

OPINION 6

HUMANS & OTHER  
LIVING BEINGS

WORLD 9

UKRAINE SAYS IT HAS STRUCK  
RUSSIAN BOAT IN BLACK SEA

MONEY 10

MARKETS DECLINE FOR 6TH DAY;  
SENSEX SHEDS 135 POINTS

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY JUNE 18, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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INDIA BEAT  
SOUTH AFRICA  
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11 SPORT

## FIRE AND FURY ENGULF AGNIPATH 1 killed; protesters attack Bihar Dy CM house, set 12 trains ablaze, block roads

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Protests against Agnipath scheme intensified on Friday with the agitation spreading to southern States, and protesters setting 12 trains on fire across the country till now. One person was killed in police firing in Secunderabad in Telangana. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh witnessed violent protests. Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Renu Devi's house was attacked in Bettiah.

The Bihar and Haryana Governments suspended internet and mobile telephone services in many districts following the Agnipath protests.

In Bihar, internet and telecom services will remain suspended till June 19 in Kaimur, Bhojpur, Aurangabad, Rohtas, Buxar, Nawada, West Champaran, Samastipur, Lakhisarai, Begusarai, Vaishali and Saran. The RJD has called for Bihar bandh on Saturday to protest the Agnipath scheme.

Over 80 Express and 134 passenger trains have been cancelled and 61 Express and 30 passenger trains have been partially cancelled as protests over the Agnipath recruitment scheme continue across the country. At least 11 Express trains have been diverted.

Telangana police resorted to aerial firing to disperse the angry crowd at the Secunderabad railway station as protests escalated into large-scale violence and arson.

Protesters were demonstrating on railway tracks and halted all train movement for

the last three hours. Security forces were outnumbered as the railway station was overrun by angry youth, who reportedly set three trains on fire.

The railways are diverting trains so that they do not pass through the Secunderabad station. The disruption began at 9 am when over 350 protesters took over the railway station.

East Coast Express, Rajkot Express, and Ajanta Express were set on fire by violent protesters. 71 trains — 65 from Hyderabad Multi-Modal Transport System and six Express trains — have been cancelled so far.

Protesters ran amok at Trichy railway station in Tamil Nadu against the Agnipath scheme. They squatted on a railway track before officials moved them from the tracks. In Bihar, where the protests entered the third day, the house of Deputy Chief Minister Renu Devi was attacked. "Such type of violence is very dangerous for society. The protesters should remember that this is a loss for society," she told a private television channel.

"The large-scale violence and arson is a handiwork of goons instigated by the Opposition parties. What else explains targeted attacks on BJP leaders? My house in Bettiah town was attacked. Window panes and a car parked inside got damaged. Thankfully, none of those inside were injured. Petrol pump owned by a brother of Sanjay Jaiswal (State party president) has been vandalised," Devi told PTI.

In Motihari, the car of BJP MLA Vinay Bihari was pelted



A policeman aims to fire in the air to disperse people protesting against Agnipath scheme in Danapur on Friday

PTI

with stones and while the legislator and his driver were not injured, the vehicle was badly damaged.

Two coaches of the Jammu Tawi Express train were set on fire in Bihar's Samastipur district.

A BJP office was attacked in the Lakhisarai district. A mob set fire to the Islampur-Hatia express train which was stationed at the Islampur station in Nalanda. Three AC coaches are completely burnt down and several other coaches have been damaged.

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Policemen try to douse a fire in a train, set by people protesting against Agnipath scheme, in Ballia on Friday

PTI

## Top Ministers defend Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

As protests against "Agnipath" policy turned violent on Friday in several parts of the country, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah reached out to the job aspirants, asking them to start preparing for the recruitment which will start soon after the age limit was increased to 23 years from 21 on Thursday.

The age limit was raised as a "one-time" waiver as recruitment was put on hold for the last two years due to the corona pandemic, denying a chance to the candidates, Rajnath said, adding it is a "golden opportunity".

Home Minister Amit Shah said the decision to increase the upper age limit for the recruitment in the defence services will benefit the job aspirants in a big way.

Union Minister Anurag Thakur posted a video on his

Twitter, in which he was seen interacting with a group of youngsters in his constituency Hamirpur and clearing their doubts about the scheme.

Army Chief General Manoj Pande too urged the aspirants to avail of this opportunity as they could not do so in the past two years. Raising of the upper age limit for induction under the "Agnipath" scheme would permit a larger section of youth to enroll as "Agniveer", said IAF chief VR Chaudhari.

Shah said the recruitment process in the Army was affected for the last two years due to the coronavirus pandemic, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken a sensitive decision by showing concern for the youth of the country.

"The recruitment process in the Army was affected due to the corona pandemic for the last two years, so Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji has taken a sensitive decision, showing concern for the youth,

to give them two years concession in the age limit from 21 years to 23 years in the first year of Agnipath scheme," Shah said in a tweet in Hindi.

A large number of youth will benefit from this decision. Through the "Agnipath" scheme, they will move forward in the service to the country and their bright future, he said. "I thank @narendramodi ji," he added.

In an attempt to assuage the concerns of the young people agitating against the "Agnipath" military recruitment, Rajnath said the new model is a "golden opportunity" for those wanting to join the country's defence system. The process will start in a "few days," Rajnath said.

He said the Government's decision to increase the upper age limit from 21 years to 23 years for recruitment under the scheme in 2022 will allow a significant number of youths to join the armed forces.

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## IAF, Army set to notify selection next week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Amid rising protests in several parts of the country against the "Agnipath" scheme, the Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF) have decided to go ahead with the process of recruitment. While the Army will issue a notification on Monday next, the IAF will start the selection process on June 24.

Giving details of the process, the Army officials said after the issuance of initial notification for enrolment under the Agnipath scheme,

various agencies of the Army will come out with details of the induction process like the number of vacancies, location of recruitment rallies and test schedules, they said.

The training of the recruits is likely to commence from December this year, they said. The plan is to deploy the initial batches of recruits under the new scheme in operational and non-operational roles by around June next year.

Indian Air Force chief VR Chaudhari said here on Friday the selection process by the IAF for the recruitment under the Agnipath scheme will start

from June 24.

He also said raising the upper age limit to 23 for induction under the Agnipath scheme for the year 2022 will permit a larger section of the youth to enroll under the new model of recruitment.

"The Government has recently come out with the "Agnipath" scheme for enrolment in the armed forces. The age bracket for the scheme is 17-and-a-half-years to 21 years. I am pleased to inform you that the upper age limit for the first induction has been increased to 23 years," Chaudhari said.

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## J&K polls likely by end of year

### Rajnath hints at a Jammu event

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday set the ball rolling by dropping a clear hint that the first ever Assembly elections in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir are round the corner and may be held by this year-end.

Before winding up his two-day-long visit to Jammu & Kashmir, Singh arrived in Jammu to attend a function marking the 200th coronation ceremony of Maharaja Gulab Singh at Hari Niwas Palace.

Speaking in the presence of former Sadr-e-Riyasat and veteran Parliamentarian Dr Karan Singh, son of last Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh, Rajnath Singh said the delimitation exercise was completed recently following which the number of seats has increased to 90 with Kashmir division having 47 seats and Jammu 43.

"There's a strong possibility that the electoral process will commence by the end of this year in J&K," he added.

The Union Minister also read out the report card of the Narendra Modi-led Government at the Centre while listing out changes brought in J&K after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A.

The Defence Minister also said that the neighbouring country is sowing the seeds of

hatred in India.

"There's foreign conspiracy in recent targeted killings in J&K. We need to foil such attempts. We won't let the forceful migration happen of any person from any religion or sect," Singh added.

The function was also attended by Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, Vikramaditya Singh, BJP leader Ajatshatru Singh, members of the Maharaja Gulab Singh Memorial Trust, Member Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma, besides many former Ministers, ex-MLAs and prominent dignitaries.

After the culmination of the marathon exercise of the delimitation, the Election Commission of India had already initiated the revision of electoral rolls in Jammu & Kashmir. It is mandatory to update the electoral rolls before holding the first ever Assembly polls in the Union Territory.

Official sources said the draft rolls are expected to be ready by August 31.

Last week, the Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey had convened a meeting where the J&K Chief Electoral Officer was directed to map the redrawn Assembly constituencies.

During the revision exercise, citizens would be given opportunities to enrol, delete and change their particulars in the electoral rolls.

## Govt OK's linking of Aadhaar with voter IDs to curb many enrolments

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The Government on Friday issued four notifications allowing linking of electoral roll data with Aadhaar, making electoral law gender neutral for service voters and enabling young citizens register as voters four times a year instead of the present one. The notifications are part of the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021 passed by Parliament last year.

Law Minister Kiren Rijiju took to Twitter to announce that four notifications in this regard have been issued in consultation with the Election Commission. The Union Minister shared a chart to say the notifications will enable "linking of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem to curb the menace of multiple enrolment of the same person in different places".

He also said now a citizen who turns 18 on January 1 or April 1 or July 1 or October 1 in a calendar year can immediately apply for voter registration. "The four qualifying dates will considerably enhance the voter base," he said.

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## NCERT removes Guj riots, Mughal, Emergency from Class XII books

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The NCERT has removed portions about the 2002 Gujarat riots, Emergency, Cold War, Naxalite movement and Mughal courts from its Class 12 textbooks as part of its "syllabus rationalisation" exercise.

The NCERT, an autonomous body of the Union Education Ministry, has cited "overlapping" and "irrelevant" as reasons for dropping those portions from the syllabus.

Many of these changes were announced earlier this year when the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) rationalised its syllabi in April.

Besides schools under CBSE, some State boards too use NCERT textbooks. Listing the changes, the NCERT, in a note, said, "The content of the textbooks has been rationalised for various reasons, including overlapping with similar content in other subject areas in the same class, similar content included in the lower or higher classes on the same subject."

In Class 12 political science textbook, pages on "Gujarat riots" will be excluded from chapter: "Recent Developments in Indian Politics".

Continued on Page 2

## CAPSULE

### 35% RISE IN COVID CASES IN DELHI, 1 DIES OF VIRUS

**New Delhi:** Delhi reported 1,797 new Covid cases on Friday, a 35 per cent rise over the previous day count, and a virus-related death. Total 12,847 coronavirus cases were reported across the country, taking the overall tally of the pandemic cases to 4,32,70,577, while active cases increased to 63,063. The data updated at 8 am also recorded 14 fresh fatalities.

### PRIEST YATI PUT UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN GZB

**Ghaziabad:** Controversial priest Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati of the Dasna Devi temple here was put under "house arrest" for a day on Friday, days after he declared to visit the Delhi's Jama Masjid.

## China veto India, US bid to tag Pak-based Makki as terrorist

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

China's decision to block a joint proposal by India and the US to designate Pakistan-based Abdul Rehman Makki as an international terrorist under the UN sanctions committee runs counter to Beijing's claim of combating terrorism and signals its "double standards", Government sources here said on Friday.

Protecting well-known terrorists from sanctioning will only undermine China's credibility and "risk exposing" even itself more to the growing threat of terrorism, they said.

Makki has been involved in raising funds, recruiting and radicalising youths to resort to violence and planning attacks in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, they said.

On June 1, India and the US jointly proposed to list Makki under the UNSC's Al-Qaeda and ISIL Sanctions Committee which is known as the UNSC 1267 Committee. Both India and the US have listed Makki as a terrorist under their domestic laws.

China has placed a "technical hold" on the proposal to list Makki and this measure can last for up to six months at a

time. "This decision by China is extremely unfortunate given the overwhelming evidence against Makki. Moreover, it runs counter to China's claims of combating terrorism," said a source.

It was not the first time that China has placed hurdles for the listing of known terrorists as it had repeatedly blocked proposals to designate Maulana Masood Azhar, the chief of Pakistan-based and UN-proscribed terrorist entity Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), the sources said.

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## Mumbai cops with summons look for Nupur for 5 days

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A Mumbai Police team is in Delhi in connection with the probe against now suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma for alleged objectionable comments against Prophet Mohammad, an official said on Friday.

The team, from Pydhonie police station here, is in the national Capital for the past five days as it needs to physically hand over summons to Sharma to appear before police and to look into other aspects of the probe, he said.

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Mahakosh Refined Soyabean Oil	1 Litre Pouch	193/-	183/-	10/- Per Litre
Mahakosh Kachi Ghani Mustard Oil	1 Litre Pouch	203/-	188/-	15/- Per Litre
Sunrich Refined Sunflower Oil	1 Litre Pouch	215/-	205/-	10/- Per Litre
Ruchi Gold Refined Palmolein Oil	1 Litre Pouch	193/-	183/-	10/- Per Litre
Ruchi No. 1 Vanaspati	1 Litre Pouch	183/-	173/-	10/- Per Litre



# Delhiites get relief from heat

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

For the second straight day, the Delhiites got a respite from the heatwave in the national Capital, as heavy rains lashed parts of Delhi on Friday. The minimum temperature plummeted by five notches to 22.8 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The weather office had predicted thunderstorms with light to moderate intensity rains in the national Capital. "Thunderstorm with light to moderate intensity rain and gusty winds with speed of 30-40 Km/h would occur over and adjoining areas of Delhi and NCR (Loni Dehat, Hindon AF Station, Ghaziabad, Indirapuram, Chhapraula, Noida, Dadri, Greater Noida," the Met office had tweeted at



1:50 PM. The weather office had earlier said the city received 7 mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours ending 8.30 AM on Friday. Heavy rains also lashed parts of Delhi on Friday morning, while the maximum temperature during the day in the Capital settled at 36.7 degrees Celsius, three notches less than the normal for this

time of the year. According to the data released by the weather station, the observatories at Ridge, Ayanagar, Najafgarh, Pitampura, Palam, and Lodhi Road recorded maximum temperatures of 36.2 degrees Celsius, 37.2 degrees Celsius, 39 degrees Celsius, 37.3 degrees Celsius, 37.6 degrees Celsius and 37.2 degrees Celsius

respectively. The IMD predicted that Delhi will remain cloudy with moderate rain for the next four days with the maximum temperature up to 36-37 degrees Celsius and the minimum temperature will go down to 25-26 degree Celsius. "Current spell of intense rainfall is likely to continue over Northeast India and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim during the next four days and decrease thereafter," weather department said. Meanwhile Delhi traffic Police department advised commuters to plan their journey according to weather condition. The police also took it to twitter and wrote, "As per weather forecast" Cloudy sky with moderate rain" is expected in Delhi. Commuters are advised to plan their journey accordingly," tweeted at 2:49 PM.

## Sonia Gandhi has lower respiratory tract infection

**New Delhi:** Congress president Sonia Gandhi has been detected with a lower respiratory tract infection after her admission to a private hospital in the national Capital last week for Covid-related complications. Newly appointed Congress chief spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said Sonia Gandhi was admitted to the hospital on June 12 after bleeding from her nose following a recent Covid infection. "She was immediately put under treatment and underwent a related follow-up procedure a day earlier," he said in a statement. Ramesh, who is the new general secretary in-charge of the party's communications department, said a fungal infection in her lower respiratory tract was also detected upon admission.

## India, Indonesia foreign Ministers review ties

**New Delhi:** India and Indonesia on Friday reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties during the talks here between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his visiting counterpart Retno Marsudi. The talks were termed "productive." The two leaders focused on bilateral cooperation in several key areas including defence and security, trade, and connectivity. The talks were held under the framework of the India-Indonesia Joint Commission. Marsudi is on a visit to India primarily to attend a foreign ministerial meeting of New Delhi and Association of southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states that took place on Thursday.

## NCR PULSE

**83 PEOPLE HELD OVER HOOLIGANISM**  
New Delhi: Eighty-three people have been arrested for allegedly creating public nuisance and hooliganism during a welcome rally for a criminal in Delhi Cantonment area, police said on Friday. According to police, one Abid Ahmad (37), a resident of Tughlakabad Extension and a criminal of Govindpuri police station, was released on Thursday from Tihar Jail on bail in a case. Police received input that many notorious associates and criminals will be receiving him and taking out a 'show off parade' via Delhi Cantonment area.

**DDA CONDUCTS SECOND DRAW**  
New Delhi: The DDA on Friday conducted the second draw for 903 beneficiaries of Bhoomiheen Camp during which allotment-cum-demand letters will be issued online to the beneficiaries, in the national capital. A total of 2890 Households found to be existed in the Bhoomiheen Camp at Kalkaji in the preliminary survey. Accordingly, DDA has constructed 3024 flats for their In-Situ Rehabilitation. The draw for the remaining eligible beneficiaries will be conducted within fortnight. The flats will be allotted on payment of Rs 1,42,000 including Rs 30,000 as maintenance charge for five years.

**AGNIPATH SCHEME WILL BE GAME-CHANGER**  
New Delhi: The 'Agnipath' defence recruitment scheme is strategically planned and will prove to be a game-changer in strengthening the security of our nation, the apex body of private security guards said on Friday. The Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) said 'Agniveers' will be employed as security officers in private sector on priority basis.

# Ranjana Prakash Desai appointed as chairperson of Press Council of India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, a former judge of the Supreme Court, was appointed as the chairperson of the Press Council of India (PCI). Justice Desai had recently headed the Delimitation Commission on Jammu and Kashmir, which was set up to redraw the assembly constituencies of the Union Territory. A committee comprising vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and PCI member Prakash Dubey approved her appointment as the PCI chairperson at a meeting held on Tuesday and the



announcement was made on Friday night. Justice Desai, 72, is also a former judge of the Bombay high court. The post was lying vacant since Justice Chandramauli Kumar Prasad (ret'd) completed his term as PCI chairperson and demitted office in November last year.

# 1,797 fresh corona cases in Delhi; one casualty

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 1,797 coronavirus cases and one fatality due to the infection, while the positivity rate rose to 8.18 per cent, according to data shared by the health department on Friday. This is the third consecutive day that Delhi has recorded over 1,300 cases in a day. The capital has logged more than 1,000 daily cases for the fourth day on the trot. With the fresh cases, Delhi's tally of COVID-19 cases increased to 19,19,025 while the death toll rose to 26,226, the department said in its latest bulletin. Meanwhile, amid the increasing coronavirus cases in the national capital, over 5,300 challans were issued across Delhi between June 10 and 15 and fines to the tune of over Rs 26 lakh were

imposed on those flouting Covid norms. However, the total fines collected was Rs 14,60,980 almost half of the amount of fines imposed by the districts. The officials explained that while some people pay the fine amount on the spot, there are others who pay the fine later in the court. On many occasions, violators do not have sufficient amount to pay the fine. In that case, we issue challans and send them to the violator's residence or email them, said an official. The enforcement team of the New Delhi district issued the maximum number of challans while the southwest district administration issued the least number of fines and recorded single-digit number on all six days between June 10 and June 15. Delhi recorded 1,323 new Covid cases and two

deaths on Thursday, while the positivity rate stood at 6.69 per cent, according to data shared by the health department here. It was the second consecutive day that Delhi recorded over 1,300 cases in a day. Between June 10 and June 15, 5,313 challans were issued across revenue districts of Delhi by enforcement teams with the maximum fines being imposed in New Delhi district while the least imposed in the north district. In New Delhi district between June 10 and June 15, the number of challans stood at 384, 429, 393, 317, 355 and 355 respectively while in the same period, the north district saw seven challans being issued on first two days, followed by four on the next two days and then six challans each on June 14 and June 15. Similarly southwest district also recorded sin-

gle-digit figures on three days while on June 10, June 11 and June 14, 19, 11 and 14 fines were imposed respectively. The total fines imposed stood at Rs 26,23,080, according to official data. In view of the current surge in cases, districts in Delhi have also ramped up measures to ensure that positive cases are detected on time. An official said there is laxity on the part of people in following Covid-appropriate behaviour despite the spike in cases. However, the official said the hospitalisation rate is low and only those who have comorbidities or are unvaccinated are getting hospitalized. Amid a spike in daily cases, positivity rate too has climbed from 1.92 per cent registered on June 7 to 7.01 per cent on June 15, according to official figures.

