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THIEM GETS WILDCARD FOR US OPEN 2022
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Dolo gave docs ₹1K cr to push tablet, SC told

I was also asked to have same (medicine) when I had Covid, this is a serious matter, says Justice Chandrachud; Medical sales representatives' body seeks statutory backing to marketing practices

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a sensational revelation, the Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the Central Board for Direct Taxes has accused makers of the Dolo-650 tablets of distributing freebies worth ₹1,000 crore to doctors as consideration for prescribing the tablet for Covid related treatments.

Justice DY Chandrachud, who was heading the bench also comprising Justice AS Bopanna, said it is a serious issue and even he was prescribed the same during Covid.

"This is not music to my ears. I was also asked to have the same when I had Covid. This is a serious issue," Justice Chandrachud remarked on the usage of Dolo-650 tablet, an anti-fever drug prescribed to patients.

The Central Government represented by Additional Solicitor General KM Natraj was directed to file a reply within 10 days. The Supreme Court was hearing a PIL seeking directions to make pharmaceutical companies liable for giving freebies to doctors as an incentive to prescribe their drugs.

Senior advocate Sanjay Parikh, appearing for the association of medical representatives, pointed out the example of the excessive sale and prescription of the drug Remdisivir during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The plea by the Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives Association of India sought direction to give statutory backing to the Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP). There is currently no law or regulation that prohibits such practices in the absence of any statutory basis for the UCPMP, a voluntary set of rules for the sector, the petition said.

Pharmaceutical marketing practices is unregulated in India despite the country being a signatory to the UN Convention against corruption, said the petition.

This leads to a situation where the consumer pays a lot for branded medicines that is over-prescribed or irrationally prescribed by doctors in exchange for gifts, entertainment, hospitality and other advantages, it was contended.

The potency of such drugs and poisons pose a danger to the life and health of people even as doctors can be penalised for misconduct facilitated by the pharmaceutical companies that walk away scot-free, said the plea.

Alarming rise in Covid deaths in Delhi, Maha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid warning from the World Health Organization (WHO) that the Covid virus is here to stay, populous States like Maharashtra and Delhi have witnessed an alarming rise in coronavirus deaths.

Overall fatality surged to touch 72 on Thursday, the highest so far in the last one month even as countrywide infection tally remained within a daily range of 8,000 to 20,000 cases. While the country saw 72 deaths on Thursday, the previous day death was just 29 on a caseload of 8,000 plus.

Delhi on Thursday reported 1,964 cases and eight Covid deaths in the past 24 hours.

India saw a single-day rise of 12,608 new coronavirus infections on Wednesday taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 4,42,98,864, while the active cases declined to 1,01,343, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. The national death toll climbed to 5,27,206 with 72 fatalities, including 29 fatalities in Kerala.

Speaking on whether the reason for the spike in Delhi is a new Omicron subvariant, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist of the WHO, said, "All these numbers basically indicate a combination of different mutations."

"In India and about 15 to 20 other countries, BA.2 (Omicron sub-variant) has further evolved and we have BA 2.75 and also BA 2.74, BA 2.76 and by studying the mutations, scientists have a very good idea of what each variant is doing. BA 2.75 has certainly become more efficient at transmitting itself, and is able to evade the immune response," said Dr Swaminathan was quoted by NDTV.

Boat with weapons seized off Raigad, probe ordered

Fadnavis rules out terror angle

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a development that revived the shocking memories of the manner in which a huge cache of arms, ammunition, and explosives were off-loaded along the Konkan coast ahead of the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts, a crew-less foreign-origin speed-boat with three AK-47 rifles and ammunition on board was seized off the Raigad coast in coastal Maharashtra.

The 16-metre-long boat "Lady Haan", owned by an Australian couple had been adrift for 52 days during which it came floating from the Oman coast to Harihareshwar-Shrivardhan coast in Raigad district in the Konkan region.

The suspicious speedboat was first sighted by some local fishermen in the choppy Arabian Sea on Thursday morning, resulting in a sensation in the sleepy. Before long, the villagers alerted the local police. The local police in turn sounded an alert to the Indian Coast Guard and the Maharashtra Police, who seized the vessel.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who holds the Home portfolio, ruled out any terror angle, notwithstanding the fact that the incident has given rise to questions of maritime and coastal security.

Giving details of the circumstances leading to the sighting of the boat, Fadnavis told the Maharashtra legislature that the boat was on a voyage from Muscat to Europe. "On June 26, around 1,000 hrs, the engines of the boat failed after which the crew sounded a distress call. Around 1300 hrs, a Korean warship, which was in the vicinity, rescued the crew and handed them over to Oman authorities".

A suspicious boat with three AK-47 rifles and bullets found off the Raigad coast in Maharashtra on Thursday PTI

Owing to the rough seas, the Australian couple reportedly could not arrange to tow the vessel and after remaining adrift for over seven weeks in the choppy Arabian Sea waters, it finally landed up Harihareshwar Beach on Thursday.

Fadnavis said that because of tidal waves at that point of time, the boat could not be towed. "The Raigad Police have recovered 3 AK-47 guns and some quantities of ammunition from the speedboat," Fadnavis said.

On his part, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde ordered a probe into the incident.

The senior officials of the Indian Coast Guard, Raigad police, and Anti-Terrorism Squad are carrying out investigations into the incident.

Not wanting to take any chances, the Maharashtra Government has sounded a high alert in Mumbai, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Pune and other places as a precaution in view of the festivities tomorrow.

The seized speedboat, named "Lady haan" is owned by an Australian woman Hannah Laundergun and her husband Captain James Horbert. Horbert was navigating the boat.

The questions that have cropped up include: as to whether the sophisticated arms and ammunition belonged to the Australian couple and why they were carrying the arms and ammunition.

The place where the boat was sighted is the vicinity of vital Indian offshore installations like the Mumbai High Fields.

CAPSULE

MIN: INDO-CHINA TIES IN VERY DIFFICULT PHASE

Bangkok: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday that the relationship between India and China is going through an "extremely difficult phase" after what Beijing has done at the border and emphasised that the Asian Century will not happen if the two neighbours could not join hands.

SC TO UP GOVT: REPLY ON LALITPUR GANG-RAPE PIL

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday directed the Uttar Pradesh Government to file its reply on a PIL filed by NGO Bachpan Bachao Andolan in connection with the sexual assault of a minor girl at a police station after she was dumped by four youths who gang-raped her in Lalitpur district.

TWIN TOWER DEMOLITION: EVACUATION PLAN FINAL

Noida: Residents of Emerald Court and ATS Village societies will have to vacate homes by 7 am on August 28, according to the evacuation plan that was finalised on Thursday for the demolition of twin towers in Noida.

300 RETAIL LIQUOR VENDS GIVEN LICENCES IN DELHI

New Delhi: The Excise Department of the Delhi Government has so far issued 300 retail liquor licences and started registration of various alcohol brands, as the four Government corporations are scheduled to run 500 vends across the city from September 1, officials said on Thursday.

ED RAIDS MP BROTHER IN CASE AGAINST MUKHTAR

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday raided the official residence of BSP MP Afzal Ansari in Delhi as part of investigation against his jailed brother Mukhtar Ansari.

Book Shahnawaz on rape plaint, HC slams Delhi Police for delay

BJP leader moves SC after HC order

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered that an FIR be registered against BJP leader Shahnawaz Hussain on a woman's rape complaint in 2018.

Hussain moved the Supreme Court after the Delhi HC order. The SC will hear the case next week, but it has not restrained the police from filing the FIR.

The Delhi HC noted that there was a complete reluctance on the part of the police even to register an FIR. Justice Asha Menon said there was no perversity in the 2018 trial order directing the registration of the FIR and vacated the interim orders of the court staying its operation.

"There is no merit in the present petition. The petition is dismissed. The interim orders stand vacated. The FIR be registered forthwith. The investigations be completed and a detailed report under Section 173 CrPC be submitted before the learned MM (metropolitan magistrate) within three months," said the court in its order on Wednesday.

A Delhi-based woman had moved the lower court seeking registration of an FIR against Hussain on her allegation of rape.

In its order, the HC said while reference is made in the police status report to the recording of the statement of the prosecutrix on four occasions, there was no explanation as to why the FIR was not lodged.

"The FIR only puts the machinery into operation. It is a foundation for investigation of the offence complained of. It is only after investigations that the police can come to the conclusion whether or not an offence had been committed and if so by whom. In the present case, there seems to be a complete reluctance on the part of the police even to register an FIR," said the court.

Laxmi Narayan Mandir (Birla Mandir) illuminated on the occasion of Janamashtami in New Delhi on Thursday
Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

₹11 cr coins missing from Raj SBI branch, CBI raids 25 places

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday conducted searches at 25 locations across the country in connection with the disappearance of coins worth ₹11 crore from the vaults of an SBI branch in Karauli in Rajasthan.

The searches were conducted in Delhi, Jaipur, Dausa, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur, Alwar, Udaipur, and Bhilwara on the premises of around 15 former bank officials, branch manager/joint custodian and cash officers among others in the ongoing investigation in the case.

The matter came to light after the State Bank of India (SBI) branch decided to carry out the counting of money after a preliminary enquiry indicated discrepancies in its cash reserve at the Mehandipur branch in the Karauli district in August 2021.

Alarmed bank officials had roped in a Jaipur-based private vendor to do counting of coins supposed to be ₹13 crore according to account books.

To their shock, the vendor found only 3,000 bags carrying coins worth about ₹2 crore, while coins of ₹11 crore were missing from the branch.

It is also alleged that the employees of the private vendor who were doing the counting were threatened in the night of August 10, 2021, at the guesthouse where they were staying and were asked to refrain from the counting, the FIR has alleged.

205 die, ₹1,014 cr loss in 1 month of monsoon in HP

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Due to severe weather conditions this monsoon, at least 205 people lost their lives and seven went missing in Himachal Pradesh in the last over one-and-a-half-months, State disaster management director Sudesh Kumar Mokhta said here on Thursday.

Since June 29, the State has suffered a loss of ₹1,014.08 crore due to damaged roads, water lines, and power transmission, he said.

At least 103 people lost their lives in 35 accidents from June 29 to August 16 during the ongoing monsoon season, and 33 people were killed in freak incidents. Twenty-five people drowned in six incidents, seven died in 48 landslides, and three in 51 flash floods that occurred during the period, he said.

Besides, 120 animals lost their lives, 95 houses were fully damaged and 335 houses partially damaged in monsoon-related incidents in various parts of the State, Mokhta added.

Fugitive rape-murder accused lynched

PTI ■ NORTH LAKHIMPUR

A 45-year-old man, who escaped from court two days back and was accused of rape and murder, was lynched by a mob on Thursday in Assam's Lakhimpur district, police said.

Gerjai Barua, alias Raju Barua, who the police identified as a dreaded criminal, was hiding near a stream in Kilakili village in Ghilamar police station area when some locals nabbed him during the early hours, a police officer said.

They informed the police, which took some time to reach the area due to inaccessibility. By that time, more villagers gathered and they started thrashing Barua. When police reached, the man was found to be severely injured, and two police personnel also received injuries while trying to rescue him from the irate mob, the officer said.

"We took him to Dhakuakhana Civil Hospital, where doctors pronounced him brought dead. The two policemen have been sent to North Lakhimpur town for better treatment," he added.

Dozens of cases related to theft, dacoity, murder, rape and other crimes were registered against him in different police stations during the last 15 years, police said.

Relish aloo-puri at rly stations again

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Freshly cooked aloo-puri at Deendayal Railway Station (Mughalsarai), or idli sambhar, alloo bonda or egg chops at Purulia Station, and many more food items are likely to be back on the railway platforms across the country — right in front of your train coaches.

The Indian Railways has taken this step to give a fillip to the regional cuisines and discourage the rising demands of unhealthy fast food on the railway premises and trains.

However, the good old stainless-steel carts of yore will be replaced by a sleek trolley modified by the National Institute of Design (NID) to facilitate the promotion of the "one Station One Product" policy as announced in the annual Budget earlier this year.

The policy aims to promote one local product at each railway station like glass bangles at Firozabad, sandals, and blankets at Ludhiana, oranges, grapes or Kolhapuri chappals at Nashik, coffee at Hosur railway station, and handmade Banaras Silk sarees at Varanasi Junction.

The freshly cooked meal like aloo-puri for which the passengers used to hold their hunger even if the trains used to be late for a particular destination, lost its flavour after the railway banned their cooking on platforms and introduced a revamped catering system to serve packed items.

Ahmedabad-based NID has designed carts having various compartments to give better display to the products. Under the new provisions, vendors with local cuisines and handicrafts will be legally allowed to board trains up to the next stoppage to sell their products on board.

A fee of ₹1,500 for 15 days of business has been levied for such vendor activities on rail premises. As a prototype, the railways has introduced this policy at some stations during the last couple of months. Looking at the excellent business, the authorities want to replicate it across the 7,000 railway stations in the country.

"Most of the vendors have reported earning Rs 5,000 a day and so far none has reported dissatisfaction over earnings. A circular will be issued that no railways authorities or personnel harass such legal vendors.

A special kind of badge will be given to them for better identification and to sell their products in a dignified way," said a railway official.

Armed criminals loot Rs 35 lakhs from Bank of India at gunpoint

Police clueless, exit points of city sealed

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

In a broad daylight incident, a gang of armed criminals looted Rs 35 lakhs from Bank of India's Ulidih branch in Mango on Thursday morning. Covering their faces with masks, about half-a-dozen criminals were involved in the incident that spread fear in the area.

The robbers also took the bank officials as well as the customers hostage before decamping with the cash. The sensational robbery took place at the Bank of India's branch located on Dimna Road at busy hours like 10.30 am. The area remains busy with people throughout the day.

The criminals swooped over the bank posing as customers but had covered their faces with masks while committing the robbery.

A police official said that it seemed to be a child's play for the gang of robbers. They simply walked up to the cashier, pointed a gun at him, grabbed the cash and fled. In fact, within a few minutes, they were out of the bank and on the busy main road. They reportedly escaped. No one even put up any resistance.

The robbers also snatched mobile phones from all those inside the premises and subsequently drove them all into a room. Soon they collected the entire stock of cash from the cash section and fled the scene.

The criminals executed the robbery in such swiftness that none of the bank officials could do anything to alert the police. The management of the branch had informed the police only after the robbers had fled the spot.

The OC of Ulidih police station, Meghnath Mandal, who was first to reach the spot, confirmed the robbery.

"As per the initial information gathered. There has been a robbery in the Bank of India's branch here. We estimate Rs 35 lakhs to have been looted," said Mandal. The OC said they are trying to scan CCTV footage of the crime scene to detect the case.

Soon after senior police officers, SSP Prabhat Kumar and City SP, K Vijay Shankar reached the spot and started investigating the incident. The police have also started a frantic search operation having sealed the exit points of the city.

"It's really a shocking incident. Looting money from the bank's door step is definitely a daring act as there were so many people coming and going out of the bank," said the official.

Describing the criminals involved in the loot, the police said one of the criminals was shot.

"Investigation is on and we have sealed the entire city and set up arms-checking at a number of places. Apart from this we are raiding the hideouts in Mango, and Chandil. We understand that the criminals had been following the bank closely before committing the loot," said the police officer.

Tailor shot at in Daltonganj

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

A 40 year old tailor identified as Tauseef survived a bid on his life last night around 10 pm. Two assailants following him on a bike fired shots at him which hurt his one shoulder. The tailor was also on another bike going home. The tailor is undergoing treatment in a private hospital.

Officer in charge of the town police station Daltonganj Abhay Kumar Sinha said police will soon crack this case. Sinha said it will be too premature to jump to any conclusion as to what was the compelling situation or circumstances that led to this shoot out at night.

The Police officer said the way the assailants had fired shots could be just for the purpose of frightening him but incidentally it hurt the tailor. Sinha said had the assailants decided to finish him they could have not missed the chance.

The motive behind the shoot out is yet to be ascertained. There have been no arrests so far till the time of filing of this report.

CCL wins Coal Minister's Award 2021-22 in Safety & Sustainability

PNS ■ RANCHI

Central Coalfields Limited (CCL), a Jharkhand-based subsidiary of Coal India Limited, bagged safety and sustainability category award at Coal Minister's Award -2021-22 during a mega function in New Delhi on Thursday. CCL was awarded second prize in safety and third prize in sustainability for outstanding performance.

Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs, Pralhad Joshi handed the trophy to CMD, CCL, PM Prasad in presence of Coal Secretary, Dr Anil Kumar Jain, CIL Chairman, Pramod Agarwal and other dignitaries. General Manager of Dhori Area, Manoj Kumar Agarwal and Magadh- Sanghmitra Area, KK Sinha of the company were also awarded on this occasion for their outstanding performance.

After receiving the award, Prasad said that this award is a testimony of our deep commitment towards safety, sustainable and eco-friendly mining, which is at the core of our mining operations. He further said that the award is the result of the dedicated and committed teamwork of our employees and management, coupled with some best practices being followed in the company. He said that safety in operations is of paramount importance and they are committed to ensure an accident free workplace at CCL.

CMD CCL said that CCL is committed to fulfil the vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. He further expressed his gratitude to Coal Secretary Dr Anil Kumar Jain and Coal India Chairman Shri Pramod Agrawal for their guidance.

In previous fiscal 2021-22, the company has recorded the highest production and dispatch since its inception of 68.8 MT and 71.8 MT.

Drilling machine slips in ditch due to sudden subsidence at Dahibari coal mines

PANKAJ KUMAR ■ DHANBAD

A Drilling machine slipped into a five hundred meter deep ditch due to sudden subsidence that took place at Dahibari coal mines of CV area of BCCL under Nirsa police station early Thursday morning.

Cracks have appeared on around 400 meter surface due to subsidence .The road leading to the coal mine viewpoint was completely damaged due to subsidence that took place with a huge bang.

Incidentally, there was no loss of life as the day shift had not started . Besides, several electrical poles too were uprooted due to the incident .Company guards on duty rushed for safe locations due to the incident as they were surrounded by sparking electrical wires of subsided poles.

This happens to be the third incident of subsidence in the locality. First was reported on August 10 and about four days ago the road leading to Thaparnagar station too had subsided at different locations.

The BCCL authorities had directed for removing the heavy machines from the area on August 10 itself but before those could be removed a major subsidence took place today causing machinery loss to the company.

Notices have been served to all BCCL employees residing in the area to vacate company quarters and to shift to safe locations. Similar notice has been given to private persons of the locality.

Though incidents subsidence often are on rise during monsoon, company authorities claim that geological disturbances due to unscientific mining during pre -nationalisation in Kalamati area are main causes of subsidence now.

Senior BCCL officers and local police have reached the incident spot and are persuading locals to shift to safe locations.

UG students may choose vocational course with regular courses

PNS ■ HAZARIBAG

Under the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Vinoba Bhave University has decided to start the undergraduate course under the rule and regulation of NEP. According to the New Education Policy the students can choose any vocational course with the regular four years degree course. As many as 41,456 students have applied for admission in the four years degree course.

Vice Chancellor of the university Mukul Naryan Dev said that we have decided to implement the National Education Policy in undergraduate courses in all constituent and affiliated colleges.

He further said that under this policy we have to offer vocational courses with regular courses. We have received online applications from more than 40 thousand students and maximum students have shown their interest in constituent colleges rather than affiliated colleges.

We have decided on both the courses in the colleges. The morning session has been allotted to vocational courses and regular courses in the evening. In St. Columba's college the students can choose any one from Bio-tech, BCA, vocational course.

In KB Women's college in vocational courses Fashion designing, C&D, Bachelor in corporate secretary, Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Technology (BMLT), and BCA (Bachelor in Computer Application), the students can select any vocational course.

In Ananda college the students can select any one from the BBA (Bachelor in Business Administration), BCA, Bio- Tech as vocational courses.

Dev further said that generally the fees of vocational courses are higher than the regular course. We are providing the facilities to poor students to pass the vocation courses on concessional rates.

City celebrates 'Janmastmi' with special charm

PNS ■ BOKARO

Amidst chants of 'Hare Rama Hare Krishna', the entire steel city Bokaro today gave a festive look as people celebrated Krishna Janmashtami with great pomp and enthusiasm.

To seek the blessings of Lord Krishna, Janmashtami is also celebrated at Delhi Public School, Chas today with mirth and joy. The students of the Pre-Primary Wing showed great enthusiasm in the celebration rejoicing in their extraordinary bond with the supreme divine.

The school conducted a special assembly that started with the holy prayer chanted by the officiating principal, Deepali Bhuskute. A thought and a Hindi poem were presented by Shristi Shukla and Smriti Shubham of classes IV and III respectively. A special dance on the theme was presented by the students of classes II and III. What stole everyone's attention was a skit on "Krishna Lila", where children showed their extreme talent in acting. Enthusiastic students also participated in several other activities organised for the occasion.

In her message, the Chief Mentor of the school Dr Hemlata S Mohan said, "Lord Krishna is the most revered deity of the Hindus. His life is an impression of all good virtues and ideals. His divine preaching in the form of the Gita is a treasure to the world. It is very important for teachers and parents to work in unison to impart the richness of our culture and customs. Giving insight to students on the rich scriptures through storytelling is an essential part of the current education as the Nation Education Policy brings before us. Through these activities, the knowledge of the students gets a boost as well as brings out the multifaceted personality of the child.

The Officiating Principal of the school, Deepali Bhuskute blessed all the students on this auspicious day and gave them the message to impersonate Lord Krishna. She said, "The students should look ahead and keep in mind the virtues that the Lord has bestowed us. Her words truly summed up the efficacy of celebrating the festival of devotion and obedience towards their parents and teachers."

Suresh Agarwal, Member of the school and Secretary D S Memorial, Chas was overwhelmed by the participation of the students and appreciated their effort.

REGION

Two road robbers heald, sent to jail

DEVASHEESH BADAL ■ GIRIDIH:

On the border of Jharkhand-Bihar, three miscreants riding a motorcycle near Adhpelia bridge of Bhelwaghati, a Naxal-affected area of Giridih district, robbed Rs 16 thousand cash, mobile, tab, fingerprint scanner, and a bike from a finance company employee Shaukat Ali. The victim Shaukat informed the local administration, after which the police got involved in the search and arrested two criminals Chandrashekhar Singh of the Ganva police station area and Santosh Kumar Yadav of the Tisri police station area. Police recovered motorcycles, mobiles, tabs and other items from these accused.

Regarding the incident, SDPO Anil Kumar Singh said that the accused have already been involved in criminal incidents, at present both have been arrested and sent to jail.

15 people sentenced to death by Jamshedpur court

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Fifteen people were sentenced to death by Jamshedpur court on Thursday for killing an inmate of the Ghaghidih Central Jail during a clash between two groups in 2019.Additional public prosecutor Rajeev Kumar said that the court of additional district judge-4 Rajendra Kumar Sinha sentenced the 15 people to death by hanging after convicting them under IPC sections 302 (murder) and 120B (criminal conspiracy),The court also sentenced seven others people to 10 years in prison after convicting them under IPC section 307 (attempt to murder), he said. Two of those sentenced to death are at large, police said.The convicts who have been sentenced to death are Shyamu Jojo, Panchanan Patro, Pinku Poorti, Ajay Mallah, Arup Kumar Bose, Ram Rai Surin, Ramai Karua, Gangadhar Khandait, Rameshwar Angaria, Gopal Tiriya, Sharat Gop, Vasudev Mahato, Jani Ansara, Shiv Shankar Paswan and Sanjay Diggi . At the same time, those who have been sentenced to 10 years include Shoaib Akhtar, Md Tauqir, Ajit Das, Sonu Lal, Sumit Singh, Rishi Lohar and Saurabh Singh.

