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THE TERROR FACTORY
IN AFGHANISTAN

WORLD 8

STOCKPILE ESSENTIALS AMID FOOD
SHORTAGE: LANKAN PREZ

MONEY 10

'ACTION AGAINST WHEAT EXPORTERS
WHO SUBMIT BACK-DATED PAPERS'

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY JUNE 4, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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Shah holds meeting on targeted killings in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday took stock of the security situation in Jammu & Kashmir in the wake of a series of targeted killings in the valley with security and intelligence top brass.

National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval, Army Chief General Manoj Pande, and Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Manoj Sinha were among those who attended the meeting.

The Home Minister also reviewed the security situation in Jammu & Kashmir and security arrangements for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra also figured in the meetings.

The high-level meeting came after terrorists carried out a series of targeted killings in the Kashmir valley, mostly of Hindus, security personnel, and local civilians. Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Director of Intelligence Bureau Arvind Kumar, Director General of Central Reserve Police Force Kuldeep Singh, Border Security Force chief Pankaj Singh, and Jammu & Kashmir Director General of Police Dilbag Singh were among other key officials who took part in the meeting.

Earlier, Shah had an informal meeting with LG Manoj



Union Home Minister Amit Shah exchanges greetings with J&K Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and NSA Ajit Doval as he arrives to hold a review meeting on security situation in Jammu & Kashmir, in New Delhi on Friday

PTI

Sinha, Arvind Kumar, Secretary of RAW Samant Goel and DGP of Jammu & Kashmir Dilbag Singh.

Two persons — a bank employee and a brick kiln labourer — were killed in Kashmir on Thursday while another labourer was injured in two separate incidents. The bank manager was the ninth and the labourer was the 10th targeted killing in Kashmir since May 1.

A woman teacher hailing from the Samba district of the Jammu region was shot dead by terrorists at a school in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday.

On May 18, terrorists had entered a wine shop at Baramulla in North Kashmir and threw a grenade, killing one person from the Jammu region and injuring three others. Policeman Saifullah Qadri was shot dead outside his res-

idence in Srinagar on May 24 while television artiste Amreen Bhat was gunned down in Budgam two days later.

Meanwhile, panic stricken Kashmiri Pandit employees on Friday shifted their families from Kashmir valley to Jammu ignoring assurances given by the Union Territory administration to ensure their safety after their relocation to safer places within Kashmir valley. **Continued on Page 2**

India: US report on religious freedom 'vote bank politics'

US State Dept report on rise in attacks on people, places of worship in India ill-informed: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Modi Government on Friday took strong exception to a US State Department report that claimed there was a rise in attacks on people and places of worship in India and termed these comments as "ill-informed." New Delhi also said "it is unfortunate (that) vote bank politics is being practiced in international politics".

The sharp reaction by the Ministry of External Affairs came a day after US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said there have been rising attacks on people and places of worship in India, asserting that America will continue to stand up for religious freedom around the world.

He made these observations at the release of the annual International Religious Freedom report for the year 2021.

Rebutting his remarks, the MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Friday, "We have noted the release of the US State Department 2021 Report



on International Religious Freedom, and ill informed comments by senior US officials. "It is unfortunate that vote bank politics is being practised in international relations. We would urge that assessments based on motivated inputs and biased views be avoided."

Bagchi said as a naturally pluralistic society, India values religious freedom and human rights. "In our discussions with the US, we have regularly highlighted issues of concern there, including racially and ethnically motivated attacks, hate crimes and gun violence," he asserted.

Blinken had also said people from the minority communities and women were being targeted in other Asian countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan and China.

"The United States will continue to stand up for religious freedom around the

world. We'll keep working alongside other governments, multilateral organisations, civil society to do so, including next month at the United Kingdom's ministerial to advance religious freedom," Blinken told media persons. "At its core, our work is about ensuring that all people have the freedom to pursue the spiritual tradition that most has meaning to their time on earth," he said, noting that the report documents how religious freedom and the rights of religious minorities are under threat in communities around the world.

"For example, in India, the world's largest democracy and home to a great diversity of faiths, we've seen rising attacks on people and places of worship; in Vietnam, where authorities harassed members of unregistered religious communities; in Nigeria, where

several state governments are using anti-defamation and blasphemy laws to punish people for expressing their beliefs," Blinken said.

China, he said, continues to harass adherents of other religions that it deems out of line with the Chinese Communist Party doctrine, including by destroying Buddhist, Christian, Islamic and Taoist houses of worship and by erecting barriers to employment and housing for Christians, Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists and Falun Gong practitioners.

In Afghanistan, conditions for religious freedom have deteriorated dramatically under the Taliban, particularly as they crack down on the basic rights of women and girls to get an education, to work, to engage in society, often under the banner of religion, he said.

Meanwhile, ISIS-K is conducting increasingly violent attacks against religious minorities, particularly Shia Hazaras, he added.

"In Pakistan, at least 16 individuals accused of blasphemy were sentenced to death by Pakistani courts in 2021 though none of these sentences has yet to be carried out," Blinken said.

"Beyond these countries, the report documents how religious freedom and the rights of religious minorities are under threat in communities around the world," he said.

In custody, Bishnoi admits his gang killed Moose Wala

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, who is in Delhi Police's Special Cell custody, has revealed that his gang's members, including Canada-based Goldy Brar, killed 28-year-old Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, alias Sidhu Moose Wala.

Sources said they suspect the accused involved in Moose Wala's murder had fled to Nepal and they are hiding there. A special cell team has gone to Nepal to trace the suspects. According to sources, Bishnoi has been very uncooperative during interrogation and has not disclosed the names of his gang members who were the real conspirators in the killing.

"He has alleged that Moose Wala was involved in the killing of Akali Dal youth leader Vikramjit Singh, alias Vicky Middukhera, on August 7 last year which led to a rivalry



between him and the Punjabi singer," said the sources.

"Bishnoi has been very uncooperative so far. But during interrogation, he accepted that he had a rivalry with Moose Wala and claimed that his gang members killed the singer," said sources. "He has revealed that Goldy Brar was one of the gang members who hatched the conspiracy to kill Moose Wala, but he has not yet disclosed the names of other associates who were the real executioners of the plot," a police official said.

Continued on Page 2

Riots in Kanpur over blasphemy during TV debate, 18 arrested

Accused will be booked under Gangster Act, their properties will be demolished: Police

PTI ■ KANPUR



Police personnel use tear gas to disperse people amid clashes as violence erupted in the city after members of Muslim community took out a procession and closed their shops in Kanpur on Friday

PTI

Mobs hurled bombs and pelted stones at each other as violence erupted in Kanpur after groups of people tried to force shopkeepers to down shutters over an alleged insult to Prophet Mohammed on a television show.

Clashes broke out in Pared, Nai Sadak and Yateemkhana areas of the city after Friday namaz, police said.

The two sides hurled bombs and opened fire as members of one of the groups attempted to shut shops over alleged insulting remarks made by BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma during a television debate recently, a senior police

official said. Those who allegedly forced traders to shut shops clashed with police personnel who then used batons to disperse the mob.

Meanwhile, 18 people have been arrested in connection with the incident.

"Those involved in the violence are being identified with help of video clips of the incident. Eighteen people have been arrested," said Additional Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar.

Continued on Page 2

UP will give momentum to India's growth story: Modi

Investors have golden opportunity in UP, says PM, lays foundation for ₹80,000 crore projects

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the third groundbreaking ceremony and laid the foundation stones of 1,406 projects worth more than Rs 80,000 crore in Lucknow on Friday. The memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for these projects were signed during the first UP Investors' Summit in 2018. The projects include fields like agriculture, IT, electronics, micro, MSME, manufacturing, renewable energy, pharmacy, tourism, defence and aerospace, and handloom and textile.

Inviting leading industry tycoons to visit his parliament



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and UP CM Yogi Adityanath, arrives to attend the Ground Breaking Ceremony @3.0 of the UP Investors Summit in Lucknow on Friday

PTI

tary constituency Varanasi to explore opportunities there, the PM said, "The investors have a golden opportunity to invest in UP as the Government is promoting natural farming. With the Ganga flowing through 25 to 30 districts of UP covering around 11,000 km, with the provision in Union Cabinet for building a natural farming corridor on

both sides of the Ganga for a stretch of five kilometres each, in addition to Uttar Pradesh Government's food processing policy, investors have a 'golden opportunity' in the agricultural sector. I am confident that UP with its consumer base of 16 per cent, will give momentum to India's growth story."

Continued on Page 2

Sexual assault at Metro station, girl complains of cops' apathy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Twitter user on Thursday claimed that she faced sexual harassment at the Jor Bagh Metro Station in Delhi. She shared her ordeal on Twitter and described the traumatising incident about how the man, under the guise of asking her for directions, exposed himself. She alleged the policeman at the platform did not take any action when she asked for help.

"While travelling on the Yellow Line today, I faced sexual harassment at the Jor Bagh Station. A man had asked for my help with an address during the metro ride. I helped him, then on platform on pretext of confirming address, he exposed his private parts," the woman tweeted.

Detailed report on P3



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क्र.सं.	अधिकारी	कार्यालय का पता	फोन नं.	ई-मेल
1.	उपायुक्त, मध्य क्षेत्र	शिव मंदिर मार्ग, लाजपत नगर -II	011-29815975	dc-cnz@mcd.nic.in
2.	उपायुक्त, सिटी एसपी क्षेत्र	जोल्ड हिन्दु कॉलेज बिल्डिंग, कश्मीरी गेट	011-23913740	dc-citysp2@mcd.nic.in
3.	उपायुक्त, रिविल लाइन क्षेत्र	16, राजपुर रोड, रिविल लाइन	011-23982437	dc-civillines@mcd.nic.in
4.	उपायुक्त, करोल बाग क्षेत्र	डी. बी. गुप्ता रोड, आनंद पर्यट, करोल बाग	011-25729723	dc-karolbagh@mcd.nic.in
5.	उपायुक्त, केशवपुरम क्षेत्र	ए-1, डॉ. सचदेवा मार्ग, केशवपुरम	011-27183138	dc-keshavpuram@mcd.nic.in
6.	उपायुक्त, नजफगढ़ क्षेत्र	बॉस मेट्रो स्टेशन के नजदीक, नजफगढ़	011-28014302	dc-najafgarh@mcd.nic.in
7.	उपायुक्त, नरेला क्षेत्र	पुलिस स्टेशन नरेला के सामने, आर्य समाज रोड	011-27283262	dc-narela@mcd.nic.in
8.	उपायुक्त, रोहिणी क्षेत्र	सेक्टर - V, रोहिणी	011-27052101	dc-rohizone@mcd.nic.in
9.	उपायुक्त, शाहदरा उत्तरी क्षेत्र	श्याम लाल कॉलेज के नजदीक, केशव चौक	011-71468247	dcsnz-edmc@mcd.nic.in
10.	उपायुक्त, शाहदरा दक्षिणी क्षेत्र	इस्टीट्यूशनल क्षेत्र, विश्वास नगर, शाहदरा	011-22303651	dcssz-edmc@mcd.nic.in
11.	उपायुक्त, दक्षिणी क्षेत्र	अरविंदो मार्ग, गीन पार्क	011-47501986	dc-south@mcd.nic.in
12.	उपायुक्त, पश्चिमी क्षेत्र	डॉ. साहिब सिंह बर्म निगम नवन, शिवाजी प्लेस, राजा गार्डन	011-25934789	dc-west@mcd.nic.in
13.	अतिरिक्त आयुक्त, सिविक सेंटर	चौथा तल, डॉ. श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी सिविक सेंटर	011-23225454	addicommedu@mcd.nic.in
14.	सहायक आयुक्त, पटपटगंज (पूर्ववर्ती पूर्वी दिल्ली नगर निगम)	उद्योग सदन, पटपटगंज औद्योगिक क्षेत्र	011-22386319	ac-mcd1@mcd.nic.in

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India sees a sharp spike in Covid cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country saw a sharp spike in Covid-19 cases during the last 24 hours, crossing the 4000 in a day after nearly three months, prompting the Centre to ask five States—Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Telangana to closely monitor emerging clusters, maintain an adequate number of tests, and send samples from infected individuals for genome sequencing.

This has stoked fears of the emergence of another wave in some parts of the States that have eased almost all restrictions.

The spurt in Covid cases particularly in these five states saw overall infections in India in a single day to above 4,000 after 84 days, taking the tally of

Covid-19 cases to 4,31,68,585. However, what has come as a relief, for now, is that there has been no spurt in hospitalization and most infections are only mildly symptomatic.

In a letter to the five states, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan asked them to keep a vigil on patients with influenza-like illnesses and severe acute respiratory syndrome to detect early signs of the spread of the coronavirus infection.

In comparison to 15,708 Covid-19 cases noted across India in the week ending May 27, the number has increased to 21,055 this week, Bhushan said in his letter to the state health secretaries. The weekly test positivity had also risen from 0.52 to 0.73 percent within one week, he added.

As per the letter, 11 districts in Kerala, two districts in

Tamil Nadu, one district in Karnataka, and six districts in Maharashtra have reported an uptick in new cases and COVID-19 test positivity rate over the last few days.

"There are few states which are reporting a higher contribution to India's cases indicating the possibility of a localised spread of the infection," said the letter. "There is, therefore, a need to follow a risk assessment-based approach on the public health responses without losing the gains made so far in the fight against the pandemic." The Covid=19 data shows that even though 24 states and Union Territories on Friday recorded the rise in Covid-19 cases, the highest daily rise was from Kerala and Maharashtra. Kerala also has the highest load of Covid-19 cases, followed by Maharashtra.

Kashmiri Pandits leave Valley for 'safe' Jammu after targeted killings

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Panic stricken Kashmiri pandit employees Friday shifted their families from Kashmir valley to Jammu ignoring assurances given by the Union Territory administration to ensure their safety after their relocation to safer places within Kashmir valley.

Rough estimates suggested more than 100 families, the majority of whom were staying in rented accommodation, left the valley early in the morning. Few families living in transit camps also managed to reach Jammu despite facing many roadblocks.

As the day progressed the district authorities in Anantnag, Baramulla, Budgam and Srinagar locked down the main gates of various transit camps to prevent movement of employees. Despite these restrictions some of the employees, citing medical emergencies, managed to move towards Jammu to ensure safety of their families.

Senior police and district



administration officers have been regularly visiting these camps to motivate these employees to stay put and not to encourage anti-national elements who are hell bent upon triggering a second round of migration of Kashmiri pandits from the Kashmir valley.

On reaching Jammu several employees interacted with the media on the road side near Jagti Migrant camp before heading to their homes in different directions. A Kashmir pandit employee who reached Jammu late Friday afternoon said, "all eyes were set on the

high-level meeting between the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and LG Manoj Sinha in New Delhi. But the outcome of the meeting has disappointed us".

"We have learnt through media reports that the government has decided not to shift the employees deployed under the PM's package to safer places in Jammu. We are not going to accept this diktat. We will not go back to Kashmir valley because we fear for our lives". Despite assurances after the killing of Rahul Bhat the JUT administration has failed to

prevent targeted killings.

"The administration is regularly sending a team of police/civil officers to motivate us to stay back and not return to Jammu. He said despite restrictions around 70 percent of employees have vacated their accommodation in these camps and already shifted to Jammu".

A representative of the Kashmiri pandit employees camp committee claimed. "When we came here to work 12 years ago we considered ourselves ambassadors of the government".

"We always considered ourselves an integral part of Kashmir. But a series of targeted killings have exposed the ugly reality. We are not welcome here as employees. We are not safe here anymore".

Another employee told the media persons in Jammu on Friday, "There is nothing new about this 'Naya Kashmir' as projected by the UT administration through full page advertisements".

"The Kashmiri pandits suf-

fered pangs of exodus in 1990 and 32 years after we are again at the receiving end". The future looks bleak.

"The communication between the employees and the local administration has totally failed. In the last 12 years whenever we raised issues of sustenance, job related grievances we were ill treated by the bureaucrats in the civil secretariat. Now if the UT administration is serious on bringing reforms and addressing our grievances they must also shunt such officers from the key positions as they have vested interests and instead of resolving our issues they were compounding our miseries".

Along with Kashmiri Pandit migrant employees a large number of SC/ST employees under reserved category were working in the valley and migrated to Jammu after Rajni Bala was killed in cold blood outside her school on May 31. She has been working in Kashmir since June 2009.

Sound generates desired meaning in a film: Resul Pookutty

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

India's leading sound designer and production mixer Resul Pookutty said here on Friday that "camera only catches a picture, which is abstract, while sound generates the desired meaning in a film"

Addressing a master-class on 'Aesthetics of Sound in Cinema' at the ongoing 17th Mumbai International Film Festival- MIFF 2022 here, Pookutty of Slumdog Millionaire fame said: "Sound has the ability to define space and meaning. Camera only catches a picture, which is abstract, with sound its meaning gets defined. Sound generates the desired meaning in a film"

Pookutty — who has recorded, edited, engineered and designed more than 90 films in a short span of his career, and won national and international recognition for his work — said: "As a sound designer I select from umpteen numbers of sounds available with me and present a package to the audience, which becomes a holistic experience for them".

Narrating his experience of the Oscar award winning film Slumdog Millionaire, Shri Pookutty said: "Human brain processes sound in a certain way, which a sound designer must understand. I designed sound for Slumdog Millionaire on the basic idea of how a

human brain processes sound? Accordingly we recorded the sound using multiple cameras and designed it".

Talking about different forms of sounds used in filmmaking, the noted sound designer said: "In films we broadly use five different types of sounds which are: Production Sound, Foley sound, Ambience Sound, Designed Sound, and Music."

