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LOOMING: CIVIL
WAR IN MYANMAR?

WORLD 8

RUSSIAN MISSILES KILL
AT LEAST 19 IN ODESA

MONEY 10

MARKETS PLUNGE FOR 3RD DAY AS
FAG-END REBOUND LOSES STEAM

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY JULY 2, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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SINDHU OUT
OF MALAYSIA
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11 SPORT

SC raps Nupur: 'Your loose tongue set nation on fire'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday gave a scathing tongue-lashing to suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma for her controversial comments against Prophet Mohammad, saying her "loose tongue" has "set the entire country on fire" and that she is "single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country."

The court refused to entertain Sharma's plea for clubbing of FIRs lodged in various States against her for the remark and held that the comment was made either for cheap publicity, political agenda or some nefarious activities.

"She actually has a loose tongue and has made all kinds of irresponsible statements on TV and set the entire country on fire. Yet, she claims to be a lawyer of 10 years standing... She should have immediately apologised for her comments to the whole country," said the bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala.

Sharma, who petitioned as NV Sharma, was represented by senior lawyer Maninder Singh. Sharma's remarks during a TV debate triggered protests across the country and drew sharp reactions from many Gulf countries. The BJP subsequently suspended her from the party.

"These remarks are very



disturbing and smack of arrogance. What is her business to make such remarks? These remarks have led to unfortunate incidents in the country... These people are not religious. They do not have respect for other religions. These remarks were made for cheap publicity or political agenda or some other nefarious activities," the bench said.

While refusing to entertain Sharma's plea for clubbing of FIRs, the vacation bench allowed her to withdraw the plea. "She has a threat or she has become a security threat? The way she has ignited emotions across the country... this lady is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country," the bench said when Sharma's lawyer pointed out that she was facing threats to life.

The bench added, "The way she ignited emotions

across the country has led to unfortunate incidents. This lady is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country. We saw the debate."

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for Sharma, said she had indeed apologised for her remarks and there are several judgments that say there cannot be two FIRs for the same incident.

The bench said, "Her apology came too late and that too conditionally saying if religious sentiments are hurt and so on. She should have been on TV immediately and apologised to the nation."

The court said her petition smacks of arrogance and that she thinks the magistrate of the country is too small for her.

"When an FIR is registered and you are not arrested, this shows your clout. She thinks she has the power to go on making irresponsible statements," the bench said.

When Singh claimed that Sharma was a spokesperson of a political party and her unintentional comments were in relation to a debate, the court said, "If you are a spokesperson of a party, it is not a licence to say things like this."

The bench said, "If there was a misuse of the debate, the first thing she should have done was to file an FIR against the anchor."

Continued on Page 2

Modi Govt has created atmosphere of hate: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
WAYANAD

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has taken a potshot at the Union Government over the Supreme Court's scathing criticism of ex-BJP spokesperson Numpr Sharma's controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammad and said the Government has created the atmosphere of anger and hate in the country and not one person alone.

Rahul told the media in Wayanad, his parliamentary constituency, "The Supreme Court has said this. But the atmosphere in the country is created by the ruling Government. It is not the person who made this statement. It is the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the BJP and the RSS who have created this environment in the country. This environment of anger and this environment of hatred. This is against the interest of India and our people."

Continued on Page 2

Uddhav taunts BJP for ignoring '50-50' offer, losing CM chair

Had Shah kept his word, there wouldn't have been MVA Govt, says Thackeray

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after rebel Sena leader Eknath Shinde replaced him as the Maharashtra Chief Minister, Shiv Sena president and former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday slammed the BJP for installing "so-called" Shiv Sainik Shinde as the Chief Minister, after reneging on the pre-2019 poll promise of rotating the CM's post.

He also removed Shinde from the post of Shiv Sena leader in the party organisation.

Talking to the media at the Shiv Sena Bhavan, Uddhav questioned the manner in which the BJP has gone about forming the Government and said Shinde, who deserted his party, could not be termed a "Shiv Sena" CM.

"The manner in which the BJP formed a Government and appointed a so-called Shiv Sainik as the Chief Minister surprises me. After the 2019 Assembly polls, I was talking about sharing the Chief Minister's post on a rotational basis. Shiv Sena and the BJP had reached an understanding over the rotational Chief Ministership. Had then BJP president Amit Shah kept his



Former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena Chief Uddhav Thackeray arrives for a press conference at Shiv Sena Bhavan in Mumbai on Friday

word, there would not have been an MVA Government," Uddhav said.

"Had the BJP accepted the formula of the rotational Chief Minister, then it would have given the CM's post to the Shiv Sena for the first two and a half years and had its Chief Minister for the remaining term of two and half years. What has the BJP gained now it doesn't have its own Chief Minister even for the rest of the term," said the Sena president.

Late at night, in a letter issued by the party, Uddhav accused Shinde of indulging in "anti-party activities" and said he has voluntarily given up his membership.

Continued on Page 2

Shinde Govt to face floor test on July 4

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra's new Chief Minister Eknath Shinde will seek a confidence vote on the floor of the State Assembly on July 4.

A day after Sena's break-away rebel faction leader Shinde and BJP's Devendra Fadnis were sworn in as the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister respectively, the new Government convened a

special session of the State Legislature on July 3 and 4.

On the first day of the special session, i.e. on July 3, a new Speaker will be elected in place of Nana Patole who had resigned from the post in February last year.

The Speaker's post has remained vacant for the past 16 months. Deputy Speaker Narhari Zhirwal has functioned as the Acting Speaker since then.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

DESI UNMANNED PLANE FLIGHT SUCCESSFUL



Bengaluru: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Friday successfully carried out the maiden flight of the indigenously developed unmanned aircraft at Chitradurga, Karnataka.

P4

HYD DECKED UP FOR BJP NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

Hyderabad: The Telangana capital is decked up for the BJP's two-day National Executive meeting from Saturday, with the who's who of the BJP set to descend on this southern state for the crucial meeting at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre that has come under a tight security cover.

P4



Devotees throng the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra during the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath which commenced amid tight security in Puri on Friday. The 'Yatra' commenced on Friday after two years of a break due to the Covid-19 pandemic

PTI

SC rejects plea for urgent hearing on Shinde camp MLAs' disqualification

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to grant an urgent hearing to a plea by the Uddhav Thackeray camp to decide on the pending disqualification proceedings against 16 lawmakers, including the newly-appointed Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The court posted a plea of Shiv Sena chief whip Sunil Prabhu on July 11 when all other petitions on the Maharashtra issue are listed.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Prabhu, urged a vacation bench of Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala that the interim plea needed an urgent hearing due to the pendency of disqualification proceedings against the 16 lawmakers.

"I am sorry for the trouble... We have filed an application. Your Lordships on June 29 passed an order, thereafter Shinde was sworn in as Chief Minister. The problem that faces the Assembly and all of us is that as to how the votes have to be counted as there is no merger under the 10th schedule of the Constitution," the senior lawyer said.

"Both sides (of Shiv Sena) are going to issue a whip. How are we going to control the proceedings of the House? Whose whip is going to be counted? He (Shinde) is not the party and that matter can only be decided by the Election Commission. Ex-facie, this is not the dance of democracy," he said.

The bench said it was "fully conscious of the issue. We will look into the issue," it said.

I-T dept sends notice to Pawar over poll affidavits

PNS ■ MUMBAI

In what is being seen as an act of political vendetta that came in the wake of the fall of the MVA Government, the Income Tax (I-T) department has sent a notice to NCP chief Sharad Pawar in connection with poll affidavits filed by him in 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2020.

Confirming the development himself, Pawar said in a lighter vein that he had received a "love letter" from the IT department. In a series of tweets put out in Marathi, the NCP chief said: "The investigating agencies are being used (by the Government) against its political rivals. The department told me that it is investigating the poll affidavit filed by me in the 2004 LS polls."

Continued on Page 2

SII first Indian firm to export 32.4L Covid vax doses to US

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Government has given permission to Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) to supply 32.4 lakh doses of its Covid-19 jab Covovax under the brand name Nuvaxovid to the US. This will be the first vaccine to be exported to the US by any Indian manufacturer. The shipment is likely to be dispatched on July 3, an official source told a news agency.

In a letter to the Government on June 29, Prakash Kumar Singh, director (Government and Regulatory Affairs) at SII, had sought permission to export Covovax to the US. Sources said it will be the first instance of any Indian manufacturer exporting any vaccine — Covid or non-Covid — to the US.

"It is a matter of pride for us and our country that in line with clarion call of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Making in India for the world'



and under leadership of our CEO, Dr Adar C Poonawalla, our made-in-India world class Covovax vaccine will be the first life-saving vaccine of our country to be exported to the United States of America," Singh had said in his communication, according to the source.

On December 28, 2021, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had approved Covovax for restricted use in emergency situations in adults, and in the 12-17 year age group on March 9. On June 29, the drug regulator approved it for restricted emergency use in

children aged 7 to 11 years.

Covovax is manufactured through technology transfer from Novavax and is approved by the European Medicines Agency for conditional marketing authorisation.

It was granted emergency use listing by the WHO in December 2017, 2020. In August 2020, the US-based vaccine maker Novavax Inc had announced a licence agreement with SII for the development and commercialisation of NVX-CoV2373, its Covid-19 vaccine candidate, in India and low and middle-income countries.

Capt Amarinder all set to join BJP

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Months after facing a resounding defeat in Punjab Assembly polls after ending his decade-old association with the Congress and floating his own political outfit, Punjab's former Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh is all set to join ranks with the saffron brigade.

Virtually fighting for political survival, Capt Amarinder will be joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on his return from the UK next week, along with his Congress MP wife Preneet Kaur, while also merging his eight-month-old political outfit Punjab Lok Congress (PLC) with the saffron party.

The 89-year-old has recently undergone a spinal surgery in London, and is recuperating at present. He is expected to return by next week, after which he would be formally inducted in the BJP.

It has been learnt that the

former two-time Chief Minister will be given an important responsibility, with the saffron party primarily focusing on the next Lok Sabha elections. Several prominent Congress leaders have already joined the BJP — before and after the elections.

The "Patiala Royal" has been in the political wilderness after facing a defeat from a first-timer AAP candidate in his bastion — Patiala city — forfeiting his security deposit.

Capt Amarinder was unceremoniously removed from the Chief Minister's chair in September, following his months-long showdown with Navjot Singh Sidhu, who was elevated to be Punjab Congress president despite strong opposition by him.

In his place, the party chose Charanjit Singh Channi to head the State — becoming Punjab's first Dalit Chief Minister.

Continued on Page 2

Modi, Putin speak over phone, discuss Ukraine, bilateral trade

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday reviewed the time-tested ties between the two nations. The issue of the Ukraine war was also figured in the talks. Modi favoured dialogue and diplomacy to end the ongoing Ukraine conflict.

This was the fourth time the two leaders talked on the phone since the Ukraine conflict started in February.

The two leaders reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken during Putin's visit to India in December 2021.

Incidentally, the talks took place three days after Modi attended the G-7 summit in Germany where the leaders of some countries discussed ways to increase pressure on Russia to end the military action in Ukraine.

India, so far, has abstained from voting against Russia in the United Nations (UN) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Giving details of the talks between Putin and Modi, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two leaders exchanged ideas on how bilateral trade in agricultural goods, fertilizers and pharma products could be encouraged further. The leaders also discussed global issues, including the state of the international energy and food markets.

In the context of the ongoing situation in



Ukraine, the Prime Minister reiterated India's long-standing position in favour of dialogue and diplomacy. The two leaders agreed to maintain regular consultations on global and bilateral issues, the MEA said.

The first time the two leaders spoke on the phone was on February 24 when the Russian military action began in Ukraine. Putin and Modi talked two more times on March 2 and March 7.

Govt's intention is not to fight with anyone: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two days after being accused of making "factually and legally incorrect" statements over an ACB probe, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday said he only mentioned the law point of the matter and that L-G VK Saxena should have kept the AAP dispensation in the loop if he changed a decision of his predecessor.

Speaking at a press conference, Sisodia said the Delhi Government's intention is not to fight with anyone, but it will do so if work related to Delhi is obstructed.

Lieutenant Governor Saxena, in his letter to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, on June 28 had claimed that Sisodia made "factually and legally incorrect" statements in the Anti Corruption Branch (ACB) probe approved by him



in connection with alleged irregularities in the construction of seven temporary hospitals during COVID-19 pandemic.

"I only put the law position before him. The law position is very clear that there should be a decision on it. Previous L-G had given his judgement on it. If he was changing the judgement then he should have kept the elected Government in the loop," Sisodia said. The

Kejriwal Government will fight with anyone if there is any hindrance in the work related to Delhi, he asserted."We want to work together and do not want such a situation to arise. But if work of people are stopped, we would need to talk. Our only intention is that work related to Delhi does not stop," Sisodia said.

Earlier, in a letter to Saxena, Sisodia had asked under whose "pressure" the L-G had approved investigation by the ACB in an old complaint that was rejected by his predecessor Anil Bajjal as "frivolous and baseless".

The L-G in his letter to Kejriwal had explained that the permission for ACB probe was granted after careful examination and strictly in accordance with the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and the provisions of law as settled by the courts.

FIR filed over scuffle inside Tihar prison; 23 injured

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Prisons department has filed a police complaint in connection with a scuffle inside Tihar jail here in which 16 inmates and seven jail staff got injured. During a routine search in ward number 4 of central jail number 8 on Wednesday, some inmates obstructed the team of jail officials and abused them, following which a scuffle ensued between the two sides, said the official.

The staff tried to bring the situation under control but the inmates did not relent and began banging their heads against the wall and inflicted self-injuries with sharp-edged objects, said the official.

A senior jail official said a complaint has been filed with police regarding the incident. None of the injured sustained serious injuries, added the official.

The inmates injured in scuffle were treated at prison dispensary, and four of them were sent to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, the officials said, adding that seven staff members received minor wounds. Such incidents have taken place earlier too, therefore efforts are being to reduce them, official said,official said, adding that the authorities are taking several steps like installation of more CCTV cameras, counselling of prisoners, and special attention on trouble makers.

To Whomsoever It May Concern
General Public is hereby informed that our Clients Babulji (Father), Laxmi Devi (Mother), Ashok Kumar (Brother) and Rekha (Renji) (Sister) R/o H-13/B, Gali No. 25, Raja Puri, Uttam Nagar New Delhi-110059, Have Disowned their Son/brother namely Chander aged 28 Years from all movable and immovable property. Thus, he don't have any claim over H-13/B, Gali No. 25, Raja Puri, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059. Which is owned by our clients, and our clients are not responsible for their actions.

Vinod Pant (Advocate)
Ch: 500-501, Western Wing M.Com, CWA, MBA, LLB Tis Hazari, New Delhi-54 (M): 09313633143

Public Notice
This is to inform general public that Sh. Sabudhin Saiti is the owner of the Land area measuring 64 Sq. Yds. i.e. 52.50 Sq. mtrs., out of Khasha No. 31 M. Situated in Village- Mamura, Tehsil- Dadri, Distt- Gautam Budh Nagar U.P. vide Sale Deed dated 22.06.2005 (Doc. No. 4357). Sh. Sabudhin Saiti has misplaced the below mentioned documents.
a. Original GPA, ATS & Will Dated 11.03.2005 executed by Sh. Mahavir prasad Jindal Karan of Mahavir Prasad Jindal HUF in favour of Sh. Jai Pal Gaigri in respect of the entire Property.
Anyone who find the above said documents shall handover the same to the Manager of Religare Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (RHDFTCL) having its office at West End Mall, 10th Floor, Office No. 927-928, Janakpuri West, New Delhi-110058. Now, Sh. Sabudhin Saiti is availing loan on this property from Religare Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (RHDFTCL) by mortgaging the said property. In case anyone has any objection regarding mortgage of the said property, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhanwan/Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9812828636 (M).

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, Mahander Singh Dahiya, resident of Flat No. 112, Guru Apartments, Plot No.-2, Sector-06, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075, hereby declare that the name of Mahander Dahiya has been changed to Mahander Singh Dahiya.
PD(90120)C

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com
शुद्धि पत्र
इस समाचार पत्र में दिनांक 22.06.2022 को प्रकाशित जॉब सं०-03/ई-निविदा/म०क्र०वि०/2022-23 हेतु प्रिंटिंग एवं स्टेशनरी सामान की आपूर्ति कराने के लिए ई-निविदा के उक्त N.I.T. की विक्रय की अन्तिम तिथि को दिनांक 11.07.2022 तक बढ़ाया जाता है। ई-निविदा में प्राप्त ई-निविदाओं की प्री-क्वालिफिकेशन दिनांक 12.07.2022 को 11:00 बजे खोली जायेगी।
(आरोको रामी)
भण्डार क्रय अधिकारी, नौएडा।
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

BSES
BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi
CORRIGENDUM
EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF OFFER
Due to unavoidable circumstances, the last date of submission of tender against NIT no. Head (PMG) /BRPL/ETender/ 2022-23 / 1375 dated 30.06.22, for purchase of power by BRPL has been extended till 07th July 2022 and the revised schedule is as follows:
A. Last date of bid submission is 07th July 2022 up to 15:00:00 hrs and Opening of non financial technical bids is 08th July 2022 at 11:00:00 hrs
HOD (PMG) BSES Rajdhani power limited:
For further details please log on to <http://www.bsesdelhi.com> & www.mstconcommerce.com
Regd. Off.: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019
Corporate Identification No.: 140119001200PLC111527
Telephone No.:- +91 11 4601 7225 Fax No.:- +91 11 39595930
Website :- www.bsesdelhi.com

Delhi Govt sets up panel for coordination among agencies over waterlogging, desilting

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Government has formed an inter-departmental committee headed by the PWD secretary to ensure better coordination among various agencies in dealing with waterlogging issues and desilting of drains.

According to Delhi Government's Flood Order 2022, which was released on Thursday by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, the committee will monitor desilting of drains and sewers and address waterlogging problem at vulnerable points during the monsoon.

"For monitoring the activities of desilting of storm water drains and to address waterlogging issues, an inter-departmental coordination committee has been formed by consensus of all departments.

"Secretary, PWD is the coordination committee chairman. Meetings of the committee will be held on regular basis to resolve inter-departmental issues, monitor desilting works, monitor and check waterlogging vulnerable locations," the flood order said.

Officials from other government agencies including the NDMC, MCD, Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC),

Delhi Cantonment Board, Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Jal Board, Delhi State Industrial ad Infrastructure Development Corporation, Delhi International Airport Limited, National Highways Authority of India, Indian Railways, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board among others, will be the members of the coordination committee.

"The coordination committee will monitor activities including desilting of storm water drains and sewers, cleaning of municipal solid waste from drains, addressing and resolving waterlogging vulnerable locations to check recurrence, status of operation of storm water pumps, inspection and cross inspection of desilting works and operation of pumps and resolve inter-departmental issues," the order stated.

Delhi witnessed waterlogging and massive traffic snarls on key stretches after the city received first monsoon showers on Thursday.

In a separate instruction, the divisional commissioner has asked district magistrates of 11 revenue districts in the capital to carry out "ground truthing" of desilting of drains carried out by the Flood and Irrigation department and other local bodies.

Modi Govt has created atmosphere of hate: Rahul

From Page 1

"The Congress party builds bridges between people, we build bridges between communities, we bring people together. So what we are seeing in the country is what is being done by the RSS and the BJP. This is completely against our philosophy. We don't believe in solving problems with hatred and anger," he added.

SC raps Nupur: ‘Your loose tongue set nation on fire’

From Page 1

Singh said she had reacted to the debate initiated by other debaters and pointed to the transcript of the debate. He said there were serious debates on the issue within the same community and Sharma's remarks were made in that context only.

The bench said, "What was the TV debate for? Was it to fan an agenda and why did they choose a sub-judice topic? What is the business of the TV channel to discuss the matter which is sub-judice, except to promote an agenda?"

Referring to various apex court verdicts, Singh said there cannot be a second FIR on the same cause of action. Justice Kant said she has remedy before the High Court and can very well approach it, if there is a second FIR. Singh then

referred to the Arnab Goswami case of 2020 and TT Antony case of 2001, and said the law has been laid down by the apex court that multiple FIR on the same configuration can be clubbed and there can be no second FIR on the same cause.

The bench said, "The case of a journalist expressing his right on a particular issue is on a different pedestal from a spokesperson of a political party who is lambasting others with irresponsible statements without thinking of the consequences".

