATANJALI FOODS LTD.**

FORMERLY KNOWN AS RUCHI SOYA INDUSTRIES LIMITED

Whether it's Raksha Bandhan, Bhai Dooj or any other festival or joyful occasion, bring Patanjali's Cow Ghee, Kachi Ghani Mustard Oil, Rice Bran Oil and pure-sattvik nutritious products of Patanjali at your home and save your family from the poison of adulteration.

If even a single particle of impure food enters your body, it destroys your DNA from your blood and pushes you towards old age. (Reference: Ayurveda, Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads)



Patanjali Cow's Ghee is beneficial for physical strength, sharp mind, memory, healthy heart, good eye sight, long life, better digestion and glowing skin.



It is enriched with natural oryzanol that prevents high cholesterol level, diabetes and keeps your heart healthy. It enhances immunity. Also has goodness of Vitamin A and D.



Most of the mustard oils available in market are adulterated with palm oil and other cheap oils. Patanjali Kacchi Ghani is 100% pure mustard oil prepared without any chemical process.



Adopt high fiber brown colour flour, enriched with B12 and iron traditional chakki atta and high fiber besan with goodness of protein.



Unpolished natural Pulses. Enriched with protein, taste and healthy natural nutrients.



Patanjali Spices made from natural and pure ingredients & free from adulteration. Strengthens the digestive system to give a taste full of health.



Patanjali Rice, Sabse Nice. 2 years aged basmati and complete range of other types of rice.



Patanjali Honey has passed more than 100 parameters of purity and is natural immunity booster.



Dates, Almonds, Cashew, Raisin, Anjeer Range of Patanjali Dry fruits.



Reduces inflammation, increases immunity to make respiratory system strong and provides protection against diseases.

House Session no immunity for MPs against arrest: VP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday clarified that members of Parliament do not enjoy any immunity from arrest in criminal cases when the House is in session and they cannot avoid summons issued by law enforcement agencies.

The proceedings of the House were adjourned for almost half an hour in the morning as Congress members created an uproar alleging misuse of probe agencies by the government.

When the Upper House assembled for the morning session, Naidu proceeded with the scheduled business of laying of the listed papers on the

table, but had to adjourn the House within a few minutes. More than 10 Congress members trooped into the Well of the House, protesting against the alleged misuse of central probe agencies.

The Congress members said the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, has been “insulted” as he was summoned by the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday during the working hours of Parliament.

Naidu said there is a wrong notion among the members that they have a privilege from action by agencies while Parliament is in session. He said that under Article 105 of the Constitution members of Parliament enjoy certain privileges so they can perform

their duties without any hindrances. One of the privileges is that a member of Parliament cannot be arrested in a civil case 40 days before the commencement of the session or committee meeting and 40 days thereafter, Naidu said, adding that this privilege is already incorporated under Section 135A of the Civil Procedure Court.

“However, in criminal matters members of Parliament are not on a different footing than a common citizen. That means members of Parliament do not enjoy any immunity from being arrested in a criminal case during the session or otherwise,” Naidu clarified. He cited his past observations in this regard and Supreme Court rulings.

Kolkata girl raped by G’gram man

GURUGRAM: A 27-year-old Kolkata-based woman was allegedly raped by a man who she met at a club located in Sector-29, police said. The woman, an executive, arrived in the city a week ago on a work purpose and checked into a guest house located in Sector 40.

The victim in her complaint told the police, On Wednesday night, she had visited a club located in Sector-29, where a man befriended her and offered her wine and cigarettes.

Later the duo went to another club and left the venue late at night in the accused car. On the pretext of having dinner, the man took her to a hotel in Noida, where he allegedly raped her, police said.

FIR against BJP leader for abusing woman

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

The Gautam Budh Nagar Police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) after a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Shrikant Tyagi was found abusing a woman, a resident of Grand Omaxe sector 93B in Noida during an argument over the plantation in the society.

The move comes after a video of Shrikant Tyagi, National Executive Member, BJP’s Kisaan Morcha, went viral on social media in which the Tyagi could be heard hurling abuses at the woman and even pushing her. “Don’t you dare touch my plants otherwise I will see you……. I have registry of the area,” Tyagi said in the video. The victim woman can be heard in the video asking Tyagi to show the registry.

The social media was also filled with the video of the victim woman narrating the entire incident. “I live in Grand Omaxe. A man, named Shrikant Tyagi, residing on the ground floor was encroaching the society by planting small and large plants in the common area.

When I asked him to remove it, he denied and when I tried to remove them, he hurled abuses at me and for my husband and my kids,” the woman said in the video doing rounds on social media.

The video also shows the residents of the society accusing Tyagi of encroaching the area by planting small and large plants. The society residents also said that Tyagi had even pasted MLA sticker on his car and bullies everyone in the society.

NCR PULSE

ANGANWADI CENTRE AT SAINIK ENCLAVE OPENED
New Delhi: Delhi Women & Child Development Minister, Kailash Gahlot today inaugurated a new Anganwadi Centre at Sainik Enclave, Part-III in Najafgarh. Officials said that the new Anganwadi Centre in the area will improve the nutritional and health status of children, pregnant women and nursing mothers by providing a package of services.

RED FORT NO KITE FLYING ZONE: DELHI POLICE
New Delhi: The Delhi Police on Friday designated a five-kilometre radius around the historic Red Fort as a ‘no kite flying zone’ till Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoists the tricolour at the Mughal era monument on Independence Day. ‘As a security measure, Red Fort & the 5 KM radius around the monument is declared as a ‘No Kite Flying Zone’, till the flag-hoisting ceremony & the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s address to the Nation on August 15,’ it tweeted.

‘3 MCD SHOOLS DIGITALLY TRANSFORMED’
New Delhi: Three schools of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi got complete digital transformation of education by the installation of Digital Classrooms. Officials said that two more schools would be transformed in the upcoming week. This initiative was a step in the direction of digital transformation of education in Government schools of India and was commenced under the CSR initiative of Globus Infocom Limited, India’s leading Ed-tech solution provider.

