

OPINION 6

QUAD CAN DO WITH MORE PARTNERS

WORLD 9

SL CABINET DEFERS 21ST AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION BY A WEEK

MONEY 10

INVESTORS POORER BY OVER ₹2L CR AS MARKETS PLUMMET

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY JUNE 8, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



MITHALI AT 7th SPOT IN WODI RANKINGS 12 SPORT

As UN chips in, India tries to undo 'remarks' damage

As Muslim world simmers with rage, Goyal says India will keep up good relations with Gulf

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations (UN) has called for respect and tolerance for all religions after Iraq, Turkey, Malaysia, and Libya on Tuesday joined over a dozen Muslim countries in condemning the controversial remarks of now-suspended BJP spokespersons against Prophet Mohammad.

Echoing Centre's efforts to reach out to the Arab nations, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said action has been taken against the persons (Nupur Sharma) and asserted that "good relations" would continue with the countries.

"We strongly encourage respect and tolerance for all religions," said Stephane Dujarric, a spokesperson for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, late on Monday in a press briefing.

He was responding to a question by a Pakistani journalist on remarks by BJP's former national spokesperson



Nupur Sharma and its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal against Prophet Mohammad.

"I've seen stories. I haven't seen the remarks themselves, but I mean, regardless, I can tell you that we strongly encourage respect and tolerance for all religions," Dujarric said.

Reacting to the row, Goyal said the controversy had not impacted the NDA dispensation as Nupur is not a Government functionary and stressed that good relations will continue with the Gulf countries that have reacted sharply to the issue.

"I don't think that this statement was made by any Government functionary and, therefore, it has no impact on the Government and necessary action has been taken by the party," Goyal, Minister for Commerce and Industry, told

reporters in Kochi, Kerala when asked about the controversy.

He said the External Affairs Ministry has clarified the issue. "The Foreign Office has come out with a clear clarification on that remark and the BJP has taken the necessary action in this regard. With all these countries, we have a very good relationship and our relations will continue to be very good," he said. When asked about a social media campaign to boycott Indian products in the wake of the row, the Minister said he has not heard of any such thing.

"They have only mentioned that such a statement should not be made and accordingly, action has been taken against the person who made the comments. All the Indians living in gulf countries are safe and do not have to worry," the Union Minister said.

Earlier, Iraq and Libya joined over a dozen Muslim countries in condemning the controversial remarks made by now-suspended BJP spokesperson.

The Iraqi statement said, "these abuses, malicious and disgraceful acts will have serious repercussions and, if not contained, may lead to dire consequences that will have unimaginable consequences for the peaceful coexistence, as

Qaeda threatens suicide attacks in parts of India

New Delhi: Terror group Al-Qaeda, in a threat letter dated June 6, said it would launch suicide attacks in Delhi, Mumbai, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat to "fight for the honour of the Prophet".

This comes in light of the controversy that has erupted after BJP spokespersons made remarks on Prophet Muhammad. **PTI**

well as increase strife and tensions between peoples," according to the official Iraqi News Agency (INA).

The Indian Embassy in its statement said "in line with our civilisational heritage and strong cultural traditions of unity in diversity, Government of India accords the highest respect of all religions. Strong action has already been taken against those who made the derogatory remarks."

A statement has also been issued by concerned quarters emphasising respect for all religions, denouncing insults to any religious personality or demeaning any religion or sect, it said.

Continued on Page 2

CDS eligibility rules tweaked, aspirants can supersede seniors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has widened the eligibility criteria for the selection to the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The amendment will open the post to any serving or retired three-star officer of the rank of lieutenant general or equivalent in the IAF (air marshal) and Navy (vice admiral).

The post of CDS has been vacant since General Bipin Rawat died in a helicopter mishap in December last year.

A new gazette notification stipulates that a serving or retired three-star officer of the rank of lieutenant general or equivalent in the IAF (air marshal) and Navy (vice admiral) can be selected for the top job. However, the candidate should not have attained the age of 62 years. It means serving or retired vice chief can supersede their seniors and become CDS. Lieutenant general is the second-highest post in the armed forces.

Similarly, a retired chief of the Army, the IAF or the Navy is also eligible for the post of the CDS provided the candidate is below 62 years of age on the date of appointment.

The tenure of the chiefs of the three services is three years or 62 years of age, whichever is earlier. This will virtually rule out retired chiefs of the three



forces for the post of the CDS.

The gazette notifications issued on Monday said the Government may appoint any of these top serving or retired officers as CDS "if considered necessary, in the public interest". The amended rules will enable the Government to widen its pool for the selection of the new CDS.

"The Central Government may, if considered necessary, in the public interest, so to do, appoint as Chief of Defence Staff, an officer who is serving as lieutenant general or general or an officer who has retired in the rank of lieutenant general or general but has not

attained the age of sixty-two years on the date of his appointment," said the gazette notification amending the Army Rules 1954.

While appointing General Rawat as the first CDS of the country in 2020, the Government had gone by the principle of first among the equals. Then, General Rawat retired as the Army chief and the senior amongst the three services chiefs. The chiefs are four-star officers.

The new notification also says the Government may extend the service of the CDS "for such period as it may deem necessary subject to a

maximum age of 65 years".

The post of CDS was created as the single point military advisor to the political leadership on the issues of national security. General Rawat was also given the responsibility of fast-tracking defence reforms to fight modern day warfare.

The CDS also runs the Department of Military Affairs in the Ministry of Defence and is principally responsible for getting the armed forces better integrated rather than operating in silos. This includes the creation of new military commands which integrate the Army, Air Force, and Navy to fight together.

Punjab Police arrests 8 in Moose Wala murder case

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a major breakthrough in the gruesome killing of Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh, alias Sidhu Moose Wala, the Punjab Police on Tuesday said that at least eight persons have been arrested in the matter for providing logistic support, conducting recce, and harbouring the shooters.

Moose Wala, who left his house around 4.30 pm on May 29 along with two persons Gurwinder Singh (neighbour) and Gurpreet Singh (cousin), was shot dead by some unidentified persons in broad daylight while he was driving his Mahindra Thar vehicle.

The police have also identified four shooters involved in the crime, said Parmod Ban, Punjab's ADGP, Anti-Gangster Task Force on Tuesday.

Continued on Page 2



Children beating heat in Bawana canal in Delhi on Tuesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Seized ₹2.85 cr from Jain house: ED; AAP says it's just ₹2.79 lakh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday said it has recovered various incriminating documents and digital records besides cash to the tune of ₹2.85 crore and 133 gold coins weighing 1.80 kg from unexplained source of income from the premises of arrested Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain and his accomplices.

The AAP has denied the ED claim and said no such seizure was made.

The AAP claimed that ED has recovered only some documents, one digital device, and ₹2.79 lakh from Satyendar's house during their searches.

While the AAP strongly refuted ED's claim of seizure of ₹2.8 crore, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal alleged Prime Minister Narendra Modi is



after his Aam Aadmi Party and its Governments in the national Capital and Punjab.

Taking to Twitter, Kejriwal dubbed the charges against Jain as a lie. "At this time, the Prime Minister is after the Aam Aadmi Party with all his power, especially the Governments of Delhi and Punjab. Lie after lie, lie after lie," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

"You (PM) have the power of all the agencies but God is

with us," he added.

On Monday, the ED had conducted a search operation under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on the premises of Satyendar Kumar Jain/Poonam Jain, and his accomplices and other persons who had either directly or indirectly assisted him or participated in the process of money laundering, the ED said in a statement.

Continued on Page 2

Most wanted in South Africa, Gupta brothers arrested in Dubai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Dubai Police has arrested two Indian-origin fugitive businessmen brothers, Rajesh and Atul Gupta, who were among South Africa's most-wanted suspects in a corruption case that led to the fall of South African President Jacob Zuma from office.

The Interpol had issued Red Corner Notices against Rajesh, 51, and Atul, 53, who fled South Africa with their families following probes into their alleged plundering of billions of Rands from State-owned enterprises during the presidency of Zuma.

Rajesh and Atul have been arrested in connection with money laundering and criminal charges in South Africa, the Dubai Police said in a statement.

"Dubai Police made the arrest after receiving a red corner notice for the Gupta brothers by Interpol. The force has



Atul Gupta (file photo)

also coordinated with the authorities in South Africa regarding the extradition file to complete the legal procedures," it said in its statement.

However, the status of the third Gupta brother, Ajay Gupta, is not known immediately. In South Africa, the investigation against the Gupta brothers into the massive plundering of state institutions during former Zuma's era has concluded. Zuma, 80, was South African President from 2009 to 2018 when he was dislodged from the office.

Continued on Page 2

India lowest in Environmental Performance Index 2022

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With markedly poor air quality and quickly rising greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) prioritising economic growth over environmental sustainability, India, for the first time, comes in at the very bottom of the 2022 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) ranking of 180 countries, released by US-based institutions recently.

The US, the largest historical polluter, is ranked 43rd, while the current biggest emitter China has been ranked at the 160th position. Denmark, the UK, Finland, Malta and Sweden occupy the top five slots, while countries from south and southeast Asia are placed at the bottom five.

The ranking is based on an assessment of 40 performance indicators, including climate change, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, and environmental public health and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. India's lowest rank is



attributed to its air pollution and rapidly rising GHG emissions. The EPI has been prepared by researchers of the Yale Centre for Environmental Law & Policy and the Centre for International Earth Science Information Network Earth Institute, Columbia University.

"Major countries measure much more work to do than they may have realised if the world is to avoid the potentially devastating impacts of climate change," said Daniel Esty, Hillhouse Professor of Environmental Law and Policy

and director of the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy that produces the EPI every two years.

The 2022 EPI ranks 180 countries on 40 performance indicators covering climate change, environmental public health, and ecosystem vitality. "These indicators measure how close countries are to meeting internationally established sustainability targets for specific environmental issues," said the report carrying the 2022 EPI.

Continued on Page 2

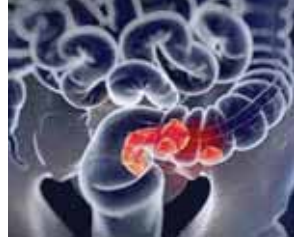
Trial drug completely cures rectal cancer in all patients

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In what is making waves in the medical world, a small group of people with rectal cancer who were treated with a drug called Dostarlimab for around six months, saw their tumours disappear, according to a report in the New York Times.

Dostarlimab is a drug with laboratory-produced molecules that acts as substitute antibodies in the human body. All 18 rectal cancer patients were given the same drug and as a result of the treatment, cancer was completely obliterated in every patient - undetectable by physical exam, endoscopy, positron emission tomography or PET scans or MRI scans.

As per the New York Times, the patients involved in the clinical trial faced grueling previous treatments to obliterate their cancer, such as chemotherapy, radiation and invasive surgery that could result in bowel, urinary and



even sexual dysfunction. The 18 patients went into the trial expecting to have to go through these as the next step. However, to their surprise, no further treatment was needed.

Speaking to the media outlet, Dr Alan P Venook, who is a colorectal cancer specialist at the University of California, said that the complete remission in every single patient is "unheard-of". He hailed the research as a world-first. He even noted that it was especially impressive as not all of the patients suffered significant complications from the trial drug.

Separately, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and a co-author of the paper oncologist Dr Andrea Cercek

described the moment patients found out they were cancer-free. For the trial, patients took Dostarlimab every three weeks for six months. They were all in similar stages of their cancer - it was locally advanced in the rectum but had not spread to other organs.

However, Dr Prashant Mehta, medical oncologist at Asian Institute of Medical Sciences in Faridabad, Haryana, said these patients have not been shown to be cured, but have achieved complete response. These patients have a specific genetic alteration called dMMR so this does not apply to all. Moreover, this is a small single arm study of a small number of patients, so it is only hypothesis generating, he said.

Only a randomised controlled trial with sufficient number of patients where this is compared with standard of care will answer whether this can be a part of recommended treatment or not! But I agree this is a promising sign," he said.

Orange alert as mercury hits 46 degrees C

Weather experts have attributed heatwave to lack of strong western disturbances and incessant hot and dry westerly winds

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the mercury hit the 46 degrees Celsius mark in parts of the national Capital, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) sounded an orange weather alert, requiring people and Governments to be prepared for emergencies.

The maximum temperature settled at 46.3 degrees Celsius at Mungeshpur and Sports Complex, making them the hottest places in the Capital. Pitampura, Najafgarh and the Ridge recorded a high of 45.7 degrees Celsius, 45.9 degrees Celsius and 44.9 degrees Celsius, respectively. According to IMD, the national Capital is likely to get some respite from the blistering heat as heatwave conditions are likely to abate from June 11 . The IMD said a fresh western disturbance may bring some relief on the weekend.

At the Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's base station, the maximum temperature settled at 43.5 degrees Celsius, three notches above normal.

Five out of 11 weather stations in Delhi recorded a heatwave on Tuesday. Pitampura, Najafgarh and the Ridge recorded a high of 45.7 degrees

Celsius, 45.9 degrees Celsius and 44.9 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The Met Office had earlier issued a yellow alert, warning of heatwave conditions at isolated places in the Capital on Tuesday.

It said the heatwave could lead to "moderate" health concerns for vulnerable people -- infants, elderly people and those with chronic diseases.

"Hence, people of these regions should avoid heat exposure, wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose cotton clothes and cover the head with a piece of cloth, a hat or an umbrella," it said.

There is an "increased likelihood of heat-illness symptoms in people who are either exposed to the sun for a prolonged period or doing heavy work", an IMD advisory read. Weather experts have attributed the heatwave spell to the lack of strong western disturbances and incessant hot and dry westerly winds.

Mahesh Palawat, vice-president (climate change and meteorology), Skymet Weather, said a fresh western disturbance may induce a cyclonic circulation over Punjab and Haryana which would lead to intermittent pre-monsoon activity in Haryana, Punjab, north Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh from June 10.

The maximum temperature in the Capital may drop to



Two women share an umbrella to shield themselves from the scorching sun in the national Capital on Tuesday
RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

40-41 degrees Celsius by Friday. With the monsoon expected to cover eastern India by June 15, easterly winds will bring in moisture and intensify pre-monsoon activity in northwest

tent pre-monsoon activity in Haryana, Punjab, north Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh from June 10.

The maximum temperature in the Capital may drop to

India.

Palawat said monsoon is likely to arrive in Delhi around the normal date -- June 27-28, and there is no system in sight which could stall its progress. A clearer picture will emerge in a week or so, he said.

Last year, the IMD had forecast that monsoon would hit Delhi nearly two weeks before its usual date. However, it had reached the capital only on July 13, making it the most delayed in 19 years.

The monsoon had entered a "break" phase and there was virtually no progress from June 20 to July 8, Palawat recalled. A heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature is over 40 degrees Celsius and at least 4.5 notches above normal.

A severe heatwave is declared if the departure from normal temperature is by more than 6.4 notches, according to the IMD.

Based on the absolute recorded temperatures, a heatwave is declared when an area logs a maximum temperature of 45 degrees Celsius.

A severe heatwave is declared if the maximum temperature crosses the 47-degree Celsius mark.

AAP says BJP doing witch hunt, spreading lies on ED's seizure

Only ₹2.79 lakh accounted for cash found from Jain's house, says Saurabh Bhardwaj quoting ED memo



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday rallied behind Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain and termed his arrest as a "witch hunt" by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government at the Centre.

"The Prime Minister is on a witch hunt against the Aam Aadmi Party with full force. We're seeing vicious campaigns especially against the governments of Delhi and Punjab.

Lies are being spread over and over. He may have the muscle of all his agencies but God is with us," Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted.

While addressing the media, the AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj accused the BJP of twisting facts and said, "PM Modi's ED gave a clean chit to Satyendar Jain through its Seizure Memo. It clearly states that Rs 2.79 lakh were found but not seized as they were accounted for.

The Modi Government's image was shattered at the international level due to the BJP so it started a fake news campaign against Jain claiming cash & gold were found in the raid."

"The BJP on the other hand is a nexus of bigots of such high calibre that they started their vicious campaign today. After all, the Centre had chosen its favorite puppet for the job and had to save the image of the Centre and the ED," added Bhardwaj.

"In such a circumstance, it is necessary to take note of the 'Punchnama' or the 'Seizure Memo' of the ED.

The memo states, 'as a result of the search, various documents, one digital device and two locker keys were seized. Indian currency totalling Rs 2 lakh, 79 thousands and 200 rupees was also recovered during the search,'

BJP, Cong slam Delhi Govt over ED's recoveries



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi units of the BJP and the Congress on Tuesday slammed the Kejriwal Government over the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) recoveries of gold and cash from the premises of jailed Minister Satyendar Jain and his associates, and claimed more heads will roll in the coming days.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana said that the ED should also probe Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

"Kejriwal had given a clean chit to Jain after he was arrested by the ED in the money laundering case, which means he knows the links," Khurana said.

"Unexplained" cash of Rs 2.85 crore and 133 gold coins were seized after raids were conducted at the premises of Jain and his alleged associates as part of a money laundering probe against them.

BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla also played an audio of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's strong defence of Jitender Singh Tomar, a Minister in the previous AAP Government who had to quit for allegedly having a fake degree. Kejriwal had come to his defence before he was forced to sack him as a probe

brought forth evidence of his suspected wrongdoing.

The AAP is adept at playing the victim, he said, and asked Kejriwal to share the documents, based on which, he has been giving a clean chit to Jain.

Poonawalla alleged that there may be many stakeholders in Jain's alleged corruption, forcing Kejriwal to continue to protect him or probe agencies may reach others as well.

BJP leader Kapil Mishra, who was removed from the AAP after alleging in 2017 that he had seen Jain giving Rs 2 crore to Kejriwal, took a dig at the AAP chief after the ED's recoveries.

"Kejriwal had demanded Padma Vibhushan for Jain. Kejriwal is bound to give a clean chit to Jain because he is partner in crime," Mishra alleged.

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar claimed that it is "quite clear" that Jain was involved in a major corruption.

"Gradually many more names from the AAP will come up in this graft case. The next person to face the ED will be Manish Sisodia," he said.

Delhi Congress has submitted a complaint to Delhi Police Crime Branch demanding a probe in an alleged liquor 'scam'. The party will also approach CBI if Delhi Police fails to act, Kumar said.



Delhi sports varsity inks MoU with East London varsity

2 universities will exchange knowledge, explore innovation in sports science, staff and student exchange

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Sports University on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of East London to impart world-class sports education to Indian athletes.

The universities will cooperate in exchange of knowledge, explore research and innovation opportunities in the fields of sports science, staff and student exchange.

