

OPINION 6
DIGITAL EDUCATION
FOR DIGITAL INDIA**WORLD 9**
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'NO 1ST USE' NUKE POLICY**MONEY 10**
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12 SPORT

Job, price rise, LAC to heat up Winter Session

EWS quota, women reservation Bill, collegium system also in Opp basket

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Winter Session of Parliament beginning Wednesday, the Opposition parties on Tuesday demanded discussion on a slew of key issues, including unemployment, price rise, quota for the EWS sections, and situation at the Sino-India border in the all-party meeting called by the Central Government. The issues are set to be raised by the Opposition during the Winter Session.

In the meeting, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) pitched for the passage of the long-pending women's reservation Bill in the Winter Session. The one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State legislatures was also raised by the TMC, the JD(U) and the SAD parties in the Business Advisory Committee meeting called by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

The session would proceed amid the key poll outcomes of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh Assembly polls.

Exit polls on Monday pre-



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla holds a Business Advisory Committee meeting with all-party leaders on the eve of the start of Parliament's Winter Session, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

PTI

dicted a big majority for the BJP in Gujarat and a dead heat in Himachal Pradesh where most pollsters gave an edge to the ruling party over the Congress. The session which had to be delayed by a month due to the Gujarat election schedule would witness the Government introducing 16 Bills during 17 sittings of the session.

Leaders from more than 30 parties attended the all-party meeting to discuss the legislative agenda and the issues likely that would be taken up during the Winter Session of Parliament.

The meeting was chaired by Union Minister and Deputy leader of the BJP in the Lok Sabha Rajnath Singh. Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha

Piyush Goyal and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi were also present.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, "There are so many issues before the country, such as unemployment and price rise, and the Government owes an answer to the people."

'Morally wrong': Ukraine slams India's oil import from Russia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar defended India's decision to buy oil from Russia during the ongoing Ukraine conflict, the Ukraine Foreign Minister on Tuesday said it is "morally inappropriate."

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba also said, "The opportunity for India to buy Russian oil at a cheap price comes from the fact that Ukrainians are suffering from Russian aggression and dying every day."

Making this assertion in an interview to a private television channel, the Ukrainian Minister said, "If you benefit because of our suffering, it would be good to see more of your help addressed to us."

Jaishankar on Monday said India's decision to buy oil from Russia was largely driven by market forces adding the European Union (EU) has bought more oil from Russia than India during the last few months, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

Jaishankar's assertion came during his talks with visiting German counterpart Annalena Baerbock. "The European Union from February to November have imported more fossil fuel from Russia than the next 10 countries combined. The oil import in the European Union is six times what India has imported, gas is infinite times because we don't import it," he said.



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office, Ukrainian soldier takes a selfie with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, during his visit to Slavyansk, Donbas region, Ukraine on Tuesday

AP/PTI

Addressing a joint Press meet with the German Minister after talks, Jaishankar also said, "I would urge you to look at these figures. There is a website called 'Russia Fossil Fuel Tracker' it would give you country-by-country data of who is really importing what and I suspect that might be very helpful."

Jaishankar also said there is a finite amount of energy resources and Europe cannot make choices to prioritise its energy needs while asking India to do something else.

On economic ties, he said India's trade with Russia is at a very small level- \$12-13 bil-

lion, in comparison to European countries. "We have also given Russians a set of products... I don't think people should read more into it other than the legitimate expectations of any trading country to increase its trade," he said.

Responding to this assertion by Jaishankar, Kuleba said "It is not enough to point fingers at the European Union and say, Oh, they are doing the same thing."

According to Kuleba, India's decision to import cheap Russian oil needs to be seen through the prism of human suffering in Ukraine.

CAPSULE

ECONOMIST & FORMER MINISTER YK ALAGH DIES

Ahmedabad: Noted economist and former Union minister Yoginder K Alagh passed away here on Tuesday after prolonged illness, his family said. Alagh (83) was an emeritus professor at the Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research here and was not keeping well for some time, his son Munish Alagh said. YK Alagh was born in Chakwal in present-day Pakistan in 1939 and studied at the University of Rajasthan.

Maha-K'taka border crisis escalates

Fadanvis to take up matter with Bommai, to speak with Shah



TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The vexed Maharashtra-Karnataka boundary row sparked minor violence in the border city of Belagavi on Tuesday, prompting Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadanvis to take the matter with the southern State Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and announced that he would speak to Union Home Minister Amit Shah in this regard.

A day ahead of the start of the Winter Session of Parliament in New Delhi, the Maharashtra-Karnataka border row escalated in Belagavi as "Karnataka Rakshana Vedike" (KRV) stopped trucks bearing Maharashtra registration numbers and smeared them with black ink and hurled stones at one of the trucks damaging it extensively.

While Fadnavis asked Bommai to initiate action against those behind Tuesday's violence in Belagavi, NCP chief Sharad Pawar warned the Karnataka Chief Minister that if the violence did not stop within 48 hours, then Maharashtra — which had hitherto been maintaining "restraint" — would have no alternative but to "take a dif-

ferent stand in the matter".

Pawar also said he would visit the affected areas in Karnataka if the Bommai dispensation did not restore normalcy in the border areas in the next two days.

Following the incidents of violence, two Maharashtra Ministers, Chandrakant Patil and Shambhuraj Desai, cancelled their scheduled visit to Belagavi.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Police detained as many as 100 KRV and Maharashtra Ekkikaran Samiti (MES), an organisation fighting for the inclusion of the Marathi-speaking villages in the border areas, as a precautionary measure.

Taking serious cognisance of the incidents in Belagavi, Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Fadnavis spoke to the Karnataka Chief Minister and asked the latter to restore normalcy in the border city.

Interacting with media persons in Mumbai, Fadnavis said, "I spoke to the Karnataka Chief Minister and expressed my displeasure and concern over the incidents in Belagavi." I asked him to initiate action against the miscreants behind the incidents."

Ensure nobody goes to sleep on empty stomach: SC to Govt

'Foodgrains under the National Food Security Act must reach last man'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Central Government to see to it that foodgrains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) reach the last man.

The court observed that it is our culture to ensure nobody goes to sleep empty stomach.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and Hima Kohli directed the Centre to submit a fresh chart with the number of migrant and unorganised sector workers registered on eShram portal.

"It is the duty of the Central Government to ensure foodgrains under NFSA are reach-



ing the last man. We are not saying that the Centre is not doing anything; the Union of India has ensured foodgrains to people during Covid. At the same time, we have to see it continue. It is our culture (to ensure) that nobody goes to sleep on empty stomach," the bench said.

The SC was hearing its suo moto case on the plight of migrant workers during the Covid pandemic lockdowns.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for three social activists Anjali Bharadwaj, Harsh Mander and Jagdeep Chhokar, said the

country's population has increased after the 2011 census and so has the number of beneficiaries covered under the NFSA. He argued that many eligible and needy beneficiaries will be deprived of the benefit under the law if it is not enforced effectively.

Bhushan said the Government claims the per capita income of people has increased in recent years, but added India has slipped rapidly in the global hunger index.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, submitted there are 81.35 crore beneficiaries under the NFSA, a very large number even in the Indian context. He said the 2011 census has not stopped the Government from adding more people to the list of beneficiaries which is growing.

Trains to zip at 75 km/hour to cut fog delay

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In its preparedness towards train operations during the foggy days of winter, the Indian Railways has decided to enhance the maximum permissible speed of trains to 75 km per hour from the present 60 km per hour to combat delays caused by inclement weather.

"It has been decided that with the use of fog devices in locomotives, the maximum permissible speed during foggy/inclement weather conditions can be enhanced from 60 kmph (km per hour) to 75 kmph," the Indian Railways

said in a statement.

The national transporter has also asked railway zones to keep adequate supply of detonators — appliances fixed on rails that explode with a loud report when an engine passes so as to attract the driver's attention. It also said lime marking across the track at sighting boards (or at distant signals in case of double-distant signals) must be done.

"All signal sighting boards, whistle boards, fog signal posts and busy vulnerable level crossing gates, which are accident prone, should either be painted or provided with yellow/black luminous strips.

Brazil dances to FIFA WC quarterfinals

AP ■ DOHA

The joy — and the dancing — are back for five-time champion Brazil at the World Cup.

The big win over South Korea on Monday secured Brazil a berth in the quarterfinals in Qatar. It also restored the team's confidence after a tumultuous start to the tournament in which the Seleção lost Neymar to injury and saw its unbeaten group-stage streak end in a defeat to Cameroon.

But Neymar returned in style, looking fully fit and scoring a goal in Brazil's 4-1 win at Stadium 974. Vinicius Júnior, Richarlison and Lucas Paquetá also scored, and after each goal the Brazilians broke out dance moves.

They had promised different celebrations for each goal in Qatar, and were at last able to use many of them, after a group-stage in which Brazil scored only three times. It lost 1-0 to Cameroon in its last group game.

Even coach Tite got in on the act, joining Richarlison for



Brazil's goalkeeper Alisson saves the ball during the World Cup round of 16 soccer match against South Korea

AP

his trademark "pigeon" celebration.

The coach and the players got into a circle and put their hands on their hips and started moving their heads back and forth to imitate a pigeon, which is Richarlison's nickname.

After the match, Richarlison showed his dance

to former Brazil star Ronaldo, teaching him the moves.

The Brazil players had already danced after Vinicius Júnior's first goal, when he, Neymar, Raphinha and Lucas Paquetá did a few moves together. It was similar after each goal.

All the dancing got some criticism from former Ireland

player and commentator Roy Keane, who said the Brazilian players were "disrespecting the opposition," especially with the manager getting involved.

Tite defended his players. "It just means being happy because of the goal, the performance, the win..." he said.

"It's not about being disrespectful with the opponent."

Tite had joked with Richarlison before the match that if the player scored, he would dance with him to celebrate.

He said the victory was important to restore the team's morale after the loss to Cameroon, and that having Neymar back was crucial for the squad's confidence.

"The team improved, there's nothing more I could ask from them," he said.

"Neymar is our leader, the team knows that he is there and that he makes the difference. He makes the other players better."

Neymar missed two matches because of a right ankle injury sustained in the team's opening 2-0 win against Serbia. Brazil then defeated Switzerland 1-0 before falling to Cameroon in what was its first group-stage loss after 17 games, a streak that had dated to 1998.

Brazil, seeking its first World Cup title in two decades, will face 2018 runner-up Croatia in the quarterfinals on Friday.

RSP collaborates with NDDDB and District Administration to launch flagship CSR Gift Milk Programme for school children

RAHUL SHARMA ■ BOKARO

SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has collaborated with National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) for Nutrition, Anand, Gujarat and District Administration to launch a flagship CSR Gift Milk Programme for School children. The Milk will be supplied by Odisha Milk Federation (OMFED) which has been arranged by NDDDB For Nutrition for the implementation of the program. It is noteworthy that the project has been conceptualized un-



der the guidance of Atanu Bhowmick, Director In-Charge, RSP. A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the CSR Depart-

Bisra Block. P K Satapathy, ED (P&A), RSP was the Chief Guest of the function. A C Sinha, MD, OMFED, Abhijit Bhattacharya, GM, NDDDB, Anand, Gujarat, K C Das, Block Education Officer, Bisra, Smruti Singh, Project Manager, NDDDB for Nutrition, Anand, Sabyasachi Roy, Regional Officer, NDDDB, Kolkata, Munmun Mitra, GM (CSR), RSP were present on the dais. It is noteworthy that the program will cover 1150 children from 22 schools of Bisra Block. As a part of the unique CSR ini-

tiative 200ml fortified flavoured milk will be given to each child on all working days at school premises. It aims to reduce the levels of malnutrition amongst children studying in government schools. The Chief Guest and other guests presented bottled Milk to the children to mark the occasion.

At the outset the programme commenced with the dignitaries lighting the ceremonial lamp. The students of the school presented a riveting folk dance during the programme.

Adani Foundation organizes free health checkup camp in Mahugai Kala

Free medication and medicines were provided to the villagers

AVINASH ANJAN ■ HAZARIBAG

The Adani Foundation, under its CSR programme, organized a free health check-up camp at Upgraded Middle School located in Mahugai Kala Panchayat on Tuesday under the Gondalpur mining project. Villages in huge numbers



were benefitted from this health camp.

On this occasion, a team of paramedical staff under

villagers. In this day-long camp from 11:00 am, the health of women, children and elders of the village were examined.

In this medical check-up camp organized by Adani Foundation, the villagers voluntarily came forward and took free consultation from the doctor regarding their health issues. Common issues noticed in villagers were eye sight problems, diabetes, body pain,

cough, cold .Vitals such as blood pressure, < weight and pulse were also checked.

While talking with the villagers, the doctor has advised them to take care during winters as during this time people, especially children are prone to fall ill. To boost immunity, it is very important to include some physical activity and take a proper nutritious diet to fight against.

ESL's young archers aim at future goals

PNS ■ BOKARO

The Sports Authority of India hosted the Khelo India East Zone Archery Tournament, a state-level archery competition in which five young archers from the Vedanta ESL Archery Academy participated. The event was conducted on 3rd December 2022, where around

300 archers took part from the eastern zone. Competing against all the participants across different regions, Gulshan and Bikesh from the ESL Archery Academy earned silver medals in the junior division. Vedanta ESL Archery Academy nurtures 50 young archers from various age groups up to the age of 21, under the direc-

tion of renowned experts.

It is noteworthy that previously they had a similar pride moment for our project initiative, when two of their young female archers bagged four gold medals at the National Archery Tournament 2022, which was held in Andhra Pradesh. And now again, the dedication of their students along



with the consistent guidance of their coaches resulted in achieving the aim. With this zeal and diligence, ESL

hopes to continue and perform better day by day and will bring pride to the nation.



PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Leading bulk material handling company, TRF Limited (formerly known as Tata Robins Fraser Limited) celebrated its 60 years of incorporation. To mark the occasion, a function was organised in the company premises which was attended by all employees, Union Officials and ex-employees

of the company.

Speaking on the occasion, Avneesh Gupta, vice president (TQM and E&P), Tata Steel congratulated TRF for completing 60 years. He said that TRF can take a significant part in India's growth story in infrastructure and engineering projects for which there is enough scope in the ecosystem. He appreciated innova-

TRF celebrates 60 years of excellence

tive work done by TRF engineers. He observed that improvements can be brought about either through buying technology or through unlocking the infinite potential of employees which is more important for an organization. He felt that we should continue to strengthen our focus on bringing improvements through quality circles, small group activity, TQM and people engagement.

Rakeshwar Pandey, president, Tata Steel Labour Union, who was the guest-of-honour on the occasion, stated that it is a historic moment for TRF. He stressed on maintaining the highest level of quality and no compromise on safety. Umesh Kumar Singh,

managing director of the company, appreciated the dedication and hard work of everyone associated with the company who achieved this milestone and congratulated the employees as the company marks its Diamond Jubilee, wishing them all the success. He mentioned some challenges ahead e.g. skill up gradation, and productivity enhancement. He stressed on maintaining the highest level of safety and ethical standards. Few of the ex-employees of the company also shared their experiences on this occasion. A handbook to maintain TRF's Equipment and Coal Handling Plant (CHP) was released by the dignitaries. Those employees who

had completed more than 40 years of service in the Company were presented with the Long Service Award.

A series of sports and cultural events are being planned over a period of next few months to mark the Diamond Jubilee Year. TRF Limited was established in 1962 to cater the needs of Power, Steel, Mining and Port Industry in the area of Bulk Material Handling, which is the core industry for our Country's development. Over years, TRF Limited became one of the premier and most reliable manufacturers of Bulk Material Handling Equipment and Systems, earning trust and appreciation of its customers and other stakeholders.

Anti-crime checking drive at Mango, three detained

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

In order to ensure a peaceful New Year, the city police carried out anti-crime checking outside Mango police station, outside Olihdi police station and at Chepapul. During this, the police only checked cars. The police also searched the trunks of all the cars and checked the dashboard of all the cars passing through there.

There was a long jam of vehicles during the check drive. During the anti-crime checking, the police have also detained three suspects from Chepapul who are being interrogated. Giving information, Rural SP Mukesh Kumar said that the police had received secret information that some criminals are trying to leave the city through Mango. After getting the information, the police started



anti-crime checking. During checking, three suspects have been detained who are being interrogated.

Meanwhile, Jamshedpur police today said that security will be beefed up in and around the city on the occasion of New Year celebrations. Extra forces have been

deployed on picnic spots, restaurants, parks, malls so that people can welcome the New Year peacefully.

A total of 22 checking points have been set from Dimma and Burudih Dam in Ghatsila from the city for both the year end as well as the New Year celebration.

Those found unmasked will be taken to task.

The senior officer pointed out that they have put up over 20 armed police beside five police officers in the Dimma Lake area. During this season eve-teasing cases register an increase at the picnic spots so the district women cell of the police has planned to work in coordination with the respective local police stations to prevent incidents of eve-teasing in the picnic spots, said an official of the district women's cell.

He said that they had convened a special meeting of the police officers assigned for carrying out the checking of arms or helmet in the city, and had categorically briefed them that whoever is using a Press or Police sticker must show a valid I-card.

"In the event that anyone fails to produce a valid I-card,

then the police officer concerned will immediately strip the sticker off the vehicle and subsequently prosecute the person for cheating the police," said the official.

With the onset of winter, denizens of the district have started frequenting the picnic spots and different tourist's destinations to enjoy their holidays. Places like Jubilee Park, Dimma Lake, Tata Steel Zoological Park, Hudco Dam in Telco and Kanderbera, NH 33 are the favourites.

However concerned over recent spurt of naxal activities in the areas like Patamda, Ghatshila and NH 33 the East Singhbhum district administration is gearing up to make elaborate deployment of policemen both armed and lathi-wielding along with executive magistrates to maintain the law and order situation during the celebrations.

REGION

4 murdered in one day in Dhanbad

PANKAJ KUMAR ■ DHANBAD

Four persons were murdered in one day in Dhanbad on Monday at three different locations. The day started with murder of a tribal couple in Eastern Tundi and ended with murder of a land broker who had been to participate in a marriage function. The tribal couple was identified as Sakol Marandhi and his wife Dakhan Marandi resident of phoolpahar village of Rupan panchayat under Eastern Tundi block. Yet another murder was of a 16-year-old girl domestically help working at a doctors house located at Dhaiya. Her mother Neetu Devi, resident of Jharia was called by the doctors family stating that she is ill. The. However, she found her daughter dead and was handed the body. The victim's mother has filed a complaint with Jharia PS against the doctor. In the last incident a land broker Ajay Paswan was shot dead while he was on his way to attend the marriage reception of a close friend's residence located at Bagula basti under Saraidhela police station. The police have filed three separate cases at different police stations and is investigating the causes of murder.

Closing ceremony of Rajbhasha Pakhwada organized in BSL

PNS ■ BOKARO

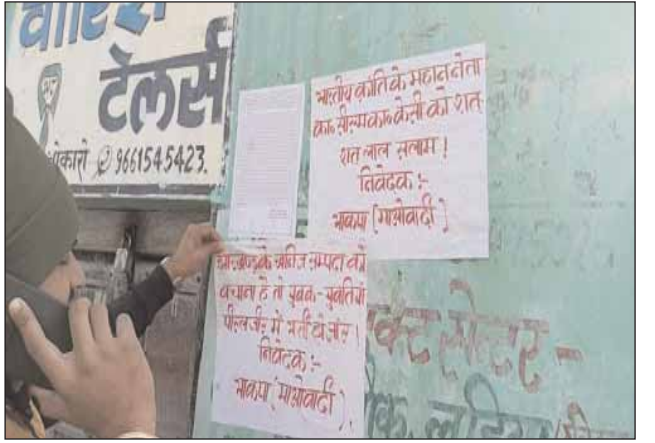
The closing ceremony of Rajbhasha Pakhwada at Bokaro Steel Plant was organized at the Human Resource Development Center. On this occasion, the chief guest of the function was the director in-charge Amarendu Prakash. As special guest ED (P&A) Sanjay Kumar, ED (Finance & Accounts) Suresh Rangani, ED (Materials Management) Amitabh Srivastava, ED (Projects) Chittaranjan Mahapatra were present, Also Senior officers, members of Narakas organization and award winners were present. In his speech, the chief guest, DIC Amarendu Prakash stressed on the need not only to use the official language but also to make it easy and simple. He further said that by including words from other languages like English and other Indian languages in Hindi, the richness, communicability and acceptability of Hindi will increase. During the program, the guests awarded Director Incharge Chal Vaijayanti Trophy to the Transport Department, Late Shankar Dayal Singh Chal Vaijayanti Trophy to the Coke Oven and Coal Chemicals Department and Prateek Shield to the CED Department. The program was coordinated by Senior Manager (Liaison and Administration) Shashank Shekhar and the vote of thanks was given by Deputy General Manager (Liaison and Administration) UK Singh.