Pookutty, who is the recipient of numerous awards and honours in the ones bestowed on him by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts-BAFTA and the Cinema Audio Society (CAS) — said: "While designing sound, we have to keep in mind, the context of story, vision of the director and socio-cultural aspects in which it is being set. I experienced this shoot of the film 'The Good Road'"

Pookutty — who has been part of several award winning films like Roar-Tigers of Sunderbans, Unfreedom, India's Daughter and Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja — differentiated between a dialogue and speech "Spoken dialogue thrown into an acoustic environment, captured by a microphone with emotion becomes a speech. When we deal with a dialogue in a film, we are actually trying to create a speech, which will set an emotional connection with the audience", he said.

Health Min asks Maha Govt to control spread of Covid-19

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking serious cognisance of the increased number of Covid-19 positive cases during the week ending on June 3, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Friday asked the Maharashtra government to maintain strict vigil and take pre-emptive action to control the spread of infection.

On a day when the new Covid-19 cases crossed the 1,000 mark in the state for the third consecutive day, Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Rajesh Bhushan advised the state government to continue to adopt a five-fold strategy for prompt and effective management of Covid-19.

The five-fold strategy involved aspects like Covid-19 Appropriate Behaviour, Monitoring Clusters of new Covid-19 cases, adequate testing as per guidelines, monitoring Influenza-like cases in all health facilities and genomic sequencing for prescribed samples of international passengers, collection of sample from sentinel sites (identified health facilities), and local clusters of cases.

Among other things, the Centre has taken serious note of the upsurge in cases the past one week ending on June 3.

KK death: Kolkata Police sets SoP for mega concerts

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Under attack for failing to control the unruly situation at Nazrul Manch where Bollywood singer Krishnakumar Kunnath on Tuesday sung the last songs of his life in a concert organized by the students' union of Sir Gurudas College before succumbing to a massive heart attack, the Kolkata Police on Friday announced a standard operating procedure to be followed while organizing high voltage college fests.

Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal on Friday said that according to the new SoP the organizers would have "to ensure certain steps before getting police permissions for concerts in public



auditoriums."

According to the new rules in every such concert the organizers would have to keep two ambulances and a doctor as standby. Besides, "they would have to make arrangements with the nearest hospitals to provide emergency services to those falling sick," the Commissioner said adding adequate security measures

11 from UP declared elected unopposed to RS



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All 11 candidates in the Rajya Sabha biennial elections from Uttar Pradesh were declared elected unopposed to the Upper House of Parliament by the Election Commission of India here on Friday.

Against the 11 seats, 12 candidates had filed their nomination papers but one nomination was rejected by the returning officer.

Out of 11 candidates eight are of the Bharatiya Janata Party and one of the Samajwadi Party, independent candidate

Kapil Sibal and Rashtriya Lok Dal president Jayant Chaudhary, both supported by the SP. The paper of 12th candidate Mauni Falahari Baba was rejected.

The elected candidates are Darshan Singh, Babu Ram Nishad, Mithilesh Kumar, Radha Mohan Das Agarwal, K Lakshman, Lakshmi Kant Bajpai, Surendra Singh Nagar and Sangita Yadav, all of BJP, Javed Ali Khan of Samajwadi Party. Kapil Sibal (independent) and Jayant Chaudhary (RLD chief), both supported by the Samajwadi Party.

UP will give momentum...

From Page 1

Modi said, "It is not a small thing that a Government has been re-elected for a second time in a row in UP. It shows that the Government has earned the confidence of the people. Investors are willing to invest in the State because of the improved law and order situation, investment-friendly atmosphere and the infrastructural development taking place under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. "

Modi made the remarks after laying the foundation stones of 1,406 projects. In attendance were Yogi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and top business leaders, including Gautam Adani and Kumar Mangalam Birla.

"I am confident that Uttar Pradesh, with its consumer base of 16 per cent, will give momentum to India's growth

story. Every sixth man in the country is from Uttar Pradesh. More than a dozen towns in the state have a population of over 5 lakh. Every district has a special product, which is being promoted by the Government. The State has the highest number of MSMEs. The State produces all grains and a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables," the Prime Minister pointed out.

Modi further said, "India saw a record FDI of 84 billion USD last year. Today, the world is seeing India's potential and appreciating its performance. We are growing the fastest among the G20 economies. India is at number two in the Global Retail Index."

As the National Democratic Alliance Government completes eight years at the Centre, the Prime Minister compared the pre-2014 and post-NDA era, saying,

"Before 2014, we had only

a few hundred startups. But today the number of registered startups is reaching around 70,000-mark. More recently, India has also made a record of 10 unicorns. The previous Union Government ignored the country's development."

"Last year, a record FDI of \$84 billion came from more than 100 countries of the world. India has created a new record in the last financial year by exporting merchandise worth more than \$ 417 billion or Rs 30 lakh crore rupees," the Prime Minister added.

"In 2014, there were only 65 million broadband subscribers in our country. Today their number has exceeded 78 crore. In 2014, one GB of data used to cost around Rs 200. Today its price has come down to Rs 1-12. India is one of the countries in the world that has such cheap data," Modi further underlined.

Maya seeks action against targeted killings in Kashmir

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati, on Friday, urged the Centre to take strict action over the recent killings in Kashmir.

Amid recent targeted killings in Jammu and Kashmir, former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati, urged the Central government to take strict action against the incidents and the people behind such attacks. The BSP chief noted that the recent attacks in Kashmir had created an atmosphere of panic in the region and called it "worrisome".

"Innocent people are being killed every day in Jammu and Kashmir. Recently, there was

the murder of a resident of Rajasthan and a bank manager; very sad and also worrying. Due to this, there is an atmosphere of panic. The Central government should take strict action against such guilty elements, this is the demand of the BSP," Mayawati tweeted.

In a recent terror attack, a bank manager, identified as Vijay Kumar, was shot dead by terrorists in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday. He was shot right outside his office. The incident occurred at the Ellaquai Dehati Bank at Areh Mohanpora in Kulgam. The Resistance Front, a shadow outfit of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Shah holds meeting on targeted...

From Page 1

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On reaching Jammu several employees interacted with the media on the road side near Jagti Migrant camp before heading to their homes in different directions.

A Kashmir Pandit employee who reached Jammu late Friday afternoon said, "All eyes were set on the high-level meeting between the Shah and LG Sinha in New Delhi. But the outcome of the meeting has disappointed us. We have learnt through media reports that the Government has decided not to shift the employees deployed under the PM's package to safer places in Jammu. We are not going to accept this diktat. We will not go back to Kashmir valley because we fear for our lives. Despite assurances after the killing of Rahul Bhat the JUT administration has failed to prevent targeted killings."

He said the administration was regularly sending police and civil officers to motivate them to stay back and not return to Jammu. "Despite restrictions, around 70 per

cent of employees have vacated their accommodation in these camps and already shifted to Jammu," he said.

A representative of the Kashmiri Pandit employees camp committee claimed, "When we came here to work 12 years ago we considered ourselves ambassadors of the Government. We always considered ourselves an integral part of Kashmir. But a series of targeted killings have exposed the ugly reality. We are not welcome here as employees. We are not safe here anymore."

Another employee told the media persons in Jammu on Friday, "There is nothing new about this 'Naya Kashmir' as projected by the UT administration through full page advertisements."

Along with Kashmiri Pandit migrant employees, a large number of SC/ST employees under reserved category were working in the valley, they migrated to Jammu after Rajni Bala was killed in cold blood outside her school on May 31.

In custody, Bishnoi...

From Page 1

Bishnoi, who is facing nearly 60 cases, was lodged in Central Jail number eight of Tihar.

The singer-politician was shot dead by some unidentified assailants in Punjab's Mansa district on May 29, a day after the Punjab Government curtailed his security cover.

The Delhi Police Special Cell, which is probing the matter, got the custody of Bishnoi for three days after arresting him from Tihar in a case registered under the Arms Act, officials added.

Gangster Kala Jathedi and his aide Kala Rana, who were in police custody in a different case, were also questioned in connection with the killing of Moose Wala. According to officials, after questioning Bishnoi in Tihar prison, he was produced at the Patiala House court and was remanded in

three-day police custody for questioning in connection with the case where three criminals were arrested after a brief encounter with the Special Cell's unit last month.

During interrogation, the arrested criminals had disclosed that the weapons recovered from them were supplied by Bishnoi, a senior police official said. The development came a day after a Delhi court refused to entertain a plea filed by Bishnoi seeking a direction to the jail authorities not to give his custody to Punjab Police, which suspects that he had plotted the singer's killing.

Bishnoi has moved the Delhi High Court under the apprehension of a fake encounter by the Punjab Police.

The Punjab Police had earlier said Moose Wala's killing seemed to be the result of an inter-gang rivalry and the Lawrence Bishnoi gang was involved in it.

Woman complains of sexual harassment at Metro station

Commuters must report matter to nearest Metro staff, says DMRC; cops say CISF mans Metro security

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Twitter user on Thursday claimed that she faced sexual harassment at the Jor Bagh Metro Station in Delhi. She shared her ordeal in a thread on Twitter and described the traumatising incident about how the man, under the guise of asking her for directions, exposed himself. The woman also alleged that the policeman on duty at the platform did not take any action after she approached him for help.

"While travelling on the Yellow Line today, I faced sex-

ual harassment at the Jor Bagh Station. A man had asked for my help with an address during the metro ride.

I helped him, then got off at my station and sat on the platform to book a cab. The man approached me again at the station under the garb of confirming the address. The man flashed his genitals while trying to show me a file containing the address," the woman alleged in a tweet.

"I approached a policeman standing on the platform, but he flatly refused to help me and asked me to go upstairs to talk about it.

I was still scared but somehow managed to go upstairs and found other policemen. I asked dem to take me to the CCTV room so dat I could recognise him," she said in another tweet. The woman alleged that when she asked the authorities to do something, they blamed her for creating a scene.

"I asked them to do something about it but instead they

started blaming me and said dat I shouldve created a scene & tht theres nothing they can do now since he managed to leave," the woman said in her tweets.

The woman said she is scared to step out of her house and "the incident has completely shaken up my belief that metros are safe." She said it's important that this reaches the right authorities, including the Delhi Metro and the Delhi Police so that they know "how bad their safety measures are".

Replying to her tweets, the Delhi Metro asked the woman to share the exact time of the incident. "Please provide exact time of the incident.

In such cases, commuters are requested to immediately report the matter to the nearest metro staff or contact the customer care centre at the station. They can also call DMRC helpline no. 155370 or CISF helpline no. 155655 so that immediate help can be provided," the DMRC said in its tweet. The Delhi Commission

for Women also issued a notice to the police and sought an action taken report in connection with the incident.

Police said the security inside Metro stations is manned by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

"We are taking up the matter with the higher authorities in the CISF to find out why the matter was not brought to Delhi Police's notice earlier," officials said.

In February 2020, a woman had alleged that she was harassed by a man inside a Delhi Metro train, following which a case was registered.

In a series of Tweets, the woman had claimed that when she was returning to Gurugram on a metro train at night, a man facing her had flashed his genitals.

She had also posted a picture of the man on the microblogging site. An FIR was later filed and the accused, a 28-year-old civil engineer, was later arrested.

Delhi HC refuses to come to aid of Stephen's

Court declines to stay DU's letter warning college of action if UG prospectus not withdrawn

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday refused to stay for now Delhi University's (DU) letter asking St. Stephen's College to withdraw its prospectus for the undergraduate (UG) courses for the academic year 2022-23.

The premier college has challenged DU's letter asking it to withdraw its prospectus for the UG courses giving 85 per cent weightage to Common University Entrance Test (CUET) and 15 per cent weightage to the college interview for

its unreserved seats. A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Sachin Datta, however, issued a notice on the stay application and petition filed by the college and listed it for further hearing on July 6, along with a similar petition filed by a law student who has sought direction to the college to take admission on its 'unreserved seats' in UG courses only based on CUET scores as mandated by DU.

When the college's counsel urged the court to only clarify that DU will not insist on taking action against it, the Bench said, "We are not going to say anything. You may stick to your stand."

"If you are not complying with their other directions you don't comply with this also. Who is stopping you," the Bench said. When the college's counsel said, "If we withdraw the prospectus, the matter becomes infructuous." The Bench said, then "Don't do it".

HC reserves order on ED's plea on Jain's lawyer watching his grilling

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday reserved its order on a plea by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging a lower court order allowing a counsel to be present during the interrogations of Delhi Cabinet Minister Satyendar Jain in connection with a money-laundering case. Justice Yogesh Khanna reserved his verdict in the matter after hearing the counsels of all parties.

The ED had challenged the condition imposed by the Special Judge in the last paragraph of the remand order



stating that during the time of interrogation, one advocate shall be allowed to remain present at a safe distance, from where he can see Jain but not hear him.

Additional Solicitor-

General (ASG) SV Raju appeared for the ED, and argued that the condition was contrary to various Supreme Court and other judgments.

Raju argued before the court that the impugned condition was contrary to the 1992 Supreme Court judgment in a case titled Poolpandi vs Superintendent, Central Excise and several other judgments passed by the court from time to time.

Pointing out that Jain has already been arrested, the ED's counsel said thus he is not entitled to other rights which are available to accused persons.

However, Senior Advocate Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi appearing for Jain, contradicted the ASG's submission, stating that the ED's own remand application names him as an accused. "They have repeatedly called me an accused. Their remand application starts with the word accused.

I am searching for his certificate of not being an accused," he said. Singhvi added that the petition is an abuse of process of law and should be dismissed with costs. A special court had last week granted custody of Jain to ED till June 9.

‘Don’t do politics on Moose Wala death’

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal on Friday termed the killing of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala unfortunate. Kejriwal said that politics should not be done around it.

"I believe whatever incidents have happened in Punjab, there should be no politics around them. Sidhu Moosewala was killed, it is really unfortunate. The Punjab Chief Minister has already said

they are trying their best and assured that the accused will soon be arrested and given the strictest punishment," Kejriwal said on the sidelines of his visit to an STP in Delhi's Rohini area.

The 28-year-old Moosewala was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Punjab's Mansa district on Sunday, a day after the State Government pruned his security cover.

The assailants had sprayed bullets on Moosewala in Jawahar Ke village after way-laying his vehicle, a Thar.

AIIMS RDA up in arms over recruitment process

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi has taken strong exception to the recruitment process for the post of Assistant Professor for 2021 in the premier institute, saying that it is not only 'faulty' and 'confusing' but also 'discriminatory'.

The RDA has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandivya and AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria to intervene and rectify process to ensure justice to all candidates and avoid confusion and delays in future.

As per letter, last November, the process of permanent appointment of 252 faculty-level (Assistant Professor) doctors was started in 56 departments, which is still pending.

"Now as per new notification issued in May, posts have been advertised again in seven of these departments. In such a situation, the doctors who have already applied for appointment are confused whether to apply again for

new appointment or not."Also, "last date for eligibility for previous notification was December 15, 2021 and for current notification it is June 30.

It is pertinent to mention that seven departments/specialties including ENT, Medical Physics, Anesthesia, Pediatrics, Hospital Administration, Pathology and Cardiology have vacancies in both the notifications.

This gives extra advantage to applicants of these select few departments while putting all others at a disadvantage as they cannot apply as per latest notification which opens from 1 June.

"This would also further narrow down competition, as only one more batch would be eligible from these select departments, following the previous notification," said letter. "Why has recruitment process been initiated again in seven departments and not in all others? This is discriminatory.

This can be challenged in the court as well," said a RDA member. The RDA maintained that equal opportunity should be given to applicants and competition needs to be broadened with more eligible candi-

dates. A large fraction (about 30-60 per cent) of the faculty vacancies advertised in Institutes of National Importance in the last one year remained vacant after interviews.

"It is, therefore, pertinent to ensure wider participation and competition in the ongoing faculty recruitment drive at the AIIMS to avoid this pitfall of seats going vacant even after the recruitment drive."

This is not only a waste of the institute's time and resources but also can potentially impair patient care due to lack of faculty members, the RDA said.

In case of notification 2021, it has been more than six months but the interview process has not been initiated till date and yet another notification has been issued (May 2022). This has denied opportunities to numerous candidates and added to the confusion, it said.

The RDA has now urged the Government to extend the last date for eligibility till August, 31 in view of inordinate delays to provide equal opportunity to all candidates, citing precedence in the past also.

‘Restaurants cannot add service charge to food bill’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday asserted that restaurants cannot add 'service charge' to the food bills, though customers at their discretion can give "tips" separately.

Goyal said if restaurant owners want to pay higher salaries to their employees, they are free to increase rates on their food menu as there are no price controls in the country. He also dismissed contentions of restaurant owners that they would incur losses if the service charge is done away with.

"You (restaurants) cannot add service charge in a bill...If you feel that some more benefits are to be given to employees, it cannot be forced on customers. You can raise prices to give hikes," Goyal said in reply to a question on the issue of service charges by restaurants.

The minister said the government was getting complaints from consumers regarding the service charge being imposed by restaurants.

"You are free to give raises to employees and increase rates. But if there is a hidden



cost, how the people will know the real price," he said. Goyal also added that people leave tips if they find services to their satisfaction, and they can continue doing so.

On Thursday, the consumer affairs ministry said the government will soon come out with a legal framework to stop restaurants from imposing service charges on customers as the practice is "unfair".

The Department of Consumer Affairs held a meeting with representatives of associations of restaurants and consumers. After the meeting, Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh said that the government is of the view that the practice of imposing service charges adversely affects rights of consumers and is an "unfair trade practice" as well.

End migration of Pandits, outsiders from Kashmir, now: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday demanded immediate steps to end the migration of Kashmiri Pandits and outsiders from Kashmir and asked the Government to engage with the stakeholders to restore normalcy in the troubled Valley.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi hit out at the Centre for "neglecting the security issues" in Kashmir and alleged that "those supposed to protect Kashmiri Pandits are busy promoting films".

"Bank managers, teachers and many innocent people are being killed every day, Kashmiri Pandits are migrating. Those who have to protect them do not have time. They are busy promoting films. The BJP has reduced Kashmir to its ladder of power," Rahul tweeted and urged the Prime

Minister "to take immediate steps to restore peace" in the Valley.