This will help develop new courses and careers for sports, thereby improving the sports ecosystem in both the countries.

The MoU was signed during the ongoing visit of the largest education delegation from the UK comprising representatives of 22 universities and higher education leaders to scout for new National Education Policy (NEP) aligned collaborations.

"There is a nagging feeling in every Indian's heart that despite being a country of 130 crore people we have only won a handful of medals.

Delhi Sports Policy aims to nurture a culture of sports that can catapult underprivileged children to the global arena," Kejriwal said at the event. "Delhi Sports University is

funded by the Delhi Government. I believe it is a stepping stone for the entire nation and will prove to be a legacy in the sports world for generations to come," he said.

Kejriwal said the university will welcome talent from all corners of the country in all kinds of sports.

"I am deeply elated to have signed this agreement in such a short period of time since the inception of Delhi Sports University. The University of East London has a very rich experience in the field of sports. They have a deep and meaningful relationship with the Olympics and that will benefit us in realising our dream," he added.

Barbara Wickham OBE, Director India, British Council, said the inking of the partnership will bring immense value for the students looking to build their careers in athletics.

"As Delhi's long-standing partner in driving internationalisation of education ecosystems, we are very happy to have supported this visionary higher education collaboration with the UK," she said.

Vivienne Stern, International Director, UK Universities, Barbara Wickham, Country Director, British Council India, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Karnam Malleswari, Vice-Chancellor, Delhi Sports University, and senior education leaders from India and the UK were present on the occasion among other dignitaries.

Nupur given security by cops after threats over her communal quips



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following the death threat by unidentified persons to the suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma over her controversial remarks on Prophet Mohammad, the Delhi Police on Tuesday said that they have provided adequate security to her.

Sharma had requested the police to provide security citing harassment and threats she had been receiving.

"Sharma and her family have been provided police security after she alleged that she has been receiving threats and was being harassed over her remarks," said a senior police official. The BJP on Sunday suspended Sharma and expelled its Delhi unit media head Naveen Kumar Jindal as row over their alleged derogatory

BJP's ex-Delhi media head gets death threats on social media

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) former Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal on Tuesday claimed that he and his family members have been receiving "death threats" on social media platforms.

Earlier, Jindal had come under attack on social media after his tweet about Prophet Mohammad on June 1. "Me and my family members have been receiving death threats on social media platforms. I would like to request Delhi police to kindly take note of it," Jindal wrote on Twitter. On Sunday, a communication from Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta to Jindal

said his views on social media vitiate communal harmony and are in violation of the party's fundamental beliefs.

He has acted against the party's policies and ideology, Gupta had said. "Your primary membership is immediately terminated and you are expelled from the party," Gupta had said in the communication.

Jindal said that he had tweeted asking a question to those attacking and insulting Hindu deities and it was not aimed at hurting the religious sentiments of any community. Jindal, a former journalist with over two decades of experience, has attracted controversy through his social media posts in the past too.

and strongly denounces insults of any religious personality. Sharma's comments, made during a TV debate nearly 10 days ago, and Jindal's now-deleted tweets sparked a Twitter trend calling for a boycott of Indian products in some countries.

CM seeks Shah time to discuss hate killing of Kashmiri Pandits

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said he has sought an appointment with Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss killings of Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley.

The development comes two days after Kejriwal, at the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) 'Jan Aakrosh Rally', had criticised the Modi Government and said he would meet Shah to know about the Centre's plan to stop "massacre of Kashmiri Pandits" in the Valley.

"I have sought time from the

Union Home Minister to discuss the continuing massacre of Kashmiri Pandits," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi.

At the rally on Sunday, Kejriwal had claimed that Kashmiri Pandits are being forced to leave the valley due to the targeted killings of minorities and demanded that the Centre put forth an action plan to stop such incidents.

The spate of targeted killings in Kashmir started in May, which included that of Rahul Bhat, a clerk, who was shot dead inside the tehsildar's office in Budgam district's Chadoora.



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has questioned gangster Lawrence Bishnoi in connection with the recently received threat letter to Bollywood actor Salman Khan and his father Salim Khan. "Bishnoi has denied any involvement in

the death threat letter to Khan and maintained that he has no hand in it," said sources Bishnoi, a few years ago had threatened to kill Salman Khan for his alleged involvement in the infamous black buck poaching case.

The Mumbai Police had said that said that around 7:30 AM on Sunday, Salim Khan was handed over an unsigned, hand-written threat letter, which was addressed to Salman, by an unknown person while he was sitting on a bench after jogging at the Bandra Bandstand promenade. The letter is signed off with some initials which the police are prob-

ing and also attempting to unravel if they are linked to any past incidents targeting Salman Khan. Police teams have earlier, interrogated Bishnoi for his alleged involvement in the murder of Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu alias Sidhu Moosewala.

"Bishnoi has alleged that Moosewala 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 dur-

ing interrogation, he accepted that he had a rivalry with Moosewala and claimed that his gang members killed the singer," said sources. "He has revealed that Goldy Brar was one of the gang members who conspired and executed the killing of Moosewala but has not yet disclosed the names of other associates who were the real conspirators and executioners of the killing," a police official said.

The official said, "Bishnoi has not disclosed the exact motive behind executing the killing and has been uncooperative about revealing other details about the murder."

'Constitute group to examine norms for public places'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police and Excise Commissioners have been directed by the Delhi High Court to constitute a consultative group to examine the feasibility of extending the operational timing of places of public entertainment, which includes places serving liquor, up to 3 AM.

The order was passed by Justice Yashwant Varma on a petition by the National Restaurant Association of India which sought to restrain the Delhi Police from interfering with the operation and running of restaurants and bars till 3 am in terms of the excise policy.

The court observed that while it does not intend to stand in the way of the excise department framing a policy,

the same has to be "harmonised with" the police's authority to regulate the operational timing of eating houses and places of public entertainment.

"Bars or for that matter any establishment where liquor and intoxicating substances are served and to which members of the public may be admitted would clearly fall within the ambit of the above.

Since the operation of those outlets and venues would undoubtedly have a bearing on issues such as security of the public, and the issue of maintenance of law and order, it would not only have been expedient but the law itself would mandate a joint and consultative deliberation between the authorities... Are framed," said the court in its

order dated June 3. "Viewed in that backdrop it would be expedient to direct the Excise Commissioner as well as the Commissioner of Police to constitute a consultative group which may examine the feasibility of extending the operational timing of places of public entertainment up to 3:00 A.M.," ordered the court which asked that the exercise to be completed within two weeks and sought a report.

Delhi Police, in response to the plea, stated that any place or venue where liquor or intoxicating drugs are supplied, which would fall within the ambit of a "place of public entertainment" and would include "eating houses", is permitted to remain open and operate till 1 am.

It was contended that it

would be imprudent to increase their operational timing up till 3 am as the issue of opening of bars, etc has an indelible connection with the issue of public order.

Delhi government submitted that Delhi Excise Rules empower the Excise Commissioner to specify the hours that may be maintained by outlets and licensees for the sale of liquor.

Justice Varma noted that Delhi Police was not consulted before the inclusion of the prescription concerning timing in the present excise policy and observed that it would have been expedient for the excise authorities as well as the Delhi government to have elicited their views before holding out that bars would be permitted to operate till 3 am.



Hindu groups protest outside Delhi CM's House, against pension given to maulanas, in New Delhi on Tuesday
RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

Religare ex-CMD held by EOW in connection with fraud worth ₹800 cr
STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police has arrested former managing director and chairman of Religare Sunil Godhwani in connection with a 2020 case related to fraud worth Rs 800 crore. Godhwani who is already in judicial custody in another case was taken on production remand and then arrested in fraud worth Rs.800 crore, a case which was registered against him in 2020 by EOW of Delhi Police, police said

"He was already under judicial custody in another case. Meanwhile, there was already a case going on which was registered in 2020 and he was arrested in that fraud case worth Rs. 800 crore.

Scindia launches policy to boost 11 aero sports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time in a major push to aero-sports in the country, Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday launched a "National Air Sport Policy (NASP) 2022", which established a four-tier governance structure to promote 11 disciplines, including ballooning, paragliding and aerobatics. As per the policy, schools, colleges and universities will be encouraged to have air sports included in their curriculum. Multiple locations for air sports will be established across the country," the Minister said. Speaking on the future of Air Sports in India, he said "From a small market size of around 5,000 odd air sports practitioners creating around Rs 80-100 crore of annual revenue in India, I feel we can target over Rs 8,000 – 10,000 crore annual revenue and generate over 1,00,000 direct jobs. The economic multiplier benefits in terms of travel, tourism, support services and local infrastructure develop-



ment will be over three times." "We are also thinking of creating a segregated airspace for air sports in certain corridors much like what we have done with drones. That will help in proliferating these sports," Scindia said. "The Centre is also contemplating an incentive scheme to promote manufacturing of air sports equipment in India," he revealed. "It is time to emerge as a global capital for air sports leveraging the energy of our youth. The policy has been made with a vision of making India one of the top air sports nations by 2030," he mentioned. As per the policy, Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) will be the nodal body for air sports in India, and 13

air sports associations will be formed for 13 sports each. The NASP, in its present form, will cover air sports such as aerobatics, aeromodelling, model rocketry, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, gliding and powered gliding, hang-gliding and powered hang-gliding, parachuting (including skydiving, BASE jumping and wingsuit flying), paragliding and paramotoring (including powered parachute trikes), powered aircraft and rotorcraft. The list of 11 sports may be extended, the Minister said. National associations for individual air sports will be in the second tier, regional units and State affiliates will be in the third tier, and district-level associations will be in the fourth tier. "We must make sure that safety is maintained. There is a very high level of risk with air sports as well and therefore, on the first hand, we must ensure that there is complete coordination with the air traffic controller (ATC)."

Modi Govt brought LWE-affected districts down by 70%: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Claiming that untoward incidents taking place in Northeast have come down to 1,700 from 8,700 during 10 years of Cong Govt, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Narendra Modi Government has brought the number of districts affected by Left-wing extremism down by 70 per cent. Only 87 security personnel have lost their lives in the Northeast under the Modi Government as against 304 during the Congress rule. The number of civilian deaths has come down from 1,990 to 217, he said. Shah said the Modi Government also lifted the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from more than 66 per cent area in the Northeast and brought peace there. "The northeast and Left-wing extremism-affected areas of the country are tribal-dominated regions and security is a precursor to development there. Secured Northeast and secured central India pave the way for the development of tribals," he said after inaugurating the National Tribal Research Institute in Delhi.

Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accorded top priority to research and education since he came to power. "Under the Congress Government, in 2014, Rs 7 crore had been set aside for this purpose. In 2022, we have kept Rs 150 crore for it," Shah said. Modi Government has increased the budget for Eklavya residential schools from Rs 278 crore to Rs 1,418 crore this financial year, he said. "I believe that only a tribal child can bring the 'best medal' in the Olympics as sports is a part of tribal traditions. "They are 'natural' sportspersons and only need guidance, coaching, practice and a platform to showcase their talent," Shah said. The Government spends Rs 1.09 lakh on each tribal student in Eklavya residential schools as against Rs 42,000 earlier, he added. Shah highlighted the BJP has the most number of tribal MPs and Ministers. "Previous Governments would talk about tribal development but did they provide clean drinking water to tribals or build toilets in their houses? Did they give health cards to



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Union Ministers Arjun Munda and Kiren Rijiju during inauguration of the National Tribal Research Institute, as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebration by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in New Delhi on Tuesday

the Scheduled Tribes communities?" he posed. The Modi Government provided clean drinking water to 1.28 crore tribal houses under the Jal Jeevan Mission and built toilets in 1.45 crore homes, Shah said. "We have given Ayushman cards to 42 lakh Scheduled Tribes families and built over 40 lakh houses for tribals under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana," the Union Home Minister said.

Shah said the Modi Government has recognised the sacrifices and valour of tribal freedom fighters and 10 museums are being built across India in their honour at a cost of around Rs 200 crore. Home Minister said there are many institutions in the country such as the Planning Commission, now Niti Aayog, Life Insurance Corporation of India and the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited which have contributed immensely to the

country's progress. Similarly, this NTRI will play a pivotal role in the development of tribals in the country. This is a milestone, he said. The institute will become the backbone of tribal development in the run-up to 100 years of India's Independence, Shah said. Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said indigenous tribes are spread across the country but earlier people would not consider them a part of the mainstream.

Covid +ve Sonia seeks more time from ED to appear



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has sought more time from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to appear before it as she is still suffering from Covid. Congress sources on Tuesday said Sonia, who tested positive on Thursday, is yet to recover and her latest report is not Covid-negative. The ED had summoned Sonia to appear before it on June 8 in connection with a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper-AJL issue. The ED had also summoned her son and former party chief Rahul Gandhi on June 13 for questioning in the case. He was earlier asked by the agency to depose on June 2 but the Lok Sabha member from Wayanad constituency in

Kerala sought a fresh date as he was out of country. The agency later asked Rahul Gandhi to appear on June 13 at its headquarters in central Delhi. Congress leaders had earlier claimed that Sonia Gandhi is determined to appear before the ED provided she recovered from the virus. The case pertains to the probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the party-promoted Young Indian that owns the National Herald newspaper. The paper is published by Associated Journals Limited (AJL) and owned by Young Indian Pvt Limited. Officials said the agency wants to record the statements of Rahul and Sonia Gandhi under criminal sections of 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 understand the shareholding pattern, financial transactions and role of the promoters of Young Indian and AJL, officials had said. The members of the first family of the Congress party, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, are among the

promoters and shareholders of Young Indian. The probe agency had registered a fresh

case under the criminal provisions of the 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.

CBI taks over probe into alleged rape and killing of 14-year-old girl in Noida

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has taken over the probe into two separate cases of alleged rape and killing of a 14-year-old girl in a school in Noida's Sorkha village, and another FIR relating to her abduction. The case was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court on a plea of the girl's parents, who had alleged that their daughter's body was found hanging in a classroom of the Arya Kanya Gurukul Vaiddham in Sorkha village in Noida Sector 115, where she used to study, on July 3, 2020. The institution is run by one Jayendra Acharya and his wife. The parents have alleged that Acharya had called them to the Gurukul without informing them that their daughter had died. The parents further alleged that upon their arrival



in Gurukul, Acharya and his wife, with the help of unidentified goons, snatched their mobile phones and other belongings to ensure that no pictures were taken and took them to the classroom where their daughter was hanging. Two separate FIRs were registered by the Noida police and the Haryana police on July 17 and September 9, 2020 respectively, 14 and 68 days

after the incident. The parents of the victim approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court after no action was taken by the police in Haryana, where they had lodged a case of abduction, and in Uttar Pradesh, where they had got an FIR registered for the alleged rape and killing of their daughter. The parents said the condition in which the body was found showed that the victim

was raped and killed. According to the FIR, Acharya forcibly sent the body for cremation without informing police and later, conducted a "havan" in the classroom where the body was found to destroy all evidence related to the case such as the victim's slippers and dupatta with which her body was found hanging. The parents of the victim alleged that they were restrained in a classroom and forced to sign blank papers, without calling police or sending the body for post-mortem. On the plea of the parents, a Supreme Court bench of justices Ajay Rastogi and CT Ravi Kumar, in April this year, directed the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments to hand over the relevant case files and documents to the CBI within four weeks.

Infants born to Covid-infected mothers show differences in neurodevelopmental outcome

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Babies born to mothers who suffered Covid-19 disease during pregnancy seem to present differences in neurodevelopmental outcomes in 6 weeks, according to an analysis presented at the 30th European Congress of Psychiatry. Project Leader Dr Rosa Ayesa Arriola, however said that "not all babies born to mothers infected with Covid show neurodevelopmental differences, but our data shows that their risk is increased in comparison to those not exposed to Covid in the womb. We need a bigger study to confirm the exact extent of the difference." While investigating, the scientists found that babies born to mothers who had been infected show greater difficulties in relaxing and adapting their bodies when they are being held when compared to infants from non-infected mothers, especially when the infection took place in late

pregnancy. Moreover, infants born from infected mothers tend to show greater difficulty in controlling head and shoulder movement. These alterations suggest a possible Covid-19 effect on motor function. The initial evaluation compared babies born to 21 Covid-positive pregnant women and their babies, with 21 healthy controls attending the Marques de Valdecilla University Hospital in Santander, Spain. During the assessment, the mothers underwent a series of tests during and after pregnancy. These included hormonal and other biochemical tests (measuring such things as cortisol levels, immunological response, etc.) salivary tests, movement responses, and psychological questionnaires. All analyses were adjusted for infant age, sex, and other factors. Meanwhile, the post-natal tests included Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale (NBAS), which measures baby's movement and behaviour.

Ministry to soon launch scheme for mechanised cleaning of sewers



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Drawing flak for its failure to check manual scavenging, which has killed at least 900 manual scavengers while cleaning sewers or septic tanks since 1993, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry will soon launch a scheme aimed at introducing sustainable solutions to prevent such fatalities. The scheme has already been formulated under the ministry's plan for mechanised cleaning of sewers and septic tanks to eliminate manual scavenging, said a senior official from the Ministry on the condition of anonymity. According to official data, over 900 workers have died while cleaning sewers or septic tanks since 1993 but activists say the number is much higher as many are involved in manual scavenging. The government does not identify deaths due to manual scavenging but calls them deaths due to hazardous cleaning of septic tanks and sewers. Manual scavenging is banned under the Prohibition

of Employment As Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. It is one of the most important government interventions for manual scavengers. Implemented by the National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFCDC) more than ten years ago, it is far from meeting its goals. Launched in 2007, the objective of SRMS was to rehabilitate manual scavengers and their dependents in alternative occupations by 2009. The scheme was revised in November 2013 until 2016-17. The Act prohibits insanitary latrines, manual scavenging and hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. The scheme has since then been extended periodically, with very little outcome progress. The Ministry had told the Rajya Sabha recently that it could not confirm the existence of any insanitary latrines, concluding that the practice of manual scavenging does not exist anymore. However, this does not correlate with the findings of Census 2011 that 26 lakh insanitary latrines existed. Further, it is important to remember that while manual scavenging under Section 2(1)(g) of the PEMSR Act, 2013 is defined as the lifting of human excreta from insanitary latrines, it is not just limited to dry latrines, but also applies to cleaning sewers, septic tanks and railway tracks as India has not fully mechanised these processes yet.