CPI Maoist rebels paste posters in Bokaro

SURESH NIKHAR ■ BERMO

CPI Maoist rebels have pasted posters in Patthar Katwa, Lahiya, Palamu, Sarubeda and Harladih within the jurisdiction of Pannk Narayanpur police station area of Bokaro district. As soon as the information was received, police reached the spot and removed the posters. In this regard, Bermo SDPO Satish Chandra Jha said that as soon as the information was received, the poster was immediately removed and further search operation is being conducted in its same limitations. On the posters of the CPI Maoists, an appeal to young men and women to join the PLGA, as well as hundreds of salutations to Comrade CM and Comrade KC have been written. Apart from this, an appeal has been made to expose all the anti-people policies of the looters, brokers, ruling classes and prepare a huge mass movement against it. It is believed that the Maoists have pasted these posters in various areas on Monday night. Sources said that the Naxalites are celebrating the 22nd anniversary of the establishment of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army i.e. PLGA from 2 to 8 December. As a precautionary measure, the police have also been conducting continuous search operations in Naxal-affected areas. Under the special strategy, apart from the Naxal affected areas, continuous operations are continuing in the foothills and forests. Despite this, the Naxalites managed to spread panic by posting posters.



TSF inks MoU for development of infrastructure for CHC, Mandu

PNS ■ RAMGARH

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed today between Dr Prabhat Kumar, Civil Surgeon, Ramgarh (Dist. Admin. on behalf of the Government of Jharkhand) and Dr Anuj Bhatnagar, Head, Public Health CSR, Tata Steel Foundation towards the infrastructural development for Community Health Centre (CHC), Mandu at District Collectorate, Ramgarh. Present on the occasion were Madhvi Mishra, DC, Ramgarh, Anurag Dixit, General Manager, West Bokaro, Tata Steel Limited, Rajesh Kumar, Chief, Capacity Enhancement Project, West Bokaro, Tata Steel, S N Nandi, Head, Infra., Tata Steel Foundation and Keshav K Ranjan, Unit Head, TSF, West Bokaro. As per the agreement, Tata Steel Foundation will take the responsibility of improving infrastructure of the CHC by renovating hospital building, construction of OPD waiting area, providing solar base electricity and modern medical equipment for Labour room, OT room and MTC room. Community Health Centre, Mandu, a 40 bedded hospital is an important public health service provider and lifeline for the community residing in interior villages of the block. As per Census 2011, around 40% of the population belongs to the SC/ST community with prime source of income as daily wage labourers in mining areas and local brickkilns. In addition, the centre is well connected with the neighbouring blocks of Ramgarh and Hazaribagh district through NH 33 and therefore has a regular footfall of the patients from both districts. While implementing various public health initiatives like immunization of children, cataract surgery camps, prevention of non-communicable diseases, treatment of TB patients and during the pandemic, the Foundation has been closely working with CHC and leveraged to reach out for preventive as well as curative measures. The centre provides OPD services like Mother and Child Health Care Services, Emergency health services and others through specialist doctors, frontline health workers and dedicated staff. Presently, the CHC requires upgradation for ensuring smooth operation and to provide a clean and healthy environment with appropriate facilities for the patients.



RSP bags the ENCON Award: 2022-23 for energy efficiency

PNS ■ BOKARO

SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant has bagged the Energy Conservation Award in the Eastern region ENCON Award 2022 competition held in November by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). RSP was adjudged with 4.5 star energy rating which is best ever for RSP and also best in SAIL. In a function held at the office of DIC on 5th December 2022 Atanu Bhowmick, Director In-Charge, RSP handed over the ENCON Award Certificate to P S Kan- nan, CGM (EMD), Abit Santosh Khakha, GM (EMD), B.P.Pandey, AGM (EMD) and his team. Speaking on the occasion Bhowmick, commended the efforts of the Energy management Department in reducing Specific energy consumption pattern of the plant which has led to huge cost savings. The assessment process has undergone through submission of application, presentation on energy performance and energy conservation projects implemented during previous financial year.



Govt to make available Rs 750 Cr to JBVNL from PFC

CM reviews works of Jharkhand Vidyut Vitaran Nigam Limited

PNS ■ RANCHI

A review meeting of the works of Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited was held today in Jharkhand Secretariat under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Hemant Soren. State Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Rajeev Arun Ekka, Principal Secretary Energy Department Avinash Kumar, Principal Secretary Finance Department Ajay Kumar Singh, Secretary to Chief Minister Vinay Kumar Choubey, Jharkhand Energy Transmission Corporation Managing Director KK Verma and other senior officials were present in the meeting.

The CM directed the officers that there should not be power cuts in the state under any circumstances. Take all necessary measures to prevent power cuts. Providing



Chief Minister Hemant Soren holds a meeting with senior officials at Project building in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

uninterrupted power to the people of the State is the priority of the state government. The CM told the officials that complaints of power cuts were being received for the last few weeks. Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited is an important entity in the power sector in the state. It is through this that electricity is supplied to the entire state. Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited should fix the system by preparing a better action plan for provid-

ing smooth electricity to the consumers.

It was decided in the meeting that the Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited will provide Rs 750 crore from Power Finance Corporation (PFC) on its guarantee to Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited for payment of dues of power generating companies. The CM directed the officials that the process of providing loan to the Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited should be completed soon so

that the dues of power generating companies could be cleared.

Soren told the officials that there should not be any laxity in the collection of electricity bills. Ensure use of modern equipment for electricity bill collection. It was also decided in the meeting that the JBVNL will now collect electricity bills through the agencies working in the Urban Development Department on the basis of the house tax collection system of the Urban Development Department, for this an action plan will be prepared soon. JBVNL will ensure the work on the model and conditions of the Urban Development Department to collect electricity bills in the urban areas of the entire state so that there is no loss in energy revenue to the state government.

The CM directed the officials to continuously monitor electricity consumption by installing communication equipment in the meters of

high tension (HT) consumers for electricity bill recovery. The CM said that 100 per cent electricity bill recovery should be ensured from the consumers. It is your responsibility that HT consumers do not have outstanding electricity bills. The Chief Minister has completed the billing process on all telecom towers and collected the electricity bills on time. The CM directed the officials to speed up the smart meter work. He said that it should be ensured that smart meters are installed at all the consumers.

The CM gave his consent to provide Rs 200 crore to Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited under Annual Development Plan (ADP) head by the state government. The amount of Rs 200 crore received from the ADP item will be spent by Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited to strengthen the arrangements of transformers, poles, wires etc in the State.

Coordinate with banks to benefit farmers with loan waiver scheme: CM

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren reviewed the Jharkhand Agricultural Loan Waiver Scheme (JKRMY) at the Ministry of Jharkhand on Tuesday. During the review, the Chief Minister was apprised by the officers that under JKRMY the loan waiver of 9,07,753 eligible farmers was to be done in

the State, but against 9,07,753 eligible farmers, only 6,06,000 farmers were disbursed by various banks.

Expressing concern over this, the Chief Minister directed that a meeting with the banks under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary should be organized soon to speed up the loan waiver work of the deprived eligible farmers under the



Agricultural Loan Waiver Scheme. Resolve the prob-

lems related to loan waiver of farmers at the earliest.

Soren said that officers should prepare a panchayat-wise database of eligible farmers by running a campaign, so that the benefit of loan waiver can be made available to them under the Jharkhand Agricultural Loan Waiver Scheme. The Chief Minister directed the officials to make the data of

eligible farmers whose loan waiver has been done public on the public platform as well.

State Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Rajeev Arun Ekka, Principal Secretary Finance Department Ajay Kumar Singh, Secretary to Chief Minister Vinay attended the meeting.

Congress adds two minority candidates in district chiefs' list

PNS ■ RANCHI

In a move to pacify the on-going brawl in the party on recently announced new district heads of the party in the State, on Tuesday, Jharkhand Congress released the list of district presidents in just 48 hours, the party high command had to show the way out to four district presidents.

As per the latest information provided by the State Congress, the party high command has decided to remove newly appointed district presidents of Koderma, Garhwa, Sahebganj and Ramgarh. In three districts,

Ramgarh, Sahebganj and Garhwa, the District President was made from the same caste Brahmin, while no one was given place from minority, women and dalit community. Since then, MLAs, former MPs and senior leaders in the party started protesting. The matter had reached the National President and the National General Secretary of the Congress.

The main reason behind the reshuffle in the list of district heads within 48 hours is the unilateral decision of Congress State In-Charge, Avinash Pandey. It is being told

that State Congress Chief, Rajesh Thakur and Congress Legislature Party Leader, Alamgir Alam met National General Secretary, KC Venugopal and urged him to release the list of district heads soon. After this, the National General Secretary instructed the State In-Charge to prepare the list soon. The in-Charge prepared the list and sent it to the high command without showing it to the State Chief and the Leader of the Legislative party. In the list that was released, the caste from which the State In-Charge comes,

had the maximum number of district heads. Protest against this started.

As soon as the new list of district presidents of Jharkhand Congress was released late night on Sunday, there was uproar in the State. The former MPs got angry because there was no minority district president in any district of the State.

Early this morning Jharkhand's veteran leader and former MP, Furkan Ansari went directly to meet Congress National President, Mallikarjun Khadge to express his displeasure.

Ansari informed about the party's position in the State

and said that the minority community, whose population is about 18 per cent in the State, is constantly being marginalized by other communities. The latest example of which is the district president's list this community has played an important role in forming the coalition Government in the state but today the party is being disappointed, he added.

After listening to all the things, Kharge took cognizance and assured that a decision will be taken soon and participation of all communities in the Congress party in the State will be ensured.

PIL against Hemant Soren: Review petition filed at SC

PNS ■ RANCHI

A review petition was filed at Supreme Court against the judgment of Apex Court dismissing two PILs related to alleged money laundering through shell companies in which CM Hemant Soren has been charged of availing the stone mining lease in his name. The review petition was filed by one Shiv Shankar Sharma on Monday.

In November this year, the Supreme Court dismissed the Public Interest Litigations (PILs) filed against Soren in Jharkhand High Court (HC) saying that they were not maintainable.

The apex court came down heavily on the Jharkhand HC for entertaining the PILs and taking cognizance



based on general submissions, calling it "an abuse of the process of the Court".

The PILs were against the Chief Minister, his family members and associates. Both the PIL witnessed a prolonged legal battle and hearing by a division bench of Chief Justice Dr Ravi Ranjan and Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad of Jharkhand. The High court found both the PILs maintainable and allowed further hearing as the petitioner had demanded a CBI inquiry of the

matter.

Two petitions filed against Soren were challenged. Out of these, one claimed Soren granted himself a mining lease while holding the mining portfolio, and sought action for the alleged misuse of public office. The other petition alleged money laundering by CM Soren and his family through shell companies and asked for an investigation by central agencies.

The High Court had ordered that the petitions were maintainable. A division bench including Chief Justice Ravi Ranjan passed a judgement on June 3 and proceeded with the matter on merits. However, the SC reserved its order on appeal on August 17 and directed that the Jharkhand HC not proceed on merits.

ED summons Barharwa DSP

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned the then DSP of Barharwa Pramod Kumar Mishra for questioning on December 12 about how he supervised the Barharwa toll plaza tender case and gave a clean chit to Congress minister Alamgir Alam as well as Pankaj Mishra. Pankaj Mishra is the MLA representative of Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren and he is currently in jail in the illegal stone mining case. The ED has filed a prosecution complaint against him. Well-placed sources said that in the same case the ED will summon Sahibganj SP Anuranjan Kispotta in the near future. Notably, the Sahibganj police gave a clean chit to Minister Alamgir Alam and Pankaj Mishra in Barharwa toll plaza case within 24 hours the businessman Shambhu Nandan lodged an FIR against them. DSP Pramod Mishra was supervising the investigation and gave a clean chit to minister and also Pankaj Mishra without any preliminary investigation and digital evidence.

Annual Sports Day celebrated with fervour at DPS Ranchi

PNS ■ RANCHI

Delhi Public school Ranchi unfolded a sporting session upholding the true spirit of integrity as the school celebrated its Annual Sports Day with great enthusiasm and zest. The school was decked up with vibrant colours giving an attractive look. The magnificence of the day was made stronger by the gracious presence of Padma Bhushan recipient VK Shunglu, Chairman, Delhi Public Society, New Delhi as the Chief Guest. The Guest of Honour of the event was Prawn Mala Hemrom CGM (P&A), SAIL UNITS Ranchi & Pro – Vice Chairperson, DPS Ranchi.

The students of Classes Nursery to XII participated in various sports events. The programme began with the rendition of welcome song by the school choir group followed by the bouquet presentation to the esteemed guests by Principal, Dr Ram Singh. He also extended a warm welcome to the respected luminaries



and gave a glimpse of the marvelous achievements of the school.

The Chief Guest unfurled the school flag. A spectacular march past by the students of all six houses — Sutej, Chenab, Jamuna, Jhelum, Ravi, and Ganga -- was presented in complete unison. The NCC Cadets also displayed their bold-hued persona during the parade which was highly appreciated by the Chief Guest. The Head Boy of the School led the oath taking ceremony in which all the students pledged to inculcate the sportsman spirit within them. It was followed by the declaration of the meet open and lighting of the torch by the

Chief Guest.

The School Band performed with their instruments leaving the gathering electrified and awe-struck. The audience was entertained through various enchanting dances and graceful presentation of aerobics by the students of classes VI to XI and a scintillating display of yoga. The audience witnessed the groundbreaking and energetic performances by the students.

The much-awaited track and field events including 100 mt, 200 mt, 800 mt and 3000 mt flat races, 4x100 mt relay along with high jumps, long jump, shot put etc were a part of the sports event. The relay race reverberated with enthusiastic cheers and applause from the spectators. The air was filled with cheering and loads of encouragement for the young and budding athletes. The primary wing students had some interesting activity races which heightened the spirit of the spectators. The winners of the various achievements were awarded by the

luminaries with medals, trophies and certificates.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest, VK Shunglu congratulated the participants on their enthusiastic display of talent and spirit of sportsmanship. He appreciated the competitive spirit instilled in the DPS students and encouraged them to pursue their goals with grit, determination and perseverance. He also wished them luck for their upcoming endeavours.

Guest of Honour Prawn Mala Hemrom was enthralled and appreciated the stupendous efforts of the students.

Principal Dr. Ram Singh delivered a motivational speech stating Sports is a hands-on learning experience to prepare students for the competition of life and leads them on their path to holistic development. Sporting activities also build team work, punctuality, discipline and sportsmanship in an individual. He motivated all the students to take part in sports enthusiastically.

Rs 3.83 lakh collected in vehicle checking drive

PNS ■ RANCHI

A vehicle checking drive was conducted by Ranchi, District Transport Officer, Praveen Prakash on Tuesday at Ratu, Daladali, Ring Road and Kanke area of the district from 08:00 am to 04:00 pm. A total of 124 vehicles were checked during vehicle checking.

Tax defaulters, overloaded vehicles, vehicles without pollution proof, without permit, without helmet and other vehicle related documents, besides checking vehicles registered outside the state of Jharkhand which are being operated under Ranchi were fined during the drive. The documents of all the vehicles were checked by the personnel of the office one by one. A fine of Rs 3,83,480 was collected from a total of 34 vehicles like goods vehicles, highways, two wheel-



DTO, Ranchi Praveen Prakash during vehicle checking drive in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

ers, autos and others.

During investigation, tax failure of 06 vehicles was found. Such vehicles have been seized and kept at Ratu police station.

Prakash appealed to the vehicle owners to keep the documents related to the vehicle with them and keep all the documents updated while operating the vehicle. He also instructed to follow the traffic rules. He said that wearing helmets while driving two wheelers and follow-

ing traffic rules has reduced road accidents.

Till October 2022, 360 people died and 364 were injured in a total of 551 road accidents in Ranchi district. In the year 2021 till December, 448 people had lost their lives in a total of 644 road accidents. The District Transport Officer expressed hope that following the traffic rules, there would be further reduction in the number of road accidents in future.

Sadar Hospital achieves remarkable feat

PNS ■ RANCHI

Sadar Hospital Ranchi crossed a new milestone on Tuesday when for the first time, a bile duct stone was removed by laparoscopy technique here.

Dr Ajit Kumar, who performed the operation, told that the patient had undergone abdominal surgery 3 years ago. "Then it was told that there is a stone in the gall bladder but due to some reasons the operation could not be done. After this the

stone of the gallbladder reached into the bile duct. At the same time, the patient also got jaundice. Then the patient came to Sadar Hospital for consultation. Kanak Devi herself is a nursing staff at Bundu Subdivision Hospital," he added. The doctor said that when MRCP was done, a big stone was found stuck at the end of the bile duct. "After conducting all kinds of tests, he was operated upon and a t-tube was inserted on 12th November. After 21 days,

the t-tube is removed after re-examination. When his MRCP was done again on 5 December, no stone was found in the bile duct. After removing the T-tube, the patient is currently kept under observation. The patient will be discharged in a day or two. The patient has been treated under the Ayushman scheme," he added.

Dr. Ajit Kumar, Anesthetist Dr. Deepak, Dr. Vikas and the entire team of OT were involved in the operation.

INBRIEF

FOWA distributes woolen clothes at Orphan School

As Ranchi is heading towards severe winter, Forest Officers Wives Association (FOWA) members distributed woolen sweaters at Adim Janjati Orphan School, Nivarnapur on December 05. President of FOWA Vibha Srivastva said that the main objective of the winter campaign is to protect children from harsh weather conditions through the provision of winter clothes. Thus, after understanding the need, FOWA has taken quick steps in meeting the winter needs of the children of the orphan school. They also distributed sweets, fruits, chips and biscuits among the children. President Vibha Srivastava, Vice President Ruchi Upadhyay, Secretary Poonam Ranjan, Joint Secretary Sunandita Das, Treasurer Meenu Pandian, Sabita Mishra and Anju Singh visited the school and spent meaningful time with the children.



Mahaparinirvan Divas in East Central Railway

Mahaparinirvan Diwas of Bharat Ratna, the architect of Indian Constitution and social reformer Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was celebrated at East Central Railway Headquarters on Tuesday. On this occasion, Anupam Sharma, General Manager, ECR, paid floral tributes to Dr. Ambedkar at the headquarters. On this occasion, all the officers and employees including AGM and PCPO paid floral tributes on the portrait of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. Along with this, the office bearers and members of the East Central Railway Scheduled Castes/Tribes Association also paid tribute to Dr. Ambedkar by offering floral tributes on his portrait.



CCL pays homage to Dr Ambedkar

On the 67th death anniversary of Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, CMD CCL PM Prasad along with Director (Finance), Pawan Kumar Mishra, Director Technical (Projects and Planning) B.R. Sairam, CVO, S.K. Sinha, trade union representatives along with a large number of employees offered floral tributes to Dr Ambedkar on the occasion. Dr Ambedkar's Mahaparinirvan Divas was celebrated today in all areas of CCL along with headquarters. CMD P.M. Prasad said of Babasaheb Ambedkar significantly, he dedicated his whole life to the service of the country. He further added that everyone should take inspiration from him and perform their duties. He stated that CCL is committed to fulfilling the energy aspirations of the nation.