Senior party leader who was elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha on Friday Vivek Tankha said the Government should spell out its policy for restoring normalcy in the Union Territory that has been, rattled by a series of targeted terrorist killings.

Underlining the need for greater sensitivity towards the people of Kashmir, he said, normalcy and peace cannot be brought there through propaganda. "A lot of statesmanship is required to address the Kashmir issue, which is currently lacking," he said.

"People are being killed in offices and even Government offices are not secure. Please move them (Pandits and outsiders) immediately to secure places and put security around them," Tankha said at an AICC press conference.

Calling for immediate steps to halt the spate of killings, Tankha said the affected people should be taken into confidence so they feel safe.

"The Government should secure all affected people and their offices...And this has to be done in the next 24 hours, as we do not want to hear that more innocents have died," he said.

Noting that the unity of the country is most important, Tankha said enough security and protection should be provided to vulnerable people so they don't have to move out of Kashmir.

"Don't let migration happen from Kashmir as it is not good for Kashmir and is neither in the country's interest. Through this appeal I expect the Central Government to come out clearly and spell out the roadmap for restoring peace and normalcy in Kashmir," he said.

Take strict action against flyers over Covid violations: HC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday called for strict action against those found violating masking and hand hygiene norms at airports and in aircraft, observing that the Covid-19 pandemic has not abated and keeps springing up its ugly head.

The Bench of Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Sachin Datta ordered that those air passengers who violate guidelines on wearing of masks or refuse to follow hand hygiene norms should be put on the no-fly list.

The bench added that it is essential to introduce sufficient deterrence to enforce compliance of norms.

The court mentioned that very often the norms are not implemented on the ground with the seriousness with which they are framed and therefore, it is essential for the authorities, including the Directorate General of Civil

Aviation (DGCA) to ensure that the implementation on the ground is effected properly.

"For this purpose, we are of the view that the DGCA should give separate binding directions to all airlines to authorize the staff at airports and in aircraft, including air hostesses, captains, pilots, and others to take strict action against passengers and others who violate the masking and hand hygiene norms.

Such persons should be booked and fined and placed in no-fly list. In our view this is essential to be a deterrence for enforcement of such norms. Let report on action taken in this regard be placed on record, list sometime in July" the order stated.

The High Court was hearing a suo motu petition registered by Justice C Hari Shankar in March last year regarding non-adherence by air passengers to social distancing norms and COVID protocol like wearing masks.

PICTALK



Smoke billows from Bhalswa landfill site on Friday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

Jaishankar: India not sitting on fence, its foreign policy protects country's interests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BRATISLAVA (SLOVAKIA)

India is not sitting on the "fence" and its foreign policy protects the country's interests, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said in the context of New Delhi's position on the ongoing Russian military action in Ukraine. He also called for a shift from Eurocentric approach as Europe ignored many issues affecting the world.

The Minister also hit back at the unfair criticism on Indian oil purchase from Russia amid the Ukraine war that has created a knock-off effect on the world economy.

Defending India's oil

imports from Russia, Jaishankar said it is important to understand how the Ukraine conflict is impacting the developing countries. He also questioned why only India was being questioned while Europe continues to import gas from Russia amid the Ukraine war.

Making the country's position clear, Jaishankar said late Thursday India is not sitting on the fence, just because its policy may not be agreeable to some other countries. India, so far, has abstained from voting against Russia in the United Nations regarding the Ukraine conflict.

"I am not sitting on the fence just because I don't agree with you. It means I am sitting on my ground," he said while



speaking at GLOBESEC seminar on 'Taking Friendship to the Next Level: Allies in the Indo-Pacific'.

Jaishankar stressed this point when asked about the country's position on the Ukraine conflict and whether India can afford to be sitting on the fence as an emerging world leader.

"This idea that I do a transaction, that I come in one

conflict because it will help in conflict 2- that's not how the world works. A lot of our problems in China have nothing to do with Ukraine, Russia. They are predated," Jaishankar said as he was asked on whether India expects global help in its situation with China.

There are a lot of issues where Europe did not speak, he said. "Europe has to get out of the mindset that Europe's problem is the world's problem but the world's problem is not Europe's problem," Jaishankar said.

"Today linkages being made between China and India and what's happening in Ukraine. Come on guys, China and India happened way before Ukraine. I do not see this as a

clever argument." All big challenges facing the world today have their solutions coming from India some way or the other, Jaishankar said.

On being asked whether India buying Russian oil is not funding the ongoing war, Jaishankar said, "Look I don't want to sound argumentative. But then, buying Russian gas is not funding the war? It's only Indian money and Russian oil coming to India that is funding the war and not Russia's gas coming to Europe? Let's be a little even-handed."

Replying to a question on India 'ignoring' Russia-Ukraine war, Jaishankar said India condemned Bucha killing and sought an investigation.

"In terms of what is hap-

pening with the Ukraine conflict, our stand is very clear that we favour an immediate cessation of hostilities. It's not that we have ignored it unless you call phone calls to Putin and Zelensky as ignoring something."

India does not accept the 'construct' that it has to side with a power axis and if it does not side with one camp, it will automatically be considered as belonging to the other camp, Jaishankar said.

"I am one-fifth of the world's population. I am what today the 5th or 6th largest economy in the world. Forget the history and civilisation bit; everybody knows that. I feel I am entitled to have my own side," Jaishankar said.

ED issues fresh summons to Rahul in Herald case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, asking him to appear before its headquarters here on June 13 for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper.

Gandhi was earlier asked by the agency to depose on June 2 but the Lok Sabha MP sought a fresh date as he was out of the country.

His mother and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, 75, has also been asked to depose before the agency on June 8. Though she tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday, the Congress party has said that she was determined to appear before the agency on the scheduled date. The case pertains to the probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the Congress-promoted Young Indian that owns the National

Herald newspaper. The paper is published by Associated Journals Limited (AJL) and owned by Young Indian Pvt. Ltd.

The agency is seeking to record the statements of Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The questioning of the senior Congress leaders and the Gandhis is part of the ED's investigation to unravel the shareholding pattern, financial transactions and role of the promoters of Young Indian and AJL, officials had said.

Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, are among the promoters and shareholders of Young Indian. The ED had registered a fresh case under PMLA after a trial court here took cognizance of an Income Tax Department probe against Young Indian Pvt Ltd on the basis of a private criminal complaint filed by BJP MP Subramanian Swamy in 2013.

Several candidates in RS poll fray elected unopposed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Several candidates who were in the Rajya Sabha poll fray scheduled on June 10 have been elected unopposed during the last two days from States like Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh even as interesting contests await in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Haryana.

All the six candidates from Tamil Nadu who had submitted their nominations for the biennial elections including the ruling DMK's 3 nominees were on Friday declared elected unopposed by authorities.

The ruling DMK's S Kalyanasundaram, R Girirajan and KRN Rajesh Kumar, AIADMK's C Ve Shanmugam

and R Dharmar and Congress' nominee P Chidambaram were declared elected unopposed following the expiry of deadline (June 3) for withdrawal of candidature.

Election for a total of 57 Rajya Sabha members from 15 States including Uttar Pradesh whose term expires during June-August 2022 are being conducted by the Election Commission.

Noted environmentalist Balbir Singh Seechewal and entrepreneur and social activist Vikramjit Singh Sahney have been elected unopposed as AAP candidates to the Rajya Sabha from Punjab after no candidate withdrew nomination papers up till the last day of withdrawal till 3 pm.

In Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena and BJP will battle it out for the sixth seat of Rajya Sabha as none of the seven candidates in the fray - four of



the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and three of BJP - withdrew their nomination on Friday. BJP has fielded Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Anil Bonde and former MP Dhananjay Mahadik, while Shiv Sena has put up two candidates - Sanjay Raut and Sanjay Pawar. NCP has renom-

inated Praful Patel, while Congress has fielded Imran Pratapgarhi. The fight for the sixth seat is between BJP's Mahadik and Sena's Sanjay Pawar.

Before the deadline ended, a three-member delegation of MVA on Friday met senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis

here with a request that his party withdraw its third candidate.

The MVA delegation told Fadnavis that the BJP can take one additional seat in the biennial Legislative Council elections to 10 seats scheduled later this month if it withdraws its third candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls. But the BJP remained firm on fielding the third candidate with Fadnavis giving a counter-offer to the three-party combine in the state.

In Jharkhand, the ruling lead alliance partner JMM's Mahua Maji and BJP's Aditya Sahu were declared elected unopposed to the upper house.

Another BJP candidate from Uttarakhand Kalpana Saini was also elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

Saini will take over from Congress' Pradeep Tamta

whose tenure ends next month. In Madhya Pradesh, Congress leader and senior lawyer Vivek Tankha and the BJP's Sumitra Valmiki and Kavita Patidar were declared as elected unopposed while the ruling Congress in neighbouring Chhattisgarh sent their nominees Rajeev Shukla and Ranjeet Ranjan unopposed to the house of elders. Shukla, a journalist-turned-politician, has served as Rajya Sabha MP thrice in the past.

Ranjan is a former Lok Sabha member from Bihar.

Four candidates of the ruling YSR Congress - V Vijayasai Reddy, Beeda Masthan Rao, R Krishnaiah and S Niranjan Reddy- were elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh as they are the only ones to file nominations when the process ended here on Tuesday.

Delhi court rejects Karti's anticipatory bail plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Friday dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of Congress MP Karti Chidambaram in a case registered by the Enforcement Directorate in the alleged Chinese Visas scam. Special Judge MK Nagpal denied relief to Karti, saying there was not enough ground to allow his application.

After the CBI's FIR, ED recently registered the money-laundering case against Karti and others in the alleged scam pertaining to the issuance of a visa to 263 Chinese nationals in 2011 when his father P Chidambaram was

the Home Minister. The federal agency has filed its case under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) taking cognizance of a recent first information report by the CBI in the same case.

SC quashes petition challenging construction at Shree Jagannath Temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a petition challenging the construction activities carried out at Shree Jagannath temple in Puri by Odisha Government to provide essential amenities like toilets and cloak rooms.

The apex court observed that these construction activities are necessary in larger public interest. The bench also took exception to the filing of frivolous PILs, and said most of such petitions are either publicity interest litigation or personal interest litigation. Rs one lakh each was put as cost on petitioners.

A vacation bench of Justices B R Gavai and Hima Kohli dismissed the PILs opposing the construction with costs, and said the State cannot be prevented from making necessary arrangements to provide basic facilities for lakhs

of devotees visiting the temple. The top court said the construction activities are being undertaken in pursuance of the directions issued by a three-judge bench of this Court in the case of Mrinalini Padhi.

"The construction is being carried out for the purpose of providing basic and essential amenities like toilets for men and women, cloak rooms, electricity rooms etc. These are the basic facilities which are necessary for the convenience of the devotees at large," said the Bench.

"In the recent past, it is noticed that there is mushroom growth of public interest litigations. However, in many of such petitions, there is no public interest involved at all. The petitions are either publicity interest litigations or personal interest litigation. We highly deprecate the practice of filing such frivolous petitions. They are nothing but abuse of the process of law.

Protected forests must have 1 km ESZ boundary: Apex court

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed that national parks and wildlife sanctuaries must have an Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of minimum one km from the demarcated boundary of a protected forest. A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, BR Gavai and AS Bopanna said mining within the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries shall not be permitted. No permanent structure will be allowed within the ESZ, said the apex court.

The top court also directed the Chief Conservator of Forests of all states and UTs to prepare a list of existing structures within the ESZs and submit a report to it within a period of three months. "For this purpose, such authorities can take assistance from Governmental agencies for satellite imaging or photography using drones," the bench said.

After Pak raised J&K at UNSC, India says country committed genocide, evaded accountability

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

In a sharp retort to Pakistan raising the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in the United Nations Security Council, India has said its neighbour committed genocide in the then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and has evaded accountability for such serious crimes.

Presenting India's stand in the UN Security Council, New Delhi also said Pakistan is a "live example" of how a nation continues to evade accountability for ethnic cleansing.

Making these assertions, Kajal Bhat, Counsellor/Legal Advisor in India's Permanent Mission in the UN also said late Thursday India will continue to take firm and decisive steps to respond to cross-border terrorism.

The Counsellor said she was constrained to take the



floor to respond to some of the falsehoods and malicious propaganda spread by the representative of Pakistan "as they are accustomed to do like a broken record".

"Today, we are discussing how to strengthen accountability and justice for serious violations of international law. The irony is perhaps lost on the representative of Pakistan, given their shameful history of committing genocide in what was then East Pakistan, and what is now Bangladesh, over 50 years back for which there has not even been an acknowledgement, much less apology

Pakistan presents a live example to the Security Council of how a state continues to evade accountability for serious crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing. To ask them to reflect on this is perhaps asking too much, but the least they could do is not sully the dignity of this Council," she said.

Bhat said innocent women, children, academics and intellectuals were treated as weapons of war in an act of "calculated genocide, carried out by the Pakistani army" in what it called 'Operation Searchlight'.

"The reign of terror unleashed by Pakistan on the population of the then East Pakistan, saw hundreds of thousands killed brutally, several thousands of women were raped," she said.

Bhat said the only contribution that Pakistan can make is to stop its support for terrorism directed against India and its people.

ED attaches ₹20.96 cr assets of IFFCO MD on money-laundering charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate of (ED) has provisionally attached proceeds of crime in the form of immovable assets valued at Rs. 20.96 crore belonging to Udai Shanker Awasthi, Managing Director of IFFCO on money laundering charges in its ongoing investigation against Directors of IFFCO and Indian Potash Limited (IPL) as also others.

The attached properties include residential houses here including a property located at HauzKhas Enclave which he had transferred to himself from IFFCO, Gurugram and Himachal Pradesh.

Earlier, ED had attached movable assets (FDRs) valued at Rs 27.79 crore in the name of Amarendra Dhari Singh, USD 47,54,606 (Rs 36.55 crore as per prevailing exchange rate) lying in the Swiss Bank Accounts of Atrium Holdings

Limited and Artistic Holdings Limited (both beneficially owned by Pankaj Jain) besides residential and commercial properties valued at Rs. 54.11 lakh belonging to Pankaj Jainin this case.

The total attachment in this case comes to about Rs 86 crore so far.

The ED had initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of a case registered by CBI May 17, 2021 against various suspects including Awasthi, Pankaj Jain, Promoter of Jyoti Trading Corporation and Rare Earth Group, Dubai, Amarendra Dhari Singh and others for criminal conspiracy, cheating and criminal misconduct.

The ED probe has revealed that Awasthi and others in IFFCO generated 'Proceeds of Crime' and layered it through various unrelated entities and part of crime proceeds was then transferred to the entities controlled by Awasthi and others.

CBI arrests 7 for diverting valuables to scrap dealers

Searches were conducted at six locations in Hyderabad

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested seven persons, including the Assistant General Manager of public sector undertaking Mishra Dhatu Nigam Ltd (MIDHANI), for allegedly diverting valuable material to scrap dealers in Hyderabad.

Besides MIDHANI AGM S Narasing Rao, the agency has arrested two personnel of the Telangana State Special Protection Force, Assistant Commandant Ravinder Reddy



and Constable Saripalli Prem Kumar.

It also nabbed scrap dealers Mohammed Nayeem Nayyar and Mohammed Waseem Nayyar and MIDHANI casual employees Bathkola Murali and Nasa Deekshith.

"It was alleged that the

accused entered into a conspiracy...To divert valuable raw/finished/semi-finished material in a clandestine manner from MIDHANI, Hyderabad to the godown of scrap dealers.

"It was further alleged that the said scrap merchants agreed to pay illegal gratifica-

tion to the temporary/casual employees and other public servants," the CBI said in a statement.

During investigation, the CBI intercepted the vehicle while transferring 950 kilogram of precious material and caught the two scrap merchants. They were stealing precious metal scrap along with two temporary employees of MIDHANI, the driver of the vehicle and other accused.

"Searches were conducted at six locations in Hyderabad at MIDHANI and other premises of accused which led to the recovery of incriminating documents and mobile phones containing incriminating evidence as well as some details of payments made by the scrap merchants to the temporary employees of MIDHANI," the agency said, adding the arrested accused will be produced before the Competent Court.

'It is vision of Modi that India should become world leader'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI/NEW DELHI

A Training Programme on "Techniques of Advanced Imaging and Mass Spectroscopy" was organised by Amity University at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi on Wednesday.

The event was sponsored by Department of Science and Technology (DST) under Synergistic Training Programme Utilising the Scientific and Technological Infrastructure (STUTI).

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Vijay Kumar Shukla, Rector, Banaras Hindu University, said, "It is the vision of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi that India should become a world leader, instead of following other countries.

Most industries require

high-tech equipment as the world is evolving, especially in the field of Science & Technology, and the aim of this program is to make state-of-the-art equipment available to the industry.

Present on the occasion were Prof. Anil K Tripathi, Coordinator, SATHI-BHU, Dr. A. Chakraborty, Deputy Director General, Amity Foundation for Science Technology and Innovation Alliances, Amity University, averred, amongst other academicians and students.

Thirty Research Scholars have been selected for the seven day training program during which participants will experience hands-on training on handling of the mass spectrometer, instrument understanding related to calibration process using compound discoverer 3.2 and data analysis.