# Syndicate of child traffickers busted, 8 people arrested

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Police has busted a syndicate of child traffickers and arrested eight people, including six women in the National Capital. The accused have been identified as Neetu, Sonia, Vineet and Meena, all residents of Delhi, Rekha Aggarwal and Moni Begum, residents of Ghaziabad in UP, and Pinku Devi and Digvijay Singh, residents of Haryana. A case was registered on Sunday on the complaint of counsellor of Delhi Commission for Women (DCW). In her complaint, she mentioned that on Saturday, she received information that the caller sold out her three days baby through her friend, police said. During investigation, with the help technical surveillance, role of Neetu and her associates was surfaced. Verification revealed that Neetu in October last year gave birth to a baby boy at Madan Mohan Malviya Nagar Hospital, Malviya Nagar, a senior police official said. Sonia got discharged her from there on October 27 and took her to her residence at Sangam Vihar. Next day, through Meena, she sold her baby (handed over custody) at a nursing home (IVF centre), Pratap Vihar, Ghaziabad for a consideration of Rs five lakh, the officer said. Vineet took co-accused Neetu, Sonia and baby to Nehru Nagar in Gaziabad, polic said. Later, the accused persons were arrested. On June 7, the child has been recovered from accused couple Digvijay Singh and Pinku Devi from their residence. SR

# China veto India, US bid to tag...

**From Page 1**  
"China should reflect on its response that signals double standards on combating terrorism. Protecting well-known terrorists from sanctioning in this manner will only undermine its credibility and risk exposing even itself more to the growing threat of terrorism," the source said. Makki is the head of the political affairs of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jamat ud-Dawa (JuD), and served as head of LeT's foreign relations department, the sources said. The LeT has been involved in major attacks in India such as the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, Red Fort Attack in 2000, Rampur CRPF Camp attack in January 2008, Khanpora (Baramulla)

attack in 2018, Srinagar attack in June 2018 and Gurez/Bandipora attack in 2018, the sources said. Makki was reportedly arrested by the Pakistan government on May 15, 2019, and was kept under house arrest in Lahore. In 2020, he was convicted of terrorism financing and was sentenced to prison by a Pakistani court, they said. The proposal to list Makki under the UN Security Council sanctions regime was circulated to all members of the Council's 1267 Committee under a no-objection procedure till June 16. "Regrettably, on June 16, China placed a 'technical hold' on the proposal to list Makki. This measure blocks the adoption of the listing proposal till the hold is withdrawn," the source said.

## FIRE AND FURY ENGULF...

**From Page 1**  
In Uttar Pradesh, a mob entered a railway station in Ballia on Friday morning and set a train coach on fire. The crowd also damaged railway station property before the police used force to disperse them. At Firozabad and Varanasi, protesters raising slogans "Bharat Mata ki Jai" and "Agnipath Vapas Lo," vandalised some other trains. The protests also compelled the Railways to cancel several trains and postpone some as a precautionary measure. Officials said the protesters also erected barriers on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway to stop buses and pelted stones at them while the traffic also briefly came to a standstill on the Yamuna Expressway near Noida. Protests also erupted in Varanasi, Firozabad and Amethi, causing damage to government buses among others. In Varanasi, youths raised anti-Government slogans at

the Cantonment Railway Station and damaged buses and carts outside. In Amethi too, youths staged a protest against the Agnipath scheme and blocked the Amethi-Durgapur road. Police and the district administration faced a tough time in removing the blockade. The Amethi-Pratapgarh road was also blocked, they said. As protests snowballed, the North-Eastern Railways, North-Central Railways and Northern Railways cancelled some trains while they stopped a few others. Public Relations Officer (PRO) of North-Eastern Railways Pankaj Singh said in view of the protests, the North-Eastern Railway has cancelled 12 trains. These include Varanasi-Chhapra, Chhapra-Aurihar, Ballia-Varanasi, Azamgarh-Varanasi, Prayagraj Rambagh-Mau, Mau-Prayagraj Rambagh, Thawe-Chhapra Kacheri, Chhapra-Varanasi, Thawe-Masrakh,

Masrakh-Thawe, Varanasi-Ballia and Banaras-Patna Express. Patna, so far, largely untouched by the stir, witnessed some commotion as controversial former MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav staged a demonstration on the Dak Bungalow crossing along with hundreds of supporters, causing huge traffic snarls. Barely a couple of kilometres away, students staged a huge demonstration at the Kargil chowk and marched through Ashok Rajpath, flanked on either side by colleges affiliated to the Patna University and book shops, coaching centres and residential complexes doubling up as cheap hostels. "It is natural for the youngsters to be outraged at the Agnipath scheme. They do not join the Armed forces, putting their lives at risk, to be kicked out after four years with no pensionary benefits," Yadav told reporters.

## Govt OK's linking...

**From Page 1**  
Earlier, only January 1 of every year was the cut-off date. The four cut-off dates for enrolment is part of a Bill passed by Parliament a few months back to allow linkage of Aadhaar with the electoral rolls. Those turning 18 on or before January 1 can register as voters on day one of January. Those turning 18 after that have to wait for one whole year. On making electoral law gender neutral, he said the word "wife" will be substituted with the word "spouse" making the statutes gender neutral which shall allow the wife or husband of a service voter to avail the voting facility available. Soldiers deployed in far flung areas or members of Indian missions abroad are some of the people considered as service voters.

## NCERT removes...

**From Page 1**  
The mention of the National Human Rights Commission report on the 2002 violence and the "raj dharma" remark by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has been dropped from the textbook. Also, chapters on Mughal courts in a history textbook, a poem on the Dalit movement and a chapter on the Cold War, are among the exclusions from the political science textbook. In Class 10, the excluded chapters included verses of poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz in 'Religion, Communalism and Politics - Communalism, Secular State' section of the textbook 'Democratic Politics II'. Also, chapters titled 'Democracy and Diversity', 'Popular Struggle and movements' and 'Challenges to Democracy' have been dropped.

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**Office of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE, Ground Water Division, Sgr.**

**Gist of e-Tender.**  
**e-NIT No -PHE/GWDS/ 11 of 06/2022**

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited in 02 Cover System for the below mentioned work from registered Mechanical/contractors/Firms Works as per the details given in tender document.

**S.No 1. Name of work :-** Development of production tube wells by P.T.O of Air Compressor in Kashmir Valley  
**Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs :-** Rs.25.00 Lacs  
**Earnest Money :-** Rs. 50,000/-  
**Cost of Tender Document :-** Rs. 1000/-  
**Time of completion :-** 30 Days  
**Class of Contract :-** Mechanical Contractors/Firms  
**Programme :-** M&E (Non-Plan)  
**Technical Sanction:-** PHE/GWD/02 of 04/2022  
**S.No 2. Name of work :-** Development of production tube wells by P.T.O of Air Compressor Pulwama, Sopore and Srinagar Districts  
**Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs :-** Rs.24.52 Lacs  
**Earnest Money :-** Rs. 49,000/-  
**Cost of Tender Document :-** Rs. 1000/-  
**Time of completion :-** 30 Days  
**Class of Contract :-** Mechanical Contractors/Firms  
**Programme :-** M&E (Plan)  
**Technical Sanction:-** PHE/GWD/03 of 04/2022  
**Note:** The Technical sheet appended with the e-NIT shall have to be filled by firm for the Technical evaluation of the item of work.  
**S.No:-01:** AAA Accorded Order No.:PHE/MCN/Works/18 of 03/2022, dated: 18-03-2022.  
**S.No:-02:** AAAAccorded Order No.:PHE/MCN/Works/18 of 03/2022, dated: 18-03-2022.

**Critical Dates / Information.**

- 1. Publishing Date :-** 16-06-2022 (02:00 PM)
- 2. Period of Downloading of Bids :-** 16-06-2022 (02:00 P.M.) to 23-06-2022 (04.30 P.M)
- 3. Period of Submission of bids :-** 16-06-2022 (02:00 P.M.) to 23-06-2022 (04.30 P.M)
- 4. Date of opening of Tender :-** 24-06-2022 at (11:00 P.M)
- 5. Tender Receiving Authority:** Executive Engineer, (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011
- 6. Document Cost : Non-Refundable** in the shape of Treasury Challan/receipt deposited to **Account Head 0215** in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar (at Saddar Treasury Srinagar) (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)
- 7. Bid Validity Period: 180 Days**
- The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on **www.Jktenders.gov.in**
- The bids of only those agencies shall be accepted who possess valid registration certificate of Mechanical Contractor/Firms.

No. DIPK-4161/22  
Dated: 17-06-2022

Sd/- Executive Engineer

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Naveen Kumar Aggarwal S/o Mr. Narendra Kumar & Mr. Shyamdutt Sharma S/o Mr. Pitandutt Sharma are the owner of Plot No. 209, having area measuring 267.5 Sq. Yds. at Gali No. 4, Shyam Park Main, Sahibabad, Pargana-Loni, Tehsil & Dist. Ghaziabad, vide Registered Sale Deed dated 19.07.2013 (Doc.No. 6826 Vol.No. 11278 Book No. 1, Page No. 289-348, registered with SRO-I, GHAZIABAD). All Persons are hereby informed that Mrs. Shweta Sharma W/o Mr. Sachin Sharma & Mr. Sachin Sharma S/o Mr. Ram Kumar Sharma (Borrower(s) are purchasing the Flat No. UG-2, Upper Ground Floor, (Front Right Hand Side), area measuring 75 Sq. Yds. Build on above-mentioned property from Mr. Naveen Kumar Aggarwal S/o Mr. Narendra Kumar & Mr. Shyamdutt Sharma S/o Mr. Pitandutt Sharma by way of registered Sale Deed and they are mortgaging the said property/flat with ART Housing Finance (India) Ltd. So General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 14 days of the present.

**Mrs. Prasoon Lata, Advocate, SG Associates (Law Firm)**  
**Unit No 7, Basement, Plot No C 78, Sector 2, Noida, UP 201301.**  
**E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com, Ph: 701172764, 8130200837**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Purshotam S/o. Mr. Parasram who is owner of Residential Property of ID No. BGRW/15/697, of land area measuring 52.00 Sq. Yds., situated at Waka Majia Lalidra abadi deh Kachha Bagh Wala, Mohalla, Bahadurgarh, Distt:-Jhajjar, Haryana, vide Transfer Deed (Blood Relation) dated 27.04.2016 (vide Document No.509) and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 7 days at below address.

**Lucem Legal LLP**  
269, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Moth, Opp. Uday Park, South Ext.-II, New Delhi-110049  
Contact # 011-40046316

## IAF, Army set to...

**From Page 1**  
Army Chief General Manoj Pande on Tuesday had said fully-trained 'Agniveers' will also serve stints at Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China and Line of Control (LOC) with Pakistan. Under the 'Agnipath' scheme, the Army is likely to recruit around 40,000 soldiers, the Navy is expected to induct around 3,000 sailors and IAF is set to recruit 3,000 air warriors this year. The Government plans to have a centralised database on the 'Agniveers' to keep track of the skills that they would acquire during their four-year tenure, sources said. The recruitment process will start after 90 days since policy was announced and nearly 46,000 soldiers will be selected on a contractual basis for a four-year stint. Later, 25 per cent of them will be retained for a permanent stint or regular service of 15 years or more with full pension and medical benefits.

## Top Ministers defend...

**From Page 1**  
"Due to the lack of recruitment process in the army for the last two years, many youths could not get the opportunity to join army. Therefore, keeping in mind the future of the youths, on the instructions of Prime Minister @narendramodi, the Government has increased the age limit for recruitment of Agniveers from 21 years to 23 years," the Defence Minister said. The Government on Thursday night increased the upper age limit for recruitment under the 'Agnipath' scheme to 23 years from 21 for the year 2022 amid widespread protest against the new model for enrolment of soldiers into the three services. Unveiling the scheme on Tuesday, the Government said youths between the age of 17-and-a-half and 21 years would be inducted for a four-year tenure while 25 per cent of the recruits will be retained for regular service. The new scheme for the recruitment of soldiers in the Army, Navy and Air Force was projected by the Government as a major overhaul of the decades-old selection process to enhance the youthful profile of the three services. The Army Chief said the Government's decision to raise the upper age limit will provide an opportunity to the youth who were preparing to join the force but could not be recruited due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years. Pande said the decision of the Government has been received by the Army to grant the one-time waiver and that the recruitment process will be announced shortly. "The schedule of the recruitment process will be announced shortly. We call upon our youths to avail this opportunity for joining Indian Army as Agniveers," Pande said. After scheme was rolled out, the Army said it would ensure an enhanced youthful profile of force and result in a "reduction in average age from 32 to 26 years over some time".

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

**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 (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	M/s Agarwal Trading Company/ Kushal Agarwal/ Neelam Agarwal/ A/c No. 245805500554	B-28, Railway Road Jain Nagar Gandhi Colony Near Vibhor Cinema Bus Stand Pilakhuwa, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh/ June 15, 2022	February 28, 2022 Rs. 57,81,769.51/-	Ghaziabad/ Hapur

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(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 18, 2022**  
**Place: Ghaziabad**

**Authorized Officer**  
**ICICI Bank Limited**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is for general information that I, SUSHMITA KUMARI POUDEL D/o RAMJI KUMARI POUDEL, R/o 2002, Village Piliang, Kotla Musarak Pur, South Delhi, Delhi-110003, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as SUSHMITA KUMARI and RAM KUMAR POODEL in my educational documents. The actual name of mine and my father are SUSHMITA KUMARI POUDEL and RAMJI KUMAR POUDEL respectively, which may be amended accordingly. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

**THANKSGIVING**

**Thank you holy spirit for all blessings. Celine**  
**PD(90110)C**



# PROTESTS AGAINST AGNIPATH DISRUPT DELHI-NCR FOR 2ND DAY



Traffic jam at ITO as students stage protest against Centre's Agnipath scheme in New Delhi on Friday (L); Delhi Metro closed gates of ITO Metro station as students launched a protest against the Centre's Agnipath scheme in New Delhi on Friday (M); Military aspirants damage bus during protest against Centre's Agnipath scheme on Yamuna Expressway near Gautam Buddha Nagar on Friday (R)



Pioneer photo

## AAP urges PM to immediately roll back Agnipath scheme

Save country from burning in the anger of youth, says Sanjay Singh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to “immediately” roll back the Agnipath scheme to save the country from “burning” in the anger of youth as protests against the Centre’s new plan for recruitment into the armed forces intensified on Friday.

The senior AAP leader and Delhi’s Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday said the protests across the country were proof that the youth of the country will never accept the Agnipath defence recruitment scheme.

“Every youth has the right to join the Army and dedicate their whole life for the country, but today the BJP is depriving them of this right. The demonstrations happening across the country are clear proof that the youth of India will never accept Agnipath. No policy or law can be greater than the passion for service to the nation,” Sisodia said in a tweet in Hindi.

Addressing the press brief-



ing, the AAP Rajya Sabha MP, Sanjay Singh said that by introducing the Agnipath scheme, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to make the Indian armed forces his “private agency.”

“The Indian armed forces are the pride of this nation and they are the key reason for the nation’s security. Each of our soldiers is incredibly brave and they are even ready to lay their lives for the nation,” said Singh.

“In a four-year period a fair amount of time will be spent in soldier training and leave periods, and in the little remaining period of time the recruits will work for the Indian armed forces.

Then when so many youngsters will be let go after the four-year period, they will have no other option besides begging for jobs in an already scarce market and many of these youngsters will only be eligible to work as poorly-paid security officers for private industries in our country,” Singh questioned.

He went ahead to say that the recruits may end up becoming ‘security guards’ for



Prime Minister Modi’s friends. “This Narendra Modi-led BJP Government has sold off so many of our national resources like SAIL, national banks, coal, LIC, BPCL, airports and ports to a handful of private companies in the country,” said Singh.

“There is going to be a large demand for security guards to protect these important institutions that have selectively been given to some private companies. Is the intention of PM Narendra Modi to convert the Indian armed forces into a security guard training centre for these private companies?,” said Singh.

“This is an insult to the Indian armed forces of this country. It is an insult to the youngsters of this great nation. First, the Government says that it will create two crore jobs in the country, then it says that ‘youngsters can sell pakoras and earn their income.’ Then the Government says that you can sell gobar and earn your income,” said Singh.

Singh also announced the AAP’s support for the youth by protesting throughout Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.

## Protests in city force DMRC to close Metro gates

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Friday closed the gates of some stations after scores of students along with the members of the All-India Students’ Association (AISA) and Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP’s) Chatr-Yuva Sangharsh Samiti (CYSS) staged a protest over the Central Government’s ‘Agnipath’ scheme for recruitment in the armed forces and demanded its rollback.

In a series of tweets, the DMRC alerted commuters about the closure of gates of stations due to security reasons. “Due to security reasons, Gate No. 1 at ITO Metro Station and Gate No. 1 & 2 at Dhansa Bus Stand Metro Station are closed, all other gates are operational,” the DMRC tweeted around 12:19 PM.

However, around 1:52 PM Delhi Metro in another tweet informed that the gates at Dhansa Metro Station were also opened.

Around 12:40 PM, the DMRC tweeted, “All gates of ITO Metro Station are closed.” It further updated and said that all gates of Delhi Gate and Jama Masjid Metro Stations were also briefly closed.

Later, at around 12:48 PM,

the DMRC tweeted that all gates were open for entry/exit at Delhi Gate and Jama Masjid Metro Stations.

Then at 4 PM it tweeted that all gates were open for entry and exit at ITO Metro Station.

According to Delhi Police, around 17-18 people belonging to AISA had gathered at the ITO to hold a protest. They were detained and immediately removed from the area.

During their protest, they raised slogans -- “Agnipath wapas lo, tanashahi nahi chalegi (take back Agnipath, dictatorship won’t work) and also held placards which read “Immediately fill all vacant posts in Defence on a permanent basis” and “Roll back Agnipath scheme.”

The Delhi unit of the SFI said it joined an all-India call against the Agnipath Scheme.

Earlier, the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) claimed that several IYC members have been detained and the barricades had been placed by the police without giving any reasons.

The police, however, said they had just made “adequate security arrangements” as the IYC had no permission to take out any protest march.

## Delhi Police registers FIR against miscreants for blocking traffic

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Friday registered a First Information Report (FIR) against unknown persons for allegedly trying to block traffic and damaging a bus during their protest against the Agnipath Defence recruitment scheme here.

The police said a few youngsters tried to block traffic on the Wazirabad Road near the Khajuri Khas Flyover on Friday to protest against the ‘Agnipath’ scheme.

The windscreen of a mini bus was also damaged as some-

one from the group threw a stone towards the vehicle, a senior police officer said.

As precautionary arrangements were already in place across the district, a police team immediately reached the spot and the youngsters were removed, the officer said.

A case under Sections 147 (punishment for rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object) and 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) of the Indian Penal Code has

been registered at the Khajuri Khas Police Station, the officer said.

Police said that they were trying to identify those involved in the incident. “Police teams are scanning CCTV cameras and videos which are being circulated on the media to identify the miscreants and take appropriate action against them,” said a police officer.

Several videos were also doing the rounds on social media. In the video, some men carrying sticks can be seen blocking the road. A protestor can be seen breaking the wind-screen of a mini bus.

## Over 100 booked for blocking Delhi-Jaipur e-way; Section 144 imposed in Gurugram

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Gurugram: As many as 100-150 youths have been booked by the Gurugram Police for allegedly disrupting and blocking the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway at Bilaspur Chowk in protest against the Agnipath scheme, even as the Gurugram district administration imposed Section 144 CrPC as a precautionary measure.

Veer Singh, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Pataudi) said around 100-150 youths have been booked at the Bilaspur Police Station for blocking the National Highway and stopping vehicle movement on both sides of the expressway for several hours on Thursday.

“The police had asked the protesters to vacate the expressway but despite instructions, they continued sitting and disrupted the traffic movement, which led to major traffic congestion on the National Highway,” Singh said.

“We are trying to identify the protesters with the help of videography and CCTVs installed at the spot. Action will be taken against those involved in the protest as per the law,” he added. Police have registered an FIR in connection



with the incident.

Earlier on Friday, the Gurugram district administration imposed Section 144 CrPC even though no fresh protest was reported here. “Orders were issued as a precautionary measure to maintain the law and order situation in district Gurugram,” SDM Gurugram Ankita Chowdhary said.

Deputy Commissioner Nishant Yadav said the order was issued as protests were likely to spread to the second day here and that the administration anticipated angry crowd at railway stations, bus stands, markets, national highways and power grids among other places in the district.

## Vote for work-oriented AAP, Kejriwal tells Rajinder Nagar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party chief, Arvind Kejriwal on Friday held a road show in support of their party candidate Durgesh Pathak for Rajinder Nagar Assembly bypoll. During the show, the Delhi Chief Minister, Kejriwal appealed to the people of Rajinder Nagar to vote for the Jhaadu on June 23.

Addressing the people, Kejriwal said that there is no benefit in electing the BJP candidate because they don’t believe in working, but only in the petty politics of slinging dirt on others.

“On the other hand, we guarantee that we will resolve all the issues in your area. Entire Delhi is with the AAP because we are a work-oriented party. I can see a vast crowd gathered here, and I want to thank each one of you for your support and blessings,” said Kejriwal.