Tributes to Dr Ambedkar at RRD

DRM Pradeep Gupta, ADRM Manish Kumar and others paid tributes by offering flowers on the picture of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar in the meeting hall of Ranchi Railway Divisional Office on the 66th death anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar on the occasion of Mahaparinirvan Divas this year Kumar, Chief Project Manager (Gati Shak-ti) Satish Kumar and all those present paid tribute by offering flowers. Along with this, during the program, the great work done by Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and his extensive contribution in constitution making to make the country progressive was mentioned. And all the officers and employees present were encouraged to follow and follow the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar. On this occasion, Sr DPO Manik Shankar, Sr DCM cum CPRO Nishant Kumar, Divisional Branch Officer, other officers and employees were present.



‘Af shouldn’t be safe haven for terrorists’

India pitches for collective efforts to combat terror in India-Central Asia NSAs’ meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Central Asian countries on Tuesday cautioned that Afghanistan must not become a safe haven for terrorist activities and called for collective action to combat challenges like terror financing, radicalization and use of terror proxies for cross-border terrorism.

National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval said monetary resources are the “lifeblood” of terrorism and countering it should be a priority.

This appeal was made here at the first meeting of the National Security Advisors (NSA) of India and Central Asia hosted by Doval. The high-profile conclave also emphasized the need for respecting Afghanistan’s sovereignty, unity and territory and urged non-interference in its internal affairs. Doval said the meeting was taking place at a time of “great churn,” in international relations.

The NSAs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are attending the conclave while Turkmenistan is being represented by its ambassador to India.

Addressing the meet focusing on combating terrorism in the region and situation in Afghanistan, Doval pitched for giving greater priority by countries of the region to counter terror financing, saying monetary resources are the “lifeblood” of terrorism.

Doval also said all United Nations(UN) member states should refrain from providing any form of support to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts and fulfill the obligations enshrined in relevant counter-terror



National Security Adviser Ajit Doval with Afghanistan's Ambassador to India Farid Mamundzay Farid Mamundzay and other delegates during the first India-Central Asia meeting of National Security Advisers and Secretaries of Security Councils, in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

conventions. He described Central Asia as India’s “extended neighbourhood”, and said New Delhi accords “highest priority” to this region.

“Afghanistan is an important issue concerning all of us. India’s concerns and objectives with regard to immediate priorities and the way forward are similar to those of many of us around the table,” he said.

Doval said connectivity with Central Asian countries remained a key priority for India and that New Delhi stands ready to cooperate, invest and build connectivity in the region.

“While expanding connectivity, it is important to ensure that connectivity initiatives are consultative, transparent and participatory, with respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all

countries,” he said, seen as an oblique reference to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Doval hosted the conclave with a focus on evolving a common framework to deal with challenges of terrorism in the region including Afghanistan and ways to bolster overall security cooperation in sync with a decision taken at the first India-Central Asia summit in January.

He said the meeting is taking place at a time of “great churn” in international relations and uncertainty about the future, noting a peaceful, secure and prosperous Central Asia is in “our common interest”.

“Today’s meeting, therefore, assumes importance as it provides us an opportunity to discuss matters which

require greater cooperation and coordination amongst the regional countries,” he said

A joint communique said the officials agreed that the expansion of terrorist propaganda, recruitment and fund-raising efforts have serious security implications for the region, and therefore, a collective and coordinated response is essential.

“The misuse of new and emerging technologies, arms and drugs trafficking, using terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism, abuse of cyber space to spread disinformation and unmanned aerial systems present new challenges in counterterrorism efforts and call for collective action,” it said.

The mentioning of cross-border terrorism is seen as a reference to Pakistan’s support to various terror groups which have been targeting India. The meeting also strongly called for an early adoption of the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism to effectively deal with the menace.

It also reiterated that greater connectivity could be a force multiplier for enhancing trade and commerce as well as for ensuring closer interactions between India and Central Asian countries. Doval also referred to the first India-Central Asia virtual summit in January that was hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“Your presence is a testimony to our cohesiveness and it will enrich the discussions. Central Asia is our extended neighbourhood with which we have civilisational linkages and we accord highest priority to this region,” Doval said.

HC nod for rare 33-week pregnancy termination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a rare instance, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday allowed termination of a 33-week pregnancy by saying that the “ultimate decision” in matters of abortion ought to recognise a woman’s choice to give birth and the possibility of dignified life of the unborn child.

Justice Prathiba M Singh observed that while the right of a pregnant woman to terminate her pregnancy has been the subject matter of debate across the world, India recognises the choice of a woman in its law.

In the present case, the petitioner, a 26 year old married woman, sought to terminate her 33-week pregnancy after she found out that the foetus was suffering from certain cerebral abnormalities. Normally, termination is not allowed after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

The petitioner had said during her ultrasounds till the 16th week of gestation period, no abnormalities were found in the foetus but on November 12, an abnormality was observed in the foetus. The court clarified that prior to undergoing termination, the informed consent of the petitioner would be



Delhi High Court

taken and she would undergo the procedure at her own risk.

The judge, while permitting the woman to immediately undergo medical termination of pregnancy, noted that the medical board unfortunately did not give a “categorical opinion” on the degree of handicap or the quality of the life of the foetus after birth and thus opined that “such unpredictability ought to weigh in favour of the woman seeking termination of pregnancy”.

“In conclusion, the court holds that the ultimate decision in such cases ought to recognise the choice of the mother as also the possibility of a dignified life of the unborn child..This court holds that medical termination of pregnancy ought to be permitted in the present case,” the court ruled.

“The right of a pregnant woman to terminate her pregnancy or abort her foetus has been the subject matter of debate across the world. This right gives the woman the ultimate choice as to whether she wants to give birth to the child

she has conceived. India is among the countries which recognises this choice of a woman in its law,” the court said.

The court said that in the present case, it was able to gauge the mental trauma affecting the parents as well as their economic and social condition, and the petitioner was taking an informed decision to terminate her pregnancy after weighing all factors. “The court comes to the conclusion that the mother’s choice is being made in a bonafide manner”, it added while allowing the petitioner to undergo medical termination of pregnancy immediately at LNJP, GTB or any other approved medical facility of her choice as per law.

The woman represented by advocate Anwesh Madhukar and Prachi Nirwan had approached the High Court last week after the GTB Hospital declined her request for termination of pregnancy on the premise that the process required judicial intervention since the current gestational age of the petitioner was beyond the permissible limit, that is, 24 weeks as per the amended Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act which came into effect from September 24, 2021.

Cong calls for like-minded Opp parties’ meet to mull Winter Session strategy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha M Mallikarjun Kharge has convened a meeting of all the ‘like-minded’ Opposition parties on Wednesday before the Winter Session of the Parliament begins.

Party sources said that Kharge has requested almost all the opposition leaders to be part of the meeting which will formulate a strategy to take on the Modi government in both the Houses of Parliament.

Representatives of SP, TMC, Shiv Sena, RJD, DMK, JDU and few others have con-

firmed their participation in the meeting which will happen at 9.45 am just before the Session begins at 11 am. They have been briefed to raise the common issues like economic condition, unemployment, border and security issues, attack on constitutional freedom, sale of certain government establishments and few other agenda which are likely to be discussed in the meeting to be chaired by Kharge.

Meanwhile, accusing the Centre of having “betrayed” the farmers, the All India Kisan Congress wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighting the “plight” of the tillers and reiterating the demand of legal guarantee for MSP for all crops.

The Congress’ unit for farmers also reiterated the demand for dismissal of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, release of “innocent” farmers imprisoned in the case, withdrawal of “fake cases” registered against farmers in various states during the farmers’ agitation and compensation to families of the deceased farmers.



President Droupadi Murmu with Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Virendra Kumar at a ceremony to pay homage to Babasaheb BR Ambedkar on his Mahaparinirvan Diwas, at Parliament House Complex in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

How long can Christian Michel be kept in custody, asks SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said on Tuesday just because Christian Michel James, an alleged middleman in the AgustaWestland chopper scam, is a foreign national, how long can he be kept in custody and does his not being an Indian justify “complete deprivation” of his liberty.

James is a United Kingdom national and was extradited from Dubai in 2018.

A Bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha

AGUSTA WESTLAND CHOPPER SCAM

said, ordinarily, if the accused had been an Indian national, the court would have been willing to grant him bail, especially if he had spent more than four years in custody for the offences the maximum punishment for which is five years.

“Merely because he is a foreign national, how long can we keep him? Can that justify complete deprivation of his liberty? Had he been an Indian national, the

court would have been willing to grant him bail,” the Bench told Additional Solicitor General SV Rau, appearing for probe agencies CBI and the ED.

The Bench said what is worrying the court is the complexity of trial as there are over 250 witnesses in the case and the co-accused government officials have been granted bail for want of sanction for prosecution. “It’s an important issue for consideration, especially the construct between the treaty and the statute (Extradition Act, 1962).

CBI to question K Kavitha in Delhi Excise Policy case on Dec 11

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has issued a fresh notice to TRS MLC K Kavitha for questioning on December 11 at her Hyderabad residence in connection with the Delhi Excise Policy scam case.

The move comes after Kavitha expressed her inability to appear before the agency on Monday (December 5) and told the agency that she was available for recording her statement from December 11 to 15 (except December 13).

In response to the first notice issued on December 2, Kavitha had said she went through the contents of the FIR copy as well as the complaint available on the website in connection with the case and her name did not figure anywhere in any manner whatsoever.

The fresh notice issued by the agency states, “...CBI team will visit your residence at 1100 hrs on December 11, 2022 for your examination and recording of your statement in connection with investigation of aforesaid (Delhi Excise scam) case. Kindly confirm your availability on the said date and time at your residential address at Hyderabad...”

Kavitha, in a statement on Monday, had said she informed the authorities that they can meet her at her Hyderabad residence.

“I am a law-abiding citizen and will cooperate with the investigation. I will meet you on any of the above said dates to cooperate with the investigation. It is made clear that this is without prejudice to my legal rights available under law,” she had said.

The CBI has already filed a charge sheet against seven individuals in connection with



TRS MLC K Kavitha's residence at Jubilee Hills, in Hyderabad on Tuesday

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the excise scam.

“Further investigation is continuing to investigate the role of FIR named accused and other persons on various allegations including conspiracies with other licensees, money trails, cartelization and larger conspiracies in the formulation and implementation of the Excise Policy,” the CBI had said after filing the charge sheet late last month.

The Enforcement

Directorate that is probing a connected money laundering case has alleged, “...Vijay Nair, on behalf of leaders of AAP has at least received kickbacks to the tune of Rs 100 crore from a group, called south group (controlled by Sarath Reddy, Ms K Kavitha, Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy) by various persons including Amit Arora.”

Officials identified Kavitha as the daughter of Telangana CM K Chandrashekhar Rao.

CBI arrests Railway DCE for taking bribe, seizes ₹251 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has recovered cash to the tune of ₹1.38 crore cash and ₹1.13 crore in bank accounts of Deputy Chief Engineer of Railways, Arun Kumar Mittal, who was arrested for allegedly taking a bribe from a contractor.

Immediately after Mittal’s arrest last week, the CBI had seized ₹38 lakh cash and about ₹1 crore was recovered during searches at his premises. Kumar was posted as Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Northern Railway, Lucknow.

Out of the ₹1.13 crore recovered from the bank accounts of the accused and his family members, majority of the amount was allegedly deposited in cash in various bank accounts, the CBI said. A case was registered on a complaint against Mittal on the allegations of demanding bribes from the complainant in lieu of passing the bills of his firm engaged in project work at Charbagh, Lucknow. The arrested accused was produced on December 2 before the Competent Court, Lucknow which remanded him to CBI custody.

IN SHORT

PM TO LAUNCH 3 AYUSH INSTITUTES ON DEC 11

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on December 11 dedicate to the nation three national Ayush institutes — All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Goa — a satellite centre of the Delhi-based AIIA — National Institute of Unani Medicine (NIUM), Ghaziabad; and National Institute of Homoeopathy (NIH), Delhi, Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said on Tuesday.

UNCONSTITUTIONAL GOVT IN MAHA: UDDHAV SENA TO SC

New Delhi: The Uddhav Thackeray-led faction of the Shiv Sena on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that a “completely unconstitutional government is being run” in Maharashtra.

NITISH GOVT ANTI-DALIT: UNION MIN PASHUPATI

New Delhi: BJP ally and Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras on Tuesday accused the Nitish Kumar-led Bihar Government of acting with a sense of revenge against Dalits, particularly Paswans, and raised the issue of “rising” crimes against the community’s members at a meeting of the ruling NDA.

ED ATTACHES ₹1.58 CR OF ANUBRATA’S CONFIDANT

New Delhi: Thirty-two properties worth more than ₹1.58 crore belonging to a person who is a “close confidant” of TMC leader Anubrata Mondal have been attached in connection with a money laundering probe linked to a cattle smuggling case of West Bengal, the ED said on Tuesday.

TN GOVT FOR JALLIKATTU, BACKS BULL-SPORT IN SC

New Delhi: The Tamil Nadu Government on Tuesday defended in the Supreme Court the law allowing bull-taming sport “jallikattu” in the State, saying it is an “incorrect notion” that an activity, which is in the nature of a sport or entertainment, cannot have a cultural value.

DCGI OK’s 1st ‘Made-in-India’ TB kit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Mylab’s PathoDetect kit patients can with a single test know their active TB infection as well as drug resistance to 2 most common drugs - Isoniazid and Rifampicin - so that they take treatment that will actually work.

The first ‘Made in India’ kit recently approved by the DCGI, TB expert panel under the ICMR has been developed by Mylab. The kit is a RT-PCR based kit for accurate detection and will be used with Mylab Compact device systems – which will allow completely automated testing of multiple samples within 2 hours.

This will be instrumental in supporting the Prime Minister’s vision to eliminate TB by 2025 from India, said Hasnukh Rawal, the MD of Mylab.



He explained that the device will help address several problems simultaneously. It can not only do multiple tests at one time but also does not need highly technical people which we are already short of to handle samples and reagents, he added.

The kit has been approved

after rigorous and large scale field trials and recommended by the TB Expert Committee under ICMR.

“Multicentre centre evaluation study and field feasibility testing studies were carried out for the “PathoDetect MTB RIF and INH drug resistance kits” & Compact device sys-

tems. The centres of trials included the most reputed TB research centres of India, which evaluated the performance of the kit against the currently used diagnostic assays for Tuberculosis,” said Rawal.

He further said, “There is a huge problem of resistance to drugs when it comes to TB. Until now, India had to conduct 2 tests: one to detect TB first and to check drug resistance – that against only one drug (Rifampicin). But with Mylab’s PathoDetect” kit, the test pattern will be changed.”

Also, the test kits have been designed to work in ambient temperatures compared to existing PCR options which need 2-8 degree cold storage. Mylab Compact” device systems do not require special infrastructure for operations and feasibility studies done on mobile vans in rural areas indicate them to be very robust.

TMC SPOKESPERSON SAKET GOKHALE ARRESTED BY GUJARAT POLICE FOR TWEET AGAINST MODI, ALLEGED FAKE NEWS

Didi cries vendetta, TMC calls it super emergency

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress (TMC) national spokesperson Saket Gokhale was being interrogated on Tuesday after he was detained by the Gujarat Police from Rajasthan late at night. The TMC leader was arrested allegedly for writing fake news as also for tweeting against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Morbi, where a bridge collapse killed over 130 people in October. The TMC has called the arrest of Saket Gokhale by the Gujarat Police an act of vindictiveness. Hours after the Gujarat Police arrested Gokhale at Jaipur Airport Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday called the arrest a result of the “BJP's vindictive attitude.”

While her party's Rajya Sabha MP Shantanu Sen said, the arrest itself proved that there was a “super emergency going on in India,” Banerjee said the act was “very bad and sad.” Banerjee who was on a swift trip of Rajasthan —where she visited the Brahama Temple at Pushkar and the shrine of Khwaja Moinudding Chisti at Ajmer Sharif — said “I heard about his arrest ...



Saket Gokhale is a bright man and is very popular in the social media ... he has been arrested for no wrong. “It is very bad and sad ... I condemn this vindictive attitude ... he was arrested because he tweeted against the Prime Minister,” on Morbi bridge collapse incident. Gokhale had allegedly written fake news on the Morbi incident and later went on to write that the Prime Minister's visit to Morbi cost more than the compensation provided to the kin of the victims of Morbi.

“The party has been trying to contact him since midnight ... but the police have confiscated his mobile and he is thus

incommunicado,” Sen adding, the Chief Minister had directed TMC Rajya Sabha Leader Derek O’ Brien to proceed to Ahmedabad to inquire into the matter and arrange for any legal help for the arrested leader. “Anyone who speaks the truth against the BJP and its government is arrested and sent to jail,” Sen said while Bengal Minister Sobhandeb

Chatopadhaya said how “about 450 journalists all over the country are languishing in various jails of the country.”

The BJP was prompt to hit back showing how a number of opposition people and journalists had either been arrested or served with notices by the police for writing against the Mamata Banerjee Government.

“Gujarat is not Bengal ... if someone has been arrested for writing untrue stories about the Prime Minister and action has been taken by the police ... if he is to be found innocent he will be released but how about Bengal where every journalist gets a notice or the police knock at his door in the midnight for doing stories on the government.”

CBI court discharges former IGNOU, PTU V-Cs in graft case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After a protracted legal battle of nearly 10 years, former IGNOU Vice-Chancellor VN Rajasekharan Pillai has come out clear after a special CBI court here discharged him in a corruption case, officials said on Tuesday.

Former Vice Chancellor of Punjab Technical University Rajneesh Arora and Joint Registrar RPS Bedi were also discharged from the case related to alleged corruption and forgery in allowing the university to run certain courses through distant mode from the academic year 2007.

“Criminal prosecution has been sought of very high-level dignitaries but the CBI just presented the charge sheet without bothering to see whether the ingredients of the alleged offences are present in this case,” Special Judge Naresh Kumar Laka noted.

The CBI, which started the probe in 2011 with a preliminary enquiry, filed an FIR followed by a charge sheet against Pillai, Arora and Bedi under charges of criminal conspiracy, forgery and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the officials said.

The central agency had alleged that the University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical Education and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on May 10, 2007, which stipulated to set up an expert committee to

visit the particular institution to verify the norms and standards of education before approving recognition.

The decision to approve was to be decided on the basis of the expert committee's report, observations of the joint committee and finally by the Distance Education Council (DEC), which is the primary authority of IGNOU for that purpose, they said. The CBI alleged that Pillai violated the MoU and "unilaterally" gave permission to Punjab Technical University to run certain courses through distant mode.

The court rejected the charge that Pillai misused his official position, as one of the relied documents in the CBI charge sheet having an expert opinion on the MoU, said it was not binding and also AICTE had not ratified the document.

Besides, the court agreed with Pillai that the MoU was to facilitate cordial functioning of three bodies—UGC, AICTE and IGNOU—having some overlapping functions "without losing their own statutory power".

“As per established principles of the rule of law, a private agreement can never supersede the statutory provisions which are enacted by the legislatures i.E. Parliament of India or the State Legislative Body,” it said.

The court said according to the charge sheet, the CBI alleged that the three caused undue benefit to Punjab Technical University by granting recognition, which it did not deserve.

SP MLA livestreams UP Assembly proceedings, asked to leave House

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party MLA Atul Spradhan on Tuesday livestreamed proceedings of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly via Facebook while protesting in the Well, drawing the ire of the Speaker who asked him to leave the House and suspended him for the entire session. Speaker Satish Mahana said it had come to his notice that a member went live on Facebook while the Samajwadi Party MLAs were protesting in the well of the House over alleged irregularities and police atrocities during the voting in the bypoll to the Rampur assembly seat.

The speaker later said he had verified that it was SP MLA Atul Pradhan, who was asked to leave the House for the entire session. While the Sardhana MLA immediately left the House, the SP members requested the speaker to review his decision as the first-time legislator was not aware of the assembly rules.Holding that “ignorance of law is not an excuse”, the speaker said: “Pradhan will not be allowed in the House.” However, on being

insisted, the speaker allowed him to attend the proceedings after 1 pm on Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, as soon as the House assembled at 11 am, the Samajwadi Party members raised the issue of alleged police high-handedness in Rampur on Monday. SP MLA Manoj Pandey alleged that the police entered the homes of people and beat them up.