Justice Kant went on, "Yes, in a democracy everyone has the right to speak. In a democracy grass has the right to grow and donkeys have the right to eat." Singh said she has joined the investigation being conducted by the Delhi Police and not running away and

DMs asked to carry out ‘ground truthing’ of desilting of drains

NEW DELHI: The district magistrates of 11 revenue districts in the national capital have been asked to carry out 'ground truthing' of desilting of drains carried out by the Department of Flood and Irrigation and other local bodies.

The directions were issued on June 24 during a senior officers' meeting. Directions were also issued to the revenue department to expedite implementation of e-Court project along with faceless transactions in sub-registrar offices.

"All district magistrates personally take ground truthing of desilting of work of drains carried out by the Department of Flood and Irrigation and Local Bodies.

The ground truthing work shall be done by the respective district magistrate personally and no delegation in this regard is allowed," the direction read.

It further said the "district magistrate can also push water in the drain in case there is a doubt regarding desilting of drain by the concerned authorities", and that the work should be carried out by next week.

In the meeting, it was also pointed out that 31 parameters under Ease of Doing Business are yet to be implemented by the revenue department. "These parameters should be implemented by October 31, 2022," the order said.

As Delhi received its first monsoon showers on Thursday, several areas, including the newly-inaugurated Pragati Maidan tunnel, ITO, Ring Road, the Barapullah corridor, the Delhi-Meerut expressway and Sarai Kale Khan, witnessed waterlogging leading to massive traffic snarls. The officials concerned were also asked to submit a brief indicating current status of these parameters and likely completion date of their implementation within one week.

NCR PULSE

GOVT SEEKS SUGGESTIONS FROM SHOPKEEPERS
New Delhi: The Delhi government will soon come out with an online form seeking suggestions from shopkeepers of the five markets that will be redeveloped. A meeting of the project's expert committee and business leaders of five markets was held at Civil Lines on Thursday. During the meeting, traders have suggested that there should be a main entry gate in the market on which the history of the market should be written.

NDDB TO DONATE ₹1.5 CR FOR CATTLE FEED
New Delhi: The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has decided to donate Rs 1.5 crore towards about 500 MT of cattle feed to meet the immediate requirement of animals in flood affected Assam through West Assam Milk Union (WAMUL). Meenesh Shah, Chairman, NDDB expressed his solidarity with all those who have suffered loss of life, property and livelihoods.

GGSIU STARTS ONLINE COUNSELLING PROCESS
New Delhi: The Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University on Friday said it has started an online counselling process for 35 academic programmes. The university has started the online counselling process for a total of 35 academic programmes on Friday, the varsity said in a statement.

GOVT TO HIRE EX-PRINCIPALS, VICE-PRINCIPALS
New Delhi: Delhi's Education department will hire retired principals and vice-principals of government schools as in-charge of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) study centres. The principals and vice principals who have retired from schools run by Delhi government, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalas and schools run by New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), will be eligible for the contractual appointment.

AYURVEDA RATNA AWARDED TO DR TANUJA NESARI
NEW DELHI: Recognising her contribution towards furthering the growth of Ayurveda in India and abroad, the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Indian Traditional Sciences (ITSappg) -- represented by dignitaries including Amarjeet S. Bhamra, Ambassador for Ayurveda and Yoga in Great Britain; Virendra Sharma, MP, UK Parliament and Chair, ITSappg; and Bob Blackman, MP, UK Parliament and Chair, ITSappg--conferred the prestigious Ayurveda Ratna award on Dr Tanuja Nesari, Director of Delhi-based All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), an autonomous organisation under Union Ministry of Ayush.

NDMC TO BAN ROAD CUTTING FROM JULY 1
New Delhi: In view of monsoon season, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has decided to ban road cutting in its area. The ban will be enforced from July 1 to September 30. "We have decided to ban road cutting in NDMC area in view of the monsoon season. It will be applied to all the essential utilities except as required for emergency work with prior approval of the competent authority," a senior NDMC official said.

MAN JUMPS IN FRONT OF METRO AT MOOLCHAND
New Delhi: A 50-year-old man jumped in front of a train at Moolchand station of Delhi Metro's Violet Line. The incident took place on Thursday. According to a senior police official, police received information at 5.04 PM that a person got injured at Moolchand metro station.

DRUNK YOUTH STABS ELDERLY MAN TO DEATH
New Delhi: A 17-year-old drunk youth stabbed an elderly man to death after the latter shouted at him in Shahdara's Vishwas Nagar area. The juvenile has been apprehended. The police received information on Thursday that an injured man was lying on a street in Vishwas Nagar. The police reached the spot and found that an elderly man was lying unconscious and blood was coming out from his abdominal area and nose. He was taken to Hedgewar hospital where he was declared brought dead.

DDA SIGNS MOU WITH WWF INDIA
New Delhi: Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has signed an MOU with World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF India) for "Nature based learning and experiential activities" at Sanjay Van, New Delhi. Sanjay Van, spread over an area of approx 783 acres is an integral part of South-Central Ridge and is a notified "Reserved Forest".

NCRTC SIGNS MEMORANDUM WITH DB INDIA
New Delhi: The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Deutsche Bahn Engineering and Consultancy India Pvt Ltd (DB India) for the comprehensive operation and maintenance of the 82 km long Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor for a period of 12 years.

2 more held for conspiring to kill Udaipur tailor: Cops

PTI ■ UDAIPUR

Two more men were arrested for conspiring to commit the murder of a tailor here and produced in a local court on Friday. Tailor Kanhaiya Lal was murdered on Tuesday by two cleaver-wielding men, who posted a grisly video of the crime online.

The court of the chief judicial magistrate, Udaipur, granted one-day transit remand of the duo. They will now be produced in an NIA court in Jaipur on Saturday by the ATS,

an advocate said. At the same time, the Udaipur district court gave direction to the Rajasthan Police to hand over the case diary to NIA. The case will be investigated by the NIA after formalities of the case transfer are completed.

Public Prosecutor Kapil Todawat said the ATS produced Mohsin and Asif, who were arrested on Thursday night, to the CJM court and the court granted transit remand for producing them in a designated NIA court in Jaipur as triala will run there.

I-T dept sends notice...

Pawar, his nephew Ajit Pawar, several other politicians and officials linked to the Rs 25,000 crore Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB) loan disbursement scam, were booked in a money laundering scam by the ED on September 23, 2019. However, he cancelled his plans to appear before the ED officials on September 28, 2019, as they advised him not to appear before them.

A month after the Economic Offence Wing of the Mumbai police – acting on a Bombay High Court directive – had registered an FIR with the MRA Marg Police Station against those named in the MSCB scam, 2019 the ED recorded Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) against Sr Pawar, Ajit Pawar, the bank's then chairman and several others.

It may be recalled that

Rote learning to be passé soon

Govt school students to be assessed on impact of mindset curricula too, say DoE’s new guidelines



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to eradicate rote learning, the Delhi Government on Friday announced new guidelines for assessment of students. Now, school students in the national Capital will be assessed for the impact of the mindset curricula in their behaviour along

with other scholastic subjects. According to the new assessment guidelines of the Directorate of Education (DoE), students from Classes 3 to 8 will be assessed for the Happiness and Deshbhakti curricula, while students of Class 9 and Class 11 will be assessed for Deshbhakti and Entrepreneurship Mindset

SALIENT FEATURES

- In the academic session 2022-23, mid-term examination will be conducted in September/October and Common Annual School Examination (CASE) will be conducted in February/March.
- The question papers of mid-term examination would be set out of the syllabus supposed to be covered up to the midterm exam.
- The question papers of annual examinations would be set out from the syllabus as prescribed by CBSE & Directorate of Education, Delhi.
- Question papers in mid-term, pre-board and annual exams shall be set in a manner to assess the comprehension, competencies and other skills as required.
- Pattern of questions particularly in secondary and sr. secondary classes shall be the

same as that of the questions set at the CBSE Board examinations.

- A greater number of competency based questions or questions that assess application of concepts in real-life/unfamiliar situations will be part of the question paper in mid-term, pre-board & annual exams.
- The result of each examination shall be analysed and difficult topics/chapters in different subjects will be identified for arranging the remedial and enrichment programmes.
- A summary of the analysis of class-wise and subject-wise results shall be prepared and kept on record to serve as an input to academic enrichment and remedial purposes.
- Examinations shall be conducted in such a manner that chances of copying, favouritism, injustice and victimisation shall be reduced to the minimum.

Curricula. However, students of Class 11 will have an additional criterion for assessment, which is their participation in Business Blasters.

The new parameters will be a supplement to the evaluation norms that already exist and are based on co-curricular and academic activities. The guidelines will, however, not be

binding on private schools.

The Government has also directed schools to include assessment of students on the basis of their abilities to handle real-life situations along with scholastic and co-scholastic activities.

Announcing the new guidelines Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said

that students will not be evaluated on the basis of curricular knowledge, but rather on their ability to apply their understanding in a variety of real-life situations. “The need of the hour is that the schools must focus on the competency-based learning, which will equip the students to face real-life challenge,” he said. The Deputy Chief Minister further said the new assessment standards will also motivate students to contribute to society’s advancement. Further, no weightage of marks obtained will be calculated for the promotion of a student to the next class.

Further detailing the procedure of assessment, the Deputy CM added that question papers will be set in a manner where students will have to answer questions based on application of concepts of these curriculum in real-life/unfamiliar situations. Along with that, they will also have unique project works based on the curriculum.

“This new process of assessment will further strengthen the critical thinking and analytical abilities of the students. It will also help them get rid of the need for rote learning methods that create excessive and unnecessary stress on students during examinations,” he added.

Two associates of Jain arrested by ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday arrested two businessmen, Vaibhav Jain and Ankush Jain, allegedly linked to Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following questioning as they were being “evasive.”

Last month, the agency had searched the premises of the duo alleged to be “business associates” of Jain.

Satyendar Jain, 57, was arrested by the ED on May 30 under PMLA and is currently undergoing judicial custody.

He is now Minister without portfolio in the Delhi Government. Earlier, Jain held health, power and a few other portfolios.

The agency has conducted at least two rounds of searches against his family and associates after it arrested the Minister in the PMLA case linked to alleged hawala dealings.

The ED had seized “unexplained” cash worth Rs 2.85 crore and 133 gold coins after the first round of raids conducted on June 6 against Jain’s family and associates.

THE AGENCY HAS CONDUCTED AT LEAST TWO ROUNDS OF SEARCHES AGAINST HIS FAMILY AND ASSOCIATES AFTER IT ARRESTED THE MINISTER IN THE PMLA CASE LINKED TO ALLEGED HAWALA DEALINGS

The premises searched included those of Ankush Jain and Vaibhav Jain, Satyendar Jain’s wife Poonam Jain, Naveen Jain and Siddharth Jain (directors of Ram Prakash Jewellers Pvt Ltd), GS Matharoo (chairman of Lala Sher Singh Jivan Vigan Trust which runs Prudence group of schools), Yogesh Kumar Jain (director in Ram Prakash Jewellers Pvt Ltd.), father-in-law of Ankush Jain and Lala Sher Singh Jivan Trust.

However, AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj had alleged at that time that the ED’s raid at Satyendar Jain’s residence was a complete failure. “Only Rs 2.79 lakh were found by the ED, which could not be seized as every penny was accounted for,” he said, showing a copy of the agency’s seizure memo.

In April, the agency had attached assets worth Rs 4.81 crore of Satyendar Jain’s family and companies “beneficially owned and controlled” by him as part of the probe.

The ED had, in a statement then, said the provisional order attached “immovable properties worth Rs 4.81 crore belonging to Akinchan Developers Pvt Ltd., Indo Metal Impex Pvt Ltd, Paryas Infosolutions Pvt Ltd., Manglayatan Projects Pvt Ltd., J J Ideal Estate Pvt Ltd., Swati Jain, wife of Vaibhav Jain, Sushila Jain, wife of Ajit Prasad Jain, and Indu Jain, wife of Sunil Jain.”

The probe found, the ED had alleged, that “during the period 2015-16, when Satyendar Kumar Jain was a public servant, the companies beneficially owned and controlled by him received accommodation entries to the tune of Rs 4.81 crore from shell (paper) companies against cash transferred to Kolkata-based entry operators through the hawala route.”

“These amounts were utilised for direct purchase of land or for repayment of loan taken for the purchase of agricultural land in and around Delhi,” the ED said.

AAP Govt OK’s ₹1,855 cr sewer lines in 4 villages

STPs also to be upgraded under projects in 39 colonies

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Arvind Kejriwal Government on Friday approved projects worth ₹1,855 crore to lay sewer lines in four villages, including 39 unauthorised colonies, and upgrade the Sewerage Treatment Plants (STPs) in the national Capital.

The decision was taken in a meeting held at Delhi Secretariat on Friday. Besides Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia, the meeting was also attended by DJB Vice-Chairman Saurabh Bhardwaj and senior officials of the concerned departments.

“Several important decisions were taken during the meeting, including those on

reduction of the Yamuna river’s pollution and further enhancement of the sewerage system in unauthorised colonies of the national capital,” said an official.

Sisodia said that a connecting pipeline will be laid to carry water from Okhla STP to the Yamuna and also, lakes will be developed near Okhla STP to recharge the groundwater. “The total cost of the whole project worth ₹1,855 crore was approved in the meeting,” he said.

“The Kejriwal Government has decided to lay a sewer line of 26.5 km in six unauthorised colonies of Bijasan along with a village of the area. At the same time, 1.5 MGD volume of water would be treated through this,” said Sisodia.

“Apart from this, 82.79 km of sewer line network will be laid in Najafgarh. Under this, about one lakh 65 thousand population of 1 village includ-

ing 21 unauthorised colonies will be benefited. The Delhi Jal Board will be able to treat 4.75 MGD water through this,” said Sisodia. “A sewer line of 17.25 km will be laid in Shikarpur, which will benefit 20 thousand people. Apart from this, a 35 km sewer line will be laid in 12 unauthorised colonies of Deoli and Sangam Vihar and a 24 km sewer line in Burari,” he said.

Sisodia said a total of 6 STPs including Kondli STP, Coronation STP, Rohini STP, Pappan Kalan Lake Sewage Treatment Plant, Narela STP, and Nilothi STP will be upgraded in Delhi.

“To upgrade it, ₹1367.5 crore will be spent by the Delhi Government. Presently, the total capacity of these STPs is 160 MGD, which will increase to 205 MGD after the upgrade. Apart from this, modern technology will be adopted to polish the recycled water,” said Sisodia.

Mixed response to single use plastic ban in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

There was a mixed response to the ban on single-use plastic that came into effect from Friday in the national Capital. While some shopkeepers in the city sent back customers who had come to shop without a carry bag, some others were found using plastic carry bags despite the ban. A majority of shopkeepers and customers were not aware of the ban. Vegetables sellers across the national Capital were also seen using polythene bags.

“No plastic” posters were seen outside shops in major markets in Delhi including Sarojini Nagar, Lajpat Nagar and Palika Bazaar, and most shopkeepers urged people to use alternatives. A few shopkeepers were, however, seen hesitantly selling items in polythene bags as they were “still left with some stock,” while traders’ bodies took rounds of the Sarojini Nagar market at regular intervals to ensure the protocol was being followed.

Most customers were seen without the trademark white Sarojini Nagar polythene bag, but plastic bags were seen lying on the roads there, and roadside eateries were still serving food in plastic plates and giving plastic cutlery.

Shops in the Sarojini Nagar

market had put up laminated posters pronouncing “Time to say no to plastic -- Fine upto one lakh”. “We have put up posters and distributed circulars. In the morning, we sent WhatsApp messages to all the shopkeepers to not use single-use plastic. We are also making rounds in the markets,” said Ashok Randhawa, “We are trying to convince them.”

At Palika Bazaar, shopkeepers were seen refusing to provide plastic bags to customers. “Many customers have gone without purchasing items because they did not have carry bags. It is not good for business but we cannot do anything,” a shopkeeper said. “We have been using plastic bags and containers for daily sales and purchase and now we no other substitute in place,” said Ramesh, a shopkeeper from Bhogal market.

“Most of the customers are not aware about the ban and they are coming to buy groceries items without carry bags,” said Ramesh.

Aditya, a delivery food joint owner in sector-20, Noida said that since their business majorly runs on delivery of food items, it would be very difficult to suddenly transition to paper containers and it would not be effective and would also prove extremely costly to them.

“There should be an alternate before even schemes comes to effect. Now, how would we do delivery of food items as plastic containers are banned? What is the alternate of plastic containers used in delivery of food items,” he questioned.

However a shopkeeper from INA market welcoming the move said that this has been a long-awaited decision and people should eagerly participate and co-operate.

“Over the years excessive misuse of polythene bags and single-use plastic has led to this present state of soil and water degradation. This was much needed and we need to save our environment for healthy life,” he said.

At the Lajpat Nagar market, the shopkeepers claimed they have not been using single use plastic for long. “We have been using cloth bags for a long time.

However, some customers prefer carrying items in a polythene bag rather than a cloth or a paper bag. We have also stopped using other items like plastic glasses and straws,” said a shopkeeper. Ashwani Marwah, general secretary of the traders’ association in Lajpat Nagar, said the shopkeepers have stopped purchasing banned items and tried to finish the stock by June 30.



Three men brave the rain on a bike on the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway in Gurugram on Friday

PTI

Plastic ban violators to face 5-year jail, ₹1 lakh fine: Min

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Friday that the city Government will issue warning notices to units found violating the ban on 19 single-use plastic (SUP) items till July 10 and punitive action will be taken thereafter against repeat offenders. “Action will include a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh or a jail term of up to five years or both under the Environment Protection Act, 1986,” he said.

Rai said that the Government will give top priority to creating awareness against the use of SUP items and providing their alternatives to people.

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) had earlier issued strict directions to manufacturers,



stockists, suppliers and distributors of SUP items to ensure zero inventory of

the banned commodities, including packaging films and plastic cutlery, by June 30.

“Many people believe that setting up enforcement teams, imposing fines and closing down (defaulting) units will make the ban successful. Our Government thinks differently... Our aim is to create awareness and provide alternatives to people before enforcing the ban,” the Minister said.

“The ban comes into effect when the unemployment rate is high. It is going to affect a large number of manufacturers, distributors and sellers of SUP items. Many people will find it difficult to make ends meet. These people are our own,” Rai said while launching a three-day fair at Thyagraj Stadium here to promote alternatives to SUP

items.

Teams of the DPCC, Revenue Department and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will conduct inspections, create awareness and issue warning notices against those not complying with the ban till July 10.

The Revenue Department and the DPCC have constituted 33 and 15 teams, respectively, to ensure enforcement of the ban.

Officials said the ‘Green Delhi’ mobile application has also been updated to file complaints regarding violation of the ban on SUP items.

Delhi generates 1,060 tonnes of plastic waste per day. SUP is estimated to be 5.6 per cent (or 56 kg per metric tonnes) of the total solid waste in the Capital.

150 outsourced Covid staff sacked

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following administrative reasons, a total of 150 outsourced staff hired for Covid duty during 2020-21 at a Delhi Government-run super speciality hospital were on Friday sacked by the authorities.

Covid-19 patients are not coming for admission for the last few months and currently all beds reserved for coronavirus patients are “lying vacant” at the Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH) in east Delhi.

“About 500-600 staff — sanitation workers, security personnel and nursing staff — were hired via an outsourcing

agency for Covid duty during 2020-21. As no Covid patient is getting admitted and as we have surplus of staff, therefore, 150 were removed today after much consideration,” the official said on Friday.

A group of terminated outsourced staff also sat on the floor of the hospital’s lobby to protest the decision, the officials said. Sources claimed that another factor behind their sacking was “below satisfactory performance.”

“However, these staff are all trained, and if tomorrow Covid cases rise again, we may rehire from among these people, accordingly,” the senior official said.

LG nod to conversion of 128 temporary posts to permanent in Govt hospitals

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved the conversion of 128 temporary positions in Government hospitals to permanent ones.

Ahead of National Doctors’ Day — celebrated on July 1 to mark the birth and death anniversary of one of the first Indian physicians and statesman Dr B C Roy — Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K

Saxena said removing ad hocism and professional insecurity for doctors would be a fitting tribute to them.

The LG had earlier approved 918 posts under various categories for the Indira Gandhi Hospital at Dwarka.

Several posts had either been lying vacant since 2011-12 or were being operated on an ad hoc basis. This decision will lead to permanent appointment on 76 posts in Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Medical

College, 40 posts in Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, nine posts in Maulana Azad Medical College and three posts in Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital, the press release said.

The posts that have now been made permanent include assistant professor - orthopaedics, senior residents in radiology, surgeons, dental surgeons, junior resident doctors, staff nurse, clinical instructor and radiographers among others.

