

## OPINION 6

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TO SHOWING MAMATA

## WORLD 8

IRAN REMOVING 27 SURVEILLANCE  
CAMERAS: UN NUCLEAR WATCHDOG

## MONEY 10

RBI: REGULATORY DESIGN SOON  
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NEW DELHI, FRIDAY JUNE 10, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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# Prez poll on July 18, BJP has clear edge

Despite all odds, Kharge reaches out to Opp leaders for joint candidate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday announced July 18 as the date of the 16th Presidential Election in which 4,809 electors, including MPs and MLAs, will vote to elect incumbent Ram Nath Kovind's successor. The tenure of President Ram Nath Kovind will come to an end on July 24, 2022, and an election for the next President has to be held before that day. The recent Assembly elections, in which the BJP put up a spectacular performance in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa, have given a clear edge to the BJP in the Presidential election.

Meanwhile, despite numbers not in its favour, Opposition parties are likely to meet next week to discuss a probable candidate for the Presidential election.

Sources said Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge has



reached out to leaders of some Opposition parties and sought their views for a joint Opposition candidate who can be fielded. Some Opposition parties are of the view that they should not give a walkover to the ruling dispensation but put up a fight. CPI Rajya Sabha

member Binoy Viswam said the Congress had reached out to him to discuss a "common candidate".

"Mallikarjun Kharge called and consulted about a common candidate for the Presidential election. I told him that the CPI would support a common can-

didate with secular credentials and progressive outlook," he said. Announcing the Presidential Election date, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the notification for the election will be issued on June 15, the last date for nomination is scheduled for June 29, while the polls to be held on July 18.

The counting of the votes, if needed, shall be done on July 21. Kumar said the EC is fully geared to conduct the election in a free and fair way, while all Covid-related safety protocol would be followed during the voting and counting of votes. He further said no political party will be allowed to issue any kind of whip.

The President is elected by the members of the Electoral College consisting of elected members of both Houses of Parliament, and elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of all States, including National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

However, the nominated members of either Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha or Legislative Assemblies of the States are not eligible to be included in the Electoral College and therefore, are not entitled to participate in the election process.

Continued on Page 2

## Iran pulls out readout of Doval's 'assurance'

Remarks on prophet didn't crop up in bilateral talks between Jaishankar and Iranian counterpart: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Iran claimed National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval assured its Foreign Minister of dealing firmly with offenders who made remarks against Prophet Mohammad, Iran pulled out the related "readout" while India said the issue didn't crop up in talks between Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar and his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

The "readout" issued late on Wednesday said the issue of remarks was raised during the meeting between Doval and the Iranian Foreign Minister.

The statement said the NSA reaffirmed the Indian Government's respect for Prophet Mohammad, saying offenders will be "dealt with, at the Government and related levels, in such a way that others will learn a lesson".

Responding to the queries about the NSAs reported assurance, MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said he didn't like to react to what transpired between two senior dignitaries. "My understanding is that what



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian speaks during an interactive session on promoting investment and trade opportunities between Iran and India, in Mumbai on Thursday

PTI

you are referring to in a readout has been pulled down (by Iran)," he said.

When asked if the issue of the controversy from the offensive comments against the Prophet came up during the meeting between Jaishankar and the Iranian Foreign Minister, Bagchi said, "My understanding is that this issue was not raised during that conversation."

On Wednesday, Iran praised India for their respect for the Prophet and historical co-existence between various faiths. The Iranian Minister tweeted late on Wednesday, "Pleased to meet PM Modi, FM

Jaishankar and other Indian officials to advance our bilateral strategic dialogue. Tehran and New Delhi agree on the need to respect divine religions and Islamic sanctities and to avoid divisive statements. Determined to bring relations to new heights."

"Abdollahian hailed the Indian people and Government for their respect for the divine faiths, especially the Prophet Mohammad and also for the religious tolerance, historical coexistence, and friendship among followers of various religions in the country," the Iranian statement said.

Continued on Page 2

## Court rejects jailed NCP MLAs' plea to let them vote in RS polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid desperate efforts by the Opposition BJP to woo independent MLAs to win the third Rajya Sabha seat in Maharashtra, a special court rejected pleas by two incarcerated former ministers and NCP MLAs Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik seeking temporary bail for a day to cast their votes in the RS polls.

This is seen as a setback for the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — comprising Shiv Sena, NCP, and Congress — which is trying to safeguard its MLAs against an alleged poaching bid by the BJP.

Polling for 16 Rajya Sabha seats in four States will be held on Friday amid allegations of attempts at horse-trading by rival parties which have corralled their MLAs in hotels and scenic resorts, prompting the Election Commission to appoint special observers and order videography of the poll.

Prominent among those whose electoral fate will be decided are Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal, Congress candidates Randeep Surjewala, Jairam Ramesh and Mukul Wasnik, and Shiv Sena's ubiquitous face Sanjay Raut. All these leaders are expected to win without a hiccup.

The BJP has 106 MLAs and it enjoys the support of five Independent MLAs and two MLAs from smaller parties.

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

### T20: PROTEAS DENY INDIA THEIR WORLD RECORD

New Delhi: The entire build-up to this India vs South Africa series was made around the 12-match winning streak that the men in blue had achieved before this contest. The new-look Indian outfit without the likes of Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, and Rohit Sharma came out all guns blazing and posted a massive total of 211 at the end of the 20th over at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. But South Africa handed India a heavy defeat by 7 wickets.

### INDIA TO HOST ASEAN FOREIGN MINS' SUMMIT

New Delhi: India will host the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN nations from June 16 to 17.

### DELHI POLICE FILES FIR AGAINST OWAIISI, NUPUR

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has registered an FIR against 31 people, including AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand.

P3

## On US Gen's remarks, India says committed to defending border

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

A day after a visiting US General termed as "alarming" the Chinese infrastructure build-up in Ladakh, India on Thursday said the Government is committed to safeguarding territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. Beijing called the US officer's remarks as a "despicable act" and criticised the attempts to "add fuel to fire".

The Chinese response came after US Army's Pacific Commanding General Charles Flynn termed the Chinese activities in the Ladakh region as "eye opener".

On a three-day visit to India, Flynn also said on Wednesday the "destabilising



and corrosive" behaviour of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the Indo-Pacific region is simply not helpful.

Reacting to the US General's remarks, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India carefully monitors developments along its border areas, including the construction of infrastructure by the Chinese side in the eastern Ladakh.

Continued on Page 2

## Curfew in J&K's Doda after tension over provocative speeches prevails

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The district administration in Doda Thursday evening imposed curfew in the Bharderwah town following tension in the area over provocative speeches.

Deputy Commissioner Doda Vikas Sharma confirmed that "curfew has been imposed in the Bharderwah town following tension in the area".

The area witnessed tension after videos of provocative speeches were circulated on different social media platforms.

Earlier in the day police had registered FIR No. 92/2022 U/S 295-A, 506 IPC at Police Station Bharderwah against the accused for making provocative statements.

Anyone who takes law into their hands will not be spared" police said in a tweet.

Continued on Page 2

# Soaring Covid cases bring Maha, Kerala, Delhi, K'taka under lens

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As India recorded 7,240 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours and the active cases surged to 32,498, the Covid situation in Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, and Karnataka is back on the radar.

The Centre has asked these States to employ a five-fold strategy: Test-track-treat-vaccine and adherence to Covid-19 Appropriate Behaviour (CAB).

The single-day rise in new coronavirus infections at 7,240 comes after 99 days, registering around 39 per cent jump in daily cases, while the daily positivity rate crossed 2 per cent after 111 days, said an official from the Union Health Ministry on Thursday.

There has been a spike in Covid cases in Maharashtra and Kerala. In both States, test positivity rates have crossed the WHO's threshold limit of 5 per cent. There has been a sharp rise in Covid-related hospital-



Medical staff at BKC Jumbo Covid Care Centre, prioritised by the BMC to be functional from June 10 amid a rise in Covid-19 cases, in Mumbai on Thursday

PTI

isations in Mumbai in the last few days, the official said.

Mumbai logged its highest single day count since January 26 with 1,765 new Covid-19 cases taking the active caseload in the city to 7,000.

In a startling increase in daily Covid-19 cases, Maharashtra on Wednesday recorded 2,701 new infections, highest in nearly four months,

and zero fatality.

The State had last recorded 2,797 fresh cases on February 17 this year. The active cases stand at 9,806. On Tuesday, Maharashtra had reported 1,881 coronavirus cases, a sizable increase compared to 1,036 infections reported the previous day.

Meanwhile, Delhi logged 622 fresh Covid cases and two

more deaths on Thursday, while the positivity rate rose to 3.17 per cent.

With this, Delhi's Covid-19 tally increased to 19,10,613 while the death toll rose to 26,216. Delhi on Wednesday had logged 564 Covid-19 cases, the highest since May 15, and one more fatality, while the positivity rate was 2.84 per cent.

Recently, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan asked State officials in Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Tamil Nadu to closely monitor emerging clusters, maintain adequate number of testing and send samples from infected individuals for genome sequencing.

"In past 2 weeks, an upsurge in Covid-19 cases has been noticed. States/UTs must not lower their guard and continue working towards building on progress made thus far to bring the pandemic situation under control," he said in a letter to the States reporting surge in the infection.

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# Max temp at 46.8 deg C in Delhi, IMD says no relief till June 15

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

For a seventh consecutive day on Thursday, Delhiites witnessed sweltering hot weather even as the India Meteorological Department said no major relief is likely till June 16. The maximum temperature settled at 46.8 degrees Celsius at Capital's Mungeshpur, making it the hottest place in the city.

Three out of the 11 weather stations in Delhi recorded a heatwave on Thursday. The Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's base station, recorded a maximum temperature of 43.8 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal. Pitampura,

Najafgarh and Ridge stations recorded a high of 45.3 degrees Celsius, 45.4 degrees Celsius and 45.2 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Weather experts said the maximum temperature in Delhi-NCR will come down by a few notches over the weekend but no major relief is likely till June 15.

They said moisture-laden easterly winds will bring significant relief in the region from June 16 onwards.

Senior IMD scientist R K Jenamani said there will be cloudy weather in Delhi over the weekend but there are less chances of rainfall.

The temperature will hover between 40 degrees Celsius

and 43 degrees Celsius.

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 the monsoon is likely to arrive in Delhi around the normal date -- June 27. There is no system in sight which could stall its progress.

A clear picture will emerge in a week or so, he said.

Last year, the IMD had forecast that the monsoon would arrive in Delhi nearly two weeks before its usual date. However, it 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 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 goes beyond 47 degrees Celsius.

## Cong to protest at ED offices across India to highlight Govt's misuse of agencies against Opp

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

All the Congress Parliamentarians and members of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) will march along with Rahul Gandhi to the office of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Delhi on Monday, June 13, to highlight how the Modi Government is misusing probe agencies to target the Opposition leaders.

Party workers led by the State unit chiefs will also hold similar protests in front of the ED's offices across the country.

The ED has summoned Rahul and party chief Sonia Gandhi in connection with a case of alleged money laundering linked to the National

Herald newspaper.

The Congress took the decision to hold a protest march at a "virtual" meeting of the senior party leaders, party MPs and State unit chiefs and general secretaries in-charge. The meeting was called to prepare for the second leg of the "Jan Jagran Abhiyan", an agitation programme against inflation, but then it was decided to expand the protest base and hit the streets across the country to make people aware how the BJP Government is misusing the machineries to target people and victimise them, said a source who was part of meeting.

Congress interim president Sonia was to appear before the ED on Thursday but due to being infected by Covid she has sought more time.

## NCRPULSE

**PWD MAY FINISH STREET REDESIGNING BY SEPT**  
New Delhi: The Public Works Department is likely to complete the redesigning and beautification of sample stretches on "European standards" by September end. The Delhi government aims to "redesign and beautify" 500-km city roads on the lines of streets in European countries. The government had approved beautification of 16 sample stretches in November 2019. Officials said on the lines of these sample stretches, 500-km of PWD roads will be beautified on "European standards"

**FOUR ARRESTED FOR DUPING PEOPLE**  
Noida: Four people, including two women, were arrested here on Thursday for allegedly duping people on pretext of reviving their lapsed insurance policies. The gang was operating from their second-floor office set up in a building in the commercial hub of sector 18, which comes under the sector 20 police station area. Eight mobile phones, two laptops and as many pen drives, three debit cards and Rs 50,000 cash were seized from them after their arrest.

**MCD TRAINS EMPLOYEES TO DEAL WITH WATERLOGGING**  
New Delhi: In view of the upcoming monsoon, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi has started preparations to deal with the unpleasant situation of water logging. In this direction, the MCD has taken an important decision to train the employees of disaster centres of MCD to deal with water logging and various types of disasters in a quick and efficient manner. The MCD said that arrangements are being made for the training of the employees deputed at the disaster centres to deal with unpleasant situations of water logging more efficiently.

**FIR AGAINST BRAND FOR PROMOTING RAPE CULTURE**  
New Delhi: Delhi Police has registered an First Information Report (FIR) against a 'Layrr Shot' perfume brand for allegedly promoting 'rape culture' through its advertisements. The case was registered following a complaint by the Delhi Commission For Women (DCW) chief Swati Malival last week. She had also written to the Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur seeking his intervention in the matter.

**S ZONE MCD OFFICE TO BE MOVED TO PATPARGANJ**  
New Delhi: Following the unification, the office of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Shahdara South Zone will be shifted from Vishwas Nagar to the headquarters of the erstwhile East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) at Patparganj. According to civic officials, the headquarter building of the erstwhile EDMC had been lying vacant after the merger of the three civic bodies in Delhi. Last month, the major staff and offices of the EDMC were shifted to the Civic Centre, which now houses the headquarters of the MCD.

**AAP GOVT TO UPSKILL UNORGANISED SECTOR**  
New Delhi: In order to increase the income of workers in the unorganised sector, the Arvind Kejriwal government has decided to provide skill training to them. Under this, a special training program has been designed by the Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU). Along with increasing the income of labourers, the main objective of this upskilling project is to further improve the skills of the people in the unorganized sector and connect them with the target groups. The labourers in the unorganised sector include plumbers, electricians, blacksmiths, potters, shoemakers, laundry workers etc.

## DU writes to colleges asking them to ensure no caste-based discrimination

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi University has written to colleges asking them to ensure there is no caste-based discrimination on the campus, saying officials or faculty members should desist from any such act against SC/ST students on grounds of their social origin.

The varsity's assistant registrar on May 25 wrote to colleges attaching several letters

from the University Grants Commission (UGC) on the prevention of caste-based discrimination in higher education and requesting them to take necessary action in the matter. The UGC, in this direction, has requested to take four actions, including constitution of a committee to look into the discrimination complaints received from SC/ST/OBC students, teachers and non-teaching staff.

"The university/insti-

tute/college may develop a page on their website for lodging such complaints of caste discrimination by Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) students and also place a complaint register in the registrar/principal office for the purpose," it said.

"If any such incident comes to the notice of the authorities, action should be taken against the erring official/faculty members promptly," it further suggested.

## Coronavirus rears its head in Delhi, +vity soars to 3.17%

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

The National Capital witnessed one fold rise in the positivity rate with it touching to 3.17 per cent on Thursday. A total of 19,619 COVID-19 tests were conducted in the national capital the previous day while city logged 622 fresh coronavirus cases and two more deaths.

With this, Delhi's COVID-19 tally increased to 19,10,613 while the death toll rose to 26,216.

On May 13, the city reported 899 new coronavirus cases and four related deaths on May 13, while the positivity rate had stood at 3.34 per cent, according to official figures.

On May 15, Delhi had



logged 613 Covid cases with a positivity rate of 2.74 per cent and three deaths.

However, the Delhi on Wednesday had logged 564 COVID-19 cases, the highest since May 15, and one more fatality, while the positivity rate was 2.84 per cent.

On Tuesday, the capital logged 450 fresh Covid cases and one more death, while the positivity rate was 1.92 per cent.

The number of daily COVID-19 cases in Delhi had touched the record high of

28,867 on January 13 this year during the third wave of the pandemic.

The city had recorded a positivity rate of 30.6 per cent on January 14, the highest during the third wave of the pandemic.

According to the bulletin issued by health department, the number of active COVID-19 cases in Delhi increased to 1,774 from 1,691 on Wednesday

As many as 1,072 patients are under home isolation, up from 1,048 the previous day, it said, adding that there are 236 containment zones in the national capital.

There are 9,630 beds for COVID-19 patients in Delhi hospitals and of those 85 are occupied, the bulletin said.

## Prez poll on July...

**From Page 1**  
Similarly, members of the Legislative Councils are also not electors for the Presidential election. The total votes are counted on the basis of their value, which varies from state to state, with an Uttar Pradesh MLA carrying the highest value followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal.

The CEC said the total number of electors for the election will be 4,809 - 776 MPs and 4,033 MLAs. The value of the vote of a MP has gone down to 700 from 708 this Presidential poll due to the absence of a legislative assembly in Jammu and Kashmir.

The total value of votes for MLAs for presidential election is 543231. The total value of votes for MPs is 543200. The total value of vote of electors for the presidential election, 2022 is 108643.

Interestingly, the value of the vote of a Member of Parliament has been fixed at 708 since the 1997 Presidential election. The value of vote of an MP for the first Presidential

election in 1952 was 494. It increased marginally to 496 in the 1957 Presidential election, followed by 493 (1962), 576 (1967 and 1969).

As per Rule 7 of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules 1974, voting for Presidential election will take place in Parliament and the premises of State Assemblies including Legislative Assemblies of NCT of Delhi and Puducherry where Legislative Assembly meets for transaction of business, while Rajya Sabha Secretary-General will be the returning officer.

"If there is an emergency, the EC would need to be informed 10 days in advance for MPs to vote in a state assembly or for MLAs to vote in Parliament complex", Kumar said.

In 2017, the Presidential polls were held on July 17 and the counting took place on July 20. Kovind defeated former Lok Sabha speaker and opposition candidate Meira Kumar by nearly 3,34,730 value votes in the polls.

## On US Gen's remarks, India says...

**From Page 1**  
"The Government is committed to and takes all adequate and appropriate measures to safeguard territorial integrity and sovereignty as the developments in recent years have clearly demonstrated," Bagchi said. He said the Government has taken various measures in recent years to develop infrastructure along the border areas to not only meet India's strategic and security requirements but also facilitate the economic developments of the areas. "As far as the current situation (in eastern Ladakh) is concerned, we have maintained continuous com-

munication with the Chinese side both through diplomatic and military channels," Bagchi said. India will maintain its dialogue with the Chinese side to resolve the remaining issues in eastern Ladakh, he added.

In Beijing, China termed the critical remarks by the US General as a "despicable act" and criticised the attempts of some American officials to "add fuel to fire".

"Moreover, India and China have the will and capability to properly resolve their differences through talks," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said while replying

to a question on the comments by Flynn. "This border issue is between China and India (and) the two sides have the will and capability to properly resolve the issue through talks," Zhao said. He also said "some US officials are trying to add fuel to the fire and pointing fingers. This is a despicable act. We hope they will do more to contribute to regional peace and stability".

He said the situation at Ladakh where the two sides had over two year-long military standoff is "stabilizing and forces from both countries have realised disengagement in most areas along the western sector".

## Court rejects jailed NCP...

**From Page 1**  
After hearing the arguments by the advocates of both Deshmukh and Malik and also counsels for the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which had opposed their pleas by the two former ministers being prisoners had no voting rights, the special court on Thursday rejected the two NCP leaders who are sitting members in the State Assembly polls.

The counsels for Deshmukh and Malik announced that they would challenge the order in the Bombay High Court. As of now they will not be able to vote in the RS polls, unless the high court hears their pleas on Friday morning and allows them to exercise their voting rights in the RS polls. Considering the strengths of major contesting parties in the 288-member Maharashtra Legislative Assembly that is an electoral college for the polls, the ruling MVA can win four out of six RS seats, while the BJP can win two seats.

While the rejection of the pleas by Deshmukh and Malik, the strength of the ruling MVA has come down to 168 MLAs --- Shiv Sena 55 (one MLA Ramesh Latke, died in Dubai last week), NCP 51, Congress 44, smaller parties/groups 10 and 8 Independents.