**खेलेगा इंडिया तो
खिलेगा इंडिया**

Opening Ceremony of **4th KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES** Panchkula, Haryana - 2021

Chief Guest

Sh. Amit Shah

Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation

Presided Over By

Sh. Manohar Lal

Chief Minister, Haryana

Guest of honour

Sh. Anurag Singh Thakur

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports,
Information and Broadcasting

August Presence of

Sh. Dushyant Chautala

Deputy Chief Minister,
Haryana

Sh. Nisith Pramanik

Union Minister of State for
Home Affairs, Youth Affairs & Sports

Sh. Gian Chand Gupta

Speaker,
Vidhan Sabha Haryana

S. Sandeep Singh

Minister of State for Sports
& Youth Affairs, Haryana

Date : 4th June, 2022 (Saturday)

Time: 06:00 pm onwards

Venue: Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex, Athletic Stadium, Panchkula, Haryana

For the schedule
of games
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Sense & sensibility

The RSS chief's first remarks on the Gyanvapi mosque row are sure to salve inflamed passions

At a time when religious passions are inflamed and inter-community relations strained, RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat's exhortation to his followers is likely to calm down tempers. "Par har masjid main Shivling kyu dekhna? Woh bhi ek puja hai (But why look for a Shivling in every mosque? What happens in mosques is also a form of prayer)," he said. It needs to be mentioned here that these were his first remarks on the controversy surrounding the Gyanvapi mosque. Of course, he didn't say that the issue is fictitious or has been raised for political purposes. "The Gyanvapi issue is on. Gyanvapi has a history which we cannot change now. We did not create that history. Not today's Hindus, not Muslims. It happened then. Islam came here with the invaders. In these attacks, temples were destroyed



to subdue the morale of those seeking freedom for this country. There are thousands of such temples. Issues of temples, which hold special significance in the hearts of Hindus, are now being raised," he said. It is, however, important to note that the RSS chief doesn't slam the contemporary Muslims for the sins of their ancestors but he doesn't want that issue to be swept under the carpet either — something which a lot many political and thought leaders desire. Worse, many intellectuals, especially those on the Left, want to whitewash the atrocities perpetrated by the Muslim invaders and rulers in the medieval period; they try to cover these up by the tapestry called 'syncretic culture' and 'Ganga-Jamuni sanskriti.'

Liberals may sneer at Bhagwat's statement, saying that it was his followers who raked up the Gyanvapi issue in the first place. They believe that the victory of the Hindu side in the matter of Ram Janmabhoomi has emboldened the saffron brigade that is now targeting not just mosques but also other Muslim monuments like the Taj Mahal and Qutub Minar. There may be some merit in the charge, for a number of zealous Hindutva activists have said and done things in the recent past that can be regarded anti-Islamic. A petitioner recently pleaded in the Allahabad High Court for the setting up of a fact-finding committee to investigate the history of the Taj Mahal and open its 22 locked rooms. Thankfully, the HC refused to wade into a murky row, saying, "For the prayer regarding opening up of the rooms, the historical research ought to involve proper methodology. This should be left to the historians." Unfortunately, the votaries of Hindutva have little patience for anything to emerge from a rigorous history debate. Ironically, their attitude is exactly the same as that of their arch-enemies — Leftists. Both believe in certain dogmas which cannot be questioned. Facts have to conform to the dogmas — otherwise facts, and those who point these out, are trashed. One hopes that Bhagwat's recently expressed views drill some sense in the minds of Hindutva warriors — and also make Left-liberals less pugnacious.

PICTALK



Participants at a rally organised on the occasion of the World Bicycle Day, in Bhopal

PTI

Soft targets

The spectre of targeted killing of minority civilians in Kashmir has returned to haunt them in a big way

Bringing back the dark memories of 1989, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir has deteriorated dramatically and violently. Since January this year, the Valley has seen at least 16 targeted killings. Minorities, civilians and Government officials are being targeted apparently because the locals have ceased adhering to dictates of the militants. Ironically, by attacking people whose right to stay in Kashmir is questioned by terrorists, they are creating an environment for Kashmiris to be assaulted outside the UT. The frustrated militants have changed their strategy to target unarmed police officers and innocent citizens, especially women. The use of pistols in these murders is on the rise since these are easy to conceal and carry. There has been an uptick in terror activity, with missing local youth constituting a huge security threat. In the Valley, there are around 160 terrorists, 70 of whom are local militants and 90 are foreign operators. Conservative estimates put the number of 'hybrid terrorists' at around 50. 'Hybrid terrorists' are agents who are not on any terror watch list but have been radicalised enough to carry out a strike before resuming their normal lives.

Pakistan is said to be ensuring that weaponry reaches these militants. Despite the fact that numerous such consignments were seized, many of them ended up in the hands of hybrid terrorists. Since Kashmir is gripped by a terror psychosis, a senior cop claims that the J&K Police has also been targeted. Off-duty officers have long been easy prey; nine cops have been killed so far this year, compared to 20 in 2021. On the

political front, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi has blamed the Union Government, saying it is repeating the mistakes from 1989. "They don't allow local politicians to speak out and such things are giving way to terrorism," he observed. What the Centre now needs to do, through its appointee Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, is to reach out more to the Muslim-dominated local population. In the immediate aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370, we had seen the younger generation of Kashmiris apologising for the mistakes their ancestors had made and saying that they were ready to atone for the bloody past by making up to the Kashmiri Pandits now and making them feel welcome back into the Valley. It's time they rose above the rhetoric and walked that talk!

The terror factory in Afghanistan

The Taliban's stated wish to have peaceful relations abroad notwithstanding, the global consequences of competitive militancy are dangerously severe

Will Afghanistan again become an exporter of global terrorism? My answer, an emphatic "yes", will trigger sharp protests. Many perhaps will cite some of what Zabiullah Mujahid, Deputy Minister for Culture and Information and official central spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (henceforth Islamic Emirate), said at the Taliban's first official press conference in Kabul on August 17, 2021. The Taliban, he said, wished to have peaceful relations with other countries and no group would be allowed to use Afghan territory to attack other nations.

These were reassuring words. The Taliban, however, are not celebrated for matching their pronouncements with action when it does not suit them. Among other things, Mujahid also said at the same press conference that the rights of women would be protected within the framework of Islam. The same day, the Taliban announced a "general amnesty" for all officials of the ousted Government. "You should restart your routine life with full confidence," said Enamullah Samangani, currently deputy central spokesman of the Islamic Emirate and a member of the Taliban's cultural commission, who announced the amnesty. He also stated: "The Islamic Emirate doesn't want women to be victims. They should be in the Government structure according to Shariah law."

The reality has been very different. Many former Government officials, including those who had surrendered, have been arrested/abducted, tortured and killed. Women have been effectively barred from education and employment, with only those whose services cannot be dispensed with, being allowed to work. They have to cover themselves head to foot in *burqa*, and be accompanied by a close male relative when venturing out of their homes. Music has effectively disappeared from Afghan life; the media are under increasing intimidation and pressure. By all indications, the Taliban, in their



second coming, are set to unleash on Afghanistan the living hell they did during their first innings in power (1996-2001).

Will it be any different in the case of terrorism? According to a recent report by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the UN Security Council, the current Taliban regime provides safe haven to several terrorist groups. The Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) runs eight training camps in Nangarhar province, "three of which are directly under Taliban control". The Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was "said to maintain three camps in Kunar and Nangarhar" provinces. Both groups have deep links with the ruling regime and hold meetings with people at the top level.

The UN report further states that Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) has between 180 and 400 fighters including "nationals from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan... located in Ghazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimruz, Paktika and Zabul Provinces". Besides, the rechristening of its magazine from *Nawa-i-Afghan Jihad* to *Nawa-e-Gazwah-e-Hind* represents a shift in focus "from Afghanistan to Kashmir". The largest terrorist group, however, is the Tehreek-



MUSIC HAS EFFECTIVELY DISAPPEARED FROM AFGHAN LIFE; THE MEDIA ARE UNDER INCREASING INTIMIDATION. BY ALL INDICATIONS, THE TALIBAN ARE SET TO UNLEASH ON AFGHANISTAN THE LIVING HELL THEY DID DURING THEIR FIRST INNINGS

e-Taliban Pakistan, which has an estimated strength of 3,000 to 4,000, mainly concentrated in the country's eastern and south-eastern parts bordering Pakistan.

The UN report states that AQIS is "unlikely to mount direct attacks outside Afghanistan for the next year or two, owing to both a lack of capability and Taliban restraint". But what happens after that? Also, what about the JeM and LeT? The argument that these outfits are likely to attack only India, implies the outrageous assumption that terrorism against India is permissible, but not against the US and the West. Besides, given their fundamentalist ideological orientation, there is no reason for them not to strike against the West, as the Al-Qaeda staged 9/11 and other attacks against the US, including the ones on the latter's embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam on August 7, 1998, which killed 224 persons and injured over 4,500.

Besides, there is the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), an affiliate of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is bitterly hostile to the Taliban. Contrary to the Taliban's claims, it has not been crushed. A dispatch in *The New York Times* (dated May 1, 2022) titled 'With Spate of Attacks, ISIS Begins

Bloody New Chapter in Afghanistan', Christina Goldbaum states that since the Taliban seized power, the ISKP has grown in reach and expanded to nearly all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. She further cites Abdul Sayed, a security expert who tracks the ISKP and other jihadi groups, as saying that the ISKP carried out 119 attacks in Afghanistan in the last four months of 2021 against 39 in the corresponding period of 2020.

The UN report states that groups like the ISKP have declined in strength and are believed to be incapable "of mounting international attacks before 2023 at the earliest". But what happens after that? Also, what about the Taliban themselves? Their soldiers regard the western countries, the Shia, Hazaras and all not practising their brand of Islam as enemies, having been fighting them continuously for years. They are bound to find peace boring. If the Taliban's leaders do not sanction jihad abroad, they will gravitate to the ISKP. Indeed, one can foresee the rise of competitive militancy, with the inevitable consequence of attacks abroad as terrorist groups seek to retain/attract recruits.

(The author is Consulting Editor, *The Pioneer*. The views expressed are personal.)



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VADODARA WOMAN'S STRANGE CASE

Sir — Whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi's India will become 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) or not is a matter of debate. But PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah's Gujarat's Vadodara town's 24-year-old Kshama Bindu created history by declaring that she would be wedding herself on June 11, complete with all rituals and ceremonies, including *phas* and applying *sindoor* (vermilion). This self-marriage or 'sologamy' is a glaring example of one and only self-reliant to the world from India. Bindu said: "Maybe I am the first to set an example of self-love in our country."

After her 'marriage', Bindu will also be heading for a two-week honeymoon in Goa. Now, one wants to know: Is the marriage going to be registered? Will a certificate be issued? Agreed, every human has a desire to live her/his life the way they like and not the way the society wants us to live. Also, her parents deserve respect for understanding her stance. But the big question is if a woman's lifetime dream is to become a mother, then how will she become a mother? Here also, she can get kids through self-love; no test tube, IVF or surrogacy needs to be done.

Bidyut K Chatterjee | Faridabad

FRAMING BETTER HEALTH POLICIES

Sir — Healthcare forms the backbone of any progressive society. Although accuracy in reporting of births and death in a given year is a necessary prerequisite in determining the actual state of health, ascertaining the cause of death remains the most important factor in framing health policies of any country. The situation in a country which accommodates about 1.4 billion people but barely manages to certify the causes of death of only 22.5 per cent of its registered deaths is certainly worrisome. This was recently revealed in the Medical Certification Cause of Death (MCCD) 2020 report.

But this is not a new problem and

After Sibal & Hardik, who's next?



Today, Hardik Patel left the Congress and a few days ago Kapil Sibal left the party and no one knows who will leave the party tomorrow. It needs to be taken seriously and ways found to make the party stronger at the grassroots with a young leadership at the helm. The charges of money laundering should be faced bravely so that the workers may remain courageous and the morale of common workers is not affected. After Kapil Sibal

changed his party loyalty, the Congress should take the strong stand on dissident leaders, also known as the G23 group. There is no elected president of the party since long and if Rahul is to be next president, it is expected that it should be declared at the earliest.

It is also expected from Rahul to refrain from making statements which deliver the wrong message in public. The party should stick to its core issues such as secularism and should not copy the other parties. In the last elections, the Congress presented its soft Hindutva, which proved harmful. In many States, the party is out of power for the last 30 years. In the recently concluded Assembly elections in five States, the party performed miserably and in the State of Punjab could not get enough seats where a Rajya Sabha member of the party would be nominated.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

there is hardly any significant improvement in this regard over the past decade. Findings reveal that most Indian States ascertain the cause in less than 20 per cent of registered deaths. Bihar is a laggard as it provides COD for only three per cent registered deaths. Inability to provide robust COD information makes it difficult to establish the impact of health hazards such as pollution, determining the number of COVID deaths, and so on. Without foolproof knowledge of the causes of fatalities, it is hard to chalk out a strategy to counter the diseases.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

TARGETED KILLINGS IN KASHMIR

Sir — The spate of killings in Kashmir has made distressing news. The targeted attacks have accentuated the religious fault lines. Killing of any person is tragic; it does not matter whether the victim belongs to one religion or the other. We should be equally sad over all deaths. Responses cannot be graded according to religion. It would be

a betrayal of our humanity if we think that expendability of life depends on religion. TV channels must take care to report the saddest events in such a manner that it does not further deepen the religious divide in Jammu and Kashmir.

Much of the violence in Kashmir Valley is a result of Hindus and Muslims being cast in an adversarial relationship despite them following the gentler strands of their respective religions. The loss of life — each life, be it of a Hindu or a Muslim, is precious — underlines the futility and pointlessness of pigeonholing people as 'us-and-them' on the basis of religion to the extent of pitting themselves against one another. Respect for other religions is a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence, and preservation of distinct religious identities is not mutually exclusive. The clash of religions proves to be costly in terms of lives.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

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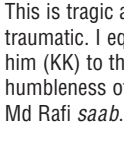


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



The US will stand with our Ukrainian partners and... continue giving weapons and equipment.

US President — Joe Biden



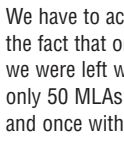
This is tragic and traumatic. I equate him (KK) to the humbleness of Md Rafi saab.

Music composer — Anu Malik



I don't think of the past and the future, only about the match that I play.

Indian cricketer — Hanuma Vihari



We have to accept the fact that once we were left with only 50 MLAs... and once with 21.

Congress leader — Sachin Pilot

FIRST COLUMN

HOW TO STOP
SEA LEVEL RISE

The problem is actually smaller
than it seems



GWYNNE DYER

Ninety per cent of ice flowing to the sea from the Antarctic ice sheet, and about half of that lost from Greenland, travels in narrow, fast ice streams measuring tens of kilometres or less across. Stemming the largest flows would allow the ice sheets to thicken, slowing or even reversing their contribution to sea-level rise.” John Moore, a British glaciologist holding dual appointments at Lapland and Beijing Normal universities, had a big idea a few years. The big ice-streams are moving faster and faster because the oceans are warming, and warm currents are eating away at the underside of those glaciers where they meet the ocean. So stop them. The warm currents are deep. When they melt the lowest part of the ice-stream where it meets the ocean the glaciers loses contact with the underlying rock, and the friction with the rock was what slows them down. They can speed up three, five even ten times faster. However, the problem is smaller than it seems. Greenland and Antarctica, where the ice is up to two kilometres deep, have about 70,000 kilometres of coastline, but the total length where the ice-streams reach the sea is only 200 km or less. Stop the accelerated melt there, and the human race might win an extra century or two to cope with all the other challenges posed by global warming without having to wage a continuous struggle to protect itself from rapidly rising sea levels at the same time. So Moore and a handful



of colleagues set out to see how we might divert those warm currents. “The warm currents run along the bottom of the sea floor, so if you (created an obstacle high enough that) the warm water couldn’t flow over it, it would slow that ice shelf melting and the ice shelf would immediately thicken,” he recalled. They chose the Thwaites glacier, the so-called ‘Doomsday glacier’ in Western Antarctica, for their thought experiment. “At Thwaites, the most vulnerable ice shelf on the planet, the major inflow of warm water is through a channel four kilometres across. And we initially thought we would just block that...make a dam,” Moore recalled. But he and a handful of colleagues had the wit to put out an all-call for better ideas in a leading scientific journal. “The engineers laughed at us, slapped us around the face, and said ‘Don’t be so stupid. You don’t want to have bulldozers or something on the sea floor.” The buoyancy wants to keep the curtain vertical, the currents want to push it over, and there will be an equilibrium where it resists that flow.” The engineer in question (who didn’t actually slap Moore around the face) was Bowie Keefer, a Canadian engineer living on Galiano Island in British Columbia’s Gulf Islands. “I was inspired by the kelp bed that we have off a beach here on Galiano. A kelp bed consists of streamers of vegetation attached to the seabed and stretched upward by a buoyant bulb at the top.” “Paddling a kayak through the kelp bed, it occurred to me that if you attached those streamers together, you would then have a curtain. And if we built a buoyant, flexible artificial curtain up to 300 metres high, attached to the seabed, fish and whales, and even icebergs, could go over the top (in the cold, fresh water), but block the warm water from coming in and protect the ice sheet.” That’s the plan, and Moore’s team has a tentative budget. “It would cost about \$5 billion a year over ten years to install the curtain, and ongoing maintenance would cost one or two billion a year thereafter. That includes a fleet of five icebreakers, ten ice-reinforced ships, fabrication of the curtain in southern Chile, the lot.” And then there’s the several dozen other, smaller glaciers that would also need to be blocked. But it would still be 10-20 times cheaper than building dykes and barriers to protect the world’s coastlines from sea level rise. Better to attack the problem at its source. (Gwynne Dyer’s new book is ‘The Shortest History of War’. The views expressed are personal.)

Barefoot College: 50 yrs of empowerment

ABHA SHARMA

Based on Gandhian ideals and values, the Barefoot College has successfully completed 50 years working towards bringing a change at the grassroots

I always had a desire to study but my dreams were put on hold after I completed Class 3. Soon, household chores and family responsibilities took precedence in life and the quest of studies took a backseat. But when way back in 2003, I got the opportunity to revive my dreams albeit in a different way, I made the most of that opportunity. It was the year I had joined the solar project run by Social Work Research Centre (SWRC) at Tilonia and my life changed for better,” said 55-year-old Lila Gurjar with a sense of great fulfillment.