BID TO MAKE NAJAFGARH MICRO-ENTERPRISE HUB
New Delhi: With an aim to make Najafgarh a women-led micro-enterprise hub, 12 newly-formed women self-help groups are going to make Najafgarh’s first area level federation (ALF). Each Area-level federation will consist of 10 self-help group (SHGs) consisting of minimum 10 members each. Delhi’s first city-level women federation will generate sustainable livelihoods and access to financial literacy through opening of bank accounts.

‘PROBE NEWLY-BUILT ROOMS IN DELHI SCHOOLS’
New Delhi: Delhi Assembly’s Leader of Opposition and BJP legislator from Badarpur area, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has demanded a CBI enquiry into the matter of the substandard quality of rooms built in Delhi schools. Bidhuri alleged that corruption has reached its peak in the Delhi government. “That is why the Education Department of Delhi Government has accused the PWD of substandard construction.

DSEU SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH ISS FACILITY
New Delhi: The Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU) on Friday signed an agreement with ISS Facility Services India to train students enrolled in the BBA (Facilities and Hygiene Management) programme. As part of this memorandum of understanding (MoU), the company will assist DSEU with curriculum advisory, faculty and staff development workshops, internships, and placement support along with six scholarships to high-performing and needy students.

IRREGULARITIES RAISED IN DELHI COLLEGES
New Delhi: In the recent Delhi University’s Academic Council meeting held on August 3, National Democratic Teachers Front (NDTF) raised the issue of ‘irregularities’ in Delhi Government-funded colleges and urged University Grants Commission (UGC) and Delhi University (DU) to take over these 28 colleges.

TENDER TO BE FLOATED FOR FOB BY AUGUST 20
New Delhi: The tender for construction of a foot-over bridge (FOB) linking the Delhi Metro’s Blue Line with Noida Metro’s Aqua Line will be floated by August 20, officials said on Friday. An expression of interest (Eoi) has also been floated for a feeder bus service from metro stations with August 18 being the last date for submission of application.

DU HOLDS 4-KM-LONG TIRANGA YATRA
New Delhi: Keeping up with the ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ campaign fervour, Delhi University is conducting a historic four km. long Tiranga Yatra on August 10. The Tiranga Yatra will see the participation of more than 1000 students, teaching and non-teaching staff of the varsity led by the Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Yogesh Singh.

‘Ramlila committees in Delhi will have to pay less rent for venues’

NEW DELHI: Ramlila committees in Delhi will have to pay less rent for venues and get required permissions from various civic agencies without any hassle, BJP leaders said on Friday after a meeting with Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

They also claimed the timing of Ramlila programmes will be extended from 10 pm to 12 midnight so that people can take their families to watch them after returning from work. The lieutenant governor, in a tweet, said he issued on-the-spot instructions to agencies concerned to resolve issues and simplify process of obtaining licences after meeting a del-

egation of Ramlil committees. "Met Delegations of Ramlila Committees & discussed issues related to smooth organisation of Ramlilas in City. Issued on-spot instructions to concerned agencies to resolve issues & simplify processes of obtaining NOC/licenses etc for the same," he tweeted.

The delegation included Delhi BJP president Aadesh Gupta, West Delhi BJP MP Parvesh Verma, Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, BJP state general secretary and Delhi Dharmik Mahasangh general secretary Ashok Goel Devraha and members of some Ramlila committees. SR

Foreign powers ruled us by belittling our feats: HM

From Page 1
“Those who ruled us destroyed our best systems. They knew that they could rule us only if they succeeded in creating an inferiority complex within us, because we were ahead of them in every aspect. These people created a myth that we were illiterate. The country that gave Geeta and the Vedas to the world, the country that gave the world zero, the country that gave the world astronomy, how can it be illiterate,” said Shah.

Shah wondered if India could claim to have achieved the true ideals of Swaraj if it failed to protect its languages, culture, and history as it marched towards the centenary of Independence. “The real meaning of Swaraj means to run India the way Indians want it to be run.

It includes our own languages, our religion, our culture and also our arts,” Shah said at the function attended by Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur, Minister of State L Murugan, I&B Secretary Apoorva Chandra, CEO of



PrasarBharati, Mayank Kumar Agrawal, Members of Parliament among others.

Shah said India has been administered well since Independence and has had several achievements to its credit. “Whoever came (to power) has taken the country forward. We respect everyone. But, if we cannot protect our languages in the centenary year, then would we have

achieved the real aim of Swaraj,” Shah asked. He said the Indian civilisation had progressed for several thousand years and there was no need for any NGO to educate the country about its culture.

Shah expressed the hope that the television serial “Swaraj” will help the country get rid of its inferiority complex and make the youth take pride in the country’s history.

Away from Delhi stir, Mamata calls on PM

From Page 1
In her memorandum, Mamata has tabulated the total amount due to the State under different schemes and benefits. The amount that is due to the State from the Centre as on July 31 has been estimated to be around ₹1,00,968.44 crore.

Mamata has often accused the BJP-led Central Government of delaying the payment of Goods and Services Tax (GST) dues to States, especially the ones ruled by Opposition parties.

Mamata, who arrived here on a four-day visit on Thursday, is likely to attend a Niti Aayog governing council meeting on August 7 to be chaired by Prime Minister Modi. Incidentally, Mamata skipped Niiti Ayog’s meetings in the past, calling them as a “fruitless” exercise.



कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल
यांत्रिक विभाग (मुख्यालय) गोवंदिपुरा (बी.एच.ई.एल.)
निविदा आमंत्रण घोषणा-पत्र
क्र. 397/या.वि./2022
निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु दो लिफाफा पद्धति के अनुसार म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग में केन्द्रीकृत व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत पंजीकृत ठेकेदार परसेन्टेज मोहर बंद निविदाये निर्धारित प्रपत्र पर ऑनलाईन आमंत्रित की जाती है।

S. No.	Tender ID	Name of Work	Estimated Amount of Contract (Rs)	EMD & Tender Cost Rs. (respectively)	Cost of Bid Document (In Rs)	Period of Completion (in Months)	SOR
1	2022_UAD_204688_2	RENEWABLE AND ASPHALTING OF ROAD AT SAHARA STATE COLONY HARIGANGA NAGAR KOSHAL NAGAR KRISHNAPURAM COLONY MAIN ROAD AND OTHER PLACES WARD 84, 85 ZONE 19 SECOND CALL	17643580/-	Rs. 61.41 Lakhs	Rs. 1,22,900/- & Rs. 2000/-	6 months	MPUADD ISSR 2021