On its part, the BJP has muddled the RS poll scene in the State by putting up a third candidate Dhananjay Mahadik in addition to its two regular candidates --- Union Minister Piyush Goyal and its other leader Anil Bonde.

On the other hand, the MVA constituents have together fielded four candidates. While the Shiv Sena has re-nominated Sanjay Raut for a fourth term and its Kolhapur district unit chief Sanjay Pawar, the NCP has re-fielded former Civil Aviation Minister Minister and Sharad Pawar's confidante Praful Patel. The Congress has sprung a surprise by putting up Imran Pratapgari, a Uttar Pradesh-based Urdu poet, as its candidate for the polls.

As per the understanding reached among the ruling MVA constituents on the basis of their respective strengths in the Maharashtra Assembly polls, the ruling Shiv Sena is contesting two seats,

while the NCP and Congress are fielding one candidate each. For winning a RS seat, the approximate number of votes required is 42.

After winning one seat each, the MVA will still have additional 44 MLAs with whose support it can win one more RS seat. On their part, the NCP and Congress have decided to transfer their additional votes to the Shiv Sena.

In all, there are a total 29 MLAs from smaller parties and independents. The ruling MVA enjoys the support of a majority of Independents and MLAs from smaller parties.

Two Samajwadi Party (SP) MLAs --- Rais Shaikh and Abu Asim Azmi -- have pledged their support to the MVA. CPM's Vinod Nikole, Swabhimani Paksha's Devendra Bhuyar and independent MLAs Ashish Jaiswal, Chandrakant Patil, Shyam Sunder Shinde have also extended their support to the MVA. The MVA leaders have said that the three parties collectively enjoyed the support of 14 MLAs -- both Independents and the ones from the smaller parties.

The BJP, which has a combined strength of 113 seats as against an approximate strength of 126 needed for winning three seats, needs as many as 16 votes from outside to win the third seat.

Having made it a prestige issue to win the third RS, the BJP -- known for its poaching abilities -- is going whole hog to win away as many as 16 additional MLAs -- mostly Independents and the ones from the smaller parties from the ruling MVA camp.

It remains to be seen if the BJP will succeed its operation "Kamal" in Friday's polls.

In Haryana, where voting will take place for two seats, the MLAs of the ruling BJP and some of its ally JJP were lodged for the second day in a resort near Chandigarh. The Congress legislators are also in a resort in Chhattisgarh amid apprehension of poaching. When asked about the mounting threat of horse-trading by rival parties, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told reporters in New Delhi: "We have appointed special observers in all the four places." The entire process will be videographed.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that I, Susmita Baskshi W/o Shri Shiv Dutt Baskshi, Cont. 9810255554, Email: drmitamita.1@gmail.com, R/o. D-1/126 Janapuri, New Delhi, is the owners of society Flat No. 213 in Nirman Group Housing Society, Mayur Vihar Phase I, has applied conversion of aforesaid property from lease hold to free hold in DDA, Original Share Certificate, Allotment Letter & Possession Letter, issued by society, of aforesaid property have been lost. An F.I.R to this effect has been lodged in police station at dated 03/10/2021. Any person(s) claiming any right, having any objection or found in possession of original document may write/contact with above named person at above address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice & can personally contact: Deputy Director, (GH) C - Block, 2nd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi

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CIN: U65922MH2005PLC272501  
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Unit Nos. 203 & 204, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, A Wing, Navbharat Estates, Zakaria Bunder Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai - 400015  
Tel No: 022-24190911  
Email: cs@vastuhfc.com  
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**SHIFTING OF BRANCH OFFICE**  
The Branch office of Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Limited ("Company") at Delhi shall be shifted to the new premises as mentioned below from **07-07-2022** (effective date):  
**Old Address:** Office No. 04, First Floor, Westend Plaza, Kharsa No 377/375, Old Gurgaon Road, Delhi Road, Near DESU Office, Kapashera, Delhi 110037  
**New Address:** B-85, Second Floor, Main Dwarka Road, Sewak Park (Patel Garden), Uttam Nagar Colony, New Delhi-110059  
The Old Premises will remain operational till 06-07-2022. From 07-07-2022 onwards, all transactions/customer service requests of the Company should be sent to the new address only.  
In case of any queries, you may contact us at: **customer@vastuhfc.com**  
**Address:** Unit Nos. 203 & 204, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, A Wing, Navbharat Estates, Zakaria Bunder Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai - 400015  
Date : 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 Sd/-  
Place : Delhi

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform general public that: Mr. Rajendra Sharma has acquired the Property bearing No. A-61 min. land area measuring 60 sq. yds., out of Kharsa no. 938/152, 907/216, 910/218, situated at Village Chandrawali in the abadi of Glai no. 6, Jagat puri Extn., Illaga Shahdara Delhi 110093 on POA basis vide Notarized GPA, ATS & Will dated 13/07/2006, executed by Mrs. Har Bati, and New. Mr. Rajendra Sharma is intending to sell the above said property to Mrs. Vinita vide Sale Deed. Further Mrs. Vinita 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 Chawani/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Venitas, Unit no. 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9606770172/ 9818229636 (M).

**I, Manju Rani W/o Arvind Kumar, R/o WZ -33, 3rd floor, street no. 13, Krishna Park Tilak Nagar New Delhi-18, I have changed my name from Manju Rani to Yamini Gupta for all future purposes.**  
PD(90106)A

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given to general public at large that my client, Mr. Bani Lal, living on this Estate at B-1063, 2nd Floor, Opposite Metro Pillar No. 566, Janapuri, New Delhi-110058 intends to grant loan facility to Sh. Priyanshu Bansal against security of Entire Second Floor without roof/terrace rights, including undivided proportionate ownership rights in the land and underneath along with the rights to passage, easements, and benefits, (hereinafter referred to as "Sae Portion") Built on Subk., Volume-401, at Pages 67 to 78, on 08.02.2012, with Sub-Register A, Delhi. Thereafter, Smt. Krishna Rani died intestate on 22.01.2013. Sh. Krishna Lal also died intestate on 10.07.2020 leaving behind only the following legal heirs viz:- a) 1/2 Smt. Anju Sahasrani W/o Sh. Manish Sahasrani, 2) Smt. Disha Girdra W/o Sh. Vikas Kumar & 3) Smt. Ekta Babbar W/o Sh. Manik Babbar all daughters of Late Sh. Krishna Lal & Late Smt. Krishna Rani who came to the joint. Owners of the "Sae Portion" by way of Hindu Succession law consequent to the demise of Sh. Krishna Lal & Smt. Krishna Rani and subsequent Variation of their names in the records of NDHC, vide Mutation Letter, dated May, 2022 issued by NDHC. Any person(s) who have any objection(s) or claims(s) with respect to right, title or interest in the said property/portion in any manner whatsoever, must immediately contact the undersigned in writing along with all supporting documents in respect of their claim(s)/objection(s). If no such claim is received with in a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, then it will be presumed that no one has any paramount right, title or interest in the said property and even if someone has any claim/objection, he/she/they have given up the same.  
**Himanshu Ahuja (Advocate)**  
Contact No: 9810310373, 011-41830049  
E-mail address: aloelegals@gmail.com

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments/ corrigendum etc.  
a) 19/GM/SM(WC-X)/ET/22-23, D/o & M/o Noida-Gr.Noida Expressway (Repairing and Painting of Entry & Exit Point / Footpath at Noida-Gr.Noida Expressway Km 10 to 20) Noida Rs. 103.22 Lakh  
The above tender can be uploaded by date **23.06.2022** upto **5.00 PM**. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date **24.06.2022 at 11.00 AM**.  
b) 18/GM/SM(WC-X)/ET/22-23, Barbed Wire Fencing Work (Fencing of Acquired Land of Village - Nalgarah, Momnathal, Samastipur, Gulawali, Badauli, Jhatta etc.) Noida Rs. 97.05 Lakh  
The above tender can be uploaded by date **16.06.2022** upto **5.00 PM**. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date **17.06.2022 at 11.00 AM**.  
**Principal General Manager**  
**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

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# Yati, Jindal, Owaisi among 31 booked for hate speech

**FIR against Nupur Sharma also for remarks on Prophet Mohammad**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operation (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police Special Cell has registered a First Information Report (FIR) against 31 people, including AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand, for allegedly spreading hate and hurting religious sentiments. Another FIR has also been registered by police against former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma for disrupting public tranquility and inciting people on divisive lines.

The FIRs also included the names of former BJP leader Naveen Kumar Jindal, journalist Saba Naqvi, Hindu Mahasabha office bearer Pooja Shakun Pandey, Maulana Mufti Nadeem from Rajasthan and Peace Party chief spokesperson Shadab Chauhan.

According to Delhi Police, the two FIRs were registered by the IFSO on Wednesday after an analysis of social media.



Reacting to the FIR, Owaisi said that he will not be intimidated by these tactics and asserted that criticising a hate speech and giving hate speeches cannot be equated.

Owaisi attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that if he were sincere, he would have stamped out hate speech without indulging in "fake balance-vaad". The AIMIM chief alleged that Delhi Police is suffering from "both-sideism" or "balance-waad" syndrome.

"One side has openly insulted our Prophet while the other side has been named to assuage BJP supporters and make it look like there were hate speeches on both sides," he said. Notices will be sent to the social media intermediaries for the details, a senior police officer said. "We have registered 2 FIRs under appropriate Sections on the basis of social media analysis against those

trying to disrupt public tranquility & inciting people on divisive lines. One pertains to Ms Nupur Sharma & other against multiple social media entities," Delhi Police tweeted.

"Even as notices are being sent to social media intermediaries for details of those behind these accounts/entities, #DelhiPolice appeals to everyone to desist from posting anything that may disrupt social and communal harmony," the Delhi Police said in another tweet. In a series of tweets, Owaisi said that he will consult his lawyers and address it as and when required.

"I've received an excerpt of the FIR. This is the first FIR I've seen that's not specifying what the crime is. Imagine an FIR about a murder where cops don't mention the weapon or that the victim bled to death.

I don't know which specific remarks of mine have

attracted the FIR," Owaisi tweeted. "It appears that Delhi Police lacks the courage to pursue cases against Yati, Nupur Sharma & Naveen Jindal, etc. This is why the delayed & weak response," he alleged.

The AIMIM chief alleged that in fact, controversial Yati has violated his bail conditions repeatedly by inciting genocide against Muslims and insulting Islam. "Delhi Police were probably trying to think of a way of registering an FIR against these people without offending Hindutvadi fan-boys/girls," he alleged.

On Wednesday, police had said the unit will investigate the roles of various social media entities in promoting false and wrong information with an intention to create unrest in the cyber space, that have ramifications on the physical space thereby compromising with the social fabric of the country.

## 30 AIMIM supporters detained for protest

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Thursday detained over 30 AIMIM supporters after they held a protest outside Parliament Street police station after AIMIM party chief Asaddudin Owaisi was named in an First Information Report (FIR) for allegedly posting and sharing messages on social media against the maintenance of public tranquility and inciting people on divisive lines.

Following the protest, a case under Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was also registered by the police against the protestors. "AIMIM supporters were protesting outside Parliament Street police station. Around 33, including a few women, have been detained," said a senior police officer.

Earlier, the Special Cell of Delhi Police registered an FIR against Owaisi, controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand and others for allegedly posting and sharing messages on social media against the mainte-



AIMIM activists protest demanding the arrest of former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma over her comments against Prophet Muhammad, outside Parliament Street Police Station, in New Delhi on Thursday

RANJAN DIMRI | PIONEER

nance of public tranquility and inciting people on divisive lines. The FIR was registered after an analysis of social media. The cases have been registered under Sections 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 295

(injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class), 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code. "Two FIRs have been registered. One case has been registered against Sharma

and another against multiple social media entities, including Owaisi, Jindal, Narsinghanand, Shadab Chauhan, Saba Naqvi, Maulana Mufti Nadeem, Abdur Rehman and Gulzar Ansari, based on the analysis," police said.

## ED gets Jain's custody for four more days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A designated court on Thursday extended by four days the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) custody of Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain in an alleged money laundering case involving a company in Kolkata.

Special Judge Geetanjali Goel extended Jain's custody till June 13 on the ED's application that sought his custody for five more days. Jain's nine-day ED custody was ending on Thursday before the agency sought extension of his custodial interrogation.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju for the ED submitted that during the remand they had conducted eight searches of the premises of Lala Sher Singh memorial trust where Jain was president and certain incriminating material was found, including cash and documents.

However, Jain has denied



that he was part of the trust during interrogation.

Raju told the court that the agency needed to confront Jain with the documents gathered during the searches. The ED said that some of the witnesses said they should not be taken in front of Jain as they feared for their safety.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Jain, opposed the ED's application, saying the accused was already in ED's custody and there was

no ground to further extend his custody.

ED's Special Public Prosecutor NK Matta had told the court that the agency had arrested Jain in an alleged money laundering case. In the afternoon, Jain was admitted to the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (RML) for three hours after he complained of uneasiness.

The court also directed the authorities to subject him to daily health check-up. An ultrasound was also performed as he complained of stomach ache besides sleep issues.

The ED had initiated the money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the CBI on August 24, 2017 under relevant Sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act against Jain, his wife Poonam Jain, Ajit Prasad Jain, Sunil Kumar Jain, Vaibhav Jain, son of Ajit Prasad Jain and Ankush Jain, son Sunil Kumar Jain.

## 20 people rescued in Jamia Nagar fire

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 20 people were rescued and nine of them have also sustained minor injuries after a fire broke out in a house in southeast Delhi's Jamia Nagar area on Thursday morning. However, there was no casualty due to the blaze.

Those who sustained minor injuries have been identified as Sana (27), Abul Akhtar Ansari (55), Jurie (26), Shabana khatoon (50), Daniel Siddique (22), Saddam, Sahid Akhtar (34), Asraja (340 and Saleem (34).

Atul Garg, Director, Delhi Fire Service, said a call about a fire in a house near Shah Masjid at Batla House was received at 8.48 A.M., following which seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

"The fire was in a five-storey building. It was triggered from meter boards and had reached up to the third floor of the house. More than 20 people were rescued and the blaze was brought under control," he said. According to a senior police officer, a police control

room (PCR) call regarding a fire in a building at H-Block of the Jamia Nagar, Delhi was received around 8: 49 AM at Jamia Nagar police station.

"Acting on the call, the police teams rushed to the spot. Meanwhile, the fire

brigade vehicles had also reached there. Residents of the building were rescued with the help of fire service staff and send to hospital in CATS ambulance," said the senior police officer. "The fire was found at the ground floor of

the house which is being used as a parking for the vehicles of the residents. In this incident, four bikes, two scooties and one cycle were burnt," said the police officer adding that crime team was called at the spot to unearth the cause of the fire.

## Two Delhi Fire personnel injured while dousing fire

NEW DELHI: Two Delhi Fire Service (DFS) personnel were injured while trying to control a fire that broke out in cluster buses in South Delhi's Sunehri Pullah Depot.

The firemen identified as Suresh and Virender Singh sustained minor injuries during a firefighting operation near Dyal Singh College on Wednesday and were rushed to the AIIMS Trauma Centre.

According to a senior DFS official, three buses, run by the Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS), had come for repair at a workshop and due to a short circuit they

caught fire. While two buses were completely damaged, the third was partially burnt, he said. Atul Garg, Director, DFS, said, "A call regarding a fire was received at around 10 P.M. at Sunehri Pullah Depot near Dyal Singh College.

"Three fire tenders were rushed to the site and the blaze was brought under control within an hour."

"A police team immediately reached the spot after a PCR call was received regarding the incident and Delhi Fire Control Room was also informed," said Benita Mary Jaiker, the Deputy

Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district.

"On enquiry, it came to notice that due to a short circuit, three buses which were parked at the battery workshop at Sunehri Pullah Depot caught fire. During firefighting operation, two persons named Suresh and Virender Singh from the fire department accidentally slipped and fell into a pit and sustained minor injuries," said the DCP.

"Virender is admitted to the trauma centre, while Suresh got discharged after being treated for his wounds," the DCP added. SR

## Blue Line blues continue unabated

**Another technical snag reported within a week**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Within a week, another technical snag was reported on Delhi Metro's Blue Line for two hours with commuters, largely office-goers, facing hardship on Thursday morning.

Blue Line connects Dwarka Sector-21 in Delhi and Noida Electronic City, along with a branch line to Vaishali. On Thursday at 7.25 am, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) tweeted, alerting commuters, "Blue Line Update Delay in services between Dwarka Sector 21 and Noida

Electronic City/Vaishali. Normal service on all other lines." Normal services on the Blue Line could only be resumed after over two hours on the corridor.

"There has been damage to the Over Head Electrification wire due to flash over by an external object between Yamuna Bank and Indraprastha. Repair work is being done on a war footing. Update on restoration shall be provided soon. The inconvenience is regretted," DMRC tweeted explaining the cause of the snag.

At 9.43 A.M it posted, "normal services have resumed". Due to the services being impacted in the morning rush hour, a majority of the

affected commuters were office-goers or businesspersons who were on their way to Connaught Place or other commercial hubs located near the Blue Line network.

Several of them took to Twitter to share problem they faced, with some even tagging Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Puri and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the effective redressal of this repeated issue.

"Another day but same news... Don't tell us about hindrance. Inform this to our offices that won't understand issues we're facing due to repeated delayed service of Blue Line," wrote a commuter and Twitter user @\_monukumar. Another commuter,

@vikek2020 tweeted, "@SecretaryMoHUA @HardeepSPuri @ArvindKejriwal please take suitable action. People are still recovering from the pandemic and such situations decrease the productivity of office-goers".

Other commuters asked why the issue was being repeated on the Blue Line in just a matter of few days. "What is the exact issue? And why can't it be resolved despite repetitive occurrence?," tweeted @MuskanBhatia18. One commuter also complained of having missed a job interview. "Had interview today at 10:00 A.M in Noida, just got a bus from Rajeev Chowk that too for Anand Vihar.

## Give Najafgarh drain desilting feasibility report: LG

**Plan to engage experts to desilt drain at Najafgarh before monsoon**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena has directed officials to submit a feasibility report within two days on the possibility of engaging an expert agency to break and pulverise the silt settled in the Najafgarh drain before monsoon.

The L-G also stressed that long-term solutions are the

need of the hour to turn the much-maligned drain into an "asset".

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also held a review meeting with the senior officials and technical team of the Dredging Corporation of India on Thursday. The meeting was also attended by Principal Secretary Irrigation and Flood Control Department Ashish Kundra. The specialists from Dredging Corporation of India inspected the Najafgarh drain on Thursday.

The team of specialists will now do the data analysis and send its recommendations to the Delhi Government within a week. Thereafter the work of desilting of Najafgarh Drain as



well as removal of water weeds from drain will be done in various phases. The breaking and pulverisation of silt will help in achieving the dual purpose of loosened silt being carried by normal water flow and also achieving bed depth, said an official statement from the L-G's office. Saxena had visited the Najafgarh drain on Saturday last week. On Wednesday, a meeting headed

by the L-G and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal along with his Deputy Manish Sisodia, Chief Secretary and officials was held to decide upon the further course of action. Saxena and Kejriwal agreed that to turn the Najafgarh drain into an asset, planning aimed at long-term solutions that also addressed the issue of recurrent expenditure and efforts needed to be undertaken.

## 4 held for burgling HC Justice's house in GK-1

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested four persons, including a woman in connection with a burglary at the residence of a High Court Justice in South Delhi.

The accused have been identified as Janasaj Tiwari (34), a resident of Jasola, Ajay Rawat (36), a resident of Dakshinipuri, Shartudhan Kumar (39) and Anjula Tiwari (39), residents of Bihar.

According to Benita Mary Jaiker, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, on May 30 at 11 A.M., police received information regarding a burglary in a house in Greater Kailash-1 area.

"The lock of the back door of the house was found broken and one almirah on the first



floor had been opened. There were some articles lying outside the cupboard.

It was found that the complainant had gone out of station on May 1 and the house was locked since then. On May 24, her relatives visited the house for cleaning. On May 30,

when they again reached there for some work, they found the back door open," said the DCP.

"During investigation, police analysed the CCTV footage and found that two persons had entered the premises through the back boundary wall. Police iden-

tified the accused persons and Sanjay was traced to Sitamarhi, Bihar and Rawat was found in Mubarakpur," said the DCP.

