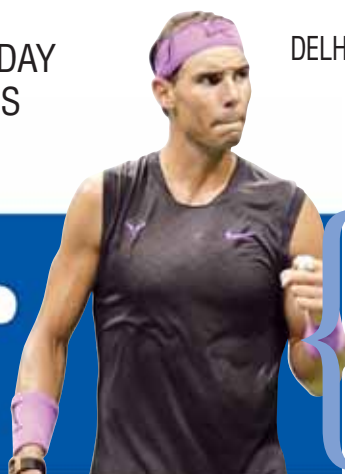


**OPINION 6**  
POVERTY CONTINUES  
TO BE AN ANATHEMA**WORLD 9**  
RUSSIA TAKING 'OPERATIONAL  
PAUSE' IN UKRAINE: ANALYSTS**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX CLIMBS FOR 2ND DAY  
AMID FIRM GLOBAL CUES

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY JULY 8, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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NADAL TO FACE  
KYRGIOS IN  
WIMBLEDON SF  
11 SPORT

# Boris blames party's herd instinct, quits

Indian-origin  
Suella Braverman  
early contender  
for UK PM race

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Thursday said he was sad to announce his resignation as Conservative Party leader, triggering a leadership election for a new Tory leader who will go on to become the new PM.

Johnson, 58, said he will remain in charge at 10 Downing Street until the process of electing a new leader is completed — expected by the time of the Conservative Party conference scheduled for October.

Johnson said, "I want you to know how sad I am to be giving up the best job in the world."

He blamed the "herd instinct" of his party as he delivered his resignation speech on the doorstep of 10 Downing Street.

"It is clearly now the will of the parliamentary Conservative Party that there should be a new leader of that party and therefore a new Prime Minister," he said.

Indian-origin Suella



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks to the media next to 10 Downing Street in London on Thursday

PTI

Braverman, currently the Attorney General in the UK Cabinet, is among the early Tory members of Parliament to formally declare her leadership bid. The 42-year-old barrister and the government's senior-most legal official is likely to command some support within the pro-Brexit wing of her party.

"I am putting myself forward because I believe that the 2019 manifesto is fit for purpose, presents a bold and inspiring vision for our country and I want to deliver on the promises contained in that

manifesto. I want to embed the opportunities of Brexit and tidy up the outstanding issues...and cut taxes," said Braverman, who is of Goan ancestry.

Johnson said: "I have agreed with Sir Graham Brady, the chairman of our back-bench MPs that the process of choosing that new leader should begin now and the timetable will be announced next week and I have today appointed a Cabinet to serve as I will until a new leader is in place," he said.

Continued on Page 2

## We need to resolve all LAC issues early: Jaishankar to Wang

**Mutual respect, sensitivity and interest must be basis of bilateral ties, says EAM**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday conveyed to China the need for an early resolution of all outstanding issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh and said that bilateral ties should be based on mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interest.

India's stand was conveyed by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in an hour-long meeting on Thursday with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Bali on the sidelines of a conclave of Foreign Ministers of the G20 nation.

"Began my day in Bali by meeting FM Wang Yi of China. Discussion lasted one hour. Focused on specific outstanding issues in our bilateral relationship pertaining to the border situation. Also spoke about other matters, including students and flights," Jaishankar tweeted.

Jaishankar and Wang looked forward to the next round of military talks between



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during their bilateral meeting ahead of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia on Thursday

PTI

the two sides at an early date to resolve the border issue.

Jaishankar also discussed with Wang the vexed issue of the return of Indian students to China and the resumption of direct flights between the two countries.

On the discussions on the border row, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Jaishankar reaffirmed the importance of "fully abiding" by bilateral agreements and protocols, and the understandings reached between him and Wang in their previous conversations.

"The External Affairs Minister called for an early resolution of all the outstanding issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh," the MEA said in a statement.

Continued on Page 2

## Vivo remitted ₹62,476 cr to China for tax evasion: ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said the Indian arm of Chinese smart phone maker Vivo and its associated companies "remitted" ₹62,476 crore out of the total sale proceeds of ₹1,25,185 crore, out of India, mainly to China to "avoid paying taxes here."

"These (associated) companies are found to have transferred huge amounts of funds to Vivo India. Further, out of the total sale proceeds of ₹1,25,185 crore, Vivo India remitted ₹62,476 crore, i.e., almost 50 per cent of the turnover out of India, mainly to China. These remittances were made in order to disclose huge losses in Indian incorporated companies to avoid payment of taxes in India," the agency said in its statement.

The ED further said, "All due procedures as per law were followed during the said operations at each premise. The employees of Vivo India, including some Chinese Nationals did not cooperate with the search proceedings and had tried to abscond, remove and hide digital devices which were retrieved by the search teams."

Meanwhile, China expressed hope that India will conduct a fair investigation.

Detailed report on P4

## CBI arrests Power Grid ED, Tata Projects officials in graft case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday arrested an executive director (ED) of Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCIL) and five officials of Tata Projects Ltd, Noida, including an executive vice president and an assistant VP, in connection with alleged bribery to favour the private firm in contracts and other works, including preparation of inflated bills.

The agency arrested the accused — PGCIL's BS Jha, and Tata Projects' executive vice president and head (Transmission and Distribution), Desh Raj Pathak, assistant VP and business head-distribution, RN Singh and its three other officials — after conducting searches at 11 locations on Wednesday which continued till Thursday, officials said.

Post-searches, the CBI recovered ₹93 lakh from the premises of Jha in Gurugram, they said. The searches were conducted at 11 premises of the accused persons located in Gurugram, Noida and Ghaziabad which led to recovery of numerous incriminating documents, materials and digital devices among others.

The CBI had received source information about the

alleged bribery in electricity projects following which Jha, who was posted in Itanagar, was put under surveillance. During the surveillance, it surfaced that Jha was allegedly receiving bribes from the executives of Tata Projects for granting favours, the officials said. The CBI action followed the registration of an FIR against Jha, Pathak and Singh.

The CBI has also named the company Tata Projects Ltd, Noida and its three other officials — Nafeez Hussain Khan, Randheer Kumar Singh and Sandeep Kumar Dubey — as accused in the FIR.

"It was alleged that the public servant (Jha) in conspiracy with others was involved in extending favours to the said company (Tata Projects) for various work viz, preparation of inflated bills, early clearing of bills, price variation clause, etc, related to contracts of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited in lieu of demand and acceptance of illegal gratification," the CBI said in a statement.

It was further alleged that Tata Projects Ltd, Noida, has bagged tenders, pertaining to a comprehensive scheme for Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, from Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd.

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

**BABBAR GETS 2-YEAR JAIL FOR ASSAULTING OFFICER**  
Lucknow: A court here awarded two-year jail to Bollywood actor and Congress leader Raj Babbar in a case involving the assault of a polling officer.

**RAILWAY MIN TERMINATES NHSRCL MD'S TENURE**  
New Delhi: The Railway Ministry on Thursday terminated the services of NHRCL Managing Director Satish Agnihotri, who was in charge of the Government's prestigious bullet train project.

**SC TO HEAR ZUBAIR'S BAIL PLEA TODAY**  
New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to hear on Friday the bail plea of Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair in a case registered in UP for allegedly outraging religious feelings.



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Gurpreet Kaur during their wedding ceremony in Chandigarh on Thursday

PTI

## India raps Germany for 'uninformed' comments on Zubair's arrest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has slammed Germany's comments on fact-checker Mohammed Zubair's arrest. India on Thursday said the independence of the country's judiciary is well recognised and that "uninformed" comments are "unhelpful" and should be avoided.

The comments by External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi came a day after a German foreign ministry official said journalists should not be "persecuted and imprisoned" for what they say and write while referring to police action against Zubair.

Continued on Page 2

## British gave India edu system to create servant class: Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during inauguration and foundation laying of various projects, at Sampurnanand stadium in Varanasi on Thursday. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are also seen

PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI/ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the British gave the country an education system to create a servant class for meeting their own needs and a lot of it still remained unchanged.

The PM said the purpose of the education system created in the country was only to provide jobs, while the system should not just produce degree-holders but provide human resources needed to take the country forward.

"The British provided this

education system to prepare a servant class for themselves to meet their needs. After Independence there were some changes in it but a lot remained," Modi said at the inauguration of a three-day meeting organised by the Union Education Ministry with the University Grants Commission and Banaras Hindu University.

In his first visit to his Varanasi constituency after the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, the PM also inaugurated the Akshaya Patra Mid-day meal kitchen here.

Continued on Page 2

## Mullah Omar's getaway car excavated, to be put on display in Kabul



AFP ■ KANDAHAR

"This vehicle was buried by the mujahideen as a memorial to Omar in 2001 to avoid it being lost," he said.

Taliban media officials published pictures of the car being dug from its vehicular grave by men using hand shovels. The Taliban want the car to be displayed in the capital's national museum as a "great historical monument", Hamad added.

The Taliban were formed in Kandahar by Omar, who led the headline Islamist movement to power in 1996 after a bloody civil war, and imposed a strict interpretation of Islamic law on the country.

Afghanistan then became a sanctuary for jihadist groups, including Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda, the architects of the September 11 attacks.

When the Taliban refused to hand over bin Laden, the US and its allies launched air strikes on Afghanistan, before invading, removing the Taliban from power and installing a new government.

Taliban officials said this week that Mullah Omar made his getaway from Kandahar in the Toyota Corolla.

Continued on Page 2

### IN RAINY SEASON

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# HC seeks jail record of Chautala in assets case

Ex-Haryana CM challenges his conviction, sentencing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



tence of four years, claiming that he has already sent five years in prison in connection with the case. "Let me call for the nominal roll. I will give a short date," said the judge and the case was listed for further hearing on July 25. The senior lawyer challenged the trial court order on the ground that the trial and the conviction were based on two different quantum of disproportionate assets.

On May 27, Special Judge Vikas Dhull had convicted Chautala and awarded a four-year jail term to him while also imposing a fine of Rs 50 lakh on the convict in the case of acquiring disproportionate

assets from 1993 to 2006. The trial court had also directed the authorities concerned to confiscate four of his properties. While convicting Chautala, it had said the accused had failed to satisfactorily account for such dis-proportionality by proving his source of income or means by way of which, he acquired assets during this period. The CBI had filed the case in 2005, and a charge sheet was filed on March 26, 2010, accusing him of amassing assets disproportionate to his legitimate income, between 1993 and 2006.

According to the CBI's FIR Chautala, while functioning as Chief Minister of Haryana during the period from July 24, 1999, to March 5, 2005, in collusion with his family members and others, accumulated assets, immovable and movable, disproportionate to his known lawful sources of income, in his name and in the names of his family members.

# HC rejects plea for suspension of Jain as Delhi Minister

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Thursday dismissed a plea seeking suspension of Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain, who is in jail after being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case, as a Cabinet Minister.

A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad rejected the plea by former BJP MLA Nand Kishore Garg.

"We know our limitations. We have to obey the statutes, rules, and notifications. We cannot travel beyond that. We are not the lawmakers," the bench said.

The petition said Jain was arrested in the money laundering case on the allegation of his involvement in hawala transactions in 2015-2016 with a Kolkata-based firm which is repugnant and inconsistent

with the rule of law as he is a public servant having a constitutional oath to uphold the rule of law in the interest of the public at large.

"However, the Minister under custody is still enjoying the perks and privileges of Cabinet Minister despite having been allegedly indicted under the serious charges which may entail severe punishment," the petitioner, through advocate Shashank Deo Sudhi, said.

The plea claimed the factual scenario, in this case, is also contrary to the provision of law applicable to the public servant who is deemed suspended immediately after the custody of more than 48 hours as per Rule 10 of The Central Civil Services (Classification, Control, and Appeal) Rules, 1965. "Further, the preferential treatment for Minister under custody strikes to Article 14 of the Constitution," it said.

# India raps Germany for 'uninformed' comments...

**From Page 1**

"In itself it's a domestic issue. Let me emphasise that there is a judicial process underway in this case and I don't think it would be appropriate for me, or anyone else, to comment on a case that is sub-judice," Bagchi said.

"I think the independence of our judiciary is well recognised and uninformed comments are unhelpful and should be avoided," he added.

Bagchi was asked at a media briefing about the remarks by the German Foreign Ministry spokesperson. The German official said free reporting is beneficial to any society and restrictions are a cause for concern.

"Journalists should not be persecuted and imprisoned for what they say and write. We are indeed aware of this specific case and our Embassy in New Delhi is monitoring it very closely," the German Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

He said the European Union has a human rights dialogue with India and the freedom of expression and freedom of the press are a focus of those discussions.

"India describes itself as the world's largest democracy. So one can expect democratic values like freedom of expression and freedom of the press to be given the necessary space there," the German spokesperson said. Zubair, the co-founder of fact-checking website Alt News, was arrested late last month over an "objectionable tweet" he posted in 2018.

The video of the German Foreign Ministry spokesperson's comments was shared on Twitter by Richard Walker, chief international editor at Deutsche Welle.

# We need to resolve early all LAC...

**From Page 1**

Recalling the disengagement achieved in some friction areas, Jaishankar reiterated the need to sustain the momentum to complete disengagement from all the remaining areas to restore peace and tranquillity in border areas.

"He reaffirmed the importance of fully abiding by bilateral agreements and protocols, and the understandings reached between the two Ministers during their previous

conversations," the MEA said. "In this regard, both Ministers affirmed that the military and diplomatic officials of the two sides should continue maintaining regular contact and looked forward to the next round of senior commanders' meeting at an early date," it said. Jaishankar also reiterated that the India-China relationship is best served by observing the three mutuals - mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests.

The MEA said Jaishankar also recalled his meeting with Wang in Delhi in March and reviewed the progress of some key issues discussed then, including the return of students.

# Boris...

**From Page 1**

The outgoing leader reiterated he had been given an "incredible mandate" at the 2019 general election, which was "the reason I have fought so hard in the last few days to continue to deliver that mandate in person."

"I felt it was my job, my duty, my obligation to you to continue to do what we promised in 2019," he said.

Referring to the high drama of the last few days, Johnson said he had tried to persuade his colleagues that it would be "eccentric" to change governments with such a "vast mandate" and when the Tories are only a "handful of points" behind in the polls and when the economic scene is so difficult

cult domestically and internationally.

He added: "I regret not to have been successful in those arguments and of course it is painful not to be able to see through so many ideas and projects myself.

"As we have seen at Westminster, the herd instinct is powerful and when the herd moves, it moves and my friends in politics no one is remotely indispensable and our brilliant Darwinian system will produce another leader, equally committed to taking this country forward through tough times."

The move came after days of high drama and a steady stream of resignations from his Cabinet since Tuesday and just minutes after his newly appointed Chancellor to replace Rishi Sunak wrote a public letter calling for him to 'go now'.

Nadhim Zahawi, the Iraqi-origin minister seen as a frontrunner to replace Johnson in 10 Downing Street, wrote a damning letter which openly questioned his boss' authority and demanded his exit. While not officially resigning from his new Cabinet post, the 55-year-old minister said the time was up for Boris Johnson.

"Prime minister, you know in your heart what the right thing to do is, and go now," he signs off.

His demand followed over 50 resignations since Johnson's apology on Tuesday, after days of changing messages from Downing Street over the hiring and handling of the now-suspended Chris Pincher, who quit as Deputy Chief Whip in charge of Tory party discipline last week after admitting drunken misconduct.

It comes in the wake of the partygate scandal of COVID law-breaking parties in Downing Street, which had resulted in a no-confidence vote last month which Johnson just survived.

His resignation will now trigger a fierce leadership battle within the Conservative Party.

# Mullah Omar's...

**From Page 1**

He died in hiding in 2013, although officials kept his death secret for several years.

After two decades of attempting to hold back a bloody insurgency, Washington withdrew the last of its troops last year as the Taliban swept across the country, seized Kabul and returned to power.

# CBI arrests Power...

**From Page 1**

According to the information, which became the basis for the FIR, Tata Projects was given the contracts under World Bank-funded North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project, a comprehensive scheme for improving power infrastructure of the region, officials said.

"We adhere to strong norms in all our business transactions and have zero tolerance to any compromise on the same. We would extend our complete support to the relevant

authorities," a spokesperson of Tata Projects claimed in a statement. Officials in the Power Grid Corporation claimed that Jha was posted as Executive Director in the Comprehensive T and D Scheme of Arunachal Pradesh.

The role of Desh Raj Pathak, Executive Vice President and SBU Head (Transmission & Distribution) India, SAARC and SEA at Tata Projects Limited; and R N Singh, AVP Business Head-Distribution came to the fore while the CBI was keeping an eye on Jha's activities.

All the six arrested accused were produced before Panchkula court on Thursday which sent them to CBI custody till July 15, the CBI added.

# British gave India edu system to create servant class...

**From Page 1**

The kitchen at the LT College has a capacity of cooking Mid-day meals for around 1 lakh students, they said.

During his visit, Modi also laid foundation stone for development projects worth Rs 1,774 crore focused on improving infrastructure and ease of living.

Modi said children now cite Google to counter others. "We should create a system in our campuses that when these students arrive there in the next few years they get what they want. We have to delve into the details of the challenges and problems and find solutions. The NEP is opening doors for education in Indian languages. I have confidence that India

could emerge as a world education destination," he said in his address at the summit in Varanasi on the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP).

The Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Samagam will adopt a "Varanasi Declaration on Higher Education", highlighting India's commitment to achieving higher education goals. The PM said "innovative thoughts and new ideas" should be discussed at the summit. He urged partnerships between the Government and the universities, asking them to identify areas of their expertise and offer advice.

"You should identify problems, resources and solutions to them within a 50-100 km

# NCRPULSE

**CLASS XII GIRL STUDENT STABBED AT TILAK NAGAR**  
**New Delhi:** A class 12 girl on way to her school was stabbed by a 22-year-old man following a quarrel between them in West Delhi's Tilak Nagar on Thursday. Police said that the duo live nearby and have been friends for the last "two to three years".

**2 HELD FOR KILLING MAN IN ROAD RAGE CASE**  
**New Delhi:** A 36-year-old man and his nephew have been arrested for allegedly killing a man in a road rage incident at Gandhi Nagar in east Delhi. The accused have been identified as Piyush and his 20-year-old nephew Deepanshu. The incident took place in the Samaspur area on July 3. According to police, Piyush was going to Ganes Nagar on a scooter on the day of the incident. A quarrel took place after victim Nikhil Sharma (20) and his friend touched the accused's vehicle near a wine shop.

**45-YEAR-OLD MAN SHOT DEAD IN GOVINDPURI**  
**New Delhi:** A 45-year-old man was shot dead by two unidentified bike-rumor assailants in front of his family in southeast Delhi's Govindpuri. The incident occurred on Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Sanjeev Kumar, a bus driver with the DTC.

**22-YR-OLD MAN ARRESTED FOR ONLINE DUPING**  
**New Delhi:** A 22-year-old man was arrested for allegedly duping a person through a logistics services provider app on the pretext of arranging a truck for him for transportation of goods. The accused Y. Hariharan, resident of Hastinapur in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh, is engaged in providing white wash service, they said. Police said the matter came to light on May 31 when the victim filed a complaint.

**FOUNDATION STONE OF AUTOMATED CAR PARKING LAID**  
**New Delhi:** Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena laid the foundation stone of an automated puzzle car parking in the Punjabi Bagh area here, officials said on Thursday. The parking facility being built by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in a 5,000 sqm plot, adjacent to the Ring Road, will accommodate 225 cars, they said.

**MIN REVIEWS SEWER SAFAI YOJANA PROGRESS**  
**New Delhi:** Delhi Cabinet Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam held a meeting with Delhi Jal Board Vice-chairperson Saurabh Bhardwaj to review the progress of Mukhyamantri Sewer Safai Yojana, which was brought to prevent any unfortunate incidents from happening to the workers performing sewerage work in Delhi.

**49 SCHEMES TO DEVELOP CITY VILLAGES OK'D**  
**New Delhi:** To ensure development in villages in the Capital, the Kejriwal Government's Delhi village Development Board has sanctioned 49 schemes, including for improving roads, drains, water bodies, community centres, parks, cremation centres, playgrounds etc, to be implemented in the village areas worth Rs 70.68 Crore. Development Minister, Gopal Rai said that the Government will take all necessary steps to improve the condition of roads, parks, small drains and multipurpose community halls in all village areas.

**HEAD CONSTABLE HELD FOR ACCEPTING ₹10 K BRIBE**  
**Gurgaon:** Sleuths of the Haryana Vigilance Bureau nabbed a head constable posted at Gwal Pahari Chowk under the DLF Phase-1 police station while accepting a bribe of ₹10,000 as monthly from a truck driver here on Thursday. The accused, identified as head constable Sunil Kumar, had demanded ₹10,000 from the complainant, a resident of Nangal Chaudhary in Mahendragarh district. Jaipal Singh, Inspector of the Haryana State Vigilance, here, said a complaint was received against Sunil.