Sadbhavna Diwas' observed at ECR

PNS ■ RANCHI

'Sadbhavna Diwas' was organized on the premises of East Central Railway Headquarters on Thursday. On this occasion, the General Manager of East Central Railway Anupam Sharma administered the pledge to all the officers and employees to work for the emotional unity and goodwill of the country without any discrimination of caste, sect, region, religion or language. He also called upon the railway workers to resolve all differences through dialogue and constitutional means without resorting to violence.

New Director takes charge at IIM Ranchi

PNS ■ RANCHI

Professor Deepak Kumar Srivastava took over charge as full time Director of IIM Ranchi here on Thursday. He took charge from outgoing Director In-charge, Prof. Pradip Kumar Bala, who is also a full time Professor and Dean, Academic Affairs and Development at IIM, Ranchi. Professor Srivastava, in his immediate past assignment, was the Dean (Academics) and Professor in Strategy Area at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Tiruchirappalli. He has more than 20 years of academic experience. Professor Srivastava has held numerous visiting teaching and research assignments at number of foreign universities, including the Universidad Panamericana, Mexico City (Mexico); School of Business, Tecnologico De Monterrey, Campus Estado de Mexico (Mexico); Coggin College of Business, University of North Florida, Jacksonville (USA) and Turku University, Turku (Finland) to name a few.

Professor Srivastava has served on important committees for a number of organizations of national significance in India. Previously, he served as a member on the Board of Governors (BoG) of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ranchi. He regularly contributes to leading newspapers, where he writes about emerging public policy issues.

GGPS Chas hosts Radha Krishna Role Play competition

RAHUL SHARMA ■ BOKARO

Guru Gobind Singh Public School, Chas organised Janmastami celebration in their school campus by the students of Primary wing with great enthusiasm. Primary students in the uniform of Radha and Krishna Role participated actively in the competition. The Principal of G.G.P.S, Chas Uma Shankar Singh, Academic coordinator Munmun, Judges Kanchan and Bimal were present in the event as guest. The competition was conducted in two groups namely Group A for Classes Pre nursery to Prep In which there was dance performance of the participants on the theme of Janmashtami. Another Group B of Classes 1-3 in which there was dialogue delivery of participants acted as Radha and Krishna were there. It is noteworthy that Anchor of the event were Kiran Mishra and Ananya of class 4A and the event was organised by Pawan house and members Nairita , Ajita Tripathi and various teachers Indu, Jyoti Singh, Jyoti Kumari, Nikki, Divya, musical team Avishek and Ranjeet participated actively to make programme all success . Akash House bagged 1st prize , Dhart house second and Pani house bagged third position from Team A whereas in another category Dhart house stood first ,Pani house as second and Akash house remained third from group B . Principal Uma Shankar congratulated the winners and praised such programmes.

DAV Bokaro crowned as winner in I-Day Cultural Programme

PNS ■ BOKARO

In the run up to celebrate 75th year of India's Independence and promote 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mohatsav, SAIL Bokaro Steel Limited organised a Mega cultural program here at Bokaro Club which got highly praised by all. In the cultural program organised under the tricolour campaign Har Ghar Tiranga, School Children's infused patriotism among the audience through dance on patriotic songs. In the same episode DAV Sector Sec-IV Bokaro too was soaked in tricolour. Right from the proud flag at the entrance to flags in students' hands, the school continued to throb with "Bharat Mata ki jai" in response to patriotic performances. One of the dance performances won Best position in DC's programme whereas the mixed patriotic song bagged second position at SAIL's BSL programme on the eve of Independence Day lead by Music Teacher Priyanka Sharma. While congratulating DAV Students and teachers on their remarkable efforts Principal of DAV AK Jha said that It is indeed a proud occasion for DAV Bokaro and this Amrit Mahotsav is dedicated to the people of India who have not only been instrumental in bringing India thus far in its evolutionary journey but also hold within them the power and potential to enable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of activating India 2.0, fuelled by the spirit of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Over all this cultural programme was a gala success of SAIL BSL where different schools participated with complete dedications.

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Govt committed to protect tribal assets, rights: CM

PNS ■ RANCHI

Netarhat Field Firing Range Kendriya Jan Sangharsh Samiti members meet Chief Minister Hemant Soren at his official residence in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today said that the government is always with tribal communities for protection of assets and rights of tribals and indigenous people. "We believe in doing, rather than saying. Today, the message is going from village to village that the government is standing with them for their interest. It is our constant endeavour that the tribes of the State should work for the uplift of the indigenous people," said the CM while addressing the delegation of Kendriya Jan Sangharsh Samiti, Latehar-Gumla against Pilot Project Netarhat Field Firing Range at Chief Minister's residential office here on Thursday.

On this occasion, the delegation expressed gratitude for the decision of the Chief Minister not to extend the Netarhat Field Firing Range notification.

He was also honoured by the delegation with a turban and a shawl.

The Chief Minister said that in this movement which has been going on for 28-30 years, today the government has taken a decision in the interest of the natives. Work is being done to complete the process related to the 1471 square kilometer land coming under the firing range, now that the poor should have rights there. He said that the government is also taking appropriate action for the problems being faced by the CNT, SPT Act. He said that we are working to protect the property and rights of tribals and indigenous people.

Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji, Lok Sabha MP Vijay Hansda, Sisai MLA Jigga Susaran Horo were present on the occasion.

Notably, the CM has given approval to the proposal of extension of Netarhat Field Firing Range on the point that it does not seem to be under consideration. The Netarhat Field Firing Range, started in 1964, was extended by the then Bihar government in 1999. Keeping in view the public interest, the CM agreed to the proposal not to re-notify the Netarhat Field Firing Range.

In protest against the Netarhat Field Firing Range, a memorandum was also submitted by about 39 revenue villages of Latehar district to the Governor, Government of Jharkhand through the general meeting, in which it was told by the public affected by the Netarhat Field Firing Range that Latehar and Gumla districts come under Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.

Here the PESA Act 1996 is applicable, under which the Gram Sabha has Constitutional rights. Under this, the village heads of the affected area of the Netarhat Field Firing Range organized a Gram Sabha on the demand of the affected public and decided not to make the land inside the village limits available for the Netarhat Field Firing Range for the army's firing exercise. At the same time, the notification of Netarhat Field Firing Range was not extended further and requested to cancel the project by duly publishing a notification.

The people affected by the Netarhat Field Firing Range were continuously protesting for the last 30 years to cancel the notification of the Netarhat Field Firing Range. Like every year at present, a protest was held on 22-23 March against the Netarhat Field Firing Range.

Six IAS officers get new responsibilities

PNS ■ RANCHI

The State Government on Thursday transferred and posted six IAS officers. Rahul Kumar Purwar, who was waiting for posting, has been made Secretary, Higher and Technical Education Department, while Agriculture Secretary Abu Baqr Siddiqui has been given additional charge of Jharkhand State Mineral Corporation Limited (JSMDC). Siddiqui is currently in the additional charge of Secretary, Mines Department. A notification with this effect has been issued on Thursday.

Principal Secretary Woman and Child Development Avinash Kumar has been appointed as Principal Secretary, Energy Department. Kumar will hold the additional charge of Chairman-cum-Managing Director of Jharkhand Urja Vikas Nigam Limited and Managing Director of Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited.

Information and Technology Department Secretary Kripanand Jha has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Women, Child Development and Social Security, he will hold additional charge of Secretary, IT and E-governance.

Waiting for posting, Chandrashekhar, has been made Special Secretary, Home, Prisons and Disaster Management Department.

Mukesh Kumar, who is looking after the charge of Tribal Welfare Commissioner, will be in additional charge of Vice Chairman, Ranchi Regional Development Authority (RRDA), while Tourism Director Anjali Yadav has been given additional charge of Managing Director of Jharkhand Tourism Development Corporation.

NEWS IN PIX

Chief Minister Hemant Soren along with eminent guests participates in Dahi Handi competition organised on the eve of Janmashtami festival at Morhabadi Ground in Ranchi on Thursday. The CM gave good wishes to people on the occasion and wished for the well being of State. PNS

A team succeeds in breaking the traditional 'matka' during Dahi Handi competition at Morhabadi Ground on the eve of Janmashtami festival in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

ED gets six days remand of HC advocate Rajiv Kumar

PNS ■ RANCHI

Advocate Rajiv Kumar. (File Photo)

The special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court of Prabhat Kumar Sharma granted the Enforcement Directorate (ED) six days police remand of advocate Rajiv Kumar. The police custody will be effective from August 20.

The ED secured six days' remand of Jharkhand High Court advocate Rajiv Kumar currently lodged at Alipur Jail in Bengal following his arrest by the Kolkata police last month. Kumar, who is known for filing PIL was produced before the PMLA court through video conferencing from Alipur jail. Following six days of police custody of Kumar, a team of senior ED officials has left for Kolkata to bring back Rajiv Kumar to Ranchi for questioning.

The ED in its plea stated that the agency has taken up a case for investigation related to seizure of Rs 50 lakh from the possession of Rajiv Kumar in which his police remand will be required. The FIR was originally lodged by the Kolkata police at Hare Street police station. The ED said that the agency lodged an ECIR in Ranchi and Rajiv Kumar is the accused in this case.

Kumar was arrested by Kolkata police on July 31 on the charges of extorting money from Kolkatta based trader Amit Agrawal for giving him relief in a PIL 4290/21 filed by Shiv Shankar Sharma at Jharkhand High Court. On Behalf of Sharma, advocate Kumar is pleading the PIL case. Police said that he was trapped along with the cash, which he had extorted from Amit Agrawal in the name of safeguarding him in a PIL 4290/21 against Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren.

Kumar was arrested by the Kolkata police allegedly with Rs 50 lakh in his possession. Reportedly, Kumar had filed a PIL in Ranchi High Court against a Kolkata-based businessman and was asking Rs 10 crore to withdraw the PIL. After negotiations, he allegedly settled at Rs 1 crore for which the first instalment of Rs 50 lakh was paid and he was caught red-handed with it.

On August 10, the ED took over the investigation of this case and an ECIR was lodged at the Ranchi zonal office of the agency. The ED prayed the PMLA court to issue a production order for Rajiv Kumar.

Rajiv Kumar, who has represented over 100 PILs, is popularly known as the 'PIL Man' in Jharkhand. A few days before his arrest, he had filed three PILs on behalf of a petitioner Shiv Shankar Sharma.

Two of the PILs are against Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, of which one is regarding the allocation of mining lease by the CM. The third one is against Soren's close aides accused of money laundering and alleged investments in shell companies, which are currently being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

INBRIEF

CMPDI inks MoA with Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra

CMPDI signed an MoA with Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) , Hazaribag for 'Sponsoring 20 youths for Govt. recognized 2 years Diploma course in Ophthalmic Assistant at Loknayak Jaiprakash Paramedical Institute, Chouparan, Hazaribag amounting to Rs.31 lakhs. This will benefit unemployed youths of Jharkhand under the command areas of CMPDI in Jharkhand state. R.K. Mahapatra, General Manager (CSR) from CMPDI and Satish Girja, Secretary from NBJK signed the MoA. The project aims to provide education at free of cost and 75 per cent hostel fees to the eligible candidates. The Ophthalmic Assistant programme is a full-time professionally accredited programme approved by the Government of Jharkhand. The course structure is standardized as per the latest guidelines.

NABARD staff protest demanding wage revision

The staff and officers of NABARD, Jharkhand Regional Office, Ranchi demonstrated in front of the Chief General Manager's room, demanding early implementation of the wage revision agreement. It may be noted that the salary revision in NABARD is pending since November 2017. National Bank Officers Association (NBOA), Ranchi President, Gautam Singh informed that if the agreement is not implemented soon, all the staff of NABARD will go on strike on all India level on August 30.

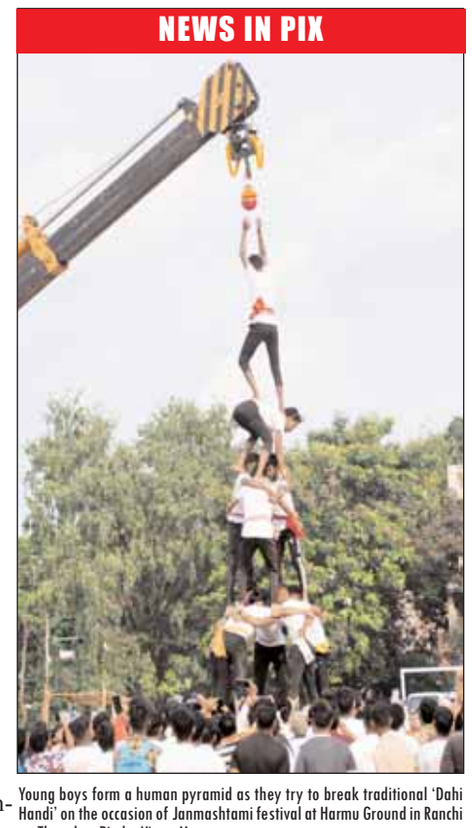
Menstrual hygiene room inaugurated

Inner Wheel Club of Jamshedpur Zest inaugurated a fully equipped new menstrual hygiene room at new colony Utkramit Vidyalaya, Adityapur. Club's district chairman Rita Jha and president of IWC Jamshedpur Zest Nisha Gadia inaugurated the new facility. To make life much easier for the girls in the school and to improve the attendance significantly the menstrual room was inaugurated. The new menstrual room has easy availability of sanitary pads, first aid kit, 2 beds, wardrobes, instructions and posters regarding the maintenance of menstrual hygiene. The club also donated Rs 9600 to the school authority to maintain the room and donated sanitary pads for the 200 girls in the school.

'Sadbhawna Diwas' in RRD

Sadbhavna Diwas is celebrated every year on 20th August. This important day is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi. Due to the holiday on August 19 and 20 in the divisional office, on Thursday, DRM Pradeep Gupta greeted the railway officers and employees at 11:30 in the premises of the divisional office. On the occasion of the day, the pledge of Sadbhavna Diwas was administered. On this occasion, ADRM (Infra) Satish Kumar, ADRM (Operations) Manish Kumar, ACMS Dr. Brajesh Sahu, Sr DPO Manik Shankar, Sr DCM cum CPRO Nishant Kumar, Sr DSTE S Oraon, Sr DEE(Traction) AR Das and other branch officers and employees were present.

NEWS IN PIX


Young boys form a human pyramid as they try to break traditional 'Dahi Handi' on the occasion of Janmashtami festival at Harmu Ground in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

Congress holds discussion on price rise

PNS ■ RANCHI

Minister Rameshwar Oraon alongwith others holds a discussion on price rise and inflation in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

Following the instructions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) against the rising inflation in the Country, on behalf of the party workers on Thursday the State Capital, in a very unique way, the discussion on inflation was held in the presence of Finance and Food Supplies Minister, Dr Rameshwar Oraon.

A chaupal organized with a cup of tea laid by laying a post and discussion on inflation was held in the Sector-2 market of Ranchi. Convener organization empowerment campaign, Alok Kumar Dubey along with Senior State Congress Leaders, Lal Kishorenath Shahdeo, Vinita Nayak, Sanjeet Yadav, Firoz Rizvi Munna and others were present.

On this occasion, Oraon said that at present common people are suffering due to unemployment and inflation. "On the one hand, due to the wrong policies of the Central Government, the employment of crores of people has been snatched, on the other hand inflation has increased the problems of the people. In 2014 the price of a gas cylinder was Rs 400, today it has become Rs 1100, the budget of the people's house has deteriorated," he added.

"The price of all essential commodities has increased tremendously. The people of India are bearing the brunt of the economic mismanagement of the Modi Government. Removing inflation and unemployment, the two big problems of human life, is the responsibility of the Central Government, how to control it, in which it has completely failed, the same Hemant Soren's Government is giving relief to the people of its State in controlling the price," said Oraon.

Dubey said that inflation has become uncontrollable in the Country, the Central Government is not being successful in curbing the increase in the price of essential commodities. "The price of milk for children has increased by Rs 4 per liter within four months. Earlier in the Congress government, senior citizens used to get a discount in train tickets, children up to eleven years old used to get a half ticket, but in the Modi government this exemption was already abolished and now a 1-year-old child will also have to take a full ticket. Railway is no longer the ride of the common people, the BJP government is trying to privatize it to benefit its capitalist friends. Truth be told, the day is not far when the Modi government will impose tax on the child in the womb and also on breathing," he added.

Shahdeo said that now the BJP Government has decided to earn from the land of Ashok Hotel. Hotel Ashok will be given on a 60-year lease to private entrepreneurs, while its vacant land will be used for commercial development and luxury service apartments to earn money, he added.

Seth demands shifting of high tension wire from residential areas

PNS ■ RANCHI

Ranchi MP Sanjay Seth.

Ranchi MP, Sanjay Seth has demanded the state government to shift or cover the high tension wires passing through or above the private and government buildings in State including Ranchi. The Ranchi MP raised the demand after meeting the family member of three youths who were killed due to electrocution on August 14, while hoisting the tricolour on their roof on Sunday.

The incident took place on August 14 at Boreya in Ranchi, when the three – Vineet Jha (23), sister Puja Kumari (25) and their cousin Aarti Kumari (26) were trying to straighten the tri-colour, which had been hoisted on their roof to mark the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, got tilted due to heavy rain.

The incident took place after the steel rod got in contact with the live wire running near their house, leading to the death of all three persons.

Seth said that the incident is due to negligence of the electricity department. The family members on several occasions had requested the officials of the Electricity Department to either shift the high tension wire from above their house or cover it, but the officials did not pay heed to their request. The family had to lose its children due to electricity department officials' negligence. Seth also demanded proper investigation in the matter from the government.

The passing of high-tension lines on the roofs of residential and commercial complexes have increased the plight of residents. There are several areas in Capital where such wires pass, posing threat to residents.

The MP said that he also receives many such complaints that high tension wires have passed over a person's house, somewhere over a government school. There is often a possibility of an accident due to this. Local citizens and villagers have urged them many times in this matter to shift the wires somewhere else or cover it, but the people of the electricity department do not consider it necessary to take cognizance of such matters.

This problem is not only the problem of Ranchi but the problem of the entire state. Seriousness should be taken in this matter. Wherever there is such a situation in the entire state including Ranchi, the high tension wire should either be shifted from there to some other place. Those wires should be covered better.

Seth also demanded Rs 10 lakh as compensation from the State government for victim family members. Angered by the irresponsible attitude of the electricity department, family members were not allowing the police to remove the body of Vineet from the spot till a complaint was filed.

Sure of bagging contract for Tejas, HAL to set up office in Malaysia

The indigenously-built light combat aircraft (LCA) Tejas PNS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Confident of bagging the contract to export 18 indigenously designed and manufactured Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA)to Malaysia, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited(HAL) will now set up an office in Kuala Lumpur. The public sector HAL is manufacturing Tejas.

Argentina, Australia, Egypt, USA, Indonesia, and Philippines have also shown interest in procuring the Tejas. If the contract goes through with Malaysia, it will be the first big export order of the Tejas LCA thereby showcasing India's capability in manufacturing state of the art fighter jets and related equipment.

The HAL had submitted a proposal to Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), Malaysia during October 2021 for supply of 18 FLIT LCAs(Tejas) against a global tender issued by the Malaysian Air Force. The final winner of the tender is expected to be declared soon by Malaysian authorities. LCA Tejas stands a fair chance of selection in the bid as it meets all the parameters sought by RMAF.Giving details of setting up office in the Kuala Lumpur, the HAL said on Thursday it inked a Memorandum of Understanding(MOU)in this regard in Bengaluru on Thursday. The office in Malaysia will help HAL in tapping the new business opportunities for Fighter Lead-in Trainer (FLIT) LCA(Tejas) and other requirements of Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) like Su-30 MKM and Hawk upgrades. It will reinforce commitment of India in supporting the Malaysian Defence Forces and industry for sustainable aerospace and defence landscape in Malaysia. Further, being one of the largest producers of Russian origin Su-30 aircraft, the HAL has capabilities to extend the required support to RMAF for Su-30 MKM fleet which is facing low serviceability issues due to ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis.The HAL can support RMAF for upgrading their Hawk fleet as well. Other HAL platforms like HTT-40, Do-228, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) have the potential to be inducted by RMAF in future. Considering the above factors, HAL's office in Kuala Lumpur will take up market promotion of HAL's range of products and services not only in Malaysia but in the entire South East Asia. The office will also contribute in increasing serviceability of existing platforms being operated by RMAF and for neighbouring Air Forces in the region. It will reinforce commitment of India in supporting the Malaysian Defence Forces and industry for sustainable aerospace and defence landscape in Malaysia, the HAL said. The HAL is now manufacturing 83 Tejas jets for the IAF after it was awarded the contract by the Indian government last year. The order is worth over ₹47,000 crores. The delivery will start from next year.

India envisages free, open, peaceful region, says MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BANGKOK

With China's growing aggressive stance in the Indo-Pacific region, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said India envisages a free, open, inclusive and peaceful region built on a rules-based order, sustainable and transparent infrastructure investment. He also stressed the need on mutual respect for sovereignty.

Making this assertion in a lecture on 'India's Vision of the Indo-Pacific' at the prestigious Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Jaishankar also said that Quad - comprising the US, India, Japan and Australia - is the most prominent plurilateral platform that addresses contemporary challenges and opportunities in the Indo-Pacific.

Jaishankar visited Thailand from August 16 to 18 to co-chair the ninth meeting of India-Thailand Joint Commission (JCM). This enunciation by the minister came as China has all along criticized the Quad combine claiming it will lead to militarization of the Indo-Pacific region.

India envisages the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to be at the centre of the Indo-Pacific, both literally and substantively, Jaishankar told the gathering which included members of Thai academia - researchers, scholars, think-tanks and students.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims.

Beijing has also built up and militarised many of the islands and reefs it controls in the region. Both areas are stated to be rich in minerals, oil and other natural resources and are also vital to global trade.

Moreover, Chinese and Indian troops are engaged in prolonged standoff in Eastern Ladakh. The two sides have so far held 16 rounds of Corps Commander Level talks to resolve the standoff which erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas.

The US, Japan, India and Australia had in 2017 given shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the "Quad" or the Quadrilateral coalition to counter China's aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region.

Jaishankar said Quad is the most prominent plurilateral platform that addresses contemporary challenges and opportunities in the Indo-Pacific. "We are confident that the entire Indo-Pacific region will benefit from its activities," he said.

The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway has the potential of creating a completely new axis of economic activity in Asia, the minister noted adding the project has had its fair share of challenges but "we are determined to bring it to an early conclusion.

"As regards his bilateral talks with his Thailand counterpart Don Pramudwinai, the ministry of external affairs said in New Delhi on Thursday, both the leaders reviewed the progress made in areas of defence and security, trade, connectivity, tourism and people-to-people ties. The JCM, co-chaired by Jaishankar and Pramudwinai took place on Wednesday in Bangkok.

