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GLOBAL 'MISSION' & DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

WORLD 8

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MONEY 10

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RANCHI, FRIDAY JULY 1, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

The Central BJP leadership — which right from the day orchestrated the developments within the ruling Shiv Sena

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

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

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



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

## Cong fears BJP may do a Maha in Jharkhand

JMM getting closer to BJP

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

While the senior party leaders of the JMM and the Congress maintained that the mandate of people of the State will be respected, a senior BJP functionary told *The Pioneer*

that after Maharashtra the party will focus on Jharkhand. Last year in July-August we tried to oust the alliance Government in Jharkhand, but could not succeed," the BJP functionary said.

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

Fadnavis is seen as the real architect of the fall of the

Uddhav Thackeray Government and was widely tipped to get the CM post.

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

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

## PM congratulates Shinde, Fadnavis

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

In tweets soon after they

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

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

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

PTI ■ LAHORE

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

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

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

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

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

## 7 jawans die as landslide hits TA camp in Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/ AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/IMPHAL

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

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



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

PTI

asked to take precautions and not let children go near the river. The district administration is in touch with national and State disaster

management agencies for search, rescue and relief operations. Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh held an emergency meeting.

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

PTI ■ SRIHARIKOTA

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

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



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

PTI

Direct-to-Home (DTH) service provider Tata Play.

On Thursday, the four-stage, 44.4 metre tall PSLV-C53 that blasted off from the second launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, placed the three Singapore satellites—DS-EO, NeuSAR and SGOOB-1 in intended orbit of 570 km.

ISRO chairman S Somanath said the rocket placed the three customer satellites "in the precise orbit of 570 km with a 10 degree inclination" and congratulated NSIL for accomplishing "yet another major mission this month itself," the earlier one being the GSAT launch last week.

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# Suspected dengue cases emerge, health dept on toes

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

East Singhbhum district administration has issued an alert in view of the influx of the dengue virus across the district.

Sources went on to inform that suspected cases of Japanese encephalitis and dengue in the last 48 hours have prompted the health department to issue an alert for vector-borne diseases in the district.

An official said that the administration will launch a special drive to create awareness about dengue and that the Health Department will monitor the onset of the disease. The alert was issued by the East Singhbhum unit of the integrated diseases surveillance programme (IDSP) on Wednesday.

Dengue and viral fever are spreading across the steel city, with affected people continuing to pour into hospitals and nursing homes.

Doctors in the city blame the rise in dengue cases on the deteriorating hygiene in the city. They said that if the civic bodies do nothing, the number of cases could spiral



out of control.

However, the resurfacing of dengue positive cases has prompted the East Singhbhum district health department to direct the district filaria to a change in strategy in order to counter the vector (Aedes Aegypti) menace.

The department, which earlier used to only spray larvicidal apart from undertaking cleanliness exercises, will be opting to destroy unused containers (identified vector breeding centers) in the affected areas and educate people on not allowing water to stagnate in residential areas.

"We need to understand that mosquitoes that carry

the virus of dengue do not come from outside, rather they generate from household things like flower-pots, coolers, water, and rejected tyres kept on the roof top or in the corner of the garden. So we must ensure that there is no such place where water is stagnant for some time," said a health official.

"The number of dengue positive cases would decrease, but we are not taking chances as we feel that awareness would continue for a lifetime and would prevent dengue even in the coming years. We had put up billboards and distributed leaflets on preventive steps against dengue, but we have started distribution on

a war footing since the last few days," an official said.

The leaflets inform on the need for maintaining cleanliness in and around houses; eradicating unused containers, which can lead to water accumulation and be a potential breeding spot for mosquitoes; periodically cleaning water tanks, coolers, refrigerators, and pots; keeping the lower portion of the body covered; and periodically cleaning dark places in the houses.

"We are also putting our staff for distribution near schools, factories, and market areas." "Our objective is to target the maximum number of people in the shortest possible time with our limited resources," added the official.

## 'Dengue Roko Abhiyan' flagged off

Tata Steel UISL ( formerly JUSCO) flagged off the Dengue Roko Abhiyan, from the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme IDSP Office. On the occasion, Dr. Sahir Pal, ACMO, Dr. Meena, DMO, John Subhakar, Chief Manager,

Public Health Services, Tata Steel UISL, and Dr. Alok Suman, Dy. Chief Manager (Entomologist), were present on the occasion. The IEC vehicle that is fitted with a PA system for the prevention and awareness of dengue was flagged off as a part of integrated vector control management. It is an innovative awareness drive amongst the community through jingle and appeal messages, but it will also involve the community in participating and depositing the container in vehicles that have potential for Aedes breeding and are unattained to remove breeding resources permanently .

As dengue, malaria, chikungunya etc spread mostly in the rainy season, therefore preventive measures are required and this initiative which has started today will continue in this activity till 30th of September Through this van and some other initiatives, people living in urban settlements of the city would be made aware to identify the breeding places of mosquitoes and prevent their breeding.

# RPF officials under ECR seize gold worth over Rs 81.60 lakh

## Three smugglers arrested

SURESH NIKHAR ■ Bermo/Gaya

In a joint operation of RPF, Gaya and DRD Patna officials under ECR seized gold worth more than Rs 81,60,000, arresting three smugglers at Gaya railway station here on Thursday. Officials arrested three passengers in relation to this case after receiving information from a source, said Sr DSC, DDU Ashish Mishra.

Upon receiving the tip-off, Inspector Ajay Prakash organised a team. Sub-Inspector Subash Ram, and Ravi Kamal, constable Shashi Shekhar and Vikash Kumar were instructed to keep a track of the 12987 train and lay a trap at Gaya station.

Upon the train's arrival at the station, passengers Vishal Kumar, Ranjan Kumar Sunita and Ashish Raj were detained and brought



to the RPF Gaya post.

The trio, revealed after a thorough interrogation that the gold was smuggled, while the team recovered 1.6 kg of gold worth Rs 81,60,000 along with other valuable items like mobile phones.

On questioning they did not give a satisfactory answer, on suspicion, the above three persons were brought down from the said coach and brought to the RPF Gaya post where on

asking the name and address respectively.

On strictly asking the above three persons, they accepted that they had gold in their possession, after searching the above three persons in a lawful manner, 13 pieces of foreign made gold of different sizes, total weight 1.6 kg. Finally, the gold was confiscated and DRD team Patna took them in their custody for necessary legal action.

## Superannuation function organised in CCL

PNS ■ RANCHI

Superannuation function for nine retiring employees was organised at Convention Centre, CCL HQ. CMD, CCL PMPrasad was the chief guest on the occasion. Director (Pers) P.V.K.R. Mallikarjuna Rao and Director (Fin) P.K.Mishra also graced the occasion. The programme was attended by General Managers, HoD's and other employees of the company.

The retiring employees shared various anecdotes from their professional journey. A total of 107 employees superannuated from CCL in June.

Speaking on the occasion CMD, CCL PM Prasad congratulated the superannuating employees on their exemplary service and wished them for the future. Director (Pers) Rao expressed his gratitude to the superannuating employees for their services and extended well wishes to the retiring employees for their health and happiness.

Director (Fin) PK Mishra said that superannuating employees should enjoy this stage of life. Later in the day a closing ceremony of Swachhta Pakhwada celebration was organised. The winners of various competitions were awarded . Swacchta warriors of the company were also felicitated on the occasion by General Manager (Admin), CCL UP Narayan and HoD(Welfare) Rekha Pandey.



## DC orders to check private clinics and doctor's certificates in Barhi

PNS ■ HAZARIBAG

Hazaribag Deputy Commissioner Nancy Sahay has ordered a check of private clinics, doctor's certificates and also the licence of medical stores in all four blocks. For this purpose the DC has constituted a four members team under the leadership of sub divisional officer of Barhi Poonam Kujur.

In this regard Sahay said that the district administration has received the regular complaints from the public that there are so many private nursing homes running in Barhi sub division who are not following the norms of nursing homes.

The district administration has decided to check all private nursing homes which are running in Barhi, Choparan, Barkatha and Padma blocks.

A four-member team has been formed under the chairmanship of Barhi Sub

Divisional officer Poonam Kujaur. The other members of the team are executive magistrate Deepa Khakho, deputy superintendent of hospital Dr. Prakash Gyani and Dr. Rajanikant.

