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Violent protests engulf India after Fri prayers



Miscreants throw stones on police during a protest against controversial remarks made by two now-suspended BJP leaders about Prophet Mohammad, in Prayagraj on Friday

Scores of cops hurt, curfew clamped in many cities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Protests erupted in several parts of the country, including the national Capital, over the alleged controversial remarks on Prophet Mohammad by two now-suspended BJP functionaries. The protests turned violent at several places, forcing the authorities to impose curfew. Scores of policemen were also injured.

In what seemed like coordinated protests, Muslim devotees came out in large numbers

on the streets across the country after the Friday prayers. Curfew has been clamped in Ranchi, besides Kishtwar and Bhaderwah towns of Jammu. Curfew was also imposed and internet services suspended in major towns of Chenab valley region in Jammu & Kashmir.

The violent protests in six districts of Uttar Pradesh led to the arrest of 109 miscreants. Crude bombs were hurled by the protesters in Prayagraj and heavy stone pelting was reported from Saharanpur where the Islamic seminary Darul Uloom Deoband is located. District Magistrate, SSP, SDM and several police officials were injured in the violence.

Reports also suggested disruption of train services on the Howrah route. Muslim devotees jammed highways in large areas of Howrah district, block-

aded traffic and vandalised public properties for hours ignoring frantic appeals for peace made by the State Ministers.

A helpless administration watched on even as Howrah continued to burn for the second consecutive day on Friday as a section of people — protesting controversial remarks of suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma against Prophet Muhammad — went on rampage blockading trains, national highways and burning police and other vehicles.

This, whereas a clueless police force took piecemeal action for want of orders from the above, sources said. Even as thousands of people, including daily commuters, were stuck on roads amid protests and punishing heat, Governor Jagdeep Shankar asked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee — who had

on Thursday appealed for peace “with folded hands” — to contain the situation.

Apparently taking a cue from the stone pelters of J&K, protesters at some places hit the police with stones prompting the latter to charge them with batons and use tear-gas shells.

In Delhi, protesters gathered outside the historic Jama Masjid after the Friday prayers demanding the arrest of suspended BJP Spokesperson Nupur Sharma.

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Protests in B'desh

Dhaka: Hundreds of people took to the streets in several major cities in Bangladesh on Friday, protesting against the controversial remarks made by two former BJP spokespersons against Prophet Mohammad.

Govt's call against stray counselling for NEET in public health interest: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a batch of petitions seeking to fill the vacant 1,456 seats in NEET-PG-2021. The apex court said that the decision of the Centre and the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) not to have a special stay round of counselling for All India Quota in NEET-PG-2021 is “in the interest of medical education and public health”. The vacation bench of Justices MR Shah and Aniruddha Bose said there cannot be any compromise with the quality of medical education which will affect public health.

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Fixated on Mughals, historians ignored other empires: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday blamed Indian historians for giving prominence to the Mughal era history only and ignoring the glorious rules of many empires like Pandyas, Ahom, Mauryas and Cholas. Releasing a book titled “Maharana: Sahastra Varsha Ka Dharma Yuddha”, Shah appealed to the historians to revive the glory of the past for the present and said history does not have to be written at the behest of the Governments but on the basis of factual events.

Asserting that “nobody can stop us from writing history as

we are independent now”, Shah pointed out that many Indian kings had fought invaders and protected their territories by defeating them bravely, but unfortunately their heroism have not been chronicled in detail in the history so far.

The battle fought for the protection of the culture, language and religion for 1,000 years has not gone in vain as “India is again standing with respect before the world now and the country's glory is recognised”, he said.

“I want to tell the historians we have many empires but historians have concentrated only on the Mughals and wrote mostly about them,” he said.

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Won't hesitate to invade Taiwan, China tells US

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

Beijing will “not hesitate to start a war” if Taiwan declares independence, China's defence minister warned his US counterpart on Friday.

“If anyone dares to split Taiwan from China, the Chinese army will definitely not hesitate to start a war no matter the cost,” Wu Qian quoted defence minister Wei Fenghe as saying during a meeting with Lloyd Austin.

Wei vowed that Beijing would “smash to smithereens any ‘Taiwan independence’ plot and resolutely uphold the unification of the motherland.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets his former schoolteacher in Navsari in Gujarat on Friday

PTI

‘Malpractice’ allegations delay RS poll results in Maha, Hry

In Rajasthan, Cong bags 3, BJP 1; In K'taka, BJP wins 3, Cong 1; setback for Subhash Chandra

TN RAGHUNATHA/PNS ■ MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The Congress and the BJP shared the honours in Rajasthan and Karnataka winning 3 and 1 Rajya Sabha seats each respectively on Friday. But counting of votes did not start till late at night in Maharashtra and Haryana as the Election Commission was dealing with complaints of electoral malpractices.

In Maharashtra, both the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and the Opposition BJP knocked on the doors of the ECI complaining against electoral malpractices allegedly indulged in by each other.

In Haryana also, the counting of votes for the two Rajya Sabha seats was put on hold after the BJP and the Independent candidate backed by it urged the Election Commission to cancel the votes of two Congress MLAs.

BJP nominee Krishan Lal Panwar and Independent candidate Kartikeya Sharma shot off a missive to the EC, alleging Congress MLAs Kiran Choudhary and BB Batra showed their ballot papers to unauthorised persons after



Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut and Congress leader Ashok Arjunrao Jagtap arrive at Vidhan Bhavan, during Rajya Sabha elections, in Mumbai on Friday

PTI

marking them and that the episodes were “duly captured” by the camera installed for the purpose of election.

However, Congress candidate from Haryana Ajay Maken wrote to the Election Commission of India, stating that the demand raised by BJP-JJP backed independent candidate Kartikeya Sharma be quashed and the results declared at the earliest.

The ruling Congress won three of the four Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan, overcoming the challenge posed by BJP-backed independent candidate Subhash Chandra. The BJP got the fourth seat. Its candidate and former minister Ghanshyam Tiwari said he had also won, polling 43 votes.

Congress candidates Randeep Surjewala, Mukul Wasnik and Pramod Tiwari were elected to the Rajya Sabha, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced. The CM also thanked BJP MLA Shobharani Kushwah for cross-voting in favour of Congress candidate Pramod Tiwari.

The BJP has suspended Kushwah from the party's primary membership. “When everybody knows that 126 MLAs are with us, why did they field an independent candidate? They wanted to attempt horse-trading but that did not happen,” Gehlot told reporters at the Assembly building.

Newly elected Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Surjewala said it was a victory of truth. “The

Congress got a total of 127 votes. One vote was rejected because of a minor thing,” he added.

Before them, BJP candidate Ghanshyam Tiwari and other leaders of the party announced his victory in one seat. “I am thankful to the State and the central leadership for making me the candidate. I got 43 votes,” Tiwari said.

All 200 Rajasthan MLAs had cast their votes for the Rajya Sabha elections by Friday afternoon. In the House, Congress has 108 MLAs, BJP 71, Independents 13, Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) three, and the CPI(M) and the Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) two each.

In Karnataka, the ruling BJP won the three Rajya Sabha seats it had contested, while the Congress managed to win only one of the two seats to which it had fielded its candidates. The Janata Dal-Secular, which had fielded one candidate despite not having enough votes, failed to win any, as the Congress did not accept its request for support in the name of secularism.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, actor-politician Jaggesh, and outgoing MLC Lehar Singh Siroya of the BJP, and former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh of the Congress were declared victorious by the poll officials after counting of votes.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

MAHA LOGS 3,081 CASES; 1,956 IN MUMBAI ALONE

Mumbai: Maharashtra on Friday recorded 3,081 new coronavirus infections, highest in nearly four months, while Mumbai reported 1,956 cases, the State health department said.

INDIA ON US CURRENCY 'MONITORING LIST'

Washington: India on Friday remained on the US treasury department's currency “Monitoring List” of major trading partners as Washington placed India along with 11 other major economies that merit close attention to their currency practices and macroeconomic policies.

GENERAL PERVEZ MUSHARRAF CRITICAL

Lahore/Dubai: Pakistan's former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf is on a ventilator support at a hospital in the UAE, Musharraf's close aide and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry said.

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MOCK FIRE DRILL AT SHAHJAHAN ROAD

New Delhi: The fire broke out on the fourth floor of Union Public Service Commission's building on National Capital's Shahjahan Road in central Delhi on Friday afternoon. The information regarding the blaze was received around 3.10 pm, following which four to five fire tenders were rushed to the spot. However, it turned out to be a mock drill which was later confirmed by the fire department.

FOOD MIN DOES SURPRISE INSPECTION

New Delhi: Delhi's Food and Civil Supplies Minister Imran Hussain carried out a surprise inspection at the Burari circle office of the Food and Supplies Department on Friday. The Minister enquired about the pending ration card applications pertaining to the circle office. He also enquired about the verification status of the pending application conducted by the concerned FSO/FSI. The Minister issued instructions to the concerned officers to promptly deal with pending applications and to resolve the cases at the earliest in the interest of beneficiaries and applicants.

33-YR-OLD PROPERTY DEALER SHOOT'S SELF

Gurugram: A 33-year-old property dealer allegedly shot himself dead in his house with his licensed revolver in Gurugram's Narsingpur village on Thursday evening. The deceased has been identified as Arjun alias Anoop. According to the police, the reason behind the suicide is yet to be known as no suicide note was recovered from the deceased prompting him to take this extreme step. However, the police suspect that Arjun suffered losses in his business this could be the reason behind this extreme step. He shot himself dead at his house.

MAN ARRESTED FOR KILLING ARMS DEALER

Gurugram: A 36-year-old man has been arrested by the Gurugram police in connection with the murder case of a 40-year-old arms dealer, Manish Bhardwaj, who was killed by the accused in Gurugram's New Colony area on June 7. The accused has been identified as Sunny Kant a resident of Gurugram. The police have also recovered a revolver which was used in the crime, 2 live cartridges and one empty shell from his possession. According to the police, Bhardwaj, Sunny Kant and Pramod alias Bablu driver of Bhardwaj were travelling in a Bolero vehicle on June 7.

WOMAN RAPED IN HOTEL BY DATE

New Delhi: A 28-year-old woman was allegedly raped at a hotel in southwest Delhi's Dwarka by a man she met on a dating app. The incident occurred on May 30. The accused, a resident of Hyderabad, is absconding. In her police complaint filed on June 3, the woman claimed that after meeting the accused on a dating app she went to the hotel with the man on May 30 where she was sexually assaulted.

DRAIN BETWEEN HIRANKI DAM-NATHUPURA SOON

New Delhi: The Delhi Government has decided to construct a massive drain between Hiranki Dam and Nathupura. Officials said that this would help in eliminating the issue of water logging on Burari Road during the rainy season. On Friday, Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia approved the project worth Rs 4.95 crore. The Burari road serves as the connecting road for many smaller colonies. After the construction of this drain, the local people will get relief from the traffic jams due to water logging during monsoons.

FILL VACANCIES IN 2 MONTHS: SOCIAL WELFARE MIN

New Delhi: Delhi's Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam on Friday directed officials to fill the vaccines in the department within two months. The department will hire more workers on contractual basis so that the elderly living in the old-age homes can have a comfortable stay, he said after a review meeting. The minister also reviewed the implementation of the Mukhyamantri Vidyarthi Pratibha Yojana and the Jai Bhim Mukhyamantri Vidyarthi Pratibha Yojana.

GOVT POLICY HELPED IN MAINTAINING GREEN COVER: CM

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said his government's tree transplantation policy has helped prevent a dip in the national capital's green cover despite a large number of development projects being undertaken in the city. Kejriwal said Delhi's green cover has increased from 19.97 per cent to 2.06 per cent after his AAP came to power. 'Delhi's green cover should have decreased to 15-16 per cent considering the development works being undertaken... But the Tree Transplantation Policy brought in October 2020 prevented it,' he said after inspecting trees transplanted at a site in Mayur Vihar.

CM Kejriwal, Danish Ambassador discuss avenues for collaboration

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Danish Ambassador Freddy Swain on Friday discussed avenues for collaboration in round-the-clock tap water supply, air purity and world-class roads. Kejriwal asked Swain for a presentation on Denmark's efforts on recharging ground-water and reducing air pollution so that the Delhi government could work with the European country in implementing it in the national capital.

Underlining that he wants Delhi's roads to be world class, Kejriwal shared that the government is redeveloping 500



km roads in the national capital as per European standards. "We can collaborate with Denmark on the road beautification project if need be," he said.

"We are aiming to beautify Delhi's 500-kilometre-long roads in the style of European countries. We have chosen a

few routes in Delhi for a pilot project, and progress at these sites is in full swing. There appears to be ample room for improvement and suggestions in our initiative. Therefore, we are excited to collaborate with Denmark on road infrastructure. We wish to learn from the improvements Denmark has made to its road infrastructure and integrate those in our projects for better results," Kejriwal said.

Swain praised the city government's efforts in reducing air pollution, the statement said. The Danish ambassador was especially "fond" of the Delhi government's electric vehicle policy. He also appreciated the e-auto project of the

Delhi government and mentioned that he has had the pleasure of driving an e-auto, which he found to be both enjoyable and exciting, it said. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was also present during the meeting.

Swain was accompanied by Anitha Kumari Sharma, the Embassy of Denmark's Urban Development Counselor. Kejriwal also said his government was working on ground-water recharge and was of the opinion that it could do a better job in collaboration with Denmark in this area.

He said that there is a huge potential in Delhi to harvest rainwater and use it in meeting the city's water requirements.

Sisodia asks officials to submit detailed report on maintenance of Chandni Chowk

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has directed officials to submit a report on the maintenance of the redeveloped Chandni Chowk market and asked them to ensure that the place does not lose its sheen.

The redeveloped market was inaugurated in September, 2021.

Laxity of officials will not be tolerated in this regard, he added. His directives came after a surprise inspection of the popular Chandni Chowk market on Thursday evening.

During the inspection, he expressed "unhappiness" over the poor upkeep of the redeveloped market.

"The Delhi Government has beautified Chandni Chowk, but during the visit there yesterday, it was very sad to see the negligence of the concerned agency towards the maintenance and cleanliness of the market. Have ordered the officials to take care of the upkeep of the market and submit the report to me. Such laxity will not be tolerated," Sisodia said in a tweet in Hindi on Friday.

During the visit Sisodia pointed out garbage strewn on the road and dangling cables and wires. The minister also met traders of the market and sought to know their issues and concerns.

According to a statement issued by the government on Friday, the deputy chief minister "reprimanded" officials for

neglect in ensuring adequate standard of cleanliness in the market.

During the inspection, it was observed that boom barriers installed in the area were not functional and movement of two-wheeler motor vehicles was noted because of police negligence. After the redevelopment, motor vehicles have been prohibited on this stretch of the road between 9 am and 9 pm.

Under the initiative of renovation and beautification of Chandni Chowk, all overhead wires were replaced by an underground wiring system on this stretch, but in the inspection, it was noted that new overhead wires had been installed at some places, the statement said.

‘Malpractice’ allegations delay RS poll results ...

From Page 1

There was suspense over the outcome of the contest for the fourth seat, which witnessed a tight contest among all the three political parties, as they had fielded candidates despite none of them having adequate number of votes to win it, and thereby forcing an election.

A total of six candidates were in the fray for the Rajya Sabha elections to the four

seats from the State, necessitating a contest for the fourth one.

With 46 votes each, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman got elected for her third Rajya Sabha term from the state, and senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh the fourth time.

In Maharashtra, though all the eligible MLAs cast their votes in the RS polls for six votes by 1.30 pm, the counting

of votes could not begin shortly thereafter as it normally happens in an election to the Upper House of Parliament owing to complaints of violations of election rules made by both the BJP and MVA.

In the normal course, the RS poll results would have been declared by 5 pm. But, with the matter being adjudicated by the ECI, available indications suggested that the election authorities might declare the RS poll results in Maharashtra late at the night or early on Saturday.

The Opposition BJP — which has made it a prestige issue to win the third seats by

any means despite the fact that it has MLAs' strength to win only win two seats out of the six seats for which the polling was held on Friday — was aggressive and more quick in lodging complaints with the election authorities.

Considering the strengths of major contending parties in the 288-member Maharashtra Legislative Assembly that is an electoral college for the polls, the ruling MVA — comprising Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress — can collectively win four out of six RS seats, while the BJP can win two seats.

Though it can win only two seats, the BJP has gone

ED gives new summons date to Sonia Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has given a new summons date to Congress President Sonia Gandhi, who is recovering from COVID-19, in connection with a money laundering case linked to the National Herald newspaper.

The agency has now asked her to appear before it on June 23.

Earlier, Gandhi was issued a summons asking her to appear on June 8. She had sought more time to appear before the agency after testing Covid-positive on June 3.



The agency has also summoned her son and Lok Sabha MP Rahul Gandhi on June 13 for questioning in the case.



Over 200 specialists and dentists from various colleges and hospitals across India participated in the one-day symposium on Orthognathic Surgery organised by the Departments of Maxillofacial Surgery & Orthodontics at SRM Kattankulathur Dental College & Hospital. The event was held at SRM Institute of Science and Technology

ahead and fielded Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, former State Minister Anil Bonde and former MP Dhananjay Mahadik as its candidates, while the Shiv Sena has nominated Sanjay Raut and Sanjay Pawar as its candidates. The NCP has put up former union minister Praful Patel as its candidate, while the Congress has fielded Imran Pratapgarhi, a Uttar Pradesh-based Urdu poet, as its candidate.

The actual contest is for the sixth seat — between BJP's Dhananjay Mahadik and Shiv Sena's Sanjay Pawar.

Earlier during the polling,

the BJP claimed that Yashomati Thakur (Congress), Jitendra Awhad (NCP) and Suhas Kande (Shiv Sena) had violated the rule officer ballot papers to their respective agents, while Kande displayed his ballot paper to the agents of two different parties, Parag Alavani, BJP MLA and polling agent, claimed.