"On the instance of Sanjay, a goldsmith Shatrudhan, who received the stolen property, was arrested from Sitamarhi. Almost all the stolen jewellery has been recovered from him," said the DCP.

"Later, Anjula, who is a friend of Sanjay, was also arrested. Some jewellery and equipment used for breaking into the house were recovered on her instance," said the DCP.

Explaining the modus operandi, police said the accused persons did a reconnaissance of the area and observed the houses that were closed.

Later, they checked whether the light of the house was on at night or not. They portrayed themselves as elec-

tricians and plumbers and rang the doorbells of the targeted houses.

If nobody answered the door, they targeted those homes, police said.

In the present case, they noticed dust on the doors and identified the house as abandoned and committed the burglary. They used scissors, screw drivers, an iron rod and hammer etc to commit the crime, police said.

Sanjay, who hails from Bihar, was first apprehended in a theft case along with Rawat in 2004 when he was a juvenile.

Later, he came in contact with other thieves and was involved in 16 cases of burglary in the south district area, police said. Police said Rs 1.40 lakh in cash and jewellery articles were recovered from their possession.

## PICTALK



People use scarfs and umbrellas to shield themselves from the hot summer sun in New Delhi on Thursday

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# Opp likely to put up joint candidate for Prez poll



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Despite their rivalries, Opposition parties are

likely to put up a joint candidate against the ruling NDA nominee in the July 18 Presidential election. Though numbers are not in its favour,

## Special observers appointed to oversee June 10 RS poll: EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar on Thursday said special observers have been appointed to oversee the June 10 Rajya Sabha poll process which will be videographed, against the backdrop of allegations of horse-trading in the Rajya Sabha elections in four states. Biennial elections to 57 Rajya Sabha seats were announced recently and 41 candidates in Uttar Pradesh,

Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Telangana, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand were declared elected unopposed last Friday.

Elections will be held for 16 seats of Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Karnataka on Friday as the number of candidates exceeds seats going to the polls. Seeking to keep their flock together, major political parties have herded their MLAs to hotels and resorts.

the Opposition, with the main constituents being Congress, TMC and TRS, is likely to meet next week to discuss a probable candidate, which it feels could also be backed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his party JDU given their differences with the BJP in the State.

Sources said that Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge has reached out to leaders of some Opposition parties and sought their views for a joint Opposition candidate who can be fielded.

Some opposition parties are of the view that they should not give a walkover to the ruling dispensation but put up a fight. CPI Rajya Sabha member Binoy Viswam said the Congress had reached out to him to discuss a "common candidate".

"Mallikarjun Khargeji

called and consulted about a common candidate for the presidential election. I told him that the CPI would support a common candidate with secular credentials and progressive outlook.

He replied that Madam Soniagi and the Congress Party also have the same position," Viswam said in a tweet. The BJP-led NDA is comfortably placed to win the presidential election with its vote share touching the 50 per cent mark of the total electors.

While there are 776 MPs of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, each having 700 votes, there are as many as 4033 legislators in states with different votes who will also elect Ram Nath Kovind's successor.

Though the final list of electors will be notified after the bye-elections to three Lok Sabha seats and the Rajya Sabha polls to 16 seats, the

NDA has 440 MPs in its favour while the opposition UPA has around

180 MPs, besides 36 MPs of Trinamool Congress who normally support the opposition candidate. The Congress and the BJP are likely to win six more Rajya Sabha seats in the

June 10 election and the UPA partners may bag three seats more. According to calculations, the NDA has around 5,35,000 votes out of a total of 10,86,431 votes of all electors. This includes 3,08,000 votes with the support of its MPs along with that of its allies. The

NDA candidate may get the support of some regional parties including the AIADMK, the BJD and the YSRCP for its candidate in the presidential poll. Among the states, the BJP has the maximum of 56,784 votes from Uttar Pradesh where it has 273 MLAs. Each MLA in

Uttar Pradesh has the maximum vote of 208.

The NDA will get its second-highest votes among states from Bihar if JDU does in favour of ruling candidate where with 127 MLAs, it will get 21,971 votes as each legislator has 173 votes, followed by 18,375 votes from Maharashtra where it has 105 MLAs and each has 175 votes.

With 131 MLAs, the NDA will get 17,161 votes from Madhya Pradesh, 16,464 votes of 112 MLAs from Gujarat and 15,982 votes of its 122 MLAs in Karnataka.

The UPA, on the other hand, has a little over 1,50,000 votes from among its MPs and will get around the same number of votes from its legislators in states.

Opposition candidates in the past too have been getting a little more than 3 lakh votes in the previous elections for the highest post in the country.

The value of the vote of a Member of Parliament has gone down to 700 from 708 in the presidential polls this time due to the absence of a legislative assembly in Jammu and Kashmir.

The value of the vote of an MP in a presidential election is based on the number of elected members in legislative assemblies of states and union territories, including Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir. Election will be held on July 18 to elect incumbent Kovind's successor, the Election Commission announced on Thursday.

## 16th Prez polls since first in 1952, 70 years after

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

It will be the 16th Presidential Election on July 18, 70 years after the first one was held when Dr Rajendra Prasad won. There were five contesting candidates then with the last one getting just 533 votes.

The second election in 1957, which was also won by Prasad, had three contesting candidates.

The third election also saw only three contestants, but the fourth election in 1967 saw as many as 17 contestants with nine getting zero votes and five getting less than 1,000 votes. In comparison, the winner of 1967 election, Zakir Hussain, secured more than 4.7 lakh votes.

The fifth election had 15 contestants with five failing to secure even a single vote. This election in 1969 had many firsts, including strict secrecy of voting and allowing some

MLAs to cast their votes at Parliament House in New Delhi instead of their state capitals. It was for the sixth election in 1974, there was only two contestants. For the seventh election in 1977, total 37 candidates filed their nominations.

On scrutiny, the returning officer rejected the nominations filed by 36 candidates and only one validly nominated candidate remained in the field, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy. The eighth presidential election in 1982 saw two contestants, while the ninth election in 1987 had three.

The 1987 election also witnessed one candidate, Mithlesh Kumar Sinha, who eventually came third with 2,223 votes, requesting the Commission for facility to put forth his views over AIR/Doordarshan.

The 10th election in 1992 had four contestants, Ram Jethmalani (2,704 votes, third

place) and Kaka Joginder Singh Urf Dharti-Pakad (1,135 votes, fourth place). There have been only two contestants since the 11th presidential election held in 1997, when the security deposit and the numbers of proposers and seconders were increased significantly.

The Presidential polls' rules have undergone changes from time to time. In a move aimed at weeding out non-serious candidates in these polls that once saw nominations getting rejected for 36 out of total 37 candidates, anyone desiring to contest would need 50 electors as proposers and 50 others as seconders.

Besides, the candidate would need to deposit an amount of Rs 15,000 as security. According to the EC, the security deposit was increased from Rs 2,500 to Rs 15,000 in 1997, when the total numbers of proposers and seconders were also increased from 10 each earlier.

## PM hails biotech as demand-driven sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Emphasising that the biotech sector is one of the most demand-driven sectors, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the campaigns for Ease of Living in India over the years have opened up new possibilities for the sector.

He pointed out that developments in health, agriculture, energy, natural farming, bio fortified seeds are creating new avenues for the sector. The Prime Minister was addressing the Biotech Startup Expo here after inaugurating the two-day event.

Modi said the Biotech Startup Expo 2022 will strengthen the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' movement in the sector. The Biotech Startup Expo-2022 is a two-day event being held on June 9 and 10. The theme of the expo is 'Biotech Startup Innovations: Towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat'.

Modi said in order to transcend government-centric approach, the government is encouraging a culture of providing new enabling interfaces. He gave the example of Startup India for startups, IN-SPACE for the space sector, iDEX for defence startups, India Semiconductor Mission for



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Ministers Piyush Goyal, Dharmendra Pradhan and Jitendra Singh during inauguration ceremony of Biotech Start-up Expo 2022, at Pragati Maidan, in New Delhi on Thursday

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semi conductors, Smart India Hackathons for encouraging innovations among the youth and also, the Biotech start-up Expo.

The government has said, the Biotech Expo will act as a platform to connect entrepreneurs, investors, industry leaders, scientists, researchers, bio-incubators, manufacturers, regulators and government officials. Maintaining that his government believes in strengthening every sector for giving

momentum to the country's development, Modi said that it has changed the earlier approach of focusing on a few sectors while ignoring others.

He said India's 'bio-economy' has grown eight times in the last eight years and has reached USD 80 billion from USD 10 billion and noted the country is not far from reaching the league of top 10 countries in the global ecosystem of biotech. In the last eight years the number of startups in the

country has increased from a few hundreds to over 70,000, adding that his government had worked to boost the ease of doing business and promote a culture of entrepreneurship, he said adding that these startups are established in about 60 different industries.

"The number of biotech incubators has increased from six in 2014 to 75 now. Biotech products have increased from 10 products to more than 700 today," he said.

Noting that exports from some sectors have hit a record, he said supporting and developing every sector is the country's need and his government is exploring every means to give momentum to India's development. The biotech sector is very important in giving new momentum to the country's development, he said.

He said there are five big reasons why India is being considered a land of opportunities in the field of biotech namely diverse population and climatic zones, India's talented human capital pool, increasing efforts for ease of doing business in India, demand for bio-products increasing continuously in India and the country's biotech sector and its track record of success.

"Inculcating the spirit of 'sakra prayas', the government, through new institutions is bringing together the best minds of the industry on a single platform.

This is another big benefit to the country. The country gets new breakthroughs from research and academia, the industry helps in what is a real world view, and the government provides necessary policy environment and necessary infrastructure," the Prime Minister further said.

## Limit to NEET-PG-21 stray counselling, education can't be compromised: SC



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Reserving its judgment for Friday, the Supreme Court on Thursday said there has to be a limit to the stray round of counselling for All India Quota in NEET-PG-21 and the students cannot be given admission by compromising the education and the health of people.

The vacation bench of Justices MR Shah and Aniruddha Bose was hearing the Government's side on petitions seeking a special stray round of counselling to fill the 1,456 seats in NEET-PG-21 that have remained vacant after the conduct of a stray round of counselling for All India Quota.

"Special stray rounds, special stray rounds- there must be a limit. For many years, the seats have remained vacant and it is not for the very first time. There must be a limit to the entire exercise.

Merely because some seats have been left vacant after 8-9 rounds of counselling can you say you will be given admission after one-and-half years in a three-year course compromising with the education and the health of people? Try to appreciate this is a three-year course," the bench observed.

When the hearing commenced, the apex court asked Additional Solicitor General Balbir Singh, appearing for the Centre, not to treat the peti-

tions as adversarial litigation. "Don't treat and consider it as an adversarial litigation and don't stand on the technicalities. It is a question of 1,400 medical seats. They are post-graduate (PG) seats. Government wants doctors

also. Government wants doctors with PG also. Government wants super speciality doctors also. We have a dearth of doctors... They can serve nation. And these 1,400 seats cannot be said to be a small number of seats," the bench said.

## Paternal grandparents take better care of child, says SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Observing that paternal grandparents would always take "better care" of grandchildren, the Supreme Court on Thursday granted the custody of a six-year-old boy, orphaned in the deadly second wave of Covid last year, to his paternal grandparents instead of his maternal aunt. Court observed that the child's inclination is towards paternal grandparents.

The bench, however, said maternal aunt can have visitation rights and meet child once a month as per convenience. "We are of opinion that High Court has committed an error in not handing over and/or continuing custody of corpus — grandson to appellant — paternal grandparents and to give custody of corpus to ...Maternal aunt of corpus. We are of opinion that if balance is to be struck between paternal grandparents and maternal aunt..., the balance would certainly tilt in favour of paternal grandparents," it said.

The Bench also expected to have video calling between boy and maternal aunt on a regular basis, it said, adding that verdict should not be misunderstood that maternal aunt may not take proper care of minor son of her deceased sister.

take care of their grandson.

It is said that the grandparents love the interest rather than principal. Emotionally also the grandparents will always take better care of their grandson. Grand Parents are more attached emotionally with grandchildren..." Justice Shah, writing the judgment for the bench, said, observing the child's inclination towards paternal grandparents.

The bench, however, said maternal aunt can have visitation rights and meet child once a month as per convenience. "We are of opinion that High Court has committed an error in not handing over and/or continuing custody of corpus — grandson to appellant — paternal grandparents and to give custody of corpus to ...Maternal aunt of corpus. We are of opinion that if balance is to be struck between paternal grandparents and maternal aunt..., the balance would certainly tilt in favour of paternal grandparents," it said.

The Bench also expected to have video calling between boy and maternal aunt on a regular basis, it said, adding that verdict should not be misunderstood that maternal aunt may not take proper care of minor son of her deceased sister.

## India hands over to Vietnam 12 high-speed guard boats



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

speed guard boats under the USD 100 million defence Line of Credit by India."The initial five boats were manufactured at the Larsen and Toubro shipyard in India and the remaining seven were built in the Hong Ha shipyard.

"I am confident that this will be a precursor to many more cooperative defence projects between India and Vietnam," he said.

"This project is a glowing example of our 'Make in India -- Make for the World' mission," Rajnath said. The defence minister said India would be "greatly pleased" if "close friends like Vietnam" become part of the country's transformation in the defence manufacturing sector.

He said the successful completion of the project, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, is a reflection of the commitment and professional excellence of the Indian defence manufacturing sector as also the Hong Ha shipyard.

Rajnath said the Indian defence industry has substantially increased its capabilities under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## ₹30.9 cr jet of Bhushan Airways attached by ED

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached a Cessna 525 A CJ 2+ Aircraft valued at Rs 30.91 crore belonging to Bhushan Airways Services Private Limited under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a cheating and bank fraud case. Total provisional attachments in this case stand at Rs 4,454.27 crore.

Bhushan Airways Services Private Limited is a company controlled and owned

by Sanjay Singal, former Managing Director of Bhushan Power & Steel Limited (BPSL). The attachment is part of ongoing ED investigations against BPSL and others, under PMLA).

Earlier, the ED had attached various immovable/movable assets valued at Rs. 4,423.36 crore (including residential/commercial properties at London, Mumbai and Delhi) in this case. The ED had initiated money laundering

investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by CBI on April 5, 2019 under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and relevant provisions f the Prevention of Corruption Act against various suspects including BSPL, Sanjay Singal, the then MD BPSL and others for criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery for purpose of cheating, use of forged documents as genuine, falsification of accounts and criminal misconduct by public servant.

## AIIA, IIT-D to develop diagnostic tools for Ayurveda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ayurveda has now turned to modern technology for validation of its beliefs and systems. As the Covid-19 threat continues, the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), under the Union Ayush Ministry, and Indian Institute of Technology(IIT), Delhi, are jointly working to develop innovative diagnostic tools and equipment for various Ayurvedic procedures.

Dr Tanuja Nesari, Director of the Delhi-based AIIA told reporters here on Thursday that at least seven collaborative projects for interdisciplinary

research in Ayurveda and applying engineering science principles have been undertaken for which results are on the way.

For instance these include, she informed, 'dhoopan yantra' - a fumigation device for aiding wound healing is being developed to eradicate virus and bacteria from the air while early cancer detection and assessment of breast cancer response to Ayurvedic drugs is being developed.

Others are Ayurvedic rasas (tastes) on gastrointestinal secretions; herbal formulations that would reduce the harmful effects of reusing cooking oil, developing a

biodegradable, herbal wound dressing and last but not the least is the study the effects of the 'Brahmari pranayama' on the nervous system. Most of these are likely to be completed by the year-end, Dr Nesari said.

She also shared that the institute is now planning to establish 'Respiratory Rehabilitation Centre' to cater to post-Covid patients, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease patients, post-acute respiratory distress syndrome patients, and interstitial lung disease patients, with ayurveda therapies, yoga, meditation and modern equipment like spirometer,

incentive spirometry and bronchodilators medicines. "The Hospital is also in the process of establishing a chemotherapy day care center to treat cancer patients using a combination of Ayurveda therapy and chemotherapy," she added.

These are just a few measures being undertaken where the best of traditional and modern medicine and therapies are being combined, "We are also working to provide holistic people-centered health services for all.

India has committed to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Universal Health Coverage by 2030.

## Bharat Gaurav train to have on-board facility for yoga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Besides several other spiritual amenities, the first "Bharat Gaurav" train, which will take pilgrims to destinations closely associated with Lord Ram in India and Nepal, will also have on-board facility for practising yoga.

According to sources in the Railways, the train will depart from Delhi's Safdarjung Station on International Yoga Day on June 21. The 10-coach train being run on Shri Ramayana Yatra Circuit will be theme based, with each coach depicting culture and tradi-

tions of India. Coach interior will be decorated with posters and artwork highlighting various themes. Two of coaches have been dedicated to yoga. An instructor will be present to showcase various asanas and interested passengers will be able to perform them in coach itself, sources said.

This will also be first tourist train to cross international borders and travel to neighbouring Nepal. It will also be first such train for tourists with all third AC coaches.

The train will take 18 days to complete its journey and will cover eight states and 12 cities across country.



# Explore legal option on hate speech, Didi tells protesters

Kona e-way blocked over quips against Prophet

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The consequence of alleged objectionable remarks earlier made by some politicians against Prophet Muhammad on Thursday reached the banks of Hooghly as members of a particular community blockaded away the busy Kona Express Way running past the high security Chief Minister's Office towards Bombay and Delhi Roads entrapping thousands of vehicles and many more thousands of daily commuters in sweltering heat.

Onlookers across the Hooghly Bridge linking Kolkata and Howrah said the traffic jam could be more than 8 km long and was growing in length under the impact of the relentless barricade.

The blockade that started at around 12 in the noon was continuing 8 hours later notwithstanding frantic appeal by a visibly helpless Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who requested "with folded hands to the members of all communities to



engage in peaceful dialogues instead of putting the society as a whole in jeopardy."

While the blockaders ignored the Chief Minister and the plight of commuters that included patients in ambulances and travelers coming from outside Kolkata continuing to burn tyres on the road and holding a large part of Howrah and Kolkata to ransom a listless clueless Kolkata Police often credited with clearing political jams in moments waited for orders, sources said.

A similar kind of protest was witnessed many years ago during the Left Front regime when the then Government had decided to host Bangla writer Taslima Nasreen in Kolkata. The situation was promptly handled by the then Government which immediately called in the Army.

However the Chief Minister stuck to appeals asking the agitators to explore legal options even as she said, "I could have

used force but I do not believe in use of force so I request all of you ... the people of all religion and groups with folded hands to engage in peaceful solution instead of putting large section of your fellow citizens to hardship of this measure."

She also asked them to protest in Delhi. She said "Go to New Delhi and protest, where there is a BJP government. Go to Gujarat and UP ... in Bengal no hate speeches are allowed."

She further said: "I call upon you to take explore measures and go to the police stations and file FIRs ... I am sure the police will take appropriate action there will be no issue and the culprits will be brought to book for their misdemeanor ... but this is no way to show your disgust."

The Bengal Imam Association too condemned the

road blockade saying "putting the fellow citizens and the society in trouble is no way to find solution ... the State administration is requested to deal the problem with strong hands ... no unruliness must be tolerated."

Earlier the Chief Minister had openly condemned the hate speech by some politicians and demanded legal actions against them.

She tweeted: "I condemn the recent heinous and atrocious hate speech remarks by a few disastrous BJP leaders, resulting in not only spread of violence, but also division of the fabric of the country, leading to disturbance of peace and amity ... I strongly seek that the accused leaders of BJP be arrested immediately so that the unity of the country is not disturbed and people at large do not face mental agony."

## BJP not for dividing Bengal: Nadda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

BJP national president JP Nadda on Thursday set to rest the issue of partition of Bengal. While the first two MPs demanded separation of North Bengal saying his party did not want the State to be partitioned.

The BJP president in a meeting told the party leaders not to make comments on slicing of Bengal saying "the party

does not support this view."

Earlier a whole lot of MPs including John Burla, Jayanta Roy and Saumitra Khan had openly demanded partition of Bengal. While the first two MPs demanded separation of North Bengal from South Bengal Khan demanded partition of Rarh Bengal comprising the Jangal Mahal districts --- like Purulia and Bankura --- of the State.

