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MONEY 10
CORE INFRA SECOTRS OUTPUT EXPANDS BY 18.1% IN MAY

DEHRADUN, FRIDAY JULY 1, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹2

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BUMRAH TO LEAD INDIA AGAINST ENG
12 SPORT

1st surprise: Shinde CM; 2nd Fadnavis his deputy

BJP sacrifices CM post to stifle public sympathy for fallen Uddhav Thackeray

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After playing a crucial role in the fall of the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA Government in Maharashtra, in a astute political move, the BJP on Thursday stunned its political rivals by anointing rebel Shiv Sena Minister and Maratha leader Eknath Shinde as the Chief Minister and its own former Chief Minister and senior party leader Devendra Fadnavis, a Brahmin, as the Deputy Chief Minister.

A day after late Sena chief Bal Thackeray's son Uddhav resigned as the Chief Minister after his once-trusted senior party colleague rebelled against him and reduced his Government into a "minority", 58-year-old Shinde staked a formal claim for late Balasaheb's legacy — by invoking the blessings of the late Sena chief during his swearing-in ceremony as the CM and posting his old photo along with late Thackeray on his twitter handle.

Apart from invoking the blessings of late Thackeray, Shinde also invoked the name of late Thane district Shiv Sena chief Anand Dighe who was considered the Bal Thackeray of Thane.

Shinde's reverence to Dighe should be seen in the light of the fact that Shinde, who was an autorickshaw driver in Thane, has come up through the Sena ranks from being a Shakha pramukh to a senior minister and now the CM.

The Central BJP leadership — which right from the day orchestrated the developments within the ruling Shiv Sena arising out of Shinde's rebellion that saw him move out of the party with 30-odd rebel MLAs to Surat in the BJP-ruled Gujarat and later to Guwahati and Goa pulled a rabbit out of its hat as it prevailed upon a reluctant Fadnavis to take oath as the Deputy Chief Minister under the rebel Sena leader. Ironically enough, Shinde had earlier worked as a senior minister for five years in the Fadnavis' Cabinet till September-October 2019.

Shinde and Fadnavis were sworn into the office as the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister respectively by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at a hurriedly called ceremony at Raj Bhavan in south Mumbai.

By making Shinde the CM instead of its own leader Fadnavis, the BJP wants to take away public sympathy from Uddhav who is being perceived as the victim of machinations of the BJP.

Newly elected Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde claps as Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is being presented a bouquet by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari during their oath-taking ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai on Thursday PTI

After plotting Uddhav's fall, Fadnavis bows to BJP call

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Two hours after former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday made it clear that he would not be part of the new Maharashtra Government, BJP president JP Nadda announced that the party's Central leadership has decided that Fadnavis will be part of the new dispensation as Deputy Chief Minister under the Chief Ministership of Eknath Shinde.

Fadnavis is seen as the real architect of the fall of the Uddhav Thackeray Government and was widely tipped to get the CM post.

The Central BJP leadership changed its mind over the issue and asked Fadnavis to join the Government in the "larger interests" of the State, sources said.

"BJP's Central leadership made a personal request to him and the Central leadership has said Fadnvais should take charge as Deputy CM of Maharashtra," Nadda tweeted. Union Home Minister Amit Shah thereafter said Fadnavis had decided to join the Shinde Cabinet.

PM congratulates Shinde, Fadnavis

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday congratulated Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis on taking as Maharashtra Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister respectively and expressed confidence that they will take the State to greater heights.

In tweets soon after they were sworn in, Modi said, "I would like to congratulate Shri Eknath Shinde on taking oath as Maharashtra CM. A grass-roots level leader, he brings with him rich political, legislative and administrative experience. I am confident that he will work towards taking Maharashtra to greater heights."

"Congratulations to Devendra Fadnavis on taking oath as Maharashtra Deputy CM. He is an inspiration for every BJP Karyakarta. His experience and expertise will be an asset for the Government. I am certain he will further strengthen Maharashtra's growth trajectory," said the Prime Minister.

Cong fears BJP may do a Maha in Jharkhand

JMM getting closer to BJP

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

After the fall of the Uddhav-led alliance Government in Maharashtra, the Congress leadership now seems to be concerned about its coalition Government in Jharkhand.

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) seems to be veering closer to the BJP with Chief Minister Hemant Soren calling on Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi a couple of days ago and his party all set to support NDA nominee Droupadi Murmu in the Presidential election. Soren is already facing heat from Central probing agencies over allegations of allotting mining leases to himself and his family members.

While the senior party leaders of the JMM and the Congress maintained that the mandate of people of the State will be respected, a senior BJP functionary told *The Pioneer* that after Maharashtra the party will focus on Jharkhand. "Last year in July-August we tried to oust the alliance Government in Jharkhand, but could not succeed," the BJP functionary said.

The first sign of fissures in the JMM-Congress alliance began with the JMM rejecting Congress' demand for a Rajya Sabha seat and instead fielding its own candidate. This was followed by JMM's reluctance to back Opposition nominee Yashwant Sinha in the Presidential election.

Refusing that his party was planning to topple the Soren Government, Jharkhand BJP chief Deepak Prakash told *The Pioneer*, "We are not into such tactics. We are playing the role of a constructive Opposition only and in the interest of the people of the State. This JMM-Congress Government is full of corrupt people and half way mark the Government has shown no sign of development. What can you say when the CM himself is embroiled in corruption?"

7 jawans die as landslide hits TA camp in Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

A massive landslide hit a town in western Manipur killing seven Territorial Army (TA) jawans and one civilian while 13 others were injured on Wednesday night. Operations continued on Thursday to rescue several people feared trapped under the debris at Tupul yard railway construction camp.

Many of those killed belonged to the TA who guarded a major railway line construction site, officials said. The landslide also obstructed the flow of the Ijie river, creating a dam-like water body that could lead to flooding and environmental disaster if the debris were to be cleared.

Rescue operations underway after a massive landslide hit the Tupul railway construction camp in Noney district of Manipur on Thursday PTI

Residents have been asked to take precautions and not let children go near the river. The district administration is in touch with national and State disaster management agencies for search, rescue and relief operations. Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh held an emergency meeting.

26/11 main handler declared dead now being grilled by Pak

PTI ■ LAHORE

Sajid Majeed Mir, one of the most wanted terrorists and the main handler of the 2008 Mumbai attacks who was once declared dead by Pakistan, will be interrogated by authorities here for his role in the deadly carnage, an official said on Thursday.

Mir, 43, a member of the banned Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorist group, was jailed for over 15 years in a terror-financing case by an Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore earlier this month as part of Pakistan's bid to exit from the grey list of the FATF.

"A Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) team will interrogate Mir in Gujranwala jail for his alleged role in the Mumbai Attack case," a senior FIA officer associated with the probe of the 26/11 case, told PTI.

He is imprisoned in the Central Jail Gujranwala, some 80 km from here.

Mir has been convicted in a separate terror financing case that has nothing to do with the Mumbai attack case. The FIA official said Mir was earlier declared a proclaimed offender in this case.

ISRO injects 3 foreign satellites in precise orbit, 2nd success in week

PTI ■ SRIHARIKOTA

In its second successful commercial mission in a week, ISRO launched three foreign satellites in precise orbit from the spaceport here on Thursday onboard PSLV C53, with the agency's trusted launch vehicle again living up to its reputation of being a reliable rocket.

PSLV-C53 is the second dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the commercial arm of ISRO which had on June 23 launched GSAT-24 in its first "demand-driven" communication satellite mission post space sector reforms, leasing the entire capacity on board to Direct-to-Home (DTH) service provider Tata Play.

ISRO's PSLV-C53 carrying DS-EO satellite along with two other co-passenger satellites successfully launched from the Sathish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota on Thursday PTI

On Thursday, the four-stage, 44.4 metre tall PSLV-C53 that blasted off from the second launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, placed the three Singapore satellites--DS-EO, NeuSAR and SCOOB-1 in intended orbit of 570 km. ISRO chairman S Somanath said the rocket placed the three customer satellites "in the precise orbit of 570 km with a 10 degree inclination" and congratulated NSIL for accomplishing "yet another major mission this month itself," the earlier one being the GSAT launch last week.

GUEST COLUMN

Use and abuse of the title doctor

Doctor' is an academic degree awarded by a university or an institution, which is used to refer to a person with a doctorate. To obtain the degree, people need to pass a special exam to be called a doctorate or by writing a thesis. A doctorate is usually regarded as a higher degree above a bachelor degree. People who have a doctorate degree may use the title doctor, though in practice it is often and most commonly used by medical doctors. Medical doctors examine, diagnose and treat patients. The word doctor in modern English is most often used to refer to a person who knows the healing art and who is trained and licensed to use the art of healing.

The word doctor comes from the Latin word for "teacher," itself from docēre, meaning "to teach". Only university professors with a doctoral degree, normally teach at university. By the 14th century, the word doctor was being applied not just to a select few theologians but also to qualified and/or accomplished academics and medical practitioners. Historically speaking, eminent scholars whose name had the prefix doctor were usually accorded a lot of respect. Because of that most of the people who are involved or working in medical care are known to use prefix doctor in their name.Everybody desires to gain respect and prestige which is usually earned by the virtues of hard work, sincerity, loyalty, honesty, compassion, care, selflessness and aesthetic sensitivity. Currently, many other people in the society are interested in gaining respect and prestige which the dedicated doctors have earned by being in this profession but these other people who had not been able to become doctors by qualification due to lack of merit and money use the title "doctor" before their name to earn the same social privileges.

The authors have seen the abuse of the prefix doctor by many paramedics. There is rampant demand for the doctor prefix among the paramedics like physiotherapist, lab technician and many other medical technicians who are working in big hospitals. Now the practice of abuse of the doctor title is so rampant in our society that not only paramedics but even the ward boys and ward ayas are using the title before their name after gaining some superfluous medical knowledge by the means of observation.

The other problem of prefixing doctor is not limited to the name but now it has become a common practice to use doctor stickers in front and back of vehicles to gain the same advantage while travelling on the roads as well.

Unfortunately, there is an uncontrolled rampant use of this prefix in the society, any person who is having little knowledge of medicine and even dispensing any medicine in the rural and remote areas is using the prefix doctor. India has millions of uneducated poor who cannot differentiate between a qualified medical doctor and the unqualified doctors because of their ignorance and poor education. Now the unqualified people who are abusing the prefix doctor give the general perception to the public that they are medical doctors and in due course of time the public continues to call them doctors even though they know that they are not qualified doctors because they are the only available skilled person in the remote areas.

Considering the non-availability of uniform and universal health care services everywhere in the country, the people prefer to take any care which is available in their vicinity irrespective of the quality of care particularly in emergency cases.

Many people know that behaviour, knowledge and skill are the key to success and the unqualified people who are practicing and prefixing the title doctor, know that they lack the required qualifications, knowledge and skill but they give a lot of importance to develop and practice good behaviour, knowing very well that behaviour precedes anyone in exhibiting their knowledge and skill. Earlier, the Medical Council of India and Indian Medical Association demanded that the prefix doctor be restricted to only allopathic practitioners but according to new amendment all practitioners of the modern medicine, Indian system of medicine - Bachelor of Ayurveda Medicine Surgery (BAMS), Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery (BHMS), Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery (BUMS),Bachelor of Siddha Medicine and Surgery (BSMS), Bachelor of Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences (BNYS) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) who are recognised by the central government of India, can use the prefix doctor in the country. Anyone, who has a doctorate in any field can also legally use the doctor prefix, in addition to the honourary doctorate degree usually DLitt, DSc and DPhil conferred by any university.

One would like to cite a story told by one of the professors of an esteemed university in the USA where one was invited to deliver a lecture. In fact, the host professor who sent the invitation to deliver a lecture asked whether I was a doctor (Dr) or a mister (Mr). I told him that I am a doctor and he again asked me whether I was a professor.Then I said, "Of course, I am not only a professor of orthopaedic surgery but also the chairman of the department." Then he replied "You cannot be a doctor". Then he politely explained to me that you are no more a doctor but you are a mister.

He narrated the story of misters in the middle ages. In case a cut/incision had to be made in the body, if needed, a barber was called to do the same after which they used to complete the surgical procedure. In those days only the barber used to have sharp tools like scissors and knife.In addition to the tools, they had some knowledge and skill in where to cut and not to cut. Male surgeons are always addressed as Mr in the United Kingdom because physicians were by definition doctors who possessed a university medical degree (MD) while surgeons seldom had any formal qualification before 1800. The growth of voluntary hospitals in 18th century brought high status to surgeons and surgeons became so proud to be distinguished from physicians that the title of Mr became a badge of honour. That's why there is still a practice in England to address senior professors and surgeons as mister followed by his name. And these practices are still going on and they don't intend to change it because English people feel pride in carrying their older tradition.

The National Medical Commission (NMC), in its code of conduct has introduced a major change, proposing the use of "Med Dr" as a prefix for those registered under the NMC Act, 2019 as practitioners of modern medicine. The draft regulations also propose allowing medical practitioners to refuse treatment in case of abusive and violent patients and/or relatives. The draft regulations have been put in the public domain by the NMC ethics and medical registration board (EMRB), inviting comments from the stakeholders by June 22, 2022. Only those RMPs who are registered under the NMC Act 2019 can use medical doctor as a prefix before their names. Every self-employed RMP must self-display the unique registration ID assigned to him or her by the EMRB in his or her prescription, certificate and money receipt given to the patients.

As we all know that MD is usually a degree conferred to non-surgical branches in Allopathic Medicine. So this is bound to create more confusion among the ignorant and illiterate as they have to choose who is the real doctor going to cure him or her.

(Padma Shri recipient Dr BKS Sanjay is a senior orthopaedic surgeon, Dr Gaurav Sanjay is an orthopaedic surgeon. Views expressed are personal)

Five arrested for gang rape of woman & 6-year old daughter

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

Five accused have been arrested by the police in the gang rape of a woman and her six-year old daughter in a moving car. The Haridwar police and special operation group (SOG) arrested the accused including residents of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh along with a resident of Kaliyar near Roorkee for the gang rape which was committed on the night of June 24 informed the deputy inspector general and Haridwar senior superintendent of police Yogendra Singh Rawat while addressing the media on Thursday.

Rawat said that after the incident, the woman victim had named one of the accused as Sonu. The police then learnt about a white coloured Alto car used in the crime. Using these two clues, the police managed to apprehend the accused. The woman had told the police that Sonu had taken her and her daughter on a motorbike while wearing a pink shirt. Later, some men in a white car forcibly took her along with her daughter and gang-raped her. The police started looking for Sonu and the white Alto car. During investigation, the police apprehended Mehak Singh alias Sonu of Imlikheda village in Kaliyar area. His motorbike was also recovered. During interrogation, Sonu told the police that on the night of the incident, he saw a woman and a girl standing and waiting for some transport. He talked to the woman and offered to drop her at Kaliyar. He then allegedly raped her after taking her to a secluded spot. After that four men reached the spot in a car, forcefully took the woman and her daughter in the car and gang raped them in the moving vehicle. They then dropped the two victims on the side of the highway.

Further Investigation revealed that the said car is registered in the name of Muzaffarnagar resident Rajeev alias Vicky Tomar. On the basis of CCTV camera footage and information from other teams and informers, two men - Vicky Tomar and Subodh were caught by the police. During interrogation, both confessed to the crime and gave the names of their companions- Deoband residents Sonu Tejian and Jagdish who were also arrested by the police. The accused Raju alias Vicky Tomar is a general secretary in the Bharatiya Kisan Union.

The Garhwal deputy inspector general has announced a reward of Rs 50,000 for the police team which solved the case.

44 new Covid-19 cases reported in U'khand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State Health department reported 44 new cases of the Covid-19 on Thursday from different parts of the state. Death of no patient was reported in the state on the day. The authorities also declared 42 patients cured from the disease on the day. The department has so far detected 93,619 new cases of the disease from January 1 this year till date. A total of 89,698 patients have recovered from the disease so far in this year while 278 patients have died in the state since January 1 this year. The recovery percentage of the disease was at 95.81 per cent on Tuesday. The positivity rate of the disease was at 2.81 per cent on the day.

The health department reported 26 new patients each from Dehradun, eight from Haridwar, five from Nainital and one each from Chamoli, Champawat, Tehri, Udham Singh Nagar and Uttarkashi districts on Thursday.

No new cases were reported from Almora, Bageshwar, Pauri Pithoragarh and Rudraprayag districts on the day.

The number of active patients of Covid-19 in the state increased to 316 on Thursday. Dehradun with 177 cases is at the top of the table of active cases while Nainital and Haridwar have 29 and 25 active cases respectively.

Rudraprayag is the only district which has no active cases of the disease now. In the ongoing vaccination drive 7,846 people were vaccinated in 772 sessions in the state held on Thursday.

Cooperative Dept to computerise all 758 MPACS in State

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Cooperatives department has taken up a target to computerise all 758 Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (MPACS) of Uttarakhand. Most of the MPACS in the country are not computerised at present. This affects their efficiency and also reduces the faith of the general public. On Thursday the secretary of the ministry of Cooperatives, Gyanesh Kumar took a virtual review meeting of the cooperative secretaries of the States. The Uttarakhand cooperatives secretary BVRC Purushottam participated in the virtual meeting from the office of Dehradun based State Integrated Cooperative Development Project. He said that 100 MPACS in the state have been computerised and made online on completion of 100 days of CM Pushkar Singh Dhami in office. He said that the process of the computerisation of remaining MPACS is at present in progress and all 758 MPACS would get computerised within the next few months. He said that the data of the National Cooperative Policy would be made available to the centre in 15 days. It is pertinent to mention here that the union cabinet has approved a sum of Rs 2,516 crore for computerisation of all the 63,000 PACS of the country and the proposal had been cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday.

Water below standards in various parts of Doon- SPECS

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The quality of water supplied in various parts of Dehradun city leaves much to be desired. This was revealed after the Society of Pollution and Environment Conservation Scientists (SPECS) tested water samples collected from 97 locations in 70 municipal wards in the city from May to June. SPECS secretary Brijmohan Sharma informed that chlorine content was found to be very high in the tap water samples collected from VIP residences and offices. The level of chlorine when the tap water reaches its final destination should be 0-2mg/l but it was found quite high in 41 places including VIP residences and offices. It was 1 at the secretariat, 1.2 in district magistrate residence and 1 at cabinet ministers Satpal Maharaj and Ganesh Joshi's residence. No chlorine was found in 50 places including Kishannagar, Premnagar, Indiranagar, Vasant Vihar, Yamuna Colony, Karnpur, Hathibadkala, Kargi Grant, Niranjanpur, Clement Town and Sahastradhara Road among other areas. Chlorine was found as per the norms in five places- Inder Road, Madrasi Colony, Tapkeshwar Marg, East Patelnagar and Canal Road. The chlorine content was very high in 41 places including Jhanda Mohalla, Vijay Colony, Race Course, Rajpur, Subhash Road, Tilak Road and other areas. Further, maximum total coliform was found in Sahastradhara Road, Bhandaribagh, Patelnagar, Premnagar, Vasant Vihar, Kargi Grant, Transport Nagar, Shimla bypass, Indira Colony, Niranjanpur, Hathibadkala and other locations. Presence of fecal coliform was found in the water samples collected from Banjara Basti, Kewal Vihar, Sahastradhara Road, Transport Nagar, Panditwadi, Niranjanpur, Vasant Vihar and Kalidas Road among other locations. Sharma said that consumption of such water with quality standards below the norms results in a range of ill-effects on health.

Aakash+BYJU'S launches audiobook for NEET aspirants

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Aakash + BYJU'S introduced the Aakash AudiPREP -- India's first comprehensive audiobook for NEET aspirants. It is an innovative web and app-based audiobook containing podcasts of scientifically designed study materials designed by experts. The audiobook lends detailed insight into physics, chemistry, botany and zoology curriculum which will be useful for class XI and XII students to crack the medical entrance examination.

Commenting on the launch of AudiPREP, managing director of Aakash+BYJU'S Aakash Chaudhry said, "We are a forward-looking organisation and to honour our student's first approach, we are constantly innovating to bring in the best technologies that provide a conducive learning environment. AudiPREP is yet another path-breaking tool giving NEET aspirants the extra edge. The comprehensive audiobooks offer high-quality study materials curated by experienced teachers and engage students by appealing to their multisensory learning."

AudiPREP will be available to Aakash+BYJU's class XI and XII students preparing for NEET free of cost.

According to the organisation, AudiPREP is a portable audiobook solution enabling proper utilisation of time. The tool also facilitates spaced repetition which is scientifically proven to improve long term memory recall. The audiobook also capacitates multisensory learning by encompassing visual sense through printed study material, hearing through audio recordings while arousing the sense of touch through writing by underlining the keywords and taking running notes.

Century mill bids farewell to workers on retirement

PNS ■ LALKUAN

A farewell programme was held for 51 workers who retired from the Century Pulp and Paper Mill. The chief executive officer of the mill Vijay Kaul presented mementoes to all the retiring associates. Senior officials of the mill presented shawls to the retiring workers who were garlanded by office bearers of the workers organisations. Speaking on the occasion, Kaul commended the appreciable work done by the retiring associates.