Senior Congress leader and PWD Minister Ashok Chavan said that his party's polling agent Amar Rajurkar had objected to the vote cast by Sudhir Mungantiwar (BJP) as the latter had handed his ballot paper to Ashish Shelar, the BJP polling agent.

Padma Shri Yogendra Baba passes away

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Baba Yogendraji, honoured by President of India with a Padma Sree for his selfless service in propagating Indian arts and culture passed away at Lucknow on Friday morning. He was 98.

Yogendraji, founder of Sanskar Bharati, launched to strengthen and sustain the centuries old Indian forms of art and culture, was engaged in finding out the lacune that retarded their growth and offered measures to revive them. An authority on Lok Sangeeth, Lok Nrithya and tribal art forms, Yogendraji travelled across the length and breadth of India to document and prepare an inventory of the dying art forms in the sub continent.

The influence wielded by



him was shared by Prof P G Haridas, president, Tapasya, Kerala's biggest art and cultural society, which is also an integral part of Sanskar Bharati. "Baba Yogendraji was a pro-active art and cultural icon who could organise mega shows exclusively featuring the Lok Sangeeth and Lok Nrithya forms. He had an umbilical cord relation with all artists," said Haridas. He said the mega festivals of Indian art and culture organised under the auspices of Sanskar Bharati were the brainchild of Yogendra Ji. "It was Baba Ji who pointed out the uniqueness of the tribal art and dance forms of the country and fought for the recognition of the artists," said the Professor.

Yogendra Ji who started his career as an activist of the RSS, switched over to the preservation of Lok Natya

and Lok Sangeeth art forms. "He wanted us to call on all the artists individually and convince them that they were part and parcel of Indian Society. He also insisted that we should ensure the well being of these artists," said Rajith Kumar, Sanskar Bharati activist from Kerala's Idukki district.

Kerala holds Yogendra in high esteem as it was at Thodupuzha a three-day art and cultural event by name Chitra Pournami was held in 1998 to celebrate his 75 th birth day. According to Prof Haridas, the style of Yogendraji's work should be an eye opener to all. "He never built a corporate office for Sanskar Bharati. It was through inter personal communication he built up the infrastructure for promoting our traditional art and cultural forms," said the professor.

Violent protests engulf India after...

From Page 1

Some of the Muslim devotees, who gathered on the steps of the mosque, carried placards and shouted slogans against Sharma and Naveen Jindal, former head of the Delhi BJP's media unit.

The protest was held peacefully and lasted for 15 to 20 minutes and the protesters were later dispersed from the area, according to senior police officials.

Several students of Jamia Millia Islamia also staged a demonstration on the university campus here demanding Sharma's arrest. They raised slogans and also held placards that read - "Blasphemy is RSS's inborn language, Save India from them, Arrest Sharma" and "Stop Attacking Muslim".

In Jharkhand, some policemen were injured while trying to control violent protesters

near Hanuman Temple on Ranchi's Main Road.

Ranchi Police fired shots in the air and resorted to baton charge to control the protesters who spilled out on the road after the Friday prayers and pelted stones and shouted slogans.

Police officials said the protests were continuing since morning and picked up tempo post-Friday prayers. Many shops and establishments owned by Muslims kept their shutters down in protest against the alleged controversial remarks.

Communal tension gripped Jammu's Baderwah and some areas of Kishtwar prompting authorities to impose curfew. Parts of Kashmir observed a shutdown. Officials said internet services were snapped in the Baderwah and Kishtwar

towns besides Srinagar city of Kashmir as a precautionary measure. Mobile internet was also suspended in parts of Kashmir to check communal flare-up.

Sporadic incidents of stone pelting were reported in Baderwah town and some radicals came out on the streets and threw stones at security forces while raising slogans. In Srinagar, protests were held at Lal Chowk, Batamaloo, Tengpora and other places with the demonstrators holding placards.

Jammu and Kashmir DGP Dilbag Singh said efforts are on to defuse tension in Baderwah town and appealed to the people to behave responsibly and not get misled by provocation besides maintaining communal harmony. Curfew has been imposed as a precautionary measure to maintain peace, he

said.

In Uttar Pradesh, protests broke out at several places with policemen pelted with stones by people in Prayagraj and Saharanpur after Friday prayers.

In Prayagraj, some motorcycles and carts were set on fire and an attempt was made to set ablaze a police vehicle. Police used tear gas and batons to disperse the demonstrators and peace was later restored, officials said, adding one policeman was hurt in Prayagraj.

The demonstrations in the district were marked by slogan-shouting against Sharma. In Saharanpur, the protesters demanded a death sentence for her.

Protests were also reported from Bijnor, Moradabad, Rampur and Lucknow. Reports of sloganeering also came from Lucknow.

Sisodia reviews progress of work at Gandhinagar market

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia on Friday held a review meeting to check the progress to redevelop Asia's largest garment Gandhinagar market in the national Capital. Sisodia in the meeting said that the redevelopment of Gandhinagar project is one of the most ambitious projects for the Delhi Government, which will be a milestone in boosting the economy of Delhi and generating thousands of jobs. Sisodia said that the redevelopment will not only give Gandhinagar a new identity, but will also increase business for merchants and provide a new shopping experience for the people. According to officials, redevelopment of Gandhi Nagar would be done in two phases considering the ongoing economic activities in the area.

"In phase-I, the arrangement of public facilities, drinking water and other facilities, installation of CCTV cameras and security monitoring system, redesign street light, street furniture and installation of visual information system will be done," said the official.

"While in phase-II, the Government will focus on urban redesigning and the architecture of the market. Simultaneously, national and international marketing of the area, digitization of area information, setting up of fire-fighting facilities and upgradation of existing facilities will be included," said the official.

Govt's call against stray counselling for NEET in public health...

From Page 1

"The decision of the Union Government and the MCC not to have a special stray round of counselling is in the interest of medical education and public health. There cannot be any compromise with the merits and/or quality of medical education, which may ultimately affect public health," the bench said while noting that it was a conscious decision and cannot be termed as arbitrary.

The top court said the

process of admission and that too in medical education cannot be endless and it must end at a particular point in time. The time schedule has to be adhered to, otherwise, ultimately, it may affect medical education and public health, it said. The apex court said the MCC and the Union of India have to adhere to the time schedule for completing the admission process when the current admission of NEET-PG-2021 is already behind the schedule.

MASSIVE PROTEST OUTSIDE JAMA MASJID

Arrest of Sharma, Jindal sought for disparaging remarks against Prophet



Muslims stage a protest over the controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammad, after the Friday prayers at Jama Masjid, in New Delhi on Friday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

3 days' judicial custody for 30 AIMIM activists

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Friday sent 30 activists of the All-India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) to three days' judicial custody, a day after they were arrested following a protest outside Parliament Street police station.

They were protesting over an FIR against AIMIM party chief Asaduddin Owaisi for allegedly posting and sharing messages on social media thereby allegedly inciting people on divisive lines. A total of 33 protesters, including women, were detained and an FIR was registered for disobe-

dience to order duly promulgated by a public servant. According to Amrutha Guguloth, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), New Delhi district, the 30 protesters were arrested under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and produced before the court on Friday.

The Delhi Police has registered FIRs against former BJP spokespersons Nupur Sharma and Naveen Kumar Jindal, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand and others for allegedly posting and sharing messages on social media against maintenance of public tranquility and

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A massive protest erupted outside Delhi's Jama Masjid after Friday prayers against the controversial remarks made by BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma against Prophet Mohammed.

The protesters demanded the arrest of Nupur and Naveen Jindal, former head of the Delhi BJP's media unit. Scores of people, carrying placards, shouted slogans against her. There was heavy security deployment to manage the situation and avoid any untoward incident.

According to senior police officers, the protest was held peacefully on the stairs near gate number one of the mosque, and it lasted for around 15 to 20 minutes. The protesters were dispersed from the area later. However, following the protest, most of the shopkeepers closed their estab-

lishment. After the protest Imam Syed Ahmed Bukhari distanced himself from the demonstration saying "nobody knows who the protesters are" and demanded action against them.

"After namaz, around 40-50 people staged a protest shouting slogans of different kinds and showing posters.

There was no announcement for a protest from Jama Masjid. Nobody knows who those people were because thousands had gathered for the Friday prayers," Bukhari said.

The cleric said several people had contacted him seeking clarity about the protests and shutting of shops in the area to condemn the remarks against the Prophet. "... but I advised them to desist from such action and maintain peace. Delhi Police can probe who the protesters were because there was no permission for the demon-

stration," he said. According to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Central district, Shweta Chauhan, around 1,500 people had gathered at the mosque for Friday prayers. When the prayers ended peacefully, some people came outside, started showing placards and shouted slogans.

Some others also joined them later and the numbers went up to around 300. Police deployment always remains at Jama Masjid during Friday prayers.

"The protesters were dispersed within 10 to 15 minutes and the situation is peaceful. Legal action will be taken regarding the incident as per law. We have identified some of the miscreants and our teams are working to identify others," said the DCP. Even after the protesters were dispersed, teams of the police and the CISF continued to be deployed in the area. According to pro-

testors, Nupur Sharma should be arrested. "I will keep protesting until she is put behind the bars. How dare she disrespect our religion," questioned 57-year-old Baba Mastan, who was part of the protest.

Mohammad Fahad (59), a shopkeeper, said, "The protest started at 2 pm. They were dispersed by the police within 15-20 minutes. It was a peaceful protest."

The row over the alleged derogatory remarks against Prophet Mohammad escalated on Sunday with protests from countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Iran, prompting the BJP to take action against its functionaries and assert that it respects all religions.

As the row intensified domestically and abroad, the BJP on Sunday suspended Nupur Sharma and expelled Jindal. The Delhi Police has registered an First Information

Report (FIR) against 31 people, including AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand, and filed a separate case against former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma for allegedly spreading hate and hurting religious sentiments.

The two FIRs were registered on Wednesday after a social media analysis, the police officials had said. Former Delhi BJP media unit head Naveen Kumar Jindal, who was expelled from the party over his alleged remarks against Prophet Mohammad, and journalist Saba Naqvi have been named in the FIR.

"Police have registered FIR against those who were spreading messages of hate, inciting various groups and creating situations which are detrimental to maintenance of public tranquility," said Suman Nalwa, spokesperson of Delhi Police.

Protests in Jamia over Nupur's communal jibe

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Several students in Jamia Millia Islamia staged a demonstration on the varsity campus here against suspended Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Nupur Sharma and her controversial remarks on Prophet Muhammad.

The students gathered in large numbers at Gate no-7 of the varsity and demanded the arrest of Nupur Sharma "for hurting religious sentiments", said student outfit Campus Front of India (CFI).

They raised slogans against the BJP and Sharma and also held placards that read "Blasphemy is RSS' inborn language, Save India from them, Arrest Nupur Sharma" and "Stop Attacking Muslims." "Nupur Sharma has hurt the

religious sentiments of Muslims.

Strict action should be taken against her and she should be put behind bars," said a student associated with CFI. The students also alleged that even before the Friday prayers the university security closed the gates.

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As the row intensified domestically and abroad, the BJP on Sunday suspended Nupur Sharma and expelled Former Delhi BJP media unit head Naveen Kumar Jindal.



Students of Jamia Millia Islamia demands hanging of former BJP spokespersons Nupur Sharma and Navin Jindal over their controversial remarks against Prophet Mohammad, on the university campus, in New Delhi on Friday

PTI Photo

L-G, CM discuss training for unorganised sector



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday discussed a range of issues, including imparting training and distribution of machinery for making cow dung logs, cotton wicks, diyas etc. from cow dung which will promote women empowerment.

This move will improve the financial condition of women, prevent clogging of drains by deterring dung disposal and will also provide additional

income to farmers and dairy owners.

According to the statement released by the LG office, Saxena invoked training and distribution of machinery for making cow dung logs, cotton wicks, diyas etc. from cow dung, which would lead to empowerment of women, financial gains and prevent clogging of drains by deterring dung disposal.

This would also provide additional income to farmers and dairy owners. The LG underlined that the cow dung logs thus created could be used

as an alternative to wood for cremation purposes. It would in the process save trees from being cut to this end and address environmental concerns, the statement said.

The LG stated that Gobar was being successfully used for the production of paint, emulsion and distemper. However, the CM said that a team of officers would visit Jaipur to see and learn the processes in order to replicate the same in Delhi as well as in Punjab, it said.

"Saxena brought up the issue of skill training and distribution of enabling toolkits to 75,000 unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the unorganized sectors like pottery, carpentry, shoe-making and blacksmithery etc, with the aim of bringing the most marginalised in the main stream of development," the statement read.

"This, the CM dwelling on his own experience in the sector, agreed would bring about much-needed empowerment and livelihood enhancement of the targeted segments. It was agreed by LG

and CM to immediately start work for the identification of individual and group beneficiaries for the roll out of this program," it said.

"During the meeting, they further discussed the problem of water scarcity in the capital city and stressed upon a sustainable way forward in order to make the city self-sufficient in meeting its water requirements.

It was decided that a meeting of all concerned departments will be held in by the LG and CM on Tuesday, wherein the officers will be asked to present their concrete plans for the purpose of absorbing rain water and prevent water-logging, apart from recharging the water table," it read.

Apart from the above, the LG and CM also discussed about upgrading of infrastructural support and public amenities at cremation grounds and decided to take immediate steps to ensure betterment.

They also discussed about preparations and rollout of special cleanliness and sanitation drive that they will jointly launch and monitor.

Kejriwal urges Khattar to release additional water in Yamuna river

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the water level dipped in the Yamuna River, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday appealed to Haryana to release additional water in the Yamuna on humanitarian grounds to address the shortage of water in the Capital.

Kejriwal said he also discussed the issue with Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena at a meeting. Several parts in the national Capital are reeling under water shortage for the past few days.

"We should not go into the legalities... That Delhi's share is this much and Haryana is releasing this much... Delhi faces a water shortage and I appeal to the Haryana Government to release additional water in the Yamuna on humanitarian grounds," Kejriwal said after meeting the L-G. "I had put the issue in front of the Lieutenant-Governor and requested him to also ask the Haryana Government on his part to release water in the river Yamuna so that people of Delhi can get some relief," he said.

Delhi Jal Board Vice-Chairman Saurabh Bhardwaj also appealed to the Haryana Government to release Delhi's share of water in the Yamuna to tide over the water crisis in the Capital.

The DJB also claimed that Haryana had stopped releasing water from the Tajewala Barrage in Yamuna Nagar district which has reduced the water supply in Delhi by around 100 million gallons a day.

DJB claimed that the Yamuna runs eight feet deep in Delhi and the water level has already reduced by 7.5 feet. The drinking water problem in Delhi has aggravated over the last two days, said a DJB official.

Addressing a press conference, the DJB Vice Chairman Saurabh Bhardwaj also appealed to the Haryana government to release Delhi's share of water in the Yamuna to tide over the water crisis in the capital. "The water level in the Wazirabad Water Treatment Plant's pond has dropped to the bare minimum. As of today, the water level in the Wazirabad



barrage has dropped from the normal 674.5 feet to the lowest level of the year at 667.70 feet," said Bhardwaj.

"This indicates that the water level is approximately 8 feet below the surface. If you look at the Yamuna, you will notice that the depth of the water is only about half a foot, ranging from 6 inches to half foot," claimed Bhardwaj.

"This indicates that water from Haryana is not being released into the Yamuna at all. At the same time, if you look at the Yamuna's water coming from Palla, you will notice that the Yamuna has completely dried up," said Bhardwaj. "As a result, water production in Delhi has been reduced by about 100 MGD, which represents a significant portion of the city's water supply," he said. Bhardwaj said the water production has dropped below 900 MGD.

Meanwhile, Bhardwaj also said that DJB is deploying a temporary water master machine for this purpose. "Through this machine, a cavity is created by removing the sand till a certain depth, resulting in formation of a pit where the water can be collected and the water level is high enough to be lifted by the temporary pumps.

Simultaneously, at the barrage water scattered over a 700-800 meter square, would be collected and lifted through a new special pumps installed as emergency measure," said Bhardwaj.

The Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla water treatment plants lift water from the Wazirabad pond, clean it and supply to northeast Delhi, west Delhi, north Delhi, central Delhi, south Delhi, including Delhi Cantonment, and New Delhi Municipal Council areas. The Chandrawal, Wazirabad

and Okhla WTPs have a capacity of 90 MGD, 135 MGD and 20 MGD, respectively. Delhi requires around 1,200 MGD of water, while the DJB supplies around 1,000 MGD.

Meanwhile, as per the statement released by the Lieutenant Governor office, during the weekly meeting, they further discussed the problem of water scarcity in the capital city and stressed upon a sustainable way forward in order to make the city self-sufficient in meeting its water requirements.

6 of Moose Wala's shooters identified by us: Delhi Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Special Cell of Delhi Police has identified six shooters allegedly involved in the murder of popular Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu alias Sidhu Moosewala.

Addressing the press conference here at Police Headquarters in the Capital, H S Dhaliwal, the Special Commissioner of Police, Special Cell said that Sidhu Moosewala's death was an organised and brazen killing.

The Special CP said that the police had issued eight pictures of the suspects and six of the shooters were identified. Out of them, the role of four in the murder, which took place in Punjab's Mansa last month, has been established.

In a joint operation Special Cell and Maharashtra Police had arrested Siddhesh Hiraman Kamle alias Mahakal earlier this week from Pune in a case under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act in connection with the incident.

"During joint interrogation of Mahakal, the two shooters from Maharashtra have been identified, Santosh Jadhav and Navnath Suryavanshi. The duo was paid them Rs 3.5 lakhs each and 50,000 was paid to Mahakal to introduce them to main perpetrators," said the Special CP.

The Delhi Police had on Wednesday said gangster Lawrence Bishnoi was the mastermind behind the murder.

Bishnoi, who is in Delhi Police's custody, had planned killing of Moosewala while he was in prison. It is suspected that Bishnoi was in touch with killers, said the sources.