Covid +ve have 25% more risk of mental disorder in 4 mths

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People infected with Covid-19 had a roughly 25 per cent increased risk of developing a psychiatric disorder in the four months following their infection, compared with those who had other types of respiratory tract infections, as per a study. In their study, published in the journal World Psychiatry, researchers at the Oregon State University (OSU) in the US found that Covid-19 patients had about 25 per cent increased risk of developing a psychiatric disorder in the four months following their infection, compared with people who had other types of respiratory tract infections. The finding, published in the journal World Psychiatry,

supports previous research on psychiatric disorders among post-Covid patients, though the current study found a smaller effect than the earlier studies. The study used data from the National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C) to match 46,610 COVID-19 positive individuals with control patients who were diagnosed with a different respiratory tract infection so they could compare how Covid-19 specifically affected patients' mental health. The researchers looked at the rate of psychiatric diagnoses for two time periods: from 21 to 120 days after patients' Covid diagnosis, and from 120 to 365 days after diagnosis, limited to patients with no previous mental illness.

They found that Covid-19 patients had a 3.8 per cent rate of developing a psychiatric disorder compared with 3.0 per cent for other respiratory tract infections. The 0.8 per cent difference amounts to about a 25 per cent increased relative risk, the researchers said. They looked specifically at anxiety disorders and mood disorders and found a minor but significant increase in risk for anxiety disorders and no change in risk for mood disorders. The large sample size and the fact that this data cohort draws from across the US gave researchers a unique window into post-Covid side effects, said study co-author Lauren Chan from OSU's College of Public Health and Human Sciences.



President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the two-day Conference of Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities and Directors of Institutions of National Importance at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday. The Conference was attended by Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan; Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar; Secretary, Higher Education Sanjay Murthy, Chairman AICTE, Heads of Central Universities/Institutes of Higher Learning and senior officials from the Ministry of Education and the President Secretariat. President is the Visitor of 161 Central Institutes of Higher Education. Out of 161 institutes, 53 are attending the Conference physically while others are connected virtually

PNS

Poll officials on remote booths to get double payment



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar trekked 18 km to reach a voting centre in Dumak village, Chamoli district, in Uttarakhand, the Election

Commission (EC) on Tuesday decided to double the remuneration of polling officials going to such booths as early as three days before voting day. The poll panel has also decided to set up a committee to examine the issues of migrant

voters. "Given the fact that voters and political parties are the primary stakeholders, wider consultation with all stakeholders including parties would be started thereafter, it said. In a statement, the EC said to enhance voting percentage, especially among migrants, "time has come to explore possibilities of remote voting, maybe on a pilot basis". "Voters migrate from the place of their registration to cities and other places for education, employment and other purposes. It becomes difficult for them to return to their registered polling stations to cast their vote. The Commission felt that time has come to explore possibilities of remote voting,

maybe on a pilot basis," it said. At a meeting of the poll panel, it was also decided to develop special water and shock proof, extra protective backpacks or cases to carry EVM-VVPATs and safeguard the machines provided to all such teams to aid hands-free movement in difficult terrain. Seeking to address voting apathy in urban areas, now all central and state government departments, central and state PSUs and corporate entities with 500 plus employees will appoint a nodal officer to ascertain leave availing but non-voting employees. "It is kind of name and shame as people in poll going areas get a day's off under the

Negotiable Instruments Act with the primary purpose of facilitating voting by employees," explained a senior functionary. "Empathising with the dedication of polling personnel who perform election duty in remote and difficult areas, the Commission decided to double the remuneration of the polling officials going to the polling Stations three days in advance. Till now, the remuneration for polling officials used to be a uniform per diem amount for all alike. Chief Electoral Officers of the states and UTs shall specifically notify such polling stations for enhanced remuneration during election," an EC

statement said. This is the third major decision taken by the EC in the last three weeks after Kumar took over as the CEC. The Commission noted that the EVM-VVPAT machines have been technologically designed to get triggered in 'unauthorised access mode' whenever there is any unauthorised attempt to open it and become unusable because of the one-time programmable chip. The Commission decided to develop special water and shock proof, extra protective backpacks or cases to carry EVM-VVPATs and safeguard the machines provided to all such teams to aid hands free movement in difficult terrain.

BJP stoking division chorus in North Bengal, says Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after a purported video released by banned Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) chief Jivan Singha seeking partition of Bengal became public, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee attacked the Opposition BJP for stoking separatism in the State. “The BJP is stoking disturbance in Bengal by encouraging divisive sentiments among the people for narrow political gains ... this will not succeed and Bengal will never be divided,” Banerjee said adding, “whenever there are elections approaching the BJP plays such dirty divisive card ... before the elections they raised the issue of Gorkhaland ... and now they are raising the issue of partitioning Bengal ... all this they are doing in the name of development ... but after we came to power we ensured maximum development of North Bengal ... we have implemented a host of government schemes like Laxmir Bhandar, etc.”

The KLO chief through his video had demanded creation of a new Koch-Kamtapur State mostly comprising the regions of North Bengal and threatened Banerjee against setting foot in the region. He said that “if the TMC Government tries to stop

creation of a new State — which is our constitutional right — then there will be a bloodbath.”

He instantly found moral support from local BJP leaders including Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar MPs Jayanta Roy and John Burla who said that deprivation of and discrimination against North Bengal could end only through a self-rule which would be possible by partitioning Bengal.

In an apparent reference to the KLO, Banerjee said that she was not afraid of guns and would lay down her life to stop any partition of Bengal. “I am not afraid of guns ... I have seen plenty of them in my life ... there is no point threatening me with guns ... my point is I will ensure all kind of development ... But I will not allow partition of Bengal where people of all castes, creed, religion and sect live happily together.”

Attacking the Centre for demonetization and printing counterfeit notes thereafter the Chief Minister said “earlier I called this Government a government of Jumlas (allegory) ... now I call this a counterfeit Government because during this Government we had notebandi and thereafter the market was flooded with counterfeit notes ... today all the Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 notes are



counterfeit ... this is a Government that cannot even ensure circulation of genuine notes.”

Referring to the recent drives by the Indian Railways to vacate its encroached properties by evicting the occupants Banerjee called upon the encroachers to stand up in revolt and resist the eviction drives.

She said “I call upon the people to resist the eviction drives because such evictions are illegal ... where the people who have no place to live will go ... they (Centre) does not even have the basic humanitarian consideration ... having failed to provide people with jobs, dwelling places and livelihood they are now evicting them ... this cannot go on.”

The BJP hit back at the Chief Minister for “leveling false charges” against the party even as its senior leader Rahul Sinha said “the Chief Minister is still haunted by notebandi as many BJP leaders lost a ill-earned fortune during demonetization,” and wondered how Bengal had become a hub of counterfeit notes in the country.

“Wherever you go in all the cases the trail of the counterfeit notes is traced to Kaliachak in Malda or Birbhum district,” another senior leader Samik Bhattacharya said. On partition of Bengal he said his party was not for dividing the State and added “whatever the local leaders from North Bengal said was an impulsive outburst due to years of deprivation.”

‘Two lots of sticky bombs on Pak drones seized in 10 days’

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The threat posted by ‘sticky bombs’ to the successful conduct of the Amarnath yatra this year is keeping the entire security grid on its tenter-hooks in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a span of last 10 days the Jammu and Kashmir police has recovered two fresh consignments of these magnetic bombs attached with the drones flown from across the border with Pakistan to smuggle them for executing the terror plot of disrupting the yatra starting from June 30.

Central intelligence agencies have already issued an advisory to the security forces to remain alert and sensitize the jawans deployed on yatra duty to prevent aerial attacks with the help of drones.

According to the Additional Director General of Police, Mukesh Singh, “three magnetic IEDs packed in tiffin boxes were recovered from the border belt of Kanachak in Jammu late Monday night”. These magnetic IEDs were attached with the drone spotted in the area. The payload was brought down leading to recovery of these sticky bombs.

In a written statement, ADGP Mukesh Singh said, “Yesterday night BSF observed a drone activity in the Kanachak area and fired some shots towards the drone.



Sticky bombs

Immediately a police party was deployed and they followed the anti drone SOP in the general area. At around 11 pm at Dayaran area of Kanachak, a police party observed the drone activity and fired at it again. The payload attached with the drone was brought down. However the drone could not be brought down”. Singh said, “the payload contained three magnetic IEDs packed inside a tiffin box with a timer set to different timings of 3 hours , 8 hours etc. The IED has been deactivated and diffused through controlled explosion. A case has been registered”

Earlier on May 29, seven magnetic bombs and an equal number of UBGL (Under barrel grenade launcher) grenades were recovered from near Hariya Chak area of Rajbagh in Kathua district.

These sticky bombs were packed in a packet attached with the hexacopter which was



Director General of Police Dilbag Singh visited base camps at Baltal and Dornail where he reviewed the security arrangements put in place at these important points en route to the Amarnath Yatra.

brought down by the police team from Rajbagh police station.

In the recent high level security review meetings chaired by the senior army and CAPF officers along with top brass of the J&K police special emphasis was made on averting the threat posed by these sticky bombs. The security grid has already decided to properly sensitize the foot soldiers about the threats posed by these readymade IED’s and how to detect them to prevent blasts.

The Jammu and Kashmir police along with CAPF are expected to launch an awareness drive for the common people and driver/cleaners to ensure they carry out frequent checks at different intervals to prevent such strikes.

The annual pilgrimage is

set to start on June 30, 2022, and will conclude on August 11, 2022, on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan.

This year’s annual pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Amarnath is expected to attract 6-8 lakh pilgrims.

The Union Home Ministry has already given its nod to rush additional 350 companies of central para military forces for the exclusive yatra duty. Several companies of CAPF have already arrived and their deployment plans are being finalised for the yatra duty.

These security personnel would be deployed for area domination duties along the yatra route, securing the outer ring of base camps at Baltal, Pahalgam, community halls, yatri niwas along the yatra route.

RS elections take interesting turn in Raj, Haryana and Maha

SACHIN PILOT DISMISSES AS "LAUGHABLE" THE BJP-BACKED INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE AND MEDIA BARON SUBHASH CHANDRA’S CLAIM OF CONGRESS MLAS CROSS-VOTING FOR HIM DURING FRIDAY’S RS POLLS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The June 10 Rajya Sabha elections have been taking interesting turns with each passing day particularly in high-stakes States like Rajasthan, Haryana and Maharashtra.

Amid reported ‘luring’ of independents MLAs and probable cross voting in States like Rajasthan, senior Congress leader Sachin Pilot entered

into an argument on social media with BJP-backed independent candidate and media baron Subash Chandra. Pilot dismissed as “laughable” Subhash Chandra’s claim of Congress MLAs cross-voting for him during Friday’s elections for the Upper House.

Congress received a shot in the arm on Tuesday when two MLAs of the Bharatiya Tribal Party announced to back the Congress after they met Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. The ruling

Congress in the State has shifted its MLAs to a hotel in Udaipur alleging that the BJP wants to poach its MLAs.

The BJP, too, has shifted most of its Rajasthan MLAs to a resort for a “training camp” even as the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) announced to support Subhash Chandra. RLP national convener and Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal on Monday night announced to give support to Chandra. The RLP, a former ally of the NDA, has



three MLAs in the 200-member Rajasthan Assembly.

There are four Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan and in the 200-member Assembly, each candidate needs 41 votes to win. Congress has 108 MLAs and the BJP has 71 votes. BJP is in a position to win one seat



and has 30 surplus votes. To win a second seat, it needs another 11. Congress is in a position to win two and for a third seat, needs 15 more votes. To guard its flock, the party has put up all its MLAs at a resort.

The elections to four seats of the Rajya Sabha from

Rajasthan will be held on June 10. The Congress has fielded Mukul Wasnik, Randeep Surjewala and Pramod Tiwari while the BJP has fielded former minister Ghanshyam Tiwari.

“Subhashji, this is not a TV series or entertainment. This is serious business,” Pilot said, taking a dig at the Zee chairman, who even reached out to him.

Pilot spoke shortly after the media baron claimed that four Congress MLAs would back him and also appealed to Pilot to seize the chance to “take revenge or send a message” by voting for him. “He has been fooled by the BJP into contesting and he will be humiliated,” Pilot stated.

Chandra said Pilot would not be able to become Chief Minister till 2028 if he missed

the opportunity. Pilot said the Congress has enough to win a third Rajya Sabha, “more than what we require”.

Further, ahead of the biennial elections for four Rajya Sabha seats in Karnataka, Congress appealed to the ‘secular MLAs’ to cast their ‘conscience votes’ to their candidate Mansoor Ali Khan. Congress Karnataka unit chief D K Shivakumar said he and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah were making this appeal to everyone in the Karnataka Assembly.

Given their strength, the BJP with 120 MLAs and Congress with 70 members are sure to win two seats and one seat respectively. The tussle is to win the fourth RS seat. The JD(S) with 32 MLAs though lacks enough MLAs to win a RS seat, it has fielded its lone

candidate Kupendra Reddy. The national parties too are eyeing to win one more seat, though the number of MLAs to cast their first preferential vote is less than the JD(S).

BJP has fielded Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Kannada film actor-turned-politician Jaggesh who are sure to win. It has also fielded Lahar Singh Siroya as its third candidate.

On the other hand, the Congress has fielded Jairam Ramesh, for whom the party has adequate numbers in the Assembly to send him to the Rajya Sabha. However, it has also fielded Mansoor Ali Khan as the second candidate. Hence, there is a tough competition between JD(S) candidate Kupendra Reddy, BJP’s L S Siroya and Congress’ M A Khan.

4 ultras killed in Kashmir; Kheer Bhawani fair to be low-key affair

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Four terrorists including two foreigners were gunned down by the joint team of security forces in different parts of Kashmir valley in the last 24 hours.

Three of them were belonging to Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) while one was associated with pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist outfit, police said.

On the other hand, a small batch of around 250 Kashmiri pandit devotees from Jammu arrived in Kashmir to participate in the annual Kheer Bhawani mela at Tulumulla in the central Kashmir district of Ganderbal on Tuesday.

Compared to previous years the annual fair is expected to remain a low key affair as



the majority of Kashmiri pandits have decided to stay away in the wake of targeted killings of members belonging to the minority community. On its part the Union Territory administration has made elaborate security arrangements but the temple recorded below average number of visitors ahead of the annual Zeshta Ashtami festival.

According to a spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir police, two Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorists including one

Pakistani terrorist namely Tufail killed were killed in the encounter at Chaktaras Kandi area of Kupwara.

Meanwhile, another terrorist was killed in an encounter in the orchards of Badimarg/ Aloora area Shopian.

According to police, the Killed terrorist has been identified as Nadeem Ahmad Rather @ Kamran of Kulgam. He was linked with pro-Pakistan terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen. Police spokesman said, Nadeem was involved in several terror crimes including killing of Kulpora Panch and recruitment of youth into terror ranks. Local reports suggested Nadeem had qualified NDA and was pursuing PG in veterinary science before he went missing from his residence in Kulgam in March

2020.

Late Monday night a Pakistani terrorist of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), identified as Hanzalla, was killed in an encounter in Sopore area of Baramulla district.

Inspector General of Police Kashmir, Vijay Kumar, identified the killed terrorist as Hanzalla of Lahore Pakistan. He said that one AK-47 rifle, 5 AK magazines and ammunition were recovered from him.

Police spokesman also informed, Shopian police Tuesday cracked the recent terror attack case in which terrorists used IED in a vehicle at Shedow Shopian, in which one soldier was martyred and others were injured. “All 04 terrorist/associates involved in the case have been arrested”, police spokesman added.

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having beefed up security star Salman Khan’s Bandra residence

“Galaxy Apartments” in the wake of death threat to him and his writer-father Salim Khan, the Mumbai police are suspecting the possible involvement of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang behind the much-discussed threat.

A Mumbai Police team is leaving for New Delhi to question Bishnoi on his suspected involvement in the alleged threats to the Khan family. The family’s security team had found a letter near Khans’ home on Sunday, threatening to do a ‘Moosewala’ with Salman Khan and his father Salim

Khan. Bishnoi, who is being investigated for of investigations of the murder of singer-rapper from Punjab Sidhu Moosewala late last month, is currently in the custody of the Delhi Police’s Special Cell.

Bishnoi’s name cropped during the course of investigations into the death threat letter received by 87-year-old Salim Khan, as the letter contained the initial LB. Even in the past, Bishnoi had vowed to kill Salman Khan after the actor was named as an accused in the 1998 Blackbuck poaching case in Rajasthan.

Police said that an unidentified person handed over the death threat letter to Salim Khan while he was resting on a bench near his home after his morning walk at 7.30 am on Sunday.

The threat letter, addressed to Salim Khan and his actor-son in Hindi, reportedly told them “Moosewala bana denge” -- in effect that both of them would meet the same fate as slain Sidhu Moosewala.

Following the receipt of the threat letter, the Khan family complained to the Bandra police who swiftly registered an FIR against unknown persons.

A Mumbai Police team, led by Joint Commissioner of Police Vishwas Nangre-Patil and other officers, visited “Galaxy Apartments”, inspected the place and spoke to Salim Khan and security officials on Monday. The security around Khans’ residence was beefed up.

Nangre-Patil also met State Home Minister Dilip

Walse-Patil and briefed him about the progress in the investigations in the case.

The Mumbai Crime Branch sleuths are assisting the Bandra police in the investigations.

Speculation has it that Bishnoi had – during a questioning conducted in 2021 – reportedly confessed to have conspired to kill Salman Khan. During the questioning, Bishnoi had admitted to having hired Sampat Nehra, a gangster from Rajasthan, to kill Salman Khan.

Nehra had allegedly travelled to Mumbai and carried out reconnaissance around Salman Khan’s home.

Nehra could not accomplish the task assigned to him by Bishnoi as he could not get a clear shot of the actor from his pistol.

UP first State to cross milestone of 33 crore Covid vax doses

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh became the first State in India to have administered more than 33 crore doses of Covid vaccines. As per CoWin data, at least 33 crore out of the total 194 crore doses administered in the country are from UP.

“Strengthening its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the Uttar Pradesh Government is providing vaccination cover to all the children aged between 12 and 17 years in a time-bound manner. So far, over 2,49,20,559 vaccine doses have been administered to children in the age group of



15-17 years and over 1,10,67,719 vaccine doses have been administered to children in the age group of 12-14 years

in the state,” Additional Chief Secretary, Medical and Health, Amit Mohan Prasad said.

Committed to providing

additional protection cover to the people, Uttar Pradesh started administering booster shots (precaution doses) from January 10. Over 32.26 lakh precaution doses have been administered in the state so far.

UP is followed by Maharashtra with 16.73 crore doses administered so far. In terms of percentage, about 93 per cent of the adult population has been fully vaccinated while 100 per cent have received at least one vaccine dose.