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Date: 30.06.2022 Authorized Officer,
Place: Dehradun Punjab National Bank

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DEHRADUN
Government of India, Ministry of Finance, (Deptt of Finacial Services)
2nd Floor, Paras Tower, Mazra, Saharnpur Road, Dehradun, UK. 248171
PUBLICATION NOTICE
IN O.A. No. 66 OF 2020
Summons Under Sub-section (4) Of Section 19 of The Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993. Read Withsub-Rule (2A) of Rule 5 of The Debt Recovery Tribunal (procedure) Rules, 1993 As Amended From Time To Time)
Dy. No. 674 Dated: 27.06.2022
Punjab National Bank V/s M/s Arhan Ali Enterprises & Ors.
To,
1. M/s Arhan Ali Enterprises having Its registered office at Muza Laxmipur, Tehsil Vikasnagar, Dehradun, UK 248198 through its sole proprietor Israr Ali S/o Irshad.
2. Israr Ali S/o Irshad R/o Muza Laxmipur, Tehsil Vikasnagar, Dehradun, UK 248198.
3. Smt. Pushpa Adhikari W/o Rajendra Singh Adhikari R/o House No.17, Prakash Lok, Phase-I, Shimla Bypass, Mazra, Dehradun, UK 248171.
Whereas the above named Applicant Bank has instituted OA No. 66 of 2020 against you for recovery of debts of Rs. 43,43,035.08/- in which Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to issue Summons/Notice U/s 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 and was listed before the Hon'ble Presiding Officer on 06.06.2022.
Whereas, it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by way of this publication directing you to appear in person or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner before the Tribunal on 07.10.2022. Further, you are required to show cause as to why the relief(s) prayed for in OA should not be granted and to file reply, if any, in your defence In a paper book form in sets and produce all the documents and affidavits under which your defence or claim for set off, counter claim, in this Tribunal personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner within 30 days from the date of the publication of this notice.
Take notice that In case of default of your appearance on the specified day and time before the Tribunal, the case shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the **27th day of June, 2022.**
By order of Tribunal, Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Dehradun

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In my service records, the names of my both daughters are mistakenly recorded as Akshita and Sadhika whereas their correct names are AKSHITA NEGI and SADHIKA NEGI respectively. D`evender Singh Negi, s/o Nain Singh Negi, Army No 15420693K NK/AA-314 Field Hospital, C/o 56 APO, R/o Chaktunwala Grant, Dehradun

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Need to develop new work culture in U'khand- Dhami

Focusing on mantra of 'simplification, solution & satisfaction' in governance, says Dhami on completing 100 days in office

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has said that a new work culture should be developed in the State. Asking the government officers and employees to come to the office on time, CM said that he and his ministers would ensure it by conducting regular inspections. Addressing media persons at his residence on the occasion of completion of 100 days of his second tenure as CM in office on Thursday, Dhami said that his government is focusing on the mantra of 'simplification, solution and satisfaction' and has kept Mondays as no meeting days in the state secretariat so that officers are available to meet general public. He added that the district level officers have been directed to meet people from 10 AM to 12 PM on all working days from Monday to Friday.

Dhami said that his government has got the mandate of people of the state to implement Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and the government has constituted a committee headed by former justice of Supreme Court Ranjana Prakash Desai which would hold consultation with all stakeholders to prepare a draft of UCC. He said that some people are raising objections to the UCC but for safeguarding the spiritual, religious and cultural identity of Uttarakhand, UCC is necessary. Dhami said that his government would provide three free gas cylinders to poor families and has increased the old age and widow pensions. Dhami said that we should make Uttarakhand the best State in the country in the field of culture, Yoga and tourism by 2025 and for it a road map is being created. He said that all the departments have been directed to prepare a roadmap for the next ten years. Dhami said that the work on centrally sponsored schemes like all-weather road, Rishikesh-Karnprayag rail project and Bharat Mala project are going on at a fast pace. The reconstruction of the Kedarnath is going on as per the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and work on the Badrinath master plan is in progress.

He said that 100 days of his government had been dedicated to commitment, dedication and effort. Dhami said that the government is working in the direction of fulfilling the dream of PM Modi that in the year 2025, Uttarakhand should be the leading state of the country. Terming Uttarakhand as the centre of religion and culture Dhami said that the state has tremendous potential for development and the state government would explore ways of using this potential to put the state on the path of development.

Cabinet ministers Dhan Singh Rawat, Ganesh Joshi, additional chief secretary Radha Raturi, special principal secretary Abhinav Kumar, director general of Information Ranvir Singh Chauhan and others were present on the occasion.

Dhami Govt moving towards fulfilling commitments made to public- Kaushik

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Executing various welfare measures in a short duration of 100 days shows the commitment of the State government under chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami to achieve the target set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of making Uttarakhand one of the best States by 2025. Stating this, the Bharatiya Janata Party State president Madan Kaushik said that the State government is consistently moving towards fulfilling the commitments made to the public. He said that this is clear from steps like formation of a committee to prepare the draft of Uniform Civil Code, deciding to provide three free gas cylinders to Antyodaya families in a year, improving facilities in all places of worship on Char Dham circuit and developing ancient temples in Kumaon region under Manaskhand Mandir Mala mission. He listed the various central and other projects on which work is being undertaken in the State. Apart from these, various policy decisions and projects being executed by the State government are ensuring the desired development of Uttarakhand and its people, he said. Kaushik expressed confidence that by bringing a positive change in the work culture, Uttarakhand will progress to one of the top Indian States by 2025.

BJP Govt has failed in every field- Congress

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Terming the performance of the Pushkar Singh Dhami government in its first 100 days as pathetic, the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara said that this government has no achievement except winning the Champawat by election by misuse of government machinery.

He said that in these 100 days, the Dhami government has engaged only in self praise and the people of the State are finding themselves cheated. Mahara said that the government has only constituted committees on the demand of Land laws and Uniform Civil Code. He opined that the Dhami government has only engaged in verbosity on the issues of migration, employment, human-wildlife conflict and health facilities. Launching an attack on the Dhami government, Mahara said that the words cannot provide food to the hungry, people need results on ground and this government has failed miserably in giving results.

The leader of opposition (LoP) Yashpal Arya also termed the 100 days of Dhami government as full of despair. He said that the argument between a minister and her secretary highlights the way in which the state government is functioning. Arya added that the government made a laughing stock of itself by mismanaging the Char Dham Yatra and the government's seriousness can be understood from the fact that the minister concerned was on foreign trip when the Yatra commenced in Uttarakhand. Congress leader Rajiv Mehrishi said that in the 100 days the BJP government has only made declarations and the government has no plan to fulfill the announcements made by it.

Irrigation Dept & PWD fully prepared for monsoon- Maharaj

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Irrigation department and Public Works Department (PWD) have made all necessary arrangements in view of the monsoon. A central flood control cell has been set up in the Dehradun irrigation division apart from which flood control cells have also been formed in both Garhwal and Kumaon. Apart from this, a large number of mechanical excavators have been deployed to open roads blocked during the rains. The Irrigation and PWD minister Satpal Maharaj said this while addressing the media here on Thursday.

As in every year, the Irrigation department has established a flood control cell in the nodal division of each district from June 15. These cells operate 24x7. The central flood control cell established in Dehradun can be reached at 9027022700. Further, the executive engineer in-charge of flood control has established a WhatsApp group with State level officers as members for exchange of flood related information. A total of 113 flood posts have also been established across the State with arrangements being made to provide warning to villagers. The department is consistently monitoring the level of all major rivers in the State while vulnerable places are also being monitored.

The PWD has also prepared for the monsoon with a total of 396 mechanical excavators being deployed across the State. Most of these machines are fitted with GPS so that their location can be ascertained. In case of any road being blocked, the operator of the mechanical excavator can be directly contacted and sent to the site for necessary work. The minister further informed that instructions have been issued to clear roadside drains so that rainwater drains out of roads swiftly and so that the roads are not damaged.

Heartiest congratulations to all the people of the state on the occasion of golden jubilee of 50 years of Rural Works Department on 1st July , 2022.

Under the guidance of Hon'ble Rural Works Minister Satpal Maharaj and to achieve the choiceless resolution of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, under the leadership of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, the Rural Department, Uttarakhand is doing unprecedented work for the development of the state.

- The approved construction work of various departments set up in the state by the Rural Works Department, deposit items and construction of rural motor roads are done in the form of departmental budget under the financial limit of Rs.15.00 crore (Rs.15 crore).
- Establishment expenditure (7.55 % in financial year 2021-22) is minimum for the construction works being done by Rural Works Department in technical departments/executive institutions working in the state.
- Rural Works Department, in the area of construction, in remote areas, where small buildings, approved under MP and MLA funds, are being done on one hand. On the other hand, construction work of many big government buildings is being done with high quality.
- In the last financial year, a total of 5577 (five thousand five hundred seventy) construction works, including about 3959 (three thousand nine hundred and eighteen) buildings of various types received by the department from 59 government departments, corporations and autonomous institutions, were completed.
- In the last years, the Department has done residential and non-residential buildings of Development Institute Rudrapur, Directorate building of PRD Department, development buildings of District Nainital, Bageshwar and Rudraprayag, present Vidhan Sabha building located in Dehradun, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya building, Sayat (Nainital) etc. Notable construction works. have been conducted.
- Under Mahakumbh Mela-2021, the construction work of four-storey building (cost Rs. 405.57 lakh) of Police CPMF's transit hostel was completed in a record time of four and a half months.
- The construction work of 201 rural motor roads (length 386.663 km) under NABARD funded and state plan has been completed from the sanctioned year 2014-15 till present, which has benefited a total population of 1,54,993 villages of 314 villages.
- The construction work of 40 rural motor roads is proposed to be started in the current financial year, for which the process of formation of DPR is in progress.

Message

I am happy that the Golden Jubilee Celebrations are being organized by the Rural Works Department, Uttarakhand on 1st July, 2022 on the occasion of completion of 50 years of the department.

Engineers play an important role in the overall development of the state. Every person associated with engineering is making an important contribution in laying a strong foundation and development of the state.

I hope that the Rural Works Department will make meaningful efforts as before for the progress and development of the state of Uttarakhand. Hearty congratulations from my side on the contribution made by the engineers of the Rural Works Department in the interest of the state and the completion of 50 years of the department ——

Shri Satpal Maharaj
Hon'ble Minister, Rural Works Department, Tourism, Culture, Irrigation, PWD and Panchayati Raj, Government of Uttarakhand

Future Work

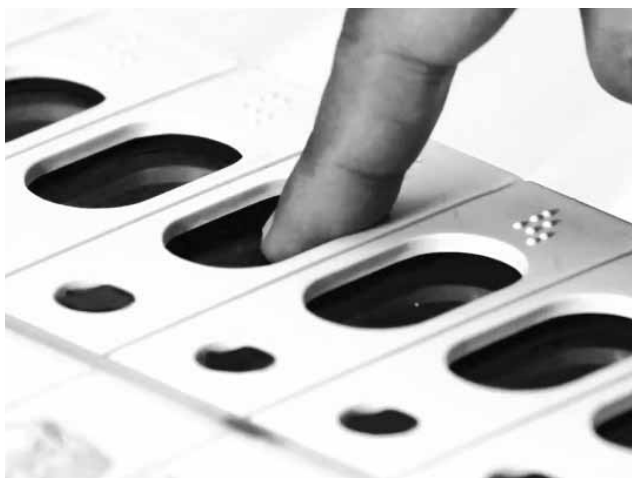
- It is proposed to prepare a proposal of "Mukhyamantri Gram Sadak Yojana" to connect every village of Uttarakhand state with roads, for which the data base of rural motor roads is being prepared by the department.
- Provision of solar plant and rainwater harvesting system will also be made along with hill culture/local craftsmanship in construction works.
- The department will be reorganized with the aim of increasing the working capacity of the department and carrying out the schemes of the government at an accelerated pace. To increase healthy competition among the executing agencies, the limit of work for the department will be increased to Rs.

Directorate of Rural Works Department, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

EC BEGINS REVISION OF ELECTORAL ROLLS IN J&K

Taking place after a gap of three years, the process is an indication that polls could be held in Valley

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Election Commission (EC) has begun the process of electoral rolls' revision in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) after a gap of three years, in an indication that polls could be held in the Valley post its delimitation exercise. In a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of J&K, the EC has given a timeline to complete various activities before the final publication of the electoral rolls on October 31.

" ... In order to update the electoral rolls on the basis of the newly-delimited constituencies, so that all newly-eligible young electors can have the opportunity to get themselves enrolled, the exercise of Special Summary Revision with reference to the next qualifying date is required to be undertaken without further delay," the letter said.

"Consequent upon amendment in Section 14 of the Representation of the People Act by Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, as notified vide the Gazette of India notification No. 67, dated 30 December 2021 and corresponding changes in the Registration of Electors Rule, 1960 notified on 17th June, 2022, four qualifying dates, namely, 1 January, 1 April, 1 July, and 1 October are available in the law. In view of the reason explained in the preceding paragraph, the Commission has decided to order SSR, 2022 with respect to October 1, 2022 which is the next qualifying date for preparation of electoral roll, after conclusion of the ongoing pre-revision activities," reads the letter.

"Accordingly, the Commission has directed to carry out the revision activity for Special Summary Revision of Photo Electoral Rolls w.r.t 01.10.2022 as the qualifying date in UT of J&K," it further states. The revision of electoral rolls couldn't be undertaken in J&K due to August 5, 2019 constitutional changes and delimitation exercise.

"I am directed to state that as per existing policy, revision of electoral rolls with reference to 1 January of the coming year as the qualifying date is done in later part of each year in all States/UTs (normally in the last quarter of a year) so that final publication of the electoral rolls could be made in the first week of January of the succeeding year.

"However, due to various administrative reasons, this annual revision of electoral roll could not be undertaken in Jammu and Kashmir after SSR, 2019. In the meantime, delimitation exercise of constituencies in the Union. Territory was also in progress and the finally delimited constituencies were notified by the Delimitation Commission on 05th May, 2022," the letter states. As per schedule announced by the ECI, the integrated draft electoral roll shall be published on September 01, 2019.

According to the poll-body, the claims and objections can be filed between September 01 to September 30 and they shall be disposed of by October 15. The final publication of electoral rolls shall be done on October 31, the schedule states.

Officials said the voters' list will keep getting updated as there are four cut-off dates in a year now when those turning 18 can enrol themselves as voters.

Earlier, those turning 18 on or before the first day of the year, could apply to become voters on January 1. Now, those turning 18 on or before January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1 can apply to become voters.

As per existing policy, the revision of electoral rolls with reference to January 1 of the coming year as the qualifying date is carried out in later part of each year in all states and union territories so that the final publication of the electoral rolls could be made in the first week of January of the succeeding year.

However, due to various reasons, the annual revision of electoral rolls could not be undertaken in Jammu and Kashmir after special summary revision, 2019.

In the meantime, an exercise to redraw the boundaries of constituencies in the UT was in progress and the finally delimitated segments were notified by the Delimitation Commission on May 5 this year.

India sees huge jump in Covid cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India saw a massive jump in Covid cases on Thursday as it recorded 18,000 new infections, pushing the active caseload to breach the one lakh mark for the first time in the last four months. The country has witnessed a jump of more than 4,000 cases in just 24 hours while death, too, is inching up gradually to touch 39.

As many as 13,827 patients recovered from the infection. The total active Covid cases crossed the one-lakh mark at 1,04,555. The total number of deaths in the country is now at 5,25,116. The country has witnessed a jump of more than 4,000 cases in just 24 hours. On Wednesday, India had logged 14,506 new Covid cases and 30 deaths. Active cases on Wednesday comprised 0.23 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.56 per cent, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

There are 43 districts that are recording a weekly positivity rate of 10 per cent or more. Kerala tops the list with 11 districts, followed by Mizoram (6) and Maharashtra (5).

The other states that have been witnessing a noticeable rise include Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Manipur, Mizoram, Goa, Karnataka and Puducherry. While there are 42 districts in India that are recording a positivity rate between 5 and 10 per cent, the 627 others are still below the 5 per cent-mark.

Fresh Covid-19 cases in India in the week ending Sunday surged to the highest in nearly four months with close to 80,000 new infections, up 62% from the previous week's tally. Although deaths from the virus remained very low compared to previous outbreaks, at least 93 fatalities were reported in the country during the week, more than the combined toll in the previous two weeks (45 and 41).

INSACOG (Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium) officials said, "Omicron sub-lineages, mainly BA.2 and BA.2.38, and BA.4 and BA.5 in some parts of the country, were behind the current spike". During this week, fresh cases rose in nearly all states and UTs. The highest numbers were reported from Maharashtra, where the weekly tally crossed the 25,000 mark (25,172), up 45 per cent from 17,380 in the preceding week. Kerala reported a similar spike of 42 per cent, with over 20,500 new cases.

The surge intensified in NCR cities, with weekly numbers more than doubling. Delhi reported 9,291 cases, a rise of 128 per cent from last week's tally of 4,068 while Uttar Pradesh witnessed a 109 per cent surge, reporting 2,711 infections. Haryana's tally rose 94 per cent, from India's weekly Covid cases up 60 per cent to 80k, deaths low but rising.

Among States that reported more than 1,000 new infections during the week, the highest percentage rise was seen in Tamil Nadu — up 169 per cent, from 1,299 last week to 3,492 — and Bengal, where cases rose by 145 per cent from 663 to 1,621. In States where numbers were still relatively low, Assam saw a 4.8-fold increase in cases, Jharkhand 2.5-fold and Chhattisgarh 2.2-fold.

UN condemns killing of Kanhaiya Lal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The United Nations (UN) has condemned the killing of Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur and called for respect of all religions to ensure different communities live in peace and harmony.

This reaction came from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres who urged full respect of all religions, his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said late on Wednesday.

Dujarric said this in response to a question on whether the UN chief has a comment on the resurgence of religious tensions in India following the killing of Kanhaiya Lal.

"We very much hope... we call for the full respect of all religions and for ensuring, throughout the world, that different communities can live in harmony and in peace," Dujarric said at the daily press briefing.

In response to another question on the arrest of Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair, he said, "We believe in a fundamental right of expression. We believe in the fundamental right of journalists to express, themselves and we also believe in the fundamental need for people to respect other communities and other religions. We believe those two sentiments are very much compatible."

LS MPs' trips cost Rlys ₹62 cr over 5 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Free train travels of sitting and former Lok Sabha members over the last five years have cost the Indian Railways exchequer ₹62 crore, which included nearly ₹2.5 crore in the pandemic-hit 2020-21. While sitting MPs are entitled to use the railways' first class air-conditioned or executive class for free, their spouses, too, can avail free travel under certain conditions. Former MPs are also entitled to travel in any train in AC-2 tier along with a companion or in AC-1 if alone.

In the response to a Right to Information (RTI) application, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said it has received a bill of ₹35.21 crore from the Indian Railways for the travel of sitting MPs and ₹26.82 crore for former MPs during 2017-2018 to 2021-22.

According to the response, the MPs and ex-MPs used the Railway passes even during the pandemic-hit year of 2020-21 when their bill was ₹1.29 crore and ₹1.18 crore, respectively. The Railways' pay and accounts department forwards the bills to the LS Secretariat for processing. The Railways has recently put on hold an array of concessions it offered to certain categories of passengers, including senior citizens. While there was subdued anger among certain sections over the move, the discontinuation of the subsidy given to senior citizens has drawn a lot of ire. According to official data, between March 20, 2020 and March 31, 2022, the Railways did not offer concessions to 7.31 crore senior citizen travellers. These included 4.46 crore males over the age of 60, and 2.84 crore females over 58 and 8,310 transgender people.

Last year the Rajya Sabha Secretariat also found randomly that 87 per cent of the total cost of journeys have not been undertaken and neither were cancelled but the Secretariat had to reimburse to the Railways. In an advisory the Rajya Sabha noted that from the details of debit claims raised by the Ministry of Railways, multiple bookings were being made by some members in various trains departing from the same/different stations to different destinations for the same day.

The Rajya Sabha Secretariat has to make payments to the Ministry of Railways even for those bookings which are actually not utilised by the members. In respect of a sitting member too, the analysis done by the RS Secretariat revealed the actual journeys during January 2019 amounted to only 15 per cent of the total claim of Railways, forcing the Secretariat to pay 85 per cent extra for journeys not undertaken.

Major hope for patients of pancreatic cancer

Scientists show it's possible to reverse key process that allows cancer cells to grow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a discovery that may come as a boon for the patients of pancreatic cancer, scientists have shown it is possible to reverse a key process that allows pancreatic cancer cells to grow and spread around the body. These findings, published in *Nature*, show that a protein called GREM1 is key to regulating the type of cells found in pancreatic cancer – and manipulating its levels can both fuel and reverse the ability of these cells to change into a more aggressive subtype.

Pancreatic cancer has a notoriously high mortality rate, with just seven per cent of patients surviving for five years or more. Every year, more than 10,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with the disease, with around 9,000 deaths.

Scientists from the Institute of Cancer Research conducted studies in mice and on mini pancreases made in a laboratory, where they manipulated the level of the gremlin protein in the system.

When the gene, and therefore the protein, was eliminated, tumours were rapidly converted into a more dangerous and invasive form.

In a matter of days, every tumour cell had been converted from the more harmless form into the more dangerous mesenchymal cancer cells.

The absence of "gremlin" also meant the cancer was more likely to spread to other organs. In nine out of 10 gremlin-less mice, for example, cancer spread from the pancreas into the liver.

In contrast, when the gremlin protein was working normally, the cancer spread in just 15 per cent of the laboratory animals.

As well as curtailing Grem1 production, the scientists also boosted the concentration of the protein to far beyond the normal level and found this had a beneficial effect.

Gremlin therapy can 'reverse the fate' of dangerous cells

Writing in their study, published in Nature, the scientists said that in high quantities, the gremlin protein "caused almost complete" reversal of cells that had already morphed into the more dangerous guise.

This, they said, indicated that high Grem1 activity was able to "reverse the fate" of the dangerous cells.