# J&K LG orders probe into alleged bungling in police recruitment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Amid hue and cry raised by the aspirants over the issue of alleged bungling in the recruitment of police sub-inspectors in Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday ordered a high-level probe into the matter to unravel the truth.

"From the last two-three days, newspapers have been reporting against the conduct of the Sub Inspector selection process by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB). We have decided to constitute a committee headed by Additional Chief Secretary Home R K Goyal that will probe into the matter and submit its report in a time bound manner", the Lt Governor said at a police academy in Udhampur. If any irregularity is revealed in the probe, the process shall be cancelled and fresh recruitment will be made", added the Lt Governor.

Referring to the serious allegations of malpractices reported in the media LG Sinha said, "No questions were raised at any other recruitment done so far. If there is any apprehension and doubt in the mind of the people, then it is the duty of the administration to carry



out an impartial inquiry and take necessary action.

Earlier addressing the attestation cum passing out parade at the police academy Sinha said that the terrorists and their cross-border supporters are using new method of terrorism in the region and declared that the government is committed to destroy their entire eco-system.

"The terrorists, their supporters and other support setup here are using new methods. They are radicalizing the youths," Sinha told an

outgoing parade of police.

He said that there is a need to be more alert as compared to the past in view of the new strategy and multifacet terrorism.

The LG asked the police force to treat even those who harbour and support the terrorists in the category of terrorist and deal with them accordingly.

"The person, who harbours and supports the terrorist, is equally a guilty as a terrorist, who kills. The person who runs this eco-system

is equally guilty," he said.

"Both should be dealt with similar punishment as both are enemies of humanity," he said.

Reassuring the families of those who lost their kin in selective killings, LG said their killers will soon be brought to justice.

"I want to reassure the families of martyrs that each tear of yours will be avenged. Security forces will not rest till they eliminate each of those, who killed the innocents," said the LG.

# Education is greatest enabler: Kovind at 5th convocation of IIM-Jammu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

For India to become a global knowledge hub, our institutes of learning have to be globally comparable, said the President of India Ram Nath Kovind here on Thursday. He was addressing the 5th annual convocation of Indian Institute of Management, Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that education is the greatest enabler. The future of our country depends on the good education of our young population. Institutes like IIM Jammu are nurturing our youth. These talented young people are going to build the India of the future. They are going to make the lives of the people, better, and

the country, stronger.

Referring to the start-up ecosystem President Kovind emphasised the mindset of being a job-giver and not a job-seeker among the youth of India is one of the key factors in our country having one of the best start-up ecosystems in the world. He was happy to note that IIM Jammu, in collaboration with DICCI and CII, is going to set up a special diversity cell for helping potential entrepreneurs from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. He appreciated everyone concerned with this initiative to promote entrepreneurship and inclusion.

He was happy to note that the number of Indian institutions in the global ranking is gradually increasing. He said

that new institutions like IIM Jammu should quickly adopt global best practices and aspire for higher ranking.

The President said that aided by convergence of technologies and opportunities, many start-ups have become very successful and are being described as the emerging mainstay of the Indian economy. Unicorns, most of which are set up by young people, must be a source of inspiration for all students.

The President advised students to remain quick learners and re-learners throughout their life.

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Dr. Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, Confederation of



Indian Industries (CII), and Ravi Kumar Narra, President, Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce (DICC) along with Dr. Milind Kamble, Chairman,

Board of Governors, IIM Jammu. Prof. B.S. Sahay Director, IIM Jammu attended the ceremony.

A total of 214 students

were conferred with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) Degree this year. A total number of 77 female students were also awarded the degrees.

# India to host ASEAN Foreign Mins from June 16; Myanmar may skip

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said Myanmar's participation at the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' meeting would be based on the rules of the grouping, which is seen as an indication that the country's Foreign Minister is unlikely to be in New Delhi.

The position of the ASEAN on engaging Myanmar at multilateral forums following the military coup in that country last year has been that it should be at the non-political level. "India will host the Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting (SAIFMM)

on June 16 to 17 to mark the 30th anniversary of our dialogue relations and the 10th anniversary of our strategic partnership with the ASEAN," Bagchi said at a media briefing.

He said External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Singaporean counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan will co-chair the meeting.

The Foreign Minister of Singapore is India's country coordinator in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).

Bagchi said foreign ministers of other ASEAN member states and the ASEAN secretary-general will participate in the SAIFMM.

# 1.30 lakh loudspeakers removed from religious places across UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As part of a drive to remove loudspeakers from religious places across Uttar Pradesh, the police informed on Thursday that nearly 1.30 lakh such devices have been dismantled and installed in schools and academic institutions.

A government spokesman said in Lucknow on Thursday that the state had set an example before the country in taming loudspeakers. "As many as 72,509 loudspeakers were removed from various places of

worship during the statewide drive in Uttar Pradesh and volume of 56,558 loudspeakers was reduced to permissible levels," he said.

"Loudspeakers that were removed were later handed over to schools. More than 13,145 loudspeakers were donated for morning assembly of schools, while as many as 1,583 speakers were handed over for public address systems in the area," the spokesman said.

On April 23, the Home department had issued orders to remove loudspeakers from

religious places. The chief minister's directives were based on an order of the Allahabad High Court and the authorities followed it in letter and spirit.

The entire process was conducted peacefully and amicably by maintaining dialogues with spiritual leaders of various communities.

During the drive, spiritual leaders were made aware of noise pollution through loudspeakers. Giving out a good message to society, religious leaders extended their cooperation in removing the loudspeakers.

# Bittu appointed RLD farmers' cell chief

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Former Congress leader Baljit Singh Bittu has been appointed national president of Kisan Prakosth (farmers' cell) of the Rashtriya Lok Dal.

Senior RLD leader Surendra Nath Trivedi told media persons in Lucknow on Thursday that party's national president Jayant Chaudhary appointed Bittu as chief of the farmers' cell.

"Bittu hails from Raipur and the decision to appoint him to lead the farmers' cell of the RLD was taken at a meeting at the party office in New

Delhi. Bittu has served in various capacities in Youth Congress and has also held the post of UPCC general secretary and in-charge of Lok Sabha elections in Pilibhit," he said.

Trivedi added that Bittu was very impressed with the ideology of late Prime Minister and farmers' leader Chaudhary Charan Singh and hence decided to join the party.

Team RLD national convenor Anupam Mishra congratulated Bittu on his appointment and said that the RLD farmers' cell would achieve success under his leadership.

# 9 BJP leaders file papers for UP Council elections

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All nine candidates of the Bharatiya Janata Party, including seven ministers, filed their nomination papers in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, party state president Swatantra Dev Singh, and Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak.

The BJP candidates for the UP Legislative Council polls include Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, Bhupendra Chaudhary, Dayashankar Mishra Dayalu,

JPS Rathore, Jaswant Saini, Danish Azad Ansari, Banwarilal Dohre, Mukesh Sharma and Narendra Kashyap.

Barring former MLA Banwarilal Dohre and BJP city unit president Mukesh Sharma, the other seven are ministers in the Yogi Adityanath council of ministers. Out of them Keshav Prasad Maurya had contested the assembly election from Sirathu but lost to Pallavi Patel of Apna Dal (Kamerawadi).

Before filing their nomination papers, all these leaders reached the BJP office here on Thursday morning and met

party state president Swatantra Dev Singh, state general secretary (organisation) Sunil Bansal and other party functionaries.

In the Kushabhau Thackeray auditorium of the BJP state headquarters, the party state president greeted all the candidates and felicitated them with the party's scarf. State general secretary Govind Narayan Shukla, Amarpal Maurya, media in-charge Manish Dixit and other senior office-bearers and a large number of workers were also present on this occasion.



Mathous paint their elephants to prepare them for the upcoming religious procession, 'Jalyatra' outside the Jagannath Temple, in Ahmedabad on Thursday

PTI

# NCP rehabilitates ex-BJP leader Khadse, nominates him for Maha council polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Nearly 19 months after he quit the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and joined the Sharad Pawar-led party, the ruling NCP on Thursday rehabilitated former minister and senior party leader Eknath Khadse politically, by nominating him as its candidate for the forthcoming Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC) polls, even as the Opposition BJP once again denied party ticket to its former minister Pankaja Munde to contest the MLC polls.

Sixty-nine-year-old Khadse, who had joined the NCP in October 2020 after having been virtually consigned to dog house for four-long years by the BJP, expressed happiness, as the NCP nominated him as one of the two candidates for the June 20, 2022 MLC polls. The NCP's first candidate is the State Legislative Council's current

chairman Ramraje Naik-Nimbalkar.

On his part, Khadse thanked the NCP leadership for nominating him to contest the MLC polls. "I would like to thank Sharad Pawar saheb. He has done me justice by nominating me to contest the MLC polls," he said.

Meanwhile, the rejection of a party ticket to Pankaja Munde, daughter of late senior BJP leader Gopinath Munde, came as a big disappointment to her and his supporters in the state. Her supporters staged a protest in front of the BJP office at Aurangabad hours after she was denied ticket by the BJP to contest the NLC polls.

Thursday was the second occasion in two years when she was denied a BJP ticket to contest the MLC polls. Earlier on May 8, 2020, she had been denied a party ticket in a similar fashion.

It may be recalled that

Pankaja had created a stir in the BJP in December 2019, ahead of her late father Gopinath Munde's 70th birth anniversary by joining hands with Khadse, announcing her resignation from the party's core group and daring the party leadership to sack her from the party.

For the June 20 MLC polls for 10 seats, the NCP has put up two candidates - Khadse and Nimbalkar, while alliance partner Shiv Sena has nominated Sachin Ahir and Amasha Padvi as its candidates. The Congress, the third ruling Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) has fielded its former minister Chandrakant Handore and Mumbai party President Bhai Jagtap for the polls.

The over-ambitious Opposition BJP has put up as many as six candidates -- current leader of the Opposition in the Upper House Pravin Darekar, Ram Shinde, Shrikant Bharatiya, Uma Kapre and

Prasad Lad, while it has offered its support to Independent MLA Sadabhau Khot.

The biennial polls to the 10 MLC seats are being held to fill up the vacancies of retiring members including Naik-Nimbalkar, Ravindra Phatak, Sanjay Daund, Surjitsinh Thakur, Vinayak Mete, Darekar, Desai, Raote, Lad and Khot.

The nomination of Khadse comes as a big boost to the former veteran BJP leader, who had quit the party after being part of it 40-long years ever since it was formed way back in 1980.

Khadse was a minister in the Sena-BJP government (1995-1999). Subsequently he became a Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly.

He was a strong contender for the chief minister when the BJP came to power in the state in 2014. However, Devendra Fadnavis pipped him to the post.







FIRST COLUMN

KEY TO CHANGE IS POSITIVE THINKING, PSYCHOLOGY

These qualities can influence economic development of an area and of the nation



SANGRAM MISHRA

Positive thinking in any given situation is a game changer. It is an attitude that can transform an ambiance, metamorphosing the sombre situation into a coruscating one. It seldom ignores reality, but approaches and addresses the problem with a positive attitude. Its impact, both internal and external, is tremendous as apart from ensuring a sound health of the propounder, it manifests positivity in accomplishments. Positive thinking increases motivation and catalyses action. It wards off negativity and fends for positive action. Positive affirmations, visualisation of positive outcomes, trust in self, inculcation of positive habits, and quest for silver linings in dark clouds propel positive visualisation and achievement . Just as a society is made of individuals, a nation comprises citizens and Government. Then there is the corporate sector. The physical and psychological wellbeing of individual members and their positive attitude help the nation and society. All sections grow if there is positivity. On the other hand, negativity if rampant makes a society or a nation sick with plethora of problems. Engineering a socio-economic change and effecting a paradigm shift to usher in economic development essentially needs motivation of the people for harbingering a positive result. A society conducive for a socio-economic change can herald positive economic development. Inducing positive psychology through achievement motivation is the path to economic development. Achievement motivation is a social motive and refers to striving for success with some standards of excellence. Psychologists like McClelland advocated this theory of achievement motivation. Atkinson also stated in his interaction model that the tendency to achieve success and the tendency to avoid failure are predominant in taking up any venture.

Entrepreneurship as such refers to creative and innovative responses to the environment. As it is put, there is no ideal profile. Entrepreneurs can be gregarious or taciturn, analytical or intuitive, cautious or daring. Hence positive thinking and achievement motivation can initiate a motion. Positive thinking inculcates self-confidence, risk taking ability, flexibility, need for achievement, internal locus of control, and a desire for independence and, as per Meredith, these are essential traits or qualities to initiate any economic activity. It is clear that positive psychology through achievement motivation can induce the qualities like need for achievement and making choices (with risk taking abilities), etc., and inculcation of those values in individual members. It can influence the economic development of the area in particular and the nation in general. Development of a sound entrepreneurial ecosystem which is the sum total of environmental factors that promote or hinder entrepreneurship can transform the economic scenario. Even educational institutions with motivational education can create awareness and expectancy for entrepreneurial behaviour with increase in self-efficacy. Positive thinking can destigmatise failure, explore rationality (from cognitive theorists' point of view). and spearhead the activity . It is evident from a theoretical as well as pragmatic perception that positive psychology plays a very active role in economic development through achievement motivation. Positive thinking through motivation sans negativity can catalyse economic development.

*(The author is a superannuated senior IAS officer. The views expressed are personal.)*

# How CSCs are helping delivery in rural India



DINESH TYAGI

## With Government support, at Central and State levels, CSCs can be very effective for delivery of services to citizens, especially in the countryside

Common service centres (CSCs) are digital access points under the Digital India initiative of the government of India. CSCs are social enterprises with basic computing infrastructure, which are operated and managed by a local entrepreneur. These entrepreneurs support the community in availing various government and non-Government services.

Government, both at the Central and state levels, has utilised the CSC network for extending various citizen-centric services and also support in implementation of government programmes and schemes to citizens close to their places of residence.

How effective is the CSC model for delivery of various services to citizen especially in rural India? Attempt has been made to evaluate this for selected Central government flagship programmes. One of the government initiatives has been enabling every citizen to get an Aadhar number. CSCs across the country have supported in enrollment of about 20 crore citizens for Aadhar, which is about 16 per cent of the total Aadhar generated in the country. This of course cannot be considered as major achievement. This is mainly due to the fact that all CSCs were not permitted to do Aadhar registration by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).


Even today only about 15,000 of the total 5.12 CSCs are allowed to undertake Aadhar updating. Despite this, the CSC network is the highest Aadhar enrolment agency in the country. Thus the low contribution in the Aadhaar registration and updating is due to the regulatory forbearance, not because of CSCs' inability.

Another major government initiative is financial inclusion. CSCs are working as business correspondents (BCs) of banks and also promoting the Aadhar enabled payment system (AEPs). All the 5 lakh plus CSCs are delivering the basic financial services to citizens. During 2021-22, CSCs enabled AEPs transaction for an amount of more than ₹15,000 crore; through 55,000 BCs, the bank transaction amount was ₹45,000 crore. A total of about 22 crore transaction took place in 2021-22 through BCs and AEPs services.

CSCs are also helping citizen avail loan products from banks. About 2 million loan leads have been generated during one year through CSCs across the country. CSCs have also helped citizens avail life and non-life insurance products. During the last year, 16 lakh non-life insurance products were sold to citizens through CSCs.

Similarly, CSCs are the largest enrollment agency for the National Pension Scheme of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). They have enrolled more than 45 lakh labourers under the Prime Minister Shramyogi Mandhaan Yojna.

CSCs have helped in extending the other Government pension schemes. Promoting a digitally empowered and inclusive society is another mandate of the



CSCs HAVE EMERGED AS AN EFFECTIVE CHANNEL FOR THE CONDUCT OF SURVEY, ADVOCACY OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES, AND SUPPORT IN REGISTRATION OF IDENTIFIED BENEFICIARIES WITHIN A DEFINED TIME FRAME

*(The writer is a 1978 batch IAS officer, is Managing Director, Common Services Centre (CSC) e-Governance Services, Ministry of Information Technology. The views expressed are personal.)*



Government. CSCs have supported the government in extending digital literacy to citizens in rural India. Under the Prime Minister Grameen Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) more than 45 million rural people have been provided basic digital literacy; over 50 per cent of these are women. The impact of digital literacy is also reflected in the significant increase in internet usage in rural India in recent years—about 68 crore broadband users.

The Government's intention is also to make all its services delivered to citizens close to the place of their residence. Beside enabling individuals to avail such services themselves (the Umang APP ), these are also delivered through an assisted mode, CSCs, especially to support those who are unable to avail the same directly. The Digital Sewa platform supports Government in enabling access to such services through CSCs.

However, only 15 state government (e-district) services are integrated and thus available to the people in rural areas. In many states, a large number of services are still to be enabled for delivery through CSCs. The total number of G2C services transaction through CSCs during the last year was 10.9 crore (all transactions through the Digital Sewa portal) as compared to 1.06 crore in 2014. Non-G2C service transactions during 2021 were 27.2 crore. Thus CSCs are not playing a very significant role in extending all G2C services, especially of State Governments. Uttar Pradesh (30 per cent), Bihar (10 per cent) and

Maharashtra (11 per cent) alone contribute more than 50 per cent of the total G2C services delivered through CSCs to villagers. Thus the delivery of G2C services through CSCs to citizen depends on the state government's support to integrate such services with the Digital Sewa portal and CSCs are still to play a significant role in enabling access to all G2C services to citizen across the country.

This requires integration of all the existing Government services both at the Central and state levels. The Government is also committed to improve the quality of life of farmers. CSCs have supported government in extension of the Fasal Bima Scheme. About 70 per cent of the non-loanee farmers in the country are extended the Fasal Bima Scheme through the CSCs. Similarly, CSCs have supported the extension of soil health cards (5 crore) and PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna (3.76 crore farmers).

CSCs have also promoted more than 3,000 farmer producer organisations (FPOs). Twelve 12 lakh farmers have availed the advisory from experts through the CSC teleconsultation platform. CSCs have supported farmers in the sale of their produce but in a very limited way.

Ayushman Bharat is an important scheme of Government, providing ₹5-lakh health insurance to poor families. Over 50 per cent (or 7 crore) persons have been supported by CSCs by way of registration for Ayushman Bharat. Telemedicine services of CSCs also have a limited success as the acceptability of such services in

rural India takes a long time. The Government has also been committed to extend good quality internet to rural India through Bharat Net (optical fibre). CSCs are associated in the last-mile operation of the Bharat Net.

Labour welfare continues to be an important agenda for the government. The registration of unorganised labour through E-shram has been supported by CSCs across the country. Around 16 crore unorganised labourers have been so far registered by CSCs under E-Shram which is more than 50 per cent of the total registration.

CSCs have to play a significant role in the extension of healthcare services to citizens, owing to the limited success of telemedicine in rural areas. CSCs have emerged as an effective channel for the conduct of survey (economic census of 40 crore household/establishment), advocacy of Government schemes/programmes, and support in registration of identified beneficiaries within a defined time frame.

Thus, so far the effectiveness of CSCs for support to rural citizens has been partial. With government support, both at the Central and state levels, however, CSCs can be very effective for the delivery of services to citizen, especially in the countryside. Local entrepreneurs (more than one lakh of them being women), driven by incentives and possessing the desired skill to manage and operate the computing infrastructure, can be a game changer. They help build sustainable social enterprises and a model for other developing countries.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE PRIME MINISTER IS ON A WITCH HUNT AGAINST THE AAP WITH FULL FORCE. WE'RE SEEING VICIOUS CAMPAIGNS. — DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL



KEJRIWAL HAD DEMANDED PADMA VIBHUSHAN FOR (SATYENDAR) JAIN...BOUND TO GIVE A CLEAN CHIT. HE'S A PARTNER IN CRIME. — BJP LEADER KAPIL MISHRA

# Boris Johnson averts crisis but still in unsafe zone

## The public has turned against him; the Labour Party has been leading the Conservatives in opinion polls

Cad.' Scoundrel.' 'Rotter.' The words that members of the British public used to describe Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the aftermath of last weekend's failed attempt by parliamentary members of his own Conservative Party to remove him from office had a weirdly antique ring. Nobody in England really talks like that anymore.

But then, Johnson is a weirdly antique figure. He could be a scoundrel in one of Charles Dickens' novels, or a comically inept cad in a P.G. Wodehouse story, or at best the fictional schoolboy Billy Bunter in the boys' weekly paper The Magnet (1908-1940). But behind the facade of a well-intentioned but baffled toff is just a con man.