In the age category of 15-17 years, over 97 per cent of the children have received at least one vaccine dose. More 75 per cent beneficiaries in this age

category have been fully vaccinated.

“Aggressive vaccination is an integral part of the comprehensive strategy of the government to contain the pandemic while adhering to Covid-appropriate behaviour,” Prasad said.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh continued to record fresh Covid cases in three digits with 128 infections witnessed in the last 24 hours. However, 184 patients recovered during the same period. The additional chief secretary said that there were a total of 910 active cases of Covid in the state as on Tuesday.



Newly-hatched parakeets rest after being rescued at a preservation centre in Dimapur on Tuesday.

PTI Photo

FIRST COLUMN

BOTH FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE ARE NEEDED

The basic need is an experiential guideline for action



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Anything living needs some ground rules. A living creature, be it a single-cell organism or a conglomerate of millions of cells, will need to nourish oneself and expel the waste from the body. This itself requires a routine. The ground rules of each species of a living entity define how long it will live. The same applies to human beings. To move away from the gross level of activity—rest, sleeping, awaking, breathing, eating, whatever else—one has to fall into a pattern. If there is no routine the organs of the body start malfunctioning and some form of illness takes over. Illness has its own issues and has spawned multiple breeds of doctors, variously known as allopaths, homeopaths, Unani specialists, Ayurveda acharyas, naturopaths, etc. None of these schools of medicine claim to be complete or have all the answers. Very often their assumptions are so widely different that they seem to be at war with each other. The basic need is to have a system and a logic, an experiential guideline as the basis for action. This is needed for life itself, social existence, mutual interaction and indeed is the basis of civil society. A basic act like walking on the road requires observance of certain well-understood protocols. It is important to emphasise this because there is a growing crescendo in favour of ‘do what you want, when you want without a care and concern.’ The principle is interesting and perhaps even enticing. Whereas such ‘letting down of the hair’




is desirable at times, even the location for doing so and certainly the time for doing so has to be carefully thought through. So, there is a case for freedom with thought. Taking the discussion at a higher level of thought and action it is obvious that all group living requires some ‘discipline.’ ‘Discipline’ is resented by some and many advocate ‘Bohemian freedom.’ This can be dangerous if freedom is exercised by people of poor judgment. In short, the matter also becomes the orientation and maturity of individuals. It is at the level of dyadic relationships in groups and larger conglomerates of organised existence like the state or a nation.

The matter is also of the threshold where freedom can become excessive and discipline, an overbearing phenomenon. The relationship between freedom and discipline can be subtle and yet critical for organised life. A comparable example can be when to persuade with judgment and gentleness, and when to use emphasis and assertiveness. There are no easy answers. In all this, the role of leadership becomes critical. How a leader marshals his argument, organises his data, and makes a presentation becomes an essential part of not only creating norms but the functioning of a civil society. Those who had the occasion to listen to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s address of May 2 to an Indian audience in Berlin would have seen an example of selection of facts, piecing together an argument, and backing it up with appropriate intonation and emphasis. All put together, it creates impact and could produce results. Most of us would not have that podium in one way or another for making that presentation. However, all of us will have occasion, in one way or another, to marshal facts, organise our thoughts in a disciplined manner, and communicate to someone in an acceptable idiom. This is also what life is about. Freedom and discipline have to walk hand in hand. They touch all aspects of life just as they touch all aspects of existence. In every case, judgment is the key and constant practice, and awareness is the path.

(The writer is an acclaimed management consultant. The views expressed are personal.)

Fuel tax cuts: Easier said than done



UTTAM GUPTA

It would be fair to keep the fuel tax rates in a lower slab, say, 18 per cent, but the Centre and States would start wobbling at the very idea

To rein in the inflationary pressure, on May 21, 2022, the Narendra Modi Government announced reduction in the central excise duty (CED) on petrol and diesel by ₹8 per litre and ₹6 per litre, respectively. The cuts are significant but, given the magnitude of the challenge, these won’t be enough. Let us do a fact check.

In May 2014 (when Modi took charge), CED on petrol was ₹9.8 per liter and on diesel ₹3.8 per liter. By March, 2020 (this was when the COVID-19 pandemic struck), already the Government had hiked these to ₹20 per liter on petrol and ₹16 per liter on diesel. During 2020, it was further increased on petrol by Rs 13 per liter (₹3 in March and ₹10 in May) and on diesel by ₹16 per liter (₹3 in March and ₹13 in May). Thus, by May 2020, it had peaked to ₹33 per liter on petrol and Rs 32 per liter on diesel.

On November 3, 2021, the Government reduced CED on petrol ₹5 per liter and on diesel ₹10 per liter. Thereafter, within a little over six month, on May 21, 2022, it has now further reduced the duty on petrol by ₹8 per litre and on diesel by ₹6 per litre. Put together, the cuts add up to ₹13 per liter on petrol and ₹16 per liter on diesel.

Today, the CED is ₹20 per liter on petrol and ₹16 per liter on diesel.

The duty on petrol and diesel has thus been restored to the level these were before COVID-19 struck. Critics may argue that consumers have only been given relief from the extra burden imposed by the Centre two years ago, that it has done no favor. It all depends on the way one looks at things. Someone with a positive mindset will definitely like to see the glass half full.

FY 2020-21 was an unprecedented year when most of the economic activities had come to a grinding halt, severely impacting the tax revenue. As a result, gross tax receipts (GTR) were ₹400,000 crore less than the target. This was despite the Centre garnering more from hike in fuel taxes. Without it, its fiscal health would have been even worse, jeopardising development and welfare schemes.

During 2021-22, with the impact of pandemic diminishing substantially and the economy gaining traction, GTR were higher than even the revised estimate (RE) by ₹200,000 crore. The buoyancy in tax revenue is likely to continue during the current year as well. Therefore, the cushion from higher fuel taxes won’t be needed. But, the big picture is that, even at the current level, the taxes continue to be unreasonable high.

In Delhi, the pump price of around ₹97 per litre (as on May 22, 2022) includes ex-refinery price (ERP) ₹50 plus freight ₹7 or ₹57 (ready to send to petrol pump), dealer commission ₹4, CED ₹20 and value added tax (VAT) @19.4 percent or ₹16.

“

EVEN THE TAX RATE OF 70 PER CENT AT THE LOWER END (IN DELHI) IS SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN THE HIGHEST SLAB OF 28 PER CENT UNDER THE GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

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



The tax component (CED plus VAT) alone is ₹36 per liter which works out to 70 per cent of the ERP, i.e. ₹50. Of this, 40 per cent (20/50) is collected by the Centre and 30 per cent (16/50) by the state (Delhi). In Mumbai, where VAT is much higher at ₹ 30 per liter (inflating pump price to ₹111 per liter), the tax component is ₹50 per liter or 100 per cent of ERP—40 per cent going to the Centre and 60 per cent to the state.

Even the tax rate of 70 per cent at the lower end (in Delhi) is substantially less than the highest slab of 28 per cent under the goods and services tax (GST).

As per the 2016 Constitution Amendment (GST was introduced through this amendment) Act, petrol and diesel—besides crude oil, natural gas, ATF, electricity—are included under GST, but zero rated, meaning that the Centre and States can continue to collect CED/VAT (and other local taxes) till such time the GST Council decides to take a call on taxing them under the new regime.

While almost every political party from the non-BJP ruled states is prompt in asking the Centre to tax these fuels under GST—ostensibly to lower their price to the consumers—do they realise the quantum of revenue they will have to forego in such a scenario?

In a discussion with economists and industry experts last year on ‘transition of energy products into the GST,’ the NITI Aayog had proposed to tax them @28 per cent. As per this proposal, the Centre and states will get to collect 14 per cent each as CGST (central GST) and SGST (State GST), respectively. In Delhi, the State will end up reducing its collection to less than half of the present level, whereas for the Centre the cut will be steeper to almost one-third. A state like Maharashtra will have to make a steeper climb down to less than 1/4 th (14/60) of what it is collecting now.

The highest tax slab of 28 per cent is meant for demerit goods such as tobacco and alcohol. Petrol and diesel being items of mass consumption (diesel being used for movement of goods, a higher tax on it has a much wider impact including the poorest) can’t be treated likewise. Therefore, it would be fair to keep them in a lower slab, say, 18 per cent (12 per cent is even more desirable). But the Centre and States would start wobbling at the very idea.

The challenge of high international prices is no less daunting. Already, at the current pump price (₹97 per liter in Delhi), oil marketing PSUs are having an under-recovery of ₹13 per liter. Against the current crude price of \$115 per barrel for the Indian basket, the ERP of ₹50 per liter is calculated with reference to a crude benchmark of \$90 per barrel. Had the current price been used, the ERP would have been ₹63 per litre, or ₹13 higher.

Meanwhile, continuation of the Ukraine war, increasing intensity of economic sanctions by the EU and the US on Russia, and the decision by EU countries to slash their dependence on Russian oil and gas by 90 per cent by the end of 2022 will ensure that the international crude price will remain on an escalating trajectory. Considering that India depends on imports for 83.5 per cent of its crude requirements, there is little that the Government can do to escape its onslaught.

Against this backdrop, the only way to give relief to consumers is by more cuts in taxes. For now, in view of the Centre having already done its bit, states (especially those who didn’t oblige even in November 2021) need to offer significant reduction in VAT (for instance, Maharashtra can straight away go for a cut of Rs 10 per liter).

Over the next three years or so, the Centre and states should aim at reducing their tax rates closer to 15 per cent each so that at the end, these can be taxed under GST @28 per cent including CGST 14 per cent and SGST 14 per cent.

For the long-term, India should focus on promoting self-reliance in oil production to combat its inherent vulnerability to escalating international prices.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WITH ALL THE BLOODSHED IN THE RECENT PAST, IT’S BECOME CLEAR THAT THE BJP HAS NO PLAN TO STOP THIS GENOCIDE. —DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL



WHEN THE NATION IS CONDEMNING TERROR ACTIVITIES IN KASHMIR, KEJRIWAL HAS NOTHING TO SAY AGAINST TERRORISTS AND SEPARATISTS. —I&B MINISTER ANURAG THAKUR

Caste census is vital as a factor in public policy

Every census in Independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on SCs and STs, but not on other castes

W

ill a caste census trigger a disaster or settle the demand of many political parties? While it plays such a dominant role in our social, economic, and political life, it is strange that no credible caste data has existed since 1931. Also, the prominent four main castes, Brahmin, Kshatriyas, Vaishya, and Shudra, have produced hundreds of subcastes and continue to create more sub-sections.

The demand to count castes is not new: Every census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes. Decennial census until 1931 had data on Caste, but due to World War 11, the 1941 census was skipped. After



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

independence, the Nehru government rejected the demand for a caste census.

In 2001, the Vajpayee government rejected a proposal to include caste by the then Registrar General of Census. In 2010 the Manmohan Singh government too dismissed the inclusion of castes in the Census but surveyed on an economic basis instead. The Modi Government released only its financial component (in 2015) and withheld the caste component. Unfortunately, the decennial population census of 2021 has been postponed due to the Covid pandemic.

Political parties have already taken sides and sought votes in the name of caste and won. Caste-based parties have also sprung up like the BSP, the Samajwadi Party, and the



Rashtriya Janata Dal. Parties such as JDU, RJD, SP, BSP, YSRCP, and the DMK depend on certain caste groups for their political strength. They were leading a heavy campaign for the next caste census in 2021. Other leaders, including Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Akhilesh Yadav, and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati remained supporters of the caste census.

A caste count might result

in a demand for inclusion in reservation. It comes up before almost every census. It became the electoral plank in states like Tamil Nadu, just as many Bihar and Uttar Pradesh political parties made a strong plea for a caste census. Several communities such as Jats in Haryana, Patels in Gujarat, and Marathas in Maharashtra have demanded inclusion under the OBC category.

There are arguments for and against the caste census. As for the SCs and STs, the quotas are based on the census report. But the OBC reservation was fixed at 27 per cent to keep the reservation cap at 50 per cent. If the support for the caste census is political, so is the opposition emerging from multiple factors. A caste-based census will only expose the

upper castes that have been the primary beneficiaries. Secondly, the BJP and the RSS apprehend that a caste count might dent their carefully built caste alliances.

Supporters claim there could be no proper estimate for the other backward classes (OBCs) and others without the caste data. The Mandal Commission estimated the OBC population at 52 per cent, and some other calculations are based on the National Sample Survey data. Still, political parties make their estimates in states and Lok Sabha and Assembly seats during elections. Incidentally, the National Commission on Backward Classes, the parliamentary committee on the welfare of OBCs and, in the past, the Registrar General of Census

have endorsed the demand for a backward classes census.

Secondly, the caste census was the only way to breach the current 50 per cent cap on reservations. The apex court, too, has recommended that caste count was essential to rule on the 50 per cent cap.

Thirdly, caste data is vital as a factor in public policy.

Opponents argue that such a headcount will harden caste identities and lead to social fragmentation and caste enmities. It would be not only divisive but also counterproductive. There could be political and social repercussions. BJP leaders argue that several leaders from Mahatma Gandhi downwards to Ram Manohar Lohia have said that caste discrimination has weakened society. They also feel they should not

now touch on a complex and challenging issue.

The demand for a caste census goes beyond politics. Opponents and supporters have expressed their arguments forcefully. It is for the Modi government to take a decision. India runs the world's most extensive welfare programme based on caste identity. While the youth want a casteless society, caste is being perpetuated.

India has seen many caste-based agitations and will continue to see them, which will harm the social fabric. It is an emotional and controversial issue that many governments would rather keep away from such a census. In the 21st century, India should be discussing 'let's do away with caste' rather than further dividing India into those lines.

Russia deploys more troops, claims progress in east Ukraine



AP ■ KYIV

Russia claimed Tuesday it has occupied large swathes of eastern Ukraine after a relentless, weeks-long barrage and the recent deployment of more troops. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said Moscow's forces have "liberated" 97 per cent of the Luhansk region. Russia appears bent on capturing the entire eastern Donbas part of Ukraine, which is made up of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. That goal appears to be its most immediate ambition in Ukraine.

But while the Kremlin's forces have superior firepower, the Ukrainians defenders — among them the country's most well-trained forces — are entrenched and have shown the capability to counterattack.

Shoigu claimed that Russian forces have seized the residential quarters of Sievierodonetsk and are fighting to take control of an industrial zone on its outskirts and the nearby towns.

Sievierodonetsk, the administrative center of the Luhansk region, has recently been the focus of the Russian offensive. Sievierodonetsk and nearby Lysychansk are the only two Donbas cities holding out against the Russian invasion, which is being helped by local pro-Kremlin forces.

Shoigu added that the Russian troops were pressing their offensive toward the town of Popasna and noted that they have taken control of Lyman and Sviatohirsk and 15 other towns in the region.

Popasna is a town with a pre-war population of 20,000 located about 30 kilometers (nearly 20 miles) south of Sievierodonetsk.

A Ukrainian official said Tuesday that Moscow is deploying troop reinforcements in eastern Ukraine as a Russian artillery barrage aimed to grind down Ukrainian defences.

Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai conceded that Russian forces control the industrial outskirts of Sievierodonetsk, one of two cities in the Luhansk region still in Ukrainian hands.

"Toughest street battles continue, with varying degrees of success," Haidai told The Associated Press. "The situation constantly changes, but the Ukrainians are repelling attacks."

Moscow's strategy has suffered numerous setbacks, however, since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, including a failed attempt to take Kyiv, the capital.

Moscow's forces also kept up an artillery barrage of Lysychansk, a city close to Sievierodonetsk which is almost fully controlled by Russian troops.

Haidai said Russian troops shelled a local market, a school and a college building, destroying the latter. Three wounded people were sent to hospitals in other parts of Ukraine, he said.

"A total destruction of the city is underway, Russian shelling has intensified significantly over the past 24 hours. Russians are using scorched earth tactics," Haidai said.

In all, Ukrainian forces had repelled 10 Russian attacks

over the previous 24 hours, according to Haidai. His report couldn't be independently verified.

Ukraine is receiving weapons and ammunition from the West to help fend off relentless Russian attacks. That assistance has become a target for Russian artillery and warplanes.

Russia claimed Tuesday its forces took out two artillery systems given by the United States and a howitzer supplied by Norway.

Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said the Russian artillery barrage destroyed other Ukrainian equipment in the country's east while the Russian air force hit Ukrainian troops and equipment concentrations and artillery positions.

Konashenkov's claims couldn't be independently confirmed.

In Kyiv, meanwhile, autopsies were planned on dozens of Ukrainian fighters killed at the Azovstal steelworks.

The bodies were returned to Ukraine by the Russian occupiers of the fortress-like plant in the destroyed city of Mariupol, where their last-ditch stand became a symbol of resistance against Moscow's invasion.

The Azov Regiment was among the Ukrainian units that defended the steelworks for nearly three months before surrendering in May under relentless Russian attacks from the ground, sea and air.

It was unclear how many bodies might remain at the plant.

Japan, NATO step up ties amid invasion of Ukraine

AP ■ TOKYO

Japanese and NATO officials agreed Tuesday to step up military cooperation and joint exercises as they shared concerns that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is causing a deterioration of the security environment in Europe and Asia.

Japanese Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi said after meeting with NATO Military Committee chief Rob Bauer that Japan hopes to strengthen its ties with European countries and welcomes NATO's expanded involvement in the Indo-Pacific region.

"The security of Europe and Asia are closely intertwined, especially now with the international community facing serious challenges," Kishi said.

Bauer's visit in Tokyo



comes as Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force is participating in NATO naval exercises in the Mediterranean Sea.

Japan has been increasing its military capabilities and cooperation with Europe, in

addition to its alliance with the United States and partnerships with other countries in the Indo-Pacific region and

beyond, in the face of China's rise. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has been invited to the NATO summit later this month, and is reportedly considering attending the meeting, which would make him the first Japanese leader to do so.

In May, Japanese Military Chief of Staff Koji Yamazaki joined a meeting of NATO counterparts in Belgium for the first time.

Bauer praised their increased engagement in tackling "shared security challenges".

Japan quickly joined the United States and Europe in imposing sanctions against Russia and providing support for Ukraine, saying the crisis affects not only Europe but also could further embolden China to increase its assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific.

EU blames Russia for food crisis, Russian UN envoy walks out

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

European Council President Charles Michel accused Russia on Monday of using food supplies as "a stealth missile against developing countries" and blamed the Kremlin for the looming global food crisis, prompting Moscow's U.N. Ambassador to walk out of a Security Council meeting.