Changing geopolitical scenario making Indian Ocean region competitive: NSA

At 1st MAMSG meet Doval calls for synergy among stakeholders for maritime security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As China asserts itself in the Indian Ocean, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval on Thursday cautioned that the region is becoming "competitive" and the country has to protect its interests. He also called for synergy among all the stakeholders responsible for maritime security.

Making these observations at the first meeting of the Multi Agency Maritime Security Group (MAMSG) here, Doval said, "In the changing geopolitical scenario, the Indian Ocean, which has been an ocean of peace, is gradually becoming competitive. We see a potential of having a clash of interest, we need to protect it and be vigilant," he said. The NSA refrained from naming China

Describing the Indian Ocean as a "great asset" for the country, Doval said the country's vulnerabilities are directly proportional to its assets and that India's responsibility as a premier maritime power is extremely important.

"The more we develop, the more assets we create, the more prosperous we get, greater would be the vulnerability and the need for security in the maritime domain," he said. Underlining these key factors, Doval called for seamless coordination among various agencies involved in protecting India's maritime interests, saying it will not be able to become the power it deserves to be in absence of a very strong maritime security apparatus.

Addressing the top maritime and coastal security brass from all 13 coastal states and Union Territories as well Indian Navy and other central agencies, Doval said security at the high seas and economic well-being is inextricably linked and all stakeholders must work unitedly.

"The trajectory of this nation is well defined. We know where we are going. And when our time comes...We as a nation have to be strong. India will not be able to become the power it deserves to be unless it has a very strong maritime system," Doval said.

The meeting was chaired by Vice-Admiral (Retired) G Ashok Kumar, the country's first National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC), a post created to ensure coordination among various agencies responsible for overall maritime security matrix. Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar was among the top officials who attended the deliberations.

BJP exec committee to hold contact programme in 119 T Assembly constituencies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the July 2-3 BJP national executive meeting at Hyderabad, the party's executive committee members will undertake a 'contact programme' in 119 Assembly constituencies of Telangana, which is to elect a new Assembly next year.

BJP leaders will spend two days in these Assembly constituencies and interact with local party leaders and people there, and give their feedback to the leadership, sources said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with BJP president JP Nadda and other senior central and State party leaders will attend the executive committee meeting.

Besides several national issues, Assembly polls in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat by the year-end as well as next year's poll in Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Tripura would also come up for discussion.

Preparations for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections would also be discussed, sources said.

A huge roadshow is being planned to welcome the Prime Minister from the airport to the national executive venue. Modi will also address a public rally on July 3 after the conclusion of the meet.

An exclusive vegetarian fare is being made ready for the delegates. Around 10,000 banners, 200 hoardings and flexis will be put up on 10,000 poles in the city to welcome top party leaders.

CRIMES AGAINST SCs, STs

Ensure there is no delay in registration of FIRs: MHA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has asked all States to ensure that there was no delay in registration of FIRs in cases of crimes against Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) and closely monitor such cases where investigation goes beyond two months.

In a communication to all States and Union Territories, the Home Ministry also said that the district Superintendent of Police (SP) must ensure timely attendance and protection of all prosecution witnesses including police officers and official witnesses for speedy trial of cases related to crimes against SCs and STs. "There should be no delay in the registration of FIRs in cases of crimes against SCs and STs. Ensure proper supervision at an appropriate level of cases of crimes against SCs and STs, from the recording of FIR to the disposal of the case by the competent court," said the MHA. The Home Ministry said the delays in investigation (beyond 60 days from the date of filing of the FIR) shall be monitored at the district and State level in every three months, and wherever required, special DSPs shall be appointed to expedite the process of investigation. "The authorities concerned in the State Governments must ensure proper follow up of reports of cases of atrocities against SCs and STs received from various sources, including the National Commission for SCs and STs," the communication said.

"Delay in trial of cases of crimes against SCs and STs may be reviewed on a regular basis in the monitoring committee or monthly meetings chaired by district and sessions judge attended by District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and Public Prosecutor of the district," it said.

India, Japan review cyber security, ties during 4th cyber dialogue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Japan on Thursday reviewed the entire spectrum of cyber security and bilateral cooperation in this field during the fourth cyber dialogue between the two nations. Giving details of the virtual mode talks hosted by India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that both sides discussed important areas of bilateral cyber cooperation and reviewed the progress achieved in the areas of cyber security and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) including 5G Technology. The two delegations exchanged views on latest developments in cyber domain and mutual cooperation during cyber consultations at the United Nations and other multilateral and regional fora. Both sides agreed to hold the next India-Japan Cyber Dialogue in 2023 as per mutual convenience.

The Indian delegation was led by Muanpuii Saiawi, Joint Secretary, Cyber Diplomacy Division (MEA) while the Japanese delegation was led by Yutaka Arima, Ambassador in-charge of Cyber Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Indian team consisted of officials from the MEA, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, National Security Council Secretariat, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Department of Telecommunications and Indian Computer Emergency Response Team among others.

Maha events shameful for Indian democracy: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday accused the BJP Government of capturing power "unethically" by the use of money and muscle power, and condemned it for destablising democratically-elected Governments. In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said after coming to power at the Centre in 2014, the focus of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been to capture power in the States and bring down the elected Governments rather than serve the people. "We strongly condemn the way BJP is destabilising both democratically-elected governments and democratically-installed Governments. This is not only an insult to democracy, but also an insult to the people who voted against the ideology of the BJP," he said in a statement.

"Through the naked display of money and muscle power, the BJP has undemocratically and unethically captured yet another State Government. Under the Modi-Shah duo, the BJP wants to capture power at any cost, either directly or through remote control. What happened in Maharashtra is shameful for Indian democracy," he said.

The party's statement comes on a day rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde was sworn in as the chief minister of Maharashtra. In a move that stunned political pundits and potentially checkmated the Shiv Sena, BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday announced that Shinde will be the next chief minister of Maharashtra.

Ramesh further alleged that offices of the Governors and Speakers, and agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are openly misused, adding that buying MLAs has become so commonplace that the Finance Minister blurted out the truth today, when she suggested imposition of GST on horse-trading. "The BJP can go to any extent to win elections - From misuse of money power to polarisation and violence. Despite using all these tactics, if the voters reject them, then they start hatching conspiracies to topple elected governments," he said. The Congress leader said in 2016, the BJP brought down the Congress Government in Uttarakhand in a similar way, where due to Congress MLAs leaving the party, the Government elected for five years was reduced to a minority in four years.

In Arunachal the same year, 43 out of 44 Congress MLAs defected to the BJP-backed People's Party of Arunachal Pradesh under the leadership of Chief Minister Pema Khandu. In the 2017 Assembly elections in Manipur, the Congress party emerged as the single largest party by winning 28 out of 60 seats, he said, adding that the BJP had only 21 seats, but the Congress was not given a chance to prove its majority. A similar game happened in Bihar in 2017 when the BJP toppled the Grand Alliance Government that lasted 20 months.

People pose as PMO staffers; CBI registers three cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered three separate cases of impersonation and cheating by some persons who posed as staffers of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

In the first complaint, a public grievance dated April 29, 2021 forwarded by the PMO to the CBI, was received from the victim Ravikant Kharb of Faridabad regarding cheating by one Prince (real name not known) posing himself to be a PMO official.

Prince, who claimed to be a Personal Assistant in the PMO, misrepresented to Kharb that he can manage a Government job in the RBI in lieu of a consideration amount of Rs 3 lakh out of which Rs 25,000 was paid in advance to Prince by him.

In the second case, one Dr Shiva Kumar of Kerala, impersonating as an PMO official was making calls to people from his mobile number 08075994461 claiming to be a Personal Advisor to the Prime Minister.

The third case has been registered against an unknown accused following a complaint from Anil Kumar Sharma, Assistant Director, PMO.

It said that one person claiming to be Rohit Yadav, Joint Secretary, PMO called Manoj Kumar Meena, IPS (2012-batch, AGMUT cadre) posted in Chandigarh and sought transfer of a police Constable. A probe shows that no such call was made by the official and the mobile number was also fake.

Suvendu, Mukul, Adhir took money from me: Sharada boss

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Moments before being produced before a designated court, Sudipto Sen mentioned about his letters written to the appropriate authorities in which he had claimed that Adhikari, Roy and Chowdhury had taken money from him

Triggering a big political controversy, main Sharada chit fund accused Sudipto Sen on Thursday named Bengal Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari, TMC vice president Mukul Roy and Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Chowdhury for deriving illegal benefits from him.

Moments before being produced before a designated court, Sen mentioned about his letters written to the appropriate authorities in which he had claimed that Adhikari, Roy and Chowdhury had taken money from him.

"I wrote the names of Mukul Roy, Adhir Chowdhury who took money from me … In the second letter I wrote the name of Suvendu Adhikari who extorted money from me in several tranches … once he took Rs 90 lakh for the construction of a building at Contai," Sen said.

The TMC has recently upped the ante against the BJP leadership following ED and CBI interrogation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee and his wife Rujira Banerjee. The ED has reportedly asked Rujira Banerjee to explain her links to several crores of rupees parked in a Thailand bank.

Both Abhishek and his better half have been under scanner in cases of money laundering. Junior Banerjee is also being questioned about whether he had a role in the multi-crore coal and cattle smuggling.

Reacting to Sen's statement Adhikari said he would not comment about "rubbish remarks" while Roy said he had no information about regarding whatever had been said.

Chowdhury was more vociferous in his reaction charging the Chief Minister for trying to frame him.

"Didi has been trying to find out allegations to blemish my name … she failed to do so … now she is using Sharada scamsters to make these comments ... I have already filed a defamation against Sudipto Sen," the Congress leader who is also the PCC president said wondering why there was no word about what had transpired between the Chief Minister and the Sen at Dello Bungalow in Kalimpong. "We are eager to know from CBI and ED as to what had transpired between Mamata Banerjee and Sudipto Sen in the Dello Bungalow at Kalimpong … why is there no word about that," Chowdhury said.

'DIDI IS MOTHER SHARADA REINCARNATION'

'Pained' RK Mission condemns TMC leader's statement

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Ramakrishna Mission has expressed strong objection to seniorTrinamool Congress MLA Dr Nirmal Maji's comparison of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to Sharada Devi the Holy Mother of the Order.

"Ramakrishna Mission strongly objects to the remarks made by a politician about our Holy Mother Sharada who is the driving force of the Order … we have been receiving numerous mails, messages and telephone calls from the devotees of the Ramakrishna Mission who have strong faith and reverence for Sharada Devi our Divine Mother … we have no word to express our disapproval for the needless remark about Ma Sharada," said Swami Subirananda Maharaj the Secretary of the Math and Mission in a video message, adding the Order hoped "no such remarks will be made in future."

Dr Maji a senior TMC politician had earlier claimed that Chief Minister was the reincarnation of Mother Sharada.

"I have been told by the monks of Ramakrishna Mission who quoted some companions of Swami Vivekananda saying Mother Sharada had once told them before her demise that in her next life she would reincarnate in South Kolkata around today's Kalighat and Harish Chatterjee Street area (the official residence of Banerjee) and get involved in political and social activities," Dr Maji said adding he had "no doubts that Mamata Banerjee is the Holy Mother Sharada …"

Ramakrishna Mission's official rebuttal of Dr Maji's remarks came after about two days during which the Trinamool Congress leadership maintained conspicuous silence.

Mother Sharada was the wife and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa the Master and

Guru of Swami Vivekananda who founded the Ramakrishna Mission in order to spread his ideas of unity of religion and service to mankind. While Maji would not comment TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said that his statement was uncalled for as "Mamata Banerjee is a name to reckon with while Mother Sharada needs no introduction … the two cannot be and should not be compared because they belong to different fields."

BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya too scoffed at the TMC leadership saying "sycophancy has reached such levels in the Trinamool Congress that tomorrow no one will be surprised if someone claims that Swami Vivekananda has reborn in the same Banerjee family." Bhattacharya would not however name TMC general secretary and the Chief Minister's nephew Abhishek Banerjee.

Patience of Kashmiri Pandits on dharna for past 50 days, wearing thin

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Patience of Kashmiri migrant employees, sitting on a dharna for the last 50 days in support of their one point demand of relocation to the safer areas outside the Kashmir valley, is fast running thin.

Coupled with this the Union Territory administration is not leaving any stone unturned to pressurise these employees to resume their duties in the safer zones.

On June 29, the office of the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar directed one dozen Kashmiri employees to report to the office of the Camp Director, Panthachowk to ensure smooth conduct of the Amarnath yatra.

In addition several employees, especially teachers, have been served show cause notices by their school authorities to explain the reasons behind unauthorised absence from duties for a long time. So far the majority of these employees have not resumed their duties. At the same time they are a worried lot as many of them have been handed over relieving orders by their superior officers while directing them to resume their duties.

These migrant employees have launched a peaceful agitation soon after Rahul Bhat, a Kashmiri migrant employee deployed in the Kashmir valley under Prime Minister's package, was shot dead in cold blood inside the office of Tehsildar Chadoora in the central Kashmir district of Budgam on May 12.

So far the initiatives announced by the Union territory administration have not enthused these employees and they continue to hold their ground in support of their demand. These initiatives included a promotion scheme for the PM package employees, transfer to safer zones in the district headquarters, and adequate security cover across their transit camps.

Even a high level meeting convened between the representatives of the Kashmiri migrant employees and the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha failed to break the impasse last month.

In the last 50 days these migrant employees held several rounds of discussions with the visiting bureaucrats, police officers, local politicians, took out candle light marches in the heart of Srinagar city near Lal Chowk but no major headway was achieved.

As per rough estimates around 70 percent kashmiri migrant employees have already shifted to Jammu while rest of them have been camping inside their transit camps and not stepping out as they continue to live under the shadow of guns.

The employees sitting on a dharna in the office of Relief Commissioner (Migrants), in Jammu alleged the UT administration has so far failed to address their genuine demand. "We have made it clear to the government that Kashmiri pandit employees are not going to become scapegoats. Unless the security situation is brought under control and a conducive atmosphere prevails the PM package employees should be attached with the office of Relief Commissioner, Jammu till further orders".

A kashmiri migrant employee while referring to the security scenario in the Kashmir valley claimed, "we are still living in fear in the valley.We hardly step out of the camps. The fear of targeted killings is looming large. There is no question of resuming duties under the prevailing circumstances".

Another employee sitting on a dharna in the office of Relief Commissioner said, "all those initiatives announced by the UT administration have failed to cut ice with the migrant employees". "We are only sticking to our one point demand of relocation to the safer areas outside the Kashmir valley. We don't want to serve in the Kashmir valley.

A teacher serving in the Baramulla said, "our families living in Jammu were suffering for a long time due to uncertainties in the Kashmir valley". It is for the same reason we are holding protest demonstrations in Jammu and demanding attachment with the office of Relief commissioner Jammu till the situation is brought under control.

Call to annihilate Brahmins: Swamy seeks Governor Ravi's sanction to prosecute DMK leader

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The controversy over the call made by DMK spokesman R Rajiv Gandhi to Dravidians to subject the Brahmins to genocide took a curious turn on Thursday as Dr Subramanian Swamy, president, Virat Hindustan Sangham and former union minister for law and justice, writing to Governor R N Ravi seeking permission to prosecute the former.

Gandhi had made a speech on June 3 exhorting the Dravidians to annihilate the Brahmins as demanded by E V Ramasami Naicker, founder of the Dravidian movement. The DMK spokesman had reiterated the demand made by Naicker (addressed as Periyor by Dravidian activists) in the 1960s that there should be an ethnic cleansing of Tamil Nadu by finishing off the Brahmins.

"This is a blatant violation of the Representation of People's Act (RPA) and the Election Commission of India should derecognise the DMK," Dr Swamy had asked the ECI in a letter he wrote to the Chief Election Commissioner.

But his letter to Governor Ravi seeking his sanction to prosecute the DMK leader for his controversial speech has evoked interest in Tamil Nadu. Though Gandhi is neither an elected member of assembly or parliament nor holding any position in Government, Dr Swamy chose to approach the Governor for permission to drag the DMK spokesman to court. The former union minister has sought the permission under Section 196 of the Criminal Procedure Code to prosecute Gandhi for offences against the State and for criminal conspiracy to commit such an offence.

"I have enclosed my criminal complaint that I intend to file against one R Rajiv Gandhi , the secretary and spokesperson of the DMK. For the filing of the said complaint your sanction is required under Section 196 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973," said Dr Swamy in his letter to the Governor.

He further stated that the accused had committed various offences under the Indian Penal Code by publicly calling for the genocide of Brahmins in his June 3 speech. Dr Swamy pointed out that the Supreme Court in the Subramanian Swamy v Manmohan Singh case (2012) had expounded principles governing grant of sanction for prosecution.

Section 196 of the Cr PC states among other things that no Court shall take cognizance of the offence of any criminal conspiracy punishable under Section 120-B of the IPC other than a criminal conspiracy to commit an offence punishable with death, imprisonment for life or rigorous imprisonment for a term of two years or upwards unless the State Government or the District Magistrate has consented in writing to the initiation of the proceedings.

The section 196 further states that the Central Government or State Government may, before according sanction may order a preliminary investigation by a police officer not being below the rank of Inspector in which case such police officer shall have the powers referred to in sub-section (3) of section 155.

Yogi Govt extends free ration scheme for 3 more months

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has given a big gift to about 15 crore people of Uttar Pradesh on the completion of 100 days of his government's second consecutive term. The government has extended its free ration scheme for another three months. June 30 was the last day of the scheme. Now it will continue till September 30.

The Yogi Adityanath government 2.0 will complete 100 days of its tenure on July 4. Earlier, the government had given a big gift to the people of the state by extending the free ration scheme for three months from March to June. The Yogi government has again extended it for three months. About 15 crore people will benefit from it.

BSP working on Dalit-Muslim formula for 2024 LS election

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati, on Thursday, held a meeting with senior office-bearers of all the divisions of the party and asked them to reach out to the people and tell them about the policies of the party.

She said that it was a cause of concern that public interest and public welfare were constantly being affected by the ongoing political instability, deadlock and money power games to overthrow the government in several states, including recently in Maharashtra.

Mayawati also said that the BSP had not taken the decision to support presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu under pressure from any individual or party, but had decided to back her as Murmu belonged to Scheduled Tribe and support to her was part of the policy of Bahujan Samaj Party.

This decision is neither in favour of National Democratic Alliance nor against United Progressive Alliance, she said and added that the UPA did not even discuss with the BSP while choosing its presidential candidate.

"The situation is deteriorating day by day due to wrong policies and arrogant attitude of the government. To divert the attention of the people from the current situation, the government is adopting an arrest, jail, demolish house policy by repressive methods, which is completely wrong," she said.

Mayawati said instead of appeasement, hate elements should be dealt with strictly. She said it was wrong to demolish the house of any one community and send its members to jail. "This is constitutionally and humanly unfair. Strict action should be taken against those elements who promote enmity. There should be no discrimination in this," Mayawati said during the meeting.

Mayawati said there was unrest over recruitment in government jobs. "Now the youth are angry due to the recruitment of Agniveers on a temporary basis in the army," she added. She asked the government to reconsider the Agnipath scheme for short-term recruitment in the Indian Army so that the future of the youth could be secured.

Meanwhile, Mayawati asked party workers to get fully involved in the preparations for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and upcoming civic body elections in the state. She asked them to work at the ground level. At the same time, she said that all BSP workers should try to add more and more people to the party.

Yogi asks youth to create jobs through MSMEs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Appreciating the skills of micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) entrepreneurs and handicraft artisans, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, said that they were getting global recognition which reflected the commitment of the Government towards this sector.

"With the Government's encouragement, and the positive support from the bankers, the MSMEs have flourished and as a result of this, the Government has brought down the unemployment rate from 18 per cent to 2.9 per cent in the state," Yogi asserted.

In a move towards transforming the lives of youths by making them self-reliant, the Yogi Adityanath Government dispensed Rs 16,000 crore as loan to as many as 1.90 lakh beneficiaries under the employment initiative of the state government at the MSME loan fair.

The beneficiaries of this loan fair were from various schemes including Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, Chief Minister's Youth Self-Employment Scheme, and One District One Product (ODOP) Scheme.

On this occasion, the chief minister inaugurated Common Facilitation Centres (CFCs) in Agra, Ambedkar Nagar, Sitapur, Azamgarh and Siddharthnagar districts for branding, packaging and marketing of ODOP products. The chief minister interacted with the operators of the CFCs and discussed their functioning and future action plan.

Along with that, Yogi also launched an annual loan scheme of Rs 2.95 lakh crore for the year 2022-23 at the same event. He also inaugurated the Amazon Digital Centre in Kanpur Nagar district, a unit to help small businessmen in setting up their businesses in the digital world. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Uttar Pradesh government and e-commerce company Amazon.

Akhilesh targets CM over waterlogging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, on Thursday, targeted the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party over waterlogging after the first monsoon showers, particularly in Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's native town Gorakhpur, saying it was the result of rampant corruption in the government.

While taking a jibe at Yogi Adityanath, Akhilesh Yadav shared pictures of waterlogging in Gorakhpur on Thursday on his twitter handle and wrote, "This is the punishment of lack of development under BJP's rule. BJP's scale of corruption: 'Jal Nagar' Gorakhpur. Gorakhpur tourism is inviting you to say: Swim for a few days in Gorakhpur!"

It may be mentioned here that every year UP faces floods during monsoon. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had reviewed the flood management on Wednesday in a meeting with all the district magistrates. He had expressed satisfaction over the feedback from the officials but said that the flood management programme should be started in November-December instead of starting the work in June. He had instructed all the rescue teams including State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) to be on alert. Despite this, politics started with the first monsoon showers.