For Lila, it was the newfound confidence and heartening realisation that if one is endowed with wisdom and practical knowledge, one could excel in life even without a school certificate and degree. This is the beauty of SWRC, popularly known as The Barefoot College, she says.

Based on Gandhian ideals and values, The Barefoot College has successfully completed 50 years working towards bringing a change at the grassroots, with barefoot solutions in a wide range of fields—solar and other renewable energy, water conservation, education, health, rural handicrafts, communication, women’s empowerment and public movements.

History

It may be a tryst with destiny that brought Sanjit (Bunker) Roy to Rajasthan. As a young man, well qualified from a reputed institution, a lucrative and successful professional career awaited him in 1966-67. But he decided to embark on a different path. Deeply moved by the drought situation in Bihar, he was exploring solutions to the water woes of common people. In 1972, his quest brought him to Tilonia, a small village in Ajmer district of Rajasthan. Here, along with his farmer friend, Meghraj, he started digging wells in water-starved areas of the state. This journey laid the foundation of Barefoot, gradually developing into a perspective and giving further shape to an all-inclusive comprehensive development model.

Bunker’s dream to bring about a change in rural India attracted several likeminded people, which eventually led to the formation of the SWRC at Tilonia. The centre was formally registered as Barefoot College in 1972. A year or two later, the centre began working with women, who had the natural ability to excel as community leaders. This gave impetus to women’s empowerment and soon many women, who were barely literate, successfully trained themselves as solar engineers, health workers, hand pump mechanics, puppet makers, etc.

Empowering women

The formation of women’s groups in 11 villages in 1981-82 was the beginning of an awareness drive about their economic contribution and role as a daily wage labourer. “My association with the Barefoot College made me aware about our rights and we could stage a protest to demand minimum wages that lasted almost six months in 1981,” recalls 76-year-old Norti Bai.



THE FOCUS AT THE BAREFOOT COLLEGE HAS BEEN ON FINDING HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR THE RURAL POPULATION, BE IT WATER CONSERVATION, IMPROVEMENT IN RURAL HEALTH, NIGHT SCHOOLS, ENCOURAGING CHILDREN’S PARLIAMENT OR PROMOTION OF HANDICRAFTS, ADVOCACY AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

(The writer is an independent journalist from Rajasthan. features@charkha.org Charkha Features. The views expressed are personal.)



Lighting up lives: The Solar Programme

The Solar Programme has been one of the most creative and significant programmes of the Barefoot College. The first solar project was started at the Tilonia campus in 1996 where local stakeholders received training to make solar lamps. This was well appreciated by the local community since it served their energy needs.

The larger initiative in the field, however, was the “Solar Mamas Programme” launched in the year 2000 with the European Union’s collaboration. Under the programme, semi- or even illiterate women were provided trainings in solar home lighting systems.

Recalling her experience, Lila says that she was initially hesitant and unsure if she would be able to learn through the Solar Programme but after a six-month training, she found herself to be a confident person. Having learnt the whole process successfully, she and her colleague Magan Kanwar, have been providing training to several other women like them. So far, over 1,700 women from 96 countries, such as Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Motswana, Guatemala, Kango, Mexico have been trained.

The solar programme has helped 75,000 households find solutions to their energy needs and has prevented environment pollution by saving 45 million litres of kerosene. “A homemaker like me who could never think of stepping out of the village boundary got the opportunity to visit overseas. I have visited Fiji island, Janjibar, Germany and France to attend conferences and further training,” Lila added.

Barefoot solutions

The focus at the Barefoot College has been on finding holistic solutions for the rural population, be it water conservation, improvement in rural health services, night schools, encouraging children’s parliament or promotion of handicrafts, advocacy, and skill development. The innovations and barefoot solutions at Tilonia have been widely acclaimed all over the world.

Several women have received training as hand pump mechanics as well. Lali Devi, who has a long association with Tilonia, says, “It’s the women who have to bear the brunt of water crisis the most, so it helps if the women know about hand pump technology.” Although she has never been to school, she is well equipped today to diagnose a non-functioning hand pump!

To keep the villagers updated on issues of concerns and development schemes, a community radio service has also been functional since 2009. RJ Aarti says that she feels empowered ever since she got associated with Tilonia Community Radio. “As an individual and a woman, one can hardly dare to raise any concerns with the government officials, but through the radio I have the courage to air all the public concerns and get answers for,” she said.

The fifty-year journey of the Barefoot College has shown the way how, if exposed to right opportunities, the rural population, particularly women, can increase their economic mobility in life. They have the skills and wisdom required to be a catalyst for change, for her own self-reliance and confidence and also for the betterment of her family and society.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THIS (ED SUMMONS TO SONIA, RAHUL) IS PART OF A LARGER DISEASE, WHICH WILL CONSUME THE RULING PARTY ULTIMATELY. — CONGRESS LEADER ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI



HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A CRIMINAL SAY I’M A CRIMINAL? THEY’LL OF COURSE DENY IT. BUT DOCUMENTS ARE PROOF. — BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT JP NADDA

New drug: Real money games

Players often lose money but the companies that make games earn huge profits

The author is Professor, Department of Economics, P.G.D.A.V. College (University of Delhi) For some time, you must have seen advertisements of some apps in which sports celebrities are seen advertising online games, although at the same time in the same advertisement there is also a quick warning, ‘to play these games carefully, they may be addictive.’ In fact, today our youth are getting trapped in the apps and games endorsed by these celebrities. This ‘real money gaming’ industry has expanded significantly due to the expansion of internet and mobile in the country for some time now. It is believed that by the year 2025, the business of this industry will exceed \$5 billion. Various types of online and apps-based games, including



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

(The writer is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

virtual games, i.e. fantasy sports, rummy, ludo, share trading related games, and crypto-based games, are called real money games, which are played for money and reward. These games are skill- as well as chance-based. But no matter whether they are skill based or chance based, they are expanding fast and companies promoting these apps and websites are making huge profits.

Spoiling the future of youth

Ever since the emergence of these real money games, there have been many cases of youth ending their lives after getting trapped in debt. It happens because they are virtually addicted and the chances of ultimately winning in these games are very meagre. In some cases, even families have been ruined after a youth member got



trapped in huge debts due to these addictive apps.

In 2020, an app company named Dream-11 bought the sponsorship rights of IPL cricket by paying rupees Rs 222 crore. After this the Dream-11 app became a household name. Apps of other fantasy cricket games also bought advertising rights in IPL. All these apps are being promoted by big cricket celebrities. The celebrities include M.S. Dhoni, Rohit Sharma, Hardik Pandya, and Rishabh Pant.

Reports suggest that most of the youths who commit suicide due to gambling addiction through these apps are in the 19-25 age group, and they include students, migrant laborers and businessmen.

Skill or chance?

Most courts have validated these fantasy games, accepting the argument that it is a game of skill. Yet, understanding the gravity, six governments have so far banned or disallowed fantasy cricket platforms. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has requested the Union Government, to ban 132 such apps.

Although some studies hold that the winning in this fantasy cricket game is not by chance and thus it is not gambling, some sports psychologists believe that fantasy cricket is actually gam-

bling and may lead to pathological gambling behaviour. However, the logic of the people associated with this “industry” is that there is no reason to be addicted to fantasy sports as the average ticket price in this is only Rs 35, so a person cannot lose more than 10 thousand in such games in their life time.

However, with the information that people committing suicide after getting trapped into debt of lakhs of rupees due to these ‘games’ this argument is proved wrong. Therefore, more investigation is needed in this subject. It is worth noting that at present this industry is not under any laws and is self-regulated. Therefore, instead of information from the industry itself, only a thorough investigation of these apps can only reveal the truth.

Risk-taking is not only said to be important in neoliberal economic theories but is also glorified. Many financial instruments have entered in the era of neo-liberal policies and speculation has become an integral part of today’s economies. Although speculation in the stock, commodity, and foreign exchange markets has many side effects, they are legally permitted. With the entry of speculation into the common life, the practice of fantasy games has also gained general acceptance.

Players lose, not companies

In fantasy games, some players may win and others may lose, but apps companies running these games earn huge profits. This profit drives them to purchase sponsorship rights by paying huge fees to cricket organis-

ers like BCCI. It has to be understood that their profit is at the cost of those poor students, labourers, farmers and common people who put their savings on stake in these games, or even borrow to play these real money games.

We find that courts and administrative bodies have information about these games, which the customers do not have. The Supreme Court has observed that the results of skill-based games can be influenced by mechanical tampering.

In such a situation, the government of India and the concerned administrative ministries cannot sit idle. Apps that push youth into gambling need to be banned. Till this process is complete, there will be a need to ban advertisements, especially by celebrities.

Electronic warfare shapes Russia-Ukraine war

AP ■ KYIV

On Ukraine's battlefields, the simple act of powering up a cellphone can beckon a rain of deathly skyfall. Artillery radar and remote controls for unmanned aerial vehicles may also invite fiery shrapnel show-ers.

This is electronic warfare, a critical but largely invisible aspect of Russia's war against Ukraine. Military commanders largely shun discussing it, fearing they'll jeopardize operations by revealing secrets.

Electronic warfare technology targets communications, navigation and guidance systems to locate, blind and deceive the enemy and direct lethal blows. It is used against artillery, fighter jets, cruise missiles, drones and more. Militaries also use it to protect their forces.

It's an area where Russia was thought to have a clear advantage going into the war. Yet, for reasons not entirely clear, its much-touted electronic warfare prowess was barely seen in the war's early stages in the chaotic failure to seize the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.

It has become far more of a factor in fierce fighting in eastern Ukraine, where short-er, easier-to-defend supply lines let Russia move electronic war-fare gear closer to the battle-field.

"They are jamming every-thing their systems can reach," said an official of Aerorozvidka, a reconnaissance team of Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicle tinkers, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of safety concerns. "We can't say they dominate, but they hinder us greatly."

A Ukrainian intelligence official called the Russian threat "pretty severe" when it comes to disrupting reconnaissance efforts and commanders' com-munications with troops. Russian jamming of GPS receivers on drones that Ukraine uses to locate the enemy and direct artillery fire is particularly intense "on the line of contact," he said.

Ukraine has scored some successes in countering Russia's electronic warfare efforts. It has captured important pieces of hardware - a significant intel-ligence coup - and destroyed at least two multi-vehicle mobile electronic warfare units.

Its own electronic warfare capability is hard to assess. Analysts say it has markedly improved since 2014, when Russia seized Crimea and insti-gated a separatist revolt in eastern Ukraine. But there are setbacks.

Last week, Russia claimed it destroyed a Ukrainian elec-tronic intelligence centre in the southeastern town of Dniprovske. The claim could not be independently con-

firmed, and Ukrainian officials did not respond

to a request for comment. Ukraine has also made effective use of technology and intelligence from the United States and other NATO mem-bers. Such information helped Ukraine sink the battle cruiser Moskva. Allied satellites and surveillance aircraft help from nearby skies, as does billionaire Elon Musk's Starlink satellite communications network.

Electronic war has three basic elements: probe, attack and protect. First, intelligence is gathered by locating enemy electronic signals. On attack, "white noise" jamming dis-ables and degrades enemy sys-tems, including radio and cell-phone communications, air defense and artillery radars. Then there is spoofing, which confuses and deceives. When it works, munitions miss their targets.

"Operating on a modern battlefield without data is real-ly hard," said retired Col Laurie Buckhout, a former US Army electronic warfare chief. Jamming "can blind and deaf-en an aircraft very quickly and very dangerously, especially if you lose GPS and radar and you're a jet flying at 600 miles an hour."

All of which explains the secrecy around electronic war-fare.

"It is an incredibly classified field because it is highly depen-



dent on evolving, bleeding-edge technologies where gains can be copied and erased very quickly," said James Stidham, a communications security expert who has consulted for the US State and Homeland Security departments.

Ukraine learned hard lessons about electronic warfare in 2014 and 2015, when Russia overwhelmed its forces with it. The Russians knocked drones out of the sky and disabled war-heads, penetrated cellphone networks for psychological ops and zeroed in on Ukrainian armor.

One Ukrainian officer told Christian Brose, an aide to the

late US Senator John McCain, how Russian info warriors tricked a commander into returning a wireless call from his mother. When he did, they geo-located him in mid-call and killed him with precision rockets, Brose wrote in the book "The Kill Chain."

The US also experienced Russia's electronic warfare in action in Syria, where the adversaries have backed oppos-ing sides in the civil war. In 2018, US Special Operations chief Gen Raymond Thomas described

how US pilots' communi-cations were regularly "knocked down" in Syria in the "most

aggressive" electronic warfare environment on the planet.

Russia's advanced systems are designed to blind US Airborne Warning and Control Systems, or AWACS, aircraft - the eyes and ears of battlefield commanders - as well as cruise missiles and spy satellites.

In the current war, elec-tronic warfare has become a furious theatre of contention.

Aerorozvidka has modified camera-equipped drones to pinpoint enemy positions and drop mortars and grenades. Hacking is also used to poison or disable enemy electronics and collect intelligence.

Ukrainian officials say their

electronic warfare capabilities have improved radically since 2015. They include the use of encrypted US and Turkish communications gear for a tactical edge. Ukraine has advanced so much it exports some of its technology.

Russia has engaged in GPS jamming in areas from Finland to the Black Sea, said Lt Col Tyson Wetzel, an Air Force fel-low at the Atlantic Council. One regional Finnish carrier, Transaviabaltica, had to cancel flights on one route for a week as a result. Russian jamming has also disrupted Ukrainian television broadcasting, said Frank Backes, an executive with California-based Kratos Defence, which has satellite ground stations in the region.

Yet in the war's early days, Russia's use of electronic war-fare was less effective and extensive than anticipated. That may have contributed to its fail-ure to destroy enough radar and anti-aircraft units to gain air superiority.

Russia's defence ministry did not respond to a request for comment for this article.

Some analysts believe Russian commanders held back units fearing the units would be captured. At least two were seized. One was a Krasukha-4, which a US Army database says is designed to jam satellite sig-nals as well as surveillance radar and radar-guided weapons from more than 100

miles (160 km) away. The other: the more advanced Borisoglebsk-2, which can jam drone guidance systems and radio-controlled land mines.

Russia may have also lim-ited the use of electronic war-fare early in the conflict because of concerns that ill-trained or poorly motivated technicians might not operate it properly.

"What we're learning now is that the Russians eventually turned it off because it was interfering with their own communications so much," said retired Lt Gen Ben Hodges, a former US Army commander for Europe.

The communications problems were evident with many Russian troops talking on insecure open radio channels, easily monitored by outsiders.

It's unclear how much of an edge Russia's electronic assets may now offer. Ukraine's forces are now more concentrated than early in the war, which could make them easier to tar-get.

Much depends on whether Russia's battalion tactical groups "are configured in real-ity as they are on paper," said James Rand, of the Jane's mil-itary intelligence think tank. Each group, comprised of roughly 1,000 troops, is sup-posed to have an electronic warfare unit. The Pentagon says 110 such groups are in Ukraine.

Russia may be in Ukraine to stay after 100 days of war

AP ■ KYIV

When Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine in late February, the Russian pres-ident vowed his forces would not occupy the neighbouring country. But as the invasion reached its 100th day Friday, Russia seemed increasingly unlikely to relinquish the ter-ritory it has taken in the war.

The ruble, now an official currency in the southern Kherson region, is set to replace the Ukrainian hryvnia. Residents there and in Russia-controlled parts of the Zaporizhzhia region are getting offered Russian passports. The Kremlin-installed administra-tions in both regions have talked about plans to become part of Russia.

The Moscow-backed lead-ers of separatist areas in east-ern Ukraine's Donbas region, which is mostly Russian-speak-ing, have shared similar inten-tions. Putin recognised the separatists' self-proclaimed republics as independent states two days before launching the invasion. Fighting has intensi-fied in Ukraine's east as Russia seeks to "liberate" all of the

Donbas.

The Kremlin has largely kept mum about its plans for the cities, towns and villages it has bombarded with missiles, encircled and finally captured. Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it was up to people living in seized areas to decide where and how they want to live.

Annexing more land from Ukraine was never the main goal of the invasion, but Moscow is unlikely to let go of its military gains, according to political analysts.

"Of course (Russia) intends to stay," Andrei Kolesnikov, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said. To Russia, "it's a pity to give away what has been occupied, even if it was not part of the original plan."

Putin has described the goals of the invasion somewhat vaguely, saying it was aimed at the "demilitarization" and "denazification" of Ukraine. It was widely believed that the Kremlin intended initially to install a pro-Moscow govern-ment in Kyiv and to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and taking other steps away from Russia's sphere of influ-ence.

Russia captured much of Kherson and neighboring Zaporizhzhia early in the war, gaining control over most of Ukraine's Sea of Azov coast and securing a partial land coridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

There was hardly a warm welcome from the locals. Residents of the cities of Kherson and Melitopol took to the streets to protest the occu-pation, facing off with Russian



soldiers in plazas. Ukrainian officials warned that Russia might stage a referendum in Kherson to declare the region an independent state.

No such referendum has taken place, although the Russians appeared determined to hold on to both regions.

They installed people with pro-Kremlin views to replace replace mayors and other local leaders who had disappeared in what Ukrainian officials and media said were kidnappings. Russian flags were raised Russian state broadcasts that promoted the Kremlin's ver-sion of the invasion supplanted Ukrainian TV channels.

The Russian ruble this month was introduced as the second official currency in both the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions - at least in the parts under Russian control - and pro-Russian

administrations started offering a "one-time social payment" of 10,000 rubles (roughly \$163) to local residents.

Top Russian officials started touring the regions, touting the territories' prospects for being integrated into Russia. Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin visited Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in mid-May and indicated they could become part of "our Russian family."

A senior official in the Kremlin's ruling United Russia party, Andrei Turchak, put it even more bluntly in a meeting with residents of Kherson: "Russia is here forever."

Members of the pro-Kremlin administrations in both regions soon announced that the areas would seek to be incorporated into Russia. While it remains unclear when or if it will happen, Russia is

laying the groundwork.