DU vows action against those defacing walls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Putting up posters on the walls inside the Delhi University (DU) campus may now prove costly as the varsity has decided to take strict action against those defacing them, including charging compensation or asking the perpetrators to get the walls painted again.

Officials said despite having “democracy walls” — dedicated spaces provided by the administration to paste campaign material — in DU, posters especially the ones seeking votes for poll candidates, dot the campus.

The situation worsens during the Delhi University Student Union elections when parties try to cover the entire wall with posters, they said.

In a notification issued on Thursday, DU Proctor Rajni Abbi highlighted that “certain elements” are “defacing” the walls of the campus.

She warned that strict action would be taken against those whose posters and names are found pasted or painted on the walls. “...This is the centenary year of the University of Delhi, and we are celebrating it wholeheartedly. You must have

all seen the recent developments taking place in DU like the construction of roads, pavements and whitewashing of boundary walls. But there are certain elements who deface the walls of this University,” the notification read.

Abbi noted that the defacement of walls is against the Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act, 2007 and Section 397 of the MCD Act.

When asked how the varsity will ensure the actual perpetrators are punished, Abbi said proper investigation will be carried out before holding them accountable.

2-DAY BJP NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEET

MODI TO REACH HYDERABAD TODAY TO ATTEND BJP MEET

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reach Hyderabad on Saturday to attend the BJP national executive meeting, taking place in the southern city after a gap of 18 years and wherein the party is expected to take up its expansion plan in Telangana and upcoming Assembly polls in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tripura and Madhya Pradesh.

The two-day national executive on July 2 and 3 will conclude with a massive public rally in Hyderabad, to be addressed by Modi. The rally is expected to be based on the theme of local culture and tradition.

This will be the first physical meeting of the BJP's key decision-making body outside the national capital after



a gap of five years and the third in a southern state after coming to power in 2014.

The BJP's national executive meeting is being held in Hyderabad at a time when the party is trying to make further inroads in the state, whereas the K Chandrashekar Rao-led ruling TRS is working To form an alliance to challenge the saffron party at the national level.

In the run up to the meeting, BJP leaders from across the country carried outreach activities and interacted with party workers in all 119 constituencies.

They were asked by the BJP leadership to spend two days in each of Assembly constituencies in the State before reaching the venue of the meeting.

The BJP has done well in a few recent elections including the by-elections of

Huzurabad and Dubbaka constituency and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation in 2020 when it won 48 seats.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP had won four Lok Sabha seats in Telangana.

The national executive meeting will begin on Saturday noon with the inaugural speech of BJP president JP Nadda and conclude on Sunday with Modi's address.

An exclusive vegetarian fare will be served to the delegates. Around 10,000 banners, 200 hoardings and flexes have been erected on 10,000 electric poles in the city to welcome top party leaders reaching for the meet that is held quarterly every year.

This is the first major and publicly organised BJP National Executive meet post Covid19 that forced nationwide lockdown in 2020.

Cong, Left hail SC's rap to Nupur for hate remarks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Friday said the Supreme Court has rightly called out suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma for being "single-handedly responsible for igniting emotions across the country" with her remarks against the Prophet, and that the BJP should hang its head in shame.

While the Congress said the court has strengthened the party's resolve to fight "destructively divisive ideologies", Left parties sought an immediate apology from Nupur Sharma and said if the law did not act against her, it would send out a wrong message. The Trinamool Congress slammed the Home Minister Amit Shah "for sheltering her (Nupur Sharma)".

"The court has very rightly called out the BJP spokesperson for being 'single-handedly responsible for igniting emotions across the country', and that she should apologise to the entire nation," Congress chief spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said in a statement.

"These remarks by the Supreme Court, which resonate with the entire country, should make the party in power hang its head in shame," he also said.

Ramesh said the Supreme Court has held a mirror to this government and called out the "base ugliness" of its actions. "It is no secret that the BJP seeks to profit from inflaming communal passions. Today, the Supreme Court has strengthened the resolve in every single one of us who are fighting these destructively divisive ideologies," the Congress leader.

Ramesh said the Congress will never cease its fight against "polarising anti-national forces" of all types which plunge the nation into chaos for political gains and let all Indian citizens bear the consequences of their "perverse actions".

The Left parties said it is a severe indictment of not Sharma's views alone but of the misuse of authority the BJP exercises. "It is an indictment

Letter plea to CJI seeks withdrawal of adverse remarks against Nupur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A letter petition was filed on Monday before Chief Justice N V Ramana seeking withdrawal of adverse remarks made by a Supreme Court bench against suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma while declining her plea seeking clubbing of the FIRs against her at various places over alleged controversial remarks made on the Prophet.

Earlier in the day, a vacation bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and J B Pardiwala came down heavily on Sharma for her comments against the Prophet, saying her "loose tongue" has "set the entire country on fire" and that she is "single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country".

Refusing to entertain Sharma's plea for clubbing of FIRs lodged in various States against her for the remark, the bench held that the comment was made either for cheap publicity, political agenda, or some nefarious activities.

The letter petition, filed by Delhi-based Ajay Gautam, who claims to be a social activist, said, "issue appropriate orders or directions... To withdraw their observations in the matter of Nupur Sharma so that Nupur Sharma gets a chance of fair trial."

The letter petition said that it be treated as a PIL and the adverse remarks made during the hearing be declared as "uncalled for".

During the hearing, the apex court observed that "she actually has a loose tongue and has made all kinds of irresponsible statements on TV and set the entire country on fire. Yet, she claims to be a lawyer of 10 years standing... She should have immediately apologised for her comments to the whole country."

The letter petition also sought the transfer of all the cases lodged against Sharma to Delhi.

'Defective' GST became worse in 5 yrs, wrecked economy: Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday said the GST had serious "birth defects" which became only worse over the last five years since the GST laws and the manner of their implementation have "wrecked the economy" and the party will work toward its replacement by GST 2.0. The Opposition party said demonetisation was the first "Tughlaqi farman" of the Govt while the Goods and Service Tax second that harmed the economy.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said BJP has turned the Congress' "Genuine Simple Tax" into a "Gabbar Singh Tax", making the GST a nightmare for doing business in India. He said his

party would bring a single and low-rate regime GST 2.0 and will share the collections fairly with states. His remarks came as the Goods and Service Tax (GST) regime completes five years of implementation on July 1.

"Congress' Genuine Simple Tax was turned into Gabbar Singh Tax by the BJP. Six rates, 1000 plus changes in 1,826 days! Ease? It's a nightmare to do business, especially for MSMEs," Rahul said on Twitter. "Cong will revive business and jobs with GST 2.0 - single, low rate, shared fairly with States," he said using the hashtag #5YearsofGSTMess.

Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram said the GST "celebrates" its fifth birthday on Friday but there is nothing real-

ly to celebrate. "The GST had serious birth defects. In the last five years these defects have only become worse and all those touched by GST have been seriously injured," the senior Congress leader said at the AICC Press conference.

"The GST that we have today is a complex web of many rates, conditions, exceptions and exemptions that will leave even an informed taxpayer completely bewildered. Not all registered dealers are informed taxpayers; as a result, they are at the mercy of the tax-collector," he said.

A flawed GST has led to "large-scale destruction" of MSMEs, a sector that contributes up to 90 per cent of the jobs in the manufacturing sector, he said.

Manipur landslide: 17 bodies recovered, rescue op continues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) on Friday said as many as seventeen bodies have been retrieved from the landslide site in Manipur's Noney district and efforts are on to rescue those who are still stuck beneath the debris.

The agency spokesperson said a total of three National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams and those from the Army, State police and local administration are working at the Tupul yard railway construction camp of the Territorial Army which was hit by a massive landslide on Wednesday night.

"In the joint operation, 17 dead bodies have been retrieved from the site till now.



Before the arrival of NDRF teams, 18 injured persons were rescued and shifted to hospital on June 30.

"More people are suspected to be still stuck beneath the debris. Search operation is continuing," the spokesperson said in its update on Friday.

Earlier, Eastern Command General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Lt Gen R P Kalita met the injured Territorial Army personnel who were initially admitted to Liemakong Military Hospital on Thursday.



HC notice to police over Zubair remand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rejecting any immediate relief, the Delhi High Court on Friday sought the stand of Delhi police on a plea by Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair challenging the legality of his police remand in a case related to objectionable tweets.

Justice Sanjeev Narula issued notice on the petition and granted two weeks to the investigating agency to file its response to the petition which challenges the legality and proprietary of the trial court's June 28 order granting four days of custody of Zubair to the police.

The judge listed the case for further hearing on July 27 and said that proceedings before the trial court would continue without being influenced by the present proceedings. The court noted that the remand order would expire on July 2 and said, "The police remand order is for four days. I will have to hear the other side. I will issue notice".

Zubair was arrested by the Delhi Police on June 27 for allegedly hurting religious sentiments through one of his tweets and was sent to one-day police custody by the trial court on the same day.

Covid vax effective regardless of body size

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 vaccines drastically helped cut down the infections for everyone regardless of their body size, according to a study published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology. The researchers reached this conclusion after assessing health records of 90 lakh adults in England.

Vaccine effectiveness was similar for those with a higher body mass index (BMI) and of a healthy weight, but slightly lower in the underweight group, who were also the least likely to have been vaccinated, the researchers said.

In a further analysis of vaccinated people only, among the fewer Covid-19 cases recorded, people of very low and very high BMI were more likely to experience severe disease than vaccinated healthy weight people, they said.

"Our findings provide further evidence that Covid-19 vaccines save lives for people of all sizes," said study lead author Carmen Piernas from the University of Oxford, UK.

"Our results provide reassurance to people with obesity that Covid-19 vaccines are equally as effective for them as for people with a lower BMI, and that vaccination substantially reduces their risk of severe illness if



they are infected with Covid-19," Piernas said.

The data also highlights the need for targeted efforts to increase vaccine uptake in people with a low BMI, where uptake is currently lower than for people with a higher BMI, the researchers said.

They searched anonymised health records from more than 12 million patients in England taking part in QResearch - a secure database of healthcare information available to verified researchers.

Of these, 9,171,524 (9.1 lakh) patients who were over 18 years old, had BMI data, and had not previously been infected with SARS-CoV-2 were included in the study.

People were grouped based on their BMI according to WHO defini-

'Multiple Covid infections don't build immunity'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Contrary to general perception, having Covid multiple times does not build up resistance or immunity. In fact, it may instead increase people's risk of long Covid. Because the virus is always changing, argued David Nabarro, WHO's special envoy for Covid-19.

According to Nabarro, "Having Covid multiple times does not build up resistance or immunity because the virus is always changing. It is more likely to increase your chances of getting long Covid."

"The more times you get it,

nitions. Characteristics such as age, sex, smoking status, and social deprivation were also accounted for in the analyses.

Of over 90 lakh people included in the study, 566,461 (over 5.6 lakh) tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 during the study from December 8, 2020 (date of the first vaccine given in the UK) to November 17, 2021.

Of those, 32,808 were admitted to hospital and 14,389 died. At the

more likely you are to be unlucky and end up with long Covid -- which is the thing that none of us want because it can be so serious. It can knock people off their stride for several months," Nabarro said.

Long Covid is defined as having new or ongoing symptoms four weeks or more after the start of disease. Symptoms include fatigue, shortness of breath, loss of concentration, and joint pain. The symptoms can adversely affect day-to-day activities, and in some cases can be severely limiting. It can linger for months and years after an infection.

India, Pak exchange list of civilians, fishermen in custody

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Pakistan on Friday exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in their custody. These lists are exchanged every year on January one and July one under the provisions of the 2008 Agreement on Consular Access.

Giving details of the latest exchange, the Ministry of External Affairs said here India handed over lists of 309 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 95 fishermen in India's custody to Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan shared lists of 49 civilian prisoners and 633 fishermen in its custody, who are Indians or are believed to be Indians.

The Government has called for early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners, missing Indian defence personnel, and fishermen along with their boats, from Pakistan's custody, the ministry said. In this context, Pakistan was asked to expedite the release and repatriation of

536 Indian fishermen and three Indian civilian prisoners to India who have completed their sentence and whose nationality has been confirmed and conveyed to Pakistan.

In addition, Pakistan was asked to provide immediate consular access to the remaining 105 fishermen and 20 civilian prisoners who are in Pakistan's custody and are believed to be Indian.

India remains committed to addressing, on priority, all humanitarian matters, including those pertaining to prisoners and fishermen in each other's country. In this context, India also urged Pakistan to expedite necessary action at its end to confirm the nationality status of 57 Pakistani prisoners, including fishermen, whose repatriation is pending for want of nationality confirmation by Pakistan.

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan was requested to ensure the safety, security and welfare of all Indian and believed-to-be Indian civilian prisoners and fishermen.

India successfully carries out DRDO-made UAV's maiden flight

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant boost to indigenousization, India on Friday successfully carried out the maiden flight of an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) designed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

At present, the armed forces are using Israeli made Heron UAVs for various purposes including surveillance. The successful test of the Indian made UAV will allow India to hasten up the pace of modernization.

Moreover, the test may enable the DRDO to develop the armed version of the UAV capable of launching missiles and

precision guided ammunition thereby adding lethality to the armed forces.

Giving details of the test, officials said here the maiden flight of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator was carried out successfully by the DRDO from the Aeronautical Test Range, Chitradurga, Karnataka.

Operating in a fully autonomous mode, the aircraft exhibited a perfect flight, including take-off, way point navigation and a smooth touchdown. This flight marks a major milestone in terms of proving critical technologies towards the development of future unmanned aircraft and is a significant step towards self-

reliance in such strategic defence technologies.

The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) is designed and developed by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), Bengaluru, a premier research laboratory of the DRDO. It is powered by a small turbofan engine. The airframe, undercarriage and entire flight control and avionics systems used for the aircraft were developed indigenously.

Explaining the significance of the development, sources said the test is a major milestone in their efforts towards developing an Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) or a combat drone which is of flying wing type.

Extinct Brachystelma found after 188 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when climate change and rapid urbanization is taking a toll on the flora, researchers from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) had a pleasant surprise when they rediscovered a rare, threatened and presumed extinct species Brachystelma attenuatum after a gap of 188 years.

The lucky scientists hail from BSI in Dehradun and Himachal Pradesh University in Shimla.

This species was first discovered and described in 1835 by British botanists -- John Forbes Royle and Robert Wight -- from Doongie village (now Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh).

In 2020, while conducting

field surveys in the Western Himalayas, some interesting tuberous plants were observed by Nishant Chauhan in the Bhoranj region of Hamirpur.

These plants were brought to the BSI and there it was identified by Amber Srivastava as Brachystelma parviflorum, a species thought to be extinct by the scientists 186 years ago.

Recently, another presumed extinct species Brachystelma attenuatum has been rediscovered in Hamirpur and Mandi districts.

The species was first observed last August, but during that time the plants were in their last stage of growth and flowering period was over, making it difficult to confirm their identity, explained Chauhan.



This year, with the commencement of the flowering season, researchers revisited the same localities in March and after examining the detailed characteristics of the flowering plants they were able to identify it as Brachystelma attenuatum and the rediscovery was confirmed.

The rediscovery of both

this species is published in the international journal 'Oryx' published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Fauna and Flora International.

Brachystelma is a genus of more than 100 species in the Apocynaceae family found in Africa, Asia, and Australia, with the majority found in South Africa.

In India, the genus is represented by 40 species, primarily distributed in the Western Ghats, with only four species reported from northern India, Chauhan said.

Of these, only two species, B. parviflorum and B. attenuatum, are reported from the Indian Western Himalayas. Srivastava said: "The rediscovery of two rare species which were considered extinct from

the Western Himalayas in such a short period indicates the need for more species specific field surveys and explorations in this area so that many such rare species can be discovered and their proper conservation should be done."

Last month, BSI scientist Krishna Chowlu too had rediscovered yet another rare species of flora called the 'Indian Lipstick plant' in the Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh after around 100 years. The BSI scientist Krishna Chowlu conducted a floristic survey in December 2021, where he collected some samples of the plant from the Hyuliang and Chipru villages. After review, he recently published an article on its rediscovery in the 'Current Science' journal.

Didi going soft on Murmu, planning to ditch Sinha?

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Days after the combined Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha filed his nomination for the presidential elections —flanked by the likes of Rahul Gandhi, Sharad Pawar, Akhilesh Yadav Sitaram Yechury — Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday made a sudden turn-around dropping hints of a compromise on the BJP presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu, saying she, too, would have supported her as a consensus candidate had the BJP discussed the issue with her earlier.

Saying that Murmu had a better chance of winning, Banerjee maintained, “Had the BJP informed me in advance” that it was going to field a tribal woman candidate then, I could have thought otherwise and made attempts accordingly... we could have gone for a consensus for a larger national interest.” The Chief Minister who was speaking during an ISKON Rath Yatra programme said that she always had a soft corner for women adding “It would have been better for the nation had there been a unanimous consensus candidate, just as it happened in case of APJ Abdul Kalam. But though the BJP sought my opinion on the issue of Presidential poll, it did not tell me anything about its choice.”

Hinting at a chance of compromise if the BJP leadership approached her Banerjee said she personally was comfortable with Murmu adding that the decision on this count had to be a collective one.

“I cannot take any decision alone now, since the decision about the unanimous opposition candidate was taken together by 17 parties. Unless the others agree, I alone cannot decide anything,” she said adding her interest was to provide the nation a good impartial candidate.

BJP’s national vice-president and party MP Dilip Ghosh said that this changed stance of Banerjee is because of the realisation that Yashwant Sinha will be defeated by a huge margin. “She is now claiming that had the BJP informed her in advance, she could have given a positive consideration on Murmu’s nomination. Then



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee offers prayer during the 51st ISKCON Rath Yatra in Kolkata on Friday. PTI

why was she in a hurry to field a unanimous opposition candidate before the NDA announced its nominee? She could have waited till the time Draupadi Murmu’s name was announced,” Ghosh said. Soon after her remarks the opposition partition parties slammed the Chief Minister questioning her sincerity about an opposition unity.

“Win or no-win ... the Opposition parties had given a candidate, Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Chowdhury said adding “she has made atimely somersault otherwise she knows that she is in problem ... itseems that she has been under pressure from the BJP ... she has nowrealised that she has gone too far on the presidential issue ... the BJP leadership angry ... so she is trying to make a balancing act ... by keeping both the sides in good humour.”

CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakrabarty said that the Chief Minister had fear of central Agencies and so she was changing her stance. “she has to protect her family members from the CBI and the ED who have been regularly knocking their doors in relation to a number of scams ... if she does not ditch the opposition then her own family will be in ditch ... this is the reason why she is keeping Narendra Modi pleased ... it is now very clear that there is an understanding between the TMC

and the BJP which we have been telling for years ... Mamata Banerjee is the captain of BJP’s B team.” BJP leader Dilip Ghosh said that the Chief Minister had realised that she was no match for the BJP which was why she was trying to save her face. Another State Congress leader said that

Mamata Banerjee had always “that habit of betraying people ... now it is the turn of Yashwant Sinha ji ... At least he deserved full support from his backers.” Sinha a former Union Minister in AB Vajpayee Government had joined the TMC recently as its national vice president.

SAD, JD(S) announce support for Draupadi

New Delhi: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), which exited from NDA in the wake of the farmers’ agitation and former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda’s Janata Dal (S) on Friday announced support for NDA’s presidential nominee Draupadi Murmu. SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal said that they have decided to support the NDA’s presidential candidate. He said they would never go with the Congress because of the atrocities they had committed on the Sikh community. PNS



NDA presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu with Union Ministers Anurag Thakur and Arjun Ram Meghwal, and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar meets Shiromani Akali Dal President Sukhbir Singh Badal and other leaders PTI photo

Centre to rank performance of consumer courts on basis of speed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to reduce the pendency of consumer cases, the Centre has decided to rank the performance of consumer courts on the basis of the speed at which they will dispose of cases filed before 2000 in a span of five months till November.

The performance of state and district commissions, also called consumer courts, will be rated during July-November this year and the result will be published on the occasion of the National Consumer Day commemorated on December 24, a senior Consumer Affairs Ministry official said on Friday. At present, there are 629 district

commissions and 35 state commissions with the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) at the apex. “The age of pending consumer cases is extremely high. There are 4,029 pending cases filed before the year 2000. A campaign has been launched to reduce the huge pendency of very old cases,” the senior official said.

At the end of the campaign in November, the performance of commissions as well as states will be ranked and for which the process of weightage of marks will be shared soon, the official said. Pendency of very old cases remains high in states like Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, the official added. The performance ranking of commissions in Union territories (barring Delhi) and northeastern states will be made separately, as the number of consumer cases filed in these states is low when compared to other parts of the country.