Sources said that in Barhi sub divisional headquarter only six nursing homes are running with the proper certificate, remaining are running without the certificates. The same conditions are in Choparan and Barkatha blocks of the district.

The team members have been authorised to check the licence of the medical stores in all four blocks. The deputy commissioner said that after the report of the team the action will be taken on such nursing homes and medical stores who are running illegally in the areas.

## Bank robbers' gang busted in Bokaro, 4 arrested



PNS ■ Bermo

In a joint operation with a special task force, officers of different police stations in Bokaro busted a gang involved in recent bank robbery including loot of Rs 40 lakh from the Chas branch of Bank of India and arrested four criminals, in the last 24 hours. The police also recovered Rs 20.74 lakh in cash from the possession of the arrested criminals.

Six criminals had committed the robbery at the Indian Bank branch in Chas on June 29. They had looted Rs 40 lakh from Indian Bank Chas branch in Bokaro district on June 29.

trict on June 29.

Bokaro SP Chandan Kumar Jha said the same gang was involved in Indian Bank robbery. "Rs 20.74 lakh has been recovered," the SP added.

Jha said the arrested criminals were identified as Ashok Kumar, Jitendra Singh, Subham Yadav, and Dinesh Yadav. SP said the all four criminals were arrested from different places.

Jitendra Singh is the leader of the gang. One motorcycle, three pistols used in the crime and 17 live cartridges were recovered," the SP said.

## Rescued seven child labourers get due payment

PNS ■ DHANBAD

The seven child labourers, who were rescued from different hotels by the labour department earlier this month, were given their due wages on intervention of the labour department. They were reached on June 17 by a team of the labour department after a complaint.

Out of seven four were reached from Santosh hotel, two from Gokul Sweets and one from Krishna sweets located in different locations of the city. The department had also served a notice to owners of all three and had asked them to clear the due under different sections of Minimum Wages Act of 1948.

The owners submitted a sum of Rs 84727 that was due against the wages yesterday and the same was distributed among the rescued child labourers. The parents of those rescued were present while they were given away the due wages. Labour superintendent, Paveen Kumar said that drive against child labour is part of our work and we would continue this drive.

## Behavioural change can help address plastic pollution - The ecosystem killer

By Auvi Mukherjee

The use of single-use plastic items would attract punitive action across India from July 1, putting the spotlight on the silent killer and a global threat that pollutes air, water, and soil, damaging the natural ecosystem.

But why is it needed? For greater clarity and insight into the problem, it is significant to understand the true nature of plastics, the depth of its popularity, and the adverse effects of plastic waste.

We are surrounded by plastic, in the deepest oceans, the remotest valleys, the Arctic ice, and even in our very own bodies! Interestingly, plastics have also crept their way to Mars, left by the Curiosity Rover. We produce about 300 million tonnes of plastic in a year - a number that can nearly match the weight of the entire human population and is forecast to grow 60% by 2030 and treble by 2050, as per a Center for International Environmental Law report. According to the Union Environment Minister, Mr. Bhupendra Yadav, India itself generates 3.5 million tonnes of plastic waste annually, a figure which has almost doubled over the last five years.

Nature of plastics and its role in pollution

A plastic (plastikos-to mold) is an artificial polymer-natural or synthetic substance composed of macromolecules. Plastics are composed of varied elements including carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen. They have a diverse spectrum of properties and play vital roles in everyday life. Plastic is an obvious choice in every industry, as it is easy to manufacture, cheap, light, flexible, and durable as compared to other materials like glass, rubber, and metals. Although plastics have made considerable contributions in the fields of safety, electronics, medical devices, and packaging it comes with a great cost - the crippling burden of plastic pollution.

About 91% of plastic waste is not recycled. Out of the 8.3 billion metric tonnes of plastic produced, 6.3 billion metric tonnes is plastic waste, according to Journal Science Advances. Plastic takes more than 400 years to degrade, out of which only 12% gets incinerated. The shocking increase in plastic pollution from the 1950s has left scientists appalled and environmentalists concerned. According to some reports, by 2050 the weight of plastics in landfills can be 35,000 times heavier than the Empire State Building.

Plastic wastes are non-biodegradable, hazardous to the environment, a threat to human and animal health, and a major contributor to climate change. They are not organic, and cannot be decomposed by microorganisms, degrading the environment and causing the atrophy of soil for cementing. Moreover, they spread toxins and the production and decomposition of plastics come from planet-warming fuels that also contribute to air pollution and cause illnesses

like hormone-related cancers, infertility, and neurodevelopmental disorders. Plastics also pollute the oceans-threatening the survival of entire ecosystems and infiltrating life-giving foodchains. The bulk of plastic wastes ends up in landfills, as litter in natural environments which eventually finds its way into oceans.

Impact on animals and humans

Plastics adversely affect millions of animals, birds, and marine life across the globe killing millions every year. Most animals suffer the tragic fate of entanglement or starvation. Approximately 700 species of animals, including endangered ones, are impacted by plastic pollution. Land animals including elephants, zebras, camels, and large mammals consume plastics which can be fatal and increase susceptibility to organ injuries, illnesses, and lower reproductive success.

When it comes to marine pollution, UK government data suggests that over 1 lakh marine animals, turtles, and a million sea birds are killed by plastics annually. Plastic has been uncovered from every single exotic creature of the Mariana Trench. The most overwhelmingly affected organisms are marine life, bearing the brutal brunt of plastic pollution.

As I write, 50,000 plastic bottles are being thrown away, along with a bulk of plastic bags and food wrappers. About 12 million tonnes of plastic are poured into the ocean every year, making up about 80% of ocean debris (Eunomia 2016

and IUCN 2020). Most marine animals ingest the plastics, which give them a sensation of being full and then pass away from starvation.

At sea, plastics are broken down by sunlight, wind, and wave action into microplastics, which are impossible to retrieve. From here on, it's almost game over. As per recent media reports, microplastics have been found in over 100 aquatic species, including fish, shrimps, and mussels, fated to land on our food plates and eventually end up in our digestive systems.

Tiny pieces of plastics have invaded everything - our bodies, foods, atmosphere, and water. According to research published in the Journal Environmental Science and Technology, on average, we approximately consume 50,000 microplastics in a year, not visible to the human eye. The report also discovered that an individual who consumes bottled water every day ingests a mammoth 90,000 particles of plastic in a year. The ingested plastic particles from fruits, seafood, and drinking water have the power to alter the gut microbiome, damage the immune system and cause metabolic diseases.

## Simple Solutions

Solutions for such a massive problem can never be simple. However, the simplest advice by experts is to avoid plastics as much as possible and dispose waste meticulously. Judicious use of plastics, educating consumers, adopting planet-friendly alternatives like wooden sticks, recycled paper, bamboo,

and clay cutlery, and recycling wastes will go a long way in our war against plastics. More specifically, the best antidote to microplastics is preventing waste from entering water bodies by implementing improved waste management systems, refined recycling schemes, and better product designs.

Change is happening and we must all join the movement. Small lifestyle changes like drinking filtered water, steering clear of plastic packaging, and avoiding certain cosmetic products can go a long way toward a healthy life and environment.

India is heading towards a smarter, cleaner, and sustainable future by launching a series of green initiatives. The most notable is the ban on single-use plastics, which account for 50 percent of all plastic wastes. Repeated communication on the ill effects of indiscriminate plastic use and fines for littering will ensure the much-needed behavioral change. An actionable path has been laid out and it all starts with us taking responsibility and pride in the wonders of our nature which are threatened by plastic pollution. For if not us, then who? So the next time you think of throwing that plastic wrapper on the road; think again. It may just land up in your digestive system.

The writer, a Gold Award winner in the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2021, is a football enthusiast, an occasional blogger and closely tracks issues around climate change.

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On this occasion the deputy development commissioner Prema Dixit and other officers were present.

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## Kidnapped doctor's corpse found in jungle, villagers protest

SHAILESH SHARMA ■ HAZARIBAG

A doctor of Kushambha village of Katkamdag block was kidnapped by unknown persons on 25th june. After five day the police found the dead body of the doctor from the Pindrahi jungle on Wednesday late evening.