"On his orders shooting was carried out and earlier also, on Bishnoi directions the recce of singer house was conducted by his gang members," said the sources.

Police teams have earlier, interrogated Bishnoi for his alleged involvement in murder of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala. "Bishnoi has alleged that Moosewala was involved in killing of Akali Dal youth leader Vikramjit Singh alias Vicky Middukhera on August 7 last year which led to a rivalry between him and Punjabi singer," said sources.

L-G for giving a facelift to Delhi's flyovers

Wants a de-cluttered, clean Bengali market, beautified CP outer circle

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has directed that all flyovers in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) area must be aesthetically upgraded and the railings and central verge design should be painted in a uniform colour.

The Lieutenant-Governor has also directed officials to de-clutter and clean Bengali market and aesthetically upgrade Connaught Place's northern outer circle.

Saxena, who visited the NDMC area on Thursday, also directed that the work of restoration of the iconic Gole Market be completed at the earliest. During his visit to the



Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), he asked the officials to explore the possibility of the Municipal Corporation Delhi (MCD) replicating it in its various zones.

"Stressing again on uniformity of design, aesthetics and public convenience, the L-G directed officials to come up with a plan to beautify, clean, improve and de-clutter all flyovers in the NDMC area, including the Ranjit Singh Flyover connecting Connaught Place to Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, Lala Lajpat Rai Flyover

connecting Defence Colony and the ones near Oberoi Hotel and Neela Gumbad among others," a statement from the L-G's office said.

"Apart from ensuring uniform and appealing colouring, grills and plantation on the central verge of the flyovers, the L-G also underlined the importance of cleaning and clearing of the areas below flyovers," it added.

Saxena also directed that the lanes, by-lanes, service roads and dark spots in the NDMC and Connaught Place areas be spruced up and maintained at the earliest.

"The L-G directed the officials to complete the restoration of the iconic Gole Market, which is currently closed, at the earliest.

He also pointed out encroachments and lack of maintenance in the surrounding areas. Similar instructions were issued by him with regards to Bengali Market and the northern outer circle of Connaught Place adjoining

Minto Bridge, as also the Shankar Market," the statement said.

He pointed out that the ICCC, used by the NDMC, should integrate maintenance and repair of roads and footpaths into the system so real-time status can be monitored.

"The L-G witnessed firsthand, as to how the services being provided to citizens by NDMC that are integrated into the ICCC system are being delivered and monitored.

Appreciating the work done so far in operationalising this world-class system, he directed officials present to also integrate the maintenance and repair of roads and footpaths and grievances thereof into the ICCC system so that real-time status check and monitoring could be done.

"Observing that the ICCC initiative of NDMC has evolved as an effective and exemplary model, the L-G expressed the hope of MCD replicating it in its various zones in a phased manner," the statement said.

Army Chief visits forward posts in HP, U’khand to review op readiness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As face-offs are still on at the border in Ladakh with China, Army Chief General Manoj Pande is now visiting forward posts in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand to review operational preparedness.

The two States share borders with China and transgressions by Chinese troops take place sometimes there.

His visit comes in the backdrop of the armed forces maintaining high alert all along the Line of Actual Control(LAC)from west to east since trouble erupted in Ladakh in May 2020.

Additional deployments were made to meet any challenge. Soon after taking over as the Army Chief in May, Pande visited Eastern Ladakh for a first hand review of the situation there.

Giving details of his schedule for the ongoing tour, the Army said here on Friday, Pande is currently on a three-day forward area visit to the



Line of Actual Control(LAC) in the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

This is the maiden visit of the Army Chief to this sector after taking over as assuming responsibility of the top job. He is accompanied by Army Commander, Central Command and General Officer

Commanding(goc), Uttar Bharat Area. The 4,000 km long LAC stretches from Ladakh(western sector) to Arunachal Pradesh(eastern sector). The LAC in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand is known as the middle sector.

During visits to the forward posts, Pande is being

briefed by local commanders about the prevailing situation along the borders. Taking a first-hand assessment of the operational preparedness in forward areas, the Army Chief is scheduled to witness the high altitude operational capabilities of deployed formations, including mountaineering

Two States share borders with China

skills and long range patrolling, officials said. The Army Chief is also reviewing the ongoing infrastructure and development work and the Army-Citizens connect in the forward areas. While interacting with the Commanders during his visit, the Army Chief emphasised the need for vigil and alertness along the borders.

He expressed his satisfaction at the rapid improvement of defensive posture and operational readiness of formations. He appreciated the absorption of modern technology in undertaking persistent surveillance.

During his interaction with the troops deployed on the forward posts, Pande appreciated their high morale and exhorted them to maintain the high standards of professional excellence.

He also complimented the excellent synergy between the Army, Central paramilitary forces, civil administration and the police towards operational effectiveness and sustainable development in the border areas.

CISF takes over security of JSW Steel plant in Dolvi

JSW is the 13th private sector entity in country to be secured by CISF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Friday took over the security of the JSW Steel Ltd plant in Dolvi under Raigad district Maharashtra "in light of its proximity to the coastal area making it prone to various threats".

The Unit is headed by an Inspector rank officer and the sanctioned strength of CISF for this establishment is more than 70 armed commandos. The CISF will provide security to the JSW, Dolvi on Quick Reaction Team (QRT) pattern while the steel major will bear the expenses.

JSW Steel Ltd. is a private five million tons per annum integrated steel plant spread over an area of 1,500 acres of



land and is located on the west coast of Maharashtra. It is around 80 km from Mumbai by road, and is approximately 36 km from Gateway of India by sea.

With this induction, JSW is the 13th private sector entity to be secured by CISF. Others being protected by the CISF are Reliance, Infosys and Patanjali among others.

The administrative control of this private establishment will be under Inspector General, CISF Western Sector, Mumbai. "JSW Dolvi is located close to Mumbai, the financial capital of India, and it plays a vital role in the economic

growth of not only the surrounding areas but also of the country. The proximity of the plant to the coastal area makes it prone to various threats," the CISF said in a statement.

It further said, "In the light of the threat perception, security of JSW, Dolvi is of utmost importance as this vital installation is contributing to the national economy."

Inspector General, CISF, Western Sector Headquarters, Mumbai, KN Tripathi was the Chief Guest for the induction function, Plant Head JSW, Dolvi, Ashish Chandra and other officers of JSW as also of CISF.

SC denies additional counselling round for filling up seats in nursing courses in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maintaining that the admission process cannot be endless, the Supreme Court on Friday refused to direct the Centre and the Indian Nursing Council to conduct an additional mop up round for filling up of seats in nursing courses in Delhi for the academic year 2021-22.

A vacation bench of justices M R Shah and Aniruddha Bose dismissed the pleas of St Stephens Hospital College of Nursing and Angela Biju seeking a direction to open the admission process by allowing one more additional mop up round for the nursing courses for 2021-22 on grounds including that nearly 110 seats are remaining vacant in Delhi nursing institutions.

The admission process for the nursing courses in Delhi ended on March 31, 2022 for the academic session of 2021-22. The pleas alleged that the



time schedule for two government nursing colleges was extended from March 31 to May 15 and hence, such a relief can be granted to St Stephens Hospital College of Nursing as well. "The process of admission in educational institutions cannot be endless and it must come to an end at a particular point in time.

The extension or deviation in the time schedule may ultimately affect education. Under circumstances, we see no reason to interfere with the judgement/order passed by the (Delhi) high court. Both the SLPs (Special Leave Petitions)

stand dismissed," the bench ordered. During the brief hearing, it was urged that nearly 110 nursing seats are vacant in Delhi which has felt the dearth of human resources during the pandemic.

"From notification issued by Indian Nursing Council, last date of admission for the academic year 2021-22 was March 31, 2022. As per settled position, the time schedule for the admission in education institutions has to be adhered to.

As such the high court has rightly refused to entertain the petition and grant any relief of further mop up round to fill up the seats which have remained vacant," the bench said.

"There cannot be any negative discrimination. With respect to all other institutions the time limit of March 31 has been adhered to and even date of May 15, has also gone," it said.

Heatwave in northwest, central India eases slightly

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the ongoing heatwave spell in northwest and central India eased a little on Friday and maximum temperatures are likely to fall by two to three degrees by next week.

Heatwave conditions prevailed in parts of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Jharkhand, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh during the day, with Banda in Uttar Pradesh being recorded as the hottest place in the country at 46.2 degrees Celsius.

At least 25 towns and cities across these states reported maximum temperatures above 44 degrees Celsius, down from 32 on Thursday and 42 on Wednesday.

Northwest and central India is reeling under a heatwave spell since June 2 due to an onslaught of hot and dry westerly winds. "The ongoing heatwave spell is less intense as

compared to those recorded in April-end and May, but the area of impact is almost equal," senior IMD scientist R K Jenamani said.

The IMD said maximum temperatures in the Delhi-NCR and other parts of northwest India will come down by a few notches over the week-end but no major relief is likely till June 15.

It said moisture-laden easterly winds will provide significant relief from the searing heat from June 16 onwards. Pre-monsoon activity is predicted over east Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha from June 12, but north Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and north Madhya Pradesh will continue to see above-normal temperatures till June 15, the IMD official said.

"Parts of northwest India, including Delhi-NCR, may report a marginal relief on June 11-12. There will be cloudy weather over weekend but rainfall is unlikely," he added.



Women use scarves and an umbrella to shield themselves from the heat on a hot summer afternoon, in Gurugram PTI Photo



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration of the headquarters of Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), in Ahmedabad, Friday. Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, IN-SPACe Chairman Pawan Kumar Goenka and NSA Ajit Doval are also seen. PTI Photo

Rajnath gifts \$1-mn to air force training inst in Vietnam



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up defence co-operation with Vietnam, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday handed over a "gift" of one million dollars to an air force training institute there for a language and

Information Technology (IT) laboratory on the final day of his three-day visit to Vietnam. This gift came a day after Rajnath handed over 12 high speed boats to Vietnam on Thursday under the 100 million dollar Line of Credit(LOC). The first five boats were built by Larsen and

Toubo and the remaining by the Vietnamese shipyard.

The boats were given amid increasing maritime security cooperation between the two sides to deal with Beijing's increasing military assertiveness in the South China Sea region.

On Friday, the defence minister also visited the Telecommunications University in Nha Trang where an Army software park is being established with a USD 5 million grant from India.

"Handed over a gift cheque of USD 1 million for establishing a language and IT laboratory at the Air Force Officers Training School in Nha Trang.

I am confident that the laboratory will substantially contribute to raising language and IT skills of Vietnam's Air Force personnel," Rajnath tweeted. India and Vietnam

on Wednesday inked a vision document to further broaden the "scope and scale" of defence ties by 2030 and sealed a logistics support pact to allow their militaries of the two sides to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies.

The documents were signed after Rajnath and his Vietnamese counterpart General Phan Van Giang held "fruitful" talks.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on mutual logistics support is the first such major agreement that Vietnam has signed with any country.

The defence ministry said India and Vietnam continue to have the "most trustworthy relations in contemporary times with broader convergence of interests and common concerns." Vietnam, an important country of the

ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), has territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea region.

India has oil exploration projects in the Vietnamese waters in the South China Sea. Both the countries are boosting their maritime security cooperation in the last few years to protect common interests.

Relations between the two countries were elevated to the level of 'strategic partnership' during the visit of Vietnam's then prime minister Nguyen Tan Dung to India in July 2007.

In 2016, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Vietnam, bilateral relations were further elevated to a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'. Vietnam has become an important partner in India's Act East policy and the Indo-Pacific vision.

IFRL finds faults with E-waste Management Rules

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Federation of Reverse Logistic (IFRL) has lamented that the proposed draft E-waste Management Rules of 2022 totally disregard the role and responsibilities of dismantlers or Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs).

"The policy should recognise their position in the Extended Producer Responsibility value chain and not rid them of their livelihoods," they said at a seminar held here to deliberate on the draft policy.

The body is a federation of companies active in the reverse logistics domain that seek to develop a green supply chain across the country to facilitate collection and channelization of e-waste and contribute

towards creating a circular economy.

Stating that they play a pivotal role in developing a green supply chain to enable collection and channelization of electronic scrap from the informal sector and end-consumers for environment friendly disposal, the stakeholders said that PROs perform a very important role in assisting producers engage and carry out several functions, including achieving collection targets; establishing collection mechanism such as door to door collection, implementing buy back/take back, establishing collection centres/points.

Dismantlers on the other hand contribute largely towards sorting, segregating and dismantling scrap - technically acting as pre-processors before scrap E-Waste reaches recyclers for end-to-end recycling and

extraction of precious earth metals, said the organization. Further, the IFRL said that the new guidelines seem to consider only the recyclers. "This disregards the efforts and investments by organizations engaged in developing a network of structured and formal collection and dismantling centres."

"The 'Extended Producer Responsibility' (EPR) has been defined in the Draft E-Waste Management Rules 2022 for meeting recycling targets only through registered recyclers.

But there is a need for sustaining the integrated reverse value chain comprising consumers, PROs, collection centres, dismantlers to support the producers, importers, brand owners and recyclers with quality sourcing and better collection mechanism across the country only then there can be

better recyclability," Vijai Singhal, an office bearer of the Federation enlisted the works/jobs that the PROs carry out.

Pointed out Nisha Banth, spokesperson of the Federation, "It clashes with the monopoly laws and also with the right to lawfully earn a living. The draft rules have left us in lurch."

"The PROs can continue acting as catalysts in the E-Waste value chain and help make the developed collection mechanism far more robust and integrated reverse value chain,

besides supporting the SPCBs and CPCB in E-waste data inventorisation, capacity building exercises aimed at promoting collections from residential colonies, dealers, retailers, bulk consumers, households, office clusters, and informal sector," Banth added.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Cutting carbon alone may not be enough to prevent temperatures from rising by 2 degrees Celsius. To slow down warming in the near-term and reduce suffering from the ever-increasing heatwaves, droughts, superstorms and fires, short-lived climate pollutants also must be reduced to cut down global warming in half by 2050, a study has said.

"This would give the world a fighting chance to prevent global temperatures from rising above the UN-mandated pre-industrial levels of 1.5 degree Celsius," said the study which has appeared in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "Decarbonisation is crucial to meeting our long-term climate

goals, but it's not enough," said Drew Shindell, Professor of Earth Science at Duke University.

"Our analysis shows that climate pollutants such as methane, nitrous oxide, black carbon soot, low-level ozone and hydrofluorocarbons contribute almost as much to global warming as longer-lived CO2.

"Since most of them last only a short time in the atmosphere, cutting them will slow warming faster than any other mitigation strategy," Shindell said. Recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports have projected that decarbonising the energy system and shifting to clean energy in isolation could perversely cause temperatures to rise for a while because, in addition to CO2, fossil fuel

emissions contain sulphate aerosols, which act to cool the climate for a very short time - from days to weeks - before they dissipate.

The new study accounts for this effect and concludes that focusing exclusively on reducing fossil fuel emissions could result in "weak, near-term warming", which could poten-

tially cause temperatures to exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius level by 2035 and the 2 degrees Celsius threshold by 2050. In contrast, reducing both CO2 and other climate pollutants simultaneously would significantly improve our chance of remaining below the 1.5 degree Celsius mark, the researchers said.



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FIRST COLUMN

ASEAN SUMMIT CAN HELP INDIA RE-ENGAGE WITH MYANMAR

New Delhi's approaches to its neighbourhood are selective



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The newly-elected Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese rode a specially crafted bamboo bicycle with his Indonesian counterpart President Joko Widodo in Bogor this week. This is PM Albanese's first bilateral meeting after taking over and it was high-level one, which shines the spotlight on the importance Australia pays to the Southeast Asia regional partnership. Indonesia is an important trading partner for Australia in the region, and also one of the wealthiest economies in the Asean block. Indonesia has in the past expressed concerns regarding the security pact Australia has with the US and the UK called Aukus. Indonesia wants to maintain a more neutral stance and wants to get all the investments it can, from its neighbourhood (read China), as well as from the Western world (read the US). Keeping aside the foreign policy concerns, Australia seems keen to develop and, if necessary, renegotiate its relationships with its Southeast Asian partners, even as it faces the China threat. During the meeting this week in Bogor, the Australian PM made it clear that he will attend the G20 leaders' summit later in the year in Indonesia. There were earlier apprehensions regarding Australia's attendance given the uncomfortable situation of having to share the stage with President Putin of Russia. Australia has been a vocal critic of Russia's actions in Ukraine and has sided with the US and the European block on the future course of action on Russia. The Australia PM's visit and an emphasis on devel-



oping a closer relationship with Southeast Asia comes against the backdrop of the global leaders agreeing to a trade relationship framework in Tokyo last month. The Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) is a US-led push towards finding an economic axis strengthening its own Indo Pacific strategy. India, many Asean countries, the US, the Republic of Korea, and Japan are founding members of the IPEF, which is still an evolving series of dialogue and negotiations. The IPEF's four pillars of connected economy, resilient economy, clean economy and fair economy, are mainly focused on co-authoring/co-creating rules, standards, policies for greater economic partnerships. It may be considered to be a loose agreement without any time-bound outcomes and potential economic benefits for any of the participants. That brings the focus back on India which is hosting the first Asean foreign minister's summit next week in New Delhi. This would be the first time all ten Asean member nations will have their foreign ministers present in India. India has extended the invite to the highest bureaucrat in the foreign ministry of Myanmar, as it is yet to recognise the military junta Government. Questions are being raised regarding New Delhi's selective approaches to its neighbourhood. A few days ago, a senior government official from India was in Taliban-led Afghanistan, where he met several key leaders. The focus was on humanitarian aid; however, the security strategic angle of the visit can't be ruled out, given Afghanistan's unique position as a gateway to Central Asia. Even though India has not acknowledged the Taliban-led Afghanistan government, it is clearly focused on the strategic security aspects of the relationship. Taliban is known to be the mentors of two India-focused international terror groups and has been a huge client state of Pakistan. India knowing all these contradictions, has chosen to tread a cautious path with a Taliban led Afghanistan and re-engage. However, India has so far not faced any direct threat from Myanmar (incidentally with which it shares land borders unlike Afghanistan), except from rogue armed guerrillas trained by China. The next Asean foreign minister's summit in New Delhi could be a good place to re-engage with Myanmar and the Southeast Asian neighbourhood. *(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*

How Modi changed India in eight years

In these eight years, the delivery system improved so that everyone could receive the benefits of Government schemes

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed eight years in office, India came out of the cusp of indecisiveness and apathy to a New India testified by the spirit of change. The change, which is witnessed in all spheres of society, speaks volumes about Atmanirbhar Bharat.