The plan is to rate in three categories -- aspiring, performer and achiever. The Consumer Protection Act provides for the disposal of cases within 3-5 months. Currently, there is about 5.50 lakh pending consumer cases in the country, which includes 4,029 pending cases filed before the year 2000.

‘SC remarks on Nupur plea a lesson for those fanning communalism’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court remarks while dismissing the petition of Bharatiya Janata Party’s former spokesperson Nupur Sharma and said that it would be a lesson for those who were spreading communalism and hatred in society.

The apex court while dismissing Nupur’s petition observed that “because of you (Nupur Sharma), the fire of communalism broke out in the whole country”. The court also asked Nupur Sharma to apologise to the entire country for her statement. Reacting to the apex court decision, Mayawati said in a tweet, “The strict stand taken by the Hon’ble Supreme Court today

against Nupur Sharma and the direction to her to apologise for throwing the country into a violent atmosphere with her provocative statement is an important lesson for all those who are trying to communalise the country.”

“They are shining their politics by throwing them in the fire. Also, despite the FIR being lodged against Nupur Sharma for hate speech, the negative attitude of the police towards taking action is also now appreciated and action should be taken,” Mayawati demanded.

“With the court taking cognisance, it is possible that this type of trend can be stopped a little further,” the BSP chief added in her tweet.

It may be mentioned that Nupur Sharma, suspended

from the BJP, has got a severe reprimand from the Supreme Court. The apex court said that due to the abusive speech of the suspended BJP leader, there was a fire all over the country and due to this security had also been damaged.

The Supreme Court said that Nupur Sharma should apologise to the entire nation for her remarks made on Prophet Mohammad. Earlier, Nupur Sharma had demanded transfer of all the FIRs registered against her in several states to Delhi for investigation over the controversial remarks.

Nupur Sharma said she was getting death threats so she could not go to other states for appearance in court cases. During this hearing, Justice Suryakant reprimanded Nupur Sharma in the court.



Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik pulls the chariot along with others during the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath, in Puri on Friday PTI Photo

Girl’s nose chopped off for resisting abduction bid in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident, a minor girl’s nose was chopped off by miscreants who barged into her house and tried to pull her away with them.

The incident took place in Kanpur Dehat on Thursday night and the girl was attacked with a sharp weapon when she tried to raise an alarm.The miscreants had been stalking the girl for several days.

The girl, profusely bleeding, was first taken to the district hospital and was then referred to the Hallet hospital in Kanpur Nagar for treatment. According to doctors, her condition was critical due to excessive loss of

8 more die in Assam flood; 29 lakh still hit

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam’s flood situation remained grim on Friday with eight more people losing their lives in the last 24 hours and over 29 lakh still affected, officials said. Most parts of Cachar district headquarters, Silchar, were still waterlogged, they said.

The death toll due to floods and landslides this year increased to 159, while one person was reported missing, taking the cumulative number to 36, according to a bulletin issued by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

An inter-ministerial central team (IMCT) of the Union Home Ministry is in the state and planned to visit some flood-affected areas during the day and also on Saturday.

The team has been divided into two groups with one visiting Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj and the other going to Nalbari, Bajali, Kamrup and Morigaon to assess the damage caused by the floods, according to a press release.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma went to Karimganj, his third visit to the Barak Valley in the last ten days, to review the situation there. He visited the relief camp at Subhas High School, Kalibari and Gopikanagar in the district. The chief minister had earlier made two visits to



Silchar and conducted an aerial survey of the submerged town. Several parts of Silchar, including Meherpur, Vivekananda Road, Das Colony, Ambicapatty, Church Road, Chandicharan Road, Bilpar, Public School Road, Subhash Nagar and NS Avenue areas, remained under flood-water.

Deputy Commissioner Keerthi Jalli said work is going on to repair the damaged portion of the dyke breached at Bethukundi which led to the waterlogging in the town. Work is also underway to repair the damaged dyke at Barjuri in Katigorah revenue circle of Cachar district, she said.

Truck hits vehicle in Suvendu convoy

Driver who fled accident site is absconding

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari on Friday had a providential escape when a truck hit a vehicle in his convoy smashing its front before escaping the scene.

The accident happened at near Marishda village in East Medinipur’s Midnapore district where he had gone to take part in Rath Yatra celebrations.

Adhikari escaped unhurt.

The driver who fled with his vehicle was still at large while the truck was later seized by the police. The driver was being looked for. While the ruling Trinamool Congress said that it was a freak accident the BJP leadership it was in fact an attempt on the Adhikari’s life. Local BJP MLA Tapasi Mondal said that “whenever an Opposition Leader’s convoy makes a movement the police stations enroute are informed ... the convoy is led by a pilot vehicle ... when all systems were in place how come the accident happen ... this means that there was a plan ... this was an attempt on his life.”

SFI attack outcome of policy of hatred pursued by RSS and BJP: Rahul

PNS ■ KOCHI

Rahul Gandhi, MP and former president of All India Congress Committee blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, the BJP and the RSS for the ills facing the nation.

Speaking to reporters at Kalpetta in Wayanad on Friday after visiting his parliamentary constituency office which was vandalised by the activists of SFI recently, Gandhi said the attack was the outcome of the policy of hatred pursued by the Prime Minister, Home Minister, RSS and the BJP.

The Congress leader was careful in his words and did not mention the names SFI or the CPI-M even once during his brief interaction with the media. “The office was attacked by some children.

I don’t have any anger or hostility towards them, They are children and acted in a haste without bothering about the consequences,” said Rahul Gandhi.

Referring to the Supreme Court verdict which was delivered on Friday in the Nupur Sharma case, Gandhi said the apex court itself had said that there was a sense of anger and hatred prevailing all over the country and blamed the BJP and RSS for the same.

“Yes, it is my office which was attacked by the children. But more than that it is the office of the people of Wayanad that has been attacked. But the culture of the Indian National Congress is to unify the people through peaceful manner. Violence does not have any place in our plan of things,” said Rahul Gandhi. Though it was expected that Gandhi would come down strongly on the

districts are Cachar with 14,31,652, followed by Nagaon with 5,19,463 and Barpeta with 4,00,502.

Two embankments were breached, one each in Biswanath and Udalguri, while 221 roads, five bridges and 557 houses have been damaged due to the floods. A cultivated area of 76,115 hectares has been inundated, while 51 animals were washed away.

Large-scale erosion was also reported from Biswanath, Bongaigaon, Chirang, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Kamrup, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, Morigaon, Sonitpur, Tamulpur and Tinsukia, the bulletin added.

CPI(M), he did not name either party or its student wing even once in his statement to media. The Wayanad MP was accompanied by Leader of Opposition V D Satheeshan, KPCC President K Sudhakaran, former chief minister Oommen Chandi, AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal and other leaders of the party.

Kerala woke up on Friday to news that CPI(M) headquarters AKG Centre at Thiruvananthapuram has come under attack last night. An unidentified person rising a two wheeler threw an explosive/cracker at AKG Centre around 11.30 pm last night.

There were no casualties or any untoward incident. The CPI(M) cadre retaliated instantly by vandalising Congress offices across State.

The statue of former prime minister Indira Gandhi was desecrated by CPI(M) cadres at Alappuzha. E P Jayarajan, convenor of the LDF, had blamed the Congress for the attack on the AKG Centre though by morning he toned down the intensity of his charges.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has constituted a high level team of IPS officers and more than 1,000 cops to hunt down persons behind the attack on AKG Centre at Thiruvananthapuram.

At time of going to Press, Rahul Gandhi was leading a road show at Sultan Battery as a mark of solidarity with the people who want the scrapping of the Supreme Court verdict ordering every protected forest, national park and wildlife sanctuaries across the country should have a mandatory eco-sensitive zone of a minimum one km starting from their demarcated boundaries.

and son. Neha had taken the loan almost a year ago. “Neha and Yogesh were not in a position to return the loan. So, they conspired to kill Mala and her son,” the officer explained.

On March 25, the accused took the duo to a hotel on the pretext of returning the loan. However, the woman and her son were pushed in the canal one by one, leading to their deaths due to asphyxiation.

While the mother was killed in Raya area, her son was thrown in the canal near Mant area, around 12 km away. “Neha and Yogesh took the help of one Imran and Rakesh in the murder. Our teams are trying to arrest them,” said the officer.

FIRST COLUMN

PRIVATISATION IS GOOD AND SHOULD CONTINUE

There have been setbacks but Govt stays the course



RAVI SHANKER KAPOOR

It is heartening to note that the fiasco of LIC initial public offering (IPO) and failure to privatise BPCL has not deterred the Narendra Modi government. Instead of mourning the setbacks or rethinking disinvestment policy, it is continuing with the strategic sale of Ferro Scrap Nigam Ltd (FSNL). The government may also introduce a Bill in the upcoming monsoon session of Parliament to make the privatisation of public sector banks (PSBs) possible. The message is loud and clear: the show will go on.

The Department of Investment & Public Asset Management (Dipam) recently announced that it has received multiple expressions of interest (EOIs) for FSNL privatisation. One hopes that it is brought to the logical conclusion and the company is privatised as soon as possible.

There are three reasons why public sector enterprises or undertakings (PSEs, also called PSUs) should be sold off. The most important reason has been enunciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi more than once: the business of government is not business. In a country where the state of governance is pathetic, where administrative, police, and judicial reforms are urgently needed, the powers that be are focused on non-essential functions, running PSUs being one of them.

Politicians and bureaucrats ought to emphasize on the ease of living of the citizens, not on the intricacies of running hotels and refineries.

Second, PSUs continue to torment the taxpayer. In December 2021, a financial audit report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) said that the number of PSUs making profit declined to 224 in 2019-20 from 233 in 2018-19. The total profit earned too declined to Rs 140,976 crore in 2019-20 from Rs 177,758 crore in 2018-19. Unsurprisingly, the return on equity (ROE) of 224 CPSEs also decreased to 15.31 per cent in 2019-20 from 18.69 per cent of 233 CPSEs in the previous fiscal.



The CAG report also highlighted the continuous decline in the return on capital employed (ROCE)—from 11.79 per cent in 2017-18 to 10.47 per cent in 2018-10 to 6.38 per cent in 2019-20.

Public sector banks (PSBs) are also a drain on the economy. Between 2016-17 and 2020-21 alone, the government had to infuse Rs 310,997 crore in PSBs for the purpose of recapitalisation. It needs to be mentioned that this was all taxpayer money.

To what avail? After incurring collective losses for five straight years between 2015 and 2020, PSBs earned a combined net profit of Rs 31,820 crore in 2020-21.

PSB recapitalisation brings us to the third point: there is no way that state-run entities, be it PSEs or PSBs, can be made sprightly companies which fill the exchequer and galvanize the economy, as was the purpose when these were created decades ago. There are numerous CPSEs which received several revival packages running into tens of thousands of crores—but couldn't get out of the coma. The government should learn from this experience.

It needs to be mentioned here that privatization has never been an easy exercise. When the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government decided to sell Balco to Sterlite in 2001, there was a lot of resistance to the sale. Right from the trade union leaders to the Opposition leaders in New Delhi to the then Chhattisgarh chief minister Ajit Jogi—everyone was against it. Even elements within the Sangh Parivar were opposed to privatization, but the government went ahead and it did happen.

When the Modi government recommenced privatization after a gap of almost two decades and decided to sell Air India, it faced a lot of criticism. Its perseverance paid: today the taxpayer doesn't have to pay for the losses of the so-called national carrier which ran into tens of thousands of crores. Perhaps it was called the national carrier because the nation carried it!

In a nutshell, the government must keep the privatisation process on, the recent setbacks notwithstanding.

It's time for Akhilesh to wake up & smell coffee

Bypoll losses in Rampur and Azamgarh put Akhilesh in a spot; signs of the Samajwadi Party losing core constituencies visible



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

The Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's absence from the campaign trails in the Azamgarh and Rampur Parliamentary constituencies was the talk of the town in the run up to the bypolls. He wasn't alone in skipping the campaigning, for senior party leaders from his party also gave the campaigning a miss.

When the questions were raised about the party leaders skipping the campaigning, Akhilesh Yadav told one of his acquaintances that "even if I do not go to Rampur and Azamgarh, the Samajwadi Party will win both the seats". And he did not campaign even for a single day in the two Parliamentary constituencies.

This overconfidence of Akhilesh Yadav proved detrimental for the Samajwadi Party as the party lost both the byelections even while Rampur and Azamgarh were considered to be the bastion of the party. In the aftermath of the defeat, the SP leaders blamed the government machinery, with Azam Khan and Akhilesh Yadav even saying that the district administration acted as puppets in the hands of the ruling party to ensure the victory of the BJP candidates.

The bypoll outcome calls for introspection from the SP and Akhilesh Yadav, because it is the fourth election the party has lost under his leadership. The last election Samajwadi Party won was in 2012 when Akhilesh Yadav was the state president of the party and Mulayam Singh Yadav was the national president of the SP. In 2012, the SP contested the Assembly elections while projecting Mulayam Singh Yadav as the Chief Ministerial candidate and won the polls. But, Akhilesh Yadav became Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and also became national president of the party by carrying out a coup. Since then the party has lost elections, one after the other.

Under his watch, the Samajwadi Party has reached its lowest number in Lok Sabha. The SP now has just three members in the Lok Sabha, while the party in 2019 had five MPs. Akhilesh Yadav had won from Azamgarh and Azam Khan represented the Rampur Lok Sabha seat. The bypolls in the two seats were necessitated following their resignations after winning the Assembly polls from the Karhal constituency in Mainpuri district and the Rampur Sadar seat respectively.

Azamgarh and Rampur are Muslim dominated seats and the ground equations favoured the SP, which banked on Muslim-Yadav combination. Even the MBCs such as Rajbhars were in support of the SP because of the party's alliance with Suheldeo Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) of Om Prakash Rajbhar. The Rajbhars are in sizable numbers in the Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituency.

While the BJP had breached the SP's stronghold in the Rampur Lok Sabha seat in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, it was seen



POLITICAL CHALLENGES FOR THE SP CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV ARE MOUNTING IN UTTAR PRADESH. WITH THE SP OUT OF POWER SINCE 2017, THE SP RANKS ARE DIVIDED AND DEJECTED TO MEASURE UP TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE BJP

(Author is Political Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow.)



as a fluke, as party's Nepal Singh won from Rampur in a triangular contest, with the SP and the BSP candidates splitting the votes. But the Rampur Lok Sabha bypoll was bipolar, while the SP banked on the 50 per cent Muslim vote base. The SP gave a free hand to Azam Khan, because Rampur is his 'karmathali'. Azam Khan fielded Asim Raza in the bypoll, but couldn't prove to be successful in creating a wave in his favour.

The Azamgarh bypoll verdict gave the biggest blow to the SP. Akhilesh Yadav had two big challenges in Azamgarh. He had to defend the seat that he had won in 2019, while the SP chief had also to justify the decision to field former MP from Badaun Dharmendra Yadav from Azamgarh. For a long time, the SP has been winning the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat. Mulayam Singh Yadav won from there in 2014 and five years later Akhilesh won the seat comfortably.

The political equation of Azamgarh is quite suitable for the SP. About 27 per cent Yadav and 23 per cent Muslim voters together decide the election victory. The Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat consists of Mehnagar, Azamgarh Sadar, Mubarakpur, Sagdi and Gopalpur Assembly seats.

The BJP had won the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat in 2009, but this victory was more on account of Ramakant Yadav than the party. Ramakant Yadav had

joined the BJP after his stints in the SP and the BSP. In 2014, the BJP fielded Ramakant Yadav against Mulayam Singh Yadav, but he lost. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Akhilesh Yadav defeated Dinesh Lal Yadav of the BJP by more than 2.59 lakh votes.

The Muslim-Yadav equation worked in favour of the SP in the 2022 Assembly elections, as the party won all the 10 seats here. Another reason for the SP's loss from Azamgarh could be Shivpal Singh Yadav, who had a lot of influence in the constituency. In 2014, he ensured the victory of Mulayam Singh Yadav by camping in the constituency. His appeal still holds strong among the voters. Insiders in the SP said that in view of a rift between Akhilesh Yadav and Shivpal Singh Yadav, the latter refused to take part in the campaigning. The SP candidate Dharmendra Yadav twice tried to persuade 'Chacha' because it is no longer a secret that Ram Gopal Yadav's son Akshay Yadav lost the election in Firozabad in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections due to Shivpal Singh Yadav's displeasure. But in the absence of clear signal from Akhilesh Yadav, the Chacha refused to take part in the electioneering.

In Rampur, there was a split in the Muslim vote bank. Ghanshyam Lodhi, the BJP candidate, was in the SP till January this year. At one time he was considered very loyal to Azam Khan. On January 14 this

year, he joined the BJP and destroyed the citadel of Azam Khan. The Nawab of Rampur Naved Mian also played a crucial role in ensuring the BJP candidate's victory, because Azam Khan had targeted the Nawab family during the election campaign.

The byelection results have sent a message loud and clear to the SP that Muslims are angry with the party. After the 2022 Assembly elections, the Muslim community disenchantment with the SP has been the talk of the town. Azam Khan was also reportedly angry with the party leaders. There were a series of incidents which showed growing displeasure of Muslim leaders with the SP functionaries, including Nahid Hasan and Shahjil Islam. Questions were asked as to why Akhilesh Yadav was reluctant to speak for Azam Khan and protest the demolition of the petrol pump of his party MLA?

Even the SP allies have begun questioning Akhilesh Yadav and his leadership skills. Om Prakash Rajbhar of SBSP went on record to say that Akhilesh Yadav should come out of AC comfort and wage a war on the street. He even said that the SP has not come to power because of the follies of Akhilesh Yadav. "The people who get the power due to the dynasty do not understand its value," Rajbhar said.

Akhilesh Yadav has to understand the ground reality as also the pain and anguish of his allies.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE RENAMING OF THE TWO CITIES (AURANGABAD AND OSMANABAD) WAS BALASAHEB'S DREAM THAT WE HAVE FULFILLED.
—SHIV SENA LEADER UDDHAV THACKERAY



I WANT TO INFORM UDDHAV JJ THAT NAMES CAN BE CHANGED BUT HISTORY CANNOT BE ALTERED. YOU'RE AN EXAMPLE OF DISHONEST POLITICS.
—AIMIM'S AURANGABAD MP IMTIAZ JALEEL

Overturning of Roe vs Wade robs women of basic rights

The US Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe vs Wade judgment shocked the world, putting women at grave risks

In the landmark Roe v. Wade (1973) judgment, the US Supreme Court had then declared that the constitution protected a woman's right to liberty to choose to have an abortion. In Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court found that a woman's right to make her own decisions about her pregnancy deserves the highest level of constitutional protection. It struck down several federal and state laws restricting abortion.

Now, in 2022, the very same historic judgment was overturned by the Supreme Court of the United States. This has come across as a shock globally for all activists fighting for a gender equal world. This decision has snatched away the constitutional rights of women and has made the



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progress on sexual and reproductive rights of women over the decades redundant. Despite strong opposition by women, civil society organisations and human rights activists, the Supreme Court of the United States of America overturned the historic case of Roe v. Wade. The conservative overturning of this case intrinsically reflects an authoritarian control of women's bodies and has put the lives of American women in danger by denying them bodily autonomy and the right to choose. Most importantly, it denounces the women's rights movement and decades of struggle by women in the country.

Surprisingly, the US Supreme Court has claimed several reasons for overturning Roe v. Wade, and none of

them features women and their bodies as the main theme. The judgment states that the court finds that the right to abortion is not deeply rooted in the nation's history and tradition. The legal reasoning that the court provides may sound rational, but the experience of women in the US would differ with the court's reasoning. As Justice Breyer rightly points out in his dissenting opinion: "Whatever the exact scope of the coming laws, one result is certain: the curtailment of women's rights and of their status as free and equal citizens."

Some 40 million women of child-bearing age will live in states where abortion will become more difficult to access, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a

research organisation that supports abortion rights. The restriction of abortion means an increase in unsafe abortions, a threat to the lives of women and dire physical and mental health consequences for women. While the Supreme Court is now leaving it to the states to decide how to outlaw or regulate abortion, 22 states already have laws in place that will immediately outlaw abortion, thus leaving women with grave and deadly options when it comes to not conceiving. On the personal autonomy front, this is a disaster waiting to happen.

This decision has not only stirred up the liberal groups, the political scenarios, and the feminists, but also has put women, their health, and safety at a huge risk of being left

with only abstinence or unsafe abortions. It also puts the lives of infants at risk who will be born through pregnancies unwillingly carried due to inaccessibility to safe abortions.