**GOVT WILL ENROLL 'PRYAVARAN MITRAS': MIN**  
**New Delhi:** Delhi's Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday said that the city Government will register people working or willing to work for environmental protection as 'pariyavaran mitras' and form ward-level teams. Addressing a press conference, Rai said that people's cooperation is necessary for implementation of the government's plan and policies to deal with pollution-related problems.

**FIRE BREAKS OUT IN JANAKPURI, 5 RESCUED**  
**New Delhi:** Five people, including two women, were rescued after a fire broke out in a four-storey building in west Delhi's Janakpuri area on Thursday. They were hospitalised as they complained of breathlessness. A firefighter also sustained a minor injury during the rescue operation.

**HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FOR LGBTQ+**  
**New Delhi:** First specialised scholarship for LGBTQIA+ students for higher education abroad have been announced by GradRight, an ed-fintech startup. The startup intends to offer scholarships worth Rs 2,00,000 for higher education in the world's top 500 universities.



Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari conferring an honorary degree of Doctor of Science on Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari at the 36th Convocation of the Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyaapeeth at Akola in Maharashtra on Thursday

radius of the university," he said, also suggesting that students could study the impact of government schemes in these areas. He said the education system should keep pace with a changing world and prepare the youth for it.

"In the coming 15-20 years, India will be in the hands of these children and we should think about how we are preparing them. This is our great responsibility."

Modi said the system should prepare children for the future at the age when they are curious.

"The era that imposed anything without understanding has gone. We have a blueprint for education, institutions and human resources, keeping this in mind. The children should be made skilled according to their talent. The education policy is preparing the ground for this." "In a country of so many diversities, the NEP should be welcomed," he said, adding that usually governments just draft a document, and leave the matter at that. We didn't let that happen. We have kept this National Education Policy alive every moment," he said.

Modi talked about the entry of private players in areas like space technology, saying earlier only the government was involved in them. Sectors once closed to women are now showcasing their talent, he said.

"Many new colleges, universities, IITs and IIMs are opening in the country. There has been an increase of 55 per cent in the number of medical colleges after 2014," he said, referring to the year his first Government came to power. The PM stressed the importance of fieldwork, urging evidence-based research.

He also asked for research on utilising India's demographic dividend and called for finding solutions for ageing societies elsewhere in the world. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also attended the summit.

**D.A.V. S.M.C. (SOCIETY)**  
दिनांक 24.07.2022 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे द.डी.वी. एस.एम.सी. कमेटी सोसाइटी (र.न.एस.-465) शमापुर, दिल्ली-42 का चुनाव बूट बाबा के प्रांगण में होगा। अधिक जानकारी के लिए चुनाव अधिकारी मो नं. 8368355789 से सम्पर्क करें।

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of 'Bharatiya Pravasi Janata Party'. The office of the Party is Located at 407, DLF Centre Point, Main Mahura Road, Metro Piller No. 845 Sector-11, Faridabad (Delhi NCR) 121006. This Party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951- Name/Address of the office bearers of the Party are as follows:  
**President/Chairman : Dr. AJAY TIWARI**  
**General Secretary/Secretary : SAPNA TIWARI**  
**Treasurer : SANTOSH TIWARI**  
Add : J-86, DLF, Sector-10, Faridabad-121006  
If any one has any objection to the registration of 'Bharatiya Pravasi Janata Party' they may send their Objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110031 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The public in General is hereby notified that Smt. Ved Kumari W/o Late Sh. Kishan Lal Vig, R/o XV/72, Gali No. 2 & 3, Joshi Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, had executed a WILL, dated: 23.03.2006, in favor of her son Sh. Harish Mohan Vig. To the execution of all his/her legal heirs in respect of her property bearing no. R/o XV/72, partially built up 1st Floor, with its roof rights Gali No. 2, Joshi Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, with the occupancy right of entire flat with its roof rights. Any person having and right, title, claim or interest in the said flat by way of sale, inheritance, possession, succession, mortgage, lien, lease, gift or otherwise shall intimate his/her objection in writing to the Sub-Registrar within three days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which claim, objection by any one shall be considered & shall be deemed to have waived/abandoned and the Sub-Registrar-III, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi-110002, shall free to proceed to register above Will Sh. Harish Mohan Vig. (Beneficiary).

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, Kranti wife of Late Mr. Ramesh Chand Residents of House No. F-198 Dakshin Puri New Delhi 110062, I have changed my name from Kranti Devi to Mrs. Kranti for all the future purposes.  
PD(90123)A

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Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005  
Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.  
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	M/s Mahalaxmi Agencies/ Mohit Singhal/ Suman Singhal/ A/c No. 695505600328	Plot No-3 F, 1/21, Nehru Nagar Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh/ July 05, 2022	February 23, 2022 36,48,654.56/-	Ghaziabad
2.	M/s The Kore Projects & Logistics Pvt Ltd/ Sanjeev Kumar Singh/ Pratiksha Singh/ Arvind Mishra/ A/c No. 039955000009 & 039905005489	Flat No. 7252 First Floor Sector B, Pocket 10 Vasant Kunj New Delhi 110070/ 04 June 06, 2022	March 05, 2022 Rs. 323,48/- 1,90,16,323.48/-	Gurgaon & New Delhi

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
Date : July 08, 2022  
Place: Ghaziabad  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
On Dated 08.07.2022. I, Satish Kumar Dudeja S/o Late Sh. Padam Lal, R/o H. No. 1E-52, N.I.T. Faridabad, Tehsil Badkhal, District Faridabad, Haryana PIN- 121001. I do solemnly declare the followings. That my father Sh. Padam Lal S/o Lt. Sh. Sewa Ram had passed away on Dated 12-06-1986 & my mother Smt. Sundri Bai W/o Sh. Padam Lal had also passed away on Dated 10-08-1993. I also assure that my father Sh. Padam Lal & my mother Smt. Sundri Bai have the following Legal heirs after their death: 1- Prem Prakash Dudeja (Son) 2- Satish Kumar Dudeja (Son) 3- Rajinder Kumar Dudeja (Son) 4- Vinod Kumar Dudeja (Son) 5- Krishnavanti (Daughter) 6- Manju Bala (Daughter) 7- (Late) Sudesh Tanwar (Daughter). That my sister Sudesh Tanwar had passed away on Dated 11-07-2002 and his husband Gulshan Tanwar had also passed away. After her death there are two Legal Heirs. 1- Manish Tanwar (Son) 2- Sapna Dudeja (Daughter). That apart from this there is No other Legal Heir. If any person having any objection/claim must file their objection/claim in writing at above address within 30 days from publication of this Notice. After this their share will be transferred in their name. And No claim will be entertained.  
Bhupesh Joshi  
Advocate, Faridabad  
Dated 08.07.2022



# LG: Mismanagement cost DDA ₹10K crore liabilities

Saxena invites suggestions from people, expresses his resolve to make DDA viable

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Thursday said the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) owns one of the costliest and largest chunks of real estate in the world, but "mismanagement" has led to its liabilities exceeding Rs 10,000 crore. The Lieutenant Governor, who is also the chairperson of the DDA, flagged this in a post on his official Twitter handle.

Saxena also invited suggestions from the people and expressed his resolve to "make DDA viable".

"While DDA are owners of one of costliest & largest chunk of real estate in the world, mismanagement has led to its liabilities exceeding Rs 10k Cr. Let's resolve to make DDA viable.

Your suggestions and participation will make it happen. #ForABetterDelhi," he tweeted. In his tweet, he also shared a poster having details about the financial condition of the urban



body. The poster bore the title "DDA - poor financial health". It further shared data related to the financial status of the DDA from 2019-20 to 2021-22, saying the total income is Rs 3,578.69 crore and total expenditure for the period, Rs 6,787.83 crore.

The total cash deficit is Rs 3,209.14 crore, the poster read. And, DDA's loan liabilities in five years (2016-17 to 2021-22) stands at Rs 8,915 crore, it said. The Lieutenant Governor has invited suggestions on the email id : writetolgdhli@gmail.com.

The DDA was created in 1957 under the provisions of the Delhi Development Act "to promote and secure the development of Delhi". The DDA is responsible for planning, development and construction of

housing projects, commercial lands, land management, land disposal, land pooling and land costing among others, according to its website. The DDA commenced its housing activities in 1967, it said.

In the last several days, the Lieutenant Governor has multiple times sought suggestions from the public on various issues, including air pollution and landfill sites.

Describing the landfill sites in Delhi as "grave health hazards" and a "national shame", Saxena has reached out to the people and sought their ideas that could help efforts by authorities in getting rid of these "unseemly mountains of garbage".

The national Capital has three landfill sites - Ghazipur, Bhalaswa and Okhla - that have turned into huge garbage mountains. "Unseemly Mountains of Garbage surround Delhi.

Stinking heaps over 50mtrs high in the Capital are not only grave health hazards but a National Shame! Your suggestions & participation will be of value in the efforts to rid Delhi of over 28 million MT of waste.# ForABetterDelhi," he had tweeted.

# City's temp 1.77°C hotter than 2010: Study



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A recent study revealed that in the national Capital the air temperature this year has been 1.77 degrees Celsius hotter than 2010, and the land surface temperature 1.95 degrees Celsius hotter.

According to the latest findings by the Urban Lab of Centre for Science and Environment, land surface temperatures in Delhi have been the highest since 2010 and that the city recorded significant positive anomaly (temperature higher than expected) on all three temperature parameters.

While summer or pre-monsoon season this year has overtaken 2016 records as the second hottest pre-monsoon season in the country, winter and post-monsoon seasons are warming up faster, study stated.

"The daily average heat index crossed 40 degrees Celsius in June, 2022.

"It said March and April have been unusually dry in Delhi, but humidity started to rise in May with some scattered

rain spells. "

But this spike in humidity has led to an increase in the heat index in the city, indicating increased thermal discomfort among the population," it said.

"The highest land surface temperature was observed on May 16, 2020 when 53.9 degrees Celsius was recorded within city limits, followed by May 14, 2022 with maximum land surface temperature of 51.8 degrees Celsius.

In the previous years, maximum land surface temperature was observed to be in mid-40s range," the CSE findings said.

It further said during the heatwave in May, 2022, the land surface temperature across Delhi shot above 38 degrees Celsius, which was "unusual as the green pockets within the city have not heated up to this magnitude in the previous years," and that the average land surface temperature has been getting higher than daily average air temperature. "Industrial and agricultural zone recorded highest increase in land surface temperature between March to May.

The regions at the city periphery in the north, south-west, and northwest Delhi have seen the extremely high surface temperature rise from March 19 to May 14, 2022," the study said.

The study further noted that even the temperature of the water bodies rose to 29-30 degrees Celsius in May, which

were well below 27 degrees Celsius in March.

According to CSE's analysis on air temperature variation among city's stations, Chandni Chowk recorded the highest average air temperature on May 14, 2022 with 40.39 degrees Celsius, followed by Punjabi Bagh at 40.29 degrees Celsius, Mundka at 39.5

degrees Celsius and Paharganj at 39.1 degrees Celsius. CSE said the objective of city analysis was to understand the combined effect of climate change induced unseasonal heatwaves.

The study is based on comparative statistical analysis of temperature anomalies and observed heat-related impact in Indian cities and regions.

# Rain continues to play truant

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi reeled under sultry weather conditions on Thursday as rains continued to play truant. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday said moderate rainfall on Saturday may bring down the temperature to 33 degrees Celsius.

However, rain continued to elude the Capital.

The Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, recorded a maximum temperature of 39.1 degrees Celsius, three notches above normal. However, the wet bulb temperature in Delhi stood at 30.5 degrees Celsius, which gives the feeling of 50 degree Celsius. The minimum temperature settled at 30 degrees Celsius which was two notches above the normal for this season.

Though the monsoon arrived in the Capital in an impressive manner on June 30, giving the city its first spell of heavy rainfall this season, scanty precipitation in the subsequent days has led to a gradual rise in the maximum temperature.

The IMD had earlier issued an orange alert for moderate rainfall on Wednesday which was later shifted to Thursday.

The relative humidity at Delhi's Base station, Safdarjung Observatory recorded 75 per cent at 8:30 in the morning and 52 per cent at 5:30 in the evening, stated the weather station.

According to the data released by the IMD the observatories at Ridge, Ayanagar, Najafgarh, Pitampura, Palam, and Lodhi Road recorded maximum temperatures of 37.2 degrees Celsius, 37.8 degrees Celsius, 39.8 degrees Celsius, 39.4 degrees Celsius, 38.5 degrees Celsius and 39.3 degrees Celsius respectively.

"A low pressure area had developed over Odisha and travelled to Gujarat.

"It had pulled the trough towards central India, leading to heavy rainfall there," said Mahesh Palawat, vice president (meteorology and climate change), Skymet Weather. The weather system has now moved to south Pakistan and started degenerating.

The western end of the monsoon trough will again

shift towards the north. A cyclonic circulation is also developing over central Pakistan. It could result in heavy rainfall at some places in Punjab and Haryana on Saturday and Sunday, he said.

The IMD predicted that isolated and scattered rainfall activity with isolated thunderstorm/lightning very likely over East Uttar Pradesh during next five days and over West Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh-Delhi and Rajasthan on 7th and 8th and increase thereafter becoming fairly widespread to widespread rainfall activity likely over the region during July 9, 10, 2022.

"Isolated heavy rainfall is likely over Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh on 7, 8 and 10; West Uttar Pradesh during 8 to 10; Rajasthan on July 7, 8 and 10, 2022," informed IMD.

The Safdarjung Observatory has recorded just 2.6 mm of rainfall in the last six days.

It has gauged 144.3 mm of rainfall against a normal of 106.5 mm since June 1, when the monsoon season starts. Of this, 117.2 mm came in just 24 hours ending at 8:30 am on

# JNU not against dhabas, canteens on campus, but they've to pay bills: VC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) served eviction notices on several dhabas and canteens on the campus, Vice-Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit said the owners of such establishments operating on the campus are "illegal occupants" who have not paid their rent or electricity bills for years.

"The administration was not against such establishments being there, but they have to follow the rules and pay their bills. The university was ready to allow them to clear their dues in installments," said the VC.

Last month, the varsity sent eviction notices to several canteen and dhaba owners on campus asking them to pay the rent by June 27 and vacate the premises by June 30. However, the university hasn't taken any action against the owners as of now.

Pandit has also expressed concerns over the obscurity around the ownership of these dhabas and the types of workers employed there. She pointed out that none of the canteen and Dhaba owners who has been served the notices has gone through the proper allotment process.

"These are all illegal dhabas. Nobody went through the committee (JNU Campus Development Committee). Tell them to show me the data of ownership. Somebody fell in love with someone and gave the space to them. You don't do that, it is government property," said Pandit.

According to the officials, the allotment of shops within the campus is done by the JNU Campus Development Committee (CDC). She also raised concerns over the cleanliness at these establishments



and the possibilities of child or bonded labour employed there.

"The shabas are so dirty. They haven't paid the electricity bill. They don't pay the water supply bill. I am getting an electricity bill of Rs 36 crore per year, who is going to pay," she emphasised.

"I don't know about any worker who works here -- I don't know whether they keep child labour or bonded labour. We don't know anything," she pointed out.

The latest set of eviction notices were issued as the owners did not respond to several notices against them since 2019, with a request to clear the dues, the university had said last week.

These notices sent the canteen operators into panic, who said they are too hard up to pay the dues and risk losing their livelihood entirely.

When asked that the bills are in lakhs and the dhabas owners are worried that they cannot pay it, the vice-chancellor said the university is ready to allow them to pay in instalments, but pointed out they they haven't responded to the notices yet.

"If I wanted to really throw them out I would have done by June 30th. I would have called the police and evicted them.

"My question is why don't you (dhaba/canteen owners) abide by the law of JNU. We are not against you being here. We want to make them organised. Let them start paying. They haven't paid a penny till now. We are ready to let them pay in instalments," she added.

# MHA promotes AGMUT cadre officers to rank of DGP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday promoted seven Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) Cadre officers to the rank of Director General of Police (DGP).

"In pursuance to the recommendations of the review screening Committee in its meeting held on July 1, and with the approval of the Competent Authority, IPS officers of AGMUT Cadre presently posted in the cadre have been promoted to the DGP Grade," according to the order issued on July 7 by Rakesh Kumar Singh, Under Secretary, MHA.

"The IPS 1989 batch, Mukesh Kumar Meena, Sunil Kumar Gautam, the IPS 1990 batch, Sanjay Singh, Dependra Pathak and IPS 1991 batch Nuzhat Hassan have been promoted to DGP grade," the order stated.

"Further, IPS 1990 batch, Tajendra Singh Luthra and IPS 1991 batch, Dr Vivek Gogia presently posted on Central Deputation are hereby granted proforma promotion in the DGP grade from the date of assumption of charge of their immediate junior in the cadre," the order further added.

Dependra Pathak is currently posted as Special Commissioner of Police law and order division zone -I in the national Capital. In June 2018, the MHA transferred 1990-batch IPS Pathak to Andaman and Nicobar islands as director general of police (DGP).

Earlier, Pathak worked as special commissioner of Delhi police operation and traffic and was also chief spokesperson of Delhi Police till June

# Apologise to Delhiites for calling them thieves: AAP to LG over appeal to pay taxes 'honestly'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday accused the Lieutenant Governor, VK Saxena for calling the city resident's as thieves and demanded an apology for asking people to pay taxes to the civic body honestly.

The party's reaction came after Saxena in a tweet said that the past financial mismanagement and non-payment of "any property tax" by 75 per cent residents of the city made the municipal corporation of Delhi "go in red", and asked them to pay their dues honestly to make the civic body financially stable.

Addressing a press conference, the newly elected AAP legislator from Rajinder Nagar, Durgesh Pathak termed L-G remarks as a black day in the history of the national Capital. Pathak criticized the remarks

made by L-G and called it a ploy to make Delhiites as scapegoats to hide the colossal failure of BJP-ruled Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

"BJP encashed every opportunity to gobble taxpayer's money to fill its pockets leading MCD into committing corruption in every field be it dengue, medicine, clearing garbage, buying children's books, or house tax collection," Pathak alleged.

Pathak said that since the Kejriwal government has come into power, the budget of Delhi has increased from 25,000 crores in 2015 to 70 thousand crores presently and it was only made possible with people of Delhi paying their taxes diligently.

The AAP MLA alleged that the municipal corporation is facing a financial crisis today, not because of any dishonesty on the part of Delhiites in pay-

ment of taxes but the BJP's corrupt regime in the civic body.

He further added that the CAG report spoke volumes showing how Delhi people's resolve made it possible for the government to have revenue surplus budget, with no external aid, a first in the country since Independence.

While states like UP have debt of six crores and Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka and Haryana are debt-ridden, Delhiites are proud to be debt-free.

"By the grace of God, you (LG) are sitting in a very responsible position and should not behave like a BJP worker.

Delhites only want cleanliness and there is no problem in paying taxes. You should apologise for making such an irresponsible statement as people of Delhi would not tolerate such language," said Pathak.

# ₹62 lakh demonetised notes seized, 2 arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two people from East Delhi's Laxmi Nagar area for possessing demonetised currency notes having a face value of around ₹62 lakh. Police said that the arrested men claimed that they purchased the old notes by paying Rs 10 lakh in new currency notes.

The accused have been identified as Azad Singh (48), a resident of Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Ezaz

Ahmad (45), a resident of Delhi's Laxmi Nagar area. According to Priyanka Kashyap, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), East district, on July 6, on the basis of specific inputs received regarding old currency notes, a police team was formed and a trap was laid near Laxmi Nagar Metro Station.

"Police team managed to apprehend Azad Singh and Ezaz Ahmad with one bag and one polly bag containing old currency notes of denomina-

tion of ₹1000 and ₹500. A total of ₹61,97,000 old currency notes was recovered from the accused," said the DCP.

"Teams of Special Staff, Special Cell, Intelligence Bureau (IB), Special Branch were called for their joint interrogation to find any foul play or any other angle," said the DCP. "The recovered old currency notes have been seized and legal action against both the accused persons have been taken under relevant provisions of Specified Bank Notes (Classification of

Liabilities) Act-2017," said the DCP. "Income Tax department, Enforcement Directorate and RBI are being informed for initiating any action at their end if required," the DCP added.

The Centre Government had discontinued the old currency notes in November 2016, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced demonetisation. The Centre had replaced old ₹500 notes with new ones, but no replacement for Rs 1,000 notes was made. Instead, new ₹2,000 notes were introduced

post note ban. The government then gave people time till March 2017 to deposit their old currency notes at post offices, banks and Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

In 2018, the RBI issued new-look currency notes in the denominations of ₹10, ₹50 and ₹200. And in 2019, the RBI introduced new lavender-coloured ₹100 currency notes. It had asserted at time that all ₹100 currency notes issued earlier would also continue to be legal tender.



