

## OPINION 6

ROPING IN RADIO TO  
ENHANCE IMMUNITY

## WORLD 8

NEPAL'S PARLIAMENT PASSES FIRST  
CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL

## MONEY 10

WPI INFLATION EASES TO  
3-MONTH LOW OF 15.18% IN JUNE

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY JULY 15, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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SAINA, SINDHU  
& PRANNOY WIN  
TO REACH QF  
11 SPORT

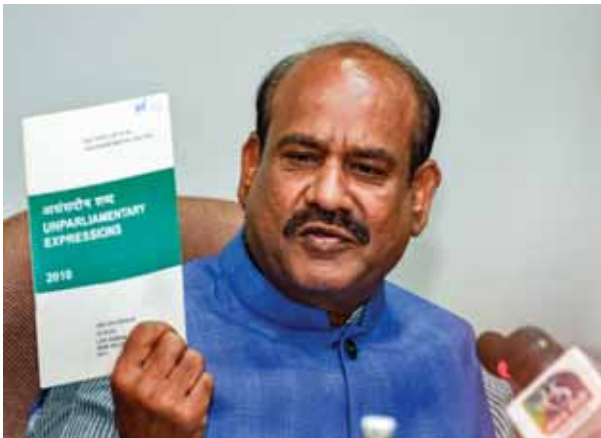
# Post Opp furore Speaker says no word banned

'Gag order' cry Opp  
parties; members  
free to express views  
in parliamentary  
language: Birla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As an aggressive Opposition protested against the alleged "gag order" on usage of certain common words in Parliament, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday asserted no word has been banned from use in Parliament and members are free to express their views while maintaining the decorum of the House.

Leaders of Opposition parties, including former Congress President Rahul Gandhi, were referring to a new booklet issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, which considered use of terms like "jumlaajeevi", "baal buddhi", "Covid spreader",



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla addresses a press conference, in New Delhi on Thursday.

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"Snoopgate" and commonly used words like "ashamed", "abused", "betrayed", "corrupt", "drama", "hypocrisy" and "incompetent" to be henceforth considered unparliamentary in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. "No word has been banned. Members are free to express their views. No one can snatch that right, but it should be as per decorum of

Parliament," Birla told reporters even as the Opposition accused the Government of listing every word used by them to "describe how the BJP was destroying India" as unparliamentary.

Birla said people, unaware of parliamentary practices were making all kinds of comments and asserted that Legislatures were independent of the Government. "It is a routine

practice continuing since 1954," he said referring to the release of the booklet compiling lists of words and expressions deemed unparliamentary.

Birla said words chosen for expunging have been used by members of the ruling party as well as the Opposition. The Congress and Trinamool Congress attacked the "gag order" in Parliament, saying all terms used by the Opposition to describe the Modi dispensation will now be considered "unparliamentary".

Taking to Twitter Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, took a dig at Modi and came up with his own unique definition of the word 'Unparliamentary'—"Words used in discussion and debates which correctly describe the PM's handling of the Government, now banned from being spoken."

He followed the definition of the word with an example—"Jumlaajeevi Tanashah shed Crocodile Tears when his lies and incompetence were exposed". "New Dictionary for New India" Gandhi wrote.

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# Pooling of I2U2 resources can aid global economy: Modi

UAE to invest \$2 bn  
in food parks  
across India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The first I2U2 summit involving India, Israel, USA and the UAE was held on Thursday. The UAE announced a two billion dollars worth investment in integrated food parks and a 330 million dollar clean energy projects in India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the pooling of resources and capabilities of India, Israel, the US and the UAE grouping can contribute to the global economy and set the example of practical cooperation.

He also said under the I2U2 framework, the four countries have agreed on increasing the joint investment in six important areas of water, energy, transport, space, health and food security.

"It is clear that the vision and agenda of I2U2 are progressive and practical," Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the I2U2 virtual Summit, in New Delhi, on Thursday

PTI

said while addressing the summit of the heads of States of this combine formed last year.

"By mobilising our mutual strength, capital, expertise and markets, we can speed up our agenda and make important contributions to the global economy. Amid increasing global uncertainty, our cooperative framework is also a good model for practical cooperation," the Prime Minister said while participating virtually in the high-profile event.

The summit was hosted by

Israel during the ongoing visit of US President Joe Biden there. Prime Minister of Israel Yair Lapid, President of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and President Biden took part in the summit. Highlighting the positive outcome of the summit, the Prime Minister said from the "very first summit, the I2U2 has established a positive agenda. We have identified joint projects in various sectors and prepared a roadmap to go ahead".

Continued on Page 2

# Gotabaya quits as Prez of Lanka

Letter sent via email  
from Singapore;  
announcement  
to be made today

PTI ■ COLOMBO/SINGAPORE

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Thursday emailed his resignation letter to the Speaker, soon after he was allowed by Singapore to enter the city-state on a "private visit", ending the suspense over his future in the face of massive public revolt against his Government's mishandling of the economy. A Saudi airlines flight carrying Rajapaksa arrived in Singapore from the Maldives where he had fled early Wednesday without resigning as promised to avoid the possibility of arrest by the new Government.

Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena's media secretary Indunil Abeywardena on Thursday night said a resignation letter from President Rajapaksa has been received through the Sri Lanka High Commission in Singapore.

"The Speaker wishes to inform that an official statement on this would be made on Friday after verification and legal formalities," Abeywardena said in a statement. The Speaker wants to see the



A man throws back a tear gas canister after it was fired by police to disperse protesters in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

AP/PTI

original signature, which will be brought to Colombo from Singapore by flight by a diplomatic officer, sources said.

The development comes on a day when anti-Government protesters announced to vacate some of the administrative buildings, including the President's House and the PM Office, they have been occupying since April 9.

With Rajapaksa's resignation Prime Minister Wickremesinghe will be the President.

## Angry Lankans gather to see 'criminal'

**Singapore:** "We are here to see a criminal" and a "fugitive who devastated our economy," some two dozen Sri Lankans living in Singapore said on Thursday as they showed up at the Changi International Airport after hearing that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa who fled the country to the Maldives will land here.

A Saudi Airlines flight carrying Rajapaksa arrived in Singapore from the Maldives in the evening and soon Singapore's Foreign Ministry confirmed his presence in the country on a "private visit" and there was no request for asylum from him.

Rajapaksa has not asked for asylum and neither has he been granted any asylum. Singapore generally does not grant requests for asylum, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson added.

PTI

In a signal to  
China, Dalai  
Lama to visit  
Leh today



MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

At a time when India and China are scheduled to attend high-level military talks on July 17, in the backdrop of ongoing stand-off over the remaining friction points along the Line of Actual Control in the eastern Ladakh sector, the Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama would be arriving in the cold desert region on Friday to address a series of religious gatherings. The Dalai Lama's extended stay in Leh is expected to unnerve Beijing.

Last week when Prime Minister Narendra Modi had greeted the Dalai Lama on his 87th birthday Beijing chose to register its concern, saying that India should stop using Tibet-related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs.

Continued on Page 2

# Patiala court upholds 2-year jail term for Daler Mehndi

Singer taken into  
custody in an over  
two-decade-old  
human trafficking  
case in Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/PATIALA

More than two decades after he was accused of illegally sending abroad people by disguising them as members of his "troupe", popular Punjabi singer Daler Mehndi's appeal against his two-year jail sentence was dismissed by a Patiala local court on Thursday.

The Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge HS Grewal upheld Mehndi's two-year jail sentence in a 2003 human trafficking case, following which he was taken into custody. He is likely to be sent to Patiala jail, where cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu and former Minister Bikram Majithia are also lodged. The lower court in 2018 had held Mehndi guilty under Section 420 (cheating) and 120B (conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code. The trial



Singer Daler Mehndi being taken to jail after sentencing for his involvement in a human trafficking case, at District Court complex in Patiala on Thursday.

PTI

court had sentenced him to two-years imprisonment and also imposed a fine of ₹2,000. As of now, he was out on bail as he had appealed against the trial court's decision.

In the complaints almost 20 years back, Daler Mehndi and his brother Shamsheer Singh were accused of collecting "passage money" to take people abroad, mainly to the US and Canada, via the "troupe" route. Though they

took some people along with them, there were others who alleged that they took money but did not keep their promise.

In September 2003, a case was registered at Patiala by one Bakshish Singh. He alleged that the brother-duo took two troupes to the US in 1998 and 1999, during the course of which 10 people were taken to the US as group members and were "dropped off" illegally.

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# Terror module busted in Patna

PM visit on July  
12 was target,  
suspects have  
links with PFI,  
say police

PNS ■ PATNA



"potential terror module indulging in anti-India activities" by arresting two suspects, including a retired Jharkhand police officer, with alleged links to radical outfit Popular Front of India (PFI). The duo was arrested in the Phulwari Sharif area of Patna late on Wednesday.

A case was registered in Patna, two people were arrested and the probe is underway. Posters, banners, the PFI documents and mobile phones were recovered during the searches. Others in the case will

also be arrested. The police are working on all the dimensions of the case, according to ADG (HQ) Patna, JS Gangwar.

An FIR has been registered against 26 people. The training of suspected terrorists had also started in Phulwari Sharif 15 days before PM Modi's visit. As soon as the information was received, the police raided and arrested two people.

Patna police said it keeps an eye on institutions like the PFI and was on constant alert ahead of the PM's visit. The police worked on the leads and

and an FIR was filed against 26 persons. However, there was no direct threat to the PM, said the police. The probe so far has revealed that for the past two months, the accused had hosted people visiting Patna from other States.

"The arrested persons have been identified as Mohammad Jallaiddin, a retired Jharkhand police officer, and Athar Parvez. They have links with the PFI. Jallaiddin was earlier associated with Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)," Phulwari Sharif Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Manish Kumar said.

"They were teaching locals how to use swords and knives and also instigating them for communal violence. An investigation has revealed that people from other States were visiting them in Patna. Those visitors used to change their names while staying in hotels in the Bihar Capital to conceal their identities," he said.

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Twitter outage  
affects people  
globally



**New Delhi:** Millions of people across the world were affected globally as the micro-blogging site Twitter was down on Thursday. According to outage tracking website Downdetector users accessing the social media platform through their desktops were automatically logged out from their accounts.

While 55,000 users registered complains globally, nearly 400 outages were reported in India till 5.30 P.M. and the affected cities in the country include Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru. The data also showed that most problems in the country were reported on Twitter's website (73 per cent). Continued on Page 2

# Rupee slides 18 paise to 79.99 vs dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee edged closer to the historic low of 80-mark against the US currency on Thursday as it declined by a little over 18 paise to settle at 79.9975 amid a stronger greenback in overseas markets.

While wholesale inflation remained double-digit for 15 straight months to June, expected deterioration in the country's current account deficit and forex outflows dragged the local unit near to the psychological low level of 80 against the greenback. A sharp correction in crude oil prices in the past few days, however, has been a breather for the local currency, analysts said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee started the day on a strong note and touched a high of 79.71 to a dollar in early trade. The local unit lost momentum after the dollar surged to 24-year high levels against a basket of

global currencies in the early European trade. The rupee finally settled at the day's lowest level of 79.9975 to a dollar, down by 18 paise over the previous close of 79.81. Some of the leading banks such as SBI were already quoting above 80 levels for selling the US dollar.

"The Indian rupee becomes the median performer among the regional currencies. The rupee closed at a record low for the fourth day in a row amid safe-haven demand for the dollar after US inflation surged to a 41-year high. The rate markets now are pricing aggressive rate hikes from Federal Reserve which supported the dollar," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said.

Spot USD/INR delayed the level 80 in today's session but is expected to break in the coming days. The pair has resistance at 80.90 after crossing 80 while the support shifted to 78.80 from 78.50, he noted.

NSE's ex-CEO  
Chitra arrested,  
ED files PMLA  
cases against 4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a money laundering case against former Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pandey and former National Stock Exchange (NSE) top bosses Chitra Ramkrishna and Ravi Narain in connection with the alleged illegal phone tapping case of the stock exchange employees.

The ED also placed under arrest Ramkrishna, who was undergoing judicial custody in the NSE co-location case linked to alleged manipulation of the bourse. The ED move to place her under arrest came after a Delhi court granted her four-day custody to the anti-money laundering probe agency.

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NCR-PULSE

**FIRE BREAKS OUT AT HOTEL IN PAHARGANJ; 10 RESCUED**  
New Delhi: Ten people were rescued after a fire broke out at a hotel in central Delhi's Paharganj area early Thursday morning. Officials said that a call about a blaze at 'Roma Delux' hotel in Paharganj was received around 4.24 am, following which four fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The fire broke out in a room on the second floor of the building.

**RAI REVIEWS PROGRESS OF GOVT'S VAN MAHOTSAV**  
New Delhi: Delhi's Environment and Forest Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday reviewed the progress of the Kejriwal Government's Van Mahotsav with the officials of the forest department. During the meeting, discussions were held regarding the Van Mahotsav which started in Delhi from July 11 and has been going on remarkably well. After the meeting, Rai informed that the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal will attend the closing ceremony of Van Mahotsav to be held on July 24.

**6 VEHICLES DAMAGED AFTER TREE FALLS IN SOUTH DELHI**  
New Delhi: Six vehicles, including four cars, got damaged after a tree fell on the road at Masjid Mor in south Delhi on Thursday. A senior police officer said the incident took place around 2 pm. Six vehicles -- four cars, a two-wheeler and a mini-truck -- got damaged, he added. No one got injured in the incident. The tree is being cut and removed from the spot.



**FR. AGNEL SCHOOL LAUNCHES INITIATIVE FOR HEALTH**  
New Delhi: Fr. Agnel School on Thursday launched an initiative for the health care of rich and poor alike so that everyone can remain healthy and free from all ailments through a modern diagnostic process. The initiative was inaugurated by Fr Agnel School Director J A Carvalho, Anmway Vice President Rajat Bannerjee in the presence of teachers and hundreds of students from neighboring slum and resettlement colonies seeking free education at Agnel Jan Kalyan Kendra, Khoda, Ghaziabad. On the occasion Carvalho said modern technology initiative provides to every individual access and opportunity to discover the state of one's health, with scientifically conducted diagnostics of a very high level that is a game changer never seen before.

**3RD DOSE OF COVID VACCINE GIVEN TO 900 INMATES**  
New Delhi: Delhi Prison authorities on Thursday said that the third dose of COVID-19 vaccine has been administered to just about 600 out of over 19,000 inmates lodged in Delhi prisons, attributing "unwillingness" and "non-eligibility" for the low coverage. According to data shared by the prison officials, a total of 28,902 Covid vaccine doses have been administered to inmates of all 16 central jails housed in Tihar, Mandoli and Rohini complexes of the Delhi Prisons department.

**AAP MLA HITS OUT AT BJP FOR MISGOVERNANCE IN MCD**  
New Delhi: Amid controversies regarding misgovernance of BJP ruled MCD, the Aam Aadmi Party MLA, Durgesh Pathak on Thursday alleged that Poonam Parashar, the secretary of civic bodies-run Hardayal Library has flouted all norms by appointing her husband as the member of the library and awarding a lucrative job worth Rs 40 thousand to her son. Pathak also alleged that the library employees have been deprived of their salaries for 18 months, citing lack of funds.

**BJP WORKERS PROTEST OUTSIDE KEJRIWALS HOUSE**  
New Delhi: Delhi BJP leaders and workers led by party MP Ramesh Bidhuri on Thursday staged a protest near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence over hike in power bills in the city. Police used water cannons to disperse the protesters when they attempted to get past barricades erected to stop them from reaching the chief minister's residence. The Kejriwal government has looted crores of rupees from Delhi people through various charges and surcharges in the past many years," Bidhuri claimed, addressing the protesters.

Twitter outage affects...

**From Page 1**  
The second most trouble was on the app (26 per cent).  
"Something went wrong. Try reloading," this was the message that could be seen.  
This was the first such outage since February and according to Downtdetector.com, which tracks outages by collating sta-

tus reports from a number of sources, showed more than 27,000 outage reports in the United States itself. Users in other countries, including the United Kingdom, Mexico, Brazil and Italy also reported similar issues. It was immediately not clear what caused the outage.

Twitter users reported that

**PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/ NEW DELHI**

Kerala Forest Minister A K Saseendran on Thursday said the State would approach the Supreme Court seeking exemption for inhabited areas while implementing its recent verdict on eco-sensitive zones (ESZ) and termed his meeting with Union Forest Minister Bhupender Yadav over the issue as "positive".  
The Centre informed the respective States that they could go ahead with legal proceedings in the matter and welcomed the southern State's stand on the issue while he was apprised of its concerns in this regard, he said after meeting Yadav at his office in New Delhi. "The Centre has a positive approach towards the State's demand. What I have understood from today's meeting is that they will do what they can do legally. During the meeting, the Minister wel-

comed our stand and ensured that the Centre will take all necessary steps. Our decision is to file our plea on the matter in the Supreme Court," Saseendran told reporters here.  
The top court had, on June 3, pronounced the verdict to create a one-km eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around all wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, which is generally considered to affect normal life of people living in such areas of the southern State for decades.  
The Minister said the higher officials from the State, who accompanied him in the meeting, would stay back to coordinate the necessary steps to file the affidavit in the court next and complete the procedures by Monday.  
As it is a matter related to the court verdict, the solution can also be found through the court only, he said, adding that the state would complete all the directives made by the apex court while pronouncing

the verdict within three months.  
The State government has the legal responsibility to fulfil the directives of the apex court and a necessary survey has already begun in this connection, he said.  
When asked whether the Centre would also approach the Supreme Court over the ESZ issue, Saseendran said he expects so.  
Meanwhile, Bhupendar Yadav later said he assured Saseendran of "full cooperation" from Centre for conserving Kerala's environment.  
"Met Kerala Forests and Wildlife Protection Minister Shri AK Saseendran. We had a detailed discussion on issues related to the environment and sustainable development of the state. Assured Saseendran ji of full cooperation from Centre for conserving Kerala's environment," Yadav tweeted.  
Later in the day, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs,

Food and Public Distribution and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ashwini Kumar Choubey said that the Centre may appeal against the top court's direction if necessary.  
Choubey was speaking to reporters at a press conference held in Guruvayur.  
In response to a query on the ESZ issue, the minister said, "We all have to respect the order of the Supreme Court. When we take up the issue before it, we will also convey the concerns of the affected persons." "We are thinking about it (an appeal) and if necessary, will file an appeal after holding discussions with all stakeholders." In the memorandum of requests submitted to the Centre, the Kerala government explained the special circumstances prevailing in the State and sought their intervention in the matter.  
The revised proposals already submitted by the State

government to the Ministry, excluding human settled areas and agricultural lands, may be considered and steps would likely be taken to issue final notification accordingly, it said.  
"Steps may be taken to exempt the State of Kerala from the directions of the Supreme Court dated June 3, 2022 considering the special circumstances and population density of the State, in overwhelming public interest," the memorandum said and requested to take "necessary legal as well as legislative steps" to fulfil this.  
The State also requested amending suitably the guidelines dated February 9, 2011 for declaration of eco sensitive zones around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries to cope up with the situations being faced by the States like Kerala and to protect the interests of common people and farmers settled along the forest fringes.  
Earlier in the day,

Saseendran made it clear that the Kerala government, in 2020 itself had requested the Centre to exempt the inhabited areas from the buffer zones being demarcated around wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.  
Amid mounting pressure from the Opposition parties and the local people in high range areas, the Left government in Kerala on Tuesday announced that it was ready to "re-examine" a Cabinet decision taken by it two years ago demarcating 0-1 km surrounding the protected forest areas as eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) in the State.  
The Kerala Legislative Assembly last week unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Centre to exempt inhabited places and agricultural lands in the State while implementing the one-km wide eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around forests and sanctuaries as directed by the Supreme Court.

NSE's ex-CEO Chitra arrested, ED files PMLA...

**From Page 1**  
The ED filed the fresh case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), a week after the CBI booked them in the illegal phone tapping case.  
The CBI had alleged that Narain and Ramkrishna, both former chief executives of the National Stock Exchange (NSE), had roped in a company founded by the retired IPS officer Pandey to snoop on the stock market employees by illegally intercepting their phone calls.

Pandey, a 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, retired from service on June 30. Before his four-month stint as Mumbai's commissioner of police, he served as acting Maharashtra director general of police (DGP).  
He was questioned by the ED on July 5 in the alleged NSE co-location scam case in Delhi.

The ED discovered secret phone surveillance while probing the alleged financial irregularities at the NSE following which it reported it to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which asked the CBI to probe the charges, officials said.  
The CBI had alleged in its complaint that during the period 2009-17, Narain, Ramkrishna, Varanasi and Haldipur conspired to illegally intercept the telephones of NSE employees for which they hired iSEC Services Pvt Ltd, founded by Pandey in 2001.  
The company allegedly received a payment of Rs 4.45 crore for illegal tapping which

**From Page 1**  
However, India rejected China's criticism and asserted that it is a consistent policy to treat the Dalai Lama as an honoured guest of the country.  
According to official sources, the Dalai Lama has been extended an invitation by the two-time Parliamentarian Thupstan Chhewang to deliver teachings to a vast number of his followers in the region.  
"His Holiness will stay in Leh till the second week of August. Elaborate arrangements have been made keeping in mind his daily needs and certain health issues", official sources said.  
On his arrival in Jammu on Thursday the spiritual leader Dalai Lama said more and

more people in China are beginning to realise that he is not seeking "independence" but meaningful autonomy and preservation of the Tibetan Buddhist culture. Advocating resolution to all disputes through dialogue, he asserted that all human beings are equal and they need to rise above the narrow-minded approach of "my nation, my ideology", which is the main trigger for fights among people. "Some Chinese hardliners consider me a separatist and a reactionary and always criticise me. But now, more Chinese are realising that the Dalai Lama is not seeking independence and only wishing China (to give) a meaningful autonomy (to Tibet) and (ensure) preserva-

tion of Tibetan Buddhist culture," the 87-year-old spiritual leader told reporters.  
Asked about China's objection to his visit, the Dalai Lama said, "This is usual. The Chinese people are not objecting... more and more Chinese are showing interest in Tibetan Buddhism. Some of their scholars are realising that Tibetan Buddhism is very scientific. Things are changing".  
"I am leaving for Ladakh tomorrow (Friday) to take part in some programme.  
Unfazed by China's criticism the local Buddhist population is all set to accord him a red carpet welcome as he will be visiting the cold desert region after a long gap of four years.