The SP MLAs entered the well of the House and raised slogans denouncing the government. The SP had given notice under rule 56 of the House seeking adjournment of the proceedings to discuss the Rampur issue.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna denied the charges levelled by the opposition members and claimed that no wrong was committed and polling in Rampur remained peaceful.

Mahana said he was ready to allow the opposition to raise this issue as per rules. He asked opposition members to restore order and go back to their seats. However, the opposition refused to relent, forcing him to adjourn the proceedings of the House for 20 minutes.

3 hurt in yet another blast in West Bengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

It is exploding bombs in Bengal. Barely four days after the Bhupatinagar blast that left three persons dead and an unspecified number of victims injured three persons including a woman and two children were severely injured at Ramnagar area of Basirhat sub-division in North 24 Parganas district some 50 miles north of Kolkata.

The incident happened on Tuesday forenoon when a child brought home a round-shaped object taking it to be a ball ...

the ball-like object that the child found in the fields exploded inside the kitchen of his house injuring another child and his mother, sources said. All have been admitted to the Basirhat district hospital, police said.

The incident occurred four days after the blast at Bhupatinagar in East Midnpore district where a Trinamool Congress leader's house literally caved in after a stockpile of explosive went off while the victims were allegedly making bombs. While Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking an NIA investigation into the Bhupatinagar incident, a Public Interest Litigation petition too was filed in Calcutta High Court demanding a similar order.

About a dozen people have lost their lives and tens of them have received grave injuries in bomb blasts and gun fights in the past little more than a month in Bengal. Such incidents were likely to go up at next year's panchayat elections draw nearer, experts say.

UDF demands judicial probe into Vizhinjam violence

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Opposition UDF on Tuesday made a scathing attack against the Kerala government, alleging that it adopted a “hostile attitude” towards the fishermen protesting against the construction of Vizhinjam port and demanded a judicial probe into the recent violent incidents in connection with the anti-seaport stir. The investigation should bring out the real truth and not cover up the facts, they said during a discussion in the state Assembly on the adjournment motion on the Vizhinjam issue.

The opposition front made it clear that they were not demanding that the construction of the upcoming port be stopped.But, development should be brought through consensus and not through confrontation, Congress legis-

lator M Vincent, who moved the motion, said. The Left government was not keen to reach out to the fishermen community and address their woes despite the latter approaching the authorities with their concerns several times, he alleged.

He accused the state government of viewing the agitators with a “hostile attitude” and charged that some cabinet ministers had called them “terrorists” and “anti-nationals”. The Kovalam MLA also alleged that there was a deliberate attempt by the police to provoke the fishermen community and thus create issues in the region.

Several people were arrested without any reason and a case was registered even against the Archbishop, he said, adding that a pregnant woman was summoned to the police station in the name of interrogation.

Giriraj lauds Lalu’s daughter for donating her kidney

Patna: RJD president Lalu Prasad's daughter Rohini Acharya, who donated a kidney to her father, has earned the praise of Union minister Giriraj Singh, one of the most strident opponents of the former Bihar chief minister.

Singh, who represents the Begusarai Lok Sabha seat of the state, expressed his sentiments on Twitter, sharing a picture of Acharya fast asleep on her hospital bed after the surgery in Singapore. "Beti ho to Rohini Acharya jaisi (Rohini

Acharya is the kind of daughter one should have)," Singh tweeted in Hindi, adding that the Singapore-based daughter of Prasad, in her early 40s, "shall serve as an example for the future generations".

PTI

Babri demolition anniversary: Little extra security, but just another day in Ayodhya

PTI ■ AYODHYA (UP)

It was business as usual in the pilgrim city on Tuesday, the day that marked the 30th anniversary of the Babri mosque demolition.

In a break from the curfew-like situation on some past occasions, life remained normal in the city with schools, colleges, offices and public institutions remaining open. Police, however, remain on alert.

Like any other day, local people were seen queuing at the Ram temple complex for a 'darshan' while traffic remained heavy during morning rush hour.

Unlike in the past, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad is not celebrating any 'Shaurya Diwas' (bravery day) and there are no plans by the Muslim community to observe a Black Day. With the Supreme Court judgement in 2019 ending the Ram Janmabhoomi land dispute, people from both the communities appear to be



yearning for peace.

In past years, Ayodhya used to be turned into a fortress ahead of the Babri mosque demolition anniversary. Not this time, though.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Ayodhya, Muniraj G said "routine arrangements" have been made in the city as precautionary measures.

"We are also continuously monitoring social media platforms, while hotels are also being checked," Muniraj G, who was recently appointed as the SSP of Ayohdya, tol reporters.

"All vehicles coming into

Lakhimpur Kheri killings: Charges framed against Ashish Mishra, 12 others for murder, criminal conspiracy

PTI ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP)

A court here on Tuesday framed charges against Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish and 12 others for murder, criminal conspiracy and related offences in the case of mowing down of protesting farmers in October 2021 in Lakhimpur Kheri, paving the way for the start of the trial.

Additional District Judge Sunil Kumar Verma has now fixed the next hearing on December 16, District Government Counsel (Criminal) Arvind Tripathi told PTI.

Tripathi said that 13 accused, including Ashish Mishra, have been charged under IPC sections 147 and 148 related to rioting, 149 (unlawful assembly), 302 (mur-



der), 307 (attempt to murder), 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 427 (mischief) and 120B (punishment for criminal conspiracy), and section 177 of Motor Vehicle Act.Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra, is the main accused in the case. The other 12 accused

are Ankit Das, Nandan Singh Bisht, Latif Kale, Satyam alias Satya Prakash Tripathi, Shekhar Bharti, Sumit Jaiswal, Ashish Pandey, Lavkush Rana, Shishu Pal, Ullas Kumar alias Mohit Trivedi, Rinku Rana and Dharmendra Banjara. All of them are in jail.

The 14th accused, Virendra Shukla, who is out on

bail, has been charged under section 201 of IPC which is related to causing the disappearance of evidence of an offence or giving false information to screen the offender.

The primary object of framing of charge is to tell the accused person precisely about what the prosecution intends to prove against him. Charges under various sections of the Arms Act were also framed against Ashish Mishra, Ankit Das, Nandan Singh Bisht, Satyam alias Satya Prakash Tripathi, Latif Kale and Sumit Jaiswal, Tripathi said.

On October 3, 2021, eight people were killed in Tikunia in Lakhimpur Kheri during violence that erupted when farmers were protesting against Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area.



School students pay tribute to Babasaheb BR Ambedkar on his death anniversary, in Agartala on Tuesday

PTI Photo

Two girls of Lapierre-funded home to represent India in Special Olympics

PTI ■ ULUBERIA (WB)

As newborns, Priyanka and Rani brought despair to their parents but a home for children with special needs in West Bengal's Howrah, set up with funds provided by French author Dominique Lapierre, helped them to qualify for the Indian handball team that will participate in the 2023 Berlin Special Olympic Games.

They secured their berths in the team at the national coaching camp held at Sonapat in Haryana in October, their coach Tamal Chatterjee told PTI.

Besides their physical challenges, they also have a disadvantaged family background.

Born to an autorickshaw driver father and housewife mother of Hatgacha village in Howrah, Priyanka was admit-



SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES BERLIN 2023

proved her mettle in handball, said Johnmary Barui, the director of Asha Bhavan Centre which runs the CCI Home said.

With the help of an intervention programme for overall development, Priyanka is now fully independent in her daily life and also helps her roommates, Barui said. Lapierre was a regular visitor to the CCI

Home for CWSN Girls. He would also interact with the girls, Barui said, adding that the famous French author helped with funds in setting up the institute.

Priyanka's teammate Rani was born to hearing-impaired parents. She was rescued from Howrah station by Childline as a runaway child when she was

very young and was sent to Asha Bhavan Centre. Rani, now 13, is a student of class 8 at Karat Beria High School. She has a 75 per cent intellectual disability and her IQ level is as low as 44, Barui said.

Noticing her love for sports, she was introduced to various sports under the supervision of coach Chatterjee and later she excelled in handball. Priyanka and Rani told PTI, through an interpreter, in sign language that they are excited to participate in the special olympics, scheduled to be held from June 17 to 25 next year.

"I want to win a gold medal for India in handball," Priyanka said. Rani said, "I will try to give my best in the special olympics and practicing very hard for it."

Coach Chatterjee said Rani is a talented striker while Priyanka is good at throwing

and snatching the ball from opponents. Both of them can grip the ball very well, which is very essential in handball, he said. Barui said the other children of the special home are excited after learning that Priyanka and Rani were selected to play in the special olympics. "Now, they have become a role model for the other kids at the home," he added.

Mohammad Mohiuddin, the chief of UNICEF in West Bengal, said that after learning about the achievements of Priyanka and Rani in handball, they enquired about duo and decided to motivate other children using them as examples.

They were featured in a UNICEF film on child sportspersons who made significant achievements, because of their outstanding feats.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

On expected lines

Exit polls have not thrown up any surprises, BJP and AAP are winners and Cong a big loser

The results of exit polls for the Assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi are on expected lines. Most reports and experts were suggesting that the Bharatiya Janata Party would increase its tally of 99 out of 182 seats in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state, overcoming 27 years of anti-incumbency and even the bad press that the saffron party got after the Morbi mishap. The average of nine exit polls for the BJP in Gujarat is 132, whereas for the Congress it is 38 and the Aam Aadmi Party, eight. In the Himalayan state too, where the electorate prefers to change the state government every five years, the BJP was seen as a party that wasn't leaving any stone unturned. A video went viral in which no less a person than the PM was heard trying to coax a rebel party candidate to withdraw his candidature. Exit polls show a tough contest in Himachal, which has 68 Assembly seats, the BJP's average being 35 and the Congress' 30, while AAP is unlikely to open its account. Only Aaj Tak-Axis My India, which gave 30-40 seats to the Congress and 24-34 to the BJP, has thrown up the possibility of the grand old party coming back to power in the hill state. For the MCD election, there were four exit polls, all of which gave a comfortable majority to AAP, the average being 154. The BJP's average was 84 and the Congress' six.

If exit polls are correct on the whole, they highlight a few facts. First, the BJP's election machine is unrivaled. The party's detractors may accuse it of having amassed wealth and using law-enforcement agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate to further its electoral ends, but it would be wrong to deny the magnitude of effort put in by its cadre and that of the RSS. They don't leave anything to chance; they are not deterred or daunted by events like the Morbi bridge collapse or the incidence of rebels everywhere; they just don't give up. The Congress, on the other hand, is just not willing, able, or both to take up the challenge that it faces today—the existential challenge against Modi's BJP. Rahul Gandhi is busy uniting the country, even as his own party is withering away. His sister, Priyanka Vadra, did work in Himachal, but not as much as her party leaders in the state wanted her to. What was once seen as a low-hanging fruit for the GOP seems to have become an apple of discord. The AAP looks like a winner. It appears to be winning the MCD election; for 15 years, the local bodies (there were three MCDs till recently) were under the BJP. Typically, the saffron party did everything to win the MCD election—from a high-profile campaign involving its stalwarts to the use of Satyendra Jain's video clips—but to little avail. Its performance in the two other states, however, compensates for the loss. The GOP, however, has no such compensation.



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PICTALK



Young women shop for Christmas decoration articles at a market, in Guwahati

PTI

Urban Voter's apathy

Low urban turnout in the recent elections reflects disenchantment of city dwellers with political system

After a high decibel campaign in three states of Gujarat, Himachal, and Delhi, it was a damp squib response by the voters, especially in urban areas. Not many came out to vote, especially in the urban areas where the voter turnout was abysmally low. Even the election commission acknowledges the fact that despite so many efforts the voter's interest in the elections was rather low. In Shimla, the turnout was dismal, 10 percentage points lower than Himachal's average of 75.6%. The trend of lower voter turnout in the urban areas was also seen in Gujarat as well. The urban turnout in the first phase in Gujarat was also lower than in 2017. In Delhi's local polls, the same trend was visible in the affluent constituencies of Delhi. The voter turnout of voters has decreased since independence. In the 50s, 60s, and 70s, the urban voters were more active than the rural ones but gradually the rural voters took over and the urban voters started keeping away from the polling booths.



Many factors have contributed to the low voter turnout in general and urban voter turnout in particular. The notion that rich people do not care about elections is largely true and this is reflected in the voting pattern in affluent neighborhoods. In villages, voting is largely a group activity and people vote decisively to effect a change or maintain the status quo. Besides, rural elected bodies are more alive in rural areas than urban ones. Besides, the political parties work harder in rural areas. Group mobilisation is difficult in cities where localities are not based on castes or a particular community. Besides, rural voters need political favours more than their urban counterparts as the rural infrastructure is still evolving whereas the urban voters do not need the government services that ardently and take them for granted. However the most worrisome is the general disenchantment of voters with the political system. Perhaps people are tired of hollow promises and antics of politicians who take voters for granted. The paradigm of two India's is visible in voting pattern also, though there is nothing wrong in high voter turnout in rural areas, and more so on lower-income rural poor. But the disconnect between city middle-classes and elections is still a trend which must be checked as it would mean caring for one at the cost of another.

Digital Education for Digital India

“Technology will not replace great teachers but technology in the hands of the great teachers can be transformational” – George Couros

Technology is one of the keywords of our world, yet it is also one of the most confused forms of elite and systematic knowledge. The usage of this term has changed immensely since the 20th century, and with time it has continued to evolve, thereby helping in improving not only the productivity of business enterprises and individuals but has also played an important role in developing human civilization.

There is no denying the fact that technology has brought a revolution in many operational fields - be it gadgets or faster modes of communication or even the education sector. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in tremendous change in the traditional educational system, wherein the concept of online classes and usage of laptops has replaced the traditional way of teaching in classrooms and through books. Digital education in India which was the sole source of learning for students in the country during the pandemic. Today, with the click of a button, students have immediate access and privilege to quality information available worldwide. They can gain practical and technical knowledge. Innovative audio-video features can enhance their cognitive level, the study materials can be downloaded and saved for future reference. Teachers too can coordinate with students through electronic (e) classrooms and impart knowledge and share their ideas and resources and utilise the resources available on the internet for their various project work, research, etc.

It is often said, technology will become the wings that will allow the educational world to fly farther and faster than ever before. Online learning has changed our perception of education, making the education sector improve over time and adding to the comfort factor in our lives. The Government of India has announced several initiatives as part of its education campaign with the aim of benefitting the students belonging to different strata of society. The Ministry of



Human Resource Development (MHRD) initiated DIKSHA- Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing as part of PM eVidya, under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat programme which is the “One Nation; One digital platform” aiming to bring together the efforts of online, digital and on-air educational modes towards education. It is a national platform for schools across India, containing quizzes and courses for teachers and students. Similarly, many other technology-based initiatives such as Vidyadaan, SWAYAM, e Pathshala, Shiksha Vani and many more under this platform have brought a sea change in the lives of the people of the nation.

These initiatives by the government are the powerful repository of educational resources that can be accessed by students, teachers, researchers and parents anytime as per their convenience. The best part about these portals is that they are user friendly and are available in different languages - English, Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit making them powerhouse of knowledge which is useful on pan India basis as people speaking different languages can make use of them and improve their learnings and capabilities to become informed and better human beings. The users can



INDIA PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE GLOBAL EDUCATION INDUSTRY AND IN THE COMING YEARS IS EXPECTED TO BECOME ONE OF THE LARGEST GLOBAL TALENT PROVIDERS

download the relevant educational material from these portals/ platforms and use them later as per their convenience. Broadcasting through radio also helps students living in remote areas to access knowledge. DTH channel with sign languages - DAISY is also available for hearing impaired students. These latest technological advancements in the field of education have put India on a high pedestal.

India plays a significant role in the global education industry and in the coming years is expected to become one of the largest global talent providers. However, the need of the hour is to ensure that our students get a high-quality education coupled with hands-on practical experience. Our curriculums need to be skill-focused, more personalised and up to date.

Digital agility through digital education is the need of the hour. For digital education to be successful, the teachers should be imparted sufficient and efficient training so that they become comfortable in these new age modes of education. This, along with well-equipped infrastructure and internet connections should be made available in the remotest areas of the country to derive true benefits of this mode of education. Electronic gadgets and technology at

affordable cost should be made available for the weaker sections of the society, making digital learning cost-effective and giving equal opportunities to everyone. Through this mode, learning can be made more interactive and engaging between the learner and the teacher. Digital education will immensely help in addressing India's vast cultural and language diversity.

India is favourably placed to reap the benefits of digitalisation of education that can change 'how and what' we learn and will certainly help in bridging the gap in interaction between the teacher and the student in near future. However, to be useful, digital education should complement the traditional mode of physical education and should not be at its cost. The benefits of physical education can't be undermined as personal touch and interaction also play a great role in the children's development. Both these modes should supplement each other. Only then will the country be able to reap the true benefits of Digital education by dramatically improving the learning capacity of the students and leading India to the path of glory.

(The author is a teacher at a reputed school in Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTROVERSY OVER COLLEGIUM

Sir — The English language print media, through its editorials and write-ups, is supporting the dictatorial attitude of the Supreme Court of India over Collegium and cursing the Union Govt. on the logical dissent on the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary. Anyone who claims to be transparent and righteous must respect the people who think otherwise about the attitude of the SC judges. The virtues of anyone or the institution must follow the scrutiny of the people affected by it, not at all by self-righteous claims.

The support to the SC judges by the large section of the media seems because of their hate towards the present Union Govt and the political party heading the state. But we must remember the SC judges too like other individuals are not supernatural human beings. Rather the judges entering through the corrupt collegium are most likely not because of their talent but due to the favour granted by the collegium. No institution should be free from criticism and responsibility. Supreme Court judges are enjoying ultimate power without responsibility. The present setup of the SC is not only harmful to justice in Bharat but is also making governance difficult at every step.

Dr. Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

RAGGING IN MEDICAL COLLEGES

Sir — Ragging in (life-saving, constructive) Medical colleges (of India) sounds contradictory and inhuman. Tomorrow's medical doctors should practice saving lives, not harming lives by ragging. All people of the modern era know that ragging is jungle law-oriented domination, sadism, and devilish nature. Parents of poor and middle-class families toil hard to send money to their children to pay expensive medical or college fees and hostel fees. Incidents of hurting and troubling others, money snatching, sound horrible, uncivilized, and surprising. Any form of ragging should be immediately stopped.

To help the helpless (juniors or anyone), the administration must urgently place extra helpers in any hostel or college

Iran bows to women power



Iran finally has scrapped its morality police after more than three months of protests triggered by the arrest of Mahsa Amini for allegedly violating the country's female dress code. Women who have been over the past couple of months led the most powerful and sustained street protests since the Islamic revolution of 1978-79. In Iran, over the years the strictness of mandatory rules on women's dress code has been enforced and for these strict rules the people, mostly women, were suffering. The protests in Iran have been led by women and young people demanding the end

of clerical rule and social freedom, in which protesters chanted women's life, freedom made to tear off their Hijabs, burn them in street bonfires, and cut their hair in a symbolic act of defiance.

This has created the first major confession to authoritarian clerical rule to scrap the morality police and made the Iranian government declare that Hijab is a matter of personal choice. The women in Iran were not against the wearing of Hijab but were against the brutalities of the Morality police. 300 people were killed in protests, 14000 people were arrested and even 30 security forces were killed. Four people have been sentenced to death on the charge of enmity against God in connection with the recent anti-government protests in Iran. Kudos to the extraordinary courage of Iranian young people especially women who have been leading their protests and made the Iranian government bow down.

Zakir Hussain | Kazipet

where ragging incidents are rising. In medical or other fields, ragging must be nullified immediately with innovative, friendly, and compassionate steps. If you punish raggers they will turn more vengeful and devilish. Educating students that only welcome parties, helping nature, happy development management, joyful success solutions, enjoy life constructively are the civilized and suitable (Panchatantra) to humans of any era. Please focus on gaining expertise in the medical field to help humanity. Not harm humanity.