- Interested bidders can view the NIT on website <https://mptenders.gov.in/>
- The Bid Document can be purchased only online from **10:30 A.M. (time) 05.08.2022 (date) to 17:30 P.M. (time) 22.08.2022 (date).**
- The bidders who bids in the tender will have to submit the document of participating firm. Document of other firm viz any other partnership firm/sister concern ect. will not be valid.
- Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on website <https://mptenders.gov.in> only, and not in newspaper. **The Initial period of 5 (Five) year after completion shall be treated as Defect Liability Period (DLP).**

In. Chief Engineer
Municipal Corporation Bhopal
District Bhopal

क्र.क्र. 484/022/023

Online Tender Document for M.P. Police
POLICE HEADQUARTER, M.P., BHOPAL
No. PHQ/15/GPC/4556-1/2022
Bhopal, Dated 03.08.2022

“ONLINE TENDER NOTICE”
Online tender are invited by Assistant Inspector General of Police (Provisioning) Police Head Quarter, Bhopal on behalf of DGP MP Bhopal for FSL Items (DNA extraction, Purification ect.) on website <https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgpe/app>.

S.No.	Item	Qty.	EMD Paid Online Through mptenders.gov.in	Tender Fees (Rs.)
1	FIRE RESISTANCE FILE CABINETS (FRCs) (With 3 Years Warranty Period)	440	4,40,000	10,000

- Cost of tender document (Tender Fee) is non refundable and cannot be exempted in any condition & must submit online through website <https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgpe/app>.
- Tender document can be download from the website of MP Police (www.mppolice.gov.in)
- Bids shall be submitted online only at MP Tenders website: <https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgpe/app>

4. Critical Date Sheet:--

Published Date	03.08.2022 Time 17:00 PM
Bid Document Download Start Date	04.08.2022 Time 11:00 AM
Pre Bid Meeting Date	10.08.2022 Time 12:00 PM
Bid Submission Start Date	16.08.2022 Time 11:00 AM
Bid Submission End Date	23.08.2022 Time 14:30 PM
Bid Opening Date	24.08.2022 Time 16:30 PM

- Interding Bidders are advised to visit this website regularly till closing date of submission to keep themselves updated as any change/modification in the tender will be intimated through this website only by corrigendum/addendum/amendment.
- Bids will be opened as per date/time as mentioned in the Tender Critical Date Sheet. After online opening of Technical-Bid the results of their qualification as well Price-Bid opening will be intimated later.

(Sunil Kumar Pandey)
A.I.G. (Provisioning)
For: Director General of Police
Madhya Pradesh

G-15105/22

Cong hits streets on price rise...

From Page 1
The MPs and others who were detained by the police during the protest were released after about six hours. Rahul, Priyanka, K C Venugopal, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Gaurav Gogoi were among the MPs detained. In a statement, the Delhi Police said a total 335 protesters, including 65 MPs, had been detained under the Delhi Police Act in order to “maintain law and order” in the area.

The protesting MPs raised slogans against the Government demanding that the GST hike on essential items be withdrawn, with party chief Sonia standing with the women MPs holding a banner outside gate number 1 of Parliament.

Priyanka and several other women party leaders were dragged into police vehicles from outside the party headquarters. She had climbed over barricades to reach the spot where she held a brief sit-in before being taken away by police which had denied permission for the protest, citing law and order. While the male Congress MPs were seen sporting black kurtas, shirts, scarves, and headgears, the women leaders also wore black with elan led by party chief Sonia who wore a printed crisp saree with a black border and a

black blouse. Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge wore a black kurta, a black turban and a white dhoti . Former Union Minister P Chidambaram and his son and MP Karti Chidambaram sported black shirts with white ‘veshtis’ (type of dhoti), while Shashi Tharoor was seen in all blacks — kurta, trouser and ‘Sadri’.

“During the debate on price rise in Parliament, BJP members said they can’t see inflation. So today by wearing black we are expressing the anger our people are feeling, we are expressing that they (Government) open their eyes to the reality of India today. Even the RBI Governor has conceded that there is high inflation but the BJP MPs and the Finance Minister have lied to people of India on the floor of the House that there is no inflation,” said party MP from Assam Gaurav Gogoi.

The Congress is preparing a massive public mobilisation programme when it launches the Kanyakumari to Kashmir ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’, which is also being seen as an occasion for yet another “Rahul relaunch” experiment. The plan of ‘padayatra’ covering 3,500 km in 148 days will have Rahul and other leaders in full strength at different times.

New VP today

From Page 1
The 80-year-old Alva is a Congress veteran and has served as the Governor of Rajasthan, while the 71-year-old Dhankhar is a Jat leader from Rajasthan with socialist background. The term of incumbent M Venkaiah Naidu ends on August 10. The Vice President is also the chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. While polling will be held from 10 am to 5 pm on Saturday, the ballots will be counted immedi-

ately after that. By late Saturday evening, the returning officer will announce the name of the next Vice President. Members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, including nominated members, are eligible to vote in the Vice Presidential poll. The electoral college in Vice Presidential election comprises a total of 788 members of both Houses of Parliament. Since all electors are members of both Houses of Parliament, the value of vote of each MP would be the same — one, the Election Commission has said.

Earlier, the BJP slammed the protest staged by the Congress leadership , saying the issues of price rise, GST and unemployment were just a pretence and the real reason

behind the stir was to save the Gandhi family from the corruption charges in the National Herald case. Getting back at the Congress after Rahul Gandhi attacked the Modi Government saying India is witnessing “death of democracy”, BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad reminded the Opposition party of its history. “Rahul’s grandmother imposed an Emergency in the country.

During the Emergency, big journalists were sent to jail. She spoke of a committed judiciary. Do you remember anything? You give us the advice of democracy. Is there democracy in your party?” the BJP MP said, dismissing Rahul’s charge that “India is witnessing the death of democracy”.