Terror module busted in...

**From Page 1**  
Several objectionable documents pertaining to Islamist extremism have been seized from their possession, the ASP said.  
Parvez's younger brother had been jailed in 2001-02 in connection with several bomb blast cases in Bihar after the SIMI was banned, Kumar said.  
"During the investigation, it was found that Parvez was in constant touch with members of several overseas organisations and was raising foreign funds to carry out anti-India activities.  
During searches at the premises of the accused, the police also recovered an excerpt from an eight-page-long document r titled 'India vision 2047' which talks about "subjugating the cowardly majority community and bringing back the glory".

The police said their internal document is very objectionable and talks of the "rule of Islam in India".  
Kumar said an excerpt from an eight-page long document they shared amongst themselves titled 'India vision 2047' says, "The PFI confident that even if 10 per cent of total Muslim population rally behind it, the PFI would subjugate coward majority community and bring back the glory."  
He said the document mentions that in case of a full-fledged showdown with the State "apart from relying on cadres we would need help from friendly Islamic countries." "In the last few years the PFI has developed friendly relations with Turkey, a flag-bearer of Islam," the police official quoted from the document.

JMM announces support to Murmu in upcoming Prez poll

**PTI ■ RANCHI**  
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Chief Shibu Soren on Thursday said his party will support NDA presidential nominee Droupadi Murmu in the July 18 election, ending weeks of suspense.  
It is for the first time that a tribal woman has got an opportunity to become President of India, he said.  
Soren directed all MPs and MLAs of the JMM to vote for Murmu on July 18, the date for the Presidential elections.  
Murmu, the former Jharkhand governor, had recently visited the state to seek support for her candidature.  
She met the JMM chief and its executive president and Chief Minister Hemant Soren.  
JMM which is allied to the Congress has 30 MLAs in the state legislature. While Murmu's victory is ensured even without the Jharkhand-based party's support, the decision by the JMM chief is a shot in the arms for the NDA candidate.  
Yashwant Sinha, the oppositions candidate incidentally is also from Jharkhand and the dilemma faced by the party was to pick between 'a son of the soil' and a 'fellow tribal', said analysts.

Post opp furore Speaker says...

**From Page 1**  
Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too criticised the order, asking, "What is the intention of the government? If one does corruption, then do not say corrupt, call corruption a 'masterstroke'. After throwing 'jumlas' (rhetoric) like '2 crore jobs', 'doubling farmers' income', they should be termed as 'thank you'".  
"PS: Who used the word 'Andolanjeevi' for the country's 'annadatas' in Parliament," she also asked in an apparent swipe at the prime minister.  
Slamming the move, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "All words used by the Opposition to describe the reality of Modi Sarkar now to be considered 'unparliamentary'. What next Vishguru".

Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala also said, "Saheb knows his qualities very well". He also shared a copy of the news report.  
The Congress said in a tweet in Hindi, "Who will be afraid of 'Jumlajeevi' - who has given jumlas? Who will be afraid of the word 'Jaichand' - who has betrayed the country. These words are not being banned in Parliament, the fear of PM Modi is coming out."  
Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien said, "Session begins in a few days. GAG ORDER ISSUED ON MPs." "Now, we will not be allowed to use these basic words while delivering a speech in #Parliament : Ashamed. Abused. Betrayed. Corrupt. Hypocrisy. Incompetent. I will use all these words. Suspend me. Fighting for democracy," the TMC leader said.  
Another Congress spokesperson Jaiver Shergill said on Twitter, "Latest List of 'banned words' in Parliament is BJP Govt desperate attempt to control criticism & hard hitting truth."  
"BJP Government wants Parliament to turn into 'yes man' chamber & 'cheer-leading stadium' rather than a house of accountability and answerability," he also said.

Gujarat Congress' working president Jignesh Mevani tweeted, "Ashamed, abused, betrayed, corrupt, drama, hypocrisy, incompetent jum-lajeevi, baal buddhi, Covid spreader, dohra charitra, nikamma,nautanki, dhindora peetna, behri sarkar are among the many words that will now be called unparliamentary. What's happening in the country?"  
Government sources said the list of unparliamentary terms to which 62 new worlds were added last year is not a new suggestion, but merely a compilation of words already expunged in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha or state legislatures. It also contains words considered unparliamentary in parliaments of Commonwealth countries, they said.  
"Most of these words were considered unparliamentary even during the UPA government," they claimed, adding that the word 'asatya' was expunged from Rajasthan assembly in 2021.  
Similarly, the word 'corrupt' and the expression 'corrupt man' were expunged on July 25, 1980, while the expression 'incompetent ministers' was expunged on November 17, 1976, officials said.  
The Monsoon session of Parliament is to begin on July 18.

affected user. "When Twitter is down, where do you even complain about it being down," posted another. According to some users, the service was resuming back to normal.  
In March, Twitter users in India experienced difficulties accessing the platform on desktops as an outage was reported in Japan, India, the

Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. The Twitter outage comes almost a month after a massive Cloudflare outage that took down platforms like Zerodha, Omegle, Feedly, and more. Earlier this month, Netflix went down right around the time Stranger Things Season 4 Volume 2 dropped.

Patiala court upholds 2-year jail term for Daler...

**From Page 1**  
"They took Rs 13 lakh from me. Neither did they send me abroad, nor did they return my money," he said.  
A month after the FIR, both Mehndi and Shamsheer were arrested, and got bail within days.  
They were charged under Indian Penal Code's (IPC) sections for human trafficking and conspiracy, and under the Indian Passport Act. After that FIR, no less than 35 more

complaints were received too.  
Three years after, the Police moved two petitions before the Court saying that Daler was not required in the case as he had nothing to do with the immigration fraud, popularly referred to as 'kabootarbaazi' — meaning flying pigeons referring to numerous youth in Punjab trying to use illegal means to settle abroad.  
However, the Court refused to discharge the Punjabi pop and Bollywood

singer stating that there was "sufficient evidence against him on the judicial file and scope for further investigation". While Shamsheer died during the trial in 2017, an employee of Mehndi's firm Bulbul Mehta was acquitted for lack of evidence.  
In 2018, the Court of Judicial Magistrate First Class had held both the brothers guilty and sentenced them to two years in jail, following which they were granted bail

and later they filed an appeal in the sessions court.  
On Thursday, the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge dismissed Mehndi's appeal against his sentence. His petition for bail was also rejected, and so was a request to be released on probation — that is, a commitment of good behaviour instead of jail time.  
Now, Mehndi has the option to approach the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Pooling of I2U2 resources can aid global...

**From Page 1**  
Also, he said, "This is truly a meeting of strategic partners. We are all good friends too, and we all have common interests in our outlook."  
A joint statement released on the occasion said the UAE will invest two billion dollars in integrated food parks all over India that will incorporate state-of-the-art climate-smart technologies to reduce food waste and spoilage, conserve fresh water, and employ renewable energy sources.  
The unique grouping of countries aims to harness the vibrancy of our societies and entrepreneurial spirit to tack-

le some of the greatest challenges confronting our world, with a particular focus on joint investments and new initiatives in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security, it said.  
Underlining the initiatives, the statement said the UAE-home to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and host of COP28 in 2023 — will invest \$2 billion dollars to develop a series of integrated food parks across India.  
India will provide appropriate land for the project and will facilitate farmers' integration into the food parks. The

US and Israeli private sectors will be invited to lend their expertise and offer innovative solutions that contribute to the overall sustainability of the project. These investments will help maximise crop yields and, in turn, help tackle food insecurity in South Asia and the Middle East. The food parks will come up in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.  
In the field of clean energy, the I2U2 Group will advance a hybrid renewable energy project in Gujarat consisting of 300 megawatts (MW) of wind and solar capacity complemented by a battery energy storage system. The US

Trade and Development Agency funded a feasibility study for the \$330 million USD project. UAE-based companies are exploring opportunities to serve as critical knowledge and investment partners.  
Israel and the United States intend to work with the UAE and India to highlight private sector opportunities. Indian companies are keen to participate in this project and contribute to India's goal of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.  
The leaders expressed their determination to leverage well-established markets to build more innovative, inclusive, and

science-based solutions to enhance food security and sustainable food systems. The leaders also welcomed India's interest in joining the United States, the UAE, and Israel in the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate initiative (AIM for Climate).  
They affirmed that these are only the first steps in a long-term strategic partnership to promote initiatives and investments that improve the movement of people and goods across hemispheres, and increase sustainability and resilience through collaborative science and technology partnerships.

# Jahangirpuri riots continuation of anti-CAA and NRC protests, 2020 Delhi riots: Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Crime Branch of the Delhi Police on Thursday filed a 2,063-page charge sheet in the northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri riots case alleging the violence was in continuation of the protests against CAA and NRC of 2019 and also the North-East Delhi riots of February 2020.

The chargesheet also mentions Ram Navmi incidents on April 10 in different parts of the country that further aggravated the communal tension between communities.

Violence in Jahangirpuri broke out on April 16 during the Hanuman Jayanti procession.

The police has filed the chargesheet against 45 people under various charges, including criminal conspiracy, 147 (rioting), an attempt to murder and assaulting a public servant, and obstructing him/her in the discharge of their public functions, punishable under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the provisions of Arms Act.

The chargesheet named 37 accused who were arrested in the matter, along with eight accused who are still at large.



A total of nine firearms, five live cartridges, two empty cartridges, nine swords, and the clothes of 11 accused persons worn at the time of the incident and seen in videos have been recovered. According to chargesheet, the CCTV footage of 28 cameras of Public Works Department (PWD) installed around Kushal Cinema Road, 30 cameras of PWD installed around C-Block, Jahangirpuri were obtained and analysed.

"A total of 34 viral videos and 56 videos from electronic media were collected and analysed. Police have arrested 20 out of 37 accused who have

been captured in CCTV footage and viral videos.

"The help of technology has been taken for the identification of accused persons," the chargesheet stated. "Total numbers of 21 mobile phones were seized from accused persons. Total 132 witnesses were examined out of which 85 police and 47 public persons including doctors and others," stated the chargesheet.

Police said the police investigation report (PIR) against two juveniles had been already filed before the Principal, Juvenile Justice Board.

"A total number of 13

teams were deployed for verifying background details of accused persons, dump data, technical (FRS) analyses, viral videos collections, CCTV footage collection, financial aspect and conspiracy angel," stated the chargesheet.

Police in its chargesheet have also shared the names of eight wanted persons. As per chargesheet, Sanwar Kalia, Saddam Khan, Salman alias Suleman, Ashanoor, Ishrafil, Jahangir, Hasmat alias Asmat and Sheikh Sikander, all residents of Jahangirpuri area are in the list of wanted.

Even as the communal tension in the area was at its peak, the BJP ruled civic agencies began anti-encroachment drive in the violence-hit Jahangirpuri area. The JCB first demolished a tobaccoist's shop and then proceeded further to demolish another juice-cum-tobacco vendor next to it. A double storey scrap dealer's shop was also razed to the ground.

The residents in the vicinity of the demolition drive could be seen watching from the rooftops and the windows of their houses. Several expressed their resentment over the government's strict

action. On February 24, 2020, the communal violence had broken out in northeast Delhi after clashes between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured. Overall 1818 persons have been arrested so far in 400 FIRs.

On September 16, 2020, the 17,000-page charge sheet filed on gave the sequence of events leading to large scale violence in which former JNU student Umar Khalid and his junior in the university Sharjeel Imam were part of the alleged conspiracy along with their associates to incite communal feelings of a particular community and instigate students of a particular community against the CAA and the state.

In December 2019, after CAA was passed replacing the Citizenship Act, 1955, to fast-track the grant of Indian citizenship to members of the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities from the Muslim-majority nations of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, scores of people protested for more than 100 days in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh area.

## MCD implements uniform rate for licence fee for all categories

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Thursday implemented a uniform rate for licence fee for all categories of general trade and storage license in the national Capital. The license fee will be increased by 15 per cent for all categories every three years from the date of implementation of the new rates starting from April 1, 2025.

Apart from this, for showrooms, retail outlets, warehouses, stores attached with cold stores, gas, CNG godowns, storage, petroleum and petroleum product categories under Group A and B Rs.66125 or Rs.166 per square meter (whichever is higher). The move comes over a month after the three corporations in Delhi were unified into a new civic body.

According to the MCD, the new rates charged for the license for an area of up to 10 sqm will be Rs 3968 for Group A and B, Rs 2645 for Group C and D and Rs 1323 for Group E and H. "For an area of 10-20 sqm, Rs. 9919 for Group A and B, Rs 6613 for Group C and D, and Rs. 3306 for Group E and H will be charged respectively," he said. "For category of 21- 400

sqm area, for group A and B Rs.9919 plus Rs.166 per sqm if the area is above 20 sq.mt will be charged. For group C and D Rs.6613 plus Rs 132 per sqm, in case the area is above than 20 sqm. For Group E and H, Rs 3306 plus Rs 99 per square meter if the area is above 20 square meter will be charged," he said.

For an area of above than 400 sqm, under Group A and B, Rs 72996 plus Rs 83 per sqm, in case the area above than 400 sqm. For Group C and D, Rs 56773 plus Rs 66 per sqm, if the area is above than 400 sqm. Apart from this, for Group E and H, Rs 40926 plus Rs 50 per sqm, if the area is above than 400 sqm will be charged, a senior official informed.

Apart from this, for showrooms, retail outlets, warehouses, stores attached with cold stores, gas, CNG godowns, storage, petroleum and petroleum product categories under Group A and B Rs.66125 or Rs.166 per square meter (whichever is higher).

For Group C and D, Rs 52900 or Rs 132 per sqm (whichever is higher). For Group E and H Rs 39675 or Rs 99 per sqm (whichever is higher) will be charged.

There will be an increase of

15 per cent in the license fee for all categories every three years from the date of implementation of the above said rates starting from 1st April 2025.

The license can be renewed from 1 April to 30 April that is within 30 days from the date of expiry without any penalty and thereafter a penalty 5 per cent per month and double at the end of the year or as per the rate of penalty fixed from time to time by the competent authority shall be charged, he stated.

Earlier this week, The MCD on Tuesday decided to rationalise licence and registration fees for running various establishments such as banquet halls and eateries in the national capital.

After the trifurcation of the MCD in 2012, the three corporations had drafted their license policy and the fee was fixed in accordance with the provisions of the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2011.

Thus, disparities existed in the fee structure approved by the three erstwhile corporations. After the unification of the corporation, uniform rates have been implemented in Delhi to establish uniformity in this regard.

## 4 Chinese staying illegally held from Greater Noida, hawala link suspected

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

The Uttar Pradesh police's Special Task Force (STF), which is probing a suspected hawala racket linked to China, has arrested four Chinese nationals who were allegedly staying illegally in India.

Those held have been identified as Johnson alias He Zhuang, Ryen alias Ren Chao, Zeng Haozhe alias Jon, and Zeng Dye, they said.

The four accused were staying in Greater Noida without a valid visa since 2020 and are connected to Xue Fei alias Kelay (36), a Chinese national who was arrested on June 13 on similar charges along with his Indian girlfriend Petekhrinuo (22) who hails from Nagaland, police said.

"These four Chinese nationals were arrested by the STF over Tuesday and Wednesday for staying in India without valid visa," said an official. Xue Fei and Petekhrinuo were arrested from a Gurugram hotel by the Uttar Pradesh police, close on the heels of the

arrest of two more Chinese men who were trying to cross over to Nepal through Bihar but were apprehended by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

Xue Fei had floated several companies in India, most of them bogus, and was also running an illegal luxury resto-bar in a Greater Noida village that chiefly had Chinese patrons only, according to investigators.

The STF of Noida had said that they are also looking at money laundering, hawala transactions, a web of bogus companies, even espionage.

Police said transactions details they had recovered pointed to hawala deals being made at the club. Police have found the transactions in the account of Fei's live-in partner, Petekhrinuo, who lived with him in a rented apartment at Jaypee Greens. Police teams are tracing the names that have popped up in transactions in the arrested woman's account and from the register (recovered from the club). "Till we get hold of their Indian accomplice and question people related to

the two or manage to bust the entire nexus, nothing can be ruled out. Other investigating agencies are also looking into the matter," said police.

Xue Fei's main Indian partner is believed to be a Gujarat-based businessman, Ravi Natwarlal. For the premises in Gharbara village that was converted into a club with over 50 rooms, a bar and a pool, Xue Fei and three others - a Chinese national and two Indians - had signed a rent agreement for five years in 2020. Police teams have also arrested Natwarlal on June 27.

In a separate development, the Noida Police had on Wednesday detained 14 Chinese nationals, including a woman, for allegedly staying in India despite having expired work visas.

They worked for a mobile phone company but their visas expired in 2020. The 14 Chinese nationals were sent to a detention centre in Delhi where proceedings for their deportation were started, according to officials.

## DU suspends Associate Prof for sexually harassing female teachers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University on Thursday suspended an Associate Professor of College of Vocational Studies for allegedly "sexually harassing" several female teachers, sources said. The decision came after the governing body of the college recommended his suspension in a meeting on Wednesday.

The suspension of Manmohan Bhasin was approved by DU Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh, sources privy to the matter said.

However, Bhasin said he has not received any such suspension letter. "I have not received any suspension letter as of now, so I have nothing to comment about it," Bhasin said. Another Associate Professor at College of Vocational Studies (CVS) said there have been multiple cases of sexual harassment against Bhasin.

The governing body con-



sulted an internal complaints committee after three female teachers — one from Ramjas College and two of CVS — had filed sexual harassment cases against him, said the professor who did not wish to be named.

"He started interfering with the investigation of the cases and was also abusing and misbehaving with the teaching and non-teaching staff. That is why the governing body decided to suspend him," the professor said.

On June 25, the governing body of the CVS censured Bhasin and debarred him from holding any administrative position in the college till further order.

"His (Bhasin's) explanation has been found dissatisfactory, the misconduct committed by him stands established. As resolved by the Governing Body of the college, the minor penalty of censure is hereby imposed on Manmohan Singh Bhasin.

You are also debarred from holding any administrative position in the college till further order," a notice by the college read. "Manmohan Singh Bhasin is further advised to desist himself from such activities in future and observe Code of Professional Ethics of Teachers in his conduct," it added.

In March, the National Commission for Women (NCW) wrote to Vice-Chancellor Singh regarding a complaint lodged by a teacher of CVS, accusing two of her colleagues of intimidation, harassment and abuse. The NCW had asked the V-C to send an action taken report at the earliest.

## Woman kills self after being forced to undergo abortion 14 times by live-in partner

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 33-year-old woman allegedly committed suicide after being forced to undergo abortion 14 times by her live-in partner in a span of eight years, police said on Thursday citing a suicide note. The incident took place on July 5 in southeast Delhi's Jaitpur area.

In the suicide note written in Hindi, the woman alleged that she had been in a live-in relationship with a man who made physical relationship with her on the promise of marriage but refused to marry her and left her with no other option except suicide, police said, adding that she was living sperately from her husband.

A case of abetment of suicide has been registered against the man who works at a software firm in Noida, a senior police officer said. According to Esha Pandey, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district, on July 5, a police control room (PCR) call

was received regarding suicide by a woman at Jaitpur. "A police team rushed to the spot where a woman was found hanging in a room.

She was immediately shifted to AIIMS where doctor declared her brought dead," said DCP. "The stool used for hanging and deceased's mobile phone were seized.

After preliminary inquiry, it was revealed that woman had been living separately from her husband for past seven-eight years," she said.

Her parents residing in Muzaffarpur in Bihar were informed and body was handed over to them after post-mortem, the DCP added.

One suicide note and viscera were handed over to police by doctors at AIIMS, police said. "We have registered a case under sections 306 (abetment of suicide), 376 (rape) and 313 (causing miscarriage without woman's consent) of Indian Penal Code and further probe was taken up," the DCP said.

## Seizure of 45 guns: Customs wants NIA to probe terror angle

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following the arrest of a married couple and seizure of 45 hand guns at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport, the Delhi Customs has written to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), mandated to probe terror-related incidents.

According to customs officials, the federal agency may look into this case to ascertain any suspected terror conspira-

cy and a letter has been sent to the NIA informing them about the seizure of these 45 guns. "A team of NIA officials, who had visited the airport, has already been briefed about the matter," he said.

A Gurugram-based married couple was arrested at the airport here for allegedly trying to smuggle these Germany and Italy-made hand guns into the country, the officials said. Officials said efforts are on to nab another accused, who

escaped from the airport after handing over two pieces of luggage carrying the guns to the couple. The accused couple, who arrived here from Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City on Monday, were accompanied by their infant daughter.

The male passenger (husband) was carrying two trolley bags, which were handed to him by his elder brother who had arrived from Paris almost at the same time and day as the couple's flight from Vietnam



landed here, the officials said. The elder brother, after handing over the trolley bags, slipped out of the airport, they said.

## CAQM recommends strengthening of air quality monitoring network



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has recommended strengthening of the air quality monitoring network in the national Capital to identify pollution hotspots and assess transboundary movement of pollution.

The recommendation is part of a policy formulated by the panel to curb air pollution in Delhi-NCR. The CAQM noted that there has been considerable progress in expanding the air quality monitoring network in Delhi-NCR since 2015. The region has a total of 146

time air quality monitors in the country are in Delhi-NCR. However, there is asymmetry in the distribution of monitors.

"Most monitors are concentrated in urban centres. While 50 per cent of the real-time monitors are located in Delhi, the remaining are distributed mainly in the four cities of Faridabad, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Ghaziabad and Gurugram," the panel said.