Jaishankar also called on Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha and conveyed personal greetings and good wishes from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rajnath felicitates 'Veer Naris' of armed forces

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday felicitated the 'Veer Naris', kin of the Armed Forces personnel, who lost their lives in a recent landslide at Tupul in Manipur and assured them of full support from his ministry.

He also presented cheques of Rs 7 lakh to each 'Veer Nari.' Thirteen soldiers, who got injured in the tragedy, were also felicitated during the event.

The felicitation ceremony was organised at Bengdubi Military Station in Darjeeling district of West Bengal by Trishakti Corps. Thirty personnel - one officer, three Junior Commissioned Officers and 26 Other Ranks – of 107 Infantry Battalion (Territorial Army) 11 Gorkha Rifles were among the 61 people killed during the tragedy in June. During the interaction with the Veer Naris and soldiers, Rajnath paid tributes to the deceased personnel, commending their bravery and dedication.

He said the nation will always remain indebted to the sacrifices made by the soldiers. The minister also said the Government is making sure that financial stability is provided to the families and dependents of the brave soldiers, assuring full support of the defence ministry.Rajnath lauded the Armed Forces for playing an important role in completing the Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal Rail Line Project in a challenging situation. He said the project is important for meeting the strategic and socio-economic needs of the country. Member of Parliament, Darjeeling Raju Bista, Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande, GOC, 111 Sub Area Lt General Tarun Kumar Aich and other senior officials of the Indian Army were present on the occasion.

Era of coalitions is over, country now wants a strong Govt at Centre, says BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of the Opposition's claim to take on the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP on Thursday responded that the era of "short-lived" coalition Governments was over and the country now wanted a strong and stable Government at the Centre.

The party also hit-out at the recent cases of crimes in Bihar and alleged involvement of some of the state ministers in criminal cases to claim that criminals have become "fearless" after the grand alliance headed by Nitish Kumar came to power in the state following the JD(U)'s split with the BJP.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is being projected by JDU and RJD as the PM candidate vis-à-vis Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the next Lok Sabha polls which are only about 18 months away.

Reacting to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's comments that the change of government in Bihar was a "positive sign" to provide a strong alternative at the Centre, former Union minister and BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said the era of the likes of V P Singh and H D Deve Gowda, who headed short-lived coalition governments, was gone and the country now wanted stability, development and effective leadership. In an interview, Yadav had also claimed that the BJP's allies in Uttar Pradesh are not happy with the saffron party and will also break free in the future.

"People of India know that the era of Deve Gowda, I K Gujral and V P Singh is gone. The country now wants stability, development, honesty and effective leadership.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided it and enhanced India's prestige," Prasad said in a retort to the SP leader. He said 2024 is far away and it remains to be seen how much understanding develops among opposition parties.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Telangana Chief Minister Chandrashekar Rao are other two leaders being seen as Prime Ministerial candidates, besides Nitish Kumar. It is also speculated in the political circles that opposition may try to settle for a single opposition nominee for Prime Minister in the run-up to 2024.

Taking on to the Nitish-led-'Mahagathbandhan', Prasad pointed out that two persons, a class 12 girl student and a solider, were shot dead in Patna, his Lok Sabha constituency, in the last 24 hours. "The state is returning to jungle raj," he alleged.

Prasad also lashed-out at the newly constituted Bihar government over the row involving Bihar minister Kartikeya Singh's who is reported to have kidnapping case with an outstanding warrant against him and alleged the state's agriculture minister was earlier linked to a rice scam.

Singh has been inducted in the Nitish cabinet as law minister. Singh's lawyer has maintained that the police investigation had found no evidence against him.

Prasad , a former Union law minister, however, rejected the claim saying the Patna High Court had in 2017 dismissed the RJD leader's plea for anticipatory bail by noting that the complaint's statement highlights his role in the abduction.

The BJP leader said the court had asked him to surrender and to apply for regular bail and accused the police of trying to save him after the JD(U)-RJD-Congress formed the government.

In a swipe at the Bihar CM after one of his party MLAs, Bima Bharti, questioned him for the induction of Leshi Singh as a minister, he said infighting has begun within the party.

8 rare disease hospitals to set up panel to vet patients' pleas for aid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has asked each of the eight designated hospitals that treat rare diseases to set up an expert committee to decide on providing a cash aid of Rs 50 lakh within a month of receiving an application for financial assistance from a patient.

The eight Centres of Excellence (CoEs) will also be given one-time financial support up to Rs 5 crore for procurement of equipment for strengthening patients care services for screening, diagnosis and prevention (prenatal diagnosis) for rare diseases based on a gap analysis, according to the new guidelines issued by the health ministry.

Also, more CoEs will be added for regional outreach if they are found to be suitable in terms of infrastructure and human resources based on recommendations of the Technical Committee of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the guidelines said.

The Ministry on August 11 issued the guidelines and procedures for granting financial assistance to patients suffering from rare diseases as thalassemia, haemophilia, and sickle cell anaemia under the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), 2021. The ministry on May 19 increased the financial support from Rs 20 lakh to Rs 50 lakh for patients belonging to all categories of rare diseases. According to the guidelines, a 'Rare Disease Committee' is to be constituted in each CoE. The nodal officer for rare disease of the hospital will be the member secretary of the committee and the CoE may also opt for an outside expert on the panel, if required.

The applications received from the patients or guardians will first be scrutinized by the nodal officer, and thereafter placed before the committee for consideration and approval.

There will be no reimbursement of expenditure already incurred. Families covered under Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) will also be eligible for financial assistance as per NPRD, 2021, if the disease is not covered under AB-PMJAY packages.

Keeping in view the resource constraint and compelling health priorities, it will be difficult for government to fully finance treatment of high cost rare diseases. The gap will be filled up by providing financial assistance through crowd-funding, the guidelines said, adding a crowdfunding portal "http://rarediseases.Nhp.Gov.In/ "http://rarediseases.Nhp.Gov.In has already been created for receiving such fund, the guidelines read.

HC-appointed panel will not take over affairs of IOA: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered a status quo and said the Delhi High Court-appointed three-member Committee of Administrators (COA) will not take over the affairs of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

A bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and CT Ravikumar took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the IOA, that the world sports body does not recognise any unelected bodies like the CoA and consequently, India may be barred from taking part in international sports events.

"The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) is a unit of the International Olympic Association and they have their own rules and according to them, if any national-level body like petitioner IOA here is represented by a non-elected body then it is treated as a third party interference," the law officer said.

Every country is bound by the rules of the international body, Mehta said, adding that the high court's intervention may or may not be for valid reasons which can be gone into by the bench at a later stage. "But the moment they (CoA) takes over, India stands almost 99 per cent chance of being suspended from participating in any Olympic and international event," the Solicitor General said.

The CJI said that Justice Hima Kohli, the third judge of the bench, did not want to hear this case which originally arose from the Delhi High Court's order. The law officer said that the interim relief can be awarded by the two judges on the bench.

"The counsel for the petitioner (IOA) and as well as the Solicitor General submitted that by virtue of the present order (of the high court), there is a possibility of India losing the chance of participation in the Olympic and all international events...

"We direct the parties to maintain the status quo. It is made clear that the charge is not handed over to the CoA. We direct the matter to be listed before an appropriate bench on Monday (August 22)," the bench said in its order. Consequently, the Delhi High Court-appointed COA, comprising former Supreme Court judge Justice Anil R Dave, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi, and former Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup, will not be able to take IOA over.

The Delhi High Court on August 16 ordered the setting up of a three-member CoA to manage the affairs of the IOA. The high court had said the "persistent recalcitrance" of the IOA to comply with the Sports Code made it imperative that its affairs be put in the hands of the CoA.

HC had directed the executive committee of IOA to forthwith hand over the charge to the newly appointed committee and said that the members of the CoA will be assisted by three eminent sportspersons, namely, Shooter Olympian Abhinav Bindra, Long Jump Olympian Anju Bobby George, and Archer Olympian Bombayla Devi Laishram.

The High Court's order was passed on a petition by senior advocate Rahul Mehra seeking strict compliance by the IOA and National Sports Federations with the Sports Code and judicial dicta.

CZA setting up zoo network for preserving genetic material

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) is setting up a consortium of network of zoos, beginning with five zoos, as a pilot project to serve as biological repositories for preserving genetic material of wildlife species in the form of cryo-banking of genetic material, semen, oocytes, tissues, and cells for future applications in case the animal gets extinct.

The five zoos are Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, West Bengal, Nehru Zoological Park, Telangana, Sakkarbaug Zoological Park, Gujarat, Bannerghatta Biological Park, Bengaluru, Karnataka and Sepahijala Zoological Park, Agartala in Tripura.These zoos will serve as genetic resource banks (GRB) for Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology's Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (CCMB-LaCONES), which is the country's only facility for conservation of endangered species.

A dedicated facility of CSIR's Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad, the Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES), since 2018 has been using modern biotechnologies for conservation of endangered wildlife.

Till now, the CCMB-LaCONES has been collecting tissues of various wild animals which have died naturally or due to medical reasons to preserve cells, gametes and gonads with the cooperation of National Zoological Park at Hyderabad.But the need for setting up the consortium was felt as collection at the LaCONES has been very dismal due to various reasons when compared to the wide species found in the country. "Despite being one of the most biodiverse countries in the world, nearly 14% of all species in India face serious threat of extinction.

These identified zoos will have highly-sophisticated labs with best of equipments to serve as biological repositories for Hyderabad Centre which will then preserves species in the form of cryo-banking of genetic material, semen, oocytes, embryos, tissues, and cells for future applications," said an official from the Union Environment Ministry.

CZA is the autonomous body under the Ministry, engaged in supervising the functioning of the zoos in the country. "The large amounts of various biological samples have to be systematically collected from different regions of the country and preserved in optimal conditions and then easily accessible to scientists for future studies or applications.

In view of the potential benefit of bio-banking of wild animals, zoos are being asked to donate biological samples of valuable wild animals to these identified five genetic resource banks," said the official about the ambitious pilot project. Soon more zoos will be brought under the ambit of the Consortium.

Genetic resource bank [GRB] involves the systematic collection of genetic material, tissues, gonads, gametes and cells, and preserved at subzero temperatures without altering their integrity and viability, he added.

GRBs could be one of the promising options for future species management or research by preserving spermatozoa, eggs and embryos of threatened populations, he said.

Prez prorogues both Houses of Parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu has prorogued both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha after the two Houses of Parliament were adjourned sine die on August 8. "The Lok Sabha which commenced its ninth session on July 18 has been prorogued by the president on August 17," according to an official communication from the Lok Sabha secretariat.

The Rajya Sabha, which was adjourned sine die on August 8, has been prorogued by the president on August 17, according to a note from the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. The Monsoon Session of Parliament started on July 18 and ended on August 8, four days ahead of schedule.

Covid forces Cong to postpone mega rally against price rise, joblessness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Thursday said it has postponed its mega rally at the Ramlila Maidan against price rise and unemployment to September 4 in view of the Covid situation in the national capital.

Congress general secretary of communications Jairam Ramesh said the rally has been postponed in view of rising cases of COVID-19 in Delhi. The rally was earlier scheduled for August 28. The party also announced to launch a "Bharat Jodo Yatra" from September 7 from Kanyakumari where former party chief Rahul Gandhi will participate and the 3500 kilomtere yatra, aimed at uniting the country, will culminate in February in Jammu and Kashmir. "Due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, the Congress party's Mehangai Par Halla Bol Rally at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi, is being rescheduled from August 28 to September 4th.

The rally will send a powerful message to the insensitive Modi sarkar," Ramesh said at a media briefing after the decision was taken in a meeting of senior party leaders and all the State Unit Chiefs besides the Chiefs Ministers of Congress ruled states. While continue its fight against price rise, the Congress has also decided to organise a series of "Mehangai Chaupal" meetings in all assembly constituencies from August 17 to 23 that will culminate in a mega rally in Delhi's Ramlila maidan. Congress will continue to spread awareness about the anti-people policies of the BJP government and increase pressure on it to change course, the party has said.

Ramesh said the Bharat Jodo Yatra will not to make speeches and address rallies but to listen to the concern of the masses by engaging them with talk shows related to issues like price rise, unemployment and restlessness within the various sections and religions of the country.

Political slugfest over inclusion of non-locals in J&K electoral rolls

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A political slugfest broke out between the Kashmir based mainstream political parties and the ruling party over inclusion of non-local voters in Jammu and Kashmir electoral rolls on Thursday.

The National Conference termed the inclusion of outside voters in Jammu and Kashmir electoral rolls as "clear-cut de-franchising" of people of the erstwhile state while Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Mehbooba Mufti described the latest decision of the election commission to allow outsiders to vote in the assembly polls as "pre-poll rigging".

Hitting back Bharatiya Janata Party's Chief Spokesman in Jammu Sunil Sethi thundered that the decision of the Chief Electoral Officer to give voting rights to all persons who ordinarily reside in Jammu Kashmir is 'legally and constitutionally' correct . Sethi said Opposition parties are trying to project the wrong picture and are still living in the pre 5th Aug 2019 era.

On the other hand terror outfit The Resistance Front (TRF) has issued a threat saying that 'every non-local will be targeted'. The threat came after Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Electoral Officer Hirdesh Kumar Wednesday said that non-locals will be allowed to cast votes in the Assembly elections in J&K. In a threat, the TRF said that it will 'not even spare beggars'.

Meanwhile, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah has convened an all-party meeting here on August 22 to discuss the issue of inclusion of outside voters in Jammu and Kashmir electoral rolls.

The meeting will discuss the future course of action with regard to the Election Commission allowing outsiders to register as voters in the Union Territory.

"With regard to the CEO's announcement stating that non-locals will be added as voters in J&K, Dr Farooq Abdullah has convened an APM (all-party meeting) on August 22 (Monday) at his residence," NC state spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said.

Dar said Abdullah has spoken to the mainstream political parties in the Union Territory and invited them to join the meeting.

"The party president spoke to all mainstream parties, except the BJP," the spokesman added.

Apparently, some of the Kashmir based political parties have sensed an opportunity to corner the government over the issue of enrolling non-locals as voters in J&k.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, the National Conference Chief spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq told reporters, "Firstly, there is no clarity on what the chief electoral officer (CEO) has said. What is the criterion of an ordinarily living citizen? Can anyone, including tourists, register their vote here?"

He said there are apprehensions among the people, and the government should clarify.

Referring to the issue of security forces personnel registering themselves as voters, Sadiq said according to the rules, security forces can register as voters only in peace stations.

"There is Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir, that means J-K is declared as a disturbed state… so there are no peace stations and then how can security forces register as local voters?" he asked.

Addressing a separate press conference at her residence Mehbooba Mufti told reporters,"I appeal to those parties that have fought for secular and democratic India, and not those that sided with Britishers should speak up. All measures and policy decisions taken in J&K are not for the national interest but only for BJP's interest. The BJP has made Kashmir a laboratory. They experiment here first and apply such tricks outside later," Mufti said.

She said the election commission is allowing 25 lakh outsiders to vote in J&K's next assembly election. "This will make voters from Kashmir as well as Jammu irrelevant. This is a step to disenfranchise locals."

CPI(M) leader M.Y. Tarigami also described the announcement made by the Chief Electoral Officer on allowing outsiders to vote in J&K as "disenfranchising the people of J&K".

Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari on Thursday sought clarification from the Centre on the inclusion of non-local voters in the electoral rolls of Jammu and Kashmir and said his party will not allow anyone to change the Union territory's demography.

Bukhari said the chief electoral officer's remarks have created confusion and uneasiness among the people.

"Two things come to our mind by such statements. One is whether it is an attempt to change our demography, and the other is how anyone can

vote at two places. If someone lives outside, how can he vote here?" Bukhari told reporters.

In Jammu, BJP's Chief spokesman Sunil Sethi clarified the opposition parties are somehow trying to create exceptions in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory which is not permissible. People of Jammu and Kashmir have welcomed the decision of complete jelling of Jammu

Kashmir to the Indian Union without exception or reservation and political parties have to realize it and live with it.

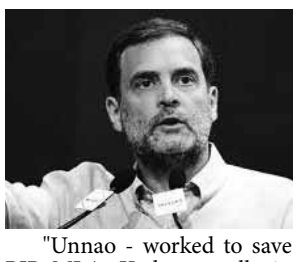
Sunil Sethi further asserted that if person from Jammu and Kashmir who is ordinarily residing in any part of country can get himself registered there as voters then how can be there reservation for same thing happening in Jammu and Kashmir

Release of Bilkis' rapists shows BJP's mindset on women: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

On a day when Bilkis Bano, a survivor of the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat, said the premature release of all the 11 convicts serving life sentence in a case related to her and seven family members, has shaken her faith in justice and left her numb, the Congress stepped up its attack with former party chief Rahul Gandhi alleging that BJP's support to criminals displays the ruling party's mindset towards women.

Stating that he was ashamed of "such politics", Rahul cited the examples of rape cases in Unnao and Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir and now Gujarat where the government this week released those convicted of rape and murder in the 2002 Bilkis Bano case.



"Unnao - worked to save BJP MLA. Kathua - rally in favour of rapists. Hathras - the government in favour of rapists. Gujarat - the release and honour of rapists. The support to criminals displays the petty mindset of the BJP towards women," Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. "Are you not ashamed of such politics, Prime Minister ji," Rahul asked.

Through a statement, Bano has appealed to the Gujarat government to "undo this harm" and give back her right to "live without fear and in peace." The 11 convicts, sentenced to life imprisonment in the 2002 case of Bilkis Bano's gang rape and murder of her seven family members during the riots, walked out of the Godhra sub-jail on Monday after the BJP government in Gujarat allowed their release under its remission policy.

Discussing the release of the Bilkis Bano case convicts, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram added that two BJP MLAs were part of the review panel that granted them remission. "There is an interesting side story to the grant of remission to 11 persons convicted for gang rape in Gujarat. Among the Review Panel were two BJP MLAs C. K. Raolji and Suman Chauhan. Another member was Murli Mulchandani who was a key witness for the prosecution in the Godhra Train burning case," Chidambaram alleged on Twitter.

He asked whether this was a neutral, non-partisan panel of experts in criminology and penology and said the district collector was the chairperson. Rahul and his party have been attacking the BJP and the prime minister for releasing the rapists in the Bilkis Bano case by granting them remission.

TRS MLC Kavitha said the welcome to the rapists and murderers after they were released from jail by some people who follow a certain ideology is a slap on the face of a just society,. In a series of tweets in Hindi, Kavitha said it is imperative to stop this extremely dangerous tradition before it takes the form of a legacy.

"The welcome shown to the rapists and murderers after getting released from jail by some people who follow a certain ideology is a slap on the face of a just society. It is imperative to stop this extremely dangerous tradition before it takes the form of a legacy," she tweeted.

ED conducts searches in UP, Delhi in PMLA case against Mukthar, Afzal Ansari

Mukhtar Ansari's Government accommodation at Janpath was also searched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches at multiple locations in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi as part of a money laundering investigation against mafia-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and his Parliamentarian brother Afzal Ansari.

The agency searched the official residence of BSP MP Afzal Ansari in Delhi as part of multi-city raids being conducted in the money laundering investigation against his jailed brother Mukhtar Ansari, officials said.

Ghazipur legislator Mukhtar Ansari's government accommodation at Janpath in central Delhi was also searched. The searches were carried out along with a CRPF security escort.

The searches are being conducted at premises located in Ghazipur, Mohammadabad (in Ghazipur district), Mau and state capital Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh apart from Delhi which are linked to Mukhtar Ansari and his alleged associates, they said.

The action is aimed at gathering evidence with regard to an ongoing investigation against Mukhtar Ansari and his associates under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

Mukhtar Ansari, a five-time former MLA, is cur-

rently lodged in jail at Banda in Uttar Pradesh.

He is being probed by the ED in connection with at least 49 criminal cases booked against him including those on charges of land grabbing, murder and extortion.

He faces trial in Uttar Pradesh in several cases, including attempt to murder and murder.

Last week, the Ghazipur district administration seized two plots of land, measuring 1.901 hectares and valued at over Rs 6 crore, that were purchased using alleged illegal earnings of Mukhtar Ansari, according to police.

In July, the Uttar Pradesh Police attached Afzal Ansari's assets worth Rs 14.90 crore under the Gangster Act.

Didi begins house cleaning, issues code of conduct for Mins

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In an apparent effort to rebuild her party's sagging image --- post arrest of senior minister Partha Chatterjee and Trinamool Congress national executive member Anubrata Mondal --- Bengal Chief Minister on Thursday issued a code of conduct for her ministers asking them not to sign certain specific files without thoroughly scrutinising them.

The Chief Minister's advice to her ministers, particularly the new ones who were inducted very recently after a Cabinet reshuffle came after the arrest of Chatterjee charged with in the cash-for-job scam and Mondal accused of cattle smuggling.

"The BJP has been trying to trap us … they have already trapped us … so I ask all the minister, particularly those who joined recently to exercise utmost vigil while signing some specific files … those files must not be signed without thorough scrutiny," the Chief Minister said prompting the opposition to wonder whether she had lost faith in her bureaucrats and the office staff who act as filters before the files reach the ministers.

The Chief Minister also asked the ministers not to use pilot vehicles and hooters or red lights while travelling. No minister even if they were traveling from the districts to Kolkata must use pilot vehicles, hooters or red beacons in order not to pick up people's annoyance, the Chief Minister said, asking the ministers and peoples representatives to maintain a humble image.

Banerjee has recently dropped a number of senior leaders including jailed leader and former number two in her cabinet Partha Chatterjee, Paresh Adhikari and slashed responsibilities of many other senior ministers like Firhad Hakim and Jyotipriya Mullick. She inducted some new less controversial faces like Partha Bhowmick, Babul Supriya, Birbaha Soren and others.

The Chief Minister also asked the Cabinet ministers to divide responsibilities among their deputies and ensure their performance. Asking her senior minister and North 24 Parganas district president JP Mullick to "travel less and perform more" Banerjee said the ministers should strictly concentrate on their work.

Banerjee's advice to her ministers came in tandem with a parallel development where Partha Chatterjee while appearing before a designated court said "no one will be spared," adding "truth will come out and everything will be proved in time." His comment when no question was hurled at him by the media.

His comment is also being taken as a continuation of an earlier comment made more than a fortnight ago when he told the media that he was being made a victim of conspiracy. "I am a victim of conspiracy … things will come out in time," he had told then.

Incidentally according to the Enforcement Directorate officials Chatterjee had denied the ownership of Rs 50 crore and many more crores worth of jewellery recovered from his close aide Arpita Mukherjee's apartments. Mukherjee too had disowned the cash saying some unknown people would regularly visit her apartment and put the bags in particular rooms.

Chatterjee who was on Thursday produced before the court at the end of his 10-days remand was again remanded to another ten-days custody by the court.

While at the court the former Education, Industries and Parliamentary Affairs Minister prayed before the judge with folded hands to grant him bail, advocates said adding while making his submission his voice trembled suddenly he made the comments apparently to the media.

The former minister considered closest to the Chief Minister apart from Mukul Roy had also served as the Opposition Leader of the State during the Left Front.