As soon as the news of the discovery of the doctor's body spread to the village, nearly 400 villagers reached Katkamdag police station as a sign of protest. The villagers have demanded the arrest of cul-

perts within 24 hours along with hanging of kidnappers.

Dr. Abhijit Kumar Roy has been doing the practice in the Kushambha village since 2013. He was very much popular among the villagers and also surrounding areas. He was living in the house of Upendra Yadav. He was basically a resident of West Bengal.

Dr. Roy was married to Puja last year. She was living with her relative in Tandwa of Chatra district. A resident of the village Roshan Kumar Yadav said

to the doctor that someone is calling him. Doctor came with Yadav and Yadav left him on NH-33. He was kidnapped from there by the kidnappers.

The villagers alleged that they had informed the local police station after the kidnapping, but the police did not take it seriously. The villagers said that if the local police had searched the kidnappers at the proper time then the life of the doctor could be saved. The villagers have demanded a job for the deceased doctor's wife.

## Water level increases in Garga, alert issued

PNS ■ BOKARO

As the water level increased in the Garga reservoir, the dam authority issued a red alert asking people not to go into the river as water flow increased into the river. It might be expected of a sudden release of more water from the reservoir of the dam at any time, the warning reveals.

Authorities also warned all residents living close to the riverbanks to move to safer and higher places. Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL)

authority issued an alert stating that water level has been in the Garga reservoir and dam gates can be opened any time from 01 July to 31 October.

We have warned all residents living close to the riverbanks to move to safer and higher places. As the water level increases in the reservoir, huge amounts of water can be released anytime in any day. If the gates of the dam were opened, huge amounts of water would be released from the dam, informed AK Singh GM, TE TA, BSL.

The management issued a warning not to enter the Garga River as the water level increased in both the dam and the river. A sudden release of more water from the dam's reservoir is possible at any time, according to the warning. The water level in the dam rose due to the heavy rain.

The threat of a flood remains, according to officials who are monitoring the rise in the river's and dam's water level. However, they stated that the likelihood of a major flood in the district was low.



# CM inaugurates world class Fossil Park in Sahebganj

**Pays tributes to Sido-Kanhu on Hul Diwas**

PNS ■ RANCHI

How did the earth originate? What was the basis of the creation of humans and other living beings? How did human life develop? The history of Mandro-Rajmahal hills is a witness to this," said Chief Minister Hemant Soren said during inauguration of the world class Fossils Park and Fossils Museum-cum-Auditorium at Mandro on Thursday. The CM also visited the Fossil Park.

The CM said that the history of the hills, trees and rocks of Mandro is as old as the time of the arrival of living beings on the earth and perhaps even older. This Fossils Park will not only become a special attraction for tourists, but will also give a new direction to the research of geologists and students.

Soren said that there are only a few places in the whole world that tell the history of the creation of human life on earth. In this, the land of Mandro located in Sahibganj is in the first place. Such a treasure is hidden in the hills and



Chief Minister Hemant Soren garlands at the statues of tribal freedom fighter Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu on the occasion of 'Hul Diwas' celebration, at Bhognadih, Sahibganj on Thursday. PNS

forests here, which will be rarely seen anywhere. The fossils here contain the entire history of the creation of the universe in itself. Let the whole country and the world know about it. Also, to preserve the fossils here, it has been given the form of Fossil Park.

On this occasion MP Vijay Kumar Hansda, APCCF of Forest Department NK Singh, Regional Forest Conservator Satish Chandra Rai and many other officials were present.

The CM said that the tribal society has been fighting for its rights since the very beginning, a living example of this is available from Bhognadih, where Amar Veer Shaheed Sido-Kanhu

took their own initiative to protect the interests of the tribal society from the British. They sacrificed their lives. The CM was addressing the people after offering prayers at the memorial site of Amar Shaheed Sido-Kanhu at Bhognadih, Sahibganj on the occasion of Hool Diwas today.

Speaking on the occasion, Soren said that the tribal society has made its own identity in the country. It has left his major mark in many stories of history. The tribal community has made its own place by following the duty towards the society. This society has been playing its major role in saving water-forest-land. The CM said that his-



Chief Minister Hemant Soren meets family members of tribal freedom fighter Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu on the occasion of 'Hul Diwas' celebration at Bhognadih, Sahibganj on Thursday. PNS

torians believe that after the formation of the earth, the land first appeared in the Kolhan region of Jharkhand. Some remains of the dinosaur era are also found here. He said that the tribal societies have been fighting to protect their interests from the very beginning. Many hundred years ago, great tribal leaders like Phoolo-Jhano, Chand-Bhairava, Sido-Kanhu had fought for their rights and united people for the benefit of the society.

The CM inaugurated the Amar Shaheed Sido Kanhu gate on the occasion of Hool Diwas. After this garlanded the statue situated at the residence of Amar Shaheed Sido Kanhu and met

his descendants and presented them with gifts. He also directed the concerned officials to take prompt action on the memoranda given by their descendants. After this, the CM garlanded the statues of Sido-Kanhu, Phoolo-Jhano and Chand-Bhairava at Amar Shaheed Sido-Kanhu Park, Bhognadih on the occasion of Hul Diwas.

In the programme, the foundation stone of 19 schemes worth Rs 1646.36 lakh was laid and Rs 3303.43 lakh was inaugurated. On this occasion, the CM distributed appointment letters and assets among the beneficiaries under various schemes of the government.

## Despite bypoll setback, BJP popularity growing in Mandar: Sahu

PNS ■ RANCHI

Facing a setback in bypolls since 2019 with more recently in Mandar where BJP candidate Gangotri Kujur lost to Congress candidate Shilpi Neha Turkey daughter of former MLA Bandhu Turkey, the BJP today claimed that its support base in Mandar is growing day by day.

The State BJP leaders confidently claimed that BJP will get public support in the next by-election of the state. The leaders claimed that it is evident from increasing vote share of BJP candidates in the four by-elections held in the state since 2019. Raja Sabha MP Aditya Sahu said in a press conference at the party office that the Mandar by-election was held recently, BJP candidate vote share has gone up.

In 2014, the BJP candidate got 54 thousand votes. In 2019, the BJP candidate polled 68 thousand votes. In the recent by-poll the BJP candidate polled 72 thousand votes. Considering the demographics here, this increasing vote percentage assumes importance as in such a situation, we hope that in the next election, lotus will bloom in Mandar.

In the Mandar assembly by-election, Congress candidate



Raja Sabha MP Aditya Sahu, Media in-charge Shivpujan Pathak, Ashok Braik alongwith Gangotri Kujur during a press conference at party office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

Shilpa Neha Turkey won by 23,517 votes. Shilpa got 95,062 votes, while BJP candidate Gangotri Kujur, who came second, got 71,545 votes. Over 61.25 per cent of about 3.5 lakh voters exercised their franchise in the election, held on June 23. The by-election was necessitated after the disqualification of Bandhu Turkey as an MLA in the wake of his conviction in a corruption case.

Dumka, Bermo, Madhupur and Mandar seats have also belonged to the ruling parties. The vote percentage of BJP has increased in the by-elections as compared to 2019. In the next elections, only BJP will lead in these places. State Vice Presi-

dent and former MLA Gangotri Kujur and others were also present in the press conference.

Aditya Sahu said that no person contests elections in BJP. Collective leadership and each and every worker fights, works hard. BJP is a party of workers. The arrogant Bandhu Turkey and the Congress party tricked the poor. He said that everyone knows what condition the ruling party has brought to the state in the last two-three years. Bandhu Turkey was an MLA for two and a half years now. They should tell what schemes they could bring in their Mandar in so many years, who benefited them by putting them on the ground.

## Hearing on PILs against Soren deferred to July 5

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand High Court on Thursday extensively heard arguments on the merit of PILs 4290/2021 and 727/2022 against Chief Minister Hemant Soren and posted the matter for further hearing on Tuesday.

The division bench of Chief Justice Dr. Ravi Ranjan and Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad started the hearing at 10.30 AM and continued till 4.30 PM.

The court deferred the hearing on the request of Kapil Sibal representing the state government. He said that the State government needs additional time to reply in detail to the allegations made by the petitioner Shiv Shankar Sharma. The court said it wants to complete the hearing as early as possible and it has given sufficient time to the petitioner and respondents to present their case.