The other districts of NCR have only one real time monitor each. Until some time ago, several districts did not have any monitors at all, including manual ones. Of the total 65 manual stations in NCR, only 20 have PM2.5 monitors.

"Further strengthening of the monitoring grid in the NCR region requires a roadmap. Delhi has a sufficient number of regulatory monitors and needs to focus on quality control of the data and its dissemination.

The rest of NCR will require further strengthening of the grid," read the policy document issued by the CAQM on Wednesday

## RWAs slam plan to ban BS-IV diesel vehicles if AQI crosses 450-mark

NEW DELHI: Several resident welfare associations (RWAs) in the national Capital on Thursday lashed out at the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) over its new plan to ban BS-IV four-wheeler diesel vehicles in Delhi if the air quality index (AQI) crosses 450.

RWA president of Defence Colony Ranjit Singh questioned, "This is a ridiculous policy. When there already is a policy for pollution under control (PUC) certificates and people are constantly pestered to get their PUC done, then why ban diesel vehicles?" The CAQM has comprehensively revamped Graded Response Action Plan — a set of anti-air pollution measures followed in Delhi and its vicinity according to the severity of the situation. The revised plan, which is part of a new policy formulated by the

CAQM, entails a ban on BS-IV four-wheeler diesel vehicles in Delhi and the bordering districts of NCR if the AQI breaches the 450-mark. Vehicles engaged in essential services are exempt.

B S Vohra, president of the East Delhi RWAs joint front, said instead of banning BS IV four-wheeler diesel vehicles, the PUC certification policy should be made more stringent. "First, they pester citizens to get PUC done. If someone does not have a PUC, a fine of Rs 10,000 is imposed. Why did they introduce the PUC certification policy in the first place if they had to ultimately nullify it," he asked.

The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), notified by Ministry of Environment in 2017, comes into force in mid-October when air pollution levels start worsening.

## ‘Diesel autos to be phased out by end of 2026 to curb air pollution’

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The new policy formulated by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) stated that the diesel-run auto rickshaws will have to be phased out in the entire National Capital Region (NCR) by December 31, 2026, aiming to curb air pollution in Delhi-NCR.

The policy unveiled on Wednesday mandates phasing out of diesel autos in Gurugram, Faridabad, Gautam Buddh Nagar and Ghaziabad by December 31, 2024.

The autos will be gradually moved out of service in the remaining districts of the national capital region by December 31, 2026. The NCR covers the whole of Delhi, 14



districts of Haryana, 8 districts of Uttar Pradesh and two districts of Rajasthan. Only Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and electric autos will be registered in NCR states from January 1, 2023, according to the policy. Delhi had in 1998 launched a programme to convert its fleet of diesel auto

rickshaws into CNG ones. No diesel-run auto is registered in Delhi at present. The Delhi Transport Department had in October last year launched the scheme for registration of 4,261 e-autos. The new policy lists sector-wise action plans to curb air pollution in Delhi-NCR in the next five years.

# Kerala reports first monkeypox case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Kerala reporting India's first case of monkeypox in Kollam, the Union Health Ministry on Thursday decided to deploy a multi-disciplinary Central team to support the Pinarayi Vijayan Government in probing the outbreak and instituting requisite health measures.

"He is a traveller from UAE. He reached the state on July 12. He reached Trivandrum airport and all the steps are being taken as per the guidelines issued by WHO and ICMR," Kerala Health Minister Vena George said about the 35-year-old patient..

The monkeypox case comes even as India, after a gap of 145 days, recorded over 20,000 new coronavirus infections while the active cases increased to 1,36,076.

The huge surge comes on the eve of the 75-day long free precaution Covid jab drive to be launched from July 15. The Centre has directed the states/UTs to screen and test suspected cases at entry points

and in communities. The health ministry's requirements include patient isolation, rigorous risk communication addressed at health personnel, and appropriate human resource and logistical assistance.

In a letter to the States, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan emphasised the need of having a strict monitoring system in place at all ports of entry in order to swiftly detect and isolate suspicious cases.

The Health Secretary directed all states and union territories to take critical activities, such as orienting and re-orienting all key stakeholders, such as health screening teams at points of entry, disease surveillance teams, and clinicians working in hospitals, regarding common signs and symptoms.

A total of 20,139 new Covid-19 cases were reported in a span of 24 hours, pushing the total tally of cases to 4,36,89,989. The death toll climbed to 5,25,557 with 38 new fatalities, the data said even as the Centre warned the States to be aware of the monkey cases which are on rise in



a few pockets of the world.

The Covid active cases comprise 0.31 per cent of the total infections, while the national recovery rate was recorded at 98.49 per cent, the Ministry said in a statement.

In the meanwhile, the World Health Organisation (WHO) also warned all country governments and healthcare systems to take steps to curb the spread of infection as the number of new cases worldwide had risen by 30% in the last two weeks.

"I am concerned that cases of Covid-19 continue to rise -

putting further pressure on stretched health systems and health workers. I am also concerned about the increasing trend of deaths," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recently.

The WHO Chief warning follows an alert issued by the Union Health Ministry to the states, and UTs about the spread of the monkeypox illness, which, it said, has caused concern throughout the world in recent weeks with 3,413 laboratory cases and one confirmed fatality.

# Nupur case: A-G declines consent to initiate contempt proceedings against ex-judge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Attorney General KK Venugopal has refused sanction to initiate contempt proceedings against former Delhi High Court judge S N Dhingra and two others for criticising the Supreme Court over its oral observations against suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma.

In a letter, advocate C R Jaya Sukin had sought the AG's consent to initiate criminal contempt of court against Dhingra, former Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi and senior advocate K Rama Kumar for calling the top court's observations in Nupur Sharma's case "irresponsible, illegal and unfair".

Venugopal said the statements made by the three people were neither "vituperative nor abusive" nor were they likely to interfere with the administration of justice by the Supreme Court. "I have gone through your request seeking consent to initiate proceedings



for criminal contempt against Justice (retd) S N Dhingra, Mr Aman Lekhi and Mr K Rama Kumar senior advocate.

I find that the statements made by three persons, who are in the realm of fair comment, on a hearing conducted by the Supreme Court.

"The statements are not vituperative or abusive nor are they likely to interfere with the administration of justice by the Supreme Court of India. It may be noted that the Supreme Court, in a large number of judgements, has held that fair and reasonable criticism of

judicial proceedings would not constitute contempt of court," the AG said in his letter.

Venugopal said he was not satisfied that the criticism made by the three people named in the letter was with malice or an attempt to impair the administration of justice.

"I am not satisfied that the criticism made by the three persons named in your letter is with malice or is an attempt to impair the administration of justice, or that it was a deliberate and motivated attempt to bring down the image of the judiciary. In the circumstances, I accordingly decline consent to initiate proceedings to criminal contempt of the Supreme Court," he said.

A vacation bench of justices Surya Kant and J B Pardiwala had on July 1 severely reprimanded Sharma for her comment against Prophet Mohammad, saying her "loose tongue" has "set the entire country on fire" and that she was "single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country".

## IN SHORTS

**EC TO HEAR SOREN CASE ON AUGUST 5**  
New Delhi: The BJP, which is the petitioner in the case being heard by the Election Commission against Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren for extending himself a mining lease, on Thursday sought adjournment of the hearing. The case will now come up for hearing on August 5, officials said. They said Soren's legal team agreed and the EC adjourned Thursday's hearing.

**SCHOOLS TO SHUT ORDER WITHDRAWN**  
New Delhi: In a relief to students enrolled in schools run by the railways, the Railway Board on Thursday withdrew its earlier orders to either shut or merge its schools in the country with Kendriya Vidyalayas.

**ZUBAIR MOVES SC TO QUASH 6 FIRS**



New Delhi: Alt News co-founder Mohd Zubair on Thursday moved the Supreme Court seeking quashing of six FIRs lodged against him in several districts of Uttar Pradesh. In his fresh plea, Zubair has also sought interim bail in all six cases. The plea of Zubair has also challenged the constitution of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) by the UP government to probe the six cases

**CBI'S FRESH FIR AGAINST MEHUL**  
New Delhi: The CBI on Thursday filed fresh FIR against fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi for cheating the Canara Bank-led consortium of Rs 55.27 cr. Since 2018, he has resided in Antigua and Barbuda, where he is now a citizen. He vanished from the nation in 2021 and then reappeared in Dominica from where he was turned away.

**PIYUSH GOYAL REAMAINS RS LEADER**



New Delhi: The BJP has retained Union Minister Piyush Goyal as its leader in the Rajya Sabha, paving the way for him to continue as the Leader of the House following his election to Parliament for a third term. Goyal (58) was the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha prior to his third term as well, so it will be a mere formality necessitated by his fresh term.

**SC RAPS NAGALAND GOVT OVER POLL DELAY**  
New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up the Nagaland Government over the delay in notifying the elections in urban local bodies and directed the State Election Commission to inform it within two weeks about the complete schedule of the polls.

**SC SEEKS UP'S RESPONSE ON AZAM CASE**  
New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday sought the Uttar Pradesh Government's response on compliance with its order by which it had stayed the bail condition imposed on Samajwadi Party MLA Azam Khan that land adjoining the Jauhar University campus will be attached in an alleged enemy property grabbing case.

**SC REJECTS CBI PROBE INTO TRIBALS' KILLING**  
New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday dismissed with an "exemplary" cost of Rs five lakh a plea seeking a CBI probe into the purported massacre of some tribals, allegedly by security forces, in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district in 2009.

**TASK FORCE SET UP TO FILL VACANT POSTS**  
New Delhi: A task force has been formed to coordinate the progress of filling up the vacant posts in different Government Ministries, Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said on Thursday. He said that all ministries/departments have also been requested to chalk out a plan to fill up the vacancies latest by December, 2023.

# Cong's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' on Oct 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday announced that it will embark on its 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' on October 2 under the leadership of the party's former president, Rahul Gandhi. 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' will be a 148-day-long yatra, which will be undertaken from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

The party also discussed its strategy in the forthcoming Monsoon Session which was chaired by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and attended by the party MPs. The Congress Parliamentary Strategy Committee group decided on issues to be raised during the upcoming session. "We have decided to give priority to issues of LPG and price rise that affect the common people.

We will also raise the issue of Agniphath scheme of army recruitment in the upcoming session," Congress senior leader and Leader of Opposition

Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge told mediapersons after the meeting. The Monsoon session of Parliament will begin on July 18 and continue till August 12.

Among other issues to be raised include unemployment, the falling value of the Rupee and the economic situation in the country. The party will also seek a discussion in Parliament on the Chinese transgressions along the border in eastern Ladakh.

The Congress will seek answers from the government on the demands of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, which spearheaded the agitation against the now-scrapped farm laws, and the setting up of a committee on MSP.

The meeting was attended by most of the MPs including Kharge, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, P Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, K Suresh, and Manickam Tagore.

The final touching points of the Bharat Jodo Yatra was discussed at the meeting at Congress' headquarters attended by party general secretary in-charges, state in-charges and PCC presidents. However, Rahul skipped the meeting as

he is on a short personal visit abroad.

The first meeting of the Central Planning Group for Bharat Jodo Yatra took place on July Monday which was attended by Rahul Gandhi. Sources in the party said Rahul is likely to return by Sunday, ahead of the Presidential election and the Monsoon session of Parliament on July 18.

Congress General Secretary Organisation KC Venugopal, AICC Treasurer Pawan Bansal, AICC General Secretary Mukul Wasnik, Ajay Maken, Randeep Surjewala, Bhawar Jitendra Singh and Rajya Sabha MP and AICC in-charge of Delhi Shaktisinh Gohil also attended the meet.

Sonia had announced the mass campaign to counter "polarization" politics with the slogan "Bharat Jodo" on May 16-- the last day of the Congress-led Chintan Shivir in Rajasthan's Udaipur.

The yatra will include padayatras, rallies, and public meetings, which will be attended by the Congress top brass including Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Every day 25 kilometres of padyatra will be undertaken.

# ED arrests 4 people in ₹3,986 bank fraud case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested four accused persons in connection with a bank fraud case involving more than Rs 3,986 crore by Chennai-based Surana Group of Companies.

The arrested accused are Dinesh Chand Surana, Managing Director-cum-Promoter of Surana Industries Limited, Surana Power Ltd and Promoter of Surana Corporation Ltd., Vijay Raj Surana, Managing Director-cum-Promoter of Surana Corporation Limited as well as promoter of Surana Industries Limited and Surana Power Limited, besides P Anand and I Prabhakaran, the dummy directors of shell companies, the ED said in a statement.

"The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of three FIRs registered by Central Bureau of Investigation, Bengaluru on the allegations that these three companies, along with their Promoters, Managing Director/Directors and



unknown individuals indulged in the misappropriation and criminal breach of trust, manipulation of books of accounts through fictitious entities and have routed funds through the shell companies and siphoned off the funds from the company's accounts for their personal gains, causing loss to the tune of Rs 3,986 crore to the Public Sector Banks," the agency said in its statement.

The ED probe revealed that a web of shell companies was created by these persons, wherein the dummy directors of these shell companies were either the relatives/persons from ancestral village of Surana family or the employees of Surana group companies. All the four arrested persons were produced before Principal Session Judge Court, Chennai which granted their 14-day remand to ED up to July 27.

# 'Desecration of Gandhi statue in Canada has hurt sentiments of Indians'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AGENCIESNEW DELHI/TORONTO

Dismayed over the incident of desecration of Mahatma Gandhi's statue in Canada, India has said it is "distressed" and the act has hurt the sentiments of the Indian community there. The local police is handling it as a case of "hate bias motivated incident".

The strong reaction by the Indian Consulate in Toronto on Thursday came after the five-metre-tall statue at the Vishnu temple around Yonge Street and Garden Avenue there was found defaced at about 12.30 pm on Wednesday, according to reports.

The statue is nearly 30 years old and was made in Delhi. It was reportedly unveiled in 1988. The Indian Consulate said it was "distressed" at the vandalism of the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Vishnu temple in the Richmond Hill neighbourhood. "We are distressed at the desecration of Mahatma

Gandhi statue at Vishnu temple in Richmond Hill. This criminal, hateful act of vandalism has deeply hurt the sentiments of the Indian community in Canada. We are in contact with Canadian authorities to investigate this hate crime," it said in a statement on Twitter.

The High Commission of India in Ottawa province said it has approached the Canadian government to investigate the issue. It also said added the incident has resulted in a feeling of "increased concern and insecurity" among the Indian community in the province and its capital city of Toronto.

"We are deeply anguished by this hate crime that seeks to terrorize the Indian community. It has led to increased concern and insecurity in the Indian community here.

We have approached the Canadian government to investigate and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice swiftly," the High Commission said in a tweet.

# Opp parties to meet on Sunday to discuss joint candidate for Vice Prez poll

**New Delhi:** Opposition parties will meet on Sunday to discuss the joint candidate for the vice presidential election. Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge said all parties would meet on July 17 and will hold discussion on who will be their joint candidate for the post of vice president.

The tenure of incumbent M Venkaiah Naidu ends on August 10. The election has already been notified by the Election Commission and the last date for filing of nominations is July 19. The election for the post of vice president will be held on August 6.

# Calcutta HC cancels bail granted to main accused in Jay death case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Calcutta High Court has cancelled the bail granted to the main accused in a case related to the death of Jay Prakash Yadav. This case was one of the prominent cases of post-poll violence in West Bengal.

The CBI had registered the case on August 25, 2021 on the orders of Calcutta High Court and took over the investigation of the case, earlier registered at Police Station Bhatpara, North 24 Parganas on June 6, 2021 against three accused and unknown person on the allegations that the

accused visited the house of a victim and abused him and other members. One of the accused allegedly hurled a bomb on the forehead of the said victim and due to explosion of the bomb, he died, the CBI said. After investigation, a chargesheet was filed against the four accused on September 3, 2021 before the Competent Court. Further investigation is being conducted.

The Court of ADJ 3rd, Barrackpore (West Bengal) granted bail to the main accused on November 9, 2021. Following this, the CBI filed a petition before Calcutta High Court for cancellation of bail.

# CUET for under graduate courses to begin today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The first Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for under graduate courses will begin on Friday at test centres over 510 cities of India and abroad. With 14.9 lakh registrations, the CUET -- the common gateway for undergraduate admission in all central universities -- is now the second biggest entrance exam surpassing JEE-Main's average registration of nine lakh. NEET-UG is the biggest entrance test in India with an average of 18 lakh registrations. The exam will be conducted in two phases by the National Testing Agency (NTA). While Phase 1 will be held in

July, the second one will be conducted in August. Candidates who have opted for Physics, Chemistry or Biology have been assigned for Phase 2 of the CUET exam given the NEET (UG) - 2022 will be held on July 17. "The CUET (UG)-2022 has been scheduled for approximately 14,90,000 candidates, with around 8.1 lakh candidates in the first slot and 6.80 lakh candidates in the second.

These candidates have applied for 54,555 unique combination of subjects across 90 universities," UGC Chairman Jagadesh Kumar said. "Given such a large number of subjects, a unique date sheet for every individual candidate has been created. Accordingly, advance

intimation slip for examination city to all candidates with the date and city of the exam has been issued followed by admit cards," he added. "The exam will be conducted from July 15 to August 20 at exam centres located in over 500 cities across India and 10 cities abroad," Kumar said.

"Some candidates have requested a change of centre. Such requests are being considered by the NTA and the candidates need not feel anxious about it," Kumar said. Elaborating on the format of the score, Kumar said it will be the NTA score which is in percentile format. "The score will indicate the position of a candidate vis-a-vis other candidates

who took the test. It is an indicator of the relative position of the candidate," he said.

The UGC chief had in March announced that CUET scores, and not Class 12 marks, would be mandatory for admission to 45 central universities which can fix their minimum eligibility criteria. Kumar had clarified that students from state boards will not be at a disadvantage under the new system and the exam will not give a push to the coaching culture. A total of 44 central universities, 12 state universities, 11 deemed universities, and 19 private universities have applied to participate in the first edition of CUET for UG admissions in the 2022-23 academic session.

# Covid: Nasal spray reduces viral load by 94%



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A nasal spray administered in high-risk adult Covid-19 patients in India reduced viral load by 94 per cent within 24 hours and 99 percent in 48 hours, according to the results of phase 3 trial of the drug pub-

lished in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal. The study on Nitric Oxide Nasal Spray (NONS) was conducted by Mumbai-based pharmaceutical company Glenmark in 306 vaccinated and unvaccinated adults with symptomatic mild COVID-19 across 20 clinical sites in India. The

trial evaluated a seven-day treatment of NONS plus standard of care versus placebo nasal spray and standard care in patients with symptomatic Covid-19. NONS was self-administered six times daily as two sprays per nostril for seven days. The study was conducted during the Delta and Omicron surges. The research found that high risk patients who received NONS had significant reduction in viral load within 24 hours, which was sustained over seven days of treatment.

Viral load was reduced by 93.7 per cent within 24 hours and by 99 per cent within 48 hours of treatment with NONS. Similar results were observed in vaccinated and unvaccinated populations, the authors said.

"The robust double-blind trial demonstrated significant efficacy and remarkable safety of NONS," Monika Tandon, Senior VP & Head - Clinical Development, Glenmark, and one of the authors of the study said. "This therapy has the potential to make a crucial con-

tribution to COVID-19 management, with its ease of use in the current highly transmissible phase of pandemic," Tandon said in a statement.

# Ensure Sputnik V recipients take both jabs: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has suggested States to ensure private vaccination centres providing Sputnik V vaccine reach out to beneficiaries for due doses -- both second and precaution -- while ensuring availability of the jab.

In a letter to States and Union Territories, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Thursday said it has been observed that the uptake of precaution dose of Sputnik V is only 0.5 per cent of those due for it.

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**  
**ICICI Bank**

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.	Anant Srivastava/ Suman Srivastava/ LBNOD0002303052	Flat No 1603, 16th Floor, Block-C, Antriksh Golf View II, Plot Gh-04 B, Sector 78, Noida/ July 11, 2022	January 28, 2020/ Rs.67,08,364/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Dhiraj Jain/ Shash Jain/ LBNOD00002083766	Flat No. A3/ 0505, 5th Floor, "The Romano", Situated At 001, Sector 118/GHP Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, UP 201301/ July 11, 2022	July 31, 2017/ Rs. 37,56,052/-	Delhi/ NCR
3.	Ritendra Kumar/ Hari Narayan Gupta/ LBDEL00002520011	Flat No Am H 301, 3rd Floor Tower- H Ajnara Ambrosia, Plot No GH-01, Sector- 118, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh/ July 11, 2022	February 28, 2022/ Rs.2,621,451/-	Delhi/ NCR
4.	Rohit Raina/ Renuka Raina/ LBDEL00002091351	Flat No J-606, 6th Floor, Tower OJ, Ajnara Le Garden, Plot No. GH-02, Sector-16, Greater Noida West Noida, Noida, Uttar Pradesh/ July 11, 2022	September 27, 2021/ Rs.35,40,647/-	Delhi/ NCR
5.	Ejaz Sibtain/ Nishat Sibtain/ LBNOD00005143794	Unit No-KPA0020705, 7th Floor, Tower- KPA02, Kensington Park Jaypee Greens, Sector- 133 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh/ July 11, 2022	June 23, 2021/ Rs. 37,30,336/-	Delhi/ NCR
6.	Malay Singh/ Mona Singh/ LBDEL00004288410	Flat No- 1404, 14th Floor, Tower- E1, Skytech Mattrot, Plot No- GH-01/D, Sec- 76, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh/ July 11, 2022	June 23, 2021/ Rs. 50,20,369/-	Delhi/ NCR

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 15, 2022**  
**Place : Delhi/ NCR**

**Authorized Officer**  
**ICICI Bank Limited**

# Talks, terror cannot go together: BJP's Rana on dialogue with Pak

PTI ■ JAMMU

Taking a jibe at the advocates of India-Pakistan dialogue, BJP leader Devender Singh Rana on Thursday said New Delhi has made it amply clear umpteen times that talks and terror cannot go together.