Vista - the nation's power corridor - envisages a new triangular Parliament building, a common central secretariat, the revamping of the three-kilometre-long Rajpath from Vijay Chowk to India Gate, a new prime minister's residence and a prime minister's office, and a new vice-president's enclave.

Earlier this week, Puri had visited the stretch and said that Delhiites, who have warm memories of place, would be pleasantly surprised to see how it is being totally transformed.

# Nature enthusiasts, visitors throng Delhi Zoo for wildlife experience

SHIREYA ARORA ■ NEW DELHI

The oppressive heatwave and the Covid threat subsiding, and mild monsoon showers providing some respite, visitors and nature enthusiasts, both young and old, are flocking the National Zoological Park — popularly called the Delhi Zoo — for an authentic wildlife experience.

In fact, there has been a surge in the average daily footfall, of late, with numbers reaching around 11,000 during the weekends.

Last weekend saw a sudden surge in the number of visitors as the city received its first spell of rain. Sunday registered as many as 13,000 visitors, the highest number of footfalls recorded since Covid crisis. During pre-Covid times, the Zoo was receiving around 25-



27 lakh footfalls annually, said Dharamdeo Rai, Director of the Zoo. "The pandemic caused the closure of the zoo which

was then opened in April last year for a few days. It closed its doors again due to a second-wave outbreak. In March, 2022



it was finally opened again and following the necessary Covid protocols an online-ticket booking system was put

in place," he said. Dr Sanjay Shukla, Member Secretary of the Central Zoo Authority, the autonomous body under the

Union Environment Ministry which supervises the functioning of the Delhi Zoo, too attributed the increase in footfall to pleasant weather and the zoo rekindling its verdant greenery.

"With the pandemic forcing us to stay indoors, we lost touch with nature. As Covid curbs are easing and weather conditions improving, parents are increasingly bringing their kids to connect with nature and experience wildlife in its pristine form. From schoolchildren to elderly, everyone gets rejuvenated and energized after spending some time exploring nature," pointed out Shukla.

He opined that more people are likely to visit the zoo in near future as animals such as birds and felines tend to roam freely and enjoy rains. "Birds such as peacocks love to come

out especially in the monsoons, and it is a treat for the eyes for the visitors," he said. "Covid protocols and guidelines are being adhered to as the daily number of visitors is increasing.

The premises where the public gather to see the animals are fumigated and sanitised on a regular basis, said a senior official. The enclosures where animals stay are also cleaned and sanitised," Shukla informed about the steps taken in view of the Covid scenario.

The Zoo, home to a large number of different species of reptiles, birds, and mammals, has revived its greenery much to the respite of the inmates. Bar-headed geese and star tortoise recently joined the clan that includes among others a host of endangered species such as white tiger, Asiatic

lion, jaguar, hippopotamus, African elephant, brown-anthered deer, reptiles such as marsh crocodile, gharial and birds like the Indian hornbill, Egyptian vulture, owl and peacocks. Free-ranging and migratory species include palm civet, porcupine, the cobra, mongoose, painted stork, rosy pelicans, spotted owl, and more.

Overall, the Zoo which is spread over 176-acres of area plays host to around 92 species. Animals such as leopards and tigers who are sensitive to heat, which are often found hiding in caves and ponds, could now be seen roaming freely, much to the delight of the visitors.

Online booking system has also minimised physical contact and avoided overcrowding. People are allowed to enter in slots and Covid protocols are observed, chipped in Rai.



# Bullet train project head terminated on graft charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a sudden development, the Railway Ministry on Thursday terminated the services of National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) Managing Director Satish Agnihotri, who was in charge of the government's prestigious bullet train project. Rajendra Prasad, Director, Projects, NHSRCL, has been handed over the charge for three months.

Agnihotri's appointment itself had made news when he was appointed by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet by a special order that said 'Agnihotri appointed by setting aside and with all relaxations as advertised for the vacancy post'.

Senior Railway officials said there were several allegations against Agnihotri, including misuse of official position and diverting funds in an unauthorised manner to a private company. They said the decision to terminate the services of Agnihotri came following a June 2 Lokpal court order directing the CBI to probe charges of a "quid pro quo" deal allegedly struck by the former NHSRCL MD with a private



company during his nine-year tenure as CMD of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL).

The Lokpal court has directed the CBI to "ascertain whether any offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, is made out" against Agnihotri and to submit the probe report to the Lokpal office within six months or before

December 12, 2022.

"The competent authority has approved the termination of office of Satish Agnihotri. He has been directed to be relieved with immediate effect," read the July 7 letter of the Railway Board, addressed to the company secretary of the NHSRCL. NHSRCL is a joint venture of the Government of

India and participating states for implementing high-speed rail projects.

Officials also alleged that Agnihotri took up a job in a private firm within a year of his retirement. This was in violation of government rules which prohibits retired officials from accepting commercial employment

before one year of retirement without the Centre's approval.

Sources close to Agnihotri said that the senior bureaucrat has denied all the allegations and said that he had neither favoured a particular company nor his son worked in any firm which bagged such works. They said Agnihotri also asserted that he had written to the DoPT seeking a waiver of the one-year cooling-off period before joining the firm. Agnihotri refused to speak on the matter.

Officials said the complaints against him were made by one of his batchmates after he bagged the prestigious job of heading the NHSRCL, which is the implementing agency of the government's ambitious bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

A 1982-batch IRSE officer, Agnihotri joined NHSRCL in July 2021. Earlier, he was the chairman and managing director of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL). He has over 20 years of experience in the implementation of mega rail infrastructure projects. He also held the position of chairman, High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (HSRC), a fully owned subsidiary of RVNL since its inception in July 2012 till August 2018.



## 'Vivo remitted 50% turnover to China to evade tax in India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said the Indian arm of Chinese smartphone maker Vivo and its associated companies "remitted" Rs 62,476 crores out of the total sale proceeds of Rs 1,25,185 crore, almost 50 percent of the turnover, out of India, mainly to China to "avoid paying taxes here".

Following searches conducted by the ED on Tuesday at 48 locations across the country belonging to VIVO Mobiles India Pvt. Ltd. and its 23 associated companies, including Grand Prospect International Communication Pvt Ltd (GPICPL), the agency said it has seized balance of Rs 465 crore lying in 119 bank accounts, including fixed deposits (FDs) of 66 crore of Vivo India, 2 kg gold bars, and Rs 73 lakh in cash.

Vivo Mobiles India Pvt Ltd was incorporated on August 1, 2014 as a subsidiary of Multi Accord Ltd, a Hong Kong-based company and was registered at Registrar of Companies (ROC) Delhi.

GPICPL (Grand Prospects International Communication Pvt. Ltd.) was registered on December 3, 2014 at ROC Shimla, with registered addresses of Solan, Himachal Pradesh and Gandhinagar, Jammu. GPICPL was incorporated by ZhengshenOu, Bin Lou and Zhang Jie with the help of one Nitin Garg, Chartered Accountant. Bin Lou left India on April 26, 2018. ZhengshenOu and Zhang Jie left India in 2021.

Probe under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was initiated by ED on February 3, 2022 on the basis of Kalkaji police station FIR dated December 5, 2021 registered by Delhi Police under IPC Sections relating to

cheating and criminal conspiracy against GPICPL and its Director, shareholders and certifying professionals on the basis of complaint filed by Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

As per the FIR, GPICPL and its shareholders had used forged identification documents and falsified addresses at the time of incorporation. The allegations were found to be true as the investigation revealed that the addresses mentioned by the directors of GPICPL did not belong to them, but in fact it was a government building and house of a senior bureaucrat.

ED's investigation revealed that the director of GPICPL, namely Bin Lou, was also a former director of Vivo. He had incorporated multiple companies across the country spread across various States, a total of 18 companies around the same time, just after the incorporation of Vivo in 2014-15 and further another Chinese National Zhixin Wei had incorporated four more companies.

"These companies are found to have transferred huge amounts of funds to Vivo India. Further, out of the total sale proceeds of Rs. 1,25,185 crores, Vivo India remitted Rs. 62,476 crores, i.e., almost 50 percent of the turnover, out of India, mainly to China. These remittances were made in order to disclose huge losses in Indian incorporated companies to avoid payment of taxes in India," the agency said in its statement.

The ED further said, "All due procedures as per law were followed during the said operations at each premise. The employees of Vivo India, including some Chinese Nationals did not cooperate with the search proceedings and had tried to abscond, remove and hide digital devices which were retrieved by the search teams."

# India logs 19K new Covid cases amid BA.2.75 scare

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid reports that a new sub-lineage ABA.2.75 of the Omicron variant is doing rounds in India, active Covid-19 case-load in the country jumped to 1.19 lakh on Thursday with nearly 19,000 new infections (18,930) which pushed the daily positivity rate to touch 4.32 per cent-mark.

Tamil Nadu and West Bengal witnessed a massive jump even as the two worst hit states—Delhi and Maharashtra recorded a dip in the infection, as per the data available from the Union Health Ministry.

India, during the past 24 hours, also reported 35 deaths that pushed the country's toll to 5.25 lakh with a case mortality rate of 1.21 per cent. Meanwhile, 14,650 recoveries were also reported in the same time span, pushing the total recoveries to 4.29 crore.

While Maharashtra reported 3,142 fresh cases, including 695 in Mumbai, and seven fatalities, Delhi logged 600 cases and one fatality with the test positivity rate declining



to 3.27 per cent.

In contrast, West Bengal continued to see a massive spike in cases, reporting 2,352 new infections with a positivity rate of 16.24 per

cent. Three fatalities were also reported that took the toll to 21,231. Currently, West Bengal has 14,270 active Covid-19 cases, as per the state health department.

Like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu also continued to report a spike in cases. In the last 24 hours, the southern state reported 2,743 new coronavirus cases that pushed its active caseload to 17,717. However, no new Covid-19 fatality was registered in the same time span, as per the state health department.

The 35 new fatalities include 19 from Kerala, seven from Maharashtra and three from West Bengal.

A total of 5,25,305 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,47,956 from Maharashtra, 70,073 from Kerala, 40,122 from Karnataka, 38,027 from Tamil Nadu, 26,276 from Delhi, 23,543 from Uttar Pradesh and 21,231 from West Bengal. The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday had said that a new sub-lineage BA.2.75 of the Omicron variant is doing rounds in countries like India.

"On COVID-19, globally reports have increased nearly all WHO sub-regions increase this week," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

## Rajnath to brief Parl panel members on Agnipath scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry on Thursday said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will brief the members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Defence, comprising MPs from ruling as well as Opposition parties, on Monday, on various aspects of the recently-launched Agnipath recruitment.

The three service chiefs and defence secretary are also likely to be present in the meeting, the defence ministry said.

The committee on Defence chaired by Singh has 20 members, including 13 from Lok Sabha and around 7 from Rajya Sabha, according to the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry website.

It includes members from almost all parties. Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, National Conference supremo Farooq Abdullah and TMC leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay are among its members.

"Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh is scheduled to brief the Committee members about various aspects of the recently-launched AGNIPATH scheme, through which recruitment of soldiers in all the three Services will henceforth take place," the ministry said in a statement.

The Defence Secretary, three Service Chiefs and other senior officials of the ministry are likely to be present, it added. After the scheme was unveiled on June 14, violent protests took place in several states for nearly a week and various opposition parties demanded its rollback.

## Follow public interest broadcast rules strictly: Govt to FM channels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Thursday asked FM radio channels to "strictly adhere" to the rules mandating broadcast of public interest announcements.

In an advisory to all FM radio channels, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting underscored the provisions of the Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA) and Migration of Grant of Permission Agreement (MGOPA) signed to operate FM radio broadcasting channels in various cities across the country.

According to the agreements, FM radio channels are required to carry public interest announcements for a maximum of one hour daily at suitable or proportional time slots interspersed with during that day as sought by the central government or the state government concerned. "In case of the total demand of the Central Government and the State Government exceeds one hour per day, the State Government concerned shall be eligible for announcements covering only the period remaining after meeting the demand of the Central Government," the relevant clauses in the GOPA and MGOPA state.

Association of Radio Operators



for India (AROI) officials wondered at the timing of the advisory, contending that the radio channels have been following the rules, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when messages creating awareness about the viral outbreak were broadcast.

"Now, therefore, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in exercise of powers flowing from GOPA/MGOPA, hereby advises all the permission holders to strictly adhere to the aforementioned terms and conditions of permission," the advisory said. It said the government had the right to impose penalties as specified under GOPA/MGOPA in the event of a permission holder violating any terms and conditions of permission.

## SC to hear bail plea of Alt News founder Zubair today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear on Friday the bail plea of Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair in connection with a case registered against him in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly outraging religious feelings. A vacation bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and JK Maheshwari said on Thursday that the matter be listed on Friday subject to clearance from the Chief Justice of India.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for Zubair, said his anticipatory bail was rejected by the Allahabad High Court and subsequently he was arrested. "There is a threat to his life as people out there are threatening him", he said while urging the court to list the matter urgently. An FIR was lodged against Zubair in UP under IPC section 295A (deliberate and malicious act intended to outrage religious feelings) and section 67 of the IT Act.

## Modi to deliver first Arun Jaitley Memorial Lecture today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the first 'Arun Jaitley Memorial Lecture' here on Friday in which Tharman Shanmugaratnam, a senior minister of the Singapore government, will deliver the keynote address on 'Growth through Inclusivity, Inclusivity through Growth'.

The Department of Economic affairs, Ministry of Finance, has organised the memorial lecture in recognition of Jaitley's 'invaluable contribution' to the nation, according to



the Prime Ministers Office (PMO).

The event will see a panel

## Awaiting assignment: Bench to Zee News anchor seeking hearing on FIRs

PNS: Zee News anchor Rohit Ranjan on Thursday again sought urgent hearing on the FIRs registered against him for playing a doctored clip of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Ranjan had later apologised for his mistake. A vacation bench headed by Justice Indira Banerjee, which on

Wednesday had ordered listing of the plea for hearing on Thursday, said it was "awaiting assignment from the CJ".

"It has not been assigned to us. It is awaiting assignment by the chief justice. It may not be assigned to us," said the bench which also comprised justice J K Maheshwari.

Panagariya, a professor at the Columbia University, PMO said. A close confidante of Modi, Jaitley was the finance minister in the first Modi government. He passed away in 2019 at the age of 66.

During the event, Modi will also interact with delegates participating in the Kautilya Economic Conclave (KEC), a three-day event being organised from July 8 to 10.

KEC is being organised by the Institute of Economic Growth with support from the Ministry of Finance, PMO said.

# 10 Indian cities breach PM 2.5, PM10 safe limits during summer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Data from 10 cities—Agra, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Jodhpur, Mumbai, Lucknow, and Patna—has shown that the monthly PM2.5 and PM10 levels during the summer months breached the annual CPCB safe limits of 40 micrograms per cubic metre and 60 micrograms per cubic metre, respectively, during these months.

These cities were selected and average PM2.5, PM10 and NO2 levels were analysed for the months of March, April, May, and June. These cities are all part of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) by the Union Environment Ministry. The CPCB's annual aver-



age permissible limits for PM2.5, PM10 and NO2 are 40, 60, and 40 micrograms per cubic metre, respectively. The WHO safe limits are even lower at 5, 15, and 10 micrograms per cubic metre for the three pollutants, respectively, as per an official from the CPCB.

The analysis by Climate Trends, an advocacy think tank working on the issues related to air pollution and climate change, showed that in March

this year, except Chennai, all other cities recorded PM2.5 levels above safe limits while 10 cities recorded PM10 levels above safe limits.

In April, except Kolkata, all other cities recorded PM2.5 levels above safe limits while in case of PM10, except Chennai, all other cities recorded levels above safe limits. Similarly, in May, only three cities—Bengaluru, Chennai, and Kolkata recorded safe levels of

PM2.5 while in the case of PM10, all the cities recorded levels above safe limits.

With some parts of the country receiving rains in June, five cities—Agra, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai—saw their PM2.5 levels improve and within the CPCB safety limits. But only three cities—Bengaluru, Chennai and Mumbai—saw PM10 levels less than 60 micrograms per cubic metre during June, the official said.

Northwest Indian plains have witnessed repeated heat waves since March this year. This resulted in an increased power demand, approximately 75 per cent of which came from coal-powered thermal power plants.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Smoking increases the risk of developing schizophrenia by 53%-127% and depression by 54%-132%, a report by academics from the University of Bristol has said.

More research is needed to identify why this is the case, and more evidence is needed for other mental health conditions such as anxiety or bipolar disorder, it said.

The evidence was presented recently at the Royal College of Psychiatrists International Congress.

One of the authors of the new report, Professor Marcus Munafo Professor of Biological Psychology at the University of Bristol, said: "There is no longer any doubt that smoking is bad for mental health and this needs to be a priority in the forthcoming Tobacco Control Plan.

"Those working with people with



mental health conditions need to understand and address the vicious cycle of bidirectional effects, whereby having symptoms of mental illness causes individuals to smoke more and to be more likely to become addicted.

"At the same time, smoking also increases the risk of subsequent mental ill-

ness and exacerbates mental health symptoms. Lower rates of smoking will improve overall levels of good mental health as well as physical health."

Alongside the report a joint publication by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) and the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Public Mental Health Implementation Centre sets out how a public mental health approach to smoking can be taken to address smoking and reduce poor mental health.

More research is needed to identify why this is the case, and more evidence is needed for other mental health conditions such as anxiety or bipolar disorder. Image is in the public domain

The NHS has pledged to put support in place for smokers on mental health wards and those accessing support in the community, but this is largely confined to those with severe mental illness.



# Centre withholding WB grants: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday slammed the Centre for enforcing what she called an “economic blockade” of Bengal accusing the BJP Government of withholding all the rightful grants due to her State.

Speaking at a programme where she gave away students’ credit cards to the students, Mamata said her Government was continuing with the education schemes “despite the fact that we do not get funds from the Centre ... they have enforced an economic blockade of Bengal ... they are not giving what is rightfully hours ... the Centre has not cleared funds for 100-days’ work schemes for the past six months ... they are not giving funds for housing schemes ... it is not their money. This money belongs to the people of the State because the Centre takes away taxes from here and only return a part of it as grants.”

Holding the Centre responsible for non-clearance of the workers’ dues under the MNREGA scheme she said “not only have they stopped funds for all the development projects but they have also made the University Grants Commission block the funds earlier received by the research



scholars ... despite all these hardships my government is trying its level best to stand by the side of the students.”

Referring to the schemes like Kanyashree, Sikshashree, Sabooj Saathi etc— that had earned international appreciation — the Chief Minister claimed Bengal during her tenure had made remarkable progress in the field of education with more number of students getting higher marks and with the premium educational institutions like “Jadavpur University and Calcutta University occupying the number one spot.”

During the occasion, Chief Minister gave away student credit cards among 8,000 beneficiaries. Under this scheme needy students going for high-

er studies are able to get education loans up to Rs 10 lakh.

Hitting the Banerjee back, BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya said that the “Centre is not keeping back the funds ... rather it is very much eager to release them provided the State Government produces the balance sheets and accounts for the utilisation of the earlier grants ... the money given by the Centre does not belong to the BJP.

It is a public money and every such fund has to be accounted for ... repeated requests by the Central officials to the State Government to furnish accounts for the funds spent go unheeded ... the Centre cannot allow spending of funds meant for one project in other unplanned areas ...

this is not how a government should run.”

Meanwhile, amid ongoing war of words between the Trinamool Congress and the BJP the Bengal ruling outfit on Thursday demanded the arrest of BJP national vice-president Dilip Ghosh for using disrespectful words for the Chief Minister at a mega programme held by a national media house.

Voicing outrage at the alleged unparliamentary words used for Banerjee by Ghosh, a group of TMC leaders including Bengal ministers Bratya Basu and Dr. Shashi Panja on Thursday met the Governor seeking action against the BJP leader. Incidentally, it has been an usual tactic for the BJP to meet the Governor seeking action against the TMC leaders.

TMC MP and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee too attacked the BJP leadership in the social media wrote “Outrageous ... It is about time to get this loose tongue arrested! Is this how BJP ... leaders talk about the only sitting woman Chief Minister of the nation?”

Ghosh who had bluntly attacked Banerjee during a media interaction reacted saying “is it the same Trinamool which everyday attacks the Governor and now is laying at

his feet to take action against me ... why don’t they get me arrested ... after all they are in power ... if they have power let them go and arrest me.”