Artists perform on the eve of the annual 'Rath Yatra' of Lord Jagannath in Ahmedabad onThursday PTI

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Rebel turns king

After a series of twists and turns, Shinde is the Maharashtra CM and Fadnavis his deputy

When Uddhav Thackeray resigned as the Maharashtra Chief Minister immediately after the Supreme Court's refusal to stay a floor test in the Assembly on Wednesday, it looked like former Chief Minister and top Bharatiya Janata Party leader in the State Devendra Fadnavis was set to make a comeback. The rebel Shiv Sena leader, Eknath Shinde, was expected to be his deputy. But that was not to be; at a joint press conference with Shinde, Fadnavis himself announced that Shinde would occupy the high office. This was a big surprise for everyone — not just the BJP and Shiv Sena leaders but also the Thackeray camp and other anti-BJP politicians. There was some disappointment in the BJP camp that their leader Fadnavis

— who had worked so hard to keep the pressure on the MVA Government and eventually ousted it — could not become the CM. Fadnavis said that he would not be part of the Government. But the surprises of the day did not end with the press conference. While political commentators were analysing the ramifications of his not joining the State Government — Is he aspiring for a national role in the party? Will he manage the Government by remote control? — news came that he would indeed join the State Cabinet, as Deputy CM. Party president JP Nadda said, "The BJP's central leadership has decided that Devendra Fadnavis should become a part of the Government. So, made a personal request to him. The central leadership has said that Devendra Fadnvais should take charge as the Deputy CM of Maharashtra."

Finally, at 7.30 pm, Shinde was sworn in as the Chief Minister and Fadnavis as his deputy. Such are the twists and turns in Indian politics. By making Shinde the CM, the BJP top brass seems to be more interested in the longevity of its Government in Maharashtra, a leading industrial State, than in the benefits that come with the top office. Besides, they know that Shinde would be completely dependent on them for survival. As it is, he has crossed the Rubicon in Sena politics by snapping all ties with the Uddhav Thackeray family, which is often seen and presented as the heart and soul of the Shiv Sena. At present, perception is that while Shinde has the majority of Sena MLAs with him, the party rank and file is solidly behind Thackeray. But then there is often a chasm between perception and reality. Shinde and his followers have themselves risen through the ranks. In other words, Shinde and Co cannot be dismissed as nobodies, as leaders who are of no consequence without the backing of the Thackeray family. Ironically, Thackeray might have helped Shinde's case as the Chief Minister. In his response to the rebellion, he had asked the Shinde camp, "If I step down, can you guarantee another Sainik will be the Chief Minister?" Well, instead of the rebels, the BJP has answered that question.

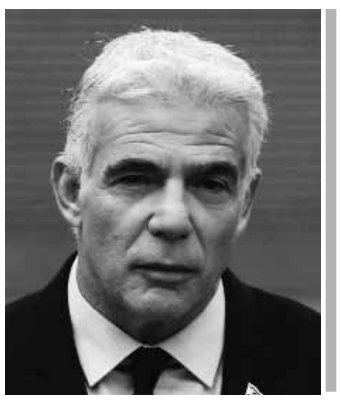
PICTALK

Women carry pots filled with cooked rice, decorated with turmeric and *neem* leaves, to goddess Kali in Hyderabad AP

Power shift

Israel is seeing a change of guard as Yair Lapid takes over as caretaker PM

The reins of power have not changed hands only in Maharashtra, and no longer does Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy remain the only high-profile head of a State who has appeared in popular television programmes. Quite a geographical distance away from India and Ukraine, the small but powerful country of Israel too is witnessing a shift in power. In the 10 years since he relinquished his job as a political chat show host to turn a full-time politician, Yair Lapid had dreamed of becoming Israel's Prime Minister. Now, as he prepares to take over in a caretaker capacity, he is sure to put his best foot forward to prove that he deserves the top job in the long term even as the country prepares to go to polls for the fifth time in less than four years. Meanwhile, former amateur boxer Lapid faces a stiff challenge from conservative Benjamin Netanyahu — Israel's longest-serving leader — whom



he successfully knocked out of office in 2021 by forging an unlikely alliance between eight, ideologically diverse political parties. Of course, Netanyahu — seeking his sixth term in office — will seek to paint his bitter rival as weak on security, particularly when it comes to Iran and terrorism. The challenge for Lapid will be to prove that he can protect Israel from its enemies and promote domestic unity.

But how does the shift in Israel's domestic power equation impact India? Well, time will surely shed more light on this subject as the current fluid situation unfolds until a new Government is formed after polls due in October or November. However, here're a few pointers. India and Israel have an extensive and comprehensive economic, military and political relationship. India is the largest buyer of Israeli military equipment and Israel is the second-largest supplier of military equipment to India after Russia. From 1999 to 2009, military business between the nations was worth around $9 billion. Military and strategic ties between the two nations extend to intelligence-sharing on terror groups and joint military training. As of 2019, India was the third-largest Asian trade partner of Israel, and its tenth-largest trade partner overall, with bilateral trade, excluding military sales, clocking $5.53 billion. Needless to say, New Delhi shall be keenly watching the unfolding drama in Tel Aviv. So far, Israel has been an all-weather friend and hopefully that won't change.

Global 'mission' & democratic culture

SARADINDU **MUKHERJI**

The recent street violence has put the focus back on the malignant influence of the Islamic ummah on large sections of Indian Muslim population

In 1353, England had enacted the Statute of Praemunire to prohibit all appeals to authorities outside England involving cognisable cases before the local courts. History knows how Henry VIII (1509-1547) had made use of this legal measure to bring an end to papal control, establish the sovereignty of the English State, dissolve the monasteries and taking forward the process of reformation. These have important lessons for many cutting across national boundaries.

The ongoing display of street violence in many cities of India, the attack on railway carriages, blockades put up on the highways, coupled with incendiary statements and threats of physical violence against the spokespersons of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party have once again brought to the surface the malignant influence of the Islamic ummah on large sections of the Indian population. The support extended by the "secularists", basically anti-Hindus, has further bolstered them. "Secularism", as it has been practised in India since the Khilafat days, and more rigorously after Independence/Partition, is known for its promotion and pampering of many absurdities, irredentism, extra-territorial loyalty and theologically sanctioned intolerance/destruction of the "other".

Those who foul-mouth "others" and threaten people with dire consequences in the name of alleged "blasphemy" must realise that what was easily achievable in the middle ages, long before the advent of enlightenment, liberalism, democratic system of governance, is not possible in 21st century India. Whether to stay cocooned in the primitive past or move forward with time as the rest of the civilised world is doing is for the respective societies to decide. It is true that certain political parties and State Governments have been partial to jihadi outfits and appear sympathetic to their atrocious religio-political objectives. True, these zealots were virtually let off for their lawless behaviour over the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019. Those guilty of large-scale

violence in West Bengal before and after the polls in 2021, which resulted in the killing and rape of many Hindus, still remain unpunished. Hence, they feel emboldened.

However, it is time to ponder the unacceptable conduct of people pushing forward with the objectives of the Islamic ummah. Khilafat was discarded by Kamal Pasha in Turkey but got a fresh lease of life because of Gandhi, leading to the genocide of Kerala Hindus (Moplahs, 1921). Subsequent emasculation of the Indian National Congress, leading to the Partition, marked the ultimate defeat of Hindus and a glorious victory for the Islamic ummah. While Pakistan carried out a systematic religio-ethnic cleansing of its Hindu, Buddhist, Sikhs population, India's "secular" leadership did not permit any exchange of population. Thus the basic issue remained unresolved.

The Hindus of Kashmir Valley turned into refugees in their own land. Certain constitutional provisions, gradual extension of Sachar Commission largesse, Minority Commission and the practice of helping the obscurantist elements have consolidated and rabid anti-Hindu elements.

> URGENT REMEDIAL LEGAL REFORMS ARE NEEDED TO DEFINE 'BLASPHEMY', IMPOSE CONDIGN PUNISHMENT FOR ESPOUSING NON-INDIAN IDEAS THAT VIOLATE OUR POLITICAL-LEGAL SYSTEM AND CREATE A PERPETUALLY POISONOUS ATMOSPHERE

The academic curriculum fashioned by Nehru-Azad-Nurul Hasan-Arjun Singh has strengthened this mindset that tends to push India back and destroys its very foundations. Heavily santitised social-science/ historical studies are the biggest casualties.

The liberal and creative space created by our saints and seers over the millennium, and later nurtured by the likes of Bankim, Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekananda, Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Pauhari Baba, Tagore and Savarkar, who had warned us against the destructive elements, is being systematically destroyed. Our media and entertainment industry are in the hands of anti-Hindus. Hence, urgent remedial legal reforms are needed to define "blasphemy", impose condign punishment for espousing non-Indian ideas that violate our political-legal system and create a perpetually poisonous atmosphere.

It is high time that the ummah may have to explain, and then compensate all those in India (and also outside) who feel deeply humiliated at the sight of thousands of their sacred places turned into mosques and millions of their fellow citizens imposed with artificial Arab identity. Then there is the issue of Wakf property. Their crime multiplies when one adds to their inhuman record the genocide of Hindus and other minorities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and in our own Kashmir Valley. What ideology explains these?

All those trying to corner India must understand that our people are very much conscious of its rich indigenous civilisational legacies and its immense potential. India is a sovereign democratic Republic, and confident of chartering its own course without unwarranted external advisories and interference! Those operating the global interests of the ummah, like the Organisation of Islamic Countries, and certain other countries and their Indian agents demanding action/apology from India could be appropriately advised that they must look back at their own record of unpardonable sacrilege on the Indian soil over the centuries. India's wounded civilisation cannot be targeted endlessly by terrorists in the name of a global mission!

(The author wrote the foreign policy content of the BJP, when its first website was launched in 1998. Currently, he is a Member, ICHR. The views expressed are personal).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOCUS ON CLEANER TECHNOLOGIES

Sir — The theme of the G7 Summit was to discuss the invasion of Ukraine, ways and means to stabilise energy markets and lessen dependence on Russian gas and oil. Close on the heels of the upcoming Nato Summit, the G7 has laid out the contours of strategic conversation around Ukraine. The announcement of Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment by US President Joe Biden to invest $600 billion by 2027 in poor and developing countries is aimed at providing an alternative to China's BRI, which is seen as imposing an untenable debt burden on developing countries.

PM Narendra Modi reminded the western countries of their promises made a decade ago of financing cleaner and green technologies to the poor and developing countries to the tune of $100 billion per year, which have fallen far short of the target. India's concern for greater investment in cleaner technologies is real as it has been able to achieve climate goals to a certain extent. By neither endorsing the Chinese President's GPI nor commenting on Biden's new initiative, India has rightly underlined its central role in the new thrust for the Indo Pacific by the western nations.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | *Nainital*

UDAIPUR MURDER IS CONDEMNABLE

Sir — In a horrific incident in Rajasthan's Udaipur district, two youth (Mohammed Gos and Riyaz Ansari) who posed as customers at a tailoring shop, allegedly beheaded tailor Kanhaiya Lal Teli days after he allegedly shared social media posts in support of Nupur Sharma. The assailants broke into his shop in daylight, stabbed him multiple times with a sword and then slashed his throat. Then the suspects posted a message on social media bragging about their misdeed. Lal had earlier complained about receiving death threats over his alleged social media post.

But the tailor himself was arrested and the matter was 'settled' after police-mediated sessions between him and the complainants. But the manner in which he was butchered isn't only shocking but gives clear indication that terror-mongers were involved. The mixed population of Hindus and Muslims in the area is worried about the growing tension. It's heartening that immediately after Lal's murder, Ajmer Dargah Deewan Zainul Abedin Ali Khan said Indian Muslims will never allow the Taliban mindset to spread in the country. The National Investigation Agency has already taken over the murder investigation and re-registered a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | *Faridabad*

SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN'S VICTORY

Sir — With his victory, SAD (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann in the Lok Sabha bypoll wrested the lone seat held by AAP. The bypoll was necessitated by the resignation of Bhagwant Mann since he took over as the Punjab Chief Minister. The bypoll victories do not indicate the mood of people or nation. Therefore, any attributions to Mann's victory or the opponent's defeat may be imaginary. A buoyed Mann has credited the victory to Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He should have introspected before issuing such a controversial statement. If Bhindranwale's teaching could permeate such an influence, why was AAP brought to power instead of his party?

Bhindranwale was certainly not a patriot. He was a religious leader backed by Pakistan for the aim of carving out Khalistan. Indira Gandhi ordered Operation Blue Star to check separatist activities, which led to confrontation with the military in 1984. At the time, Bhindranwale was among those killed in Operation Blue Star. If Mann thinks that his victory is a victory for Khalistan's movement, he is living in a fool's paradise. It may be recalled that he had insisted that he be allowed to carry *kirpan* to Parliament House.

KV Seetharamaiah | *Bengaluru*

A step in the right direction

I would like to express my delight on the important step taken by our Government to forbid the use of single-use plastic products. It is the right step in the country's mission to save the environment as single-use plastic can harm animals that eat it out of the debris and these can ultimately lead to its accumulation in the human body over time. This leads to severe health problems such as obesity and cancer. The Government's move will create new jobs in the recycling industry and give its contribution in solving India's unemployment problem. It would also increase the demand for more sustainable products which would boost the country's overall economy.

This step would drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is also a pocket-friendly step as other alternatives are much cheaper. To ensure that the step is implemented properly, we need more social scientists like Mubarak Ahmad Khan who developed a carry bag from the jute plant that serves the same purpose as plastic polythene bags. Other alternatives for replacing single-use plastics are using platinum silicon for food packaging, which has the same properties as plastic. We can replace plastic food wraps with beeswax-coated cloth as an alternative. Stainless steel and glass may be a replacement for plastic for food and beverage storage. These measures in India would go a long way in leading the fight to reverse climate change.

Krishna Kararia | *Rohini*

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

Due to Rajasthan Govt's policies, a situation of communal frenzy has arisen in the State.

Rajasthan ex-Chief Minister
—Vasundhara Raje

We need to act urgently to do everything to make Russia stop the killing spree.

Ukraine President
—Volodymyr Zelenskyy

I studied Hindi for almost 10 hours in a small office… Didn't see my family for two-three years.

Actor
—Nargis Fakhri

Not worried, to be honest. Wanted to keep pressure out of my equation.

India cricket skipper
—Hardik Pandya

Since the day the L-G took oath, he's trying to sabotage Delhi's constitutional setup.

AAP leader
—Atishi

FIRST COLUMN

YOGA NOW ACCESSIBLE TO ENTIRE HUMANKIND

Yoga seeks to unite human body with mind

ISHWAR V **BASAVARADDI**

On June 21 the world comes together to celebrate the aspirations of human spirit by hosting Yoga sessions. India, which gave birth to Yoga, is continuously playing a substantial role in making this ancient science of holistic well-being accessible to a large portion of the world's population, keeping in mind India's philosophy of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, i.e. 'the entire world is one family.'

Yoga is a discipline that seeks to accomplish the union of human body and mind towards the realisation of its infinite potential and elevating the human consciousness beyond the confines of individual mind and ego until it merges with all pervading Supreme Consciousness. The regular practice of various tenets of Yoga aids holistic well-being by improving physical, physiological, psychological, emotional and intellectual health.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 27, 2014, urged the United Nations General Assembly to take cognisance of the universal appeal of Yoga. This is how June 21 became the International Day of Yoga (IDY).

India has also succeeded in impressing upon the world that Yoga is integral to its ancient cultural heritage which goes back to 5,000 years. The proactive efforts by the Indian Government also led to Yoga's inclusion in the Unesco's representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity in December 2016.

Today, the knowledge and practice of Yoga has spread beyond the confines of East and South Asia. International Day of Yoga is now celebrated as a festival in almost all countries, by all creeds, race, caste, gender, and age groups making it the biggest global event for humanity's holistic health and wellbeing.

The word Yoga first finds mention in the ancient text of Rigveda which was composed during the Indus-Saraswati Valley Civilisation. It was then developed further by the sages. Raj Yoga (the Yoga of Mind Management) was arranged into a eight-limb treatise, Yoga Sutras, by Patanjali during the 2nd Century BC.

Srimad Bhagvad Gita, the most widely read scripture, discusses mainly four classical forms of Yoga—i.e., Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga, and Dhyana-yoga.

Although the Western World is interested in Yoga, its focus is mostly limited to the physical aspect of Yoga. However, in the last few decades, the US healthcare fraternity has been using Pranayama (regulated breathing techniques) and meditation in Yoga for treatment of the autism spectrum disorder. Various research articles in PubMEd and research done in India in collaboration with AIIMS, NIMHANS, etc., clearly show the efficacy of yoga in physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

India encourages the daily practice of Yoga among people. The effectiveness of Pranayama was manifest during the outbreak of Covid-19. Records show that millions of healthcare workers and Covid-19 patients in India made a lasting and faster recovery by practicing Yogasana, Pranayama, and meditation.

To increase awareness about Yoga and to encourage its practice among people, the Government has declared Yogasana as a competitive sport. India's efforts to establish it in Asian and Olympic Games are continuing. The Prime Minister has also announced two categories of awards, international and national, to honour individuals and organisations making outstanding contributions towards the promotion and development of Yoga.

Currently, about 1.25 lakh wellness centres teach Yoga across the country. In rural India, Gram Panchayats are continuously being sensitised about the regular practice of Yoga and the Yoga Protocols through various efforts. Prime Minister wrote letters to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayat Pradhans to promote Yoga-related activities. The Practice of Yoga has also been introduced in uniformed services.

(The author is Director, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, New Delhi)

Sexist attitude, remarks must be challenged

VK **KARTHIKA**

Normalisation of sexist harassment must cease for gender equality; educational institutions should embrace gender sensitivity

Sexual violence is widely equated with rape cases. The media spotlight brings spotlight on increasing crime rates, violence against women and safety of women. But sexist harassment, the most commonplace and everyday occurrence, is normalized.

Sexist harassment is consumed as something very normal. This normalcy is because of the patriarchal perspectives. There could be a fear factor too, for the victim might be unsure about raising voice. The act of sexist harassment for many simply means "a friendly gesture" or "a naïve joke." Thus, as rightly pointed out by Sheela Suryanarayanan, there is "an expensive silence" about sexist harassment.

Sexist violence begins from domestic spaces that formulate and foster different rules for women and men. This further gets reinstated at social institutions. Human minds are thought to be chastised by all kinds of biases when they become educated, on the premise that higher education institutions are considered as places that host healthy debates on social taboos to enable the youngsters to transcend boundaries of narrow mindedness, social inequalities and identity crises.

Sadly, gender discrimination and sexist violence creep into higher education institutions and contaminate all possibilities of establishing gender parity. Misogyny is palpable in all sectors while educational institutions are transforming into habitats of sexist ideologies that victimise women students, faculty, and non-teaching staff alike although the nature and gravity of violence varies.

An integral constituent of educational institutions is the student welfare office. When this office itself operates as an agency that endorses sexist notions either by visibly channelling or by metaphorically sanctioning them, it is important to underscore that everyone who consumes or disseminates such ideologies becomes a part of misogynistic propaganda.

Many of the educational institutions impose separate rules for the female students with regard to the dress, behaviour and their conduct on campus. Even during arts and sports festivals which allow the men students to be part of the festivities, the women can be a part of it until it is the time for them to get back to their hostels as there is a "gendered curfew" on campus. Authorities circulate notices that prescribe separate rules for women students and their men counterparts.

However, sexism operates covertly through subtle references towards the character of the girl who violates the popular gender expectations of the authorities. If confronted about the unjust treatment and policing, the authorities always defend themselves using benevolent sexism, with the best intention to protect the womenfolk!

Recently the Dean of Students' Welfare of an Institution of Eminence in central India issued a pamphlet on dangers of drug use, worded supposedly for witty and catchy slogans, created by students as part of a competition. These slogans were accredited and enlisted as the best entries from the contest.

> SEXIST HARASSMENT AND THE PREVAILING MISOGYNISTIC SENTIMENTS AROUND US CERTAINLY DO HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON WOMEN'S PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. IT IS HIGH TIME SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY ITS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, STOPPED OBJECTIFYING WOMEN

The author is Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, at National Institute of Technology-Trichy (NIT-T)

"Drug and Death - Couple with No Divorce" topped the rest and the acknowledgment of the nuanced and metaphorical references to the wife and husband never to be divorced appears both compulsorily heterosexual and naïve, not to mention the valorised nature of the marital relationship as the ideal and the goal of all youthful relationships. This slogan is an allegory of the conservative reinforcement of the institution of marriage and propagating such ideas in a university campus where youth must engage in critical questioning of institutions that must be condemned. The pamphlet institutionalised the ritual of sexist harassment.

To begin with, why is there a need to gender the drug-use and drug-menace?

'Heroine' being punned with 'heroin' and the appeal to be a 'hero' without the counterpart are all such supposedly 'powerful slogans' that disturbingly equate drugs with women. "Be a hero without heroin" is an index of the masculine construction of heroism where the absence of the female counterpart adds to the glory of being a hero. Thinking in binaries, having a choice of either this or that, encourages irrationality. This is very evident in the immediate one that follows - Heroin will make you loose [sic] Heroine! Although it sounds apparently innocent and jocular, this slogan shows the sheer absence of gender sensitivity.

Secondly, it normalises the prevalent gender stereotypes and patriarchal prejudices that exist around us. Women connoting drugs, inebriation and destruction being hailed as winning slogans is a reinforcement of unjust gender relations through not-so-veiled metaphors in the minds of the youth.