An office of Russia's migra-tion services opened in Melitopol, taking applications for Russian citizenship in a fast-track procedure Putin expand-ed to residents of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. The rapid procedure was first implemented in 2019 in the rebel-controlled areas of the Donbas, where more than 700,000 people have received Russian passports.

Oleg Kryuchkov, an official in Russia-annexed Crimea, said this week that the two south-ern regions have switched to Russian internet providers; state media ran footage of peo-ple lining up to get Russian SIM cards for their cellphones. Kryuchkov also said that both regions were switching to the Russian country code, +7, from the Ukrainian +380.

Senior Russian lawmaker

Leonid Slutsky, a member of the Russian delegation in stalled peace talks with Ukraine, said that referendums on joining Russia could take place in the Donbas, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions as early as July.

Asked about such a sce-nario, Kremlin spokesman Peskov reiterated Thursday that it was up to the Ukrainian people to decide their futures but because of the continuing fighting, the conditions were not right for organizing annex-ation referendums.

Tatyana Stanovaya, founder and CEO of R.Politik, an independent think tank on Russian politics, thinks Putin doesn't want to rush the refer-endums and run the risk of them being denounced as shams. "He wants the referen-dum to be real, so that the West can see that, indeed, Russia was right, the people want to live with Russia," Stanovaya said. Ukrainian experts say it is not going to be easy for the Kremlin to rally genuine sup-port in Ukraine's south.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of Fullerton India Home Finance Company, That Mr. Rakesh Gupta and Mr. Nareish Mishra are joint owners of Second Floor, without roof rights "said floor" part of Property bearing No. K-87-A, built on Plot No. A-21, area measuring 84.3 Sq. Yds., out of M. No. 40, Killa No. 11, Situated in the area of Village Khyasia, in the colony known as Shyam Nagar, New Delhi (the said property), by virtue of Sale deed dated 06.05.2013, registration No. 9705. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owners want to sell the said property to Mr. Sahil Gupta who is taking Loan from Fullerton for purchase of the said floor, if anybody has any objections upon the ownership of above owners over the said floor, its sale (Mortgage) litigation, and any kind of objections, kindly inform the under-signed in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 11nd Floor, 23, Shivali Nagar, New Nagar, Delhi (Cell: Ph: 911-4111257-78, kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com)

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publicly notified that the Plot No D-31, Sector-40, Noida has been allotted in the name of S.K. Kakkar S/o M.S. Kakkar R/o 32/33, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi, had sold the said flat, on the basis of GPA to the following persons:- A GPA was executed in favour of Raman Mehtani S/o Shri R.K. Mehtani R/o M-20, Chittranjan Park, New Delhi presently at 40/52, Second Floor, Chittranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 executed at GPA executed at Sub Registrar Noida Vide Book No IV Volume No 2 on pages 156 at Document No 1598 and Addl Book No IV Volume No 82 on pages 633 to 638 dated 17.08.1995 and Agreement to Sell was not registered. So with the help of the notice it is informed the transfer of the above flat goes in favour of Praveen Bhayana, Ajay Bhayana, Vinay Bhayana All S/o Shri V.P. Bhayana & Mrs. Anju Mehta W/o Sh. Nareish Mehta All R/o D-31, Sector-40, Noida U.P. if any one/above partner has /have any objection he/she may submit his/her, objection in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority along-with sufficient proofs within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

Ajay Bhayana

LOST - FOUND

We, Rajiv Chawla and Krishan Lal Chawla, R/o D-4, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-51, to inform all of you that 60 shares of Dhanuka Agritech Limited are registered under joint name Rajiv Chawla and Krishan Lal Chawla, Folio No. 663 have been lost in Krishna Nagar Market, Delhi. If any person finds please inform at: **9810061068**

There Details are as follows

Certificate No. : 1389 to 1394
Distinctive No. : 1777171 - 1777230
No. of Shares : 60

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORK
Tender Notice No.- Sr. DEE (RS&G) BSP/OTP/12-23-04DtId: 24.05.2022

Name of Work: "Rewiring of staff quarters over BSP division and improvement of medical facility equipments at central hospital Bilaspur." **Tender Value (Approx.): ₹ 1,13,22,532.87/-**. **Bid security amount: ₹ 2,06,600/-**, **Tender Closing Date/Time: 16.06.2022, 15:00 Hrs.**

For further details, eligibility criteria & complete details for the above work, please refer/download tender document which is available on web site www.ireps.gov.in.

Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer (RS&G) CPR/10/52 S.E.C. Railway/Bilaspur
(f) South East Central Railway (e)@seccrll

NORTHERN RAILWAY

ADDENDUM EMPANELMENT OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES

In reference to the above mentioned advertisement published in this newspaper on 20.05.2022 under Release Order No. 1190/2022, it is to further state that the Annual Turnover duly audited and certified by the Chartered Accountant for the **Financial Year 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21** shall be considered for Financial Eligibility. Hence submission of Annual Turnover of 2021-22 is not compulsory. All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.

Chief Public Relations Officer 1341/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public at large is hereby informed I, Ramesh Chand Bhalla S/o Late K.L. Bhalla, R/o F-191E, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092 has disowned my son Rakesh Bhalla, whose where abouts are not known to me despite of our best efforts. I disowned from all my moveable and immoveable properties and has severed all relationships with him. Whoever deals with him, shall do so at his risk and cost. If you Rakesh Bhalla come to me then I am open for resolution.

Sd/- Ramesh Chand Bhalla,

IN THE COURT OF THE V JUNIOR CIVIL JUDGE, CITY CIVIL COURT AT HYDERABAD, O.S.No. 187 of 2021.

Between:
Union Bank of India, [A Govt. of India undertaking] [formerly] Andhra Bank Credit card Division. rep. by Senior Manager (Law), Head Office, Koti, Sultan Bazar, Hyderabad.Plaintiff.

AND
Mr. Sumit Gupta, S/o Mr. Kishan Gupta, Aged about 35yrs, Occ: Private, R2-B/122, Dabri Extension [East], New Delhi- 110045.Defendant.

Whereas the above named Plaintiff has filed the above suit O.S.No. 1692 of 2021 on the file of Hon'ble V Junior Civil Judge, City Civil Court, Hyderabad against you for recovery of due amount of Rs.2,04,636.20 pertaining to your credit card No. 4373-7820-7807-0004 . You are therefore directed to appear in person or through Advocate on 27.6.22 at 10.30 a.m. to answer the suit, failing which the suit will be decided ex parte. Take notice accordingly.


[AS PER THE COURT ORDER]

M. V. Nagaraj,
V. V. S. Annaram
Counsel for Plaintiffs.
H.No. 1-1-336/18,
Chikkadapalli, Hyderabad.

उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग हरिद्वार फ़ोन कोड:- 249404			
संख्या :: 58/46/E-1/डी0आर0(पी0सी0एस0)/2020-21 दिनांक: 03 जून, 2022			
विज्ञापित			
उत्तराखण्ड सम्मिलित राज्य सिविल /प्रवर अधीनस्थ सेवा परीक्षा-2021			
एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि विज्ञापन संख्या:A-1/E-1/PCS-2021/2021-22, दिनांक 10 अगस्त, 2021 एवं अतिरिक्त विज्ञापन /शुद्धि-पत्र दिनांक 07 दिसम्बर, 2021 द्वारा "उत्तराखण्ड सम्मिलित राज्य सिविल /प्रवर अधीनस्थ सेवा परीक्षा-2021" के अन्तर्गत विज्ञापित 318 पद के सापेक्ष दिनांक 03 अप्रैल 2022 को आयोजित प्रारम्भिक परीक्षा के परिणाम दिनांक 26.05.2022 एवं दिनांक 30.05.2022 में सफल घोषित अभ्यर्थियों हेतु मुख्य परीक्षा का शुल्क जमा करने एवं उक्त परीक्षा हेतु नगर के चयन का विकल्प मांगा जाना है, जिसके लिए महत्वपूर्ण तिथियां निम्नवत है:-			
i	मुख्य परीक्षा हेतु आवेदन करने एवं परीक्षा शुल्क Debit Card/Credit Card के माध्यम से जमा करने की प्रारम्भ तिथि-	04.06.2022	(रविवार)
ii	मुख्य परीक्षा हेतु आवेदन करने एवं परीक्षा शुल्क Net Banking/ Debit Card/Credit Card के माध्यम से जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि-	18.06.2022	(रविवार)
अभ्यर्थी, मुख्य परीक्षा का शुल्क जमा करने व दिनांक 20 अगस्त, 2022 से 23 अगस्त, 2022 तक आयोजित होने वाली उक्त परीक्षा हेतु नगर के चयन का विकल्प भरे जाने हेतु आयोग की वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध विस्तृत विज्ञापित का अवश्य अवलोकन कर लें। अभ्यर्थी आयोग की वेबसाइट www.psc.uk.gov.in पर दिये गये लिंक का प्रयोग करते हुए निम्नलिखित अंतिम तिथि तक नगर का चयन का विकल्प भरेते हुए परीक्षा शुल्क जमा करना सुनिश्चित करें।			
प्रश्नगत परीक्षा के इस चरण में मुख्य परीक्षा में सफल अभ्यर्थियों द्वारा ऑनलाइन आवेदन पत्र के प्रिंटआउट प्रति के साथ अपने दायों के समर्थन में समस्त शैक्षणिक/आरक्षण आदि संबंधी प्रमाण पत्रों की स्वप्रमाणित छायाप्रति आयोग कार्यालय में जमा करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। मुख्य परीक्षा के उपरान्त साक्षात्कार हेतु सफल अभ्यर्थियों को पृथक से समाचार पत्रों एवं आयोग की वेबसाइट पर विज्ञापित के माध्यम से आवेदन पत्र की प्रिंटआउट प्रति सहित समस्त अनिवार्य अभिलेख संग्राये जाने हेतु सूचित किया जायेगा।			
(कर्मन्द्र सिंह) सचिव।			

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN-E-TENDER NOTICE	
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.	
1	Name of work Repairs to Drain of New Delhi & Anand Vihar yards by provision of sewer line, manhole cover, at washable apron drains at washing line & stabling line and repairs to catwalk, pathway in washing line in DLT complex and Anand Vihar yard and provision of fencing to prevent trespassing and dumping of garbage from outside into Railway land, painting work at DLT shed, Electric Loco Shed, turntable and Tower wagon sheds in the section of SR.ADEN/NDLS under Sr.DEN-III/DLI.
2	Approx cost of work Rs. 99.99,854.28/- (Rupees Ninety Nine Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Four & Twenty Eight Paise Only)
3	Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 2.00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh Only)
4	Cost of tender document Rs. 0.00/-
5	Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender 24.06.2022 @ 15:00 Hrs.
6	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen www.ireps.gov.in
<p>• The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NTT-18-2022-23/W-3 Dated :-02.06.2022 1333/2022</p>	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE



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

Whereas

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Saurabh Kumar Goel/ Munesh Devi/ LBDEL00004412796/ LBDEL00004413807/ LBDEL00005395711	Flat No:- 859, Fourth Floor, Pocket G H- 4, Sector 28, Rohini, Delhi/ May 30, 2022	January 18,2022/ Rs 18,65,232.80/-	Delhi/ NCR

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

Date : June 04, 2022

Authorized Officer

‘Action against Wheat exporters who submit back-dated papers’

New Delhi: The Government will take strict action against exporters who are trying to ship or have shipped wheat by submitting back-dated and improper documents following the ban on exports of the crop, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday. On May 13, the government banned wheat exports to control domestic prices. However, it allowed shipments for exporters who have valid irrevocable letters of credit (LCs) issued on or before May 13.

The commerce ministry has tightened the norms for obtaining registration certificates for wheat exports with a view to curbing fraudulent practices such as submission of improper documents by traders. Exporters have to submit the message exchange date with foreign banks along with a valid irrevocable letter of credit, issued on or before May 13, to obtain registration of contracts (RC) to ship their consignments.

“Some people have even tried to cheat by making back-dated applications and putting up LCs. The government will come down strongly on anybody who has tried to back date



an LC; who has made an application to allow exports based on documents which are irregular in any form,” Goyal told reporters here.

He added that the ministry is investigating exporters who have received authorisation to verify if they have filed all the proper documents.

“... Strongest action will be taken on any exporter who has tried to game the system or who has tried to create back-dated LCs, back-dated applications. I want that message to be very clear,” he added.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has earlier stated that it has received information from sources that fraudulent back-dated LCs, showing date of issuance prior to May 13, 2022, are being submitted by some unscrupulous exporters for issue of RCs.

The minister further said an inter-ministerial committee, comprising officials from food, agriculture and foreign affairs ministries, has been set up to examine requests for wheat from neighbouring and friendly countries. **PTI**

Sebi strengthen investor grievance redressal mechanism

New Delhi: Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday came out with a new framework for investor grievance redressal mechanism as part of its effort to strengthen the process.

The new mechanism will come into effect from July 1, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular. For any dispute between the member and client relating to the transactions in a stock exchange, which is of civil nature, the complainant or member is required to first refer the complaint to the investor grievance redressal mechanism (IGRC) and/or to the arbitration mechanism provided by the bourse before resorting to other remedies available under any other law, Sebi said.

For the removal of doubts, the regulator has clarified that the sole arbitrator or the panel of arbitrators appointed under the stock exchange arbitration mechanism may consider any claim relating to any dispute between a stockbroker and client, arising out of the transactions in a stock exchange, **PTI**



and shall always be deemed to have the competence to rule on its jurisdiction.

A complainant or member, who is not satisfied with the recommendation of the IGRC can avail of the arbitration mechanism of the stock exchange for settlement of complaints within three months from the date of IGRC recommendation. The time period of three months will be applicable only for the cases where the IGRC recommendation is being challenged.

For any arbitration application received without going through the IGRC mechanism, the time period of three months will not apply, and for such cases, the limitation period for filing arbitration will be governed by the law of limitation. **PTI**

Markets succumb to fag-end sell-off, close higher for week

Mumbai: Equity indices swooned in the last hour of trade on Friday to close with modest losses as risk-on sentiment remained subdued ahead of the RBI's policy decision next week.

A weak rupee and unabated selling by foreign funds further weighed on bourses, traders said.

After soaring over 600 points in intra-day trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex came under sudden selling pressure towards the fag-end to close 48.88 points or 0.09 per cent lower at 55,769.23.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty dipped 43.70 points or 0.26 per cent to finish at 16,584.30.

UltraTech Cement was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 5.49 per cent, followed by Maruti, NTPC, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank and M&M.

On the other hand, index heavyweight Reliance Industries topped the winners' chart for the second straight day, climbing 2.02 per cent.

Infosys, Larsen & Toubro, Sun Pharma, TCS, Wipro and HUL were among the other prominent gainers.



“The late sell-off indicates the lack of confidence in the domestic market driven by the concerns over central bank policy. While in the global market, the investors were waiting for the release of US job data.

“The RBI is expected to hike rates by 25 bps to 35 bps and the Fed by 50 bps, but the outlook and changes in the economic growth and inflation will determine the market trend. If the central banks decide on a stringent policy tightening, the market mood can swing bearish,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial

Services. On a weekly basis, the Sensex advanced 884.57 points or 1.61 per cent, while the Nifty gained 231.85 points or 1.41 per cent.

“The local markets are waiting for the outcome of the RBI monetary policy, mid-week next week, and also the FOMC meeting by mid-June.

The likelihood of rate action as well as liquidity reduction measures, it is feared, might adversely affect economic growth which is already slowing down owing to high inflation and its consequences for consumption spending. **PTI**

Tata Projects to construct Noida International Airport at Jewar

Mumbai: Tata Group's infrastructure and construction arm, Tata Projects, has bagged the contract to construct the upcoming Noida International Airport at Jewar, in Uttar Pradesh. As part of the contract, Tata Projects will construct the terminal, runway, air-side infrastructure, roads, utilities, landside facilities and other ancillary buildings at the airport, Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (YIAPL) said in a statement on Friday.

YIAPL is a 100 per cent subsidiary of Swiss developer Zurich Airport International AG and has been incorporated as a Special Purpose Vehicle to develop Noida International Airport. In 2019, Zurich Airport International AG won the bid to develop the airport. The Uttar Pradesh government signed the concession agreement with YIAPL on October 7, 2020, to commence

the development of the NIA.

The greenfield facility, spread in 1,334 hectares, will have a single-runway operation in the first phase with a capacity to handle 12-million passengers per annum at an investment of Rs 5,700 crore.

“YIAPL has selected Tata Projects Ltd to undertake the Engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) of Noida International Airport.

The company has been selected from three shortlisted teams with demonstrated experience in the design, procurement, and construction of large infrastructure projects,” the statement said.

The new airport is expected to be functional by 2024, as per the developer. With the closure of the EPC contract, the first phase of the airport is on track to be delivered within three years of the commencement of the concession period, YIAPL said. **PTI**

Govt asks CIL to be ready to import 12 mn tonnes of coal for power utilities

New Delhi: The government has directed state-owned CIL to be prepared to import 12 million tonnes (MT) of coal for power utilities for the next 13 months.

The state gencos and independent power producers have sought time till Saturday afternoon to figure out the quantity of coal they require and the import orders would be placed by Coal India very soon, a source said. It would be the first time since 2015 that the maharatna firm imports the dry fuel. “Government of India has mandated Coal India to be ready to import 12 million tonnes of coal for July this year to July 2023,” the source added.

A query sent to the company in this regard did not elicit any immediate response. According to industry experts, the government is making all efforts to build up stock of coal to avoid the reoccurrence of power outages which happened in April on account of



shortage of the fossil fuel.

On May 18, the Ministry of Power had warned that if orders for coal imports are not placed by May 31, 2022 and the imported fuel does not start arriving at power plants by June 15, the defaulter gencos will have to increase their imports to the extent of 15 per cent.