Prasad also alleged that during the takeover of the National Herald newspaper, assets worth Rs 5,000 crore were claimed for Rs 5 lakh with Sonia and Rahul having 76 per cent majority share in Young India which acquired it. The National Herald case is being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and both Sonia and Rahul have been interrogated by the Central investigating agency.

Prasad said the price rise protest is essentially aimed at “saving” the Gandhi family from corruption charges and asked Rahul not to blame Indian democracy for his party’s repeated poll defeats under him.

“Why do you blame democracy when the people of India reject you with repeated regularity and you go on losing one election after another,” he said and asked Rahul if there is democracy within his party which has some ‘good leaders’ but it is all about the Gandhi family. “Stop demeaning the institutions of India to safeguard your corruption and misdeeds... If people don’t listen to you, why are you blaming us,” he said.

“If India saw dictatorship, it was during the Emergency when people, including oppo-

sition leaders and editors, were jailed, judges superseded and censorship imposed. Indira Gandhi had then spoken about having “committed judiciary,” the former Law Minister said.

In the National Herald case, Prasad said the judiciary refused to quash charges against the Gandhis and Rahul had the temerity of blaming the institutions, the BJP leader said. Rahul will have to face consequences for what he has done, Prasad said. adding, “You will have to face trial and answer the ED’s questions.”

Union Minister Anurag Thakur also said the protests by the Congress from Parliament to the streets cannot turn the “truth” of corruption charges against its leaders into a lie.

“They are trying to apply pressure on the Government and probe agencies after doing corruption. The BJP came to power in 2014 and had promised to give corruption-free governance.

This is what Modi has delivered in eight years. Probe agencies are now working against corruption done earlier,” he said. Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra should not obstruct the ED’s work, Thakur said, claiming the agency works under no political pressure and functions independently.

Both Prasad and Thakur also referred to the allegations of corruption against other opposition leaders, including those from the Aam Aadmi Party and the Trinamool Congress. Large amounts of cash and other assets allegedly acquired by them have been seized by the ED, they said.

Prasad said Rahul had levelled all kinds of allegations against Modi during the 2019 polls as well, but people elected him (Modi) with a bigger mandate. Rahul during the price-rise protest maintained that the country is witnessing “the demise of democracy” and what India started building brick by brick a century ago is being destroyed.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Printed and published by Narendra Kumar for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., No. 6, Behind Gulab Bhawan, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455, Communication Office: F-31, Sector 6, NOIDA, Gautam Budh Nagar-201301, U.P. Phone: 0120-4879800 & 4879900 and printed at Jagran Prakashan Ltd, D-210, 211 Sector-63, Noida (U.P.). Executive Editor: Navin Upadhyay. AIR SURCHARGE of ₹ 2.00 East: Calcutta, North: Leh West: Mumbai & Ahmedabad South: Bangalore & Chennai. Central : Khajuraho. Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226 016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445.

AAP Govt to distribute 25L flags in Delhi

Let's hold a Tricolour and sing national anthem together: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday called upon the people to celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence by holding the Tricolour and singing the national anthem at 5 P.M. on August 14, the eve of Independence Day.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government has decided to distribute 25 lakh flags across the city. Government school students will also be given flags so that they can take them home, he said.

"Several initiatives like 'Har Ghar Tiranga' and 'Har Haath Tiranga' are being organised to put more joy into our celebrations. Today, I want to appeal to the people of the country to celebrate the eve of Independence Day with the same zeal, too. Let us all get together on August 14 at 5 P.M. and sing the national anthem while holding a Tiranga in our hands and desh bhakti in our hearts," said Kejriwal.

"We have planned a mega Tiranga distribution drive in Delhi to fulfil this purpose. Whoever can buy the national flag themselves can do so, children can paint their flags, while the Delhi Government will distribute 25 lakh



Tirangas all over Delhi. Every student of our Government schools will be given a Tiranga, to hoist it at home," said the Chief Minister.

"We aim to distribute Tirangas in every gali and mohalla of Delhi. We want the Tiranga to fly high on every chowk of Delhi. I request everyone to take part in this initiative and then hoist the Tiranga at their house with pride to fill the whole State with the feeling of desh bhakti," said Kejriwal adding that "we will all hoist the Tiranga together

Schools told to hoist Tricolour from Aug 13-15

SHREYA ARORA ■ NEW DELHI

All schools in Delhi are being roped into the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign. Schools, including private ones, have been directed to hoist the Tricolour atop their buildings from August 13 to August 15. The heads of all Government and private schools in the city have been directed by the Delhi Government's Education Department to hoist the country's national flag on their buildings during this period.

With an aim to sensitize students, parents and staff regarding the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative all schools government/aided/private have been asked to launch a special Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign.

Lieutenant-Governor Vinai

Kumar Saxena has urged schools to conduct special assemblies where the design of the national flag along with stories of martyrs should be discussed.

A host of activities such as singing of patriotic songs, painting and slogan-writing related to the theme of the national flag would be conducted.

School Management Committees (SMC) have been asked to motivate parents and people living in the vicinity to increasingly participate in the campaign.

The L-G has also asked school authorities to organize Prabhat Pheries with the students from August 11 to August 14 to encourage people to hoist the national flag atop their houses and create awareness regarding the campaign.

In a statement released by Raj

Niwas, students, parents and school staff were encouraged to upload selfies in the Government portal <https://harghartiranga.com>. It was also suggested that a selfie point should be made in each school where students can take selfies with the Tricolour.

The statement also said that schools should check their requirement for the flags and procure them on time using the SMC funds to make the campaign a grand success. It also said that students and parents should be encouraged to purchase the national flag.

According to officials the flag can be purchased from registered vendors via Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal, self-help groups (SHGs) and other manufacturers or suppliers.

L-G directs CS to resolve water supply issue at Montenegro Consulate



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Consulate of Montenegro in the national Capital has been getting no water supply for the last two days. The Consulate has alleged that despite requests to the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) no water tanker has been provided to them. The Consul-General on Friday wrote to Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Vinai Kumar Saxena urging him to intervene and resolve the issue at the earliest.

Following the letter, the L-G directed Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to immediately resolve the issue and advised Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to address matters that affect India's image globally.