He claimed that terrorism emanating from Pakistan is on its last breath due to focussed operations by the security forces, the Jammu and Kashmir police and the people who have experienced the most traumatic phase in the Valley over the past three decades.

"Engagement between two sovereign nations is a central subject and still those trying to carve out an unsolicited role for themselves, for whatever reasons, by jumping the line should understand that India cannot engage itself with a country that sprouts terrorism," Rana said.

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday said militancy in Kashmir will not end until the government wins the hearts of the people in the Valley and seeks a solution by talking to Pakistan.

"The caravan of militancy will not end. Their (BJP) ministers and other leaders issue statements that it has ended, but I want to tell them that this will not end till they try to win the hearts of the people of Kashmir and seek a solution after talking to our neighbouring country (Pakistan)," he had said.

Rana, on Thursday, said, "A few people may try to condone or downplay the barbarism unleashed by terrorists in terms of death and devastation caused and continuously being perpetrated by Pakistani lackeys. But that does not change the ugly face of terrorism Kashmir is witnessing."

He referred to the killing of Assistant Sub-Inspector Mushtaq Ahmed in the Lal Bazar area of Srinagar, saying conditional condemnation of such dastardly acts by "privileged some" serves as cover fire to



enemies of peace.

Pakistan, which sponsored, trained and supported terrorists, cannot hold peace to ransom as they are destined to doom, the senior BJP leader said

"In the guns they keep brandishing lies their end," Rana said, claiming that the average lifespan of a terrorist is just seven days.

He also cautioned those providing cover and moral support to terrorists and peace breakers in pursuit of furthering the political agenda, saying the people are mature and sagacious enough to read between the lines.

"People of Kashmir are realising the dividends of peace more than before as normalised Valley is booming with economic activity in the wake of unprecedented arrival of tourists and pilgrims," Rana said.

He said the beautiful, blissful face of

Kashmir was evident during the recent flash flood at the Amarnath cave shrine as the local Muslims, unmindful of their Eid festivity, worked shoulder to shoulder with the Army, police and NDRF teams in saving the lives of the pilgrims.

"This is the real Kashmir and not the one of those trying to trample its ethos with the alien gun and those providing cover fire for earning brownie points to further their politics," he added.

Rana exuded confidence that the peace-loving people of Jammu and Kashmir will continue to support the peace initiatives and isolate the inimical elements.

"This is imperative for a progressive and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir, which is treading the path of holistic and all-round development as envisioned in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas motto," he added.

# Godavari turns ferocious, record flood expected in next 3 days

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh is on the brink of a worst flood after a gap of 36 years as river Godavari has been turning ferocious by the hour, threatening to inundate tens of villages mostly in West Godavari and Konaseema districts. Godavari has been flowing close to the third danger level of 17 lakh cusecs at Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowaleswaram near Rajamahendravaram, as a flood of 16.61 lakh cusecs was recorded on Thursday evening, with indication that it may rise further later tonight.

As over 18 lakh cusecs of floodwater has been discharged at upstream Bhadrachalam in neighbouring Telangana, all

that will reach Cotton Barrage in the next few hours.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will conduct an aerial survey on Friday afternoon to assess the devastation caused by the Godavari flood. Given the rains in the upper catchment areas in Maharashtra and Telangana and the consequent rise in flood level, officials here anticipate a discharge of over 24 lakh cusecs over the next two days.

This will be the highest flood in Godavari after the one in 1986. "As per the information available right now, the flood flow may touch 20 lakh cusecs by Friday evening and go further up the next day.

We have been asked to prepare for a flood of up to 28 lakh cusecs," a district Collector told PTI over phone.

Accordingly, revenue and irrigation department officials conducted a recce to identify weak spots along the Godavari river bund and traced at least six such vulnerable areas. "We have accordingly started taking protective measures. We have also identified at least 36 villages that need to be fully evacuated if the flood surge continues," the official added.

The surge in flood has wrecked havoc particularly in the island villages of river Godavari, which remained cut off from outside world. The Yetapaka police station in Alluri Sitarama Raju district had to be shut down as it was inundated by over three feet of floodwater. A helicopter of the Indian Navy has been pressed into service to transport essential commodities in

Velerupadu mandal in Eluru district that remained cut off due to massive flood. Special Chief Secretary G Sai Prasad has been monitoring the situation from the State Emergency Operations Centre here. State Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma, who reviewed the situation through a video-conference with Collectors of Alluri Sitarama Raju, Konaseema, Eluru, West and East Godavari districts, directed them to evacuate residents from low-lying areas under the Polavaram project to safer places and extend relief.

In Konaseema district, about 17,000 people from 36 island villages have to be evacuated to safety. In West Godavari district too, people from 18 villages have to be shifted.

# Unparliamentary words row: TMC attacks BJP, says 'situation wasn't this bad even during British rule'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has slammed the BJP Government for its "ridiculous interpretation" of "unparliamentary" words wondering whether India was better off during the British rule than in Narendra Modi's time.

Terming the Government's ban on certain words as "ridiculous" TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Thursday "if the Government will decide as to which word should be used as words of protest then where is the need of running the parliament ... where is the need of electing MPs ... then why don't they run show without the Opposition."

Asserting that "Indians enjoyed more freedom during the British period than during the BJP regime," he said, "nothing could be more dictatorial than this ... when the Government decides what the people will eat, what they will wear, what they will speak, where they will work and how they will work then you have no doubt that you are in an era worse than Emergency."

Attacking the Prime Minister for using words like "Andolanjeevi," Banerjee said "When he uses such words there is no problem but when the opposition uses the word Jumlajeevi then it becomes unparliamentary."

Questioning the sense behind the banning of words like corrupt, dictatorial, jumla,

he said "no decision can be more dictatorial than robbing your right to freedom of expression ... this is being done because you know that you will take a number of autocratic decisions in days to come ... and to stop the opposition from exposing you in parliament you are banning such words."

On the issue of angry lion as national emblem atop the new parliament building Banerjee said "it is not only the question of the angry lion" which very much expressed the government's aggressive stance to all kind of opposition "but also it is the issue of usurping all the powers and grabbing all the limelight at the cost of established parliamentary norms."

He asked "why the President of India was not given to inaugurate the national emblem because it is he who summons the both Houses of Parliament ... he is the supreme executive of the country ... is the respect you have for the President?"

Questioning why the Prime Minister and not the President was not given to inaugurate the Ayodhya Ram Temple he wondered whether there was that inherent dislike for the scheduled castes involved in not inviting a single member from the SC community at Ayodhya.

TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien too attacked the government for trying to gag the opposition.

# Coal smuggling case: CBI arrests 4, ED calls Bengal Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Four top officers, including three former and one present general managers of the Eastern Coal Fields, were on Thursday arrested by the CBI in connection with the coal smuggling case.

Apart from the four top officers three lesser officials were also arrested in the case, sources said adding a designated Asansol court sent them to seven days' CBI custody. According to sources the investigating agency has found these

officials to be in constant touch with Anup Maji alias Lala one of the kingpins of the coal scam. A number of TMC leaders including party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee were under CBI-ED scanner in the coal and cattle smuggling case.

In fact the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday summoned Bengal Minister Moloy Ghatak and a party MLA Sushanto from Purulia. They have been asked by the ED to appear at its Delhi office on Friday. The cases pertain to coal smuggling between 2018

# Parts of Gujarat continue to reel under downpour; Navsari worst hit, 3 NHs shut

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Heavy rains continued to pound several parts of Gujarat and some rivers were in spate in Navsari district where many areas went under knee-deep water, forcing authorities to evacuate more than 100 people, officials said on Thursday.

There was no immediate respite in sight as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted "heavy to very heavy rain" on Friday at several places across Gujarat, mainly in southern parts of the state and the Saurashtra region.

Since Thursday morning, significant rainfall was reported in south Gujarat's Navsari district, with Chikhli taluka receiving 209 mm between 6am and 4pm. Chikhli was followed by Gandevi (205 mm), Navsari taluka (187 mm), Vandsa (157 mm) and Jalalpor (154 mm), a release from the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) said.

Incessant showers have been lashing many parts of the state since the last four days.

Notably, Vandsa taluka of Navsari district received a whopping 394 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period ended at 6 am of Thursday, said the release. Kaprada and Dharampur taluka in Valsad district received 377 mm and 340 mm rains, respectively, during the same period, it said.

With several areas of Navsari town and the district inundated, authorities, with the help of NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), rescued 108 persons from different

# IMD: Odisha overcomes monsoon rain deficit

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Torrential downpour in several parts of Odisha due to a low pressure area over its coast has helped the state overcome the deficit in rainfall during this monsoon, the India Meteorological Department said.

The seasonal cumulative rainfall between June 1 to July 14 was 341 mm against the average value of 345.5 mm, the Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar, said

During the period, six districts received excess showers, while 17 others received normal rainfall. "Now we can say that rainfall across Odisha is normal and there is no deficit. Rainfall will continue till July 17," H R Biswas, Director of the Meteorological Centre, Bhubaneswar, told PTI.

and 2020.

Reacting to the summons and arrests made on Thursday Banerjee said it was a BJP's ploy to break the morale of his party and vowed not to bow before the saffron outfit.

"As they have failed to defeat us politically in Bengal ... they are using these dirty measures to frighten us ... but the TMC will emerge stronger from each such encounters" he said wondering "how the State police or politicians can be involved in smuggling where CISF guards the ECL which is a central venture."

# Non-bailable warrant against BJP MLA in 15-year-old case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Baratiya Janata Party legislator from Kheri, Arvind Giri, who had parted with friends at Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in 2007, faces trouble after 15 years as a non-bailable warrant (NBW) has been issued against him by the court of additional chief judicial magistrate of Lakhimpur Kheri.

The MLA's driver, Arjun Kumar, has also been served a warrant.

Giri and his relatives had "violated the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve guidelines while having a party inside the Kishanpur range of the reserve forest".

# Maha rain: Over 900 people rescued from inundated houses in Chandrapur

PTI ■ CHANDRAPUR

Over 900 people were evacuated safely from houses that were inundated with water from Irai dam in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district on Thursday, an official said. Disaster management personnel

conducted rescue operations at Ballarpur, Arwat, Korpana among other places in the district, he said.

The water level has increased in all reservoirs, including Irai dam, due to incessant rainfall in the district since last week. Officials have opened seven

gates of the dam by a metre, the official said.

The discharge of water from Irai dam caused flooding in Rehmat Nagar, Datala, Haveli Complex, Sister Colony, Bangarwada, and low-lying areas of the city under the Chandrapur Municipal Corporation, he said.

parts of Chikhli and Vandsa taluka and shifted them to safer

places, said Gujarat Revenue Minister Rajendra Trivedi after

meeting officials at SEOC in Gandhinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS					
THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HERE BUY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGE IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILABLE THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILABLE AS THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT. THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOLVE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON <b>25.07.2022 AT 12.30 PM TO 3.30 PM</b> ON "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATEVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".					
DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT					
BRANCH NAME	CUSTOMER NAME	LOAN A/C NO.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING	DATE OF RECALL	GROSS WEIGHT
<b>BRANCH NAME ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	GURMEET KAUR CHAWLA	XXXXXXXXX9308	1018284	25-MAR-21	211.80
ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	KUMAIL ABBAS	XXXXXXXXX6820	476316	17-MAY-22	10.10
ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	KUMAIL ABBAS	XXXXXXXXX8833	222661	24-MAR-22	24.30
ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	NIRAJ KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX9946	39234	24-MAR-22	16.30
ASHOK VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	AMIT JAIN	XXXXXXXXX4197	42630	17-MAY-22	10.00
<b>BRANCH NAME BALI NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
BALI NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	ASHISH KUMAR MISHRA	XXXXXXXXX5363	178939	05-FEB-22	5.50
<b>BRANCH NAME FARIDABAD [HR]</b>					
FARIDABAD [HR]	RAHUL	XXXXXXXXX8068	235242	30-APR-21	15.70
FARIDABAD [HR]	AMARJEET SINGH	XXXXXXXXX7341	99864	18-JUN-22	15.20
FARIDABAD [HR]	PARMANAND SINGH	XXXXXXXXX6771	95456	18-JUN-22	9.60
FARIDABAD [HR]	ASHOK KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX3152	43755	22-JUN-21	6.70
FARIDABAD [HR]	GOURAV	XXXXXXXXX3237	33937	17-MAY-22	18.50
FARIDABAD [HR]	PREM WATI	XXXXXXXXX2088	32345	24-JAN-22	11.10
<b>BRANCH NAME GHAZIABAD [UP]</b>					
GHAZIABAD [UP]	ANJALEE PATHAK	XXXXXXXXX7097	107808	30-MAR-22	6.30
GHAZIABAD [UP]	HAKIKAT ALI	XXXXXXXXX9608	59771	28-FEB-22	2.70
GHAZIABAD [UP]	MOHD SHAHID	XXXXXXXXX9929	186042	07-JAN-22	67.30
<b>BRANCH NAME JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL</b>					
JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL	MOHIT	XXXXXXXXX7592	125487	18-JUN-22	40.30
JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL	MOHIT	XXXXXXXXX7494	54250	18-JUN-22	10.20
JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL	AMIT KUMAR SHARMA	XXXXXXXXX8487	58125	24-MAR-22	29.50
<b>BRANCH NAME KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	RAJU KUMAR GUPTA	XXXXXXXXX4788	221252	24-MAR-22	10.30
KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	MUKESH KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX5675	379265	24-MAR-22	126.60
KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	MADHU SINGH	XXXXXXXXX7518	148527	17-MAY-22	30.00
KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	SABA SOMIYA	XXXXXXXXX0133	91506	17-MAY-22	32.40
KALKAJI, NEW DELHI [DL]	JAFAR	XXXXXXXXX8338	27882	17-MAY-22	10.40
<b>BRANCH NAME LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	JAGJIT SINGH MAKKAR	XXXXXXXXX4479	983864	09-JUN-22	157.60
LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	DINESH SINGH	XXXXXXXXX7223	574596	13-APR-22	6.40
LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	YOGESH SONAWA	XXXXXXXXX3782	134596	18-JUN-22	7.70
LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	MANGAL RATAN KASHYAP	XXXXXXXXX1834	84515	30-MAR-22	34.90
LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	VIJAY CHOWDHARY	XXXXXXXXX9433	52143	07-JAN-22	20.10
LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	ANKUSH SHARMA	XXXXXXXXX7898	28579	30-MAR-22	7.50
<b>BRANCH NAME MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	GETANJALI SINGH	XXXXXXXXX3735	282298	24-MAR-22	52.00
<b>BRANCH NAME MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	ANIL KUMAR LAMBA	XXXXXXXXX0787	1266942	17-JUN-22	61.80
MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	RAJEEV CHAUHAN	XXXXXXXXX2876	457586	18-JUN-22	26.30
MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	PRIYANKA YADAV	XXXXXXXXX5554	159680	30-MAR-22	48.20
MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	AJAY VIR SINGH	XXXXXXXXX9853	63621	17-MAY-22	25.70
<b>BRANCH NAME NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]	DEVENDER KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX4684	366119	24-MAR-22	49.70
NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]	DEVENDER KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX4179	153576	24-MAR-22	14.40
NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]	RAHUL	XXXXXXXXX3685	82755	17-MAY-22	36.20
NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]	MONU KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX1944	43552	17-MAY-22	15.20
NAZAFGARH, NEW DELHI [DL]	RAJ KUMAR SINGH	XXXXXXXXX5593	30619	18-JUN-22	4.40
<b>BRANCH NAME NEW FRIENDS COLONY, NEW DELHI</b>					
NEW FRIENDS COLONY, NEW DELHI	MOHD MOHSIN KHAN	XXXXXXXXX1305	153073	18-JUN-22	48.20
NEW FRIENDS COLONY, NEW DELHI	MURLY KUMAR JHA	XXXXXXXXX8746	146222	05-FEB-22	52.70
NEW FRIENDS COLONY, NEW DELHI	EBRAHIM KHAN	XXXXXXXXX6896	126705	17-MAY-22	43.00
<b>BRANCH NAME NOIDA [UP]</b>					
NOIDA [UP]	ANUJ KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX3779	357089	11-MAR-22	213.70
NOIDA [UP]	ABHAY RAJ MISHRA	XXXXXXXXX6156	158239	07-JAN-22	61.70
NOIDA [UP]	MANINDAR NAGAR	XXXXXXXXX9757	92004	21-APR-22	37.10
NOIDA [UP]	RAM KUMAR CHOUDHARY	XXXXXXXXX6929	74299	24-JAN-22	25.00
NOIDA [UP]	AKASH YADAV	XXXXXXXXX8768	68187	17-MAY-22	24.40
NOIDA [UP]	RAJNIKANT KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX0656	43263	24-MAR-22	15.20
<b>BRANCH NAME PALAM VIHAR, GURGAON [HR]</b>					
PALAM VIHAR, GURGAON [HR]	POONAM SINGH	XXXXXXXXX5377	89363	05-FEB-22	25.60
<b>BRANCH NAME PARADISE MALL S GUR HR</b>					
PARADISE MALL S GUR HR	SUNDER SINGH	XXXXXXXXX0879	83320	24-Mar-22	33.00
PARADISE MALL S GUR HR	SACHIN KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX8397	44900	17-May-22	10.50
<b>BRANCH NAME ROHINI, DELHI [DL]</b>					
ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	VISHVADEV	XXXXXXXXX5190	1381594	13-APR-22	71.60
ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	CHANDER PRAKASH PANDEY	XXXXXXXXX0043	447087	30-APR-21	16.60
ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	NAVEEN	XXXXXXXXX3320	373374	17-MAY-22	60.10
ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	ANIL KUMAR MISHRA	XXXXXXXXX6436	342275	22-JUN-21	58.80
ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	NAVEEN	XXXXXXXXX3655	217303	17-MAY-22	45.70
ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	RAGENDAR KUMAR AGARWAL	XXXXXXXXX0178	452152	23-NOV-21	193.30
ROHINI, DELHI [DL]	BHUPENDER KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX5761	33903	17-MAY-22	13.40
<b>BRANCH NAME SECTOR 10A, GURGAON [HR]</b>					
SECTOR 10A, GURGAON [HR]	RAJBEER SINGH	XXXXXXXXX3078	1196570	24-MAR-22	173.00
SECTOR 10A, GURGAON [HR]	HARIOM MISHRA	XXXXXXXXX9275	117729	17-MAY-22	21.53
SECTOR 10A, GURGAON [HR]	HARIOM MISHRA	XXXXXXXXX4133	57330	17-MAY-22	10.16
SECTOR 10A, GURGAON [HR]	SONIA RANI	XXXXXXXXX2304	27866	17-JUN-22	3.02
<b>BRANCH NAME SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]</b>					
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	SUMAIYA AHMED	XXXXXXXXX9582	154804	22-JUN-21	6.30
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	RAMBAHADUR SINGH	XXXXXXXXX6013	147263	17-MAY-22	10.30
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	PRIYANKA SINGH	XXXXXXXXX0334	112422	17-MAY-22	18.20
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	SATYA RANJAN NAYAK	XXXXXXXXX4978	28648	18-JUN-22	8.80
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	PINKI	XXXXXXXXX3994	322730	07-JAN-22	119.60
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	PINKI	XXXXXXXXX0467	238236	21-APR-22	83.90
<b>BRANCH NAME SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]</b>					
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	AMIT BEHL	XXXXXXXXX5344	696347	07-JAN-22	30.40
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	POONAM SINGH	XXXXXXXXX0753	689589	22-JUN-21	114.90
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	VISHAL NAGAR	XXXXXXXXX0240	344113	07-MAY-22	17.80
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	BAUJEET SINGH	XXXXXXXXX0826	188886	07-MAY-22	14.90
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	DEEPAK	XXXXXXXXX3254	126300	29-JAN-22	62.40
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	NITIN JINDAL	XXXXXXXXX1618	206131	18-JAN-21	61.10
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	VINOD KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX3778	192776	17-MAY-22	68.50
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	ONKAR PRASAD SHARMA	XXXXXXXXX7473	164336	30-MAR-22	55.20
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	NITIN JINDAL	XXXXXXXXX8953	72051	12-AUG-21	30.30
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	PARMOD GUPTA	XXXXXXXXX5808	67435	24-MAR-22	28.20
SECTOR 16, FARIDABAD [HR]	ONKAR PRASAD SHARMA	XXXXXXXXX6848	50912	30-MAR-22	28.60
<b>BRANCH NAME SHALIMAR BAGH, DELHI [DL]</b>					
SHALIMAR BAGH, DELHI [DL]	MANNU KUMAR	XXXXXXXXX2064	63924	07-JAN-22	23.90
<b>BRANCH NAME SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	RINA SINGH	XXXXXXXXX5984	177628	18-JUN-22	23.50
SWASTHYA VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	ARTI AGGARWAL	XXXXXXXXX8175	134448	18-JUN-22	31.40
<b>BRANCH NAME TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL]</b>					
TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL]	MOHD KALAM	XXXXXXXXX9238	170321	18-JUN-22	1.40
TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL]	RANI DEVI	XXXXXXXXX0166	121184	17-MAY-22	44.70
TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL]	RUDRADEV PANDEY	XXXXXXXXX4102	68887	22-JUN-21	24.10
TILAK NAGAR, DELHI [DL]	VIJAY BABU	XXXXXXXXX3734	50694	03-DEC-21	21.50
<b>BRANCH NAME UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	ROHIT SODHI	XXXXXXXXX6656	274882	18-JUN-22	36.00
<b>BRANCH NAME VIKASPURI, NEW DELHI [DL]</b>					
VIKASPURI, NEW DELHI [DL]	VINIT YADAV	XXXXXXXXX5046	80992	18-FEB-22	31.20
<b>BRANCH NAME VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP]</b>					
VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP]	LALIT MOHAN DHYANI	XXXXXXXXX1053	96958	06-JUN-22	19.80
VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP]	MOHD AKHLAK	XXXXXXXXX6740	95743	22-JUN-21	5.30
VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP]	VISHAL SAGAR	XXXXXXXXX9862	64009	30-Mar-22	20.70
VAISHALI, GHAZIABAD [UP]	ADITYA GANJOO	XXXXXXXXX7864	44723	22-Jun-21	14.00
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FIRST COLUMN

I2U2: COMING OF AGE FOR CLOSER TIES

I2U2 is a significant forum for India to raise its geo-strategic voice



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India participated in a senior leader level meeting this week at a forum known as the I2U2. The name, with a clever resonance to new star exploration missions, stands for the first letters of the countries, which are coming together to form a promising formidable regional alliance. This forum is also being termed as a western QUAD. The I2U2 leader-level meeting held virtually saw Israel, India, the UAE and the US come together to reimagine the geopolitical economy of the region.