The court rejected an interlocutory petition filed by a person who wanted the opportunity to represent his case before the High Court. The person said to be from Kolkata was represented by his lawyer Amitesh Banerjee who said that the name of his company has figured in the PIL

hence an opportunity should be given to him. The court said that the concerned person is not a respondent in the PIL. Even if the court orders a CBI probe it will not be against any person or the company.

In 4290/2021 related to allegations against CM for laundering money through shell companies, petitioner's lawyer Rajiv Kumar said that the chief minister and his associates have amassed wealth and the same has been parked in shell companies. He further claimed that money was laundered through the liquor business and a powerful syndicate having political and bureaucratic backing is minting money. He said that CM's brother Basant Soren has a mining company and undue favour was extended to the said company named Grands Mining Pvt LLP. He said that land in acres was allotted to a company being run by CM's family member whereas CM himself availed stone mining lease. The petitioner pointed out that CM got undue favour by misusing his office.

Rajiv Kumar informed the court that a number of IAS officers are deeply involved in looting the State exchequer to an extent

that Palamu DC gave a mining lease to his mother-in-law.

Kapil Sibal in his submission rejected the allegation as untrue and said that the petitioner has some ulterior motives. He said that no undue favour was extended to the company Sohrai Livestock in terms of grant of land for industrial purposes. In this company CM's wife and sister-in-law are directors. Sibal said that the company was granted land under due process of law and the government also withdrew the grant of land. The state government filed a detailed counter affidavit where it admitted that Grands Mining currently has five mining leases. But the company was never extended undue favour and even action was recommended for violating norms. Sibal said that the state government would file a case of perjury against the petitioner.

He said that the petitioner made allegations without having prima facie. About the shell companies, he claimed that even old and reputed companies have been mentioned in the list of shell companies. For example, he referred to Anoop Tea Pvt Limited which according to him was established in 1969.

## JAC results for Intermediate Commerce, Arts declared

**Pass percentage in commerce 92.75%, arts 97.43%**

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Jharkhand Academic Council (JAC) declared the Class 12 results for arts and commerce streams today. This year pass percentage has remained high despite the pandemic. While other boards have witnessed drop in pass percentage, however for Jharkhand board there has been a rise in pass percentage.

As many as 92.75% of students who took the commerce exam have passed while in arts stream 97.43%

of students have cleared the JAC 12th examinations. The Jharkhand Board 12th science results too have been declared and that too was one of the best performances of JAC science students in recent years.

JAC 12th arts and commerce results were first scheduled to be out at 2:30 PM, however, after a delay, the result was finally announced around 4:30 PM. The results are available at jac.nic.in, jacresults.com and jharresults.nic.in. There was a rush of students to see the results, the site was slow with students having to wait for long hours to see the results. The last time when the 10th results were announced,



Education Minister Jagarnath Mahto releases JAC Board results at JAC office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Ratan Lal

the website crashed.

The students had to wait for long hours at an internet café to see the results. The biggest wait of students was in rural areas where the internet connectivity was less. More than two lakh students took the JAC Class 12 Arts and Commerce examination this year.

Thus, students need to know alternative websites, apps, and other routes to check marks. JAC 12th results will also be available at digilocker.gov.in as well as results.gov.in.

In order to clear the exams, students need to secure a minimum of 23 marks out of 70 marks paper and 33

marks out of 100 marks paper. Overall students need to score 33 percent to be passed in the JAC board exam 2022. Those who fail to match the passing criteria need not worry as they will have one more chance by appearing in compartment exams.

This year the Jharkhand Board held exams, as per the pre-pandemic practice. This might impact the pass percentage. Jharkhand Board will be releasing a merit list including names of toppers and marks obtained by them today. This will be the first time since the pandemic that the merit list will be out. The last time the Jharkhand Board merit list was issued was in 2019.

## 'Door to door survey will be done for Sarvajan Pension Yojana'

PNS ■ RANCHI

Door to door survey will be done for Sarvajan Pension Yojana, so that maximum numbers of eligible beneficiaries get the benefit of the scheme. Through a virtual meeting held on Thursday, Ranchi Deputy Commissioner (DC), Chhavi Ranjan directed to work under a special campaign in Ranchi district for this.

Ranjan said, "The Government appreciated the excellent performance of Ranchi district in Government at your door programme and Ranchi district has stood first in the entire State".

Ranjan said that no eligi-



Ranchi DC Chhavi Ranjan during a meeting with senior officials in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

ble beneficiary should be left out of Sarvajan Pension Yojana. "Not even a single eligible old, disabled and destitute woman should be deprived of the benefits of the scheme. Marking the eligible beneficiaries according to the voter list, they should be given the benefit of the scheme. Said that

BLO and Sevika-Sahayak will do door to door survey work. Instructions have been given to depute women supervisors for surveys in urban areas. There will be a lady supervisor at 5-6 booths," he added.

During the meeting, the DC directed to provide a daily report of the survey

being conducted in various blocks. He said that the block level survey report should be sent to the District Social Welfare Officer and Assistant Director Social Security, so that the process could be completed at the earliest for giving pension to the eligible beneficiaries.

Ranjan spoke of strict action in case of any negligence in the process of taking the benefits of Sarvajan Pension Yojana to the beneficiaries. He said that if there is a complaint of any CDPO, BSW, lady supervisor, then report to the BDO. Action will be taken against them immediately.

Expressing displeasure over the lack of expected progress of the scheme, the

DC directed to expedite the work and along with this, all the BDO-COs were asked to set up camps in their respective areas on every Tuesday and Friday. The DC also directed to make the forms available on VHSND in all Anganwadi centers so that the eligible beneficiaries coming to Anganwadi centers can be provided the benefits of the scheme during this period.

"The special campaign being run for Sarvajan Pension Yojana will be monitored by the district level officials. DC directed to nominate senior officers for each 4-5 blocks. Those who will visit the concerned block on the day of the camp," said Ranjan.

## IIT, ISM develops Smart Auto-Irrigation and Soil Monitoring System

**The system established at KVK, Dhanbad**

MRITUANJAY KUMAR ■ RANCHI

IIT (ISM), Dhanbad has researched and developed a new Smart Auto-Irrigation and Upgrade of Soil Monitoring System to motivate and engage to take up agriculture and farming for the distressed families of farmers affected by COVID-19. It was demonstrated at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Dhanbad on Thursday by the IIT, (ISM) Dhanbad research team.

Scientist KVK, Dhanbad, Seema Singh informed that the farmers will be benefited by the new advanced system and the focus is on driving the new system and developing into a sustainable source of income. This project has been established at KVK, Dhanbad, she added.

Singh further informed that the project is part of the IEEE



Scientists of IIT-ISM Dhanbad along with KVM officials in Dhanbad on Thursday. PNS

HAC (Humanitarian Activities Committee) and IEEE SIGHT's (Special Interest Group on Humanitarian Technology) response to the current COVID-19 situation with an institute in selected developing Countries has been chosen to improve. IEEE (USA) led by Project Head, Professor, Rajeev Kumar Ranjan and Dr Dheeraj

Kumar from IIT (ISM) to empower the people of Dhanbad. "A research fund of US\$ 4,995 has been provided this time to make Dhanbad's initiative a success. The project members are Pushkar Srivastava, Sanal Roy, Om Kumar, Sachin Kumar and Shubham Kumar Kurey. The project was ethically supported by Deputy Director, Dhi-

raj Kumar and Director, Rajiv Shekhar," she added.

"Old irrigation techniques lead to wastage of water. Dhanbad district is facing water shortage for a long time. It encourages people to take up farming in the area and move to the nearby metros for better opportunities. This project will help farmers or COVID-19 migrants who are less skilled in farming with a more efficient mode of irrigation. The proposed system is designed to remove unnecessary water runoff in agricultural land by using a sprinkler system. Using the sensor, the readings of temperature, wind speed, sunlight intensity, soil moisture, air humidity and pH are continuously monitored. Solar panels were used for power supply in the system which has made the project self-sufficient, thus it will be more sustainable," said Singh.