Further, if blending with

domestic coal is not started by June 15, then the domestic allocation of the concerned defaulter's thermal power plants will be further reduced by 5 per cent, the ministry had said in a letter to state governments and power generation companies (gencos), including independent power producers (IPPs). **PTI**

Rupee pares initial gains, settles 3 paise lower at 77.63 against USD

Mumbai: The rupee pared initial gains and settled 3 paise lower at 77.63 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, in line with a muted trend in domestic equities.

Forex traders said persistent foreign fund outflows and widening trade deficit weighed on the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range. It opened at 77.47 against the greenback and finally settled at 77.63, down 3 paise over its previous close.

During the session, the rupee touched an intra-day low of 77.66 and a high of 77.47. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 77.60.

“The rupee erased opening gains as equities turned down while crude oil prices remained firm. Foreign fund outflows and widening trade balance weighed on the local



unit,” said Dilip Parmar, Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Parmar further said, “We believe spot USD-INR will consolidate in the range of 77.44 to 77.74. Short-term traders should wait for the range breakout above 77.74 which can pave way for 78 and 78.30 while breaking below 74.44 push it towards 77.”

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.03 per cent lower at 101.79. **PTI**

After ‘fat finger’ trade, NSE cautions brokers against executing non-genuine trades

New Delhi: Leading stock exchange NSE has cautioned stock brokers against executing orders which appear to be non-genuine, leading to deviation in the normal price discovery process.

This came after the National Stock Exchange's (NSE) derivatives segment witnessed a ‘fat finger’ trade on Thursday that may have caused a loss of ₹200-250 crore to a brokerage house. This could be the biggest trading mistake in the domestic market's history.

In market parlance, a ‘fat finger’ trade is an erroneous action resulting from pressing a wrong key.

In a circular, NSE asked its trading members to strictly desist from entering or executing transactions which prima facie appear to be non-genuine on their own account and refrain from indulging in practices which lead to aberrations in the order book. **PTI**

‘Solid cash flow to support ONGC’s higher investments’

New Delhi: Riding on the back of surge in global energy prices, state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) should have a solid base to increase investments over the next 12-18 months on account of healthy earnings, S&P Global Ratings said on Friday.

“Improved cash flow continues to support the rating” of ONGC, it said in a statement.

While ONGC gets price equivalent to international oil rates for the crude oil it produces from fields such as Mumbai High, the government fixed price of natural gas based on a formula that factors in global indices.

While oil prices are hovering at multi-year high, gas prices for ONGC too have risen to best ever rate of USD 6.1 per million British thermal unit.

“ONGC will direct more than 60 per cent of its improved

cash flows to capital investments over the next few years. We expect the company to spend ₹55,000-60,000 crore in fiscal 2023 (ending March 31, 2023) compared with less than ₹45,000 crore that it has spent annually for the past two years in view of challenging business conditions,” it said.

Of this, ONGC intends to spend ₹31,000 crore over the next three years on exploration activities, compared with close to ₹21,000 crore for the last three years.

“This increase will offset the decline in the company's recent production to 43.4 million tonne of oil equivalent (mmtoe) in fiscal 2022 from 48.25 mmtoe in fiscal 2020. We anticipate these investments will also aid earnings resilience if prices start to decline,” S&P said.

ONGC is also likely to maintain healthy dividend dis-

tribution to shareholders, it said.

“The company paid about ₹13,000 crore in dividends in fiscal 2022, equivalent to about 30 per cent of its free operating cash flows. ONGC has shown good flexibility in the past when it scaled back dividends to about ₹3,000 crore in fiscal 2021 due to the challenging business conditions. However, given the healthy earnings outlook, we expect the company to maintain its stated financial policy of returning 40-50 per cent of net income to shareholders,” it said.

The rating agency said favourable crude oil prices will support ONGC's earnings over the next 12 months and underpin the increased investments.

It revised its forecast for Brent crude oil price for the rest of 2022 to USD 90 per barrel and USD 75 a barrel for 2023. **PTI**

Countries send back India tea high in pesticides

Kolkata: Both international and domestic buyers have rejected a series of tea consignments due to the presence of pesticides and chemicals beyond permissible limits, Indian Tea Exporters Association (ITEA) chairman Anshuman Kanoria said on Friday.

Filling up the vacuum created by crisis-hit Sri Lanka in the global market, Tea Board is eyeing to ramp up exports. However, the rejection of consignments is causing a decline in outward shipments.

All teas sold in the country must conform to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) norms. However, most of the buyers are purchasing tea that have unusually high chemical content, Kanoria told PTI.

In 2021, India exported 195.90 million kg tea. The major buyers were



Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) nations and Iran. The board is aiming to achieve 300 million kg tea this year.

Kanoria said that many countries are following strict entry regulations for tea. Most of the countries follow variations of the EU standards,

which are more stringent than the FSSAI rules.

“Instead of complying with the law, many are urging the government to make the FSSAI norms more liberal,” he said, adding that this would send a wrong signal as the beverage is considered to be a health drink. **PTI**

Gold futures gain on fresh bets

New Delhi: Gold prices on Friday increased by ₹57 to ₹51,326 per 10 grams in futures trade as speculators created fresh positions on a firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for August delivery traded higher by ₹57 or 0.11 per cent at ₹51,326 per 10 grams in a business turnover of 14,427 lots.

Fresh positions built up by participants led to the rise in gold prices, analysts said.

Globally, gold was trading 0.13 per cent lower at USD 1,869 per ounce in New York. **PTI**

Audi introduces warranty coverage for 5 years



New Delhi: Luxury car manufacturer Audi India on Friday said it has introduced warranty coverage for five years with unlimited mileage for all its cars sold this year, starting June 1.

The company has launched the initiative to mark 15 years in the country. “To celebrate 15 glorious years in India, we have

announced a segment first warranty coverage for five years with unlimited mileage for our customers this year, starting June 1, 2022,” Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon said in a statement. This is a milestone initiative and the company is happy to offer a complete peace of mind package, he added. **PTI**

‘3rd-party insurance premium hike for 2-wheelers unlikely to impact demand’

Mumbai: The upward revision in the third-party insurance premium for two-wheelers, which has come into force from June 1, is unlikely to materially impact the demand, credit ratings agency ICRA said on Friday.

ICRA said it expects a 7-10 per cent year-on-year volume growth in the two-wheeler industry this fiscal, despite inflationary pressures and elongated semiconductor shortage due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

After a two-year moratorium due to the Covid-19 pandemic, third-party insurance premium rates have been hiked between 15-20 per cent for the premium category (more than 150 cc category).

However, the entry-level

motorcycles and scooters (75 cc-150 cc), which accounts for 89 per cent in the overall two-wheeler volume, has been spared of any hike.

The increase in third party insurance premiums is, therefore, unlikely to materially impact the two-wheeler demand, ICRA said.

Moreover, given the fact that the less than 1 per cent increase in road price for the premium segment on account of the rate hike is also not significant, the rate hike is unlikely to have a major impact on consumer sentiments and comes as a relief for the industry, which has been grappling with muted demand, it stated.

Domestic two-wheeler industry volumes contracted

for a third consecutive year in FY2022, with the consumer sentiments remaining muted. The cost of ownership of a two-wheeler has been steadily increasing over the years, thereby impacting affordability, said Rohan Kanwar Gupta, Vice President, Corporate Ratings, ICRA.

“Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) have been forced to hike prices on account of multiple factors such as raw material hardening, transition to stringent emission norms and changes mandated by regulations, especially with regards to safety standards.

“In FY2022, even as there was no impact of regulatory notifications on prices, the OEMs had to pass on raw material hardening impact

through multiple price hikes. As a result, enhanced cost of acquisition coupled with heightened crude prices have led to a significant increase in the cost of the ownership,” said Gupta.

Noting that aided by a recovery in rural sentiments post a healthy rabi harvest and pent up demand for festivals and weddings, wholesale volumes of motorcycles posed a recovery in April and May; ICRA said, reopening of education institutes and reversal in work-from-home trends in corporate India also supported the scooter uptake, thereby raising hopes of recovery in prospects of the two-wheeler industry.

As demand remains fragile, a further increase in the cost

of acquisition could have constrained demand recovery for 2Ws in the near term, the ratings agency said, adding, the fact that the entry-level two-wheeler segment has been left out of the insurance price hike, comes as a relief for the industry.

Even as inflationary pressures and elongated semiconductor chip shortage due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict continue to remain headwinds for the industry, a broader vaccination coverage, reopening of education institutes and corporates; and expectations of normal monsoon, all coupled with a low base, are expected to drive a 7-10 per cent year-on-year volumes growth for the industry in FY2023. **PTI**

Coco has 'nothing to lose' against Swiatek



AP ■ PARIS

Coco Gauff says she has "nothing to lose" in Saturday's French Open final against world number one Iga Swiatek, with her opponent on a 34-match winning streak and looking for a second Roland Garros title.

Teenage star Gauff is the youngest Grand Slam finalist since Maria Sharapova at Wimbledon 18 years ago and only graduated from high school while in Paris.

The 18-year-old has yet to drop a set in the tournament and showed little signs of nerves in her first major semi-final with a 6-3, 6-1 win over Martina Trevisan.

But she is the underdog against

Poland's Swiatek, who will equal Venus Williams' record for the longest women's unbeaten run in the 21st century if she lifts the trophy.

"I think going in I have nothing to lose and she's definitely the favourite going into the match on paper," said American Gauff, who burst onto the scene by making the Wimbledon fourth round as a 15-year-old in 2019.

"I'm just going to play free and play my best tennis. I think in a Grand Slam final anything can happen.

"If I do lift the trophy, honestly, I don't think my life is going to change really. I know it sounds kind of bad to say that, but the people who love me are still going to love me regardless if I lift the trophy or not."

RED-HOT SWIATEK

Swiatek, who herself only turned 21 on Tuesday, has enjoyed a remarkable season and is looking for a sixth successive title.

The 2020 French Open champion's 6-2, 6-1 semi-final thrashing of Daria Kasatkina saw her draw level with Serena Williams' career-best winning streak from 2013.

"It's going to be tough (for her opponent)," said Russian Kasatkina after seeing her run comprehensively ended by the top seed.

"I think the mental part is going to, especially at the beginning, make a big difference.

"It's difficult when the player is moving good and then she can transition to attack mode. Then it makes

it really, really tough."

Four of Swiatek's five tournament victories this year have come at the prestigious WTA 1,000 events, but she says she still has to battle nerves before big matches.

"I couldn't get rid of the expectations fully (in the semi-finals), but I tried to accept that, that they are going to be there and it's going to stress me a little bit more," said Swiatek.

'PEACE, END GUN VIOLENCE'

Gauff wrote "peace, end gun violence" on a court-side TV camera after her semi-final victory and has said she wants to speak out about issues off the court.

Swiatek, though, does not think she is ready yet to use her profile to talk about political or social issues.

"I don't actually know how I want to use my platform," she said. "I haven't figured it out yet, because it's still pretty new for me.

"I feel like I really have to focus on my tennis first. When I'm going to get more experience in life generally I think it's going to be easier for me to choose the right path."

The Pole has won both of her career meetings with Gauff -- in the 2021 Rome semi-finals and in Miami earlier this year.

"I'm pretty happy that she's doing well, because I think she's also had a huge amount of pressure in her life," Swiatek said of Gauff.

"When I see her, I tend to forget that she's 18."

Swiatek says she listens to classic rock music, including Led Zeppelin and AC/DC, before stepping onto court, while Gauff enjoys a hardcore rap playlist.

But there won't be a clash of styles on Court Philippe Chatrier as



FIFA ban on India will be catastrophic: Chhetri

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri on Friday dropped yet another hint that his retirement is not far away, saying a FIFA ban on India in the aftermath of Supreme Court's ruling to oust Praful Patel as AIFF president would be catastrophic as he is playing his "last games".

The 37-year-old Chhetri's retirement has been a matter of speculation for some time now and he has said on many occasions that his illustrious career will come to an end soon.

"No matter what is happening on that front, I hope it is under control and the country does not get a ban," the iconic India captain said during a media interaction ahead of the Asian Cup qualifiers final round beginning here on June 8.

"Because, that will be catastrophic, not just for the whole country but for me, because I'm 37. I'm playing my last games. You never know when there's a last game for you."

S o yes... I was scared when the headlines came, it affects you. But with my limited knowledge, when you go into it, you understand that it is not that dangerous and things will subside," he added.

Patel was thrown out of office by the Supreme Court in a May 18 ruling as he has exceeded his tenure as All India Football Federation President. His third term in office was to end in December



2020 but he clung on to a SC case, which remained pending since 2017, to extend his executive committee's term while refusing to hold elections till the issue of a new constitution was settled by the top court.

There were fears in some quarters that the SC ruling could lead to FIFA imposing a ban on India and stripping the country off the hosting rights of Under-17 Women's World Cup in October. A joint team from FIFA and AFC is slated to visit India to "understand the current situation".

Every time he takes the pitch, there's speculation about his retirement and the Indian captain happily responds with a smile that "I don't know yet".

"Same question was asked before the last Asia Cup (2019) that 'what next' and I said the same thing. Five years have passed. It's the same now. I was 32 then, now I'm 37-38. I don't know, maybe.

"Right now, I'm enjoying it. I enjoy sprinting with Udanta (Singh), enjoying headers with (Sandesh) Jhingnan, and scoring against Gurpreet. The day I don't (enjoy), I'll be done. I can't give you a number when.

Portugal's Horta scores late to deny Spain win in Nations League



AP ■ MADRID

Spain were denied a winning start by Portugal in the Nations League on Thursday as Alvaro Morata's first-half finish was cancelled out by a late equaliser from Ricardo Horta.

Morata sidefooted home at the end of a scintillating counter-attack and while Cristiano Ronaldo came on in

the second half for Portugal, it was another substitute who grabbed the equaliser as Horta swept in with eight minutes left.

A 1-1 draw means neither of the two favourites in Group A2 claim the early advantage, with games against Switzerland and Czech Republic to come. Spain play the Czechs in Prague on Sunday while Portugal are at home to Switzerland.

Both of these teams will be among those considered capable of winning the World Cup in Qatar later this year but it was Spain's youthful side that looked the more complete in a surprisingly feisty and energetic contest at the Benito Villamarin, coming on the back of another long and draining season.

Morata's goal makes him Spain's joint-seventh top-scorer in history, with 26 goals in 53 games, while Sergio Busquets made his 135th appearance for the national team, meaning he moves above Xavi Hernandez and sits behind only Iker Casillas and Sergio Ramos on Spain's all-time list.

But it was the 17-year-old Gavi's run and pass that made Morata's goal and the Barcelona midfielder was arguably the outstanding player in the game, putting in another accomplished performance that will surely have impressed Luis Enrique.

Spain reached the final of last year's Nations League, beating European champions Italy in the semis before losing to France, and they enjoyed a relatively smooth qualification for the World Cup, after collecting 19 points from a possible 24 to top Group B.



Cavani leads Uruguay to friendly win over Mexico

AP ■ PHOENIX

Edinson Cavani showed prospective employers that he still has plenty to offer as he hit a brace in Uruguay's victory over Mexico in Phoenix on Thursday.

The 35-year-old striker, who will be a free agent when his contract at Manchester United runs out this month, scored twice early in the second half.

It was a relatively even affair until Uruguay made the breakthrough 10 minutes before the interval.

Federico Valverde's corner was met by Cavani and his header was saved by Alfredo Talavera, but Matías Vecino was quickest to react and forced the ball home.

The second half had barely begun before La Celeste had doubled their lead.

Facundo Pellistri, who has spent the last 18 months on loan at Spanish side Alavés from Manchester United, burst down the right flank before picking out Cavani in the middle of the penalty area to apply the necessary finish.

And the veteran hit the net for a second time just eight minutes later. The problems came down Mexico's left side again, with Damián Suárez laying the ball into Cavani's path to allow him drill a low shot from 25 yards.

Both sides will be in action again on Sunday, with Mexico heading to Chicago to face Ecuador and Uruguay taking on the USA in Kansas City.

Flick wary of Mancini's under-fire Italy

AP ■ BERLIN

Germany boss Hansi Flick expects Italy's under-pressure head coach Roberto Mancini to come out firing and inspire the European champions in Saturday's Nations League clash.

Italy host Germany in Bologna with the hosts licking their wounds from a 3-0 thrashing by Argentina in Wednesday's Finalissima at Wembley and still reeling after again missing out on World Cup qualification.

A shock 1-0 defeat to North Macedonia in a play-off in March saw Italy fail to qualify for a second successive World Cup.

"We were all surprised that Italy were knocked out and it's not easy to predict how they will play," Flick said at Germany's training base in Herzogenaurach, Bavaria.

He is wary of Mancini, who is leading another rebuilding job in the wake of Italy's latest World Cup blow after taking over as coach in 2018 and masterminding their Euro 2020 triumph.

"It's the second time Mancini has started a new cycle," said Flick.

"He has a very big squad with young, ambitious players. He did a fantastic job after the World Cup in Russia.



"I think we were all fans (of the Italian team) during the European Championship - the team spirit and how they played was impressive.

"He will try to do the same again and has the quality to implement that."

Germany have eight wins and one draw from nine games since Flick took charge, but history shows he is right to be cautious.

Italy have won 15 of the 35 meetings between the European powerhouses with 12 draws and just eight wins by Germany.

Italian sports daily Gazzetta dello Sport views the Germany match as a "decisive test for this Italy, whose mood

and prestige are sinking ever lower".

The Germans want to throw down a marker at the start of a dense run of Nations League games.

They host England on Tuesday in Munich, then play Hungary away four days later before facing Italy in Muenchengladbach on June 14.

"We want to be back among the world's best," said Flick, with the Germans still smarting from their 2018 World Cup group stage exit as reigning champions.

"Now we'll have to see what the four games yield and see what we need to do better before the 2022 World Cup."