The seeds of the I2U2 summit were sown during the pandemic when President Biden's predecessor Donald Trump tried to normalise the decades' old troubled relationship between Israel and Arabs, under an agreement called the Abraham's accord. The subsequent change of leadership in the US after 2020 meant that the Abraham's accord did not find optimal mind space beyond a few think tanks in Washington. However, President Biden (rightly) calculated the need to continue with his predecessor's foreign policies and chose to revive the Abraham accord, along with expanding the agreement, to bring India into the picture. This resulted in the first of its kind foreign ministers' meeting last October between the US, the UAE, Israel and India.

The foreign ministers' meeting between four countries marked a significant shift in foreign policy outlook for each of the countries involved, and reorientation of their engagements in the Middle East. First, the US acknowledged to an extent that it needs new partners in the region, such as India at the table, to meaningfully manage the Middle East. It also signified that the US was willing to give away some of its legacy claims as peace agent for the region. Secondly, it also highlighted the close cooperation between the UAE and Israel in technology and trade. This



underscores the true spirit of Abraham's accord, whose declaration reads "the best way to address challenges is through cooperation and dialogue".

One of the most significant beneficiaries from the creation of this multilateral group in the region is India. It is significant to note that India did not establish full diplomatic relations with Israel until about two decades ago. The fear was India's close ties with Israel and political sanctity to the country may upset decades' old relationship with the Arab world. India is one of the major oil importing nations from the Arab world.

India shed its Cold War mindset of non-alignment with the US and larger West in the Indo Pacific, and aggressively came on board of QUAD, (a group of US, India, Australia and Japan) to establish greater cooperation for a secure transparent rules-based Indo-Pacific. After dragging its feet for nearly five years, since QUAD was first thought of, Australia and India were forced to come together with the two other countries as result of increased hostility from China. The covid pandemic and subsequent military faceoff with China in India's north-western front further pushed India into the QUAD group.

Meanwhile, the US's exit from Afghanistan and the ongoing war in Ukraine, leading to higher prices for oil and food, forced many countries, including America, to rethink their strategic, bilateral, and multi-lateral engagements. All this means every western country and US are recalibrating their China engagements and looking at alternate partners, the best bet for them being India which is a democracy. The I2U2 is the right level of multilateral cooperation which chooses to engage in a meaningful manner without having the China factor. There are chances that these arrangements could be extended to some more countries in the Middle East and possibly Africa which could help expand India's share of voice.

*(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Indian intellectuals are blind to reality, facts



RAVI SHANKER KAPOOR

## For ordinary people, seeing is believing but for intellectuals believing is seeing

There are two kinds of people in the world: normal human beings and intellectuals. The critical difference between the two is that while for normal people seeing is believing, for intellectuals it is the other way around. This difference makes intellectuals different from ordinary people.

It is palpable at any gathering of intellectuals, whether it is a Not-In-My-Name protest or a meeting to denounce the Narendra Modi government over some issue or another. The look, the feel, the atmospherics—everything about an intellectuals' meet is surreal. Having attended quite a few such meetings in recent times, I can make a few observations about them.

First the look. Normal people wear, or want to wear, good clothes. Men go for Raymond, Reid & Taylor, J. Hamstead, Arrow, Louise Phillippe, Van Huesen; women love Nalli, Satyapaul, Manish Malhotra. Intellectuals, however, prefer khadi and Fabindia. The duller the color, the coarser the fabric, the more depressing the look, the better.

When a normal couple is alone, they make love; when an intellectual couple is alone, they discuss 'sexual politics'.

When normal people attend a marriage party, they rejoice in good tidings. Intellectuals, on the contrary, don't approve of any marriage unless both partners are of the same sex. The normal marriage they view with suspicion, often as a fodder for the perpetuation of patriarchy and heteronormativity.

If you ask normal people, who are their favorite film actors and actresses, they would say Dev Anand, Dilip Kumar, Rajesh Khanna, Dharmendra, Shah Rukh Khan, Madhubala, Suraiya, Hema Malini, Madhuri Dixit, Kangana Ranaut, and so on. If you ask an intellectual the same question, the answer would be Balraj Sahni, Smita Patil, et al.

Now Sahni and Patil were great actors, but I wonder what kind of man would like to take his girlfriend to watch Do Bigha Zameen.

This brings us to the question: What makes intellectuals so different? A quick Google search will give you delectable quotes: "an intellectual is a person who's found one thing that's more interesting than sex" (Aldous Huxley); "an intellectual is a man who takes more words than necessary to tell more than he knows" (Dwight D. Eisenhower).

Instead of defining intellectuals, however, I would describe them in the following way: If Karl Marx tells a normal man, 'Look, that dog has bitten off your ear,' he would touch his own ear to find out if his ear is missing. But if Marx says the same thing to an intellectual, the latter would begin chasing the dog without bothering to check the veracity of the claim.

As mentioned earlier, the distinguishing feature of intellectuals is: believing is



INDIAN INTELLECTUALS ARE COMFORTABLE IN THEIR OWN COCOONS AND ECHO CHAMBERS. THEY ARE BLIND TO AND THEY FEAR TO SEE THE REALITY AS IT IS. THEY RARELY, TO USE IRVING KRYSTAL'S PHRASEOLOGY, GET 'MUGGED BY REALITY'



seeing. We perceive phenomena and then come to some conclusion; mostly, experience guides us. But intellectuals know the Truth; they are convinced that they are divinely-ordained or dialectically-blessed to know the Truth. So what they do is just cherry-pick facts to embellish it.

In schools and colleges, they are taught that capitalism is bad and socialism and communism are good. These are the tendentious teachings of pinkish professors and theoreticians; they wrote textbooks and dominated Indian academics after Independence—the teachings which got accepted as gospel truth by our thought leaders.

Rarely, if ever, the ideas of anti-communist thinkers like Milton Friedman, Ayn Rand, and Fredrick Hayek were introduced to Indian students at any level.

Intellectuals claim to be liberal in their outlook, open to all ideas, and critical of received wisdom. But, in reality, they are most illiberal when it comes to anything conflicting with their own dogmas—and socialism and communism are just dogmas, and dangerous ones at that. For them, socialism and communism are good, period. Dogmatically, they are most unwilling to discard this belief that was formed when they were in schools and colleges. Like the first love, they cherish it all their lives, notwithstanding the mountain of evidence suggesting the opposite.

The truth is that over 100 million people perished under socialist and communist regimes? For decades, intellectuals all over the world disputed that, rubbishing it as Western or bourgeois propaganda. We, the people of India, escaped

the worst depredations of socialism and communism—primarily because the British had built robust institutions and also because there were a number of leaders (e.g., former prime minister Charan Singh) to resist complete descent into collectivism and other horrors. But socialism did hurt us badly; it is still a bane, as evident from the fact that we are still a poor country, with per capita income is below \$2,300.

The mendacity of Leftist intellectuals and liberals was unbounded. Paul Johnson wrote in The Modern Times: "The famine of 1932, the worst in Russian history, was virtually unreported. At the height of it, the visiting biologist Julian Huxley found a level of physique and general health rather above that to be seen in England." Shaw threw his food supplies out of the train window just before crossing the Russian frontier 'convinced that there were no shortages in Russia'...

Further, Johnson wrote, "Self-delusion was obviously the biggest single factor in the presentation of an unsuccessful despotism as a Utopia in the making [in Russia]. But there was also conscious deception by men and women who thought of themselves as idealists and who, at the time, honestly believed they were serving a higher human purpose by systematic misrepresentation and lying... The Thirties was the age of the heroic lie. Sainly mendacity became its more prized virtue. Stalin's tortured Russia was the prime beneficiary of this sanctified falsification."

Sainly mendacity and heroic lies are the warp and woof of the narrative that intellectuals peddle all the time. They claimed to be the

champions of individual liberty and privacy, thus opposing, for instance, the Modi government's efforts to link Aadhaar with welfare measures, administrative mechanisms, and money movement. But it was many of these people, big state enthusiasts as they are, conjured up targeted welfare; this is how Aadhaar got conceived in the first place. This happened when Sonia Gandhi ruled the country by proxy and had filled her National Advisory Council with all manner of intellectuals.

Anything wrong in the economy is because of liberalisation. In their scheme of things, what they perceive and conceptualise is knowledge; the opposite is a malevolent construct of 'false consciousness'. Intellectuals claim that they are the champions of human rights and civil liberties; and they sometimes practically act as the over-ground activists of Maoists, the sworn enemies of not just human rights and civil liberties but all that is good and glorious in human civilization.

Intellectuals claim that they want the uplift of the poor, yet the economic philosophy that they favor, socialism, has been discredited all over the world (If the Modi regime is troubled today, it is primarily because it has been unwilling or incapable of dispensing with the vestiges of socialist structures, but that's another story). No intellectual wishes to acknowledge the reality that socialism perpetuates poverty.

Indian intellectuals are comfortable in their own cocoons and echo chambers. They are blind to and they fear to see the reality as it is. They rarely, to use Irving Krystal's phraseology, get 'mugged by reality.'

## SPOINTCOUNTERPOINT

IT SHOULD NOT HAPPEN THAT THE POPULATION GROWTH OF SOME COMMUNITY IS HIGH AND WE STABILISE THE POPULATION OF THE NATIVES —UP CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH



ARE MUSLIMS NOT NATIVES OF INDIA? IF WE SEE THE REALITY, NATIVES ARE ONLY TRIBALS AND DRAVIDIAN PEOPLE. —AIMIM CHIEF ASADUDDIN OWAISI

# Rate rationalisation is the key to unlock GST potential

## Lessons of five years of the GST call for the Centre, States to walk an extra mile for optimum revenue

June 30 marked the fifth anniversary of the goods and services tax launched by the NDA-II government on July 1, 2017. The new tax law was introduced with an objective to fetch all indirect taxes on goods and services under the ambit of one tax. Though a few items like diesel, petrol and liquor are not included in GST, there is demand in the industry for bringing petroleum products under its net. But the government has some apprehension, because taxes on fuel contribute most of the revenue of the governments at the Centre and states. The government earned Rs 3.92 lakh crore in FY21, Rs 3.91 lakh crore in FY22 and Rs 0.31 lakh crore in the first two months of FY23 from excise duty.



VINAY K SRIVASTAVA

(The author is Associate Professor, Institute of Technology & Science, Ghaziabad)

important parameter for the analysis of the success of GST. There was an unofficial target of Rs 1 lakh crore per month for revenue generation through new tax law. But in the first year, second year and fourth financial year of GST implementation, the actual revenue was far behind the unofficial target. However, the gross GST revenue has exceeded the unofficial target of Rs 1 lakh crore since second quarter of FY21 except for the month of June of FY22.

The actual average per month realisation was Rs 0.90 lakh crore in FY18, Rs 0.98 lakh crore in FY19 and Rs 0.95 lakh crore in FY21. The main reason for the fall of revenue in FY21 was Covid-19 pandemic. The gross GST collection during the fiscal was Rs 1.02 lakh crore. The growth in gross GST collection



got momentum in the FY22. In this financial year, the government realised the highest ever gross GST of Rs 14.87 lakh crore with an average of Rs 1.24 lakh crore per month. The same tempo continued in the current financial year too. In the first quarter of FY23, the government collected total GST revenue of Rs

4.53 lakh crore with an average of Rs 1.51 lakh crore.

One of the objectives of the introduction of GST was to expend revenue of the government. It was expected that the GST revenue would increase with a higher rate. The average growth of indirect taxes (union excise duty and service tax) of

the last five years in pre-GST regime or during FY13-FY17 was 21.98 percent. As well the average growth in indirect taxes in the last 10 years that is during FY13-FY22 has been 16.79 percent.

However, total GST revenue collection of the central government was Rs 28.70 lakh crore -- 99.27 percent of the revised target of Rs 28.91 lakh crore during FY18-FY22. The average growth in GST revenue during the same period was 13.3 percent. Thus, the growth rate in GST revenue in the last five years is 3.5 percent less than the last 10 years growth rate and 8.7 percent lesser than pre-GST last five years average growth rate.

Further, if we club union excise duty and service tax revenue of the same period with

GST from FY18 to FY22, the growth rate of indirect taxes in post GST era has been 11.6 percent. It is also 5.2 percent lower as compared to last 10 years growth rate of indirect taxes and 10.4 percent lesser than pre-GST last five years average growth rate.

The statistics of the performance of GST in terms of revenue is not satisfactory. Anyway, in terms of indirect tax revenue to GDP, the situation is different. Indirect tax revenue to GDP jumped to 7.40 percent of real GDP in FY22 (post-GST year) from 5.12 percent of real GDP in financial year 2016-17 (pre-GST year).

It depicts that there is no significant impact of GST on indirect tax revenue of the government. According to the working paper (385) of NIPFP, the gov-

ernment could not reap the benefits of GST.

The challenge of GST revenue can be addressed through rate rationalisation. At present we have a zero rate, a low rate of 5 percent on essential items and a higher rate of 28 percent on luxury items together with 12 percent and 18 percent along with a three percent on precious metals and a 0.25 percent on precious stones and diamonds. Moreover, a cess is also levied over the peak rate of 28 percent on demerit goods.

The rate should be reduced to three rates, as had been the case in 2002 with CENVAT, a merit rate of 8 percent and demerit rate of 24 percent and a mean rate of 16 percent, besides service tax that segregated into five slabs under GST.

# Capitol Hill riot hearings raise questions about Prez’s power

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The House January 6 committee’s investigation of the aftermath of the 2020 presidential election and the events leading up to the US Capitol insurrection is raising questions about former president Donald Trump’s role and whether he committed crimes.

The various schemes and talking points that witnesses have revealed also highlight what a president has the authority to do.

Government and legal experts say the bigger question is: Can further limits be put on presidential authority to make sure there are no repeats of 2020 in future administrations?

## WHAT LAWS FORM THE BASIS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL POWERS IN QUESTION?

There are two primary ones: the Insurrection Act, first enacted in 1792, and the National Emergencies Act of 1976.

The Insurrection Act is a long-standing presidential power that gives the president wide latitude to use military forces to stop a rebellion or domestic violence. The act allows the use of military forces, which are normally barred by the Posse Comitatus Act from joining in civilian law enforcement actions.

Elizabeth Goitein, senior director of the liberty and national security programme at the Brennan Center for Justice, said the insurrection “in my opinion” could have been the catalyst for the president to invoke the act and bring in the military to escort congressional lawmakers out of the proceedings for their safety.

“That doesn’t mean Donald Trump would have been the president, but it would have thrown a wrench in the works,” she said.

Under the NEA, dozens of statutory authorities become available to any president when nation-



al emergencies are declared. They include everything from severe weather responses to civil disorder. Congress can vote to terminate the declaration, but if the president vetoes, a two-thirds super-majority is required to overcome the veto.

“The statute itself doesn’t say what an emergency is. It leaves it up to the president,” said Chris Edelson, assistant professor of government at American University.

“That means an unscrupulous president can use it” for ill purposes. It is up to Congress to rein in the president, he said.

## WHAT ISSUES WERE RAISED AT THE LAST HEARING?

In the most recent hearing, former White House counsel Pat Cipollone discussed a rancorous meeting in which Trump’s outside legal team brought a draft executive order to seize the states’ voting machines. In his testimony Cipollone said the plan was a ter-

rrible idea. It had been floated before.

“You can’t preemptively seize voting machines. If there was a reason to do so, you need a court order,” Edelson said.

At the same meeting, there were a range of theories pushed, including invoking martial law. It was an idea Trump adviser Michael Flynn had floated before, along with seizing the voting machines.

## WHAT ABOUT MARTIAL LAW?

Under the Insurrection Act the president can call on the military in certain circumstances, but they are intended to support civilian law enforcement.

One example was the use of the military during the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Under martial law the military takes over the function of the civilian government.

Martial law, said Goitein, “gives me nightmares” because the law is unsettled. “The whole concept of martial law, there’s not even an

agreed upon definition of what it is,” she said.

## ARE THERE GUARDRAILS TO PREVENT FUTURE PRESIDENTS FROM ABUSING POWER?

The House passed the Protecting Our Democracy bill last year and sent it to the Senate. The legislation would prevent presidents from pardoning themselves, strengthen reporting requirements for campaigns, and clarify and enhance criminal penalties for campaigns that accept foreign information sought or obtained for political advantage.

The Senate has taken no action on the proposal. Without congressional action, the questions over presidential power and its expansiveness remain open. “The Constitution assumes that checks and balances work. If the president goes too far, Congress will rein him in,” said Edelman. In Trump’s case, Congress has not shown an appetite for doing that.

# I win elections to cut taxes, Sunak hits back at critics in UK PM race

PTI ■ LONDON

Former Finance Minister Rishi Sunak enters a second round of voting on Thursday in the Conservative Party leadership election to determine the next British Prime Minister with a comfortable lead and has hit back at critics of his tax plans.

Sunak, 42, is firmly placed as the candidate to beat in the race after he won the first round of voting on Wednesday with 88 votes and then received the backing of former Cabinet minister Jeremy Hunt, who was last placed with 18 votes.

Tory members of Parliament will have their say at the ballot box again as the six remaining candidates – including Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt (67 votes), Foreign Secretary Liz Truss (50 votes), former minister Kemi Badenoch (40 votes), backbencher Tom Tugendhat (37 votes) and Suella Braverman (32 votes) – are whittled down further, with those with the least votes getting eliminated in round two.

“I think our number one economic priority is to tackle inflation and not make it worse. Inflation is the enemy and makes everybody poorer,” Sunak told the BBC when pushed on the issue of cutting taxes, which is seen as a decisive issue among the leadership contenders.

“I will get taxes down in this Parliament, but I’m going to do so responsibly. I don’t cut taxes to win elections, I win elections to cut taxes,” he said, in contrast to his nearest rivals who have made tax cut pledges already.

The British Indian ex-minister, who resigned as Chancellor and set off events in motion that ended in the resignation of Boris Johnson as prime minister last week, stressed that he is the “best person” to beat the Opposition Labour Party in the next general election – expected by 2024.

“I want to cut taxes and I will deliver tax cuts, but we will do that in a measured way. And the only way to really do that sustainably over time is to ensure that the Conservatives win the next general election.



And I’m convinced that I’m the best person to beat (Labour leader) Keir Starmer and secure that election victory,” he said.

On being challenged that he would struggle to connect with the poverty and cost-of-living crisis facing millions across Britain, Sunak pointed to his record as Chancellor when he introduced measures over the pandemic to help struggling families cope with the lockdown.

“When this country was faced with one of the biggest challenges that we had seen, I stepped up and in a matter of weeks put together and delivered the furlough scheme, which protected over 10 million people’s jobs and livelihood.

That’s an enormous amount of good for those people. I’m really proud of that achievement,” he said.

Sunak was also challenged over his long term commitment to Britain and where he would “stay and retire”, alluding to his US Green Card which he reportedly held on to months into his job in the UK Cabinet.

“I was living and working and studying (Stanford University) in America at the time, but I returned to the United Kingdom and decided to try and serve my country as an MP and then in government,” he told the BBC.

“And now hopefully if I’m fortunate enough as Prime Minister, and that’s because I believe I’m the best person to lead us through the challenges we face, do that in an honest and responsible way.

But also, I know I’ve got the energy and the experience and the vision to grow our economy,” he said.

On being probed on his wider plans in government, Sunak confirmed that he was in favour of the immigration strategy to deport some illegal migrants to Rwanda in order to control the borders.

“I say that as the child and grandchild of immigrants. This country has a proud history of welcoming people, but it’s also right that we’re in control of who’s coming here.

And, sadly, there is an illegal set of criminal gangs who are causing people to die in pursuit of coming here. We must stop that. The policy that we’ve put in place gives us the ability to do so,” he said.

Sunak has highlighted his immigrant background as the very “personal story” behind his leadership campaign, with a focus on his Indian maternal grandmother who migrated to the UK from Tanzania in the 1960s.

# Biden says US won’t wait ‘forever’ for Iran on N-deal

AP ■ JERUSALEM

US President Joe Biden said on Thursday that the US is “not going to wait forever” for Iran to rejoin a dormant nuclear deal, a day after saying he’d be willing to use force as a last resort against Tehran if necessary.

Biden made the comments at a news conference after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid following one-on-one talks in which they discussed Iran’s rapidly progressing nuclear programme.

“We’ve laid out for the leadership of Iran what we’re willing to accept in order to get back into the JCPOA. We’re waiting for their response. When that will come, I’m not certain,” Biden said, using an acronym for the Iran nuclear deal. “But we’re not going to wait forever.”

Resurrecting the nuclear deal brokered by Barack Obama’s administration and abandoned by Donald Trump in 2018 was a key priority for Biden as he entered office. But administration officials have become increasingly pessimistic about the chances of Iran returning to compliance.

Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid on



Thursday discussed Iran’s rapidly progressing nuclear programme, with the Israeli leader vowing afterward that “there will be no nuclear Iran”.

The US president, who is set to travel to Saudi Arabia on Friday, said he also stressed to Lapid the importance of Israel becoming “totally integrated” in the region.