The Scientist further said that all this is easily managed by an Android Application de-

veloped by the students which will be available on Google Play Store with the name Agro-Pro 2.0. "The interface is designed to be minimal to use, with an easy-to-use interface where most tasks are automated that do not require human intervention. Migrant workers living in urban areas have skills that can be used adeptly in providing basic capacity to farmers and eliminating orthodox methods of irrigation practice," she added.

Singh also said that the new system is cost effective and can be easily afforded by the farmer. Maintenance cost is also very less. "The system comes with a host of features, including but not limited to automatic irrigation, control via multi-language Android app, farmer-irrigation support, 24/7 monitoring. Although these are the current set of features, the proposed research ideas can be implemented with appropriate financial and administrative support from Government organizations," she added.

## INBRIEF

### Plantation drive by CMPDI

CMPDI (HQ) as part of Swachhita Pakhwada-2022 carried out Plantation drive and planted saplings (Teak, Gulmohar) at Morhabadi, Ranchi in association/support from Team Green, Ranchi. Saplings were fenced to protect it from animals. Suman Rastogi, Chief Manager (P/CSR) and Safina Parveen, Dy. Manager (CSR), CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi along with the CSR team were present. CMPDI is observing Swachhita Pakhwada from 16.06.2022 to 30.06.2022.

### SCS celebrates National Doctor's Day

Suren-dranath Centenary School celebrated National Doctor's Day on the school premises. They expressed their gratitude towards their selfless services. This day is celebrated to pay tribute to the great Doctor and Philanthropist Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy. Several activities were organised by the Health Club of the school. A Blood Donation Camp was organized in the campus, a team from RIMS Blood bank offered their valuable services to the camp. The teaching, non-teaching staff and many parents donated blood with proud hearts. As many as 15 units of blood were collected. Several other activities were also organised like the sports teachers monitored the height and weight of the students of class II. Tips for oral hygiene were shared by the Parent doctors, Dr Mahadev & Dr Santosh Kumar in Junior wing. Dental checkup was also done by them.

### CCL RRD hold meeting

A meeting was held between Divisional Railway Manager Pradeep Gupta and CMD, CCL PM Prasad at CCL Ranchi Headquarters, Darbhanga House on Thursday. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss in detail the increase in freight loading and other topics in the current situation. In the meeting, various points were discussed in detail for increasing the loading mainly from Rajrapa siding like infrastructure development, improving the condition of railway tracks, providing necessary facilities etc. Along with this, the problems faced in shipment were also discussed in the meeting and it was also discussed to find solutions to them. The DRM assured that all possible assistance would be provided to them by the Railways to increase the loading. In this meeting, Sr DOM Aditya Kumar Chaudhary, Dr DCM cum CPRO Nishant Kumar, DE (East) Bishwajit Ghosh and GM (Sales) of CCL Aji Kumar Singh were present.

### NABARD staff hold demonstrations

All Regional Offices of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) under the joint aegis of All India National Bank Officers Association (AINOB) and All India National Bank Employees Association (AINBEA) on 30th June 2022, organized gate-demonstration at the Training Institute and Head Office during the lunch break demanding wage revision agreement. In the same se-

quence, gate-demonstration was also organized by the local unit of the association at NABARD Jharkhand Regional Office, Ranchi during the midday lunch break. During this, the President of National Bank Officers Association Gautam Singh requested all the staff to maintain patience and restraint. National Bank Employees Association President Ram Niwas said that there has been a long delay in wage revision. We have been getting the same salary as the Reserve Bank of India and we will continue to get the same salary in future also.

### 59 SAIL officials, staff promoted



A total of 51 Executives and 8 Non-executives were promoted in SAIL Ranchi Units today. Felicitation functions were held at RDCIS, CET & MTI to honour the achievers. Jagdish Arora, ED (CET), Nirvik Banerjee, ED(RDCIS) and Sanjeev Kumar, ED(HRD) encouraged the collective. The distribution this year was 10 executives from E6 to E7 grade, 4 executives from E5 to E6 Grade, 21 executives from E4 to E5 grade, 11 executives from E3 to E4 grade and 5 executives from E2 to E3 grade. In the Non-executive grade 2 were from RDCIS, 1 from CET, 4 from MTI and one from RMG. Apart from the Chief executives and awardees, several senior officers graced the felicitation ceremony.

### 2 members of CMPDI family honoured

Two members of the CMPDI family were felicitated in a farewell-cum-honouring ceremony held here on Thursday. These include AK Sharma-Chief Manager (Mining) and SC Jha-Assistant Foreman. On this occasion, AK Rana, Senior Adviser, CMPDI honoured the retired employees on behalf of the company by giving them a bouquet, a mandala, a logo and a shawl and wished all the retired employees a bright future, good health, a happy and long life. On the occasion, the General Managers / Heads of Departments of CMPDI also wished good luck to all the retired employees and their families.

### RRD bids adieu to 8 employees



Eight railway personnel of Ranchi Railway Division retired on Thursday. All these were paid the retirement funds. On this occasion, ADRM (Operations) Manish Kumar and Sr DPO, Manik Shankar extended their best wishes to all. The officers wished them a healthy and happy retired life and said that their valuable contribution to railways will be remembered. AAO Rautu Kaloundiya said that "Invest your money properly". ADPO Chittaranjan Kumar was also present on the occasion. Today the CMO of RRD, Dr. GC Hembram also retired.



# EC BEGINS REVISION OF ELECTORAL ROLLS IN J&K

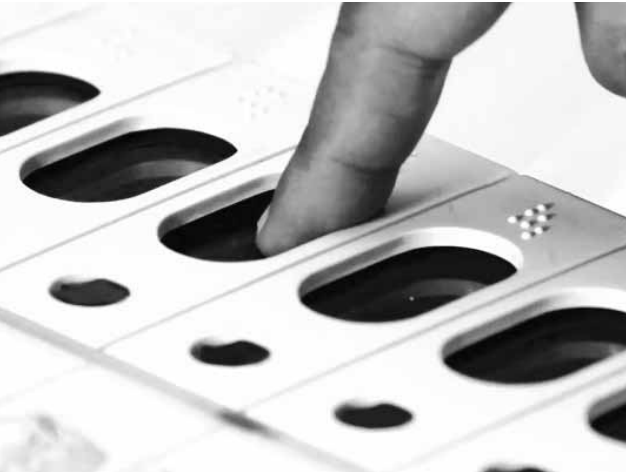
Taking place after a gap of three years, the process is an indication that polls could be held in Valley

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"Consequent upon amendment in Section 14 of the Representation of the People Act by Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, as notified vide the Gazette of India notification No. 67, dated 30 December 2021 and corresponding



changes in the Registration of Electors Rule, 1960 notified on 17th June, 2022, four qualifying dates, namely, 1 January, 1 April, 1 July, and 1 October are available in the law. In view of the reason explained in the preceding paragraph, the Commission has decided to order SSR, 2022 with respect to October 1, 2022 which is the next qualifying date for preparation of electoral roll, after conclusion of the ongoing pre-revision activities,"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## India sees huge jump in Covid cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Fresh Covid-19 cases in India in the week ending Sunday surged to the highest in nearly four months with close to 80,000 new infections, up 62% from the previous week's tally. Although deaths from the virus remained very low compared to previous outbreaks, at least 93 fatali-



ties were reported in the country during the week, more than the combined toll in the previous two weeks (45 and 41).

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

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

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

## UN condemns killing of Kanhaiya Lal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

"We very much hope... we call for the full respect of all religions and for ensuring, throughout the world, that different communities can live in harmony and in peace," Dujarric said at the daily press briefing. In response to another question on the arrest of Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair, he said, "We believe in a fundamental right of expression. We believe in the fundamental right of journalists to express, themselves and we also believe in the fundamental need for people to respect other communities and other religions. We believe those two sentiments are very much compatible."



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

other multilateral and regional fora. Both sides agreed to hold the next India-Japan Cyber Dialogue in 2023 as per mutual convenience.

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

In the response to a Right to Information (RTI) application, the Lok

Sabha Secretariat said it has received a bill of ₹35.21 crore from the Indian Railways for the travel of sitting MPs and ₹26.82 crore for former MPs during 2017-2018 to 2021-22.