This is New India, built with the promise of 'Sabka saath, sabka vikas aur sabka vishwas', and whose foundation was laid by Modi. In these eight years the delivery system improved so that everyone could get the benefit of government schemes without any bias.

The eight years also witnessed one of the darkest chapters of humanity, when the world was hit by the corona pandemic, which led to death, destruction, and disruption of economic activities. India was lucky to have a leader like Modi at the helm of affairs; because of his timely interventions through effective policies and programmes, India was able to safeguard the country's economy to a large extent. When even developed nations felt helpless, the PM came up with policies to bring 135 crore Indians out of gloom and distress. Free ration, free vaccination, and free treatment of corona-affected people provided much-needed relief to the people across the country.

This was the reason why world leaders praised Modi for his visionary leadership during the pandemic that created a 'suraksha chakra' across Indians and this helped India to fight pandemics better. The suraksha chakra not only helped India protect its citizens from the deadly coronavirus but also revived the economy through a booster dose of Rs 20 lakh crore. It ensured that India remained the top-performing economy despite facing the pandemic. One year later, we can proudly say that India is on its path to becoming an economic superpower.

Recently, US President Joe Biden praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for handling the Covid pandemic "successfully" and contrasted India's success with China's "failure" in dealing with coronavirus. This praise came during a closed session of the Quad Summit when Biden said Modi's success has shown the world that democracies can deliver. The PM, by using to his advantage various global forums, has also shown the world the richness and diversity of our great culture. Global recognition of yoga and Ayurveda is the outcome of these efforts.

PM Modi has changed the political culture and ushered in a responsive; pro-active Government as "seva, sushasan and garib kalyan" (service, good governance, and welfare of the poor) are the soul of the Modi Government. From the very beginning, the PM's focus has been on inclusive development, in which the needs and aspirations of all sections of society are taken care of. But it is the welfare of the poorest of the poor that underlines all his policies and programmes.



ONE OF THE BIG ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MODI GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN THE SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE FARM SECTOR. UTTAR PRADESH IS AN AGRARIAN STATE AND THE PM'S INITIATIVES HAVE ALREADY STARTED PAYING DIVIDENDS

(The author is MLC and BJP's UP unit vice-president. The views expressed are personal.)



The Central Government's schemes like Atmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India, Digital India, Start-up India, Stand up India and *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* are milestones in making India self-reliant, while Gem portal, Jan Dhan Yojana, Aadhar, and digital transactions through smartphones have brought about transparency in financial dealings.

One of the most celebrated aspects of the Modi regime would be the digitization of the economy. It began with Aadhar. This was followed by the Jan Dhan Accounts, and finally cheap internet connections for hundreds of millions of Indians. Prime Minister Modi recently told an Indian diaspora in Japan that India's share in the global digital transactions is 40 per cent—the highest in the world. There is no surprise that QR codes are available even with gol-gappa vendors or vegetable vendors. This was unimaginable a few years back.

The scale and effective implementation of these schemes have been the hallmark of the Modi government. It is the first time since Independence that the poor and those belonging to weaker sections have become true stakeholders in the Government.

The benefits of Government schemes have reached all the states without any discrimination. Take the case of Uttar Pradesh which has implemented the Central government policies in letter and in spirit. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, houses were allocated to 1.22 crore families in urban areas and 2.55 crore families in rural areas across India of which 17.54 lakh and 26.16 lakh houses will be built

in urban and rural areas, respectively, in UP. The high point is that many deprived communities like Mushar, Bantangia, Tharu, and Sehariya also got houses.

Uttar Pradesh has also been one of the biggest beneficiaries of the Swachh Bharat Mission, as 2.61 crore families out of over 11 crore got toilets across the country under the scheme belong to Uttar Pradesh. As many as 57,500 community toilets have also been built in UP, providing employment to thousands of women who receive an allowance of ₹9,000 for the maintenance of these community toilets. Another scheme in which UP is far ahead of other states is Amrit Yojana under the Jal Jeevan Mission, which seeks to provide clean drinking water through taps to every household by the year 2024. A total of 12.70 crore drinking water connections and 91 lakh sewerage connections have been provided under the scheme all over the country, of which Uttar Pradesh has completed 121 drinking water and 59 sewer projects and would be providing tap water to seven districts of Bundelkhand as well as Mirzapur and Sonbhadra. Besides, 66 districts consisting of 33,000 panchayats will get these connections by 2024.

PM Modi always talks about Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas—the ideology which defines the principles of the government, and its goal is to ensure that the benefits of government policies and programmes reach the citizens who are at the bottom of the development pyramid.

The Saubhagya Yojana brought light into the lives of people who earlier remained engulfed in dark-

ness. It is a well-known fact that over 3 crore people had no electricity connection because the previous Governments never gave a thought about it. But in the last eight years, 1.41 crore people got free electricity connection in UP alone. One of the big achievements of the Modi Government has been the special focus on the development of the farm sector. Uttar Pradesh is an agrarian state and the PM's initiatives to uplift farmers have already started paying dividends. As many as 2.55 crore farmers have recently received the 11th installment worth around ₹47,397.48 crore under PM Samman Nidhi.

Besides, out of 23 crore soil health cards issued across the country, 3.76 crore have been issued to farmers of Uttar Pradesh. At least 1.91 crore farmers have got Kisan Credit cards while Crop Insurance Scheme has benefited 2.46 crore farmers.

The health sector also flourished under the visionary leadership of Modi. Before 2014, UP's health infrastructure was very poor. Today, the state has 209 RTPCR labs and the state is capable of conducting 3 lakh tests daily for Covid in UP. About 8.43 lakh people have benefitted from the Ayushman Bharat and Jan Aarogya Yojana. Two AIIMS institutes are already operational in UP while 33 medical colleges are being built. The PM is known for his big and bold decisions, and he derives his strength from the trust and blessings of 135 crore Indians. The past eight years have given India a strong foundation on which our nation's future is being built. This will make India even stronger and more self-reliant.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE CORE OF THE BJP IS FRINGE (AFTER THE PARTY'S LEADERS MADE COMMENTS AGAINST PROPHET MOHAMMAD). —CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



A MAN WHO IS A FRINGE IN POLITICS IS RAISING FINGERS AT OTHERS. THE CONGRESS SHOULD FIRST LOOK INWARDS. —BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON RP SINGH

RBI must urge the Govt to check infra spending

The central bank's rate hikes have come too late, as both retail and wholesale inflation soared

The Reserve Bank of India raising the key policy interest rates by 0.5 per cent to 4.9 per cent, the second in five weeks, indicates further tightening and also raises the question how for the last over two years it overlooked inflation control. It woke up at a critical juncture, with its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) itself hinting at stagflationary trends—growth stagnation and continued price rises—and the World Bank almost confirming it. Was the RBI overlooking a ticking bomb or was it too accommodative during the Covid pandemic because of other pressures? It has been speaking about inflationary trends since 2020 but apparently was being industry-friendly in keeping the rates low, ignoring



SHIVAJI SARKAR

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

the concern for safeguarding the interest of the depositors. Since most central banks were following the same policy, including the US, it escaped scrutiny.

The RBI has woken up late. Meanwhile the US inflation, which used to remain low around 2 per cent, has shot up to 8.5 per cent and has become a problem for President Joe Biden and the world economy. The IMF has been harping on it, saying that since early 2022, both headline inflation and core inflation were significantly above target in most advanced economies.

The RBI needs to stress its own 2016 finding that infrastructure expenses on roads and bridges have negative consequences. It may be pointed out that the MPC in July 2021 had also discussed stagflationary



trends but desisted rate rise despite a dissent note on the price front and cut on taxes. But till May this year, the RBI did not act. It had similarly ignored high prices in 2008 right after the global financial crisis. Then too it appeared accommodative before it resorted to the control mechanism and raised the rates. The large lenders benefited immensely from it as they took huge credit at low rates. At this juncture the first signs of inflation were noticed in January-March quarter 2020 when infla-

tion touched 6 per cent.

As consumer inflation (CPI) touches 7.9 per cent and wholesale inflation (WPI) 15.1 per cent, the highest level in three decades, the central bank remained complacent. In July 2021, it predicted 2022 inflation to be at 5.7 per cent. The WPI went up from 10.7 per cent in April 2021 to the present lever, but the RBI speaks only of CPI. It is a bit surprising that despite noticing the malignant trends the RBI remained quiet till May 2022.

Then, it took swift action, raising the rate by 0.9 per cent between May 4 and June 8. Some more quick steps are likely to increase the repo rate. It still presumes that India's crude oil basket will remain at \$105, though market prices are at around \$120.

The RBI is also optimistic on growth to remain at 7.2 per cent, though the World Bank predicts global growth to come down to 2.9 per cent from 5.7 per cent in 2021. The RBI seems still cushy; it is not using the MPC power. Except in 2021, the dissent has not been there, despite uncertainty over the economic situation most poignantly pointed out by its Consumer Confidence Survey 2021. It revealed weakness in the bargaining powers of the working class.

For quite some time, low-cost borrowing had been a priority of the RBI, despite it affecting the health of the banking sector and yielding low gains for the common people and senior citizens. Inflation harms the poor the most.

The RBI has to target CPI

inflation at 4 per cent; now it also warrants targeting the runaway WPI, a trend that needs deeper study of the changing market dynamics. High WPI, accompanied by high CPI, means the actual inflation level is around 20 per cent.

No wonder the MPC considers stagflation now a greater possibility as does the World Bank. In the prevailing situation it should have come out with detailed reports on the market functioning in India. There is a contrast here. While high profits are being cornered by a few big companies, most others, especially smaller firms, are incurring heavy losses. The RBI has to suggest the corrective methods.

Monetary tightening has its consequences. It can act as a drag on private consumption

that is already at a low for over a year.

It has to listen to World Bank president David Malpass who says, "For many countries, recession will be hard to avoid." The World Bank is firm that the economic slowdown might be severe by the end of 2022 as the Ukraine war has hit supplies and trade networks. It says that if the US Federal Reserve's rate hikes go too high, the economy could risk backsliding into a contraction and recession.

It predicts "several years of above-average inflation and below average growth with potentially destabilizing consequences for low and middle income economies. It's a phenomenon—stagflation—that the world has not seen since the 1970s." The warning is severe and grim.

Ukraine: 100-200 soldiers die daily, new plea for more arms

AP ■ KYIV

Up to 200 Ukrainian soldiers are being killed every day in Russia's military onslaught, according to an adviser to Ukraine's president — and only more and more advanced Western weaponry will turn back the Russian offensive, reduce the casualties and force Moscow to the negotiating table.

Mykhailo Podolyak told the BBC in an interview aired on Thursday that the daily loss of between 100 and 200 Ukrainian soldiers is the result of a "complete lack of parity" between Ukraine and Russia, which has "thrown pretty much everything non-nuclear at the front" in its bid to advance in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region and beyond.

Recently Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy put the daily death toll at up to 100, but Podolyak said it had grown.

Ukrainian officials have pointed at the mounting losses to emphasise their demand for more Western weapons,



which have been critical to the country's unexpected success in holding off the larger and better equipped Russian forces.

After a bungled attempt to overrun Kyiv in the early days of the war, Russia shifted its focus to the Donbas region of coal mines and factories. But its progress there has been plodding. Podolyak said delivery of state-of-the-art artillery systems would not only curb Ukraine's death toll, it would help its forces reclaim seized territory.

"There's something really important thing that our part-

ners need to understand, and that's until Russia suffers a serious military defeat, no form of dialogue will be possible, and they will continue to be able to try and take parts of our country," he said.

Podolyak also addressed Western fears that Western rocket launchers in the hands of Ukraine's forces would be used to strike targets inside Russia and potentially escalate the conflict to a wider conflagration, saying that "it won't happen."

The slog in the Donbas continued on Friday, with a

Ukrainian governor saying forces are fighting "for every house and every street" in Sievierodonetsk, the recent focus of clashes.

Sievierodonetsk is in the last pocket of the Luhansk region that has not yet been claimed by Russia.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai told The Associated Press that Ukrainian forces retain control of the industrial zone on the edge of the city and some other sections, and painstaking block-by-block fighting continues.

Zelenskyy said late Thursday that while the situation in the Donbas is static, Ukrainian forces had made some progress in the Zaporizhzhia region in the south, where the Ukrainian troops have been able to "spoil the plans of the occupiers." He gave no specifics.

The British government said Russia must take responsibility for the "sham trial" of two Britons and a Moroccan who were sentenced to death for fighting against Russian forces in Ukraine.

Britons Aiden Aslin and Shaun Pinner and Moroccan Brahim Saadoun were convicted by a court run by pro-Moscow separatist authorities in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, which is not recognised internationally.

Separatist authorities argued that the men were "mercenaries" not entitled to the usual protections accorded prisoners of war.

Aslin's and Pinner's families have said that the two men were long-serving members of the Ukrainian military. Saadoun's father told a Moroccan online newspaper that his son is not a mercenary and that he holds Ukrainian citizenship.

Government minister Robin Walker said Friday that it was "an illegal court in a sham government" but that the UK would use "all diplomatic channels to make the case that these are prisoners of war who should be treated accordingly".

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is due to speak to her Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba later Friday about the case.

Zelenskyy prods EU on membership hopes

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is urging the European Union strongly to put his country on track to membership. In a video address on Friday to the Copenhagen Democracy Summit, Zelenskyy said the EU should act quickly to offer Ukraine the status of a candidate to join the 27-nation bloc.

He said that the "gray zone" Ukraine has been left in has encouraged Russian aggression. He urged the EU to show "that its words about the Ukrainian people being part of the European family aren't a hollow sound."

Zelenskyy deplored that "there are still some political skeptics who doubt whether we should be allowed to move to join the EU." In other developments, Denmark — Finland plans to send more defense equipment to Ukraine but isn't specifying what it is or when it will be delivered.

The government said Friday that President Sauli Niinistö agreed to its request to send more military aid. It said it wasn't giving more information in order "to ensure that the



help arrives."

The Nordic nation already has sent rifles and anti-tank weapons to Ukraine, among other things.

Finland, a European Union member that has a long border with Russia, sought NATO membership following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has met with Pope Francis to discuss efforts to end the war in Ukraine and relieve the global food crisis it has exacerbated.

In a tweet after the 20-minute audience Friday, von der Leyen wrote: "We stand with those suffering from the destruction in Ukraine. This war must end, bringing peace back to Europe."

Von der Leyen also met with the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and the foreign minister, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, who recently returned from Ukraine. The Vatican said their talks focused on the "common commitment to work to bring the war in Ukraine to an end, dedicating particular attention to the humanitarian aspects and the food consequences of the continuation of the conflict."

In Geneva the U.N. Human rights office has voiced concern about the death sentences imposed by pro-Moscow rebels in Ukraine on three captured foreigners who were fighting on the Ukrainian side. A court in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic found two Britons and one Moroccan guilty of seeking the violent overthrow of power. The men were also convicted of mercenary activities and terrorism.

U.N. Rights office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani noted Friday that, according to the Ukrainian military, all three were part of Ukraine's armed forces. She said if that is the case they "should not be considered as mercenaries".

West denounces death sentences for 3 who fought for Ukraine

AP ■ BAKHMUT

Ukraine and the West denounced a pro-Moscow court that sentenced two British citizens and a Moroccan to death for fighting for Ukraine, calling the proceedings a sham and a violation of the rules of war.

Meanwhile, as the Kremlin's forces continued a grinding war of attrition in the east, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday appeared to liken his actions to those of Peter the Great in the 18th century and said

the country needs to "take back" historic Russian lands.

The court in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic in Ukraine found the three fighters guilty of seeking the violent overthrow of power, an offense punishable by death in the unrecognized eastern republic. The men were also convicted of mercenary activities and terrorism.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti reported that the defendants — identified as Aiden Aslin, Shaun Pinner and Brahim Saadoun — will face a firing squad. They have a month

to appeal.

The separatist side argued that the three were "mercenaries" not entitled to the usual protections accorded prisoners of war. They are the first foreign fighters sentenced by Ukraine's Russian-backed rebels.

Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesman Oleh Nikolenko condemned the proceedings as legally invalid, saying, "Such show trials put the interests of propaganda above the law and morality." He said that all foreign citizens fighting as part of Ukraine's armed forces should be con-

sidered Ukrainian military personnel and protected as such.

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss pronounced the sentencing a "sham judgment with absolutely no legitimacy." Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman Jamie Davies said that under the Geneva Conventions, POWs are entitled to immunity as combatants.

Saadoun's father, Taher Saadoun, told the Moroccan online Arab-language newspaper Madar 21 that his son is not a mercenary and that he holds Ukrainian citizenship.

Aslin's and Pinner's families have said that the two men were long-serving members of the Ukrainian military. Both are said to have lived in Ukraine since 2018.

The three men fought alongside Ukrainian troops before Pinner and Aslin surrendered to pro-Russian forces in the southern port of Mariupol in mid-April and Saadoun was captured in mid-March in the eastern city of Volnovakha.

Another British fighter taken prisoner by the pro-Russian forces, Andrew Hill, is awaiting trial.