Johnson's last-but-one predecessor as prime minister,

David Cameron, once called him a "greased piglet" who "manages to slip through other people's hands where mere mortals fail." He is always getting into trouble, but somehow he always gets away with it. Until now.

He lies reflexively, even when he doesn't need to, and everybody in the country knows it. He is transparently self-interested, shamelessly entitled, and his only notable accomplishment in almost three years in office has been to 'get Brexit done'. Except that it isn't 'done'; it's falling apart again.

His relationship with the Conservative Party he leads has always been transactional. Most of his parliamentary colleagues dislike and distrust him, but they believed he could win elections for them because so many voters fell for Johnson's shambling

The Conservatives are famous for their ruthlessness in ditching leaders who cannot deliver, and true to form there was an attempt to dump Johnson last weekend. More than 15 per cent of the party's members of Parliament demanded a secret ballot on his leadership, which automatically triggered Monday's vote.

It failed, as everybody expected it would, because the 'payroll vote' (Members of Parliament who hold government appointments and are obliged to support the prime minister) accounts for almost half of all the Conservative MPs. But the revolt came far closer to succeeding than the rebels had hoped, and it was the start of an almost unstoppable process.

The final tally was 211 votes

to keep Johnson as party leader (and therefore prime minister); 148 votes to drop him. That is not "an extremely good, positive, conclusive, decisive result," as Johnson claimed. It is a defeat from which there is no coming back.

One reason is that a clear majority of the 'backbenchers' (those not on the 'payroll vote') voted to change leaders. Now that they know their own numbers, they will be more confident and persistent, knowing that they just have to wait for some of the rats (or rather, ministers, junior ministers and parliamentary private secretaries) to desert the sinking ship.

The other reason is that the British public (including Conservative voters) has finally made up its mind about Johnson. The decisive factor

was 'Partygate': the endless succession of boozy leaving parties, birthday parties, and 'Thank God It's Friday' parties that took place in Johnson's house and offices at the height of Covid lockdowns in Britain.

There was a months-long drip-feed of leaks and fines, giving everyone ample time to contemplate the gulf in behaviour between ordinary people who obeyed the rules even to the extent of not visiting family members dying in hospitals, and privileged political operators who thought they were above the rules. It will prove fatal for Johnson's prime ministership.

Johnson can stagger along for a while, throwing out random threats and promises—to start a trade war with the European Union, or to bring back 'Imperial measures' (inch-

es, ounces and quarts)—all in the hope of resurrecting his leading role in the old Brexit wars at home. But he won't get very far.

From now on, he will face the same sort of guerrilla war that he himself used to bring down his predecessor, Theresa May. The rebels within his own party will combine with the opposition parties to thwart any deliberately provocative legislation that he tries to pass.

The Labour Party, of course, is praying that Johnson stays in office until the next scheduled election in 2024, or chooses to call an early election as a last-ditch gamble: that would virtually guarantee a Labour victory. However, the Conservatives are still not so befuddled as to let that happen. Johnson will be gone within the year.



GWYNNE DYER

*Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)*



# Lanka's ex-FM Basil resigns from Parliament

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Basil Rajapaksa, the youngest brother of Sri Lanka's president and former finance minister, resigned from his parliamentary seat on Thursday, the second such resignation from the cash-strapped government in a month from the powerful Rajapaksa family amid massive public protest over the unprecedented economic crisis in the country.

With the Rajapaksas coming under intense public pressure for their mishandling of the economic crisis, Mahinda Rajapaksa, the prime minister and elder brother of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, had to resign last month.

Talking to reporters here, Basil said, "I resigned my seat to allow Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) to nominate someone suitable."

Asked if he had preempted resignation as he would be disqualified to be in Parliament through the proposed 21st Amendment (21A) to the Constitution due to his holding of both the US and Sri Lankan dual citizenship, Basil, the youngest of the Rajapaksa brothers, said it wasn't so.

Basil, however, said he is opposed to the 21st Amendment, the Daily Mirror newspaper reported.

The 21A aims, among other reforms, at barring dual citizens from contesting elections to hold public office.

The 21st Amendment is also expected to annul the 20A to the



Constitution, which gives unfettered powers to President Gotabaya after abolishing the 19th Amendment that will strengthen Parliament.

In a direct attack on Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Basil said he is against presidential powers being pruned to be vested with a prime minister not elected by the people. His

elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa had to resign amidst public anger against the government's inability to handle the economic crisis.

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.

Both Basil, 71, and Mahinda, 76, fell victim to public rage as demonstrations became widespread urging the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 72, over the economic crisis.

Widely regarded as the intellectual pillar of the Rajapaksa family of political brothers, Basil was the finance minister of Sri Lanka until April 4 when he was sacked by President Gotabaya as the country's economic crisis worsened.

He was accused of being partially responsible for the economic crisis in the country.

However, Basil denied that the economic crisis was not his making and the country should have gone to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout much earlier.

Sri Lanka is currently in the process of striking a bailout deal with the IMF.

Basil said he was the one who initiated engagement with the IMF but there was another group in the government against it at that time.

He said the government should go for an IMF programme on a sound footing.

Basil asserted it was his initiative -- making contact with India for credit lines -- that saved Sri Lanka from suffering more.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament that no country except India is providing money to the crisis-hit island nation for fuel.

Meanwhile, billionaire businessman Dhammika Perera is tipped to be nominated as the SLPP national list parliamentarian to fill the seat vacated by the resignation of Basil, the Colombo Page news portal reported.

# French lawmakers pledge support for Taiwan on island visit

AP ■ TAIPEI

A French parliamentary delegation pledged support for Taiwan during a meeting Thursday with the president of the self-governing island democracy that China claims as its own territory with no right to diplomatic recognition.

Senator Joel Guerriau, vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and the Armed Forces, told Tsai Ing-wen he would "help Taiwan oppose its oppressors and promote Taiwan's freedom."

Tsai, who won a second term as president in 2020, emphasized the strong connection between Taiwan's high-tech economy and countries in the European Union.

"We expect Taiwan and France to continue to deepen cooperation in various fields," Tsai said. France assumed the presidency of the Council of the EU in January.

The visit is the third by French lawmakers to Taiwan in recent months, and follows a meeting earlier this week between Tsai and a group of Slovakian lawmakers who

offered similar expressions of support for the island's democracy.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said "China is firmly opposed to any forms of official and political contacts between Taiwan and countries that have diplomatic ties with China." "We urge the relevant party to ... Avoid sending wrong signals to Taiwan independence forces, and take concrete actions to maintain the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations," Zhao said at a daily briefing.

Taiwan has drawn increasing support from European nations in defiance of China, while current and retired U.S. Politicians have also visited the island to show Washington's backing.

French Senators Vincent Eble, Sylvie Goy-Chavent, Dany Wattebled and Ludovic Haye were accompanying Guerriau on the six-day visit. In February, the European Commission unveiled the European Chips Act aimed at enabling the EU to work more closely with Taiwan and other world leaders in the semiconductor industry.

# Michigan GOP candidate Kelley charged for Capitol riot role

AP ■ DETROIT

Ryan Kelley, one of five Republican candidates for Michigan governor, was charged with misdemeanors on Thursday for his role in the 2021 postelection riot at the US Capitol.

Kelley, 40, was arrested in western Michigan and awaits a court hearing in Grand Rapids, FBI spokeswoman Mara Schneider said.

His arrest came hours before the House committee investigating the insurrection holds a widely-anticipated public hearing, showing never-seen video, audio and an array of evidence collected by the panel exemplifying the deadly violence that erupted that day.

There was no immediate comment from Kelley's campaign.

Kelley's participation in the Jan. 6 insurrection has

been widely known. In a court document, federal investigators filed photos of him in a baseball cap worn backward, trying to rally the pro-Donald Trump crowd.

An affidavit filed by the FBI says Kelley was captured on video outside the Capitol, where he repeatedly waved to the crowd, directing them toward stairs leading into the building. He also used his cellphone "to film the crowd assaulting and pushing past US Capitol Police Officers." He is later seen among a crowd that climbed the stairs to a Capitol entrance after causing police to retreat, the document states.

Kelley, who lives in Allendale Township, is accused of disruptive conduct, injuring public property and entering restricted space without permission, according to the criminal complaint.

Kelley is one of five candidates on the Aug. 2 Republican

primary ballot. The winner will face Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Kelley is among more than 800 people who are facing criminal charges in connection with the Jan. 6 riot. More than 300 people have pleaded guilty, largely to misdemeanor offenses punishable by no more than one year in prison.

Some who've pleaded guilty to misdemeanors have gotten short stints behind bars while others have been sentenced to home confinement or just probation.

Kelley declined to participate in a debate last week because organizers of a public policy conference on Mackinac Island required proof of a COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test. During the early months of the pandemic, Kelley organised a protest at the Michigan Capitol, inviting heavily armed militias to gather inside the statehouse.

# Chinese military plane crash kills 1, injures 2

PTI ■ BEIJING

A Chinese military jet crashed in a residential area in central China's Hubei Province on Thursday, killing one person and injuring two others in the country's third aviation accident in over two months.

The J-7 fighter jet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force crashed in the residential area in Xiangyang city, the state-run CGTN reported.

One person was killed and two others were injured, besides damage to residential buildings. The pilot ejected successfully. The pilot and the injured people have all been sent to the hospital for treatment, the report said.

The cause of the accident and the casualties are being further investigated and verified, the report said. The plane crashed in the residential area near the airport, setting off fire to several buildings, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported. State broadcaster CCTV's military channel reported that the J-7 fighter jet crashed during training. Videos of the crash posted on social media showed several houses on fire at the scene. Laohekou Airport is now mainly used as a training site for new fighter pilots from the Air Force, the Post report said.

There have been several other cases of fighter jets crashing during training flights in China. In 2015, a Chinese air force pilot parachuted to safety moments before his aircraft crashed into a hillside. Two years before that, a military pilot died when his fighter jet crashed during night training in eastern Zhejiang, the report said.

# Iran removing 27 surveillance cameras: UN nuclear watchdog

AP ■ VIENNA

The head of the UN's nuclear watchdog agency said Thursday that Iran is removing 27 surveillance cameras from nuclear sites in the country, raising the risk of its inspectors being unable to track Tehran's advances as it enriches closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, made the comments at a suddenly called news conference in Vienna, standing next to an example of the cameras installed across Iran.

Grossi said the move poses a "serious challenge" to its efforts, warning that in three to four weeks, it would be unable to maintain a "continuity of knowledge" about Iran's programme.

"This would be a fatal blow" to negotiations over Iran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers, Grossi said. "When we lose this, then it's anybody's guess," he added. Iran did not immediately acknowledge it was removing the cameras, though it threatened Wednesday to take more steps amid a yearslong crisis that threatens to widen into further attacks across the Mideast.

Grossi said that would leave "40-something" cameras still in Iran. The sites that would see cameras removed include its underground Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, as well as its facility in Isfahan, Grossi said.

"We are in a very tense situation with the negotiations over the (nuclear deal) at a low ebb," Grossi added. "Now we are adding this to the picture;



as you can see it's not a very nice one."

On Wednesday, Iran said it shut off two devices the IAEA uses to monitor enrichment at Natanz. Grossi acknowledged that, saying that among the devices being removed was the Online Enrichment Monitor and flowmeter. Those watch the enrichment of uranium gas through piping at enrichment facilities.

Iran's decision comes as the IAEA's board censured Tehran over what the agency calls the Islamic Republic's failure to provide "credible information" over man-made nuclear material found at three undeclared sites in the country.

The IAEA earlier Thursday said Grossi told members that Iran informed the agency that it planned to install two new cascades of the IR-6 at Natanz. A cascade is a series of centrifuges hooked together to rapidly spin uranium gas to enrich it.

An IR-6 centrifuge spins uranium 10 times as fast as the first-generation centrifuges that Iran was once limited to under its nuclear deal with world powers. As of February, Iran already had been spinning a

cascade of IR-6s at its underground facility at Fordo, according to the IAEA.

Iran earlier said it planned to install one cascade of IR-6s at Natanz. The IAEA said it "verified" the ongoing installation of that cascade Monday, while the newly promised two new cascades had yet to begin.

Iran and world powers agreed in 2015 to the nuclear deal, which saw Tehran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. In 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord, raising tensions across the wider Middle East and sparking a series of attacks and incidents.

Talks in Vienna over Iran's tattered nuclear deal have been stalled since April. Since the deal's collapse, Iran runs advanced centrifuges and has a rapidly growing stockpile of enriched uranium.

Nonproliferation experts warn Iran has enriched enough up to 60% purity - a short technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90% - to make one nuclear weapon should it decide to do so.

Iran insists its programme

is for peaceful purposes, though UN experts and Western intelligence agencies say Iran had an organised military nuclear programme through 2003.

Building a nuclear bomb would still take Iran more time if it pursued a weapon, analysts say, though they warn Tehran's advances make the programme more dangerous. Israel has threatened in the past that it would carry out a preemptive strike to stop Iran - and already is suspected in a series of recent killings targeting Iranian officials.

Iran already has been holding footage from IAEA surveillance cameras since February 2021 as a pressure tactic to restore the atomic accord. The Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, which runs its civilian nuclear programme, published video it said showed its workers turning off both regular and backup battery power for two IAEA cameras on Wednesday.

The censure resolution at the IAEA meeting in Vienna, sponsored by Germany, France, the UK and US, passed with the support of 30 of 35 governors. Russia and China voted against, Russian ambassador Mikhail Ulyanov wrote on Twitter. India, Libya and Pakistan abstained.

After the vote, a joint statement from France, Germany, and the UK and the US said the censure "sends an unambiguous message to Iran that it must meet its safeguards obligations and provide technically credible clarifications on outstanding safeguards issues." Iran's Foreign Ministry meanwhile criticised the censure as a "political, incorrect and unconstructive action".

# US official meets Marcos in Philippines in diplomatic push

AP ■ BANGKOK

A top State Department official met Thursday with Philippine President-elect Ferdinand Marcos Jr. In Manila, part of an ongoing diplomatic outreach in the Asia-Pacific region by Washington to try and blunt growing Chinese influence.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman tweeted after meeting Marcos that the two discussed a range of issues, including the Philippines-U.S. Alliance, deepening economic

ties, advancing human rights and "preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific."

Marcos, the son of long-time Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. Who was ousted in a popular uprising in 1986, was elected in a landslide last month, alarming human rights activists and pro-democracy groups.

The U.S. Appears prepared to work with him, with President Joe Biden being one of the first world leaders to call Marcos and congratulate him on his electoral victory.

# 35 children die in Ethiopia's Afar amid drought, conflict

AP ■ NAIROBI (KENYA)

At least 35 children have died in recent weeks due to drought and conflict in Ethiopia's northeastern Afar region, according to a local hospital and the medical charity Doctors Without Borders. The announcement on Thursday came days after a government minister denied that people have died due to food shortages.

"Thirty-five children have died in the last eight weeks alone," said doctors.

# Israeli PM Bennett in snap UAE visit amid standoff with Iran

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett was on a surprise visit to the United Arab Emirates on Thursday, a snap trip that came as efforts to salvage a deal over Iran's nuclear programme were stalled amid a deepening standoff with Tehran.

The visit was Bennett's second public trip to Abu Dhabi since Israel and the UAE agreed



to normalize ties in 2020 after years of quiet cooperation, mainly over their shared concerns over Iran's nuclear capabilities. A statement from Bennett's office said the Israeli leader will meet Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed and that the two will discuss "various regional issues," with Iran likely to top the agenda.

In a video statement recorded before departing, Bennett commended countries at an International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in Vienna on Wednesday who voted to censure Iran over its transparency about nuclear activities at three undeclared sites in the country.

"We see here a firm stance by the countries of the world regarding the distinction between good and evil, as they clearly state that Iran is concealing things. We will not let up on this issue," he said before boarding a plane to the UAE. The IAEA said Thursday Iran plans to ramp up its uranium enrichment, with the installation of advanced centrifuges. Israel considers Iran to be its greatest enemy and it strongly opposed the 2015 deal. It says it wants an improved deal that places tighter restrictions on Iran's nuclear programme and addresses Iran's long-range missile programme and its support for hostile proxies along Israel's borders. Israel also says the negotiations must be accompanied by a "credible" military threat to ensure that Iran does not delay indefinitely.

# EU court says UK residents in EU nations can't vote there

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union's top court ruled on Thursday that British citizens living long-term in the 27 EU member countries have no right to vote or stand for office in the bloc unless they have obtained a European nationality.

The ruling came in what was seen as a test case for the rights of UK citizens who continue to live in the EU despite Britain's exit from the bloc two years ago. More than one million Britons were living in Europe. Many opposed Brexit in January 2020 and had their lives upended.

The case was first launched in France by a British woman who has lived there for more than three decades, but who was struck off the electoral roll after Brexit and couldn't vote in local elections in March 2020. She had declined to apply for French nationality.

The woman, identified only by her initials EP in line with court practice, argues that she was deprived of her right to vote in the EU, but also in the UK owing to a rule there that



prevents people from voting if they've lived abroad for more than 15 years.

But the European Court of Justice ruled that people living in Europe even prior to Brexit "no longer enjoy the status of citizen of the Union, nor, more specifically, the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections in their Member State of residence," according to a court statement.

The Luxembourg-based court said that "this is an automatic consequence of the sole sovereign decision taken by the United Kingdom to withdraw from the European Union."

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Whereas We Chander Mohan Khatana, S/o Sh. Dharam Pal Khatana, Priya Mohan Khatana S/o Sh. Dharam Pal Khatana; Dharam Pal Khatana S/o Sh. Chet Ram and Surinder Singh Khatana S/o Sh. Gopi Singh have been granted a License No. 16 of 2022 Dated 9.3.2022 for Developing an Affordable residential Plotted Colony on Land measuring 9.025 acres under DDJAY Policy in Village Dhunela, Sector 35, Sohna, Distt. Gurugram by The Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh vide memo no. LC-4535-JE(MK)/2022/6662 Dated 10.3.2022.

And where as we are in the process of getting the said Project Registered on RERA, Gurugram for launch of the said Project and in the meantime the Change of Developer/Beneficial Interest as per Policy No. PF-51A/2015/2708 Dated 18th February 2015 for the said colony is proposed to M/s CLARIKA INFRA PVT LTD, Corp office ATS TOWER, Plot No. 16, 4th Floor Sector 135, Noida-201305 a subsidiary of M/s Homekraft Infra Pvt. Ltd.

And whereas office of Director Town & Country Planning, Haryana vide his memo no. LC-4535-JE(MK)/2022/15398 Dated 3.06.2022 has granted in principle approval for Change of Developer/ Beneficial Interest in favour of M/s CLARIKA INFRA PVT. LTD. and has required seeking "NO OBJECTION" from General Public for the proposed change of developer as a precondition for allowing the same.

Accordingly vide this Public Notice objections are hereby invited from any of the General Public/allottees in the said project on the proposed change of Developer within a period of 15 days from the date of Publication of this notice.

Objections if any be filed in the office of District Town Planner (P), Sector-14, Gurugram, Haryana or may be filed with the undersigned Licensees at their address given below failing which it shall be presumed that there are no objections for change of developer to M/s CLARIKA INFRA PVT. LTD. in this License.

**Sd/-**  
Chander Mohan Khatana, S/o Sh. Dharam Pal Khatana  
Priya Mohan Khatana S/o Sh. Dharam Pal Khatana  
Dharam Pal Khatana S/o Sh. Chet Ram  
and Surinder Singh Khatana S/o Sh. Gopi Singh  
All Residents of Village Dhunela, Tehsil Sohna, Distt. Gurugram



# Key city’s fate in balance as fighting rages in east Ukraine

AP ■ BAKHMUT (UKRAINE)

Russian forces pounded an eastern Ukrainian city on Thursday and the two sides waged pitched street battles that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said could determine the fate of the critical Donbas region. Meanwhile, Russia claimed that it struck a training facility far from the front lines, west of the capital.

In the wake of a series of setbacks in the 3-month-old war, Russia set its sights on the industrial Donbas region of coal mines and factories, where Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting Ukrainian

troops for years and where they already held swaths of territory before the invasion.