## TMC leaders first shot, then hacked, bombed to death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

In a shocking incident three block level Trinamool Congress leaders were first shot, then hacked and then bombed to death in broad day light on Thursday, police said adding the incident took place on a busy road at Canning township some 50 miles south of Kolkata.

The miscreants allegedly even tried to behead a local TMC member of Gopalpur panchayat Swapan Majhi after shooting and bombing him dead.

A large contingent of police personnel led by ADG SN Gupta and a IG and SP rushed to the spot. “The police are trying to investigate all the angles ... we have some leads and will be able to crack the case soon,” the ADG said.

## SHO axed after scribe sends his anti-Yogi remark video to BJP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Making objectionable comments against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath became costly for a police officer in Barabanki. The cop was removed from his post and sent to police lines after a video came to fore showing him making objectionable comments against Yogi Adityanath, officials said on Thursday.

Station House Officer of Asandra police station, Dhyandendra Pratap Singh, allegedly made comments against Chief Minister while talking to someone in his office room. A journalist forwarded a video of this conversation to Bharatiya Janata Party district president Shashank Kushumesh, who, in turn, filed a complaint against officer with Superintendent of Police Anurag Vats a couple of days ago.

Kushumesh alleged that the SHO was trying to create a revolt against Government by making such comments in public. Sources said that a local journalist and a woman police officer had a dispute over some issue inside Asandra police station a few days back.



## UP only State in India to have 13 expressways

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has become the first State in the country to have 13 expressways. Of these 13 expressways having a total length of 3,200 kilometers, work is going on, on seven while six expressways are operational.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 296-km-long Bundelkhand Expressway on July 16 and with its inauguration Bundelkhand will be directly connected to Delhi.

“Realising that infrastructure is the growth engine of the economy and roads are the mirror of progress, the double engine Bharatiya Janata Party-led government has worked extensively for the rejuvenation of roads,” a government spokesman said here on Thursday. He added that from village streets to block headquarters and district headquarters, a network of roads connecting other states and other countries has been created.

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that only one-and-a-half expressways were built in 70 years. He said the double engine government had fulfilled the decades-old demand of the people of National Capital Region (NCR) and western UP and Delhi-Meerut Expressway was an example of this.

Also, the foundation stone of the 594 km long Ganga Expressway has been laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This expressway will not only reduce the distance between East and West but will also serve to connect people.

The Bundelkhand Expressway will connect people with Delhi and other states as well. This will benefit the people of Chitrakoot, Banda, Mahoba, Hamirpur, Jalaun, Auraiya and Etawah districts. People will get the benefit of connecting Bundelkhand with Delhi directly and Bundelkhand will be free from the stain of backwardness. “Apart from this, Lucknow-Kanpur Expressway, Bundelkhand Expressway,

Gorakhpur Link Expressway, Ghazipur-Ballia-Manjhihat Expressway and Delhi-Dehradun Expressway are being constructed,” Maurya said. “These corridors will give impetus to rapid, balanced and inclusive growth as well as immense employment potential. Lands have been marked for this. Airstrips are also being built on the expressways for landing and take-off of Air Force aircraft in case of emergency,” he said.

### EXPRESSWAY NETWORK IN UP

- ▲ Yamuna Expressway -- 165 km
- ▲ Noida-Greater Noida Expressway -- 25 km
- ▲ Agra-Lucknow Expressway -- 302 km
- ▲ Delhi-Meerut Expressway -- 96 km
- ▲ Purvanchal Expressway -- 341 km
- ▲ Bundelkhand Expressway -- 296 km

Total operational expressways – 1,225 km

### EXPRESSWAYS UNDERCONSTRUCTION

- ▲ Gorakhpur Link Expressway -- 91 km
  - ▲ Ganga-Expressway-- 594 km
  - ▲ Lucknow-Kanpur Expressway -- 63 km
  - ▲ Ghaziabad-Kanpur Expressway - 380 km
  - ▲ Gorakhpur-Siliguri Expressway - 519 km
  - ▲ Delhi-Saharanpur-Dehradun Expressway -- 210 km
  - ▲ Ghazipur-Ballia-Manjhihat Expressway -- 117 km
- Expressways under construction – 1,974 km

## Terrorism in J&K crushed under PM’s leadership: Shah



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the Union Territory administration in Jammu and Kashmir has established a decisive domination over terrorism under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing a gathering through video conferencing after unveiling the ‘Statue of Peace’ of philosopher and social reformer Ramanujacharya in Sonawar, the Union Home

Minister said, “Today, under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Jammu and Kashmir is on the path of peace and development. Sinha has established a decisive domination over terrorism there under the leadership of PM Modi”. So far this year around 125 terrorists have been gunned down by the joint team of security forces in different anti-terrorist operations.

Several top commanders and foreign terrorists belonging to the Lashkar-e-Tayyeb and Jaish-e-Mohammad ter-

rorist outfit were neutralised. Referring to the ongoing developmental works Shah said the administration headed by Sinha has also delivered development to the people of Kashmir without any discrimination.

“For a long time, the nation had a hope that Jammu and Kashmir will be irreversibly integrated with the nation by removal of Article 370 and Article 35A, and that hope was fulfilled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On 5 August 2019, a new era was established in Kashmir,” he said. He said he was feeling peace that the Surya (Sun) temple in Srinagar had been restored and renovated. “...The unveiling of the statue of peace in Srinagar is a good sign for the people of India, especially the people of Jammu and Kashmir,” Shah said.

“I believe that the Statue of Peace will bring the blessings and teachings of Ramanujacharya to the people of all religions in Kashmir and take them on the path of peace and development,” he added.

Throwing light on the life and teachings of the philosopher, Shah said he had worked mostly in South India but had visited Kashmir to procure an

important manuscript called ‘Bodhayana Vritti’, a treatise on the Brahma Sutras, as the only copy of this manuscript was in the royal library of the Valley.

“The King in Kashmir not only opened the doors of his library but also welcomed Swamy Ramanujacharya,” he added.

The four-feet-tall statue shows Ramanujacharya sitting with his hands folded. The 600-kg statue carved from white granite has been placed three feet above the ground.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also attended the ceremony of unveiling of the Statue of Peace of Swami Ramanujacharya Ji at Shuryar Mandir, Srinagar. In his message Manoj Sinha said, Jagadguru is an inspiration for eternal peace, unity & integrity of the country, social reform & upliftment of the downtrodden of society.

“With the installation of the Statue of Peace, J&K is sending a message of peace, unity, harmony & brotherhood to the world. I am confident, Jagadguru Ramanujacharya’s life and message, emphasizing peace, love, truth & equality of all human beings will continue to inspire & guide people of J&K,” he added.

## Pinarayi Vijayan is out to finish me off, says Swapna Suresh

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Swapna Suresh, the controversial woman behind the rise and fall of Shivsankar, former principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, fired yet another salvo on Thursday against the LDF Government in the State.

“Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is out to finish me off. It was at his order the Crime Branch team of Kerala Police summoned me for another round of questioning on Tuesday. More than questioning, the police team was threatening me,” said Swapna Suresh, the prime accused in the “gold smuggling through diplomatic channel” scam that shook Kerala politics during 2020 and 2021.

She said that the officers of the Crime Branch warned her not to open her mouth against the chief minister or his close family members. “If you speak out against the Chief Minister, we will slap criminal charges against you that you are the person behind more than 700

riots the State saw during the last two years.

That will be the end of your freedom and the rest of your life you will be behind bars,” Swapna Suresh quoted the officers as telling. They also asked her to had over whatever evidences she had against the business dealings of Veena, daughter of Vijayan and the new wife of PWD Minister Mohammed Riyaz.

Swapna Suresh, the former liaison executive of the UAE consulate at Thiruvananthapuram, also said that the chief minister was making life difficult for her. “I lost my job with the HRDS, Wayanad because the chief minister’s men were pressurizing the employers to send me out of the organization. It was with a heavy heart that they terminated my job with the NGO.

Pinarayi Vijayan is the person behind this operation. I have ended up as an unemployed person and my family consisting of my two children and mother are facing uncertainty,” she said.

## Kerala CM for action against those involved in fraudulent recruitment

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday directed the police to take stringent action against the agencies and persons involved in fraudulent job recruitment in the southern State.

In the wake of the rising number of cases of cheating of the foreign job aspirants and complaints against persons and agencies involved in fraudulent recruitment, the Chief Minister chaired a meeting of top officials here and directed the state police chief to make public the action taken against individuals and institutions involved in such illegal acts.

The meeting called to discuss the government’s programme to curb the menace of job fraud and fake recruitment was attended by state police chief and authorities of Department of Non Resident Keralite’s Affairs (NORKA) and Protector of Emigrants, a CMO release said. Vijayan directed the officials to put in place a mechanism to redress complaints and make necessary interventions and to constitute a task force comprising officials of the Police department, Protector of Emigrants and NORKA Roots to deal with the issue. A dedicated email address and contact number should also be provided to



National Democratic Alliance’s (NDA) Presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu being felicitated with an Assamese ‘japi’ by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma during a programme, in Guwahati on Thursday

## India rejects China’s criticism of PM’s birthday greetings to Dalai Lama

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday rejected China’s criticism over Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama, asserting that it is a consistent policy of the government to treat the Tibetan spiritual leader as an honoured guest.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said that birthday greetings by prime minister to Dalai Lama should be seen in this overall context. A day after Modi greeted the Dalai Lama over phone on his 87th birthday.

## Set up MSP panel, bring white paper on prevailing foodgrain crisis: Cong to Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday demanded a committee on minimum support price for crops be set up immediately as promised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last November and also sought a white paper on the “prevailing foodgrain crisis” in the country.

Congress leader Deepender Singh Hooda claimed that foodgrain stocks in India were at a 15-year low and per capita stocks at a 50-year low.

This is why the government had reduced wheat allocations to 10 states, including BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, he alleged and held the Central government responsible for the “current food crisis”. “We want to tell the government to immediately set up the MSP committee as promised to farmers by the prime minister to provide a legal guarantee to minimum support price.

“The government should also publish a white paper on the current crisis of foodgrains, clearly spelling out who has benefitted from the export of wheat. The white paper should also be on the procurement and public distribution system policy in the country,” Hooda told reporters.

He asked the government why the wheat allocation quota of states has been cut and said the white paper should answer



this. Alleging that the government’s intention to benefit its “crony friends at the cost of farmers” has “threatened” the country’s food security, Hooda cited the statement of a Niti Aayog member who has called for a rethink on procurement-based MSP. “It is clear that the government wants to follow the same path and intent with which it brought the three farm laws. The Niti Aayog’s statement is throwing salt on the wounds of farmers.

It is very clear that the government has decided to betray the farmers,” the Congress leader alleged. He added that the Niti Aayog member had earlier too stated that legalising MSP would spell doom for the market.

“The BJP government’s motto is to stand with some big industrialists and serve them while exploiting farmers and farm labourers,” the Rajya Sabha MP from Haryana alleged. National security, foodgrain security and income of farmers have been endangered due to the government’s policies, he alleged.

## Need to ensure 100% renewables energy to tackle climate crisis: Experts



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the national Capital recording a rise in the registration of electric vehicles, some environmentalists raised doubts whether the transition to EVs will actually help fight the global climate crisis in the long run and said there is an

urgent need to opt for renewable energy alongside it.

Since electric vehicles rely on regular charging from a local electricity network, it is quite obvious that coal is being used at another source, one of them said. According to official data, there are 1,39,945 registered electric vehicles in Delhi

as of March 21, 2022. This year electric vehicles accounted for more than nine per cent of all vehicles registered in the national capital, up from nearly three per cent in 2018.

Though electric vehicles are expected to cut oil consumption and lower carbon dioxide emission, they said it alone will not help fight the global climate crisis. There is an urgent need to ensure 100 per cent renewable energy alongside electric vehicles.

Since electric vehicles rely on regular charging from a local electricity network, it is quite obvious that coal is being used at another source, one of them said. According to official data, there are 1,39,945 registered electric vehicles in Delhi

is needed to phase out internal combustion engine cars. “Changes in transport need to go hand in hand with changes in the wider energy system.

We must increase reclamation and recycling in the batteries sector and see much more research and investment in battery technology. We also need to reduce the number of cars on the road and understand that ‘car as a system’ is not good for cities.

It is manifesting the increasing social and economic gap in the urban space,” he said. He further said that in their Greenpeace India campaign, they have been demanding renewable energy-fuelled electric buses that have great

potential not only for reducing CO2 emission but also for improving air quality and noise protection in cities. Environmentalist Bhavreen Kandhari said that since EVs rely on regular charging from a local electricity network, it is quite obvious that coal is being used at another source.

“Fossil fuels are ‘dirty’ and renewables like wind and solar energy and electric vehicles are ‘clean’ - has become a fixture of policy assumptions in developed countries.

In that case, questions also arise that from where the rare earth metals or minerals required to manufacture EV cars will be mined? How will the dangerous battery pollu-

tants of an EV at end of its life be disposed off? And from where will additional power come for charging new EVs?” Kandhari asked. Ten-year-old globally recognised climate activist Licypriya Kangujam told PTI that electric vehicles alone will not solve the global climate crisis and that subsidising and investing on fossil fuels need to be stopped.

“We need to replace all the coal power plants and thermal power plants by solar power plants. We need to see more bicycles on roads instead of more motor vehicles. Planting trees are the ultimate solution to fight the climate change besides reducing our emissions,” Kangujam told PTI.








FIRST COLUMN

ANGER MANAGEMENT  
LEADS TO DIVINITY

Freedom from anger is indicative  
of many good qualities




AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Anger may be justified for reasons such as being insulted or denial of opportunities or even for causes such as perceived injustices. There could be plenty of reasons to get angry spontaneously, but it's unwise not to check them. Animals also get angry when provoked and they are unable to restrain themselves, but human beings have been provided with the ability to control anger.

Lord Krishna says in Gita (2.62), "When a person meditates on sense objects, attachment develops towards them. From attachment, lust manifests, and from lust anger results due to non-fulfillment." In another verse, He sheds more light on the subject, saying "It is lust only; it is anger only, born of the mode of passion." Then the Lord continues, "Lust is the one that devours, and is a great sinner. Know this to be the enemy in this world (3.37)."

There are other reasons also for controlling anger. Lord Krishna explains, "From anger, foolishness (closed mind) results; from foolishness, bewilderment (inability to take right decisions based upon experience) results; from bewilderment, loss of intelligence occurs. And by the loss of intelligence, a person is doomed (2.63)." In the verse quoted here, Lord Krishna counsels why it is critical to give up anger, explaining "Lust, anger and greed are the three doors to hell, which cause ruination of the soul. Therefore, one should give up these three (16.21)." Durvasa Muni was prone to anger. He wasted the fruits of his tapasya, which he earned. Many other saintly persons have also squandered their well-earned 'punya' by losing control over themselves by getting angry. What do we see in road rage? Two parties, completely strangers to one another, lose control over themselves due to an accident and end up physically harming one another seriously. What happens in families, who don't put checks on their angry outbursts? They ruin their relationships with ramifications for years. Relationships between individuals, communities, countries, etc., are destroyed, because anger overwhelmed them.



There are enormous benefits to checking anger. Lord Krishna informs, "One, who is capable of tolerating the urge caused by lust and anger in this world, prior to leaving the body, he is a true yogi; he is a happy person (5.23)." In another verse, the Lord adds "for saintly persons, who are free from lust and anger, are self-controlled; and are self-realized, there is all-round blissful liberation (5.26)". He emphasized this point further in another verse when He said, "He, who, having controlled the senses, the mind and the intelligence, that liberation-minded sage, having been freed from material desires, fear and anger, is really liberated at all times (5.28)."

Freedom from anger is indicative of many good qualities. Lord Krishna illuminates, "One who is not agitated by miseries; is free from desires for sense enjoyment in good times; is free from attachment, fear and anger; that sage is considered to be of steady intelligence (2.56)." Further, free of attachment, fear and anger, fully absorbed in Me, and having taken My shelter, many knowledgeable and austere persons have become purified, and have achieved My consciousness (4.10), Lord Krishna expounds.

Therefore, as stated very forcefully by Lord Krishna, one should try to control one's anger, otherwise irreparable losses will come one's way. On the other hand, one who can control his or her anger will derive unbelievable benefits. One will be a better judge of situations; anger makes a person poor judge of them. One will suffer less stress; almost everyone's life is full of stress. There will be fewer conflicts and disputes with people around us; there will be better communication with them; one will develop closer and healthier relationships.

*(Bishnoi is a spiritual writer. The views expressed are personal.)*

# FPIs quit India; LIC, MFs make risky bets



SHIVAJI SARKAR

## Global economy stares at an uncertain time, with the fears of recession looming large; India needs to be cautious

Prospects of the US going into a deep recession, Federal Bank's rate hikes and hawkish views, European Union uncertainties and Russia-Ukraine war are bleeding the Indian stock markets. The outflow of Rs 2.71 lakh crore in the last eight months is posing a severe challenge to the Indian economy, putting even public deposits at grave risks.

If the western economies slip into recession, the Indian economy will have one additional challenge to face in the near future at a time when better terms of trade are needed for growth, as exports may take a severe hit. This may put pressure on the trade deficit further. "This is an anticipated outcome of their policy response of raising interest rates to manage the unprecedented inflation levels that they are currently experiencing," Ernst and Young said in its recent update.

The risk of the US economy tumbling into recession over the next year has doubled following the Federal Reserve's 75 basis-point interest-rate hike last week, says Goldman Sachs. It says in a note that the chance of a recession hitting in the next 12 months has risen from 15 percent before the rate hike, to 30 percent as of this week.

As the economy slumps and the interest rates are hiked, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) are moving their investments back to the US. Heavy outflows of FPI money from India in the last one year exceed what was seen during the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008, analysts at ICICI Securities say. The ongoing FPI selling in Indian equities is turning out to be the highest selling spree since the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008 at \$36 billion against \$28 billion during the GFC. However, inflows from domestic institutional investors into the shaky market have been constant while benchmark indices are down just around 10 percent compared to more than 50 percent in 2008.

The selloff that began in August, 2021 while there was a brief lull in September continues unabated since October last year. The FPIs pulling out of the capital from the equity markets in India has hit the rupee badly, with its exchange rate against the dollar falling to Rs 79.2 despite heavy RBI intervention to defend the currency.

Bankruptcy in the Euro region is deeper than explained. The latest voyage of the world's biggest unfinished cruiser to a ship-breaking yard because of the lack of a buyer is a testimony that the malaise is much deeper than what is being seen. The European economy is getting into the throes of crisis with the clogging of gas supplies from Russia, an expected food crisis and wrecking of its growth and economy for just siding with NATO. The US has yet not found a counter to checkmate Russia except giving some arms to Ukraine.



EQUITY MARKETS ARE TUMBLING, AS HOT MONEY TAKES FLIGHT AMID EMERGING UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC SITUATIONS IN THE US AND EUROPE DUE TO MULTIPLE FACTORS THAT CALL FOR TIGHTENING OF THE BELTS TO LAND THE INDIAN ECONOMY SAFELY

*(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)*



India despite being a friend of both the US and Russia is unable to save itself from the hazards despite maintaining a fine balance with the two big powers of the world. It is singled by high global inflation, higher domestic inflation, mounting debt, falling rupee vis a vis dollar. India's external debt rose by \$11.5 billion in October-December 2021 to stand at \$614.9 billion at the end of the quarter, according to data released by the Ministry of Finance on March 31. The IMF has issued a word of caution to India. It says external debt, by supplementing domestic savings, can help countries grow faster. But a large stock of external debt can potentially create vulnerabilities and dent growth prospects. Since the onset of the pandemic, many countries have expanded public spending to support the recovery, which has led to a build-up of their external debt. In other words, it warns to check external debt in particular.

The total external debt, which fell below the pre-crisis levels in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic lockdown, crossed the pre-pandemic levels as at end-December 2020 and commercial borrowings crossing the pre-pandemic levels as at end September 2021 and short-term trade credit crossing the pre-pandemic levels as at end-December 2021, the RBI says.

As India aims at higher, sustainable and inclusive growth, the RBI warns of keeping external debt flows within the estimated threshold limit for preserving overall

macro-stability to ward off external vulnerability. It's a stern warning, more so as savings is also not growing to meet the critical demands.

The FPI investment is not considered a staple investment. But it is a kind of hedge against external borrowings, forex reserves as also the need to maintain rupee stability. The majority of the external debt is private. General government external debt stood at \$131.4 billion as on December 31, down from \$132.0 billion as at the end of September 2021. Non-government commercial external debt, meanwhile, rose to \$483.6 billion, 36.8 percent from \$471.4 billion. The official borrowings are from international institutions on soft terms with the lowest risks. During fiscal 2021-22, India borrowed the most from the International bank for Reconstruction and Development at Rs 22,362 crore, followed by Asian Development Bank at Rs 16802 crore and the Government of Japan at Rs 9835 crore.