Michel addressed Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia directly at the council meeting, saying he saw millions of tonnes of grain and wheat stuck in containers and ships at the Ukrainian port of Odessa a few weeks ago.

That was "because of Russian warships in the Black Sea," and Moscow's attacks on transport infrastructure and grain storage facilities, and its tanks, bombs and mines that are preventing Ukraine from planting and harvesting, he said. "This is driving up food prices, pushing people into poverty, and destabilising entire regions," Michel said. "Russia is solely responsible for this looming food crisis. Russia alone."

Michel also accused Russian forces of stealing grain from areas it has occupied "while shifting the blame of others," calling this "cowardly" and "propaganda, pure and simple."

Nebenzia walked out during Michel's briefing, giving Russia's seat to another diplomat.

Russia's deputy U.N. Ambassador Dmitry Polyansky tweeted later on Telegram's Russian channel that Michel's comments were "so rude" that the Russian ambassador left the Security Council chamber.

The Security Council meeting was supposed to focus on sexual violence during the war



in Ukraine but Russia's invasion and the consequences, especially on global food shortages and rising prices, were also raised.

Michel gave strong backing to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' efforts to get a package agreement that would allow grain exports from Ukraine and ensure that Russian food and fertilizer have unrestricted access to global markets.

Ukraine and Russia together produce almost a third of the world's wheat and barley and half of its sunflower oil, while Russia and its ally Belarus are the world's number two and three producers of potash, a key ingredient of fertilizer.

Guterres warned last month that global hunger levels "are at a new high," with the number of people facing severe food insecurity doubling in just two years from 135 million before the COVID-19 pandemic to 276 million today.

He said more than 500,000 people are living in famine conditions -- an increase of more than 500% since 2016.

Ukraine's U.N. Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya told the Security Council on Monday that the country

remains committed to finding solutions to prevent the global food crisis and is ready to create "the necessary conditions" to resume exports from the key southern port of Odesa.

"The question is how to make sure that Russia does not abuse the trade route to attack the city itself," he said.

Kyslytsya said the question has become more relevant since four Russian missiles hit a plant in the capital Kyiv on Sunday where freight cars that carry grain to Ukrainian ports were being repaired.

"It means all Putin's fairy tales about his readiness to facilitate Ukrainian wheat export that he so eloquently tells his rare interlocutors remain too far removed from reality," the Ukrainian ambassador said.

Nonetheless, "we continue our work with the U.N. And partners to ensure the functioning of the maritime rules for the expert for Ukrainian agricultural products," Kyslytsya said.

"As a first step," he said, "Russia must withdraw its naval forces in the maritime waters around Ukraine and provide security guarantees against attacks in ports" and against commercial ships.

Ukraine recovers bodies from steel-plant siege

AP ■ KYIV

Russia has begun turning over the bodies of Ukrainian fighters killed at the Azovstal steelworks, the fortress-like plant in the destroyed city of Mariupol where their last-ditch stand became a symbol of resistance against Moscow's invasion.

Dozens of the dead taken from the bombed-out mill's now Russian-occupied ruins have been transferred to the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, where DNA testing is underway to identify the remains, according to both a military leader and a spokeswoman for the Azov Regiment.

The Azov Regiment was among the Ukrainian units that defended the steelworks for nearly three months before surrendering in May under relentless Russian attacks from the ground, sea and air.

It was unclear how many bodies might remain at the plant.

Meanwhile, Russian forces continued to fight for control of Sievierodonetsk, an eastern Ukrainian city that is key to Moscow's goal of completing the capture of the industrial Donbas region.

And Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow's forces also intend to take the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, home to more than 700,000 people, a move that could severely weaken Ukraine's standing and allow the Russian military to advance closer to the center of the country.

"In the Zaporizhzhia region ... There is the most threatening situation there," Zelenskyy said.

The Ukrainian fighters' dogged defense of the steel mill



frustrated the Kremlin's objective of quickly capturing Mariupol and tied down Russian forces in the strategic port city.

The defenders' fate in Russian hands is shrouded in uncertainty. Zelenskyy said more than 2,500 fighters from the plant are being held prisoner, and Ukraine is working to win their release.

The recovery of their remains from the Azovstal ruins has not been announced by the Ukrainian government, and Russian officials have not commented. But relatives of soldiers killed at the plant discussed the process with The Associated Press.

Ukraine on Saturday announced the first officially confirmed swap of its military dead since the war began.

It said the two sides exchanged 320 bodies in all, each getting back 160 sets of remains. The swap took place Thursday on the front line in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Anna Holovko, a spokeswoman for the Azov Regiment, said all 160 of the Ukrainian bodies turned over by the Russians were from the Azovstal ruins.

She said that at least 52 of those bodies are thought to be the remains of Azov Regiment soldiers.

Maksym Zhorin, a former Azov Regiment leader now co-commanding a Kyiv-based military unit, confirmed that bodies from the steel plant were among those exchanged.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Transfer of ownership in respect of Plot No. 309, area measuring 322.92 sq. yds., situated in the layout plan of the A. G.C.R. Co-operative House Building Society Ltd. now known as A.G.C.R. Enclave, at village Karkardooma, I.P. Extension Part-II, Delhi.

In respect of 100% share upon the intestate death of Trilok Chand Sharma resident of – B1-1023, Clover Heights, Salunke, Vihar Road, Wanowrie, Pune-411040.

WHEREAS Trilok Chand Sharma was the owner of Plot No. 309, area measuring 322.92 sq. yds., situated in the layout plan of the A. G.C.R. Co-operative House Building Society Ltd. now known as A.G.C.R. Enclave, at village Karkardooma, I.P. Extension Part-II, Delhi.

WHEREAS the said Trilok Chand Sharma has died on 02.05.2021.

WHEREAS Mr. Vivek Sharma (Son) and Ms. Neeta Sharma (Daughter) are the legal heirs of the said Late Trilok Chand Sharma.

WHEREAS Mr. Vivek Sharma and Ms. Neeta Sharma intend to apply for the transfer of the said property in their favour as they are the only Class I legal heirs of the said Trilok Chand Sharma.

If any person is having any objection against the transfer of said property Plot No. 309, area measuring 322.92 sq. yds., situated in the layout plan of the A. G.C.R. Co-operative House Building Society Ltd. now known as A.G.C.R. Enclave, at village Karkardooma, I.P. Extension Part-II, Delhi in favour of Mr. Vivek Sharma (Son) and Ms. Neeta Sharma (Daughter), legal heirs of the said Late Trilok Chand Sharma, he/she/they can submit objection in writing to the office of the undersigned, alongwith supporting documents within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the concerned Authority may sanction the mutation of the property as per the records & may not entertain subsequent claim, thereupon.

Mr. Subash Bhat (Advocate)
Add: Trinity Legal Partners, C-401,
The Courtyard, Nirvana Country,
Sector 50, Gurgaon, Haryana.
subash.bhat@trinitylegalpartners.com

Public Notice

This is to inform general public that Mr. Kuldeep Singh has acquired the Western portion of property no. F-205, area measuring 55 sq. yds. on plot no. 7 out of 10 area no. 677. Situated in the area of Sunderashan Park extn. Colony near Moti nagar in village Basai Darapur New Delhi on POA basis vide notarized GPA, ATS & will dated 12.12.1989, executed by Mr. Ramesh Singh, and Now, Mr. Kuldeep Singh is intending to sell the above said property to Mrs. Ashraf Verma vide Sale Deed. Further Mrs. Ashraf Verma is mortgaging the above said property with Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas, Unit no. 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that my clients **Sh. Narendra Kumar Dhiran** S/o Late Sh. Hari Dass, and his wife Smt. Bimla Devi, both R/o Plot No.-49 A, Kharsa No.-27/13, Tajpur Road, Behind Bala Ji Mandir, Bakhtawar Pur, North West Delhi 110036 have served all their relations with their son Sh. Viswakant Dhiran and his Wife Smt. Usha due to their bad habits. Both of my above-named clients have also disowned and debarred his said son from all their movable and immovable properties. Anybody dealing with Sh. Viswakant Dhiran and his wife will do so at his/her/their own risk and responsibilities and my clients will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Sh. Viswakant Dhiran.

Sandeep Sharma (Advocate) Ch.No. 812, Lawyers, chamber block District Court Rohini, Delhi-85

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that **Harinder Singh, Rajesh Gauda & Nikhil Jain** claims to be owner and in possession of Prop. No. 56, Block-I, "South City-1", Gurgaon, Haryana (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of Sale Deed Dated 24.09.2018. Doc No. 9718 executed by Sanjeev Mitta, said Sanjeev Mitta had inherited half share of the said property by virtue of Will dated 20.08.2015 executed by Trilok Chand Mitta and said Harinder Singh, Rajesh Gauda & Nikhil Jain has agreed to sell the first floor of the said Property to **Mr. Sunil Kumar Aggarwal** and said **Mr. Sunil Kumar Aggarwal** has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients, **IDFC FIRST BANK LTD, ITO Branch, New Delhi** all persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 14 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan against the said property and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

Vishal Diwan (Advocate)
For Diwan and Company LLP
Advocates and Solicitors
House No.2 (LGF), NRI Complex New Delhi -19
Mobile No. 9816399999

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that Mr. Surinder Singh S/o Late Jawahar Singh owner of Freehold Property Bearing No. W2-54, on plot no. 10, wide roof/terrace rights, admeasuring 45.00 Sq. Yards, out of kharsa no. 13/16/1, Situated at Village Chaukhandi, Chaukhandi Extn., P.O. Tilak Nagar, New Delhi vide Relinquishment Deed dated 09.03.2022, as Regd. No. 2272, it is informed that there are no other legal heirs of Late S. Jawahar Singh except 1. Mrs. Prem Kaur (wife) and 2. Mr. Sunder Singh (Son).

If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 07 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghu Thari, Advocate
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110001
Mob.-91-8076188328

Public Notice

This is to inform general public that Mr. Neeraj Gupta is the owner of Property no. D-33, area measuring 250 sq. yds situated at South extension, Part - 1, New Delhi vide Relinquishment Deed dated 06.05.2015. Mr. Neeraj Gupta has misplaced the below mentioned document:

A. Original Sale Deed dated 26.04.1990 executed by M/S D.L.F. Housing & Construction Pvt. Ltd in favour of Mr. Prem Chand Aggarwal adopted son of Mrs. Chalti Devi in respect of said property as doc no. 5221, vol no. 590 on pages no. 184-186 on 02.11.1990. Anyone who find the above said document shall handover the same to the Manager of PNB Housing Finance Ltd. Now, Mr. Neeraj Gupta is availing loan on this property from PNB Housing Finance Ltd. by mortgaging the said property. In case anyone has any objection regarding mortgage of the said property, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no. 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact: at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **Suman Mittal** and **Dinesh Mittal** are the absolute owners of Entire Second Floor without roof rights of Property Bearing No. 164, Area Measuring 183.67 Sq. Yds., Situated in the layout plan of P&T CHBS Ltd., Presently known as Sandesh Vihar, Patampra, Delhi-110034 having acquired by Sale Deed dated 16.07.2015 (registration No. 8192) executed by Sanjay Chopra (owner by virtue of Regd. Relinquishment Deed dated 26.03.2015 (document no. 2881) executed by Sangeeta Anand and Sumita Bhanchari.

All person/s having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Shoo No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayapuri Vihar-II, Delhi-91, Mob. 9810063351

Ukraine facing sexual violence, trafficking crisis



AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Sexual violence in Ukraine, especially against women and girls, remains prevalent and underreported, and the humanitarian crisis in the war-torn country is turning into "a human trafficking crisis," the U.N. Special envoy for sexual violence in conflict said Monday.

Pramila Patten told the U.N. Security Council that there is a gap between its resolutions aimed at preventing rape and other sexual attacks during conflicts and the reality on the ground for the most vulnerable -- women and children.

As of June 3, she said, the U.N. Human rights office had received 124 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence — 97 of them involving women and girls, 19 against men, seven against boys and one gender unknown.

Verification of the cases is continuing.

Patten said Ukraine's prosecutor general informed her during a visit in May that a national hotline reported the fol-

lowing forms of conflict-related sexual violence between Feb. 24, when Russian troops invaded the country, and April 12: "rape, gang rape, pregnancy following rape, attempted rape, threats of rape, coercion to watch an act of sexual violence committed against a partner or a child, and forced nudity."

She said the history of conflicts shows that "sexual violence is the most consistently and massively under-reported violation," adding that is why it is critical to reinforce prevention and protection and provide services to victims from the onset of any armed conflict.

Russia's U.N. Ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, categorically rejected and condemned all allegations of sexual violence by Russian troops as "lies." He said Russia's soldiers are subject to strict rules prohibiting torture and violence against civilians.

He claimed the same rules don't apply to Ukraine's "nationalist battalions" and said the international community will

soon have "the full truth about these crimes, including crimes of a sexual nature, committed by Ukrainian nationalist units and the Ukrainian armed forces."

Ukrainian Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya said his country's law enforcement bodies, media and non-governmental groups "continue to report numerous cases of sexual violence committed by Russian troops."

According to the Ministry of Interior, he said, "minors and elderly women were among the victims of Russian rapists" and "fatalities have also been registered."

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield cited "a mountain of credible reports of atrocities committed by Russia's forces against civilians," including "horrific accounts of sexual violence."

"More and more allegations show Russia's soldiers sexually assaulting women and girls, as well as men and boys," she said. "We have heard from Ukraine's deputy prime minister that Russian soldiers raped Ukrainian women for hours -- and then killed them." Patten, who also visited reception centres and border crossings in Poland and Moldova, gave several anecdotal accounts of trafficking attempts and expressed serious concern at "the lack of consistent vetting of accommodation offers and transportation arrangements" for Ukrainians fleeing the fighting. She said over 90% of those refugees are women and children.

She said that Ukraine has established a temporary task force on human trafficking, but that it is equally critical to ensure protection systems for refugees in all transit and destination countries and at all border crossing.

Russia: We've destroyed artillery from West



AP ■ MOSCOW

The Russian military says it has destroyed several artillery systems provided by the West in the latest series of strikes on Ukrainian targets.

Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said Tuesday that the Russian artillery hit a howitzer supplied by Norway and two other artillery systems given to Ukraine by the United States. He said that the Russian artillery barrage destroyed other Ukrainian equipment in the country's east while the Russian air force hit Ukrainian troops and equipment concentrations and artillery positions.

Konashenkov's claims couldn't be independently confirmed.

SL Cabinet defers 21st Amendment to the Constitution by a week

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Cabinet has deferred by a week the approval of the proposed 21st Amendment to the Constitution to empower Parliament over the executive president, amidst stiff resistance from some members of the ruling party.

The 21st Amendment is expected to annul the 20A to the Constitution which gives unfettered powers to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa after abolishing the 19th Amendment.

The draft of the proposed amendment was presented at Monday's Cabinet meeting. "It was decided to approve it only after all parties agreed with the amendments proposed. It will be presented to the Cabinet next week," Charitha Herath, a government parliamentarian, told reporters. A section of the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party (SLPP) is averse to bringing in 21A without addressing the current economic crisis.

"People are facing difficulties without essentials. We will have to think of settling the economic issues first before trying political solutions," Sagara Kariyawasam, the ruling SLPP general secretary said.

Constitutional Affairs



Minister Wijedasa Rajapakse was hopeful of having the Cabinet nod on Monday.

The government announced on Friday that most of the concerns raised by parties had been addressed and agreed upon. However, the main Opposition party, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), expressed disagreement, saying the government needed to wait until the Supreme Court's determination on their draft document on the amendment.

The SJB has accused the government of watering down

the amendment so as to allow president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to continue enjoying full powers. The SJB presses for the abolition of the presidential system.

The constitutional affairs minister said the government's aim was to move provisions which may require it to be subject to a national referendum.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe last week battled for the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, saying it will curb the president's unlimited powers while enhancing the role of Parliament in governing

the debt-ridden country which is also facing an unprecedented political turmoil. His proposal to introduce the 21st Amendment met with stiff resistance from some members of the ruling SLPP party.

They charged that Wickremesinghe was looking to garner more power for himself while weakening President Rajapaksa who appointed him.

The powerful Rajapaksa family tightened their grip on power after their massive victory in the general elections in August 2020, which allowed

them to amend the Constitution to restore presidential powers and install close family members in key positions. Wickremesinghe was the main sponsor of the 19th Amendment in 2015 which empowered Parliament over the executive president.

The constitutional reform was a major plank of the agreement between Rajapaksa and Wickremesinghe when he took over the job of prime minister on May 12. Sri Lanka has been grappling with unprecedented economic turmoil since its independence from Britain in 1948. Sri Lanka's economic crisis has created political unrest with protesters demanding the President's resignation.

Under the 21A, the President will be held accountable to the Parliament. The Cabinet of Ministers is also accountable to Parliament. The National Council is also accountable to Parliament. Fifteen Committees and Oversight Committees are accountable to Parliament. Sri Lanka in mid-April declared that it was unable to meet its foreign debt payments and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) classified Sri Lanka's debt as unsustainable. Therefore debt restructuring was key for an IMF programme.

NY governor signs law raising age to own semiautomatic rifle

AP ■ NEW YORK

New Yorkers under age 21 will be prohibited from buying semiautomatic rifles under a new law signed Monday by Gov. Kathy Hochul, making the state among the first to enact a major gun control initiative following a wave of deadly mass shootings. Hochul, a Democrat, signed 10 public safety-related bills, including one that will require micro-stamping in new firearms, which could help law enforcement solve gun-related crimes.

Another revised the state's "red flag" law, which allows courts to temporarily take away guns from people who might be a threat to themselves or others. "In New York, we are taking bold, strong action. We're tightening red flag laws to keep guns away from dangerous people," Hochul said at a press conference in the Bronx.

New York's Legislature passed the bills last week, pushing the changes through after a pair of mass shootings involving 18-year-old gunmen using semiautomatic rifles.

Ten Black people died in a racist attack on a Buffalo supermarket May 14.



A Texas school shooting took the lives of 19 children and two teachers 10 days later.

The quick action in New York further illustrated the sharp divide between Republican and Democratic leaders on how to respond to gun violence. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said after the massacre of children in Uvalde that government should increase security in schools and resources for mental health, but the Republican says stricter gun laws are ineffective.

Fellow Republican Gov. Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee echoed similar sentiments Monday, a day after gunfire near a Chattanooga nightclub left

three people dead and multiple people wounded.