Consul-General Dr Janice Darbari wrote in the letter, "I have a humble request as water supply to the Consulate has not been coming for two days. The DJB has said that they will send a water tanker, but no action was taken. The water supply is low pressure and dirty. Kindly resolve the matter as it disrupts the working of the diplomatic Mission India."

As per the sources, expressing concern over non-supply of water even to members of the diplomatic corps as also, recurrent problems of sewage management to various diplomatic missions in the Capital, the L-G has asked the Chief Secretary to immediately address the issues and flagged these issues up to Kejriwal.

He also took to Twitter and wrote, "Received complaint from Consulate of Montenegro regarding non supply of water, unavailability of tankers & dirty water at low pressure by DJB. Directed CS to immediately resolve the issue. Advised CM @ArvindKejriwal ji to address such matters that affect India's image globally."

Meanwhile, the DJB in a statement said that water supply in the area, where the Consul-General's residence is located, is normal and no disruption has been reported or observed in the recent past and no complaint of dirty water has been received recently.

"A call was made from the Consulate's residence from mobile No. 09811871296 to area JE on August 4. The caller requested water through a tanker and agreed to get water in the morning on August 5. JE concerned directed the staff of water emergency at GK-1, to send a water tanker to S-528, GK-1 at the earliest in the morning. Water was delivered at 8:45 A.M. through a water tanker bearing no. DL-1L-K 7904 on August 5," DJB claimed.

"JE concerned along with field staff visited House No. S-528, GK-1 and apprised Consulate staff available there, that water supply at their residence shall be checked during supply hours on August 6, as there is only one time supply in the morning from 12 midnight to 7:00 A.M.," the statement further read.

L-G asks Chief Secretary to ensure adherence to ToBR for transparency

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that the violation of Transaction of Business of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Rules, 1993 (ToBR), was not in the interest of transparent and accountable governance, the Lieutenant-Governor's (L-G) Secretariat has written to Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, who is also Secretary to the Cabinet, to look into the issue and ensure adherence to laid-down statutory provisions of the ToBR, both in letter and spirit.

"Of the 234 proposals considered by the Cabinet in their meeting from April 2020 till July this year, 79 proposals were received in the L-G's Secretariat one day before the scheduled meeting of the Cabinet, 63 were received on the same day of the meeting and 40 such proposals were received after the Cabinet meeting was held. It is clear that the compliance of the ToBR in this matter happened only in 22 per cent of the cases, while in 78 per cent instances the ToBR was violated without any justification," sources said.

"Citing the provisions of the ToBR that provide that a copy of the memorandums or proposals and Cabinet Notes to be considered by the Council of Ministers or Cabinet be made available to the L-G Secretariat at least two days before the

No. of Proposals	Received 02 or more days before meeting	Received 01 day before meeting	Received on the same day of meeting	Received after meeting was held	Proposals decided through circulation without a Cabinet Meeting
Grand Total-234	52	79	63	40	40
(Percentage %)	(22%)	(34%)	(27%)	(17%)	



scheduled date of the meeting of the Council of Ministers' the note observes that a significant number of such Cabinet Notes are received just prior to the scheduled meeting of the Cabinet or even after conclusion

of such meetings, without recording any reason for such transgression of the ToBR," they stated.

"There are also many instances where such Proposals or Cabinet Notes are placed

before the Cabinet directly and a copy of the same is not provided to the L-G's Secretariat at all," they said.

"As per information provided by the General Administration Department, 102 proposals out of 274 proposals (37.22 per cent) during the above period were considered and approved by the Council of Ministers either as Tabled Agenda or through Circulation among the Ministers without effective deliberations - something that should be done sparingly in interest of transparency, accountability and effective governance," they said.

"The L-G's office has noted with concern that such non-compliance of ToBR, prima facie result in grant of little or no time for study of proposals required for effective deliberations during the meeting of the Cabinet. It also results in insufficient time for the L-G's office to form an opinion, if any, thus affecting overall governance of the national Capital," sources informed.

2,419 Covid cases in city, highest in 6 months



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital on Friday recorded 2,419 Covid cases, the highest in six months, with a positivity rate of 12.95 per cent, while two more people died due to the disease, according to the Health Department data.

It was the third consecutive day that the daily count of Covid-19 cases crossed the 2,000-mark in the city.

Delhi on Thursday recorded 2,202 Covid cases, with a positivity rate of 11.84 per cent, while four more people died due to the disease.

Also, this was the fourth day in a row that the positivity rate breached the 10-per cent mark.

The fresh cases came out of 18,685 Covid tests conducted in the city on Thursday.

With the fresh infections on Friday, the Coronavirus case tally in the national Capital rose to 19,64,793, while the death toll reached 26,327.

Delhi has reported a few cases of the BA.4 and the BA.5 sub-variants of Omicron, which are highly transmissible.

The number of daily Coronavirus cases in Delhi had touched the record high of 28,867 on January 13 this year during the third wave of the pandemic. The city had recorded a positivity rate of 30.6 per cent on January 14, the highest during the third wave of the pandemic.

65 Cong MPs among 335 protesters detained by cops for march in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Friday detained a total of 335 protesters including 65 MPs of the Congress after they were denied permission for holding a protest against price rise and GST on food items in the national Capital, citing prohibitory orders and the law and order situation in the city.

According to Dr Sagar Preet Hooda, the Special Commissioner of Police, Law and Order, on Friday the functionaries and supporters of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) organised a protest in the New Delhi area. "Adequate police arrangements were put in place to maintain law and order and avert any untoward incident in the wake of the ongoing Parliament Session and forthcoming Independence Day. Orders under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) are also in force prohibiting large gatherings in New Delhi district," said the Special CP.

"The protests were held at various sites of New Delhi district including Akbar Road, Vijay Chowk and Jantar Mantar. The protesters were appropriately warned about the prohibitory orders in force in the area and repeatedly requested to disperse from the area," said the Special CP.

"However, they continued the protest, thereby violating prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC. When the police personnel moved in to contain the situation, the protesters tried to obstruct the police officers from performing their duties, manhandled and injured them. Appropriate legal action is being taken into the matter," said Dr Hooda.