Ukraine: Drivers risk all to bring aid, help civilians flee

AP ■ ZAPORIZHZHIA (UKRAINE)

As a Russian artillery pummeled the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol in April, one family decided to flee, walking for miles with three young children in tow to a nearby village. But it was thanks to a volunteer driver who crossed the front line that they managed to eventually make it out of Russian-held territory.

"The driver, Zhenya, is a saint," said Luda Lobanova, 58, after stepping off a minibus in the central Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia in early May along with 8-year-old Ihor, 7-year-old Sofia and 2 1/2-year-old Vlad. "There were so many times that they turned us around. If it wasn't for Zhenya, we wouldn't have made it."

With tears in her eyes, Lobanova thanked him before he slipped away, clambering back into his minibus. He had more humanitarian aid to deliver, more people to pick up.

On the edge of the conflict zone in Ukraine, which runs along the country's east and south, volunteer drivers are risking everything to deliver humanitarian aid to Ukrainians behind the front lines, and to get people out. The routes are dangerous and long — sometimes several days' long — and the drivers face detention, injury or death. More than two dozen drivers have been captured, held for more than two months by Russian-backed separatists in the eastern Donetsk region, Ukrainian activists say.

A few do it for money, some drivers said, but many do it for free, either alone or in organized groups.

"I decided to do it because there are women and children there," said Oleksandr Petrenko, who carried out several evacuations from areas in and around Mariupol before he deemed his risk of detention too great because of his repeated forays into Russian-held territory.

"I also have a mother, I have a girlfriend. These people don't have to stay there, in that human grinder. Lives are broken here. If you don't do it, people might die," he said.

Joining more experienced drivers at first, Petrenko learned the routes and how to operate. He adopted a set of strict rules, which apply to drivers and passengers alike: Wipe photos and messages off mobile phones, don't criticize Russia or Russian-backed separatists and never, ever get into political discussions — the wrong comment with the wrong people could cost you your freedom, or your life.

His first trip was the scariest. Even the weather was foreboding. "It was gray and gloomy," he said. "It was raining. And when you enter a city of black color that burned down — it's like a movie."

Petrenko estimated that he managed to evacuate about 130 people from Russian-held areas before he stopped driving because of the risks.



Companies will regret leaving Russia: Putin

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin says foreign companies that have left Russia will regret their decision.

"In today's conditions, when someone jumped off somewhere, left, chose to stop some activity here, they will regret it," he declared at a meeting with young entrepreneurs in Moscow.

"They will regret it, not because we threaten anyone," Putin continued. "They will regret it because Russia is a country with great potential, really." Putin also appeared to claim that the exodus of foreign firms from Russia was evidence of U.S. Domination over other Western states and economies.

"Many regret that they have to leave. This is all a manifestation of the internal state of these countries that cannot make sovereign decisions," he added.

He then reiterated that

Russia is "a sovereign country that should be looking to the future." Putin spoke of Russia's need to "take back (territory) and defend itself" Thursday in a speech in which he compared himself to Peter the Great. Speaking at a meeting with young entrepreneurs in Moscow, Putin drew parallels between the conquering monarch's founding of St. Petersburg and his government's annexation of territory.

"When he founded the new capital, no European country recognized it as Russia. Everybody recognised it as Sweden," Putin said. "And Slavic people have always lived there along with Finno-Ugric people, and the territory was under the control of the Russian state."

"What was he doing? Taking back and reinforcing. That's what he did. And it looks like it fell on us to take back and reinforce as well," he said.

Ukraine war: IMF says is concerned by food, fertiliser export restrictions

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Observing that some 30 countries have curtailed exports of commodity goods including food and fuel, and that since the war in Ukraine began, the International Monetary Fund Thursday said it is concerned by the use of food and fertilizer export restrictions.

It welcomed India's decision recently to relax its originally announced ban on wheat exports, and allow some shipments to proceed.

"We are very concerned by the use of food and fertilizer export restrictions, which can exacerbate global price increases and market volatility. So, this goes beyond India," IMF spokesperson Gerry Rice told reporters at a news conference here.

"Our monitoring indicates that some 30 coun-

tries, in fact, have curtailed exports of commodity goods, including food and fuel, and that since the war in Ukraine began, the International Monetary Fund Thursday said it is concerned by the use of food and fertilizer export restrictions.

It welcomed India's decision recently to relax its originally announced ban and allow some wheat exports to proceed, including the already contracted shipments and exports to countries with food security needs. And we hope to see further relaxation of bans and again, not just by India, but also by all countries who have imposed them," Rice said.

SALE NOTICE	
The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-	
Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI BANK LTD VS NIDHI SHARMA, CS (COMM) No. 1397/2019	Vehicle No. UP14DU6650 Make and Model- RENAULT DUSTER RXE DCI 85 PS, Manu Year- 2018
ICICI BANK LTD VS SOBHA RAM, C.S. NO 3168/19	Vehicle No. UP16ET0758 Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT BASE CRDI, Manu Year- 2016
ICICI BANK LTD VS DHARMENDRA CHOUDHARY, CS No. 3000/19	Vehicle No. DL1ZB3435, Make and Model- MARUTI SWIFT DZIRE TOUR-LXI, Manu Year- 2017
ICICI BANK LTD VS MEENU ARORA, CS (COMM) No. 2004/2021	Vehicle No. DL8CAX6152, Make and Model- MARUTI WAGON R LXI CNG, Manu Year- 2019
ICICI BANK LTD VS HEERU BIDHURI, CS (COMM) No. 3091/21	Vehicle No. DL3CCP8554, Make and Model- TOYOTA ETOS LIVA VD, Manu Year- 2015
ICICI BANK LTD VS RIZOO SOOD CS (COMM) No. 798/2019	Vehicle No. UP14ET9537, Make and Model- CHEVEROLET SAIL LS, Manu Year- 2015
ICICI BANK LTD VS AVLESH KUMAR CS (COMM) No. 2303/2021	Vehicle No. HR51AU2335, Make and Model- NISSAN Sunny XV D, Manu Year- 2012
ICICI BANK LTD VS SACHIN AWANA CS (COMM) No. 4617/2021	Vehicle No. UP16FT6914, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT, Manu Year- 2018
ICICI BANK LTD VS ZAFAR CS (COMM) No. 1335/21	Vehicle No. DL12CB4572, Make and Model- FORD ECOSPORT T.15 TITANIUM D, Manu Year- 2014
ICICI BANK LTD VS PANKAJ SETHI CS (COMM) No. 2611/2021	Vehicle No. DL8CZ5955, Make and Model- AUDI AUDI Q3 2.0 TDI, Manu Year- 2013

Auction Date: June 24, 2022 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Place of Auction: Godara Yard, Khewat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chowk, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec- 17, Sukhraili, Gurugram- 122022

Contact Person- Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. Babar & Anr., CS (Comm) No. 1377-21	Vehicle No- UP14JT1939, Make & Model- ASHOK LEYLAND GURU 1010, Manu. Year- 2019
ICICI BANK LTD VS Sonam Tomar & Anr. (COMM) No. 1829/2021	Vehicle No. UP14HT8563, Make and Model- ASHOK LEYLAND LTD PARTNER, Manu Year- 2019

Auction Date : June 24, 2022 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Place of Auction: Mahakal Parking yard, Kharsa No 527 Village Banthia Near Indane Gas Plant Loni Ghaziabad- UP, 201102

Contact Person- Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI BANK LTD VS SANJEET, CS (COMM) No. 1270 of 2021	Vehicle No- HR38Y5915, Make and Model- EICHER PRO 1110XP, Manu Year- 2018

Auction Date: June 24, 2022 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Place of Auction: SHRIRAM AUTOMALL INDIA LTD., Pio Maniayari road, Opposite Kanya Gurukul school, Narela, New Delhi - 110040

Contact Person- Rajeev Ranjan (8584874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)

Case Details	Asset Details
ICICI BANK LTD VS NAUSHAD, CS (COMM) No. 2894-19	Vehicle No. UP14HT8453, Make and Model- TATA 1512, Manu Year- 2019

Auction Date: June 24, 2022 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Place of Auction: Mohd Nasir Khan, Survey No. 506 and 508, Village Ataria, Subdivision Manawa, Tehsil Sidhauhi, Dist Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh- 261303

Contact Person- Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)/ Avinash Srivastava 8953652366

Terms of Sale
The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participant/s are therefore requested, in their own interest, to satisfy himself / themselves/ itself with regard to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at auction site with original KYC documents to participate in the auction.
Successfully bidder shall have to deposit sale amount within 5 days from the approval date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. The intending bidders may visit ICICI Bank Ltd, Shal Towers, Plot No. 23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh Delhi- 110005 for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicles.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large Mr. Rakesh Kumar S/o Mr. Harswaroop who is purchasing the Residential Property bearing Kharsa No. 67/5 min, Area Measuring 60 Sq. Yards situated at Adarsh Colony Part of Village Dundaheda, Tehsil & District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201009 from Mr. Indrapal S/o Mr. Ganga Prasad, who had owner through Khatauni Record, and same to be financed & mortgaged by Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. If any person having any type of claim/right/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, disputes etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
Office No. G-03, at Ground Floor, on Plot No. D-61, Sector-2, Noida, UP - 201301
Contact # 0120-4130438

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, on behalf of my client, Urmeed Housing Finance Limited having its registered office at Unit No. 809 815 - 8th Floor Tower - A Emaar Digital Greens Golf Course Ext RD Gurugram, Haryana 122102 (referred to as "Housing Finance Corporation"). The property was Mortgaged to the HFC by the Raju Yadav S/o Sh. Despti Yadav, who is a registered owner of One-Storeyed House area measuring 34 Sq. Yds. i.e. 28.42 Sq. Mtrs., Kharsa No.156, situated at Village Yusufpur, Chakshabhet, Pargana and Tehsil Dadri, District GautamBuddh Nagar, U.P., INDIA by virtue of Registered Sale Deed dated 24.07.2018 executed by Smt. Neelkamal W/o Sh. Nanakchandin favour of Sh. Raju Yadav S/o Sh. Despti Yadav via document number 14654, Book No. 1, Volume No. 12203, on Pages 279 to 300 on 24/07/2018. The Original Deed of the said property is lost and a Lost Article Information Report has been registered for the same vide LAR No. 2022000272913. Any person having any information or objection or the possession of the above mentioned lost deed, should notify to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110032 along with the Original Deed under address or through registered A/D. Vishal Mehan (Advocate) E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110032. Mobile No. 9811215181

UJVN LTD.
H.O.: "UJ-JWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road Dehradun-248006
Phone No.: 0135- 2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com

Ro.No.- 315 **Dated- 10-06-2022**

Tender Notice
Office of Executive Engineer (M&G) Kulhal Power Station, Kulhal, invites sealed tenders for the following works:
Tender No. : 06/UJVNL/EE (M&G)/KPS/2022-23 Hiring of one no. non AC Jeep (Bolero plus /TUV 300) (7-seater, Model 2020 or later) along with driver for one year.
Tender No. : 07/UJVNL/EE (M&G)/KPS/2022-23 SITC of 400 kVA, 11/0.415kV transformer, wireless water level indicator & other works at Old Colony, Kulhal.
Estimated cost : Rs. 385000/-, Rs. 1523665/- GST Extra
Date of availability of bid document on website : 10/06/2022 11:00 Hrs. Last date for submission of tender : 01/07/2022 15:00 Hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "**www.ujvn.com**"
Executive Engineer (M&G) Kulhal
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग
हर्द्वार
फ़ोन कोड- 249404

संख्या : 67/07/E-02/DR/AG(RO/ARO)/2017-18 दिनांक :: 10 जून, 2022
विज्ञापित
महाधिवक्ता कार्यालय के अन्तर्गत समीक्षा अधिकारी/सहायक समीक्षा अधिकारी परीक्षा-2021
Advocate General's Office Review Officer/Assistant Review Officer Exam-2021
एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि महाधिवक्ता कार्यालय के अन्तर्गत समीक्षा अधिकारी/सहायक समीक्षा अधिकारी परीक्षा-2021 हेतु प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या- A-3/E-2/DR/AG(RO/ARO)/2021, दिनांक 15 अगस्त, 2021 के सापेक्ष दिनांक 27 मार्च, 2022 को आयोजित प्रारम्भिक परीक्षा का परिणाम, विज्ञापित संख्या-28/ /गोपन-02/ महा(सं0300/सं0स0अ0)/2021-22, दिनांक 26 मई, 2022 द्वारा घोषित किया गया है।
02. उक्त परीक्षा परिणाम के अप्रबन्धित रूप से सफल घोषित अभ्यर्थियों द्वारा आयोग की वेबसाइट **www.psc.uk.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध लिंक का प्रयोग करते हुए निर्धारित मुख्य परीक्षा शुल्क जमा करने के उपरान्त ऑनलाइन आवेदन-पत्र (जिसमें अनुक्रमांक अंकित हो) तथा अभिलेखों की वैकलिस्ट, आयोग की वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड करते हुए समस्त रैकथनिक, आखण इत्यादि अभिलेखों की स्वहस्ताक्षरित छायाप्रति के साथ आयोग कार्यालय में जमा किया जाना है। अभ्यर्थी लिफाफे के ऊपर परीक्षा का नाम "महाधिवक्ता कार्यालय के अन्तर्गत समीक्षा अधिकारी/सहायक समीक्षा अधिकारी परीक्षा-2021" अवश्य अंकित करें।
03. उक्तानुसार परीक्षा शुल्क जमा करते हुए समस्त अभिलेख सचिव, उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा, आयोग, हर्द्वार-249404 के कार्यालय में डाक द्वारा अथवा अन्य किसी भी माध्यम से जमा किये जाने की अन्तिम तिथि 01 जुलाई, 2022 (शुक्रवार) (सायं 06:00 बजे तक) निर्धारित की गयी है। उक्तांकित निर्धारित अन्तिम तिथि के पश्चात् प्राप्त आवेदन-पत्र/अभिलेखों को आयोग द्वारा स्वीकार नहीं किया जायेगा। अभ्यर्थियों को उपरोक्त के सम्बन्ध में डाक द्वारा पृथक से सूचना प्रेषित नहीं की जायेगी। अभ्यर्थी समस्त अभिलेख/प्रमाण-पत्र सावधानीपूर्वक भली-भांति चैक करने के पश्चात् ही आयोग को प्रेषित करें तथा किसी भी दशा में अपूर्ण व अस्पष्ट अभिलेख प्रेषित न करें।
अभ्यर्थी उक्त के सम्बन्ध में मुख्य परीक्षा शुल्क जमा किये जाने हेतु लिंक एवं वैकलिस्ट का अवलोकन आयोग की वेबसाइट **www.psc.uk.gov.in** पर करना अवश्य सुनिश्चित करें।
(एशु एल्लो सेमवाल) प्रमारी सचिव।

Capitol riot put US democracy at risk: Panel chief

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The chairman of the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection and Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 election is ready to open Thursday's prime-time hearing declaring the deadly attack and the lies that led to it put "two and half centuries of constitutional democracy at risk."

Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said "the world is watching" the US Response to the panel's year-long investigation into the Capitol attack and the defeated president's extraordinary effort to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's election victory.

"America has long been expected to be a shining city on



a hill. A beacon of hope and freedom," Thompson planned to say, according to excerpts released in advance. "How can we play that role when our own house is in such disorder? We must confront the truth with candor, resolve and determination."

The committee planned to present never-before-seen video and a mass of other evi-

dence to show the "harrowing story" of the deadly violence that day and also a chilling backstory as Trump, the defeated president, tried to overturn Biden's election victory.

Thursday's prime-time hearing is providing eyewitness testimony from the first police officer pummeled in the mob riot and from a documentary filmmaker who tracked the

extremist Proud Boys as they prepared to fight for Trump immediately after the election and then led the storming of the Capitol. The hearing is also featuring accounts from Trump aides and family members, interviewed behind closed doors.

"When you hear and understand the wide-reaching conspiracy and the effort to try to corrupt every lever and agency of government involved in this, you know, the hair on the back of your neck should stand up," Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a member of the 1/6 committee, said in an interview.

The 1/6 panel's yearlong investigation will begin to show how America's tradition of a peaceful transfer of presidential power came close to slipping away. It will reconstruct how Trump refused to concede the

2020 election, spread false claims of voter fraud and orchestrated an unprecedented public and private campaign to overturn Biden's victory.

Biden, in Los Angeles for the Summit of the Americas, said many viewers "are going to be seeing for the first time a lot of the detail that occurred."

"I think it was a clear, flagrant violation of the Constitution," he said.

Trump, unapologetic, dismissed the investigation anew — and even declared on social media that Jan. 6 "represented the greatest movement in the history of our country." The result of the coming weeks of public hearings may not change hearts or minds in politically polarized America. But the committee's investigation with 1,000 interviews is intended to

stand as a public record for history. A final report aims to provide an accounting of the most violent attack on the Capitol since the British set fire to it in 1814, and to ensure such an attack never happens again. The riot left more than 100 police officers injured, many beaten and bloodied, as the crowd of pro-Trump rioters, some armed with pipes, bats and bear spray, charged into the Capitol. At least nine people who were there died during and after the rioting, including a woman who was shot and killed by police.

Emotions are still raw at the Capitol, and security will be tight for the hearings. Law enforcement officials are reporting a spike in violent threats against members of Congress.

Capitol riot panel blames Trump for 1/6 attempted coup

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The House panel investigating the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol laid the blame firmly on Donald Trump on Thursday night, saying the assault was hardly spontaneous but an "attempted coup" and a direct result of the defeated president's effort to overturn the 2020 election.

With a never-before-seen 12-minute video of extremist groups leading the deadly siege and startling testimony from Trump's most inner circle, the 1/6 committee provided gripping detail in contending that

Trump's repeated lies about election fraud and his public effort to stop Joe Biden's victory led to the attack and imperiled American democracy.

"Democracy remains in danger," said Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., chairman of the panel, during the hearing, timed for prime time to reach as many Americans as possible.

"January 6 was the culmination of an attempted coup, a brazen attempt, as one rioter put it shortly after January 6, to overthrow the government," Thompson said. "The violence was no accident."