In New York, most people under age 21 had already been banned from owning handguns. People age 18 and over will still be allowed to own other types of long guns, including shotguns and bolt-action rifles. Part of New York's new law will also require all purchasers of semiautomatic rifles to get a license, something now required only for handguns.

Proposed federal legislation that would require buyers of semiautomatic weapons to be 21 is advancing in the U.S. House, but is seen as facing long odds in the Senate.

Italy seizes 4 tonnes of cocaine linked to Colombian Gulf Clan

AP ■ MILAN

Italian agents on Tuesday confiscated 4.3 tons of cocaine with a street value of nearly a quarter-billion euros (dollars) in the northeastern port city of Trieste, dealing a blow to Colombia's feared Gulf Clan in one of the largest drug busts ever in Europe. Arrest warrants were being executed for 38 people on suspicion of international drug trafficking in Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Colombia.

The seizure was carried out by Italian financial police and coordinated by anti-mafia investigators, following a yearlong investigation that also involved US Homeland Security.

The undercover operation "took another strong tackle to one of the most important groups of Colombian narco-cos," anti-mafia investigators said in a statement in English. Last month, the Gulf Clan's alleged boss was extradited from Colombia to the United States. Dairo Antonio Úsuga David, better known by the alias Otoniel, faces US indictments in three federal courts.

US official vows 'forceful response' if N Korea tests nuke

AP ■ SEOUL

US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman on Tuesday warned of a forceful response if North Korea carries out its first nuclear test explosion in nearly five years as she travelled to Seoul to meet with South Korean and Japanese allies and discuss the escalating standoff.

US and South Korean officials have said North Korea is all but ready to conduct another detonation at its nuclear testing ground in the northeastern town of Punggye-ri, which last hosted a test in September 2017, when it claimed to have detonated a thermonuclear bomb designed for its intercontinental ballistic missiles.

While the Biden administration has vowed to push for additional international sanctions if North Korea goes on with the nuclear test, the prospects for meaningful new punitive measures are unclear with the United Nations



Security Council divided over Russia's war on Ukraine.

"Any nuclear test would be in complete violation of UN Security Council resolutions. There would be a swift and forceful response to such a test," Sherman said, following a meeting with South Korea Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong. "We continue to urge Pyongyang to cease its destabilizing and provocative activities and choose the path of diplomacy," she said.

Sherman and Cho are

planning a trilateral meeting with Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mori Takeo on Wednesday over the North Korean nuclear issue. Sherman's trip to Asia came after North Korea fired a salvo of eight ballistic missiles into the sea Sunday, possibly setting a new high in single-day launches, extending a provocative streak in weapons tests this year that also included the country's first demonstrations of ICBMs since 2017.

North Korean leader Kim

Jong Un could further escalate his brinkmanship by conducting what would be the country's seventh nuclear test since 2006.

Experts say North Korea could use a test claim an ability to build small nuclear bombs that could be clustered on a multiwarhead ICBM or fit on Kim's expanding range of short-range, solid-fuel missiles that pose an increasing threat to South Korea and Japan. Rafael Mariano Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said Monday there are indications that one of the passages at the Punggye-ri testing ground has been reopened, possibly in preparations for a nuclear test.

Hours before Sherman's meeting in Seoul, State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters in Washington that the United States remains concerned that North Korea could seek its seventh test "in the coming days."

The Biden administration's punitive action over

North Korea's weapons tests in recent months have been limited to largely symbolic unilateral sanctions. Russia and China had vetoed a U.S.-sponsored resolution that would have imposed additional sanctions on North Korea over its previous ballistic tests on May 25. "We have called on members of the international community, certainly members of the UN Security Council's permanent five, to be responsible stakeholders in the U.N. Security Council as a preeminent forum for addressing threats to international peace and security," Price said.

"Unilateral actions are never going to be the most attractive or even the most effective response, and that is especially the case because we are gratified that we have close allies in the form of Japan and the ROK," he said, referring to South Korea's formal name, the Republic of Korea.

North Korean state media have yet to comment on Sunday's launches.

China, Cambodia breaking ground on joint port project

AP ■ PHNOM PENH

Cambodia denied again on Tuesday that it will allow any Chinese military presence at a port where it and China are beginning an expansion this week that has prompted concern in the United States and elsewhere that it will be used by Beijing as a naval outpost on the Gulf of Thailand.

Chief Government spokesman Phay Siphan described the expansion of the Ream Naval Base as "cooperation between China and Cambodia" and said the Chinese ambassador to Cambodia will preside over the groundbreaking on Wednesday along with Cambodia's defense minister and other senior military officials.

He denied, however, a report in the Washington Post newspaper citing an anonymous Chinese official that the facility on the northern side of the Cambodian base would be used in part by the Chinese military.

Siphan said it would be a violation of Cambodia's Constitution to host a foreign military power, and that there had been no change in the terms of his country's agreement with China on constructing the facility.

"I think that's a strong accusation," he said in a telephone interview.

He would not comment on the extent of the Chinese involvement and said the project involved constructing a facility for repairing ships. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Tuesday said the work would be a "renovation" of the base which "aims to strengthen the Cambodian navy's capability to maintain maritime territorial integrity and combat maritime crime."

Ream faces the Gulf of Thailand, adjacent to the South China Sea, where China has aggressively asserted its claim to virtually the entire strategic waterway. The U.S. has refused to recognize China's sweeping claim and routinely conducts military maneuvers there to reinforce that they are international waters.

A Chinese base in Cambodia could become a chokepoint in the Gulf of Thailand close to the strategically important Malacca Strait.

State Department spokesman Ned Price said



Monday that allegations China intends to establish a military presence at the Ream base are "consistent with credible reporting we've seen from the PRC (People's Republic of China) that the PRC is engaged in a significant ongoing construction project at Ream Naval Base."

"As we've said, an exclusive PRC military presence at Ream could threaten Cambodia's autonomy and undermine regional security as well," he said.

China recently signed a security deal with the Solomon Islands that the U.S. And others worry could lead to a military presence there, and Price noted that Beijing has also reached out to a number of other South Pacific islands.

"We have seen the PRC attempt to put forward a series of shadowy, opaque deals that they would like to see signed in the dead of night with no input or transparency," he said. "This has been a pattern on the part of the PRC."

The U.S. Itself has more foreign military bases than any other country, including multiple facilities in the Asia-Pacific region.

At a regular Foreign Ministry briefing, Zhao accused the U.S. Of "bullying" Cambodia and ignoring its denials that Ream would be used for Chinese military purposes, while noting Washington's own network of bases around the world. "China and Cambodia are comprehensive strategic partners, and our cooperation in various fields is open, transparent, reasonable and legitimate, which benefits the two countries," he said.

UK PM Boris rallies his Cabinet after narrow win

PTI ■ LONDON

A defiant British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday led his first Cabinet meeting after a tense day of political intrigue, which ended in him securing a victory in a no-confidence ballot of his party members with a narrow margin as a major chunk of his MPs voted against him as the leader. Johnson, 57, is rallying his Cabinet ministers, who largely backed him quite publicly and even called upon the angry backbench members of Parliament leading the rebellion to line up behind his leadership for the greater good of the country. He began the meeting by thanking his top team after



an "important day," with reference to the vote on Monday night. "We are now able to draw a line under the issues that our opponents want to talk about and we are able to get on with talking about what I think the people of this country want us

to talk about which is what we are doing to help them and to take the country forward," he said, in a televised start of the meeting.

"That is what we are going

to do. We are going to focus exclusively on that. We are going to get on with the massive agenda that we were elected to deliver in 2019 (general election)," he said.

But the Opposition Labour was keen to keep up the attack on a bruised Prime Minister, with the party's Deputy Leader saying he's now on borrowed time.

IndoStar Capital Finance Limited		
Registered Office - One World Centre, Tower 2A, 20 th Floor, Jupiter Mills Compound, S B Marg, Mumbai - 400013, India		
Branch Office – Delhi		
NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13 (2) OF SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.		
I, the undersigned as the authorized officer of M/s Indostar Capital Finance LTD, hereby give the following notice to the below mentioned Borrower (S) / Co-Borrower (S) / Guarantor (S) who have grossly failed to discharge their legal liability i.e. defaulted in the repayment of the amount i.e. principal as well as the interest and other charges accrued there-on for Loan (S) Against Property (S) advanced to them by M/s Indostar Capital Finance LTD and as a consequence there-of, the Loan (S) have become Non-Performing Assets (N.P.A's) of the company. Accordingly, Notice (S) dated -20 th Apr 2022 were issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and rules there-to, on their last Known addresses through India Post on 21 st Apr 2022, however the same have been returned un-served and it is apprehended that the parties mentioned here-in are avoiding the service of the same, as such the Borrower (S) / Co-Borrower (S) / Guarantor (S) named below are hereby intimidated by way of this publication notice to clear their entire outstanding dues for the loan facilities availed and also for which securities have been created by them as detailed under:		
Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower & Address	Description of the Security	Notice Date & Amount(S) Demanded
1. (Borrower) 1) M/s Auto Zone Through its Proprietor: Mohit Puri B-95, Lajpat Nagar-1, Landmark- Lajpat Nagar Metro, New Delhi-110024	All that "ENTIRE FIRST FLOOR WITH FITTINGS AND FIXTURES INSTALLED THERE IN PROPERTY BEARING NO. B-195, SITUATED AT LAJPAT NAGAR-1, NEW DELHI, MEASURING 100 SQ. YRDS (15'x60') ALONGWITH PROPORTIONATE UNDIVIDED, INDIVISIBLE AND IMPARTIBLE SHARE OF OWNERSHIP RIGHTS IN THE LAND UNDERNEATH, TOGETHER WITH ALL RIGHTS, TITLES, INTERESTS, EASEMENTS, PRIVILEGES, ETC. BOUNDED AS EAST: SERVICE LANE, WEST: ROAD, NORTH: PROPERTY NO. B-1/105, SOUTH: PROPERTY NO. B-1/94.	4 th Apr 2022 ₹64,17,842/- (Rupees Sixty-Four Lac Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Two Only)
2. (Co-Borrower) 2) Mr. Mohit Puri S/o Late Mr. Subhash Chander Puri Proprietor of M/s Auto Zone, B-95, Lajpat Nagar-1, Landmark- Lajpat Nagar Metro, New Delhi-110024		₹64,17,842/- (Rupees Sixty-Four Lac Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Two Only)
3.) Mr. Rohit Puri S/o Late Mr. Subhash Chander Puri, B-95, Lajpat Nagar-1, Landmark- Lajpat Nagar Metro, New Delhi-110024		₹64,17,842/- (Rupees Sixty-Four Lac Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Two Only)
4. Mrs. Rita Puri W/o Late Mr. Subhash Chander Puri, B-95, Lajpat Nagar-1, Landmark- Lajpat Nagar Metro, New Delhi-110024		₹64,17,842/- (Rupees Sixty-Four Lac Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Two Only)
5. Ms. Rimpy Puri B-95, Lajpat Nagar-1, Landmark- Lajpat Nagar Metro, New Delhi-110024		₹64,17,842/- (Rupees Sixty-Four Lac Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Two Only)
Loan No- 1) LSDL03418-190003056 2) LSDL13920-210004587		
This step is being taken for substituted service of the un-served notice (S). The above mentioned Borrower (S)/ Co-Borrower (S)/ Guarantor (S) are advised to make the payments of amount demanded above along with future interest and other charges accrued there-on, within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which (without prejudice to any other right remedy available with Indostar Capital Finance LTD) further steps for taking possession of the Secured Assets/Mortgaged property will be initiated under the provisions of Sec.13 (4) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security Interest Act, 2002 and Rules there -to. The parties named above are also advised not to alienate, create third party interest in the above-mentioned properties on which Indostar Capital Finance LTD has the first Charge.		
Place – Delhi		Sd/- (Supreet Singh)
Date – 07.06.2022		Authorised Officer

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, महासमुन्द्र (छ.ग.) Phone No:- 07723-223731, E-mail:- eephe-mah-cg@nic.in			
क्र. 3197 / व.ले.सि. / का.अ. / लो.स्वा.या.खण्ड / 2022 / महासमुन्द्र दिनांक-01 / 06 / 2022			
ई-प्रोचोसेसमेंट निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना			
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली के अन्तर्गत के सहभा श्रेणी में पंजीकृत लेखद्वारा से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाईन (online) की निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।			
कार्य का नाम- महासमुन्द्र जिले के विभिन्न ग्रामों में जल जीवन मिशन अन्तर्गत रेड्रोफिटिंग नल जल प्रदाय योजनाओं के समस्त कार्य।			
निविदा क्रमांक व दिनांक	सिस्टम निविदा क्रमांक	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमति लागत (रु. लाख में)
1	2	3	4
189 / 01-06-2022	100729	ग्राम बिरकोनी रेड्रोफिटिंग नल जल प्रदाय योजना विकास खण्ड महासमुन्द्र	208.13
2. उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापि, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोचोसेसमेंट वेब पोर्टल https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।			
3. निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अतिम तिथि 22.06.2022 साय 05:30 बजे तक निविदा खुलने का दिनांक 29.06.2022			
हस्ता / कार्यपालन अभियंता लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड महासमुन्द्र (छ.ग.)			
R.O. No:- 91915/8 R.O. Date:- 07/06/2022			

Investors poorer by over ₹2L cr as markets plummet

New Delhi: Investors' wealth on Tuesday tumbled over Rs 2 lakh crore amid heavy selling pressure in domestic equities.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 567.98 points or 1.02 per cent to settle at 55,107.34. In tandem with weak equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms tumbled by Rs 2,08,291.75 crore to Rs 2,54,33,013.63 crore.

"Investors are in a wait and watch mood ahead of the RBI's credit policy announcement. The market has simply borne the brunt of unabated FII selling, which continues to desert Indian equities amid weakening rupee and strengthening dollar," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail) at Kotak Securities Ltd.

Titan was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack, falling 4.48 per cent, followed by Dr Reddy's, Larsen & Toubro, HUL, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance, TCS and ICICI Bank.

NTPC, Maruti, M&M, Bharti Airtel, Reliance



Industries and Power Grid managed to settle in the green.

"Markets inched lower and lost a per cent amid mixed cues. Initially, weakness in the global markets was weighing on the sentiment and continued selling in banking, FMCG and IT majors kept the pressure intact till the end. The focus will be on MPC's meeting outcome on Wednesday," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research at Religare Broking Ltd.

In the broader market, the

BSE midcap gauge declined 0.77 per cent and the smallcap index dipped 0.67 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, consumer durables tanked 2.71 per cent, followed by realty (1.57 per cent), capital goods (1.53 per cent), FMCG (1.42 per cent), IT (1.42 per cent), teck (1.32 per cent) and basic materials (1.17 per cent). In contrast, oil & gas, energy, telecom, utilities, auto and power ended with gains. **PTI**

Sensex extends sell-off to third day, RBI policy in focus

Mumbai: Extending its sell-off to the third straight session, equity benchmark Sensex slumped 568 points on Tuesday as investors scrambled to offload riskier assets ahead of the RBI's policy decision.

Wobbly global markets, continuous foreign fund outflows and the rupee crashing to a record low against the US dollar further queered the pitch for Dalal Street.

The 30-share BSE Sensex opened in the red and sank around 800 points during the session.

It finally finished 567.98 points or 1.02 per cent lower at 55,107.34.

The broader NSE Nifty slumped 153.20 points or 0.92 per cent to end at 16,416.35.

Titan was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack, tumbling 4.48 per cent, followed by Dr Reddy's, Larsen & Toubro, HUL, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance, TCS and Nestle India. Only five counters man-

aged to close higher -- NTPC, Maruti, M&M, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Industries, climbing up to 1.35 per cent.

The RBI will announce its monetary policy decision on Wednesday amid expectations of another hike in benchmark interest rate to contain inflation that continues to remain above the central bank's upper tolerance level.

"The volatility in the market is forcing investors to stay sidelined ahead of the RBI's policy announcement. The market has factored a hike of up to 50 bps of repo rate and CRR, but any further stricter measures to clamp liquidity due to lingering inflation will have ramifications on the market trend.

"Apart from the monetary measures, the RBI's guidance on growth and inflation forecast will determine the market trend," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. **PTI**

Sebi orders attachment of bank, demat accounts of Rose Valley, 4 others to recover over ₹1K cr

New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi has ordered attachment of bank accounts as well as share and mutual fund holdings of Rose Valley Hotels and Entertainment Ltd and its then directors to recover investors' dues totalling over ₹1,000 crore.

This recovery proceeding has been initiated against them to recover ₹1,006.70 crore collected by the company through the issuance of non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to investors, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in an attachment notice on Monday.

In its notice, Sebi asked banks, depositories and mutual funds not to allow any debit from the accounts of Rose Valley and its then directors - Gautam Kundu, Ashok Kumar Saha, Shibamoy Dutta and Abir Kundu. However, credits have been permitted.

Further, the markets watchdog has directed all banks to attach all accounts, including lockers, held by the defaulters. "There is sufficient reason to believe that the defaulters



may withdraw the amounts/dispose of the securities in the accounts held with you and realisation of amount due under the certificate would in consequence be delayed or obstructed," Sebi noted.

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

In November 2017, the regulator had ordered Rose Valley and its then directors to refund thousands of crores to the investors who had parked money in holiday membership plans of the group as it declared those schemes as illegal. Besides, they were barred from the markets for four years. According to the regulator, the various plans offered by the firm with a promise of return qualify as a Collective Investment Scheme (CIS). **PTI**

Raise current sugar export cap by 1 mn tonnes: Pawar to PM

New Delhi: NCP chief and former agriculture minister Sharad Pawar has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting him to raise the cap on sugar exports by 1 million tonnes.

Last month, the government imposed a cap of 10 million tonnes on sugar exports for the 2021-22 marketing year ending September to ensure enough supply during festival season in October and November, and check prices. Mills have already exported around 8 million tonnes of sugar so far in this marketing year.

India exported a record 7 million tonnes of the sweetener in the 2020-21 marketing year (October-September).

National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF), in a statement, expressed concern that the capping of current year's sugar export at 10 million tonnes has led to less export release orders issued to cooperatives.

"The export release orders (EROs) issued to cooperatives is barely 47 per cent which in our opinion is not in tune with performers vis-a-vis non-performers. Balance 53 per cent raw sugar remaining without EROs will cause a heavy financial loss if not permitted for exports as there is no local market for this stock which tends to deteriorate in storage," the cooperative body said. NFCSF also mentioned that these anomalies have been brought to the notice of the Prime Minister by the NCP chief. According to the cooperative body, Pawar has written to the Prime Minister bringing these anomalies his notice and requesting him to increase the current cap by 1 million tonnes. **PTI**

Collection efficiency for NBFCs, HFCs at 97-101% in April: Report

Mumbai: The collection efficiency of non-banking finance companies and housing finance companies was in the healthy range of 97-101 per cent in April, according to a report.