According to sources Chatterjee was upset with the Chief Minister for not standing by him and sparing a word of support for him during a public meeting at Behala, the jailed minister's constituency.

The Chief Minister had not spent a word for him but had firmly stood by Mondal saying he was being victimised by the BJP government as he was an able party man who had banished the saffron outfit from

Birbhum and other parts of the State.

Mondal who is charged with cattle smuggling had also been named in sand and stone and coal smuggling cases. In the same case the ED has earlier questioned Chief Minister's nephew and party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee too. Critics feel that Banerjee had no way but to side with Mondal because he too is named in the coal scam and must be kept from opening his mouth.

Kerala Governor-CPM spat over varsity appointment intensifies

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

For the first time in the political history of Kerala, an open war has erupted between Arif Mohammed Khan, the Governor and the State administration. In an unprecedented action, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan froze the decision of the CPI(M) controlled Kannur University appointing the wife of a party bigwig as associate professor violating all norms and qualifications prescribed by the University itself.

Prof Gopinath Raveendran, a CPI(M) fellow traveller, who is the vice chancellor of the Kannur University was issued a show cause notice by the Governor on Wednesday evening asking why action should not be taken against the former for the blatant violation of all norms. "So long as I remain the Chancellor of the University, I will not allow close relations of the powerful and mighty to be appointed anywhere in the government services that come under the jurisdiction of the Governor," said Governor Khan late Wednesday evening before boarding the aircraft for New Delhi.

Priya Varghese, who has been appointed as the associate professor of the department of Malayalam, Kannur University, is the wife of K K Ragesh, private secretary to chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan. According to the memorandum submitted by the Save University Forum, an independent body of academicians and researchers, Varghese does not have either the University mandated teaching or research experience. "We were shocked to learn from the vice-chancellor that she was awarded the first rank in the interview despite her not qualifying in the other modes of selection. This is an open violation of the rules prescribed by the University Grants Commission," a representative of Save University Forum told The Pioneer.

Sources close to the Governor told this newspaper that he was thoroughly disappointed and dejected with the politicisation and favouritism employed in the appointment to University posts. Rajbhavan sources made it clear that the Vice Chancellor was engaged in a losing battle as the show cause notice was issued under Article 7 of the Kannur University Act.

Kerala's cultural landscape got a jolt on Thursday morning as Dr M Rajeev Kumar, eminent literary critic and well known writer, who has exposed many underhand dealings in the educational department came out in the open appreciating the Governor for his bold decision and lambasting the State administration for the faux pas. "The intervention of party leaders ensured that the teaching experience of less than 18 months was portrayed as eight years. She was engaged in clerical works in State Language Institute and whatever she had published were carried by the Vignana Kairali, a journal which is not even read by its editor," said Dr Rajeev Kumar, himself a left ideologue.

Dr Rajeev Kumar said even if the Courts uphold the decision of the vice-chancellor citing technicalities, it is a great development that the State got a Governor which it deserved. "We have instances of Governors in the past who misused their position to get their wards admitted for MBBS courses in the State's Medical Colleges. Governor Khan has brought a refreshing experience to the rotten State administration by his no-nonsense approach," said Dr Rajeev Kumar.

Station Superintendent of Aligarh railway station accused of molestation

PNS ■ ALIGARH

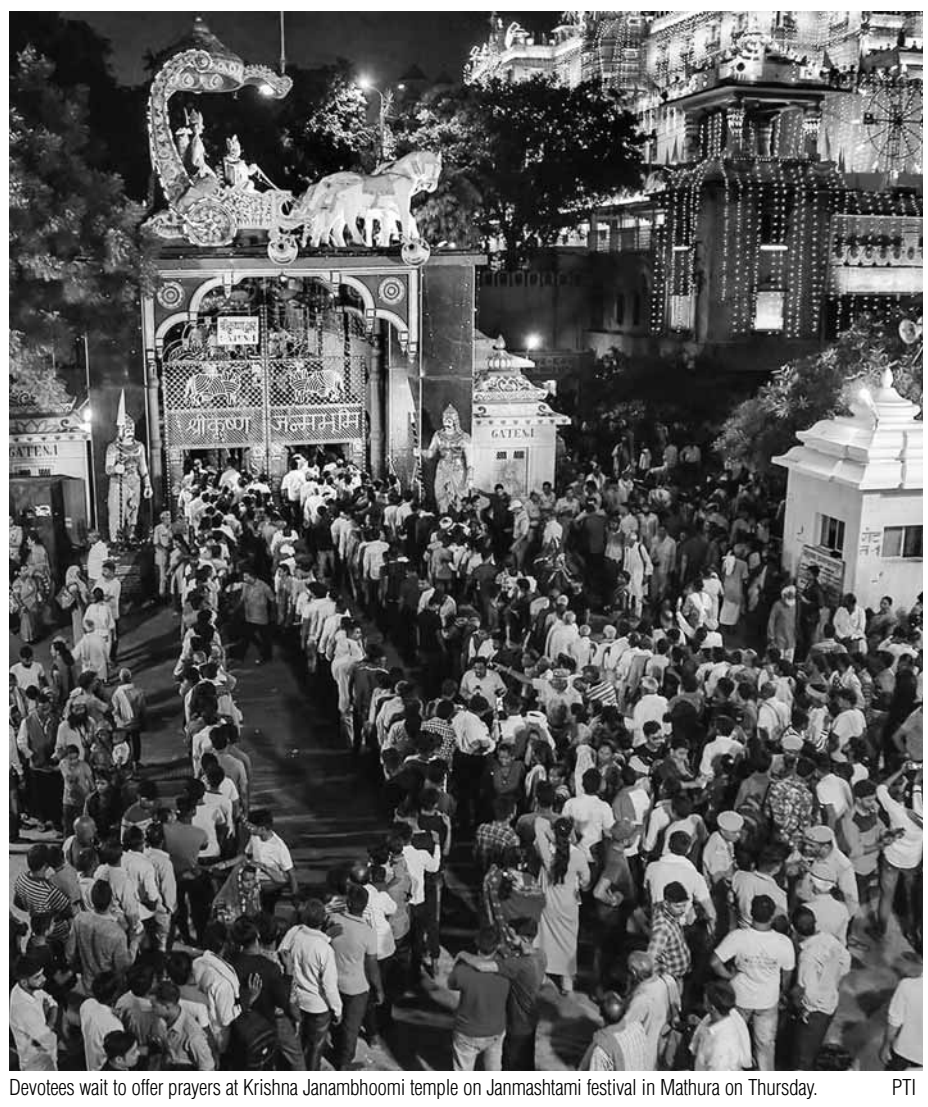
An FIR lodged against station superintendent by a woman employee posted at Aligarh railway junction. She has accused station superintendent DK Gautam of making obscene talk and molestation by calling her to his office. In this case, a complaint was made on behalf of the victim on the railway officials and CM portal. After that, a case has been registered in the police station GRP.

According to the victim, her husband was posted in the railways and died in the line of duty. She got a job as a dependent of the deceased. It is alleged that the station superintendent talks obscenely to her. The incident happened on the evening of July 28. She was going home after finishing her duty. Then the superintendent called her to his office and started talking obscenely. When she resisted, he held her hand. Somehow she freed her hand and ran from there making noise.

It is alleged that pressure was being made to not register the case. In this case, a com-

plaint was lodged on behalf of the victim in the police station, but the case was not registered. On this, she complained to the Railway Officer and the CM Portal. After which a case was registered in the police station.

Inspector Subodh Kumar Yadav, in-charge of GRP, said that on the complaint of the lady employee, a case of molestation is being registered against Station Superintendent DK Gautam and investigation is being done in the matter. On the other hand, station superintendent DK Gautam has termed the allegations made by the female employee as baseless. They have said that they have already complained to the higher authorities about the women workers. The woman employee has made fabricated allegations regarding this.



Devotees wait to offer prayers at Krishna Janambhoomi temple on Janmashtami festival in Mathura on Thursday. PTI

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Correct decision

The government blocks eight YouTube news channels, one Facebook account, and two Facebook posts

The Narendra Modi government has done well by blocking eight YouTube-based news channels, one Facebook account, and two Facebook posts. While seven blocked YouTube channels are Indian, one is run from Pakistan. The government has said it has proscribed the platforms spreading disinformation related to India's national security, foreign relations, and public order. A quick look at some of the posts, screenshots of which are in the official press release, suggests that they were indulging in something worse than fake news. Fake news can also be the result of a lazy reporter's credulity, but some of the stories these folks have been posting were, to put it mildly, preposterous. Loktantra Tv, for instance, gave the 'news' that Modi has banned Bakr-eid celebrations. Also, a holy war has started in India and Shankaracharya Nishchalananda Saraswati will lead the attack on Mecca and Medina. Another YouTube channel U&V TV posted that Modi is facing treason charges. AM Razvi's YouTube channel reported about not just disturbances in Ajmer Dargah but also that the Army had to be deployed. Gouravshali Pawan Mithilanchal, another YouTube channel, reported even more sensational and incredible: that India and Egypt have attacked Turkey. Pakistan's News ki Dunya posted that 100 crore Hindus will kill 40 crore Muslims, and that Muslims should go to Pakistan or Bangladesh. Another post showed that India's Qutub Minar mosque has been demolished. No journalist, however incompetent, would run such outlandish 'news' stories without checking several times the source and the authenticity of such 'news.'

The government has correctly pointed out that the purpose of the content published by some of these YouTube channels was to spread hatred among religious communities in India. Free speech is a right that needs to be protected everywhere, but it is also constrained by the harm principle: that is, you cannot use freedom of expression to hurt others. The content mentioned in the press release is capable of causing a great deal of harm to people by creating disharmony in society, even triggering communal riots. The YouTubers should also learn a lesson from the government action. Social media platforms offer a lot of opportunities to non-journalists to present news and views; many of them have also gained in the process. However, they must remember that while Article 19 of the Constitution grants the freedom of speech and expression, it also imposes reasonable restrictions "in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence." There is another problem: if the users of social media platforms don't behave themselves, it gives the authorities a pretext to come up with restrictive rules and regulations. It is time that irresponsible YouTube-based news channels, and even some mainstream media channels, didn't abuse free speech.

PICTALK

Children dressed as Lord Krishna and Radha during a fancy dress competition on Janmashtami at ISKCON temple PTI

Confusion at highest level

Government's stand on refugees remains ambiguous, especially on the Rohingyas

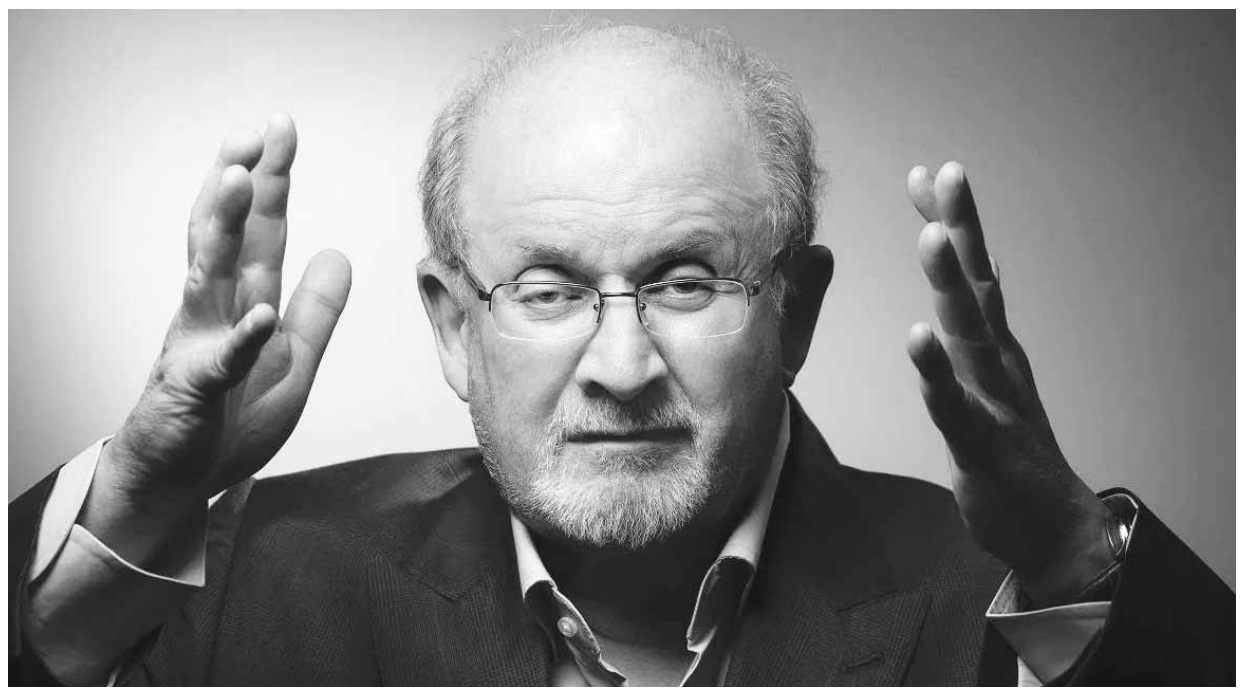
India's refugee policy remains confused and rudderless, to say the least. Often the ministry and the minister are at a cross purpose giving a red face to the government. An unnecessary controversy erupted over providing residential flats to the Rohingya refugees living in Delhi in the Bakkarwala area of Delhi. In fact, Hardeep Puri, minister for Housing and urban affairs tweeted several times on Wednesday morning flaunting the government's decision to provide the flats to the Rohingyas. However, the Ministry of Home Affairs in a press release reverted Minister's decision saying that all the Rohingya were illegal immigrants who were to be returned to their home country and that the refugees would continue to stay at their present location. The Home Ministry communique said that the Delhi government has been asked not to move the refugees who would remain in their present location. The MHA calls the present location of Rohingyas a' detention center' and Rohingyas 'Illegal foreigners'. In fact, it went on to direct the government of Delhi to declare officially the present address of Rohingyas as a detention center. The MHA decision left him no choice but to chew his words. Puri had gone on to say that it was a landmark decision and that the refugees would be provided with the basic amenities, identity cards (issued by the UNHCR), and security.So the government raised the hopes of Rohingya refugees in the morning and dashed them by the evening.

Rohingyas made their way to India to escape the Myanmar Army's pogrom that has been termed by the UN as one of the worst genocide in history.In Delhi, After a mysterious fire broke out in the Okhla settlement of the Rohingyas, KalindiKunj area in New Delhi they were shifted to their present location. Curiously Rohingya refugee camps in India have witnessed four fires in 2021 alone. Between 2016 and 2021, 12 mysterious fires broke out in Rohingya camps. Most of these fires show a trend, they broke at night and were preceded by threats of eviction or bigotry but are blamed on the short circuit. Whether we should allow these refugees to live in our country is subject to debate and a policy decision of the government but till they are deported it is the duty of the government to provide them basic amenities and safety and security which are enshrined in the UN. Each individual even an illegal immigrant has the right to life and it is our duty to safeguard it, regardless.

Surviving in the times of zealotry

INDRA SHEKHAR **SINGH**

The attack on Salman Rushdie raises many questions. Love is perhaps the only way to deal with hatemongers, hate begets hate



Salman Rushdie lives! Stitched up and sedated, he does talk and hasn't lost his sense of humour. But there is some question India@75 must answer. How do we react when one of the most famous Indian-origin people alive is brutally stabbed in a public event in the US? We must begin to question.

After watching the video a few times and reading a dozen articles with eye-witness accounts the picture got murkier. But let's do a quick recap, to get the fact clear. Rushdie is no ordinary writer, he has been under threat for decades due to a death fatwa issued against him by a religious leader in Iran. He was living in Britain then, and for years under the protectorate of the British secret service. The British government no doubt used him as a pawn in the geo-political cat and mouse with Iran and the EU, but nevertheless protected his life from assailants in Britain and the world at large. Even Rushdie salutes the heroic efforts of security personnel that protected him over the years. Meanwhile, the British foreign office along with concerned citizens and nations successfully pressured Iran to not enforce the Fatwa.

Post the non-enforcement stance taken by Iran, Salman Rushdie began returning to his normal life and eventually moved across the pond to the US. He was even been allowed into India.

But let's go back to the attack now. First question if the attacker wanted to kill Rushdie, why didn't he use a gun? Thank god he didn't use it, but why didn't he? Buying a small caliber weapon is as easy as buying candy in many parts of America, so why didn't the attacker use one? If the attacker was not a 'lone wolf' his handlers would have no trouble getting the attacker a gun. One can easily wonder was the attacker just trying to injure Rushdie.

The Attacker wouldn't have gotten the bounty if Mr Rushdie was merely injured. So the use of the knife was quite ill-thought, especially as there were almost no security checks at the institute. He could very easily carry a gun inside.

The second question stems from the first, why didn't the policeman on Rushdie's security detail, take preventive disarming actions? Especially when the attacker ran across the hall and climbed the stage to attack Rushdie. The US police system has gained much notoriety for being a trigger-happy force. So why didn't the policeman on duty shoot the assailant? If not on the body, at least on the leg? What happened in Chautauqua Institution in western New York, is a flagrant violation of every security protocol, especially by American standards. Rushdie is a high-profile target who addressed the Uber-liberal democrats, it was only SOP to have some security there.

So now the question is - was this an intentional lapse? Let's move away from Rushdie for a minute now and focus on the US foreign policy agenda. Despite even Henry Kissinger calling Anthony Blinken's foreign policy driving the "US to the brink of war" with "Russia and China", the Biden administration has been making all the right moves to antagonise them further and also strengthen their ranks.

> BUT WHAT SHOULD WE DO? JOIN THE HATERS AND CELEBRATE THIS ATTACK. DO WE BLAME RUSHDIE FOR WRITING HIS HEART OUT OR EMBRACE RUSHDIE AND SUPPORT HIM AND ADD TO THE IRAN BASHING?

This attack on Rushdie may be a coincidence or a mad-hatter conspiracy, but this public stabbing brings Iran back into the news cycle and reinforces the negative public opinion against Iran suddenly. Iran has been US's favourite punch bag for some time now, and with the Salman Rushdie attack, the US foreign policy politickers can add Iran to the "new axis of evil" — Iran, Russia, and China. The debate is slowly shifting away from Rushdie and more towards Iran bashing. It is regretful that yet again Rushdie has become a pawn in the great power politics.

But what should we do? Join the haters and celebrate this attack. Do we blame Rushdie for writing his heart out or embrace Rushdie and support him and add to the Iran bashing? The answer is not a straight one. A Muslim didn't attack Salman or an Iranian. It was an individual. Let's keep the blame where it belongs and not allow the machinations of warmongers to piggyback on it.

India and her people, our civilization is a major theme of Rushdie's books. And any readers of Joseph Anton, Rushdie's memoirs will verify his love for this land. Yet we banned his books, canceled his visas, and made him a pariah, at a time he needed his people the most. The armed assailant didn't only attack Rushdie, he attempted to destroy the stories and ethos of the subcontinent that Rushdie writes, about and will fictionalize in the future. And the only way to beat the attacker is to love Rushdie. We need to unban all his books, so the people of our country can make a decision for themselves. We need to battle hate and violence with love, for without it neither Rushdie nor us have any chance. That's why perhaps Allah made the good Muslims live and sent the bad ones to prison.

(The author writes on agriculture and environment, and is a former Director — Policy & Outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JANMASHTAMI CELEBRATIONS

Sir — Janmashtami 2022 will be marked on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhadrapada (July - August) in India. This year, there has been a lot of confusion about whether Krishna Janmashtami will be celebrated on August 18 or August 19. The Hindu festival of Janmashtami, which is also known as Krishna Janmashtami, Krishnasthami, or Gokulashtami, marks the birth of Lord Krishna.

As per the Vedic Panchang, Ashtami Tithi will begin at 9.21 PM on August 18 and will end at 10.59 PM on August 19, 2022. So, Janmashtami 2022 will be celebrated on both days while the Nishith Puja time will begin at 12.02 am on August 18 and ends at 12.48 PM on the same day. As per Hindu Mythology, Lord Krishna loved curd, white butter, and milk during his childhood days.

Krishna along with his friends used to steal it from the neighbours. The villagers went to his mother to complain about this. She advised villagers to hide the freshly churned Makhan in an earthen pot at some height. However, the idea did not work as Krishna and his friends started making human pyramids to reach the handi. To celebrate Krishna's mischievous tricks, every year on Janmashtami, people organize Dahi Handi and make a human pyramid to break the earthen pot kept at height. The charm of Krishna is forever!

Divyansha Sharma | *ujjain*

AN EGREGIOUS REMISSION

Sir — The remission leading to the premature release of 11 Bilkis Bano case convicts from prison has come in for a lot of flak from people and rightly so. It was apparent that the Gujarat government facilitated remission for political reasons without sparing a thought to what Bilkis Bano underwent and without empathizing with her. The grant of remission sends the wrong message that even gang` rape and mass murder convicts become eligible for leniency at the hands of the state if they belong to the 'right' religion and committed the felonies in 'a certain context'. The gravity of the felonies of rape and murder during the 2002 Gujarat pogrom for which the convicts were sentenced to life imprisonment is incontestable. The horrible nature of the crimes - gang rape of a five-month pregnant woman and killing of her three-year-old daughter were among them - does not bear thinking about. 'The convicts were not certified to have expressed remorse for their heinous crimes.

The way the released lifers were feted was a telling comment on the present sorry state of affairs in India. It rendered Prime Minister Modi's pledge to uphold women's rights and dignity and free the country of misogyny in his Independence Day address to the nation hollow. It made a mockery of the profession of Nari Shakti and Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

G.David Milton | *Maruthancode*

The Prisoners of War

Once again the barbaric brute forces in Kashmir have gunned down a Kashmiri Pandit Sunil Kumar in an apple orchard in the chotigam area, Shopian district of South Kashmir. This dastardly and gruesome killing of an innocent Kashmiri Pandit has shattered the whole KP community. The government has miserably failed to protect the precious lives of Kashmiri Pandits and other non-locals in Kashmir. Since the abrogation of article-370 and 35-A, the situation in Kashmir has turned volatile as the attacks on Hindu minorities are happening day in and day out without any respite. Selective and targeted killings of Hindu minorities and other nonlocals have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among all Hindu minorities. Thus rightly the PM package migrant employees are protesting for the last 100 days in favor of their one-point demand of relocation outside the valley as they feel very apprehensive about their safety and security in Kashmir. Since the martyrdom of Rahul Bhat, these hapless and unfortunate Kashmiri Pandit package employees are on the roads and are agitating for their survival and existence. It is high time now that the central government must immediately relocate/deploy all PM Package employees to Jammu province to stop any further bloodshed. Is anybody listening is the million-dollar question?

Vivek Koul | *New Delhi*

BAD NEWS FOR INDIAN FOOTBALL

Sir — The suspension of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) by the world governing body FIFA will likely have serious implications on Indian football. The national teams become ineligible to participate in continental tournaments.