But, as elsewhere, the Russian advance has not been as quick as expected, and the plodding battle for control of Sievierodonetsk has devolved into street-to-street fighting that has been relatively rare in the conflict.

“Fierce battles continue in the city itself, street battles are taking place with varied success in city blocks,” Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai told The Associated Press. “The army of Ukraine is fighting for every street and house.”

Separately on Thursday,



Russia’s Defence Ministry said it used air-launched missiles against a Ukrainian military base in the Zhytomyr region, to the west of Kyiv, alleging that mercenaries were being trained there. There was no immediate comment from Ukrainian authorities to the Russian claims.

Moscow has repeatedly accused Ukraine of using mercenaries in the fighting.

Foreigners have fought as part of Ukraine’s regular military and some have joined volunteer brigades, but it’s unclear whether they’re mercenaries.

Zhytomyr has periodically suffered missile strikes — but the vast majority of fighting and

attacks have been concentrated in Ukraine’s east.

Late Wednesday, Zelenskyy called the painstaking, inch-by-inch fight for Sievierodonetsk the “epicentre” of the battle for the Donbas and perhaps one of the most difficult battles of the war. The city is one of the last yet to be taken by the Russians in Luhansk, one of the two regions that make up the Donbas.

“In many ways, it is there that the fate of our Donbas is being decided,” Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address, which was recorded in the street outside his office in Kyiv.

Oleksiy Arestovych, an adviser to Zelenskyy’s office,

said on Tuesday that Russian forces have changed their tactics in the battle, retreating from Sievierodonetsk, while pounding it with artillery and airstrikes — without any particular success. They are also targeting the neighbouring city of Lysychansk with “day and night shelling,” as well as trying to storm the key road connecting Lysychansk and Bakhmut to the southwest, he said. Evidence of the enormous human cost of the war mounted as workers pulled up to 100 bodies from each smashed building in the devastated city of Mariupol — a gruesome effort that one official described as an “endless caravan of death.”

## ‘Hard hit by sanctions Russia’s economy will shrink by 15% this year’

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Hard hit by sanctions since the February 24 invasion of Ukraine, Russia’s economy will shrink by 15 per cent this year and another 3 per cent in 2023, wiping out 15 years of economic gains, according to the Institute of International Finance, a global banking trade group.

The resilience of the ruble — Russia’s currency — has partially shielded its economy from the full impact of sanctions. Propping up the ruble are strong oil and natural gas sales and the Russian central bank, which has raised interest rates and imposed capital controls to keep money from fleeing the country.



Ukraine to export grain amid an escalating world food crisis.

Russia says the Ukrainian ports must be demined to allow safe shipping and insists on its right to check incoming ships to make sure they don’t bring weapons into Ukraine.

Ivashchenko said Ukraine would prefer if NATO ships entered the Black Sea and served as guarantors. He also said it was the Russians who have planted sea mines in the area, and it would take three to four months to remove them. In another development, Slovakia’s government has approved a long-term Defense Ministry plan to modernize and significantly increase the number of troops in its armed forces following Russia’s invasion of neighbouring Ukraine.

According to the plan announced Wednesday, the NATO member with a population of 5.5 million people should have 22,000 service members by 2035, up from 14,100 this year.

Slovakia also plans to acquire 228 various armed vehicles and will modernize its air force bases to be ready for the U.S. F-16 fighter jets whose delivery should start in 2024, with other deals to purchase new arms to follow.

The government has also

confirmed Slovakia’s commitment to spend 2 per cent of its gross domestic product on the military by 2024.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says a plan by the United Nations for a grain corridor to carry Ukrainian agricultural products was “feasible.” Speaking alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a news conference Wednesday in Ankara following talks, Cavusoglu said the plan required negotiation between Moscow and Kyiv.

There was no Ukrainian representative at the Ankara meeting. But Kyiv has expressed concerns that if it removes mines from its Black Sea ports, Russia would be more able to attack its southern coast. Cavusoglu also said Moscow’s request that its involvement in implementing the U.N. Plan result in the easing of international sanctions against it was “quite legitimate.”

“If the whole world is in need of the products to be exported by Ukraine and the Russian Federation, then a method needs to be established,” he said, adding that he hoped “technical preparations” could be made “as soon as possible.”

## Russia says it hit base for ‘mercenaries’

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia’s defence ministry says it used air-launched missiles to destroy a Ukrainian military base where foreign fighters allegedly were being trained.

Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said on Thursday that the training centre was in the Zhytomyr region of central Ukraine, about 125 kilometres west of Kyiv.

There was no immediate comment from Ukraine to the Russian claims. Russia refers to foreign fighters who joined Ukrainian troops in the war as mercenaries.

Konashenkov said Russian missiles also destroyed an ammunition depot and an anti-aircraft system elsewhere in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the governor of eastern Ukraine’s Luhansk province says Russian forces are

employing “scorched-earth tactics” against the city of Sievierodonetsk, hitting it with rockets, artillery and mortars.

Serhiy Haidai also told The Associated Press on Thursday that neighbouring Lysychansk is enduring “day and night shelling.”

Russians are trying the storm the key road connecting Lysychansk and the city of Bakhmut but have failed to gain control of it, he said.

Haidai says Ukraine still “remains able to deliver humanitarian supplies to the region by a relatively safe route.”

Ukraine’s east has been the main focus of Russia’s attacks for more than two months.

Haidai said there were two attacks on a chemical plant and “fierce battles” continue in Sievierodonetsk.

“Street battles are taking place with varied success in city



blocks,” the governor said. “The army of Ukraine is fighting for every street and house.”

Also, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Russia’s invasion of his country is a threat to the environment and could lead to dangerous pollution in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy made the comments at a ministerial meeting

of the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

He used the platform to impress on ministers the need to wean states off Russian natural gas in favour of green energy. The Black Sea and the Sea of Azov border both Ukraine and Russia. The Black Sea also borders Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Turkey.

In other development of the day, Poland’s president has sharply criticised phone calls the leaders of France and Germany had with Vladimir Putin, saying the conversations serve only to legitimise the Russian leader.

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz have spoken to Putin several times since Russia invaded Ukraine, both separately and together, in attempts to nudge him toward ending the war.

Polish President Andrzej Duda was quoted Thursday as telling Germany’s Bild newspaper that he’s “astonished” by the calls.

Duda argued they achieve nothing and “only bring about a legitimisation of a person who is responsible for the crimes the Russian army is committing in Ukraine.”

## Smashed buildings in Mariupol produce ‘caravan of death’

AP ■ BAKHMUT (UKRAINE)

The human cost of the war in Ukraine mounted as workers pulled up to 100 bodies from each smashed building in the devastated city of Mariupol — a gruesome effort that one official described as an “endless caravan of death.”

Meanwhile, fears of a global food crisis escalated over Ukraine’s inability to export millions of tons of grain through its blockaded ports.

At the same time, Ukrainian and Russian forces battled fiercely Wednesday for control of Sievierodonetsk, a city that has emerged as central to Moscow’s grinding campaign to capture Ukraine’s eastern industrial heartland, known as the Donbas.

Many buildings in Mariupol contain 50 to 100 bodies each, according to a mayoral aide in the Russian-held port city in the south.

Petro Andryushchenko said on the Telegram app that the bodies are being taken in an “endless caravan of death” to



a morgue, landfills and other places. At least 21,000 Mariupol civilians were killed during the weeks-long Russian siege, Ukrainian authorities have estimated.

The consequences of the war are being felt far beyond Eastern Europe because shipments of Ukrainian grain are bottled up inside the country, driving up the price of food.

Ukraine, long known as the “bread basket of Europe,” is one of the world’s biggest exporters of wheat, corn and sun-

flower oil, but much of that flow has been halted by the war and a Russian blockade of Ukraine’s Black Sea coast. An estimated 22 million tons of grain remains in Ukraine. The failure to ship it out is endangering the food supply in many developing countries, especially in Africa.

Russia expressed support Wednesday for a U.N. Plan to create a safe corridor at sea that would allow Ukraine to resume grain shipments. The plan, among other things, calls for Ukraine to remove mines from the waters near the Black Sea port of Odesa. But Russia is insisting that it be allowed to check incoming vessels for weapons. And Ukraine has expressed fear that clearing the mines could enable Russia to attack the coast. Ukrainian officials said the Kremlin’s assurances that it wouldn’t do that cannot be trusted.

European Council President Charles Michel on Wednesday accused the Kremlin of “weaponizing food supplies and surrounding their actions with a web of lies, Soviet-style.”

## Zelenskyy: Russia feels too strong to talk

AP ■ NEW YORK

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Russia is unwilling to negotiate an end to the war because it still feels strong, Zelenskyy told U.S. Corporate leaders Wednesday that for Russia to join in negotiations “is simply not possible now because Russia can still feel its power.”

Speaking via a video link through a translator, he added: “We need to weaken Russia and the world is supposed to do it.”

Zelenskyy said Ukraine is doing its part on the battlefield and called for even tougher sanctions to weaken Russia economically.

He told the business leaders: “We need to switch Russia off the global financial system completely.”

# As war in Ukraine drags on, fears of global food crisis grow

AP ■ BAKHMUT (UKRAINE)

Ukrainian and Russian forces battled fiercely for control of a key eastern city Wednesday, while fears of a global food crisis escalated as millions of tons of grain pile up inside the besieged country, unable to be exported by sea because of the war.

The urban battle for Sievierodonetsk testified to the painstaking, inch-by-inch campaign by Moscow’s troops to seize the eastern industrial heartland known as the Donbas.

More than three months into the grinding war, Russia’s continuing encroachment could open up the possibility of a negotiated settlement between the two nations, analysts said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin “has the option of declaring his objectives met at more or less any time in order to consolidate Russia’s territorial gains,” said Keir Giles, a Russia expert at the London think tank Chatham House. At that point, Giles said, Western leaders may “pressure Ukraine to accept their losses in order to bring an end to the fighting.”

The consequences of the war have been felt in many countries, where it is driving up the price of food since critical shipments of Ukrainian grain are bottled up inside the country.

Ukraine, long known as the “bread basket of Europe,” is one of the world’s biggest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but much of that flow has been halted by the war and a Russian blockade of Ukraine’s Black Sea coast. An estimated 22 million tons of grain remains in Ukraine.



Russia has expressed support for the creation of a safe corridor at sea that would allow Ukraine to resume grain shipments. Under the proposal, Ukraine would have to remove its mines from the waters near the Black Sea port of Odesa, and Russia would be allowed to check incoming vessels for weapons.

Ukraine, though, has expressed fear that clearing the mines could enable Russia to attack the coast. Ukrainian officials have said that the Kremlin’s repeated assurances that it would not take advantage of the situation cannot be trusted.

European Council President Charles Michel on Wednesday accused the Kremlin of “weaponizing food supplies and surrounding their actions with a web of lies, Soviet-style.”

While Russia, which is also a major supplier of grain to the rest of

the world, has blamed the looming food crisis on Western sanctions against Moscow, the European Union heatedly denied that and said the blame rests with Russia itself for waging war against Ukraine.

“These are Russian ships and Russian missiles that are blocking the export of crops and grain,” Michel said. “Russian tanks, bombs and mines are preventing Ukraine from planting and harvesting.”

The West has exempted grain and other food from its sanctions against Russia, but the U.S. and the EU have imposed sweeping punitive measures against Russian ships. Moscow argues that those restrictions make it impossible to use its ships to export grain, and also make other shipping companies reluctant to carry its product.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting raged in and around Sievierodonetsk, one of the

last cities yet to be taken by the Russians in Luhansk, one of the two provinces that make up the Donbas. Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai acknowledged the difficulties, saying, “Maybe we will have to retreat, but right now battles are ongoing in the city.”

“Everything the Russian army has — artillery, mortars, tanks, aviation — all of that, they’re using in Sievierodonetsk in order to wipe the city off the face of the Earth and capture it completely,” he said.

Sievierodonetsk, which had a pre-war population of 100,000, and the city of Lysychansk are wedged between Russian forces in Luhansk province.

Valentyna Tsonkan, an elderly resident of Lysychansk, described the moment when her house came under attack.

“I was lying on my bed. The shrapnel hit the wall and went through my shoulder,” she said as she received treatment for her wounds.

Meanwhile, to the north, Russian shelling of the Kharkiv region killed five people and wounded 12 over the past 24 hours, Ukrainian authorities said.

The Russian military said it used high-precision missiles to hit an armor repair plant near Kharkiv. There was no confirmation from Ukraine of such a plant being hit.

Turkey has sought to play a role in negotiating an end to the war and in brokering the resumption of grain shipments. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu met on Wednesday with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov. But Ukraine was not invited to the talks.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client (i.e. Fullerton India Home Finance Company) that Mr. Rishabh Chandra Jain is the owner of Built up Second floor without roof rights "said floor" part of Property bearing No. 3870, Plot No. 28, area measuring 145 Sq. Yds., Gali No. 10, Situated in the area of Village Chokri, Mubarakabad, abadi known as Ganesha Pura Kanaujya Nagar, in Nagar, Delhi by virtue of Sale Deed dated 10.08.2021, registration no. 10333. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner wants to sell the said floor to a person who intends to obtain loan from our client against the said floor, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner over the said floor, its Sale/ Mortgage/ litigation, and any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

**Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)**

200, 1st Floor, 23, Shivaji Marg, Mohi Nagar, N. Delhi-13 Ph: 011-41112527-28 kumaradvocates.educare@gmail.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General public is hereby informed that (1) Shri Ram Singh S/o Shri Dharam and (2) Shri Anil and (3) Shri Bansi both S/o Shri Ram Singh (4) Shri Rajkumar (5) Shri Sumit Devi (6) Shri Gauri Devi (7) Shri Ram Singh, is/are intending to sell Residential Built-up House on Plot No. 4, area measuring 43.75 Sq. Yards i.e. 36.57 Sq. Meters, out of Khata No. 1551, Situated in Kailashpuram-II, in the Village Rajpur, Pargana Joesa Taluk & Distt. Ghazabad U.P. to Shri. Seema Devi W/o Shri Satya Dev said property to be financed by New First Finance Company India Ltd Branch Greater Noida. The Original Sale Deed Regd. No. 2122, Book No. 1, Vol No. 4559, on Pages 103-122, dated 24.02.2012, SRO-II, Ghazabad, in, pertaining to Shri Ram Singh S/o Shri Dharam to the aforesaid property has been lost and FIR LR No.20220000272008 has been registered on 08.06.2022 with online Police and State Crime Record Bureau Lucknow. U.P. Any person(s) found in possession of aforesaid original sale deed, their kindly contact the undersigned along with original property document, within 07 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid sale deed shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.

**Raghav Tiwari, Advocate**

**Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110001**

**Mob: +91-9871838284**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

My client **Anita Dhawan, W/o Lt Sanjay Dhawan, R/o A6/271, A Janta Flat, Paschim Vihar, N.Delhi** have debarred their son **Akansh & his wife Rithika** from their movable & immovable properties due to their misbehavior with my client. My client have also served all their relation with them. If any person deal with them in any manner they do so at their own risk and responsibility.

**Swaran Kamal Singh (Advocate), Ch. 507, Western Wing, Tis Hazari District Court, Delhi-06**

HDB Financial Services Limited

**HDB FINANCIAL SERVICES**

Ground Floor, Zenith House, Keshavnagar Khadye Marg, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai - 400034 Tel No.: +91 22 49116300

**FINAL AUCTION CUM SALE NOTICE FOR GOLD ORNAMENTS**

The borrower(s) (whose details are provided in the table herein below), in particular, and the public, in general, are hereby informed that the below mentioned accounts are overdue, and the borrowers/account holders have not responded/complied with the communication, and notice send by HDB Financial Services Limited (the "Company") requesting the borrower to clear his/her/their dues as per the documents in respect of the below mentioned loan signed/accepted by the borrower(s) (such documents, collectively "loan agreement") and therefore defaulted in terms thereof. The Company has in exercise of its rights as a pledgee, decided to enforce the pledge and therefore hold a public auction of the gold ornaments pledged to the company as security for the loan for the purpose of selling the same and realizing/recovering the dues owned by the borrower(s) to the company. The auction will be conducted on **15-06-2022** at the below mentioned local branch of HDB Financial Services Limited from 11.00 am onwards on the date and branches mentioned in the below table:-

S. No.	Loan No	Customer Name	Date of Loan	Overdue Amount Rs.	Branch Name
1	16631316	Rachana Sharma	02-08-2021	7799	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
2	20340125	Sabir Ali	16-12-2021	23302	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
3	20394606	Rajesh Arora	17-12-2021	10992	Delhi-Dilshad Garden
4	20201436	Ritesh Jain	10-12-2021	29376	Delhi-Gandhi Nagar
5	17838093	Vijay Kumar Sharma	19-09-2021	5508	Delhi-Hari Nagar
6	20112030	Pintu Kumar	06-12-2021	22770	Delhi-Jagatpur
7	13258133	Anjum A	18-11-2020	55517	Delhi-Kailash Nagar
8	14099754	Manoj Kumar	30-01-2021	4870	Delhi-Kailash Nagar
9	13260935	Madhu Rani	18-11-2020	53368	Delhi-Kamla Nagar
10	19839326	Vinod Kumar Rai	26-11-2021	31239	Delhi-Kamla Nagar
11	8769901	Prem Kumar Goyal	19-09-2021	4633	Delhi-Karol Bagh
12	14323204	Mukesh Verma	18-02-2021	14668	Delhi-Lajpat Nagar
13	13444017	Anand Kumar	04-12-2020	8726	Delhi-Madipur
14	9334127	Vinod Kumar Gupta	23-10-2019	8100	Delhi-Mayapuri
15	13266471	Raj Kumar Baisla	20-11-2020	4065	Delhi-Mayapuri
16	19845946	Vishakha Malhotra	26-11-2021	24008	Delhi-Mayapuri
17	18254006	Babli Kumari	06-10-2021	8290	Delhi-Nangloi
18	20554301	Kishan Kumar	24-12-2021	12545	Delhi-Nangloi
19	16530724	Ram Suresh Mahto	27-07-2021	10965	Delhi-Narela
20	20220421	Madan Mansingh	13-12-2021	7950	Delhi-Patel Nagar
21	5267076	Suresh Goyal	12-09-2018	1512	Delhi-Shahdara
22	21255942	Rakesh Kumar Kapoor	19-01-2022	21432	Delhi-Tilak Nagar
23	14597759	Vijay Kumar Mishra	15-03-2021	5690	Delhi-Uttam Nagar

The auction shall be conducted on an "AS IS WHERE" and "AS IS WHAT IT" basis and the Company is not making and shall not make any representation or warranties as regards the quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. It shall be the sole and absolute responsibility of the potential purchaser to verify, examine and satisfy themselves about the quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments prior to placing their bid and for such purpose it shall be open to potential purchasers to examine, at their sole cost and expense, and at the address set out herein above, the gold ornaments whether with or without expert advice 45 minutes prior to the time stipulated for the conduct of the auction. All the bid shall be subjected to such minimum reserve price as the company may deem fit to fix in this regards. The auction process and sale (if any) pursuant to such auction shall be subjected to such further terms and condition as the company may at sole discretion deem fit to impose.

If the borrower(s) mentioned above pays the amount due to the Company in terms of the loan agreement in his individual loan account in full before the auction as mentioned above, the pledged ornaments securing the said loan may be withdrawn from the said auction without further notice. Please note the it is the absolute discretionary power of the undersigned authorized officer of the company, either to postpone or to cancel the auction proceeding without prior notice and without assigning any reason thereof and to reject any or all the bids or offer without assigning any reason for the same.

**Place : DELHI**  
**Date : 10-06-2022**

**Authorised Officer**  
**(HDB Financial Services Ltd)**



# RBI: Regulatory design soon on digital lending platforms

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India will soon come out with regulatory architecture for digital lending platforms, many of which are unauthorised and illegal, Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday.

There have been increasing cases of alleged suicides of borrowers due to harassment by a few of the operators of digital lending apps.

“I think very soon we will be coming out with a broad regulatory architecture, which should be able to address the challenges that we are confronted with regard to lending through digital platforms, many of which are unauthorised, unregistered and, should I say, illegal,” Das said while delivering a lecture on - Indian Businesses (Past, Present and Future).

He was speaking at the Iconic Week celebration as part of the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence, organised by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs



(CBIC).