He bashed the BJP for not respecting the mandate of the people or the rule of law. “People are saying they are happy under our rule. I want to say that it is their rule. People are supreme in a democracy. A lot of work has been done in



the past seven years, and now every single Delhiite takes pride when someone visits them. People are fed up with BJP wherever they are in power because they only know how to spread hate,” said AAP national convener.

“I only know how to bring progress. When it is the government which gets the work done by bringing policies and implementing them, it will be advantageous to have an MLA of the ruling party as he will get the work done faster. You have a choice between a progressive party and hate-spreading machinery.

They have started showing their true colours even though the elections are yet to take place. You have to vote for us, and I guarantee you that we will bring progress in the area,” Kejriwal added.

AAP supporters wearing party colours, walked along with the convoy, holding posters bearing images of Kejriwal and Pathak and a slogan -- ‘Kejriwal ki Sarkar, Kejriwal ka Vidhyak’, and raised cheers, joined at many places by local residents, who complimented them by waving brooms from the balconies of their houses.

## BJP seeks CEO action against AAP spokesperson for calling leader ‘Pakistani’

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leaders on Friday met Delhi Chief Electoral Officer Dr Ranvir Singh and demanded action against AAP spokesperson for allegedly terming their party’s candidate, Rajesh Bhatia, a “Pakistani”. Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri accused AAP spokesperson of “insulting” Bhatia and also violating the model code of conduct.

In a news channel debate, the AAP spokesperson had purportedly said that Bhatia’s ancestors “must have come to India from Pakistan so he is a Pakistani”. He was giving reply to BJP’s attack on AAP candidate Durgesh Pathak as an outsider in Rajinder Nagar.

Pathak had contested the 2020 Assembly polls from the Karawal Nagar seat and lost to

the BJP’s Mohan Singh Bisht.

The bypoll to the Rajinder Nagar seat was necessitated after sitting AAP MLA Raghav Chadha was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Punjab.

Bidhuri said that lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs came to India from Pakistan after Partition in 1947, and thousands of such families are settled in Rajinder Nagar.

“By terming BJP candidate Rajesh Bhatia a Pakistani, the AAP spokesperson has violated the model code of conduct,” he said.

Delhi BJP general secretary Harsh Malhotra and MLA Ajay Mahawar said that Aam Aadmi Party is trying to “vitiate” the election campaigning process as it is losing political ground.

The voting for the bypoll will take place on June 23 and the result will be declared on June 26.

## PM to inaugurate Pragati Maidan tunnel on June 19

The tunnel will allow commuters travelling to Central Delhi from East Delhi to avoid ITO, Mathura Road

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the main tunnel and five other underpasses as part of the Pragati Maidan Integrated Transit Corridor project on June 19. The inauguration of the 1.6-km-long tunnel, which will be Delhi’s first, will allow commuters travelling to India Gate and other central Delhi areas from east Delhi, Noida and

Ghaziabad to ditch traffic snarls at ITO, Mathura Road and Bhairon Marg.

The project has been built at a cost of more than Rs 920 crore and funded entirely by the Central Government, the PMO said in a statement.

It is aimed at providing hassle-free and smooth access to the new world-class exhibition and convention centre being developed at Pragati Maidan, thereby facilitating easy participation of exhibitors and visitors



in the programmes, it said.

Public Works Department (PWD) officials said that once the tunnel is operational, motorists travelling from Noida, Ghaziabad and east Delhi areas will have signal-free access to India Gate, Supreme Court,

Mathura Road and vice-versa.

The tunnel starts near the National Sports Complex of India (NSCI) at the Purana Qila Road and passes underneath the redeveloped Pragati Maidan to culminate at the Ring Road near the Pragati

Power station. “It will be Delhi’s first tunnel in which traffic will move. It is equipped with the latest technologies such as a digital control room with the facility of a public announcement system inside the tunnel. To allay fears of water logging, we have constructed seven underground sumps to collect and drain storm water automatically,” a PWD official said.

This will be the PWD’s second big road infrastructure project that will be thrown open to the public this year. In April, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had inaugurated the underpass at the Ashram intersection in south Delhi. Another PWD official

said that the tunnel will be under strict surveillance with nearly 100 CCTV cameras installed inside. “We have also made arrangements for proper ventilation in the tunnel. Specially designed German-made large exhaust fans have been installed for ventilation purposes,” the official said.

The official added that other than easing traffic movement in the ITO area, the tunnel and underpasses will also improve connectivity to the newly redeveloped Pragati Maidan. Dedicated entry and exit points have been provided for Pragati Maidan from the tunnel and the underpasses on Bhairon Marg.

	<b>Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd.</b> (A Govt. of India Enterprise-Mini Ratna) CIN NO - L74899DL1999GO101707	
<b>IRCTC invites bids for</b>		
<b>i) Open E-Tender No.- IRCTC/RND/ANAPUR/LOGISTICS/2022</b> for transportation and CFA services of Rail Neer Packaged Drinking Water for Rail Neer plant, Danapur . Pre-bid meeting: 23.06.2022 at 15:00 hrs. Last Date of Submission: 12.07.2022 up to 15:00 hrs.		
<b>ii) Open E-Tender No.- 2022/IRCTC/RNP/BSP/PDW</b> for Selection of Operator for 'Rail Neer' Packaged Drinking Water Plant at Bilaspur Chhattisgarh.Pre-bid meeting: 24.06.2022 at 15:00 hrs. Last Date of Submission: 13.07.2022 up to 15:00 hrs.		
<b>iii) Open E-Tender No.- 2022/IRCTC/TOURISM/BHARAT GAURAV DELUXE TRAIN OPERATIONS</b> from reputed firms having an established business in Tour operations for planning, refurbishment and operation of Bharat Gaurav Deluxe train rake of IRCTC for a period of Nine years & extendable by Two years. Date of pre-Bid meeting : 28.06.2022 at 12:00 hrs. Last Date of Submission: 12.07.2022 up to 15:00 hrs.		
<b>iv) Open E-tender No.- 2022/IRCTC/COIR-02</b> for Renovation, Operation, Maintenance & Transfer Back of Retiring Rooms at various Railway Stations. Last Date for submission of Tender is 11.07.2022 up to 15:00 Hrs.		
For details visit <a href="http://irctc.com">irctc.com</a> and <a href="http://www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC">www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC</a> . For downloading & participation visit <a href="http://tenderwizard.com/IRCTC">tenderwizard.com/IRCTC</a> .		
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Office Address:- GGM/P&T, 10th Floor, Statesman House, B-148, Barakhamba Road, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110 001. Tel.011-23311263-64 Fax: 011-23311259.		



# Cong demands Parl panel on def meet to discuss Agnipath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday demanded rollback of the Agnipath scheme, while the BJP went all out to defend the scheme for recruitment in defence services. Senior Rajya Sabha MP and Congress General Secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal demanded an urgent meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence to discuss the controversial 'Agnipath' military recruitment scheme, at a time violent protests have erupted against it. In a letter to Standing Committee Chairman Jual Oram, the Congress MP also urged that major stakeholders and defence experts be invited to seek their opinion on the programme.

Congress Rajya Sabha MP Deepinder Singh Hooda said the scheme should be taken back immediately and a three-year age relaxation be announced for youths who could not join the armed forces due to delays in recruitment.

Party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi too attacked the government over the Agnipath scheme, saying the BJP dispensation was required

## MODI ONLY HEARS VOICE OF HIS FRIENDS, NOT PEOPLE: RAHUL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday claimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not understand what the people of the country want as he cannot hear anything except the voice of his "friends". The BJP, however, strongly defended the 'Agnipath' scheme.

Rahul made these remarks a day after the government raised the upper age limit to 23 years from 21 years for recruitment under 'Agnipath', amid protests by

youth in several parts of the country against the scheme.

The Congress leader also cited schemes such as GST, note ban, farm laws and now Agnipath, saying they were projected to be for the welfare of the people but were rejected by the citizens.

"Agnipath- youth rejected. Farm laws- farmers rejected. Noteban- economists rejected. GST- traders rejected. The PM does not understand what the people of the country want, as he cannot hear anything except the voice of his 'friends'," Rahul said in a tweet.

to amend rules under the scheme soon after its announcement indicating it was imposed on the youth in "haste", and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

Urging the protesters to be patient and not resort to violence, Hooda asked the government to apologise to the youth of the country for bringing the new short-term recruit-

ment scheme for the armed forces.

"The government should immediately take back the Agnipath scheme. It is neither in favour of national security nor national interests and certainly not in favour of the country's youth," he told reporters at a press conference.

Recalling the death of over

700 farmers during the year-long farmer agitation, Hooda flagged the alleged suicide of a Haryana youth for losing his chance to join the Army.

"Don't make the same mistake as you (government) did during the farmers' agitation which saw the death of over 700 protesting farmers," he said, demanding immediate withdrawal of the Agnipath scheme.

Hooda said the Congress stands by the aspirants for jobs in the defence services and will fight for their rights and demands.

The party also demanded that the government convene either a special session of Parliament or an all-party meeting to discuss the armed forces recruitment issue and build a bipartisan consensus on the matter.

Claiming the Agnipath scheme is not suited for India, Hooda alleged the government is bringing schemes from other countries which shows that it is infatuated with western concepts. He alleged there was a disconnect between the government policies and rural India, the prime examples of which are the land acquisition act, the farm laws and now the Agnipath scheme.

In a tweet in Message Priyanka Gandhi said "not even 24 hours had passed" that the BJP government had to change the rules of the new army recruitment scheme. This means the scheme is being imposed on the youth in haste, the Congress general secretary said.

"Narendra Modi ji, withdraw this scheme immediately. Give appointments and put out the result of the stalled recruitment in the Air Force," Priyanka Gandhi said. "Conduct army recruitment (with age relaxation) as before," she demanded. The BJP leaders lauded the government's decision to raise the upper age limit for recruitment under the Agnipath scheme to 23 years.

BJP president J P Nadda said it shows that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fully seized of the concerns of the country's youth and is making efforts for their bright future.

Underlining that the intention of the government is very clear, and it is sensitive, Union Minister Giriraj Singh said the recruitment process will start in a few days, and requested all youngsters to start preparing for it.

# CBI raids house of Raj Chief Minister's bother

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday searched the Jodhpur home of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's brother Agrasen Gehlot and 16 other locations in three States in connection with alleged corruption related to the export of subsidised fertiliser meant for farmers. In its FIR, the CBI has named 15 persons, including Gehlot, and entities as accused in the FIR.

Over 60 officials of the CBI were engaged in searches at 17 locations in Gujarat, Rajasthan and West Bengal, officials said.

A CBI team also reached Agrasen Gehlot's residence in Mandore, Jodhpur, to conduct



searches.

The CBI has also named Deen Dayal Vohra, Amrit Lal Bandi, Brijesh Jairam Nath, Nitin Kumar Shah, Sunil Sharma and Praveen Saraf among others as accused in the FIR, they said.

Reacting to the development, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot said he had recently sought an appointment with the Director of CBI and the ED and the Chairman of the

Income Tax Department.

He said, "On June 13, time was sought, on 15 the case was registered, and on June 17 there were raids. What is this approach, it is beyond comprehension?"

"If I am active in Delhi or I participated in Rahul's movement then why revenge is taken from my brother. When there was a political crisis here in our government in 2020, at that time also the ED had raided my brother's place," Gehlot told reporters at the airport.

Gehlot was in Delhi for several days to participate in the Congress' protest against the questioning of Rahul Gandhi by the ED in a money laundering case.

# ED searches in case linked to Jain

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in the national Capital region in connection with a money laundering probe against Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain and his associates.

At least 10 residential and business premises were covered in the search operation by the ED. The premises linked to the promoters of a business group running a prominent school were also searched, officials said.

Jain, 57, was arrested by the agency on May 30 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and he is presently undergoing judi-

cial custody.

A decision on his bail plea has been reserved by a Delhi court.

The agency had claimed to have seized "unexplained" cash worth Rs 2.85 crore and 133 gold coins after similar raids were conducted against Jain's family and others after his arrest.

Jain, a minister without portfolio in the Arvind Kejriwal government in Delhi, is being probed by the ED under the PMLA for alleged hawala dealings.

In April, the ED had attached assets worth Rs 4.81 crore of Jain's family and companies "beneficially owned and controlled" by him as part of the PMLA probe.

# Bar contest from 2 seats or impose hefty fine: EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has made a fresh push for amending law to bar people from contesting from more than one seat.

The DC has said that if it cannot be done, then a hefty fine should be imposed on those vacating one of the constituencies and forcing a bypoll.

As per the existing electoral law, a candidate is allowed to file nominations from two different constituencies in a general election or a group of bye-elections or biennial elections. Since one individual is allowed to represent only one constituency in a legislative or parliamentary body, he/she has to vacate the other seat in case victories were registered on both seats.

It has been learnt that in a recent meeting with the Legislative Secretary in the Law Ministry, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar discussed this proposal.

Renewing another one of its long-standing demands, the EC has sought an amendment of Section 33(7) of the Representation of People Act, 1951 to restrict the number of seats a candidate can contest from. The Act currently allows a person to contest a general election or a group of by-elections or biennial elections from up to two constituencies.

Way back in 1996, the government had amended the Representation of the People Act to bar a person from contesting elections from more than two seats.

Prior to the amendment, an individual was permitted to contest polls from as many seats as he wanted.

In 2004, the EC proposed an amendment of Section 33(7) to certain sections of the Act so that a person cannot fight elections from more than one constituency at a time.

The amount of fine then was proposed at Rs 5 lakh for state assembly and legislative

council election and Rs 10 lakh for Lok Sabha election. The poll panel believes the amount should be appropriately revised.

The Commission believes that when a candidate contests from two seats, it is imperative that he has to vacate one of the two seats should he win both. This, apart from the consequent unavoidable financial burden on the public exchequer and the manpower and other resources for holding by-election against the resultant vacancy, would be an injustice to the voters of the constituency which the candidate is quitting from.

The Law Commission, which advises government on complex legal issues, had supported the proposal of restricting candidates from more than one seat. However, it had not endorsed the Commission's alternative proposal to require winning candidates to deposit an appropriate amount of money being the expenditure for conducting the elections.

# Over 12K Covid cases second consecutive day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the second day in a row, India reported more than 12,000 Covid-19 cases. India logged 12,847 cases in the last 24 hours, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed on Friday. After a gap of more than three months, India witnessed an uptick in the number of Covid cases as the country recorded as many as 12,213 fresh Covid-19 infections on Thursday.

According to the data shared by the Union Health Ministry on Friday, the country saw a total of 7,985 discharges in the last 24 hours, taking the total recovery rate at around 98.64 per cent and total recoveries data reached to 4,26,82,697. 14 deaths were reported due to infection.

The top five states that registered the maximum number of fresh Covid-19 cases are Maharashtra with 4,255 cases, followed by Kerala with 3,419 cases, Delhi with 1,323 cases, Karnataka with 833 cases, and Haryana with 625 cases.

Meanwhile amid rising Covid-19 cases, the Centre has asked the states and UTs to



complete all activities under the Emergency COVID Response Package (ECRP)-II scheme by December 31 this year.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan Tchaired a virtual meeting with all states and Union Territories to review the physical and financial progress under the National Health Mission (NHM), ECRP-II, Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), 15th Finance Commission grants and the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PM-NDP).

The Centre asked the states and UTs to complete all activities under the ECRP-II scheme by December 31 this year. The states were also advised that, instead of seeking the approval of the Union Health Ministry, State Health Societies (SHS) have been authorised to accord

the remaining approvals of activities under ECRP-II.

Highlighting the need to expedite the utilisation of funds released under the ECRP-II package, the states were informed that 100 per cent Central share amount has been released to the states.

The Union Health Secretary highlighted that for ensuring implementation of programmes and initiatives, allocated government resources under the National Health Mission must be expedited and utilised efficiently. He urged the states to provide necessary documentation and utilisation certificates corresponding to fund utilisation and ensure refund of the unused amount. The states were also urged to map these transfers on the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) portal.

The ministry said that to develop capacities of health systems and institutions across the continuum of care at all levels -- primary, secondary, tertiary -- and to prepare health systems in responding effectively to the current and future pandemics, disasters,

Rs. 64,180 crore for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26 has been allocated under PM-ABHIM.

Given the emphasis on utilisation of these funds for capital expenditure, the states and UTs were requested to expedite proposals and MoUs to be sent to the Union Health Ministry under PM-ABHIM to enable the ministry to release funds on time for the states.

To ensure mapping of the physical and financial progress, the states were requested to identify physical facilities and complete the mapping exercise on the NHM-Progress Monitoring System (PMS) portal at the earliest.

To expand the coverage of the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) across the country, the states were asked in the meeting to cover all districts by the Haemodialysis programme and promote the peritoneal dialysis programme alongside, as it is less restrictive for the patients and requires less technical demand from institutions.

# Vaccine-induced immunity wanes rapidly: UK study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People with prior-variant infection were moderately protected from Omicron even after a year, but vaccine-induced immunity against new infection appeared to wane rapidly, finds a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The findings are in line with studies on Omicron-specific booster studies by Pfizer or Moderna, which although provide good protection but remain temporarily effective against infection by the Omicron variant.

The new study, led by researchers at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, was conducted on more than 100,000 Omicron-infected and non-infected individuals.

The results showed that people who took two-dose vaccination of either the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA vaccine, but had no history of prior infection, had no significant protection against Omicron.

However, having a booster dose appeared to be about 60 per cent protective, though most boosters were received just weeks before the Omicron wave.

For those with no history of vaccination, SARS-CoV-2 infection during a prior-variant wave appeared to provide about 50 per cent protection against symptomatic infection during the Omicron wave, and this "natural immunity" was associated with almost the same degree of protection even a year after infection. But the combination of prior, full vaccination and prior infection was maximally protective: Individuals with prior infection and three doses of either mRNA vaccine were, overall, nearly 80 per cent protected from symptomatic infection during the Omicron wave, the researchers said.

The results also indicated that vaccination, prior infection alone or a combination, was protective against severe illness from Omicron infections.

# One in eight people in world has mental disorder: WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About one in eight people in the world live with a mental disorder, said the World Health Organisation (WHO) in a landmark report released on Friday calling for urgent action on transforming mental healthcare. The lack of awareness and access to care remain the most significant obstacles to mental health care.

Even before the pandemic, in 2019, the number of people living with a mental disorder was nearly a billion, including 14 per cent of the world's adolescents, a number that has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years.

In the first year of the pandemic alone, the rates of the already-common conditions such as depression and anxiety went up by more than 25 per cent.

The WHO report revealed that on average, countries dedicate less than 2 per cent of their healthcare budgets to mental health. As a result, just a small fraction of people in need get access to effective, affordable and quality mental health care.

The report urges mental health decision makers and advocates to step up commitment and action to change attitudes, actions and approaches to mental health, its determinants and mental health care.

"Everyone's life touches someone with a mental health condition. Investment into mental health is an investment into a better life and future for all," said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in a statement. The report also called to end stigma, discrimination and human rights violations against people with mental health conditions, with 20 countries still criminalising attempted suicide.

It noted that globally, there may be 20 suicide attempts to every one death, and yet suicide accounts for more than one in every 100 deaths. It is a major cause of death among young people.

# Cherrapunji gets third highest rainfall in 122 years in 24 hrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After recording 811.6 mm of rain in 24 hours just two days ago, Cherrapunji in Meghalaya received a bountiful 972 mm of precipitation in 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Friday, the highest in June since 1995 and the third highest in 122 years.

Cherrapunji recorded 673.6 mm of rainfall on Thursday, 811.6 mm on Wednesday, 62.6 mm on Tuesday, 293 mm on Monday and 354 mm on Sunday. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) data showed that Cherrapunji has received a total of 4081.3 mm rainfall till Friday.

In 24 hours ending 8:30 am on Wednesday, the town nestled in the East Khasi Hills gauged a copious 811.2 mm of rainfall.

On June 16, 1995, Cherrapunji logged 1563.3 mm of rainfall. A day before, on June 15, 1995, it received 930 mm of precipitation. "One of the wettest places in the world, Cherrapunji has recorded more than 800 mm of precipitation on a June day on nine occasions since the IMD started keeping records in 1901, the IMD data showed.

The hill station reported 973.8 mm of precipitation on June 5, 1956. The spell of extreme rainfall is likely to continue for one or two days.

Thereafter, the intensity will decrease, the IMD said.

At an aerial distance of 10 km from Cherrapunji, Mawsynram, the wettest place in India, gauged 710.6 mm of rainfall in 24 hours ending 8:30 am Wednesday, the maximum since June 1966.

On June 10, 1966, Mawsynram had recorded 717.6 mm of rainfall. On June 7, 1966, it had received 944.7 mm of precipitation, the highest on a June day since the IMD began maintaining records. The town had gauged a 24-hour rainfall of 623.4 mm on June 8, 2015.