According to the response, the MPs and ex-MPs used the Railway passes even during the pandemic-hit year of 2020-21 when their bill was ₹1.29 crore and ₹1.18 crore, respectively. The Railways' pay and accounts department forwards the bills to the LS Secretariat for processing. The Railways has recently put on hold an array of concessions it offered to certain categories of passengers, including senior citizens. While there was subdued anger among certain sections

over the move, the discontinuation of the subsidy given to senior citizens has drawn a lot of ire. According to official data, between March 20, 2020 and March 31, 2022, the Railways did not offer concessions to 7.31 crore senior citizen travellers. These included 4.46 crore males over the age of 60, and 2.84 crore females over 58 and 8,310 transgender people.

Last year the Rajya Sabha Secretariat also found randomly that 87 per cent of the total cost of journeys have not been undertaken and neither were cancelled but the Secretariat had to reimburse to the Railways. In an advisory the Rajya Sabha noted that from the details of

debit claims raised by the Ministry of Railways, multiple bookings were being made by some members in various trains departing from the same/different stations to different destinations for the same day.

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

## Changing geopolitical scenario making Indian Ocean region competitive: NSA

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Making these observa-

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

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



ly important.

"The more we develop, the more assets we create, the more prosperous we get, greater would be the vulnerability and the need for security in the maritime domain," he said. Underlining these key fac-

tors, Doval called for seamless coordination among various agencies involved in protecting India's maritime interests, saying it will not be able to become the power it deserves to be in absence of a very strong maritime security apparatus.

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

"The trajectory of this nation is well defined. We

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

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

### CRIMES AGAINST SCs, STs

## Ensure there is no delay in registration of FIRs: MHA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

In a communication to all States and Union Territories, the Home Ministry also said that the district

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

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

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## Maha events shameful for Indian democracy: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

"Through the naked display of money and muscle power, the BJP has undemocratically and unethically captured yet another

State Government. Under the Modi-Shah duo, the BJP wants to capture power at any cost, either directly or through remote control. What happened in Maharashtra is shameful for Indian democracy," he said.

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

Ramesh further alleged that offices of the Governors and Speakers, and agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are openly misused, adding that buying MLAs has become so commonplace that the Finance Minister blurted out the truth today, when she suggested imposition of GST on horse-trading. "The BJP can go to any extent to win elections - From misuse of

money power to polarisation and violence. Despite using all these tactics, if the voters reject them, then they start hatching conspiracies to topple elected governments," he said. The Congress leader said in 2016, the BJP brought down the Congress Government in Uttarakhand in a similar way, where due to Congress MLAs leaving the party, the Government elected for five years was reduced to a minority in four years.

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

## People pose as PMO staffers; CBI registers three cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

advance to Prince by him.

In the second case, one Dr Shiva Kumar of Kerala, impersonating as an PMO official was making calls to people from his mobile number 08075994461 claiming to be a Personal Advisor to the Prime Minister. The third case has been registered against an unknown accused following a complaint from Anil Kumar Sharma, Assistant Director, PMO.

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



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

The TMC has recently upped the ante against the BJP leadership following ED and



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

CBI interrogation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee and his wife Rujira Banerjee. The ED has reportedly asked Rujira Banerjee to explain her links to several crores of rupees parked in a Thailand bank.

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

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

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

"Didi has been trying to find out allegations to blemish my name ... she failed to do so ... now she is using Sharada scammers to make these comments ... I have already filed a

defamation against Sudipto Sen," the Congress leader who is also the PCC president said wondering why there was no word about what had transpired between the Chief Minister and the Sen at Dello Bungalow in Kalimpong. "We are eager to know from CBI and ED as to what had transpired between Mamata Banerjee and Sudipto Sen in the Dello Bungalow at Kalimpong ... why is there no word about that," Chowdhury said.

# 'DIDI IS MOTHER SHARADA REINCARNATION' 'Pained' RK Mission condemns TMC leader's statement

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

In addition several employees, especially teachers, have been served show cause notices

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

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

So far the initiatives announced by the Union territory administration have not

enthused these employees and they continue to hold their ground in support of their demand. These initiatives included a promotion scheme for the PM package employees, transfer to safer zones in the district headquarters, and adequate security cover across their transit camps.

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

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



As per rough estimates around 70 percent kashmiri migrant employees have

already shifted to Jammu while rest of them have been camping inside their transit camps

and not stepping out as they continue to live under the shadow of guns.

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

Gandhi had made a speech on June 3 exhorting the Dravidians to annihilate the Brahmins as demanded by E V Ramasami Naicker, founder of the Dravidian movement. The DMK spokesman had reiterated the demand made by Naicker (addressed as Periyar by Dravidian activists) in the

1960s that there should be an ethnic cleansing of Tamil Nadu by finishing off the Brahmins.

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

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

prosecute Gandhi for offences against the State and for criminal conspiracy to commit such an offence.

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

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

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

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

## Yogi Govt extends free ration scheme for 3 more months

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

## BSP working on Dalit-Muslim formula for 2024 LS election

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

her was part of the policy of Bahujan Samaj Party.

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

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

Mayawati said instead of appeasement, hate elements should be dealt with strictly. She said it was wrong to demolish the house of any one community and send its members to jail. "This is constitutionally and humanly unfair. Strict action

should be taken against those elements who promote enmity. There should be no discrimination in this," Mayawati said during the meeting.

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

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

# Yogi asks youth to create jobs through MSMEs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

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

On this occasion, the chief minister inaugurated Common Facilitation Centres (CFCs) in Agra, Ambedkar Nagar, Sitapur,

Azamgarh and Siddharthnagar districts for branding, packaging and marketing of ODOP products. The chief minister interacted with the operators of the CFCs and discussed their functioning and future action plan.

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

## Akhilesh targets CM over waterlogging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

in Gorakhpur!"

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



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





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Rebel turns king

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

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



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

become a part of the Government. So, made a personal request to him. The central leadership has said that Devendra Fadnavis should take charge as the Deputy CM of Maharashtra."

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

### PICTALK



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

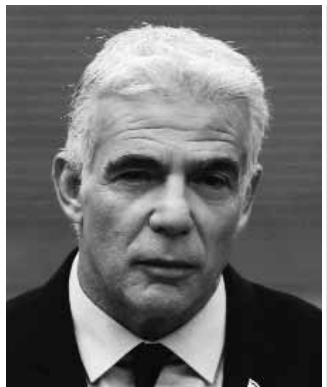
AP

## Power shift

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

The reins of power have not changed hands only in Maharashtra, and no longer does Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy remain the only high-profile head of a State who has appeared in popular television programmes. Quite a geographical distance away from India and Ukraine, the small but powerful country of Israel too is witnessing a shift in power. In the 10 years since he relinquished his job as a political chat show host to turn a full-time politician, Yair Lapid had dreamed of becoming Israel's Prime Minister. Now, as he prepares to take over in a caretaker capacity, he is sure to put his best foot forward to prove that he deserves the top job in the long term even as the country prepares to go to polls for the fifth time in less than four years. Meanwhile, former amateur boxer Lapid faces a stiff challenge from conservative Benjamin Netanyahu — Israel's longest-serving leader — whom he successfully knocked out of office in 2021 by forging an unlikely alliance between eight, ideologically diverse political parties. Of course, Netanyahu — seeking his sixth term in office — will seek to paint his bitter rival as weak on security, particularly when it comes to Iran and terrorism. The challenge for Lapid will be to prove that he can protect Israel from its enemies and promote domestic unity.

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



# Global 'mission' & democratic culture

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



SARADINDU MUKHERJI

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

It is high time that the ummah may have to explain, and then compensate all those in India (and also outside) who feel deeply humiliated at the sight of thousands of their sacred places turned into mosques and millions of their fellow citizens imposed with artificial Arab identity. Then there is the issue of Wafk

property. Their crime multiplies when one adds to their inhuman record the genocide of Hindus and other minorities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and in our own Kashmir Valley. What ideology explains these?

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FOCUS ON CLEANER TECHNOLOGIES

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

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

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

### UDAIPUR MURDER IS CONDEMNABLE

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

But the tailor himself was arrested and the matter was 'settled' after police-mediated sessions between him and the complainants. But the manner in which he was

## A step in the right direction



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

problem. It would also increase the demand for more sustainable products which would boost the country's overall economy.