Their one-on-one talks are the centrepiece of a 48-hour visit by Biden aimed at strengthening already tight relations between the US and Israel.

The leaders also issued a joint declaration emphasising military cooperation and a commitment to preventing Iran, which Israel considers an enemy, from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

“We discussed the Iranian threat,” Lapid told reporters

afterward. “There will be no nuclear Iran.”

Israeli officials have sought to use Biden’s first visit to the Middle East as president to underscore that Iran’s nuclear programme has progressed too far and encourage the Biden administration to scuttle efforts to revive a 2015 agreement with Iran to limit its development.

Resurrecting the Iran nuclear deal brokered by Barack Obama’s administration and abandoned by Donald Trump in 2018 was a key priority for Biden as he entered office. But administration officials have become increasingly pessimistic about the chances of getting Tehran back into compliance. In the joint statement, the US said it is ready to use “all elements of its national power” to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb.

Biden, in an interview with Israel’s Channel 12 that aired on Wednesday, offered strong assurances of his determination to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power, saying he’d be willing to use force as a “last resort” if necessary.

Iran announced last week that it has enriched uranium to 60 per cent purity, a technical step away from weapons-grade quality.

# Seeking to integrate Israel into Mideast, says US Prez

AP ■ JERUSALEM

US President Joe Biden says he is working to promote Israel’s burgeoning ties with Arab partners in the Middle East.

Biden spoke after meeting Israel’s interim prime minister, Yair Lapid, in Jerusalem on Thursday.

“I talked about how important it was from my perspective for Israel to be totally integrated in the region,” Biden said.

Under the Trump administration, Israel struck diplomatic deals with four Arab countries known as the Abraham Accords.

Biden is hoping to build on those fledgling ties as he heads to Saudi Arabia to meet with Gulf Arab partners this weekend. The ties are largely based on shared concerns about Iran’s nuclear programme and military activities across the region.

Lapid described Biden’s trip to Saudi Arabia as “extremely important to Israel”. Biden also appeared to give a boost to Lapid, who hopes to win a full term in November elections. “We had a good beginning of a long, God willing, relationship,” Biden said.

Jerusalem: The United Arab Emirates is investing \$2 billion to launch food processing centres across India that will use climate-smart technologies to help reduce waste and conserve fresh water.

The initiative was announced on Thursday ahead of the first virtual leaders’ meeting of I2U2 – a new grouping of Israel, India, United States and UAE – that is looking to spur joint investments in water, energy, transportation, food security, and more.

India will provide land for the project. US and Israeli private firms are invited to lend their expertise to the project that the group said will help maximise crop yields. The group has set tackling food insecurity in South and Middle East as a major goal.

President Joe Biden is taking part the video meeting from Israel, where he is in the second day of a whirlwind visit to the Middle East.

# Nepal’s Parliament passes first Citizenship Amendment Bill

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal’s Parliament on Wednesday passed the country’s first Citizenship Amendment Bill, which was under discussion for more than two years as political parties failed to forge a consensus on it.

The bill has been under discussion in the House of Representatives since 2020, but it failed to be endorsed due to differences among the political parties over certain provisions, namely the seven-year waiting period for obtaining naturalised citizenship for foreign



women married to Nepali men.

In the meeting of the lower house of Parliament or the House of Representatives on Wednesday, Home Minister

Bal Krishna Khand presented Nepal’s first Citizenship Amendment Bill 2022 before the lawmakers, and said that the bill has been tabled in par-

# Solomons leader: Chinese base would make our people targets

AP ■ SUVA (FIJI)

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare said Thursday that his country’s new security pact with Beijing would not allow China to build a military base on the South Pacific nation and make his citizens “targets for potential military strikes”.

Sogavare struck an agreement with Beijing in April to provide security support. Details of the pact haven’t been made public but the deal has raised fears of a permanent Chinese military facility within 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) of the northeast Australian coast.

He used a meeting of Pacific island nation leaders Thursday in Fiji to strongly deny that his country would become a Chinese military foothold in the South Pacific.

“The moment we establish a foreign military base, we immediately become an enemy. And we also put our country and our people as targets for potential military strikes,” Sogavare told reporters in the capital Suva. “There is no military base, nor any other military facility or institutions, in the agreement. And that’s a very important point that we continue to reiterate to the family in the region,” he added.

# Outbreaks from animals in Africa surged by 60% in last decade

AP ■ LONDON

The number of outbreaks of diseases that jumped from animals to humans in Africa has jumped by more than 60% in the last decade, the World Health Organisation said, a worrying sign the planet could face increased animal-borne diseases like monkeypox, Ebola and coronavirus in the future.

There has been a 63% rise in the number of animal diseases breaching the species barrier from 2012 to 2022, as compared to the decade before, the UN health agency said in a statement on Thursday.

There was a particular spike from 2019 to 2020, when diseases originating in animals that later infected humans, made up half of all significant public health events in Africa, said WHO. Diseases like Ebola and other hemorrhagic fevers were responsible for 70% of those outbreaks, in addition to illnesses like monkeypox, dengue, anthrax and plague.

“We must act now to contain zoonotic diseases before they can cause widespread infections and stop Africa from becoming a hotspot for emerging infectious diseases,” WHO’s Africa director, Dr Matshidiso Moeti said in a statement.

While diseases in animals

had infected people for centuries in Africa, recent developments like quicker travel across the continent have made it easier for viruses to cross borders, she said.

WHO also noted that Africa has the world’s fastest-growing population, which increases urbanisation and reduces roaming areas for wild animals. Scientists also fear that outbreaks that may have once been contained to distant, rural areas can now spread more quickly to Africa’s large cities with international travel links, that might then carry the diseases around the world.

During the West Africa Ebola outbreak that began in 2014, it was not until the disease arrived in capital cities that its spread became explosive, ultimately killing more than 10,000 people and arriving in several cities in Europe and the US.

Until May, monkeypox had not been known to cause significant outbreaks beyond central and West Africa, where it has sickened people for decades. According to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, there are now more than 11,000 cases worldwide in 65 countries, the majority of which had not previously reported monkeypox.

liament to amend the Nepal Citizenship Act 2006 and make provisions for providing citizenship as directed by the Constitution.

“There are thousands of people who are deprived of citizenship certificates although their parents are citizens of Nepal. The lack of citizenship certificates was further depriving them of education and other facilities.

I appeal to help create an environment to endorse the new bill and for headway to implement the law by formulating new laws,” the Home Minister said.

# Arizona attorney general asks court to unblock abortion ban

AP ■ PHOENIX

Arizona’s Republican attorney general has asked a court to lift an injunction blocking the enforcement of a law that bans all abortions except when the life of the mother is at risk.

The filing from Attorney General Mark Brnovich on Wednesday asks a court in Tucson to lift an order in place since shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1973’s Roe v. Wade case that abortions are a constitutional right.

The newly conservative high court overturned that decision last month, leaving it again to the states to decide how to regulate abortions. Arizona’s near-total ban on abortions has been on the books since at least 1901, and Brnovich said with Roe overturned it should now be enforceable. “We believe this is the best and most accurate state of the law,” Brnovich said in a statement. “We know this is an important issue to so many Arizonans, and our hope is that the court will provide clarity and uniformity for our state.”

Brnovich, who is running for U.S. Senate, announced late last month that the old abortion ban was enforceable and that he would seek to have the injunction lifted.

# Japan PM blames police for death of Abe

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Thursday blamed inadequate police protection for the death of former leader Shinzo Abe, who was shot while giving an outdoor campaign speech.

Abe, one of Japan’s most influential politicians, was assassinated last Friday in western Japan, shocking a nation known for its low crime rate. Photos and videos of the shooting show the gunman was able to come close to Abe.

Officials at the National Public Safety Commission and National Police Agency are investigating what went wrong and will come up with measures, Kishida said.

“I urge them to fix what needs to be fixed, while also studying examples in other countries,” he said.

Kishida also announced plans to hold a state funeral for Abe later this year, noting his contributions at home and in boosting Japan’s security alliance with the United States.

A smaller funeral ceremony was held at a



temple in Tokyo on Tuesday for Abe, whose nationalistic views drove the governing party’s conservative policies.

A suspect was arrested immediately after Abe was shot on Friday and is being held for questioning. Police and media reports say he told investigators that a rumoured link between Abe and a religious group the suspect hated was the reason he killed the former prime minister.

The suspect, 41-year-old Tetsuya Yamagami, served briefly in Japan’s navy. He was reportedly upset because his mother made large donations to the Unification Church that bankrupted the family.

The assassination of Abe has shed a light on links between the governing Liberal Democratic Party and the Unification Church, which is known for its conservative and anti-communist beliefs and its mass weddings.

The Japan branch of the South Korean-based church confirmed on Monday that Yamagami’s mother was a member and that Abe was not. Abe has appeared in video messages to groups affiliated with the church.

# 'RUSSIAN STRIKE KILLS 17 IN UKRAINE'



AP ■ KYIV

Russian missiles that struck a city in central Ukraine killed 17 people and wounding about 90 more on Thursday, Ukrainian authorities said. The country's president called the attack "an open act of terrorism" against civilians in locations without military value. Ukraine's national police said three missiles hit an office building and damaged nearby residential buildings in Vinnytsia, which is located 268 kilometers southwest of the capital Kyiv. The missile strike ignited a fire that expanded to engulf 50 cars in an adjacent parking lot. The governor of the Vinnytsia region, Serhiy Borzov, said Ukrainian air defence systems shot down another four missiles over the area. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said a child was among the dead. He suggested the attack was deliberately aimed at civilians.

The strike happened as government officials from about 40 countries met in The Hague to discuss coordinating efforts to investigate and prosecute potential war crimes in Ukraine. "Every day Russia is destroying the civilian population, killing Ukrainian children, directing missiles at civilian objects. Where there is no military (targets). What is it if not an open act of terrorism?" Zelenskyy wrote on the Telegram messaging app. Before the missiles hit Vinnytsia, the president's office reported the deaths of five civilians and the wounding of another eight in Russian attacks over the past day. One person was wounded when a missile damaged several buildings in the southern city of Mykolaiv early on Thursday, Ukrainian authorities said. A missile attack on Wednesday killed at least five people in the city.

Russian forces also continued artillery and missile attacks in eastern Ukraine, primarily in Donetsk province after overtaking adjacent Luhansk. The city of Lysychansk, the last major stronghold of Ukrainian resistance in Luhansk, fell to Russian forces at the beginning of the month. Luhansk and Donetsk together make up the Donbas, a mostly Russian-speaking region of steel factories, mines and other industries. Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko urged residents to evacuate as "quickly as possible." "We are urging civilians to leave the region, where electricity, water and gas are in short supply after the Russian shelling," Kyrylenko said in televised remarks. "The fighting is intensifying, and people should stop risking their lives and leave the region." The British Defence Ministry on

Thursday said despite continued shelling in the Donbas region, Russian forces did not make major territorial gains in recent days. "The aging vehicles, weapons and Soviet-era tactics used by Russian forces do not lend themselves to quickly regaining or building momentum unless used in overwhelming mass – which Russia is currently unable to bring to bear," the British ministry said. Both the Russian forces and Ukrainian militaries are seeking to replenish their depleted stocks of unmanned aerial vehicles to pinpoint enemy positions and guide artillery strikes. Both sides are looking to procure jamming-resistant, advanced drones that could offer a decisive edge in battle. Ukrainian officials say the demand for such technology is "immense" with crowdfunding efforts underway to raise the necessary cash for purchases.

# Nations discuss coordinating Ukraine war crimes probes

AP ■ THE HAGUE

The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court called Thursday for an international "overarching strategy" to coordinate efforts to bring perpetrators of war crimes in Ukraine to justice. Since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine on Feb 24, his military forces have been accused of abuses ranging from killings in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha to deadly attacks on civilian facilities, including the March 16 bombing of a theatre in Mariupol that an Associated Press investigation established likely killed close to 600 people. "The simple truth is that, as we speak, children, women and men, the young and the old, are living in terror," ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan said as he opened a Ukraine Accountability Conference in The Hague. "They're suffering in Ukraine and in so many different parts of the world. Grieving about what they lost yesterday, holding their breath about what they could lose today, and what tomorrow can bring. At a time like this, the law cannot be a spectator." Khan said Thursday's ministerial meeting addressed "a need of coordination, of coherence" and "the need of an overarching strategy" as different nations and courts work to investigate and prosecute crimes. The AP and FRONTLINE, which are tracking incidents in Ukraine, have so far tallied 338 potential war crimes. US State Department



human rights envoy Uzra Zeya accused Russian forces of atrocities as she delivered a message to the conference from Secretary of State Antony Blinken. She said the accusations in Ukraine mirrored Russia's previous actions in conflicts in Chechnya, Georgia, Syria and Ukraine since 2014. "With each day, the war crimes mount. Rape, torture, extrajudicial executions, disappearances, forced deportations. Attacks on schools, hospitals, playgrounds, apartment buildings, grain silos, water and gas facilities," Zeya said. "These are not the acts of rogue units; they fit a clear pattern across every part of Ukraine touched by Russia's forces." Some 40 nations from the European Union and around the world sent representative to Thursday's conference hosted by Khan, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Wopke Hoekstra and European Union Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders. Reynders said the meeting was held as Ukraine investigates more than 20,000 war crimes in addition to the International Criminal Court probe and national investigations in 14 European Union member states. Among the topics is how investigators from different countries can collect and document evidence, including of sexual crimes, so it can be used in other jurisdictions. In a video message to the meeting, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called on the international community to establish a tribunal to prosecute Russian leaders for the crime of aggression - when one state launches an unjustified attack on another. The ICC does not have jurisdiction to prosecute the crime of aggression in Ukraine because neither Russia nor Ukraine is among the court's 123 member states. Kyiv has, however, accepted the court's jurisdiction and that cleared the way for Khan to open an investigation in Ukraine in early March after dozens of the global court's member nations asked him to intervene. He has visited Ukraine to see firsthand the horrors inflicted on the country and sent the court's largest-ever team of investigators to gather evidence.

# Ukraine plays special role in France's Bastille Day parade

AP ■ PARIS

The war in Ukraine has even shaken up Bastille Day, a powerful political, historical and symbolic event in France. France celebrated its national holiday Thursday with thousands of French troops marching down the Champs-Élysées avenue alongside allies from Eastern Europe. The traditional parade also featured warplanes, military vehicles and a drone in a performance showing off France's might and its military efforts to support Ukraine. The opening of this year's Bastille Day parade was designed to demonstrate France's commitment to NATO and to European allies touched most closely by the war in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine 20 weeks ago. Troops from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary were assigned the front position, bearing their national flags. Multinational troops deployed in Romania after the invasion marched after them. Higher-than-usual temperatures baking Paris this week didn't deter crowds from gathering to watch the parade, surrounded by tight security along the Champs-Élysées. A group of young people from France's

universal national service program stood up and applauded as the parade got underway, visibly thrilled to be watching the event in person. A fighter jet flyover wowed the crowd, especially the opening formation that trailed red, white and blue smoke over the Arc de Triomphe. On the eve of Bastille Day, French President Emmanuel Macron hailed Ukraine's unexpected ability to stand up to Russia's aggression. He called for a review of France's military organization to make it more nimble in the face of changing threats, as well as for a "rethink" of France's military presence in Africa. "Each and every one of us was struck by the Ukrainian nation's moral strength that allowed it to hold on despite an initially unfavorable balance of power," Macron told French military brass Wednesday night. "I've asked the minister, the joint chief of staff and the general delegate for armaments to review the pertinence of our organizations, our structures and even the way we look at things ... To sometimes be able to make decisions faster, to coordinate better and with efficiency, and to adapt to the evolutions of conflicts," the president said. Macron and other dignitaries presided



over Thursday's event in which more than 6,000 people and 200 horses of France's Republican Guard took part, along with 65 planes, 25 helicopters and 181 vehicles. A Reaper, a sophisticated American combat drone, swooped over the parade for the first time. Such a drone embodies the modernization of France's military equipment, and was used in Niger and elsewhere in Africa's Sahel region as part of France's military operation to defeat jihadists. Drones are also a powerful symbol of the Ukraine war, where they're being used more intensively than any other war to date. The motto of this year's Bastille events, "Share the Flame," is a reference to France hosting the Olympic Games in 2024. High-profile Olympic and Paralympic athletes were invited to attend. The spectacle closes with a nighttime fireworks show set off from the Eiffel Tower. Bastille Day marks the July 14, 1789, storming of the Bastille prison by angry Paris crowds that helped spark the French Revolution and by extension, a spirit of national unity, thanks to broad rights granted to citizens in the ensuing years. Celebrations are held in towns across France and beyond, with parties from New Orleans to Australia and beyond.

# In Ukraine war, a race to acquire smarter, deadlier drones

AP ■ KYIV

Drone camera footage defines much of the public's view of the war in Ukraine: grenades quietly dropped on unwitting soldiers, eerie flights over silent, bombed-out cities, armour and outposts exploding into fireballs. Never in the history of warfare have drones been used as intensively as in Ukraine, where they often play an out-sized role in who lives and dies. Russians and Ukrainians alike depend heavily on unmanned aerial vehicles to pinpoint enemy positions and guide their hellish artillery strikes. But after months of fighting, the drone fleets of both sides are depleted, and they are racing to build or buy the kind of jamming-resistant, advanced drones that could offer a decisive edge. The urgency was reflected by the White House's disclosure on Monday that it has information that Iran will be rushing "up to several hundred" unmanned aerial vehicles to Moscow's aid. Iranian-supplied drones have effectively penetrated US-supplied Saudi and Emirati air-defence systems in the Middle East. "The Russian drone force may still be capable, but exhausted. And Russians are looking to capitalise on a proven Iranian track record," said Samuel Bendett, an analyst at the CNA military think tank. Meanwhile, Ukraine wants the means "to strike at Russian command and control facilities at a significant distance", Bendett said. The demand for off-the-shelf consumer models remains intense in Ukraine,

as do efforts to modify amateur drones to make them more resistant to jamming. Both sides are crowdfunding to replace battlefield losses. "The number we need is immense," a senior Ukrainian official, Yuri Shchygol, told reporters on Wednesday, detailing the first results of a new fundraising campaign called "Army of Drones." He said Ukraine is initially seeking to purchase 200 NATO-grade military drones but requires 10 times more. Outgunned Ukrainian fighters complain that they simply don't have the military-grade drones needed to defeat Russian jamming and radio-controlled hijacking. The civilian models most Ukrainians rely on are detected and defeated with relative ease. And it's not uncommon for Russian artillery to rain down on their operators within minutes of a drone being detected. Compared with the war's early months, Bendett now sees less evidence of Russian drones getting shot down. "The Ukrainians are on the ropes," he said. Adding to the defenders' woes: The Ukrainian hero of the war's early weeks, the Turkish-made Bayraktar TB-2 laser-guided, bomb-dropping drone, has become less effective in the face of denser Russian air and electronic defences in eastern Ukraine. It was the star of many a patriotic Ukrainian video. "Russians are in a much better position because they fly long-range drones" designed to evade electronic counter-measures, a Ukrainian air reconnaissance unit leader recently told Associated Press journalists outside Bakhmut near the front lines. On the ground, Russia's more plentiful electronic warfare units can cut off drone pilots' communications, interrupt live video and drop the vehicle from the sky or, if it has homing technology, force it to retreat. Hence the need for advanced drones that can survive radio interference and GPS jamming and rely on satellite communications and other technologies for control and navigation.

North Korea has become one of the few nations in the world to recognize the independence of two Russian-backed separatist regions in eastern Ukraine in support of Russia's war against its neighbor. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry cut off diplomatic ties with North Korea in response and condemned Pyongyang's decision as undermining Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. North Korea has repeatedly blamed the United States for the crisis in Ukraine, claiming the West's "hegemonic policy" justified Russia's offensive in Ukraine to protect itself. North Korea's state media said Thursday that the country's foreign minister, Choe Sun Hui, sent letters to leaders in the breakaway regions of Donetsk and Luhansk a day earlier to convey the North's decision to recognize their independence and its willingness to develop diplomatic relations with both. Donetsk separatist leader Denis Pushilin acknowledged North Korea's decision Wednesday. Luhansk and Donetsk together make up the Donbas region, a mostly Russian-speaking region of steel factories, mines and other industries in Ukraine's east. Separatists have controlled parts of both provinces since 2014, but Russian President Vladimir Putin recognized their independence only shortly before the invasion began

# N Korea backs independence of breakaway regions in Ukraine

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea has already suspended its political and economic contacts with North Korea because of international sanctions imposed on the North over its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles program. in February. Syria has since recognized their independence as well. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Russia's appeal to North Korea for support shows Moscow has "no more allies in the world, except for countries that depend on it financially and politically."



Notice is hereby given that the Share Certificate equivalent to one share of Rs.100/-issued by the Ajanta Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Plot No.36,Ajanta Apartment, I.P. Extension, Delhi-110092, in the name of Shri Sham Lal Wadhwa son of Shri Chhabil Das Wadhwa Membership No.116, who was allotted that Flat No. 60 by the Society, has been reported missing/lost/not traceable.An application has been received for issue of duplicate share certificate from Shri Sham Lal Wadhwa son of Shri Chhabil Das Wadhwa resident of Flat No.60, Ajanta Apartment, I.P. Extension, New Delhi-110092 who has purchased the said flat through instrument of Conveyance Deed dated 29.03.1993 and also applied for grant of membership of this Society and requested this society for issue of duplicate Share Certificate, which is reported by him to be missing/ lost/ not traceable. Any person having any objection or claim to issue a duplicate share certificate, should communicate his/her objection in writing to this society within Fifteen (15) days from the date of issue of this Notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the duplicate Share Certificate will be issued to him in lieu of the missing/ untraceable certificate.