Das on Wednesday suggested that customers borrowing from unregistered digital lending apps should approach the local police in case of any issue. Most of the digital lending apps are not registered with the central bank and operate by themselves, he told reporters after announcing the monetary policy.

Das said whenever it gets a complaint from any customer,

the central bank directs customers of such unregistered apps to approach the local police, which will conduct an investigation and take necessary action on the issue

“It is my humble request to all those using such apps to first check if the app is RBI registered or not. If the app is RBI registered, the central bank will act immediately in case of any misdoing, I assure you,” he said. **PTI**

# Sensex jumps over 425 points; Nifty tests 16,500

**Mumbai:** Snapping its four-day losing run, equity benchmark Sensex jumped 427 points to settle at 55,320 on Thursday, tracking heavy buying in index majors Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel and Tech Mahindra despite a weak trend overseas.

The 30-share BSE benchmark surged 427.79 points or 0.78 per cent to close at 55,320.28. During the day, the benchmark hit a high of 55,366.84 and a low of 54,507.41.

The broader NSE Nifty advanced 121.85 points or 0.74 per cent to finish at 16,478.10.

Dr Reddy’s was the biggest gainer in the Sensex pack, surging 3 per cent, followed by Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel, Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharma and Kotak Mahindra Bank.

On the other hand, Tata Steel, NTPC, SBI and Bajaj Finance were among the main



losers, shedding up to 3.81 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Shanghai, Seoul and Hong Kong ended lower, while Tokyo settled higher.

European markets were trading significant lower during afternoon trade.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude slipped 0.13 per cent to USD 123.42 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers as they offloaded shares worth ₹2,484.25 crore on Wednesday, according to stock exchange data. **PTI**

# Equity MFs continue to see positive momentum; ₹18,529-crore inflow recorded in May

**New Delhi:** Undeterred by the stock market volatility, uncertainty due to the Ukraine-Russia war and high inflation, equity mutual funds continue to remain attractive choice for investors for the 15th straight month, registering a net inflow of ₹18,529 crore in May on robust SIP numbers.

This was higher than ₹15,890 crore net inflow in April, data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Thursday.

Equity schemes have been witnessing net inflow since March 2021, highlighting the positive sentiment among investors.

Prior to this, such schemes had consistently witnessed outflows for eight months from July 2020 to February 2021, losing ₹46,791 crore.

All the equity-oriented categories received net inflows in May with flexi cap funds category being the biggest beneficiary with a net inflow of ₹2,939 crore.

Besides, large-cap, large & mid-cap fund and sectoral/the-

matic funds witnessed over ₹2,200 crore net infusion each.

“The consistent SIP flows are supporting the net positive sales numbers in equities. Through the ongoing volatility, we see continued interest amongst retail investors to allocate to equity MFs. The spread of new flows is well diversified across categories,” Akhil Chaturvedi, Chief Business Officer, Motilal Oswal AMC, said.

Kavita Krishnan, Senior Analyst-Manager Research, Morningstar India, said the Indian equity market remains an attractive choice for investors across emerging markets despite valuations still being at a premium.

“A strong underlying structural story supports the consistent inflows, despite the challenges that we face at a macro level. The government’s focus on curbing inflation and positive measures towards this direction has also led to increased investor confidence,” she added.

Gopal Kavalireddi, Head of Research at FYERS is of the

view that even with markets facing high volatility, uncertainty due to the Ukraine-Russia war, supply chain disruptions, high inflation and lower economic growth projections, investors are opting for equity mutual fund.

Inflow through SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) rose to ₹12,286 crore in May from ₹11,863 crore in April, indicating that retail investors continue to hold confidence on equity investments. This is the ninth consecutive month of SIP inflow being greater than ₹10,000 crore, a trend which started in September 2021 with ₹10,351 crore inflow.

“Retail Mutual Fund investors continue to embrace SIP mode and Equity and hybrid asset class for their long-term savings, and at the same time reallocating their savings in fixed income asset class more towards liquid and overnight categories and safer government securities schemes, owing to rising interest rate scenario,” N S Venkatesh, Chief Executive, AMFI said. **PTI**

# Gold gains ₹130; silver rises by ₹ 273

**New Delhi:** Gold prices in the national capital on Thursday gained by ₹133 to ₹50,907 per 10 grams, supported by rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at ₹50,774 per 10 grams. Silver also jumped by ₹273 to ₹61,535 per kg from ₹61,262 per kg in the previous trade.

The rupee depreciated by 8 paise to close at 77.76 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices and persistent foreign capital outflows. In the international market, gold was trading slightly lower at USD 1,850 per ounce while silver was trading flat at USD 21.95 per ounce.

“Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading 0.15 per cent down on Thursday,” said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities. **PTI**

# Key pillars of WTO should be retained while undertaking its reforms: Official

**New Delhi:** India would support efforts to improve the working of the World Trade Organisation but its key pillars like special and differential treatment for less developed and developing nations, equal voice and dispute settlement mechanism should be retained while undertaking WTO reforms, an official said.

The Geneva-based 164-member World Trade Organisation (WTO) is a multilateral body which formulates rules for global exports and imports and adjudicates disputes between two or more than two countries on trade-related issues.

WTO reforms is one of the key issues which would figure in the forthcoming ministerial meeting. The four-day Ministerial Conference is scheduled to start from June 12 in Geneva. Last meeting was held in Argentina in 2017.

Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making



body of the WTO.

“We believe that WTO is an important organisation. Its multi-lateral nature should never be affected and therefore we support any efforts to improve its working. But the pillars of the WTO which is - special and differential treatment for the less developed and developing nations, consensus based approach that is the equal voice that every member

has, transparency requirements, rule of law and dispute settlement mechanism -- all these pillars of the WTO should be maintained when we are trying to do WTO reforms,” the official said.

“So we are going to try and focus to bring the WTO reform agenda to be a more focused agenda and maintaining these pillars and these disciplines,” the official added. **PTI**

# Rupee slips 8 paise to close at 77.76 against US dollar

**Mumbai:** The rupee depreciated by 8 paise to close at 77.76 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices and persistent foreign capital outflows.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 77.74 against the greenback and finally settled at 77.76, down 8 paise over its previous close.

During the session, the rupee touched an all-time low of 77.81 against the American currency.

On Wednesday, the rupee had recovered from its record low to close 10 paise higher at 77.68.

“Volatility in rupee remained low even after the release of RBI policy statement,” said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial



Services.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday raised the key interest rate by 50 basis points, the second increase in five weeks, to rein in the rise in prices that it saw continuing to hurt consumers in the near-term.

The rate hike comes on the back of a 40 bps increase by the RBI at an unscheduled meeting on May 4. “Major crosses remain under pressure following broader strength in the dollar. **PTI**

# Businesses should avoid aggressive short-term reward-seeking culture, says RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said businesses should avoid having an aggressive short-term reward-seeking culture without considering the build-up of excessive risks in their balance sheets.

Das said doing business involves risk taking. But before taking the risk, the upside and downside will have to be carefully considered.

“Businesses should avoid aggressive short-term reward-seeking culture without regard for the build-up of excessive risk in the balance sheet,” Das said while delivering a speech at the Iconic Week celebrations, as part of the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’, to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence.

The event was organised by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) here. The common characteristics of some of the inappropriate business models or



strategies that have come to the RBI’s notice includes inappropriate funding structure, building asset liability mismatches, which are highly risky and not sustainable, he said.

Besides, unrealistic strategic assumptions, particularly excessive optimism about capabilities, growth opportunities and market trends may lead to poor strategic decisions, he noted.

He said the RBI has mandated a host of disclosure for its regulated entities to ensure that they make full disclosure of all material information in their financial statements.

Tarun Bajaj, Revenue Secretary and Vivek Johri, Chairman, CBIC were also present at the event. **PTI**

# Improve on professionalism, reduce expenditure: Sitharaman to PSEs

**Gandhinagar:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday asked public sector enterprises to improve on professionalism, reduce expenditure and consider working with private sector entities.

She was addressing the heads of various central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar after inaugurating a mega exhibition on the contribution of these government-owned companies to nation-building as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.

“It is now time for PSEs to show that you are very keen to improve on your professionalism as much as you have done between 1991 and now. And where possible, in order to bring down the overheads, it might be worth looking at private participation together with what you are doing...You can benefit from the efficiency of the



private sector,” Sitharaman said.

Referring to the new PSE policy announced in 2021, the Finance Minister said PSEs need to be aware of the competition they will face from the private sector for whom the government has opened the strategic sectors.

“The policy has opened up for the private sector to operate, and therefore, I would raise a flag here to all the PSEs. The moment you are opening up for the private sector to come into an area, we in the public sector will have to be conscious of the level of competition which is going to be before us.

“And if we are conscious of the level of competition, I am sure, just like you have done in

the past for several decades, you will face the challenge, and also be able to stand up and through better efficiencies be on the top rather than leave the space,” Sitharaman said.

She termed the economic reforms, which were introduced in the country in 1991, a “game-changer”.

“With India opening up after 1991, PSEs started competing with the private sector entities. You found that to be a game-changer as the PSEs realised that now they have to improve on their efficiencies, also scale up and reduce the overheads,” the Minister said.

The exhibition titled “Nation Building and CPSEs” has stalls of nearly 75 central government companies, such as Coal India, GAIL India, NTPC, Steel Authority of India Ltd and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. The exhibition will be open to the public from June 10 to 12. **PTI**

# Hero MotoCorp launches community riding platform for Xpulse bike owners

**New Delhi:** Two-wheeler major Hero MotoCorp on Thursday said it has launched a new community riding platform for owners of its Xpulse bike.

The XCLAN platform will be the first official Xpulse owners club that will provide a stage for owners to engage with each other, build their cohort, and develop camaraderie with budding and experienced riders.

The inaugural chapters will be rolled out in five cities across the country - Dehradun, Guwahati, Bengaluru, Cochin and Mumbai - and will be subsequently expanded to additional cities by the latter half of 2022, the country’s largest two-wheeler maker said in a statement.

An XCLAN membership will bring numerous exciting benefits to customers, including onboarding kit, invitation to rides and rally events across

India and other benefits at an all-inclusive annual price of Rs 2,000 per rider, it added.

“Motorcycling is an experience like no other to explore one’s passion of travelling, discovering new places and enjoying a sense of being one with nature. These experiences are heightened when accomplished with partners who have similar tastes,” Hero MotoCorp Chief Growth Officer Ranjivjit Singh noted.

The company is bringing the two - the globally popular Xpulse and riding enthusiasts - together through XCLAN so that people across the country can have unique experiences and create memories with their tribe of fellow motorcyclists, he added.

XCLAN engagements and rides will commence from July 2022 onwards with three categories - Sunrise Rides, Overnight Rides and Expedition rides. **PTI**

# Delhi Metro invites bids for purchase of airport line assets

**New Delhi:** Delhi Metro has invited bids from 18 banks to raise loan to the tune of ₹2,700 cr for “purchase of Airport Line assets,” according to letters sent to these banks by the urban transporter.

This comes in the backdrop of the Supreme Court early May upholding a Delhi High Court order directing the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to pay over ₹4,600 crore of arbitral award along with interest to the Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Limited (DAMEPL) in two equal installments in two months. **PTI**

# CIL floats maiden tender to import 2.416 MT coal for power sector

**New Delhi:** State-owned CIL on Thursday said that it has floated its maiden tender to import 2.416 million tonnes of coal to ensure adequate supply of the fuel to power plants in the country.

The development assumes significance in the wake of the government making all efforts to build up stock of coal to avoid the reoccurrence of power outages which happened in April on account of shortage of the fossil fuel.

“In a first ever, Coal India Limited (CIL) on Wednesday floated an international competitive bidding e-tender, seeking bids for import of 2.416 million tonnes (MTs) of coal,” the company said in a statement.

The coal being sourced on behalf of the state generating companies (gencos) and independent power plants (IPPs) is based on the indents received from them.

It is for July-September

period of the current fiscal year, the statement said.

Though coal import is an uncharted terrain for CIL, within a week of receiving indents from the seven state gencos and 19 IPPs, for a total of 2.41.6 MTs of coal, the company on a war footing has finalised and floated the tender.

The current short-term tender for import of dry fuel for the second quarter of the ongoing financial year is source agnostic. This means the coal can be sourced from any country. The Centre had nominated the maharatna firm as a centralised agency to increase coal supplies to state gencos and IPPs through import of dry-fuel at a time when the demand for coal is high.

The company’s board had last week given its go-ahead for the public sector unit to proceed ahead with the issuance of two international tenders -- a short-term and a medium-

term -- for sourcing coal from overseas. The last date for the receipt of bids is June 29. There is an option of pre-bid meeting on June 14 to seek clarification on any nuances of the tender, CIL said.

After the price discovery, CIL will immediately execute a contract with the successful bidder for supply of coal. Then the state owned coal miner will enter into a back-to-back pact with state gencos and IPPs to whom coal has to be supplied.

The coal imported will be routed through nine ports located in east and west coasts of the country.

The successful agency, selected through the bidding process, will deliver coal at the doorstep of the power plants of state gencos and IPPs.

The government had earlier directed CIL to be prepared to import 12 million tonnes of coal for power utilities for the next 13 months. **PTI**

# Zvolv to invest USD 3 mn to scale up West Asia & North Africa operations

**Mumbai:** Hyper automation platform Zvolv is investing USD 3 million to scale up its operations in the West Asian and North African regions, as part of its overseas expansion plan. The investment will help the Pune-based startup, to strengthen its business operations as well as build on its partner ecosystem.

With this expansion the startup is expecting to net around USD 5 million in topline from overseas markets next year, Hardik Gandhi, its managing director, told PTI.

Zvolv is backed by JSW Ventures -- the start-up investment arm of the diversified JSW Group and Riso Capital. JSW Ventures and Riso Capital have invested USD 1.5 million in Zvolv, which also has other investors. Launched in 2018, Zvolv, is a unified platform-as-a-service bringing together multiple hyper-automation technologies onto a single platform, enabling and fast-tracking varied automation needs for an enterprise offering no-code and low-code flexibility. Zvolv has chalked out a capex of around USD 3 million in the West Asia region over the next three years. After the first phase of investment and expansion, the startup expects USD 5 million in revenue from global operations next year and going forward, it expects over 60 per cent of revenue to come from overseas operations, Gandhi said. **PTI**

# No business case for 5G roll-out if concerns on private captive networks not addressed: Telcos’ body COAI

**New Delhi:** Industry body COAI has warned that there will be no business case for roll-out of 5G networks, if telecom operators’ concern on the critical issue of private captive networks is not addressed immediately.

In a letter to Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, COAI said if independent entities are allowed to set up private captive networks with direct 5G spectrum allotment by the telecom department, “the business case of TSPs (Telecom Service Providers) will get severely degraded”.

“This will diminish the revenue so much that there will be

no viable business case left for the TSPs and there will not remain any need for 5G networks roll-out by TSPs,” it said.

The comments of COAI - whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea -- assumes significance as telecom operators and tech companies have locked horns over the hotly-contested issue of 5G spectrum allocation and captive private networks.

Private enterprises have asserted that giving spectrum directly for creation of captive networks, without any dependency on telcos, would accelerate the digital agenda -- a stance that telecom operators’ have vehemently opposed. **PTI**

# Company secretaries help cos grow big: Rijiju

**New Delhi:** Company secretaries help companies grow big and strengthen the economy though they always remain in the background, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Thursday.

The Union Law and Justice Minister was speaking at a special programme under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) here.

“Though the company secretaries always remain in the background, they are the ones who make companies grow big, strengthen the economy and are the foundation of Atmanirbhar Bharat,” a release issued by ICSI quoted Rijiju as



saying.

Rijiju also appreciated the efforts of the Institute in bringing the far-flung areas of North-East into the mainstream by going an extra mile

and waiving fees for students from northeastern states of India.

Corporate Affairs Secretary Rajesh Verma said Company secretaries are the catalyst in promoting and upholding good governance in the country.

Devendra V Deshpande, President, ICSI, said that the Institute is aspiring to become a think tank of Good Governance Practices and explore newer areas of service in the future.

Deshpande also mentioned the introduction of ICSI BRSR Awards for all companies who have taken up Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting. **PTI**



# BELGIUM BOUNCE BACK TO CRUSH POLAND



PARIS ■ AFP

Belgium lost their opening game to neighbours Netherlands but responded with an increasingly dominant performance and finished the game with five goals in just over 30 minutes. "It brings extra emotion when you lose against your rivals so that was definitely a motivator tonight," said Belgium coach Roberto Martinez. "Against The Netherlands we were passive, waiting, insecure. Now we were a team instead of individuals." Belgium suffered another early setback on Wednesday as the visitors took the lead after 28 minutes as star striker Robert Lewandowski struck with his 22nd goal for club and country in 2022.

The Bayern Munich attacker controlled a pass from Piotr Zielinski in mid-air and then poked it past the on-rushing Simon Mignolet with the outside of his left boot. The hosts levelled three minutes before half time. Kevin de Bruyne cut through the Polish defense. After his drive was parried, Timothy Castagne rolled the ball back to Axel Witsel who swerved a drive inside the post. Belgium took the lead after 59 minutes on the counter-attack. Captain Eden Hazard found De Bruyne free in the box and he slid a shot past Bartlomiej Dragowski. Hazard, who struggled with injury at Real Madrid this season and was an

unused substitute in the Champions League final, came off after 66 minutes. "I am extremely happy that I could be important to the team, especially after my season," he said. Leandro Trossard replaced Hazard and scored twice in seven minutes. Defender Leander Dendoncker then struck his first international goal from long range. Lois Openda, who came off the bench to make his international debut with six minutes left, rounded off the rout in added time. "It was a match that will give us a lot to think about, a lot of question marks in various parts of our game plan and overall strategy, but also a lesson on how to play against such teams," said Liewandowski.

Belgium, who lost their Group 4 opener to the Netherlands, sit second behind their neighbours and ahead of Poland on goal difference. "Nobody should be worried about the future of Belgian football. We have immense talent but we have to be patient," said Martinez. "We finally have the structure in place. The rest will follow, but the talent is definitely there." In the World Cup in Qatar in November, Belgium have been drawn in a group with Canada, Morocco and the 2018 losing finalists Croatia. Poland face Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Argentina. "I told the players that they should use it as a reminder of how opponents play at the very highest levels in the world," said Poland coach Czeslaw Michniewicz.

## Ukraine beat Republic of Ireland



AP ■ DUBLIN

Viktor Tsygankov lifted Ukraine's spirits after their painful failure to qualify for the World Cup as the midfielder clinched a 1-0 Nations League victory over the Republic of Ireland on Wednesday. Tsygankov struck with a fine free-kick early in the second at Dublin's Aviva Stadium. Ukraine held on to that slender lead as they bounced back from the 1-0 defeat against Wales on Sunday that ended the war-torn nation's bid to qualify for this year's World Cup. While Ukraine won't be going to Qatar for the World Cup, their impressive response to such a devastating loss

epitomised the spirit in Oleksandr Petrakov's side. Of course Petrakov's players have far greater concerns as the Russian invasion continues in their homeland. Petrakov had admitted the emotional and physical impact of the events in Cardiff combined with the ongoing war had taken its toll on his players. He made 10 changes after the Wales game and the understudies were good enough to extend Ireland's winless run in the Nations League to 12 games. Ireland's hopes of winning the Nations League B group already look forlorn ahead of Scotland's visit to Dublin on Saturday following successive defeats by Armenia and Ukraine.

## Weghorst ends Wales' unbeaten home run

AP ■ CARDIFF



Wout Weghorst ended Wales' World Cup party and shattered their 19-match unbeaten home record in dramatic fashion as the Netherlands won 2-1 in Wednesday's Nations League clash in Cardiff. Wales will head to Qatar in November for their first World Cup appearance in 64 years after beating Ukraine 1-0 in the play-off final on Sunday. But Robert Page's side, who face USA, Iran and England in the group stage in Qatar, came back down to earth with a bump as

they suffered a second successive Nations League Group A4 defeat after last week's loss in Poland. In a thrilling finale, Rhys Norrington-Davies equalised for Wales in stoppage-time following Teun Koopmeiners' goal early in the second half.