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

Krishna Kararia | Rohini

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

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

### SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN'S VICTORY

Sir — With his victory, SAD (Amritsar) president Simranjit Singh Mann in the Lok Sabha bypoll wrested the lone seat held by AAP. The bypoll was necessitated by the resignation of Bhagwant Mann since he took over as the Punjab Chief Minister. The bypoll victories do not indicate the mood of people or nation. Therefore, any attributions to Mann's victory or the opponent's

defeat may be imaginary. A buoyed Mann has credited the victory to Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He should have introspected before issuing such a controversial statement. If Bhindranwale's teaching could permeate such an influence, why was AAP brought to power instead of his party?

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

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUNDBITE

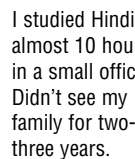
Due to Rajasthan Govt's policies, a situation of communal frenzy has arisen in the State.

Rajasthan ex-Chief Minister —Vasundhara Raje



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

Ukraine President —Volodymyr Zelenskyy

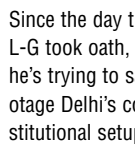


I studied Hindi for almost 10 hours in a small office... Didn't see my family for two-three years.



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

India cricket skipper —Hardik Pandya



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

AAP leader —Atishi

Actor —Nargis Fakhri



FIRST COLUMN

YOGA NOW ACCESSIBLE TO ENTIRE HUMANKIND

Yoga seeks to unite human body with mind

ISHWAR V BASAVARADDI


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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Sexist attitude, remarks must be challenged

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recently the Dean of Students’ Welfare of an Institution of Eminence in central India issued a pamphlet on dangers of drug



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

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



use, worded supposedly for witty and catchy slogans, created by students as part of a competition. These slogans were accredited and enlisted as the best entries from the contest.

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

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

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

Secondly, it normalises the

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

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

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

Despite clearing the UGC

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

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

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

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

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

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



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


# India leads with effective climate change response

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

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

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

On forest and environment conservation, it is worthwhile to assess the performance of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Policies of the



VK BAHUGUNA

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Environment sector influence the success of several programmes of different Ministries. There is a mixed bag of assessment.

Soon after taking over the reign of administration the first thing the Ministry urgently needed was to ensure transparency in granting forest and environmental clearances. Transparency is the hallmark of corruption free governance. The Ministry apart from other steps had created a mechanism under the ‘Parivesh’ portal where all user agencies are supposed to apply online for environmental and forestry clearances. It has ensured transparency, accountability, and time bound performance and thus made the clearance process free from delay and red tape. Procedures were simplified

for quick and professional examination of proposals. The changes ensured access of services to all sections of the people. While the poor people in the villages got quick clearances at the Regional offices/DFO levels for schools, police outpost, hospitals and other developmental works, the industries and other public utility sectors, necessary for infrastructure and development like water schemes, dams, electricity and mining, got timely clearances, which were earlier delayed for several years.

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

governance and cut delays.

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

The Compensatory Afforestation and Management Authority (CAMPAA) Amendment Bill was languishing for a long time. The govern-

ment brought accountability and streamlined the use of CAMPA funds, amounting more than Rs 80,000 crore. More than Rs 48,000 crore was released by December 2021 to 32 States which will give impetus to increase the forest cover.

The welfare of more than 10 crore tribal people is at the core of the policy making of the government. The Ministry has signed a memorandum with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to sort out the emerging issues between the two Ministries in the implementation of Forest Right Act 2006. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in 2018 launched the ‘Van Dhan’ scheme in 2018 through TRIFED. This cross cutting scheme aims at increasing the income of tribal people

engaged in the collection of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) through value addition of the products through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of value Chain for MFPs in 340 districts of 27 states through 3225 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras to 10 lakh tribals.

On the international stage, PM Modi has assumed the leadership role in the field of climate change negotiations and India is the voice of developing countries. India has solid achievements in the field of combating climate change. The Prime Minister jointly with French President Emanuel Macron created an International Solar Alliance to combat climate change. India has achieved its voluntary target of reducing emissions

intensity of its GDP by 21 per cent over 2005 levels by 2020 and is poised to achieve 35 per cent reduction well before the target year of 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2070. India is home to 17 percent of the world population but our emission footprint is only 4 per cent compared with the developed world’s 60 per cent with 17 per cent population.

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





# Russian forces leave Snake Island, keep up eastern assault

AP ■ KYIV

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

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

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

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

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

Russia took control of the island that sits along a busy shipping lane in the opening days of the war in apparent hope to use it as a staging



ground for an attack on Odesa.

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

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

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

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

It is focused on the city of

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

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

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

fully encircle the city.

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

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

He denied Russia had adjusted its strategy after failing to take Kyiv in the early stage of the conflict. "As you can see, the troops are moving and reaching the marks that

were set for them for a certain stage of this combat work. Everything is going according to plan," Putin said at a news conference in Turkmenistan.

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

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

vivors suffered severed limbs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## UK to give more military support for Ukraine



PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

Downing Street said the funding represents the first step in enabling Ukraine to go

beyond their valiant defence against the illegal Russian invasion to mounting offensive operations against Russian ground forces in order to restore Ukrainian sovereignty.

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

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

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

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

## Climate concerns grow as US helps Europe replace Russian gas

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

AP ■ YAHIDNE (UKRAINE)

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

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

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

Denys Ovcharenko, 31,



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

"While the guys are protecting us, we work here,"

Huschuk said, referring to troops at the front.

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

Most of Yahidne's residents – almost 400 people – spent a month in the school's basement, where they were held around the clock as

human shields to protect against an attack by the Ukrainian army.

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

The Russians left the vil-

lage at the end of March.

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

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

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

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

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

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(ADARSH GANESH) Advocate

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Email Support@profitmart.in  
Contact: 020 49119119

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### PUBLIC NOTICE

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

Sagar Aggarwal, Advocate  
M:9819980834

### PUBLIC NOTICE

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

### GENERAL NOTICE

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

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

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

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

Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID card no. 2210960. Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.

Date: 27/6/2022 For ICICI Bank Limited  
Place: Greater Noida -58-

## Putin: Western leaders would look disgusting topless

AP N MOSCOW



Putin's naked torso pictures with a "bare-chested horseback riding display," one of his widely publicised athletic adventures.

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

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

## Rights group finds twin Russian strikes hit Mariupol theater

AP ■ PARIS

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

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

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

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

Researchers for Amnesty International identified 12 of the dead.

Those who bore witness "saw bodies, remains of bodies. And that's how we can try to reconstruct. But the truth is that we will never know the truth. We will never get the final fig-



ure. And what is more or horrifying for me is that we will never know the whole names," said Oksana Pokalchuk, Amnesty's director general for Ukraine.

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

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



# Core infra sectors output expands by 18.1% in May

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

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

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

Cumulatively, during April-May 2022-23, the output of these eight sectors declined to 13.6 per cent as compared to 36.3 per cent during April-May 2021-22. **PTI**

## Sensex, Nifty end flat after choppy trade

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Cryptocurrencies clear danger, Govt to finalise consulting paper: RBI

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

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

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

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

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

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

RBI first came out with a circular regarding cryptocurrencies in 2018 and had barred entities regulated by it from dealing in such instruments. However, in early 2020,



Supreme Court struck down the circular.

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

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

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

Regarding the economy, he said it is skewed towards global spillovers and geopoliti-

cal tensions.

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

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

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



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

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

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

There is sufficient reason to believe that the defaulter may dispose of the securities in the account held by you and realisation of amount due under the certificate would in

consequence be delayed or obstructed, Sebi said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Writes to Union commerce & Industry Min

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

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

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

Unless UK agrees to remove minimum maturation requirement for Indian whisky which is used to block whisky

from India, the largest producer of whisky in the world, the FTA will be a one-way affair with no benefit to India."

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

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

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

Giri further said it costs 50-75% more to produce a product in India compared to Scotland. "Capital costs 8-10% in India compared to just 2-3% in Scotland. Evaporation loss-

es are 10% every year in India compared to 1-2% in Scotland due to difference in climate conditions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Gold declines ₹323; silver tumbles ₹776



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In absolute terms, the total liabilities, including liabilities under the 'Public Account' of the government, jumped to ₹1,33,22,727 crore at the end of

March 31, 2022. As of December 31, 2021, the total liabilities stood at ₹1,28,41,996 crore.