Syria suspends Damascus airport flights after Israel strike

AP ■ DAMASCUS (SYRIA)

Syria has suspended all flights to and from Damascus International Airport after an Israeli airstrike on Friday hit an area close to the facility, a pro-government newspaper reported.

Al-Watan said the strike left the runway damaged, without giving further details about the attack. The airport is located south of the capital Damascus where Syrian opposition activists say Iran-backed militiamen are active and have arms depots.

Israel has for years carried out strikes in the area, including one on May 21 that resulted in a fire near the airport, leading to the postponement of two flights.

State news agency SANA said the Ministry of Transportation confirmed that all flights have been suspended because "some technical equipment stopped functioning at the airport." It did not mention a strike.

The private Sham Wings airlines said it is diverting all its flights from Damascus to the Aleppo International Airport in the country's north. It added that all passengers will be shuttled by buses between the two cities for free. The airport is located south of Damascus.

Flightradar24 showed no flights in the vicinity of airport on Friday at noon.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the Friday morning Israeli strike hit three arms depots for Iran-backed militiamen inside the airport, adding that the northern runway at the facility was damaged as was the observation tower.

The Observatory added that the northern runway was the only one functioning after Israeli strikes last year badly damaged the other runway, known as the southern runway.

The announcement came hours after Syria's state media reported Israeli airstrikes on some military positions south of Damascus early Friday, wounding one person and causing material damage.

Israel has staged hundreds of strikes on targets in Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

It says it targets bases of Iran-allied militias, such as Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group that has fighters deployed in Syria and fighting on the side of Syrian President Bashar Assad's government forces, and arms shipments believed to be bound for the militias.

Watchdog: Afghan Taliban detaining, torturing civilians

RAHIM FAIEZ ■ ISLAMABAD

Taliban security forces in northern Afghanistan have unlawfully detained and tortured residents accused of association with an opposition armed group, New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a statement on Friday.

Since mid-May 2022, fighting has escalated in Panjshir province as National Resistance Front (NRF) forces have attacked Taliban units and checkpoints, HRW said.

The Taliban have responded by deploying to the province thousands of fighters, who have carried out search operations targeting communities they allege are supporting the NRF, the group added.

"Taliban forces have committed summary executions and enforced disappearances of captured fighters and other detainees, which are war crimes," also in other provinces, it said.

In a mountainous valley north of Kabul, the last remnants of Afghanistan's shattered security forces have vowed to resist the Taliban in a remote region that has defied conquerors before.



Nestled in the towering Hindu Kush, the Panjshir Valley has a single narrow entrance. Local fighters held off the Soviets there in the 1980s, and the Taliban a decade later under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Massoud, a guerrilla fighter who attained near-mythic status before he was killed in a suicide bombing.

His 33-year-old foreign-educated son, Ahmad Massoud, and several top officials from the ousted Western-

backed government have vowed to resist the Taliban.

"Taliban forces in Panjshir province have quickly resorted to beating civilians in their response to fighting against the opposition National Resistance Front," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"The Taliban's longstanding failure to punish those responsible for serious abuses in their ranks puts more civilians at risk," Gossman was quoted in the statement.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is known to all that the allottees of Residential Flat No.E-221, Jalvayu Vihar, Sector-21, NOIDA, Wg.Cdr. Jagatjit Singh Badhwar S/o Sh. Mohan Lal Badhwar & Smt. Loveleen Bhola W/o Sh. A.M. Bhola, Both R/o D-2448, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, have sold the above flat on GPA basis as under :-

1. A.G.P.A. was executed on dt. 07.01.1991, in favour of Col. Ranbir Singh S/o S. Teja Singh Tiwana, R/o 15, Armd Regt. C/o 56, A.P.O, which is regd. in the office of S.R. NOIDA, and the Agreement to Sell was not executed in favour of any person. Because the Agreement to Sell was not executed/regd., so with the help of this notice, it is informed that the transfer of the above flat on the basis of GPA goes in favour of Sh. Rajat Mahajan S/o Sh. L.C. Mahajan, R/o E-221, Sector-21, NOIDA. If anyone has any objection, he/she will submit his/her objection in the O.S.D. (GHP) Section of Noida Authority within 10 days of the publication of this notice.

RAJAT MAHAJAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is known to all that the allottee of Residential Flat No. 180-B, on First Floor, Situated in BLOCK-B-10, UDAIGIRI-II, SECTOR-34, NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh, having Super Area 40.24 Sq. Mtrs, M/s BERRY INDUSTRIES at E-81, SECTOR-06, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, U.P. Through its Prop. MR. ANIL BERRY Son of SHRI YP BERRY R/o E-127, SECTOR-20, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, U.P. has sold the above flat on GPA basis as under:-

1. A G.P.A. was executed on dt. 06.03.1992 in favour of MRS. MOHINI SHARMA W/o SHRI A.K. SHARMA R/o G-58, SECTOR-56, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, U.P. which is registered in the office of Sub-Registrar-III Noida, and the Agreement to Sell was not executed in favour of any person.

Because the Agreement to Sell was not executed/regd., so with the help of this notice, it is informed that the transfer of the above said flat on the basis of GPA goes to transfer in favour of MRS. CHANDRALEKHA RAY W/O SHRI DESHBANDHU RAY, R/O FLAT NO. 308, 3RD FLOOR, SAI SARNAI APARTMENT, GIJHORA, SECTOR-53, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, U.P.

If anyone has any objection, he/she will submit his/her objection in the Residential (Housing) Deptt. of Noida Authority within 15 days of the publication of this notice.

(MRS. MOHINI SHARMA)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
(Under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
KURUKSHETRA-136119

E-Tender Notice

E-Tenders are invited for the procurement of goods on SITC basis as mentioned below:-

E-Tender ID No./Date : N/ITK/01/PES/01/2022 Dated 02.06.2022

Description of Goods : Day to Day Operation and Upkeep of the Swimming Pool from 15.07.2022 to 31.10.2022

Last date & Time of submission the tender : 27.06.2022 at 03:00 PM

Tender opening Date and Time : 27.06.2022 at 04:00 PM

The details and conditions of E-tender are available on Institute website www.nitkkr.ac.in and <https://mhrd.euniwizarde.com>.

Sd/-
Registrar /I/c

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता/सदस्य सचिव जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता समिति लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, दन्तवाड़ा

(फ़ोन/फ़ैक्स नं. – 07856-252362, ई-मेल – eedan-phe-cg@nic.in)

— ई-प्रोक्यूमेंट शुद्धिपत्र —

एकीकृत पंजीयन व्यवस्था प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत वेकेंडरों से प्रपत्र "ए" प्रविशत दर पर निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु (Online) निविदा क्रमांक 48 से 82 तक कुल 29 निविदा आमंत्रित की गयी थी। उक्त निविदा में किसी भी वेकेंडर द्वारा भाग नहीं लेने के कारण निविदा तिथि आगे बढ़ाई जाती है। निविदा की सामान्य शर्त अन्य जानकारी वेबसाईट पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर दर्शित है। निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि निर्धार्य 20.06.2022 है।

हस्ता /—
कार्यपालन अभियंता/सदस्य सचिव
जिला जल एवं स्वच्छता समिति
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खंड दन्तवाड़ा

R.O. No:- 92056/5
R.O. Date:- 10/06/2022

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

The Chief Administrative Officer/Const/Northern Railway, Kashmir Gate, Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under Two Packet System for the under noted work:-

1. Full Name of work

Construction of service building, S&T rooms, gate lodge at level crossing, Rail & high level passenger platforms, earthwork in cutting/filling in formation, construction of staff quarters, fencing, extension of minor bridges, Construction of Platform shelters, provision of station name board, road work, modification of existing building including dismantling of existing building structure & fencing with other allied works in Masit, Todarpur and Balamau and linking of BG track and turnouts, provision of glude joint and SEJs, dismantling of existing track and turnouts, handling, lifting, loading, leading, unloading and spreading of ballast, handling of Pway material working in BN/NI period and other allied works at Balamau on LKO-SRE section and any other civil engineering works at any section in the jurisdiction of DY.CE/C/MB over Moradabad division

2. Approx. Cost of work

Rs. 2390.53 Lacs

3. Completion period of the work

18 (Eighteen) months

4. Earnest Money to be deposited

Rs. 13,45,300/-

5. Sale/availability of tender document on Rly. Website

Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from **16.06.2022 to 08.07.2022** upto 11:30 hrs.

6. Last date/Time of upload of tenders

08.07.2022 upto 11:30 hours. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. **24.06.2022 to 08.07.2022**

7. Date and time of opening of tender (Technical bid)

08.07.2022 at 11:30 hours (immediately after close of uploading of tender (D2). In case of two packet system, Financial bids of the eligible tenders would be opened subsequently on the date and time to be notified later on. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender Notice No. 74-W-4-1-453-WA-MB Dated :- 10.06.2022 1422/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)
Nishitha Parisar, Bijalae Nagar, Govindpura, Bhopal-23
Phone No. : 0755-2602033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636
No. MD/MK/04/582 Bhopal, Dated 10.06.2022

TENDER NOTICE

MPMKVVCL, Bhopal invites online Bids from Agencies for supply & execution of below items as per Tender Specification under Scheme :-

Tender specification Number	Particulars of material for Procurement	Approx. Value. (Rs. Lakh)	Tender fee (incl. GST) (In Rs.)	Date of Pre Bid Conference	Date of Opening of Tender
MD/MK/04/789	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 11 KV, 1500 KVAR Auto-Switched Capacitor Bank Including Associated Equipments in MPMKVCL, Bhopal Company Area Under RDSS Scheme.	7806.00	23600.00	17.06.2022 3.00 PM	30.06.2022 3.00 PM

Other details and full tender document would be available on our Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. website <https://mptenders.gov.in> very shortly.

M.P. Madhyam/105240/2022 CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

NORTHERN RAILWAY

INVITATION OF TENDERS THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

Tender Notice No. 20/ 2022-2023 Date : 10.06.2022
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. N.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	07221857	NON ASBESTOS BASED ORGANIC BRAKE PADS	12672 SET	08.07.22
02	06221002A	PIG IRON	428601 KGS	08.07.22
03	09222589	PRIMARY BRAKE BEAM	426 NOS	11.07.22
04	09222141	ROTARY BOTTOM	11117 NOS	12.07.22
05	07222018	GUIDE BUSH, FOR AXLE BOX GUIDE	86412 NOS	14.07.22
06	09222048	BOGIE CENTRE PIVOT	2672 NOS	15.07.22
07	09222327	RUBBER SPRING FOR DRAW GEAR	2297 SET	24.08.22

NOTE -1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details.
2. No Manual offer will be entertained.

1416/22

AXIS BANK

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS

THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HERE BY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGE IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILABLE THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILABLE. AS THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT, THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOKE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON **21.06.2022 AT 12.30 PM TO 3.30 PM** ON 'AS IN WHERE IS', 'AS IS WHAT IS', 'WHATEVER THERE IS' AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".

DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT

BRANCH NAME	CUSTOMER NAME	LOAN A/C NO.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING	DATE OF RECALL	GROSS WEIGHT
BRANCH NAME JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL					
JYOTI NAGAR DEL DL	ROMA	XXXXXXX00003938	387947	07-Jan-22	156.5
BRANCH NAME LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]					
LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	OM PRAKASH ROY	XXXXXXX00006948	59354	15-Feb-21	13.2
BRANCH NAME MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]					
MAYUR VIHAR, NEW DELHI [DL]	PRIYANKA YADAV	XXXXXXX00005554	159680	30-Mar-22	19.4
BRANCH NAME NOIDA [UP]					
NOIDA [UP]	ANUJ KUMAR	XXXXXXX00003779	357089.31	11-Mar-22	174.6
NOIDA [UP]	MANINDAR NAGAR	XXXXXXX00009757	92004	21-Apr-22	17.8
BRANCH NAME SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]					
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	PINKI .	XXXXXXX00003994	322730.38	07-Jan-22	29.2
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	PINKI .	XXXXXXX00004678	238236.36	21-Apr-22	21.2
SECTOR 14, GURGAON [HR]	KASHIF AZIZ	XXXXXXX00004310	205978	21-Apr-22	55.1
BRANCH NAME VIKASPURI, NEW DELHI [DL]					
VIKASPURI, NEW DELHI [DL]	VINIT YADAV	XXXXXXX00005046	80991.83	18-Feb-22	4.7

AXIS BANK LTD. HAS THE AUTHORITY TO REMOVE ACCOUNT/CHANGE THE AUCTION DATE WITHOUT ANY PRIOR NOTICE. AUCTION WILL BE HELD ONLINE [HTTPS://GOLD.SAMILIN](https://GOLD.SAMILIN) BETWEEN **12.30 PM TO 3.30 PM**. FOR DETAILED TERMS AND CONDITIONS, PLEASE LOG INTO GIVEN WEBSITE [HTTPS://GOLD.SAMILIN](https://GOLD.SAMILIN)

PLACE: DELHI & NCR **SD/-, AUTHORIZED OFFICER**
DATE: 11-06-2022 **AXIS BANK LTD.**

ICICI Bank

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

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Sajit Nath Menon/ Swati Menon/ LBNOD00002426943	G03, Ground Floor, Tower- E, Resiozone Residency, Mayur Vihar Sahasradhara, Dehradun, Uttarakhand/ Jun 07, 2022	October 25, 2016 Rs. 54,39,861/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Sanjana Kapoor/ Manoj Kumar Dixit/ LBDEL00002445525	Flat No- F G05, GF, Resiozone Residency, Mayur Vihar, Sahasradhara Road, Khasra No.231-234, Dehradun, Uttarakhand/ Jun 07, 2022	December 30, 2017 Rs. 51,72,485/-	Delhi/ NCR
3.	Indraraj Singh Katheria/ Avinash Singh Katheria/ LBGUR00002440784	Flat No G04, Tower-F, Resiozone Residency, Mayur Vihar, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand/ Jun 07, 2022	August 31, 2017 Rs. 47,46,342/-	Delhi/ NCR
4.	Santosh Singh Yadav/ Reena Yadav/ LBNOD00002369567	Flat No D-G03, Tower-D, Resiozone Residency Mayur Vihar, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand/ Jun 07, 2022	February 21, 2018 Rs. 40,87,251/-	Delhi/ NCR

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

Date : June 10, 2022 **Authorized Officer**
Place: Delhi/ NCR **ICICI Bank Limited**

Fitch revises India rating outlook to Stable from Negative



New Delhi: Fitch Ratings on Friday said it has revised the outlook on India's sovereign rating to Stable from Negative as downside risks to medium-term growth have diminished on rapid economic recovery.

Fitch Ratings kept the rating unchanged at 'BBB-'.

"The Outlook revision reflects our view that downside risks to medium-term growth have diminished due to India's

rapid economic recovery and easing financial sector weaknesses, despite near-term headwinds from the global commodity price shock," it said.

It, however, cut the economic growth forecast to 7.8 per cent for the current fiscal (April 2022 to March 2023) from the 8.5 per cent prediction it made in March due to the inflationary impact of the global commodity price shock. **PTI**

Sensex nosedives 1,000 pts; Nifty slumps below 16,300

Mumbai: Equity benchmark Sensex slumped over 1,000 points to sink below the 55,000-level on Friday, tracking deep losses in IT, finance, banking and energy stocks amid widespread selling in the global markets.

A weak rupee, surging crude prices and relentless foreign capital outflows further weighed on sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE index ended 1,016.84 points or 1.84 per cent lower at 54,303.44. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty plunged 276.30 points or 1.68 per cent to 16,201.80.

Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, skidding about 4 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, HDFC twins, Reliance Industries, Wipro, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel and TCS.

On the other hand, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Dr Reddy's, Titan and IndusInd Bank were among the gainers.

Sector-wise, BSE IT, tech, bankex, finance and oil & gas



lost up to 2.09 per cent, while telecom logged gains.

According to rating agency Icra, operating profit margins of information technology companies can moderate by up to 1.50 per cent in the near term as wage cost inflation coming on the back of high attrition hits players in the over USD 200 billion industry.

In the broader markets, the BSE midcap, large-cap and smallcap gauges slipped much as 1.72 per cent.

The rupee declined 11 paise to close at a record low of 77.85 (provisional) against the

US dollar on Friday.

Following a massive sell-off in the US market, bourses in Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Seoul ended sharply lower, while Shanghai settled in the green. Equities in Europe were witnessing intense selling pressure in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.45 per cent to USD 123.62 per barrel.

The basket of crude oil that India buys has hit a decade high of USD 121 per barrel, but retail selling prices of petrol and diesel continue to remain frozen.

The Indian basket on June 9 touched USD 121.28, matching levels seen in February/March 2012, according to data available from the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC). Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital market, as they sold shares worth Rs 1,512.64 crore on Thursday, as per exchange data. **PTI**

CIL to source 6 MT more coal from overseas, floats medium-term tenders to boost domestic supplies

New Delhi: State-owned CIL on Friday floated two medium-term tenders for sourcing 6 million tonnes (MT) of coal from overseas, a move aimed at securing domestic fuel supplies amid the fear of shortage during monsoon.

These two tenders for a total of 6 million tonnes coal have an option of increasing the bid quantity by 100 per cent to 12 MT.

The development comes a day after the public sector unit floating its maiden tender to import 2.416 million tonnes of coal.

The import tender was floated after the government asked the company to build up stock of fossil fuel to avoid the reoccurrence of power outages, which happened in April on account of shortage of the fuel.

"In an urgency to shore up coal stocks at the indigenous coal-based power plants, as directed by the government, Coal India Limited (CIL) on Friday floated two international competitive bidding e-tenders of 3 million tonnes



each to source coal from abroad," the company said in a statement.

Though CIL is on its full steam in augmenting the production to meet the domestic demand of the country, this is a step towards a state of readiness to combat futuristic coal supply crunch if any, the PSU said.