"Total 335 protesters including 65 MPs have been detained under 65



Delhi Police Act in order to maintain law & order in the area. Intimation about detention of MPs and MLAs is being sent to the respective competent authorities," the Special CP added.

The detained leaders also include Members of the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

Earlier, the Delhi Police had denied permission to the Congress for holding a protest in the national Capital on Friday. The Congress had planned a mass protest against price rise, unemployment and the GST hike on essential items on August 5.

According to a senior official, the Delhi Police, in a letter to AICC, General Secretary K C Venugopal, refused permission to the party for holding the protest, citing that prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC have been imposed in New Delhi district.

Rain, protests, heavy security lead to traffic snarls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Heavy rain lashed parts of the national Capital on Friday, bringing much-needed respite to Delhiites from the humid temperature. The maximum temperature in the city settled at 30.4 degrees Celsius, four notches less than the normal, for this time of the year.

Apart from the heavy rainfall resulting in waterlogging, Congress protests in the city and elaborate security arrangements by the Delhi Police and traffic cops led to massive traffic jams in the national Capital. Police barricades and checking by

Delhi Police further aggravated the situation at bordering areas for vehicles coming from Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Gurugram.

The Delhi Traffic Police took to Twitter to inform commuters and suggested that they plan their journey accordingly.

Meanwhile, the weather office said the city received 0.8 mm rainfall in the 24 hours ending 8.30 A.M.

The other station of Delhi including Palam, Lodi Road, Ridge, Aya Nagar, Pusa, Sports Complex, Najafgarh, and Pitampura recorded rainfall of 033.6 mm, 000.3 mm, 016.6 mm, 027.8 mm, 003.5 mm,

003.5, 010.5 mm, and 012.5 mm respectively. The minimum temperature settled at one notch above the normal at 26.5 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD.

The relative humidity at 8.30 A.M. on Friday was 92 per cent and 86 per cent at 5:30 P.M., the weather office said.

Light to moderate rainfall was reported in Saket, Malviya Nagar, Burari, GTB Nagar, East of Kailash, Lajpat Nagar, Kailash Hills and central Delhi. Downpours in parts of Delhi led to waterlogging in some areas, causing inconvenience to the residents.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday met with President Droupadi Murmu and congratulated her on assuming office. "Called on Hon'ble President Droupadi Murmu ji at the Rashtrapati Bhavan today. Congratulated her on assuming office as the 15th President of India," he said in a tweet. In a tweet, the President's Office said, "Chief Minister of NCT of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan."

HC refuses to ban kite flying in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to ban kite flying in the national Capital, saying it is a cultural activity, and directed the Government and police to ensure compliance with the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) order banning sale of Chinese synthetic 'manjha' used for kite flying.

A Bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad noted that the NGT has already



imposed a complete ban on Chinese synthetic 'manjha' and even the Delhi Police has been issuing notifications in this regard and also taking action against violators.

The High Court was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL)

seeking a complete ban on flying, sale, purchase, storage, and transportation of kites as many people and birds are killed or injured due to accidents caused by glass-coated strings.

The Bench, which disposed of the petition, said kite flying cannot be banned as it is a "cultural activity" and can be associated with "religious activity" and directed the State Government and the Delhi Police to ensure strict compliance with the NGT order banning use and sale of Chinese 'manjha'.

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 tele-callers 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.टी.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 निस्सीकरण आदि हेतु www.uktenders.gov.in वेबसाइट पर लॉग-इन करें। **मुख्य अभियन्ता (कुमाऊँ)**

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 shifiting work under section of SSE/IF/Way/FDB under ADEN/TKD.		
Similar nature of work: CTR/TRR/TFR/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 : sepwdph@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 (day)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Medical Record Destruction
In keeping with current state regulations & hospital policy, governing the retention and destructions of patient health records, notice is hereby given of our intent to destroy, by shredding, the records of those individuals who last received treatment prior to: 01.04.2017, and whose are not currently active patients. Destruction of medical records is scheduled to begin 18.08.2022. You may contact our Medical Records Department at 991141717 if you wish to pick up your medical records before destruction is set to begin.

AASHIRWAD NURSING HOME
HEART & DIABETES CENTER
A-283, Lions Enclave, Marble Blk, Vijas Nagar, Uttam Nagar, ND-59

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that my clients, Mohd. Ikram Khan R/o A-188, A-Block, Buland Masjid, Shastri Park, North East Delhi, Delhi - 110053 have disowned and debarred their son Mohd. Inamul Haque from all their movable and immovable assets. Any person dealing with them shall do so at their own risk and responsibilities and my clients shall have no responsibility or liability of any kind whatsoever arising out of act(s) and/or omission(s) of Mohd. Inamul Haque.

Kushagra Azad (Advocate)
Ch. No. D-218, Karkardooma Court Delhi

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public at large is hereby informed that the property at Freehold Society built up Flat No.151, First Floor, Ras Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd, known as Ras Vihar, Plot No. 99, I P Extension Patparganj Delhi-110092, presently owned and possessed by Sh. Tribhawan Singh by virtue of Conveyance Deed duly registered vide Document. No. 9139, dated 11.06.2019, is/are proposed to be Mortgage with SBI. R.A.C.P.C. Netaji Subhash Place Pitambara, New Delhi and as per present owner(s) version the said property is/are free from all sorts of encumbrances. The Original Share certificate issued by society is reported as Lost/ misplaced vide LR No 627606/2022, dated 25.07.2022 and did not find dispute of all sincere efforts.