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**Estimated cost: Rs 28,23,500.00(GST Extra)**  
**Date of availability of bid document on website:- 15/07/2022**  
**Last date for submission of bids on website:-04/08/2022 upto 18:00 Hrs**  
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**"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"**

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DL2FP0014,	DL3FAD0040,	DL2SK3758,
DL2FC20030,	DL9C80800,	DL4SAW7539,
HR03N5103,	DL6CE0450,	DL8CNB7592,
DL4CAA9791,	DL8CF1910,	DL4CS0802,
DL3CAK6608,	DL8CE1321,	DL4CG9404,
DL2CACB949,	DL4CNC0620,	DL3SAK4001,
DL9CE8447,	DL4CAV7252,	DL4SAE2697,
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DL9CT7600,	DL1CH3873,	UP78AH3851,
DA00060,	DL2CAG4650,	DL8SAH1491,
DL8CV0048,	DL4CAH1801,	DL8SAE3652,
DL3CAV1082,	UK08K8585,	DL8SB26484,
DL4CAV6666,	DL4CAG3924,	DL8SH9543,
DL3FAA7000,	DL1CJ4878,	DL07415,
DL3CAK7347,	DL8CH2829,	DL4SAM8875,
DL2CP0946,	DL6CF2151,	DL4SAN1754,
DL8Z13,	DL8SU7212,	DL2CAC8237,
DL8CR0013,	DL8SZ1076,	DL8SF7713,
DL1CH8110,	DL8SAE9885,	DL1LC6384,
DL6CD4541,	DL6TS3757,	DL9SF9675,
DL8CD4543,	DL3CARI1285,	DL8SP5937,
DL8CR5716,	DL8CA4908,	DL8SAF0617,
DL8CK8939,	DL2FF0049,	DL8SAB9552,
DL4CS2580,	NO REG 15,	BR04C1247,
DL3CP4448,	UP57AU5416,	DL5SB3725,
DL5CD3277,	DL9ST3211,	DL9ST3211,
DL3CT1208,	DL8CH4695,	DLN7768,
DL2CA66175,	DL8CH9426,	DL1SD7832,
DL8CH9254,	DL6SY082,	DL8ST7426,
DL4CS9461,	DL8SM1371,	DL8SAF9393,
DL4CN7897,	DL8CA4822,	DL3SD5666,
DL3CAK8448,	DL8SW9000,	DL8SAC7005,
DL4CAB7278,	DL8SAK0916,	DL8SM0181,
DL2CZ5426,	DL2CZ2348,	DL6SB7153,
DL2CAC3949,	DL8SK7722,	DL4CNC0145

# WPI inflation eases to 3-month low of 15.18% in June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The wholesale price-based inflation eased to a three-month low of 15.18 per cent in June on a sharp decline in the prices of minerals, but food articles continued to remain costly.

June is the 15th consecutive month when the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation remained in double-digit. Last month, it touched a record high of 15.88 per cent. In June 2021, it was 12.07 per cent.

Inflation in food articles in June was 14.39 per cent, as prices of vegetables, fruits and potato witnessed a sharp spike over the year-ago period.

In May, the wholesale price inflation in food articles was 12.34 per cent.

The rate of price rise in vegetables was 56.75 per cent, while in potato and fruits, it was 39.38 and 20.33 per cent, respectively.

The WPI inflation in minerals dropped sharply to 8.55 per cent in June from 33.94 per cent in May.

In the fuel and power basket, inflation was 40.38 per cent, while in manufactured products and oil seeds, it was 9.19 per cent and 2.74 per cent, respectively.

Inflation in crude petroleum



and natural gas was 77.29 per cent in June.

Icra Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said minerals and basic metals displayed a sharp month-on-month correction in June 2022, as fears of an impending global recession unfolded, dampening commodity prices.

"We expect the WPI inflation to ease to 13 per cent in July 2022, reflecting the ongoing correction in global commodity and fuel prices as well as domestic food prices," Nayar said.

She said that the RBI could

hike interest rates by 60 bps over the next two reviews, taking the repo rate to 5.5 per cent by September 2022, followed by a pause to ascertain the momentum of economic growth.

CRCL LLP CEO and Managing Partner DRE Reddy

said the key reason for the high inflation level is rising food, fuel, and vegetable prices. The cut in excise duty announced by the government and good monsoon year may ease inflation a little as we move forward in the year.

"The geopolitical tensions and crude price movement and commodity prices will guide WPI inflation going forward," he added.

The RBI mainly looks at retail inflation to frame monetary policy. The next meeting of the RBI's interest-setting monetary policy committee is on August 2-4.

Retail inflation remained above the Reserve Bank's comfort level for the sixth month in a row and was at 7.01 per cent in June.

The RBI projected inflation to be at 7.5 per cent in the June quarter (Q1) and 7.4 per cent in the September quarter (Q2), before easing to 6.2 per cent in the December quarter (Q3) and further to 5.8 per cent in the March quarter (Q4) this fiscal.

To tame stubbornly high inflation, the RBI has hiked the key interest rate by 90 basis points in the last two months.

The central bank also raised the inflation projection by 100 basis points to 6.7 per cent for 2022-23.

# Sensex, Nifty slide for 4th day; IT, banking shares drop

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty gave up early gains to close lower for a fourth straight session on Thursday due to selling in IT and banking shares amid weak global equities.

The 30-share BSE benchmark settled 98 points or 0.18 per cent lower at 53,416.15. During the day, it hit a high of 53,861.28 and a low of 53,163.77.

The broader NSE Nifty also pared initial gains and ended 28 points or 0.18 per cent down to settle at 15,938.65.

Among the Sensex constituents, Axis Bank declined the most by 1.74 per cent. HCL Technologies, State Bank of India, Tech Mahindra, TCS, Wipro, UltraTech Cement and ITC were the major laggards.

Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's Lab, Maruti Suzuki India, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Titan and Reliance Industries were among the gainers.

Energy stocks gained after reports said that the government may review the windfall tax on petrol and diesel exports after a sharp decline in crude oil prices.

Reliance Industries rose by 0.83 per cent helping the index restrict losses.

"Tracking weak cues in global markets, Indian indices gave away their initial gains amid concerns over higher-than-expected US inflation



data. Investors are increasingly expecting the Fed to carry out a minimum 75bps rate hike this month in order to combat high inflation.

"On the domestic front, India's WPI inflation moderated in June although it remains at elevated levels," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The wholesale price-based inflation eased to a three-month low of 15.18 per cent in June on a sharp decline in the prices of minerals, but food articles continued to remain costly.

June is the 15th consecutive month when the wholesale price index-based inflation remained double-digit.

"Markets remained volatile on the weekly expiry day and settled with a marginal cut. After the initial uptick, the benchmark drifted lower and traded with a negative bias for most of the session. However, a rebound in select index majors in the final hour

trimmed some losses. Besides global headwinds, domestic cues are also portraying a mixed picture," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.56 per cent, while midcap dipped 0.40 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, IT fell by 1.44 per cent, and tech by 1.14 per cent while basic materials (0.71 per cent), telecom (0.63 per cent), metal (0.48 per cent) and bank (0.43 per cent) were the major laggards.

Energy, healthcare, consumer durables, oil & gas and power were among the winners. In Asia, markets in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended lower, while Tokyo settled in the green.

Equity markets in Europe were trading lower during mid-session deals. The US markets had ended lower on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.97 per cent to USD 97.61 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors turned net buyers in the capital market on Thursday, buying shares worth Rs 309.06 crore on net basis, as per exchange data.

The rupee, however, slid to all-time low of 79.99 against the US dollar due to concerns over inflation and possible rate hikes by central banks.

# Rising interest rates, inflation to affect affordable housing finance companies' growth: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rising interest rates, higher inflation and increasing cost of construction are likely to slow down growth of affordable housing finance companies in the current fiscal, a report said on Thursday.

Affordable housing finance (ticket size below Rs 25 lakh) has proven to be one of the most resilient sectors to economic cycles and seen rapid progress over the past decade, India Ratings and Research said in a report.

With 25 per cent compound annual growth rate, the affordable housing sector has outpaced the overall housing finance sector growth in the past five years.

However, some tailwinds that had supported the sector earlier seem to be moderating and thus could slow down the pace of sector loan growth, it said.

"Rising interest rates, reduced cash flow of borrowers on account of the high inflation rate, increasing cost of construction, leading to both a rise in property costs and slowdown in new inventory launches, and halting of the government's Credit-linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) are some of the challenges facing this segment," the agency said.

The interest rate scenario has turned around and most recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased the repo rates by 90 basis points (bps), leaving the repo rate just 25 bps lower than the pre-Covid levels.

The agency said a 100 bps increase in the interest rates leads to the borrowers' home loan EMI rising 6.1-6.4 per cent y-o-y in general, while for an affordable housing borrower,



er, the loan EMI rises by about 5.3 per cent.

If the interest rate cycle continues to move up, a 200 bps increase could increase EMI in the range of 10.8-13 per cent, it said.

"While for existing borrowers, lenders can cushion the impact of increase in interest rates by a tenor extension in the first instance. However, for new customers, the EMIs increase would be upfront, thus impacting their home buying sentiments negatively in the medium term," it said.

The report said the construction costs for the housing sector have increased sharply with a steep increase in the prices of various raw materials, including cement, steel and concrete along with higher labour costs.

This has resulted in an increase of 20-25 per cent across key markets over a base

construction cost of Rs 2,000-2,500 per square feet, as was seen in 2019, leading to margin pressure for developers, it said.

While developers have not been able to pass on the complete cost increase, there remains a near- to medium-term upward pressure on real estate prices for buyers.

"The high inflationary environment, coupled with high interest rates, is likely to affect loan affordability for new home buyers, which could lead to a slowdown in Asset Under Management (AUM) growth for home financiers due to a moderation in disbursements," the agency said.

The agency further said it expects the housing finance sector to grow at 13 per cent y-o-y in FY23, with affordable housing finance witnessing a growth of 16-18 per cent.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Agriculture on Thursday released its second advance estimates projecting that India's horticulture production is estimated to rise 2.1 per cent to 341.63 million tonne in 2021-22 mainly on higher output of fruits, vegetables and honey, an increase of about 7.07 million tones as compared to 334.60 million tonne in 2020-21.

Except onion, potato and tomato productions are expected to be lower in 2021-22.

In the first estimates, the production was pegged at 333.25 million tonne. The area under horticulture crops has increased marginally to 27.74



million hectare from 27.48 million hectare.

As per the data, fruits production is estimated to rise to 107.10 million tonne from 102.48 million tonne in

2020-21. The production of vegetables is estimated to increase to 204.61 million tonne compared to 200.45 million tonne in 2020-21.

Among vegetables, onion

production is estimated to rise at 31.70 million tonne from 26.64 million tonne in 2020-21. However, potato production is expected to decline to 53.58 million tonne

from 56.17 million tonne in 2020-21.

Tomato output is projected to fall at 20.34 million tonne as compared to 21.18 million tonne in 2020-21.

"Increase in production of fruits, vegetables and honey while decrease in production of spices, flowers, aromatics and medicinal plants and plantation crops over previous year, is envisaged," the statement said.

Planting of kharif or summer-sown crops is currently lagging last year's levels due to an uneven monsoon, despite a recent pick-up in rains and flooding in many states. Meteorologists expect rainfall to be average for the rest of July, the most crucial month for agriculture.

# Work for bullet train project gains momentum

**Mumbai:** Pace of Bullet train Project has gained significant momentum during last few days. Clearing a long pending issue, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has issued directives to shift a petrol pump of BPCL located on a plot at BKC earmarked for the terminus of the high-speed train to be constructed as three-storey underground structure and will have six platforms on the lowest level.

About 1.2 hectares in Palghar, Maharashtra has been handed over last week which was earlier stuck up for months. With that, 90.56% land has been acquired for the entire project, (98.8% in Gujarat and 100% in Dadar Nagar Haveli and 72.25% in Maharashtra).

The new Government in Maharashtra has shown a proactive and positive

approach towards the Bullet train project and in a review meeting on 12.07.2022, has committed that issues involving transfer of land for BKC underground station (4.84 Ha) and 3.92 Ha at Vikroli for tunnel shaft will be resolved by September.

For Bullet train project alignment passing through the forest area, stage I clearance has been granted by Maharashtra Government and Stage-II approval is also expected by September.

So far, foundation and pier works have been completed in 75 length of the 352 Km long Gujarat portion of the project.

The works on bridges on rivers and launching of Girders for viaduct in 180 Km length of alignment are going on in full swing. The works on all eight (8) stations between Vapi and Sabarmati are also under various stages of construction.

# 'Domestic coal prices to remain high in current quarter as well'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rating agency Icra on Thursday said it expects prices of domestic coal to remain high in the ongoing quarter as well given the supply challenges of the dry fuel during monsoon. The domestic e-auction premium on coal increased by over 400 per cent in May, thereby adversely impacting the cost structure of the base metal companies and margins.

"Going forward, given the coal supply challenges during the ongoing monsoon season, the rating agency expects domestic coal prices to remain elevated in the current quarter as well," Icra said in a statement.

Power cost, it said, has risen substantially for domestic base metal companies, owing to lower availability of linkage coal to non-power sectors and elevated coal prices in both international and domestic markets.

# G20 must ensure developing nations earn 'meaningful revenues' from global minimum tax deal: Nirmala

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday called on G20 countries to ensure that developing nations do not face any "unintended consequences" of the proposed global minimum tax deal at the G20 and earn "meaningful revenues".

She also said that the concerns of developing nations should also be addressed while formulating rules for the proposed two-pillar tax deal to ensure a fairer and inclusive tax system.

"...It is necessary to guard against any unintended consequences, which may have an adverse impact on developing countries. We shall continue to work for the strengthening of international cooperation for a fairer, transparent, efficient and effective global tax system that supports and empowers the developing countries in their efforts to mobilise resources," she said while addressing the 'G20 Ministerial Symposium on Tax and Development' in Bali.

A total of 130 countries, including India, had in July last year agreed to a overhaul of global tax norms to ensure that multinationals pay taxes wherever they operate and at a minimum 15 per cent rate. The finance ministry had then said that some significant issues, including share of profit allocation and scope of subject to tax rules, are yet to be addressed and a 'consensus agreement' would happen after working out the technical details of the proposal.

The proposed two-pillar solution consists of two components -- Pillar One which is about reallocation of additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions and Pillar Two consisting of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.



Developing countries make up almost one-third of the membership of the G20 inclusive framework for taxation.

"There is a need to ensure that the developing countries are able to effectively participate in the negotiations as well. Resource constraints and the limited capacities to participate in the discussions at the inclusive framework need to be addressed to ensure that membership of the developing countries result in their needs and concerns being articulated and heard and that truly is the inclusive framework," she said.

Sitharaman called on the G20 inclusive framework to support the active participation of all members in the finalisation of the technical aspects of the two-pillar solution.

This, she said, would ensure a "fairer, sustainable and inclusive tax system, which results in meaningful revenue" for the developing countries.

"We need to have their (developing nations) inputs and include them particularly because these rules will affect them," the minister said.

Both the pillars of the proposed taxation system should come into effect simultaneously for an equitable solution, Sitharaman said, adding "there is no way in which they can be implemented separately, because their effectiveness will be lost."

# New vice chairman, MD at LANXESS India

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Namitesh Roy Choudhury has assumed the role of Vice Chairman and Managing Director of LANXESS India, effective July 1. He has also taken on the responsibility of Region Head for India. In his new role, he will represent the businesses of LANXESS India to the global organisation and will report to Dr Anno Borkowsky, member of the Board of Management and head of all the four regions, globally.

He has been the Executive Director since October 1, 2021 and Vice President, Industrial & Environmental Affairs for LANXESS India since 2007.

# Asia's largest integrated expo on cleaning technology opens



The three-day Asia's largest integrated exhibitions on cleaning technology — 18th edition of Clean India Show, Waste Technology India Expo, Laudrex India Expo and Auto Care Expo opened on Thursday at the India Exposition Mart Ltd, Greater Noida. The Clean India Technology Week is bringing together products, systems, solutions and services for meeting all of India's cleaning, waste management and linen care requirements. The Clean India Show is showcasing the next generation of cleaning and hygiene products under one roof

# Valid medical prescriptions must for sale of specified ayurveda, unani drugs online: CCPA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) on Thursday directed e-commerce entities to sell specified ayurveda, siddha and unani drugs only after customers upload valid medical prescriptions from registered doctors on the platforms.

The requirement will be applicable for drugs specified under Schedule E (1) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945. Schedule E lists out poisonous substances under the ayurveda (including siddha) and unani systems of medicine. Such drugs are required to be

taken under medical supervision. "Consuming such drugs without medical supervision can lead to severe health complications. E-commerce platforms have been advised that the sale or facilitating the sale of such drugs shall be done only after a valid prescription of a registered Ayurveda, Siddha or Unani practitioner respectively is uploaded by the user on the platform," the CCPA said in a statement.

Besides, the word 'caution' is to be printed in both English and Hindi languages on the label of the container of such medicines specified in Schedule E (1).

# India top medal tally with 3 Gold, 4 Silver, 1 Bronze

PTI ■ CHANGWON

India topped the medal's tally at the ongoing ISSF Shooting World Cup here on Thursday after a slew of fantastic outings from its shooters.

India finished the tournament with eight medals -- three Gold, four Silver and one Bronze -- and were way ahead of hosts Korea and Serbia in the medal's tally.

The day began on a brilliant note for India when the troika of Arjun Babuta, Shahu Tushar Mane and Paarth Makhija helped the country bag its third Gold medal, beating Korea 17-15 in the 10m air rifle team event.

Arjun, Makhija and Mane fought neck to neck and staged a comeback, leading through the final to claim the top prize ahead of the Korean team of Seungho Bang, Sangdo Kim, and Hajun Park.

It was Arjun and Shahu's second Gold in the World Cup.

The second medal of the day came in the form of silver when the trio of Elavenni Valaviran, Mehuli Ghosh, and Ramita settled for Silver after going down to the home team of Jihyeon Keum, Eunseo Lee, and Dayeong Gwon 10-16.

In the men's 10m air Pistol team event final, the Indian team put up a spirited fight against the experienced Italian trio of Paolo Monna, Alessio Torracchi and Luca Tesconi before going down 15-17, ensuring another Silver for the country.

India's third Silver of the day came in the 10m air pistol team women's event when the new-look team of Rhythm Sangwan, Yuvika Tomar and Palak faced a 2-10 drubbing against a quality Korean side comprising Tokyo Olympics Silver medallist Kim Minjung.



## Neeraj Chopra a huge inspiration for me: Babuta

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Backed by Abhinav Bindra and inspired by his college senior Neeraj Chopra, young shooter Arjun Babuta is looking to "deliver" a strong performance at the World Championship and secure an Olympic quota.

The 23-year-old has played a pivotal role in India's impressive show at the ongoing ISSF World Cup in Changwon, Korea, having claimed two Gold for the country.

"Neeraj (Chopra) and I studied at the same college in Chandigarh, although he was a batch senior than me. But what he achieved at the Olympic Games in 2020 was a huge motivating factor for athletes like me and he is indeed a huge inspiration," Arjun said.

"Sport is very difficult for young athletes who go through the grind every single day. But Neeraj's historic feat has lifted an entire generation of young athletes, including me, who are hungrier than ever to win something for India in the grandest stage," he added.

Babuta's double Gold-winning feat at the World Cup will, in all likelihood, earn him a place in the Indian side for the upcoming World Championships in Cairo.

He said that qualifying for the Paris Olympic Games is his biggest 'goal in life' right now.

"I was 19 when I missed the Tokyo Olympics qualifying event in 2019. The pain and agony was excruciating, but I practised round-the-clock to ensure that I win medal at the World Cup," Arjun said. "The prime focus, right now, is to deliver a top performance at the World Championships and qualify for the Paris Olympics," he added.

The 23-year-old Punjab man said he grew up hearing stories about Abhinav Bindra's historic Gold medal-winning feat at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when he became the first Indian to win an individual yellow metal at the Games.

"His achievements moulded me as a shooter. A towering personality like him who changed Indian sports in 2008, taught me so many things about life and sport," Arjun remarked.



## Spotlight on Neeraj Chopra' Sreeshankar eyes glory too

PTI ■ EUGENE

Neeraj Chopra will carry a billion hopes into the World Championship for yet another landmark result and it won't be a surprise if long jumper Murali Sreeshankar also grabs a slice of history at the showpiece, starting here Friday.

Chopra is cherishing phenomenal results this season. The star athlete has improved his personal best twice -- he recorded a 89.30m throw on June 14 at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland before sending his spear to 89.94m, just 6cm shy of 90m, in the prestigious Stockholm Diamond League Meeting on June 30.

In between, he had won the javelin throw event at Kuortane Games in Finland with a throw of 86.69m under wet and slippery conditions.

Given the form he is in, the Tokyo Olympic Champion is expected to script history and become only the second Indian and first male player from the country to win a medal in the World Athletics Championships.

Chopra's main rival for the Gold medal will be the defending champion Anderson Peters of Grenada. Peters is the favourite to win Gold as he owns four of the top five throws this season. His best effort of 93.07 is also the best result this season.

A Gold is, however, not beyond Chopra's reach as he has beaten Peters twice this season -- at Paavo Nurmi Games and Kuortane Games. Peters also struggled briefly this season due to injury while Chopra has been in the pink of his health.

His other challengers include Olympic Silver medalist Jakob Vadlejch (season's best 90.88m), Germany's Julian

Weber (SB 89.54m), Trinidad and Tobago's 2012 Olympic champion Keshorn Walcott (SB 89.07m) and Finland's Oliver Helander (SB 89.83m).

Chopra will have company in Rohit Yadav, who has a season's best of 82.54m while finishing second in the National Inter-State Championships last month.

The two qualifying rounds of the men's javelin throw competition will be held on July 21 while the final will be held two days later.

National record holder long jumper Murali Sreeshankar will be a dark horse as he sits at joint second place among season leaders with his 8.36m effort during the Federation Cup in April. He will be seen in action on Friday (early hours on Saturday in India) in the qualifying rounds.