Burnley striker Weghorst sealed the points for the Netherlands with just seconds left as the visitors ruined the longest unbeaten home run in Wales' history. For the first time since November 2018, Wales were beaten in front of their own fans.



## Sindhu, Sen enter Indonesia Masters quarterfinals

PTI ■ JAKARTA

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and World Championship bronze winner Lakshya Sen progressed to the quarterfinals of the Indonesia Masters Super 500 badminton tournament with contrasting wins here on Thursday. Sen, who was part of the Indian team that claimed a historic Thomas Cup title triumph in Bangkok, registered a 21-18 21-15 win over world number 13 Rasmus Gemke of Denmark in 54 minutes in the men's singles. In the women's singles, Sindhu was made to toil hard for over an hour by Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia before winning 23-21 20-22 21-11 in the second round. Sen, seeded seventh, will next be pitted against Chinese Taipei's third seed Chou Tien Chen, who had defeated the Indian in a three-game thriller during the Thomas Cup last month in their only meeting. A tough quarterfinal awaits fourth seeded Sindhu as she will take on the winner of the match between Thailand's fifth seed Ratchanon Intanon and Kirsty Gilmour of Scotland. Against the unseeded Tunjung, Sindhu started on a bright note and played aggressively to surge to a 10-5 lead. She used her experience and reach to engage her opponents in long rallies initially. But the Indonesian, whom Sidhu had defeated six times earlier, made a remarkable fightback to claw her way back into the contest to level the scores at 15 apiece. From there on, it was a neck-and-neck

fight between the two players as they traded points till 21 before Sindhu raised her level to pocket the first game. The second game was a complete contrast as it was Tunjung who started on an attacking note and raced to a 10-5 lead before Sindhu fought back to draw parity at 15-15. Thereafter, the players continued their battle for points till 20 points before determined the Indonesian won the game to take the match into the decider. The decider, however, was a one-sided affair as after a few initial exchanges, to be precise till seven points, Sindhu didn't allow her opponent an inch and used her big match experience to run away with the game and the match. Earlier in the day playing Gemke for the first time in his international career, world number 9 Sen showed better nerves as he limited his errors and fought his way to a fine win. Sen overturned a 0-3 deficit to a 9-6 advantage, only to allow Gemke to hold a slender 11-10 cushion at the break. However, the Indian came out all guns blazing and reeled off six straight points to move to 16-12 before sealing the opening game. Sen and Gemke breathed down each other's neck for most part of the second game as lead exchanged hands frequently before the Indian once again stepped ahead from 13-12 to close out the issue with a four-point burst. Sindhu will face Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung, while the mixed doubles pairing of Ashwini Ponnappa and B Sumeeth Reddy will take on second seeds Chinese Zheng Si Wei and Huang Ya Qiong later in the day.

## Wimbledon singles champions to win £2m each

AP ■ LONDON

Wimbledon announced record prize money on Thursday for this year's edition of tennis' oldest Grand Slam tournament, with the two singles champions taking home £2 million (\$2.5 million, 2.3 million euros) each. The total prize money of £40.35 million represents an 11.1 percent increase on last year's Championships, where capacity at the southwest London venue was reduced for Covid reasons. It is also 5.4 percent more than was on offer to competitors during the last 'regular' edition of Wimbledon in 2019. There had been speculation that the removal of ranking points by the ATP (men's) and WTA (women's) tours, following Wimbledon's controversial decision to ban Russian



and Belarusian players following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, could lead to a reduced prize fund.

But with capacity crowds expected and scheduled play on the middle Sunday for the first time, organisers have boosted the overall total. Players beaten in the first round of the singles will still collect £50,000 while the runners-up in the finals will each take home more than £1 million. Former world number one Naomi Osaka has threatened to withdraw from this year's Wimbledon over the decision to strip the tournament of ranking points but has still to confirm if she will indeed miss the last of tennis' four majors still played on grass. This year's Wimbledon starts on June 27, with Novak Djokovic set to defend his men's singles title but no reigning women's champion taking part after Australia's Ashleigh Barty retired in March.

## Top Indian athletes to jostle for CWG berths

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Some of them are already on a record-breaking spree but those who are struggling will strive to rediscover form and stake claim in Indian team for the Commonwealth Games as the National Inter-State Senior Championships are set to kick off, here Friday. Olympic Champion Neeraj Chopra and 3000m steeplechase 'record man' Avinash Sable will not be there but all other top athletes of the country will compete in the crucial five-day event. Sable on Sunday had finished a creditable fifth with a time of 8:12.48, breaking his own national record for the eighth time during the Diamond League Meeting in Morocco. The Sports Ministry had recently sanctioned the extension of his training stint at Colorado Springs in the USA there till July 24. Besides being the last major event before the AFI picks the squad for the July 28 to August 8 CWG in Birmingham, athletes can also make a last-ditch effort to touch the qualifying standards for the July 15-24 World Championships in Eugene, USA.



More than 600 athletes from 23 states and Union Territories will vie for top honours. Sri Lanka has also sent an 11-member team. Except for Chopra and possibly Sable and those recuperating from injuries, the cream of Indian athletics will be there.

The likes of seasoned campaigners Hima Das, Dutte Chand, Seema Punia, Annu Rani, Jyothi Yarraji among women and M Sreeshankar, Tajinderpal Singh Toor and Mohammed Anas Yahya from among men are all taking part in the event.

Chopra, who had become the first Indian track and field athlete to win an Olympic gold, is currently training in Europe and has a big-ticket contest on June 14 in Finland where he will be up against some of the best in the world. Andhra athlete Jyothi broke

## Female sailor accuses coach of making her feel 'uncomfortable'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Days after a renowned cyclist accused her coach of sexual harassment, a national level female sailor has alleged that a coach made her "uncomfortable" during a foreign exposure trip to Germany. According to a source, the complainant reached out to the Yachting Federation of India (YAI) several times but when she did not get any response, she sought Sports Authority of India's intervention last night. SAI has now sought a report from the Federation by the end of the day, asking if the sailor had approached them earlier, and if so why the matter was not taken seriously. "The SAI has received a complaint from a female sailor that a coach is making her uncomfortable during a foreign exposure tour of

Germany. The sailor claimed that she had earlier approached the federation but after getting no response from them, she knocked on SAI's doors," a SAI source told PTI. "SAI has sought a report from the federation from the Yachting Federation of India on this serious matter. "The camp was proposed and organised by the Yachting Association of India and funded by SAI through ACTC, as is the norm. The coach in question has been appointed by the federation and was included in the contingent as per the proposal of the Federation," the source added. SAI has also reached out to the athlete, who claimed that "mental pressure" was being created by the coach during training. The sailor did mention any sexual harassment by the coach.

the 100m hurdles national record three times last month during her training-cum-competition tour of Europe. She will be under spotlight as she pushes for a sub-13 sec time. Her latest national record stands at 13.04. Her coach James Hillier has said that World Championships qualifying mark -- 12.80s -- would not be easy but would be under her radar. Another ward of Hillier, Amlan Borgohain of Assam would also be looking to book his place in CWG team after creating a 200m national record (20.52s) at the Federation Cup in April. However, he was not at his best during the recent European stint. The long jump pit will be one of the centres of attraction with three members of the 8m club set to renew their rivalry. National record holder Murali Sreeshankar (NR 8.36m) has left behind his Olympics debacle and would be the favourite after his European stint during which he managed 8.31m in Greece. But, he will be fiercely challenged by Jeswin Aldrin (8.20m PB) and Mohammed Anees (8.15m PB).



# MILLER, RASSIE CRUSH INDIA IN 1ST T20I

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

David Miller continued his sensational run in the T20 format and found an able ally in Rassie van der Dussen on Thursday, as the duo combined to help South Africa chase down the highest total in their history to win the first T20 International against Rishabh Pant-led India by seven wickets at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi and go 1-0 up in the five-match series.

The duo stitched an unbeaten 131 runs for the fourth wicket to help Temba Bavuma and Co. chase down the total of 212 runs in 19.1 overs for the loss of just three wickets.

Van der Dussen top-scored for the visitors as he remained not out on 75 runs from 46 balls and scored 7 fours and 5 sixes during his stay at the crease. On the other hand, Miller hammered 64 runs off just 31 balls. His innings was laced with 4 fours and 5 sixes.

India had posted an imposing 211 for four with the help of Ishan Kishan (76 off 48 balls), new skipper Rishabh Pant (29 off 16) and Hardik Pandya (31 off 12).

However, it was not meant to be as the Indians were outdone by the brilliance of Miller and van der Dussen, who toyed with the opposition attack. The loss also ended India's 12-match winning streak.

South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma (10) and Quinton de Kock (22) were off to a flyer as they raced to 22/0 in the first two overs. However, the ever-reliable Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled a brilliant leg-cutter to dismiss Bavuma.

Dwayne Pretorius (29 off 13) and de Kock then took leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and Hardik to the cleaners.

While Chahal gave away 16 runs, Hardik, whose return to bowling was highly anticipated ahead of the series, leaked 18 runs and was slammed for three sixes by Pretorius, including one that was 91m long.

Harshal Patel finally broke the partnership as he bamboozled Pretorius with a slow full toss.

The Indian bowlers kept striking at regular intervals and limit the boundaries, slowing the proceedings. But 'Killer Miller'



had different ideas.

Continuing his stellar run from the IPL, the Southpaw smashed a total of three

sixes and a couple of fours in the 12th and 13th over to get South Africa back in the game, while van der Dussen played the

perfect second fiddle.

With 80 needed off the last six. Miller brought up his fifth T20 half-century.

India had the opportunity to break the dangerous partnership between Miller and van der Dussen but Shreyas was guilty

of dropping the latter at deep midwicket on 29.

The drop cost India dearly as van der Dussen pummelled Harshal to submission. The South African hit three sixes and a four.

After that, it was a six-hitting fest as both the batters hit five maximums each.

Earlier, India were off to a bright start after being asked to bat. The hosts plundered 13 runs off the first over with Kishan hitting back-to-back fours as Bavuma opted to open with spinner Keshav Maharaj.

Rectifying his mistake, Bavuma bought pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada into the attack, who restricted the scoring giving away two runs in the following over.

Kishan seemed to be struggling with Anrich Nortje's pace but alongside Rituraj Gaikwad (23) kept on stealing boundaries and sixes with ease at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

Gaikwad was dropped on 17 by Dwayne Pretorius at the beginning of the seventh over. However, the right-hander couldn't capitalize on the reprieve as he was caught at midwicket by Bavuma off Wayne Parnell, who made a comeback to the South African side for the first time since 2017.

Kishan and new-man Shreyas Iyer (36) continued to score runs at will as India raced to 100 runs in 9.4 overs.

The visitors also seemed a tad sloppy on the field, missing catches and a stumping opportunity.

Iyer then hit Tabraiz Shamsi for a couple of sixes over long-on.

Kishan brought up his third T20 fifty in style as he whacked Maharaj for a six-over dip midwicket. In the groove, he then took the spinner to the cleaners in his next over launching the ball for back-to-back sixes before hitting two fours.

However, Maharaj finally redeemed himself as Ishan hit the length ball straight in the hands of David Miller at wide long-on. Iyer too departed soon after.

Captain Pant and his deputy Pandya, who returned to the side after leading his side Gujarat Titans to the IPL title, then hit a flurry of fours and sixes to provide the final flourish.

## Afghans complete ODI sweep

AP ■ HARARE

Afghanistan completed a 3-0 whitewash of Zimbabwe on Thursday in a ODI series in Harare, but made heavy weather of chasing a modest target due to some lacklustre batting. Set just 136 to win, the tourists scored slowly and lost wickets to be in trouble at 60-4 after the last ball of the 20th over.

Captain Hashmatullah Shahidi (38) and Mohammad Nabi (34 not out) then patiently turned the tide, steadily adding the runs that eventually delivered a four-wicket victory with 74 balls to spare.

Put in to bat by the tourists, Zimbabwe had their own problems with only Sikandar Raza (38) and Ryan Burl (21) making any impact, and they were all out for 135 in 44.5 overs.

After previous victories by 60 runs and eight wickets at Harare Sports Club, Afghanistan overtook England for second place in the World Cup Super League standings. They trail Bangladesh by 20 points having played six matches less.

The top eight Super League finishers qualify for the 2023 World Cup in India while the



other five nations in the table must go into a 10-team tournament from which only two secure finals places.

Afghanistan have won 10 of 12 Super League matches while a much higher-profile team like South Africa lie 11th having been victorious in only four of 13 ODIs.

Zimbabwe batted poorly with the team managing just eight fours between them while the lone six came from lower-order batsman Milton Shumba.

Only Raza and Burl could make meaningful contributions against a six-man Afghan attack, all of whom claimed at least one wicket.

Rashid Khan was the most successful Afghan bowler with three wickets.

## Babar leads Pak to win in 1st ODI

AP ■ MULTAN

Babar Azam broke records once again by scoring his 17th ODI century and helped Pakistan beat West Indies by five wickets in the opening ODI at Multan Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Khushdil Shah played an aggressive knock of 41 runs to finish off 306-runs chase against the visitors in style.

In twilight phase of the second innings, Pakistan suffered tough situation after they lost in-form skipper Babar. However, Khushdil stood firm with his fire power knock to take Pakistan over the victory line.

Khushdil's eye-catching innings of 41 was laced with four sixes and a boundary. He smashed Romario Shepherd for three sixes in a row in 47th over to change the scenario.

Earlier, centurion Shai Hope and Shamarh Brooks were on song as they set the tone for West Indies to score 305-8 against Pakistan in opening ODI of three-match series.

Setting perfect momentum for West Indies after they opted to bat first, Hope and Brooks stayed long at the crease



to put the home side under pressure.

Attacking shots and aggressive mindset must have amused almost a full house here at the stadium but the fans really wanted to see their team making a comeback.

After Shaheen Shah Afridi picked up Kyle Mayers for just nine runs, Pakistan generated a hope of getting tourists bowl out earlier. But, Hope shattered the hopes of the men in green by scoring his 12th ODI century.

Hope and Brooks scored 154 runs together, registering second-highest second-wicket

partnership at Multan Stadium. The highest is of 159 runs between Graeme Smith and Shaun Pollock which they scored back in 2007.

A twist was needed in the game as fans were chanting 'out, out, out', generating a mesmerizing chorus voice in the ground. And, finally the twist came on the last ball of 31st over when Shadab Khan took a blinder at short third man.

In-form, Brooks edged off Mohammad Nawaz and never knew he had to walk off in such a way. Shadab stretched for full length dive to take a one-handed blinder.

The right-handed batter scored 70 runs off 83 balls including seven boundaries.

It was Brook, who got out but the real threat in the form of Hope was looming over Babar Azam XI. He went onto score runs and completed his 12th century of 118 balls. Also, this magnificent performance helped him break the highest runs record of his countrymen and former West Indian captain Richie Richardson.

In 1987, Richardson had scored highest 110 runs in ODIs in Pakistan. However, Hope is now the new highest ODI run-scorer in Pakistan with 127 off 134 balls laced with 15 boundaries and a maximum.

Pakistan made a comeback in the field but Romario Shepherd (25) and Rovman Powell (32) smacked the Pakistani bowlers to race West Indies' score once again.

Haris Rauf remained expensive for conceding 77 runs off his 10 overs but also took four wickets. Afridi bagged two wickets while Shadab and Nawaz shared a wicket apiece. Hasan Ali went wicket-less and conceded 68 runs in 10 overs.

## Leach retained in unchanged England XI for 2nd Test

AP ■ LONDON

Jack Leach has kept his place in an unchanged England XI for the second Test against New Zealand at Nottingham's Trent Bridge starting on Friday after being passed fit following concussion.

Leach missed the majority of England's five-wicket win in the series opener at Lord's after falling on his head while saving a boundary on the first morning at the 'Home of Cricket'.

He was replaced by fellow spinner Matt Parkinson, England's first concussion substitute, but has been cleared to take the field in Nottingham.

Uncapped Yorkshire batsman Harry Brook and Somerset fast bowler Craig Overton missed out again as England once more named their team a day ahead of schedule.

England captain Ben Stokes, a pace-bowling all-rounder who has been managing a knee injury, sent down just 9.4 overs at Lord's but an unchanged team indicates the hosts are confident their skip-



per will be able to play a full part with the ball.

Meanwhile, England's fallible top-order have been given a chance to redeem themselves despite two collapses at Lord's that were offset by Joe Root's superb match-winning 115 not out in the star batsman's first Test since standing down as captain.

That leaves Brook, averaging a colossal 140 for Yorkshire in this season's County Championship, waiting to make his Test debut. Victory for England over the World Test champions would give them an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match series.

# World Record: Mumbai decimate Uttarakhand by 725 runs

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Domestic giants Mumbai on Thursday broke the world record for highest margin of victory in the history of first-class cricket as they crushed minnows Uttarakhand by a staggering 725 runs on the fourth day of their Ranji Trophy quarter-final here and stormed into the semi-finals.

Mumbai broke New South Wales' 92-year-old Sheffield Shield record when they beat Queensland by 685 runs.

In the Ranji Trophy, the previous record for highest margin for victory was held by Bengal, who had defeated Odisha by 540 runs in 1953-54.

Mumbai's world record comes a day after Bengal broke a 129-year-old one with all their nine batters scoring half-century in a single innings against Jharkhand in another quarter-final.

Mumbai will now meet Uttar Pradesh in the semi-final of the prestigious domestic competition.

The 41-time Ranji Trophy champions, who dominated right from the first-day, declared their second innings at 261/3 and thus set Uttarakhand an improbable 794-run target.

They had piled up 647/8 declared in their first essay, riding on maiden double hundred from debutant Suved Parkar (252).

Uttarakhand who were bundled



out for partly 114 in their first essay, once again capitulated in front of the Mumbai bowlers, as they were bundled out for just 69 in the second innings.

Mumbai bowlers led by experienced pacer Dhawal Kulkarni run

riot. Kulkarni (3/11) along with in-form left-arm spinner Shams Mulani (3/15) and off-spinner Tanush Kotian (3/13) grabbed three wickets apiece as none of the Uttarakhand batters showed any spine.

Kulkarni wreaked havoc as he

first castled opener Kamal Singh (0) and then trapped rival skipper Jay Bista (0) in front of the wickets, with the opposition tottering at 1/2. He then cleaned up Robin Bist (3) with a delivery that jagged backed in as Uttarakhand was starring at a huge

defeat.

In-form Mulani, who had grabbed a fiver in the first innings, got into the act and ran through the middle-order. His victims included Kunal Chandela (21), Dikshanshu Negi (5) and Mayank Mishra (0).

## MP win by 10 wickets

PTI ■ ALUR

Spinner Kumar Kartikeya carried on with his brilliant bowling display and spun a web around the Punjab batters as Madhya Pradesh cruised into the Ranji Trophy semi-finals with a 10-wicket victory here on Thursday.

Kartikeya scalped 6 for 50, his second-best bowling figures in First Class cricket, with another spinner Saransh Jain playing perfect second fiddle, claiming 4 for 100, as Punjab folded for a paltry 203 in the second innings.

Wickets kept tumbling for the hill state even as Kotian dismissed three lower-order batters in quick succession and also grabbed the final wicket of Agrim Tiwari to cap off a historic win for his side.

For Uttarakhand, such was the collapse that only wicket-keeper Shivam Khurana (25 not out) and Chandela could reach the double-figure mark.

Mumbai's medium pacer Mohit Awasthi (1/5) also played his part to perfection.

Parkar was adjudged as the player of the match.

Punjab resumed play on day four at 120 for 5, still 58 adrift of their opponent to make them bat again and riding on Mayank Markande (33), who batted with freedom, taking the MP bowlers to the cleaners with one four and three sixes posted 203 in second innings.

With only 26 to chase down, MP openers Himanshu Mantri (9 not out) and Yash Dubey (17) achieved the target without much fuss in just 5.1 overs, helping their side to comfortably book a place in the last four of the elite domestic event.

### BENGAL IN COMMAND

Sayan Mondal and Shahbaz Ahmed snared four wickets each to put Bengal in the driver's seat against Jharkhand on day four of their quarter-final.

Courtesy of an impressive performance by the bowlers, Bengal obtained a massive 475-run first-innings lead. The overall lead after the day's play stood at a staggering 551 runs.

The Abhimanyu Easwaran-led side seemed to have put one foot in the semi-final.