Benevolent sexism and 'concerns about protecting the rich cultural traditions of India' had been metaphorically showcased when the men students of another central university in northern India covered the university's walls with the picture of a 'caged bird' in which each bar of the cage represented 'faith', 'dignity', 'submission' and 'morality' with an inscription that cancelled any attempts of women to claim their human rights as 'evil' acts. In the same institute, women students were denied access to the library as the head of the institution believed that their presence unnecessarily invited boys to the library! The academic implications of this curfew had already been debated back in 2014.

Thus, the passive consumers of sexist ideology in fact indirectly or intently become its spokespersons later. A woman scholar from an institute of national importance states: "In a recent sports event, our batch won the overall championship. One of the teammates, a boy, said that the girls should go and collect the trophy even though they did not partake in the match. When asked about the reason for this he said that it was a compensation for cheering them which came as an insult for all of us girls. Our gestures of solidarity were misread and our male friends considered us cheer girls".

Despite clearing the UGC National Eligibility Test (NET) and securing a Master's and a B. Ed. Degree from two different central universities, a woman lecturer was reduced to her clothing by the management of College of Applied Sciences (CAS), Kodungalloor, Kerala. The lecturer refused to meet the management's condition of wearing a saree and had to resign. This incident resulted in the state's higher education department issuing a circular, in November 2021, that clarified that the teachers do not have to adhere to a particular dress code.

It is embarrassing to understand that the statutes of various Central Universities, IITs and NITs carry gendered language. The references in these documents to the principal administrators like the Vice Chancellor, Director, Deputy Director and Registrar have taken the personal pronoun 'he' with its variant possessive forms wherever required. Does it mean that there is a predominant assumption about a woman's incapability to assume positions of power? Or is it mandatory that a woman, if at all fortunate to be in an office, compromises with the male oriented linguistic constructions evident in these documents?

Sexist harassment and the prevailing misogynistic sentiments around us certainly do have a negative impact on women's personal and professional development. It is high time society, especially its educational institutions, stopped objectifying women as pleasing gadgets/substances or as powerless secondary citizens.

Gender equality is one of the development goals that we need to strive towards for a sustainable society.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

HOW I WISH THE GOVERNOR HAD SHOWN DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE AND DUE DILIGENCE IN ACTING ON OUR CABINET'S RECOMMENDATION.
—MAHARASHTRA EX-CHIEF MINISTER
UDDHAV THACKERAY

(DEVENDRA) FADNAVIS COULD HAVE BECOME CM GOING BY THE NUMBERS BUT HE SHOWED A BIG HEART AND I THANK HIM.
—MAHARASHTRA CM-DESIGNATE
EKNATH SHINDE

India leads with effective climate change response

Decisive mandate for Modi Government helped India to step up climate change response

VK **BAHUGUNA**

In the May 2014 general elections, after a gap of 24 years, a single party won the absolute majority in the Lok Sabha.

PM Modi gave the mantra of "sabka sath, sabka vikas" for governance. This helped in unveiling the pro-poor and gender sensitive schemes such as Ujjawala and Swachch Bharat, besides enactment of triple talaq legislation. India's international stature also grew significantly. PM Modi retained power after the 2019 elections with BJP and its allies in the NDA winning 335 Lok Sabha seats.

On forest and environment conservation, it is worthwhile to assess the performance of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Policies of the Environment sector influence the success of several programmes of different Ministries. There is a mixed bag of assessment.

The author is former Director-General, ICFRE, and Chancellor, FRI Deemed University, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Soon after taking over the reign of administration the first thing the Ministry urgently needed was to ensure transparency in granting forest and environmental clearances. Transparency is the hallmark of corruption free governance. The Ministry apart from other steps had created a mechanism under the 'Parivesh' portal where all user agencies are supposed to apply online for environmental and forestry clearances. It has ensured transparency, accountability, and time bound performance and thus made the clearance process free from delay and red tape. Procedures were simplified for quick and professional examination of proposals. The changes ensured access of services to all sections of the people. While the poor people in the villages got quick clearances at the Regional offices/DFO levels for schools, police outpost, hospitals and other developmental works, the industries and other public utility sectors, necessary for infrastructure and development like water schemes, dams, electricity and mining, got timely clearances, which were earlier delayed for several years.

In a major reform, the Ministry in 2021 re-organized its regional offices by restructuring the manpower, besides constituting regional empowered committees so that interface with people and state governments improves for better governance and cut delays.

The Forest Survey of India recorded an 8021 square km increase in overall forest and tree cover amounting to one percent jump in forest and tree cover during 2015 to 2017. Similarly, the trend continued during 2019 to 2021 when the forest and tree cover in the country increased by 2261 square km, taking the country's forest and tree cover to 80.9 million hectares with 24.62 per cent of the geographic area. The tiger population in the country has witnessed a steady increase from 2226 in 2014 to 2967 in the latest assessment.

The Compensatory Afforestation and Management Authority (CAMPA) Amendment Bill was languishing for a long time. The government brought accountability and streamlined the use of CAMPA funds, amounting more than Rs 80,000 crore. More than Rs 48,000 crore was released by December 2021 to 32 States which will give impetus to increase the forest cover.

The welfare of more than 10 crore tribal people is at the core of the policy making of the government. The Ministry has signed a memorandum with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to sort out the emerging issues between the two Ministries in the implementation of Forest Right Act 2006. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in 2018 launched the 'Van Dhan' scheme in 2018 through TRIFED. This cross cutting scheme aims at increasing the income of tribal people engaged in the collection of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) through value addition of the products through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of value Chain for MFPs in 340 districts of 27 states through 3225 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras to 10 lakh tribals.

On the international stage, PM Modi has assumed the leadership role in the field of climate change negotiations and India is the voice of developing countries. India has solid achievements in the field of combating climate change. The Prime Minister jointly with French President Emanuel Macron created an International Solar Alliance to combat climate change. India has achieved its voluntary target of reducing emissions intensity of its GDP by 21 per cent over 2005 levels by 2020 and is poised to achieve 35 per cent reduction well before the target year of 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2070. India is home to 17 percent of the world population but our emission footprint is only 4 per cent compared with the developed world's 60 per cent with 17 per cent population.

However, on the flip side the Ministry has fallen in the trap of a few foreign agencies by promoting certification of government forests. It will compromise the sovereignty of the country on our natural resources and the Prime Minister as well as External Affairs Minister must caution the Environment Minister from 'acting penny wise pound foolish'.

48% Americans want Trump charged for 1/6, says survey

AP ■ WASHINGTON

About half of Americans believe former President Donald Trump should be charged with a crime for his role in the US Capitol attack on Jan. 6, 2021, a new poll shows. The survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that 48% of US adults say the former president should be charged with a crime for his role, while 31% say he should not be charged. An additional 20% say they don't know enough to have an opinion. Fifty-eight per cent say Trump bears a great deal or quite a bit of responsibility for what happened that day.

The poll was conducted after five public hearings by the House committee,investigating Jan. 6, which has sought to paint Trump's potential criminal culpability in the events that led to deadly insurrection. But it was taken before Tuesday's surprise hearing featuring former Trump White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson. Her explosive testimony provided the most compelling evidence yet that the former president could be linked to a federal crime, experts say.

Views on Trump's criminal liability break down predictably along party lines, with 86% of Democrats but only 10% of Republicans saying Trump should be charged with a crime. Among Republicans, 68% say he should not be charged and 21% say they don't know. Still, the fact that nearly half the country believes he should be prosecuted is a remarkable position for the former president, pointing to the difficulties he could face if he makes another run at the White House in 2024.

For Ella Metze, a South Carolina Democrat, Trump's culpability has been clear from the beginning, when he urged his supporters to march to the Capitol on the morning of Jan. 6 and "fight like hell." "It was meant to provoke violence because he kept encouraging them," the 86-year-old told The Associated Press. "As it happened, I

watched it all and I just thought why doesn't somebody stop this? Why doesn't he stop this?"

Chris Schloemer, a Texas independent, agreed Trump holds responsibility for egging on the crowd with his baseless claims of election fraud. But, the 61-year-old doesn't lay the blame solely on Trump. Schloemer feels Republicans in Congress have a hand in what happened that day, too: "I feel like people were afraid of Donald Trump, especially Republican politicians, and so they wouldn't rein him in, and I think that just emboldened him."

And he's not alone. While views of Trump's role have not changed since December, Americans are somewhat more likely now than they were then to say Republicans in Congress were significantly responsible for the events of Jan. 6. Forty-six percent say that now, up slightly from 41% in December. An additional 21% say GOP lawmakers had some responsibility and 30% say they were not responsible. The change in the share saying Republicans in Congress have a large amount of responsibility was driven mostly by Democrats and independents.

Ulysses Bryant, a Democrat from Florida, said while he always believed Trump and the rioters should be charged with a crime, he hadn't known of the involvement of congressional Republicans until he began to follow the hearings.

Close to 6 in 10 Americans — 56% — say they followed news about the congressional hearings. A smaller but still sizeable share — 42% — say they watched or listened.

The nine-member panel, comprised of seven Democrats and two Republicans, has worked around the clock for the past year to investigate the connection between Trump and his allies and the violence and chaos that ensued on the Capitol. The public hearing phase of their investigation is meant to put all of that investigative work on display to the American public in an effort to create a historical record of what occurred.

Seventy-five percent of Democrats and 42% of Republicans say they followed news about the hearings. More Democrats than Republicans also say they tuned in, 58% to 27%. The first of the public hearings, which began in early June, received high ratings for TV viewership, though subsequent hearings have received more modest ratings.

Kathlyn Keller, a retired investment banker from San Francisco, is one of the GOP voters who has tuned into the hearings and still believes Trump holds no responsibility for the events of that day.

The 83-year-old thinks the only people who should be charged are those who brought weapons to the Capitol, or anyone who got into the building and caused damage inside. Trump "absolutely shouldn't be charged with anything," she told AP.

Nonetheless, the committee plans to continue its congressional probe and present new evidence in the coming weeks to its many viewers, including the most important one: Attorney General Merrick Garland. Regardless of public opinion about Trump's likely criminal involvement, lawmakers continue to face a stark reality: While they can investigate Jan. 6 and issue subpoenas to gather information, only the Justice Department can bring criminal charges.

But there are clear signs in recent weeks that the Justice Department appears to be escalating its probe of pro-Trump efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Federal agents on Wednesday seized the cell phone of Trump lawyer John Eastman, who was the architect behind a plan to pressure then-Vice President Mike Pence into rejecting the electoral college results.

Last week, authorities searched the Virginia home of Jeffrey Clark, who was known at the Justice Department to champion Trump's false claims of election fraud. Agents also served subpoenas to the Republican Party chairmen of Arizona, Nevada and Georgia, three states that went for President Joe Biden and where Trump allies created slates of "alternate electors" intended to subvert the vote. And Republicans in two other states — Michigan and Pennsylvania — disclosed they had been interviewed by the FBI.

Covid cases rising nearly everywhere in world: WHO

AP ■ GENEVA

The number of new coronavirus cases rose by 18 per cent in the last week, with more than 4.1 million cases reported globally, according to the World Health Organisation.

The UN health agency said in its latest weekly report on the pandemic that the worldwide number of deaths remained relatively similar to the week before, at about 8,500. COVID-related deaths increased in three regions: the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Americas. The biggest weekly rise in new COVID-19 cases was seen in the Middle East, where they increased by 47 per cent, according to the report released late Wednesday. Infections rose by about 32 per cent in Europe and Southeast Asia, and by about 14 per cent in the Americas, WHO said.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said cases were on the rise in 110 countries, mostly driven by the omicron variants BA.4 and BA.5. "This pandemic is changing, but it's not over," Tedros said this week during a press briefing. He said the ability to track COVID-19's genetic evolution was "under threat" as countries relaxed surveillance and genetic sequencing efforts, warning that would make it more difficult to catch emerging and potentially dangerous new variants.

He called for countries to immunise their most vulnerable populations, including health workers and people over 60, saying that hundreds of millions remain unvaccinated and at risk of severe disease and death. Tedros said that while more than 1.2 billion COVID-19 vaccines have been administered globally, the average immunization rate in poor countries is about 13 per cent.

"If rich countries are vaccinating children from as young as six months old and planning to do further rounds of vaccination, it is incomprehensible to suggest that lower-income countries should not vaccinate and boost their most at risk (people)," he said.

According to figures compiled by Oxfam and the People's Vaccine Alliance, fewer than half of the 2.1 billion vaccines promised to poorer countries by the Group of Seven large economies have been delivered. Earlier this month, the US authorised COVID-19 vaccines for infants and preschoolers, rolling out a national immunisation plan targeting 18 million of the youngest children.

Calls for Georgia chief to resign after Black man's shooting

AP ■ SAVANNAH (US)

Religious leaders and others in Savannah, Georgia's oldest city, called Wednesday for the police chief's resignation and a federal investigation into local officer-involved shootings, including one last week that left a Black man dead.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation said it is independently investigating Friday's fatal shooting of a man who officers spotted walking around midday in the middle of a street. The man, Saudi Arai Lee, 31, of Savannah, lived in the neighbourhood where the shooting occurred.

"Family after family are crying because of sons or their daughters shot down by this police department and it must stop," Elder James Johnson, founder of the activist group Racial Justice Network, said at a news conference Wednesday.

"I don't know if it's the training or a fear of a Black man, but seems like they shoot and ask questions later, and we cannot and will not tolerate this," he said.

Officers approached Lee to speak with him, the GBI said. The agency said Lee immediately showed them his wallet, saying it contained his weapons permit, and then lifted his shirt and removed a weapon from a holster. Authorities said a short chase followed and that Lee was shot by Savannah Police Officer Ernest Ferguson, who is white. Officials said emergency medical aid was rendered but Lee was later pronounced dead at a hospital.

"This man had a legal concealed weapons permit and still was shot down. It should never be a death sentence (for) a Black man for carrying a weapon," Johnson said.

Marcos takes helm in Philippines, silent on father's abuses

AP ■ MANILA (PHILIPPINES)

Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the namesake son of an ousted dictator, praised his father's legacy and glossed over its violent past as he was sworn in as Philippine president on Thursday after a stunning election victory that opponents say was pulled off by whitewashing his family's image.

His rise to power, 36 years after an army-backed "People Power" revolt booted his father from office and into global infamy, upends politics in the Asian democracy, where a public holiday, monuments and the Philippine Constitution stand as reminders of the end of Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s tyrannical rule.

But in his inaugural speech, Marcos Jr. Defended the legacy of his late father, who he said accomplished many things that had not been done since the country's independence.

"He got it done, sometimes with the needed support, sometimes without. So will it be with his son," he said to applause from his supporters in the crowd. "You will get no excuses from me."

"My father built more and better roads, produced more rice than all administrations before his," Marcos Jr. Said.

He praised the infrastructure projects by his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who ended his six-year term also with a legacy of violence, strongman rule and contempt for those who stood in his path.

The new president called for unity, saying "we will go farther together than against each other. He did not touch on the human rights atrocities and plunder his father was accused of, saying he would not talk about the past but the future.

Activists and survivors of the martial law era under his father protested Marcos Jr.'s inauguration, which took place at a noontime ceremony at the steps of the National Museum in Manila.

Thousands of police officers, including anti-riot contingents, SWAT commandos and snipers, were deployed in the bayside tourist district for security.

Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan and US Vice President Kamala Harris's husband Doug Emhoff were among foreign dignitaries who attend-

ed the event that featured a 21-gun salute, a military parade and air force jet fly-bys.

"Wow is this really happening?" asked Bonifacio Ilagan, a 70-year-old activist who was detained and severely tortured by counterinsurgency forces during the elder Marcos's rule. "For victims of martial law like me, this is a nightmare."

Marching in the streets, the protesters displayed placards that read, "Never again to martial law" and "Reject Marcos-Duterte".

Such historical baggage and antagonism stand to hound Marcos Jr. During a six-year presidency beginning at a time of intense crises.

The Philippines has been among the countries worst-hit in Asia by the two-year coronavirus pandemic, after more than 60,000 deaths and extended lockdowns sent the economy to its worst recession since World War II and worsened poverty, unemployment and hunger.

As the pandemic was easing early this year, Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent global inflation soaring and sparked fears of food shortages.

Last week, Marcos Jr. Announced he would serve as secretary of agriculture temporarily after he takes office to prepare for possible food supply emergencies.

He also inherits decades-old Muslim and communist insurgencies, crime, gaping inequality and political divisions inflamed by his election.

Congress last month proclaimed his landslide victory, as well as that of his running mate Sara Duterte, the daughter of the outgoing president, in the vice-presidential race.

"I ask you all pray for me, wish me well. I want to do well because when the president does well, the country does well," he said after his congressional proclamation. Marcos Jr. Received more than 31 million votes and Sara Duterte more than 32 million of the more than 55 million votes cast in the May 9 election — massive victories that will provide them robust political capital as they face tremendous challenges as well as doubts arising from their fathers' reputations. It was the first majority presidential victory in the Philippines in decades.

Xi arrives in Hong Kong for 25th anniv of handover

AP ■ HONG KONG

Chinese leader Xi Jinping arrived in Hong Kong on Thursday ahead of the 25th anniversary of the British handover and after a two-year transformation bringing the city more tightly under Communist Party control. It is Xi's first trip outside of mainland China in nearly 2 ½ years.

Supporters waving Chinese and Hong Kong flags chanted "Welcome, welcome! Warm welcome!" as Xi's train pulled into the train station.

Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, were welcomed by city leader Carrie Lam as they alighted the train. Xi waved at supporters who welcomed him on the platform, and later greeted John Lee, the city's incoming leader, and Leung Chun-ying, a former chief executive of the city, along with other officials.

"I'm very happy to be in Hong Kong," Xi said in a speech at the Hong Kong West Kowloon train station. "It's been five years since I last visited, and in the past five years I've been paying attention to and thinking about Hong Kong."

Under Xi's leadership, China has reshaped Hong Kong in the past two years, cracking down on protest and freedom of speech and introducing a more patriotic curriculum in schools. The changes have all but eliminated opposition voices and driven many to leave.

Hong Kong and nearby Macao are special administrative regions that are governed separately from the rest of China, known as the Chinese mainland.

Xi has not left China since the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. China has maintained a strict "zero-COVID" policy that aims to keep the virus out. Xi's last overseas trip was to Myanmar in January 2020.

At the train station, Xi said Hong Kong has overcome many challenges over the years and had been "reborn from the ashes" with "vigorous vitality."

"As long as we stick to the one country, two systems' framework, Hong Kong will certainly have a brighter future and will make new and bigger contributions to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people," he said.

Later Thursday, Xi is expected to visit the Hong Kong Science Park before meeting with pro-Beijing politicians and tycoons, and then attend a closed-door banquet hosted by Lam, the outgoing chief executive, according to local newspaper South China Morning Post.

Both Xi and Peng are likely to spend Thursday night in the Chinese city of Shenzhen — 15 minutes away from Hong Kong by high-speed train — and return to the city on Friday morning to attend the July 1 events. On Friday, Xi will attend a ceremony marking Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997 and officiate an inauguration ceremony for the new government led by incoming leader Lee.

Ahead of his arrival in Hong Kong, thousands of guests — including top officials, lawmakers and diplomats — checked in to quarantine hotels earlier this week and have been taking daily nucleic acid tests as part of coronavirus precautions.

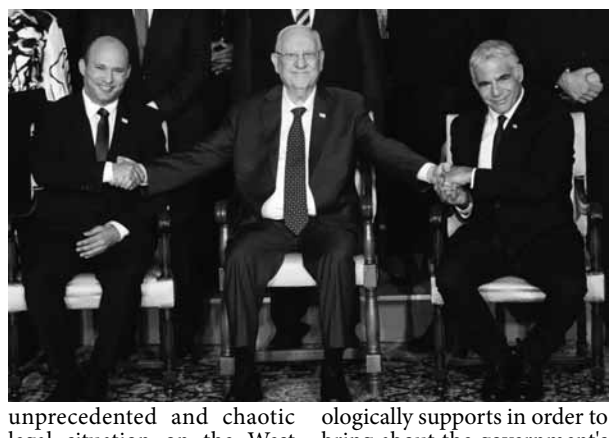
Israel's experiment with diverse coalition Govt comes to end

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's experiment with the most diverse political alliance ranging from the Left, Centre and Right to even an Islamist Arab party finally came to an end on Thursday with the Knesset voting to disperse itself in an overwhelming 92-0 vote, clearing the way for fresh polls — the fifth in less than four years. The "anti-Netanyahu" glue (the resolve to keep former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu away from power) that kept the diverse partners with sharp ideological differences together for a little more than a year finally gave in under the weight of its incompatibility.

Uncomfortable members kept the government on its toes all through its stint and chose to go with "their conscience" finally making it untenable while the Netanyahu bloc remained loyal to him, blocking the government even on issues which otherwise gelled along with their ideology.

The decision to dissolve the 120-member Knesset (Parliament) came right up to the wire, as Israel stood on the threshold of entering an



unprecedented and chaotic legal situation on the West Bank.

Israel set up Israeli legal status for settlers in the West Bank, while creating separate legal treatment for Palestinians living in the same locations, through emergency regulations that were put in place in 1967 and must be renewed every five years.

The current regulations were to expire Thursday at midnight and in one of the events that precipitated the coalition's demise, the government was unable to muster support to pass the renewal against an opposition determined to block even laws it ideologically supports in order to bring about the government's end. Israel's Knesset voted to disband itself on Thursday morning, sending the country reeling toward its fifth election since 2019. The last general election was held in March 2021. Parliament voted to disperse 92–0, setting the next round of elections on November 1.