In 1971, two years prior to Roe V. Wade, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act was enacted by Parliament in India, allowing registered medical practitioners to carry out abortions under certain specified circumstances. It also granted immunity to doctors performing abortions in accordance with its provisions from prosecution under Section 312 IPC. When the law was initially passed in 1971, the upper-limit for abortion was 20 weeks. Following the 2021 amendment, it has been extended to 24 weeks in the case of women who meet cer-

tain criteria. India's generous stance on the termination of pregnancy is definitely comforting. India might even be a part of the highest echelons of countries that safeguard the constitutional and legal rights of women of the country. While the women of America had to endure a long struggle in the fight for equal suffrage, India had given equal voting rights since Independence. Not only this, when it comes to women representation in the highest political offices, India fares better than the United States of America. Even as the West retrogresses, India shows the path to a progressive society.

As the decision of SCOTUS will regress the United States of America, it is important to highlight that the judi-

ciary is an extremely important pillar of democracy, protecting the constitutionality of laws and the rights of the people. It's a shame that the institution has failed the women of the country and stripped them of the basic human rights that they have been expected to preserve. In fact, up to 66 per cent of US citizens did not want it to be overturned. So, for whom did the SCOTUS issue its decision? The self-serving extreme conservatives who would disvalue a living individual, the authoritative and patriarchal regime?

In a nutshell, Roe v. Wade protected women's right to have an abortion and didn't "force" anyone to have an abortion. The USA is on a similar path of suffering that Ireland was on from 1983-2018.

Russian missiles kill at least 19 in Odesa

AP ■ KYIV

Russian missile attacks on residential areas in a coastal town near the Ukrainian port city of Odesa early Friday killed at least 19 people, authorities reported, a day after Russian forces withdrew from a strategic Black Sea island.

Video of the pre-dawn attack showed the charred remains of buildings in the small town of Serhiivka, located about 50 kilometers southwest of Odesa.

The Ukrainian president's office said three X-22 missiles fired by Russian bombers struck an apartment building and two campsites.

"A terrorist country is killing our people. In response to defeats on the battlefield, they fight civilians," Andriy Yermak, the chief of staff to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Ukraine's Security Service said 19 people died, including two children. It said another 38, including six children and a pregnant woman, were hospitalised with injuries. Most of the victims were in the apartment building, Ukrainian emergency officials said.

The airstrikes followed the pull-out of Russian forces from Snake Island on Thursday, a move that was expected to potentially ease the threat to nearby Odesa, home to



Ukraine's biggest port. The island sits along a busy shipping lane.

Russia took control of it in the opening days of the war in the apparent hope of using it as a staging ground for an assault on Odesa.

The Kremlin portrayed the

departure of Russian troops from Snake Island as a "goodwill gesture" intended to facilitate shipments of grain and other agricultural products to Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world.

Ukraine's military claimed a

barrage of its artillery and missiles forced the Russians to flee in two small speedboats. The exact number of withdrawing troops was not disclosed.

The island took on significance early in the war as a symbol of

Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion. Ukrainian troops there reportedly received a demand from a Russian warship to surrender or be bombed. The answer supposedly came back, "Go (expletive) yourself."

Zelenskyy said that although the pullout did not guarantee the Black Sea region's safety, it would "significantly limit" Russian activities there.

"Step by step, we will push (Russia) out of our sea, our land, our sky," he said in his nightly address.

In eastern Ukraine, Russian forces kept up their push to encircle the last stronghold of resistance in Luhansk, one of two provinces that make up the country's Donbas region. Moscow-backed separatists have controlled much of the region for eight years.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said the Russians were trying to encircle the city of Lysychansk and fighting for control over an oil refinery on the city's edge.

"The shelling of the city is very intensive," Haidai told The Associated Press.

"The occupiers are destroying one house after another with heavy artillery and other weapons. Residents of Lysychansk are hiding in basements almost round the clock."

The offensive has failed so far to

cut Ukrainian supply lines, although the main highway leading west was not being used because of constant Russian shelling, the governor said. "The evacuation is impossible," he added.

But Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Friday that Russian and Luhansk separatist forces had taken control of the refinery as well as a mine and a gelatin factory in Lysychansk "over the last three days."

Ukraine's presidential office said a series of Russian strikes in the past 24 hours also killed civilians in eastern Ukraine - four in the northeastern Kharkiv region and another four in Donetsk province.

Russian bombardments killed large numbers of civilians earlier in the war, including at a hospital and a theatre in the port city of Mariupol. Mass casualties had appeared to become more infrequent as Moscow concentrated on capturing the Donbas region.

However, a missile strike Monday on a shopping mall in Kremenchuk, a city in central Ukraine, killed at least 19 people and injured another 62, authorities said Friday. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday denied that Russian forces targeted the shopping mall, saying that his country doesn't hit civilian facilities.

Ukraine protests Russian film screening at Czech film fest

AP ■ PRAGUE

An international film festival in the Czech spa town of Karlovy Vary kicked off Friday amid controversy following a protest by Ukraine over the screening of a Russian film alongside Ukrainian-made movies.

Prior to the start of the 56th edition of the festival, several leading Ukrainian filmmakers along with Ukraine's ambassador to Prague protested the scheduled screening of "Captain Volkonogov Escaped."

Ukrainian Ambassador Yevhen Perebyinis said in an open letter that it would be "inhuman" to screen Ukrainian films alongside a Russian movie made with support from Russia's Culture Ministry at a time when Russian troops had "committed atrocities" during their invasion of his country. Organisers said they consider the Russian movie — whose world premiere was at last year's Venice Film Festival — as being indirectly critical of the current Russian leadership.

International Criminal Court marks 20th anniversary

AP ■ THE HAGUE (NETHERLANDS)

The International Criminal Court marked the 20th anniversary of its establishment on Friday as its prosecutors probed war crimes in countries around the world, including what one expert called a "make or break" investigation in Ukraine.

The court, long criticised for tackling only crimes in Africa and failed prosecutions of senior leaders in Kenya and Ivory Coast, now has investigations underway in 17 countries, from Afghanistan to Ukraine, although the majority of cases are in Africa.

David Crane, the founding chief prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone that convicted former Liberian President Charles Taylor and others as war criminals, said the Hague-based ICC is a crucial legal institution despite some criticism of its work.

"The ICC is the cornerstone now of how we deal with atrocity crimes at the international level," Crane told The Associated Press.

"With the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the ICC must be the lead in holding President Vladimir Putin accountable. This is the ICC's moment. They have to get this right."

The court has registered only three war crimes convictions



tions and five for interfering with justice in the 20 years since its founding treaty, the Rome Statute, came into force on July 1, 2002.

Without a police force of its own and relying on national authorities to carry out arrests, getting suspects to The Hague has been a problem from the outset and is likely to remain a critical stumbling block to meeting out justice.

And that justice does not come cheap. The court's budget for 2022 is nearly 155 million euros (USD 161 million), and it has spent more than 2.2 billion euros (USD 2.3 billion) over its two-decade life.

A total of 123 countries are members of the court and accept its jurisdiction, but global powers the US, Russia and China do not. That means that if Prosecutor Karim Khan's investigations in Ukraine lead to charges against Russian sus-

pects, Moscow is not likely to willingly make them available for trial in The Hague.

Friday's anniversary should be a moment to "reflect and to try to refresh the process of international justice", Khan said. "If we work in a collective manner, I am confident that international justice can accelerate and advance and have the required impact," he added.

In a statement marking the anniversary, the European Union highlighted the ICC's achievements and called on nations that have not yet joined to do so.

"Its landmark decisions have contributed to the fight against impunity and the development of international criminal jurisprudence, for example on sexual and gender-based crimes, the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts and the destruction of cultural property," the EU said.

African officials: Monkeypox spread already emergency

AP ■ HARARE

Health authorities in Africa say they are treating the expanding monkeypox outbreak there as an emergency and are calling on rich countries to share the world's limited supply of vaccines in an effort to avoid the glaring equity problems seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Monkeypox has been sickening people in parts of central and west Africa for decades, but the lack of laboratory diagnosis and weak surveillance means many cases are going undetected across the continent. To date, countries in Africa have reported more than 1,800 suspected cases so far this year including more than 70 deaths, but only 109 have been lab-confirmed.

"This particular outbreak for us means an emergency," said Ahmed Ogwell, the acting director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control. "We want to be able to address monkeypox as an emergency now so that it does not cause more pain and suffering," he said.

Last week, WHO said its emergency committee concluded that the expanding monkeypox outbreak was worrying, but did not yet warrant being declared a global health emergency. The U.N. Health agency said it would reconsider its decision if the disease continued spreading across more borders, showed signs of increased severity, or began infecting vulnerable groups like pregnant women and children.

Globally, more than 5,000 cases of



monkeypox have been reported in 51 countries, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The majority of those cases are in Europe. No deaths beyond Africa have been reported. Within Africa, WHO said monkeypox has spread to countries where it hasn't previously been seen, including South Africa, Ghana and Morocco. But more than 90% of the continent's infections are in Congo and Nigeria, according to WHO's Africa director, Dr. Moeti Matshidiso.

She said that given the limited global supplies of vaccines to fight monkeypox, WHO was in talks with manufacturers and countries with stockpiles to see if they might be shared. The vac-

cines have mainly been developed to stop smallpox, a related disease - and most are not authorized for use against monkeypox in Africa. Vaccines have not previously been used to try to stamp out monkeypox epidemics in Africa; officials have relied mostly on measures like contact tracing and isolation.

"We would like to see the global spotlight on monkeypox act as a catalyst to beat this disease once and for all in Africa," she said at a press briefing Thursday.

WHO noted that similar to the scramble last year for COVID-19 vaccines, countries with supplies of vaccines to stop monkeypox are not yet sharing them with African countries.

"We do not have any donations that have been offered to (poorer) countries," said Fiona Braka, who heads WHO's emergency response team in Africa. "We know that those countries that have some stocks, they are mainly reserving them for their own populations."

WHO said last month it was working to create a mechanism to share vaccines with countries with the biggest outbreaks, which some fear could see vaccines go to rich countries like Britain, Germany and France, some of the agency's biggest donors and who already have their own supplies.

While monkeypox cases in Europe and North America have been mostly identified in men who are gay, bisexual or sleep with other men, that is not the case in Africa.

WHO's Tieble Traore said that according to detailed data from Ghana, the numbers of monkeypox cases were almost evenly split between men and women. "We have not yet seen spread among men who have sex with men," he said. Among monkeypox cases in Britain, which has the biggest outbreak beyond Africa, the vast majority of cases are in men and officials have noted it is spreading only within "defined sexual networks of gay, bisexual, or men who have sex with men."

Scientists warn that anyone is at risk of catching monkeypox if they come into close, physical contact with an infected patient or their clothing or bed-sheets.

Hundreds rally in Sudan day after 9 killed during protests

AP ■ CAIRO

Funeral processions turned into anti-military marches and hundreds took to the streets Friday in Sudan's capital, a day after nine people were killed in demonstrations against the country's ruling generals.

The United States and others in the international community condemned the violence in this East African nation, which has been rocked by near-weekly protests since an Oct 25 coup upended its fragile transition to democracy.

The rallies on Thursdays were the largest seen in months. Sudanese military authorities have met the protests with a deadly crackdown, which has so far killed 113 people, including 18 children.

In and near Khartoum, funeral marches for some of those killed the day before turned into protests while others gathered after Friday prayers at mosques in the country's capital. Online, photographs of the dead were posted, in some cases in an effort to identify them.

The Sudan's Doctors Committee, a medical group that monitors casualties from demonstrations, said security forces shot and killed nine people, including a child, in or near Khartoum during the rallies on Thursday.

Court leaves dwindling paths for Biden's climate mission



AP ■ WASHINGTON

More than 500 days into his presidency, Joe Biden's hope for saving the Earth from the most devastating effects of climate change may not quite be dead.

But it's not far from it.

A Supreme Court ruling on Thursday not only limited the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate climate pollution by power plants but also suggests the court is poised to block other efforts by Biden and federal agencies to limit the climate-wrecking fumes emitted by oil, gas and coal.

It's a blow to Biden's commitment to slash emissions in the few years scientists say are left to stave off worse and deadlier levels of global warming. And it's a sign, to Democrats at home and allies abroad, of the dwindling options remaining for Biden to reverse the legacy of former president Donald Trump, who mocked the science of climate change.

Trump's three Supreme Court appointees provided half of the affirmative votes in Thursday's 6-3 ruling.

After the ruling, a veteran Democratic law-

maker acknowledged he saw little hope of Congress producing any meaningful climate legislation, either.

"There's no easy fix from Congress from this mess," Rhode Island Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse said. The foreign allies whom Biden once spoke of leading to a global clean-power transformation are wondering if the US can even lead itself.

The climate decision in some ways "may have broader impacts at least on the European populace that this is a country that, A: can't get things done and B: is going in a really bizarre direction domestically," said Max Bergmann, director of the Europe programme at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

And in a Houston neighbourhood entering hurricane season, a man who had spent four decades advocating for the Black communities and other communities of colour and poorer communities hit hardest by pollution and the record heat, cold, floods and storms of climate change reacted to the ruling like many others did — saying salvaging climate efforts depends on Biden now, and his willingness to act and lead.

Turkey blocks access to Deutsche Welle and Voice of America

AP ■ ISTANBUL

Turkey's media watchdog has banned access to the Turkish services of US public service broadcaster Voice of America and German broadcaster Deutsche Welle, prompting criticism of censorship.

The Supreme Board of Radio and Television enforced a February decision requiring international media that air television content in Turkish online to apply for a broadcast license. An Ankara court ruled to restrict access to the websites of the state-owned Deutsche Welle and Voice of America late Thursday.

Neither website was available in Turkey on Friday. In a statement, Deutsche Welle said it did not comply with the licensing requirement because it "would have allowed the Turkish government to censor editorial content."

Director general Peter Limbourg said this was explained in detail to the Turkish radio and TV board, abbreviated as RTUK.

"For example, media licensed in Turkey are required to delete online content that RTUK interprets as inappropriate. This is simply unacceptable for an independent broadcaster. DW will take legal action against the blocking that has now taken place," Limbourg said. Ilhan Tasci, a RTUK member from Turkey's main opposition Republican People's Party, said he opposed the move to block the two foreign broadcasters.

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in (Contact number 96461-18754)

Tender Enquiry No.288/HPs/ED-III/M-138 Dt. 30-06-2022
Dy. CE/ Hydrel Projects, PSPCL, Shed A-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-Tender for RLA and RMU Study of UBDC Stage I Power Houses and preparation of DPR, Technical Specs and commercial specs of proposed replacements.
For details NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 07-07-2022 onwards.
NOTE:- Corrigendum and Addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
76155/12/968/2021/15380 C-255/22

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CONSTRUCTION DIVISION, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM, CHAMPAWAT
Phone/Fax : 05965 - 230044 E-Mail:- executivechampawat@gmail.com

Bid Notification No : 1028 / Nivida / 336 Date: 01.07.2022

E - TENDER NOTICE

Name of the works:
1. Banlekh (Retro) W/S Scheme (JJM)
2. Kolidhek W/S Scheme (JJM)
Date of Publication on e-procurement portal Date. 04.07.2022 at 17.00 hrs.
Note : Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal - www.uktenders.gov.in & contact 05965-230044.

Executive Engineer

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (283139)

Letter No: 1219/NIVIDA-ANUBANDHI/Ranikhet/124 Date : 1.7.2022

E-Tender Notice

1. **Name of the work:-** Supply, installation and commissioning of L.P.G. cremation machine and construction of shed for cremation machine at Vishvanath Ghat Almora, District - Almora.
2. **Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 119.68 Lakh
3. **Period of Completion:-** 8 Month
4. **Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 1.7.2022 (17.00 hrs)
5. **Online Bid submission: End date:-** 22.07.2022 (17.00 hrs)
6. **Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 25.07.2022 (11.00 hrs)
7. **Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
8. **Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:-** 7.7.2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
9. **For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in**

GENERAL MANAGER

Trump’s vulnerabilities for 2024 mount after new testimony



AP ■ SIOUX CENTER (IOWA)

Stunning new revelations about former President Donald Trump’s fight to overturn the 2020 election have exposed growing political vulnerabilities just as he eyes another presidential bid.

A former White House aide this week described Trump as an unhinged leader with no regard for the safety of elected officials in either party as he clung to power on Jan. 6, 2021. The testimony from the congressional panel investigating the Capitol attack provided a roadmap for prosecutors to potentially charge Trump with a crime, some legal experts say.

Republican voters — and Trump’s would-be rivals in the 2024 presidential race — took notice.

Here in Iowa, the state expected to host the first presidential nominating contest in roughly 18 months, several voters signalled Thursday that they were open to another presidential candidate even if Trump were to run again. At the same time, some conservative media outlets issued scathing rebukes of the former pres-

his awareness that some supporters had brought weapons to the city on Jan. 6 and his ambivalence as rioters later laid siege to the Capitol. Upset at the size of the crowd at his “Stop the Steal” rally — many supporters avoided entering because they were armed and didn’t want to go through metal detectors — Trump said words to the effect of, “I don’t care that they have weapons. They’re not here to hurt me,” according to Hutchinson. She recalled hearing about a separate incident after the rally in which Trump tried to grab at the steering wheel of the presidential vehicle to go to the Capitol to join his supporters.

That detail has caused some pushback. The agent who was driving the vehicle and another official were reportedly prepared to testify under oath that Trump never lunged for the wheel.

But the renewed concern was evident. The conservative Washington Examiner’s editorial board said Hutchinson’s testimony “ought to ring the death knell” for Trump’s political career. “Trump is unfit to be anywhere near power ever again.” The often Trump-friendly New York Post blasted the headline: “Tyrant Trump.” And the conservative editorial page of the Wall Street Journal wrote, “Just when it seems as if Donald Trump’s behaviour after his 2020 loss couldn’t possibly look worse, a new piece of wild testimony arrives.”

To be sure, conservatives have shared serious concerns about Trump repeatedly in recent years. And in every case, the former president has emerged largely unscathed, sometimes stronger. He has been caught on video bragging about sexual assault; he instigated a violent attack on the Capitol; and he has been twice impeached. Yet Trump is sitting on campaign funds that exceed \$101 million and remains deeply popular with many Republican voters. Lest there be any question, Republican candidates from Arizona to Pennsylvania to Georgia have been battling one another this midterm season for his support.

ident. Aides for multiple GOP presidential prospects also indicated, publicly and privately, that they felt increasingly emboldened to challenge Trump in 2024 following the explosive new testimony.

Nikki Haley, Trump’s ambassador to the United Nations, drew roughly 350 conservative activists to a congressional fundraising barbecue on Thursday in Sioux County, where Trump won 82% of the vote in 2020. There was ample evidence of Trump fatigue. Interviews with a dozen attendees revealed strong interest in a 2024 alternative, even if Trump is on the ballot.

“You’d be hard-pressed to find people in this area who support the idea that people aren’t looking for someone else,” said Dave Van Wyk, a transportation company owner. “To presume that conservative America is 100% behind Donald Trump is simply not the case.” For some Republican voters, that was the feeling even before this week’s stunning new testimony. Former White House staffer Cassidy Hutchinson on Tuesday offered previously unknown details about the extent of Trump’s rage in his final weeks of office,

New York lawmakers to vote on new gun rules following ruling

AP ■ ALBANY

New York lawmakers plan to vote on legislation seeking to limit the proliferation of firearms in public after the Supreme Court gutted the state’s century-old handgun licensing law.

The state is overhauling its rules for carrying guns after the court decided that ordinary citizens had a right to arm themselves in public for self-defense, something the state limited in the past mostly to people working in law enforcement or security.

New rules being rushed through an emergency session



of the Legislature would allow many more gun owners to apply for a license to carry a concealed weapon, but would seek to set new restrictions on where firearms can be carried.

One provision, proposed by Gov. Kathy Hochul on

Wednesday, would ban people from carrying firearms into places of business unless owners put up signage saying guns are welcome.

New York would be the first state to pass such a rule, according to David Pucino, deputy chief counsel at Giffords Law Center. In states where carrying guns is more common, businesses that want to keep guns out are usually required to post signs indicating weapons aren’t allowed.

New York would also set new requirements for obtaining a handgun permit, including mandating 15 hours of in-person fire range training.

Jackson sworn in, becomes 1st Black woman on Supreme Court

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Ketanji Brown Jackson was sworn in to the Supreme Court, shattering a glass ceiling as the first Black woman on the nation’s highest court.

The 51-year-old Jackson is the court’s 116th justice, and she took the place of the justice she once worked for. Justice Stephen Breyer’s retirement was effective at noon.