It is hereby notified that any person, Attorney and or executor of POA: beneficiary of WILL and/or entity, firm/ company, society and/or any member of society, Bank - HUF/member of HUF, financial institution having any claim, any charge, interest or lien or claim and/or objection to thereof, he/she/they may lodge notify the same to the undersigned with documentary proof/court judgment within 15 days from the day of publication of this public notice, failing which any further/ future claim/objection(s) shall be rejected and my client /prospective buyer (s) as a bona-fide purchaser conclude the title/ Sale Deed proposed to be executed in favour of my client or in the name of his/ her /their nominees shall be deemed to be clear and marketable without any defect encumbrance, flaw and impediment. **Sahil Arora (Advocate)**
Off. No. 107, 1st Floor, M.S. Chambers, Aruns Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-92

PARIJAT PAPER MILLS LIMITED				
CIN: L21012UP1989PLC010589				
Reg. Off: 10.6 Km StoneBhopa Road, Vill-Jat Mujhera, Muzaffarnagar - 251308, (U.P)				
Website: www.parijatpapermills.com, Email: parijatapapermills@yahoo.com				
STATEMENT OF STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2022				
(Rs. in Lacs except EPS)				
Sr. No.	PARTICULARS	Quarter Ended	Year Ended	Year Ended
		30.06.2022	30.06.2021	31.03.2022
		(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1.	Total income from operations (Net)	3489.55	2286.41	12560.15
2.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (Before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extra ordinary items)	89.04	99.91	88.00
3.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	89.04	99.91	88.00
4.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	75.15	84.32	61.74
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after Tax)]	75.15	84.32	61.74
6.	Paid-up Equity share capital (Face value Rs. 10/- each)	329.00	329.00	329
7.	Other Equity [Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves)]	746.37	693.36	671.22
8.	Earnings per share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)	2.28	2.56	1.88
	a) Basic			
	b) Diluted			

Notes:

1. The above results were reviewed by an audit Committee and thereafter taken on record by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 05.08.2022 after review by an Audit Committee.

2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly & year to date financial results filed with the stock exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly & year to date financial results are available on the Stock Exchange website (www.mseil.in) and the company's website (www.parijatpapermills.com).

For and on behalf of
Parijat Paper Mills Limited
Sd/-
Amit Mittal (Whole Time Director)
Date: 05.08.2022
Place: Muzaffarnagar
DIN:00754471

Notes:-
1. The above results were reviewed by an audit Committee and thereafter taken on record by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 05.08.2022 after review by an Audit Committee.
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly & year to date financial results filed with the stock exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly & year to date financial results are available on the Stock Exchange website (www.mse.i.in) and the company's website (www.parijatpapermills.com).

For and on behalf of Parijat Paper Mills Limited
Sd/-
Amit Mittal (Whole Time Director)
DIN:00754471

Date: 05.08.2022
Place: Muzaffarnagar

Cabinet Secy Gauba gets 1-year extension

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba was on Friday given an extension of one more year in service by the Government. This is his second extension on the post. Gauba, a former Union Home Secretary, was appointed to the country's top bureaucratic post for two years in 2019. He was given a one-year extension in August last year.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved extension in service to Gauba, a 1982-batch IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre, as Cabinet Secretary for a further period of one-year beyond August 30, 2022, said the Friday's order.

Gauba played a key role in drafting the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, under which the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was divided into two Union territories following the abrogation of the special status given to it under Article 370 of the Constitution.

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.

Centre warns Chhattisgarh over poor PMAY-G execution

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing its displeasure at the poor implementation of the rural housing scheme in Chhattisgarh, the Centre has warned the Congress-led State Government that "it will have to reconsider its support to its other core schemes" if it fails to duly implement the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G).

The central rural housing flagship has been implemented from April 1, 2016, with an objective of providing "Housing for All" by March 2024. In a letter to Chhattisgarh Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain, Rural

Development Secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha has mentioned that state government has not shown satisfactory progress despite several letters and meetings in this connection. "If the state is unable to implement PMAY-G..., the ministry shall be compelled to reconsider its support to other core Rural Development (Ministry) schemes/programmes," Sinha said in letter.

He said despite several rounds of communication from "various levels of Union Ministry to Chhattisgarh Government, it has neither shown satisfactory progress nor released due state share of ₹562 crore, as a result of which

the work of PMAY-G has come to a standstill in the state, a situation, which you are well aware of".

Underlining that scheme is implemented on the ground level by state governments, Sinha said Chhattisgarh in 2020-21 withdrew the majority of the 6.48 lakh houses allocated to it "due to difficulty in releasing corresponding state share."

In 2021-22, the Rural Development Ministry was compelled to withdraw allocated target of nearly 7.82 lakh houses, again due to the state's inability in releasing its share, amounting to ₹562 crore, Sinha added.

Raut thanks Opp parties for supporting him

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena leader and a Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut, currently in the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) custody in an alleged money laundering case, has thanked Opposition parties for supporting him. His party colleague and MP in Rajya Sabha Priyanka Chaturvedi on Friday released a letter signed by Raut.

In the letter addressed to Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, the Shiv Sena spokesman thanked leaders of all Opposition parties including the Congress, NCP, TMC, DMK, AAP, CPI and CPI (M) for expressing solidarity with him. The Shiv Sena's Rajya Sabha member was arrested on

August 1 by the ED in a case related to alleged irregularities in the redevelopment of Patra Chawl, a row tenement in suburban Goregaon. On Thursday, a court extended his ED custody till August 8. "The toughest times show you who your reliable allies are," the letter said. "I am thankful for the overwhelming support given to me during the political witch-hunt and motivated attack directed against me by the central government through central agencies.

My fight will continue for what is right. Neither will I bow down to pressure nor will I break my resolve to see this fight through," Raut wrote recalling ferocious Balasaheb Thackeray.

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.



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.

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 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.

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	Number of Shares and % age of total Votes cast against the Resolution			
		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 : 09-08-2022
AUCTION VENUE : THROUGH E-AUCTION
AUCTION ADDRESS : https://gold.matxnet.net/
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.
Thirissur 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
AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LTD. APPLICANT
DATE: 22.04.2022
M/S BANK OF INDIA & ORS. VERSUS 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.

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.

PICTALK



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

AP

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'



SANGRAM MISHRA

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 mandarin 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 welfarist 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

SOUND BITE

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



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi



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




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

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 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".

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



PK VASUDEVA

(The author is a retired professor of international trade)

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.

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



KC TYAGI

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.

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

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.

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.

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 Henniss-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.

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).

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

stronger, while an interim budget to be presented early next month is expected to announce much needed reforms in the economy. 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.

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

played a significant role in deterring Russian advance in the early stage of the conflict, but it hasn't joined sanctions with Russia.

Amid a major economic crisis with official inflation hitting nearly 80%, Turkey increasingly relies on Russia for trade and tourism.