The AIFF is in a state of topsy-turvydom due to the mismanagement of its administration after long-serving former chief Praful Patel stayed in office beyond the maximum term of 12 years, without holding fresh elections. This needs to be addressed ed quickly for the AIFF, so that elections can be held immediately and play This is the first time that the AIFF has received suspension by FIFA in its 85-year history. It is unfortunate that soccer turns sombre for Indian football, and let us hope it resurrects itself

Ranganathan Sivakumar | *Chennai*

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

Every country will try to ensure the best deal possible to cushion high energy prices and India is doing exactly the same.

Foreign Minister
—S Jaishankars

Wow. In the raid by the FBI on Mar-a-Lago, they stole my three Passports (one expired), along with everything else. This is an assault on a political opponent at a level never before seen in our country.

Ex US President
—Donald Trump

It was my childhood dream to be part of Hindi films.

Actor
—Gulshan Devaiah

I am a retired cricketer, who is completely dependent on the pension from the BCCI. My only source of income is from the Board, for which I am really thankful and grateful.

Cricketer
—Vinod Kambli

It has been 75 years of independence. We achieved a lot, But there's anger, a question among people that several small nations who attained independence after us, surpassed us...Why did India lag behind?

Delhi CM
—Arvind Kejriwal

FIRSTCOLUMN

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES GROW IN AMRIT KAAL

Foreign policy must evolve to meet economic clouts

KUMARDEEP **BANERJEE**

Imran Khan, the ousted Prime Minister of Pakistan, recently praised India's autonomous foreign policy in a political meeting. He complimented India for choosing a path of calibrated diplomacy in the aftermath of the ongoing war in Ukraine. While Khan's praise may not be the most sought after accolade for India's foreign policy strategy, it does reflect the directional shift in our external relations, in the nearly 75 years of being an independent democratic republic.

India's foreign policy stance in the last 75 years has been a matter of careful choices made as result of its colonial past and a cold war era world order cleaved in the middle. India in 1947 was an infant republic, which had almost overnight chosen the path of democracy to govern one of the largest, diverse crowds of citizens around the globe. It meant, laying the foundations of democracy first, thereby bringing in political empowerment, before economic prosperity.

The founding architects of the Indian republic also had socialist bent of mind and believed in the idea of a welfare state. That meant the state would be the biggest job creator and would be present in every domain of public life. This inward focus of the state meant India's foreign policy remained an ambiguous bunch of principles, better left for the most seasoned bureaucrats and statesmen to tackle.

Jawaharlal Nehru was the longest serving external affairs minister of India, besides being a Prime Minister. All his successors in the next 50 years were in the hot seat of managing external relations for less than four years.

However, this changed in 2014 when the Narendra Modi-led BJP government came to power and an articulate Sushma Swaraj occupied the seat for five years. The change and the willingness to showcase India's diplomatic prowess had started somewhere in the early 2000, when India realised it must have an independent foreign policy.

The 1960s hangover of the nonaligned era, which was the underlying template for India's foreign policy, was slowly beginning to wane. India had chosen nonalignment along with a few other like minded countries as the stated strategy to engage with the external world, which had been split between the US and the USSR blocs.

The neutral stance underscored India's bilateral, and plurilateral engagements on the global stage. It also meant India never tried to engage with its global counterparts beyond a couple of issues (such as Kashmir and relations with its neighbour Pakistan).

India and China had a bitter military faceoff in the 1960s, but it didn't leave a lasting dent in the bilateral relations beyond the decade. In fact, many subsequent leaders since the first faceoff, tried to bunch India China as two Asian powers which could be a formidable force for the rest of the world. An aggressive

China gobbling up islands in the Indian Ocean Region, coercing smaller nations into binding aid for development of infrastructure (Belt and Road Initiative), the growing distance between China and the US and finally the military faceoff between China and India in 2020 in Galwan ensured India's foreign policy architecture has a permanent China docket.

India in 2022 is a nearly $3 trillion economy and making steady progress towards being the third largest economy in the world by 2030. This economic power means a vociferous say in global affairs and an assured seat on multilateral high tables. India in the 75th year of its Independence has to keep realigning its foreign policy to match the changed status.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator.)

Wrong to call welfare schemes 'freebies'

VANAM JWALA **NARASIMHA RAO**

State governments must work for the welfare of the poor, for their empowerment and providing them with basic amenities

Delivering the Independence Day address at the Historical Golkonda Fort in Hyderabad, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) criticized the Center for insulting States' welfare schemes by labelling them as 'freebies'. He added that public welfare is the foremost responsibility of the government and hence Center's remarks are highly objectionable.

Disagreeing vehemently with the Center's concept of freebies, KCR said that it also amounts to weakening the nation's cooperative federal spirit and running down welfare schemes of States. Centre, which is supposed to fulfill that social responsibility, has done miserably over a period, observed KCR.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent remark on 'revdi culture' perhaps is at the center of CM KCR's observations similar to some of his counterparts in the country. According to Modi, attempts are being made in the country to bring a culture of garnering votes by distributing revdis, a sweet popular in North India, distributed during festivals, which is very dangerous for the development of the country.

Criticizing some opposition parties for engaging in the politics of freebies, the PM said that they are obstacles to India's efforts to become self-reliant while also being a burden on taxpayers. Notwithstanding this, the Independence Day was celebrated across the country with several chief ministers making a slew of welfare scheme announcements and countering Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'revdi culture' remark.

Unfortunately, PM Modi seems to have failed to take into account that social welfare schemes that subsidize the populace are a universal phenomenon now and, in a democracy, these are but natural. For instance, in the USA, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is the largest federal nutrition assistance program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low and no income people.

Similarly, the Singapore Government provides financial aid to any family making less than $1,900 a month, besides providing aid in other forms such as making education more affordable, tax exemptions for impoverished families and more affordable housing. Its system of social security is based on enabling self-reliance, supported by strong family and social networks. These are a few examples only. Would these fit into the concept of freebies?

We defined our country as a welfare state, which is a form of government in which the state protects and promotes the economic and social well-being of the citizens, based on the principles of equal opportunity and equitable distribution of wealth. The welfare state is a way of governing in which the state or an established group of social institutions provides basic economic security to its citizens.

> THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES FINANCIAL AID TO ANY FAMILY MAKING LESS THAN $1,900 A MONTH, BESIDES PROVIDING AID IN OTHER FORMS SUCH AS MAKING EDUCATION MORE AFFORDABLE, TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES AND MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(The author is Chief Public Relations Officer to Chief Minister, Telangana.)

By definition, in a welfare state, the government is responsible for the individual and social welfare of its citizens. A fundamental feature of the welfare state is social insurance and social security. This is exactly or perhaps even more as envisaged in the definition of a welfare state. Welfare encompasses those government programs that provide benefits and economic assistance to no or low-income people living in Telangana.

Welfare programs of Government of Telangana aims to improve the quality of life and living standards of the poor and underprivileged. People are able to stand on their own feet with an assured monthly or annual income making them prosperous. KCR's preference is social insurance. It may sound a bit philosophical, but the schemes conceived and being implemented by the KCR Government takes care of every stage of a human being's life true to the saying caring from 'cradle to grave'.

In the letter and spirit of the welfare state, the Telangana Government implements a number of welfare programs. To name a few identified priority areas of welfare of Telangana Government, there is Kalyan Laxmi, Shaadi Mubarak, Aasara pensions, Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bhima, Sheep distribution, Fish breeding, Free Double bedroom houses, Residential school education, Dalit Bandhu, etc.

Despite spending huge amounts on these schemes, Telangana has emerged financially strong in the country. The Government's top priority has been to extend a real helping hand to the needy, helpless and poorest of the poor strata and accordingly, welfare programs were conceived and implemented. The Aasara Pensions, aimed at providing security to life, are being given to every poverty-stricken individual, identifying them either as old or widow or single woman or a beedi worker or a handloom worker or an old age artist or a filarial affected person or AIIDS patient or for that matter any one below the poverty line.

This social security pension scheme is now extended to 10 lakh new beneficiaries from August 15 for a total of 46 lakh beneficiaries. Should this be called a freebie or a social security measure?

The large-scale distribution of sheep substantially enhanced the livestock wealth of Golla and Kurumas communities. The investment support scheme for agriculture, the Rythu Bandhu meant for providing financial assistance to farmer towards crop investment enthused the hearts of farmers. These are not freebies but welfare aimed at social security for the poor farmer.

The Dalit Bandhu Scheme, yet another welfare measure, is bound to change the life and financial status of Dalits in Telangana forever. In the long run, it will become a model policy for other states to emulate. It will herald a sea change in the lives of Dalits and will become torchbearer for Dalits elsewhere in the country.

The Telangana Dalit Bandhu Scheme would help Dalits to define their own development and become partners in the development. This is certainly not a freebie but by all means a social security measure.

Empowerment is the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities, enabling them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. It is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

CM KCR is laying a strong foundation for future generations' prosperity and making all sections of the society become economically self-reliant. Why call them freebies?

In a democratic society like India, people have several hopes, purposes, aspirations, ambitions, desires, requirements, passions, problems, needs and so on. People from time to time elect the party, which in their view will fulfill their needs. The contesting parties make promises in the form of election manifestos keeping in view the people's welfare in focus.

Voters consider them and choose a particular party and elect it to power. The Government thus elected by them to keep their promises has to initiate and implement a number of welfare programs and they cannot be dubbed as freebies. Unfortunately, most of the parties after coming to power fail to keep up their promises. In the case of KCR, he has not only fulfilled all the promises and even gone beyond though not mentioned in the election manifesto.

CM KCR firmly believes that mere growth has no meaning and even legitimacy, if the deprived sections of the society are left behind. Inclusive growth should not only ensure a broad flow of benefits and economic opportunities, but also encompass empowerment and participation. And hence it's all public welfare, please don't call them freebies, Modiji.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

TODAY DELHI'S SHAMELESS CM IS COMPLETELY EXPOSED. HE SENT A LETTER ASKING FOR FLATS IN BAKKARWAL FOR ROHINGYAS & IS NOW DOING GUTTER LEVEL POLITICS.
—BJP MP
GAUTAM GAMBHIR

THE CENTRE WAS TELLING THIS NEWS AS ITS ACHIEVEMENT IN THE MORNING IT IS NOW TRYING TO LAY THE BLAME ON THE DELHI GOVERNMENT.
—DY CM DELHI
MANISH SISODIA

How to promote information processing by students

The 5 strategies for better student engagement are - visuals, simple language, procedures, analogies, and organised content

RADHIKA **ZAHEDI**

Effective student engagement and classroom management are two important pedagogical strategies that teachers learn about in teacher education programmes. With technological advances, there are innumerable new ways of keeping students engaged.

By sticking to basics, five fundamental strategies are seen that reduce the sensory and cognitive loads on students to promote better processing of instructions and information. Any teacher can use these strategies to retain the attention of students.

According to the Information Processing Theory, during the learning experience in the classroom, first, students receive information through their senses by listening, seeing information visually on the screen or board or through the teachers' gestures and demonstrations and when hands-on experiences are used through other senses.

Secondly, all this information is being processed mentally by students: What does this word mean? What should I do next? What should I remember? How do these items connect? Finally, when students have processed and made sense of the information, with repeated recall and practice, some of it may get stored in the long-term memory.

Thus, three aspects are key to student attention; students first receive information through their senses; if there is too much sensory information coming in at the same time, some of it may be lost because it is too much for the brain to attend to at the same time; students then process this information taken in through the senses using the short-term memory or working memory in their brains.

Students make sense of the information by decode it, make connections, decide what is important, etc. Here too, there is a limit to how much information can be processed at one time, which is called cognitive load. Both sensory and cognitive overload can have negative effects on students' attention and engagement.

Therefore, teachers should recognise that sensory and cognitive overload is undesirable and should incorporate strategies that reduce the load on students.

Broadly, there could be five strategies that can reduce sensory and cognitive overload for students.

Visuals: Never underestimate the power of a good visual to anchor classroom instruction such as a digital presentation, a chart or well-structured board work. Visuals that organise the most important instructions or information can reduce cognitive load on the brain by making it available for students instead of requiring them to hold all of it in their minds, i.e., use their working memory. Reading about design principles beyond just the educational field - for example gestalt principles, colour, and sizing - can be very helpful in creating visual aids that promote student engagement.

Simple and Concise Language: Planning instructions and the specific language can reduce cognitive load for students. This ensures that student attention is focused on the learning instead of all of it being exhausted on trying to understand complicated instructions. Teachers should keep their sentences simple and concise when giving out instructions and avoid sharing too many instructions in one go. Thinking about which specific terms you will use beforehand and using the same terms consistently help reduce cognitive load.

Routines and procedures: Having regularly used routines or 'classroom protocols' in place of things like getting into groups, taking resources out, doing classwork, etc., is another teacher strategy for reducing cognitive load. Teachers can get students to understand what needs to be done just by using a single sentence or routine name. This means that students are listening to fewer instructions and using less cognitive load to understand the instructions leaving more for attending to the learning that is happening.

Analogies: Using analogies to explain new content aids information processing because students can attach the explanation to a model that they are familiar with instead of trying to make a sense of something that is completely new. Using analogies or even prior knowledge to make connections to something that students already know leads to greater storage of information in the brain with less cognitive load.

Organising content: The way we organise information can impact cognitive load and therefore engagement. Chunking content into logically arranged sections when presenting with clear titles is much better for cognitive processing than presenting it as one giant paragraph. This can be further extended by providing students with graphic organisers to help organise and process the content.

The strategies listed above are all focused on reducing sensory and cognitive load to aid attention and engagement. There are many other great teacher strategies that increase student attention by using emotional engagement strategies like using stories as a hook, asking questions to keep students actively engaged, providing opportunities for students to work with peers and aligning content to areas of interest for students.

(The author is school Director, The Green Acres Academy.)

Zelenskyy to host Lviv talks with UN chief, Erdogan

AP ■ LVIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is due to host the UN chief and Turkey's leader Thursday for talks on the recent deal to resume Ukraine's grain exports, the volatile situation at a Russian-occupied nuclear power plant and efforts to help end the nearly six-month-old war.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres arrived Wednesday in Lviv, near Ukraine's border with Poland, where he will meet Zelenskyy and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said that among other issues, Guterres will discuss "his overall efforts to do what he can to essentially lower the temperature as much as possible with the various authorities."

Last month, Turkey and the UN helped broker an agreement clearing the way for Ukraine to export 22 million tons of corn and other grain stuck in its Black Sea ports since Russia invaded February 24.

A separate memorandum between Russia and the UN aimed to clear roadblocks to shipments of Russian food and fertilizer to world markets.

The war and the blocked exports significantly exacerbated the global food crisis because Ukraine and Russia are major suppliers.

Grain prices peaked after Russia's invasion, and while some have since returned to prewar levels, they remain significantly higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Developing countries have been hit particularly hard by supply shortages and high prices. Even though ships are now leaving Russia and Ukraine, the food crisis hasn't ended.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters this week that Guterres' trip to Ukraine will allow him "to see first-hand the results of an initiative … that is so critically important to hundreds of millions of people."

Dujarric added that he expects "the need for a political solution" to the war to be raised in Thursday's talks.

He said the three leaders will also discuss the situation at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine, Europe's largest, which Moscow and Kyiv have accused each other of shelling.

In his nightly video address Wednesday, Zelensky reaffirmed his demand for the Russian military to leave the plant, emphasizing that "only absolute transparency and control of the situation at and around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant for the Ukrainian state, for the international community, and for the IAEA can guarantee a gradual return to normal nuclear safety." The International Atomic Energy Agency is a UN agency.

Russia has rejected the demand.

Erdogan's office has confirmed that he would discuss the grain deal during the talks as well as ways to end the war through diplomatic means.

Earlier this month, the Turkish leader met on the same issues with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In March, Turkey hosted a round of talks between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators, who discussed a possible deal to end the hostilities. The talks fell apart after the meeting in Istanbul, with both sides blaming each other.

Erdogan has engaged in a delicate balancing act, maintaining good relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Turkey has provided Ukraine with drones, which played a significant role in deterring a Russian advance early in the conflict, but it has refrained from joining Western sanctions against Russia over the war.

Facing a major economic crisis with official inflation near 80 per cent, Turkey increasingly relies on Russia for trade and tourism. Russian gas covers 45 per cent of Turkish energy needs, and Russia's atomic agency is building Turkey's first nuclear power plant.

During their meeting in Sochi this month, Putin and Erdogan agreed to bolster energy, financial and other ties between their countries, raising concerns in the West that Ankara could help Moscow bypass the US and European Union sanctions.

Ship that Ukraine alleges has stolen grain likely off Syria

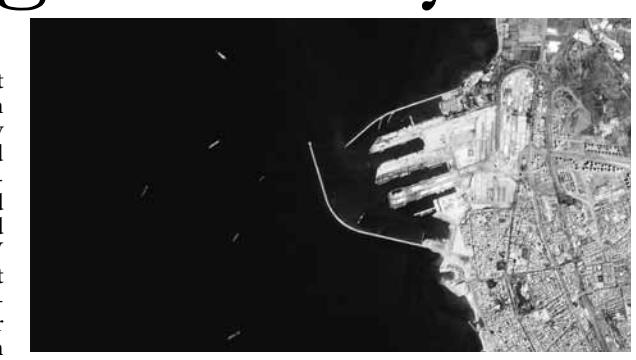
AP ■ DUBAI

A Russian cargo ship that Ukraine alleges holds stolen grain from territory seized by Moscow appears to have reached the Syrian port of Tartus, according to satellite images analysed Thursday by The Associated Press. The arrival of the SV Konstantin marks just the latest shipment of Ukrainian grain — whether legally purchased or allegedly looted — to reach Syria.

Another, the Razoni, recently docked full of legally purchased Ukrainian corn as part of a United Nations-led effort to get the country's food out of the war zone to a hungry world.

The Konstantin's arrival also shows the level Damascus has relied on Russia to keep its embattled President Bashar Assad in power amid his own nation's yearslong war, particularly at this Mediterranean Sea port that hosts Russian warships and has crucial Russian-run grain silos.

The Konstantin travelled from the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea from around July 6, according to ship-tracking data from MarineTraffic.Com analyzed by the AP.



The ship had loaded Ukrainian grain at Sevastopol, said Ihor Ostash, Ukraine's ambassador to Lebanon, during an interview with Espreso TV.

That port city in Crimea has seen Russian forces previously bring grain by truck from occupied territories, Ukrainian officials say.

The Konstantin travelled through the Bosphorus and reached the Turkish city of Izmir on the Aegean Sea.

The ship then headed into the Mediterranean along the coast of Cyprus before switching off its Automatic Identification System tracker on Sunday.

Ships are supposed to keep their AIS trackers on, but vessels wanting to hide their movements often turn theirs off.

Those heading to Syrian ports routinely do so.

Satellite images from Planet Labs PBC analysed by the AP show the Konstantin off the coast of Tartus on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The vessel's length, width and appearance resembles previous Planet Labs images of the ship taken at a time corresponding to when its AIS tracker was still on north of Cyprus.

Yoruk Isik, a non-resident scholar at the Washington-based Middle East Institute who monitors shipping through the Bosphorus, has been tracking the Konstantin. He and other open-source intelligence analysts first said they believed the vessel to be off Tartus as well, based on the satellite photos.

Officials at Tartus port could not be reached for comment. Syria's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment.

Syria remains sanctioned by the West over killing and abuses of civilians during the civil war, though food supplies have been exempted by the West. Already in May, satellite images showed the Russian-flagged Matros Pozynich at dockside in Latakia, Syria.

Ukraine said the ship had 27,000 tonnes of grain Russia stolen from it and initially tried to sell to Egypt, which refused to take the cargo.

Tartus, on the Mediterranean Sea, lies about 320 kilometers northwest of Syria's capital, Damascus. Russia has a Soviet-era naval base there, the only such facility outside the former Soviet Union.

In 2017, Moscow struck a deal with Assad's government to extend its lease on Tartus for 49 years. The agreement allows Russia to keep up to 11 warships there, including nuclear-powered ones. Satellite photos this week showed at least two Russian submarines and other warships at the port.

Russian firm Stroytransgaz, owned by billionaire oligarch Gennady Timchenko through his investment firm Volga Group, runs the port. Timchenko is a billionaire close to Russian President Vladimir Putin sanctioned by the European Union and the U.S. Stroytransgaz did not respond to a request for comment.

Russia deploys hypersonic missiles to its Baltic exclave

AP ■ MOSCOW

The Russian military said Thursday that it has deployed warplanes armed with state-of-the-art hypersonic missiles to the country's Kaliningrad region, a move that comes amid soaring tensions with the West over Moscow's action in Ukraine.

Russia's Defense Ministry said three MiG-31 fighters with Kinzhal hypersonic missiles arrived at the Chkalovsk airbase in the Baltic Sea enclave as part of "additional measures of strategic deterrence."

The ministry said the warplanes will be put on round-the-clock alert.

A video released by the Defense Ministry showed the fighters arriving at the base but not carrying the missiles, which were apparently delivered separately.

The deployment of Kinzhal missiles to Kaliningrad as Russia's campaign in Ukraine nears the sixth-month mark appeared intended to showcase the Russian military's capability to threaten NATO assets.

The region borders NATO members Poland and Lithuania.

Moscow has strongly criticised the deliveries of Western weapons to Ukraine, accusing the U.S. And its allies of fuelling the conflict.

The Russian military says the Kinzhal has a range of up to 2,000 kilometers and flies at 10 times the speed of sound, making it hard to intercept.

Russia has used the weapon to strike several targets in Ukraine.

Kaliningrad's location has put it in the forefront of Moscow's efforts to counter what it described as NATO's hostile policies.

The Kremlin has methodically bolstered its military forces there, arming them with state-of-the-art weapons, including precision-guided Iskander missiles and an array of air defense systems.

Russian spacewalk cut short by bad battery

AP ■ CAPE CANAVERAL (US)

A Russian spacewalker had to rush back inside the International Space Station on Wednesday when the battery voltage in his spacesuit suddenly dropped.

Russian Mission Control ordered Oleg Artemyev, the station commander, to quickly return to the airlock so he could hook his suit to station power. The hatch remained open as his spacewalking partner, Denis Matveev, tidied up outside.

NASA said neither man was ever in any danger. Matveev, in fact, remained outside for another hour or so, before he, too, was ordered to wrap it up. Although Matveev's suit was fine, Russian Mission Control cut the spacewalk short since flight rules insist on the buddy system.

The cosmonauts managed to install cameras on the European Space Agency's new robot arm before the trouble cropped up, barely two hours into a planned 6 1/2-hour spacewalk.

"You know, the start was so excellent," Matveev said as he made his way back inside, with some of the robot arm installation work left undone.

The 36-foot (11-meter) robot arm arrived at the space station last summer aboard a Russian lab.

UJVNL
UJVN Limited
H.O.: "UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135- 2763808 & Fax- 0135- 2763508
CIN No U40101UR2001SGC025866
Website: www.ujvnl.com

पत्रांक: 536 Tender Notice दिनांक: 18.08.2022

Office of the (Executive Engineer, Generation, Dharasu Power House, Chinyalisaur), invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below :

Tender No.09/EE (GEN)/MB-II/2022-23

Name of work/supply/services: Maintenance of Garden and operation of canteen at Dharasu power house for the year 2022-23.