The 23-year-old Sreeshankar has also been a consistent performer this season. He had another big jump of 8.31m in an event in Greece before winning Gold at the National Inter-State Championships with a leap of 8.23m.

Sreeshankar shares the joint second spot among season leaders with Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece who is the favourite to win Gold here.

Another Indian, Jeswin Aldrin who had a wind-assisted 8.37m jump during the Federation Cup will also be in the fray. He was initially not named in the Indian team after his form dipped but was later added following two rounds of trials.

In the men's 3000m steeplechase, Avinash Sable will have to improve his timing by several seconds from his national record effort of 8:12.48 if he wants to be in contention for a podium in a tough field.

# Saina stuns Bing Jiao to join Sindhu, Prannoy in quarterfinals

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Olympic Bronze medallist Saina Nehwal showed signs of regaining her form with a sensational win over Chinese world number 9 He Bing Jiao in the Singapore Open here on Thursday.

The two-time Commonwealth Games Gold winner joined compatriots PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy in the quarterfinals of the tournament.

Saina, a London Olympics Bronze medallist, prevailed 21-19, 21-12, 21-17 over the fifth seeded Chinese to make the last eight stage. It will be her first appearance in quarterfinals of a Super 500 event in over two and a half years.

She will meet Japan's Aya Ohori next.

The 32-year-old from Hyderabad has been battling a series of injuries and lack of form in the past few years, which forced her to skip the selection trials for the Commonwealth Games, in April.

In the last three years, Saina's best performance had been a semi-

final finish at Orleans Master Super 100 last year. She had also reached the quarterfinal stage at Malaysia Masters and Barcelona Spain Masters in 2020.

Two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu and in-form Prannoy also stormed into the quarterfinals after registering fighting wins.

Third seed Sindhu staved off a spirited challenge from Vietnam's world number 59 Thuy Linh Nguyen 19-21, 21-19, 21-18 in the women's singles competition to set up a clash with China's Han Yue.

Prannoy, ranked world number 19, notched up his second win in three weeks over world number four and third seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei 14-21, 22-20, 21-18 in an hour and nine minute contest.

The 29-year-old Indian, who is looking to break his five-year-old title drought, will face Japan's Kodai Naraoka next.

The men's doubles pairing of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila also entered the quarters, with a stunning 18-21,



24-22, 21-18 win over sixth seeded Malaysian combination of Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin.

A day after notching up an upset win over compatriot Kidambi Srikanth, Mithun Manjunath's run ended with a fighting 10-21, 21-18, 16-21 loss to Ireland's Nhat Nguyen.

Ashmita Chaliha, who had defeated Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan, also couldn't proceed further in the tournament, losing 9-21, 13-21 to Han Yue of China.

The highlight of the day was Saina's thrilling victory over Bing Jiao, a two-time World Championship Bronze medallist, whom the Indian had defeated in their only meeting way back in 2019.

Saina's trademark cross court smashes and drops were on full display as she put up a good show at the Singapore Indoor Stadium here.

Left-handed Bing Jiao however seemed too erratic, struggling with the lengths of the shuttles as her mis-cued shots went wide and long and also got buried at the net, allowing Saina to gather points.

# 'We'll work on bettering our performance at CWG'

PTI ■ TERRASSA

The FIH World Cup did not go as expected for the Indian women's hockey team but striker Navneet Kaur on Thursday said the side will look to better its performance at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

India finished ninth in the World Cup.

The team began the campaign with a 1-1 draw against England. In its next match, it was held to a 1-1 draw by China. India's final group stage match ended in a 3-4 defeat to New Zealand.

India had a chance to go to the quarterfinals despite finishing third in the group stage. However, they missed out on the opportunity to finish in the top 8 after a 0-1 loss to Spain.

Speaking about India's loss to Spain, Navneet said, "When



we lost the match against Spain, we were utterly disappointed but knew we had to quickly put that match behind us and focus on the upcoming

games against Canada and Japan.

"The only thing we wanted was to register good wins against these two teams and

finish our World Cup campaign on a positive note," she continued.

In their 9th-16th place game, India defeated Canada 2-3 via shootout after the game was tied at 1-1 at the end of regulation time.

Following that, India defeated Japan 3-1 in the 9th-12th place match on Wednesday night at the Estadi Olímpic de Terrassa to finish ninth in the final standings.

"I feel we could have done even better against Canada and not let the match go into a shootout. But we missed many chances in the circle. Against Japan, it was important we improvised our chances and we pushed them from the word go," Navneet further said.

India will kick off their CWG campaign against Ghana on July 29.

# Dembélé signs new contract with Barca

AP ■ BARCELONA

Ousmane Dembélé has agreed to sign a new contract with Barcelona through June 2024.

The deal on Thursday comes a day after club president Joan Laporta said Dembélé would stay on during the presentation of new signing Raphinha.

Dembélé, now 25, joined Barcelona in 2017 on a then club-record transfer from Borussia Dortmund that with variables was set to reach 147 million euros (then \$173 million) as the club sought a young talent after the unwanted exit of Neymar.

After suffering serious injuries early in his stay at Barcelona, Dembélé consolidated himself as one of its most irreplaceable players thanks to his speed and playmaking.

The new contract concludes a drawn-out negotiation between player and club that appeared to have broken down in January when Dembélé rejected Barcelona's renewal offer, prompting the club to tell his agent to find the France winger a new club.

Dembélé continued to play well for coach Xavi Hernández and remained one of his most used players.



But with his contract expiring this summer, it appeared he would leave. Dembélé was linked to possible moves to England's Premier League or to Paris Saint-Germain, the team of Neymar and former Barcelona great Lionel Messi. Now he will be considered one of Xavi's pillars as the coach tries to build a winning side following a season without a title.

The forward has 32 goals and assisted on 34 more in 150 appearances for Barcelona.

## Mesut Ozil joins 2020 Turkish champs Basaksehir

AP ■ ISTANBUL

German World Cup winning midfielder Mesut Ozil signed for 2020 Turkish champions Basaksehir on Thursday, a day after he left their rivals Fenerbahce.

"Our club has signed a one year contract with the option of another year with Mesut Ozil," Basaksehir said in a statement.

Basaksehir is known for its close ties with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was best man at Ozil's wedding in 2019 to a former Miss Turkey, Amine Gulse.

Ozil, 33, split with Fenerbahce with two years of his deal still to run.

# Klopp brushes off criticism of Nunez

AP ■ SINGAPORE

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp on Thursday laughed off past comments about his unwillingness to spend heavily on a single player, defending the club's big-money signing of Darwin Nunez from Benfica.

Speaking in Singapore ahead of Friday's pre-season friendly against Crystal Palace, the Anfield boss was reminded by reporters of a 2018 comment where he said he did not want to spend £100 million (\$118 million) on a single player.

Fans have poked fun at the German after his club agreed a deal with Benfica for Uruguayan striker Nunez that could see them pay up to £85 million (\$100.4 million) with add-ons.

Klopp, however, laughed off the question, saying the transfer market had changed since he made the comments.

"When you want to sign a striker as exciting as Darwin is, it's the market and you have to pay the price," said Klopp.

"I've said so many things in my life which have caught me later and showed me how quickly life can change," he added.

Nunez was heavily criticised on social media after a rusty performance in his first game for Liverpool, after he missed an open goal in their 4-0 loss to Manchester United in Bangkok on Tuesday.

Klopp said the criticism was unfair and backed the Uruguayan to come good for the Reds.



"The only real important thing is how I judge the situation and I couldn't be more calm or completely convinced about his potential," the German added.

He also downplayed the heavy loss to arch-rivals United, insisting that his focus was not on results but on preparing his players for the start of the new season.

"Do I like losing 4-0 against Man United? Not at all but we cannot judge our pre-season on just doing well in games," he said.

The German said the pre-season matches his team are playing were important, "but the more important games are coming up in two weeks and that's when we have to be ready".

# Camp Nou, both Madrid stadiums want to be in 2030 World Cup

AP ■ MADRID

The stadiums of Barcelona, Real Madrid and Atlético Madrid are among venues seeking to host matches if the 2030 World Cup takes place in Spain and Portugal, the Spanish football federation said on Thursday.

A total of 15 stadiums have offered to be among the 11 Spanish venues expected to host games if the Iberian bid is successful. Portugal would host matches in three venues.

Barcelona's Camp Nou, Atlético's Wanda Metropoli-



tano and Madrid's Santiago Bernabéu highlight the initial list, which also includes the venues of Athletic Bilbao, Valencia, Celta Vigo and

Real Sociedad. Both the Camp Nou and the Santiago Bernabéu are expected to be fully renovated by the 2030 World Cup.

"This is the most important project that Spain will undertake in the next few years," Spanish federation president Luis Rubiales said after a meeting to present the venues list and discuss the nations' bid.

The evaluation of the Spanish host cities will take place through November, with no set date for an announcement of the 11 venues that will be picked for the final bid presentation.

FIFA has yet to officially release the official bid requirements for the 2030 World Cup, but Spain and Portugal are planning for a tournament with 48 nations, similar to the one in 2026 in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

FIFA is expected to select the 2030 World Cup host nations in 2024.



## Kohli, Bumrah rested from WI T20Is; Ashwin returns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah were on Thursday rested from the five T20Is against the West Indies, to be played in the Caribbean and the United States from July 29.

K L Rahul, who recently underwent a surgery for sports hernia, and Kuldeep Yadav were picked in the 18-man squad subject to fitness. Kuldeep had suffered a hand injury in the home series against South Africa in June.

Ravichandran Ashwin also made a comeback to the T20 squad, having played his last T20 in November last year.

PTI had earlier reported that Kohli, who is struggling for form and has not scored a hundred since November 2019, had asked for rest from the entire white-leg tour of the West Indies comprising three ODIs and five T20s. The tour begins on July 22.

Star leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has also been given rest.

Besides Kohli, Bumrah will not be part of the Caribbean and the United States tour.

Skipper Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant and Hardik Pandya, who will not be part

of the preceding ODI series, will return for the T20s. Shikhar Dhawan will captain in ODIs.

Leg spinner Ravi Bishnoi has retained his place in the T20 side and so has pacer Avesh Khan.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh, who was not part of the full-strength squad against England in the final two T20s, is back in the mix.

From the squad that won the series in England, pace sensation Umran Malik has been dropped. In his outings in Ireland and England, Malik has shown that he remains a work in progress and needs to improve on his accuracy.

The first T20 will be played in Trinidad on July 29, followed by a couple of games in St Kitts before the action moves to the US with two games scheduled in Lauderdale, Florida.

**Team:** Rohit Sharma (captain), Ishan Kishan, KL Rahul\* (subject to fitness), Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Shreyas Iyer, Dinesh Karthik, Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, R Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, Kuldeep Yadav\* (subject to fitness), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Avesh Khan, Harshal Patel, Arshdeep Singh.

# Chahal, Hardik restrict Eng to 246

PTI ■ LONDON

Yuzvendra Chahal's clever variations complemented by Hardik Pandya's steady fast medium bowling saw India bowl out England for a manageable 246 in 49 overs in the second ODI at the Lord's on Thursday.

However, it was Moeen Ali (47 off 64 balls) who took the attack back to the opposition camp with his audacious hooked and pulled sixes interspersed with slog sweeps as England's total had some semblance of respectability after the feared top-order promised much but delivered little.

Moeen and David Willey (41 off 49 balls) added 62 runs for the seventh wicket to help set up a 250-run target after 200 looked improbable at one point in time.

On a two-paced track, Chahal (10-0-47-4) was brilliant in managing his lengths while giving the ball a lot of air as he got rid of England's 'Big Three' -- Jonny Bairstow (31), Joe Root (11) and Ben Stokes (21) -- and then snuffed out Moeen just when he was looking dangerous.

At the other end, Pandya (6-0-28-2), who is slowly getting his bowling rhythm back, chipped in with wickets of Jason Roy (23) and Liam Livingstone (33) to choke the run-flow as Rohit Sharma had another fine day in office, maneuvering his six-man attack.

Mohammed Shami (10-0-48-1) was regal as usual as he castled rival skipper Jos Buttler (4) with a sharp inswinger that tailed in late.

Jasprit Bumrah (10-1-49-2) and Shami were once again in the zone although it wasn't as big a debacle for England compared to the opening game.

It was a steady start for England as Roy first tried breaking the shackles by charging down the track off Shami and blasted him over mid-wicket for a six and then whipped him through the same region for a boundary.



## BCCI monitoring situation in Sri Lanka: Ganguly

AGENCIES ■ LONDON

Ahead of Asia Cup scheduled to be held in August in Sri Lanka, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sourav Ganguly on Thursday said that the board will keep monitoring the situation in the island nation amid the ongoing political and economic crisis there. "I cannot comment at the moment (about the possibility of India hosting the event). We will keep monitoring (the situation in Sri Lanka). Australia is playing there. The Sri Lankan team is also doing well. I cannot comment at the moment. Let us wait for a month," the BCCI president told ANI.

Sri Lanka had recently hosted Australia for a multi-format series. The series was highly compet-

itive and saw good cricket from both sides. Australia won the T20I series 2-1, the ODI series was won by Sri Lanka 3-2, while the Warne-Murli Trophy in Tests was shared after the two-match series ended in a 1-1 draw.

Ganguly also spoke about the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic during his tenure as BCCI president.

"But we managed to get cricket going and as you know, broadcast rights have gone exceptionally well. Although I never equate money with the sport, but it is always good to have money because infrastructure is built that way. Indian cricket is in a solid position. As and when we will finish, someone else will come in and take it forward. It is the players and administrators who will

take the game forward," said Ganguly.

Two major ICC events are set to take place in the near future - the T20 World Cup in 2022 and the 50-over World Cup in 2023.

Speaking about the high expectations from India in these tournaments, the BCCI president said, "You do not win ICC tournaments all the time. They (India) were in the finals of the Champions Trophy in 2017 and they lost in the semis in the 2019 WC. It has not been that they have been absolutely poor in World Cups but as you rightly said whenever India plays the expectations are more of winning. They are a great side they have some fantastic players and hopefully when it comes to Australia this time, they will stand up and deliver."

# Sri Lanka announce 18-member squad for two Tests against Pak

AP ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka have included plenty of spinning options in their 18-player squad for the upcoming two-match Test series at home against Pakistan.

All-rounder Dhananjaya de Silva, pacer Asitha Fernando and spinner Jeffrey Vandersay are all named in the squad and are in contention to return to Sri Lanka's XI after the trio missed the second Test against Australia due to Covid. Key batter Pathum Nissanka - who tested positive to Covid midway through that match - is also a chance to return, while left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya is likely to get the chance to lead Sri Lanka's spin attack after his match-winning efforts against Australia.

Jayasuriya claimed 12 wickets for the match against Pat Cummins' side, which is the best haul for Sri Lanka on Test debut and the fourth-best for a debutant overall.

The 30-year-old is likely to have Maheesh Theekshana and Ramesh Mendis share the spinning duties with him against Pakistan, but young left-arm



Praveen Jayawickrama has been left out of Sri Lanka's squad.

Experienced left-hander Dimuth Karunaratne will once again captain a Sri Lankan side that is looking to continue their recent rise up the World Test Championship standings, with Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews and the in-form Dinesh Chandimal to provide the bulk of the batting support.

Pakistan are one spot behind Sri Lanka in fourth place on the World Championship standings and are still well in contention of reaching next year's final.

The series begins with the first Test in Galle on Saturday, with the two teams then moving to Colombo for the second Test at the end of the month.

**Squad:** Dimuth Karunaratne

(c), Pathum Nissanka, Oshada Fernando, Angelo Mathews, Kusal Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva, Kamindu Mendis, Niroshan Dickwella, Dinesh Chandimal, Ramesh Mendis, Maheesh Theekshana, Kasun Rajitha, Vishwa Fernando, Asitha Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka, Prabath Jayasuriya, Dunith Wellalage and Jeffrey Vandersay.

## Harbhajan to play in 2nd edition of Legends League Cricket

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh will be back in the cricket field when he competes in the second season of the Legends League Cricket in September. Harbhajan will join former Indian opener Virender Sehwag, Irfan Pathan, Yusuf Pathan, former Australian speedster Brett Lee, spin legend Muttiah Muralitharan, and World Cup winning former England captain, Eoin Morgan.

The second season of the LLC will feature four teams and 110 former international cricketers.

"It makes me feel super charged to be back on the ground and play with the global legends of the game. I am looking forward to September eagerly," Harbhajan said. Besides Harbhajan, former Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Mortaza has also confirmed his participation in the upcoming edition of LLC. Meanwhile, former West Indies cricketers, Lendl Simmons and Denesh Ramdin have joined the league's player draft for the upcoming season. The inaugural edition of the tournament featured former cricketers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Australia, England divided into three teams representing India, Asia and Rest of the World respectively.



## Lanning wants to see cricket at Olympics

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia women's team captain Meg Lanning is hoping that cricket's appearance at the upcoming Commonwealth Games could go a long way in helping the sport enter the Olympics.

Lanning and Co. Will be competing at the Birmingham showpiece, starting July 28, as cricket returns to the Commonwealth Games for the first time since 1998.

The Australian men's team had claimed a silver when cricket was included at the quadrennial event more than two decades ago.

"Cricket in the Olympics would be amazing. Especially for the game as well, to reach a new audience," Lanning told BBC Sport.

"It would allow different people to see that game would really help the growth of it in other countries around the world, and particularly for women."

Paris will host the next edition of the Olympics in 2024, followed by Los Angeles in 2028 and Brisbane in 2032.

Lanning feels the sport will be included someday in the future.

"I'm not really sure what it takes to get it into the Olympics, but from the perspective of players, it would be amazing," Lanning added.



"It's something I'd love to do but I think if it was going to happen, it will probably be once I've finished up playing."

This time eight countries will battle it out in a 10-day women's T20 tournament at Edgbaston, and Lanning will try to help her side win the gold.

"We're looking at it as a very unique opportunity. We want to win that gold medal," Lanning said.

"Our group is really excited about it. It's a new challenge, and I think it comes at a really good time for our team."

Lanning had led Australia to the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup title in New Zealand.

# B'desh beat WI by 9 wickets in 2nd ODI, seal series

AP ■ GUYANA

Bangladesh's array of spin bowling talent again proved too much for the West Indies batting line-up to handle with the visitors completing a comprehensive series-clinching nine-wicket victory in the second One-Day International of a three-match series at the Guyana National Stadium on Wednesday.

Beaten by six wickets in the first match at the same venue on Sunday, the home batsmen were even more inept in being dismissed for 108 off 35 overs.

Having been swept 2-0 in both the preceding Test and T20 International series, the tourists extended the ODI dominance of their present foes in reaching the modest target with almost 30 overs to spare.

It was their 10th consecutive ODI victory over the West

Indies and also ensures they remain unbeaten in ODI series against the Caribbean side since they lost the corresponding duel in the region in 2014.

Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz led the rout with figures of four for 29 while left-arm slow bowler Nasum Ahmed claimed three for 19 and the 'Man of the Match' award as the home side's batsmen once again appeared all at sea on a pitch which again offered considerable assistance to the spinners.

Tamim Iqbal then led the comfortable pursuit of such a modest target, sealing victory and reaching a 53rd ODI half-century with his seventh boundary.

"We really wanted to win this series very badly after losing in the Tests and T20 Internationals," said Tamim in reflecting on a performance which gave Bangladesh at fifth straight ODI series win.



"We know this is the format we are strongest in and it was important to show that confidence after the earlier disappointments."

Following their struggles in the rain-affected first match,

West Indies tried to build a more stable platform after predictably being put in to bat.

However the dismissal of Kyle Mayers by the spin of Mosaddek Hossain after an opening stand of 27 in the 11th

over triggered the slide which saw them crashing to 86 for nine in the 31st over.

An unbeaten 25 by all-rounder Keemo Paul and a last-wicket stand of 22 with fellow-Guyanese Gudakesh Motie at least took the West Indies past the 100-run mark.

Motie was the lone-wicket taker in the Bangladesh reply, dismissing Najmul Hossain Shanto for 20 to end an opening stand of 48 with Tamim.

Liton Das' unbeaten 32 alongside his skipper ensured the romp to victory was completed in double-quick time.

"We didn't show up as a batting unit today," was the frank assessment of West Indies captain Nicholas Pooran, who fell to Nasum for a first-ball 'duck'.

"It is quite frustrating our batting efforts of late in ODI cricket and we need to come together quickly to fix this situation."

# UK police open investigation into Farah trafficking revelations

AP ■ LONDON

London's Metropolitan Police have opened an investigation into British Olympic great Mo Farah's stunning revelations he was illegally trafficked into Britain as a child.

The 39-year-old Somali-born athlete -- who won double Olympic gold (5/10,000m) for his adopted country at both the 2012 and 2016 Games -- revealed in a BBC documentary this week his real name is Hussein Abdi Kahin.

He added he was forced to work in domestic servitude after entering the country aged eight or nine.

"We are aware of reports in the media concerning Sir Mo Farah," said the Metropolitan Police in a statement on Thursday.

"No reports have been made to the MPS (Metropolitan Police



Service) at this time. Specialist officers have opened an investigation and are currently assessing the available information."

Farah was helped to obtain UK citizenship by his physical education teacher at school, Alan Watkinson, while still using the assumed name Mohamed Farah given to him by a woman who trafficked him to

Britain.

On Wednesday, Farah was assured by the British Government he would not be stripped of his citizenship with a spokesman for Prime Minister Boris Johnson describing him as "a sporting hero".

Rather than moving to the UK as a refugee from Somalia with his mother and two of his brothers to join his IT consultant father as previously claimed, Farah said he came from Djibouti with the woman he had never met, and then made to look after another family's children. In fact, he said, his father was killed in civil unrest in Somalia when Farah was aged four and his mother, Aisha, and two brothers live in the break-away state of Somaliland.

He was encouraged to speak out now by his wife and children, after burying the truth for decades.