The IMD has issued a red alert, warning of very heavy to

extremely heavy rainfall in Meghalaya and Assam in the next two days. "A trough at mean sea level runs from north-west Uttar Pradesh to Manipur across Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim and Assam. Moisture incursion is very likely to continue due to strong

lower-level southerly/southwesterly winds from the Bay of Bengal during June 17-20," it said in a special bulletin.

"Under its influence, widespread rainfall accompanied with thunderstorms/lightning/heavy to very heavy with extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places is very likely to continue over northeastern states.

PUBLIC NOTICE				
<b>ICICI Bank</b> Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005				
The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.				
Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ Loan Account Number & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Murari Kumar Choudhary, Tripurari Kumar, 223 A Chhurya Mohalla Madanpur Khadar, Delhi/ LBGUR00002368262	Flat No 1401, 14th Floor Tower A2 Uniworld Gardens Sec 117 Noida	12/04/2022 Rs. 49,47,714/-	03/01/ 2022
2.	Tarun Lalwani, Anita Lalwani, Jawaharlal Mahender Kumar Lalwani, Premilata Lalwani, Neatxcess Communications Ltd, Telecolex Information Systems Ltd, B-63 Queen Parkjhu Road, Santa Cruz, Mumbai Maharashtra Mumbai/ LBDEL00002438189	Flat No 1603, 16th Floor, Gurgaon Gateway Tower- B, Village Baghga, Gurgaon Manesar, Gurgaon, Gurgaon 122001	12/04/2022 Rs. 2,10,13,400.66/-	06/04/ 2021
3.	Poonam Sharma, U3S Traders Private Limited, B4, 1/11752 B, Gif Panchsheel, Garden Naveen, Shahdra, Delhi, 1/11752 B/ LBDEL00004227654	Plot No-187, 2nd Floor, Bhai Parmanand Colon Ydelhi-110009	13/05/2022 Rs. 56,69,301/-	27/02/ 2022
4.	Poonam Sharma, U3S Traders Private Limited, B4, 1/11752 B, Gif Panchsheel, Garden Naveen, Shahdra, Delhi, 1/11752 B/ LBDEL00004291576	Plot No-187, 2nd Floor, Bhai Parmanand Colon Ydelhi-110009	13/05/2022 Rs. 4,82,040/-	27/02/ 2022
5.	Rajesh Bhatia, Sonia Bhatia, B4, 321, Sec-21 B, Faridabad, 321/ LBDEL00004848090	H No 104, Ground Floor and Basement, Block- B, Shivalki Colony Delhi 110017	13/05/2022 Rs. 2,21,32,902/-	06/12/ 2021
6.	Rajesh Bhatia, Sonia Bhatia, B4, 321, Sec-21 B, Faridabad, 321/ LBDEL00004870017	H No 104, Ground Floor and Basement, Block- B, Shivalki Colony Delhi 110017	13/05/2022 Rs. 10,61,887/-	06/12/ 2021
7.	Harish Peethambaran Maliyil,boby Matheew, S/o Peethambaran S, Channenahalli Village, Kandegala Post Kasaba Hobali, Priyapattana Talluku Channenahalli, Mysuru Karnataka, Mysuru Kamataka, Periyapatna/ LBDEL00003385392	Flat No-D-1204, Tower-D, 12th Floor, Meghdutam Encore, Plot No Gh 05, Sports City, Sector Adjoining, Techzone 4, Greater Noida (West), Noida 201307	13/05/2022 Rs. 39,31,430/-	31/01/ 2022
8.	Tannoy Sen, Anita Das, D-127, First Floor, Sec-15 Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, Noida/ LBGUR00003995553	Flat No 1206, 12th Floor, Tower A-3, Splendor Grande, Sector-19 Panipat, Haryana, Panipat 132108	13/05/2022 Rs. 54,09,825/-	03/02/ 2022
9.	Anita., Pardeep Kumar, House No- 540, Sadar Police Station, Sector-47, Islampur 97, Gurgaon South City Farrukhnagar, Haryana Haryana Gurgaon/ LBNOD00005214533	Plot No-591, Urban Estate, Sector-47, Haryana, Gurgaon-122001	13/05/2022 Rs. 50,36,850/-	03/02/ 2022
10.	Poonam Sharma, U3S Traders Private Limited, Umakant Sharma, 1/11752 B Gif Panchsheel Garden Naveen Shahdras Ghaziabad/ LBDEL00004291302	Flat No C-906, 9th Floor D B City Block C, Near Sharda, City Centri Hurawali, Link Road, Gwalior474001	13/05/2022 Rs. 3,32,573/-	27/02/ 2022
11.	Pramod Kumar Sharma, Rohit Sharma, R-6/130 Raj Nagaruttar Pradeshshuttar Pradesh Ghaziabad/ LBNOD00002909277	House No-6/130, Sector-6 Rajnagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh	13/05/2022 Rs. 2,44,37,892.9/-	31/08/ 2020
12.	Sohan Bahadur Gurong, Anita Gurong, B-6/40/2, Safadanjung Enclave, Delhi- 110029/ LBGUR00002089622	Flat No. 8082, 8th Floor, Type-A Tower-8, ATS Triumph, Sector-104 Gurgaon, Haryana, Gurgaon 122101	12/04/22 Rs. 2,26,71,226.8/-	10/01/ 2022
The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.				
Date : June 18, 2022		Authorized Officer		
Place : Delhi/ NCR		ICICI Bank Limited		



# Bengal recruitment scams: HC orders CBI to act fast

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Days after expressing displeasure at the slow progress of investigations into the multiple recruitment scams in Bengal Calcutta High Court on Friday warned the Central Bureau of Investigations with handing over the charge of investigation to retired Joint Director Upen Biswas so as to expedite the investigation process should the Agency fail to comply with its orders.

The Court had earlier ordered the CBI to appoint a Special Investigation Team led by a Joint Director to investigate recruitment irregularities in the appointment of school teachers and non-teaching staff.

In recent weeks the Court has ordered the CBI to investigate at least half-a-dozen appointment “irregular” procedures — at Group D and C level, apart from selection tests of Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary teachers—involving thousands of aspirants asking Agency to even investigate top bureaucrats and ministers even if it meant taking them into custody. The Court’s Friday’s remarks came as CBI dilly-dallied with



appointment SIT headed by a Joint Director as directed by the Bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay. “The Court told the CBI counsel if the Agency does not appoint a Jt Director then the Judge would do so by appointing Upen Biswas a retired Jt Director,” said an advocate.

Subsequently the CBI counsel said that the Agency would indeed appoint a Jt Director to lead SIT. Biswas also a petitioner in the case had successfully investigated the Bihar Animal Husbandry scam in the 1990s. He had earlier complained that he was approached by a person with offer providing teachers’ jobs to candidates in exchange of cash. “I was informed that teachers’

jobs were being sold for Rs 10 to Rs 30 lakhs,” Biswas said adding, “a probe Agency must have the will to act... as we did in Bihar ... we did not listen to any advice ... probed our cases and secured conviction in all the 29 cases.”

The Court also ordered that no officers of the SIT would be transferred before the completion of the investigation. The SIT would function under the supervision of the Court.

Earlier a judicial committee appointed by Court had found massive irregularities in appointment of teachers and Group D and C level staff. Names of State ministers Partho Chatterjee and Paresah Adhikari have got embroiled in case.

# Maha council polls: HC rejects pleas by Malik, Deshmukh for nod to cast vote

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra’s incarcerated former ministers Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik on Friday suffered a similar setback for the second time in eight days, when the Bombay High Court rejected their applications seeking their release for a few hours on June 20 to vote in the Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC) elections.

After hearing the arguments made by the petitioners of both the petitioners and also the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Justice N. J. Jamdar of the Bombay High Court declined to entertain the pleas by the two NCP leaders who are both members of the Maharashtra Assembly.

Deshmukh and Malik had moved the high court on the ground that they were both MLAs and that they ought to be given an opportunity to vote in elections. By declining to entertain the pleas by the NCP’s two former ministers, the high court made it clear that they could not be released from judicial custody in order to enable them to cast their

vote in the elections scheduled for June 20. The lawyers representing Malik and Deshmukh said that the former ministers would file a special leave petition against the order before the Supreme Court on Monday.

Earlier making a strong case for the temporary release of client Malik, senior advocate Amit Desai argued that his client was not seeking his release on bail but was merely seeking permission to be taken to cast his vote with an escort.

Desai told the court that the section 62 (5) of the Representation of the People Act did not prevent the high court from exercising its discretion to pass an order to facilitate the process of voting for Malik and such discretion was not taken away by any of the previous high court or Supreme Court judgments.

Desai argued that the high court must therefore exercise discretion in favour of a fair political process and allow his client to exercise his voting right in the MLVC elections. Advocate Vikram Chaudhari, who appeared for Deshmukh,

told the court that the application was not adversarial and hence ED’s opposition to letting his client vote was questionable. He contended that the argument made by the ED that the court could not have a discretion in the matter was a dangerous one.

He argued that because there was an embargo under Section 62(5) of the Representation of People Act, the legislators had been compelled to approach the court. Chaudhary said that Deshmukh was only seeking release for a short period to vote and the high court had the discretion to permit it.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, representing ED, had opposed the pleas citing Section 62(5) of the Representation of People Act which the agency claimed, clearly barred the right to vote for prisoners and there was no question of the court using its discretionary powers.

Friday’s was the second occasion in a week when the court disallowed Deshmukh and Malik to grant temporary bail to them to cast their vote in an election.

# Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders call BJP anti-Army



T N RAGHUNATHANMUMBAI:

Amid protests in many parts of the country against the “Agnipath” scheme unveiled by the Narendra Modi government, the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders on Friday dubbed the BJP as “anti-Army” and said it was “teasing the unemployed youth” and taking the people of the country on a “Jumla-path”.

Coming down heavily on the ruling BJP at the Centre for its “mindless and arbitrary” to decision to introduce “Agnipath” scheme, Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said: “Giving employment for mere four in the armed forces under the cute name of ‘Agnipath’ means that the youth of the country face a bleak future. Then, these young boys and girls will again be rendered jobless. The Narendra Modi government is making a mockery of the people and deceiving the youth and the jobless of India.”

State Congress’ Chief Spokesperson Atul Londhe said that currently, there were 62,29,000 vacancies in the Central Government, out of which 2,55,000 are in the Indian Army.

“The decision to recruit only 46,000 of them was made with great fanfare. After six months training and then three half years in the job, those opting will get barely Rs.30,000-Rs.40,000 salary, no job secu-

rity and no future provisions. The BJP government is gambling with the careers of our youths and Agnipath must be rolled back,” Londhe said.

In his vehement criticism of the Modi government for its “Agnipath” scheme, State NCP’s Chief Spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said under the BJP rule, the country was witnessing its highest-ever unemployment situation and the Centre was not serious about finding a long-term solution for the millions of jobless youth.

“The new Agnipath scheme envisages unemployed youths of the country to join the Indian Armed Forces for a short service tenure of four years, and then fails to safeguard the long-term service prospects of these hopeful young men and women... The scheme lacks imagination and direction, and this is evident from the massive protests that have erupted all over the country,” Tapase said.

Shiv Sena’s spokesperson Dr. Manisha Kayande debunked the “Agnipath” scheme, saying that it was yet another instance of how the Modi dispensation was proving to be ‘anti-army’ in its approach, though our brave soldiers were always prepared to sacrifice their lives for the nation.

“First there was the controversial policy of One Rank One Pension (OROP) which was opposed by the armed

forces also, and now we have the Agnipath scheme. Till now the youth could serve for 16 years and then if found physically fit, their tenure could be extended. But Agnipath will completely dilute it,” Dr. Kayande said.

“The Agnipath scheme is clearly an injustice on the young people who are the future of the country... We demand that this scheme should be immediately withdrawn,” Dr. Kayande said.

Tapase said that while earlier Modi had promised ‘One Rank One Pension’, under Agnipath, there would be ‘No Rank, No Pension’ or even

gratuuity for the youth who take up the 4-year jobs in the armed forces. “Under such a scenario, how and where will the youth learn new skills to get them proper jobs after leaving the armed forces? Even the private sector will not accept them with full pay scales and the dignity they deserve,” Tapase said.

Patole, Tapase and Dr. Kayande demanded to know “what happened to Modi’s tall promise of providing two crore jobs every year” made during the 2014 elections, and sought details of exactly how jobs were created in the past 8 years of the BJP rule.

# Agneepath stir: Ruckus in Aligarh, police post blown up, ADG’s car damaged

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

In the Agneepath protest, miscreants ransacked, arson and pelted stones. Most of the ruckus has happened in Aligarh. Here the police post was burnt. The SSP and other officers had to run for their lives and the glasses were broken by stone pelting on the ADG’s vehicle.

The protest against the Agneepath scheme started from this morning itself. There was a fierce ruckus in Aligarh on Friday against the new scheme of army recruitment, Agneepath. The ruckus which started around 11 am contin-

ues to go on. The police post was burnt. The SSP and other officers had to run for their lives and the glasses were broken by stone pelting on the ADG’s vehicle.

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ues to go on. The police post was burnt. The SSP and other officers had to run for their lives and the glasses were broken by stone pelting on the ADG’s vehicle.

The windshild of the car is also broken. On this matter, ADG Law and Order Prashant Kumar said that tyre of a roadways bus has been set on fire in Tappal. Some inputs have been received that students are being instigated.

Demonstrations are still going on in some places in Mathura. Some chaotic elements have entered among the students. The students are being explained. Public representatives and village heads have been engaged in this work. Eight vehicles have been set ablaze by the protesters so

far. Officials say, for the time being, avoid using the Yamuna Expressway to go from Aligarh to Noida or Delhi.

If it is not necessary, please postpone the journey. There is a huge traffic jam on Yamuna Expressway due to the protest. Eight vehicles have been set ablaze by the protesters so far.

A youth protesting in Tappal and Jattari got a rubber bullet Youth protested in Tappal and Jattari regarding Agneepath scheme in Aligarh. The police also came on the back foot for the demonstration of the youth.

On the orders of the officers, the police personnel had to fire with tear shells and rubber bullets. After which the protesting youths dispersed and the police got relief. In police firing, Sumit, 21-year-old son of Buddha Sen, a resident of Singroth village, got a rubber bullet in back of his head.

He was admitted to Tappal Hospital in an injured condition where doctor Mohit, who was present in emergency, treated him. He has been discharged after giving first aid. The family went home with young man.

# Two held with satellite phone in Amethi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Acting on the inputs from Army Intelligence, the Amethi police arrested two persons from Mawaiya hamlet and recovered a satellite phone from their possession. Soon after arrest, the sleuths of Army Intelligence, local intelligence unit and Anti-Terrorists Squad grilled youths to verify if they had any terror link. Sources said that Amethi police got a message from Army

Intelligence on Thursday about activation of a banned satellite phone in Mawaiya village under model police station in Ramganj.

The senior officers directed SWAT team in-charge Dharendra Kumar Verma, surveillance cell in-charge Vivek Singh and Ramganj police station in-charge Mithilesh Singh to take action.



**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given to the General public on behalf of Fullerton India Home Finance Company that Mrs. Munni is owner of Plot No. 17, Kila No. 19, Situated in the abadi of Gali No. 4, Post Office Walli Gali, Rashid Market, Edn, in the area of Village Khung Khos, Baga Shabara, Delhi, vide a registered Reacquisition Deed dt. 08.02.2019, registration No. 775, executed by Mohd. Inayat Ansari, Mohd. Nazhat, Mr. Mohammed Shazad, Mohd. Anjed Ansari, Mohd. Ashraf Ansari, Mohd. Arif, Mohd. Aabid, Mohd. Ansh, Mohd. Sultan, Mrs. Saima Bano Ansari and Mrs. Nazreen Ansari. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell Upper Ground Floor without roof rights, of the said property to Mr. Imtiaz Rasool who is taking a Loan from Fullerton India Home Finance Company Ltd. for purchase of the said floor, if anybody has any objection(s) upon the ownership of Mrs. Munni in respect of the said property (to sale Mortgage/Litigation, and any kind of dispute, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
A notice is hereby given that Mr. Vipinder Singh Negi (w. e. f. 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022) have been removed from the directorship of 4 Bhai Fitness Pvt. Ltd. (DBA: Dhakad Gym). He have ceased to have any authority whatsoever to transact any business or to act in any way on behalf of the Company. Moreover, if he or any person(s) hired/appointed/authorised by him transacts any business or act in any way on behalf of the Company will be legally prosecuted.  
Mr. Vikas Yadav (Director)  
For 4 Bhai Fitness Pvt. Ltd.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
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# ACB arrests BJP corporator for graft



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A BJP corporator of Jammu Municipal Corporation was trapped and arrested along with her husband by the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) while accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000 for issuance of ‘Mulba

clearance certificate’ on Friday. In a written statement, Anti Corruption Bureau said, Jyoti Devi, Corporator, Ward No.53 of Jammu Municipal Corporation and her husband Sham Lal were trapped and arrested while accepting a bribe of ₹10,000 for issuance of Mulba Clearance certificate.

According to a statement issued by the Anti Corruption Bureau, “the complainant had alleged that Jyoti Devi, corporator of Ward no 53 demanded an amount of Rs. 10,000/- as bribe for issuance of mulba clearance certificate of the works done by him”. She also directed the complainant to contact her husband for payment of bribe money, the ACB statement said.

“Upon receiving the complaint, allegations of the complaint were verified. Consequently a case FIR No. 10/2022 P/S ACB-J U/s 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 and 120-B IPC was registered at PS ACB-Jammu”, spokesman of the ACB said.

“A trap team was constituted whereupon the accused Sham Lal was caught red handed while demanding and

accepting bribe of Rs. 10,000/- on behalf of his wife Jyoti Devi Corporator of Ward No. 53 from the complainant. Both the accused persons were taken into custody on the spot. Searches at the residential house of the accused persons were also conducted” the ACB statement said.

The contractor was allotted work for upgradation of the open area along the main road near Mastermind Classes by Pre-cast of paver tiles and upgradation of open area along main road near Easy day at Ward No. 53 Trikuta Nagar, Jammu”.

As per the existing procedure the contractor was supposed to submit a Mulba clearance certificate before receiving final payment from JMC. The certificate is issued by concerned Corporator.

# SP, BSP chiefs missing in campaigns for bypolls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Even though the stakes are high for Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party in the bypolls to Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha seats, leaders of both the parties, Akhilesh Yadav and Mayawati, have not campaigned for their candidates so far.

Campaigning for both the seats will end on June 21 and polling will be held on June 23. The BSP has not fielded a candidate on the Rampur parliamentary seat.

The Samajwadi Party faces the tough task of retaining both the Lok Sabha seats as

Akhilesh Yadav was elected from Azamgarh and Mohammad Azam Khan from Rampur in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Both the SP leaders contested the recent UP assembly election and won after which they resigned their Lok Sabha seats necessitating the by-elections.

The two bypolls will also decide the future of the Bahujan Samaj Party, which is desperately trying to make a comeback on the centre stage of UP politics. During the last 10 years, the BSP record has been dismal as it lost the 2012, 2017 and 2022 UP assembly elections and its tally in UP

assembly has been reduced to one MLA.

BSP’s performance in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls was also far from satisfactory. The Lok Sabha by-elections in Rampur and Azamgarh will be a litmus test for the Samajwadi Party which faces the challenge of holding on to its number two position in state politics. Samajwadi party has fielded Dharmendra Yadav, cousin of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Akhilesh, on Thursday, issued an appeal to the voters in both the constituencies to vote for his party. The Samajwadi Party has the highest stakes in these by-elections

since both, Azamgarh and Rampur were held by SP.

The BSP is playing a spoiler for SP in Azamgarh where it has fielded Guddu Jamali, a popular local leader who is likely to eat into the Muslim votes. Azamgarh has a sizeable Yadav and Muslim population and any dent in these vote banks could upset the apple cart for the SP. Samajwadi Party’s Maharashtra unit president Abu Asim Azmi, a native of Azamgarh, is leading the party’s campaign in Muslim-dominated areas of the district. However, Akhilesh’s absence is now emerging as a major factor in the constituency.







FIRST COLUMN

STATE-RUN BANKS MUST RETRAIN EMPLOYEES

Their inadequacies result in bad debts and fraud



S KALYANASUNDARAM

*Thuglak* is a popular Tamil weekly magazine mostly devoted to politics and allied subjects. It conducts an annual meeting with its readers which is very popular. Some of the comments made by the present editor of Thuglak, S. Gurumurthy, at the recent meeting caused a stir.