Nivriti Sreelekha PS | Secunderabad

INDIAN TEAM DISAPPOINTS AGAIN

Sir — Team India's track record in recent times is going for a toss as we could not finish off the opposition clinically as we lack the killer instinct in such competitive games. Winning is a habit and we lacked the will to win close games. Indian cricket has died a thousand deaths at Mirpur as we allowed the last two too long and thus lost the initiative. We did not have a single bowler who could take just one wicket. When we form a team we can

witness the likes and dislikes of the captain and the coach thereby missing out on a balanced team for all formats of the game. The entire team including the coach and also the captain should be sacked and the team should be rebuilt from scratch.

High time we stop resting on our laurels and ICC rankings. It is just the magical figures that count for Indian selectors and we come straight to assess our team from IPL performances. The team is unsettled. Chopping and choosing the team combination is causing a lot of uncertainties in the team and bowling looks so weak and unsure. Batting is just good in patches and neither the experienced nor the new players are contributing to the score. Even in the past, we depended more on all-rounders to repair the damages and the trend continues. Playing a positive game of cricket and an aim to win matches can prove to be a tonic for this ill-fated Indian Team.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

The All-Party meet on India's G-20 Presidency was a productive one. This Presidency belongs to the entire nation and will give us the opportunity to showcase our culture.



Prime Minister
— Narendra Modi

In order to solve our world's sanitation crisis, we need smarter toilets that don't rely on sewage systems and prevent the spread of diseases.

Microsoft founder
— Bill Gates

They (parents) didn't want me to join the film industry. They said it is a very harsh profession, we don't want you there. So I said I don't think I have a choice (but to do movies) because I really love it.

Actor
— Aamir Khan

When it comes to Rishabh (Pant), I'm not very aware, to be honest. I just found out in the dressing room that he was being

released, I don't know what the reasons are.

Vice captain
— KL Rahul

It is not appropriate for them to come when there is such a situation between the two states. We have already sent the message not to come.

Karnataka Chief Minister
— Basavaraj Bommai



FIRST COLUMN

EMOTIONS SPOIL LIFE GOAL; AIM SENSIBLY


Lord Krishna counsels a realistic and sensible approach



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Lord Krishna guides in the Bhagavad-Geeta, when He states, “In the bonafide Sankhya philosophy, these five causes have been stated for success in all actions.” (18.13) These are, “The place of action, the doer, many different kinds of instruments, many different efforts and the providence.” (18.14) The Lord states further, “Whatever action is begun by a man by body, speech and mind, these five are the causes of them.” (18.15) Lord Krishna summarises, “This being the case, still, who on account of immature intelligence thinks himself as the only doer, he is foolish; he does not understand.” (18.16)

Are we being foolish? Are we aiming too big or too small? Are we being realistic and sensible in setting our goals? Let us see if we are. There should be a fair assessment of the following. What are our abilities? Connected with this is our potential. An example will help us understand. Suppose there is a girl. Unfortunately, she is not pretty. On top of it she has tendency of becoming obese. Should she plan to enter the glamour world? No, she must focus on something to do with intelligence, if she is sharp in studies. Next come resources. What is available to us? Suppose there is a boy from a poor family, focus on getting a good job to begin his professional life. On the other hand, a boy from a rich family can plan to become a businessman. He should study and specialise in management from the best institutions.



The third criterion must be circumstances and opportunities available. A boy born to a yogi couple can think of becoming a yogi himself, blessed as he is. He has a tremendous start for making good spiritual progress in the present life. The fourth yardstick must be ‘yukta cheshta’ (appropriate efforts), as instructed by Lord Krishna in verse #6.17. Too much is counterproductive like a student appearing for an important exam studying all night. Too little is sick because all of us are expected to help ourselves as much as possible.

What does the Bhagavad-Geeta teach us in this connection? What did Lord Krishna promise Arjuna? In verse #2.37, He told Arjuna that if victorious he will enjoy the earth and if slain will achieve heaven. God did not even mention liberation because Arjuna was not an advanced devotee; he was just thinking of getting started, as he expressed in the verse #6.38. Lord clarified that a yogi, which Arjuna was not, achieves perfection due to practice of many births. (6.45) The creation works on the karmaphala principle, and mostly what we bring from our previous births come to fruition in the present life. Therefore, it is futile to imagine that we can achieve almost anything by our present efforts. This is not the way the creation works. For the present life, He counsels a realistic and sensible approach, when He states, “Be satisfied with any benefit, which comes of its own accord due to acts done earlier.” (4.22)

If we continue to harbour unrealistic desires, we will only get frustrated and waste a valuable human life. This is a materialistic way of thinking, in which God and His rules are ignored. One violates the ‘maryada’ (limit) of thinking and goes very far from reality. Lord Krishna has clearly warned that we have right in action, not ever in pre-determining fruits. (2.47) ‘Ahankar’ (ego) prompts it and should be shunned. We will be well served.

(The author is a spiritual teacher)

Amrit Mahotsav: Saga to tell untold stories

Yesterday was the death anniversary of Ambedkar, which gave us the opportunity to remember the unsung heroes of India

The dawn of the historic 76th Independence Day has marked the beginning of the era of ‘Amrit Kaal’. The valorous saga of struggle against the British Raj and subsequently earned freedom is the outcome of the immeasurable sacrifices of unsung heroes.

Amrit Mahotsav is celebrated to mark the 75th Birthday of the sage in mythology. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has conceptualized ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ by drawing a similar parallel to Independent India’s 75th year journey. The ever-increasing public participation in Amrit Mahotsav events further pushes for the amalgamation of everything that aids in strengthening the political, social, and economic uplift of a value-driven India.


After the birth of Independent India, the pages of history remained knowingly and unknowingly skewed to celebrate specific Ideas and ideals that have shaped the India we breathe in today. The political aspiration and increasing groves of nepotism had hugely hampered the cause for crediting recognition to builders of the Nation. This opaque idealism towards their contribution might have been addressed in the short-term agenda of the then decision makers, but it became a sentimental hurt for many for a long time.

One such tallest nation builder, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, had a similar fate as the subsequent regimes didn’t heed the wholesomeness of Ambedkar’s deed and the subsequent psychological undercurrent among his well-wishers and followers. It is a crystal clear fact that it took 34 years to posthumously award him Bharat Ratna, similar is the fate of the installation of his portrait in the Central Hall, a place where he drafted the Constitution of India. The echo of Ambedkar in the Central Hall was an echo of social, political and economic justice for newly budding independent India. The journey for installing a life-size portrait in Parliament’s Central Hall is very heartening commentary for every fellow Ambedkarite.

A brief account of the record tells a grim picture of the happenings. As Dr Ambedkar breathed last on December 6, 1956, then onwards demand for installation for the Central Hall portrait was raised by his followers.

Despite the need, Jawaharlal Nehru rejected the demand for Dr. Ambedkar’s portraits, and Moti Lal Nehru’s portrait was installed on 30 March 1957. J.L. Nehru’s intentions and deep-rooted superiority complex visibly come out in his remark dated July 23, 1957 on the portrait demand of Prantiya Jataw Sabha, Gwalior, wherein he says: “So far as Dr Ambedkar’s portrait is concerned, I would have no objection to its being put up in the library or somewhere else provided it is relatively small or otherwise good.”

Later, the same demand was declined again by the then Jawaharlal Nehru Portrait



THE LIFE-SIZE PORTRAIT, MADE BY ARTIST ZEBAMAMROHAWI AND DONATED BY ‘THE BR AMBEDKAR VICHAR MANCH’, WAS UNVEILED BY PRIME MINISTER VPSINGH ON APRIL 12, 1990, AS PART OF THE CENTENARY YEAR CELEBRATION OF AMBEDKAR’S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

(The author is Minister of State for Culture & Parliamentary Affairs, and Lok Sabha MP from Bikaner)



Parliamentary Committee on August 26, 1965, citing the unavailability of vacant panels in the central Hall. Ironically, the same unavailability turned to availability on May 5, 1966, when the Central Hall witnessed Pt Jawaharlal Nehru’s portrait.

It was time when the nation was marking the 75th birth anniversary of Dr Ambedkar. This eager demand for a central hall portrait was pacified by issuing a mere 15th paisa commemorative stamp. This indifferent attitude of the Congress government’s insensitivity towards the aspiration of Dr Ambedkar’s followers further intensified their demand.

Diluting from the core idea, Dr Ambedkar’s bronze statue, received from Dr Baba Saheb Memorial Committee, was installed at Iron Gate No. 3 on 2nd April 1967. The Then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi did not attend the statue unveiling ceremony.

Meanwhile, on November 19, 1987, the portrait of Indira Gandhi was installed in the Central Hall. At this stage, the demand for duly recognizing Baba Saheb’s portrait gets further impetus, and more and more Dalit MPs call the attention of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to confer him Bharat Ratna and Central Hall portrait. Under this pressure, the Rajiv Gandhi-led government consented to the portrait installation, and then Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar installed the central Hall portrait on August 9, 1989, which the B.R. Ambedkar Vichar Manch donated. These dynamics made it clear that this step resulted from compulsion and not

by choice. It is ironic to learn that the installed portrait of Dr Ambedkar was withdrawn by succumbing to the ill-will agenda of congress leaders.

The portrait was removed from the Central Hall and found its new home in the Parliament museum along with other freedom fighters. This whole episode made a severe dent in the feelings of fans and followers of Baba Saheb. Many ambedkariate associations and Dalit MPs protested against this unruly gesture of the congress government. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a reasoned voice of opposition, was a keen observant figure of the whole portrait dynamics.

The widely held precedent that the Central Hall portrait can be displayed only for the person whose portrait/statue/ bust not already installed in Parliament estate was contravened for the Nehru family by subsequent congress regimes. It was ironic that despite these exceptions, the same precedent was argued during the consideration and delaying of Ambedkar’s Central Hall portrait.

The awakened conscience of the followers of Dr. Ambedkar remained fully intact to check the long-drawn insensitivity of the congress-led dispensation. It was in 1989 that VP Singh’s government, externally supported by BJR, came to power, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee proposed to address this long pending grievance. A genuinely justified decision showed a path of light to the dark-ridden aspirations of fellow Ambedkarite, with the return of Dr Ambedkar’s Portrait in the Central Hall.

The life-size portrait, made by artist Zeba Amrohawi and donated by ‘The BR Ambedkar Vichar Manch’, was unveiled by prime minister VP Singh on April 12, 1990, as part of the centenary year celebration of Ambedkar’s birth anniversary.

Notably, the earlier regimes’ exhibited biases and insensitivities in recognizing the founding father’s significant contribution compelled us to reflect on the time scale for much-needed course correction. It carries a mammoth task to unearth the harsh realities as an outcome of indifference to the aspirations of a downtrodden section of society. The phenomenon of duly recognizing effort and sacrifices is a gesture that presents a better understanding of our past and adds dimensions to rational reasoning for bringing out the best in the future generation.

The ongoing ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ is a righteous initiative of the Modi Government to express our sincere gratitude to the noble souls and all stakeholders whose unaccounted and undivided efforts are fulfilling the aspiration of the masses, enabling them to realize their full potential. It is a journey of building a value-driven India for nurturing upcoming generations. This festive occasion has brought up the spirit of independence alive again on a massive scale. Today on the death anniversary of Baba Saheb, let’s seize the opportunity by crediting due recognition to the unsung heroes of India by bringing out their hitherto untold stories. Let the spirit of ‘Amrit Mahotsav’ take everyone to scale new heights for the Nation.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT


I HAVEN’T READ THE CONSTITUTION, BUT, FROM WHAT I’VE BEEN TOLD, MOST OF IT IS A WASTE OF PAPER, QUITE FRANKLY. — FORMER US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



THE CONSTITUTION IS GREATER THAN ANY PRESIDENT. — TWITTER CHIEF ELON MUSK

How to check cheque bounce? Don’t issue cheques

With the advancement of technology of digital transfer, there is no reason to accept cheque as a payment instrument at all



S KALYANASUNDARAM

As there is a large number of pending cases relating to cheque bounces in Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan, the Supreme Court in May 22 has directed to constitute special courts in these states with retired judges.

Before the introduction of Section 138 of Negotiable Instruments Act in 1989, bouncing of cheque for want of funds was not straightaway a criminal offence. It was considered only as a civil dispute. There was a possibility to invoke Section 420 of Indian Penal Code to treat the cheque bounce as cheating. But in such cases, the beneficiary of the cheque had to prove the intention of the issuer of the cheque to

cheat him. But after introduction of Section 138 of NI Act, if the cheque has been issued for clearance of liability and if the cheque is returned for insufficient balance in the account, it becomes a criminal offence. Of course, there are procedural aspects as to the need to give notice to pay, etc. This was made to enhance the acceptability of cheques in the country.

Now it is reported that many suggestions were made at a high-level meeting recently called by the Government to deal with the high incidence of cheque bounce cases and the government is contemplating to introduce some of the suggestions.

One suggestion is to dip into other accounts of a

cheque issuer in case of insufficient balance in one account which results in return of cheque. It is strange that the suggestion has been made without understanding the legal relationship between a banker and a customer. Banks open and operate accounts for customers as per the contract between the bank and the customer and it is subject to various provisions of Indian Contract Act.

Bankers cannot be made a party in the dispute between the drawer and payee of a cheque. The banker is there to execute the order of the drawer as the contract is between the banker and its customer. Making the banker help the beneficiary of a cheque will be patently illegal.

Banks can debit a cus-

tomers’ account only as per mandate and not otherwise. There is Section 31 of NI Act which states as follows: Liability of drawee of cheque — The drawee of a cheque having sufficient funds of the drawer in his hands properly applicable to the payment of such cheque must pay the cheque when duly required so to do, and, in default of such payment, must compensate the drawer for any loss or damage caused by such default.

The Government is looking at another suggestion that is to prohibit opening of new accounts to offenders of cheque bounce cases. It is possible to implement this suggestion just with an administrative order from Reserve Bank of India. But

the judiciary may look into such direction as discrimination as until an offence is proved and the person is convicted.

The issuer of the cheque bounce case cannot be considered as a person who has committed the offence until convicted by the court.

Yet another suggestion is to treat the cheque bounce similar to loan default and to inform credit information companies for necessary downgrade of score.

Industry body PHDCCI has suggested to the Finance Ministry to take measures like compulsory suspension of bank withdrawals for a few days to make cheque issuers accountable for their action in cheque bounce cases. Again patently it is illegal to stop

operation in bank accounts for such a reason. Operations in bank accounts can be stopped only when there is a court order like Garnishee order, or where there is attachment order from Income Tax department, etc. Or there can be a banker’s general lien over the balance.

The industry body has also suggested enacting a law that from the date of dishonouring of cheque, the dispute between the two parties must be settled within 90 days through mediation. Enacting such a law may be easier. But how to implement the time line? Even in mediation there is scope to drag the case endlessly.

The best way to check cheque bounce cases is to

reduce the incidence of issue of cheque. With the advancement of technology of digital funds transfer, there is no reason to accept cheque as a payment instrument at all. We may even remove the penal provision under Section 138. This penal provision was introduced when online transfers were not possible.

Now there is no necessity to continue the same and to provide an avenue for a number of criminal cases. If someone is still accepting a cheque as a medium for payment, it should be their funeral. Let them understand the risk and let them take that risk. Let them not be allowed to strain the already overburdened judiciary.

Russian airfield hit day after drone strikes on bases

AP ■ KYIV

A fire that broke out at an airport in Russia's southern Kursk region that borders Ukraine was the result of a drone attack, the regional governor said Tuesday, a day after Moscow blamed Kyiv for drone strikes on two air bases deep inside Russia and launched a new wave of missile strikes on Ukrainian territory.

Kursk Governor Roman Starovoy said in a Telegram post that the drone attack ignited an oil reservoir in the area of Kursk airport and the blaze was being contained by crews at the scene.

Ukrainian officials have not formally confirmed carrying out the drone attacks, maintaining their apparent policy of deliberate ambiguity as they have done in the past when it comes to high-profile attacks on Russian targets.

Presidential adviser Mikhail Podolyak taunted Moscow in comments on Twitter.

"If something is launched into other countries' airspace, sooner or later unknown flying objects will return to the point of departure," Podolyak wrote. "The earth is round."

The unprecedented attacks in Russia - more than 500 km (300 miles) from the border with Ukraine - threatened a major escalation of the nine-month war. One of the airfields houses bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

The attacks also exposed the vulnerability of some of Russia's most strategic military sites, raising questions about the effectiveness of their air defenses.

Russia's Defence Ministry said three Russian servicemen were killed and four others wounded by debris, and that two aircraft were slightly damaged.

The ministry didn't say where the drones had originated. But Russian military bloggers said they likely were launched by Ukrainian scouts, and argued that the strikes had inflicted serious reputational damage on Moscow.

The attacks on the Engels base in the Saratov region on the Volga River and the Dyagilevo base in the Ryazan region in western Russia were part of Ukraine's efforts to curtail Russia's long-range bomber force, the ministry said.

The Engels base hosts Tu-95 and Tu-160 nuclear-capable strategic bombers that have been involved in strikes on Ukraine. Dyagilevo houses tanker aircraft used for mid-air refuelling.

In a daily intelligence update on the war in Ukraine, Britain's Defence Ministry said



Russia was likely to consider the base attacks as "some of the most strategically significant failures of force protection since its invasion of Ukraine".

It said the bombers would likely be dispersed to other airfields.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russian authorities will "take the necessary measures" to enhance protection of key facilities in view of the latest Ukrainian attacks.

Speaking in a conference call with reporters Tuesday, Peskov said "the Ukrainian regime's course for continuation of such terror attacks poses a threat."

Peskov reaffirmed that Russia sees no prospects for peace talks now, adding that "the Russian Federation must achieve its stated goals."

EU, Western Balkans to boost partnership amid Ukraine war

AP ■ TIRANA (ALBANIA)

EU leaders and their Western Balkan counterparts gathered Tuesday for talks aimed at boosting their partnership as Russia's war in Ukraine threatens to reshape the geopolitical balance in the region.

The EU wants to use the one-day summit in Albania's capital to tell leaders from Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia that they have futures within the wealthy economic bloc and give them concrete signs, rather than just promises, that they will join one day.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, has been repeating that stepping up the bloc's engagement with the six nations is more crucial than ever to maintaining Europe's security.

As Europe's relationship with Russia deteriorates further because of the war, tensions have also mounted in the Balkans and the EU wants to avoid other flashpoints close to its borders.

"In the Western Balkans, several crises are looming, and partners feel the immediate damaging impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine," Borrell said last month. "The shockwaves of this war are hitting the Western Balkans. To counter that, we are stepping up our engagement as the Western Balkans remain our geostrategic priority - the closest and most important geostrategic priority."

According to a draft of the declaration to be adopted at the summit, the EU will repeat "its full and unequivocal commitment to the European Union membership perspective of the Western Balkans" and call for an acceleration of accession talks with the incumbents.

In return, the EU expects full solidarity from its Western Balkans partners and wants them fully aligned with its foreign policies.

That particular point has been problematic with Serbia, whose president, Aleksandar Vucic, claims he wants to take Serbia into the European Union but has cultivated ties with Russia.

Although Serbia's representatives voted in favor of various U.N. Resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Vucic has refused to explicitly condemn Moscow. His country has not joined Western sanctions against Russia over the war.

Although the progress of the six nations toward EU membership had stalled recently, there has been some progress over the past few months.

This summer, the EU started membership negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia following years of delays. And Bosnia moved a small step closer on its path to joining the powerful economic bloc when the commission advised member countries in October to grant it candidate status despite continuing criticism of the way the nation is run.

Kosovo has only started the first step, with the signing of a Stabilization and Association Agreement. It said it would apply for candidate status later this month.

Among the concrete measures to be adopted in Tirana, a deal involving telecommunications operators that will bring down data roaming charges will be announced. Discussions will also focus on the negative effects for energy and food security from Russia's war in Ukraine. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has already announced financial support to help countries in the Western Balkans cope with shortages and higher prices.

The EU last admitted a new member - Croatia, which is also part of the Balkans - in 2013. Before that, Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007. With the withdrawal of the United Kingdom in 2021, the EU now has 27 member nations.