The collections had seen a modest decline of about 3 per cent following the third wave of infections in January 2022, but the recovery was prompt, given the lower severity of the Covid variant and limited restrictions on movements during this period, Icra Rating said in a report on Tuesday.

The analysis is based on Icra-rated retail pools securitised by non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs).

Securitisation refers to the pooling of cash-flow-producing assets (such as mortgages, loans, and bonds) and subsequent issuance of securities in the capital markets backed by these collateral pools.

"The collection efficiency for NBFCs and HFCs has been

healthy in the range of 97-101 per cent at the beginning of FY2023," the report said.

Healthy collection efficiency was witnessed in its rated securitised pools for April which is expected to have remained strong in May, it added.

With business activities close to pre-Covid levels for most sectors coupled with a heavy focus on collections by the NBFCs and HFCs, the concern on collection efficiency, at least from the non-restructured portfolio of the financiers, has reduced, the agency said.

Further, tightening of pool selection criteria by the investors for securitised pools and strengthening of prevailing credit appraisal processes and parameters by the lenders following the emergence of Covid also had a positive bearing on the overall collection efficiency, it said. The agency's Vice President and Group Head

(Structured Finance Ratings) Abhishek Dafia said the collection efficiency is expected to remain largely stable this fiscal, as long as we do not see any fresh COVID wave that results in lockdowns by the governments.

Any rise in infections for shorter periods of time would still not cause much concern, considering the approach followed by state governments during the second and third waves where the lockdowns were more localised and initiated only if necessary.

The performance of secured asset classes, especially mortgage-backed loans, has been stronger than the unsecured asset classes during the Covid period. For instance, housing loan pools witnessed a marginal decline of about 2-3 per cent in collection efficiency due to the onset of the third wave but reached 100 per cent in March 2022 itself, Dafia said. **PTI**

Gencos have started coal import related process: Power Min

New Delhi: Electricity generation companies (gencos) have started the process of importing coal for blending purposes, Union Power Minister R K Singh said on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Power had on May 18 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.

It further said if blending with domestic coal is does not start by June 15, the domestic allocation of the concerned defaulters' thermal power plants will be further reduced by 5 per cent, the ministry had said in a letter to state governments and gencos, including independent power producers (IPPs). **PTI**

Replying to a question on the issue, the minister said "most of the states have started (the process), in fact every state has started."

Without sharing any figure, he said Coal India Limited (CIL) has ramped up its production but it needs to increase it more because the demand has gone up significantly.

"...CIL increased their production but not to the extent that was required So our reserves started coming down from 24 MT (million tonne) on April 1, in the power plants, to 19 MT on April 13 to about 18.5 MT on May 31. It has again grown to now 20 MT," Singh said at a press briefing.

Power demand has also risen as a total 2.86 crore households which did not have access to power earlier have been electrified, he said. **PTI**

Gold declines ₹205, silver tumbles by ₹964

New Delhi: Gold in the national Capital on Tuesday declined by ₹205 to ₹50,733 per 10 grams, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal finished at ₹50,938 per 10 grams.

Silver also dipped ₹964 to ₹61,555 per kg from ₹62,519 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices for 24 carat gold in Delhi fell by ₹205 reflecting overnight decline in COMEX gold prices," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,844 per ounce while silver was marginally lower at USD 22.01 per ounce.

"Gold prices capped upside on stronger dollar and firm US bond yields," Patel added. **PTI**

Rupee declines 7 paise to close at 77.73 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee slipped 7 paise to close at 77.73 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday as a massive sell-off in domestic equities and stronger greenback overseas on investor sentiment.

Persistent foreign capital outflows and elevated global crude oil prices also impacted the domestic unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 77.72 and witnessed an intra-day high of 77.69 and a low of 77.73 against the US dollar.

The local unit finally settled at 77.73, down 7 paise over its previous close of 77.66.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 567.98 points or 1.02 per cent lower at 55,107.34, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 153.20 points or 0.92 per cent to 16,416.35. **PTI**

Govt plans to monetise assets worth over ₹75K cr in coal mining sector in FY-2023



New Delhi: The Government plans to monetise assets worth ₹75,220 crore in the coal mining sector in the current financial year.

The monetisation of coal blocks is likely to generate a revenue of ₹52,200 crore, fol-

lowed by ₹20,320 crore from projects on Mine Developer and Operator (MDO) model, ₹2,000 crore from discontinued mines and Rs 700 crore from washeries, the coal ministry said in its monetisation plan for the 2022-23.

The monetisation figures are tentative.

The asset monetisation target of NITI Aayog for the coal ministry for FY23 is ₹6,060 crore, the ministry said.

Against the NITI Aayog's target of ₹3,394 crore for 2021-22, the total monetisation of the coal ministry was ₹40,090 crore, it said.

Of the said ₹40,090 crore, ₹28,986 crore came from coal blocks, ₹9,592.64 crore from MDO model and ₹1,512 crore from Coal Bed Methane (CBM) projects.

"...39 coal blocks are taken for monetisation having total value of ₹28,986 crore. Monetisation value of 39 mines is based on calculation done by NITI Aayog," the ministry said.

According to the National Monetisation Pipeline, 160 coal mining assets with an estimated worth of ₹28,747 crore have been identified for monetisation during FY22-25. **PTI**

Crude oil futures gain on spot demand



New Delhi: Crude oil prices on Tuesday rose by ₹14 to ₹9,239 per barrel as participants widened positions on a firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for June delivery traded higher by ₹14 or 0.15 per cent at ₹9,239 per barrel in 12,582 lots.

Analysts said the raising of bets by participants kept crude oil prices higher in futures trade.

Globally, West Texas Intermediate crude oil was up by 0.37 per cent at USD 118.94 per barrel, while Brent crude traded 0.33 per cent higher at USD 119.90 per barrel in New York. **PTI**

Retail investors acting like shock absorbers in stock market: FM

New Delhi: Amid continuing volatility in the stock market, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said retail investors seem to act as shock absorbers even when foreign portfolio investors went away.

Speaking at an event of the corporate affairs ministry as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Sitharaman said that during the pandemic, there has been a very significant increase in retail investor numbers.

"Retail investors have come in a big way that they seem to act like shock absorbers... If FPIs went away, our markets did not really have to show their ups and downs in a very distinct way because small investors in the country have come in a big way," she said.

Sitharaman is also in charge of the corporate affairs



ministry.

In March, the Central Depository Services (India) Ltd said the number of active Demat accounts opened with it touched the six crore mark.

In recent months, the stock market has been witnessing significant volatility and foreign portfolio investors going on a selling spree amid tightening monetary policy actions to curb rising inflation and geopolitical tensions. **PTI**

Jio expands 4G services in Ladakh region near Pangong lake

Srinagar: Reliance Jio has expanded the reach of its 4G services in Ladakh region to a village close to Pangong lake, an area which has been a friction point between India and China in recent years.

Officials said Reliance Jio launched its 4G voice and data services at Spangmik village near Pangong lake in Ladakh.

The telecom operator became the first network to provide 4G mobile connectivity in and around the Pangong area, a popular tourist destination, officials said.

Lok Sabha member from Ladakh Jamyang Tsering Namgyal inaugurated the Jio mobile tower at Spangmik village.

Namgyal asserted that with the launch of the mobile network in the area, the long pending demand of the locals has been fulfilled. **PTI**

Govt notifies Green Open Access Rules '22

New Delhi: The Government on Tuesday said it has notified the Green Open Access Rules 2022 to further accelerate India's renewable energy programmes.

These rules are notified for promoting generation, purchase and consumption of green energy including through waste-to-energy plants. It enables a simplified procedure for the open access to green power, the power ministry said in a statement.

"In order to further accelerate our ambitious renewable energy programmes, with the end goal of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and green energy for all, Green Open Access Rules 2022 have been notified on June 6, 2022,"

the ministry said.

Consumers can now demand green power from discoms (power distribution companies), it said, adding, "Every consumer becomes stakeholder to contribute in achieving India's commitment of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel by 2030."

As per the rules, the green open access is allowed to any consumer and the limit of open access transaction has been reduced from 1 MW (megawatt) to 100 kW for green energy in order to enable small consumers also to purchase renewable power through open access. There will be transparency in the approval process of the open access applications. **PTI**

Lanka seeks \$55 mn loan from India for buying fertiliser

Colombo: Sri Lanka has sought a USD 55 million loan from India for the procurement of urea amidst its worst economic crisis threatening a severe food shortage, an official said on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe had recently warned of a food crisis in the island nation due to the ongoing economic crisis. The Cabinet has approved a proposal by the Prime Minister to sign an agreement with India to purchase urea for agriculture, an official said.

The government said that the Indian government has agreed to provide the USD 55 million loan through the Export-Import Bank of India.

The loan is being obtained for the procurement of urea for the 2022/23 'Maha' harvest season.

Wickremesinghe has said that within five to six months, the current agriculture shortages could be salvaged if swift action was taken to address the shortages faced by the farmers.

The country is facing a near 50 per cent crop loss due to a decision of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa last year to ban chemical fertiliser imports.

The decision led to widespread farmer protests which the government ignored, saying it was the policy to turn to green agriculture with organic fertiliser. **PTI**

HC reserves order on Tata Motors plea

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Tuesday closed all arguments and reserved its order on a plea filed by the Tata Motors challenging its disqualification from the tender process for 1,400 electric buses for the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) Undertaking.

The Tata Motors participated in the tender process, but its bid was disqualified by the BEST following a technical suitability evaluation, the parties had earlier told the high court. The auto major had approached the HC last month, challenging the BEST's decision to disqualify it from the tender process for operating 1,400 electric buses for the city. **PTI**

Traders' body protests licence for tobacco sale in Gzb

Ghaziabad: Federation of Retailers Association of India (FRAI), the representative body of 80 lakh retailers, including panwallas, selling tobacco products has raised strong objections to the order issued by Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam which mandates separate licence for selling tobacco products like pan, bidi, cigarette, etc. FRAI said such measures will cause harassment to poor and mostly uneducated micro-retailers at the hands of enforcement officials and will bring back the license raj.

Moreover, it will lead to a sharp increase in their cost of doing business at a time when retailers are in a desperate situation due to a massive loss in business on account of Covid.

CIABC urges Govt to set up export promotion council for alcoholic beverages

New Delhi: Liquor industry body CIABC has requested the government to set up an export promotion council for alcoholic beverages under the aegis of the commerce ministry to promote the outbound shipments of the sector.

The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) has sent a communication to the government in this regard.

CIABC Director-General Vinod Giri said the sector needs support for improving the exports, especially in the context of free trade agreements, where alcoholic beverages are part of the wish lists of several countries like the UK

and the European Union.

Currently, India exports around 7 million cases only and bringing the sector under these agreements will open up opportunities for India also.

"A concerted effort and mechanism are required to promote exports of alcohol from India. Therefore, I think it is time for the government to consider setting up a body like the Alcoholic Beverages Export Promotion Council," Giri said.

As per estimates, the global alcoholic beverage trade stood at over USD 200 billion and India's share is less than half a per cent. The major global players in the sector include France, the UK, US and Mexico. **PTI**

INDIA READY TO CRUSH CAMBODIANS



PTI ■ KOLKATA

Slipper Sunil Chhetri will get a chance to bolster his tally of 80 international goals as the Indian team gears up to steamroll 171st ranked Cambodia on Wednesday in its bid to make a fifth appearance in AFC Cup tournament proper.

With the next Asian Cup slated in late 2023 or early 2024 after the pull-out of China, Chhetri, who will complete 17 years in international football, might see this tournament as the 'final frontier' in his illustrious career.

"I want to qualify. If I'm not there, my country will be there. So either I'll be having a beer and watching Udanta sprint, or you having a beer and I'll be sprinting there. But we want to be there," Chhetri made his

intention clear ahead of his 126th international appearance.

This is a tournament which gives India the best chance to qualify for the Continental trophy without much fuss but if there is a slip-up against lowly-ranked nation, Chhetri or coach Igor Stimac will have little room for justification.

The Blue Tigers under Stimac did not have a perfect build-up to the continental showpiece, having lost all their three International friendlies arranged in the lead-up to the qualifiers.

In between they endured a shameful 1-2 defeat against Indian Super League side ATK Mohun Bagan, won 2-1 against I-League All Stars and were held to a 1-1 draw against Bengal, the Santosh Trophy runners-up of the season.

It's more than seven months

since they won a match at International level -- a 3-0 win against Nepal in the SAFF Championship final on October 16, 2021.

The recent results have proved to be a setback for the Stimac-coached side, which put up some gritty shows in the World Cup Qualifiers against Asian heavyweights Qatar (goalless draw) and Oman (1-2 loss after leading till 81st minute).

Up against an 'unknown entity' in Cambodia, Chhetri conceded that half the battle will be lost if they don't do well against the minnows. "We are playing them first. If we don't do well against Cambodia, you have lost half your battle," he pointed out.

"As of now, we are just thinking about Cambodia, watching as many videos as possible of them. Once we

are done (with them), then we think about Afghanistan. No doubt, Afghanistan are also strong."

Compared to Indian build-up, the 'Angkor Warriors', who have qualified for the Asian Cup only once 50 years back in 1972, come here with a 2-1 win over Timor-Leste in a home friendly.

With their Japanese tactician duo of Ryu Hirose and Keisuke Honda at their helm of coaching affairs, the Cambodians will look to surprise the home-backed Indians.

From an Indian point of view, the biggest setback for Stimac in the recent past has been the injury to striker Rahim Ali, who started forming a strong attacking force with the livewire Chhetri.

Just when he started to fill in the vacuum created by Jeje Lalpekhlua, Ali is forced out with a muscle injury

I don't look at rankings: Stimac

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Indian team head coach Igor Stimac refused to read much into their higher ranking on the eve of the Asian Cup Qualifiers, saying it doesn't matter in present day football.

Eyeing a second straight Asian Cup qualification and fifth overall, 106th ranked India start as favourites and rank way higher than their three group D opponents in Cambodia, Afghanistan and Hong Kong.

"I respect every opposition. I don't look at rankings. Cambodia didn't come here to participate, they came with the same desire to win the game," Stimac said on the eve of their group opener.

"When India were down 180 in rankings, we went to win the games and not lose them. I would also have more respect for each opponent. I'd never say we can win against anyone easily. That would be disrespectful. We need to be ready, hungry and fully motivated for these games."

"There's no easy game anymore. That was some 50 years ago. From 100 positions until 180-200, there is a very small margin and difference in quality," he added.

The Croat, whose contract has been extended till the end of the Asian Cup Qualifiers, faces a big test as he outlined his strategy to press for an early goal.

"I'd say that we have prepared for any case scenario, but we intend to press for the first minute of the game and put Cambodia under high pressure."

"We need to prove that we are favourites and we need to control as well as be ready to handle the counter-attacks. I'd say we are ready for that."

India's build-up to the



Qualifiers has been far from impressive as they have lost three of their four practice matches, while the one against Zambia was cancelled.

Pointing out that he missed star Indian forward Sunil Chhetri in two matches, Stimac said: "I'm never worried about the friendly games, less worried than you. It's a learning process. It's more important how we do in these official games."

"Once we started together, we were very clear on what we needed to do in the future. We were clear that we needed to make sure that India participates in every edition of the AFC Asian Cup. These are the steps in football in our progress to make the World Cup."

JHINGAN UPBEAT

All eyes would be on defender Sandesh Jhingan, who made a

comeback during their match against Jordan, after a long injury layoff.

"You have seen me play in the AFC Cup. Nothing changes much," said Jhingan.

Seen as a future India captain, the 28-year-old centre back however does not still consider his place "permanent" in the team.

"No one has a permanent place in the XI. The quality of competition is so high these days. You need to work very hard every day in training to earn the right to play."

"To play in the Asian Cup is massive and to qualify it on home soil at Kolkata is amazing. The experience in Kolkata is massive. Playing in front of a packed stadium is the stuff of dreams for us. The more the fans come, the better for us," he said.

Croatia hold France in Nations League



AP ■ SPLIT

Andrej Kramaric scored a late penalty as Croatia salvaged a 1-1 draw at home to world champions France on Monday that left both teams still chasing a first win in the Nations League.

Juventus midfielder Adrien

Rabiot fired France ahead on 52 minutes in Split as coach Didier Deschamps selected an inexperienced side without star forwards Kylian Mbappe and Karim Benzema.

Croatia equalised seven minutes from time when Andrej Kramaric won and converted a penalty. France and

Croatia have just one point apiece in League A, Group 1. France were beaten 2-1 by Denmark in their opening game at home last week, while Croatia crashed to a 3-0 loss to Austria. On a night Luka Modric earned his 150th cap for Croatia, Deschamps handed a number of fringe players the chance to make an impression before the World Cup starts in Qatar in November.

But it was experienced defender Presnel Kimpembe who raced back to block as Ante Budimir hesitated to shoot with team-mate Lovro Majer also in position for a tap-in.

Rabiot broke the deadlock when he was played in by a superb ball from Wissam Ben Yedder, sweeping clinically inside the near post for only his second international goal.

Substitute Antoine Griezmann saw a shot repelled by Livakovic shortly before Croatia were awarded a penalty following a VAR review after it was initially overruled for off-side.

Maignan saved at the feet of Luka Sucic, but Jonathan Clauss caught Kramaric from behind, the Hoffenheim striker calmly rolling home from the spot after a lengthy wait to review the incident.

Nikola Vlasic threatened to snatch a first win for Croatia over France in nine attempts, but Maignan got down sharply to turn behind.



Paddler Diya Chitale included in CWG squad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young Indian table tennis player Diya Chitale, who had approached the Delhi High Court over her exclusion from the women's CWG squad, was on Tuesday included in the side for the July-August event at the expense of Archana Kamath.

However, Manush Shah, who had also filed a writ petition in the Delhi High Court against his non-selection, remains a reserve player with no changes made in the men's squad, which will be led by Sharath Kamal.

The Committee of Administrators (CoA) running the suspended Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) had last week announced a provisional women's team comprising Manika Batra, Kamath, Sreeja Akula and Reeth Rishya in the team with 19-year-old Chitale as the standby.

The team was subject to clearance from Sports Authority of India (SAI) but on Monday the Sports Ministry threw

the ball back in CoA's court, saying squad selection was the responsibility of the national sports federation.