At the annual meeting conducted on May 8, while replying to a question by a reader on the functioning of government banks, Gurumurthy said that all the talented people have left the government banks to private banks and what is left with the government banks is bunch of ‘kazhisadaikal’ in Tamil. This word can be roughly translated as ‘poor grade left overs’ or ‘bottom most left overs’.

Though this slang is not un-parliamentary it can be viewed as derogatory based on the context. The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who was on the dais, expressed her disapproval with her facial expression and body language. Bank employees have taken it as an insult to them and their union has sought an unconditional apology from Gurumurthy. Moreover the unions have written to Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das and sought the removal of Gurumurthy from the RBI board.



Leaving aside the comment on the quality of public sector bank employees, it is evident that over the years the thrust given to the bankers to learn and adopt their field is not commendable.

After the nationalisation of major banks in 1969, they recruited people from all streams, most of them with a science background. These people were trained with domain knowledge of banking.

There was a shift from this thrust to acquire knowledge once new private players came into picture with totally computerised banking in the 1990s. The new banks expected staff to sell banking products like any other commodity. They have adopted ‘system-embedded knowledge’ and the staff have been trained to adopt a ‘menu-driven programme’ of computer operation.

New private banks started selling products as if they were selling FMCG products. Slowly this culture was adopted by public sector banks also. No one bothered about the basic legal and regulatory provisions. This has led to the violation of banking norms.

An example will reveal how the banks do not comply with various RBI regulations. In 2019 the RBI imposed a penalty of Rs 71 crore for non-compliance of guidelines regarding SWIFT on 36 banks. Every now and then, the banking regulator imposes penalties on some banks. From the penalties levied by the RBI on banks, one can understand the magnitude of violations. During 2020-21, the banking ombudsman received 404,143 complaints on deficiency of service. Lack of knowledge of the staff will always result in a large number of complaints.

When the staff is not adequately trained, fraudsters take advantage to deceive the bank. Fraud happens only when someone in the system has compromised the established system either because of ignorance or collusion. Among many reasons for the incidence of non-performing assets of banks, the poor credit appraisal system is a major one; this is because of the inadequate knowledge and skills of bankers. As per a newspaper report of 2019, the RBI has held banks’ poor credit appraisal responsible for their high bad debts arising out of Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (Mudra) loans.

There is a difference between banks and other corporations. Banks are run with deposits from the general public. If anything goes wrong, it affects a lot of people as there is a domino effect.

Alvin Toffler said “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” It is time for banks to introspect and improve the knowledge base and skillsets of their employees.

*(The writer is a retired banker. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Agnipath will help military, youngsters, economy

## Our military forces must be young and agile, and our economy strong, to meet challenges of the changing global order



SUMET BHASIN

The Narendra Modi government’s unveiling of the Agnipath scheme seeks to fill the void in India’s growing fast-

The author is Director, of the Public Policy Research Centre

# Govt faces a dilemma over e-commerce

## Any tweak in policy will upset foreign investors, while the status quo will hurt small traders

Ever since Indian retail was opened to foreign direct investment (FDI)—albeit through the so-called marketplace model in 2016—foreign giants like Amazon and Walmart-owned-Flipkart have been embroiled in protracted legal battles.

In a public interest litigation (PIL) filed in early 2018, the Retailers Association of India (RAI) had alleged violation of FDI norms in e-commerce. On October 31, 2018, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had informed the Delhi High Court (DHC) that it was investigating violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (Fema) against Amazon, et al, but the proceedings are stuck.

In another petition filed before the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the All-India Online Vendors Association (AIOVA) had alleged abuse of market dominance against Flipkart India Private Limited (it is into wholesale trading/distribution) and e-commerce marketplace Flipkart Internet Private Limited. But, CCI saw nothing wrong in this practice; it wondered “how come any one player in the market command any dominant position.”

Even as the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) quashed the CCI ruling and ordered a probe, nothing is heard on the subject thereafter. A most talked about case relates to a complaint by the trade body Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh (DVM) on January 13, 2020, with the CCI alleging anti-competitive behavior by Amazon Seller Services (it operates an e-commerce marketplace) and Flipkart Internet.

DVM argued that Amazon and Flipkart had entered into exclusive sales agreements with smartphone makers to sell certain phones through a small number of preferred sellers. It also alleged that they had given preferential treatment to certain sellers by giving them higher search rankings, and offering to pay for part of the discount that such sellers would offer during key sales periods such as Flipkart’s Big Billion Days and Amazon’s Prime Day.

The CCI agreed with DVM’s contention and ordered a probe. Amazon and Flipkart approached the Karnataka High Court (KHC) with a plea to quash the CCI order. The KHC refused to quash it, which prompted the duo to challenge the order in the Supreme Court (SC). In August 2021, the SC dismissed their applications and ordered that “the CCI Director General will complete the probe and submit the findings to the commission which will pass final orders.”

Meanwhile, in a complaint filed by AIOVA against Amazon Seller Services, the CCI opined that “the information contains allegations that are devoid of admissible/requisite evidence.” In DVM’s case, even if the commission establishes anti-competitive behavior by Amazon, it will be heading for interminable litigation.

Have Amazon and others really



THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO ALLOW 100 PER CENT FDI IN OFFLINE RETAIL SANS RIDERS. THIS WILL ENABLE ALL RETAILERS, ONLINE OR OFFLINE, BIG OR SMALL, TO COMPETE WITH ONE ANOTHER ON EQUAL TERMS

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indulged in unfair practices? Have they violated the guidelines on FDI in e-commerce?

As per the guidelines issued in early 2016, 100 per cent FDI is allowed under the marketplace model. The marketplace is a platform where vendors sell their products to consumers even as its owner merely acts as a facilitator by providing services such as booking orders, raising invoices, arranging delivery, accepting payments, handling rejections, etc. He can’t hold inventory or undertake direct selling.

Two conditions are prescribed. First, the entity cannot permit more than 25 per cent of total sales on the marketplace from one vendor or its group companies. Two, it cannot directly or indirectly influence the sale price. Without any mention as to who the vendor is, a firm linked to the marketplace either its subsidiary or a joint venture (JV) with an Indian company is eligible.

As for the second condition, it is not easy to establish that the marketplace owner has manipulated the sale price.

Thus, contrary to the stated intent of the policy, these norms permitted e-commerce majors as direct sellers, albeit through their subsidiary/JV. No wonder, Amazon established a JV Prione Business Services (PBS), in collaboration with an Indian entity owned by Narayan Murthy of Infosys. PBS in turn, owns a firm Cloudtail India Pvt Ltd which is a “preferred” seller on Amazon’s marketplace.

Much has been said about the e-commerce giants indulging in anti-competitive behavior; indeed this is the main complaint of traders. But what often goes unnoticed is that the 2016 guidelines provided for the possibility of a total of four

sellers on the marketplace (based on a threshold of 25 per cent of total sales for each seller) all related to the owner of the platform.

Even as Amazon and others went all out to exploit these loopholes in the guidelines, the Commerce Ministry issued a clarification on December 26, 2018. It said: “The owner of the marketplace or its subsidiary or its JV with an Indian company can’t have ownership of the seller.”

Moreover, “a seller on the platform can’t source more than 25 per cent of its inventory from a firm connected with the latter.”

The marketplace owner could get around both the clarifications: first, by having less than 50 per cent shareholding in the seller firm, they can argue that they have no control (majority) over the latter, and second by its wholesale arm restricting supplies to the seller within the 25 per cent threshold.

The clarification has done little to rein in the hold of e-commerce majors in direct selling to consumers to the detriment of small traders. For instance, only three dozen firms out of the 400,000 sellers on Amazon platform account for 67 per cent of sales on it.

The government has been trying to make corrections to bring the extant dispensation in line with the stated policy intent.

In 2020, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, issued the Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules, under Section 101 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The rules bar affiliated entities from selling on e-commerce platforms and restrict ‘flash sales’, and disallow sellers from using the name or brand associated with that

of marketplace e-commerce entities for promotion of goods.

Last year, the DCA came up with an amendment to the rules to restrict business-to-business, or B2B, sales (this is to prohibit transactions between the owner of the marketplace and seller on his platform) in e-commerce and a provision to prevent ‘abuse of dominant position’ by e-commerce firms.

The sole purpose of the above amendments is to undo the damage (to the small traders) caused by 2016 guidelines. If the government goes ahead with the former, it will be tantamount to overturning the latter. It will be viewed as a retrospective change of policy and send a wrong signal to foreign investors.

On the other hand, if the 2016 guidelines stay intact, small traders will continue to face unfair and discriminatory treatment.

We need to understand the genesis behind the present situation. The Modi government was keen to get FDI in retail but didn’t want to displease small traders. So, it brought foreign majors through the backdoor in the garb of the marketplace. The result: it is caught ‘between the deep sea and the devil’.

It can get out of the mess if it dispenses with the marketplace and legitimises 100 per cent FDI in online retail. The government should also allow 100 per cent FDI in offline retail sans riders (at present, 51 per cent is allowed in this segment subject to onerous riders which is tantamount to a complete bar). This will enable all retailers, online or offline, big or small, to compete with one another on equal terms.

It will be a win-win for all stakeholders who will also be spared the agony of endless litigation.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE CUSTOMISED PROGRAMME BY NIOS WILL BE RELEVANT TO THE SPIRIT OF THE AGNIPATH SCHEME. —UNION EDUCATION MINISTER DHARMENDRA PRADHAN



THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT SOLDIERS RECRUITED UNDER THE SCHEME WILL BE BETTER TRAINED AND MOTIVATED. —FORMER UNION MINISTER P CHIDAMBARAM



evolving role in the global order. The initiative to hire 46,000 Agniveers this year in the armed forces will immediately bring down the average age from the current 32 to 26, helping the Indian military to become much younger.

Besides, it’s pertinent to look at the socio-economic impact of the Agnipath scheme, since India aspires to become a \$5-trillion economy, which in turn will throw up newer challenges and opportunities. Economy thrives on a stable security situation, both internal and external. Agniveers will immediately fill a large portion of the vacancies in the armed forces while also creating a large pool of the militarily trained personnel who could be easily drafted into the paramilitary forces, who are engaged in

ensuring peaceful elections and maintaining peace in strife-torn and insurgency hit areas.

Among the paramilitary forces, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) alone has seen a major expansion in the scope of its responsibilities to provide security to industrial units and transportation systems, including Metro services in several cities.

The Agnipath scheme

promises to make trained manpower available that could be easily drafted for such duties.

Indeed, 25 per cent of the Agniveers would be absorbed in the armed forces for a longer duration. The Ministry of Home Affairs has already made it clear that the paramilitary services would give preferences to the Agniveers in their recruitments. This truly makes sense as the Agniveers would already come trained and with basic re-skilling they would be able to take up the newer responsibilities.

The ambit of national security is also evolving. Besides safeguarding territorial integrity and internal peace, national security also entails that the economic forces in the country don’t face any security threat. India will have to think about providing a full-proof security

ecosystem to economic activities in metropolitan cities and also at places where they are nudged to go, including Jammu and Kashmir and the North-Eastern states. Economic disruptions due to any reason could pose a threat to national security.

Equally important is the social import of the Agnipath scheme as it promises to build a patriotic character among the youth of the country. Disciplined youth is an asset to society. Military training imparts discipline. The Ministry of Education’s policy of recognising military training of the Agniveers for credits in their graduation for in-service courses by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is praiseworthy.

After four years of military service, 75 per cent of the

Agniveers will come back to the society with training, skills and education to embark on vocations of their choice with capital in hand. This will work as a force multiplier for the Agniveers to play the role of change agents.

A number of countries have similar programmes for their military forces. It has been seen in such countries, including Israel, that the former military personnel have engaged in activities which added value to their economies. Already former armed forces personnel are most sought-after by the private security agencies which have immensely proliferated in the recent years.

It’s futile to argue that the armed forces will be burdened with the training efforts for Agniveers, because India is no

more a status quoist country; capacity expansion is the mantra of the Modi government. India not only has to expand the capacity but also qualitatively improve upon the outcome.

Additionally, the state police too are in need of major human resources training and upskilling because of the rising internal security challenges. State governments, which already have to fill a large number of vacancies in their police forces, can begin to look comfortably at the Agniveers. This can help the state police become more agile and also efficient.

Indeed, the social impact of Agniveers in villages would be substantial as they could become role models for youngsters. Agniveers, by the time they come out of the military service, will also have enough savings.



# Recession not inevitable: Biden

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden told The Associated Press that the American people are “really, really down” after a tumultuous two years with the coronavirus pandemic, volatility in the economy and now surging gasoline prices that are slamming family budgets.

He said on Thursday that a recession is not inevitable and bristled at claims by Republican lawmakers that last year’s COVID-19 aid plan was fully to blame for inflation reaching a 40-year high, calling that argument “bizarre.”

As for the overall American mindset, Biden said, “People are really, really down.” “They’re really down,” he said. “The need for mental health in America, it has skyrocketed, because people have seen everything upset. Everything they’ve counted on upset. But most of it’s the consequence of what’s happened, what happened as a consequence of the COVID crisis.”

Speaking to the AP in a 30-minute Oval Office interview,



Biden addressed the warnings by economists that the United States could be headed for a recession.

“First of all, it’s not inevitable,” he said. “Secondly, we’re in a stronger position than any nation in the world to overcome this inflation.”

As for the causes of inflation, Biden flashed some defensiveness on that count. “If it’s my fault, why is it the case in every other major industrial country in the world that inflation is higher? You ask yourself that? I’m not being a wise guy,” he said.

The president said he saw

reason for optimism with the 3.6 per cent unemployment rate and America’s relative strength in the world.

“Be confident, because I am confident we’re better positioned than any country in the world to own the second quarter of the 21st century,” Biden said. “That’s not hyperbole, that’s a fact.”

Biden’s bleak assessment of the national psyche comes as voters have soured on his job performance and the direction of the country. Only 39 per cent of US adults approve of Biden’s performance as president,

according to a May poll from

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Research, dipping from already negative ratings a month earlier.

Overall, only about 2 in 10 adults said the US is heading in the right direction or that the economy is good, both down from about 3 in 10 in April. Those drops were concentrated among Democrats, with just 33 per cent within the president’s party saying the country is headed in the right direction, down from 49 per cent in April.

The president outlined some of the hard choices he has faced, saying the US needed to stand up to Russian President Vladimir Putin for invading Ukraine in February even though tough sanctions imposed as a result of that war have caused gas prices to surge, creating a political risk for Biden in an election year. He called on oil companies to think of the world’s short-term needs and increase production.

Asked why he ordered the financial penalties against Moscow that have disrupted

food and energy markets globally, Biden said he made his calculation as commander in chief rather than as a politician thinking about the election.

“I’m the president of the United States,” he said. “It’s what’s best in the country. No kidding. No kidding. So what happens? What happens if the strongest power in NATO, the organizational structure we put together, walked away from Russian aggression?”

Biden spun out the possibility of chaos in Europe if an unimpeded Russia kept moving deeper into the continent, China was emboldened to take over Taiwan and North Korea grew even more aggressive with its nuclear weapon ambitions.

Biden renewed his contention that major oil companies have benefited from higher prices without increasing production as much as they should. He said the companies needed to think of the world in the short term, not just their investors.

“Don’t just reward yourselves,” he said.

# UK OK’s extradition of Assange to US

AP ■ LONDON

The British government has ordered the extradition of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to the United States to face spying charges. He is likely to appeal.

Home Secretary Priti Patel signed the extradition order on Friday, her department said. It follows a British court ruling in April that Assange could be sent to the U.S.

The Home Office said in a statement that “the U.K courts have not found that it would be oppressive, unjust or an abuse of process to extradite Mr. Assange.” “Nor have they found that extradition would be incompatible with his human rights, including his right to a fair trial and to freedom of expression, and that whilst in the U.S. He will be treated appropriately, including in relation to his health.”

The decision is a big moment in Assange’s years-



long battle to avoid facing trial in the U.S. — though not necessarily the end of the tale. Assange has 14 days to appeal.

A British judge approved the extradition in April, leaving the final decision to the government. The ruling came after a legal battle that went all the way to the U.K. Supreme Court.

The U.S. Has asked British authorities to extradite Assange so he can stand trial on 17 charges of espionage and one charge of computer misuse over WikiLeaks’ publication of a huge trove of classified documents more than a decade ago. American prosecutors say Assange unlawfully helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst

Chelsea Manning steal classified diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, putting lives at risk.

Journalism organisations and human rights groups have called on Britain to refuse the extradition request. Supporters and lawyers for Assange, 50, argue that he was acting as a journalist and is entitled to First Amendment protections of freedom of speech for publishing documents that exposed U.S. Military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. They argue that his case is politically motivated.

Assange’s lawyers say he could face up to 175 years in jail if he is convicted in the U.S., though American authorities have said any sentence is likely to be much lower than that.

Assange has been held at Britain’s high-security Belmarsh Prison in London since 2019, when he was arrested for skipping bail during a separate legal battle.

# 1/6 panel: Plan for Pence to reject electors ‘nuts,’ ‘crazy’



AP ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump’s closest advisers viewed his last-ditch efforts to pressure Vice President Mike Pence to reject the tally of state electors and overturn the 2020 election as “nuts,” “crazy” and even likely incite riots, witnesses revealed in stark testimony to the Jan 6 committee on Thursday.

Gripping new evidence also detailed how the mob that stormed the Capitol that day came within 40 feet of where Pence and his team were sheltering, highlighting the danger Trump had put him in.

With live testimony, including from Pence’s counsel, and other evidence from its yearlong investigation the panel is dissecting as unlawful and unconstitutional the plan from conservative lawyer John Eastman to reverse Joe Biden’s election victory. The pressure Trump put on Pence, including at a Jan 6 rally, led directly to the insurrection at the Capitol, the panel said.

“Are you out of your effing mind?” said Eric Herschmann, a lawyer advising Trump, told Eastman in recorded testimony shown at the hearing.

“You’re going to cause riots in the streets.”

A text message from Fox News’ Sean Hannity to Trump’s chief of staff Mark Meadows about the plan in the run-up to Jan 6 read: “I’m very worried about the next 48 hours.”

Trump campaign adviser Jason Miller said those around Trump called it “crazy.”

The panel opened its third hearing this month demonstrating that Trump’s false claims of a fraudulent election left him grasping for alternatives as courts turned back dozens of lawsuits challenging the vote.

Trump latched onto Eastman’s highly unusual plan to defy historical precedent of the Electoral Count Act, and started pressuring Pence in public and private as the vice president was to preside over the Jan 6 joint session of Congress to certify Biden’s election.

The committee has said the plan was illegal, and a federal judge has said it is “more likely than not” Trump committed crimes in his attempt to stop the certification.

# Alabama church shooting kills 2, wounds 1

AP ■ VESTAVIA HILLS (US)

A single gunman opened fire inside a suburban Alabama church, killing two people and wounding a third at a small group meeting before being taken into custody, authorities said.

The attack occurred at Saint Stephen’s Episcopal Church in the Birmingham suburb of Vestavia Hills on Thursday, said Police Capt. Shane Ware. He said dispatchers got a call at around 6:20 p.m. Reporting an active shooter there.

Ware said a suspect was detained and there was “no threat to the community at this time.” Police declined to identify the suspect or the victims, or provide further details on the attack, saying another briefing was planned Friday.

At an earlier news confer-

ence, Ware had said one person was killed and two others hospitalized.

The church’s website listed a “Boomers Potluck” for Thursday night. “There will be no program, simply eat and have time for fellowship,” the flyer read.

Thursday’s shooting took place just over a month after one person was killed and five others injured when a man opened fire on Taiwanese parishioners at a church in Southern California. It also comes nearly seven years to the day after an avowed white supremacist killed nine people during Bible study at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

In Vestavia Hills, investigators remained at the scene hours past nightfall, with yellow police tape cordoning off the church complex and emer-



gency police and fire vehicles with flashing lights blocking the route to the church. The FBI, U.S. Marshals Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco and Explosives dispatched agents to the scene.

Nearby, people huddled and prayed.

The Rev. Kelley Hudlow, an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Alabama, told broadcast outlet WBRC that the shooting had stunned the church and the commu-

# China to hold this year’s BRICS summit on Jun 23-24

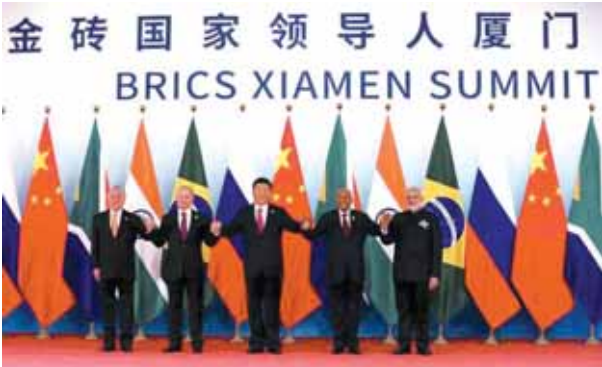
PTI ■ BEIJING

The 14th summit of BRICS nations - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa - will be hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping here on June 23 via video link and would be followed by a high-level dialogue on global development the next day, the Foreign Ministry announced here on Friday.