Moments later, joined by her family, Jackson recited the two oaths required of Supreme Court justices, one administered by Breyer and the other by Chief Justice John Roberts.

“With a full heart, I accept the solemn responsibility of supporting and defending the Constitution of the United



States and administering justice without fear or favor, so help me God,” Jackson said in a statement issued by the court.

“I am truly grateful to be part of the promise of our great Nation. I extend my sincerest

thanks to all of my new colleagues for their warm and gracious welcome.”

Roberts welcomed Jackson “to the court and our common calling.”

The ceremony was streamed live on the court’s website.

Jackson, a federal judge since 2013, is joining three other women — Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Amy Coney Barrett.

It’s the first time four women will serve together on the nine-member court.

Biden nominated Jackson in February, a month after Breyer, 83, announced he would retire at the end of the court’s term, assuming his successor had been confirmed.

Johnson hit with another drunken scandal as deputy whip quits



PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, still under the shadow of the partygate scandal of COVID law-breaching parties in Downing Street, has been hit with yet another drunken scandal as an ally in charge of discipline within the governing party resigned.

Chris Pincher, 52, stepped down as the Deputy Chief Whip of the Conservative Party on Thursday night after admitting in his resignation letter that he “drank far too much” and “embarrassed myself and other people”. There have been growing calls for Johnson to suspend him from the party after allegations emerged of him groping two men at a private members’ club in London.

“Last night I drank far too much,” reads Pincher’s resignation letter.

“I think the right thing to do in the circumstances is for me to resign as deputy chief whip. I owe it to you and the people I’ve caused upset to, to do this,” he said.

“The Sun” newspaper first reported the resignation, saying the senior Conservative MP was drinking at the Carlton Club in central London when he is said to have assaulted two other male guests.

Bangladesh to start de-radicalising drive for jailed Islamists

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh will start a de-radicalisation campaign for Islamists in jail as years of security clampdown has waned the strength of the militant outfits in the country since the 2016 terrorist attack on a posh Dhaka restaurant in which 20 people, including an Indian and 16 other foreigners, were killed, officials said here on Friday.

“The initiative is aimed to prevent the jailed militants’ return to the path of militancy,” said a spokesman of police’s Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit as Bangladesh revisits the horror of the July 1, 2016 night at the Holey Artisan cafe. CTTC unit chief Mohammad Asaduzzaman said they received the home ministry’s approval to the deradicalisation campaign to appoint psychologists, clerics and counterterrorism experts to counsel the militants who were in jail or on bail.

Under the project, the CTTC will rehabilitate 20 militants in next one year, providing them financial support so they could earn their living and get themselves reintegrated into society



after they complete their prison terms, he said, adding, “We will also monitor their activities.”

According to home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, 7,000 suspected militants were arrested under the anti-terrorism campaign since 2016.

Five militants, armed with guns and machetes, stormed the Holey Artisan cafe on July 1, 2016 evening and took diners hostage and carried out the massacre overnight, killing nine Italians, seven Japanese, an American, an Indian

woman and five Bangladeshis, including two police officials.

Army commandos launched a counter assault, killing all the attackers on the spot in the early hours of July 2 and rescued the survivors after 12 hours of mayhem during which one restaurant worker was accidentally killed.

An Islamic State or IS-inclined outfit called Neo Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo JMB) had carried out the massacre. While the IS immediate-

ly claimed responsibility for the attack, Bangladesh repeatedly declined the presence of any foreign terrorist group in the country, attributing the incident to homegrown terrorists.

Three years later, a Bangladesh court in 2019 handed death sentences to seven Neo-JMB operatives who were found to have financed the attack, supplied weapons, or assisted in other forms those who directly carried out the massacre.

Their case, however, is pending at the high court for a mandatory death reference hearing. Bangladesh’s attorney general’s office has said efforts were underway to quicken the process.

The attack forced Bangladesh to launch immediately a massive and protracted nationwide anti-militancy crackdown engaging its military, specialised police units including elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), which also draws personnel from army, navy and air force.

A series of crackdowns killed dozens of militants including women, some with their minor children who could not be saved during the armed encounters at the Islamists hideouts.

European force battling extremists withdraws from Mali

AP ■ PARIS

A European military task force that helped Mali’s government fight Islamic extremists has formally withdrawn from the West African country amid tensions with its ruling military junta.

The French military, which spearheaded the Takuba task force, announced on Friday that it officially ended its work on Thursday. The move was tied to France’s decision earlier this year to withdraw troops from Mali after nine years helping Malian forces fight violent extremists who had threatened to seize power.

The Takuba force was composed of several hundred special forces troops from 10 countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, Italy,

Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden. It aimed at training and protecting Malian combat forces. Despite the withdrawal, the French military called the force a “strategic and tactical success” and an example of “what Europeans are able to achieve together in complex security environments”, saying that lessons learned from Takuba could be used in future joint operations.

In announcing its pullout, France accused Mali’s authorities of neglecting the fight against Islamic extremists. France is maintaining a military presence in neighbouring West African nations facing threats from extremist violence.

PUBLIC NOTICE
(Be it known to all that I, VINEETA DOGRA W/O PURAN CHAND DOGRA R/O- SFS FLAT NO. 4032, GROUND & FIRST FLOOR, POCKET- S & 6, SECTOR-B, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI 110070, I am the legal owner of SFS FLAT NO. 4032, GROUND & FIRST FLOOR, POCKET- S & 6, SECTOR-B, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI 110070, FILE NO. F-126 (28)1988/VK/SFS/III, which is allotted by the DDA. Original DDA Possession Letter & WATER & Electricity NOC of the above Plot has been lost. An FIR/NCR to this effect has lodged in P. S. Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No. 549491/2022, Dated-01-07-2022. 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. 9463742308 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Any person claiming any right, interest, or having any objections with respect to this property can also personally inform/contact me.)

IN THE XXIII ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL COURT AT ALLIKULAM COMPLEX, (Moor Market), CHENNAI – 600 003. O.S No : 7048 OF 2021

M/s. Triviron Healthcare Private Limited, No.15, 4th Street, Abhiramapuram, Chennai-18, Rep by its Manager-Admin M.Rajagopal. ... Plaintiff.

Vs

1. M/s. Tecura Healthcare, 2. Mr. Vishal, Proprietor. ... Defendants.

To

1. M/s. Tecura Healthcare, No.281, G-Floor, K.No.468, Sivaji Market, Pitampura, Delhi- 110 034, Represent by Mr. Vishal. 2. Mr. Vishal, Proprietor, M/s. Tecura Healthcare, No.281, G-Floor, K.No.468, Shivaji Market, Pitampura, Delhi- 110 034.

Please take notice that the above referred matter came up for hearing on 09.06.2022 and the Hon'ble Judge was pleased to Order Paper Publication on or before 18-07-2022 and post the suit on 18-07-2022. The suit is posted on 18-07-2022 at 10.30 a.m for your appearance, you have to appear in person or through your Advocate, on above said date, before the above said Court failing which the matter will be decided and Exparte Order would be passed in your absence.

R.Ramesh
Counsel for Plaintiff

MAHINDRA RURAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Corporate Office:- Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd. Sadhana House, 2nd Floor, 570, P.B. Marg Wori, Mumbai 400 018 India; Tel: +91 22 66523500 Fax: +91 22 24972741
Regional Office:- LDA Colony, B2/B70 Kanpur Road, Near Phoneix Mall, Lucknow.
Branch Office: 3rd Floor 139-141 Mangal Pandey Nagar Opposite CCS University Meerut. Uttar Pradesh 250002 .

Disposal of Secured Assets under Private Treaty, as provided under Rule 8(5)(d) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Particulars of which are given below:-

In exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (4) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (herein after referred to as "SARFAESI Act") and Rule 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as "Rules") for the purpose of recovering the secured debts, the authorized officer of the secured creditor M/s Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "MRHFL") has decided to sell the secured asset (immovable property), the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor under S. 13 (4) of SARFAESI Act, described herein below as "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IT IS BASIS" and the public and all concerned including the concerned borrowers/mortgagors, their representatives, as the case may be are hereby informed that the secured asset listed below will be sold, particulars of which are given below:

Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property (Secured Assets)	Offer Amount Received
1. NIRBHAY SINGH NAGAR (Borrower) At:- S/O SATPAL SINGH, H.NO. 9 NANGLA SHERKHAN URF JAIN PUR MEERUT,UTTAR PRADESH -250002	12-01-2021 RS. 7,55,797/-	PART OF PLOT NO 19 & 20 KHASRA NO 111,GRAM- KUNDA PARTAPUR, MEERUT,UTTAR PRADESH -250002	Rs. 2,00,000/- (RUPEES TWO LAKH ONLY)
2. AJAY SINGH (Co-Borrower) At:- S/O SATPAL SINGH, RACCHOTI, MEERUT,UP-250106	Physical Possession Date	North - REMAINING PART OF PLOT NO.20, South- REMAINING PART OF PLOT NO.19 , East - KHET OF DHANPAL, West - RASTA 20~ WIDE	
3. SHIKHA AGARWAL (Guarantor) At:- W/O RAJIV AGARWAL, 278/7 JAGRITI VIHAR SEC-7, MEERUT,UTTAR PRADESH -250004 MEERUT- MEERUT 582727/XSEMMER00489862	10-04-2021		

1.MRHFL acting through its Authorized Officer has now received offers to buy the same (offer amount is tabulated in the table above), and we intend to accept it, interalia considering the fact that the previous public auction held was unsuccessful.

2.To Participate in Auction intended bidder has to deposit 10 % of the Reserve Price.

3.The detail terms and conditions of the auction sale are incorporated in the prescribed tender form. Tender forms are available on www.mahindraruralhousingfinance.com as well as above branch office. The sale will be subject to terms and conditions mentioned in Tender Form.

4.For further details, contact The Authorised Officers, **Deep Chandra Joshi 8853265434** Last date of submission of sealed offers in the prescribed tender forms along with EMD is **18/July/2022 Time 11.00 AM TO 6 PM** at the branch office address mentioned herein above. Tenders that are not filled up properly or tenders received beyond last date will be considered as invalid tender and shall accordingly be rejected. No interest shall be paid on the EMD.

5.Date of opening of the offers for Property is **20/JULY/2022 Time 10:00 to 3:00 PM** at the above mentioned branch office address. The tender will be opened in the presence of the Authorised Officer.

6.Date of inspection of the immovable property is **16/July/2022 Time 11.00 AM TO 6 PM.**

7.The Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) are hereby given **15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002** to pay the sum mentioned as above before the date of Auction failing which the offer received will be accepted and the immovable property will be auctioned and balance, if any, will be recovered with interest and costs. If the Borrower pays the amount due to Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd., in full before the date of sale, auction is liable to be stopped.

8.The immovable property will be sold to the highest tendered. However, the undersigned reserves the absolute discretion to allow inter se bidding, if deemed necessary.

Place :- Meerut Date:-02.07.2022 Sd/- Authorised Officer Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Limited

Shivalik Agro Poly Products Limited
CIN: U15131HP1976PLC003703
Registered office: Plot No.1, Sector-3, Industrial Area, Panwano (H.P.)-173220
Corporate Office: B-45, Phase III, Industrial Area, Mohali (Punjab.)-160055
Phone: 0172-2227087-88 Fax: 0172-2270349
Email: saplmoh@sappl.co.in Web site: shivalikagropoly.com

NOTICE
(For kind attention of the equity shareholders of the company)
Subject: Transfer of unclaimed dividend (F.Y. 2014-15) and corresponding equity shares of the company held by the shareholders to the account of Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Authority.
Pursuant to the provisions of Section 124 of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016 (as amended up to date) (the Rules), members are hereby informed that unclaimed dividend for the financial year ended on 31.03.2015 and their corresponding shares held by the shareholders if any in respect of which the dividend has not been paid or claimed by them for seven consecutive years or more from the financial year 31.03.2015 will be due for transfer to Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) on or after 07.10.2022 . The Company has communicated individually to the concerned shareholders at their latest available address whose dividend and shares are liable to be transferred to IEPF authority under the said Rules for taking appropriate action
The company has uploaded full details of such shareholders indicating dividend amount and no. of shares due for transfer to Account of IEPF Authority on its website www.shivalikagropoly.com at web link http://www.shivalikagropoly.com/List_of_unclaimed_dividend_for_TRF_to_IEPF.aspx and http://www.shivalikagropoly.com/List_of_shares_for_TRF_to_IEPF.aspx
The concerned Shareholders are requested to claim their unclaimed dividend amounts before the above said date i.e. 07.10.2022 failing which the company will proceeds to transfer the unclaimed dividend and respective shares to the account of IEPF Authority in accordance with the said provisions of law and relevant rules. Shareholders may note that both the unclaimed or unpaid dividend and corresponding shares once transferred to IEPF Authority including all benefits accruing on such shares, if any, can be claimed back by them from IEPF Authority after following the procedure prescribed by the Rules.
The concerned shareholder, holding shares in physical form and whose shares are liable to be transferred to DEMAT Account of IEPF Authority, may note that the Company would be issuing new share certificate(s) in lieu of the original share certificate(s) held by them for the purpose of transfer the same to DEMAT Account of IEPF Authority as per Rules and upon such issue, the original share certificate(s) which stand registered in their names shall stand automatically cancelled and be non-negotiable. The shareholders may further note that the details uploaded by the Company on its website should be regarded as adequate notice in respect of issue of new share certificate(s) by the Company for the purpose of transfer of share to DEMAT Account of IEPF Authority pursuant to the Rules.
In case, the shareholders have any query on the subject matter, they may contact the company's Share Transfer Agents at Abhipra Capital Limited, Mr. Jeewat Rai Tel: 011-42390725, email at ra@abhipra.com or the company at Shivalik Agro Poly Products Limited , Mr. B. L. Jain, B-45, Phase III, Industrial Area , Mohali -160055 (PB) Phone: 0172-2227087-88 Fax 0172-2270349, Email : bljain@sappl.co.in
For Shivalik Agro Poly Products Limited
Sd/ B L Jain
Place: Mohali (Punjab) Dated: 01.07.2022
Finance Controller & Company Secretary

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

Notices under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. LBGUR00002407970, LBDEL00002403986, LBGUR00003050742. Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower **MONICA SHARMA/ DIPAK CHOPRA** was published as Physical Possession Publication Notice under section 13(4) in newspaper **The Pioneer (Eng) & The Pioneer (Hin)** dated **June 22, 2022**. We wish to mention that inadvertently and unintentionally a typographical error has occurred in the said publication and Loan Account number was mentioned as **LBGUR00002403986** instead of **LBDEL00002403986**. We therefore, request you to please read the same as **LBDEL00002403986**. All other details mentioned in the said Notice dated will remain same. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to you in this regard.
Date : July 02, 2022 Authorized Officer
Place: Delhi NCR ICICI Bank Limited

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता,
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड विलासपुर (छ.ग.)
:: ऑन लाईन निविदा संशोधन सूचना :: जी क्र 91897 / 5
इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा को अपरिहार्य कारणों से निविदा के लिथियो में निम्नानुसार संशोधन की जाती है।
सिस्टम क्रं निविदा क्रं पूर्व निर्धारित बिड मरने संशोधित निर्धारित बिड रिमार्क एवं दिनांक अंतिम लिथि मरने अंतिम लिथि
101453 NIT 57 date 26.06.2022 06.07.2022
निविदा की अन्य शर्तों पूर्ववत रहेगी, अन्य विवरण एवं विस्तृत निविदा छ.ग. शासन के ई-प्रोक्वोस्ट वेबसाइट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर देखे जा सकते है।
हस्ता / -
कार्यालय अभियंता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड विलासपुर (छ.ग.)
R.O. No.- 92642/6
R.O. Date:- 01/07/2022

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (263139)
Letter No.: 1218/NIVIDA-ANUBANDH/Ranikhet/123 Date : 1.7.2022

E-Tender Notice
1. **Name of the work:-** CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE AT LAMGARA, DISTT.- ALMORA
2. **Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 498.97 Lakh
3. **Period of Completion:-** 12 Month
4. **Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 1.7.2022 (17.00 hrs)
5. **Online Bid submission: End date:-** 22.07.2022 (17.00 hrs)
6. **Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 25.07.2022 (11.00 hrs)
7. **Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jal Nigam, Haldwani.
8. **Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:-** 7.7.2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
9. For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal www.uktenders.gov.in
GENERAL MANAGER

Markets plunge for 3rd day as fag-end rebound loses steam



Mumbai: The BSE Sensex pared most of its losses to end modestly lower on Friday, pressured by a sharp decline in index heavyweight Reliance Industries after the government imposed an export tax on petroleum products.

The 30-share benchmark dived over 900 points in early trade, but clawed back lost ground on fag-end buying. It finally ended 111.01 points or 0.21 per cent lower at 52,907.93, marking its third straight day of loss.

On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty dipped 28.20 points or 0.18 per cent to 15,752.05.

The Government on Friday slapped an export tax on petrol, diesel and jet fuel (ATF) while also joining nations like the UK in imposing a windfall tax on crude oil produced locally.

The export tax is to deter companies such as Reliance

Industries and Rosneft-based Nayara Energy from preferring overseas markets over domestic supplies.

The levy on crude, which follows record earnings by state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL) and private sector Cairn Oil & Gas of Vedanta Ltd, alone will fetch the government over ₹7,000 crore annually on about 30 million tonnes of crude oil produced domestically.

Reliance Industries was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, dropping 7.14 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, NTPC, Bharti Airtel, Maruti, Sun Pharma, ICICI Bank and Dr Reddy's.

ITC topped the gainers' chart with a jump of 3.99 per cent. Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints, HUL, HDFC and Nestle India were among the other major winners. **PTI**

Gold jumps ₹1,088 amid import duty hike



New Delhi: Gold in the national capital on Friday rose by ₹1,088 to ₹51,458 per 10 grams, according to HDFC securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal finished at ₹50,370 per 10 grams.

Silver, however, fell by ₹411 to ₹58,159 per kg from ₹58,570 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi surged by ₹1,088 after India raised import duty on gold by 5 per cent," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,794 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 19.76 per ounce. **PTI**

SBI's gold loan portfolio crosses ₹1 L-crore mark

Mumbai: The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) on Friday said its gold loan portfolio has crossed 1 lakh crore-mark for the first time, chairman Dinesh Khara said on Friday.

The lender, which has a 24 per cent market share in gold loans, is bullish on growth in the segment as the asset class provides investors a safe investment option amid rising inflation.

"Last week, we crossed Rs 1 lakh crore portfolio in gold loans for the first time. In the first quarter of the current year, we have seen much better growth as compared to what we have achieved in the past. I expect that in the current year we should be in a position to grow well in this particular segment," Khara told reporters on Friday.

He said in case of inflationary conditions, gold, as an asset class, becomes more favourable.

"Normally, during such a period when gold is a preferred asset class, there is also a felt need for monetising this asset

Govt imposes curbs on petrol, diesel export

New Delhi: The Government has imposed export restrictions on petrol and diesel by directing exporters to supply a specified quantity in the domestic market, a move aimed at ensuring adequate availability within the country.

According to a notification of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), motor gasoline (petrol) exporter is required to submit a self-declaration to the concerned customs authority at the time of export confirming that 50 per cent of quantity mentioned in the shipping bill has been/will be supplied in the domestic market during the current financial year.

For gas oil or automotive diesel exporters, the quantity has been fixed at 30 per cent.

However, exports to Bhutan and Nepal are exempted from this condition.

The limit is also not applicable to 100 per cent Export Oriented Units (EOUs) and units in SEZs (Special Economic Zones). EOUs and SEZs are developed primarily for exports.

The notification said that the exporters will have to file a quarterly return to the ministry of petroleum and natural gas regarding the same.

The decision assumes significance as the government on Friday slapped an export tax on petrol, diesel and jet fuel (ATF) while also joining nations like the UK in imposing a windfall tax on crude oil produced locally. A ₹6 per litre tax on



export of petrol and ATF and Rs 13 per litre tax on export of diesel is effective from July 1, finance ministry notifications showed.

The export tax has been imposed to deter companies from preferring overseas markets over domestic supplies. **PTI**

being available and exports are happening at such phenomenal profit, we need at least some of it for our own citizens. "We need to take this twin-pronged approach," the minister added.

A ₹23,250 per tonne tax was levied on crude oil produced domestically.

Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said the new taxes would be applicable on SEZ units. "But, the export restriction will not be applicable," he said. **PTI**

Govt to review new taxes levied on crude, diesel, ATF every fortnight: FM

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the Government will review every fortnight the new taxes levied on crude, diesel and ATF based on international prices.