During the week ended February 25, India's foreign currency assets declined by \$ 2.22 billion. Since then more of it was lost in managing the rupee and the external sector. The rupee remains under pressure. This is a call for severe caution. The void of the FPIs is being filled up by domestic institutional investors (DIIs), led by LIC, mutual funds and insurance companies. They are absorbing most of the FPI sales to keep the stock market maintain a semblance but it is an artificial

support for virtually subsidizing the domestic companies, whose valuations are on an apparent roll. In other words, public money is being pumped into shaky private operations further debilitating the public institutions.

The institutions are supposed to take independent decisions. But this kind of operation, pushing them into risky operations, is questionable. Most of these organisations, now particularly LIC, are at high risk of losing people's deposits. The RBI, SEBI and other regulators need to step in to check such deals and purchases as the market value of many corporate with high ECBs as also domestic borrowings are suspect.

What appears to be innocuous withdrawal of some foreign companies have left a deep sense of hurt. It calls for a decision at the level of top regulators as also the ministry of finance to check the quality of investments being made in the risky assets. Stock prices are mostly notional and speculative, based on the premise that it would have made gains in future. Since 1992, the innumerable crashes or scams were based on these premises in the Indian equity markets, which bled the middle class by eroding their investments. Severe caution is needed at this hour as even an innocuous repeat of a failure can shear the Indian economy of billions of US dollars, if not trillions.

What looks like a US or Euro recession, if not dealt with cautiously, could have deleterious effects in India. Stitch in time is the best medicine.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

I THINK IT WAS A MISTAKE TO APPOINT CHRIS PINCHER AND I APOLOGISE FOR IT. IT WAS THE WRONG THING TO DO.  
—BRITISH PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON



I AM INSTINCTIVELY A TEAM PLAYER BUT THE BRITISH PEOPLE RIGHTLY EXPECT INTEGRITY FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT.  
—BRITISH HEALTH SECRETARY SAJID JAVID

# Railways seeks to end silos, incentivises excellence

## After much trial and errors, Railways has embarked on path of reforms, beginning with selection for key operational posts

Something unusual happened in Indian Railways (IR) last month, as hundreds of senior officers in Level 15, or Higher Administration Grade, filled up applications for selection as General Manager. They described five contributions they had made to the Railways in the course of their services, besides their impact areas if they were selected for the designated roles. Some of the officers even enlisted consultants to write their applications.

The top management of IR appears to be in a mess due to half-baked reforms, lacking in purpose, initiated by the previous Railway Board. Numerous top posts of IR, particularly Members of Board and General Managers (GMs), lie vacant, while it was



SUDHANSHU MANI

*(The author is a former general manager in the Indian Railways)*

announced that future induction of officers would be done for Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS), an integrated service through a common examination. There was more criticism than support for the move with reservations for a single cadre at the entry stage, even while the rationale to do away with the functioning in silos was much appreciated.

The incumbent Railways Minister is faced with the challenges of a deep financial crisis, attributable partly to the pandemic, but also to IR's inherent lethargy and problems. One would have thought that having got the notification for recruitment of 150 IRMS officers issued, the goal of unification of its eight existing cadres would take a backseat,

as bringing them on a common platform would cause a serious imbalance between engineers, who join at a younger age, vis-à-vis others, who join at an older age through Civil Services examination.

The ministry decided that officers from 1983 to 1986 batches, currently serving in Level 15 from the eight organised Group-A services (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Traffic, Accounts, Personnel, Signal and Stores), would be eligible to apply for empanelment in Level 16 of IRMS and they would form the pool for the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet to choose from for the 29 posts of GMs and equivalents.

Senior officers in Level 15, or HAG, still in service on a cut-off date, irrespective of the

number of years of service left, can apply with self-assessment. The selection process for empanelment would include Emotional Quotient test, multi-source assessment (peers, seniors, etc) and scrutiny of annual confidential reports. This system largely takes away any advantage of the age factor.

A panel comprising retired Board Members, GMs, Additional Members, Departmental Heads and retired Secretaries to GoI shall evaluate the applications for a Departmental Promotion Committee. The latter will include Secretary/DOP&T, Chairman & CEO, IR and one Secretary-level non-railway officer and make an overall recommendation for empanelment.

The IR has seven posts in

Level 17, the next level after GM, which are, Chairman Railway Board cum CEO, Members and Board Director Generals. There would be a similar process for selection to these posts from officers of Level 15 and 16, subject to their still being in service on a cut-off date. This too is transformational; in a lighter vein, for Level 15 officers, it is tantamount to 'double promotion' in schools of yore, reserved for brilliant students.

In the present system, officers can work out, with a reasonable accuracy, right at the beginning of their careers, the level to which they would rise based on their date of birth, as the system provides for yearly empanelment from Level 15 based on inter-se seniority and their balance years in service on

a cut-off date. This is detrimental with a double whammy; those who are likely to go up decide to tread cautiously and not take any transformational or tricky decisions which can invite vigilance complaints and controversies and those not likely to rise to the top decide to take it easy without much incentive to perform. There sure are self-motivated officers as exceptions but the outcome of mediocre chalta hai (everything acceptable!) performance is more common. In the new system, the top posts have been opened to a much larger pool of officers.

Today, the officers who join IRTS, IRAS and IRPS at an older age through Civil Services examination are at a disadvantage vis-à-vis engineers who join at a younger age through

Indian Engineering Service examination. A detrimental fallout of this has been that officers of these key departments do not rise to become GM; in my early service days some of the finest GMs came from IRTS as they had great insight into the nitty-gritty of railway operations. The new system gives a chance to such officers.

Since 2016, those empanelled in Level 16, but not posted, as they lacked two-year residual services on the date of vacancy, were given Level 16 pay and pension benefits once their junior(s) got posted. It follows that those who missed empanelment on age grounds should also get this relief. Such officers would now, not only be eligible for entering the panel, but also get the Level 16 pay and pension benefits.



# Indian-origin Suella Braverman early contender for UK PM race

PTI ■ LONDON

Even before Boris Johnson stepped out of 10 Downing Street on Thursday to deliver his resignation speech as Conservative Party leader, triggering a leadership race for a new British prime minister, the runners and riders had been lining up to compete for the top job.

Indian-origin Suella Braverman, currently the Attorney General in the UK Cabinet, is among the early Tory members of Parliament to formally declare her leadership bid. The 42-year-old barrister and the government's senior-most legal official is likely to command some support within the pro-Brexit wing of her party.

"I am putting myself forward because I believe that the 2019 manifesto is fit for purpose, presents a bold and inspiring vision for our country and I want to deliver on the promises contained in that manifesto. I want to embed the opportunities of Brexit and tidy up the outstanding issues...and cut taxes," said Braverman, who is of Goan ancestry.

Another fellow staunch Brexiteer, Steve Baker, also declared on air that he intends to throw his hat in the ring. He is an influential Tory backbencher who served as chair of the European Research Group, in favour of a hard Brexit deal.

But the duo are largely seen as outliers and now with Johnson's formal resignation, the other more serious bids are expected to start pouring in thick and fast.



In a latest YouGov poll of Tory party members in 'The Daily Telegraph', UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has emerged as the frontrunner to become the next Prime Minister. The party's 1922 Committee is responsible for setting the timetable for a Tory leadership contest.

To take part in the race, a Tory MP has to be nominated by eight col-

leagues. If more than two MPs put themselves forward and secure enough nominations to run for leader, a series of secret ballots are held to whittle them down. The YouGov survey indicates that Wallace may be in pole position if he chooses to contest and then makes it to the final two candidates.

He is on 13 per cent, just ahead

of junior minister Penny Mordaunt on 12 per cent.

Former UK Chancellor Rishi

Sunak, the Indian-origin minister who stepped down on Tuesday, is also seen as a contender and is at 10 per cent in the survey. Former Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who came second in the 2019 Conservative leadership contest, is on a joint 5 per cent,

alongside the new Chancellor, Nadhim Zahawi.

Zahawi, former Health and Education Secretary and most recently Chancellor in the Boris Johnson Cabinet, is believed to have already been working with Australian political strategist Sir Lynton Crosby - the man behind Johnson's thumping general electoral win in December 2019. The 55-year-old Iraqi refugee, who arrived in the UK as an 11-year-old boy, is yet to formally declare his intention to vie for the top job but is seen as a serious contender.

UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is another key contender, who is also believed to have been lining up her leadership bid over the last few months. She's currently at 8 per cent in the YouGov poll.

Former health secretary Sajid Javid, the Pakistani-origin minister who was the first to resign from Cabinet this week, is also seen as someone who might throw his hat in the ring.

Some of the other Conservative Party names doing the rounds include House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee chair Tom Tugendhat, Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab and recently sacked Cabinet minister Michael Gove.

The final shortlist of candidates is expected to go head to head in a debate until a vote between the final two decides on the winner, who will be the new Conservative Party leader and formally succeed Johnson as the new British prime minister.



## China lashes out at US, British intel services

AP ■ BEIJING

The United States is "the biggest threat to world peace, stability and development," China said on Thursday, continuing its sharp rhetoric in response to US accusations of Chinese spying and threats to the international order.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian's comments came a day after the head of the FBI and the leader of Britain's domestic intelligence agency raised fresh alarms about the Chinese government, warning business leaders that Beijing is determined to steal their technology for competitive gain.

The heightened tone comes ahead of a meeting Saturday between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations' ministers summit in Bali, Indonesia.

"The relevant US politician has been playing up the so-called China threat to smear and attack China," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing when asked about FBI Director Christopher Wray's comments reaffirming long-standing concerns in denouncing economic espionage and hacking operations by China as well as the Chinese government's efforts to stifle dissent abroad.

"Facts have fully proven that the US is the biggest

threat to world peace, stability and development," Zhao said. "We urge this US official to have the right perspective, see China's developments in an objective and reasonable manner and stop spreading lies and stop making irresponsible remarks."

Wray's speech was particularly notable because it took place at MI5's London headquarters and alongside the agency's director general, Ken McCallum, in an intended show of Western solidarity.

"We consistently see that it's the Chinese government that poses the biggest long-term threat to our economic and national security, and by our, I mean both of our nations, along with our allies in Europe and elsewhere," Wray told attendees.

McCallum said the Chinese government and its "covert pressure across the globe" amounts to "the most game-changing challenge we face." Under Xi Jinping, president and head of the ruling Communist Party, China has assumed an increasingly aggressive foreign policy, joining with Russia in seeking to undermine the influence of the U.S. And its allies.

Beijing has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine - which is expected to dominate the G-20 foreign ministers meeting - while condemning Western sanctions against Moscow and accusing Washington and NATO of provoking the conflict.

ic heat move into the Arctic.

"Thirty years is considered the minimum to represent climate change," said Petr Chylek, a physicist and climate researcher at Los Alamos National Laboratory, US, and lead author of the study published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

"We decreased the time interval to 21 years. At that smaller time scale, and contrary to previous investigations that found the Arctic amplification index increases in a smooth way, we observed two distinct steps, one in 1986 and a second one in 1999," Chylek said.

## Pregnant Sri Lankan woman waiting in queue for two days for passport delivers baby girl

PTI ■ COLOMBO

A pregnant Sri Lankan woman, who had been in a queue for two days to obtain a passport to leave the crisis-hit country for employment overseas, went into labour while waiting for her turn on Thursday and delivered a baby girl.

Sri Lanka Army personnel stationed at the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Colombo noticed the 26-year-old woman in labour at the premises on Thursday morning and rushed her to the Castle Hospital where she delivered the baby, officials said.

The woman along with her husband from the central hills had been in the queue for the last two days to obtain a passport to take up a job overseas.

Since the economic crisis kicked in during late January, long queues to obtain passports were seen regularly at the passport office. Most of the people have opted to obtain passports in the 'one day issue service'.

Meanwhile, another person, who was waiting at a fuel queue, died of a heart attack this morning, the fifteenth such death in a fuel queue since March.

The 60-year-old ice cream seller on a three wheeler had spent two continuous days in the queue for fuel at Payagala south of here. He developed chest pain while in the queue and was rushed to a hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Long queues for fuel are now seen leading to the Indian Oil Company's LIOC retail pumps in the country.

The state fuel entity CPC

pumps dried up 10 days ago with no information on supply ships arriving in the country.

The LIOC, which runs over 200 pumping stations, now makes limited issues by using its supplies from their storage tanks in the eastern district of Trincomalee.

Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekara told Parliament on Wednesday that until the arrival of a ship from the IOC, no fuel carrying vessels were available until July 22. Therefore, to meet the shortage, the government opted to pay a higher price and ordered a shipment to be able to reach by July 15.

Sri Lanka is going through the worst economic crisis since its independence from Britain in 1948, and needs to obtain at least USD 4 billion to tide over the acute shortage in foreign exchange reserves.

## Trial opens in deadly collapse of Italy's Morandi Bridge

AP ■ GENOA (ITALY),

Fifty-nine people went on trial on Thursday for the 2018 collapse of Genoa's Morandi bridge, accused of manslaughter and other charges in the deaths of 43 people.

The defendants include former executives and experts of the company that manages many of Italy's bridges and highways, as well as former officials of the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport.

A huge section of the Morandi bridge broke off during a violent rainstorm on August 14, 2018, when highways were packed on the eve of Italy's biggest summer holiday, sending cars plunging into the



dry riverbed below.

Prosecutors have alleged the defendants knew the bridge, which was built in the 1960s, was at risk of collapsing and that corners were cut on maintenance to save money.

The bridge's designer had recommended regular upkeep to remove rust, especially due to the corrosive effect of moist air from the nearby Ligurian

Sea, and maintenance to counter the effect of pollution on concrete.

"There are elements that prove that, since 2013, it was written in documents that the Morandi bridge was at risk of collapsing," said Egle Possetti, a member of the committee of relatives of Morandi victims who attended the hearing.

"In five years, nothing was

## Bulls run in Spain for 1st time since 2019; no one gored

AP ■ PAMPLONA (SPAIN)

The first bull run in three years took place on Thursday at the San Fermin festival in the Spanish city of Pamplona. No one was gored, but several runners took knocks and hard falls as tens of thousands people revelled in the return of one of Europe's most famous traditional events.

Six bulls guided by six tame oxen charged through Pamplona's streets for around two minutes and 35 seconds without provoking too much carnage among the thousands of observers and participants cramming the course.

Several runners were stomped, trampled or shoved to the cobblestone pavement. A animal's horn smacked at least two men in the head, but neither suffered a skewering.

## 'Trump girl': WV Guard member admits role in Capitol riot

AP ■ CHARLESTON, W.VA

A West Virginia National Guard member who wore a hoodie that read "Yes, I'm a Trump girl" inside the U.S. Capitol Rotunda during the Jan. 6 riot pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor Wednesday.

Jamie Lynn Ferguson entered the plea to parading, demonstrating or picketing in a Capitol building during a conference call with a U.S. magistrate judge in Washington, D.C. The charge carries a maximum penalty of six months in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Prosecutors asked that three other charges be dismissed. Ferguson, 44, also agreed to pay \$500 restitution for damage caused to the Capitol. Sentencing was set for Nov. 18.

On Jan. 3, 2021, Ferguson shared an article on her Facebook account containing a picture of a crowd in front of the Capitol with a storm cloud and Mount Rushmore above it. A caption in the post read, "I pray this is exactly what D.C. will look like on Jan. 6th. #HoldTheLine." A comment on the post asked whether Ferguson was going to the Capitol and she replied, "I am," according to court documents.

In an interview with FBI special agents a week after the riot, Ferguson admitted attending former President Donald Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally in

front of the White House before heading to the Capitol. Ferguson was wearing a dark hoodie with the phrase "Yes, I'm a Trump Girl" in white lettering when she entered the building. She spent nearly an hour inside, mostly walking around the Rotunda, the documents showed.

A report submitted to the FBI by the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations said Ferguson was on leave from the National Guard from Jan. 5 to Jan. 7. Ferguson said she attended the rally with her parents, who left afterward. Ferguson said she proceeded to the Capitol because she believed she would be able to see Trump again.

Ferguson was arrested in May in Lynchburg, Virginia. She is a technical sergeant and a drill status guardsman assigned to the West Virginia Air National Guard.

"As a matter of policy, the 130th Airlift Wing and the West Virginia National Guard do not comment on civilian criminal matters," the Guard said in a statement Wednesday.

Under the conditions of her release, Ferguson was ordered to stay at the Virginia home of her parents.

More than 830 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Capitol riot. More than 320 of them have pleaded guilty, mostly to misdemeanor charges, and over 200 have been sentenced.

## Georgia subpoenaing Giuliani, Graham in Trump election probe

AP ■ BEIJING

The Georgia prosecutor investigating the conduct of former President Donald Trump and his allies after the 2020 election is subpoenaing U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and other members of Trump's campaign legal team to testify before a special grand jury.

Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis on Tuesday filed petitions with the judge overseeing the special grand jury as part of her investigation into what she alleges was "a multi-state, coordinated plan by the Trump Campaign to influence the results of the November 2020 election in Georgia and elsewhere."

The move marks a major escalation in a case that could pose a serious legal challenge to the former president as he weighs another White House run. While the special grand jury has already heard from top state officials, Tuesday's filings directly target several of Trump's closest allies and advisers, including Giuliani, who led his campaign's legal efforts to overturn the election results.

"It means the investigation is obviously becoming more intense because those are trusted advisers, those are inner circle people," said Robert James, former district attorney in DeKalb County, which neighbors Fulton.

The special grand jury has been investigating whether Trump and others illegally tried to meddle in the 2020 presidential election in Georgia as he desperately tried to cling to power after Democrat Joe Biden's victory. Trump continues to insist that the election was stolen, despite the fact that numerous feder-



al and local officials, a long list of courts, top former campaign staff and even Trump's own attorney general have all said there is no evidence of the fraud he alleges.

The investigation is separate from that being conducted by a congressional committee that has been examining the events surrounding the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 as well as the Department of Justice's own sprawling probe. Trump is also facing other legal challenges, including in New York, where he, his namesake son and his daughter Ivanka have agreed to answer questions under oath beginning next week in the New York attorney general's civil investigation into his business practices.

The escalation comes as Trump has been mulling announcing a third presidential run as soon as this summer as he seeks to deflect attention from the ongoing investigations and lock in support before a long list of other potential candidates, such as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, make their own moves.

Willis, who took this unusual step of requesting a special grand jury earlier this year, has confirmed that she and her team are looking into a January 2021 phone call in which Trump pushed Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" the votes needed for him to win the state.

## Arctic heating up four times faster than global warming

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Arctic is heating up more than four times faster than the rate of global warming, according to a new analysis of observed temperatures.

The trend has stepped upward steeply twice in the last 50 years, a finding missed by all but four of 39 climate models, the researchers said.

The study does not pinpoint a cause for these relatively sudden increases, but the researchers speculate that contributing causes are probably sea ice and water vapour feedbacks combined with changes in how atmospheric and ocean-

## EU Parliament condemns US abortion ruling, seeks safeguards

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union's parliament on Thursday overwhelmingly condemned the end of constitutional protections for abortion in the US and called for such safeguards to be enshrined in the EU's fundamental rights charter.

In a 324-155 vote with 38 abstentions, European Parliament lawmakers adopted a resolution that crystalised the anger seen in many of the EU's 27 member countries since the US Supreme Court handed down its ruling on

June 24. "It teaches us a lesson: Women's and girls' human rights can never be taken for granted, and we must always fight to defend them," Swedish politician Helene Fritzton, who is vice president of an parliamentary alliance of Socialists and Democrats, said.

Underscoring fears that anti-abortion movements might expand in Europe, some legislators said they wanted to see EU-wide protections adopted. "The United States has clearly shown why we must use every tool available to safeguard abortion rights in the European

Union," said Stéphane Séjourné the president of the liberal Renew Europe group in the EU Parl. The resolution calls on member nations to add a sentence reading "Everyone has a right to safe and legal abortion" to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. National laws determine the status of abortion in individual EU countries, much like the Supreme Court's ruling will result in for states in the US. Abortion is legal and practised without much political opposition in many member nations, but is banned in Malta and restricted in Poland.

## Monkeypox cases rise 77% in UN agency's latest weekly count

AP ■ GENEVA

The World Health Organisation on Thursday reported a 77 per cent weekly increase in the number of laboratory-confirmed monkeypox cases, to more than 6,000 worldwide, and two more deaths in parts of Africa where the virus has circulated for years.

Most of the cases were reported in Europe and Africa. The UN health agency said the mysterious outbreak continues to mainly affect men who have had sex with men, and that other population groups

showed no signs of sustained transmission.