Latvia revokes licence of independent Russian TV channel

AP ■ TALLINN

Latvia has revoked the license of an independent Russian TV channel exiled in the Baltic country for, among other things, voicing support for the Russian military and including Crimea in its map of Russia, media authorities said on Tuesday.

The decision by the Latvian National Electronic Mass Media Council was based on number of recent violations by TV Rain and the license was revoked on the grounds of a threat to national security and public order.

The region's main news agency, Baltic News Service, said the decision will take effect on Thursday when not only TV Rain's broadcasts but also its programs on YouTube will be blocked in Latvia.

TV Rain was earlier fined by the Latvian media watchdog for failing to ensure proper translation of its broadcasts into Latvian, the Baltic country's only official language.

On Friday, Latvia's state security service started a probe into statements made by TV Rain on suspicion that it was supporting Russia and its military currently waging a war in Ukraine.

Latvia's decision was triggered by a TV Rain programme in which the anchor invited Russian soldiers and their families watching it to share their stories with the channel and promised to offer help.

The host offered an apology, saying he wasn't promising material assistance to Russian troops on the front line in Ukraine, but the channel quickly fired him and apologized.

The incident came on top of earlier tensions with the Latvian authorities, who issued a reprimand over the channel depicting the Moscow-annexed Crimea as part of Russia on maps and referring to the Russian military as "our army."

TV Rain owner Natalya Sindeyeva said in an interview that she hasn't decided on the next steps yet.



First delivery of South Korean heavy weapons comes to Poland

AP ■ GDYNIA

Polish President Andrzej Duda and the country's defense minister on Tuesday took delivery of a first shipment of tanks and howitzers from South Korea, hailing the swift implementation of a deal signed in the summer in the face of the war in neighboring Ukraine.

Duda and Mariusz Blaszczak were in the Polish Navy port of Gdynia, on the Baltic coast, to mark the arrival by sea of the first 10 Black Panther K2 tanks, along with 24 Thunder K9 howitzers, from a \$5.8 billion deal with Seoul.

They stressed that South Korea responded quickly to the need by Poland, a European Union nation, to urgently increase its deterrence and defense potential as Russia is fighting a war in Ukraine, just across Poland's eastern border.

Korean government and defense industry officials were also present.

"This is the future, this is the real strengthening of Poland's security," Duda said, standing before the tanks and the howitzers.

"In order to stop aggression, to stop the enemy, it is necessary for the army to have this modern equipment," he added. More deliveries are planned through 2025.

Poland is purchasing hundreds of K2 Black Panther tanks made by Hyundai Rotem and of K9 Thunder howitzers made by Hanhwa Defense. The deal includes training, logistics and ammunition.

The conservative government in Warsaw is also buying Korean FA-50 fighter jets, a light training and combat aircraft made jointly by Korea Aerospace and Lockheed Martin, for some USD 3 billion.

Poland is also seeking a technology transfer so it can launch production domestically.



Hungary vetoes EU Ukraine aid, deepening rift with Brussels

AP ■ BRUSSELS

A rift between the European Union and member state Hungary deepened Tuesday when Budapest vetoed an 18-billion euro (\$18.93 billion) financial aid package to Kyiv, exacerbating a dispute over the rule of law in the country and Prime Minister Viktor Orban's outlook over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

EU finance ministers also postponed any decision to punish Hungary by withholding billions of euros for failing to implement solid rule-of-law reforms.

Instead of ensuring unanimous support for aid to Ukraine, Hungary's veto made sure that the EU's other 26 member states would need work out a more complicated technical plan to make sure aid can keep flowing to Kyiv in the new year.

"In the end agreement was found on formulations that allow a flexible and quick way to deploy funds to Ukraine without fundamentally changing the way the EU manages its funds. I say agreement, but in the reality that agreement was minus one," said Tuomas Saarenheimo, the chairman of the EU Council Economic and Financial Committee.

Many nations see Orban's evasive tactics as a thinly veiled attempt to blackmail the EU into releasing billions in regular funding and pandemic recovery cash that has been held up.

The EU's 27 nations have until Dec. 19 to make a decision, and EU leaders meet for a two-day summit next week, increasing chances that the issues would still need to be grappled with at a later date.

EU nations have been mulling for years now whether to punish Orban for what he calls his brand of "illiberal democracy" but what is seen by many others as unfit for the EU's traditional sense of Western democratic liberalism.

On top of that, Orban has also angered the bloc's officials with his repeated criticism of EU sanctions targeting Russia for its war in Ukraine.

The EU's executive branch proposed that the bloc suspend around 7.5 billion euros (\$7.5 billion) in regular funding to Hungary over concerns about democratic backsliding and the possible mismanagement of EU money. The Commission also wants to put conditions on Hungary's pandemic recovery plan worth 5.8 billion euros and insists Budapest implement 27 "super milestones" on democratic reforms to unlock the funding.



Russia unleashes missiles but Ukraine says most shot down

AP ■ KYIV

Russia unleashed what Ukrainian authorities called the latest "massive missile attack" across their country, striking homes and buildings, killing civilians, and disrupting electrical power and water supplies in areas - notably in the Black Sea port city of Odesa. Ukraine's air force claimed it shot down more than 60 of the 70 missiles fired.

Hours earlier, explosions rocked two air bases deep inside Russia, and the Defense Ministry in Moscow said it had shot down two Ukrainian drones attacking the sites, and that three Russian servicemen were killed by falling debris and four others were wounded.

The attacks at the bases in the Saratov region on the Volga River and the Dyagilevo base in the Ryazan region in western Russia raised the threat of a dangerous escalation in the war.

Kyiv had not commented on the explosions at the Russian bases.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, drove a car across a bridge linking his country to the Crimean Peninsula following its repair from a truck bombing in October that had embarrassed Moscow.

Russia responded to the bridge attack by firing waves of missiles at Ukrainian infrastructure targets in the weeks that followed, and Monday's onslaught was just the latest round of retaliatory strikes. Russia is seeking to disable Ukraine's energy supplies and infrastructure as winter approaches - part of a new strategy in its nine-month war.

Defiant as ever, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy praised his military forces and the technicians who snapped into action to repair the damage.

"Air defense shot down most of the missiles," he said in brief comments on social media. "Power engineers have already started to restore electricity. Our people never give up."

Ukraine's air force said early indications showed Russian forces fired 38 cruise missiles from carriers in the Caspian Sea and from the southern Russian region of Rostov. Another 22 Kalibr cruise missiles were fired from its Black Sea fleet, and kong-range bombers, fighter jets and guided missiles were also involved, it said.

"In total, more than 60 invaders' missiles were shot down!" the air force said on its Telegram channel.

Ukraine's electricity provider, Ukrenergo, lashed out at Russia over "the eighth massive missile attack by a terrorist country," saying its facilities had been hit, triggering blackouts. It urged residents to stay

in shelters as its crews tried to repair the damage.

In the capital of Kyiv, scores of people quickly filled the central Zoloti Vorota metro station after the warnings, and many checked their phones for updates. There were no immediate signs of whether the city or the surrounding region was hit.

Air raid sirens sounded across the country. Ukrainian media reported explosions in several parts of the country south of Kyiv, including Cherkasy, Kryvyi Rih and Odesa. Officials said water, electricity and central heating was cut to many parts of Odesa.

"The enemy is again attacking the territory of Ukraine with missiles!" Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office, wrote on Telegram.

Tymoshenko said two people were killed and three others injured - including a 22-month-old child - in the village of Novosofiyivka in the southern Zaporizhzhia region.

In neighboring Moldova, the Interior Ministry said on its Facebook page that border patrol officers had found a rocket in an orchard near the northern city of Briceni near Ukraine.

Emergency services, including a bomb squad. Were sent to the scene. Controls in the vicinity have also been tightened, the ministry said. It was not immediately clear when the rocket may have landed or who fired it.

Moldovan Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita stopped short of saying when the missile might have fallen but cautioned that "a new wave of missile attacks is taking place in Ukraine, which has direct consequences for our country." She warned that Moldova could suffer further power outages in the new Russian strikes.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the attack on its bases were part of Ukraine's efforts to curtail operations of Russia's long-range bomber force.

The Engels air base in the Saratov region houses nuclear-capable bombers and was the first time since the start of the conflict that such a facility was attacked. It's located over 600 kilometers (more than 370 miles) east of the border with Ukraine.

The Dyagilevo air base, which houses flight tankers used to refuel other planes in the air, is located about 500 kilometers (over 300 miles) northwest of the Ukrainian border.

The Russian Defense Ministry said four other servicemen were injured and two aircraft were lightly damaged by the drones' debris.

The ministry didn't say



ement official responsible for the project.

Putin had inaugurated the bridge in a highly symbolic move after the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Zelenskyy's office said three rocket strikes hit his hometown of Rih Krivyy Rih in south-central Ukraine, killing a factory worker and injuring three others. In the northeastern region of Kharkiv, a person was killed in strikes by S-300 missiles on civilian infrastructure in the town of Kupiansk, it said.

The war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 has displaced millions from their homes, killed and injured tens of thousands of people and shaken the world economy - notably through the fallout on the prices and availability of food, fertilizer and fuel that are key exports from Ukraine and Russia.

Western countries Monday imposed a \$60-per-barrel price cap and a ban on some types of Russian oil, part of new measures aimed at stepping up pressure on Moscow over the war.

The move has prompted a rejection from the Kremlin and also criticism from Zelenskyy - whose government wants the cap to be half as high.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who is in charge of energy issues, warned in televised comments Sunday that Russia won't sell its oil to countries that try to apply the price cap.

"We will only sell oil and oil products to the countries that will work with us on market terms, even if we have to reduce output to some extent," Novak said hours before the price cap took effect.

The 27-country European bloc also imposed an embargo on Russian oil shipped by sea.

Russia, the world's No. 2 oil producer, relies on oil and gas to underpin its economy, which has already come under sweeping international sanctions over the war.

In recent weeks, Russia has been pounding Ukrainian infrastructure - including power plants - with military strikes and keeping an offensive going in the east, notably in and around the town of Bakhmut.

China reiterates ‘no 1st use’ nuke policy, blasts US report

AP ■ BEIJING

China strictly adheres to its policy of no first use of nuclear weapons "at any time and under any circumstances," its Defence Ministry said Tuesday in a scathing response to a US report alleging a major buildup in Beijing's nuclear capabilities.

The Pentagon last week released an annual China security report that warned Beijing would likely have 1,500 nuclear warheads by 2035, and that it has provided no clarity on how it plans to use them.

That report "distorts China's national defence policy and military strategy, makes groundless speculation about China's military development and grossly interferes in China's internal affairs on the issue of Taiwan," ministry spokesperson Tan Kefei said in a statement.

Tan accused the US of being the "biggest troublemaker and destroyer of world peace and stability," and repeated that Beijing has never renounced the use of force to conquer self-governing Taiwan, a US ally that China considers part of its territory.

Tan did not directly address the report's allegations about a Chinese nuclear buildup, but blamed the US for raising nuclear tensions, particularly with its plan to help Australia build a fleet of submarines powered by US nuclear technology, which the French president has described as a "confrontation with China."

Australia has said it will not seek to arm the submarines with nuclear weapons. Tan also accused the US of having the world's largest nuclear arsenal, although that title is actually held by Russia, a close Chinese military, economic and diplomatic partner.

As of 2022, Russia possesses a total of 5,977 nuclear warheads compared to 5,428 in the US inventory, according to the Federation of American Scientists, China currently has 350 nuclear warheads, according to the federation.

China has long adhered to what it calls a purely defensive national security strategy, including a claim that it will never be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict. That



stance has frequently been challenged at home and abroad, particularly if it comes to a confrontation over Taiwan.

"What needs to be emphasized is that China firmly pursues the nuclear strategy of self-defense and defense, always adheres to the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, and maintains its nuclear force at the minimum level required for national security," Tan said in the statement, which was posted on the ministry's website.

His remarks came days after US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said the US is at

a pivotal point with China and will need military strength to ensure that American values, not Beijing's, set global norms in the 21st century.

Austin's speech Saturday at the Reagan National Defence Forum capped a week in which the Pentagon was squarely focused on China's rise and what that might mean for America's position in the world.

China "is the only country with both the will and, increasingly, the power to reshape its region and the international order to suit its authoritarian preferences," Austin said. "So let me be clear: We will not let that happen."

North Korea fires artillery again over South Korea's drills

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea on Tuesday fired a barrage of artillery rounds into waters near rival South Korea for the second consecutive day in a tit-for-tat for ongoing U.S.-South Korea live-fire drills in an inland border region.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected North Korea firing around 90 artillery rounds from the eastern coastal town of Kosong around 10 am and another 10 rounds from the nearby town of Kumgang around 6 pm.

It said the shells landed in the northern side of a maritime buffer zone the Koreans established in 2018 to reduce border tensions.

The South said it communicated verbal warnings to North Korea and urged it to abide by the military agreement.

The South Korean assessments were slightly different from details announced by North Korea's military, which said it fired 82 shells from multiple rocket launchers.

An unidentified spokesperson of the North Korean People's Army's General Staff said the firings were meant as a warning against "enemy side" artillery exercises in a region near the inter-Korean land border.

The spokesperson said South Korea was being hypocritical in criticising North Korea for breaching the 2018 agreement, saying the South's unspecified past actions in violation of the agreement must be "calculated first."

"The (Korean People's Army) seriously warns the enemy side once again to stop at once the irritating military actions in the area close to the front," the spokesperson said. "Our military counteraction against the continued provocative actions of the enemies will be more offensive as the days go by."

North Korea also on Monday fired around 130 artillery rounds into waters inside the maritime buffer zones with South Korea, while accusing the South of raising unnecessary tension in front-line areas.

The latest North Korean



military action has worsened animosity between the rivals, whose relations have sharply declined amid a prolonged pause in nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang.

The South Korean army had earlier issued a public notice about live-fire exercises involving multiple rocket launch systems and howitzers in two separate testing grounds in the Cheorwon region this week.

South Korea's Defence Ministry on Tuesday confirmed that the exercises, which began on Monday and continue through Wednesday, are part of combined training with U.S. Troops.

The ministry said that the exercises did not run against the 2018 inter-Korean military agreement, because they are being conducted outside the ground buffer zone set within 5 kilometers of the military demarcation line separating the Koreas.

"We sternly warn that North Korea will be solely responsible for any outcome produced by the North's unilateral and consistent violations" of the 2018 agreement, the ministry said in a statement.

North Korea's military said it ordered Monday's artillery fire after detecting dozens of South Korean projectiles flying southeast from the Cheorwon region.

South Korean lawmakers raise concerns over Chinese voters

AP ■ SEOUL

Members of South Korea's ruling conservative party have proposed a bill that would place tighter restrictions on the voting rights of foreign permanent residents in local elections, which they insist is necessary to protect the country's democracy from being undermined by Chinese voters.

Critics say the efforts to pass the bill could exacerbate racism and hatred toward Chinese people living in South Korea and would be a step back in an increasingly multicultural society that needs to embrace immigration to make up for an aging and shrinking population.

People Power Party lawmaker Kwon Seong-dong, a close ally of President Yoon Suk Yeol, said Tuesday it has become crucial to prevent the voting system from being exploited as a "maneuvering tool" by other governments.

Chinese Prez Xi to visit Saudi Arabia to blunt US influence

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping will make a three day-official visit to Saudi Arabia starting Wednesday during which he will attend the China-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) meeting.

While there is no official announcement here about his visit, Saudi state media reported on Tuesday that President Xi will arrive in the Gulf Kingdom on Wednesday for a three-day visit to the world's largest oil producer.

The visit will include a bilateral summit chaired by Saudi King Salman and attended by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, according to the Saudi state media reports.

Xi will also attend a summit with rulers from the six-member GCC and talks convening leaders from elsewhere in the Middle East, the report said.

The GCC is a regional, intergovernmental, political, and economic union comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Xi's arrival coincides with heightened tensions between Saudi Arabia and the US over issues ranging from energy policy to regional security and human rights.

His visit also comes in the backdrop of assertions by US President Joe Biden that Washington will not cede the Middle East to Beijing.

"We will not walk away and leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia, or Iran... The US is not going anywhere," Biden told the assembled Arab leaders when he visited Riyadh in July.

The US and Saudi Arabia are still embroiled in a heated spat over oil production. In October, OPEC+ slashed output by two million barrels per day in an effort to "stabilise" prices. The decision was taken despite heavy US campaigning against it.

The Chinese president's visit, which comes as he faces mounting pressure at home over opposition to his "zero Covid" strategy, underscores China's desire to boost links in a region that is traditionally seen by Washington as falling under its sphere of influence, the Financial Times reported.

Officers to receive Congressional Gold Medals for Jan 6

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Top House and Senate leaders will present law enforcement officers who defended the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, with Congressional Gold Medals on Tuesday, awarding them Congress's highest honour nearly two years after they fought with former President Donald Trump's supporters in a brutal and bloody attack.

To recognize the hundreds of officers who were at the Capitol on Jan. 6, the medals will be placed in four locations — at U.S. Capitol Police headquarters, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Capitol and the Smithsonian Institution. President Joe Biden said when he signed the legislation last year that a medal will be placed at the



Smithsonian museum "so all visitors can understand what happened that day."

The ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda comes as Democrats, just weeks away from losing their House majority, race to finish a nearly 18-month investigation of the insurrection.

Democrats and two Republicans conducting the probe have vowed to uncover the details of the attack, which came as Trump tried to overturn his election defeat and encouraged his supporters to "fight like hell" in a rally just before the congressional certification.

Awarding the medals will be among House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's last ceremonial acts as she prepares to step down from leadership. When the bill passed the House more than a year ago, she said the law enforcement officers from across the city defended the Capitol because they were "the type of Americans who heard the call to serve and answered it, putting country above self."

"They enabled us to return to the Capitol," and certify Biden's presidency, she said then, "to that podium that night to show the world that our democracy had prevailed and that it had succeeded because of them."

turn his election defeat and encouraged his supporters to "fight like hell" in a rally just before the congressional certification.

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Trump Organisation tax fraud trial in jury's hands

AP ■ NEW YORK

Jurors started deliberating Monday in the Trump Organization's criminal tax fraud trial, weighing charges that former President Donald Trump's company helped executives dodge personal income taxes on perks such as Manhattan apartments and luxury cars.

The deliberations follow a monthlong trial that featured testimony from seven witnesses,

including longtime Trump Organization finance chief Allen Weisselberg and Senior Vice President and Controller Jeffrey McConney. An outside accountant who spent years preparing tax returns for Trump and the company also testified.

About 40 minutes into deliberations, jurors sent a note asking the judge to reread the elements of one of the charges, conspiracy to defraud in the fourth degree.

Iran officials sentence 5 to death for killing Basij officer

AP ■ CAIRO

Iranian authorities sentenced five people to death for allegedly killing an officer affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard, state media said Tuesday. Eleven others received lengthy prison sentences.

The 13 men and three minors had been charged with killing Ruhollah Ajamian, an official from the Basij, a paramilitary volunteer branch of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard, according to the report from IRNA, Iran's state news agency.

The five sentenced to death Monday were charged by Iran's Revolutionary Court, along with

eight others. Three boys were charged by Iran's Criminal Court, according to the report. Iran's judiciary spokesman, Masoud Setayeshi, who is cited in the report, provided no evidence to support any of the accusations.

The alleged killing took place in Karaj, near Tehran, on Nov. 12 when the 16 encircled and attacked Ajamian with knives and stones, the report said. IRNA did not disclose the identities of the 16. It said their sentences can be appealed.

The sentences come amid months of anti-government demonstrations that have been violently suppressed by Iran's security forces.

Taliban allow high school graduation exams for Afghan girls

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Afghan girls will be allowed to take their high school graduation exams this week, an official and documents from the Taliban government indicated Tuesday — even though they have been banned from classrooms since the former insurgents took over the country last year.