She said these are "extraordinary times" and oil prices are internationally unbridled.

"We do not want to discourage export, but want domestic availability to increase," Sitharaman told reporters here.

She said that if oil is not

the recent decline in rupee has been roughly in line with other regional currencies. It is likely to remain under pressure in the near future as long as outflows continue with tighter dollar liquidity, Parmar said, adding, "Spot USD-INR is having resistance at 79.30 and support at 78.70 with a bullish bias."

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 111.01 points or 0.21 per cent lower at 52,907.93, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 28.20 points or 0.18 per cent to 15,752.05. **PTI**

RBI asks banks to test note sorting machines on quarterly basis

Mumbai: The RBI on Friday asked banks to test their note sorting machines for accuracy and consistency every quarter to ensure currency notes conform to the prescribed parameters.

Following demonetisation in November 2016, the Reserve Bank issued new notes of ₹200, ₹500, and ₹2000, besides releasing new series for other denominations.

In the backdrop of the new series of banknotes, the Reserve Bank said note authentication and fitness sorting parameters have been reviewed and a revised set of guidelines have been issued for implementation.

In the circular on 'Note Sorting Machines - Authentication and Fitness Sorting Parameters', the RBI said a fit note is "a note that is genuine, sufficiently clean to allow its denomination to be readily ascertained and thus suitable for recycling".

An unfit note is the one that is not suitable for recycling because of its physical condition or belongs to a series that has been phased out by the Reserve Bank of India.

"A note must pass all the fitness parameters to be considered fit for recycling," the central bank said while prescribing the parameters.

The parameters, it said, provide the minimum standards for cash handling machines used by banks.

"Notes can only be recycled/reissued if they are evaluated as genuine and fit according to these parameters. An authenticity check is a prerequisite for fitness sorting," the RBI said.

The machines should be able to identify and segregate suspected counterfeit notes which are unfit for circulation.

"Banks shall ensure that the Note Sorting machines are tested for accuracy and consistency on a quarterly basis



and recalibrated, if required. A certificate (signed by Bank Officials) to this effect shall be maintained for records," the RBI said.

As a part of fitness sorting, notes with any visual or physical defects are to be sorted as unfit as per the criteria prescribed in the circular.

It also said 'suspect/reject notes' should be subjected to manual inspection for any wrongdoings.

Big tech firms offering financial services pose risk to financial stability: RBI

Mumbai: Big tech companies offering financial services pose risk to financial stability as their complex intertwined operational linkages with financial institutions could lead to contagion effect and potential anti-competitive behaviour, the RBI has said.

The central bank, in its 25th Financial Stability Report (FSR), said the advent of FinTech has exposed the banking system to new risks which extend beyond prudential issues and often intersect with other public policy objectives relating to safeguarding of data privacy, cyber security, consumer protection, competition and compliance with anti-money laundering policies.

Big techs can scale up rapidly and pose risk to financial stability, which can arise from increased disintermediation of incumbent institutions, it noted.

"Moreover, complex intertwined operational linkages between BigTech firms and financial institutions could lead

Rupee gains 12 p to close at 78.94 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee rebounded from its all-time low to close 12 paise higher at 78.94 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 78.99 against the greenback and fell to an intra-day low of 79.12.

It finally settled at 78.94, a rise of 12 paise over its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee had slipped 3 paise to close at a fresh lifetime low of 79.06 against the US dollar.

"The Indian government's effort of tightening exports of oil and imports of gold fell short to change the market mood as the participants remained worried about capital outflows, risk-off sentiments and widening deficit," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

The recent decline in rupee has been roughly in line with other regional currencies. It is likely to remain under pressure in the near future as long as outflows continue with tighter dollar liquidity, Parmar said, adding, "Spot USD-INR is having resistance at 79.30 and support at 78.70 with a bullish bias."

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 111.01 points or 0.21 per cent lower at 52,907.93, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 28.20 points or 0.18 per cent to 15,752.05. **PTI**

Govt watchful and mindful of impact of declining rupee on imports: FM



New Delhi: The Government is watchful and mindful of the impact of falling rupee on the country's imports, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, while asserting that Indian currency has performed relatively better than others against dollar.

Depreciation of rupee makes India's imports costlier, while on the other hand exports become attractive.

"The Reserve Bank of India is very keenly watching the exchange rate. We are not alone in this world. We are also open as an economy... The rupee against the dollar and other currencies versus the dollar, the rupee has performed relatively better," she said.

Acknowledging that falling rupee would impact immediately on imports, which will become expensive, she said, "That is one thing I am very watchful and mindful of because a lot of our industries do depend on some essential goods to be imported upon for their production."

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.

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.

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 hit its all-time low of 79.12 against dollar during the intra-day trade but recovered to close at 78.94 (provisional) against the greenback on Friday. **PTI**

Reliance Industries stock tumbles over 7%, ONGC tanks more than 13%

New Delhi: Shares of Reliance Industries tumbled over 7 per cent on Friday, with its market valuation falling by ₹1.25 lakh crore, after the government imposed an export tax on petrol, diesel, and jet fuel (ATF). The Government on Friday slapped an export tax on petrol, diesel and jet fuel while also joining nations like the UK in imposing a windfall tax on crude oil produced locally.

Shares of Reliance Industries fell 7.14 per cent to settle at ₹2,408.95 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 8.82 per cent to ₹2,365.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries eroded by ₹1,25,447.5 crore to ₹16,29,684.50 crore.

It was the biggest drag among the Sensex firms.

Shares of ONGC tanked 13.40 per cent to ₹131.15 apiece and Vedanta declined 4.04 per cent to ₹213.95 on the BSE.

Among others, Oil India tanked 15.07 per cent, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals dived 9.99 per cent, Chennai Petroleum Corporation cracked 5.23 per cent and Hindustan Oil Exploration Company declined 3.18 per cent.

The BSE energy index fell by 3.99 per cent to 7,635.10.

A ₹6 per litre tax on export of petrol and ATF, and ₹13 per litre tax on export of diesel is effective from July 1, finance ministry notifications showed. Additionally, a ₹23,250 per tonne tax was levied on crude oil produced domestically. **PTI**

BUSINESS BRIEF

KINGSTON SHOWCASING PRODUCTS AT CCTA IT EXPO-22
Chandigarh: Strengthening its footprint in North India, Kingston Technology, which specialises in memory products and technology solutions, is showcasing its compelling range of products across categories at CCTA IT EXPO 2022.

FIRST-EVER EV CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
Faridabad: India's largest EV super store chain Electric One Mobility Pvt Ltd has launched India's first-ever Electric Vehicle Centre of Excellence "Skill Next" at Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad. Disclosing the news, Amit Das, founder & CEO, Electric One Mobility said, the move comes in the wake of the strong need to hone skills of students and adapt to the EV Revolution that is unfolding before the world.

ROYALTY-INCLUDED MUSIC PLATFORM
New Delhi: SyncMama is the world's first-ever royalty-included music licensing platform for UGC creators with over 400,000 soundtracks, special effects, and AI text-to-voice in 17 languages, including Hindi and Indian English. The platform has the tools to make a great soundtrack: music, SFX and Voiceover. Achille Forler, the company's founder, says, "SyncMama launched in South Asia because India has the ideal legal framework — 'royalty-free' is illegal since 2012.

FASTEST DIAGNOSTIC LAB SERVICES LAUNCHED
New Delhi: Orange Health, a leading health-tech start-up building India's fastest diagnostic lab service, launched its services in New Delhi as part of its ambitious geographical expansion plan. With this launch, customers can avail a wide range of diagnostic services in just 60 minutes. Dhruv Gupta and Tarun Bhamra, co-founders, Orange Health, said, "Customers are expressing a strong preference for speed, reliability and convenient offerings."

Coal India registers record 160 MT output in Apr-Jun this fiscal

New Delhi: State-owned Coal India on Friday said its coal production increased 29 per cent year-on-year to a record 159.8 million tonne (MT) in April-June this fiscal.

It had produced 124 MT coal in the year-ago period, Coal India Limited (CIL) said in a statement.

"CIL ended April-June FY23 capping a historic high of 29 per cent. CIL produced 159.8 MT of coal, which is 35.8 MT more than the 124 MT in April-June FY22. All the coal companies of CIL have registered growth," the company said.



Such growth was never witnessed in any Q1 since CIL's inception. The company's first-quarter production surge of nearly 36 MT's surpassed the entire annual increase of 26.4 MT of FY22, a senior company official said in the

statement. Increased production enables better stock build-up, it added.

With the coal demand from power plants reaching a higher pitch, CIL's supplies to the power sector reached a new high of 153.2 MT during the quarter, registering a strong growth of 19.8 per cent. The expansion in absolute terms was 25.3 MT over 127.9 MT of last fiscal's Q1. CIL on an average supplied 1.684 MT of coal per day to the power sector in June 2022 quarter compared to a daily requirement of 1.650 MT. **PTI**

Honda Cars India sales jump 64% in June

New Delhi: Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) on Friday reported a 64 per cent increase in domestic sales at 7,834 units in June 2022.

The company had registered 4,767 units in domestic sales in the same month last year, HCIL said in a statement.

Exports were at 2,502 units last month as against 1,241 units in June 2021, it added. HCIL Director, Marketing and Sales, Yuichi

Murata said, "The demand trend for Honda Cars remains robust as the industry notices a good month in terms of automotive sales consumption." However, he said, "The supply side challenges including chip shortage continued to affect our production and despatches in June.

Unfortunately, this situation still persists and clear signs of recovery are not visible yet." **PTI**

India's power consumption grows 17.2% to 134.13 bn units in June

New Delhi: Power consumption in the country grew by 17.2 per cent year-on-year to 134.13 billion units (BU) in June, amid severe heat and spurt in economic activities.

Power consumption in June last year was recorded at 114.48 BU, which was higher than 105.08 BU in the same month of 2020, according to power ministry data.

Moreover, peak power demand met, which is the highest supply in a day, during



June 2020, due to the imposition of lockdown restrictions for curbing the spread of the coronavirus.

The power consumption in June 2019 (pre-pandemic period) was at 117.98 billion units. According to experts, power consumption and demand rose mainly because of severe heat and spurt in economic activities, pushing commercial and industrial requirements of electricity in the country. **PTI**

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Govt to fund BSNL-ITI pilot project for developing technology for 4G, 5G, e-band services

New Delhi: The Government will fund a pilot project of state-owned firms BSNL and ITI along with startups for developing indigenous technology for 4G, 5G and E-band spectrum services, an official statement said on Friday.

Government's telecom research organisation C-DoT will also be involved in the project which has played a key role in developing first made-in-India 4G and 5G telecom network technology in collaboration with TCS-Tejas Networks.

"Department of Telecommunications (USOF), ministry of communications, has signed an agreement with Indian Telephone Industries (ITI) Limited and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to fund the pilot projects of E-band, LTE indigenous technologies including integration of 4G/5G prototypes with C-DoT core," an official statement said.

The Universal Service

Obligation Fund (USOF), under its programme for induction of new technological developments in the telecom sector in rural and remote areas, is funding four pilot projects each of around Rs 10 crore enabling the development and hardening of these technologies.

The indigenous companies Astrome Technologies, Lekha Wireless Solutions, Resonous Technologies and Signaltron would be executing these projects. **PTI**

Neeraj confident of breaching 90m this yr



PTI ■ STOCKHOLM

Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is confident of breaching the elusive 90m barrier this year but he is not thinking about the coveted mark going into the upcoming World Championships as he feels that would lead to extra pressure.

The 24-year-old is within touching distance of the coveted 90m mark, considered the gold standard in the world of javelin throw.

In his three outings this season, Chopra has improved his personal

best twice — he recorded a 89.30m throw last month at the Paavo Nurmi Games before sending his spear to 89.94m, just 6cm shy of 90m, at the Diamond League Meet here on Thursday.

"Today, I feel good and after the first throw, I thought I could throw even over 90m today. But it is OK as I have more competitions coming this year," Chopra said after his second place finish.

Chopra's opening throw of 89.94m bagged him his first podium finish at the Diamond League.

"I am close to 90m now and I can

throw it this year. Despite the fact that I did not win tonight, I feel very good because I did my best."

Chopra finished second behind Grenada's Anderson Peters, who had a best throw of 90.31m in his third attempt.

"When Anderson Peters crossed 90 metres, I too felt that I had to do it. I had that in mind that everything should be perfect, the javelin should go in one line and the technique should be perfect. When everything is perfect then only you can throw such long distance," the Indian said.

"There was competition but I am

happy that my all throws were quite good. I am happy with the performance. I am playing after a long time and will look to give my best in the next competition."

Chopra will next compete at the World Championships to be held in Eugene, USA from July 15 to 24.

"I will come to know about that (form) in Oregon. Every competition, every day is different. When I start playing in Oregon I will get to know if I am feeling the pressure of being an Olympic champion."

"I play with a free mind, pressure is not there in my mind. I train hard

and try to give my 100 per cent in competition," he said.

The Haryana athlete, who has made a strong start to the season, said he will not be changing his training method for the worlds.

"My next is Oregon -- the World Championship. It's not far away so we won't change anything. But will continue to improve the ongoing training."

The legendary Anju Bobby George is the only Indian to have won a World Championships medal in athletics with a long jump bronze in the 2003 edition.

"There is no pressure that India has only one medal. Not thinking much about what to do at the World Championships. There is not much pressure now but will see how the mindset is once I reach there. We will try our best," Chopra said.

After Chopra's gold at Tokyo, javelin throw and athletics' popularity has sky-rocketed in India.

"I am happy that everyone is watching athletics back home online also. A lot of Indians had come here and the Indian ambassador had also come, it felt nice that athletics is growing in India."

NEERAJ THROW MOTIVATED ME, SAYS PETERS

Reigning world champion Peters, who won the Diamond League Meet here, said he was motivated by Chopra's opening throw where the Indian smashed his own national record and improved his personal best.

"Getting the 90m throw was really good, I was very much motivated by Neeraj to get a 90m throw because he started the competition with a PB and a NR and that was pretty good for the start," Peters said.

"The javelin throw community is really good and I am enjoying every competition. We always motivate each other, we want to make sure that everybody is doing ok. We want everybody to perform well."

"So doing competitions with those guys means a lot to me. The more I compete, the better I become. In Eugene, it will be anybody's game."



Sharath Kamal to lead TT team training tour of Portugal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran Achanta Sharath Kamal will lead a 10-member Indian table tennis team during a training tour of Portugal from July 3 to 10 ahead of the upcoming Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

The team consists of five men and as many women paddlers, and will be accompanied by two coaches in Raman Subramanian and Anindita Chakraborty.

Besides Sharath, the other members of the men's team are Sanil Shetty, Gunnasekaran Sathiyar, Harmmeet Desai and Manush Shah. Sreeja Akula, Reeth Tennison, Manika Batra, Diya Chitale and Swastika Ghosh form the women's side.

The Sports Ministry has sanctioned the tour at cost to government subject to clearance from the Ministry of External Affairs.

Sharath Kamal, who will be featuring in his fifth CWG, is the most experienced of the lot.

"We have come into the final phase of preparation going into the Commonwealth Games. We will be going for match practice and a training camp in Portugal. The tour will be followed by a WTT tournament in Hugar, Sharath said during a virtual press conference organised by the Sports Authority of India.

"We will be playing in a good international tournament. The training camp will help us reevaluate our training session and preparations ahead of the CWG," the 39-year-old said.

He might be at the fag end of his career, but Sharath is still India's best bet in the CWG, having constantly working on his physical fitness and mental health.

"The amount of time I am spending at the gym is much more compared to my table tennis. I am also working on my mental fitness. I am having two fitness session and one table tennis session. It changes according to necessity, intensity varies," he said.

The four-time CWG gold medallist will be partnering Sreeja Akula in the mixed doubles. Sharath won a bronze in the last CWG at Gold Coast along with Mouma Das.

"I have always been a team guy which is a very important thing while playing doubles. For me the most important factor is adaptability. I adapt easily which helps me in doubles," he said.

FIFA to use new high-tech for offside calls at WC

AP ■ GENEVA

FIFA will introduce new technology to improve offside calls at the World Cup in Qatar this year, using a limb-tracking camera system.

FIFA said on Friday it is ready to launch semi-automated offside technology (SAOT) that uses multiple cameras to track player movements plus a sensor in the ball - and will quickly show 3D images on stadium screens at the tournament to help fans understand the referee's call.

It's the third World Cup in a row that sees FIFA introduce new technology to help referees.

Goal-line technology was ready for the 2014 tournament in Brazil after a notorious refereeing error in 2010. In 2018, video review to help referees judge game-changing incidents was rolled out in Russia.

The new offside system promises faster and more accurate decisions than are currently made with the VAR system, even though the 2018 World Cup avoided major mistakes on offside calls.

Sampaoli leaves Marseille

AP ■ PARIS

Argentinian Jorge Sampaoli has left his position as Marseille coach after guiding them back to the Champions League, the French club announced on Friday.

Sampaoli, 62, arrived at the Stade Velodrome in March 2021 and took Marseille to a second-placed finish in Ligue 1 last season.

"After 16 months of collaboration, this work has allowed the club to take the next step in their new sporting project and qualify directly for the Champions League," the club said in a statement.

"We are happy with the path taken and emotions shared but after a lot of consideration, the two parties, who are reacting in the interest of Marseille, agreed to bring this relationship to an end."

In May, colourful former Argentina and Sevilla boss Sampaoli, who also led Chile to the 2015 Copa

America title, said he needed further funds to make the most of featuring in Europe's top tournament.

"Do we want the Champions League for the money or to be competitive?," he told reporters earlier this year.

"Playing the Champions League is about playing great teams."

"Playing a few matches and not really being a part of the competition seems illogical for me."

The 1993 Champions League winners have signed Spartak Moscow centre-back Samuel Gigot and teenager Isaak Toure before returning to the competition for the first time since 2020, when they won just one group game.

But France defensive midfielder Boubacar Kamara has left for Aston Villa on a free transfer and defender William Saliba has returned to Arsenal after his loan spell. Marseille start their new Ligue 1 season on the weekend of August 5-7 by hosting Reims.

Sindhu loses to nemesis Tai Tzu Ying, Prannoy also exits from Malaysia Open

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu crashed out in the women's singles quarter-finals of the Malaysia Open badminton tournament after losing to her nemesis Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei in a hard-fought three-game contest here on Friday.

Sindhu, seeded seventh, squandered a game lead to lose 13-21, 21-15, 21-13 to the second seed Tai Tzu, a silver medallist at the Tokyo Olympics.

By virtue of the win, the Chinese Taipei shuttler extended her domination over the Indian ace, leading 16-5 on head-to-head record. Sindhu has now lost six matches on the trot against Tai Tzu.

Indian challenge ended in the Super 750 event as HS Prannoy also made a quarter-final exit, losing to seventh



seeded Jonatan Christie of Indonesia 18-21, 16-21 in 44-minute men's singles match.

Sindhu, playing against drift, made a slow start and trailed 2-5 in the opening

game. But she soon got her act together and pocketed 11 points on the trot to go into the break leading 11-7.

The Chinese Taipei shuttler tried to make comeback into

the contest by playing long rallies but Sindhu was upto the task to pocket the opening game.

Sindhu started the second game brightly but her fancied rival dominated the proceedings after the early exchanges to lead 11-3 at the break.

Tai Tzu continued in the same vein after the change of ends and extended her lead to 14-3 before Sindhu relied on her powerful smashes to reduce the deficit to 17-15.

Tai Tzu, however, regrouped quickly and pocketed the next four points to draw level in the contest.

It was a close contest in the decider as both the shuttlers fought tooth and nail till 12 points before Tai Tzu put Sindhu under pressure with a mix of drop shots and smashes to clinch the third game and keep her title defence hopes alive.

Richarlison joins Spurs in £60 million deal

AP ■ LONDON

Tottenham completed the signing of Richarlison from Everton on a five-year deal for a fee that could reportedly rise to £60 million (\$73 million) on Friday.

The Brazilian international will add greater depth to the Spurs forward line, although he has a tough task ahead to dislodge either Harry Kane or Son Heung-min from his two favoured positions up front and on the left of the attack.

Tottenham will pay an initial £50 million fee with a further £10 million in performance-related bonuses.

Richarlison becomes Spurs' fourth signing of the transfer window after Croatian winger Ivan Perisic, midfielder Yves Bissouma and goalkeeper Fraser Forster.