WHO said it counted 6,027 laboratory-confirmed cases of monkeypox from 59 countries as of Monday, an increase of 2,614 cases since its last count for the week that ended June 27. It said three people have now died in connection with the outbreak, all of them in Africa. The agency said nine additional countries had reported cases, while 10 countries had not reported any new cases for more than three weeks, which is the maximum incubation period.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Wednesday he remained "concerned by the scale and spread of the virus," noting that over 80 per cent of the cases turned up in Europe.

He said he would convene the next meeting of a WHO expert panel for no later than the week of July 18. Most monkeypox patients experience fever, body aches, chills and fatigue. People with more serious illness may develop a rash and lesions on the face and hands that can spread to other parts of the body.



# Russia taking ‘operational pause’ in Ukraine: Analysts

AP ■ KYIV

Foreign analysts say Russia may be temporarily easing its offensive in Ukraine as the Russian military attempts to reassemble its forces for a renewed assault.

On Wednesday, Russian forces made no claimed or assessed territorial gains in Ukraine "for the first time in 133 days of war", according to the Institute for the Study of War.

The think tank based in Washington suggested that Moscow may be taking an "operational pause", but that it does not entail "the complete cessation of active hostilities".

"Russian forces will likely confine themselves to relatively small-scale offensive actions as they attempt to set conditions for more significant offensive operations and rebuild the combat power needed to attempt those more ambitious undertakings," the institute said.

A Thursday statement from Russia's Defence Ministry seemed to confirm that assessment. It said Russian military units involved in combat in Ukraine had been given time to rest.

"The units that performed combat missions during the special military operation are taking measures to recover their combat capabilities. The servicemen are given the opportunity to rest, receive



letters and parcels from home," read the statement, quoted by Russian state news agency Tass.

Shelling continued in Ukraine's east, where at least nine civilians were killed and six wounded in 24 hours, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukraine's presidential office said in its Thursday morning update that cities and villages in seven Ukrainian regions were shelled in the past day. Most of the civilian deaths occurred in Donetsk province, where fighting is ongoing. Seven civilians were killed there, including a child, the presidential office said.

Ten cities and villages came under shelling in Donetsk, and

35 buildings were destroyed, including a school, a vocational college and a hospital, officials said.

Donetsk is part of the Donbas, a mostly Russian-speaking industrial region where Ukraine's most experienced soldiers are concentrated. Pro-Russian separatists have fought Ukrainian forces and controlled much of the Donbas for eight years.

Russian President Vladimir Putin recognised the independence of two self-proclaimed republics there just before Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24.

Putin on Monday claimed victory in Luhansk, the other

province constituting the Donbas, after Ukrainian forces withdrew from the last city they controlled there. The governor of Luhansk, Serhiy Haidai, denied on Wednesday that the Russians had completely captured the province.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, a boarding school was hit, but no one was injured. The Kharkiv region, which lies along the border with Russia, is under daily shelling, and two civilians were killed there over the past 24 hours.

The Ukrainian military said on Thursday that Russian forces also carried out shelling and helicopter strikes in the

Sumy region in the northeast.

Even as the fighting continued, the British Defence Ministry said it thinks Russia's military is "reconstituting" its forces. A ministry intelligence assessment issued on Thursday said the heavy shelling along the front line in Donetsk is likely intended to secure previous Russian gains.

Further hostilities were reported in the Black Sea where the Ukrainian military said on Thursday that a Ukrainian flag had been planted on a strategic island that Russian troops withdrew from last month.

Ukraine's Operational Command South said in a statement that Ukrainian military units had cleared Snake Island, an outpost off Ukraine's southwestern coast vital for guaranteeing sea lanes out of the key port of Odesa.

The command group also said the Ukrainian military had destroyed some 30 pieces of Russian military equipment, describing the discovery of "abandoned ammunition and vast ruins".

Russian troops withdrew from the island on June 30 in what Russia's Defence Ministry called "a goodwill gesture". But the ministry said on Thursday that a Russian Aerospace Forces aircraft had launched a missile strike on the island as Ukrainian forces attempted to plant the flag.

"As a result, some of the Ukrainian military personnel

were destroyed, the rest fled," the ministry said. Ukraine also said that Russia fired two missiles targeting a Moldovan-flagged oil tanker in the Black Sea, setting it ablaze.

Ukraine's southern military command said the strike hit the Millennial Spirit, which has over 500 tons of diesel fuel on board. Ukraine says one missile struck the ship, while the other went wide. Social media images showed smoke rising off the coast of Odesa on Thursday morning.

The ship has been without a crew, drifting at sea since the start of the war in February. Russia did not immediately acknowledge the strike on the vessel. The ship's tracking devices have been down since it was abandoned by its crew.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said it summoned the Turkish ambassador in Kyiv Thursday over what it described as the theft of Ukrainian grain by a Russian ship.

The Russian ship Zhibek Zholy was allowed to leave Turkey's Black Sea coast after Turkish authorities briefly detained it at Ukraine's request. Ukraine summoned the ambassador to complain about the "unacceptable situation".

Turkey, with its Bosphorus Strait, is a key transit route for shipping out of the Black Sea. Ukraine has sought to pressure Ankara to stop Russian shipments of its grain, a vital source of revenue.

## Ukrainians cling to life at front line: 'We are patriots'

AP ■ KHARKIV

Wiktor Lazar shares his war-side balcony with a pair of opera glasses and a tiny orange snake, his only companion in an apartment that seems to sit at the edge of the world.

The opera glasses, more of a joke, are hardly needed - the front line is visible without them. The rumbling of Russian and Ukrainian shelling is audible even now, although Lazar claims not to notice. Below his balcony is a crater, one of many. On the nearby street, a Grad rocket launcher rolls by.

Lazar estimates the Russians are just 10 kilometers (6 miles) away.

As the war grinds into its fifth month along deadly fault lines in Ukraine's east and south, Lazar and his few neighbours in Kharkiv's vast and shattered neighbourhood of Saltivka represent a life without resolution in which many are trapped. New communities are being told to flee. Not all do.

While towns and villages around the capital of Kyiv have begun to rebuild after the Russians withdrew months ago and world powers discuss long-term recovery, others in eastern Ukraine still cannot sleep soundly.

The Soviet-era apartment blocks in Saltivka once housed a half-million people, one of the largest neighbourhoods in Europe. Now perhaps only dozens remain. Some of the buildings are blackened, while others are crumbling slab by slab.

"This is my home," says the

37-year-old Lazar, who is shirtless in the soaring summer heat, revealing a machine gun tattoo on his right arm. He proclaims he's ready to fight the Russians, but his only weapons are kitchen knives.

A broken guitar hangs on the wall of his apartment. Lazar, a musician, dreams of holding a defiant concert in Saltivka's echoing, cat-roamed streets. In better days, he played for crowds in the plazas of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, which is showing signs of rebounding from the war - even though it's only a short distance from the border with Russia.

Saltivka, by comparison, is almost dead. Past a final subway station dedicated to heroes, all activity sputters out. Shops are closed and apartment blocks gape with broken windows. In one, a table-sized chunk of concrete twists slowly on a shred of rebar, waiting to fall.

Tall grass overtakes abandoned playgrounds scattered with fallen and ripened cherries. Soldiers' trenches are bare. In a few apartments now ripped open, laundry still hangs on the line.

From time to time, a car crunches along the debris. It might bring movers trying to salvage some furniture or volunteers bringing assistance.

Outside Lazar's building, people have assembled a modest kitchen with a mounted bell to ring when the day's food arrives. Near the teapot on a wood stove, ammunition boxes now hold bread slowly going stale.

## Russia's war in Ukraine to overshadow G20 talks in Bali

AP ■ JAKARTA

Foreign ministers from the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations are gathering in Indonesia's resort island of Bali for talks bound to be dominated by the conflict in Ukraine despite an agenda focused on global cooperation and food and energy security.

The one-day gathering will take place on Friday on the mostly Hindu "island of the gods" in the majority Muslim archipelago nation.

Underscoring the backdrop of tensions hanging over the meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russia's top diplomat Sergey Lavrov stopped in various Asian capitals on their way to Bali, drumming up support and fortifying their ties in the region ahead of the talks.

The United States and its allies have sought to punish Russian President Vladimir Putin in as many ways as possible, including by threatening a boycott of the G-20's Bali summit in November unless Putin is removed from the forum.

So as this year's president of the G-20, Indonesia has been forced into playing a more constructive role on the world stage rather than acting just as an "event organizer." The country has sought to remain neutral in dealing with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and President Joko Widodo has been guarded in his comments.

Widodo was the first Asian leader to visit the warring countries. Ukraine is not a member of G-20, but Widodo has invited Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the November summit along with Putin, hoping to appease all sides and limit any distractions from the forum's agenda.

Zelenskyy has said he won't attend if the war is continuing then and has opted to follow the discussions by video link. Widodo reportedly told Italian Prime Minister Marion Draghi, on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in Germany, that Putin also will not be coming. Moscow has said a decision has not yet been made. That apparent compromise may be put to the test when the G-20 foreign ministers gather in Bali's heavily-guarded Nusa Dua tourist haven to lay the groundwork for the 17th summit of the West's economic powerhouses.

Strains between Washington and Beijing are also apparent: On Wednesday, China launched a scathing attack on the U.S. And NATO, just days before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the Chinese foreign minister are due to meet in Bali.

Washington "observes international rules only as it sees fit," Chinese Foreign Ministry



spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters in Beijing. He said the "so-called rules-based international order is actually a family rule made by a handful of countries to serve the U.S. Self-interest."

A key aim of the talks will be to seek ways to improve food security at a time when Russia's invasion of Ukraine has choked global markets, pushing prices of meat, dairy products, cereals, sugar and vegetable oils sharply higher. "These visits are not only important for Indonesians but also for other developing countries in order to prevent the people of developing and low-income countries from falling into extreme poverty and hunger," Widodo told reporters in Jakarta before his departure to Germany on June 26.

Russia and Ukraine account for a third of the world's wheat exports and Ukraine alone grows enough of the grain to feed 400 million people. But Moscow's blockade means Kyiv can only move 2 million tons a month, 60% less than usual.

Millions of tons of Ukrainian grain are sitting in silos waiting to be shipped through safe corridors in the Black Sea. Ukraine also is one of the world's largest exporters of corn and sunflower oil, but Russia's invasion halted most of that flow. Such disruptions threaten food supplies for many developing countries, especially in Africa.

The crisis is having inflationary ripple effects in Indonesia, including a shortage of flour that is compelling local companies to raise the politically-sensitive price of instant noodles, a hugely popular Indonesian staple.

Russia has pledged to increase its wheat exports to Indonesia. Last year, those amounted to only 2,955 tons compared with the 3 million tonnes imported from Ukraine.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has told reporters it's important to achieve a resumption of grain exports from Ukraine and food and fertilizer exports from Russia to end shortages and reduce prices.

## Griner arrives at Russian court for trial on drug charges

AP ■ SZYPLISZKI, POLAND

Jailed American basketball star Brittney Griner returned to a Russian court Thursday to face her trial on drug charges as a senior Russian diplomat warned that U.S. criticism of how Russia's handling the case wouldn't help her release prospects.

Griner's trial began last week amid a growing chorus of calls for Washington to do more to secure her freedom nearly five months after her arrest.

The athlete was detained in February at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport after vape canisters with cannabis oil allegedly were found in her luggage. She faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted of large-scale transportation of drugs.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warned Thursday that "attempts by the American side to make noise in public ... don't help the practical settlement of issues."

The White House said



President Joe Biden called Griner's wife on Wednesday to assure her that he's doing all he can to obtain the athlete's release, as soon as possible. They spoke after Biden read a letter from Griner in which she said she feared she'd never return home.

Washington hasn't made public its strategy in the case and the United States may have little leverage with Moscow because of strong animosity due to Russia's military actions in Ukraine.

The State Department has designated Griner as wrongfully detained, moving her case under the supervision of its special pres-

idential envoy for hostage affairs, effectively the government's chief hostage negotiator.

Asked about the possibility of Griner being swapped for a Russian jailed in the U.S., Ryabkov, the senior Russian diplomat, noted that until her trial is over "there are no formal or procedural reasons to talk about any further steps." He warned that U.S. criticism, including a description of Griner as wrongfully detained and dismissive comments about the Russian judicial system, "makes it difficult to engage in detailed discussion of any possible exchanges."

## Inflation pushed 71M people into poverty since Ukraine war

AP ■ DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Staggering 71 million more people around the world are experiencing poverty as a result of soaring food and energy prices that climbed in the weeks following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United Nations Development Program said in a report Thursday.

The UNDP estimates that 51.6 million more people fell into poverty in the first three months after the war, living off \$1.90 a day or less. This pushed the total number globally at this threshold to 9% of the world's population. An additional 20 million people slipped to the poverty line of \$3.20 a day.

In low-income countries, families spend 42% of their household incomes on food but as Western nations moved to sanction Russia, the price of fuel and staple food items like

wheat, sugar and cooking oil soared. Ukraine's blocked ports and its inability to export grains to low-income countries further drove up prices, pushing tens of millions quickly into poverty.

"The cost of living impact is almost without precedent in a generation... and that is why it is so serious," UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said at the launch of the report.

The speed at which this many people experienced poverty outpaced the economic pain felt at the peak of the pandemic.

The UNDP noted that 125 million additional people experienced poverty over about 18 months during the pandemic's lockdowns and closures, compared with more than 71 million who hit poverty in just three months after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February.

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**No. 409**  
**Date Extension-02**  
**Date: 07.07.2022**  
Due to unavoidable reason dates of tender no- 01/EE(E&M)/ ICHARI/TN/202-23 and Tender No. 02/EE(E&M)/ICHAIRI/TN/ 2022-23 are being extended as follows.  
Last date of downloading the tender:- upto 10:00 hrs of 26.07.2022  
Last date for submission of tender:- upto 15:00 hrs of 26.07.2022  
Tender opening Date & Time:- Upto 11:30 hrs of 27.07.2022  
All other terms & conditions remain shall remain same. For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "https://uktenders.gov.in"  
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**संख्या : 31/04/E-3/DR(A.R.)/2022**  
**दिनांक : 07 जुलाई, 2022**  
**विज्ञापित**  
एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि उच्च शिक्षा विभाग के अन्तर्गत राज्याधीन विश्वविद्यालयों में सहायक कुलसचिव के रिक्त 13 पदों एवं संस्कृत शिक्षा विभाग के अन्तर्गत सहायक कुल सचिव के रिक्त 02 पदों पर सीधी भर्ती द्वारा चयन हेतु 'सहायक कुलसचिव परीक्षा-2022' के माध्यम से ऑनलाइन आवेदन पत्र आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं। उक्त विज्ञापन के संबंध में अतिमहत्वपूर्ण तिथियाँ निम्नवत हैं:-  
विज्ञापन प्रकाशन की तिथि — 08 जुलाई, 2022  
ऑनलाइन आवेदन पत्र भरने की अन्तिम तिथि — 28 जुलाई, 2022  
(रात्रि 11.59.59 बजे तक)  
परीक्षा शुल्क- Net Banking/Debit Card/Credit Card/ — 28 जुलाई, 2022  
UPI Payment द्वारा जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि (रात्रि 11.59.59 बजे तक)  
भर्ती से सम्बन्धित सितियों का विवरण, अर्हता और शर्तें इत्यादि आयोग की वेबसाइट **www.psc.uk.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध विज्ञापन में उल्लिखित हैं। अथर्थाँ ऑनलाइन आवेदन करने से पूर्व विज्ञापन का मली-माँति अवलोकन करना सुनिश्चित करें।  
(कर्मन्द् सिंह) सचिव।

## Russia proposes 6-month cross-border aid renewal for Syria

AP ■ JAKARTA

Russia has agreed to continue humanitarian aid deliveries from Turkey to rebel-held northwest Syria for six months - not a year, as many U.N. Security Council members, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and more than 30 nongovernmental groups want.

Russia proposed amendments to a draft resolution by Ireland and Norway reducing their year-long time frame for deliveries. Council diplomats said consultations were continuing late Wednesday to see if a compromise could be reached.

The Security Council scheduled

a vote for Thursday morning. If no compromise appeared, the draft resolution by Ireland and Norway to extend cross-border deliveries for 12 months would be voted on first. If it failed to get nine votes, or was vetoed by Russia, the Russian resolution with a six-month extension would then be put to a vote.

In early July 2020, China and Russia vetoed a U.N. Resolution that would have maintained two border crossing points from Turkey to deliver humanitarian aid to Idlib. Days later, the council authorized the delivery of aid through just one of those crossings, Bab al-Hawa. That one-year mandate was extended for a year on July 9, 2021, and expires this

Sunday.

The Russian proposal called for increased efforts to ensure "full, safe and unhindered" deliveries of humanitarian assistance across conflict lines within Syria, according to the Russian draft obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press.

It also would authorize the establishment of "a special working group" comprising concerned council members, major donors, interested regional parties and representatives of international humanitarian agencies "in order to regularly review and follow-up on the implementation of this resolution."

Neither of those proposals were in the Ireland-Norway draft resolu-

tion.

Northwest Idlib is the last rebel-held bastion in Syria and al Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham is the strongest insurgent group in the region. The U.N. Said last week that the first 10 years of the Syrian conflict, which started in 2011, killed more than 300,000 civilians -- the highest official estimate of civilian casualties. In a letter to Security Council ambassadors obtained Wednesday by the AP, former International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo warned that by approving cross-border deliveries to northwest Syria, council members "could find themselves materially supporting a U.N.-

designated terrorist organization."

He said northwest Syria "is controlled by Al Nusra, a U.N. Designated terrorist organization affiliated with al Qaida and currently called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham."

Any support to a "terrorist organization, including humanitarian assistance," is prohibited by previous U.N. Security Council resolutions, Ocampo said. To avoid a "flagrant violation" of its resolutions, he said the Security Council should have the operation monitoring cross-border deliveries confirm that the al Qaida-linked groups "are not involved in implementing humanitarian aid" or remove Al Nusra-Hayat Tahrir al-Sham from the "terrorist" list.



# Sensex climbs for 2nd day amid firm global cues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmarks darted up for the second straight session on Thursday, propped up by robust buying in consumption, metal and bank stocks amid a bullish trend overseas. However, a depreciating rupee and foreign fund outflows capped the gains, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex rose 427.49 points or 0.80 per cent to close at 54,178.46. The broader NSE Nifty advanced 143.10 points or 0.89 per cent to 16,132.90. Titan was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, spurting 5.69 per cent, after the Tata group firm reported a three-fold jump in sales for the April-June quarter. Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, M&M, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank were the other major gainers, rising up to 4.88 per cent. In contrast, Dr Reddy's, Nestle India, Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance, HUL and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards, shedding as much as 1.26 per cent. The market breadth was positive, with 21 of the 30 Sensex stocks closing in the green. "Domestic bourses mirrored an upbeat mood in global equity markets as investors digested the latest FOMC minutes while falling crude and commodity prices lifted investor sentiments. This upside momentum could dominate the markets in the near-term, underpinned by hopes of reducing inflation," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.



The RBI's latest measures to boost foreign exchange inflows is expected to aid the tumbling rupee, he added.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said supportive global cues triggered a gap-up opening in the benchmarks. "The recent uptick in the index has certainly eased some pressure but the key is to sustain amid mixed sentiment. Apart from the global markets, the focus will be on IT major TCS results for cues," he noted. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.30 per cent and midcap index went higher by 1.19 per cent. All the BSE sectoral indices ended higher, with metal advancing the most by 4.49 per cent, followed by consumer durables (3.24 per cent), realty (2.55 per cent), basic materials (2.22 per cent), capital goods (2.01 per cent) and industrials (1.73 per cent). World stocks marched higher despite the US Federal Reserve's minutes of its previous meeting indicating a hawkish stance, with a rate hike of 75 basis points likely in July to tame inflation. The minutes were released on Wednesday. In Asia, markets in Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended higher. European bourses too were trading in the positive zone in mid-session deals. The US markets had clocked gains on Wednesday. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude inched up 0.05 per cent to USD 100.7 per barrel. The rupee declined 19 paise to close at 79.13 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday. Foreign institutional investors resumed selling after a day's breather, offloading shares worth a net Rs 330.13 crore on Wednesday, as per exchange data.