Estimated cost : Rs. 929644/-

Date of availability of bid document on website : 21.08.2022

Last date for submission of tender : 16.09.2022 upto 15:30 Hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvnl.com"

Executive Engineer (Generation)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Body Meeting of Manav Kalyan Credit Co-Operative Society Limited will be held on 11th September, 2022 on 2.30 P.M. at Daara Regency, A-47, Guru Nanak Pura, Vikas Marg, Near Nirman Vihar Metro Station, Delhi-110092 to transact the following business: -

1. For consideration of the audited statement of accounts for financial year 2021-22.
2. For consideration of the audit report and annual report for financial year 2021-22.
3. For consideration of audit compliance report for financial year 2021-22.
4. For approval of the annual budget.
5. For approval of the long-term perspective plan and the annual operational plan
6. Any other matter with the permission of the chair.

For Manav Kalyan Credit Co-Operative Society Ltd.
Place: Delhi, (President/ Chairman)
Date: 16th August, 2022

BOMBAY MERCANTILE CO-OPERATIVE BANK LIMITED
(Estd:1939) (Multi State Scheduled Bank)
Regd Head Office : Zain G. Rangoonwala Building, 78, Mohammed Ali Road, Mumbai - 400 003.
Tel : 022-23425961/62/63/64, 23449586,62552800 For Account Balance Enquiry Missed Call : 9512004406

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Notice is hereby given that the 85th Annual General Meeting of the Members [Shareholders] of **BOMBAY MERCANTILE CO-OPERATIVE BANK LIMITED will be held on Friday, September 02, 2022 at 10.30 a.m. at HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA, Baitul Hujjaj [Haj House], 2nd Floor, 7 - A, M.R.A. Marg [Palton Road], Mumbai – 400 001** to transact the following business :

1. To confirm the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 24th September, 2021.
2. To consider and adopt the Report of the Board of Directors and the Audited Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Account and Statutory Auditor's Report for the year ended as on 31st March, 2022.
3. To appropriate Net Profit as recommended by the Board of Directors for the year ended 31st March, 2022.
4. To approve the appointment of Auditors for the Bank for the year 2022-2023 and fix their remuneration.
5. To consider the Annual Budget of the Bank for the year 2022-2023.
6. To approve Bye-Law Nos.3[5](a), 3[5](b), 44[4] & delete Bye-Law 3[8](t) as per Annexure attached.
7. To grant Leave of Absence to the Members of the Bank who have not attended this 85th Annual General Meeting.
8. Any other issue / business with the permission of the Chair.

By Order of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
DR. M. SHAH ALAM KHAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Date : August 18, 2022
Place: Mumbai.

Note:
- If there is no quorum within half an hour after the appointed time, the Meeting shall stand adjourned to 11.00 a.m. on the same day and the Agenda of the Original Meeting shall be transacted at the said venue, irrespective of the rule of quorum, in terms of Bye-Law No.39.
- Any Member desiring information pertaining to Accounts, is requested to write to the Bank, at-least six days in advance of the date of the Annual General Meeting.
- Copies of the Annual Report are available at the Head Office and the Branches of the Bank.

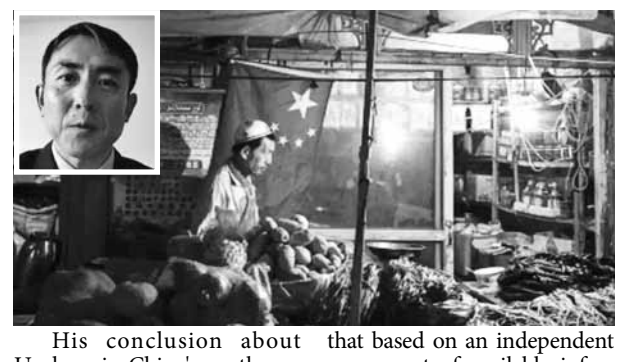
UN investigator: Contemporary slavery extensive around globe

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

A UN investigator says contemporary forms of slavery are widely practiced around the world, including forced labor for China's Uyghur minority, bonded labour for the lowest caste Dalits in South Asia, and domestic servitude in Gulf countries, Brazil and Colombia.

Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur Tomoya Obokat adds that traditional enslavement, especially of minorities, is found in Mauritania, Mali and Niger in Africa's Sahel region.

He said in a report to the UN General Assembly circulated Wednesday that child labour — another contemporary form of slavery — exists in all regions of the world, including its worst forms. "In Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, the Americas and Europe, between 4 and 6 percent of children are said to be in child labour, and the percentage is much higher in Africa (21.6 per cent), with the highest rate in sub-Saharan Africa (23.9 per cent)," he said.



His conclusion about Uyghurs in China's northwestern province of Xinjiang follows a US ban imposed last December on imports from the region unless businesses can prove items are made without forced labour. There have been many claims China engages in systemic and widespread abuse of ethnic and religious minorities in its western region.

China's Foreign Ministry sharply criticized that finding by Okobata, who is a Japanese scholar and professor of international law and human rights at Keele University in England.

In the report, Okobata said that based on an independent assessment of available information from many sources, including victims and government accounts, he "regards it as reasonable to conclude that forced labor among Uyghur, Kazakh and other ethnic minorities in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing has been occurring in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China."

He cited two systems used by China — the detention of minorities for vocational skills education and training followed by work placement, and a poverty alleviation through labour program in which surplus rural labourers are transferred to other work. He said labour transfer is also practiced in Tibet where farmers, herders and other rural workers are transferred into low-skilled and low-paid employment.

While these programs may create jobs and income as the government claims, Obokata said in many cases the work is involuntary and workers are subject to excessive surveillance, abusive living and working conditions, restricted movements, threats, physical or sexual violence, and other inhuman or degrading treatment.

"Some instances may amount to enslavement as a crime against humanity, meriting a further independent analysis," he said. China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin accused Obokata of choosing "to believe in lies and disinformation about Xinjiang spread by the US and some other Western countries and anti-China forces."

He also accused Obokata of abusing his authority as a special investigator to "smear and denigrate China and serve as a political tool for anti-China forces."

He accused unnamed "forces" of fabricating disinformation on forced labour "to undermine Xinjiang's prosperity and stability and contain China's development and revitalization."'China strongly condemns this," Wang said. "There has never been `forced labor' in Xinjiang."

He said China protects the rights and interests of workers from all ethnic groups to seek employment, participate in economic and social life, "and to share the dividends of socioeconomic progress."

Obokata said minorities are also subjected to forced labour in Latin America, pointing to rural areas of Brazil, including the Amazon, where "slavery is intricately linked with economic activities that are causing environmental devastation, including illegal logging and mining."

China, Japan officials meet amid Taiwan tensions

AP ■ BEIJING

Chinese and Japanese officials have met in northern China amid renewed tensions over Beijing's military threats against Taiwan and after Tokyo protested China's firing of missiles into Japan's exclusive economic zone during recent military drills.

The meeting Wednesday between senior foreign affairs advisor Yang Jiechi and the head of Japan's National Security Secretariat, Akiba Takeo, followed China's cancellation of a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries after Japan signed on to a statement from the Group of Seven industrialized countries criticizing China's threatening war games surrounding Taiwan earlier this month.

Japan issued diplomatic protests over China's firing of missiles into its exclusive economic zone during the drills, which saw Chinese warplanes and navy ships cross the middle zone of the Taiwan Strait that has long been a buffer between the sides.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. The former Japanese colony has been under Chinese military threat since Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government fled to the island in 1949 as Mao Zedong's Communist Party seized control of the Chinese mainland.

In his comments to Takeo, Yang said "the Taiwan question bears on the political foundation of China-Japan relations and the basic trust and good faith between the two countries," China's official Xinhua News Agency reported Thursday.

"Japan should ... Shape up a right perception of China, pursue a positive, pragmatic and rational China policy, and uphold the right direction of peaceful development," Xinhua quoted Yang as saying.

China's nearly two weeks of military exercises surrounding Taiwan followed US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island in defiance of Beijing's threats.

China announced further drills in response to the visit by another Congressional delegation this week, but has not said when or where they will take place.

The exercises appear to have had little impact among Taiwan's more than 23 million people, who overwhelmingly favor the status quo of de facto independence while maintaining robust economic ties with China.

Takeo met earlier this month with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Washington, during which they "reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and reinforced their resolve to stand united against Russia's unjust and unprovoked war on Ukraine and united in support of the Ukrainian people," the State Department said in a news release.

China's threats against Taiwan have been likened to Russia's invasion of its neighbor. Shortly before Moscow dispatched troops in February, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping met in Beijing, where they declared their relationship had "no limits" and Russia supported China's claim to Taiwan.

Many Chinese also resent Japan over its brutal invasion and occupation of parts of the country during the 1930s and 1940s, sentiments kept alive by Communist Party propaganda.

In an incident reported widely on social media, a Chinese woman wearing a traditional Japanese kimono dress was recently detained by police in the eastern city of Hangzhou for allegedly creating a disturbance. She was reportedly released without charge after writing an apology.

US to hold trade talks with Taiwan in new show of support

AP ■ BEIJING

The US government plans talks with Taiwan on a wide-ranging trade treaty in a sign of support for the self-ruled island democracy claimed by China's ruling Communist Party as part of its territory.

The announcement on Thursday comes after Beijing held military drills that included firing missiles into the sea to intimidate Taiwan following this month's visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The US Trade Representative's office made no mention of tension with Beijing but said the "formal negotiations" were meant to enhance trade and regulatory cooperation, which would entail closer official interaction.

President Joe Biden's coordinator for the Indo-Pacific region, Kurt Campbell, told reporters last week that trade talks would be part of efforts to "deepen our ties with Taiwan," though he said US policy wasn't changing.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. The island never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the Communist Party says it is obliged to united politically with the mainland, by force if necessary.

The United States has no official relations with Taiwan but maintains extensive ties through its unofficial embassy, the American Institute in Taiwan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's government says official contact with Taiwan such as Pelosi's August 2 one-day visit might embolden the island to try to make its decade-old de facto independence permanent, a step Beijing says would lead to war.

Washington says it takes no position on the status of China and Taiwan but wants their dispute settled peacefully. The US government is obligated by federal law to see that the island has the means to defend itself.

"We will continue to take calm and resolute steps to uphold peace and stability in the face of Beijing's ongoing efforts to undermine it, and to support Taiwan," Campbell said during a conference call last Friday.

A second group of US lawmakers led by Sen. Ed Markey, a Democrat from Massachusetts, arrived on Taiwan on Sunday and met with President Tsai Ing-wen. Beijing announced a second round of military drills following their arrival.

Beijing had no immediate reaction to the trade talks announcement.

The talks also will cover agriculture, labor, the environment, digital technology, the status of state-owned enterprises and "non-market policies," the USTR said.

It gave no indication which officials would be involved but said talks would be held under the auspices of the American Institute and Taiwan's informal embassy, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States.

US-Chinese relations are their lowest level in decades amid disputes about security, technology, Beijing's treatment of Muslim minorities and its crackdown in Hong Kong.

They are locked in a 3-year-old tariff war over disputes in many of the areas mentioned in Thursday's announcement. They include China's support for government companies that dominate many of its industries and complaints Beijing steals foreign technology and hampers foreign competitors in an array of fields in violation of its market-opening commitments.

Then-President Donald Trump raised tariffs on Chinese goods in 2019 in response to complaints its technology development tactics violate its free-trade commitments and threaten US industrial leadership. President Joe Biden has left most of those tariff hikes in place.

Taiwan, with 24 million people, is the ninth-largest US trading partner and the 10th-largest US export market, according to the USTR. The State Department describes it as a "key US partner in the Indo-Pacific."

Taiwan is the main global source of processor chips for smartphones, medical devices, autos and home appliances, as well as industrial components used by factories in China and other Asian countries.

Hong Kong political activists plead guilty amid crackdown

AP ■ HONG KONG

Authorities in Hong Kong say 29 out of 47 pro-democracy activists charged with "conspiracy to commit subversion" under a tough National Security Law entered guilty pleas on Thursday, as the Beijing government seeks to further silence opposition voices in the regional financial hub.

Thursday's court proceedings came amid a sweeping campaign against those speaking out against demands for absolute loyalty to China's ruling Communist Party.

The 47 democracy activists, aged 23 to 64, were charged with conspiracy to commit subversion under the Beijing-imposed National Security Law and detained last year over their involvement in an unofficial primary election in 2020 that authorities said was a plot to paralyse Hong Kong's government. The primary showed strong support for candidates willing to challenge the Beijing-backed local government.

Among those making guilty pleas were well-known political activists including Joshua Wong and Benny Tai, Hong Kong media said.

Media reporting restrictions were lifted for the cases, which will start next month at Hong Kong's high court.

Hong Kong was handed over from British to Chinese rule in 1997 with a pledge that it would retain its own legal, economic and social systems for 50 years.

Despite the steady deterioration of those special rights promised to the territory under a "one country, two systems" framework, it retains the system of British common law, independent from Communist Party dictates that determine legal outcomes on the mainland.

During Thursday's hearing, Wong, who remains in detention, said the primary election allowed Hong Kongers to express their political will.

"Our vote is our voice, being heard in the global community," Wong said.

Media to ask judge to release Trump search warrant affidavit

AP ■ WEST PALM BEACH (US)

Attorneys for many of the nation's largest media companies will try to persuade a federal magistrate judge on Thursday afternoon to make public the affidavit supporting the warrant that allowed FBI agents to search former President Donald Trump's Florida estate last week.

The Associated Press, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, the broadcast TV networks, CNN and others want US Magistrate Judge Bruce E. Reinhart to release the affidavit over the objection of the US Justice Department, which says its investigation of Trump's handling of "highly classified material" would be compromised.

The media companies argue the affidavit's release would help the public determine if the Justice Department had legitimate reasons for the search or if it was part of a Biden administration vendetta against Trump, as the former president and his backers contend.

Trump, in a Truth Social post last week, called for the release of the unredacted affidavit in the interest of transparency.

"The matter is one of utmost public interest, involving the actions of current and former government officials," wrote attorney Carol Jean LoCiero, who is representing the Times and others.

"President Trump decried the the search as an assault that could only take place in Third World Countries,' asserted agents even broke into my safe,' and otherwise challenged the validity of the search."

Justice Department attorneys argued in a court filing that its investigation into Trump's handling of "highly classified material" is ongoing and that the document contains sensitive information about witnesses.

The filing by Juan Antonio Gonzalez, the U.S. Attorney in Miami, and Jay Bratt, a top Justice Department national security official, says making the affidavit public would "cause significant and irreparable damage to this ongoing criminal investigation."

"If disclosed, the affidavit would serve as a roadmap to the government's ongoing investigation, providing specific details about its direction and likely course, in a manner that is highly likely to compromise future investigative steps," they wrote.

As of Wednesday afternoon, Trump's attorneys had not indicated on the court's docket that they plan to take part in the hearing.

FBI agents searched Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate on August 8, removing 11 sets of classified documents, with some not only marked top secret but also "sensitive compartmented information," according to a receipt of what was taken that was released on Friday.

That is a special category meant to protect the nation's most important secrets that if revealed publicly could cause "exceptionally grave" damage to US interests.

The court records did not provide specific details about information the documents might contain.

Mali accuses France of colluding with Islamic extremists

AP ■ BAMAKO (MALI)

Mali's foreign minister is accusing France of having colluded with the same Islamic extremists that it spent nearly a decade fighting until its troops departed earlier this week, an allegation sharply denied by the French government.

The inflammatory letter sent to the president of the UN Security Council is the latest effort to undermine support for France, Mali's former coloniser, at a time when some fear the French military departure could pave the way for militants to intensify their attacks.

The last French troops from Operation Barkhane left a Mali on Monday after relations sharply deteriorated with the Malian junta leader who seized power two years ago.

"The government of Mali has several pieces of evidence that these flagrant violations of Malian airspace have been used by France to gather intelligence for terrorist groups operating in the Sahel and to drop arms and ammunition to them," Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop wrote in his letter to the UN.

Mali's government asked the UN to "work to ensure that the French Republic immediately ceases its acts of aggression against Mali."

The French Embassy in Mali vigorously denied the allegations in a tweet posted on Wednesday.

"France has obviously never supported, directly or indirectly, these terrorist groups, which remain its designated enemies around the planet," the embassy tweeted.

The French military declined to comment on the Malian foreign minister's letter, calling it "a diplomatic and political issue."

In 2013, France led a military operation to oust Islamic extremists from the major towns across northern Mali where the militants had seized power and begun imposing harsh penalties on civilians who violated their strict interpretation of Islamic law known as Shariah.

When French troops liberated the northern towns, they were welcomed by many Malians waving hand-sewn French flags.

The extremists, though, regrouped in surrounding desert areas and continued carrying out attacks against the Malian military and UN peacekeepers trying to stabilise the country.

The extremists' violence has increased and spread further south near the capital city. Frustration with the attacks helped fuel support for the coup leader who overthrew Mali's democratically elected president two years ago.

Rushdie attacker 'surprised' the author survived

AP ■ MAYVILLE (US)

The man charged with stabbing Salman Rushdie on a lecture stage in western New York said in an interview that he was surprised to learn the accomplished author had survived the attack.

Speaking to the New York Post from jail, Hadi Matar said he decided to see Rushdie at the Chautauqua Institution after he saw a tweet last winter about the writer's planned appearance.

"I don't like the person. I don't think he's a very good person," Matar told the newspaper. "He's someone who attacked Islam. He attacked their beliefs, the belief systems."

Matar, 24, said he considered late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini "a great person" but wouldn't say whether he was following a fatwa, or edict, issued by Khomeini in Iran in 1989 that called for Rushdie's death after the author published "The Satanic Verses."

Iran has denied involvement in the attack. Matar, who lives in Fairview, New Jersey, said he hadn't had any contact with Iran's Revolutionary Guard. He told the Post he had only read "a couple pages" of "The Satanic Verses."

Rushdie, 75, suffered a damaged liver and severed nerves in an arm and an eye, according to his agent, in the attack Friday. His agent, Andrew Wylie, said his condition has improved and he is on the road to recovery.

Matar, who is charged with attempted murder and assault, told the Post he took a bus to Buffalo the day before the attack and then took a Lyft to Chautauqua, about 40 miles (64 kilometers) away.

He bought a pass to the Chautauqua Institution grounds and then slept in the grass the night before Rushdie's planned talk.

Matar was born in the US but holds dual citizenship in Lebanon, where his parents were born. His mother has told reporters in interviews that Matar came back changed from a visit to see his father in Lebanon in 2018. After that, he became moody and withdrew from his family, she said.

UK PM race: Truss holds lead but voters still prefer Boris

PTI ■ LONDON

A new survey on Thursday confirmed a 32-point lead of Foreign Secretary Liz Truss over former Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the Conservative Party leadership race, but also showed a strong preference among Tory members for outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The YouGov survey for 'Sky News' suggests 66 per cent of members are in favour of voting for Truss and 34 per cent back the British Indian ex-minister, once those Tory members who do not know or will not vote are excluded.

The survey also shows a majority in favour of ousted leader Boris Johnson, with 55 per cent saying that Tory MPs were wrong to effectively force him to resign and 40 per cent saying they were right.

"The poll makes clear that the incumbent Prime Minister is still held in high affection among Tory members and any successor could be unfavourably compared to him by Tory members," Sky News said in its poll analysis.

If Johnson was still in the contest alongside Sunak and Truss, 46 per cent say they would vote for the incumbent and only 24 per cent for Truss and 23 per cent for Sunak.

Similarly, 44 per cent say that Johnson would make the best Prime Minister, 24 per cent favouring Truss and 23 per cent for Sunak.

Almost double the number of Tory members feel Johnson is the one who could beat Opposition Labour Leader Keir Starmer in a general election.

The latest survey, covering 1,089 Conservative Party members who hold a vote in the leadership election, was conducted between August 12 and 17.

It comes on the back of a separate Conservative Home survey on Wednesday, which also gave Truss a 32-point lead in the race.

The YouGov survey shows the contest has tightened only very slightly since its last similar poll of members over two weeks ago, when Truss had a 38-point lead, indicating that the debates and hustings are not injecting much-needed momentum for the Sunak camp.

'Death toll in Afghan capital mosque bombing now 21'

AP ■ KABUL

A bombing at a mosque in the Afghan capital of Kabul during evening prayers killed at least 21 people, including a prominent cleric, and wounded at least 33, eyewitnesses and police said Thursday.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack Wednesday night, the latest to strike the country in the year since the Taliban seized power. Several children were reported to be among the wounded.

The Islamic State group's local affiliate has stepped up attacks targeting the Taliban and civilians since the former insurgents' takeover last August as US and NATO troops were in the final stages of their withdrawal from the country. Last week, the IS claimed responsibility for killing a prominent Taliban cleric at his religious center in Kabul.

Khalid Zadran, the spokesman for Kabul's police chief, gave the figures to The Associated Press for the bombing at the Sunni mosque.

According to the eyewitness, a resident of the city's Kher Khanna neighborhood where the Siddiquiya Mosque was targeted, the explosion was carried out by a suicide bomber. The slain cleric was Mullah Amir Mohammad Kabuli, the eyewitness said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid also condemned the explosion and vowed that the "perpetrators of such crimes will soon be brought to justice and will be punished."

There were fears the casualty numbers could rise further. On Thursday morning, one witness to the blast who gave his name as Qyaamuddin told the AP he believed as many as 25 people may have been killed in the blast.

Telecom Min asks telcos to gear up for 5G launch

New Delhi: Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday asked telecom service providers to gear up for 5G launch, post the issuance of spectrum allocation letters.

In a first, the Department of Telecom (DoT) has issued spectrum assignment letters on the same day the successful bidders of radio waves made upfront payments.

"5G Update:Spectrum assignment letter issued. Requesting TSPs to prepare for 5G launch," Vaishnaw wrote on a social media platform.

The DoT has received payment of around ₹17,876 crore from service providers— Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio, Adani Data Networks and Vodafone Idea for spectrum they won in a recent auction.

The country's biggest ever auction of telecom spectrum received a record ₹1.5 lakh crore worth of bids, with Mukesh Ambani's Jio cornering nearly half of all the airwaves sold with a ₹87,946.93 crore bid. Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said that his company Bharti Airtel received a spectrum allocation letter within a few hours of making upfront payment to the DoT.

"In my over 30 years of first-hand experience with DoT, this is a first ! Business as it should be. Leadership at work-Right at the top and at the helm of telecom. What a Change ! Change that can transform this nation – power its dreams to be a developed nation," Mittal said.

Airtel acquired 19,867.8 MHz spectrum by securing a pan-India footprint of 3.5 GHz and 26 GHz bands and selected purchase of radio waves in low and mid-band spectrum for ₹43,039.63 crore.

"Airtel paid ₹8,312.4 crore towards spectrum dues and was provided the allocation letter for the designated frequency bands within hours. E band allocation was given along with spectrum as promised. No Fuss, No Follow Up, No running around the corridors and No tall claims. This is ease of doing business at work in its full glory," Mittal said.

Airtel has said that it will launch 5G service this month.

While all telecom operators have opted to make payments in 20 annual installments, Bharti Airtel paid ₹8,312.4 crore equivalent to four annual installments.

Reliance Jio has made payments of ₹7,864.78 crore, Vodafone Idea ₹1,679.98 crore and Adani Data Networks ₹18.94 crore.