It also depends on Russia for natural gas imports and Russia's atomic agency is building Turkey's first nuclear power plant.

Russia-Turkey relations hit a low point in 2015 when Turkey shot down a Russian warplane near the Syrian border and Moscow responded by halting tourism to Turkey and banning imports of fruit and vegetables and other items from Turkey.

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-

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.

Musk countersuit accuses Twitter of fraud

AP ■ NEW YORK

Elon Musk accused Twitter of fraud in a countersuit over his aborted \$44 billion deal for the social media company, which he said held back necessary information and misled his team about its true user base, according to media reports.

According to The Washington Post, the countersuit filed by the billionaire and Tesla CEO filed Thursday alleges that Twitter committed fraud, breach of contract and violation of the Texas Securities Act.

Musk's counterclaims were filed

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.

GOLDEN HAT-TRICK

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Bajrang Punia was a class apart while defending his title before Sakshi Malik produced a sensational gold medal winning effort as Indian wrestlers grabbed five medals, including three gold, at the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

Deepak Punia (86kg) also contributed in swelling India's medal tally by winning the men's free style gold but birthday girl Anshu Malik (57kg) had to be content with a silver medal in her maiden CWG appearance.

Divya Kakran clinched a bronze in 68kg, winning the medal play-off in just 26 seconds against Tonga's Tiger Lily.

Courtesy three golds, India moved to fifth position in the medal tally ahead of Scotland.

Such was Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist 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 Geroige 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.

SAKSHI REVERSES TREND

For Sakshi, 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 by winning her maiden CWG gold.

She began by pinning home team



wrestler Kelsey Barnes and followed that with a technical superiority win against Cameroon's Berthe Emilienne.

In the final against Ana Paula Godinez Gonzalez, Sakshi trailed 0-4 after the Canadian scored on counter-attack. Sakshi's right leg attack got wrong as she lost position, allowing her rival to complete a take down move.

The U-23 World champion effected another take down to go into the break with a 4-0 lead.

Sakshi, who of late, has been seen

succumbing to pressure reversed the trend this time as she initiated a right leg attack to throw the Canadian on the mat.

From there she used power to pin Gonzalez, turning the table on her rival in a sensational manner.

She had won a bronze in 2018 in Gold Coast and a silver in 2014 Glasgow Games.

DEEPAK PUNIA GRABS GOLD

Deepak Punia (86kg) was calcula-

tive in his bouts and finished on top of the podium without losing a single point.

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.

The 23-year-old Indian had better stamina and outlasted Inam 3-0. His first point was from a push out while

the second came on passivity of the Pakistani.

There were no big moves in the bout as Inam had lost steam by the second round. Deepak completed his win with another push out point.

ANSHU GETS SILVER ON B'DAY

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.

M 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.

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.

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 medallist 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 medallist 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 medallist, 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.

BHAVINA STORMS INTO TT FINAL

India's Bhavina Patel cruised to the women's singles class 3-5 para table tennis final and assured herself of a medal at the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

The Tokyo Paralympics Silver medallist thrashed England's Sue Bailey 11-6, 11-6, 11-6 to seal her final berth.

The 35-year-old Gujarat paddler will take on Nigeria's Christiana Ikpeoyi in the final on Saturday.

Sonalben Patel, on the other hand, went down to Ikpeoyi 11-8, 6-11, 4-11, 7-11. She will now face Bailey in the Bronze medal match.

Raj Aravindan Alagar also lost 11-7, 8-11, 4-11, 7-11 to Nigeria's Nasiru Sule in the men's 3-5 class semifinal.

He will now cross swords with Nigerian Isau Ogunkunle in the Bronze medal play-off on Sunday.

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

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 beat Eng to enter final of men's fours

BIRMINGHAM: India are assured of a second medal from lawn bowl competition after the men's fours team made its way into the final of the Commonwealth Games here on Friday. After the quartet of Lovely Choubey (lead), Pinki (second), Nayanmoni Saikia (third) and Rupa Rani Tirkey (skip) beat South Africa 17-10 in the women's fours final to hand India a historic Gold on Tuesday, it was the turn of men's team to follow their women counterparts. The men's quartet of Sunil Bahadur (lead), Navneet Singh (second), Chandan Kumar (skip) defeated hosts England by a close 13-12 margin in the semifinal to assure India of at least a Silver medal.

Earlier, the women's pair of Lovely Choubey and Nayanmoni Saikia were knocked out of the Games after they went down in the quarterfinals. PTI

Lovlina targets bigger goals, says CWG 'not important'

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Star Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain is not losing sleep over her shock quarterfinal exit and says a Commonwealth Games success would not have helped her much in her quest for a second successive Olympic medal in 2024 as she was competing in a non-Olympic category in Birmingham CWG.

Lovlina, who became the only second Indian woman boxer to win an Olympic medal in Tokyo last year, competed in the light middleweight category, which does not figure in the 2024 Paris Games roster.

"That's why CWG was not that important to me as my main target is Paris and this was not an Olympic weight category. It would not have helped me much in the larger scheme of things," Lovlina said.

"Yes, Commonwealth Games have a big stature no doubt about that. But my target is Paris and to get myself prepared is the main objective."



At her maiden CWG appearance in Gold Coast in 2018, Lovlina had also met a similar fate, bowing out in the quarterfinals.

"Every loss or win is an experience. And I'm taking this loss in a positive way. I've to work on myself."

"Ultimate goal is Paris, whatever the difficulties maybe, I've to overcome them. Life has

many ups and downs but 'haar nahin maan na hai' (it's not about giving up)."

She made headlines for wrong reasons in the build-up to the CWG as she alleged "mental harassment" after her personal coach Sandhya Gurung was denied entry into the Games Village. Sandhya was added to the contingent days before her bout.

"Yes, I was a bit distracted in the build-up to the Games. But thankfully everything was sorted before the competition. I got my coaches."

"But I feel it did not affect me. There was a lot of publicity but I was away from social media. I wasn't aware of what's going on around me. Even now, I've kept it off to keep myself away from it."

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.

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 Clarence 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 Sikaia struck centuries as Zimbabwe 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).