The coalition agreement paves the way for Foreign Minister and Alternate Prime Minister Yair Lapid, 58, to formally succeed as Prime Minister at midnight when Naftali Bennett, 50, assumes the role of an Alternate Prime Minister.

Iran-US nuclear talks end without making progress

AP ■ DUBAI

Indirect negotiations between Iran and the US over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers ended Wednesday in Qatar after failing to make significant progress amid a growing crisis over the Islamic Republic's atomic program, diplomats said.

The Doha talks broke up after two days without any sign of a breakthrough, months after talks in Vienna among all of the deal's parties went on "pause."

In the time since, Iran shut off surveillance cameras of international inspectors and now has enough high-enriched uranium to potentially fashion into at least one nuclear bomb if it chose.

And with Iran and the US blaming each other for the talks' failure, it remains unclear when — or if — there will be another round of negotiations.

European Union mediator Enrique Mora on Twitter described as "intense" the two days of talks in Doha.

"Unfortunately, not yet the progress the EU team as coordinator had hoped-for," Mora wrote. "We will keep working with even greater urgency to bring back on track a key deal for non-proliferation and regional stability."

Mora's comments came hours after the semiofficial Tasnim news agency, believed to be close to Iran's hard-line Revolutionary Guard, described the negotiations as finished hours before they ended and having "no effect on breaking the deadlock in the talks."

Tasnim claimed that the American position did not include "a guarantee for Iran benefiting economically from the deal," quoting what it described as unnamed "informed sources."

"Washington is seeking to revive the (deal) in order to limit Iran without economic achievement for our country," the Tasnim report claimed. A key sticking point has been American sanctions targeting the Guard.

R Kelly sentenced to 30 years in sex trafficking case

AP N NEW YORK

Disgraced R&B superstar R. Kelly was sentenced Wednesday to 30 years in prison for using his fame to sexually abuse young fans, including some who were just children, in a systematic scheme that went on for decades.

Through tears and anger, several of Kelly's accusers told a court in New York City, and the singer himself, that he had misled and preyed upon them.

"You made me do things that broke my spirit. I literally wished I would die because of how low you made me feel," said one unnamed survivor, directly addressing Kelly, who kept his hands folded and his eyes downcast. "Do you remember that?" she asked.

Kelly, 55, didn't give a statement and showed no reaction on hearing his penalty, which also included a $100,000 fine. He has denied wrongdoing, and he plans to appeal his conviction. The Grammy-winning, multi-platinum-selling songwriter was found guilty last year of racketeering and sex trafficking at a trial that gave voice to accusers who had previously wondered if their stories were being ignored because they were Black women.

Russian forces leave Snake Island, keep up eastern assault

AP ■ KYIV

Russia on Thursday pulled back its forces from a strategically placed Black Sea island where they have faced relentless Ukrainian attacks, but kept up its push to encircle the last bulwark of Ukraine's resistance in the eastern province of Luhansk.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it withdrew its forces from the Zmiyinyy (Snake) Island off Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa in what it described as a "goodwill gesture." Ukraine's military said the Russians fled the island in two speedboats following a barrage of Ukrainian artillery and missile strikes. Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Lt. Gen. Igor Konashenkov insisted that the withdrawal was intended to demonstrate that "the Russian Federation wasn't hampering the United Nations' efforts to establish a humanitarian corridor for taking agricultural products from the territory of Ukraine."

Ukraine and the West have accused Russian of blockading Ukrainian ports to prevent exports of grain, contributing to the global food crisis.

Russia has denied the accusations and charged that Ukraine needs to remove sea mines from the Black Sea to allow safe navigation.

Turkey has sought to broker a deal on unblocking grain exports from Ukraine, but the talks have dragged on without any sign of quick progress, with Kyiv voicing concern that Russia could use the deal to launch an attack on Odesa.

Russia took control of the island that sits along a busy shipping lane in the opening days of the war in apparent hope to use it as a staging ground for an attack on Odesa.

The island came to epitomise the Ukrainian resistance to the Russian invasion, when Ukrainian troops there received a demand from a Russian warship to surrender or face bombardment. "Russian warship," the answer came back, "go (expletive) yourself."

The Ukrainian defenders of the island were captured by the Russians but later freed as part of a prisoner exchange.

After the island was taken, the Ukrainian military relentlessly bombarded a small Russian garrison and air defense assets stationed there.

In the east of Ukraine on Thursday, Moscow kept up its push to take control of the entire Donbas region.

It is focused on the city of Lysychansk, the last remaining Ukrainian stronghold in the Luhansk province. Russian troops and their separatist allies control 95% of Luhansk and about half of Donetsk, the two provinces that make up the mostly Russian-speaking Donbas.

The Ukrainian General Staff said that the Russian troops were shelling Lysychansk and clashing with Ukrainian defenders around an oil refinery on the edge of the city.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said Russian reconaissance units tried to enter Lysychansk Wednesday, but were repelled by Ukrainian forces. He said the Russians were trying to block a highway used to deliver supplies and fully encircle the city.

"The Russians have thrown practically all their forces to seize the city," Haidai said.

Speaking on a visit to Turkmenistan early Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said his goals in Ukraine haven't changed since the start of the war. He said they were "the liberation of the Donbas, the protection of these people and the creation of conditions that would guarantee the security of Russia itself." He made no mention of his original stated goals to "demilitarise" and "de-Nazify" Ukraine.

He denied Russia had adjusted its strategy after failing to take Kyiv in the early stage of the conflict. "As you can see, the troops are moving and reaching the marks that were set for them for a certain stage of this combat work. Everything is going according to plan," Putin said at a news conference in Turkmenistan.

Funerals were to be held Thursday for some of the 18 people confirmed killed by Monday's Russian missile strike on a busy shopping mall in the central city of Kremenchuk. Crews continued to search through the rubble in search of another 20 people who remain missing.

Ukrainian State Emergency Services press officer Svitlana Rybalko told The Associated Press that along with the 18 bodies, investigators found fragments of eight more bodies. It was not immediately clear whether that meant there were more victims. A number of survivors suffered severed limbs.

After the attack on the mall, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused Russia of becoming a "terrorist" state. On Wednesday, he reproached NATO for not embracing or equipping his embattled country more fully.

He asked for more modern artillery systems and other weapons and warned the NATO leaders they either had to provide Ukraine with the help it needed to defeat Russia or "face a delayed war between Russia and yourself."

On Thursday, Sweden announced plans to send more military support to Ukraine, including anti-tank weapons, support weapons and demining equipment that it says Kyiv had requested. "It is important that the support to Ukraine from the democratic countries in Europe is continuous and long-term," Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist said, according to the Swedish news agency TT.

Hultqvist didn't say when and how the equipment would be delivered . Sweden was invited at a NATO summit this week to join the Western military alliance.

Russia, shunned by the West, has been intent on bolstering ties elsewhere. On Thursday, Iranian state media said that Iran has proposed expanding financial exchanges with Russia as well as cooperating in the energy field within a framework independent of the Western financial exchange system, while both countries are under heavy sanctions.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Putin met on the sidelines of a summit of the Caspian Sea Littoral States in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, state-run IRNA news agency reported on Thursday.

UK to give more military support for Ukraine

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK will provide another 1 billion pounds of military support to Ukraine, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced at a NATO Leaders' Summit in Madrid on Thursday.

This latest funding has been dubbed a new phase in the international community's support to Ukraine. It will go towards capabilities including sophisticated air defence systems, uncrewed aerial vehicles, innovative new electronic warfare equipment and thousands of pieces of vital kit for Ukrainian soldiers.

"[Russian President] Putin's brutality continues to take Ukrainian lives and threaten peace and security across Europe," said Johnson.

"As Putin fails to make the gains he had anticipated and hoped for and the futility of this war becomes clear to all, his attacks against the Ukrainian people are increasingly barbaric. UK weapons, equipment and training are transforming Ukraine's defences against this onslaught. And we will continue to stand squarely behind the Ukrainian people to ensure Putin fails in Ukraine," he said.

Downing Street said the funding represents the first step in enabling Ukraine to go beyond their valiant defence against the illegal Russian invasion to mounting offensive operations against Russian ground forces in order to restore Ukrainian sovereignty.

The latest announcement brings the total UK military support since the outbreak of war to 2.3 billion pounds – more than any country other than the United States.

Support so far includes more than 5,000 NLAW anti-tank missiles made in Northern Ireland, long-range multiple launch rocket systems, artillery systems, including 155mm self propelled guns, and rapid design and production of short to medium range persistent loitering munitions by a UK start-up company.

Last week, the prime minister also announced the UK was offering a comprehensive new training programme to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, helping them build long-term endurance in the face of continuing Russian barbarism.

"Britain's commitment to Ukraine is real and constant and we will stand by them until Russia changes course. This military assistance will help them intensify their fight against Russian aggression and ensure they have the defence capabilities they need," said UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace.

Climate concerns grow as US helps Europe replace Russian gas

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Amos Hochstein, President Joe Biden's point man for global energy problems, says he knows that transitioning away from the climate-wrecking pollution of fossil fuels is the only way to go. He advocates urgently for renewable energy, for energy-smart thermostats and heat pumps.

But when it comes to tackling the pressing energy challenges presented by Russia's war on Ukraine, Hochstein also can sound like nothing as much as the West's oilfield roustabout, taking a giant pipe wrench to the world's near-crisis-level energy shortfalls.

Appearing before a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee this month on US help in Europe's Russian-fueled energy problems, Hochstein spoke enthusiastically of prospects for a new floating natural gas terminal in Albania, new gas connections elsewhere in the Balkans.

'We cannot pause our lives': Ukrainians begin rebuilding

AP ■ YAHIDNE (UKRAINE)

On the outskirts of a Ukrainian village stand the remnants of a small school that was partially destroyed in the early weeks of the Russian invasion.

Surrounded by tall pine trees, the school's broken windows offer glimpses of abandoned classrooms that are unlikely to see students again anytime soon. It is just one of many buildings in Yahidne that were shattered by the war.

But this village and others are gradually returning to life a few months after Russian troops retreated from the northern Chernihiv region. Now people are repairing homes, and the sound of construction tools fills the air. Volunteers from all over Ukraine, and from other countries, are coming to help because there is so much to do before another winter approaches. Among the workers are a copywriter and a cameraman who have been repairing the roof of the apartment block in front of the school for several days under a scorching sun.

Denys Ovcharenko, 31, and Denys Huschyk, 43, came from the capital, Kyiv. They joined a volunteer building organization called Dobrobat, a name that combines "dobro," or kindness, with "bat" for battalion. The men and 22 other volunteers help their compatriots return to their homes as soon as possible.

"While the guys are protecting us, we work here," Huschyk said, referring to troops at the front.

No one in the village yet plans to rebuild the school, which was used by the Russians as a base. Villagers prefer not to mention the place at all.

Most of Yahidne's residents — almost 400 people — spent a month in the school's basement, where they were held around the clock as human shields to protect against an attack by the Ukrainian army.

Only occasionally did the Russian troops allow villagers to climb upstairs and enter the yard. But that was not enough. Ten people died in the dark, crowded basement. Survivors blame the lack of fresh air.

The Russians left the village at the end of March.

The Dobrobat group plans to repair the roofs of 21 houses in the coming weeks. The volunteers include teachers, athletes and programmers. About 80% of them have no experience in construction.

Yahidne is just one of the villages in northern Ukraine that suffered from Russia's aggression. And Dobrobat is just one of the groups responding, sometimes drawing volunteers from beyond Ukraine.

A father and son from the Czech Republic decided to spend their annual family trip in Ukraine this year. Michal and Daniel Kahle see each other for only a few weeks each summer, as the son studies in the United States.

"We wanted to do something meaningful instead of just being tourists," said Daniel, 21.

That's how they came to the town of Makariv in the Kyiv region. Many buildings there were destroyed or damaged in the first weeks of the war.

Father and son joined the youth volunteer movement Building Ukraine Together, which since 2014 has helped restore damaged buildings in eastern Ukraine. For several days, together with young people from different parts of Ukraine, they worked to rebuild the Makariv fire department, which was hit by an artillery shell on March 12.

"It's a long game. We cannot pause our lives, sit at home and wait for the war to end," said Tetyana Symkovych, the volunteer group's coordinator in Makariv. Many Ukrainians volunteer because they want to be helpful. But that is not the only reason Yulia Kapustienko comes to the fire department every morning to putty the walls. At the end of April, the young woman left Mariupol after spending two months in the besieged port city.

"I saw dead bodies and burned houses. Still, when I see a normal house, I automatically imagine what will happen to it after the rocket hits," she said. "It is impossible to erase this from your mind. But at the same time, I try not to get stuck in the past, so it is important for me to do something, to take responsibility." The 23-year-old is originally from Horlivka in the eastern Donetsk region. Her first experience of armed occupation was in 2014. After that, she cried for three years, unable to endure the loss of her hometown.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that our client Sh. Ravinder Kumar Bansal S/o Sh. S.L. Gupta, R/o CP-33, Pitampura, Delhi 110034 has lost his original 'Site Possession Letter', 'Posse-ssion Letter,' 'Demand cum Allotment Letter' of property bearing no. CP-33, Pitampura, Delhi 110034. If any person finds the aforementioned, kindly inform the same to the undersigned

Sagar Aggarwal, Advocate
M:9810980834

GENERAL NOTICE

It is informed to the public that Prakash Hospital will destroy the medical records of patients who were admitted for treatment at this hospital upto June 2017.

If any person has objection or interested in his/her medical records, he/she should contact **Ms. Rizwana** before 10 July 2022.

PRAKASH HOSPITAL
Sector-33, Noida- 201301
Ph: 8826000033

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my clients Sh. Uma Shankar S/o late Sh. Rajpath and Promila W/o Sh. Uma Shankar both R/o C-7/90, Sector-15, Rohini Delhi-110089, disinherit their son Mr. Chandan and Chandan's wife Smt. Anu, from all their movable and immovable properties. They would not have any share, whatsoever, in the moveable and immovable properties of my above said clients. Anybody dealing with them shall do so at his/her own responsibility and my clients shall not be responsible for the same.

(ADARSH GANESH)
Advocate

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that, **I, Ritu Sengupta wife of Late Shri D. Sengupta alias Debdatta Sengupta resident of Flat No.B-8/6145, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070, is owner/mutatee and in physical possession of Flat No.6147, Pkt-8, Sector-B, First Floor, Cat-III, SFS Flats, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi,** and applied for Transfer/Mutation of said flat in D.D.A. The Original Allocation Letter, Fifth And Final Demand Letter, Possession Letter, NOC For Water And Electricity, Site Possession Slip, and Bank Challans e.t.c., and other related documents, of the said Flat have been lost. An F.I.R./NCR to this effect has been lodged. 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. 9871453535 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this plot can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (LAB) H or Director (H)-I, D Block 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

Public Notice: Loss of ID Card:

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of Mr Dharam Veer Singh issued by ICICI Bank ltd. having ID card no. 2210960 has been found missing and/or lost on 27/6/2022. Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited, 1st floor SD Tower Rohini Sector 8.

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no 2210960.

Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

Date: 27/6/2022 **For ICICI Bank Limited**
Place: Greater Noida -Sd-

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the following person /Authorised person (AP) are no longer affiliated with **M/s. PROFITMART SECURITIES PVT. LTD.** Member of NSE, BSE & MCX having the registered office as given below with effect from 29-06-2022. Any person dealing with below mention person / Authorised person (AP) should do at their own risk. M/s. PROFITMART SECURITIES PVT. LTD., shall not be liable for any dealing with them.

Sr. No	Name of Authorised person (AP)	PAN NUMBER
1.	NEELAKSH GUPTA	AZEPN8470E
2.	SOBRE EL CIELO PRIVATE LIMITED	ABBCS7083G

Reason: unethical and illegal business activities other than stock broking and fraudulent Activity.

In case of any queries, investor are requested to inform **M/s. PROFITMART SECURITIES PVT. LTD.**, at the following address within 30 days from the date of issuing this notice.

M/s. PROFITMART SECURITIES PVT. LTD.,
Unit No 213, opal Square, Plot No C-1 Thane, Mumbai – 400604
Email Support@profitmart.in
Contact: 020 49119119

Sd/-
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UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone.: 0135-2763508, Fax- 0135- 2763507,
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvnl.com

पत्रांक सं. 386 दिनांक 30.06.2022

Corrigendum-01

Correction in section I Part 2 "Eligibility Criteria" and date extension of NIT: **07/UJVNL/EE (M&G)/KPS/2022-23** SITC of 400 kVA, 11/0.415kV transformer, wireless water level indicator & other works at Old colony, Kulhal is hereby made as per following:

1. The Tenderers must have CLASS-A ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR LICENCE valid on the date of submission of bid & during execution of work.

Last date for submission of tender: 06.07.2022, 15:00 Hrs.
Date of opening of tender : 07.07.2022, 11:00 Hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvnl.com"

Executive Engineer (M&G), Kulhal

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

Putin: Western leaders would look disgusting topless

AP N MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin shot back at Western leaders who mocked his athletic exploits, saying they would look "disgusting" if they tried to emulate his bare-torso appearances.

Putin made the comment during a visit to Turkmenistan early on Thursday when asked about Western leaders joking about him at the G7 summit.

As they sat down for talks, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson jested that G7 leaders could take their clothes off to "show that we're tougher than Putin" amid Russia-West tensions over Moscow's military action in Ukraine.

Canadian premier Justin Trudeau joked that Western leaders could try to match Putin's naked torso pictures with a "bare-chested horseback riding display", one of his widely publicised athletic adventures.

Speaking to reporters, Putin retorted that, unlike him, Western leaders abuse alcohol and don't do sports.

"I don't know how they wanted to get undressed, above or below the waist," he said. ""But I think it would be a disgusting sight in any case."

Rights group finds twin Russian strikes hit Mariupol theater

AP ■ PARIS

Evidence suggests twin Russian airstrikes deliberately targeted a theater being used as a shelter in the besieged city of Mariupol, the rights group Amnesty International said in a report released Thursday.

The report condemned the attack as a war crime. Amnesty said there was no evidence that the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater was a base of operations for Ukrainian soldiers and every indication that it was a haven for civilians seeking protection from weeks of relentless shellings and airstrikes.

The March 16 airstrike devastated the building, collapsing its rear and side walls directly onto a field kitchen used as a community gathering space for food, water and scarce news about evacuations and the war.

City officials initially estimated around 300 dead. An Associated Press investigation found the attack may have killed closer to 600 people inside and outside the building. Most of the two dozen survivors and witnesses AP interviewed put the number even higher.

Researchers for Amnesty International identified 12 of the dead.

Those who bore witness "saw bodies, remains of bodies. And that's how we can try to reconstruct. But the truth is that we will never know the truth. We will never get the final figure. And what is more or horrifying for me is that we will never know the whole names," said Oksana Pokalchuk, Amnesty's director general for Ukraine.

The Amnesty team interviewed 52 survivors and first-hand witnesses, about half of whom were either in the theater or nearby. Using satellite imagery from that morning, they determined that the sky was consistently clear enough for any pilot to see the word "CHILDREN" written in giant Cyrillic letters in the building's front and back.

Physicists and weapons analysts examined imagery of the debris and determined that two 500 kilogram bombs dropped from a Russian jet were the most likely munition. Their finding was consistent with the testimony from multiple witnesses who told The Associated Press they had heard two explosions.

Core infra sectors output expands by 18.1% in May

New Delhi: The growth of eight core infrastructure sectors expanded by 18.1 per cent in May against 16.4 per cent in the year-ago period, according to official data released on Thursday.

The output of eight infrastructure sectors of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity had expanded by 9.3 per cent in April 2022, the data showed. In May, the output of coal, crude oil, refinery products, fertiliser, cement and electricity rose by 25.1 per cent, 4.6 per cent, 16.7 per cent, 22.8 per cent, 26.3 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively.

Growth rate in the production of natural gas and steel slowed down by 7 per cent and 15 per cent in the month under review as compared to 20.1 per cent and 55.2 per cent, respectively in May 2021.

Cumulatively, during April-May 2022-23, the output of these eight sectors declined to 13. 6 per cent as compared to 36.3 per cent during April-May 2021-22. ***PTI***

Sensex, Nifty end flat after choppy trade

Mumbai: Benchmark indices ended on a flat note on Thursday as fag-end selling wiped out intra-day gains amid weak global trends.

The BSE benchmark Sensex slipped 8.03 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 53,018.94. During the day, it had gained 350.57 points or 0.66 per cent to 53,377.54.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty fell 18.85 points or 0.12 per cent to close at 15,780.25.

Tech Mahindra was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack, dropping 2.09 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, HCL Tech and M&M.

In contrast, Axis Bank, SBI, Kotak Mahindra Bank, NTPC, Larsen & Toubro and Reliance Industries were among the prominent gainers, rising up to 1.74 per cent.

"Asian and European markets struggled to regain footing amid global recession fears, leading to a resurgent US dollar, which benefitted from safe-haven demand. FII selling nearing exhaustion provided comfort to the jittery Indian market," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Tokyo, Seoul and Hong Kong ended lower, while Shanghai settled in the green.

European markets were trading lower in mid-session deals. "The undertone remains bearish due to weak global cues and persistent foreign fund outflows. There is so much uncertainty that traders don't want to risk placing huge bullish bets," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd. ***PTI***

Centre's fiscal deficit at 12.3% of full year target in May: Official data

New Delhi: The Central Government's fiscal deficit at the end of May stood at 12.3 per cent of the annual budget target for 2022-23, mainly due to higher expenditure, according to official data released on Thursday.