The tenders are not indent based but to keep coal on tap for immediate availability and use in future. It is an advance action by the maharatna firm in fortifying future supplies and keeping a vendor ready.

The tenure for placement of order is for a period of one year beginning next month till June next year. The minimum indent quantity will be 50,000

tonnes.

As and when indented by the state generating companies (gencos) and independent power plants, orders will be placed to ship the coal into the country. From the date of placing the indents delivery of coal would be made within 30 days at the free on rail destination of the power plants which seek coal. This means delivery at the doorstep.

For the 6 MTs coal sought through competitive bids, nine destination ports have been identified for the discharge of coal -- 3 MTs each at the eastern and western coasts of the country. The estimated value of the work is pegged at Rs 3,850 crore for each tranche of three million tonnes. **PTI**

Rupee falls 11 paise to record low of 77.85 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee tumbled 11 paise to close at a fresh lifetime low of 77.85 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday as a sell-off in domestic equities and stronger greenback overseas weighed on investor sentiment.

Persistent foreign capital outflows, elevated global crude oil prices and risk-averse sentiments also impacted the domestic unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 77.81 and witnessed an intra-day high of 77.79 and a low of 77.87 against the US dollar.

The local unit finally settled at its all-time low of 77.85, down 11 paise over its previous close of 77.74.

"The Indian rupee dropped to a record low amid risk-averse sentiment, weaker macro data and a stronger dollar index. The rupee marked



the new record low of 77.8725 as the central bank remains aside from intervening while importers rush for dollars," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Parmar further noted that the global central banks' overriding need to fight inflation with higher interest rates remains a headwind for risk assets and favours the dollar bulls.

"On the domestic front, spot USD-INR is expected to consolidate in the range of 77.50 to 78.30 with a bullish bias," he said. **PTI**

Gold declines by ₹58; silver tumbles ₹601

New Delhi: Gold prices declined by ₹58 to ₹50,793 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to HDFC securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at ₹50,851 per 10 grams.

Silver also tumbled by ₹601 to ₹60,914 per kg from ₹61,515 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,846 per ounce and silver was trading flat at USD 21.69 per ounce.

Gold witnessed selling with rise in US bond yields and a stronger dollar, said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities. **PTI**

Indian crude oil basket hits 10-year high; petrol, diesel prices unchanged

New Delhi: The basket of crude oil that India buys has hit a decade high of USD 121 per barrel, but retail selling prices of petrol and diesel continue to remain frozen.

The Indian basket on June 9 touched USD 121.28, matching levels seen in February/March 2012, according to data available from the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).

As per the PPAC, the Indian basket of crude oil averaged USD 111.86 per barrel between February 25 and March 29 - the immediate period after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent oil on fire.

It averaged USD 103.44 a barrel between March 30 and April 27. International oil prices held near a 13-week high on Thursday, underpinned by robust demand from key buyers like the US.

They, however, pared some gains on Friday, with Brent



crude futures for August losing 81 cents to trade at USD 122.26 per barrel. US West Texas Intermediate crude for July was at USD 120.72 a barrel, down 79 cents. Retail fuel rates, however, continue to be on a freeze in India.

State-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) are supposed to adjust petrol and diesel prices daily in line with the cost, but they have been since November 2021

moderating pump rates.

India is 85 per cent dependent on imports to meet its oil needs and so local pump rates are benchmarked against international prices.

Industry sources said local pump rates are benchmarked to around USD 85 per barrel crude oil price but oil firms haven't changed rates as they aid the government in trying to control inflation, which already is ruling at an almost eight-year high of 7.8 per cent.

Fuel prices, particularly diesel, have a cascading effect on inflation as an elevated price will lead to higher transportation costs, spiking prices across the board, including essentials like vegetables.

The sources said the industry was selling petrol at a loss of about Rs 18 per litre and diesel at Rs 21 a litre. Petrol and diesel prices were last revised to align with the cost on April 6 and have been on freeze since then. **PTI**

Awfis opens new centre in Chennai

Chennai: Co-working space provider Awfis has set up its new centre in the city, the seventh such facility, under its plan to strengthen presence pan-India, the company said on Friday.

The state-of-the-art facility, spread across 45,000 sq ft with 650 seats, is equipped with 'cutting-edge' infrastructure and has design in line with the company's philosophy of creating space reflecting Indian culture.

Awfis currently has seven co-working centres in Chennai and the company plans to open four more centres by end of the year, a company statement said.

The new centre is part of the company's premium workspace offering --- Awfis Gold --- which aims to deliver an unparalleled workplace experience to the company's clientele. "We have realigned our offerings to meet the requirements of the workforce in line with the new reality. **PTI**

Mercedes delivers first ever unit of AMG GT Black Series in India

New Delhi: German luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz on Friday said it has delivered the first-ever unit of AMG GT Black Series in India.

The price of the super exclusive models starts from Rs 5.5 crore (ex-showroom) and can go up depending on individual configurations.

The AMG GT Black Series, the most powerful AMG ever, comes with a 4-litre V8 engine that develops 537 kW (730 hp), enabling the two-door vehicle to accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds and 0 to 200 km/h in under 9 seconds with a top speed of 325 km/h.

The model highlights Mercedes-Benz's rich tradition in motorsports, as well as its expertise in consistent technology transfer from motorsport to series production cars.

The company said it has delivered the first AMG GT



Black Series super sports car in India to supercar enthusiast Boopesh Reddy.

"There was an overwhelming response from the AMG customers for the AMG GT Black Series supercar since its global debut, and we will deliver two units of this exclusive masterpiece in India based on our allocations. The second unit of the Black Series will be delivered to our customer next month," Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director and CEO Martin Schwenk said in a statement. **PTI**

Duty on solar modules, cells to continue; don't want imports: Power Min

New Delhi: There are "no plans" to review the basic customs duty (BCD) levied on solar modules and cells, Union Power Minister R K Singh has said.

"I don't want any Chinese imports and want everything Made in India," Singh, who is also the Minister of New and Renewable Energy told PTI in reply to a question related to the duty levied on the two items.

Last year, the government had announced imposing 40 per cent BCD on solar modules and 25 per cent on solar cells with effect from April 1, 2022.

Singh said as a result of the duty, the domestic manufacturing capacity of modules and cells has started going up.

However, developers of renewable energy projects have been raising concerns that the domestic capacity is not



enough to meet their needs of modules and cells, and were expecting relief from the government.

When asked about plans of reviewing the decision to impose duty, the Minister replied: "By and large this will remain. I don't want any Chinese imports. No plans (of reviewing the decision or modifying it)."

According to research firm Mercom India Research, the domestic module manufacturing capacity was around 18-20 GW as of March 2022. **PTI**

IMF says it is concerned by food, fertilizer export restrictions

Welcomes India's decision to relax ban on wheat exports

Washington: The IMF has said that it is concerned by the use of food and fertilizer export restrictions by some nations which can exacerbate global price increases and market volatility and welcomed India's recent decision to relax its originally announced ban on wheat exports and allow some shipments to proceed.

A senior International Monetary Fund official observed that some 30 countries have curtailed exports of commodity goods including food and fuel since the war in Ukraine began.

"We are very concerned by



the use of food and fertilizer export restrictions, which can exacerbate global price increases and market volatility. So, this goes beyond India," IMF spokesperson Gerry Rice told reporters at a news conference here on Thursday.

"Our monitoring indicates that some 30 countries, in fact, have curtailed exports of com-

modity goods, including food and fuel, and that since the war in Ukraine began. So, we are very concerned about this. (IMF Managing Director) Kristalina Georgieva has been very vocal on this. (First Deputy Managing Director) Gita Gopinath spoke about it again, yesterday," he said. **PTI**

Omega Seiki enters passenger electric three-wheeler segment, launches Stream at ₹3.40 lakh

Mumbai: Anglian Omega Group's EV arm Omega Seiki Mobility on Friday announced its entry into the passenger electric three-wheeler segment, with the launch of Stream priced at ₹3.40-lakh (ex-showroom New Delhi) post-government subsidy.

The company said it has invested around USD 12-15 million in the new product, which aims to cater to domestic and overseas markets demand.

The Faridabad-headquartered company was leading in the electric cargo three-wheeler segment. **PTI**

Exprto raises ₹5 crore in seed funding from GSF, Angel List US, others

New Delhi: Education technology startup Exprto has raised ₹5 crore in a seed investment round led by GSF and Angel List USA, the company said on Friday.

The latest round also saw participation from Agility Ventures, Lets Venture and Supermorphus.

Exprto positions itself as an experience-sharing and mentorship network for students.

It offers mentorship services that vary between 1 to 12 months duration. At present, the platform offers one-on-one as well as cohort-based group mentorship sessions.

Based on the stage of preparation that aspirants are at, each service is personalised using proprietary Artificial

EXPRTO POSITIONS ITSELF AS AN EXPERIENCE-SHARING AND MENTORSHIP NETWORK FOR STUDENTS

Intelligence/Machine Learning profile-matching tech.

The funding round also saw unicorn founders and angel investors participating in it, which included Rishabh Karwa (Go Mechanic), Rahul

Jaimini (Swiggy), Sanka Aravind (Rapido), Rajesh Yabaji (Blackbuck), Vikas Bagaria (Pee Safe), Rahul Maroli (Zee5), Nitish Mitter Sain (Nazara Technologies), Dinesh Gulati (India Mart), Deep Gupta, Sahil Mahaldar and Archana Priyadarshini, among others.

"Exprto... Has raised Rs 5 crore in a seed round led by GSF and Angel List US; it also had Agility Ventures, Lets Venture, and Supermorphus participating in it," the company statement said.

Funds raised by the education technology startup will be used to improve overall product service, accelerate growth and build new technologies, it informed. **PTI**

Irdai allows life insurers to launch products without prior approval

New Delhi: Irdai on Friday extended the 'use and file' procedure for the most of the life insurance products, thereby allowing insurers to launch new products without prior approval of the regulator.

This comes days after Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) extending similar relaxations to health insurance products as well as general insurance covers.

In a press release, Irdai said that in its continuous endeavour towards the reform agenda taken up towards having a fully insured India, it has extended the 'use and file' procedure for most of the life insurance products.

"This means now the life insurance companies can also launch these products without prior approval of Irdai," the regulator said. Earlier when the industry was in nascent stage, it was made mandatory for the insurance companies to take prior approval before launching any life insurance product.

However, with the maturity attained by the industry, it is envisaged that necessary relaxations may be allowed, Irdai said.

"This move will enable life insurers to launch most of the products (except individual savings, individual pensions and annuity) in a timely manner according to the dynamic needs of the market," it added.

According to Irdai, the relaxation will result in improving ease of doing business for insurers and also lead to expansion of the choices available to policyholders.

"The life insurance industry is expected to use this opportunity to respond faster to the emerging market needs, in terms of designing and pricing of insurance products resulting in more choices for the policyholders, which will further help in increasing the insurance penetration in India," it said.

The life insurers are expected to have a board-approved product management and pricing policy, the Irdai said. **PTI**

Solar plants for community health centres in Gurugram

Gurugram: Two two solar power units with 10KV capacity each were set up at the Community Health Centres at Bhorikalan and Bhangrola in Gurugram on Friday.

"Volvo is committed to sustainability," said Jyoti Malhotra, MD of Volvo Cars India which in collaboration with ASSOCHAM set up the units, inaugurated by Deputy Civil Surgeon Pradeep Kumar.

"ASSOCHAM partners the Indian industry in reaching out to communities to enable them to benefit from technology and enhancing the quality of life," said ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood. **PTI**

Chhetri in focus again as India face Afghans

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The inspirational Sunil Chhetri would look to continue from where he left against Cambodia as India face Afghanistan in their second match of the Asian Cup Qualifiers here on Saturday.

On an evening of missed opportunities, the 37-year-old veteran struck a goal in each half to give Igor Stimac's side all three points, ensuring the group hosts keep ahead of Hong Kong on goal difference after Jorn Andersen's team won 2-1 over Afghanistan in the first match on Wednesday.

Seeking to make a second successive Asian Cup Finals, the Chhetri-led India would look to bring out their best, especially up front with the likes of Liston Colaco, Manvir Singh, Udanta Singh, Ashique Kuruniyan and Roshan Singh hoping to improving their finishing abilities.

All of them got ample opportunities but failed to make an impact as far as scoring was concerned and it was once again left to the veteran to settle the nerves with his brace that took his international tally to 82 goals, behind Cristiano Ronaldo (117) and Lionel Messi (86).

"I'm tired of answering this question," Stimac said when asked about life after Chhetri.

"When he's (Sunil) with us, I don't care if others are not



scoring. If he's not here, then others will start scoring. Why look for someone else when he's scoring two goals every day?" he asked.

From Afghan's point of view it will be a do-or-die match and the physically stronger team would look to make it count against the

Indian backline of Roshan Singh, Sandesh Jhingan, Anwar Ali and Akash Mishra, who impressed the most in their outing against Cambodia.

In such a scenario, the onus would be on the attacking line-up to "kill the contest" by scoring early goals, something that buried Afghanistan against

Hong Kong.

The fitness of Roshan has been a concern after their outing against Cambodia and Stimac said they would assess

NADA to collect dope samples from all medals winners at athletics Nationals

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) will collect samples from all medal winners at the ongoing National Inter-State Senior Athletics Championships and will not take random samples for testing.

There are 43 medal events in the championships but there might be athletes who win more than one medal.

"We will take samples of gold, silver and bronze winners in each event, both men and women. We are not collecting random samples," a member of the dope testing team told PTI.

A NADA dope testing team from Bengaluru arrived on Thursday, a day before the start of the event, which will serve as a selection trial for the July 28 to Aug 8 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Last month, Maharashtra quarter-miler Aishwarya Mishra evaded dope testing agencies as she "disappeared" after winning gold in the Federation Cup in April with the third fastest Indian time (51.18 seconds) ever.

She, however, false-started in the women's 400m heats in the morning session on Friday and was disqualified.

Reduced to tears, Mishra was guided by officials out of the running arena. She will now compete in the 200m race.

PFA awards: Mo Salah named best men's player



AP ■ LONDON

Liverpool star Mohamed Salah won the 2021-22 Professional Footballers' Association men's Player of the Year award for the second time on Thursday, beating out teammates Sadio Mane and Virgil van Dijk and two-time winner Kevin De Bruyne after scoring 23 goals in the Premier League.

Salah last won the award in 2018.

Harry Kane and Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo were also nominated for the award.

Tottenham's Son Heung-Min, who finished alongside Salah as the Premier League's joint-top scorer, didn't make the shortlist.

Chelsea forward Sam Kerr was also named the PFA women's Player of the Year after leading the Blues to a domestic double. Kerr scored 32 goals in all competitions as Chelsea captured the Women's Super League title and Women's FA Cup.

City players Phil Foden and Lauren Hemp were voted the PFA's men's and women's top young players, respectively. Foden defended his title from last season, while Hemp nabbed the award for the fourth time.

Players from England's top four divisions cast the votes for the two major awards.

Despite winning the Premier League title, City have just three players in the PFA men's team of the year. However, six players from runners-up Liverpool made the 11.

Ronaldo and Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger earned places on the team sheet, but Tottenham's two star forwards, Kane and Son, missed out.

The women's team of the year includes four players from Chelsea, three each from Arsenal and City, and one from Manchester United.

Mary Kom ruled out of CWG after suffering knee injury in selection trials

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran Indian boxer MC Mary Kom's bid to compete at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games ended in a heart-break here on Friday as she was forced to withdraw midway from the selection trials due to a knee injury.

The six-time world champion twisted her left knee in the first few minutes in the opening round of the 48kg semi-finals against Haryana's Nitu.

Mary Kom will thus miss the quadrennial event, where she had become the first Indian woman boxer to claim a Gold medal in the last edition in 2018.

"Six-time world champion Mary Kom has withdrawn from the ongoing Women's Boxing Trials for the 2022 Commonwealth Games due to an injury she suffered on Friday," the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) said in a statement. Mary Kom fell down in the very



first round of the bout. The 39-year-old tried to keep going after receiving medical assistance but after a couple of punches, she struggled to keep balance as she clutched her left knee and looked in a lot of pain.

The Manipuri had to be carried out

of the ring with Nitu being announced the winner via RSCI (Referee Stops Contest due to injury).

The London Olympics Bronze medallist, whose left knee was heavily bandaged after the fall, was then taken to the hospital for scans.

NIKHAT, LOVLINA ON COURSE

World champion Nikhat Zareen and Tokyo Olympics Bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain stayed on course for securing CWG spots by registering convincing win in their respective weight categories.

Nikhat (50kg) continued in her sublime form as she out-punched Anamika 7-0.

On the other hand, Lovlina (70kg), who is coming off an underwhelming world championship campaign, also notched a unanimous decision win over fellow Assamese boxer Ankushita Boro by an identical 7-0 margin.

Sindhu, Sen bow out of Indonesia Masters



PTI ■ JAKARTA

Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and rising star Lakshya Sen made quarterfinal exits in their respective singles events, ending India's challenge in the

Indonesia Open Super Series 500 tournament here on Friday. Sen was first to be eliminated as the 20-year-old went down fighting and forced a decider against his higher-seeded Chinese Taipei rival Chou Tien Chen 21-16, 12-21, 21-14.

India's last hope then rested on Sindhu but the former world champion went down without a fight to her old foe Ratchanok Intanon 12-21, 10-21 in a match lasting a little over half an hour.

The 27-year-old was at her dominating best and looked at ease with both in attacks and defence and the Indian was never able to fightback and suffered her fifth straight loss against her Thai rival.

Indian hockey teams aim to fine-tune specific areas

PTI ■ ANTWERP

Adequate game time against quality opposition, working on their tactical nous will be high on Indian men's and women's hockey teams' agenda as they resume their respective FIH Pro League campaigns against Belgium on Saturday as pre-cursor to Commonwealth Games.