China is this year’s chair of the BRICS.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa are expected to take part in the summit to be hosted by Chinese President Xi.

The Summit will be held in virtual format under the theme of ‘Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development’, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said in a statement.



BRICS leaders and leaders of “relevant” emerging markets and developing countries will also attend a high-level dialogue on Jun 24 and hold a dialogue on ‘Foster a Global Development Partnership for the New Era to Jointly Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’, Hua said in a statement on Friday.

Xi will also take part in the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum in virtual format on June 22 and

deliver a keynote speech, she said. In the run-up to the summit, China held a series of preparatory meetings, including the BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting followed by a meeting of the National Security Advisors (NSAs).

India’s NSA Ajit Doval took part in the BRICS top security officials meeting held virtually on Wednesday.

The top security officials of the five countries held an in-depth exchange of views and reached a consensus on issues

such as strengthening multilateralism and global governance and responding to new threats and challenges to national security, according to the Chinese official media report.

Doval called for bolstering cooperation against terrorism without any reservations as he addressed the meeting of the five-nation grouping.

The meeting also discussed strengthening and improving governance in new frontiers, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

All parties expressed their readiness to work for fruitful outcomes of the 14th BRICS summit, it said.

The meeting reviewed the work of the working group on counter-terrorism and cyber security, agreed to jointly promote plans and roadmaps for international counter-terrorism and cyber security cooperation, and uphold the central coordinating role of the United Nations in the global counter-terrorism cause.

# Israeli troops kill 3 Palestinians in West Bank gunbattle

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli forces shot dead three Palestinians and wounded at least eight others early Friday during a military operation in the occupied West Bank town of Jenin, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

The military said its forces came under attack and exchanged fire with militants.

The Israeli military has been carrying out near-daily raids in the occupied West Bank since a string of attacks earlier this year killed 19 people in Israel.

Many of the arrest raids have been launched in and around Jenin, the hometown of several of the attackers.

The military said it raided two locations in search of weapons. At the first, it says soldiers fired back after Palestinians opened fire and hurled explosive devices at them.



On their way to the second location, they exchanged fire with Palestinian gunmen in a vehicle, the army said.

Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi, the military chief of staff, said in a speech that three militants were killed.

The military said the troops confiscated rifles, a sub-machine gun and other equipment from inside the vehicle.

Heavy exchanges of gunfire could be heard in videos circulated on social media. Later, footage on social media showed a bullet-riddled vehicle with bloodstains and residents inspecting it.

# Leaders meet in Madrid to mark world day to fight drought

AP ■ MADRID

Politicians and experts met in Madrid on Friday to discuss ways to tackle drought and the increasing spread of deserts across the globe.

“The consequences of drought can affect up to three quarters of humanity by 2050. There is nowhere to hide if we are unable or unwilling to avert the severe alterations we are inflicting on the planet,” Ibrahim Thiaw, executive secretary of the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification, or UNCCD, said at the opening of the meeting.

“Let us be prepared to confront the new reality,” he added.

The half-day meeting is being held to mark the United Nations’ World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.

Thiaw said half the world population was expected to face severe water scarcity in the next eight years, adding that that could lead to as many as



700 million people — or about 10 per cent of the world’s population — being at risk of being displaced during that period.

The meeting brought together numerous experts,

including Kenya’s Patricia Kombu, founder of the PaTree Initiative to help Kenya achieve 10% forest cover by getting students to plant trees.

“I know majority of you have never come across

drought,” said Kombo. “But I would like to tell you how drought feels like. Clean and safe drinking water is like a diamond. Three meals a day is a dream.”

She said communities had

turned to violence because of the lack of food and water.

“You are fighting for the only available resources,” she said. “We are fighting for water.”

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez spoke at the meeting and U.N. Secretary General António Guterres was to make an address by video.

The UNCCD says that between 1900 and 2019, droughts have impacted 2.7 billion people in the world, and caused 11.7 million deaths.

Spain’s Ecological Transition ministry says 75% of Spanish land is vulnerable to desertification and this is increasing.

The meeting comes as Spain is suffering an unusually early heat wave that has helped fuel wildfires across the country.

The focus of the meeting will be on encouraging early action to prevent disastrous outcomes.

# Lanka’s ex-FM Basil hospitalised: Report

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Basil Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka’s former finance minister and the brother of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, has been admitted to a private hospital here, according to a media report on Friday. Basil, 71, is the youngest brother of President Rajapaksa and former prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. However, it is yet known why he was hospitalised, the Daily Mirror, an online newspaper reported.

In April too, Basil Rajapaksa was admitted to a private hospital in Colombo after contracting COVID-19.

Widely regarded as the intellectual pillar of the Rajapaksa family, Basil was the finance minister of Sri Lanka until April 4 when he was sacked by President



Gotabaya as the country’s economic crisis worsened.

Basil, a Sri Lankan-American, resigned from Parliament on June 9. He was accused of being partially responsible for the economic crisis in the country.

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

# Japan top court: Govt not responsible for Fukushima disaster

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan’s top court on Friday ruled that the government was not liable for the 2011 Fukushima nuclear crisis, dismissing thousands of evacuees’ demands that the state, not just the utility, pay compensation for the damages inflicted to their lives. Friday’s ruling was the first Supreme Court decision on the government responsibility for the Fukushima disaster in four compensation lawsuits filed by about 3,700 Fukushima residents.

The four-judge bench headed by Hiroyuki Kanno said that the government could not be held liable for the disaster because damage from the tsunami of that magnitude could not have been prevented even if the industry minister had used his regulatory authority and ordered the utility to enhance a seawall based on a tsunami estimate at that time.



# Ukraine says it has struck Russian boat in Black Sea

AP ■ KYIV

The Ukrainian navy claimed on Friday that it struck a Russian boat carrying air defence systems to a strategic island in the Black Sea.

In a statement on social media, the navy said the Vasily Bekh was used to transport ammunition, weapons and personnel to Snake Island, which is vital for protecting sea lanes out of the key port of Odesa.

It did not say how much damage it inflicted with the strike.

Snake Island, located some 35 kilometres off the coast, figured memorably early in the war when Ukrainian border guards stationed there defied Russian orders to surrender, using colourful language that later became a rallying cry.

The flagship of Russia's Black Sea fleet, used in the seizure of Snake Island, was sunk in April by Ukraine — a major coup for the outmanned and outgunned Ukrainian forces, which made effective use



of technology and intelligence from the US to target the ship.

The Ukrainian Navy said on Friday that that after the sinking of the flagship Moskva, the Russians began to install an

anti-aircraft missile system called TOR on the decks of their ships.

It said that was not enough to prevent Ukraine's naval forces from "demilitarising the

Russian occupiers".

There was no immediate reaction from Russian authorities about the Ukrainian claim.

Despite the apparent success, Ukraine has urged its

allies to rush more and better weapons to the country, saying it can't hold off Russia's more powerful forces without more support.

Western weapons have been critical to the embattled nation's surprising success so far.

Kyiv has also pushed for increased political support, including a fast track to membership in the European Union.

On a visit to Ukraine on Thursday, four European Union leaders vowed to back Kyiv's candidacy to eventually join the bloc.

The EU Commission, the union's executive arm, is set to meet on Friday to make its official recommendation.

The war has increased pressure on EU governments to move more quickly on Ukraine's candidate status, and Thursday's pledge to support candidacy status for Ukraine and neighbouring Moldova pushes the whole 27-nation union closer to doing so.

But the process still is expected to take years, and EU members remain divided over how quickly and fully to open their arms to new members.

## As Russia presses assault, Ukraine given possible path to EU

AP ■ LYSYCHANSK (UKRAINE)

The European Union's executive arm recommended putting Ukraine on a path to membership on Friday, a symbolic boost for the embattled country but one that did not slow a Russian onslaught in the east that is taking civilian lives and flattening cities.

The possibility of membership in a union created to safeguard peace on the continent and that stands as a model for the rule of law and prosperity fulfils a wish of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the many Western-looking citizens resisting Russia's invasion.

The latest embrace of Ukraine by its European allies also marks another setback for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who launched his war nearly four months ago, hoping to pull his ex-Soviet neighbor back into Russia's sphere of influence. Putin was scheduled to address Russia's showpiece economic forum in St. Petersburg on Friday, but his speech had to be delayed because the forum's website was hit with a cyberattack.

The European Commission's recommendation that Ukraine become a candidate for membership will be discussed by leaders of the 27-nation bloc during a summit next week in Brussels. The war has increased pressure on EU governments to fast-track Ukraine's candidate status. But the process is expected to take years, and EU members remain divided over how quickly and fully to open their arms to new members.

Support for Ukraine from Western countries — both political and military — has been key to its surprising success in the face of larger and better equipped Russian forces. Zelenskyy has also clamored for more immediate support in the form of more and better weapons to turn the tide in the country's eastern Donbas region.

Russia pressed its offensive there Friday, leaving desperate residents struggling to make sense of what the future holds for them.

"We are old people, we do not have a place to go. Where will I go?" asked Vira Miedientseva, one of the elderly residents grappling with the aftermath of an attack Thursday in Lysychansk, which lies just across the river from Sievierodonetsk, a key focus of battles in recent weeks that Russians have nearly captured.

In other developments:

The Ukrainian navy claimed Friday that it destroyed a Russian boat carrying air defense systems to a strategic island in the Black Sea. In a statement on social media, the navy said that the Vasily Bekh was used to transport ammunition, weapons and personnel to Snake Island, which is vital for protecting sea lanes out of the



key port of Odesa.

Snake Island, located some 35 kilometers (20 miles) off the coast, figured memorably early in the war when Ukrainian border guards stationed there defied Russian orders to surrender, using colorful language that later became a rallying cry. There was no immediate reaction from Russian authorities about the Ukrainian claim.

The war's disruption to exports of grain and other crops from Ukraine that feed the world has captured global attention and sent bread prices soaring across the world. But the production of other, more niche foodstuffs has also been impacted, including for a Ukrainian snail farmer.

The organiser of the Eurovision Song Contest said Friday that it will start talks with the BBC on possibly holding next year's event in the U.K. After concluding that it can't be held in Ukraine. Last month, Ukrainian band Kalush Orchestra won the 2022 contest, buoying Ukrainian spirits. The event is traditionally staged by the previous year's winner.

After a series of setbacks early in the war, including the failure to seize Ukraine's capital, Russian forces have switched their focus to the Donbas, pressing a grinding offensive. In recent weeks, they have moved in on Sievierodonetsk and surrounding villages — the last pocket of the Luhansk region not yet claimed by Russia or its allies.

"The Russians are pouring fire on the city," said Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai. "It's getting harder and harder for us to fight in Sievierodonetsk, because the Russians outnumber us in artillery and manpower, and it's very difficult for us to resist this barrage of fire."

The constant shelling made it impossible for 568 people, including 38 children, sheltering in the Azot chemical plant in the city to escape, he said.

Russian forces have destroyed all three bridges leading out of the city, but Haidai said it still had not been fully blocked off.

## Amid Ukraine's war, farmer takes comfort from her snails

AP ■ VERESNYA (UKRAINE)

The Ukrainian farmer was living a quiet life with the quietest of creatures: snails that she raises for export. Then, skies on the horizon turned flaming red. Russia had launched its invasion and nearby towns were burning.

Olena Avramenko's village of Veresnya, northwest of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, was quickly occupied by Russian forces. But her snails were too precious to leave.

So she stayed, sheltering in her basement and cooking meals of snails — snail ravioli, fried snails, snails with garlic butter — for herself and the eight other people she took in.

The war's disruption to exports of grain and other crops from Ukraine that feed the world has captured global attention and sent bread prices soaring across the world. But the production of other, more niche foodstuffs has also been impacted.

Before the war threw Ukrainian life and its economy into a tailspin, farmers and artisans in the country were successfully trying their hands not just with snails but also with oysters, edible frogs, vegetable-based milks, craft beers, cheeses and other products for European markets.

Avramenko and her son, Anton, turned to snail farming five years ago. He sold everything to invest in the business, which at the time was seen as a risky, exotic business in Ukraine. For them, it was an adventure, something new to learn. They exported the snails to Spanish restaurants and Avramenko realized she had



found her calling.

"I stayed to protect our farm and home," she said. "If I hadn't done it, nothing would have been left."

In France, where snails are eaten piping hot with oozing garlic butter or mixed into pates, importers had noticed Ukrainian snails making inroads into the market. Exports to the European Union of raw Ukrainian snails more than doubled between 2017 and 2021, from 347 tons to 844 tons.

"But this number could be underestimated," said Pierre Commere of the French agro-industry group Adepace. "For several years now there has been a long-running crisis in the snail industry. It has become more and more difficult to find snails and prices are rising."

During the Russian occupation of her village, Avramenko found another calling: taking her mind off the war by dreaming up new recipes for snails when peace returned.

Her son, luckily, was not in Veresnya when the Russian invasion started on Feb. 24 and he couldn't immediately get back. But Russian soldiers didn't seem interested in their snails. They did come searching for fuel, smashing a window and asking Avramenko for her keys.

She gently scolded them for breaking and entering. One of them asked her to forgive him.

Russian forces pulled out of Veresnya at the end of March, part of a general withdrawal from the north and around Kyiv to head out for a massive Russian offensive on Ukraine's east and south, where the fight-

ing still rages. Many villages in the Kyiv area were littered with bodies and international experts are working there to document suspected war crimes.

Her son called the day after the Russian pullout and said they'd get straight back to work. He said because the war delayed the start of the snail-rearing season, their business will at best only break even this year. But he didn't want the slow pace of snail farming, he felt, will do everyone some good.

"I was somewhere between fear and collapse when he said that," Avramenko said. "But it was the right thing to do. You need to do something to overcome the state of shock. If not, you can easily lose your mind."

## Ukraine plans visa regime for Russians amid war



AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine plans to introduce a visa regime for Russian citizens, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday.

The move is likely to be viewed as symbolic given that the borders between the neighbouring countries are officially closed while they are at war in Ukraine. It nevertheless represents a significant change to the ease of travel previously permitted.

In a Telegram post, Zelenskyy said that Russians will need a visa to enter Ukraine from July 1. He said the decision, which is due to be formalised through a Cabinet resolution, was motivated by "unprecedented threats to the national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Ukraine.

Before Moscow invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, Russians didn't need visas to enter the country. Many Russians have relatives across the border, while others travelled regularly to visit Ukraine's southern beaches and urban cultural hubs.

The war in Ukraine Russia's war on its southern neighbour was in its 17th week on Friday.

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson flew out to Ukraine to meet President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a surprise visit to the capital Kyiv, where he launched a major training operation for Ukrainian armed forces with the potential to train up to 10,000 soldiers every 120 days.

Johnson told Zelenskyy that the UK's landmark programme could fundamentally change the equation of the war, ensuring the armed forces of Ukraine have the resilience they need to fight the Russian forces of President Vladimir Putin.

He was due to address a summit in Doncaster in northern England but tweeted to reveal he was in Kyiv instead.

"President, Volodymyr, it is good to be in Kyiv again," said Johnson.

In a statement from Downing Street, the prime minister stressed that the UK will be with Ukraine until they "ultimately prevail".

"My visit today, in the

depths of this war, is to send a clear and simple message to the Ukrainian people: the UK is with you, and we will be with you until you ultimately prevail," said Johnson.

Johnson and Zelenskyy are said to have discussed the situation in Ukraine and how the latest UK-led programme would train and drill the armed forces of Ukraine using battle-proven British Army expertise, allowing them to accelerate their deployment, rebuild their forces, and scale-up their resistance.

"As Ukrainian soldiers fire UK missiles in defence of your nation's sovereignty, they do so also in defence of the very freedoms we take for granted. That is why I have offered President Zelenskyy a major new military training programme that could change the equation of this war — harnessing that most powerful of forces, the Ukrainian determination to win," Johnson said.

"Two months on from my last visit, the Ukrainian grit, determination and resilience is stronger than ever, and I know that unbreakable resolve will long outlive the vain ambitions of President Putin," he added.

The previous Operation Orbital saw the UK train more than 22,000 Ukrainian personnel from 2015 until the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The new programme would train forces outside of the UK. Each soldier would spend three weeks on the training course, learning battle-winning skills for the front line, as well as basic medical training, cyber-security and counter explosive tactics. Alongside the training offer, the leaders also discussed how the UK can play a "pivotal role" in ending the blockade of grain. Downing Street said the training programme builds on the UK's global leadership in supporting Ukraine in its valiant defence of its country.

## Australia's new PM considers visit to Ukraine

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australia's new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Friday he would take advice on whether to accept President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's invitation to visit Ukraine during an upcoming European trip.

Albanese will attend a NATO meeting in Spain at the end of this month.

Albanese said he only became aware of the invitation to visit Ukraine when he read a newspaper report Friday.

"I'll take appropriate advice, and obviously there are security issues as well in terms of such a visit," Albanese told reporters.

"I appreciate the spirit in which it's been offered and one of the reasons why Australia has been invited to NATO is that Australia is the largest non-NATO contributor to give support to Ukraine in its defense of its national sovereignty against Russia's illegal, immoral invasion. And we'll continue to stand with the people of Ukraine," Albanese added.

Zelenskyy gave the invitation when he wrote to congratulate Albanese on his center-left Labor Party's win at elections on May 21, said Ukraine Embassy in Australia's deputy head of mission Volodymyr Shalkivski.

The invitation was for Albanese to "visit



Ukraine at his convenience," Shalkivski said, and the embassy handed the invitation over to the new administration June 7.

European leaders are increasingly visiting Ukraine's capital Kyiv by rail from Poland. Zelenskyy addressed the Australian Parliament by video in late March when then-Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative coalition was in power. The president appealed for armored vehicles and tougher sanctions against Russia.

Australia responded by promising 14 M113 fully tracked armored personnel carriers and 40 Bushmaster four-wheel-drive armored vehicles. The vehicles brought the cost of Australia's contribution to Ukraine's defense to 285 million Australian dollars (USD 200 million) by late May.

**GOVERNMENT OF UTTARAKHAND**  
**Office of Superintending Engineer, Research Circle**  
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**e-Tender Notice No. : 01/SE (R) NHP/e-Tender/2022-23 Dated 17.06.2022**  
Superintending Engineer, Research Circle, Irrigation Research Institute, Roorkee, Uttarakhand on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites item wise rates through e-tenders in "Two Bid System" for the following work.

S. No.	Name of work	Cost of tender form (Rs.)	Validity of Tender	Period of completion
1	2	3	4	5
1	Supply, installation, testing & commissioning of Echo Sounder in Uttarakhand under National Hydrology Project	4,000.00+ GST @ 18%	120 Days	3 months

**Key Dates**

1	Date of calling	17.06.2022	-
2	Date of online publication	17.06.2022	05.30 PM
3	Documents downloads start date	17.06.2022	06.00 PM
4	Pre-bid meeting date	27.06.2022	01.30 PM
5	Bid submission start date	07.07.2022	03.30 PM
6	Bid submission end date	18.07.2022	03.00 PM
7	Physical Submission of bid security and cost of bidding document	18.07.2022	03.00 PM
8	Date of opening of Technical bid	18.07.2022	03.30 PM
9	Date of opening of financial bid	To be declared later	

For further details please log on to [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in)

**Superintending Engineer**  
**Research Circle**  
**Irrigation Research Institute, Roorkee**

**LATTER NO. 1573 DATE 17.06.2022**

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING,**  
**UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM**  
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)  
Letter No.: 1069/Nivida-Anubandh/Ranikhet/97  
Dated : 17.06.2022

**E-Tender Notice**

- Name of the work:-** CONSTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT INTER COLLEGE MAIN BUILDING AT MACHOD, DISTT-ALMORA
- Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 198.98 Lakh
- Period of Completion:-** 8 Month
- Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 17-06-2022 (17.00 hrs)
- Online Bid submission: End date :-** 09-07-2022 (17.00 hrs)
- Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 12-07-2022 (11.00hrs)
- Name and Address of the Officer inviting bid:-** General Manager (Kumaon), Nirman Wing, Uttarakhand Pey Jai Nigam, Haldwani.
- Pre-bid meeting details (if required) Date & Place:-** 23-06-2022 (11.00 hrs) Project Manager Construction Unit Uttarakhand Peyjal Nigam, Ranikhet.
- For further details, details of subsequent Amendment / correction documentation etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in)

**GENERAL MANAGER**

**OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING,**  
**UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM**  
E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL (PIN 263139)  
Letter No.: 1070/Nivida-Anubandh/Ranikhet/98  
Dated : 17.06.2022

**E-Tender Notice**

- Name of the work:-** Construction of Multipurpose Hall at Government Girls Inter College at Chaukhotia, District-Almora
- Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 99.57 Lakh
- Period of Completion:-** 8 Month
- Date and Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal:-** 17-06-2022 (17.00 hrs)
- Online Bid submission: End date :-** 09-07-2022 (17.00 hrs)
- Date & Time of Technical bid Opening :-** 12-07-2022 (11.00hrs)
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**GENERAL MANAGER**



# Net direct tax mop-up rises 45%



## To over ₹3.39 lakh cr till mid-June

**New Delhi:** The net direct tax collections till mid-June this fiscal increased 45 per cent to over ₹3.39 lakh crore, buoyed by decent advance tax mop-up, the Income Tax department said on Friday.