Richest Indian Gautam Adani's group has placed bids worth ₹211.86 crore for 400 MHz in a band that is not used for offering public telephony services. ***PTI***

Airtel gets spectrum allocation letter, Mittal hails ease of doing business

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel received spectrum allocation letter within few hours of making upfront payment to the Department of Telecom, Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said on Thursday.

This is the first time ever that the Department of Telecom (DoT) has handed out a spectrum allocation letter on the day of making upfront payment.

"Airtel paid ₹8,312.4 crore towards spectrum dues and was provided the allocation letter for the designated frequency bands within hours.

E band allocation was given along with spectrum as promised. ***PTI***

Sensex maintains momentum for fifth day; Nifty nears 18k

Mumbai: Equity benchmark Sensex ticked higher for the fifth straight session on Thursday, helped by fag-end buying in select blue-chip stocks amid a largely negative trend in global markets.

A depreciating rupee and rising crude prices in the international market capped the gains in domestic equities, traders said.

In a largely choppy session, the 30-share BSE index ended 37.87 points or 0.06 per cent higher at 60,298 after starting the trade on a weak note. During the day, it hit a high of 60,341.41 and a low of 59,946.44.

Logging its eighth consecutive gain, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 12.25 points or 0.07 per cent to settle at 17,956.50. "Nifty on August 18 extended its winning streak for the eighth day, the longest in 20 months. Nifty opened lower and swung between gains and losses for the bulk of the session before closing near day's high," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

Kotak Mahindra Bank was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 3.45 per cent, followed by Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India and ITC.

On the other hand, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Wipro, Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Axis Bank and Nestle were among the laggards.

"After opening on a negative note, the market showed high volatility in the early to mid part of the session. Intraday weakness of mid-part was reversed, and the market shifted into an upside bounce in the second half of the day. ***PTI***

Sebi comes out with guidelines for overseas investment by AIFs, VCFs

New Delhi: Sebi on Thursday came out with new guidelines for Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) and Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) for making investment abroad, under which overseas investee firms won't need to have an Indian connection.

Under the rules, AIFs can invest in securities of companies incorporated outside India. Besides, VCFs are allowed to make investments in off-shore venture capital undertaking, subject to certain conditions.

One of the conditions was that such overseas investments were allowed only in those companies which had an Indian connection. Like, a company has a front office overseas, while having its back office operations in India.

"The requirement of the overseas investee company to have an Indian connection... Has been done away with," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

As per the fresh guidelines, AIFs or VCFs will be allowed to invest in an overseas investee company, which is incorporated in a country whose securities market regulator is a signatory to the International Organization of Securities Commission's (IOSCO) Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding or a signatory to the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding with Sebi.

Besides, AIFs or VCFs will not invest in an overseas investee company, which is incorporated in a country identified by Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as a jurisdiction having a strategic anti-money laundering or combating the financing of terrorism deficiencies to which counter measures apply.

Also, such entities have been prohibited from making an investment in a country that has not made sufficient progress in addressing the deficiencies or has not committed to an action plan developed with FATF to address such deficiencies.

AIFs or VCFs will have to file an application before Sebi for allocation of overseas investment limit in the format.

"If an AIF/VCF liquidates investment made in an overseas investee company previously, the sale proceeds received from such liquidation, to the extent of investment made in the said overseas investee company, shall be available to all AIFs/VCFs for reinvestment," the regulator said.

Further, AIFs or VCFs will sell the investment in overseas investee companies only to the entities eligible to make overseas investments.

AIFs or VCFs will have to furnish the divestment details of the overseas investments to the capital markets regulator in a specified format within three working days for updating the overall limit available for overseas investment by these entities. Also, all the overseas investments sold/divested by them till date, will also be reported to Sebi within 30 days. ***PTI***

Gold falls ₹32; silver declines ₹348

New Delhi: Gold in the national capital on Thursday fell ₹32 to ₹52,224 per 10 grams, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had finished at ₹52,256 per 10 grams.

Silver also declined ₹348 to ₹57,298 per kg from ₹57,646 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,763 per ounce while silver was trading flat at USD 19.67 per ounce.

"Gold prices have kept range bound trading in the past few days on mixed global cues over the pace of US Federal Reserve's rate hike and inflation worries," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities. ***PTI***

Rupee falls 19 paise to close at 79.64 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee depreciated 19 paise to close at 79.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, following the strength of the American currency in the overseas market.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 79.60 and moved in a range of 79.60 to 79.71 during the day. It finally ended at 79.64 against the greenback, down 19 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee gained 29 paise to settle at 79.45 against the dollar.

Forex traders said the US dollar index witnessed an upturn after the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes showed that though things are slowing in the US, the Fed is not done with the rate hikes.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.10 per cent to 106.68.

The US central bank policymakers committed to raising rates as high as necessary to tame inflation, said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Somaiya further added that "we expect the USD/INR (Spot) to trade sideways and quote in the range of 79.20 and 79.80".

Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 1.58 per cent to USD 95.13 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 37.87 points or 0.06 per cent higher at 60,298.00, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 12.25 points or 0.07 per cent to 17,956.50.

Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital market on Wednesday as they purchased shares worth ₹2,347.22 crore, as per exchange data. ***PTI***

Crude oil futures gain on spot demand

New Delhi: Crude oil prices on Thursday rose by Rs 96 to Rs 7,090 per barrel in futures trade as participants widened positions on a firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for August delivery traded higher by Rs 96 or 1.37 per cent at Rs 7,090 per barrel in 5,070 lots.

Analysts said raising of bets by participants kept crude oil prices higher in futures trade.

Globally, West Texas Intermediate crude oil was up by 1.43 per cent at USD 89.37 per barrel, and Brent crude traded 1.71 per cent higher at USD 95.25 per barrel in New York. ***PTI***

GST investigation wing asks officers to refrain from summoning CMD/CEOs

New Delhi: The GST investigation authority has asked field offices not to exercise the power to arrest in a mechanical manner and also refrain from summoning senior management officials like CMDs and CEOs.

The investigation authority under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has issued guidelines to field officers on issuing summons and provision of arrest and bail under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law.

It said that as arrest impinges on the personal liberty of an individual, such a measure should be based on credible material.

"The arrest should not be made in routine and mechanical manner," it said.

The guidelines also provided a checklist for the officers wanting to arrest an alleged GST offender. The list includes questions like whether the alleged offender is likely to tamper with evidence or intimidate witnesses, and if the person is mastermind of the offence committed.

The guidelines on arrest take in account the Supreme Court judgement wherein it was observed that "merely because an arrest can be made because it is lawful does not mandate that arrest must be made".

The apex court had further said that a distinction must be made between the existence of the power to arrest and the justification for exercising it.

The guidelines said that the relevant factors before deciding to arrest a person, apart from fulfilment of the legal requirements, must be that the need to ensure proper investigation and prevent the possibility of tampering with evidence or intimidating or influencing witnesses exists.

About the instructions with regard to summons, the guidelines said that senior management officials such as CMD/MD/CEO/CFO/similar officers of any company or a PSU (Public Sector Unit) should not generally be issued summons in the first instance.

"They should be summoned when there are clear indications in the investigation of their involvement in the decision making process which led to loss of revenue," it said.

Issuing the guidelines, the GST investigation authority said it has been brought to the notice of the CBIC that field formations are issuing summons to top officials of companies in a routine manner to call for material evidence/documents.

Besides, summons have also been issued to call for statutory records like GSTR-3B, GSTR-1, which are available online on the GST portal. ***PTI***

Silver futures rise on spot demand

New Delhi: Silver prices on Thursday increased by ₹13 to ₹56,928 per kilogram in futures trade as participants widened their bets on a firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, silver contracts for September delivery gained ₹13 or 0.02 per cent to ₹56,928 per kg in 16,710 lots.

Analysts said the rise in silver prices was mainly due to fresh positions built up by participants on a positive domestic trend.

Globally, silver was trading 0.18 per cent lower at USD 19.82 per ounce in New York. ***PTI***

Tata Power Renewable raises ₹2K cr by issuing 8.36 cr shares to BlackRock-backed firm

New Delhi: Tata Power arm Tata Power Renewable Energy on Thursday said it raised around Rs 2,000 crore by issuing 8.36 crore equity shares to BlackRock-backed GreenForest New Energies Bidco, according to a regulatory filing.

Earlier in April this year, BlackRock Real Assets-led consortium, including Mubadala Investment Company, had inked a binding agreement with Tata Power to invest Rs 4,000 crore by way of equity/compulsorily convertible instruments for a 10.53 per cent stake in Tata Power Renewables Energy Ltd, translating to a base equity valuation of Rs 34,000 crore.

The final shareholding will range from 9.76 per cent to 11.43 per cent on final conversion, it had said in April this year.

"The board of directors of Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company, today approved the allotment of 8,36,05,049 equity shares of Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd of the face value of Rs 10 each at a price of Rs 239.22 per equity share (including premium of Rs 229.22) aggregating to Rs 1999,99,99,822 on a preferential basis to GreenForest New Energies Bidco Ltd, a company incorporated under the laws of England and Wales," a BSE filing stated.

This (issuance of shares) completes Tranche 1 of the transaction. Tranche 2 infusion of Rs 2,000 crore will be concluded in accordance with the terms of the agreements, it informed.

The proposed investment is expected to fund Tata Power Renewables' aggressive growth plans. Over the next five years, Tata Power Renewables aims to achieve a portfolio of over 20 GW of renewables assets and a market leading position in the rooftop and electric vehicle charging space across India, Tata Power had said in April. ***PTI***

Govt extends deadline for PLI applications for specialty steel for 5th time

New Delhi: The Government has for the fifth time extended the deadline to submit applications under the production-linked incentive scheme for specialty steel till September 15.

The previous deadline to submit applications under the production-linked incentive scheme was July 31.

Initially, March 29 was the last date for manufacturers to apply for the benefits under the PLI (Production-Linked Incentive) scheme for speciality steel.

It was later extended till April 30, and again to May 31, 2022. It was further extended till June 30 and July 31.

The Government had last year approved a ₹6,322-crore PLI scheme to boost the production of speciality steel in the country.

In a statement, the steel ministry said that the last date for receipt of applications under the PLI Scheme for Specialty Steel through the online application window has been extended up to September 15.

"Criteria for participation, eligibility and other parameters have been notified on July 29, and the same are available on the portal. Interested companies are requested to first register and then apply on the portal well before the deadline," the statement said. ***PTI***

Oil at six-month low: Petrol at breakeven, losses continue on diesel

New Delhi: International oil prices have hit a six-month low, helping Indian fuel retailers breakeven on petrol but they continue to lose money on diesel - the most used fuel in the country, officials said.

The world's best-known crude benchmark, Brent was trading at USD 94.91 per barrel on Thursday after concerns of a global recession led to it slipping to a six-month low of USD 91.51 on the previous day.

The current rates are a relief to India, which is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs.

The fall in prices has meant that fuel retailers such as Indian Oil Corporation are now breaking even on petrol but there are some losses on diesel, officials with knowledge of the matter said.

State-owned fuel retailers IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have not exercised their right to adjust the retail selling price of petrol and diesel in line with the international costs for four and half months now to help the government manage runaway inflation.

At one point, they were losing Rs 20-25 per litre on diesel and Rs 14-18 a litre on petrol as international oil prices soared. These losses have been trimmed with the fall in oil prices.

"There are no under-recovery (losses) on petrol now. For diesel, it will take some time to reach that level," an official said.

But this is unlikely to translate into an immediate reduction in rates as oil companies will be allowed to recoup losses they had accumulated on selling fuel at below cost in the last five months, another official said.

Under-recovery on diesel is now down to Rs 4-5 a litre.

IOC, BPCL and HPCL are supposed to revise the retail price of petrol and diesel daily in line with cost. But they froze rates for a record 137 days beginning November 4, 2021, just as states like Uttar Pradesh went to polls. ***PTI***

Over 30 pc of Indian employees want to change jobs: PwC survey

New Delhi: Over 30 per cent of Indian employees want to change jobs while 71 per cent feel they are being overlooked for career advancement, said a PwC India report.

Workplaces in India have changed significantly over the past couple of years, with considerable mindset shifts for both employers and employees.

While employers have been more focused on building a resilient workforce strategy, employees on their part are driven by opportunities for fulfilment, creativity, innovation and authenticity, apart from financial rewards, said PwC's India Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2022.

The report is based on the findings of PwC's Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2022. The survey included 2,608 participants from India and 93 per cent of them were full-time employees.

As per the survey, 34 per cent of respondents in India believe they are extremely/very likely to switch to a new employer as compared to 19 per cent globally.

Further, 32 per cent said that they plan to leave the workforce. Millennials are the most likely to seek new employment, with 37 per cent indicating that they are likely to switch employers in the next 12 months. While Gen Z employees are less likely to quit, about a third of them are extremely or very likely to ask for a reduction in work hours.

Chaitali Mukherjee, Partner and Leader, People and Organisation, PwC India, said that the disruptive landscape of social, environmental, economic and geopolitical changes has had profound consequences on organisations and their workforce strategies.

Leaders need to consider these disruptions while drawing up their short- and long-term plans for the organisation as well as their people, Mukherjee said.

"For an organisation to be fit for future, it is imperative that employee perspective dovetails with the employer's perspective to accelerate transformation keeping in mind the workforce dynamics, with well-defined tangible measures to bring about greater alignment between both these aspects," Mukherjee said. ***PTI***

Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund mobilises ₹1,400 crore from flexi-cap scheme NFO

New Delhi: Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund on Thursday said it has collected over ₹1,400 crore from its flexi-cap scheme during the New Fund Offering (NFO) period.

The scheme — Baroda BNP Paribas Flexi Cap Fund — is an open-ended dynamic equity scheme investing across large cap, mid cap, small cap companies.

NFO was opened from July 25 to August 8, the fund house said in a statement.

THE SCHEME IS AN OPEN-ENDED DYNAMIC EQUITY SCHEME INVESTING ACROSS LARGE CAP, MID CAP, SMALL CAP COMPANIES

This is the first new fund offered by Baroda BNP Paribas Asset Management India after the merger of Baroda Asset Management India into BNP Paribas Asset Management India.

"Over 42,000 investors from more than 120 cities across India have posed their faith in our very first NFO after the merger...

"It is a reflection of not just the synergy and the immense potential offered by this combined entity, but also the trust and confidence shown by our investors and partners in our offerings," Suresh Soni, CEO of Baroda BNP Paribas Asset Management India, said .

The fund will re-open for subscriptions by August 24. ***PTI***

Beery Moments in Delhi-NCR

New Delhi: Beer lovers are all set to have a field day as Beer Cafe, one of India's largest beer chains is playing a host to all beer lovers and raise toast to all breweries and bartenders to rejoice in the deliciousness of this popular beverage. To this end, a 21-day long campaign, till August 25, is going on in all 15 Beer Cafe outlets located in Delhi and NCR, said Rahul Singh, Beer Café CEO

Coric crashes Nadal's Cincinnati party

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Borna Coric spoiled the return of Rafael Nadal after a five-year absence from the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters on Wednesday with a 7-6 (11/9), 4-6, 6-3 upset victory in the second round.

The 36-year-old Spaniard, who won the Cincinnati title in 2013, was playing his first match in well over a month after withdrawing with an abdominal injury from his Wimbledon semi-final against Nick Kyrgios.

Nadal began the season with three titles and 20 consecutive wins but will head into the US Open after only one summer hardcourt match.

The night appearance by the 22-time Grand Slam champion was interrupted for an hour and a quarter by rain in the opening set.

Once back, the pair struggled into a first-set tie-breaker which lasted for well over a quarter of an hour.

Nadal missed on two set points of his own and had to save two set points for Coric.

But on the Croat's third opportunity, Nadal handed over the set after an hour and a quarter on court with a costly double-fault.

Nadal then took another 75 minutes to square the match thanks to a break in the seventh game of the second set.

The Spaniard got into trouble as he was broken to trail 2-4 on a forehand wide, opening the door for Coric, who underwent right shoulder surgery last year, to finish off the victory in just under three hours.

"It was very very special," Coric said. "I've been out the last two years injured. I didn't play on the big stage.

"I was looking forward to playing this match. It was all kind of crazy I would say."

Kyrgios, meanwhile, lost his way amid objections to on-court advertising lights, with the Wimbledon runner-up falling 6-3, 6-2 to American Taylor Fritz.

The Australian was in complaint mode from the start, lamenting the distraction of flickering LED lights on an advertising board and demanding a fix.

World number 28 Kyrgios, after a standout summer which included the Washington title this month, could not find his best game in crashing out to 11th seed Fritz after only 50 minutes.

The Aussie had beaten his last five American opponents and stood 15-2 since his surprise Wimbledon final against Novak Djokovic.

Fritz fired a 16th ace to set up match point and won as Kyrgios hit the top of the net with a weak forehand.

"It feels great the way my game is coming together," Fritz said. "This is the kind of match I need to build confidence."

THE 36-YEAR-OLD NADAL, WHO WON THE CINCINNATI TITLE IN 2013, WAS PLAYING HIS FIRST MATCH IN WELL OVER A MONTH AFTER WITHDRAWING WITH AN ABDOMINAL INJURY FROM HIS WIMBLEDON SEMI-FINAL

RADUCANU ROLLS ON

Women's 10th seed Emma Raducanu dispatched her second Grand Slam champion in less than 24 hours, crushing Victoria Azarenka 6-0, 6-2.

The teenaged US Open champion claimed the first 10 games before Azarenka, a two-time Australian Open champion, finally captured a game.

But the young Briton, who ousted Serena Williams the night before with another love set, denied Azarenka on two break points in the final game to win in 63 minutes.

"It was another really difficult match and a tough matchup to play Vika," Raducanu said. "I knew I had to be really on my game. I didn't have much time to turn around.

"I'm obviously pleased with how I played today and how I stayed really focused."

Andy Murray needed a post-match on-court visit from the trainer after losing 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to Cameron Norrie in the second round.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray, twice a Cincinnati champion, needed massage on his right thigh before leaving the court after battling for nearly two and three-quarter hours.

"My consistency maybe was not where I'd want it," Murray said. "But there was some positive tennis in there at times. I definitely had enough opportunities to win."

After cramping at other events in recent weeks, the 35-year-old Scotsman is worried about his physical situation.

"It's a big concern for me. It's something I need to address and find a solution for," Murray said. "You need to try and understand what's going on there."

American Ben Shelton stunned fifth seed Casper Ruud, defeating the Norwegian 6-3, 6-3, while women's world number one Iga Swiatek beat Sloane Stephens 6-4, 7-5.

Venus, Thiem handed US Open wildcards

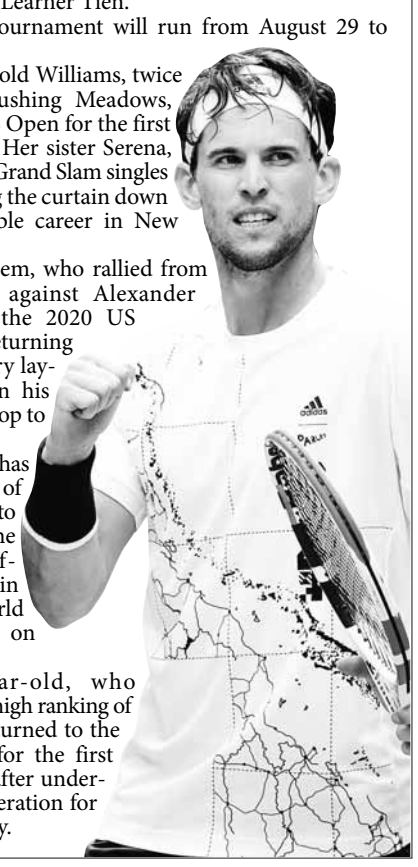
AP ■ NEW YORK

Former US Open champions Venus Williams and Dominic Thiem were handed wildcard entries into this year's final Grand Slam tournament, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) said on Wednesday.

Other Americans, along with Williams, getting Flushing Meadows wildcards were former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, CoCo Vandeweghe, Elizabeth Mandlik, Peyton Stearns and 17-year-old Eleana Yu.

American men gaining direct entry into the main draw via wildcards include Sam Querrey, Emilio Nava, JJ Wolf, Ben Shelton and Learner Tien.

This year's tournament will run from August 29 to September 11.



The 42-year-old Williams, twice champion at Flushing Meadows, returns to the US Open for the first time since 2020. Her sister Serena, the winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, could bring the curtain down on her remarkable career in New York.

Austrian Thiem, who rallied from two sets down against Alexander Zverev to win the 2020 US Open, is also returning from a long injury layoff that has seen his world ranking drop to 228.

Gael Monfils has been ruled out of the US Open due to a foot injury the Frenchman suffered last week in Montreal, the world number 22 said on Wednesday.

The 35-year-old, who reached a career-high ranking of sixth in 2016, returned to the Tour last week for the first time since May after undergoing a small operation for a right foot injury.

World Cup ticket sales approach 2.5 million

AP ■ DOHA

A total of 2.45 million tickets have been sold for this year's World Cup in Qatar after over half a million were snapped up in the latest sales period, organisers announced on Thursday.

World football's governing body FIFA said that 520,532 were sold in the period between July 5 and August 16, with Qatar, the United States, England, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, France, Argentina, Brazil and Germany the leading countries of residence for those purchasing match tickets.

FIFA stated that the most popular games for ticket sales include Brazil's group-phase encounters against Cameroon and Serbia, Portugal's meeting with Uruguay, Costa Rica's clash with Germany, and Australia against Denmark.

In June organisers said there had been "record-breaking" demand for tickets at a time when 1.2 million had been sold.

That figure has now more than doubled, with total ticket sales including those going to partners of FIFA, federations and for hospitality, as well as to the general public.

There are 3,010,679 tickets available altogether, with FIFA saying a "last-minute" sales period will open in the run-up to the start of the tournament at a date still to be confirmed.

More than a million visitors are expected in Qatar — the tiny Gulf state with 2.8 million inhabitants — for the first World Cup in the Middle East.

Vijender Singh knocks out Eliasu Sulley to return to winning ways

PTI ■ RAIPUR

Star Indian boxer Vijender Singh returned to winning ways in style as he notched a knockout win over Ghana's Eliasu Sulley here on Wednesday.

Vijender, who delivered India's first Olympic and men's world championship medals in boxing, showed his class as he dominated Sulley.

Vijender landed the winning blow in the second round of what was to be a six-round contest to leave the reigning national West Africa Boxing Union Champion dazed.

The 36-year-old Beijing Olympics bronze medallist needed only five minutes and seven seconds to dispatch the Ghanian, who till now had a 100 per cent knockout record.

It is Vijender's 13th pro-boxing win. His only loss on the professional circuit had come last year in March when he went down to Russia's Artysh Lopsan.

"It's good to be back. We start our season with a victory. It wasn't easy to fight against (Sulley). Will return to the gym in a week and will fight again in December or January," Vijender said after the win.

Walking out to the "So high" song by the late Sidhu Moose Wala, Vijender oozed confidence from the beginning. He used his long reach and straight jabs to good effect, putting his opponent under pressure, to the delight of the partisan crowd.

He relied on a combination of punches to get the job done and was technically far more superior to Sulley.

In the second round, he gave his opponent a chance to attack as he switched to counter attacking.