According to two documents from the Taliban ministry of education, obtained by The Associated Press, the decision applies to 31 out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces where the winter school break starts in late December.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of HFC Bank Ltd. that Mrs. Pooja Upadhyay widow of late Mr. Rakesh Upadhyay is owner of Endre Second floor (Said floor) built on Property No. 10, addressing 2/2-2, 50, yds., in Block K-2, Situated at Model Town, Delhi. "Said Property", 1/2 share by virtue of Registered Belongingment deed dated 20.09.2020, registration No. 8732, executed by Mr. Ashish Upadhyay for himself and on behalf of Mr. Pooja Upadhyay & Mrs. Kuldeep Upadhyay, and remaining 1/2 share by virtue of sale deed dated 25.09.2020, registration No. 8830, executed by Mr. Pawan Kumar Chhabra has lost / misplaced SMC certificate stating legal heirs of late Mr. Rakesh Upadhyay. All persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said missing document. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 10 days of the present.

Kumar Associates (Advocate & Consultant)
200, Third Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Wazir Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph: 011-40112527-28 kumar.associates.advocate@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that I S. Kedarnath S/o N.V. Subramanian R/o A-214, Mangal CGHS LTD Plot No. 16 Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096, Allottee of flat No. A-214, Mangal CGHS LTD Plot No. 16, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096, have applied for conversion of the aforesaid flat from leasehold to freehold vide application LD/LT/364H/OCT/02/2022, in DDA original documents i.e. Share Certificate of the above flat issued by Mangal CGHS LTD has been lost. An FIR to this effect has been lodged in the Police Station Crime Branch, New Delhi, vide FIR No. CR. LR/9253/2021 dated 26/11/2021.

Any person (S) Claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9874374345 within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform or write to the Dy. Director, (GH) or Director(RL), Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

Name	Age	Relationship
Sardar Hari Singh	89 years	Husband
Ripdaman Kaur Chandok	62 years	Daughter
Amardeep Kaur Singh	58 years	Daughter
Devinder Jot Singh	56 years	Son
Bobby Singh	53 years	Son
Who are all Relinquishing the Flat / apartment in the name of Ripdaman Kaur Chandok, W/o Sardar Lakhinder Singh Chandok.		
Sardar Hari Singh R/o 8236 firenze Blvd Orlando, FL 32836, U.S.A		

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN TENDER "CORRIGENDUM" NOTICE Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering	
1. N.I.T. No.	GSU/DLI/05/22-23/CORRIGENDUM Dated:- 06.12.2022
2. Name of work with its location	Linking of B.G.P. Way track and other allied works such as Assembling, linking & dismantling of BG Railway track, points & crossing, traps, AT welding work, glued joints, Supply of balast, leading, loading & unloading of P. Way material & PRC sleepers and balance work of washable apron based on BLT concept and other misc. works at Subzimandi Delhi in c/w Additional Train handling Facilities and Delhi Subzimandi-Delhi Main Additional line.
3. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 8.21,58,982.69/-
4. Earnest Money	Rs. 5.60,800/-
5. Completion period of work	8 Months
6. Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 15:00 hrs on 20.12.2022 Opening of tender at 15:00 hrs. on 20.12.2022.
7. Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
No.- CPM/GSU/Engg./NIT/05/2022-23 (NIT-05) Dated:- 06.12.2022 3245/2022	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

PUBLIC NOTICE	
IN THE MATTER OF SECTION 13 OF THE LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT, 2008 READ WITH RULE 17 OF LLP (INCORPORATION OF LLP) RULES, 2009 AND OTHER APPLICABLE PROVISIONS, IF ANY, OF THE LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT, 2008.	
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF REMONK ENGINEERS LLP (AAV-2275) HAVING ITS REGISTERED OFFICE AT I 17, VIJAY CHOWK LAXMI NAGAR, NEAR DESU OFFICE DELHI NEW DELHI 110092 INDIA.	
Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the LLP proposes to make an application to the Registrar of Companies, Kanpur Uttar Pradesh under section 13 (3) of the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 seeking permission to change its Registered office from the state of "Delhi" (I 17, VIJAY CHOWK LAXMI NAGAR, NEAR DESU OFFICE DELHI NEW DELHI 110092) to the state of "Uttarpradesh" (KC-7, KAVI NAGAR, GHAZIABAD, UP, INDIA 201001). Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the LLP may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by Registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition supported by an affidavit to the Registrar of Companies, Kanpur Uttar Pradesh within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice.	
For and on Behalf of the LLP FOR REMONK ENGINEERS LLP	
Date: 03-12-2022 Place: Ghaziabad	Sd/- SANJAY GARG (Designated Partner)
	Sd/- USHA RANI (Designated Partner)

Uttarakhand Police Headquarters						
12 Subhash Marg Dehradun						
Tender No. DG-III-1 (Mod) 2022			Date: December, 05 2022			
<u>EXTENSION TENDER NOTICE</u>						
Sealed e-tenders was invited from manufacturer/authorised dealer for the supply and installation of Smart & Intelligent Command and Control Room in three district.						
The date of receipt of tender & opening of tender is being extended as follows:-						
Sl. No.	Name of the items	Bids Number	Last date & Time for receipt of tender		Date & Time for opening of technical offer	
1	Smart & Intelligent Command and Control Room	DG-3 (Mod)-1-2022	19.12.2022	11:00Hrs	19.12.2022	12:00Hrs
For more Information of E-tender Please Login http://uktenders.gov.in						
IG, P&M Police HQ, Uttarakhand, Dehradun						

PUBLIC NOTICE	
This is to inform the General Public that I, R K Nandwani S/o Sh. Sewa Ram Nandwani R/o 13, Nandwani Nagar, Sonapat, Haryana-131001 have lost my Possession letter, Possession Slip, Demand letter & NOC of electricity and others of DDALIG Flat No.-36, Third Floor, BLK-13, PN-1, Sec-34, Rohini, Delhi. Vide File No. L/3531/1088/2015/DDA14/RO, having any objection or found contact at above address/9306927918 or Asstt. Dir.(LG) - H. DDA, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi Within 15 days from the date of publication.	
From: R K Nandwani S/o Sh. Sewa Ram Nandwani	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)	
N.I.T. No. : 30 (A.B.)/22-23/W/E	
Name of work with its location: (A) Outsourcing (operation & maintenance) of Bhaoran Mandir Nursery in the S/o SSE/Hort/Baroda House & NDLS under ADE/N Hort/NDLS. (B) Annual maintenance & operation of automatic irrigation system in Rail Eco Park Chankya Puri, New Delhi	
Approx. cost of work : (A) 91,01,969.27 (B) 19,99,870.00	
EMD amount : (A) 1,82,000.00 (B) 40,000.00	
Completion period of work : (A) 60 Months (B) 20 Months	
Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender : Closing date of tender on 27.12.2022 at 15:00 hrs.	
Website particular notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. : Above tender available on website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in	
No. 128-W/269/OET/22-23/WE/NIT/30 (A,B.) Dated. 01.12.2022 3240/2022	
Serving Customers with a Smile	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)	
Name of work with its location	Provision of LAN Connectivity from nearest RCL Pop for HMIS Implementation in Health unit over Delhi Division.
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹1,19,72,546.62/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹2,09,900.00/- only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer- C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annexe-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time- 04.01.2023 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.
Tender No. 558-Sig-16-Tele-OET-960 Dated: 05.12.2022 3237/2022	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)	
N.I.T. No.	29-A/22-23/WE
Name of work with its location	(A) Provision of Gym at officers enclave chankya puri New Delhi in the S/o SSE/W/HZM under ADENE-III
Approx. cost of work	(A) 3205305.53
EMD amount	(A) 64100.00
Completion period of work	(A) 4 Months
Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Closing date of tender on 27.12.2022 at 15:00 hrs.
Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
No. 128-W/269/OET/22-23/WE/NIT/29-A Dated: 14.11.2022 3241/2022	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

Nepal polls: Rise of two new parties ends monopoly of traditional forces in Madhes region

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The recently concluded election in Nepal has witnessed two new parties - Janamat Party and Nagarik Unmukti Party - entering into Parliament from the Terai or Madhes region, ending the monopoly of the two traditional parties in the southern plains bordering India.

In fact, the combined strength of both the traditional forces of Terai - Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) led by

Upendra Mahato and Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP) led by Mahantha Thakur — has been reduced by 50 per cent in the just concluded polls.

Five years ago, the two Terai-based parties had a combined strength of 33 in the House of Representatives. However, their combined strength has been reduced to just 16 seats, with the emergence of two new political parties in the region.

In the recent election, JSP has bagged seven seats under

direct voting and it will get five more seats under proportionate voting. Similarly, LSP has won just 4 seats but it would not get any seat under proportionate voting as the party failed to get national recognition.

Political analyst Rajesh Ahiraj, who closely monitors Madhesi politics, said that corruption, communalism and provocative politics are the main factors that made these traditional Madhesi parties weaker and tarnished their image in the Terai region.

Fitch: India to grow at 7% this fiscal

India could be one of fastest-growing markets this year: Fitch Ratings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fitch Ratings on Tuesday retained India's economic growth forecast at 7 per cent for the current fiscal, saying India could be one of the fastest-growing emerging markets this year. It, however, cut the projections for the next two financial years, stating that even though the country is shielded to some extent from global economic shocks but is not impervious to global developments.



In its December edition of the Global Economic Outlook, Fitch projected India's GDP to grow at 7 per cent in the current fiscal and slow to 6.2 per cent in 2023-24 and 6.9 per cent in 2024-25.

In September, Fitch had projected 7 per cent growth for the current fiscal, followed by 6.7 per cent in 2023-24 and 7.1 per cent growth in 2024-25.

Given the stronger-than-expected outturn, Fitch forecasts growth at 7 per cent in the

financial year ending March 2023 (FY23).

"India is expected to record one of the fastest growth rates among emerging markets in our Fitch20 coverage this year," it said.

India is shielded to some extent from global economic shocks given the domestically focused nature of its economy, with consumption and investment making up the bulk of the country's GDP.

World Bank revises upwards India's GDP growth forecast to 6.9% for FY23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The World Bank on Tuesday revised upwards its GDP growth forecast for India to 6.9 per cent for 2022-23, saying the economy was showing higher resilience to global shocks.

In its India Development Update, the World Bank said the revision was due to higher resilience of the Indian economy to global shocks and better-than-expected second quarter numbers.

India's economy grew at 6.3 per cent in September quarter 2022-23 as compared to 13.5 per cent in the preceding June quarter, mainly on account of contraction in output of manufacturing and mining sectors.

This is the first upgrade of India's growth forecast by any international agency amid the global turmoil.

In October, the World Bank had cut India's GDP growth forecast to 6.5 per cent from 7.5 per cent earlier. Now, it has upgraded the projection to 6.9



per cent for 2022-23 (April 2022-March 2023).

The report titled 'Navigating the Storm', said while the deteriorating external environment will weigh on India's growth prospects, the economy is relatively well positioned to weather global spillovers compared to most other emerging markets.

Impact of a tightening global monetary policy cycle, slowing global growth and elevated commodity prices will mean that the Indian economy will experience lower growth in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22

(8.7 per cent), it said.

Despite these challenges, it said, the update expects India to register a strong GDP growth and remain one of the fastest growing major economies in the world, due to a robust domestic demand.

"The World Bank has revised its 2022-23 GDP forecast upward to 6.9 per cent from 6.5 per cent (in October 2022), considering a strong outturn in India in second quarter (July-September) of 2022-23 financial year," the India Development Update said.

Markets settle lower, Sensex falls for third day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices ended the day in the negative territory on Tuesday amid weak global market trends and rising crude prices.

Falling for the third day running, the 30-share BSE benchmark ended 208.24 points or 0.33 per cent lower at 62,626.36. During the day, it tumbled 444.53 points or 0.70 per cent to 62,390.07.

The broader NSE Nifty declined 58.30 points or 0.31 per cent to end at 18,642.75.

"Bears kept pushing domestic indices lower amid unfavourable global cues, with significant selling in metal and IT stocks. The mood was dampened by renewed concerns over policy tightening by the Fed in response to strong economic data out of the US. However, while easing COVID curbs in China benefited the



demand outlook, fresh sanctions on Russian oil further added volatility to global oil markets. Investors at home await the RBI policy meet tomorrow," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Among the Sensex pack, Tata Steel, Dr Reddy's, Infosys, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies and Maruti were the major laggards.

Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid and Nestle were among the winners.

Rupee slumps 76 paise to close at 82.61 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined by 76 paise to close at 82.61 against the US dollar on Tuesday due to heavy selling pressure in domestic equities and rising crude prices in the overseas markets.

In addition, investors remained concerned over continued foreign capital outflows ahead of the RBI's policy announcement on Wednesday, forex dealers said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 81.94, then slipped further to end at 82.61, registering a fall of 76 paise. During the day, the local unit witnessed an intraday high of 81.94 and a low of 82.63.

In the previous session on Monday, the rupee had settled down by 52 paise at 81.85 against the dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.05 per cent to 105.24.



Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 0.64 per cent to USD 83.22 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 208.24 points or 0.33 per cent to end at 62,626.36, while the broader NSE Nifty 58.30 declined points or 0.31 per cent to 18,642.75.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday as they sold shares worth Rs 1,139.07 crore, according to exchange data.

The World Bank on Tuesday revised upwards its GDP growth forecast for India to 6.9 per cent for 2022-23, saying the economy was showing higher resilience to global shocks.

Sebi can relax rules for Govt for PSU disinvestment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi can relax regulatory norms for the Central Government in relation to strategic disinvestment of public sector undertakings (PSUs), according to a notification.

"The Board (Sebi) may after due consideration of the interest of the investors and the securities market and for the development of the securities market, relax the strict enforcement of any of the requirements of these regulations if an application is made by the Central Government in relation to its strategic disinvestment in a listed entity," Sebi said in a notification made public on Tuesday.

To give this effect, the regulator has amended LODR (Listing Obligations and disclosure Requirements) norms.

Earlier in September, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) had decided to dispense with a requirement for calculating open offer price with respect to the disinvest-



ment of PSUs.

As per Sebi norms, one of the parameters prescribed to determine the open offer price of a frequently traded scrip is Volume-Weighted Average Market Price (VWAMP) for 60 trading days immediately preceding the date of the public announcement.

The board of Sebi approved amending the takeover regulations in the context of strategic disinvestment of PSUs and consideration payable under open offer.

"The market price of the PSU company undergoing strategic disinvestment becomes susceptible to... Periodic disclosures.

"Considering the unique nature of transaction and process involved in a PSU disinvestment spanning over a long period, such a requirement of determination of open offer price under the takeover regulations many a time acts as an impediment in fructifying such strategic disinvestment of PSUs," Sebi has said.

Against this backdrop, Sebi has decided to dispense with the requirement of calculating 60 days' VWAMP for the determination of open offer price in case of disinvestment of PSU companies wherein it results in its change in control, either by way of direct acquisition or indirect acquisition.

Adani among 3 Indian billionaires on Forbes Asia Heroes of Philanthropy list

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian billionaires Gautam Adani, Shiv Nadar, and Ashok Soota, as well as Malaysian-Indian businessman Brahmam Vasudevan and his lawyer wife Shanthi Kandiah, were named in the 16th edition of Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy list released on Tuesday.

The unranked list "highlights leading altruists in the Asia-Pacific region who demonstrated a strong personal commitment to philanthropic causes," Forbes said in a press release.

Adani was listed for having pledged Rs 60,000 crores (USD 7.7 billion) when he turned 60 in June this year. The pledge makes him one of India's most generous philanthropists, the press release said.

The money will address healthcare, education, and skill development and will be channelled through the family's Adani Foundation, which was founded in 1996.

Each year, the foundation



helps nearly 3.7 million people across India.

Self-made billionaire and philanthropist Shiv Nadar counts among the top donors in India, having channelled close to USD 1 billion of his wealth over a few decades to various social causes through the eponymous Shiv Nadar Foundation.

This year he donated Rs 11,600 crore (USD 142 million) to the foundation he established in 1994, intending to create an equitable, merit-based society by empowering individuals through education.

Nadar, who cofounded

HCL Technologies has helped set up educational institutions such as schools and universities via the foundation, which also promotes art and culture. He stepped down from executive roles at the IT services company in 2021.

Tech tycoon Ashok Soota has pledged Rs 600 crore (USD 75 million) to the medical research trust he founded in April 2021 for the study of ageing and neurological illnesses.

He started SKAN- Scientific Knowledge for Ageing and Neurological ailments-with a Rs 200 crore outlay, which has since tripled.

Cut excise duty on CNG till gas included in GST: Parikh panel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Government should moderate the excise duty it levies on CNG till such time that the environment-friendly natural gas is included in the one-nation-one-tax GST regime, Kirit Parikh Committee has recommended.

Natural gas is currently outside the ambit of GST, and existing legacy taxes -- central excise duty, state VAT and central sales tax -- continue to be applicable on the fuel.

While the central government does not levy excise duty on natural gas when sold in gaseous form, it charges a 14 per cent tax on compressed natural gas (CNG). States levy VAT as high as 24.5 per cent on gas.

The Parikh Committee, which was formed to recommend fair price of gas to the end consumer and a 'market-oriented, transparent and reliable pricing regime', in its report to



the Oil Ministry last week suggested that "gas should be brought under the GST regime".

"The committee recognise that this requires consensus among the states," it said.

"To obtain this, if need be the states may be compensated for five years for any loss in revenue. The process of getting the needed consensus should be initiated now."

Natural gas along with crude oil, petrol, diesel and ATF were kept out of the GST

regime when the single rate of taxation for goods and services was rolled out on July 1, 2017.

Gas-producing states, such as Gujarat, feared a loss of revenue if VAT and other taxes were to get subsumed into the GST.

"Till the time the GST regime is implemented, Government may consider moderating the Central Excise duty rate on CNG to reduce the burden of higher natural gas costs on the consumers," the committee report said.

Fertiliser subsidy bill in FY'23 seen at ₹2.3-2.5 lakh cr; may fall 25pc in FY'24: FAI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government's fertiliser subsidy will rise to Rs 2.3-2.5 lakh crore in this fiscal but the bill may fall by 25 per cent in the 2023-24 financial year with moderation in global prices, according to industry body FAI.

Fertilisers Association of India (FAI) expressed concern that the fixed cost of urea has not been increased affecting the viability of urea plants. It also pointed out that the industry is running on a very thin margin, which is hampering new investments in this sector.

The industry body said there is sufficient availability of fertilisers, including urea and DAP, for the ongoing rabi (winter-sown) season.

"We estimate the fertiliser subsidy bill at Rs 2.3 lakh crore to Rs 2.5 lakh crore," FAI President K S Raju told



reporters here late Monday.

This has helped insulate the farmers from the impact of a steep increase in the cost of all fertilisers due to sharp rise in international prices of fertilisers and raw materials, he added.

The fertiliser subsidy stood at Rs 1.62 lakh crore in the previous financial year.

FAI board member P S Gahlaut, who is MD of Indian Potash Ltd, said the subsidy bill in the next fiscal year could fall by around 25 per cent as the global prices have softened.

However, he said a lot will depend on the future trends of global prices.

Global airline industry to post USD 6.9 bn loss in 2022: IATA

PTI ■ GENEVA

The global airline industry is projected to report a lower loss at USD 6.9 billion in 2022, mainly due to stronger passenger yields and cost control by carriers amid rising fuel prices, according to industry body IATA.

In June, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) projected the industry loss at USD 9.7 billion. In October 2021, it forecast a loss of USD 11.6 billion for this year.

On Tuesday, IATA said the global airline industry is expected to return to profitability in 2023 and post a small net profit of USD 4.7 billion.

After being significantly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, the airline industry is on the recovery path.

In 2022, airline net loss is expected to be USD 6.9 billion.



This is significantly better than loss of USD 42 billion and USD 137.7 billion in 2021 and 2020, respectively, it said.

"We are on the right path... But still a long way to go," IATA Director General Willie Walsh said at a briefing here on Tuesday.

For 2022, IATA said the improved prospects stem largely from strengthened yields and strong cost control in the face of rising fuel prices.

"Passenger yields are expected to grow by 8.4 per

cent (up from 5.6 per cent anticipated in June). Propelled by that strength, passenger revenues are expected to grow USD 438 billion (up from USD 239 billion in 2021)," it noted.