The net direct tax collection of over ₹3.39 lakh crore includes Corporation Tax (CIT) at over ₹1.70 lakh crore and Personal Income Tax (PIT), including Security Transaction Tax (STT), at over ₹1.67 lakh crore.

"The figures of Direct Tax collections for the Financial Year 2022-23, as on June 16, 2022, show that net collections are at ₹3,39,225 crore compared to ₹2,33,651 crore over the corresponding period of the preceding year, representing an increase of 45 per cent over the collections of the preceding year," the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said.

The advance tax collections for the first quarter this fiscal stand at over ₹1.01 lakh crore against ₹75,783 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, a growth of more than 33 per cent.

This comprises CIT at ₹78,842 crore and PIT at ₹22,175 crore. **PTI**

# RBI not behind the curve, says Governor Shaktikanta

## 'Focus on inflation target could have been disastrous for economy'

**Mumbai:** Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday refuted criticism of the RBI being behind the curve in its policies, making it clear that the consequences of focusing on the 4 per cent inflation target would have been "disastrous" for the pandemic-hit economy.

In comments that came two days after former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian co-authored an article blaming the RBI for acting late on inflation and being behind the curve, Das said the central bank acted as per the evolving economic developments and also gave out a timeline of its actions to explain the shift.

"...tolerance of a higher inflation during the pandemic was a necessity, and we still stand by our decision," Das said speaking at an event organised

by Financial Express here.

He said the RBI switched into ultra-accommodation as soon as the country went into the lockdown and shifted focus to inflation two years later in April 2022, when it saw that the GDP had gone beyond the pre-pandemic level.

Despite its accommodative policies, the economy contracted by 6.6 per cent in FY21 and recovered to barely above the pre-pandemic levels in FY22, he said, stressing that a shift in policy management to focus on inflation even 3-4 months before April 2022 was not apt.

"I feel that we are very much in line with the requirements of our time, the RBI has acted proactively and I would not agree with any perception or any sort of description that the RBI has fallen behind the curve," Das said.

Subramanian's article blamed the RBI for being behind the curve, pointing out that the 4 per cent inflation target has not been met since October 2019 and in 18 of the 32 months since then, the headline consumer price inflation has breached even the

RBI's ceiling of 6 per cent. It also raised question marks over inflation forecasting.

Disclosing that he has not read the article and making it clear that he does not want to join any debate, Das said the RBI's mandate is that of flexible inflation targeting where it is required to take care of both price rise and growth, especially so in extraordinary situations like a pandemic.

"If we had been very firm in maintaining 4 per cent (inflation) and kept the rates unduly high, I'm sorry, the consequences of that approach would have been disastrous for the economy."

"If we had attempted to keep...monetary policy tighter at that time, the economic damage that you would have caused to our economy and to our financial markets would have been enormous and it would have taken years for India to come back," he noted.

According to the governor, the RBI was not optimistic with its FY23 inflation estimate of 4.5 per cent made public ahead of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which sent the oil prices rocketing. **PTI**

# Big tech's financial services play poses systemic concerns like overleverage: RBI Governor

**Mumbai:** RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday said the entry of big tech firms into the financial sector poses systemic concerns like overleverage at the borrowers' ends.

The entry of firms like Google, Amazon and Facebook (Meta), referred as big tech companies, also poses question marks around competition and data privacy.

"They (big tech) carry risks, which need to be properly assessed and dealt with," Das said while speaking at Modern BFSI Summit 2022 organised by Financial Express.

Such companies can include entities in e-commerce, search engines and social media platforms that have started to offer financial services in a "big way" on their own or through tie-ups, he said, adding this is leading to the use of new methodologies in credit assessment.

"Such large-scale use of new methodologies in credit assessment can create systemic concerns like overleverage, inadequate credit assessment and similar other risks," he added.

Das said deploying harsh recovery methods like calling



up at odd hours or using foul language is "unacceptable" and assured that the RBI is paying "serious attention" to such happenings to ensure necessary action is taken to curb such activities.

He said most of such instances are reported from unregulated entities, but added that the central bank has also come across such tactics being used by entities regulated by the RBI, and urged all players to give special attention to the same.

The comments came at a time when there have been allegations of suicides by many borrowers triggered by harsh recovery practices by agents.

The central bank will continue with its role to foster innovation while trying to contain the systemic challenges, he said, adding that the RBI will soon come out with a discussion paper on digital lending. **PTI**

# Govt all set to ensure capex support growth momentum

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Government is committed to ensure that capital expenditure will continue to support the economic growth momentum regained after the third Covid-19 wave, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said on Friday.

The government has taken various steps -- including lowering taxes, the continuation of privatisation, setting up institutions for sequestering bad loans and managing them and launching an asset monetisation drive -- to strengthen the real economy.

"Given the ongoing sense of uncertainty among the private sector participants, both in banking and the non-banking world, the government is committed to making sure that capital expenditure continues (in) such (a way) that growth impulse that we have regained after the third wave is not surrendered," Nageswaran said while speaking at a banking event organised by Financial Express. In the previous fiscal the government managed to spend ₹5.92 lakh crore. **PTI**

# Rupee settles flat at 78.09 against US dollar



**Mumbai:** The rupee pared initial gains to settle just 1 paisa higher at 78.09 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday amid a muted trend in domestic equities and unabated foreign capital outflows.

A strong dollar overseas and higher crude prices also kept the domestic unit under pressure, forex dealers said. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened strong at 78.03 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 78.02 and a low of 78.09.

It finally ended at 78.09, registering a gain of 1 paisa over its previous close of 78.10. The dollar index, which

gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, climbed 0.71 per cent to 104.37.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, spurted 0.96 per cent to USD 120.96 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 135.37 points or 0.26 per cent lower at 51,360.42, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 67.10 points or 0.44 per cent to 15,293.50.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,257.65 crore, as per exchange data. **PTI**

# Gold climbs by ₹416; silver zooms ₹1,014

**New Delhi:** Gold prices in the national capital on Friday rallied by ₹416 to ₹50,802 per 10 grams, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at ₹50,386 per 10 grams.

Silver also surged by ₹1,014 to ₹61,343 per kg from ₹60,329 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi were up by ₹416 reflecting overnight rally in COMEX gold prices," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities.

In the international market gold was quoting lower at USD 1,850 per ounce and silver was trading flat at USD 21.90 per ounce. **PTI**

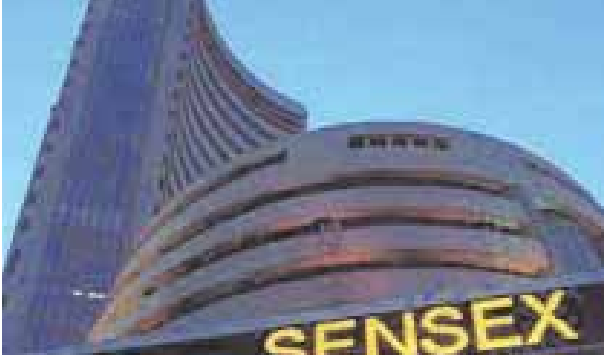
# Markets decline for 6th day; Sensex sheds 135 points

**Mumbai:** Benchmark indices extended their losing streak to the sixth straight session on Friday, with the Sensex declining 135 points in choppy trade amid mixed global markets, unabated foreign fund outflows, and rising crude oil prices.

The BSE benchmark declined 135.37 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 51,360.42. During the day, the benchmark faced volatility and tanked 574.57 points or 1.11 per cent to its one-year low of 50,921.22.

The NSE Nifty went lower by 67.10 points or 0.44 per cent to end at 15,293.50. From the Sensex pack, Titan, Wipro, Dr Reddy's, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, PowerGrid, Larsen & Toubro, UltraTech Cement, Maruti, TCS and Hindustan Unilever were the biggest laggards.

On the other hand, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries and ICICI Bank



were among the gainers.

In Asia, markets in Tokyo and Seoul ended lower, while Hong Kong and Shanghai posted gains. European markets were trading in the green in mid-session deals. Stock exchanges in the US ended sharply lower on Thursday.

"The dominant theme impacting equity markets globally is the synchronised global monetary tightening and the consequent fears of economic

slowdown," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 0.96 per cent to USD 120.96 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital market, as they sold shares worth Rs 3,257.65 crore on Thursday, as per exchange data. **PTI**

# Coal India plans green mining options by leveraging technology to boost output

**New Delhi:** State-owned CIL is looking at green mining options by leveraging a slew of eco-friendly technologies in both underground and open-cast mines, a move that would help in augmenting the production and reduce the adverse impact on environment.

With land turning out to be a major pain point for expansion of coal mining operations, these technologies bypass land acquisition and avoid its degradation.

"Coal India Ltd (CIL) is taking a close look on green mining options in a bid to minimise adverse environmental impact by leveraging a slew of eco-friendly technologies in its underground and opencast mines," the maharatna firm said.

The locked-up coal assets left out earlier due to techno-commercial and safety



concerns can now be unearthed through these technologies, it said.

The Public Sector Unit (PSU) is exploring ramping up its underground production by four-fold to 100 million tonnes (MT) by FY30 from 25.6 MT in FY22.

Production from underground mines is environmentally clean, minimally invasive on land degradation and society friendly, it said. **PTI**

# WTO clinches deal on fisheries subsidies; agrees for patent waiver for Covid vaccines

**Geneva:** After two nights of intense negotiations, World Trade Organisation members on Friday clinched a deal on curbing harmful fishing subsidies and agreed for a temporary patent waiver for Covid-19 vaccines.

It was also agreed to find a final solution to the issue of continuation of moratorium on imposing customs duties on electronic transmission of goods by the next ministerial conference of the WTO or not later than March 2024.

"All in all, it is a good package," commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal told reporters here.

After a gap of about nine years, a pact -- fisheries subsidies agreement -- was agreed



upon by the members of the WTO (World Trade Organisation).

The four-day talks, which started on June 12, got over only on early Friday.

It was in 2013 at the Bali ministerial conference of the WTO, the member countries inked the trade facilitation

agreement to promote seamless movement of goods across the global borders.

The fisheries subsidies agreement, which was under discussions for over two decades, was finalised to eliminate subsidies on overfishing, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. **PTI**

# HDFC Life to raise up to ₹350 cr debt capital via bonds

**New Delhi:** HDFC Life Insurance Company on Friday said it will raise debt capital of up to ₹350 crore by issuing bonds on a private placement basis.

The Capital Raising Committee of the company's board approved a proposal for raising up to ₹350 crore through issuance of 3,500 non-convertible debentures, HDFC Life said in a regulatory filing.

The company said the bonds will carry coupon rate of 8.20 per cent per annum.

The bonds will be listed on wholesale debt market segment of NSE, it said.

HDFC Life stock was trading at ₹550 on BSE, down 3.69 per cent from the previous close. **PTI**

# PACL case: Sebi panel provides facilities for investors to update mobile number

**New Delhi:** A high-powered Sebi committee on Friday provided facilities to PACL investors to update details of their mobile numbers and enquire whether SMSs have been sent to them to submit original certificates.

The committee in April asked investors, who invested in illegal schemes of PACL, to submit their original registration certificates by June 30 only after receiving an SMS from the panel.

This was applicable only to those investors whose claim money is between ₹10,001 and ₹15,000 and whose applications were verified.

The markets regulator had set up a committee headed by former Chief Justice of India RM Lodha following a

Supreme Court order to refund money to investors in the matter of PACL Group.

The panel is overseeing the process of disposing of properties to refund investors after verifying their genuineness. It has already initiated the process of refund in phases.

PACL, also known as Pearl Group, which had raised money from the public in the name of agriculture and real estate businesses, was found by Sebi to have collected more than ₹60,000 crore through illegal collective investment schemes (CIS) over a period of 18 years.

According to a press release uploaded on Sebi's website, the committee has been receiving queries from investors regarding the non-receipt of

SMS calling for original PACL certificates owing to a change of mobile number.

Many investors have said that mobile numbers provided by them during the submission of online claims are no longer operational. Accordingly, the committee has now provided few facilities to investors or applicants of PACL on the web portal.

"Investors/applicants of PACL Ltd can now update/change their registered mobile numbers online on the web portal. Investors/applicants with claims between ₹10,001 and ₹15,000 can now check on the web portal whether SMS has been sent to their registered mobile numbers for submission of original PACL certificates," according to a release. **PTI**

# To rein in pvt retailers, Govt expands USO to remote petrol pumps

**New Delhi:** In a bid to rein in private fuel retailers curtailing operations to cut losses, the government has expanded the scope of Universal Service Obligation (USO), mandating licensed entities to maintain petrol and diesel sales at all petrol pumps, including in remote areas, for specified working hours.

"The government has now expanded the horizon of USO by including all retail outlets (petrol pumps) including remote area ROs under their ambit," the oil ministry said in a statement on Friday.

After this, entities that have been granted licences to retail petrol and diesel will be "obligated to extend the USO to all the retail consumers at all the retail outlets."

Failure to meet norms can lead to the cancellation of licences.

"This has been done with an objective to ensure a higher level of customer services in the market and to ensure that adherence to the USO forms a part of the market discipline," the ministry said.

The move follows some petrol pumps operated by PSU firms in states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Gujarat going out of stock following a sudden surge in demand.

This demand followed the curtailment of operations by private fuel retailers who could not compete with the heavily under-priced rates of public sector companies.

State fuel retailers haven't changed retail prices since April 6 despite crude oil rates spiking to a decade high. **PTI**

# Will go on strike if Electricity (Amendment) Bill is passed without consultation: AIPEF

**New Delhi:** The All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) on Friday warned that its members would go on strike if Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2021 is passed without taking them into confidence.

Union Power Minister R K Singh on Thursday said the Bill, which aims at enabling consumers to choose between multiple service providers just like in case of telecom services, is likely to be introduced and pushed for passage in the monsoon session of Parliament beginning July.

AIPEF said it strongly opposes the statement made by the minister.

"Any unilateral action to get the Bill passed in Parliament without taking the

electricity employees and engineers across the country into confidence will be strongly opposed and all 27 lakh electricity employees and engineers of the country will be forced to resort to nationwide strike in protest against the move," AIPEF said in a statement.

It said it has also appealed to all chief ministers of states and Union Territories to strongly oppose the Bill in the larger interest of the energy sector and electricity consumers.

"After farmers' agitation last year, the government had given a written assurance to United Kisan Morcha that the Bill will not be placed in Parliament without discussion with all the stakeholders. **PTI**

# Maruti invests ₹2 cr in AI startup Sociograph Solutions

**New Delhi:** The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India on Friday said it has invested around Rs 2 crore in Sociograph Solutions Pvt Ltd (SSPL), a startup specialising in artificial intelligence.

The investment is part of the company's MAIL initiative to support startups with promising mobility solutions, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) said in a statement.

The company plans to use the visual artificial intelligence (AI) platform of SSPL called Dave.AI, with an aim to enhance the digital sales experience of its customers, it added.

"Our investment in SSPL demonstrates our resolve towards improving business metrics using contemporary technology," MSIL Managing Director & CEO Hisashi



Takeuchi said.

The company has undertaken the ambitious Mobility & Automobile Innovation Lab (MAIL) programme since 2019 to empower the mobility startup ecosystem in the country. The Maruti Suzuki Innovation Fund has been set up with an aim to invest in early-stage startups which are part of Maruti Suzuki programmes, he added.

"Our intent is to encourage innovation and promote the entrepreneurial spirit of startups," Takeuchi said. **PTI**

# Delhi Airport bags best airport award 2022

## This is fourth award in a row

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Airport on Friday has been awarded as the 'Best Airport in India and South Asia' in 2022 by Skytrax World Airport Awards.

According to the statement released by the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), Delhi Airport a GMR infrastructure limited-led consortium, today announced that Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), Delhi, has been adjudged the 'Best Airport in

India and South Asia' in 2022 Skytrax World Airport Awards. The airport has received the Best Airport accolade for the fourth consecutive year (2019-2022). "The airport has also improved its overall ranking, moving to the 37th place in 2022 from last year's 45th position. Delhi Airport continues to be the only Indian airport to be in the league of the World's Top 50 Airports," it said.

Commenting on the occasion, Videh Jaipuria, CEO of DIAL said that All the airport staff, stakeholders, and partners working at the airport have made Delhi Airport the Best Airport in India and South Asia with their constant resilience, focus, and customer-centricity.

This is a proud moment for all of us. We take immense pride in receiving this prestigious accolade. Delhi Airport has always set a new benchmark in providing the best airport experience to all its passengers and will continue to do so." The Skytrax World Airport Awards are the most prestigious accolades for the airport industry, voted by customers in the largest, annual global airport customer satisfaction survey. They are regarded as the quality benchmark for the world airport industry, assessing customer service and facilities across over 550 airports. The survey and awards are independent of any airport control or inputs.



# India demolish Proteas to make it 2-2

## Dinesh Karthik and Hardik Pandya shine with bat before Avesh Khan's 4 for 18 helps Men in Blue win by 82 runs

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Dinesh Karthik played a knock to remember before Avesh Khan gave his dad a "perfect birthday present" with a fiery spell as India steam-rolled South Africa by 82 runs here on Friday to level the five-match series 2-2.

Karthik (55 off 27) scored his maiden fifty close to 16 years after his T20 debut and alongside vice-captain Hardik Pandya (46 off 31) took India to a fighting 169 for six.

For the second game in a row, South African batters faltered and collapsed to 87 for nine in 16.5 overs with skipper Temba Bavuma retired hurt. Avesh (4/18) led India's brilliant display with the ball and recorded his career-best figures in the process. It was an away team's lowest total in T20 Internationals in India.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Avesh were impressive with the new ball as South Africa slipped to 35 for two in the powerplay. After a hit on the shoulder, Temba Bavuma (8) injured his left elbow with a dive on the run and had to leave the field. He didn't even come out for the post-match

presentation ceremony.

Quinton de Kock (14), who missed the last two games due to a wrist injury, was run out after getting a 'yes and no' from Dwaine Pretorius at the other end.

The pitch remained tricky to bat on even in the second innings with the odd ball gripping and rising sharply from good length, making strokeplay difficult.

South Africa could never get into the chase with wickets falling regularly.

The series decider will be played in Bengaluru on Sunday.

Earlier, the Indians were struggling at 81 for four before a 65-run stand between Hardik and Karthik brought the home team back into the game.

India were able to amass 73 runs in the last five overs.

Having won their fourth toss in as many games, South

Africa put the Indians on the back-foot in the powerplay despite the absence of their lead bowler Kagiso Rabada due to an injury.

The other pacer, who missed due to an injury was Wayne Parnell while star opener Quinton de Kock



made a welcome return at the expense of Reeza Hendricks. The first ball after the

powerplay made matters worse for India as the hosts struggled to 40 for three in 6.1

overs.

Ishan Kishan, who played some fine strokes en route to

his 27 off 26, was dismissed on the very ball of Anrich Nortje's opening spell.



## Captain Brathwaite puts Windies in charge

AP ■ ANITGUA

Kraig Brathwaite's ponderous progress towards an 11th Test century put the West Indies in control at 159 for three in reply to Bangladesh's paltry first innings total of 103 at lunch on the second day of the first Test on Friday.

Resuming on 42 with his team at 95 for two after the bowlers' demolition job on the opening day, the West Indies captain continued with his calm but snail pace manner in getting to 75 at the interval.

He has already faced 239 deliveries, stroking eight fours, in more than five hours at the crease from the start of the innings when he opened the batting in partnership with John Campbell.

Campbell absorbed 72 deliveries before being dismissed for 24 late on day one while Jermaine Blackwood, the vice-captain, resumes after lunch in partnership with Brathwaite with nine runs to his name off 43 deliveries.