While the Indian men's team is scheduled to play hosts Belgium (June 11 and June 12), followed by games against the Netherlands (June 18 and June 19 in Rotterdam), the women



will play Belgium (June 11 and June 12), Argentina (June 18 and June 19) and the United States (June 21 and June 22).

For the Indian women, these matches hold greater significance ahead of the FIH Women's World Cup to be jointly hosted by Spain and the Netherlands from July 1 to 17.

The Indian men are currently placed second in the league standings with 27 points from 12 games, a rung above Belgium, who have the same number of points but are placed below on goal difference.

So, there is hardly anything

to separate between the India and Belgium.

For India, the back-to-back matches would provide them with an opportunity to reclaim their top spot in the league, which has been taken away by the Netherlands with 28 points from 10 games.

Besides making a mark in the Pro-League, the matches would also provide valuable game time for both the national teams ahead of the Birmingham Games, scheduled to be held from July 28 to August 8.

With eyes firmly set on

podium finishes at this year's Birmingham Games, both men's and women's hockey chief coaches Graham Reid and Janneke Schopman had already insisted that they are looking at the European leg of the league to gain better tactical insights about their respective sides.

"With little less than two months for the CWG, we will utilise this time to ensure we are best prepared for the prestigious event. The Pro League matches will give us insights into the areas that require improvement ahead of the CWG," Indian men's team chief coach Reid had said.

AP ■ LISBON

Portugal scored twice in five minutes to beat the Czech Republic on Thursday and open up a two-point lead at the top of Group A2 in the Nations League.

Joao Cancelo and Goncalo Guedes were on target in the 33rd and 38th minutes in Lisbon as Portugal continued their strong start in the competition with a comfortable 2-0 win.

Victory means they sit two points clear of Spain, having won two and drawn one of their opening three games.

The Czech Republic started the match level on points with their opponents but drop to third, after Spain defeated Switzerland 1-0 in Geneva.

The Czech Republic travel to Spain on Sunday while Portugal will have the chance to extend their advantage when they play away at Switzerland, in what has been an encouraging couple of weeks for Fernando Santos' side.

Portugal had to go through the play-offs to qualify for the World Cup in Qatar, beating Turkey and North Macedonia to avoid an embar-

TWO WINS IN A ROW



assing exit. But this convincing win came after they claimed a 1-1 draw away against Spain in their opening fixture before thrashing Switzerland 4-0 in the second, with Cristiano Ronaldo scoring twice. Cancelo also got on the scoresheet there and the Manchester City defender made it two goals in as many matches by scoring just after the half-hour against the Czechs.

It came from some brilliant work by Bernardo Silva, who wriggled free on the right

and found his City teammate inside him, who fired in.

Five minutes later, it was two and again Bernardo was at the heart of it, sliding through Guedes, who swept a superb finish beyond Jindrich Stanek.

The Czechs looked dangerous on the break in the second half and a goal might have made a game of it but Vaclav Jurecka shot wide when they had a three against two.

Ronaldo almost added a third for Portugal but his first effort of the game was saved by Stanek.

Salah-less Egypt suffer shock defeat

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Egypt sorely missed injured captain Mohamed Salah as they slumped to a shock 2-0 defeat by Ethiopia on Thursday in 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifying. A strain ruled out the prolific Liverpool scorer after he defied his club last Sunday and played in a victory over

Guinea despite not being fully fit. Egypt lacked several other injured first choices, but were still expected to secure maximum Group D points in neutral Malawi against opponents 108 places lower in the world rankings. But the quick Ethiopian forwards repeatedly troubled a slow Egyptian defence in the opening half and goals from Dawa Hotessa

and captain Semeles Bekele gave them a two-goal half-time advantage.

Elsewhere, Guinea left it late to beat Malawi 1-0 in Conakry with Naby Keita, a Liverpool teammate of Salah, scoring in added time. Nigeria ended a five-match winless run by coming from behind to beat Sierra Leone 2-1 in a Group A match.



AP ■ GENEVA

Spain registered the first win of their Nations League campaign on Thursday as Pablo Sarabia's early goal was enough for a 1-0 victory over Switzerland.

Sarabia capitalised on a Swiss error at the back to give Luis Enrique's side the lead in Geneva, and that was enough for the visitors in a game that lacked clear-cut chances.

Spain, though, will be relieved to be up and running, this win coming after they

were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Portugal and then needed a 90th-minute goal to salvage a 2-2 draw away at the Czech Republic last weekend.

Switzerland, meanwhile, succumbed to a third consecutive loss in the competition after they were beaten 2-1 away by the Czech Republic before being hammered 4-0 by Portugal.

Spain are second in Group A2, two points behind Portugal, while Switzerland are last, four points adrift of the Czech Republic.

Jackson eyeing world's Gold

AP ■ ROME

Shericka Jackson is gunning for an individual Gold medal at next month's world championships after seeing off a star-studded field to claim victory in the women's 200m at Thursday's Diamond League meeting in Rome. Jamaican Jackson clocked 21.91sec to cross well clear of double Olympic Gold medallist Elaine Thompson-Herah and reigning world champion Dina Asher-Smith.

The 27-year-old won Bronze in the 100m in last year's Tokyo Olympics and was part of the 4x100m relay team, alongside Thompson-Herah, which won Gold in the Japanese capital.

"My aim is to add a Gold medal to my name," said Jackson.

"I have many individual medals at 400m and 100m, but I need to get that Gold medal in any event that might be. This is my aim this season."



Jackson ended Thompson-Herah's unbeaten record this season with a meeting record and season's best time as the worlds in Eugene, Oregon, loom.

Her performance was all the more impressive due to her compatriot and Briton Asher-Smith both running respective season's best times of 22.25sec and 22.27sec.

"This race was a good one. I ran a season's best, I cannot complain," said Thompson-Herah.

"I still have to work on some stuff. Now I concentrate on my nationals and I am looking forward to the world championships."

Can't ask Rohit, KL to drop themselves for me: Ishan



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Regular skipper Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul are quite few notches above him in terms of sheer quality and Ishan Kishan knows only too well that he can't just ask the "world class" batters to "drop themselves" from playing XI in order to accommodate him. The Indian team management looks at Kishan as a spe-

cialist opener, knowing that he isn't the one blessed with a power game to negotiate the variations during back-end of T20I games. After his 48-ball-76 in a losing cause against South Africa, which was blazing most of the times and scratchy in some parts, Kishan pledged to control the controllables. "They (Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul) are world-class play-

ers and I won't ask for my spot when they are there in the team. They have scored so many runs for our country, I cannot ask them to drop themselves and make me play in the first place," Kishan said at the post-match press conference. "My job here is to give my best in the practice session. Whenever I get my opportunity, I have to prove myself or do well for the team. I focus more

on that on what I have to do," Kishan added. For him, it is all about performing whenever he gets an opportunity and allow the coaches and selectors to do their job. "I have to keep doing my thing, it's up to the selectors and the coaches whatever they think, but my job is to give my best whenever I get my chance," he added. On his strategy, the 23-year-old stated: "We knew that the wicket is not easy for the batters to get going. My plan was to target the loose balls and put pressure on the bowlers. So, that they are also thinking and move their line and length." Despite the batters putting up a massive 211 on the board, the Indian bowlers struggled to defend the target on what was a batting better. The home team's woes were compounded when Shreyas Iyer dropped a sitter with van der Dussen, who was on 29 at that point, went on to score an unbeaten 75. "We need to address what mistakes we did with the bowling department or if it's the fielding department, but it's never any one player who, you know, makes us lose the match. So we'll figure out everything as a team," Kishan came to his colleague's defence.

Van der Dussen credits IPL for SA's historic win



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

He might not have played a lot of games for Rajasthan Royals in this edition of IPL but Rassie van der Dussen counts his experience of watching close games from the dug-out as invaluable, something that helped while chasing a huge Indian total in first T20 International. Van der Dussen scored 75 off 46 balls as South Africa chased down a target of 212 in a canter in the first T20I against India.

Van der Dussen, who although played only three games for the Rajasthan Royals this season, feels staying in India for the past couple of months, helped the majority of the South Africans players to cope with extreme conditions, while also providing them with a fair idea as to how to tackle the Indian bowlers. "Definitely (IPL has helped). I watched a lot of IPL games, did not get much of an opportunity to play but I had a pretty good idea what their bowlers would do and the conditions," van der Dussen said at the post match press conference. "Indian conditions are different to what we have in South Africa. I spent two month here, been in these conditions, been in the heat, so had acclimatised to that and that goes for everyone," he added. The likes of Quinton de Kock, David Miller, Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje were all part of the league this season, which was played entirely in India.



Bengal advance as minister Tiwary strikes century

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Seamlessly juggling politics and cricket, Manoj Tiwary on Friday achieved what no one else did in 88 years of Ranji Trophy: score a hundred while being a sitting minister in a state government. Without an iota of doubt, Tiwary's 136 was the highlight of an inconsequential fifth day's play as Bengal advanced to the semi-finals of the Ranji Trophy on the basis of their massive first-innings lead. In between signing files related to his constituency, Tiwary, a sitting minister of sports and youth affairs in the Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government, struck 19 fours and two sixes. The 36-year-old veteran also scored 73 in Bengal's first essay. There were notable contributions once again from other Bengal batters such as Shahbaz Ahmed (46), Anustup

Majumdar (38) and Abhishek Porel (34). It is worth recalling that Ahmad, Majumdar and Porel all scored big in Bengal's first innings too. Throughout the quarterfinal game, which looked one-sided from the onset, with Bengal posting a mammoth 773 for 7 in their first innings with all their top nine batters hitting at least a half century, smashing a 250-year-old record in first class cricket. The only consolation for Jharkhand was that Shahbaz Nadeem bagged 5 for 59. Like Nadeem with the ball, it was Virat Singh who shone with the bat for Jharkhand, scoring an unbeaten 136 in the first innings. Bengal will take on Madhya Pradesh in the semi-final and have a shot at qualifying for back-to-back Ranji Trophy finals. Mumbai and Uttar Pradesh will face off in the other semi-final.

India, SA teams reach Odisha

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Players of the Indian and South African cricket teams reached Odisha on Friday amid tight security ahead of their T20I game at the Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on June 12. The two teams landed at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar around 2 pm as hundreds of cricket enthusiasts gathered to welcome them. Fans gathered in large numbers at the airport, outside their hotel and on both sides of the road between the two places for one glimpse of the



cricketing stars.

The players were welcomed at the airport by members of the Odisha Cricket Association (OCA). They were taken to the hotel in special buses amid tight security. Cuttack Collector BS Chayni said that a large number of VIPs and dignitaries are expected to come to the stadium for the match. "As the chief minister has been invited, he may come to the stadium too. However, we are yet to receive any official communication in this regard," Chayni said.

Mitchell, Blundell combine again to rescue NZ



AP ■ NOTTINGHAM

New Zealand lost Henry Nicholls and Devon Conway amid a spell of probing seam bowling from England and went to Tea at 195-4 on Day 1 of the second Test at Trent Bridge on Friday. Resuming after lunch on 108-2, the third-wicket partnership between Nicholls and Conway had moved to 77 when Nicholls - dropped on 16 by Zak Crawley in the slips - edged England captain Ben Stokes to wicketkeeper Ben Foakes for 30. Three overs later, Foakes took another catch when Conway (46) got an inside edge off a delivery from veteran paceman Jimmy Anderson that nipped back off the seam. England was now into the middle order but Daryl Mitchell (20) and Tom Blundell (7) held firm to the end of the session. Blundell, however, should have departed for a duck, only for Joe Root to put down a simple catch at first slip off

Stokes.

Put into bat under a cloudy sky in Nottingham, New Zealand openers Tom Latham - the stand-in captain - and Will

Young put on 84 runs for the first wicket before departing off successive balls. Young (47) edged Stokes to Crawley at second slip and Anderson enticed a mis-hit pull shot from Latham that sailed into the hands of Matthew Potts at midwicket for 26. Anderson had 2-35 off 15 overs, while Stokes was probably the pick of the bowlers with 2-40. The pressure was on the New Zealanders, who lost the first test of the three-match series by five wickets at Lord's last week and also lost the toss in windy and overcast conditions at Trent Bridge. They were also missing regular captain Kane Williamson, who tested positive for the coronavirus late Thursday and was forced to isolate. Latham, who said he would have chosen to bowl if he had won the toss, handed a Test debut to Michael Bracewell, an allrounder in an all-pace attack. England was unchanged from Lord's.

Williamson out due to Covid-19

PTI ■ NOTTINGHAM

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson missed the second Test against England which started on Friday, after testing positive for COVID-19 the night before the match. Tom Latham is captaining the side in Williamson's absence. Williamson undertook a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) after experiencing minor symptoms on Thursday and has now begun



his five days of isolation. Coach Gary Stead on Thursday confirmed Hamish Rutherford will join the squad as Williamson's replacement. "It's such a shame for Kane to be forced to withdraw on the eve of such an important match," Stead said. "We are all feeling for him at this time and know how disappointed he will be. "Hamish was with the Test squad earlier in the tour and has been playing for the Leicestershire Foxes in the Vitality T20 Blast," he added.

Pant should be used as floater during T20 World Cup: Ponting



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former Australian skipper Ricky Ponting believes that Rishabh Pant will be "exceptionally dangerous" on "fast and bouncy" Australian wickets during the upcoming T20 World Cup, where he could be best utilised as a floater as per match situation. Ponting has worked closely with Pant at Delhi Capitals and rates the Indian keeper-batter very highly. "He (Pant) is a wonderful player. An outstanding young man, who has got the world at his feet. And he'll be exceptionally dangerous for India, especially on the wickets we'll provide in Australia. ... Good flat, fast, bouncy wickets. He'll be one of the players to watch out (for) in the tournament (World T20) for sure," Ponting said on 'ICC Review'. For Ponting, Pant's batting position should be

flexible as per Indian team's requirements. "I reckon having him as a floater. I'll probably have him listed at (number) five in the (Indian) batting line-up. "But in certain situations, where it gets to a stage, where there are seven-eight overs to go and they are one-two down, then I will look at sending him in and giving as much time as possibly can. He is that dynamic and that explosive (player) and that is certainly the way I would look at trying to use him," added Ponting, a veteran of 168 Tests. Pant managed to score just 340 runs from 14 IPL games with an average of 30.91. And according to Ponting, Pant was frustrated with his performance in the IPL. "He probably didn't have his best tournament (IPL). He was really frustrated with his IPL this year because he went into the tournament batting better than I've ever seen him bat before.



Lanka fined 40% of match fee for slow over rate in 2nd T20I

PTI ■ DUBAI

Sri Lanka have been fined 40 per cent of their match fee for maintaining slow over-rate against Australia in the second T20 in Colombo. Ranjan Madugalle of the ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after Dasun Shanaka's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration. "In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time," read an ICC statement. "Shanaka pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing," it added. On-field umpires Kumar Dharmasena and Prageeth Rambukwella, third umpire Lyndon Hannibal and fourth umpire Ruchira Palliyaguruge levelled the charge.

IPL Media Rights: Star, Viacom18, Sony, Zee in 4-way race

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The much-anticipated duel between Jeff Bezos and Mukesh Ambani for acquisition of one of world's costliest sporting properties won't materialise now as OTT giants Amazon on Friday pulled out of IPL media rights bidding, scheduled to start on Sunday. Reliance Industries Limited owned Viacom18 is considered to be one of the strongest contenders both in TV and digital space. Bezos-funded Amazon was expected to be one of the biggest bidders in digital space but pulled out of the race without revealing the reason. "Yes, Amazon is out of the race. They didn't join the technical bidding process today. As far as Google (YouTube) is concerned, they had



picked up the bid document but didn't submit it. As of now, 10 companies (TV and streaming) are in fray," a senior BCCI official said. **A FOUR-WAY BATTLE** There are four specific packages in which e-auction will be conducted for 74 games per season for a five-

year period from 2023-2027 with a provision of increasing the number of matches to 94 in the final two years. The Package A has Indian sub-continent exclusive TV (broadcast) rights while Package B covers digital rights for Indian sub-continent. The Package C is for 18 selected games in each season for digital space

while Package D (all games) will be for combined TV and digital rights for overseas markets. "Let's make it clear, the Viacom 18 JV (Joint Venture), current rights holder Walt Disney (Star), Zee and Sony are the four contenders for the packages with solid footprints in both TV and digital market," the official said. Some of the other contenders, primarily for digital space are: Times Internet, FunAsia, Dream11, FanCode while Sky Sports (UK) and Supersport (South Africa) will be vying for overseas TV and digital rights. The last time, Star India bought rights for both TV and digital with a composite bid of Rs 16,347.50 crore but this time the composite base price is more than Rs 32,000 crore.

Q: What are the dates of media rights auction? A: It is expected to be for two days — June 12 and 13.	A: ₹16,347.50 crore for both TV and Digital with Star India.	Q: Which are major companies bidding? A: There are 10 companies in fray: Viacom18 JV (Joint Venture) with Lupa Systems (Uday Shankar and James Murdoch), Walt Disney (Star), Zee, Sony (both India media and digital rights), Times Internet, Fan Code, FunAsia, Dream11 (only digital rights), Supersport (South Africa) and Sky Sports (UK) vying for Overseas TV and Digital rights.
Q: What is the period of IPL Media Rights? A: The period is for five years from 2023-2027.	Q: What are the packages on offer? A: A: TV Rights for Indian sub-continent at ₹49 crore per game. B: Digital Rights for Indian sub-continent at ₹33 cr per game. C: 18-match, non-exclusive digital package at ₹11 crore per game. D: Overseas TV and Digital Rights at ₹3 cr per game.	
Q: Number of matches per season? A: It is 74 with provision of going up to 94 in last 2 seasons.		
Q: What is current valuation of IPL Media Rights?	All bidders will have to make separate bids for each package, this time. As of Friday, some of the big players who are involved with the bidding process, feel that Rs 45,000 crore (USD 5.8 billion approx) is the amount that BCCI could expect which will be a two-and-a-half times increase in valuation.	