Fiscal deficit is the difference between total expenditure and revenue of the government. It is an indication of the total borrowings that are needed by the government. The fiscal deficit was at 8.2 per cent of the Budget Estimate (RE) of 2021-22 during the corresponding period.

In actual terms, the deficit was at Rs 2,03,921 crore at the end of May, as per the data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

The country's fiscal deficit is projected at 6.4 per cent of the GDP for this fiscal ending March 2023 as against 6.71 per cent for the previous year.

As per the data, the total receipts of the government at the end of May was at Rs 3.81 lakh crore or 16.7 per cent of the BE for 2022-23. The collection was about 18 per cent of the BE of 2021-22 in the corresponding period last fiscal.

In May, the tax (net) revenue was at 15.9 per cent of the BE of 2022-23. It was 15.1 per cent of the BE 2021-22 in the year-ago period. In actual terms, the net tax revenue stood at Rs 3,07,589 crore during April-May 2022-23.

As per the data, the central government's total expenditure at the end of May stood at Rs 5.85 lakh crore or 14.8 per cent of this year's BE. It was 13.7 per cent of the BE in the corresponding period.

For 2022-23, the fiscal deficit of the government is estimated to be Rs 16,61,196 crore. ***PTI***

Cryptocurrencies clear danger, Govt to finalise consulting paper: RBI

Mumbai: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday described cryptocurrencies as "clear danger" and said that anything that derives value based on make believe, without any underlying, is just speculation under a sophisticated name.

The Government is in the process of finalising a consultation paper on cryptocurrencies after gathering inputs from various stakeholders and institutions.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been flagging concerns about cryptocurrencies, which are seen as a highly speculative asset.

In the foreword to the 25th issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) released on Thursday, Das also said that as the financial system gets increasingly digitalised, cyber risks are growing and need special attention.

"We must be mindful of the emerging risks on the horizon. Cryptocurrencies are a clear danger. Anything that derives value based on make believe, without any underlying, is just speculation under a sophisticated name," Das said.

In recent weeks, cryptocurrencies, which are not back by any underlying value, have witnessed massive volatility amid global uncertainties.

RBI first come out with a circular regarding cryptocurrencies in 2018 and had barred entities regulated by it from dealing in such instruments. However, in early 2020, Supreme Court struck down the circular.

While regulatory clarity is yet to emerge with respect to the cryptocurrency space in the country, the government is working to finalise a consultation paper on cryptocurrencies with inputs from various stakeholders and institutions, including the World Bank and the IMF.

In the foreword of the FSR, Das also said that while technology has supported the reach of the financial sector and its benefits must be fully harnessed, its potential to disrupt financial stability has to be guarded against.

"As the financial system gets increasingly digitalised, cyber risks are growing and need special attention," he noted.

Regarding the economy, he said it is skewed towards global spillovers and geopolitical tensions.

The Indian financial system exhibits underlying robustness and resilience to withstand these shocks. "Our endeavour is to face all challenges, external and internal, with strength and innovative solutions for the Indian financial system," he added. A noteworthy feature of the current situation is the overall resilience of Indian financial institutions, which should stand the economy in good stead as it strengthens its prospects. This reflects a combination of good governance and risk management practices, he said.

According to him, the stress test results presented in the FSR demonstrate that banks are well positioned to withstand even severe stress scenarios without falling below the minimum capital requirement. ***PTI***

Sebi attaches demat, bank accounts of individual in Acclaim Industries case

New Delhi: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on Thursday ordered attachment of bank accounts as well as share and mutual fund accounts of an individual to recover investors' dues totalling Rs 73.58 lakh in the matter related to trading in Acclaim Industries shares.

The recovery proceedings against Abhishek Mehta for Rs 73.58 lakh includes interest of 12 per cent per annum i.E Rs 38.82 lakh (August 2012 to November 2021), all costs, charges and expenses, Sebi said. In its notice, Sebi asked banks, depositories and mutual funds not to allow any debit from the accounts of Mehta. However, credits have been permitted.

Further, the markets watchdog has directed all banks to attach all accounts including lockers held by the defaulters.

There is sufficient reason to believe that the defaulter may dispose of the securities in the account held by you and realisation of amount due under the certificate would in consequence be delayed or obstructed, Sebi said.

In order to protect the interest of investors, it is necessary to attach the assets of the defaulters, including bank, demat accounts and mutual fund investments, to prevent any alienation of the same, it added.

In December 2018, the regulator directed Mehta to disgorge the wrongful gain of Rs 34.74 lakh along with further interest of 12 per cent per annum from August 2012 till the date of payment.

According to Sebi, Mehta changed his shareholding after the company's board approved the proposal of the firm's merger with Database Software Technology (DSTP) in January 2012.

Further, the board decided not to merge the firm with DSTPL.However the decision was not informed to the exchange.Moreover, the information was misleading as the decision of cancellation of merger was already taken in earlier months, Sebi said. ***PTI***

Rupee relatively better placed than other global currencies against dollar: FM

New Delhi: Amid the rupee declining against the US dollar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the Indian currency is relatively better placed than other global currencies against the greenback.

Emerging market currencies have been falling against the dollar amid geopolitical tensions in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, concerns over growth, high global crude prices, sustained inflation and central banks worldwide adopting hawkish monetary policy approach.

"We are relatively better placed. We are not a closed economy. We are part of the globalised world. So, we will be impacted (by global developments)," the finance minister said on the sidelines of an event here.

She was responding to a question on the movement of rupee against the dollar.

In its Financial Stability Report (FSR) released on Thursday, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the rupee has performed relatively better than its peers.

"While the Indian Rupee (INR) has been subjected to bouts of downward pressure, it has emerged among the better performing currencies relative to peers," the 25th FSR report said.The rupee breached the psychologically significant level of 79 per dollar level for the first time ever on Wednesday and has also hit a series of lifetime lows this month. ***PTI***

CIABC seeks removal of non-tariff measures by UK on Indian products

Writes to Union commerce & Industry Min

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

With the trade negotiations between the India and UK gaining pace, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), a body of the Indian alcoholic beverage manufacturers, has written to the Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and the team negotiating FTA to ensure that United Kingdom (UK) removes Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) used by it to prevent Indian products from entering their market.

According to Vinod Giri, Director General, CIABC: "An FTA must ensure equal opportunities and level playing field for both sides, and no misuse by either side.

Unless UK agrees to remove minimum maturation requirement for Indian whisky which is used to block whisky from India, the largest producer of whisky in the world, the FTA will be a one-way affair with no benefit to India."

CIABC maintains that the UK uses the condition of minimum 3 years maturity for whisky to unfairly protect its own industry.

"India is a major whisky producing country and yet out of the 70 lakh cases of whisky exported from India every year, not even 10,000 make it to the UK. It is so because the condition of minimum 3 years maturity means 30% loss of the spirit due to evaporation which in turn makes Indian products just uncompetitive.

There is sufficient technical evidence in public domain which establishes that whisky matures 3-5 times faster in Indian climate and the effect of 3 years maturation in the UK can be achieved in just 6-9 months in India," Giri noted.

Giri further said it costs 50-75% more to produce a product in India compared to Scotland. "Capital costs 8-10% in India compared to just 2-3% in Scotland. Evaporation losses are 10% every year in India compared to 1-2% in Scotland due to difference in climate conditions.

If the cost difference is fundamental and beyond the control of industry then a level playing field must reflect that in tariff. We believe that the tariff should not go below 100% now and below 50% in foreseeable future," he added.

The CIABC has also strongly argued against any preferential duty to scotch imported in bulk. It said that out of the total 2.7 crore litres of bulk scotch imported in during 2019-20, only 25% was used for blending with Indian products and rest was used for just repacking it in India as finished product.

"Any special concessions for scotch whisky imported in bulk on grounds it is used for blending with domestic products is an eyewash and cover for packing the same product in India," Giri said.

CIABC has also demanded that products under $5 per bottle of 750 ml should not be given duty concessions.

BUSINESS BRIEF

VITEEE-2022 EXAMS BEGIN AT AP CAMPUS

Amravati: Vellore Institute of Technology Engineering Entrance examination (VITEEE)-2022 began at VIT AP campus, Amaravati on Thursday, said, VITAP Vice - Chancellor SV Kota Reddy. VITEEE, the computer based exam is conducted for admission to B. Tech programmes offered at VIT's, Vellore campus, Chennai campus, Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh) campus, and Bhopal campus during academic year 2022-23.

POWERGRID CMD GETS BEST CEO AWARD

New Delhi: K Sreekant, CMD, POWERGRID, has been conferred Business Today-PwC India's Best CEO (Power) award. The award was presented by Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Textiles at an event held in Delhi.

Power Secretary Alok Kumar presents Swachhta Pakhwada award to NTPC CMD Gurdeep Singh and Director (HR) Dillip Kumar Patel Pioneer photo

Economy on recovery path; inflationary pressure warrants careful handling of situation: RBI

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday said the Indian economy is well on the path of recovery even though inflationary pressures and geopolitical risks warrant careful handling and close monitoring of the situation.

The RBI's 25th Financial Stability Report (FSR) also said banks as well as non-banking financial institutions have sufficient capital buffers to withstand shocks.

"Notwithstanding the challenges from global spillovers, the Indian economy remains on the path of recovery, though inflationary pressures, external spillovers and geopolitical risks warrant careful handling and close monitoring," the report said. The report observed that the outlook for the global economy is shrouded by considerable uncertainty because of the war in Europe, front-loaded monetary policy normalisation by central banks in response to persistently high inflation and multiple waves of the coronavirus pandemic.

Regarding the banking sector, it said the Capital to Risk weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) rose to a new high of 16.7 per cent while their Gross Non Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio fell to a six-year low of 5.9 per cent in March 2022.

Macro stress tests for credit risk reveal that SCBs would be able to comply with the minimum capital requirements even under severe stress scenarios, it added. ***PTI***

India's coffee exports rise 19% in Jan-Jun this yr

New Delhi: Coffee shipments from India, Asia's third-largest producer and exporter, rose 19 per cent to 2,24,293 tonne in the first half of the current calendar year, according to Coffee Board.The country had exported 1,88,736 tonnes in the year-ago period.

India ships both robusta and Arabica varieties, besides instant coffee. According to the Board's latest data, the shipment of Robusta coffee jumped 39.43 per cent to 1,32,852 tonne during January-June 2022 from 95,280 tonne in the same period last year.

Gold declines ₹323; silver tumbles ₹776

New Delhi: Gold in the national capital on Thursday fell by Rs 323 to Rs 50,572 per 10 grams, according to HDFC securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 50,895 per 10 grams.

Silver also tumbled by Rs 776 to Rs 59,377 per kg from Rs 60,153 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, both gold and silver were trading flat at USD 1,815 per ounce and USD 20.76 per ounce, respectively.

"Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading down at USD 1,815 per ounce on Thursday. Gold prices are stuck in the narrow range on mixed global cues," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities. ***PTI***

Govt's total liabilities rise 3.7% to ₹133.22 lakh cr in March quarter

New Delhi: The Government's total liabilities rose 3.74 per cent to ₹133.22 lakh crore in the March quarter from ₹128.41 lakh crore in the three months ended December 2021, according to the latest public debt management report.

In absolute terms, the total liabilities, including liabilities under the 'Public Account' of the government, jumped to ₹1,33,22,727 crore at the end of March 31, 2022. As of December 31, 2021, the total liabilities stood at ₹1,28,41,996 crore.

The report released by the finance ministry on Thursday said public debt accounted for 92.28 per cent of the total outstanding liabilities at the end of March.

It was at 91.60 per cent at the end of December last year. Further, the report said the weighted average yield on primary issuances of dated securities showed an increase to 6.66 per cent in the fourth quarter from 6.33 per cent in the third quarter of the current fiscal.

"The weighted average maturity of issuances of dated securities was also higher at 17.56 years in Q4 of FY22 (16.88 years in Q3 of FY22)", it said. ***PTI***

BMW drives in 6 Series 50 Jahre M Edition priced at ₹72.9 lakh

New Delhi: German luxury carmaker BMW on Thursday said it has launched the '50 Jahre M Edition' of the BMW 6 Series in India priced at Rs 72.9 lakh (ex-showroom).

The limited edition model has been launched to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the BMW M GmbH, a subsidiary of BMW AG which manufactures high-performance cars, the automaker said in a statement.

Locally produced at company's Chennai plant, the exclusive edition comes in a petrol variant – the BMW 630i M Sport.

Available in limited numbers only, this bespoke model can be booked online via company's portal from Thursday onwards, the automaker stated.

BMW India had recently announced that it will launch 10 units of '50 Jahre M Editions' to celebrate its M sub-brand.

The BMW 6 Series executive sedan comes with the practicality of a crossover and the dynamics of a sports car, the company noted.

The model comes with a 2-litre petrol engine which generates maximum output of 258 hp enabling 0-100 kmph acceleration in just 6.5 seconds. ***PTI***

PLISKOVA OUT OF WIMBLEDON

AP ■ LONDON

Petra Kvitova has plenty of experience on the grass courts of Wimbledon. After all, she's a two-time champion at the All England Club.

But that doesn't mean everything is easy for her once she steps onto the green courts in southwest London.

She has spoken about being nervous when she comes to Wimbledon, and she showed some of those nerves on Thursday when she beat Ana Bogdan 6-1, 7-6 (5).

It was a straight-set victory, but the second set wasn't straightforward.

Kvitova was leading 5-1 when Bogdan started to reel off game after game. Then Kvitova had a match point while serving at 5-4, but failed to convert that chance and then the game itself, eventually leading to the tiebreaker.

"Especially a few games on my serve, it was really long games, and mentally very tough," the 25th-seeded Kvitova said. "I think maybe even this took some energy from my serve and I just couldn't make it."

She still pulled it out in the end, like she has done so many times in the past at Wimbledon. She won her first title in 2011, and added the second in 2014. But she was attacked in her home in 2016 and suffered knife injuries to her playing left hand. She later had surgery and needed more than five months to recover.

Last week, she won the fifth grass-court title of her career at a tournament in Eastbourne, England.

That should have given her plenty of confidence heading into this tournament, and this match.

"Somehow I made it," Kvitova said on court. "I don't know how, but I did it."

Kvitova will next face Paula Badosa. The fourth-seeded Spaniard defeated Irina Bara 6-3, 6-2.

Sixth-seeded Karolina Pliskova, who reached the Wimbledon final last year, was eliminated on Centre Court. The Czech player lost to British wild-card entry Katie Boulter 3-6, 7-6 (4), 6-4.

The 25-year-old Boulter also beat Pliskova last week at a warmup tournament in Eastbourne for her first win against a top-10 player. She broke for a 5-4 lead in the final set and converted her first match point with a volley winner.

Boulter will face Harmony Tan in the next round. Tan eliminated seven-time Wimbledon champion Serena Williams in the first round and then beat 32nd-seeded Sara Sorribes Tormo 6-3, 6-4 on Thursday.

In the men's draw, Nick Kyrgios advanced to the third round for the sixth time in eight Wimbledon appearances. The unseeded Australian, who reached the quarterfinals at the All England Club in his debut in 2014, beat 26th-seeded Filip Krajinovic 6-2, 6-3, 6-1.

It was a much easier match than the first round, when Kyrgios was taken to five sets by British wild-card entry Paul Jubb.

"Getting over the line in that first round was massive," Kyrgios said. "Today I was kind of in my zone. I just wanted to remind everyone that I'm pretty good."

Kyrgios will next face Stefanos Tsitsipas. The fourth-seeded Greek beat Jordan Thompson 6-2, 6-3, 7-5 on No. 1 Court.

Tsitsipas will be playing in the third round at the All England Club for the first time since 2018. He lost in the first round last year and 2019. His best Wimbledon result was reaching the fourth round in 2018.

No. 11 Taylor Fitz of the United States also advanced, along with No. 21 Botic van de Zandschulp of the Netherlands and Richard Gasquet of France.

BAUTISTA AGUT BECOMES THIRD COVID WITHDRAWAL

AP ■ LONDON

Spanish 17th seed Roberto Bautista Agut on Thursday became the third player to withdraw from this year's Wimbledon with Covid-19 in a fresh blow for the tournament, which has returned to full capacity this year.

"Today I have notified @Wimbledon of my withdrawal. I have tested positive for Covid-19," tweeted the 34-year-old.

"Fortunately, the symptoms are not very serious, but I think it is the best decision. Thanks for your support. I hope to come back soon."

The 2019 semi-finalist joins 2021 runner-up Matteo Berrettini as well as 2017 finalist Marin Cilic in pulling out of the event in the first week due to coronavirus.

Bautista Agut's withdrawal means that Colombia's Daniel Elahi Galan receives a walkover into the third round.

Murray has NO plans to retire despite earliest exit

AP ■ LONDON

Andy Murray plans to be back at Wimbledon next year despite suffering a second-round defeat to John Isner on Wednesday -- his earliest-ever loss at the All England Club.

The two-time champion, 35, struggled to tame the giant American's serve, failing to break once in the match on Centre Court and going down 6-4, 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (3/7), 6-4.

The British star has a stellar record at his home Grand Slam, winning the trophy in 2013 and 2016 -- his previous earliest exits came in the third round in 2005 and 2021.

But the 52nd-ranked Scot said he had no plans to hang up his racquet and was in better shape than last year.

"My game was certainly in a better place," he said. "Physically I felt good, barring the sort of 10 days post-Stuttgart (earlier this month), which was frustrating.

"I could have had a good run here. One of the reasons why improving your ranking and trying to get seeded is important, avoid playing top players and dangerous guys like that early in tournaments."

Murray said his future plans would depend on how his body holds up.

Murray had been dogged by a catalogue of injuries in recent years, undergoing two hip operations. "If physically I'm in a good place, yeah, I will continue to play," he said. "But it's not easy to keep my body in optimal condition to compete at the highest level."

Sania & partner crashes out in 1st round

PTI ■ WIMBLEDON

Indian ace Sania Mirza's final Wimbledon appearance ended in disappointment as she and her Czech partner Lucie Hradecka were eliminated in the opening round with the Polish-Brazilian combination of Magdalena Frech and Beatroz Haddad Maia beating them 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 in a hard-fought three-setter.

Mirza would have ideally preferred to last a bit longer in her swansong at the SW-19 but she will undoubtedly remember hallowed lawns where she won her maiden doubles title alongside Martina Hingis, back in 2015.

The 35-year-old Indian veteran failed to get past the third round of the mixed doubles at Wimbledon last year and will still have a shot at glory, partnering Mate Pavic of Croatia in the mixed doubles event. The duo will meet Natela Dzalamidze and David Vega Hernandez in the opening round of mixed doubles.

COVID-19 hits indian men's hockey team

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Indian men's hockey team's preparations for the Commonwealth Games was on Thursday hit by a COVID-19 outbreak as five people, including striker Gurjant Singh and head coach Graham Reid, have tested positive for the virus, here.

The RT-PCR tests were conducted on Wednesday morning. The infected, who are suffering from mild symptoms, have been placed under isolation.

"Two players and three members of the Support Staff of the Indian Men's Hockey team, currently preparing for the Commonwealth Games 2022 have tested positive for Covid-19," Hockey India said in the media release without naming anyone.

However, a team source told *PTI*," Gurjant and Graham Reid have contracted the infection. Ashok Kumar Chinnaswamy, the video analyst of the side has also tested positive."

Besides Gurjant, the other player to have tested positive is midfielder Ashis Kumar Topno.

PR Sreejesh, Manpreet Singh, Pawan, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Harmanpreet Singh, Varun Kumara and Amit Rohidas are among the 31 players training in the camp being held at the SAI campus here.

The players had assembled for the camp after competing at the FIH Hockey Pro League double-headers against Belgium and the Netherlands.

The camp is set to conclude on July 23 ahead of the team's departure for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

Prannoy stuns world No. 4, joins Sindhu in quarters

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu and Thomas Cup star HS Prannoy secured contrasting wins to enter the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Open Super 750 badminton tournament here on Thursday.

Unseeded Prannoy, who won all his matches during India's historic Thomas Cup triumph this year, registered the biggest upset of the day when he eliminated world No 4 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei 21-15, 21-7 in contest that lasted more than 30 minutes.

Fresh from his semifinal finish at the Indonesia Open last week, the 29-year-old was a slow starter in both the games. But once he gained his ground, there was no stopping the Indian, who sealed his last-eight passage with 12 points on the trot.

The world No 21 Indian will next face seventh seed Jonatan Christie of Indonesia, against whom his head-to-head record is 3-5.

Former world champion Sindhu took some time to adjust to the game of Thailand youngster Phittayaporn Chaiwan as the world No 7 Indian lost the opening game before pulling off a 19-21, 21-9, 21-14 win in a 57-minute duel.

Sindhu, seeded seventh, will next face her nemesis Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei, against whom she has a lopsided 5-15 head-to-head record including a string of five losses on the trot.

Facing the Thai 21-year-old for the first time, Sindhu took some time to assess her opponent's deceptive style of play.

Sindhu didn't let the opening game slip away and kept things close before the 21-year-old produced a straight smash to pocket the first game.

Sindhu got her acts together after the change of ends and drew level, winning the second with a breeze.

In the third game, the youngster showed some fight and held the fancied Indian 10-10, before she displayed the best rally of the match to take it 11-10 at interval.

A fine rally closer to the net gave Sindhu a slender 13-10 lead, before she made it 18-14 and then sealed the contest.

SATWIK-CHIRAG PULL OUT

Parupalli Kashyap, however, failed to make the last-eight round, going down to Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn 19-21, 10-21.

Meanwhile, men's doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty gave a walkover to the local pair of Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin.