However, Sulley had no answer to Vijender's onslaught as he fell to the canvas and got the his first count of the night.

The Bhiwani boxer then landed a series of straight jabs, hooks and upper cuts which took the wind out of Sulley as he clinched the rope. Another hook from behind spelt the end of the contest.

In the other fights of the evening, Asad Asif Khan out-punched Amey Nitin in the feather weight category.

Then Ashish Sharma suffered at the hands of Karthik Satish Kumar in the light weight category.

Gurpreet Singh also notched an unanimous decision win over Saikhom Rebaldo while Faizan Anwar registered a knockout victory over Sachin Nautiyal in the welterweight competition.

We'll continue to oppose tenure guidelines of draft 2017 Sports Code: IOA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Thursday "welcomed" the interim relief granted to it by the Supreme Court, saying it will continue to challenge the "contentious" clauses of the National Sports Code, primarily related to "tenure guidelines" for officials and voting rights" of state bodies.

Ordering status quo, the SC on Thursday said the Delhi High Court-appointed three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) will not take over the affairs of IOA.

The SC took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the IOA, that the IOC (world body) does not recognise any un-elected bodies like the CoA and consequently, India may be barred from taking part in international sports events.

The Apex court has posted IOA's appeal for further hearing on August 22.

"It is a welcome order by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The IOA and the government jointly approached SC. We had the full support of the government. We are happy that the Court took into consideration our submission," IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta told PTI.

According to the draft National Sports Code 2017, the age and tenure restrictions will be applicable to all officials and not just the president, secretary and treasurer of the nation's sports bodies.

While the tenure of an official can be a maximum of three terms, 12 years to be precise, including a cool-off period, the upper limit of age is kept at 70 years.

But as per the current IOA Constitution, an official can hold his or her office for 20 years without any cooling-off period.

The IOA said it will continue to oppose these "contentious" guidelines.

"Our main objection is on tenure guidelines. The Sports Code has already reduced the tenure of a sports administrator from 20 years to 12 years. After two terms of four years each, an official has to go for a cooling off period, we can't accept this," Mehta said.

"The Sports Code also took away the voting rights of state associations and non-Olympic sports federations, which is not fair. We want the Hon'ble Supreme Court to rectify the erroneous guidelines of the Code. We can only appeal, rest depends on the Court. We just hope a favourable order comes on August 22," Mehta added.

The Delhi High Court had on August 16 ordered the setting up of a three-member CoA to manage the affairs of the IOA.

The high court said the "persistent recalcitrance" of the IOA to comply with the Sports Code made it imperative that its affairs be put in the hands of the CoA, comprising former Supreme Court judge Justice Anil R Dave, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi, and former Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup.

Wolves sign Nunes from Sporting CP for $46 mn

AP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Wolves have broken their transfer record to sign Portugal international Matheus Nunes from Sporting Lisbon for an initial fee of 45 million euros (£38 million, $46 million).

Nunes, 23, was one of the stars as Sporting won their first Portuguese title for 19 years in the 2020/21 season and he helped them reach the Champions League last 16 last season.

The Brazil-born midfielder was described by Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola as "one of the best players in the world" after Sporting's run in the Champions League was ended by the English champions in March.

Nunes had been linked with a move to Liverpool, but he has instead joined Wolves' array of Portuguese talent thanks to the club's close connections with super agent Jorge Mendes.

The fee could rise a further five million euros in add-ons.

FTX Crypto Cup: Praggnanandhaa beats Nieman in 3rd round

PTI ■ MIAMI

Young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa beat Hans Nieman 2.5-1.5 in the third round to notch up a third straight win in the FTX Crypto Cup, the American finale of Champions Chess Tour, here on Thursday.

The 17-year-old Indian is on top of the standings with nine match points along with world No.1 Magnus Carlsen, a 2.5-1.5 winner over Levon Aronian.

Praggnanandhaa bounced back brilliantly after losing the first game to secure victories in game two and four after a drawn second game to pick up three points.

Having started his campaign with victory over world No.4 and the top ranked junior Alireza Firouzja, the Indian prodigy beat Anish Giri in the second round.

Ineos billionaire Ratcliffe 'potential buyer' of Man Utd

AP ■ LONDON

British businessman Jim Ratcliffe is "definitely a potential buyer" of Manchester United if the English football giants go on sale, a spokesman for the Ineos petrochemicals billionaire said on Wednesday.

Ineos was responding to reports United's current owners, the US-based Glazer family, are considering selling a minority stake, with the team currently bottom of the Premier League following a woeful start to the season under new manager Erik ten Hag.

The Ineos spokesman told The Times that Ratcliffe, reportedly Britain's richest man, would be prepared to buy such a stake as a prelude to assuming full control at Old Trafford.

"If something like this was possible, we would be interested in talking with a view to long-term ownership," the spokesman added.

The Glazers, who bought United in 2005 in a leveraged buyout that saddled the club with huge debts, have long been accused of taking more out financially than they have invested in terms of transfer funds or in redeveloping the club's crumbling Old Trafford ground.

They further angered United fans by backing the failed European Super League project in April last year which would have led to the club joining a breakaway competition.

United last won the Premier League in 2013 and have not lifted a major trophy since 2017, with last weekend's humiliating 4-0 loss away to Brentford leaving them bottom of England's top flight for the first time in 30 years.

"This is not about the money that has been spent or not spent," the Ineos spokesman also told The Times.

Benfica closing in on UCL group stage

AP ■ PARIS

Benfica took a big stride towards qualifying for the Champions League group stage on Wednesday by defeating Dynamo Kyiv 2-0 in Poland in the first leg of their play-off tie.

Gilberto and Goncalo Ramos scored first-half goals for twice former European champions Benfica in the Polish city of Lodz, where Dynamo are in exile following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Red Star Belgrade, the 1991 European Cup winners, lost 3-2 away to Israeli champions Maccabi Haifa, who are hoping to reach the group stage for the third time after 2002-03 and 2009-10.

Haitian forward Frantzdy Pierrot struck twice for Maccabi as the hosts opened the scoring but then fell behind as Red Star replied with goals from Aleksandar Pesic and Guelor Kanga.

Pierrot equalised shortly after half-time and Tjaronn Chery grabbed the winner on the hour to give Maccabi a narrow advantage heading into next week's return leg in Serbia. Qarabag drew 0-0 with Czech champions Viktoria Plzen in Baku.

BERARDI EXTENDS STAY

Domenico Berardi signed on Wednesday a new contract with Sassuolo that ties the Italy winger to the Serie A club until the end of June 2027.

The 28-year-old, who has played his entire professional career at Sassuolo, has extended a deal which was due to expire in 2024.

INDIA THUMP ZIMBABWE BY 10 WICKETS

PTI ■ HARARE

Pacer Deepak Chahar made an impressive comeback to international cricket with an incisive spell and openers maintained their consistency as India outclassed Zimbabwe by 10 wickets in the opening One Day International, here on Thursday.

Donning the blue jersey for the first time in six months after a long injury lay-off, Chahar hit the straps right away with figures of 3/27, which was instrumental in India restricting Zimbabwe to a sub-par 189 in just 40.3 overs.

With very little scoreboard pressure, it was a walk in the park for the Indians as the in-form opening pair of Shikhar Dhawan (81 not out) and Shubman Gill (82 not out) knocked off the target in just 30.5 overs.

With skipper KL Rahul foregoing his spot at the top of the order to let the in-form pair maintain its momentum, Dhawan and Gill scored their third half-centuries in last four games. Not to forget that it was also their third century-plus stand from the start of the West Indies series. Their lowest opening partnership had yielded 48 runs in second ODI in Caribbean.

On a track that had something for the bowlers, the Indian openers did start in a sedate fashion but with very little on the board, it did not take them much time to accelerate.

Dhawan played his signature square cuts off seamers and lofted shots off the slow bowlers during his 113-ball knock while Gill played within himself for the first 30 deliveries before starting to chance his arms and surpassed his senior partner in terms of strike-rate, facing only 72 balls.

He played some eye-catching strokes on either side of the wicket, including a huge six over deep mid-wicket off Wessly Madhevere.

Between them, they hit 19 boundaries in all.

CHAHAR SETS UP

It didn't take long for Chahar to find his rhythm on a Harare Sports Club track that offered steep bounce. The balmy morning conditions aided quality swing bowling.

He was well supported by Mohammed Siraj (1/36), who worked up brisk pace while bowling the ideal 'Test match length'.

Prasidh Krishna (3/50) and Axar Patel (3/24) also got their share of middle and lower-order victims while Kuldeep Yadav (0/36) was restrictive despite going wicket-less.

It was the record ninth-wicket stand of 70 runs between Brad Evans (33) and Richard Ngarava (32) that took Zimbabwe close to the 200-run mark.

None of the Zimbabwe batters looked comfortable during those opening overs as Chahar got a lot of deliveries to dart back late while some straightened after pitching.

Opener Innocent Kaia (4 off 20 balls) saw a ball climb up from back of length and Sanju Samson caught it on second attempt.

His left-handed partner Tadiwanashe Marumani (8 off 22 balls) drove a fuller-length delivery that swung late and Samson had an easy catch.

Chahar's best delivery was the one that got Wessly Medhevere (5) which seemed like drifting on pads but swung away late squaring up the right-hander, who was found plumb in-front.

Once Siraj had Sean Williams caught at first slip by Shikhar Dhawan, there wasn't much resistance left in the Zimbabwean batting although skipper Regis Chakabva (35 off 51 balls) tried to put up a brief fight before Axar castled him.

Just at the start of his spell, Chahar was struggling a bit with his run-up but once he got his first wicket, it seemed that he could take wicket with every delivery he bowled.

The banana inswing was back and more importantly, he was getting to move the ball late, causing a lot of doubt in batters' mind.

While Chahar has been kept on stand-by for the Asia Cup with Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the first 15, the tables could well turn once the Indian team touches base in Australia. This is because there will be at least one spinner less in the final composition of the squad as side's won't require four spinners for pitches Down Under.

Good to see bowlers putting balls in right areas: Rahul

PTI ■ HARARE

India captain KL Rahul was very impressed with his bowling unit which fashioned a 10-wicket victory over Zimbabwe by restricting the hosts to under 200 in the first ODI here on Thursday.

Rahul, himself was making a comeback to international cricket after more than two months but decided to continue with the crack opening pair of Shubman Gill and Shikhar Dhawan, who added 192 runs for an unbroken opening stand.

"Picking up wickets was crucial. There was swing and seam movement as well. But it was good to see them (bowlers) put the ball in right areas and be disciplined," the skipper said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Three players in the first XI, Rahul, Deepak Chahar and Kuldeep Yadav were making a comeback after long rehabilitation process.

"As good as it can be, I am on the field and I am happy. We do play a lot of cricket, injuries are going to be a part of it," Rahul said.

"Being away from the game is hard. Rehab and everything everyday gets boring. We'd rather be playing 365 days than be with the physio. For a few of us, it is great to be back in the Indian dressing room."

laying international cricket after a gap of six months is really tough and he was nervous at the onset, seamer Deepak Chahar said after a successful comeback with figures of 3/27.

"When you are playing an international game after six-and-a-half months, you are always nervous. Before coming here I played four-five practice games. But playing for the country, you wanted to do well and the mind and the body was not working together," he said about the start of his spell where he looked unsure about his run-up.

"That ball I wanted to bowl a bouncer and the spikes didn't go through and I slipped. The landing area was little hard and my nails were not going in and were slippy."Dhawan is enjoying a purple patch in ODI cricket and his partnership with Gill is much talked about.

"I am enjoying batting with the youngster (Gill) and I feel like a youngster too. I enjoyed the consistency from the West Indies. I knew that once I was set, I would go after the bowlers," Dhawan said after scoring unbeaten 81 off 113 balls.

"I wanted to rotate the strike as well and then plan was to accelerate. My rhythm with Gill has settled nicely. The way he bats and times the ball is lovely to watch. He has shown the consistency in converting fifties into big fifties.

Pakistan beat Netherlands by 7 wickets in 2nd ODI, seal series

AP ■ ROTTERDAM

Mohammad Rizwan and Agha Salman made unbeaten half-centuries as Pakistan eased to a seven-wicket win over the Netherlands in the second one-day international in Rotterdam on Thursday to complete a series victory.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam, the world's top-ranked ODI batsman, scored 57 off 65 balls before Rizwan and Salman led the tourists home in their pursuit of 187 with 16.2 overs to spare.

Dutch seamer Vivian Kingma removed openers Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq cheaply as Pakistan stuttered early, but Azam and Rizwan steadied the innings before Salman finished it off by blasting his first ODI fifty.

Zaman, who made 109 in the first ODI, was caught and bowled by Kingma for three and Imam was lured into a loose drive four balls later to reduce Pakistan to 11-2.

Azam passed fifty for the 38th time in 89 ODI innings but top-edged off-spinner Aryan Dutt to Bas de Leede at midwicket, ending an 88-run stand with wicketkeeper Rizwan.

Rizwan adopted a relatively cautious approach as he compiled 69 off 82 deliveries, in contrast to the fireworks delivered by Salman, who clubbed the final ball of the match for six to finish 50 not out in just his second ODI.

Haris Rauf and Mohammad Nawaz took three wickets apiece to dismiss the Netherlands for 186 in the second of a three-match series.

De Leede (89) and Tom Cooper (66) struck battling half-centuries to lift the Dutch from 8-3 but only one other batsman passed double figures for the hosts.

Naseem Shah removed Vikramjit Singh in the second over as the teenage opener edged behind and Max O'Dowd followed when he drove Rauf straight to Azam at mid-off.

The 38-year-old Wesley Barresi was bowled by Naseem for three, two days after scoring just two in his first international innings since 2019.

De Leede and Cooper set about restoring order and put on 109 for the fourth wicket.

Rabada takes five wickets as SA dismiss England for 165

AP ■ LONDON

South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada completed a five-wicket haul as England were dismissed for just 165 on the second day of the first Test at Lord's on Thursday.

Rabada, who had been doubtful for the opening match of the three-Test series, finished with figures of 5-52 in 19 overs — the 12th time he has taken five wickets in an innings.

Only Ollie Pope, with 73, offered prolonged resistance among England's top order.

Rabada, 27, did the early damage in England's innings by removing openers Alex Lees and Zak Crawley for single-figure scores on the rain-shortened opening day.

South Africa captain Dean Elgar won the toss on a green-tinged pitch and in overcast conditions that aided his four-man pace attack but his quicks backed up that call with a skilful display.

Express quick Anrich Nortje had followed up Rabada's initial good work by taking three wickets, including the prized scalp of in-form Jonny Bairstow for a duck.

England have won all four of their Tests under their new leadership pairing of captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum after switching to a mode of all-out attack.

But the policy did not work against a quality four-man pace attack that has helped South Africa climb to the top of the World Test Championship table.

England resumed on 116-6 on Thursday, with Pope 61 not out.

Pope, who had reached a 69-ball fifty on the opening day, was quickly into his stride on Thursday, pulling the third ball of the day, from Rabada, for four.

But he should have been out three balls later for 67 when he edged Rabada straight to first slip, only for Sarel Erwee to floor a routine chance despite four juggled attempts to keep hold of the ball.

Stuart Broad, nought not out overnight, got off the mark when he edged Nortje over the head of wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne for four.

Rabada then got the wicket he deserved when Pope chopped on to a full-length ball for 73 to end a 102-ball innings, leaving England 134-7.

Rabada showed there was more to his game than sheer speed when he undid Broad (15) with a clever slower ball that the tailender lobbed to Elgar at point.

Central Coalfields Limited
A Miniratna Company
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

NOTICE

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. **www.coalindia.in/** respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, **www.centralcoalfields.in**), CIL e-procurement portal **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in** and Central Public Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in** in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal **https://gem.gov.in**."

रजिस्ट्री सं. डी. एल.–33004/99 REGD. NO. D. L.-33004/99

भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

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PART II—Section 3—Sub-section (ii)
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सं. 3575] नई दिल्ली, बुधवार, अगस्त 10, 2022/श्रावण 19, 1944
No. 3575] NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022/SHRAVANA 19, 1944

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 10th August, 2022

S.O. 3743(E).—Whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways No S.O 775 dated 17/2/22, published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (ii) issued under sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highway Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government declared its intension to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for building (widening/four-laning, etc.), maintenance, management and operation of NH133 on the stretch of land from Km. 49.1 to Km. 53.29 (Dumka) in the district of DUMKA in the state of JHARKHAND.

And whereas the substance of the said notification has been published in **"Prabhat Khabar"** and **"The Pioneer English"** both dated **11/03/2022,** under sub-section (3) of section 3A of the said Act;

And whereas objections have been received and the same have been considered and disallowed by the Competent Authority;

And whereas, in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Competent Authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the Competent Authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said Schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And further, in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government, free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE

Brief description of the land to be acquired, with or without structure, falling within the NH133 in the stretch of land from NH133 Km. 49.1 to Km. 53.29 (Dumka) in the district of DUMKA in the state of JHARKHAND.

State: JHARKHAND District: DUMKA

Sl. No.	Survey Number	Type of Land	Nature of Land	Area in Hectare	Name of the Land Owner/Interested Person Part Survey No.
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Taluk: Saraiyahat		**Village: Baridih**		
1	204	Private(Dhani 2)	DHANI 2	0.006	Karmi Devi & Parni Devi S/o-Rohan Mahto
2	205	Private(Dhani 1)	Dhani 1	0.015	Mosmat Mira Devi W/o-Masudan Rout & Shrikant Rout S/o-Bishnu Rout & Jagdish Rout S/o-Raghunandan Rout & Rajesh Rout S/o-Nunulal Rout
3	206	Private(Dhani 2)	DHANI 2	0.399	Shanti Devi S/o-Karu Ray & Mosmat Kuniya S/o-Wanshraj Ray & Goshan Ray S/o-Jagdish Ray
4	215	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.004	Sukhdev Rout S/O- Jayram Rout
5	216	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.115	Mosmat Bagri W/O- Kartik Rout & Kishan Rout S/O-Ganeshi Rout & Mohan Rout S/O- Narayan Rout & Manoj Rout & Rinku Rout S/O- Charan Rout
6	217	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.161	Mosmat Bagri W/O- Kartik Rout & Kishan Rout S/O-Ganeshi Rout & Mohan Rout S/O- Narayan Rout & Manoj Rout & Rinku Rout S/O- Charan Rout
7	218	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.018	Saraswati Devi & Bhagmatiya Devi S/o-Purni Devi & Salkhi Mirdhain & Parwatiya Mirdhain & Jagdambiya Mirdhain & Goriya Mirdhain S/o-Shokhi Mirdha & Naresh Mirdha S/o- Murti Devi
8	219	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.151	Shankar Thakur & Balkishore Thakur & Santosh Thakur S/o-Sukhdev Thakur
9	220	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.261	Suresh Manjhi S/o-Charan Manjhi & Kailash Rout S/o-Tuniya Devi
10	221	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.267	Gani Prasad Singh S/o-Suryanarayan Singh & Amar Singh & Madan Singh S/o-Dindayal Singh & Shashi Singh S/o- Nilkant Singh & Anil Singh & Munna Singh S/o-Janardhan Singh & Babaar Singh & Goutam Kumar Singh & Subham Singh S/o-Midhlesh Singh & Ramesh Kumar Singh S/o- Beni Prasad Singh & Dhirendra Singh & Virendra Singh S/o-Gorelal Singh & Ranjan Singh S/o-Prabhudayal Singh & Shrawan Kumar Singh & Shivanand Singh & Ajay Singh S/o- Sapit Singh & Satwan Kumar Singh & Abhishek Kumar Singh S/o-Mahendra Prasad Singh
11	222	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.169	Ramdev Ray & Kuldev Ray & Baldev Ray & Saldev Ray S/O- Teju Ray & Bhola Ray S/O- Jaynand Ray & Sita Ray & Shivshankar Ray S/O- Puran Ray & Arjun Ray & Raju Ray S/O- Jagdev Ray & Bangali Ray & Pratap Ray S/O- Dhuran Ray & Mosmat Vina W/O- Sahdev Ray & Mosmat Kuniya W/O- Narad Ray & Sikandar Ray S/O-Arghu Ray
12	223	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.173	Jagarnath Mahto S/o-Mosmat Purni Devi & Lachhu Mahto S/o-Mohar Mahto
13	224	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.356	Lalmohan Mahto S/o-Rajan Mahto & Udeshwar Yadav S/o-Mahadev Mahto & Mosmat Kurami S/o-Guli Mahto & Bhagwat Yadav & Vikram Yadav & Babu Yadav S/o-Dilip Yadav
14	225	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.162	Guru Mahto & Digambar Mahto & Devendra Mahto & Murli mahto S/o- Ruto Mahto
15	226	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.256	Jugni Mosmat W/o-Kartik Mahto
16	227	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.396	Shankar Sah & Ramji Sah & Tetri Devi & Hira Sah S/o-Mithu Sah & Tesh Sah S/o-Meni Sah
17	228	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.085	Shanti Devi S/o-Karu Ray & Mosmat Kuniya S/o-Wanshraj Ray & Goshan Ray S/o-Jagdish Ray
18	229	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.006	Pankaj Mandal S/o-Budhu mandal & Ranjit mandal & Mangar Mandal S/o- Ludhu Mandal
19	284	Government (Raasta)	Raasta	0.002	Govt. of Jharkhand
20	491	Private(Dhaani-2)	Dhaani-2	0.0003	Devli Devi W/o-Jaldhar Sikdar & Fuleshwar Sikdar & Tufani Sikdar & Gourishankar Sikdar S/o-Bhumeshwar Sikdar & Sonalal Sikdar S/o-Wideshi Sikdar
21	628	Private(Dhani 2)	Dhani 2	0.002	Gani Prasad Singh S/o-Suryanarayan Singh & Amar Singh & Madan Singh S/o-Dindayal Singh & Shashi Singh S/o- Nilkant Singh & Anil Singh & Munna Singh S/o-Janardhan Singh & Babaar Singh & Goutam Kumar Singh & Subham Singh S/o-Midhlesh Singh & Ramesh Kumar Singh S/o- Beni Prasad Singh & Dhirendra Singh & Virendra Singh S/o-Gorelal Singh & Ranjan Singh S/o-Prabhudayal Singh & Shrawan Kumar Singh & Shivanand Singh & Ajay Singh S/o- Sapit Singh & Satwan Kumar Singh & Abhishek Kumar Singh S/o-Mahendra Prasad Singh
	Village: Hansdiha				
22	573	Private(Dhaani 2)	Dhaani 2	0.031	Shambhu Mahto & Debu Mahto & Singheswar Mahto S/O- Basudev Mahto & Jaydev Mahto & Chako Mahto & Rajendra Mahto S/O-Neman Mahto & Hriday Mahto S/O- Narayan Mahto & Likho Mahto S/O- Vishu Mahto & Mahendra Mahto & Gajanand Mahto & Chhaku Mahto S/o- Kanhai Mahto & Bhagirath Mahto S/o- Khemlal Mahto & Shyamlal Mahto S/o-Anantlal Mahto
			TOTAL	**3.0353**	

[F. No. NHAI/PD/PIU/SBG/NH-133/3D]
RAJESH GUPTA, Director