## Centre earmarks ₹80K cr interest-free loans for States undertaking capital works in FY'23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has earmarked Rs 80,000 crore as interest-free loans for states undertaking capital works in the current fiscal. In her 2022-23 Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' scheme under which total financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh crore would be given to states in the form of 50-year interest-free loans for capital investment projects. Issuing the guidelines for implementing the scheme, the finance ministry said Rs 80,000 crore is reserved for capital works to be undertaken by the states. To avail the benefit for investments made this fiscal, states will have to submit details like name of the project, capital outlay, completion period and its economic justification to the expenditure department of the Union finance ministry. "... states are required to submit capital works proposed to be taken up by them in 2022-23... to the Department of Expenditure for approval and release of funds," the expenditure department said in a letter dated April 6 sent to all state governments. Projects under PM Gati Shakti Master Plan will receive priority, it added. The 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' scheme also includes Rs 5,000 crore interest-free loans which would be provided to incentivise states to undertake privatisation or disinvestment of state public sector enterprises and asset monetisation.



Under this head, states would be incentivised to privatise or undertake strategic sale along with transfer of management control of state PSUs besides listing of PSUs on the stock exchanges. Such incentives to a particular state would be limited to Rs 1,000 crore, the expenditure department added. In her budget speech, Sitharaman had announced that the 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' scheme allocation will be used for PM Gati Shakti related and other productive capital investment of the states. Besides, allocation would be made for digitisation of the economy, including digital payments and completion of optical fibre cable network, and reforms related to building bye-laws, town planning schemes, transit-oriented development, and transferable development rights. The total Rs 1 lakh crore scheme also includes Rs 4,000 crore for PM Gram Sadak Yojana, Rs 2,000 crore digitisation incentive, Rs 6,000 crore towards urban reforms and Rs 3,000 crore for capital projects on optical fibre cable.

## 'Indian job market sees 3% growth in June'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian job market registered marginal year-on-year growth of 3 per cent across industry segments in June, according to a report. According to the data by Monster Employment Index (MEI), banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI), travel and tourism and chemical industries ramped up hiring compared to the same month last year. Moreover, sustainable finance, green jobs, and hospitality roles also charted an upswing in demand for talent. The Monster Employment Index for June this year stood at 279, as against 271 registered in the year-ago period. The Index is a broad and comprehensive monthly analysis of online job posting activity conducted by Monster India. In May 2022, the Index stood at 284. "The Indian job market has continued to grow with newer segments backed by the green revolution coming into play. We see tech-enabled industries garner more growth and innovate through this strenuous period, which is quite encouraging as India moves into a more digital-disruptive phase than ever before," Monster.Com, a Qness company, CEO Sekhar Garisa said. Garisa further noted that "while concerns over start-up layoffs continue to linger, it is important to note that they represent a very small portion of the overall job pie and several industries today have outperformed their targets to contribute to the larger growth story of our nation." However, IT-hardware software (down 2 per cent) has noted a marginal dip in hiring activity due to the trend of start-up layoffs, which have hurt the segment over the past few months, according to the report. On the contrary, industries such as media and entertainment (down 26 per cent) and engineering, cement, construction, iron/steel (down 20 per cent) have noted a continuous dip in demand for professionals. According to MEL, metros continued to top the charts in line with previous months indicating post pandemic job recovery.



It found that Mumbai (up 23 per cent) charted maximum growth among metro cities and Coimbatore (up 19 per cent) represented substantial demand among tier II metros. Metro cities like Hyderabad (up 15 per cent), Delhi-NCR (up 13 per cent) and Ahmedabad (up 11 per cent) also exhibited double digit growth as per the MEI while Chennai was up 8 per cent, Pune (up 9 per cent) and Bangalore (up 4 per cent). While most tier II cities have inched closer to pre-pandemic level hiring, the demand has hummed down reflecting current economic conditions and resultant cautious recruiter attitudes, it added. In experience levels, the demand for top management with over 15 years of experience remained the least impacted in the thick of ongoing downsizing, showcasing maximum growth in hiring at 15 per cent on a year-on-year basis and 3 per cent on a quarterly basis, the report noted.

## Rupee falls 19 paise to 79.13 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined 19 paise to close at 79.13 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as the hawkish stance of the US Federal Reserve increased the possibility of another aggressive rate hike this month. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 79.05 and finally ended at 79.13, down 19 paise over its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee closed at 78.94. "Rupee opened on a flat note but started to come under pressure despite measures announced by the RBI," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. The RBI on Wednesday raised overseas borrowing limits for companies and liberalised norms for foreign investments in government bonds as it announced a slew of measures to boost foreign exchange inflows in efforts to curb the fall of the rupee. The central bank had also said it has been closely and continuously monitoring the liquidity conditions in the forex market and has stepped in as needed in all its segments to alleviate dollar tightness with the objective of ensuring orderly market functioning. Forex traders said the US Federal Reserve's minutes of the meeting held last month indicated a hawkish stance and a rate hike of 75 basis points is likely in July.

## RBI measures to have positive impact on overseas fund inflows: DEA Secy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth on Thursday said the measures taken by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will increase inflows of overseas funds and help in strengthening the rupee against the US dollar. RBI on Wednesday raised the overseas borrowing limits for companies and liberalised norms for foreign investments in government bonds as it announced a slew of measures to boost foreign exchange inflows. Seth said RBI measures, including on External Commercial Borrowing (ECB), are transitory and for shorter duration, and would



help in boosting the foreign currency inflows into the country. RBI on Wednesday increased the ECB limit under the automatic route from USD 750 million or its equivalent per financial year to USD 1.5 billion and eased the norms for FPI investments in the debt market.

Among the fresh steps, the cap has been removed on interest rate that lenders can offer on foreign deposits by NRIs. The relaxation will be in force till October. Since the war in Ukraine broke out in late February, RBI has expended its foreign exchange reserves in order to shield the rupee from steep depreciation. Since February 25, the headline foreign exchange reserves have declined by USD 40.94 billion. The rupee has depreciated by 4.1 per cent against the US dollar during the current financial year so far (up to July 5). However, it is modest relative to other EMEs and even major Advanced Economies (AEs).

## Fundraise by Indian startups falls 33% to USD 6.9 billion in June quarter: Report

PTI ■ New Delhi

The total funding raised by Indian startups in just-ended June quarter fell 33 per cent sequentially to USD 6.9 billion, according to a report by market intelligence platform Tracxn. The capital raise during the quarter was not just lower than USD 10.3 billion logged between January and March 2022, but also marked a decline when compared to the same quarter of previous year (USD 10.1 billion in Q2 of 2021). The funding seems to have cooled off the previous high, witnessed in Q3 2021, the report said, while indicating a "major consensus amongst market players of a 'winter of funding' or a downturn in investors' confidence and sentiments towards funding startups". According to the report, Indian startups raised USD 6.9 billion in Q2 2022 (April-June) in 409 funding rounds. "... The top startups being VerSe (USD 805 million - Series J), Delhivery (USD 304 million- Series J) and udaan (USD 275 million- Series D). They were followed closely by ShareChat (USD 255 million-Series G) and upGrad (USD 225 million- Series F)," the report said. Social platforms, internet first media, payments, business-to-business e-commerce and e-commerce enablers were the top sectors that attracted the maximum funding from investors between April and June 2022. The report 'Tracxn Geo Quarterly Report: India Tech Q2 2022' noted that 121 new startups closed their first funding rounds, four startups turned unicorns, 62 startups got acquired and 5 launched their IPOs (Initial Public

Offerings). With Leadsquared, Purple, PhysicsWallah, and Open becoming new unicorns, the total valuation of unicorns swelled to USD 31.8 billion in the past quarter (Q2 2022). "GOAT Brand Labs, Fashinza, and Ilitile entered the soonicorn club with fundraises of USD 88 million, USD 135 million, and USD 47.2 million respectively. With respect to exits, while eMudhra, Delhivery, Handicrafts village, Eighty Jewellers, and Veranda Learning Solutions filed for IPOs, Blinkit (By Zomato), Whitteak (By Asian Paints), and MyHQ (By ANAROCK) were the top acquisitions," it further said. The Q3 2021 saw investments topping the charts, grossing USD 15 billion in funding rounds 'which hasn't been surpassed in recent times'. "It's leading to the major consensus amongst market players of a 'winter of funding' or a downturn in investors' confidence and sentiments towards funding startups," it said. The 'funding winter' is a result of the market slowdown and economic volatility based on the current macroeconomic conditions and geopolitical situation that's intensifying inflation, interest rates and commodity prices. Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai are the top cities attracting the maximum investments, as per the report. While IPV and Blume Ventures topped the investment charts in seed-stage startups, Sequoia Capital and Accel ranked highest in the early-stage startups funding. Sofina and DST Global are the leading late-stage institutional investors, the report said.

## RBI notifies ways to boost forex inflows



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday issued notifications relaxing provisions for overseas investments in debt market and foreign currency lending by banks, measures which were announced as part of efforts to shore up the rupee. The measures were announced on Wednesday amid the rupee falling against the US dollar. Banks can utilise the funds raised from overseas foreign currency borrowing between July 8 and October 31, 2022 for lending in foreign currency to constituents in India, as per the notification on 'Overseas foreign currency borrowing of Authorised Dealer Category-I banks'. At present, banks can undertake Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowing (OFCB) up to a limit of 100 per cent of their unimpaired Tier 1 capital or USD 10 million, whichever is higher. The funds so borrowed cannot be used for lending in foreign currency except for the purpose of export finance. The measure, RBI said is expected to facilitate foreign currency borrowing by a larger set of borrowers who may find it difficult to directly access overseas markets. The central bank has issued two other notifications related to

investment by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in debt instruments. Investments by FPIs in government securities and corporate bonds made between July 8 and October 31, 2022 will be exempted from the limit on short-term investments till maturity or sale of such investments. Currently, short-term investments by an FPI in government securities (central government securities, including treasury bills and state development loans) and corporate bonds should not exceed 30 per cent of the total investment of that FPI in any category. Relaxation has also been provided for FPI investments in corporate bonds and they can now buy such instruments for less than one-year tenor. The central bank had issued notifications regarding relaxation interest rate on Foreign Currency (Non-resident) Accounts (Banks) Scheme and Non-Resident (External) Rupee (NRE) Deposit. In its statement on Wednesday, RBI had said it has been closely and continuously monitoring the liquidity conditions in the forex market and has stepped in as needed in all its segments to alleviate dollar tightness with the objective of ensuring orderly market functioning.

## Sebi bans 7 for unauthorised investment advisory

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Thursday imposed a ban on Trend Market Advisory Services and six individuals for providing unauthorised stock recommendation to investors. They have been restrained from the securities markets for varying periods. Two individuals — C. Murlitharan and C. Paranitharan — have been restrained from the securities markets for one year. Trend Market Advisory Services (TMAS), NSK Chithanathan, C. Senthilnathan, C. Vijai and S. Kokila have been prohibited from the capital markets for a period of six months from the date of this order or till the completion of refunds. Order comes from a show cause notice dated July 19, 2021 issued by Sebi against TMAS and its partners. Trend Market Advisory Services is a partnership firm and Murlitharan, Paranitharan, Chithanathan, Senthilnathan, Vijai and Kokila are the partners of the firm.

## Cooking gas prices can't be looked at in isolation: Puri on ₹50 LPG price hike

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A day after cooking gas LPG prices were hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said gas prices cannot be looked at in isolation and that fuel prices have been held steady despite volatility in international oil markets. At a media conference, when he was asked about the steep increase in LPG prices, Puri first said that the government has been constantly striving to increase domestic production of gas and that there has been no shortage of fuel supplies anywhere in the country. "You cannot look at gas prices in isolation," he said in reference to soaring global energy rates that have led to the price increase. Non-subsidised LPG rates have gone up by Rs 244 or 30 per cent, in a span of one year and it now costs Rs 1,053 per 14.2-kg-cylinder in the national capital. Common households pay non-subsidised rates for the cooking gas they buy



after the government restricted subsidy to just poor beneficiaries who got connections under the Ujjwala scheme. Without making a direct reference to the LPG price hike, Puri said subsidies are meant to specific target beneficiaries and for specific durations. "Subsidies have to be regressive," he said. The minister said that while some nations faced a fuel supply crisis, India did not face any shortage of any fuel in any corner of the country including the North East. "Nowhere in India, there has been a shortage." "We have been able to hold prices steady," he said.

While cooking gas prices have risen on eight occasions in the last one year, they have not been in sync with the cost. International oil and gas prices have soared after Russia invaded Ukraine in February on fears of supply disruptions. Rates have fallen in recent days on talk of recession in the world's largest oil consumer, the US. Petrol and diesel prices have been on a freeze for over three months now. The pause followed rates being hiked by a record Rs 10 per litre in a matter of 16 days beginning March 22. In May, the government cut excise duty on petrol by Rs 8 per litre and diesel by Rs 6 per litre to cool soaring inflation. At that time, the government also stated that Rs 200 per cylinder subsidy on cooking gas will be limited to only 9 crore poor women and other beneficiaries who got free connections under the Ujjwala scheme and the remaining users, including households, will pay the market price (also known as non-subsidised rate).



# NADAL IN RACE TO BE FIT FOR SEMIS

AP ■ LONDON

Rafael Nadal is facing a race against time to be fit for Friday's mouthwatering Wimbledon semi-final against Nick Kyrgios but can either man stop Novak Djokovic in his relentless push for a fourth straight crown?

A meeting between 22-time Grand Slam champion Nadal and the mercurial Australian has been on the cards since Kyrgios defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas in an ill-tempered third-round meeting.

Kyrgios cruised through his last-eight match against unseeded Chilean Cristian Garin on Wednesday in straight sets to reach his first Grand Slam semi-final.

But it was a different story for Nadal, who had to battle an abdominal injury in a gruelling five-set win against 11th-seeded American Taylor Fritz.

The second seed, visibly in pain, looked unlikely to finish the match when he was forced to take a medical time-out in the second set.

But he returned to the court and twice recovered from a set down to win in four hours and 21 minutes

The extra time on court for Nadal — two hours longer than Kyrgios — is a factor in itself but the Spaniard's injury raises the prospect that he may not even be fit enough to play.

Nadal, the 2008 and 2010 champion, said he was unsure over his ongoing participation in the tournament as he targets the third leg of a rare calendar Grand Slam.

"I can't give you a clear answer because if I gave you a clear answer and tomorrow another thing happens, I will be a liar," the 36-year-old said after his quarter-final win.

If the two do meet on Centre Court, it would be the standout tie of the tournament so far in a year when many of the top seeds have fallen by the wayside early.

Kyrgios's tournament has been defined by breathtaking shot-making but also his familiar rants on court — including a demand that Tsitsipas be thrown out of the championships for hitting a ball into the crowd.

The 40th-ranked player has been fined a total of \$14,000 and he now has the added distraction of a looming court appearance in Australia, related to an allegation of assault.

Nadal has six wins against Kyrgios in nine meetings between the pair.

The Australian famously beat Nadal — then world number one — on his way to the Wimbledon quarter-finals on his debut



## JABEUR MAKES AFRICAN HISTORY

AP ■ LONDON

Ons Jabeur became the first African woman in the Open era to reach a Grand Slam singles final on Thursday when she defeated close friend Tatjana Maria in the Wimbledon semi-finals.

The 27-year-old world number two from Tunisia triumphed 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 and will face either 2019 champion Simona Halep or Elena Rybakina in Saturday's championship match.

"I'm a proud Tunisian woman standing here," said Jabeur, who was the first Arab player to make a Slam semi-final.



in 2014 but the Spaniard took his revenge in 2019.

Kyrgios, 27, said he believed the match against Nadal would be the "most-watched of all time".

"We've had some absolute battles on that Centre Court," he said. "He's won one

against me and I've won one against him.

"Obviously, we know, two completely different personalities. I feel like we respect the hell out of each other, though. I feel like that would be a mouth-watering kind of encounter for everyone around the world."

Djokovic had to come back from two

Before Thursday, South Africans Irene Bowder Peacock, at the 1927 French Open, and Renee Schuurman, in the 1959 Australian Open, were the only African women to have reached a Slam singles final.

"It's a dream come true from years of work and sacrifice. I'm happy that's paid off and I'll continue for one more match," said Jabeur. "Physically, Tatjana is a beast, she doesn't give up, I thought she would give up — her touch, her serve and everything on the court is impressive. I hope she's continues this way. Let's not play again I'm good for now.

sets down against Italian 10th seed Jannik Sinner in his quarter-finals on Tuesday.

But the 35-year-old finished the match looking fresher, even pulling off an outrageous winner while doing the splits.

The Serbian top seed is on a 26-match winning streak at Wimbledon as he seeks

## Sania bids adieu to Wimbledon



PTI ■ WIMBLEDON

Trailblazing Indian tennis star Sania Mirza's swansong appearance at Wimbledon ended in a semi-final defeat to defending champions Neal Skupski and Desirae Krawczyk in the mixed doubles event here.

Mirza and her Croatian partner Mate Pavic, seeded sixth, went down 6-4, 5-7, 4-6 to Skupski of Great Britain and American Krawczyk in two hours 16 minutes on Wednesday night.

The 35-year-old Mirza is India's most accomplished woman tennis player, having won six Grand Slam titles, including three mixed doubles trophies. She was aiming to complete a Career Slam in mixed doubles.

She had won the the mixed doubles titles at the 2009 Australian Open and the 2012 French Open with Mahesh

Bhupathi and the 2014 US Open with Brazilian Bruno Soares.

"The tears, fight and the struggle.. The work we put in is all worth it in the end ..It wasn't meant to be this time at Wimbledon but you have been nothing but spectacular it's been an honor to play here and win here over the last 20 years ..I will miss you Until we meet again," Mirza tweeted on Thursday.

This is Mirza's best mixed doubles performance at the All England Club. She had previously reached the quarter-finals in 2011, 2013 and 2015.

Mirza, a six-time Grand Slam winner, had earlier announced that she would hang up her racquet at the conclusion of the 2022 season.

The 35-year-old Indian star has now bid farewell to Wimbledon having won a women's doubles title in 2015, pairing Martina Hingis.

champion.

Djokovic, who beat the 26-year-old in their only previous meeting, is braced for a partisan crowd.

"For him, not much to lose," he said. "Every victory from now onwards is a big deal for him.

## We're ready for Australia challenge in CWG: Manpreet



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh on Thursday said they are well prepared to give six-time champions Australia a run for their money in this year's Commonwealth Games, despite not playing against the current world No.1 side for over a year.

Australia are the most successful men's hockey team in CWG's history, having won all the six Gold medals on offer since the game's introduction in the quadrennial event in 1998 Kuala Lumpur.

India, on the other hand, finished runners-up twice in 2010 and 2014 editions.

"Even though we (India and Australia) aren't in the same group but there are every possibilities to meet them at later stages of the tournament.

We have been continuously studying their strengths and weaknesses," Manpreet said during the kit unveiling ceremony of the CWG-bound Indian contingent here.

"We haven't played them for over a year but our main focus will be on not giving Australia chances at the start. No doubt they are good team, but we will try not to let them come inside the D line and give them an opportunity to score. We also need capitalise on our opportunities," the 30-year-old midfielder added.

India and Australia are placed in different pools in the Birmingham CWG to be held from July 28 to August 8. The Indians are placed in Pool B alongside England, Canada, Wales and Ghana, while Pool A consists of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan and Scotland.

## River and Boca out of Copa Libertadores

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Argentinian football giants River Plate and Boca Juniors are out of this season's Copa Libertadores despite being favorites in their round-of-16 matches. Their exits hand the favored status to Brazilian teams, which have dominated the tournament in recent years and which again look strong to lift the title. Only Brazilian and Argentinian teams will play the quarterfinals of the tournament, with two Brazilian and one Argentinian side already into the semifinals. River was knocked out on Wednesday at the Monumental de Nunez Stadium after a goalless draw with local rival Velez Sarsfield, the winners of last week's first leg 1-0. New Manchester City striker Julian Alvarez played his last match for the hosts, who protested a late goal annulled after video review.

Velez will take on another Argentinian team, Talleres, which won its tie against countrymen Colon 3-1 on aggregate. Earlier on Wednesday, Talleres beat its rival away 2-0, with goals by Federico Girotti in the 47th minute and Angelo Martino in added time.

Boca was eliminated on Tuesday by Brazil's Corinthians at La Bombonera Stadium after two goalless encounters and a 6-5 defeat on penalties.



## PV Sindhu, Prannoy glide into Malaysia Masters quarterfinals

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

India's two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu and compatriot HS Prannoy cruised to the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Masters with straight-game wins here on Thursday.

Sindhu, who is seeded seventh, made short work of the world number 32 China's Zhang Yi Man 21-12, 21-10 in just 28 minutes in the women's singles second round clash.

However, a tough contest awaits the former World Champion, currently ranked seventh in the world, as she will cross swords with her nemesis Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei in the last eight.

Sindhu has a dismal 5-16 head-to-head record against the world No. 2, who had also beaten the Indian in the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Open last week.

In the men's singles contest, Prannoy eked out a 21-19, 21-16 Wang Tzu Wei of Chinese Taipei to book a quarterfinal against Japan's Kanta Tsuneyama.