CWG-bound lifters to reach Birmingham in advance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's Commonwealth Games-bound weightlifting team, including Tokyo Olympics Silver medalist Mirabai Chanu, will reach the host city Birmingham one month in advance to acclimatise with the conditions and undergo a preparatory camp ahead of the quadrennial event.

The CWG are scheduled to take place from July 28 to August 8 in Birmingham, UK. The Indian lifters are awaiting visas and are set to fly to the UK on June 20 or 21. "The government has approved the preparatory camp. All the bookings are done. We are just waiting for the visas," Indian Weightlifting Federation president Sahdev Yadav said.

"The lifters will travel one month in advance. The exact date will be finalised after their visas arrive. The tentative travel dates are June 20 or 21," he added.

Chanu, a two-time medallist at the CWG, having won a Silver in the Glasgow edition in 2014 before clinching the Gold four years later at the 2018 Gold Coast Games, has already begun her preparation for the big-ticket event.

The 27-year-old had completed a month-long training stint in the US last month. However, others, including Youth Olympics champion Jeremy Lalrinnunga, were unable to travel to the US due to visa



issues. India are the powerhouse at the Commonwealth level. At the 2018 CWG, the Indians had returned with a haul of nine medals — five Golds, two Silver and two Bronze.

KHELO INDIA NATIONAL WEIGHTLIFTING RANKING C'SHIPS

Before travelling to Birmingham, Chanu will headline the inaugural edition of the Khelo India Youth, Junior and Senior National ranking women weightlifting championships to be held at Nagrota Bagwan, Himachal Pradesh from June 14 to 22. The tournament will help the IWL maintain a robust national ranking system while also providing additional competition to the lifters of the country.

The event will also help the federation select lifters for the national camps and

international events.

"This competition falls under the Khelo India scheme. It will be organised four times a year," Yadav said.

"Based on the results, we will prepare the ranking list up to top 15 lifters in each weight category, which will be uploaded on our website.

"Anyone will be able to access the rankings and it will give clarity on the selection process. The children will also get competition," he added.

Apart from Chanu, reigning junior world champion Harshada Garud and the Commonwealth Games-bound lifters, including Asian champion Jhilli Dalabehera, will compete at the event.

As an additional incentive, the federation has also announced cash rewards for the top eight lifters, starting ₹20,000.

INDIAN TEAM FOR CWG

Women: Mirabai Chanu (49kg), Bindyarani Devi (55kg), Popy Hazarika (59kg), Harjinder Kaur (71kg), Punam Yadav (76kg), Usha Kumari (87kg) and Purnima Pandey (+87kg).

Men: Sanket Sagar (55kg), Gururaja Poojary (61kg), Jeremy Lalrinnunga (67kg), Achinta Sehuli (73kg), Ajay Singh (81kg), Vikas Thakur (96kg), Lovepreet Singh (109kg) and Gurdeep Singh (+109kg).

FIH Hockey 5s: Test of skill & fitness for India as it forays into new genre of hockey

PTI ■ LAUSANNE

It will be a test of fitness, skill and speed for Olympic Bronze medalist India when they open their campaign against Switzerland on Saturday in the inaugural FIH Hockey 5s, a shorter and faster version of the traditional field hockey.

The two-event, an FIH's effort to promote the game among masses in a shorter version similar to T20 in cricket, Rugby7s and 3x3 basketball, will look to create a new genre for the game and increase its appeal among its fans.

The Indian men's team will play their opening match against hosts Switzerland followed by game against Pakistan on the same day.

The Indians will then face Malaysia and Poland respectively on Sunday.

Indian men's hockey team skipper for the event, Gurinder Singh said they can't wait to take the field on Saturday.



"It's a great atmosphere out here. We also had good training sessions and we are fully prepared for the tournament.

"We will be up against some quality teams and since the format is new, it will be a challenging task for us. It is fast-paced and we will need to adapt to the situations as quickly as possible," he said.

The nine-member squad features Pawan, Sanjay and Rabichandra Singh Moirangthem, who were part of

the Silver-medal winning team at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games, where the game was played in Hockey 5s format.

"It will require a lot of speed and skills. We've worked on short passes, 3D skills and the structure as well. The use of perimeter boards is a new element in this format, and we will try to take advantage of it.

"We have got three players in the team, who have played this format before, so their expe-

riences have been really helpful for us in our preparations," Gurinder said.

Indian vice-captain Sumit added, "It's a new format for us and we are super excited to play this version of the game. There will be high-scoring and neck-to-neck games, so our focus will be to play attacking hockey right from the start.

"We've worked on all the aspects of the game, and the key focus will be to use the perimeter boards effectively. We have got a good experienced team, some of us have played this format before, so we are confident and looking forward to this fun filled tournament," Sumit said.

The Indian women's team, led by Rajani Etimarpu, will also feature in the event and will open its campaign against Uruguay. Besides, the Indian women will face Poland later on Saturday.

Thereafter, India will face hosts Switzerland and South Africa respectively on Sunday.

Mitchell, Blundell revive Black Caps

AP ■ LONDON

Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell led a recovery as New Zealand battled back from losing its first four wickets cheaply to reach 128-4 in the second innings at tea on Day 2 of the opening Test against England at Lord's on Friday.

Mitchell was 43 not out and Blundell unbeaten on 39 at the interval after the pair had shared an unbroken stand of 72 for the fifth wicket.

Their partnership meant New Zealand stretched its lead to 119 runs over England, which had earlier been bowled out for just 141.

Matt Potts, making his England debut, was again the central figure as he took two of the four Kiwi wickets to fall in the second innings, including picking up the prize scalp of visiting captain Kane Williamson for the second time in the match.

Fast bowler Potts, 23, also claimed four wickets when the tourists were bowled out for a paltry 132 in the first innings on Thursday.

Concussion substitute Matt Parkinson marked his Test debut by helping England into a narrow first-innings lead of nine runs on the second day of their series opener.

England were eventually dismissed for 141 in reply to New Zealand's 132, with veteran quicks Tim Southee and Trent Boult polishing off the home side's tail.

Southee took four wickets for 55 runs in 14 overs and left-arm bowler Boult, who only arrived in England on Monday after playing in last weekend's Indian Premier League final, three for 21 in 13.5.

Parkinson, who travelled down from Manchester on Thursday as England's first concussion substitute after fellow spinner Jack Leach was injured fielding, walked out to bat with the hosts 130 for nine.



AP ■ LONDON

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Thursday that leg-spinner Matt Parkinson will replace left-arm spinner Jack Leach, who is out with a concussion, in the ongoing first Test against New Zealand at Lord's Cricket Ground.

The ECB had to fetch Parkinson from Manchester, who was 320 kilo-

Parkinson makes his Test debut



metres away from the stadium because the hosts didn't have another spinner on their squad for this game.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) called up Matt Parkinson as a temporary replacement for Leach following the incident. After receiving a late call, the

Parkinson got off the mark with a clipped two off Southee that took England into a first-innings lead.

The leg-spinner then played one of the best shots of the innings, driving Southee down the ground for four before he was last man out, caught in the slips off Boult.

England resumed on 116 for seven, still 16 runs behind, after an extraordinary start to all-rounder Ben Stokes's reign as Test captain on the opening day of this three-match series.

They had reduced New Zealand to 45 for seven before the World Test champions recovered to 132 all out, with debutant paceman Matthew Potts taking four wickets for just 13 runs in 9.2 overs.

England were then well placed in reply at 59 without loss only to suffer one of their familiar batting collapses as seven wickets were lost for just 41 runs.

Their hopes of gaining a first-innings lead rested with overnight batsmen Ben Foakes (six not out) and Stuart Broad (four not out).

Broad hit Southee for one fine straight four but, giving himself room and no longer trusting his defence, he was bowled by the pace-man attempting an extravagant drive.

Southee struck again when wicketkeeper Foakes, who had added just one run to his overnight total, carelessly guided him straight to Daryl Mitchell at first slip.



S Africa contingent clears Covid tests

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Quinton de Kock pulled up a chair near the tent as he watched the spin twins Tabraiz Shamsi and Keshav Maharaj hit the "right areas" during South African team's first training session on Friday.

The most interesting aspect of the practice session was Shamsi, Maharaj and later Aiden Markram spending quite some time doing "spot bowling".

The trio is likely to play a major role in the five match T20 series against India along with CSK all rounder Dwayne Pretorius, who also had a fair spell at the nets.

Wayne Parnell, who is making a comeback after good five years, was focused during his extended spell while Raesie van der Dussen looked the most impressive under the watchful eyes of head coach Mark Boucher.

Marco Jansen got a fair bit of batting tips from Boucher, who was seen telling him all about holding the shape while going for expansive drives.

While De Kock watched

others go through paces, South Africa's IPL star David Miller is currently holidaying in Maldives and will link up with the squad soon.

The Proteas squad members assembled at the Feroz Shah Kotla for their optional practice session after clearing their RT PCR tests ahead of opening T20 International next Thursday.

"All the squad members have tested negative but for the IPL players who were in action till last week, they would be given a few days break ahead of the series as part of workload management," a member of Proteas support staff said.

SA TEAM STAND FOR U19 COLLEAGUE

In a moving gesture, the South African national team players have all contributed for the treatment of former national U19 World Cupper Mondli Khumalo who is battling for his life in a UK hospital after being attacked outside a pub.

The Proteas have contributed through South African Cricketers' Association (SACA).

Anjum clinches Silver

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Experienced Indian shooter Anjum Moudgil clinched a Silver in the Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions as India moved up to third spot in the medal tally at the ISSF World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Friday.

Anjum went down 12-16 in the Gold medal match to Denmark's Rikke Maeng Ibsen.



Anjum, also a world champion, Silver medallist, had on Thursday qualified for the top-eight ranking round with a score of 587 out of 600, which gave her a fourth place in a field of 60 shooters.

On Friday, she finished second to Ibsen in stage two with a 406.5 to the Norwegian's 411.4. She then put up a strong challenge in the final but could not put it across the Dane.

It is Anjum's second individual World Cup Silver in the event.

The Men's 3P trio of Swapnil, Deepak Kumar and Goldie Gurjar also won a silver in the team competition.

The trio came through two rounds of qualifying to make it to the Gold medal match which they lost 7-17 to Croatia. Ukraine picked up the Bronze.

Babar & Wasim spar over Shan's batting position

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam has refused chairman of selectors Muhammad Wasim's request to accommodate specialist opener Shan Masood in the middle-order for the West Indies series as the differences between the two is now out in public domain.

Wasim in an interview to a YouTube channel had said that he was in touch with Shan, who is scoring heavily in English county championship as well as Vitality T20 blast matches.

Wasim had discussed with Shan about the possibility of trying him out in the middle-order in white ball formats as competition for the opening slots was very tight in the Pakistan team.

"I have told Shan that he should now try to bat in the middle-order so that we have evidence he can make the change for us," Wasim said.

Interestingly, when the media spoke to Babar, he made



I get impression that India & Pak players want to play against each other regularly: Rizwan

PTI ■ KARACHI

Wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan, who recently played alongside India's Cheteshwar Pujara for English county side Sussex, has got an impression that cricketers from both countries are keen on playing against each other regularly.

Rizwan and Pujara also enjoyed some useful batting partnership and generally got along well.

"Everyone wants to see Pakistan and India play bilater-

al series or other matches but the state level affairs are not in the hands of the players," Rizwan told reporters in Lahore.

Rizwan said he had had some quality discussion with Pujara on perception of Indian players about being engaged in bilateral cricket with Pakistan.

"I get the impression that players of both sides want to play regularly against each other but we can't do anything," he added.

Rizwan said he had been impressed by Pujara's professional approach and prepara-

tions for matches and learnt from him.

"You learn from being with such senior players and I picked up things from Pujara mainly from the way he focuses and concentrates while batting," he said.

The Pakistan vice captain said that he and Pujara might be from different countries but were part of a big cricket family.

Pakistan and India only meet in the ICC competitions and last featured in a bilateral white ball series in 2012.

it clear there was no possibility of this happening.

Babar insisted that including Shan in the side as a middle-order batter would be unfair with the left-hander and also

with the other players who are already in contention for middle-order slots.

"Shan Masood bats at the top of the order and he has not batted lower down the order. I

think it would be unfair with Shan to play him at number 5 or 6. We have an eye on him and he will be considered taking the balance of the side into account," Babar said in Lahore.

Finch hopes tour brings 'joy' to crisis-hit SL



AP ■ COLOMBO

Australia's cricketers hope to bring some "joy" to Sri Lanka, white-ball captain Aaron Finch said on Friday, as the island nation prepares for a seven-week tour while wrestling with an unprecedented economic crisis.

The squad arrived on Wednesday for their first all-format series against Sri Lanka in six years, at a time when fuel shortages, rolling blackouts and political turmoil have made life a misery for many.

The tour has raised security concerns in the Australian camp after deadly unrest in Sri Lanka last month, but Finch said his team were excited to

be in the country.

"We're here to play cricket and hopefully... we can bring some joy and some entertainment to Sri Lanka," he told an online press conference.

"It's such a special place to tour. The hospitality that you get here, the friendliness, and their love for the game is unbelievable," he said.

Australia will play three T20Is, five ODIs and two Test matches during the tour, which ends July 12.

The series-opening T20I will be played under lights on Tuesday in the capital Colombo, where residents have suffered through regular power cuts and waited in long

queues for fuel.

Last month, Cricket Australia boss Todd Greenberg said players were aware of the situation in the island nation and admitted a "level of discomfort around touring in conditions that contrast those faced by the people of Sri Lanka".

Australia last toured the country in 2016 but has regularly played against Sri Lanka at home, including a T20I series in February that went 4-1 to the hosts.

Finch said his team would keep their guard up during the upcoming series and expected strong showings from batsman Kusal Mendis and spinner Wanindu Hasaranga.

Malinga appointed SL's bowling strategy coach

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Legendary pacer Lasith Malinga has been appointed as the bowling strategy coach for the white-ball leg of Sri Lanka's home series against Australia.

A white ball legend in his own right and one of the greatest T20 bowlers, the 38-year-old had held the same role with the national team when the team toured Australia in February this year for a white ball series.

"Malinga, during the tour, will support Sri Lanka's bowlers, providing tactical

insight and technical expertise to help the on-field execution of strategic plans," SLC said.

While Sri Lanka had lost the series 4-1, the bowlers managed to limit the scoring with the Australian batters restricted to a high total of 164/6 across the five games.

"Sri Lanka Cricket is confident that Malinga's vast experience and renowned death-bowling expertise, especially in the T20 format, will help the team immensely going into this all-important series," the release added.

Malinga retired from all forms of the game in 2021.

"If you just look at the top order, you've got Kusal there, who can be as damaging as anyone on his day, and obviously Hasaranga has had an unbelievable couple of years in T20 cricket," Finch said.

"We had a couple of close series against them... they are a very dangerous side," he added.

Finch said the 20-over series would help his top-ranked side prepare for the upcoming T20 World Cup and he expects that spinner Ashton Agar, who is replacing Adam Zampa on the tour, will get plenty of chances to shine.

Anand remains on top after 3rd straight win

PTI ■ STAVANGER

Indian legend Viswanathan Anand continued his winning run in the Classical section of the Norway Chess tournament here as he defeated China's Wang Hao in the third round to remain on top of the standings.

The 52-year-old Anand won the Armageddon (sudden death game) early on Friday after the regular classical match was drawn after 39 moves.

The Armageddon saw the former world champion pip Hao in 44 moves to take his points tally to 7.5. He is followed by American Wesley So, who is on 6 points, and world No 1 Magnus Carlsen (5.5).

This is the Indian ace's third straight win in the Classical section after having beaten Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria) in the first two rounds.

Carlsen bounced back to win against Teimour Radjabov after having lost in the second round to So via the Armageddon.

In the other matches of the day, Vachier-Lagrave defeated Norwegian Aryan Tari and Anish Giri shared points with So, drawing the classical and Armageddon games while Shakhriyar Mamedyarov topped Topalov in the sudden death.

Sakshi Malik grabs first int'l Gold in almost 5 yrs

PTI ■ ALMATY

Sakshi Malik's struggles were nowhere to be seen as a fearless and aggressive Rio Olympics Bronze medallist grabbed her first international Gold medal in almost five years at the UWW Ranking Series event here on Friday.

India's Mansi and Divya Kakran too earned top of the podium finishes.

But the day belonged to Sakshi, who has been struggling till the recent CWG trials.

She was consistently losing to young Sonam Malik in the 62kg category and even missed qualification for the Tokyo Games but looked completely transformed on Friday as she fought her bouts with tremendous confidence.

She began with a win by technical superiority against Kazakhstan's Irina Kuznetsova and followed that up with another big 9-3 win over Uzbekistan's Rushana Abdirasulova.

As Mongolia's Tserenchimmed Sukhee forfeited her semifinal, Sakshi entered the final, where she pinned Kuznetsova while leading 7-4, beating the home wrestler for a second time in the day.



Sakshi stood out with her double leg attacks and agility, hardly giving breathing pace to her opponents. Even when her

rival won a challenge to take 5-3 lead, Sakshi was not perturbed and won in an emphatic fashion.

The last time she won a Gold was in 2017 Commonwealth Games when she won two Bronze medals at the Asian Championships in 2020 and 2022.

Also winning the Gold was Mansi (57kg), who won her final bout 3-0 against Kazakhstan's Emma Tissina, who hardly made a move. Mansi got push out points as mostly the two wrestlers were involved in standing wrestling.

Divya won two of her bouts by 'fall' — against Mongolia's Delgermaa Enkhsaikhan and Kazakhstan's Albina Kairgeldinova — but lost the final bout 10-14 to Mongolia's Bolortungalag Zorigt in the four-wrestler 68kg category.

Zorigt also finished with two wins and a defeat (against Delgermaa) but since Divya had more convincing results, she was declared winner.

India now have won four medals with Greco Roman wrestler Neeraj winning a Bronze in 63kg category on Thursday.