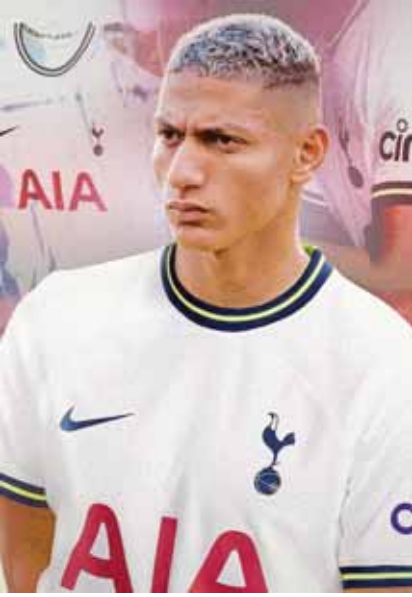
The London club have heavily backed manager Antonio Conte after the Italian secured Champions League football next season.

"We are delighted to announce the signing of Richarlison from Everton, subject to a work permit," Tottenham confirmed in a statement.

"The Brazil international has signed a contract with us until 2027."

Richarlison scored 53 goals in 152 appearances for the Toffees, since joining from Watford for £50 million in 2018.

Six of those goals crucially came in his final nine appearances for the Toffees to keep



them in the Premier League.

Despite staying up, Everton were still under pressure to sell due to financial fair play requirements.

MAN CITY SIGN ORTEGA

Manchester: Stefan Ortega said he is living the dream after the German goalkeeper secured a move to Manchester City on

Friday.

The 29-year-old was a free agent after his contract at Arminia Bielefeld expired and is expected to provide back-up to first-choice stopper Ederson.

"This is a fantastic move for me," said Ortega.

"Manchester City are an amazing team - a squad with world-class quality in every area."

"To be given the chance to join this group of players and help continue the club's success is a dream for me."

Ortega is likely to take the place of American goalkeeper Zack Steffen, who is reportedly set to join Middlesbrough on loan in a bid to get more first team football ahead of the World Cup.

VITINHA JOINS PSG

Paris: Portugal midfielder Vitinha joined Paris Saint-Germain from Porto on Thursday in what is the French champions' first foray into the transfer market.

With PSG still negotiating the exit of coach Mauricio Pochettino and the naming of Christophe Galtier as his likely replacement, Vitinha signed a five-year contract with the French capital club.

Vitinha made his first-team debut for Porto in 2020 before joining English Premier League club Wolverhampton Wanderers on loan for the 2020/21 season and playing 22 games in his first experience abroad.

Tolisso completes return to Lyon



AP ■ LYON

France international midfielder Corentin Tolisso has completed his return to Lyon from Bayern Munich, the French Ligue 1 side announced on Friday.

The 27-year-old, who left Lyon to join Bayern in 2017 for 41.5 million euros, was out of contract with the Bundesliga champions and has signed a five-year deal with the French side.

In a statement the club said that the return of Tolisso was testament to "the great ambitions of Lyon and the desire for the club to win titles again".

Tolisso, a member of the France team that won the 2018 World Cup, won five German Bundesliga titles with Bayern and the Champions League in 2020 but also suffered numerous injuries.

Over the past season, he played just 15 matches, with two goals and an assist.

Amazon secure CL rights in UK for first time



AP ■ LONDON

Amazon has secured live rights to the Champions League in the UK for the first time from 2024.

The technology giant will have the first pick of matches on a Tuesday, with BT Sport retaining the rest of the rights to the Champions League, Europa League and Europa Conference League.

The UK deal is understood to be worth around £500 million (\$607 million) a year to UEFA for the three seasons between 2024 and 2027 -- an increase of

20 percent on the current cycle.

Amazon already holds the UK rights to 20 Premier League matches per season.

"The addition of UEFA Champions League football is a truly momentous moment for Prime Video in the UK," said Alex Green, the managing director of Amazon Prime Video Sport Europe.

A new format to the Champions League will begin in the 2024/25 season with the competition expanded to 36 teams and all clubs playing eight group games.

The "Swiss Model" revamp will see the number of games in the competition overall increase from 125 to 189.

UEFA is aiming for total broadcast revenue from this cycle to reach \$5 billion per season, up from the current \$3.6 billion a year.

Discussions are ongoing between UEFA, the European Clubs Association and the European Leagues group over how that revenue will be divided up.

Jacco Swart, managing director of the European Leagues, has called for a fairer distribution among all European clubs to protect the competitive balance of competition.

Pantastic first day for India



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India rode on a magnificent century from Rishabh Pant to end day one of the rescheduled fifth Test against England at 338 for 8 here on Friday. Pant (146 off 111 balls) and Ravindra Jadeja (83 batting off 163 balls) added 222 runs for the sixth wicket as the duo frustrated the England bowlers. Pant, in his innings, hit 20 fours and four sixes. Mohammed Shami (batting 0) was giving company to Jadeja at stumps. Earlier, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja's counter-attacking partnership helped India recover to 174 for five at tea. Pant (53 batting off 52) and Jadeja

(32 batting off 65) put an unbeaten 76-run stand off 101 balls to script India's fightback. Rain delayed the start of the second session by an hour and England were all over India soon after play resumed, reducing the visitors to 98 for five. While James Anderson did the damaged in the morning, Matthew Potts got the prized wicket of an out of form Virat Kohli (11) and a shaky Hanuma Vihari (20) post lunch to put England on top. Vihari was the first to go after Potts trapped him in front of the stumps with a full ball that darted back sharply. In his following over, Potts sent back Kohli, who dragged one on to his stumps in his half-hearted attempt to

leave the ball. The former India skipper had looked quite assured in the middle until he was caught in two minds while leaving the ball. Shreyas Iyer (15 off 11), playing his first Test outside India, started on an aggressive note by collecting three fours off Potts. However, Anderson and the support staff had done their homework on Iyer, who has had issues against the short ball. The 39-year-old pacer angled one around the rib cage area that induced a faint edge on way to Sam Billings, who took a brilliant one handed catch diving full-stretched to his left. India looked down and out at that stage and fresh lease of life was infused in the innings by the two southpaws, Pant and Jadeja. Pant has made a reputation of taking the attack to the opposition even when chips are down and he just did that in the company of the more experienced Jadeja. Pant made his intent loud and clear by advancing and smashing Anderson down the ground. Jadeja too played his

strokes with the highlight being the straight drive and cover drive off Broad. Put under pressure, Stokes went for the gamble by giving the ball to left-arm spinner Jack Leach. Pant was more than happy to take the bait and hammered left-arm spinner Jack Leach for two fours and a straight six to push India towards 150. He got to his 10th half-century with a four off Leach towards deep square leg. Earlier, England's most decorated pacer Anderson produced probing spells in the rain-hit morning session to reduce India to 53 for two. Rain forced the lunch break 20 minutes before time. Anderson had openers Shubman Gill (17 off 24) and Cheteshwar Pujara (13 off 46) caught by Zak Crawley at second slip to give England the advantage after Stokes opted to 'chase' at Edgbaston. India could have been three down had Crawley held on to a tough chance presented by Vihari off Matthew Potts. In overcast conditions, it was expected to be a tough session for India, who came into the final match of the

series after playing a four-day warm-up game. England, on the other hand, came battle hardened following a morale boosting whitewash of reigning world Test champions New Zealand. Gill promised a lot during his stay in the middle. He began with a boundary with a flick through mid-wicket off Anderson before producing a glorious straight drive. Then came the pull shot off Broad and it seemed Gill was ready for the challenge. However, one is never set while playing in England and a poor shot led to Gill's downfall. Anderson is relentless around the off-stump but this particular ball was on the wider side and Gill could have left it alone but he poked at it to be caught at second slip. After a five-over burst, Anderson returned to dismiss Pujara for the 12th time in his career. Pujara, who got back into the Indian team after a prolific run in county cricket, got a beauty on the off-stump that straightened and bounced off good length to take the outside edge. Pujara had looked solid until he was undone by Anderson's brilliance.

Need Bumrah more as bowler than as a captain: Dravid

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

"Jasprit Bumrah, the match-winning pace bowler" will be required way more than "Jasprit Bumrah, the captain" during the ongoing one-off Test match against England, feels India's head coach Rahul Dravid. Bumrah on Friday, became the 36th player to lead India in Test cricket and only the second pacer-captain after legendary Kapil Dev. "Just relax, we need you more as a bowler than as captain," that's exactly what Dravid told the young skipper, after it became clear that Rohit Sharma won't be available for this game. "I've had a couple of conversations with him in the last few days to tell him to just relax. We need you more as bowler rather than as a cap-

tain," Dravid told the official broadcasters Sony. "I think he is a very thoughtful individual, understands the game very well. Also, he commands the respect of the team, which is very important as a leader," he added. The last pacer-captain that India had was Kapil Dev, who was removed from captaincy in 1987. Since then, India has never had a speed merchant leading the team in traditional cricket. "Bowling changes, field changes obviously will only get better with time. It's a new challenge. It's not easy for a fast bowler to captain, he's got to think about his own bowling too. "Captaincy is something that you'll get better at as you do it more," Dravid added. England have been in sensation-

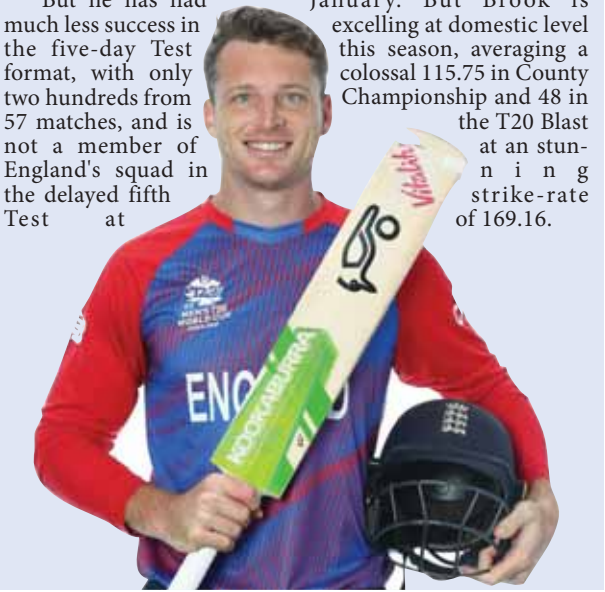
al form under new red-ball coach Brendon McCullum. The Ben Stokes-led side are coming off a 3-0 Test series win over New Zealand. "Lot of talks about England and their style of batting. I'm looking forward to it. The quality we have in our fast bowling is something that we take pride in. They have performed all over the world and I think it's going to be an interesting contest. It's about focusing on ourselves, than on the opposition." Bowling on off-stump channel consistently will be important, said Dravid. "Hitting the top of off stump is still a very good ball and it's about hitting that spot consistently. If they (England) have the skill to attack our best deliveries, then good luck to them," Dravid said.

No red ball in my bag, says Buttler

AP ■ LONDON

Newly-appointed England limited-overs captain Jos Buttler accepts his Test cricket career is on hold, with "no red ball in my bag", as he prepares to concentrate on white-ball internationals. Buttler succeeded Eoin Morgan as England skipper in the ODI and T20I formats after the 2019 50-over World Cup-winning captain announced his retirement from international cricket on Tuesday. The dynamic 31-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman had been vice-captain to Morgan, who cut short his Test career to focus on white-ball cricket, since 2015. World Cup winner Buttler, a star of the Indian Premier League, is a formidable run-scorer in limited overs cricket, where his fierce hitting has helped him compile 4,120 runs from 151 ODIs, including 10 hundreds. But he has had much less success in the five-day Test format, with only two hundreds from 57 matches, and is not a member of England's squad in the delayed fifth Test at

Edgbaston. It had been suggested Buttler — a middle-order batsman in red-ball cricket — could replace struggling opener Zak Crawley in an England Test side now being captained by multi-format all-rounder Ben Stokes. Buttler is set to take charge of 12 games in July, with T20 and ODI series against India and South Africa. His first major global event as captain will be the T20 World Cup in Australia in October, with England defending their 50-over crown in India next year. England named their squads for the upcoming white-ball series at home to India on Friday, with in-form Yorkshire batsman Harry Brook included for both of the T20 and ODI campaigns. The 23-year-old's international experience is limited to one T20 against the West Indies in Barbados in January. But Brook is excelling at domestic level this season, averaging a colossal 115.75 in County Championship and 48 in the T20 Blast at an stunning strike-rate of 169.16.



Krunal Pandya to play for Warwickshire



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Out-of-favour India all-rounder Krunal Pandya will play for leading English county Warwickshire in the Royal London Cup One Day championship from August 2-23, the county club confirmed. Krunal, elder brother of star all-rounder Hardik Pandya, has played in 19 T20Is and five

ODIs and in total has featured in 76 List A matches scoring 2,231 runs and taken 89 wickets. "Krunal is an incredible signing for the club, and I'm delighted to welcome him to Edgbaston. Krunal will bring a wealth of international experience to a team that will be desperate to do well," Director of Cricket, Paul Farbrace was quoted as saying in a media statement. The 31-year-old Krunal, a left-arm spinner and left-handed batter made his ODI debut in 2021 against England, where he struck the fastest half-century in 26 balls in history by a debutant in ODI cricket. Farbrace termed Krunal as a "world renowned all-rounder". Krunal, who has won multiple IPL trophies with Mumbai Indians, played for Lucknow Super Giants, during last edition. On his part, Krunal said, "I'm extremely excited to get the opportunity to play county cricket and to join such a history Club as Warwickshire."

India women win 1st ODI by 4 wickets

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

The experienced Deepti Sharma shone with the bat after her exploits with the ball, coming to the Indian women's team's rescue in a tricky chase for a four-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the first ODI here on Friday. In the company of Pooja Vastrakar (21 not out), Deepti (22 not out) guided the team home in 38 overs after being set an easy target of 172, in Harmanpreet Kaur's first match as full-time ODI captain. Cruising at 123 for three, India nearly made heavy weather of what seemed a comfortable run-chase after Harmanpreet departed for a well-made 44, slipping to 138 for six. But Deepti and Vastrakar ensured India emerged winners. India bowled out Sri Lanka for 171 in 48.2 overs, and then chased down the target with 12 overs to spare. The three-match series is part of the ICC ODI Championship. Harmanpreet took over the reins in the 50-over format after the recent retirement of long-time skipper Mithali Raj. Thanks to the Indian bowlers' excellent show in the series opener, Sri



Lanka's decision to bat first on winning the toss did not yield the desired result. Seasoned off-spinner Deepti and

medium pacer Renuka Singh (3/29) were the wreckers-in-chiefs, finishing with impressive figures of 3/25 and 3/29 respectively.

Staying calm helps Harman in decision-making: Deepti

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Indian women's team off-spinner Deepti Sharma feels skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's ability to "stay calm" at almost all times helps in her decision-making in the middle. In Harmanpreet's first match as full-time ODI captain, the experienced Deepti produced an all-round show to lift India to a four-wicket victory, following a tricky run-chase in the first ODI against Sri Lanka here on Friday. Asked about Harmanpreet's captaincy in the 50-over format, Deepti said, "She always stays cool, whether it's T20 or one-dayers. She is leading the team very well. Staying calm helps in taking better decisions, and we are enjoying her captaincy as a team." Cruising at 123 for three, India nearly made heavy weather of what seemed a comfortable run-chase of 172 after Harmanpreet departed for a well-made 44, slipping to 138 for

six. But Deepti (22 not out) and Pooja Vastrakar (21 not out) ensure India emerged winners with plenty of overs to spare. This was after Deepti returned excellent figures of 3/25. "We knew how the wicket was behaving, and we worked hard on partnerships. Our plan was to take 3-4 runs per over and we knew that we could build on a partnership that way and finish the game quickly," Deepti said at the post-match press conference. Deepti has been pilloried a lot for her slow batting and the all-rounder feels that she has developed new strokes that will help her in the long run. "I worked a lot on my batting and bowling both before the camp, also developed shots, and you all must have seen it here. My role remains the same, to finish games for the team, and the more I do that, the better it is for the team."

Aus crush Sri Lanka by 10 wickets in 1st Test

AP ■ GALLE

Spinner Nathan Lyon starred with a match haul of nine wickets as Australia wrapped up the opening Test on Friday with a crushing victory over Sri Lanka before lunch on the third day. The hosts were bundled out for 113 in their second innings allowing the Australians to seal a 10-wicket victory in their first over back at the crease in Galle. Lyon, whose five-for helped bowl out Sri Lanka for 212 in the first innings, and fellow spinner Travis Head took four wickets each to send the hosts packing before the morning was over. It was a huge victory for Australia, who suffered a 3-0 whitewash in Sri Lanka on their last tour in 2016. Sri Lanka suffered a blow before play began when Angelo Mathews was ruled out due to Covid-19, with Oshada Fernando named his replacement. Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne started strong, smashing four boundaries in the 17-run first over of the innings



off Mitchell Starc. But the tables soon turned when Lyon and fellow spinner Mitchell Swepson took charge. Lyon got skipper Karunaratne caught behind for 23 after just 20 balls while Swepson trapped Pathum Nissanka lbw for 14. The leg-spinner then got Oshada caught out in the 12th over as Sri Lanka slipped to 63-4. Wickets kept tumbling with Sri Lanka's batsmen desperately trying to hit their way out of trouble. Head, a left-handed bats-

man and an occasional off-spinner, struck twice in his first over to claim Dinesh Chandimal and Dhananjaya de Silva. Swashbuckling opener David Warner brought an easy finish to formalities, hitting a four and a six off Ramesh Mendis to bring up the win in four balls. Earlier in the day, fast bowler Asitha Fernando took Australia's last two first-innings wickets with the tourists adding eight to their overnight 313, for a commanding lead of 109. The second and final Test begins July 8 at the same venue.

Isner sets new world record for aces

AP ■ LONDON

John Isner found his serving groove early in his Wimbledon match against Italy's Jannik Sinner on Friday to set a new record for the number of aces on the ATP Tour. The giant American, 37, started his match against the 10th seed four aces behind Croatia's Ivo Karlovic, who has served 13,728. Isner, who dumped Andy Murray out in the previous round, broke the record in the third game of his match on Court Two with his fifth ace. Record-keeping began in 1991. "It's actually really cool," Isner said ahead of Friday's match, looking ahead to breaking the record. "It's something I'm really proud of. I will be the all-time leader. I'll keep playing, keep adding to my total... I don't know if (the record) will get broken. I could be up there for a long time." Isner, who stands six feet 10 inches (208 centimetres) tall, is also in the record books for taking part in the longest match in tennis history in 2010, against Frenchman Nicolas Pietrangeli. A plaque was unveiled outside Court 18 at Wimbledon to commemorate the contest, which lasted 11 hours and five minutes. "Give him another plaque," US



tennis great John McEnroe said on ESPN. **STEFANOS VS KYRGIOS** Stefanos Tsitsipas takes on Nick Kyrgios in a blockbuster clash at Wimbledon on Saturday, with the winner likely to be the main obstacle in Rafael Nadal's path to the final. Fourth seed Tsitsipas is the only other top-10 player left in Nadal's side of the draw, while fiery Australian

Kyrgios is a match for anybody on his day. Tsitsipas's confidence is sky-high after he clinched his first grass-court title in Mallorca last week and he now has an 8-2 record on the surface this season. The Greek player is facing a man he has beaten just once in four matches. Kyrgios, who came out on top when the two players met in Halle last month, has been making waves at Wimbledon on and off the court. His opening win over Britain's Paul Jubb was marred by his admission that he spat in the direction of fans, whom he accused of being disrespectful, and he also took aim at officials. The 27-year-old, who was fined \$10,000 over Tuesday's incidents, has been also in a testy mood in his post-match press conferences but he remains bullish. "I just feel like I'm comfortable in my own skin," the 40th-ranked player said after his straight-sets win over Filip Krajinovic. "Some people love to just tear me down. It's just not possible anymore." Tsitsipas, who reached the fourth round in 2018, said he was "thrilled" to be facing Kyrgios, who beat Nadal on his way to the quarter-finals in 2014.

Salah signs new Liverpool deal



AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Mohamed Salah ended speculation over his Liverpool future on Friday by signing a new contract that will reportedly run until 2025. Salah, who has scored 156 goals in 254 appearances for Liverpool, had entered the final year of his previous contract with talks stalling over the 30-year-old's wage demands. However, the Egypt forward said he has more trophies at Anfield in his sights after finally putting pen to paper. "I feel great and excited to win trophies with the club. It's a happy day for everyone," Salah told Liverpool's website. "It takes a little bit of time, I think, to renew, but now everything is done so we just need to focus on what's next." Since joining from Roma in 2017, Salah has become a fundamental part of Jurgen Klopp's side, helping establish them as serial contenders for domestic and European success.