"Satwik pulled a muscle in his core. He was better today but not enough to play and with Commonwealth Games around, the coaches and physios advised him to not play. Hence, Satwik-Chirah pulled out," said an official.

Davis Cup 2022: India to face Norway on September 16-17

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hosts Norway have confirmed that they will host the Indian Davis Cup team on September 16 and 17 in their next World Group I tie, the All India Tennis Association (AITA) announced on Thursday.

The hosts have a choice playing either on Thursday-Friday or Friday-Saturday and Norway have chosen the first option.

India will face Norway for the first time in the prestigious event.

"There is a lot of hope and anticipation amongst the fans as India and Norway will face each other for the first time in the history of the Davis cup and we look forward to observe some scintillating Tennis from the Men in Blue," the AITA said in a statement.

AIFF general secretary Kushal Das resigns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The controversial All India Football Federation (AIFF) general secretary Kushal Das has resigned from his post on "health grounds", ending his 12-year tenure which was often marred by allegations of financial improprieties.

Das, who was appointed to the top post in 2010, has been on leave since June 20 on health grounds, though many in football circles said he was kept out of his job by the Committee of Administrators (COA) after a Comptroller and Auditor General audit found multiple financial anomalies, which are being currently probed.

"Kushal Das, General Secretary of All India Football Federation has resigned from his post citing medical reasons. The All India Football Federation respects his decision, and thanks him for his contribution and guidance during his tenure in office. We wish him good health and luck in his future endeavours," AIFF stated.

LAFC 'perfect for me', says Chiellini

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

Veteran Italy and Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini on Wednesday said he's looking forward to bringing a high level of play and a wealth of experience to Los Angeles FC as they pursue the Major League Soccer crown.

"I am fully convinced that this club is perfect for me," Chiellini said in his first official press conference for LAFC, flashing his new No 14 jersey.

Since announcing the acquisition of Chiellini two weeks ago, the club have confirmed the imminent arrival of Wales captain Gareth Bale on a 12-month contract that features options through 2024.

Chiellini, 37, said he believed he had plenty to contribute to the young side, and that his homework had convinced him that he would find MLS a worthy occupation.

"I spoke with Andrea (Pirlo) and Alessandro Nesta and they always talk very well about this league," he said. "Surely there are some differences.

"It's a different football from the Italian (league) but every team has its own style.

"This team is perfect for me because is full of young players and they can also help me," he said. "It's impossible for me to have the same physical characteristics I had 10 years ago, but I can bring something to them. We have to create a good mix of experience and enthusiasm to became a winning group."

Neeraj to spearhead 22-member Indian team in World C'ships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will headline a 22-member Indian athletics team at the World Championships to be held in Eugene, USA from July 15 to 24.

The selected team includes 17 men and five women athletes.

Race walker Bhawana Jat and veteran discuss thrower Seema Punia has withdrawn from the elite championships.

Just like Bhawana, Seema gave the event a miss as she too wanted to focus on the Commonwealth Games, an event where she bagged medals in the last four editions.

"She wants to concentrate on the Commonwealth Games, where she won four medals. She feels she has better chance there and we also feel the same," Athletics Federation of India (AFI) president Adilee Sumariwala said while announcing the team.

Besides Chopra and Rohit Yadav is the other javelin thrower in the team.

3000m steeplechaser Avinash Sable, shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, long jumpers Murali Sreeshankar and Muhammed Anees Yahiya, triple jump trio of Abdulla Aboobacker, Praveen Chithravel and Eldhose Paul, all of whom have qualified, Sandeep Kumar (20km Race Walking), MP Jabir (400m Hurdles), Noah Nirmal Tom, Muhammed Ajmal, Naganathan Pandi, Rajesh Ramesh and Muhammed Anas Yahiya (4x400m) have found a place in the team.

The squad also includes Amoj Jacob (4x400m) but his participation is subject to fitness. In case he is not fit, Arokia Rajiv will replace him in the relay squad.

Among women, S Dhanalakhsmi (200m), Aishwarya Kailash Mishra (400m), Parul Chaudhary (3000m Steeplechase), Annu Rani (Javelin Throw) and Priyanka Goswami (20km Walk) have made the cut.

The only surprises in the squad are the inclusion of Parul and Jabir.

Jeswin Aldrin, who had already qualified for the championships, however missed the cut.

Aishwarya Mishra, who evaded from dope testing agencies last month but was allowed by AFI to compete in National Inter-State Championships, has been selected with a rider.

"She will be subject to trails in 400m and if she qualifies she will go. She will undergo electronis timing as well NADA testing," Sumariwala said.

Asked if she was tested in the National Inter-State Championships, the AFI president said: "As far as I know she was tested."

On what explanation Mishra gave after evading dope tests, Sumariwala said: "She went to visit her ailing grandmother and lost her phone. That was her explanation."

Sumariwala said the team will head to Chula Vista, California for a short stint before heading to Eugene for the event.

"The team has been selected on the basis of world ranking and qualification standards laid down by the World Athletics," he said.

"The team will leave for Chula Vista soon where it will have a short stint before World Championships."

The contingent will for the USA in three batches with the first group scheduled to leave on Saturday, followed by the next on Monday and the the third and final by July 5.

The decision to send the team in batches was taken due to time taken for getting US visa.

Indian athletics chief coach Radhakrishnan Nair informed that 11 visas have already been granted and the next set of interviews are lined up for Friday.

India ready to face England 2.0

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Never before has he navigated the choppy waters of leadership but Jasprit Bumrah will certainly like to showcase his captaincy acumen while leading a slightly under-prepared India against a vastly improved England in the rescheduled fifth Test, starting here on Friday.

India were leading the five-match series 2-1 when multiple COVID-19 cases in their camp led to the postponement of the final game which was a part of the World Test Championship.

Nine months have passed since and a lot of water has flown through the Thames with the then captain Virat Kohli relinquishing Test captaincy. His successor, Rohit Sharma, is missing out on this game after testing positive for COVID-19.

Worse, Rohit's designated deputy KL Rahul is also out after having undergone a surgery for sports hernia.

In this backdrop of musical chair of Indian captaincy, the gauntlet has been thrown at Bumrah, arguably one of the finest fast bowlers in the history of Indian cricket and now set to be the 36th man to lead the national Test team.

He has been acknowledged widely as the undisputed leader of the fast bowling group but come Friday, the challenge against Ben Stokes' side will be very different when he walks out for the toss at the Edgbaston.

While this arrangement is a stop-gap one, Indian cricket establishment might have an idea of what can be expected of Bumrah when the time comes for the next change in baton.

NEW TEMPLATE

The 3-0 demolition of New Zealand with three tricky chases completed in style has shown that England, under new coach Brendon McCullum, have de-constructed their style-sheet as far as Test matches are concerned.

Their batters are plundering opposition attack while there are lesser number of five-wicket hauls from the pacers if one goes by the statistics of the New Zealand series. It was Jack Leach, who had two five-wicket hauls and neither James Anderson nor Stuart Broad got their names on the various 'Honours' Board'.

The pitches have become a tad flatter, which is helping the batters and thus Bumrah, along with Shami and Mohammed Siraj will have an onerous task of tackling a batting line-up bubbling with confidence.

Joe Root, after relinquishing captaincy, has found the touch that had deserted him and Jonny Bairstow, with the confidence of IPL, has scored nearly 400 runs at a strike-rate of 120 plus, unheard of in Test matches.

England vs India
Live from 3:00 pm IST
SONY TEN 3, 4 & SIX

TEAM COMBINATION

India will have to bat well and in absence of regular opening pair of Rohit and Rahul, who were fantastic during the four Tests played last year.

Coach Rahul Dravid expects a match-winning performance if not a hundred from Virat Kohli, who looked good in the practice game but the Test match will be a different beast altogether.

The practice game against Leicestershire was more of an extended net session and Indian teams, since Mahendra Singh Dhoni took over as captain, has hardly played official first-class games as a pre-cursor to the Test matches.

James Anderson might be a month short of his 40th birthday but those magical wrists can still make the ball dart around and it will be a different experience for Shubman Gill or Shreyas Iyer.

Cheteshwar Pujara has scored a bagful of county runs but that psychological disadvantage of facing the very first ball of an innings, if he is asked to open, could clutter his mind.

Hanuma Vihari is a solid player but would need support from the other end, considering he has a defensive game.

It remains to be seen who will be India's bowling all-rounder. Will it be Ravichandran Ashwin, who isn't an automatic choice in overseas conditions or Shardul Thakur, who hasn't done his chances any harm with some big-hearted efforts in SENA countries.

Edgbaston hasn't exactly been a happy hunting ground for India where they have lost most of their Test matches but as it often happens with new beginnings, a new captain can always try to buck the trend.

Biggest achievement of my career: Bumrah

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Accidental India captain Jasprit Bumrah feels leading the Indian team is the biggest achievement of his career and he would go into the rescheduled fifth Test remembering the wise words of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who had no captaincy experience but went on to achieve phenomenal success as leader.

Bumrah only got to know that he will be captaining the Indian team on Thursday morning after Rohit Sharma returned another positive test for COVID-19, ruling him out of the game.

Taking on an in-form England side will be a big challenge but Bumrah is up for it.

"The taste of success feels good when there is pressure. I am always up for responsibilities and I love to be in tough challenges. As a cricketer, you always want to test yourself in deep waters. I have spoken to many cricketers. Everybody improves and keep getting better," he said on the eve of the game.

"I remember speaking to MS (Dhoni), and he told me that he never captained any side before he led India for the first time. Now, he is remembered as one of the most successful captains of all time.

"So, I am focusing on how I can help the team and not focusing on what I have done before or how the cricketing conventions or the rules have been set."

It is rare for a fast bowler to lead the Indian team and Bumrah said it was a massive honour and responsibility. The pacer has experienced meteoric rise in international cricket, including the five-day version in which he is only four seasons old, having made his Test debut in January 2018.

"Representing India in Tests was always a dream for me and this opportunity to lead the side is the biggest achievement of my career. I'm very happy that I've been given this opportunity. I have had immense faith in myself.

"In every scenario, I have trusted my instincts that have taken me to this level in cricket and I will keep doing that, going forward. Nothing changes for me, especially my role. That's what I am going to do as the captain of the side," Bumrah said.

"I only came to know that I would be leading the side after Rohit Sharma tested COVID positive once again on Thursday. I first broke the news to my family when I came to know that I would be leading the side."

Change in opposition doesn't change our approach: Ben Stokes

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

England skipper Ben Stokes says they know what it takes to beat India but insisted it's more than just winning a game since they are looking to reshape Test cricket with their style of play.

Under Brendon McCullum's guidance and Stokes' aggressive captaincy, a 'new-look' England swept New Zealand 3-0 in their last series at home, just days back.

India are leading the series 2-1 and the 31-year-old all-rounder expressed confidence of squaring the series.

"We still obviously know that we need to win this game to draw the series. But you know as I said at the end of last week that, at the moment it is bigger than results, it is bigger than you know, what happens on the field, there is more to it. We obviously want to win every game we play but it is bigger than that," Stokes said on the eve of the rescheduled fifth Test.

The match was postponed last September owing to a COVID outbreak in the touring squad.

"I think what we managed to do over the last three weeks is just reshape Test cricket with the way we played.

"We want people to enjoy us watching play. I think people are enjoying watching us play because they don't know what they are going to get because they don't know how it is going to turn out but they know how we are going to play. I have sort of likened it to the ODI thing we started after 2015 World Cup, everybody wanted to watch us play," he added.

Stokes begs to differ that India are a "step up" than New Zealand, saying the change in opposition won't alter their playing style.

"Well, we just beat the best team (New Zealand) in the world 3-0. India are obviously a completely different opposition, different dynamic of a team but we are concentrating on ourselves," Stokes said at the pre-match press conference at Edgbaston.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
QUOTATION NOTICE

Sub: Submission of design & drawing of foundation of steel columns of covered shed 109x20.1m (Sick line) at Bareilly and Double storey service building 41.2x6.06m in c/w Loco out pit at Dehradun.

The terms and conditions of above work are as follows:-

1. The above noted work should be completed within one month.
2. The concerned contractor while filling the quotation should submit the earnest money amounting ₹6500/- in the form of DD/FDR in favour of FA&CAO/C, Kashmere Gate, Delhi.
3. The concerned contractor after receiving the LOA will deposit the Performance Guarantee of 5% of the accepted value in form of FDR/BG in the name of FA&CAO/C Kashmere Gate, Delhi within 21 days of issuing date of LOA in the office of DY/CE/C/MB.
4. The value of the Performance Guarantee will be refunded after completion of the work.
5. It is requested to the quotationers, that they must submit their quotations on the prescribed performa in the tender box at this office till 11:30 hours on 07.07.2022 which will be opened on 07.07.2022.

Note: Performance of the quotation can be obtained in any working day from 10:00 hrs. till 14:00 hours from the date 30.06.2022 till 06.07.2022 from the office of Deputy Chief engineer/Const/Moradabad.

L.No.: 10-S/DyCE/C/MB Dated : 30.06.2022 1610/22

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

My job is to make impact in absence of main bowlers: Shardul

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Fast bowler Shardul Thakur cherishes his role in the Indian Test side and said his job is to make an impact when the main bowlers are on a break.

Shardul, who generally bowls third or fourth in a Test match, said he loves to deliver in crunch situations.

"Our pace bowling attack at the moment, everyone is doing well including (Mohammed) Shami, (Jasprit) Bumrah, Umesh (Yadav) whenever he gets a game. Ishant (Sharma) was there and usually they start with the new ball and a lot of times it happens that they take two-three wickets in the first spell and I get opportunity to bowl later," Thakur told BCCI.Tv.

"Opportunity is created when there is partnership and the main bowlers have to be given rest and the third and fourth bowlers are used more in the spell. In that moment, there is an opportunity for me to take a wicket and do something for the team.

"I think it is my job to bowl in those situations and I like it because if I deliver with a good performance it creates an impact in the game," added the Palghar-based right-arm pacer, who played a pivotal role in India's 157-run win over England in the fourth Test at Oval.

Thakur is a member of the Indian squad that will play England in the rescheduled fifth Test beginning here on Friday.

The 30-year-old said he loves bowling in English conditions.

"I think England is a bowler's paradise, they say because the ball swings a lot and at times you end up taking a lot of wickets in one spell itself. So, I think England is one of my favourite places to play cricket and to bowl as well," Thakur said.

"(In) England there is lot of lateral movement and off the pitch moment, it is up to you how to you want to make use of that."

Thakur, who is no mean with the bat, played a key role in the fourth Test at the Oval, slamming two crucial half-centuries and also took crucial wickets in both the innings.

In the first innings he slammed a 36-ball 57, which helped India score 191. In the second innings, Thakur bettered his score, scoring a 72-ball 60.

Recalling his performance, Thakur said, "It was an important innings. Like I said before England could have got a big lead, but that got cut down and because of that we could stage a comeback in the third and the fourth innings.

"When you play such an innings, it motivates the teammates that we have got a good opportunity to make a comeback into the game. The good performance of teammates, it will reflect when you are bowling, it will also reflect in your fielding," he said.

Khawaja, Green help Oz build lead in 1st Test

AP ■ GALLE

Usman Khawaja on Thursday praised Cameron Green for handling the Sri Lankan spinners with aplomb after the two batsmen helped Australia to a 101-run first innings lead on a weather-hit day two of the opening Test.

Replying to Sri Lanka's 212 all out on the opening day, the tourists reached 313 for eight when bad light stopped play.

It was a bonus to get any play at all after storms and ferocious winds had caused a stand to collapse, with no injuries, and delayed the start until the afternoon. Skipper Pat Cummins, on 26, and Nathan Lyon, on eight, were batting at close of play after the tourists dominated the two sessions on a turning pitch.

The left-handed Khawaja made 71 before 23-year-old Green, who top-scored with 77, was involved in an attacking stand of 84 with wicketkeeper-batsman Alex Carey.

"He (Green) batted beautifully," said Khawaja. "(It) took a lot of courage the way he batted. He came out and played a sweep shot straight away. That's not easy. "That wicket is extremely tough, it's one of the toughest I have played on."

Khawaja, 35 and a veteran of 49 Tests, said Green's game is "well beyond where a lot of us were on the sub-continent at 20".

"It's great, a lot of the things we have learned as senior batters around the group. It's great to see that knowledge being passed on."

Ramesh Mendis removed Carey for 45 to break the stand and claimed his fourth wicket of the innings when he trapped Green lbw, finishing the day with four for 107.

Mitchell Starc fell next to debutant leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay, who took two wickets, but Cummins smashed the bowlers around in his 16-ball blitz that included one four and three sixes with the last one going out of the ground.

KL undergoes successful surgery in Germany

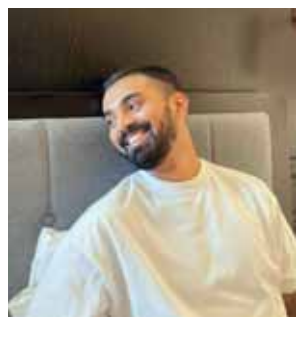
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

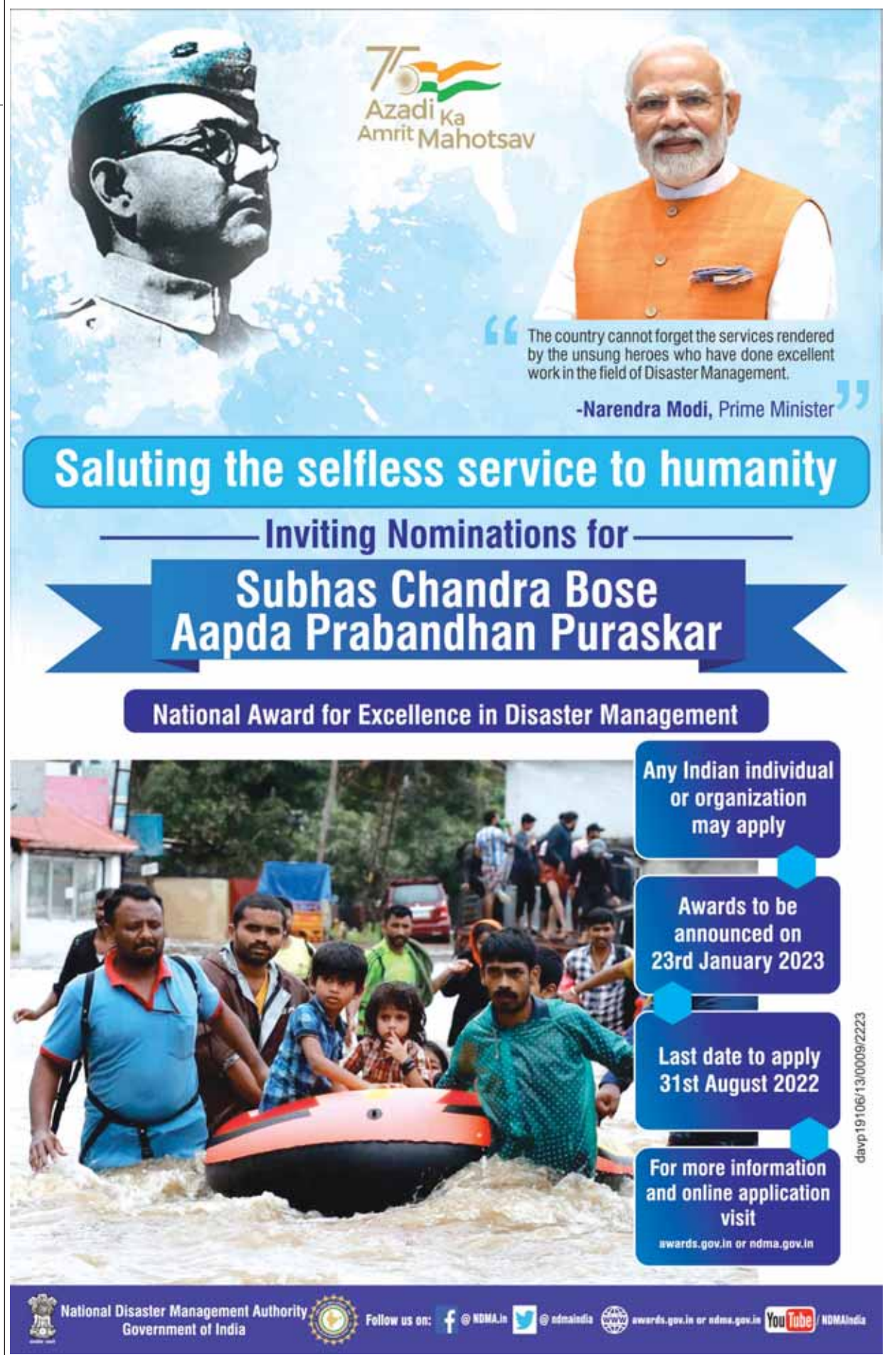
Senior India opener and regular vice-captain KL Rahul has undergone a successful surgery for sports hernia in Germany and is expected to be out of competitive cricket for another couple of months.

Rahul, who was forced to opt out of the home T20I series against South Africa earlier this month, has over the years had recurrent lower abdominal related fitness issues, including groin strains and hamstring injuries.

"It's been a tough couple of weeks but the surgery was successful. I'm healing and recovering well. My road to recovery has begun. Thank you for your messages and prayers. See you soon," Rahul tweeted.

The 30-year-old has played 42 Tests, 42 ODIs and 56 T20Is for India in the last eight years.



Once he is back in India, his rehabilitation would be monitored by the NCA Sports Science team headed by Dr Nitin Patel.

Although it is difficult to put a timeline on his comeback, sources in the know of things believe that it could take another couple of months before Rahul dons the India 'Blues' again.