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

It was at 91.60 per cent at the end of December last year. Further, the report said the

weighted average yield on primary issuances of dated securities showed an increase to 6.66 per cent in the fourth quarter from 6.33 per cent in the third quarter of the current fiscal.

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

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



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

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

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

Available in limited num-

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

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

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

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



# PLISKOVA OUT OF WIMBLEDON

AP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 25-year-old Boulter also beat Pliskova last week at a warmup tournament in Eastbourne for her



## BAUTISTA AGUT BECOMES THIRD COVID WITHDRAWAL

AP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

entry Paul Jubb.

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

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

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

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

## Murray has NO plans to retire despite earliest exit

AP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

"I could have had a good run here. One of the reasons why improving your ranking and try-



ing to get seeded is important, avoid giving top players and dangerous guys like that early in tournaments."

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

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

## Sania & partner crashes out in 1st round

PTI ■ WIMBLEDON

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

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

The 35-year-old Indian veteran failed to get past the third round of the mixed doubles at Wimbledon last year and will still have a shot at glory, partnering Mate Pavic of Croatia in the mixed doubles



event. The duo will meet Natela Dzalamidze and David Vega Hernandez in the opening round of mixed doubles.

## COVID-19 hits indian men's hockey team

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Prannoy stuns world No. 4, joins Sindhu in quarters

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

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

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

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

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

Former world champion



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

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

Facing the Thai 21-year-old

for the first time, Sindhu took some time to assess her opponent's deceptive style of play.

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

## AIFF general secretary Kushal Das resigns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

## LAFC 'perfect for me', says Chiellini

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

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

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

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

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

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



"Surely there are some differences."

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

The selected team includes 17 men and five women athletes.

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

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

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

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

3000m steeplechaser Avinash Sable, shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, long



jumpers Murali Sreeshankar and Muhammed Anees Yahiya, triple jump trio of Abdulla Aboobacker, Praveen Chithravel and Eldhose Paul, all of whom have qualified, Sandeep Kumar (20km Race Walking), MP Jabir

(400m Hurdles), Noah Nirmal Tom, Muhammed Ajmal, Naganathan Pandi, Rajesh Ramesh and Muhammed Anas Yahiya (4x400m) have found a place in the team.

The squad also includes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

was tested."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# India ready to face England 2.0

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

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

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

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

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

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



England vs India  
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SONY TEN 3, 4 & SIX

extended net session and Indian teams, since Mahendra Singh Dhoni took over as captain, has hardly played official first-class games as a pre-cursor to the Test matches.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We understand what we do well but we have also taken into account who we are playing against. Just because the opposition changes doesn't mean we change."

## Biggest achievement of my career: Bumrah

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

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

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

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

"The taste of success feels good when there is pressure. I am always up for responsibilities and I love to be in

tough challenges. As a cricketer, you always want to test yourself in deep waters. I have spoken to many cricketers. Everybody improves and keep getting better," he said on the eve of the game.

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

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

It is rare for a fast bowler to lead the Indian team and Bumrah said it was a massive honour and responsibility. The pacer has experienced meteoric rise in international cricket, including the five-day version in which he is

only four seasons old, having made his Test debut in January 2018.

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

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

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

national Test team.

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

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

### NEW TEMPLATE

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

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

Stuart Broad got their names on the various 'Honours' Board'.

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

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

### TEAM COMBINATION

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

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

The practice game against Leicestershire was more of an

## Buttler replaces Morgan as white-ball captain

AP ■ LONDON

Jos Buttler said he had been given the "greatest honour" after being named as England's new white-ball captain in succession to "inspirational" World Cup-winning skipper Eoin Morgan.

Buttler's appointment was confirmed by the England and Wales Cricket Board on Thursday, just two days after Morgan announced his retirement from international cricket.

Buttler has been a member of England's white-ball teams for over a decade, serving as Morgan's vice-captain since 2015.

The dynamic 31-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman has already led England 14 times across both ODI and T20 formats, including their most recent ODI against the Netherlands when Morgan was ruled out with a groin injury.

World Cup winner Buttler is set to take charge of 12 games in July, with T20 and ODI



series against India and South Africa.

But his first words on being named as skipper were to thank Morgan for his "outstanding leadership" in overseeing England's white-ball revival following their embarrassing first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup.

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

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 30-year-old said he loves bowling in English conditions. "I think England is a bowler's paradise, they say because the ball swings a lot and at times you end up taking a lot of wickets in one spell itself. So, I think England is one of my favourite places to play cricket and to bowl as well," Thakur said.

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

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

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

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



# India Want aim for improved show against SL



PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Starting a new era in 50-over cricket. Set without the peerless Mithali Raj, the newly-appointed skipper Harmanpreet Kaur will seek an improved performance across departments from his players as Indian women eye a winning start against hosts Sri Lanka in a three-match series, starting Friday.

India will be without their two pillars — Mithali, who retired from cricket earlier this month, and Jhulan

Goswami, who is nursing a side strain.

The absence of international cricket's most prolific duo is just one of several concerns for captain Kaur ahead of the ODI series opener.

The Indians made a positive start to the tour of the island nation by winning the T20I series 2-1 but their performance was far from perfect and while the format will change, the regulars in the side would be keen to put up a dominant display against the lowly-ranked (ninth) Sri Lanka.

## Khawaja, Green help Oz build lead in 1st Test

AP ■ GALLE

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

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

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

The left-handed Khawaja



Sri Lanka vs Australia  
Live from 10:00am IST  
SONY TEN 2

were on the sub-continent at 20'.

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

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

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

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

"He (Green) batted beautifully," said Khawaja. "(It) took a lot of courage the way he batted.

He came out and played a sweep shot straight away. That's not easy." That wicket is extremely tough, it's one of the toughest I have played on."

Khawaja, 35 and a veteran of 49 Tests, said Green's game is "well beyond where a lot of us

## Harman wants to set example in fitness

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Harmanpreet Kaur, who begins her reign as a full-time skipper of the Indian women's team with the ODI series against Sri Lanka, is seeking drastic improvement in fitness and fielding from her teammates.

Kaur, who was already leading the Indian T20 side, was handed the ODI captaincy after veteran Mithali Raj retired from international cricket earlier this month.

"I have set some goals for us. Fitness is very important for a player.

Skills wise we have coaches but I want to set an example where the players can see me and get motivated to become fit," Kaur said on eve of the first ODI against Sri Lanka.

"Fitness and fielding are two things I want my team to improve. If these two aspects are covered then you are the best side," Harmanpreet, who is among the fitter players said.

Having led India in T20s for a while, the 33-year-old said she is enjoying her captaincy stint and feels no additional pressure now that she has become a full-time skipper.

Kaur herself has been in good touch. After finishing as the highest run-getter for her side in the T20 series, it will auger well for India if the skipper can continue her top form alongside all-rounder Pooja Vastrakar.

Young wicketkeeper Richa Gosh, who shone in the in the series against New Zealand earlier this year, will be on the look-out for a good show even though team management used Yastika Bhatia as a stop-gap keeper in one of the T20I games.

With the seasoned Jhulan not in

"When I'm leading, I feel I am more involved in the game. It always gives me a lot of confidence. Captaincy is something that comes naturally to me when I'm on the field.

"After leading for a few years, things become easier. Right now, I don't feel the extra pressure, if I enjoy as captain the rest can also enjoy. I am enjoying more now as I feel I'm free to do what I want to do."

"When you give players freedom, you can improve more. That is my motive, to give the players freedom so they can express themselves."

the side, the young and relatively inexperienced fast bowling unit comprising Vastrakar, Simran Bahadur, Meghna Singh and Renuka Singh will be tested by the Lankan batting line-up headlined by Chamari Athapaththu.

The spinners have been largely on the mark but struggled in the third game. Poonam Yadav and Rajeshwari Gayakwad will have their task cut out in the longer format. Kaur and Harleen Doel, with her leg breaks, too can pitch in with some useful overs.

## KL undergoes successful surgery in Germany

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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