Bangladesh's lone success on the second morning was nevertheless fully deserved as Nkrumah Bonner lived a charmed life until being bowled off the inside-edge for 33 by Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan.

Having started the morn-

ing alongside Brathwaite, Bonner never looked comfortable against the seam bowlers and could have departed much earlier but for two moments of outrageous good fortune.

He should have been given out caught behind off Ebadot Hossain except that the players' appeal lacked conviction while Shakib opted not to review the decision, only for television replays to confirm that Bonner did indeed edge the ball into the gloves of wicketkeeper Nurul Hasan.

There was more frustration for Bangladesh when Khaled Ahmed replaced Ebadot and took a healthy edge off Bonner's bat.

However the bowler could only look on in dismay as the ball flew past the left shoulder of an unresponsive Najmul Hossain at first slip.

By the time he was eventually removed, the third-wicket partnership with Brathwaite was worth 62 runs.

Earlier on Thursday, Bangladesh's well-established vulnerability to fast bowling was in evidence again with the visitors crashing to 103 all out off fewer than 33 overs after being put in to bat.

Jayden Seales and Alzarri Joseph were the most successful West Indies bowlers with identical figures of three for 33.

AP ■ PALLEKELE

Skipper Dasun Shanaka on Thursday said Chamika Karunaratne remains a trusted performer for Sri Lanka after the fast bowler helped stun Australia by 26 runs in a rain-hit second ODI.

Chasing a rain-revised target of 216 in 43 overs, Australia suffered from regular wicket falls to get bowled out for 189 in 37.1 overs as Sri Lanka bounced back from their opening loss in the five-match series in Pallekele.

Karunaratne returned figures of 3-47 including Steve Smith, for 28, and Glenn Maxwell, for 30, and was ably supported by fellow quick Dushmantha Chameera who got the final batsman to bring the raucous home crowd to its feet. Spinners Dhananjaya de Silva, Dunith Wellalage and Chameera took two wickets each.

"We were a few runs short. But when we went onto the field, I had a feeling and the trust that our bowlers would defend," said

Shanaka.

On man of the match Karunaratne, he said, "Chamika is a born warrior. He delivers whenever I throw the ball to him."

De Silva also scored 34 with the bat and put on 61 runs for the third wicket with Kusal Mendis, who made 36, to guide Sri Lanka to 220 for nine when rain forced play to stop and late end the innings.

Pat Cummins returned figures of 4-35 but his effort went in vain. Australia lost their openers Aaron Finch, on 14, and David Warner, on 37, to De Silva as the tourists faltered in their tricky chase on a seemingly tough pitch to bat.

Smith and Travis Head attempted to rebuild the innings



and put together 31 runs before Karunaratne broke through.

Karunaratne got Smith for 28 and Wellalage's two wickets of Head (23) and Marnus Labuschagne (18) in his two

overs put the Aussies in trouble at 132-5.

Maxwell hit back to unsettle the bowlers in his brief stay at the wicket but finally mistimed a shot to get caught at

# Shanaka hails Chamika as SL win rain-hit 2nd ODI

partnerships.

Debutant left-arm spinner Matthew Kuhnemann struck in his third over of international cricket to send back Pathum Nissanka, who was caught behind for 14.

Kuhnemann returned figures of 2-48 and took two catches.

Cummins, Australia's Test captain who returned to the side after recovering from an injury at the start of the series, got the left-handed Danushka Gunathilaka caught in the deep for 18.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Mendis and de Silva attempted to rebuild with a stand that was broken by Cummins.

Cummins took down De Silva and Mendis fell to Maxwell's caught and bowled effort. Maxwell took one wicket with his off-spin to rattle the opposition middle order.

Wickets kept falling despite Shanaka's attacking cameo of 34, which ended with a mishit to point off leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson.

## Eng hit ODI world-record 498-4 against Netherlands

AP ■ AMSTELVEEN

England broke its own record for the highest-ever score in the history of one-day international cricket by making 498-4 against the Netherlands on Friday.

The total surpassed the 481-6 made by England against Australia at Trent Bridge in June 2018.

Jos Buttler, Dawid Malan and Phil Salt all hit centuries in Amstelveen, outside Amsterdam.

Buttler reached three figures in 47 balls for the second-fastest hundred for England. His crowd-pleasing knock of 162 not out contained 14 of the team's 26 sixes.

Buttler now has the three quickest ODI centuries for the national team - off 46 balls, 47 balls and 50 balls.

Salt made 122 off 93 balls and Malan 125 off



109 balls, while Liam Livingstone weighed in with a 22-ball 66 not out.

The Netherlands - playing an ODI against England for the first time outside a Cricket World Cup - had only a few moments to savor amid a barrage of big-hitting from the tourists, which led to a number of balls being lost outside the stadium.

Shane Snater bowled his cousin, Jason Roy, to leave England 1-1 and Pieter Seelaar took two wickets off successive balls - including captain Eoin Morgan for a golden duck.

# Jaiswal, Jaffer hundreds derail UP

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A dominant Mumbai rode on impressive hundreds from Yashasvi Jaiswal and Armaan Jaffer to put Uttar Pradesh on the back-foot by taking their overall lead past the 600-mark on the fourth day of their Ranji Trophy semi-final here on Friday.

It was a run-feast on day four as the two batted with authority and it is almost certain now that the 41-time Ranji Trophy winners would sail into the summit clash.

The Amol Mazumdar coached side, in their second essay, was poised at 449 for four when stumps were drawn and had an overall lead of staggering 662 runs.

Jaiswal (181), who has hit his maiden hundred in the quarter-final, slammed back-to-



back centuries in the current one, as he and Jaffer (127), bulldozed a list-less Uttar Pradesh attack.

Mumbai, which already had a lead of 346 runs, began on their overnight score of 133 for one.

**JAISWAL (181), WHO HAS HIT HIS MAIDEN HUNDRED IN THE QUARTER-FINAL, SLAMMED BACK-TO-BACK CENTURIES IN THE CURRENT ONE**

And it was sheer dominance by their young batting duo of Jaiswal and Jaffer, who would surely have made his uncle Wasim proud, by his stellar performance.

The two young Mumbai batters, who started the day when they were in their 30s, pummelled the UP attack into submission with a variety of strokes on display in their 286-run stand for the second wicket.

It was raining boundaries at

the Just Cricket Academy as Jaiswal hammered 23 fours and one maximum in his 372-ball innings, while Jaffer smashed 15 fours and two sixes in his 259-ball knock.

Uttar Pradesh had to wait long for getting the first-wicket of the day and pacer Shivam Mavi (1/36) dismissed Jaffer in the 107th over of the innings, to break the mammoth stand.

But that did not deter Jaiswal, who kept playing shots at will and spared no bowler. Jaiswal missed a richly deserved double-hundred as he was caught by Aryan Juval off Price Yadav (2/69).

UP did get two wickets in quick succession, that of Suved Parkar (22) and Jaiswal, but till then the damage was done.

At stumps, Sarfaraz Khan (23 not out) and Shams Mulani (10 not out) were holding fort.



## Abhimanyu, Shahbaz keep Bengal in hunt

PTI ■ ALUR

Skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran's unbeaten 52 after Shahbaz Ahmed's superb all-round show gave Bengal a glimmer of hope even as Madhya Pradesh firmly held the upper-hand on the penultimate day of the Ranji Trophy semi-final here on Friday.

On a difficult fourth day pitch, the India A batter looked flawless and milked the field at ease, slamming six fours in his 104-ball knock as Bengal were precariously placed at 96 for 4, needing another 254 runs to reach the stiff winning target of 350.

Madhya Pradesh, on the other hand, need six wickets in pursuit of their first Ranji final after 23 years as the match is headed for a thrilling final day finish here on Saturday.

Mumbai Indians' left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya did the maximum damage for Madhya Pradesh.

He held on to his end,

bowling 19 overs non-stop to end the day with figures of 3/35 to jump to joint-second in the top wicket-takers' list this season with Jharkhand's Shabaz Nadeem (25).

Mumbai left-arm spinner Shams Mulani leads the list with 37 wickets.

Giving Abhimanyu company at the other end was the old warhorse Anustup Majumdar, unbeaten on 8 from 25 balls after he was dropped down to No 6 in a tactical move.

Bengal also have a capable batter in Shahbaz waiting in the dressing room but it would be an onerous task on a fifth day pitch as the odd ball has started staying low and some deliveries turning square.

Sloppy umpiring and lack of DRS in Ranji Trophy also let down Bengal as they lost the wicket of an in-form Sudip Gharami (19) given lbw by umpire Ravikant Reddy who failed to notice the ball hitting his glove to a Saransh Jain delivery which was also out of

the line.

Abhishek Raman continued his forgettable outing this season, getting out for a second successive duck — this time off the first ball — as Bengal got off to a jittery start in their stiff chase of 350.

Abhimanyu at the other end looked at ease and batted with positive intent with Gharami before his partner departed in the 12th over.

Bengal however had luck in their favour also and Abhimanyu survived on 31 when a Kartikeya delivery kissed his off stump but it was not enough to dislodge the bail. Wicketkeeper-batter Abhishek Porel (7) was promoted to No 4 but he failed to make use of the opportunity as he was done in by one that turned in sharply. First innings centurion Tiwary got a reprieve on six but he also could not make use of it and in his desperation to get going came down the track but failed to get proper elevation off Kartikeya's bowling.



# PRANNOY SAILS INTO INDONESIA SEMI-FINALS

AP ■ JAKARTA

India's HS Prannoy continued his impressive run as he sailed into the semi-finals of the Indonesia Open Super 1000 badminton tournament with a straight-game win over world number 13 Rasmus Gemke of Denmark here on Friday.

A little over a month after his heroic win over Gemke in the decisive fifth rubber against Denmark which ensured India's entry into the Thomas Cup final, Prannoy produced yet another finely-crafted performance to outwit the Danish world number 13 21-14, 21-12 in a 40-minute quarterfinal clash.

It is the second semifinal appearance for world number 23 Prannoy at the Indonesia event.

He had reached the last four in the 2017 edition during which he had stunned former Olympic Gold medallist Chen Long and Malaysian great Lee Chong Wei on way to the semifinals.

Prannoy, who had reached the Swiss Open Super 300 final in March, will next face China's Zhao Jun Peng.

Coming into the match with a 2-2 head-to-head count, Prannoy didn't put a foot wrong as he played some angled cross court shots and reverse slices to good effect to keep a firm grip on the match.

The match saw short rallies with Gemke bothered by a knee issue. Prannoy waited for his opponent to make



**PRANNOY PRODUCED YET ANOTHER FINELY CRAFTED PERFORMANCE TO OUTWIT THE WORLD NUMBER 13 21-14, 21-12**

mistakes and unleashed his attacking returns whenever there was an opportunity.

The result was Prannoy galloped to a 5-0 lead before entering the break with a 11-7 cushion. He kept things under check to led the first game all throughout.

In the end, a service fault handed the Indian six game

point opportunity and he sealed it with a smash on his rival's forehand corner.

The first half of the second game was a roller-coaster ride as Gemke produced a superb fightback. He started moving well and clawed back at 6-6 with a smash after lagging 3-6 initially.

Prannoy kept the pressure on his opponent but Gemke again drew parity at 9-9 with a prompt net shot but the Indian ensured a two-point cushion at the interval.

Prannoy continued to dominate the rallies after the break as his precise returns on his rival's forehand and backhand earned him points. A similar shot took the Indian to eight match points and he converted it with Gemke's return hitting the net.



## Spurs sign Bissouma

AP ■ LONDON

Tottenham announced the signing on Friday of midfielder Yves Bissouma from Brighton for a reported fee of £25 million (\$30 million), giving manager Antonio his third signing of the transfer window.

The highly rated Mali international shone as Brighton achieved their best-ever Premier League finish of ninth last season.

Bissouma has signed a four-year deal and will join new arrivals Ivan Perisic and Fraser Forster at the London club.

"The transfer is a very good one for the club and player," said Brighton manager Graham Potter.

"Yves has shown his undoubted ability and been an important player for us during his time with us.

"Now he has a new challenge with Tottenham, including the opportunity to play Champions League football, and everyone at the club wishes him well."

### LEIPZIG RECRUIT SCHLAGER

RB Leipzig on Friday signed Austria central midfielder Xaver Schlager from Bundesliga rivals VfL Wolfsburg after actioning an release clause in his contract.

According to reports, Leipzig will pay around 12 million euros (\$12.5 million) for the 24-year-old, who has signed a contract until 2026.

"RB Leipzig are one of Germany's top teams and are consistently in Europe, they have now won their first major title with the German Cup," said Schlager in a statement.

"I'm really pleased I can continue my development here."

The Austrian made 81 appearances, scoring three goals, for Wolfsburg, who he joined in 2019 from Leipzig's sister club Red Bull Salzburg.

## Bayern Munich to start Bundesliga title defence at Frankfurt



AP ■ FRANKFURT

Bayern Munich will start its bid for a record 11th consecutive Bundesliga title with a potentially tricky game away at Europa League winner Eintracht Frankfurt.

Frankfurt has won two of its last three games against Bayern ahead of their meeting August 5, which will kick off the Bundesliga's 60th anniversary season.

The league's 2022-23 schedule, released on Friday, has last season's second-place team Borussia Dortmund opening against Bayer Leverkusen on either August 6 or 7. Of the promoted teams, Schalke visits Cologne and Werder Bremen starts away at Wolfsburg.

There will be more than two months with no games in

the middle of the season because of the World Cup in Qatar. The Bundesliga will instead start its winter break November 13 and return January 20.

### PSG VS CLERMONT

Defending champion Paris Saint-Germain begins its bid for a record 11th French league title at modest Clermont in a season where games will be played on New Year's Day.

The opening round is over August 5-7 and the league will have games on January 1 and 2 for the first time because of a break for the World Cup in Qatar.

There will be a six-week hiatus; the winter break starting on November 14 and resuming on December 28 with a midweek round.

PSG shares the record for titles with 10-time champions Marseille and Saint-Etienne, which was relegated last season along with six-time winner Bordeaux.

Clermont finished in 17th place last season to avoid relegation.

PSG could have a new coach when the league begins, with Mauricio Pochettino touted to be replaced.

Marseille was runner-up last season to qualify automatically for the Champions League, and starts the season at home to Reims.

Monaco, which finished third to enter the Champions League qualifying rounds, has a tough match at Alsace-based Strasbourg.

teams, and include the New York Giants' MetLife Stadium and the Los Angeles Rams' \$5 billion SoFi Stadium, which hosted this year's Super Bowl.

Both venues are seen as contenders to host the 2026 final.

The 2026 tournament marks the first time three countries have hosted a World Cup, with the bulk of the games taking place in the United States.

Mexico will be hosting the finals for a third time after serving as solo hosts in 1970 and 1986.

Mexico City's Azteca Stadium, named on Thursday as one of the venues, will be the

## Top seed Axelsen advances

AP ■ JAKARTA

Top seed Viktor Axelsen advanced to the semi-final of the Indonesia Open after beating Indonesia's Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in a thrilling match held at the Istora Senayan sporting arena in Jakarta on Friday.

The badminton world number one overcame a fast start from Ginting to claim the first game 21-13.

Cheered on by the home crowd, Ginting stormed back to clinch the second game 21-19 to force a decider.

But the Tokyo Olympic champion dominated the third

game, winning 21-9 to secure a place in the semis.

Axelsen said handling the pressure from Ginting and the home crowd was key to his win.

"I really tried to focus on my game today and tried to play the right game," said Axelsen after the match.

"Ginting was playing well today. He's (playing) on home soil so he had the whole stadium with him but it was a great experience for me."

In the semis, Axelsen will



face Malaysia's rising star Lee Zii Jia, who beat Singapore's Loh Kean Yew 21-18, 16-21, 22-20.

In the women's singles, world number two Tai Tzu Ying breezed through to the semi-finals after beating Denmark's Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt.

The Taiwanese ace sealed her place in the top four after outplaying Kjaersfeldt 21-13, 21-13 to set up a match against Tokyo Olympic champion Chen Yu Fei.

AP ■ PALMA

Spanish tennis legend Rafael Nadal said on Friday he intends to play at Wimbledon but his final decision rests on how his troublesome left foot feels after training in London next week.

"My intention is to play at Wimbledon," Nadal said at a press conference in Mallorca.

"The treatment and the last week of training tells me there is a chance. I will travel to London on Monday, play an exhibition at Hurlingham and do a week of training to see if it's possible."

Nadal said injections meant his left foot felt "asleep" during the French Open final on June 5 -- he still beat Casper Ruud to claim a record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title.

Nadal travelled to Barcelona last week to begin "pulsed radiofrequency stimulation", a treatment aimed at



reducing nerve pain.

Nadal's spokesperson said the treatment would leave the nerves in his foot "temporarily numb".

The 36-year-old then had his first session on grass on Monday at the Mallorca Country Club in Santa Ponca and has steadily increased the

intensity of his training this week.

"I have noticed a difference, some slightly strange feelings to be honest," said Nadal.

"With the treatment in the nerves, things happen in your foot, sometimes one part of the foot goes numb, sometimes another.

"It's normal apparently and after a few weeks the nerves reorganise themselves.

"I'm happy. I've felt a bit of pain, but it's different to what I had before, which for me is progress."

Nadal has won Wimbledon twice in his career, in 2008 and 2010.

He missed last year's tournament due to pain in the same left foot while the 2020 tournament was cancelled due to the pandemic, meaning Nadal is hoping to make his first appearance at the All England Club in three years.

"I will travel to London, play two matches there before the tournament and follow my normal schedule to prepare for Wimbledon," Nadal said.

"Who knows what can happen in a couple of days -- if the situation changes or something more negative (happens), there will be a moment to explain."

PTI ■ ROTTERDAM

Their eyes firmly set on a podium finish in the upcoming Commonwealth Games, India would look to utilise their final 2021-2022 FIH Pro League tie against the Netherlands, starting here on Saturday, to address the grey areas.

In their previous tie against Tokyo Olympic champions Belgium in Antwerp last week, India won the first match 5-4 (3-3) in shoot-out before losing 2-3 to slid to the third position in the Pro League standings with 29 points from 14 games.

Belgium moved to the top with 31 points from 14 games -- on par with Netherlands --

who have played 12 matches.

Still in with an outside chance of finishing at the top of the standings, the Indian men would be hoping to sign off their campaign on a high against the mighty Netherlands.

But it is easier said than done as world No. 3 and reigning World Cup runners-up, the Netherlands are a formidable outfit and are expected to give the Indians a tough time



## Indian men's hockey team look to end Pro League campaign on high

# 16 North American cities to host 2026 FIFA World Cup

AP ■ NEW YORK

Mexico City's iconic Azteca Stadium and the Los Angeles Rams' \$5 billion SoFi Stadium, which hosted this year's Super Bowl.

Both venues are seen as contenders to host the 2026 final.

The 2026 tournament marks the first time three countries have hosted a World Cup, with the bulk of the games taking place in the United States.

Mexico will be hosting the finals for a third time after serving as solo hosts in 1970 and 1986.

Mexico City's Azteca Stadium, named on Thursday as one of the venues, will be the



**MEXICO CITY'S AZTECA STADIUM, NAMED ON THURSDAY AS ONE OF THE VENUES, WILL BE THE FIRST STADIUM TO FEATURE IN THREE SEPARATE WORLD CUPS**

first stadium to feature in three separate World Cups.

Other Mexican venues include Guadalajara's Estadio Akron and Monterrey's Estadio BBVA.

Canada's venue cities include Vancouver's BC Place and Toronto's BMO Field.

The list of US venues stretch from coast to coast, featuring several cities that hosted games in the 1994 World Cup finals.

Other venues include the Dallas Cowboys giant AT&T Stadium in Arlington and the Miami Dolphins' Hard Rock Stadium.

The Kansas City Chiefs'

Arrowhead Stadium — the loudest stadium in the world according to the Guinness Book of World Records — also made the cut.

NFL venues in Seattle, San Francisco, Atlanta, Houston, Boston and Philadelphia were also on the list.

However the venue for the 1994 World Cup final — the iconic Pasadena Rose Bowl in suburban Los Angeles — was not included.

The identity of the cities that will host the opening game and 2026 final were not disclosed on Thursday.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said in an interview

on Fox Television following the venue announcement that decisions on the opening game and final would be taken at a later date.

"We will take our time with that decision," Infantino said.

"There are still some discussions to go on and we'll certainly choose the best cities for the openings and the finals.

"But every match will be a final at this World Cup."

While all three host countries will share games from the group stage through to the last 16, the United States will host all games from the quarter-finals onwards.