The selection committee, chaired by CoA member S D Mudgil, met again on Monday after SAI's response and finalised the team.

Kamath, who was supposed to play doubles alongside Manika, has been excluded from the squad all together and Swastika Ghosh has been put on standby. "There is only one change. Diya comes in as the fourth player in place of Archana. Archana did not meet the criteria but we thought she is also a good medal prospect (as she is world number 4 alongside Manika). But we were in a dilemma and that is why we went to the SAI and sought its guidance."

"The selectors in the end took the call to include Diya who has also done well domestically and as well as in international events. She would be playing the doubles alongside Manika," Mudgil said.

The team selection factors in per-

formances in domestic (50%) and international tournaments (30%) while the remaining 20% is left for the selectors' discretion.

However, the CoA has decided to change the ratio to 40-40-20 from the next season.

The CoA also finalised former players S Raman and Anindita Chakraborty as the coaches for the men's and women's teams for the Games in Birmingham.

Raman happens to be the personal coach of leading India player G Sathiyan and also runs a private academy but the CoA said it will be taking an undertaking from him to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

SQUADS

Men: Sharath Kamal, G Sathiyan, Harmet Desai, Sanil Shetty, Manush Shah (standby).

Women: Manika Batra, Diya Chitale, Reeth Rishya, Sreeja Akula, Swastika Ghosh (standby).

Olympic-style torch to mark beginning of 44th Chess Olympiad

PTI ■ CHENNAI

For the first time ever an Olympic-style torch relay will be conducted ahead of the 44th Chess Olympiad, slated to be held in July-August near here.

The torch relay will be a regular feature at the prestigious event from now onwards. It will always begin from India — the birth place of chess — and will travel across all continents before reaching the host city, the world governing body of the sport FIDE announced.

The torch relay will, however, be run only in India this time due to paucity of time. The legendary Viswanathan Anand will be one of the participants.

"This initiative will help in popularising the game of chess and galvanising the support of fans across the world," FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich said. "Starting from the next edition of the Olympiad, in line with the traditions of the Olympic Games, the torch will travel across all continents visiting FIDE member territories, ultimately culminating in the host country and city ahead of the opening of the Chess



Olympiad," he added.

The dates and routes of the torch relay will be announced soon after consultation with the government, FIDE and other stakeholders, Olympiad event director Bharat Singh Chauhan said in a press release.

India is hosting the Chess Olympiad for the first-time ever.

The 44th Chess Olympiad will be held in Mahabalipuram near here from July 28 to August 10.

Anand, Giri share honours in round six

PTI ■ STAVANGER

Indian maestro Viswanathan Anand drew his sixth round contest against Anish Giri of the Netherlands in the Classical section of the Norway Chess tournament.

The classical match ended in a draw after which the Armageddon ended in stalemate early on Tuesday to leave Anand on 11.5 points and in second place. World champion Magnus

Carlsen roared to the top spot with a victory over Azerbaijan's Shakhriyar Mamedyarov to take his tally to 12.5 points after six rounds.

The classical match between Anand, playing black, and Giri saw the two players shaking hands for a draw after 35 moves in an English Variation game. In the ensuing Armageddon (sudden death tie-break), the duo battled for 45 moves before it ended in a draw.

Sports Minister Thakur meets & felicitates Khelo India Kabaddi Champions



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur met and felicitated the young Kabaddi champions of SBI Khelo India Youth Games 2021 on Tuesday.

The sports minister gave a surprise visit to Panchkula's Tau Devi Lal Stadium, where he not only enjoyed watching the girls' final Kabaddi match between Hararyana and Maharashtra but also gave away medals to the winning Kabaddi teams.

After meeting and facilitating the young Kabaddi players, the Union Sports Minister also saw the finals of the KIYG

women's volleyball match and met and motivated the young women volleyball players who participated in the finals.

Speaking at the event Thakur said, "Haryana as a venue is very apt since the culture of sports is so strong here. We have a huge number of talented athletes who are performing very well and all they need is the right opportunities which we are providing constantly."

Thakur was accompanied by the Sports Minister of Haryana Sandeep Singh and veteran Long Jumper and Athletics World Cships Bronze medalist Anju Bobby George.

Lewandowski looking for 'more emotions'

AP ■ WARSAW

Bayern Munich star Robert Lewandowski revealed on Tuesday that he wants to call time on his career with the Bundesliga giants because of his desire for "more emotions in life".

The Polish forward announced last week that his time with Bayern "had come to an end" without specifying his future plans.

Asked Monday during a podcast on Polish website *Onet.pl* if his departure was dictated by a desire for more money or emotions in life, the 33-year-old answered without hesitation it was for him "emotions in life".

"Firstly, something went out inside me and it's something you can't recover, can't make up for," he explained.

"With what I acquired thanks to Bayern —and (reciprocally) Bayern thanks to me — it would be better to find a solution acceptable to both parties," he said.

After eight seasons together, "loyalty and respect are more important than business, I think," continued the striker, insisting he would leave behind 'friends' rather than 'colleagues'.

"Even close friends. With some, we spent eight years together seeing each other almost every day," he said.

PARKAR HITS DOUBLE TON ON DEBUT

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Debutant Suved Parkar pum-melled Uttarakhand bowlers into submission, hitting a maiden double century to propel Mumbai to a mammoth 647 for eight declared on the second day of their Ranji Trophy quarter-final here on Tuesday.

Parkar's stroke-filed 252 and Sarfaraz Khan's aggressive 153 have put the 41-time Ranji Trophy winners in the driver's seat.

In reply, Uttarakhand were 39 for two at stumps, losing skipper Jay Bista (0) and Mayank Mishra (4). Kamal Singh (27 not out) and Kunal Chandela (8 not out) were holding the fort at the close of play.

Uttarakhand have a mountain to climb as they trail Mumbai by 608 runs.

Parkar, thus, became the 12th Indian to score a double ton on his Ranji Trophy debut. He reached the mark with a tap to long-off off Swapnil Singh.

His 252 is now the fourth highest score by an Indian on debut and fifth in first-class cricket. He also followed the footsteps of Mumbai coach Amol Mazumdar, who had scored 260 on his Ranji debut.

Parkar, who started from his overnight score of 104 not out, continued from where he left and struck 21 boundaries and four maximums during his mammoth 447-ball innings. He didn't spare a single Uttarakhand bowler during his knock.

Sarfaraz, who resumed at the overnight score of 69, notched up his seventh first-class hundred.

Sarfaraz and Parkar, who had impressed with his foot-work, shared a staggering 267-run stand for the fourth wicket.

An audacious sweep off Mayank Mishra (1/120) cost Sarfaraz his wicket.

Sarfaraz hammered 14 boundaries and four sixes in his aggressive knock to continue his dream run in first-class cricket.

Aditya Tare (1) didn't trouble the scorers as he nicked one to wicketkeeper Shivam Khurana off left-arm pacer Agrim Tiwari's bowling.

Parkar then found an able ally in all-rounder Shams Mulani, who played his role to perfection by hitting a crucial 59.

Mulani and Parkar added 106-runs for the sixth wicket and it was during their partnership that Mumbai crossed the 500-run mark.

Mulani hit six boundaries and three sixes before being castled by Kamal Singh.

Tanush Kotian (28) and Tushar Deshpande (20 not out) also supported Parkar, who was eventually run out, courtesy a direct hit by Kunal Chandela, after which Mumbai skipper Prithvi Shaw declared the innings.

Medium-pacer Deepak Dhopola (3/89) was the pick of the bowlers for Uttarakhand.



Gharami's 186, Anustup's 117 & Tiwary's 54 power Bengal to massive total

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Sudip Gharami hogged the Slimelight for the second day running with a 186-run knock as Bengal reached 577 for five in their quarterfinal against Jharkhand here.

The seasoned Anustup Majumdar helped himself to a century (117) before Manoj Tiwary, a sitting minister for youth affairs and sports in West Bengal, walked back unbeaten on 54 at the end of second day's play at the Just Cricket Academy Ground.

Looking to accelerate the scoring rate, the 23-year-old Gharami's stay in the middle ended with a contentious decision after which Bengal looked to nudge the ball around for ones and twos, rather than going for quick runs and declare their first innings.

There were no signs of urgency from Bengal and it remains to be seen how long do they bat on the third day.

Gharami, who was 106 overnight, got out after scoring 186 off 380 balls, hitting 21 fours and a six during his long stay at the crease. The Gharami-Majumdar stand was worth 243 runs.

Opener Abhishek Raman,

who retired hurt on 41 on the opening day, returned to make 61, while Abishek Porel, who was part of India's Under-19 World Cup-winning squad earlier this year, chipped in with a 111-ball 68, making full use of the opportunity he got after Wriddhiman Saha's departure following differences with the Cricket Association of Bengal.

Anustup made his runs in 194 balls and found the fence 15 times, while former captain Tiwary, who has so far appeared in three Ranji finals and still dreams about winning the elusive title in the country's premier domestic tournament, hit three fours and a six in his 146-ball undefeated knock.

MP IN DRIVER'S SEAT

Alur: After a splendid show from their bowlers on the opening day, it was the turn of Madhya Pradesh batters, led by Shubham Sharma (102 not out), to respond strongly against Punjab on Day 2 of their quarterfinal game here.

Responding to Punjab's 219, MP rode on a strong start to their innings to reach 238 for 2 at stumps, a 19-run lead with eight first innings wickets in hand.



Umran might have to wait for his debut, hints Dravid

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India head coach Rahul Dravid has always maintained that he likes continuity and gave clear hints on Tuesday that pace sensation Umran Malik might have to wait for his turn.

Dravid was speaking ahead of the first of five-match T20I series between India and South Africa here on Thursday.

"We just have to see how much playing time we will be able to give him. We have a big squad, not possible to have everyone in the playing XI," Dravid was categorical when asked about the 'Jammu Express'.

"I am someone who likes consistency and give people time to settle in. Arshadeep has also done well, who is also an exciting player, who bowls well.

"We have a little bit of experienced guys in Harshal, Bui and Avesh, who played in the last series. It is exciting to have the young guys as well, it helps us broaden our pool and see what they can do," he said.

The coach, though, had words of praise for Umran and wants to see him more in Test cricket.

"He is exciting, certainly bowls quick and has pace. Another exciting thing in the IPL for me was to see the Indian players bowl really fast. The more he plays the better he gets. Very happy to have

him in the mix," he said.

"As a coach I would love to see it translate to the longer format of the game," the purist in him said.

AUGURS WELL FOR INDIA

Success of Indian players as captains in a tournament like IPL will eventually benefit the national team since leadership role helps in accelerating the growth of cricketers, head coach Rahul Dravid said.

Hardik Pandya led Gujarat Titans to title in its maiden season while KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, and Sanju Samson too did a commendable job while leading their respective franchises in the IPL. Rahul led new entrants LSG to the playoffs in their maiden season and Samson impressed with his captaincy as he took Rajasthan Royals to a runners-up finish this season.

"It is great that we have a lot of Indian captains doing well. Hardik was one of them. Brilliant. KL did a good job at LSG and Sanju in RR. Shreyas in KKR," Dravid said at a press conference.

"It is really great to see the young batters leading the team. It helps people grow and develop as players, having to lead teams to make the decisions. It helps you grow as a person and as a player.

"It is great from our perspective that the younger Indian players are leading well in the IPL," he added.

Understand my game lot better, says Miller

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The intensity is still the same as it was more than a decade ago, when he made his debut, but what has changed for David Miller is his ability to "understand the game a lot better" and handle pressure with consummate ease.

Miller is enjoying every bit of his new-found star status after playing a pivotal role in Gujarat Titans' IPL triumph with 481 runs. More importantly, he won at least four games in a finisher's role.

"Scoring the amount of runs I did, closing out couple of games is something I looked forward to before the start of IPL. Batting in the middle order, you do want to finish off games. So it was nice to tick that box," Miller said on the eve of South Africa's five-match T20I series against India.

In the past, the lack of consistency has been Miller's bane despite his voluminous talent, but he feels that he hasn't tweaked his game much. But it's the understanding that has made the difference.

"I wouldn't say I have done anything different. Being around long time now, one grows and matures in role I play for so many years, I understand my game a lot better," he said.

"I still get nervous and go through negative thoughts but I can deal with that pressure a lot better. Understanding my game better in what I need to do has helped," he explained.

With five matches left to complete 100 games for South Africa in the shortest format, Miller feels that he brings in calmness in the change-room. "For me, I see myself trying to create that calmness in the change room, trying to just clarify a few things with younger guys to what they need to do better.

"Really enjoyable to be giving advice but along with



that you are always developing as player and also learning from youngsters about their mindset, how they approach the game," Miller added.

His IPL performance won't put any extra pressure on him.

"Not any extra pressure or weight on my shoulders. Every international game that I have played whether as senior or junior, there has always been a sense of pressure. So I don't think it changes. Just that with experience I deal with it a lot of better."

The short vacation to Maldives also helped a lot.

"It's been pretty hard with so many games of IPL but I have been working quite hard on physical side of things. I feel fresh and good to go after a two-day break in Maldives. Pretty good for mind," he concluded.

Tickets for first T20 almost sold out

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The first T20 between India and South on Thursday is set to be a sell out with 94% tickets already sold at the 35,000 capacity Arun Jaitley Stadium.

An international game is being held in Delhi for the first time since November 2019.

"94 percent of the tickets have been sold. There are about 400-500 tickets left," DDCA joint secretary Rajan Manchanda said.

Around 27,000 tickets were put up for sale.

In its effort to improve fan experience, senior citizens will have the option to use golf cart to enter the stadium," he said.

Though the COVID-19 situation is under control, the DDCA has requested spectators to wear masks at all times except eating and drinking.

Grandhomme out of England Tests



AP ■ LONDON

New Zealand allrounder Colin De Grandhomme has been ruled out of the remainder of the Test series against England because of a tear in his right heel.

De Grandhomme was injured during the first test defeat at Lord's and faces a 10-12-week layoff.

Michael Bracewell was

with the squad in London as cover for the injured Henry Nicholls and will remain with the tour party.

"It's a real shame for Colin to suffer this injury so early in the series," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said. "He's a massive part of our Test side and we'll certainly miss him.

"It's great to be able to call on someone like Michael who ... Is match-ready."

De Grandhomme top-scored with 42 in New Zealand's first innings at Lord's but otherwise had a match to forget in the five-wicket defeat. He was run out off his first ball in the second innings and bowled England captain Ben Stokes, who went on to make a crucial half-century, off a no-ball before leaving the field injured. The second Test at Trent Bridge begins on Friday.

Mithali maintains 7th spot in WODI rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI



Talismanic Indian batter Mithali Raj continued to hold on to her seventh position while compatriot Smriti Mandhana also remained in the ninth position in the latest ICC Women's ODI batting rankings, released on Tuesday.

Australia's Alyssa Healy continued to lead the rankings chart followed by England's Natalie Sciver. Both the batters had a superb show at the Women's World Cup held in New Zealand earlier this year.

Veteran Indian

pacer Jhulan Goswami also continued to be on the fifth position in the bowling list.

Veteran Pakistan opener Sidra Ameen has reaped rewards for her memorable series against Sri Lanka, that saw her make a big leap in the latest batting chart.

Sidra scored 218 runs in the series at an impressive average of 72.66, including a match-winning 123 in the second ODI game against the Lankans. The 30-year-old has now moved up 19 places to a career-best 35th position.

Sri Lankan skipper Chamari Athapaththu also made a notable progress, climbing six spots to be placed at the 23rd position. The 32-year-old had scored 101 in the second ODI against Pakistan and totalled 142 in the three-match series. The bowling rankings was led by Englishwomen Sophie Ecclestone, while South African Shabnim Ismail, and Australia's Jess Jonassen took the second and third positions respectively.

Pak host WI for ODI series in intense heat

AP ■ MULTAN

Intensive heat will test the fitness of players when Pakistan hosts the West Indies in the three-match limited-overs international series starting here on Wednesday.

The Pakistan Cricket Board had to relocate the series to Multan from Rawalpindi last week because of the uncertain political situation in the country. The opposition, led by former Prime Minister Imran Khan, is planning rallies in the federal capital Islamabad, which is adjacent to Rawalpindi.

The temperature is expected to top 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) this week in Multan, and organisers have pushed back the starting time for games to 4:00 PM Local time to give some respite from the intense heat.

The Pakistan Cricket Board also planned to provide players with ice collars and vests during stoppages in play and extra water breaks to keep them hydrated.

"We'll try to make the guys understand what they have to do personally to hydrate themselves properly both



before, during and after the games," West Indies head coach Phil Simmons said on Tuesday.

"The heat is going to be extreme, (but) Pakistan are playing in the heat, too, so it's going to be an even contest

when we start the day. How we deal with it before, during and after is going to help us a lot."

West Indies are coming off a 3-0 series win over Netherlands last week at Amstelveen, where their top-order

batters scored prolifically. Shamrah Brooks, Shai Hope and Kyle Mayers scored centuries while Brandon King also made 91* in the second game.

The two spinners — Akeal Hosein and Hayden Walsh Junior — took the bulk of the wickets, combining for 12 between them.

West Indies will be strengthened with the return of Rovman Powell and Romario Shepherd, who both missed the series against the Netherlands because of visa issues.

"That series was good in a way because it gave guys a chance to settle in as a team," Simmons said.

"It's a young team. It's a case where we needed to play properly. We needed to keep improving and we did that during the series, so it was a good preparation."

The West Indies' ODI series in Pakistan was postponed last year after a COVID-19 outbreak in the squad during the preceding T20I series.

The Pakistan squad has spent a week in Lahore, where the weather is similar to Multan. Captain Babar Azam hoped the players were well prepared. "Definitely it is hot, but we are hav-

ing a conditioning camp and acclimatising to the weather," Babar said.

"As a professional, you have to handle these situations. We do go out to other countries to play, and even during our time in the UAE, we used to face similar temperatures. I think it won't be a problem."

Pakistan has a strong top-order batting line-up with the likes of left-handers Imam-ul-Haq and Fakhar Zaman opening the innings. Babar, in the middle-order, is in the form of his life and has scored prolifically in all the three formats of the game.

Vice-captain Shadab Khan and allrounder Mohammad Nawaz are returning to the ODI team from injuries. Pakistan also has a formidable fast bowling attack with Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf and Hasan Ali all performing well in the English county championship.

"We already have openers who are doing well and they are the priority and you always make your best ones your priority," Babar said.

"These games are crucial for us and to build a team, you have to give players consistent chances."