However, B Sai Praneeth and former Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap bowed out of the competition. While Praneeth lost to Li She Feng of China 14-21, 17-21 in 42 minutes, Kashyap was dispatched 10-21, 15-21 by sixth seed Indonesian Anthony Sinisuka Ginting.

## Eng start at Women's Euros with win in presence of record fans

AP ■ MANCHESTER

England got their quest for Euro 2022 glory off to a winning start as Beth Mead's goal earned a 1-0 victory over Austria in front of a record crowd of 69,000 at Old Trafford.

The attendance smashed the previous best for a match at the women's European Championship by nearly 30,000.

And the vast majority inside the Theatre of Dreams got what they wanted to see in an England victory - even if Sarina Wiegman's women failed to hit top gear against a side ranked 21st in the world.

Home advantage is just one of the reasons why England are considered among the favourites to win their first-ever major tournament in the women's game.

Wiegman, who led the Netherlands to victory at Euro 2017, is now unbeaten in 15 games since taking charge in September.

The weight of expectation appeared to be weighing heavy on the hosts in a nervous start.

However, they kicked the tournament into life in style on 16 minutes when Fran Kirby's lofted pass picked out Mead



and the Arsenal forward calmly lifted the ball over her club teammate Manuela Zinsberger.

Carina Wenninger made a desperate attempt to clear, but the ball had just crossed the line before she intervened.

England then settled into the rhythm that has seen them score 85 goals and concede

just three in the Wiegman era.

England face Norway next in Brighton on Monday in what is expected to be their toughest test of the group stages.

Austria take on tournament debutants Northern Ireland on the same day in Southampton.

## AC Milan make Messias' move permanent

AP ■ MILAN

Junior Messias completed his rise from delivery man to Serie A star on Thursday when his move to AC Milan was made permanent by the Italian champions.

Brazilian Messias signed for Milan last summer on a season-long loan from Crotone with an option to buy for just over five million euros and was an important part of his team's charge to the Serie A title, scoring five times in 26 league appearances.

Milan have deposited Messias' contract with Serie A after renegotiating the purchase fee to a reported 4.5 million euros plus bonuses.

Messias' arrival at the highest levels of club football is all the more impressive given he began his career in Italy in the amateur game



over a decade ago.

He arrived in Italy to live with his brother in 2011 and slowly rose through the lower reaches of Italian football — at one point transporting fridges for a living — before being picked up by then-Serie B club Crotone in January 2019.

He helped the southern team up to Serie A and two seasons ago scored nine times in 36 league appearances for a team which went straight back down after a year in the top flight, earning himself the chance to play for seven-time European champions Milan on loan.

## Thakur gives rousing send-off ceremony to 65-athletes strong Team India's Deaflympics 2021 contingent

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's Deaflympics 2021 contingent received a rousing send-off on Monday ahead of embarking for the Games, starting May 1. Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports Shri Anurag Thakur, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Nisith Pramanik and other dignitaries graced the occasion.

A total of 65 athletes will be participating at the Games in Caxias Du Sul, Brazil, making it the largest and the youngest contingent ever from India to participate in the Deaflympics. They will participate in a total of 11 sports disciplines: Athletics, Badminton, Judo, Golf, Karate,



Shooting, Swimming, Tennis, Table Tennis, Taekwondo and Wrestling. The Games are scheduled from May 1 to May 15.

Showering the contingent with the best of wishes, Shri Anurag Thakur mentioned, "On behalf of everyone in the country, I not only give the best of wishes to all of you but also want

to say that you have already shown your mettle by getting selected to represent India for the Games. Since this is the biggest contingent, I also believe we will also get the highest number of medals from Brazil. India will be the next big sporting powerhouse, be it in Olympics, Paralympics or Deaflympics. India will not stop. This century is ours and we will keep on unfurling India's flag on all sporting arena."

The Union Minister also spoke about the immense support provided to the athletes by the All India Sports Council for the Deaf (AISCD) and the Sports Authority of India. "Both the AISCD and SAI have given a lot of support to the athletes.

A 30-day National Coaching Camp was facilitated across the SAI centres for the Deaflympics-bound athletes. Besides that, SAI arranged everything for the athletes like giving them kits, ceremonial dress for the Deaflympics as well as arranging for their accommodation, lodging, boarding and transportation."

Mentioning about the kind of inspiration the contingent can provide to Young India, Shri Nisith Pramanik said, "We have seen the country's sports ecosystem ever evolving as per the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and also our Sports Minister Shri Anurag Thakur. Our Prime Minister's clarion call of 'Cheer

For India' has remained the game-changer. Be it the Olympics, Paralympics or Deaflympics, India has been set for utmost glory in sports.

Mentioning about the Brazil Deaflympics, he added, "We have the biggest contingent in Deaflympics this time. You have already become a great inspiration for Young India. The way you overcame all the hurdles is noteworthy. Also, from what I see, your passion and energy to win medals in radiating even before you have left for Brazil!"

India had sent a delegation of 46 participants in the last Deaflympics in Turkey in 2017, bagging a total of 5 medals, which included 1 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze medals.



# Women in Blue whitewash Sri Lanka

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

**S**kipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Pooja Vastrakar produced solid all-round performances as Indian women cantered to a 39-run victory over a clueless Sri Lanka in the final ODI on Thursday to complete a 3-0 rout.

Harmanpreet (75 off 88 balls and 1/21 in 5 overs) and Vastrakar (56 not out off 65 balls, and 2/32) first bailed the team out with a 97-run seventh wicket stand that ensured a decent total of 255 for 9 for the visitors.

The bowlers then executed the plans perfectly to shot out the hosts for 216 in 47.3 overs with both Harmanpreet and Vastrakar chipping in with crucial breakthroughs.

With this series win, the Indian women clinched their fourth consecutive bilateral series victory against the island nation.

The women's side had earlier won ODI series in 2013, 2015, and 2018.

Having already sealed a series win, Harmanpreet's unit came into the final game as a confident bunch, something which the Lankans distinctly lacked from the very onset.

With nothing to lose, Sri Lankan skipper Chamari



Athapaththu won the toss and sent the Indians to bat on a surface that is mostly known to favour teams batting first.

Buoyed by the outstanding performances in the second ODI, openers Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana, howev-

er, failed to make a big impact.

Mandhana was the first to depart (6 off 20 balls) as she fell victim to a length delivery from

## It is important that our batters get game-time before CWG: Harmanpreet

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

**I**ndian women's team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Thursday said she was looking to give proper game-time to her top five batters in the run-up to the Commonwealth Games, which she described as "very significant for all of us".

The CWG will be held in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8.

The Indian skipper, a top-order batter, on Thursday came out at number six in the final ODI of the three-match

series against Sri Lanka.

"As a captain, I always want to give opportunities to every batters in this team. I have always scored plenty of runs as a top-order batter.

"However, keeping in mind the Commonwealth Games, which is very significant for all of us, it is equally important that our top-five batters are getting a proper game-time before the event," Harmanpreet said.

Some fine individual performances notwithstanding, Harmanpreet attributed the 3-0 sweep, in her maiden series

as full-time ODI captain, to team effort.

"This game was very important for us, just like the last two games in this series. In the past, we used to win two games but often adopted a casual approach in the last game, having already won the series.

"We decided amongst ourselves that we would put an extra effort for this game and it was a sheer team effort. The result is for everyone to see," Harmanpreet said at the post-match press conference.

Harmanpreet was all praise for Vastrakar, who too played a part in the final game, scoring 56 off 65 balls and taking two crucial Sri Lankan wickets.

"Pooja has been performing consistently of late. Her performance in this match has once again showed that she is capable of scoring some important runs for the side. The current batting order suits her skills and we might try to push her up in the top order, but that depends on situations," she said.

three-match ODI series.

With Shafali departing at a crucial juncture, India suddenly had a middle-order collapse as they were left tottering at 124 for 6 before Harmanpreet turned the tables around in style.

The Indian skipper batted with a lot of responsibility throughout her innings and made the best of the short balls deployed by the Lankan bowlers to hit seven fours and two massive sixes.

It is worth noting that

majority of Harmanpreet boundaries came through the mid-wicket region and she was rock-solid on the leg side as well.

Harmanpreet completed her fifty with a brilliant six over deep mid-wicket region, as she got low and clobbered a floated delivery from off-spinner Oshadi Ranasinghe to clear the boundary for a maximum.

While Harmanpreet played the captain's knock, Vastrakar played the role of a perfect second fiddle, courtesy three free-

flowing sixes to hit her second fifty in women's ODI.

When Sri Lanka started the chase, skipper Athapaththu (44 off 41 balls) and Hasini Perera (39 off 57 balls) did show positive intent adding 56 for the second wicket but things went downhill after the home team skipper was dismissed.

They found Rajeshwari Gayakwad (3/36 in 10 overs) difficult to get away while most of the bowlers kept the home team under tight leash.



## SL depleted for 2nd Test after 4 players get virus

AP ■ GALLE

**S**ri Lanka has suffered a huge blow in its bid to square its two-Test series against Australia after four cricketers tested positive for COVID-19 and had to be replaced.

In coronavirus tests on Wednesday, three players from the first Test were positive: Leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay, fast bowler Asitha Fernando, and all-rounder Dhananjaya de Silva. Left-arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrama was already in isolation after testing positive earlier in the week.

They were ruled out of the second Test starting on Friday at Galle Stadium. Vandersay made his debut in the first Test Australia won by 10 wickets in three days last week.

Sri Lanka added spinners Prabath Jayasuriya, Maheesh Theekshana, Lakshan Sandakan and Dunith Wellalage in the squad and two of them are expected to partner Ramesh Mendis, who

played in the first test.

Apart from Sandakan, whose last Test was in 2018, the other new additions were yet to play a Test.

De Silva is likely to be replaced by squad member and backup batsman Kamindu Mendis.

The Sri Lankan camp will have another round of tests on Thursday, and skipper Dimuth Karunaratne feared more players will be withdrawn.

"It is very difficult to say the (team) combination," Karunaratne said. "We have picked 13 players but before we select the final 11, we have another antigen test and from that we have to find whether there are any more positive cases. Only after that can we announce our playing 11."

One piece of good news was former captain Angelo Mathews, who tested positive for COVID during the first Test, has been cleared and will take part in the second Test.

## T20 squad for Windies to be named on July 11: Kohli 'asks' for rest

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**S**tar batter Virat Kohli himself asked for rest from the entire series against the West Indies, including the five T20Is, according to sources in the BCCI.

It is also understood that the T20 squad for the tour of West Indies will be announced on July 11, one day after the shortest format series against England concludes.

"It was team management's decision to rest Kohli, Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah for the ODI series along with skipper himself," a senior BCCI source in the know of things

told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The five-match T20 series starts on July 29 in Tarouba, Trinidad followed by couple of matches in St Kitts (Aug 1 and 2) and it concludes in Florida on August 6 and 7 respectively.

"However for the T20I series, all others are playing but Kohli has himself asked for a break. He has informed that he will be available for all series after the West Indies tour," the source informed.

It is understood that senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin will be recalled for the T20 series in the Caribbean and the USA leg.

"Ashwin is very much in the scheme of things and he will be playing the T20 series in the West Indies. Also Washington Sundar is still not fit to play and by the time he gets fit, he will be playing for Lancashire in County Championship and Royal London Cup," he added.

While Kohli will get his break as he has sought but his place in the national T20 squad for the next big international assignment (Asia Cup in Sri Lanka) will depend on his T20 form in the two games that he will play against England beginning on Thursday.

In between, India are expected to play a short T20 series in

Zimbabwe and just like in Ireland, a second string team is supposed to travel to the African nation.

K L Rahul is expected to be fit before the Asia Cup but if he recovers in time for the Zimbabwe tour, he will be part of that short series.

"Obviously, the stars will be rested for the Zimbabwe series as it will be followed by Asia Cup in Sri Lanka, home series against Australia and the team then travels to Australia for the World Cup," the source said.

Deepak Chahar, who is recovering from a hamstring and back injury, is expected to be fit for Asia Cup starting August 27.



## India names 215-member athlete contingent for CWG

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**I**ndia on Thursday announced a 215-member athlete contingent across 16 disciplines for the Commonwealth Games beginning on July 28 in Birmingham.

On the sidelines of the send off-ceremony for the CWG bound athletes, IOA acting president Anil Khanna called it a 'gender-neutral contingent' with 108 men and 107 women being part of the touring party.

The overall contingent count stands at 322 including 72 team officials, 26 extra

officials, nine contingent staff, including three general managers.

Discipline-wise, the biggest contingent is of athletics and hockey (36 entries each).

India will also take part in women's cricket, which is making its CWG debut, aquatics, badminton, table tennis, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, triathlon, wrestling, weightlifting, lawn bowls, squash, judo and para sports.

India has only won 28 medals in athletics in CWG history but world championship medal winning long jumper Anju Bobby George is expecting a rich haul of at least seven medals this time with Neeraj Chopra expected to win Gold in javelin.

Chopra is also likely to be India's flag-bearer at the opening ceremony.

"We have about 13 athletes who could be in the medals bracket for second and third position but we are expecting seven medals at least across javelin, long jump, triple jump and discus," she said.

## Australia going to CWG to win Gold: Lanning



PTI ■ SYDNEY

**A**ustralian skipper Meg Lanning wants the five-time T20 World Cup-winning 'Southern Stars' to push the envelope a "little bit more" in its bid to win the first ever Gold medal on offer in women's cricket at the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Cricket will mark its return to the Commonwealth Games after a gap of 24 years in the Birmingham edition, starting later this month.

It will be the first time women's cricket will be a part of the quadrennial event.

"We are going over there to win Gold, there's no doubt about that," Lanning was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press (AAP).

"We go out there to win every game that we can and the first Commonwealth Games medal up for grabs in women's cricket is certainly something we're striving for."

Australia will open their campaign against India on July 29 at the Edgbaston Cricket Ground. Australia are placed in Group A alongside India, Pakistan and Barbados.

Lanning asserted the team is working to get better in the format.

"It's something we have spoken about as a group as a whole and also within our skill groups as well, in terms of how do we get that little bit better and push the boundaries that little bit more than we have in the past."

"We have got a couple of things we have been working on both as a team and individually as well."



## Undercover spotters to combat racism in Edgbaston T20I

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

**W**arwickshire will deploy 'undercover spotters' in second T20 between India and England at Edgbaston in the wake of allegations of racist behaviour in the crowd during the fifth Test this week, the county announced. Several Indian supporters alleged incidents of racial abuse charge from other fans on the sidelines of the rescheduled fifth Test here that England won by seven wickets to draw the series 2-2.

"Undercover football crowd-style spotters will be placed throughout the stadium to listen out for abusive behaviour and report it for immediate action," the club said.

Warwickshire, whose headquarters are at Edgbaston, has

also announced a slew of measures to curb racial abuse.

The other measures include, an increased police presence at games to handle incidents swiftly, raising racial awareness through the Edgbaston mobile app, attaching QR code stickers on every seat in the Eric Hollies Stand linking people to the app, promoting zero-tolerance messages on the back of stewards' hi-visibility jackets, and encouraging the fans entering the Eric Hollies Stand to wear zero-tolerance wristbands.

The club also said it will continue to publicly denounce any racist behaviour, and anyone found guilty of committing hate crime will be banned from Edgbaston and the ECB will extend the ban to all cricket grounds under its jurisdiction.

## 'Om Helicopteraya Namah': Birthday wishes pour in for 41-year-'young' MS Dhoni

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**V**irat Kohli described him as an 'elder brother', so did his once upon a time shadow Suresh Raina while Virender Sehwag in his inimitable style gave a grand salutation 'Om Helicopteraya Namaha' as legendary former India skipper MS Dhoni turned 41 on Thursday.

Star Indian batter Virat Kohli, who is going through the worst phase of his illustrious career, led the tributes on Twitter, and on a tad emotional note. Describing Dhoni like his "elder brother", Kohli posted: "A leader like no other. Thanks for everything you have done for Indian cricket. You became more like an elder brother for me. Nothing but love and respect always. Happy birthday skip."

A masterclass captain and the only one to win all three ICC trophies — 2007 T20 World Cup, 2011 ODI World Cup and 2013 Champions Trophy — is currently holidaying in England.

Having spent his birthday eve watching Rafael Nadal's win over Taylor Fritz in the Wimbledon quarterfinal, Dhoni celebrated his birthday



with his family and friends in England with India's current wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant also in attendance.

Dhoni's wife Sakshi shared a short video in which Dhoni was seen blowing candles while she also posted an Instagram story where Pant was seen in a group photograph.

In his typical witty way, Sehwag said no match is over till Dhoni is at the crease.

"Till the time full stop doesn't come, a sentence isn't completed. Till the time Dhoni is at the crease, match isn't completed."

"Not all teams have the fortune to have a person like Dhoni, Happy B'day to a gem

of a person and player, MS Dhoni. Om Helicopteraya Namaha," Sehwag tweeted.

India all-rounder Hardik Pandya shared a picture with Dhoni from the IPL 2022 where he's hugging him. Describing Dhoni as his 'darling', he wrote: "Wishing you the best birthday Mahi bhai."

Indian maestro Sachin Tendulkar also wished on Dhoni's birthday: "Wishing a fine leader, teammate and friend a very happy birthday! Have a great one."

His former CSK teammate Raina, who shares a special bonding with Dhoni, posted: "Happy Birthday to my big brother."

PRAVIN THIPSAY

**I**n the series 'Champion born this month', I present you with a game by a Champion who is considered to be the greatest master of sacrifices and checkmates. His sense of initiative was no less than that of Paul Morphy and you will find a lot of his games, such as 'The Immortal Game' and 'The Evergreen Game' in all books on Chess classics. These two games have undergone scrutiny by some greatest masters of all times and all of them have expressed high regards for the creativity and imagination by the White player. In words of Kasparov, these games "bewitched the contemporaries and became known as 'Immortal' and 'Evergreen' games." I think that you have guessed who I am talking

about. It is Adolf Anderssen, the Chess magician in the nineteenth century.

Karl Ernst Adolf Anderssen (6th July, 1818 -- 13th March 1879) was born at Breslau in the Prussian Province of Silesia, German Kingdom. (The town is now called Wroclaw and is a part of Poland.) Since 1842, he dominated the World Chess, winning tournaments after tournaments for three decades. The first official World Chess Champion Wilhelm Steinitz spoke and wrote very highly of Anderssen -- "We all may learn from Morphy and Anderssen how to conduct a king's-side attack, and perhaps I myself may not have learnt enough." Anderssen was so famous and popular for his skills in Chess that the Breslau University awarded an honorary doctor-

ate to him. Today we will see 'The Evergreen Game', which has been annotated by hundreds of Chess players.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0

The famous Evans Gambit. White gives up a Pawn or two to get an advantage in development.

7...d3?! 8.Qb3 Qf6 9.e5! Qg6

9...Nxe5 is not possible due to 10.Re1 when Black loses at least a piece.

10.Re1 Nge7 11.Ba3 b5? 11...0-0 was called for. 12.Qxb5 Rb8 13.Qa4 Bb6 14.Nbd2 Bb7 15.Ne4 Qf5 16.Bxd3 Qh5 (Diagram 1)

White has a huge advantage and it is time for decisive action. In accordance with his own romantic style Anderssen continued with a Knight sacri-

fice to open up files against Black King.

17.Nf6+!? gxf6 18.exf6 Rg8! "At first sight an open g-file gives Black excellent counter-attacking chances, but Anderssen's calculations were beyond the fears of an ordinary human being." — Garry Kasparov.

19.Rad1! "I will spare you hundreds of analyses by following generations of chess players. After endless debate they have agreed that 19.Rad1 was better than the alternative 19.Re4. Now the best reply was 19...Rg4!, (Recommendation of Dr Emanuel Lasker) which would pose some difficult problems for White, but in the emerging wild complications White would, in my opinion, retain the upper hand." — Garry Kasparov.

19...Qxf3? (Diagram 2)

"Now White's king is suddenly just one step from decapitation. But how can we reproach Dufresne from not recognising the magic of a genius?" — Garry Kasparov.

20.Rxe7+! Nxe7 (Diagram 3)

This allows a stunning checkmate.

The alternative 20...Kd8 21.Rxd7+! Kc8 22.Rd8+! Kxd8 would have staved off the mate at cost of the Black Queen. However, after 23.Be2+ Nd4 24.Bxf3 Bxf3 25.g3 Bxd1 26.Qxd1, there is no doubt about the outcome.

21.Qxd7+!! Kxd7 22.Bf5+ Double check! 22...Ke8

22...Kc6 would have led to 23.Bd7#

23.Bd7+ Kf8 24.Bxe7# An unbelievable combination indeed!