In the Asia Pacific region, airlines are projected to post a loss of USD 10 billion this year and the loss is expected to narrow to USD 6.6 billion in 2023.

The Asia Pacific region, IATA said, is critically held back by the impact of China's zero COVID policies on travel.

Gold falls ₹473, silver tumbles ₹1,241



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price fell by Rs 473 to Rs 53,898 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had touched Rs 54,371 per 10 gram.

Silver also tumbled by Rs 1,241 per kg to Rs 65,878 per kilogram.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,770.75 per ounce while silver was down at USD 22.38 per ounce.

"Stronger-than-expected US services data on Monday renewed pressure on the US Fed to keep interest rates higher for a longer and triggered a slide in the yellow metal," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

India's thermal power generation rises by 16% in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's thermal power generation registered a growth of 16.28 per cent at 87,687 MU (million units) in November this year as compared to 75,412 MU generated in the corresponding month of previous fiscal.

The overall generation of power in the country also increased by 14.63 per cent from 1,02,968 MU to 1,18,029 MU in the reporting month year-on-year.

Power utilities' despatch went up by 3.55 per cent to 62.34 million tonnes (MT) during November this year as compared to 60.20 MT in the year-ago month, the coal ministry said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the country's total coal output went up by



11.66 per cent to 75.87 MT last month over 67.94 MT in November last fiscal.

As per the latest figures of the coal ministry, Coal India Ltd (CIL) clocked a production growth of 12.82 per cent during November, whereas the output of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and captive mines/others registered a growth of 7.84 per cent and 6.87 per cent, respectively.

Of the top 37 coal producing mines, as many as 24 produced more than 100 per cent, while the output of five mines stood between 80 and 100 per cent.

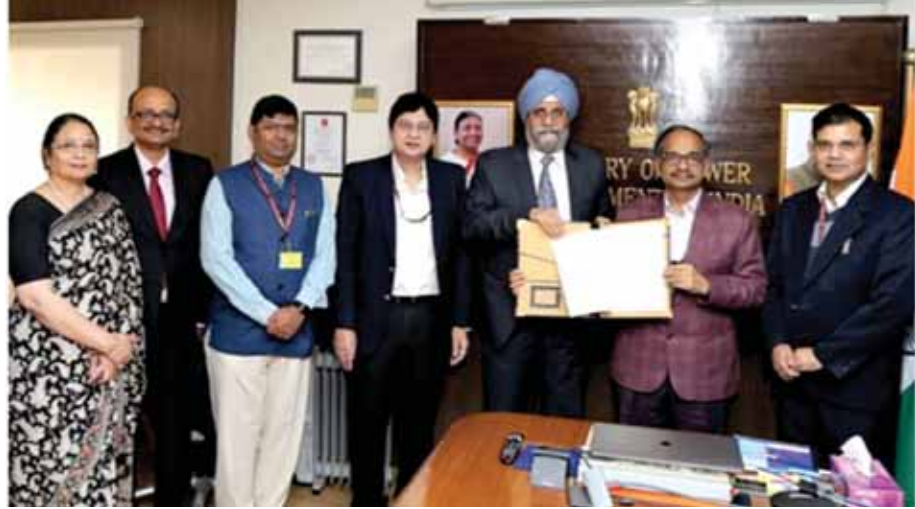
PFC signs MoU with Ministry of Power for FY 2022-23

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ravinder Singh Dhillon, RCMD, PFC signed the MoU with Alok Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Power in the presence of Ashish Upadhyaya, Special Secretary & FA, MoP, Ajay Tewari, Additional Secretary, MoP, Piyush Singh, Joint Secretary, MoP, Parminder Chopra, Director (Finance), PFC, and Rajiv Ranjan Jha, Director (Projects), PFC.

Established in 1986, PFC today is the largest government owned NBFC in India.

In 2021, it became the first CPSE to be accorded the prestigious Maharatna status in the financial space. PFC has been showing a strategic shift in its loan portfolio with focus on the Renewables space, setting itself as one of the largest funding agencies for renew-



ables in the country.

Recently the company got its MoA changed to fund the infrastructure and logistics space as well. It is a key partner to Government of India for

implementation of several schemes such as Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), Liquidity Infusion Scheme under Atmanirbhar Bharat,

Late Payment Surcharge Rules (LPS), Independent Transmission Projects (ITPs) etc and has been one of the highest dividend paying companies.

DO-OR-DIE GAME FOR INDIA

Big guns face heat as India meet Bangladesh in must-win 2nd ODI

PTI ■ MIRPUR

Trying to pick up pieces after a demoralising defeat, India's decorated top-order will be desperate to change the narrative and give a better account of itself against slow bowling in the do-or-die second ODI against Bangladesh here on Wednesday.

Having failed to take the last wicket when Bangladesh needed more than 50 runs, Indian bowlers could not deliver but there is no denying the fact that a star-studded batting line-up needs to show more responsibility.

The last time India played a bilateral series in Bangladesh was back in 2015 when under Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the team lost the three-match series 1-2 and the only win came in the dead third rubber.

History could repeat itself at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium if spinners Shakib Al Hasan and Mehidy Hasan Miraj can once again keep the Indian batters under wraps between overs 11-40.

That was the real period of struggle for all Indian batters, save KL Rahul (73 off 70 balls) who was the best player on show in the opening game.

While there are still 10 months left for the ODI World Cup, it is not yet clear what exactly will be Indian team's approach.

The talks around adopting a "fearless approach" has been going on for some time but its implementation has only been sporadic. At times, adapting to conditions and reacting to situations has got more prominence.

The track at Mirpur wasn't exactly a batting beauty but it also didn't



Dhawan focusing on his sweeping skills



PTI ■ MIRPUR

Battling indifferent form, veteran India opener Shikhar Dhawan is working on his sweep shot and reverse hit as part of his preparation for the ODI World Cup at home later this year.

Having scored just one half-century in his last nine innings, the 37-year-old left-hander faces the heat in the build up to the ODI showpiece.

Shubman Gill, who is not part of the

series in Bangladesh, has emerged as a strong contender to open alongside skipper Rohit Sharma in the World Cup.

Team India head coach Rahul Dravid had a special session with him ahead of the second ODI on Wednesday.

"It's good to practice more. These shots will come handy in these conditions. Even in the World Cup in India where spinners will make an impact, those shots will be helpful. I always enjoy playing them."

warrant a score of 186.

The erstwhile selection committee's decision to rest both Shubman Gill and Sanju Samson for this series has been equally baffling.

The logic given by the former chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma was that due to a short turnaround from New Zealand, they have picked a fresh bunch of players for the series.

Gill wasn't a part of T20 World Cup and also didn't play the T20 series in New Zealand (he was part of the squad though) and hence leaving him out was baffling.

One of the problems with the Indian top order players is that they are accelerating the run-rate but at the same time consuming way more dot deliveries than they should.

In the match against Bangladesh, dot balls worth more than 25 overs were consumed even as they batted for less than 42 overs.

If the eight overs that they couldn't bat is taken into account, the team missed out on scoring off almost 200 balls.

In modern-day cricket, when England is changing the rules of engagement across formats in every sense, the Indian team is taking one step forward and four backwards.

The idea of handing the gloves to KL Rahul wasn't about increasing flexibility in the team but to ensure that both Rahul and Dhawan could be fitted in the same playing XI, going into the World Cup.

Samson, one of the most flamboyant players, wasn't even picked for this series and Ishan Kishan, who scored a 93 in his last ODI series, despite being a specialist keeper-batter was benched.



Stokes hails 'special' win in Pakistan

AP ■ RAWALPINDI

Skipper Ben Stokes hailed England's nail-biting victory in the first Test against Pakistan as "one of the best" of his career -- particularly given the state of the lifeless Rawalpindi pitch.

With just minutes to spare in dying light after five days of enthralling cricket, England finally halted a heroic last stand by Pakistan's tailenders to win the first Test by 74 runs.

It was only the third time England have won a Test in Pakistan, although they haven't visited since 2005 because of security issues.

"To be able to get a result on this type of wicket is mind-blowing," Stokes said ahead of the second Test starting in Multan on Friday.

"I think it's probably one of the best. The effort that everyone has managed to put in this whole week is just incredible."

England have "Bazball" to thank for their victory -- the free-wheeling brand of cricket

coined from the nickname of new head coach Brendon "Baz" McCullum, a New Zealander.

McCullum was an aggressive batter in his playing days -- he holds the record for the fastest individual Test century -- and under him, and skipper Stokes, the English have brought one-day cricket to the five-day game.

Records tumbled in Rawalpindi with England becoming the only team in history to score 500 runs on the first day of a Test -- courtesy of four individual centuries, another record.

Overall, some 1,768 runs were scored in the match -- the third-highest aggregate since Test cricket began.

Still, Pakistan did well to peg back England's daunting 657-run first-innings total to trail by just 78 runs.

England again turned on the fireworks in their second innings before a bold Stokes declaration left Pakistan seeking 343 runs for victory.

Youth will play pivotal role in making India a developed nation by 2047: Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur says that the youth will play a pivotal role in making India a developed nation by 2047.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set sight on India becoming a developed nation by 2047

"For the country to progress in Amritkal, the role of young volunteers will play a pivotal role in attaining honour Prime Minister's vision of India at 2047," the

Sports Minister said on the occasion of International Volunteer Day on Monday.

"The Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs along with its partners and stakeholders remain dedicated to promoting youth action and youth volunteerism in India."

"To optimally engage the constructive and creative energies of the youth, the department of youth affairs will pursue the twin objectives of personality building and nation building," he added.

Women's cricket: BCCI transfers head coach Powar to NCA; Kanitkar appointed batting coach

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With only two months left for the Women's T20 World Cup, the BCCI on Tuesday shunted head coach Ramesh Powar to the National Cricket Academy as a part of its "restructuring module".

While no head coach was named, former India batter Hrishikesh Kanitkar, who has been a part of Indian men's pathway teams (A and U-19), has been appointed as the new batting coach ahead of the home series against Australia, starting December 9 in Mumbai.



"Ramesh Powar, former Head Coach of the senior women's team will join VVS Laxman, Head Cricket, National Cricket Academy and will switch to men's cricket as part of the restructuring module of the BCCI," the BCCI stated in a release. "The BCCI on Monday (Tuesday) announced the appointment of Hrishikesh Kanitkar as the Batting Coach of the Senior Women's cricket team. Mr. Kanitkar will join the team from the upcoming five-match T20I series against Australia starting 9th December in Mumbai," it further stated.

Handscomb hopeful of earning ticket for India tour

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

In-form batter Peter Handscomb is aware it will be difficult to find a spot in an "impressive" Australian Test squad but said he is still hoping to earn a place for the India tour with his "weight of numbers".

The 31-year-old, who last played red-ball cricket almost four years back, amassed 562 runs at 93.66 in this summer's Sheffield Shield. He notched a pair of fifties for the Prime Minister's XI against West Indies last month.

Handscomb will look to push his case when he leads a



Cricket Australia XI against South Africa, starting in Brisbane on Friday.

"I'm thereabouts ... So the conversations (with Test selectors) are promising," Handscomb was quoted as saying by 'The West Australian'.

"But you've also got to look at the Test squad as well and there are guys that are in front of me and there are batters doing pretty impressive things."

"I can score as many runs as I want but there still needs to be a spot at the next level, and at the moment they're playing pretty good cricket."

Handscomb is known for his ability to play spin but he will face competition from Travis Head when it comes to finding a place in the team for the India tour.

Head had tough tours of Sri Lanka and Pakistan this year.

"All you can do as a batter is force your way in through weight of numbers," said Handscomb, who will join Melbourne Renegades for the upcoming BBL season.

"I pick up the gloves just to make sure that they also know that I'm still available as a back-up keeper, or can take them if need be."

"That's also an important skill to have in your bag." Australia will tour India for a four-Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy early in February-March next year.

Abbas, Hasan Ali set to join Pak team after Rauf's injury

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan team management is set to call up out of favour pacers Muhammad Abbas and Hasan Ali as reinforcements for the remaining two Tests against England after fast bowler Haris Rauf was on Tuesday ruled out of the series with a grade-II strain in his right quad.

The 29-year-old Rauf, who made his Test debut in the first match against England in Rawalpindi, bowled 13 expensive overs on the first day on a placid pitch before injuring himself while fielding and rolling over the ball.

He did not bowl any further in the match although he batted

in both the innings.

With just three pacers now in the Pakistan squad, including the uncapped Muhammad Wasim (jr) and Muhammad Ali who also made his Test debut in Pindi, a reliable source said the team management would be calling up reinforcements before the second Test in Multan starting December 9.

"Most likely Hasan Ali and Muhammad Abbas will be called up to join the squad as the team is also short of bowlers for the nets. But the plan apparently is to go into the second set with three spinners and just two pace bowlers as efforts are being made to prepare a track with turn in Multan," the source said.

Prannoy eyes glory at maiden World Tour Finals

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy will look to display fearless brand of badminton against the best in the business in his quest for glory on his maiden BWF World Tour Finals appearance, here from Wednesday.

With double Olympic medallist P V Sindhu skipping the event due to an injury, Prannoy will be the lone Indian at the year-ending tournament, which was moved from Guangzhou, China, due to the rise in COVID-19 infection cases.

One of the most consistent Indian players in the circuit this season, Prannoy has been clubbed in Group A along with Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark, Japan's Kodai Naraoka and China's Lu Guang Zu.

"I am excited to start my BWF World Tour Finals campaign. It's my first time in the year-ending championships



and I hope I can perform well," said the third-seeded Prannoy, who was recently conferred with the Arjuna award.

While Prannoy has got a decent draw and will fancy his chances of making it to the semifinals from the group stage, it will not be an easy task as he doesn't hold a good record against his group opponents.

Prannoy has a dismal 1-5 record against the world No. 1 Axelsen but he would take confidence from the fact that he had defeated the Dane in their last meeting last year in Indonesia Masters.

Against the 21-year-old

Manisha wins BWF Female Para-Badminton Player of the Year award

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young Indian shuttler Manisha Ramadass has claimed the BWF Female Para-Badminton Player of the Year award for her stellar run this season.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Monday named Manisha as the winner after the 17-year-old won the gold in the World Championships in the SU5 section. Overall, she claimed 11 gold and five bronze medals in 2022. Other contenders in this section were India's Nithya Sre Sumathy and Manasi Joshi, Sarina Satomi, Giuliana Poveda Flores, and Pilar Jauregui.

Paralympic champion

Pramod Bhagat and Thomas Cup winner HS Prannoy, however, missed out on the prestigious award.

Bhagat, who claimed his fourth world championships singles gold this year, was among those short-listed for the BWF Male Para-Badminton Player of the Year but the award went to WH2 world champion and reigning Paralympic champion Daiki Kajiura, winner of 10 gold and four bronze medals overall. In the award for able-bodied shuttlers, Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen and Zheng Si Wei/Huang Ya Qiong's extraordinary dominance this season was honoured as they won the BWF Player of the Year Awards.

new sensation Kodai Naraoka, Prannoy had suffered a defeat in their only meeting in Singapore Open in July.

The Indian had lost to China's Lu Guang Zu too in his only meeting at French Open.

However, Prannoy is known to raise his game in big-ticket events and has been a revelation this year.

He played a stellar role in India's epic Thomas Cup win in May and also produced a runner-up finish at the Swiss Open Super 300, besides reaching the semifinals at the Indonesia Open Super 1000 and Malaysia Masters Super 500 event.

His fine run in the world tour events earned him a direct qualification to the season finale for the first time in his career and he would look to make the most of the opportunity this week.

While defending champion Axelsen is certainly the most difficult hurdle on his way, Prannoy can ill-afford any slip-ups against the other

two opponents.

For India, Sindhu is the only one to win the prestigious title, while Sameer Verma reached the last four stage in the 2018 edition.

STEEL AUTHORITY OF INDIA LIMITED
Rourkela Steel Plant
Rourkela - 769 011, Odisha, India

CIRCULAR NO. CSR/2022-23/408
LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION –
SUB: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS FOR PURSUING
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES (2022-23 JOINING).
Applications in the prescribed format are invited for grant of the above
financial assistance from the eligible students as per details given below.
Eligibility criteria for application:-
• The student should belong to either Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe/
other, and should be a resident of Sundargarh district, Odisha.
• The applicant should have taken admission in academic year 2022-23:
• Graduation course in Engineering, Medical or Agriculture (including
integrated/dual degree M.Tech. Course), OR
• Post Graduation course of at least two years duration in Engineering/
Medical/ Agriculture/ Business Administration.
• Details of professional course, in the academic year 2022-23 in a recognized
institution should be as follows:-
i. For Graduation Courses of at least four years duration (B.Tech./
B.Sc(Engg.)/B.Sc(Ag) etc.).
ii. For Graduation Courses of less than 4-years duration (e.g. Lateral entry
in B.Tech./B.Sc(Engg.) after Diploma in Engg.).
iii. For Graduation courses of more than 4-years duration (e.g. 5 yrs
MBBS, 5-yr integrated/dual degree M.Tech.). OR
iv. For Post Graduate course of at least two years duration (e.g. M.Tech./
MD/MS/M.Sc.(Ag)/MBA etc.).
• The student, whose parents (taken together) are having annual income
from all sources not exceeding Rs.2,50,000/- (Rupees Two Lakhs Fifty
Thousand), shall be eligible for the financial assistance.
Basis of Selection: The best twenty students (10 boys and 10 girls)
separately for the graduation courses including 5-yr MBBS/5-yr integrated/
dual degree M.Tech.) and best 10 students (5 boys and 5 girls) for Post-
graduation courses will be selected from amongst the eligible applicants. In
case there is a shortfall in number of selected candidates in either of the
categories i.e. Boys or Girls for which merit lists are prepared separately,
then the applicants from the merit list of the other category may be
additionally selected for the scholarship keeping the total number of
scholarships as 20 in case of Graduation courses and 10 in case of Post-
Graduation courses.
Financial assistance amount: The amount of financial amount is Rs.1,20,000/-
(Rupees One Lakh Twenty Thousand Only) for the graduation courses of 4-yr
duration, Rs. 90,000/- (Rupees Ninety Thousand Only) for the graduation
courses of less than 4 years (e.g. lateral entry in B.Tech./BSC (Engg.) after
diploma in Engg), Rs.1,50,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Fifty Thousand Only) for
courses of 5-yr duration and Rs.60,000/- (Rupees Sixty Thousand Only) for
the post-graduation courses, per student for entire duration of the course.
The amount will be released in equal yearly installments @ Rs. 30,000/-
(Rupees Thirty Thousand Only) per academic year based on documentary
evidence of continuation in the course.
For further details on the basis of selection, financial assistance amount
and mode of payment, application format etc., the main circular as referred
above may be referred to. The duly completed application along with
required documents are to be submitted in a sealed envelope at the
Institute for Peripheral Development (CSR Department), Sector-20, Rourkela-
769005 latest by 31/01/2023 (4 PM).

(M. Mittra)
General Manager, CSR

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POSSESSION NOTICE
(For immovable property)
TRANSPORT NAGAR BRANCH

Whereas,
The undersigned being the authorized officer of the Union Bank Of India, Transport Nagar Branch, Jamshedpur under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated **07.09.2022** calling upon the borrower **M/s Indra Construction (Prop. Rabinder Kumar)** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 18,80,697.43 (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Eighty Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Seven and paise Forty Three only)** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sub-section 4 of Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Act on this **05th day of December of the Year 2022**.
The borrower in particular and the public in general in hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Union Bank Of India** for an amount of **Rs. 18,80,697.43 (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Eighty Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Seven and paise Forty Three only)**.
The Borrower/ Guarantor's attention is invited to the provision of Sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Description of Immovable Property
EM of land and building measuring 04 katha 06 Chhattak, Plot no. 1025 & 1027 under Khata no. 16 situated at Mauza - Hesag, P.S. No. 247, Dist - Ranchi, Jharkhand
Date: 05.12.2022
Place: Jamshedpur

Authorised Officer
Union Bank Of India