

OPINION 6

UNSETTLED QUERIES
IN L'AFFAIRE NUPUR

WORLD 8

AIDE: TRUMP DISMISSED JAN 6
THREATS, WANTED TO JOIN CROWD

MONEY 10

INDIA NEEDS TO FORM GREEN
HYDROGEN CORRIDORS: NITI AAYOG

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY JUNE 30, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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DJOKOVIC IN
3rd ROUND OF
WIMBLEDON
11 SPORT

UDDHAV QUIT AS SC WON'T STAY TRUST VOTE

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Less than an hour after the Supreme Court refused to stay the confidence vote that he had been ordered to take on the floor of Assembly on Thursday by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday night announced his resignation both as the CM and as an MLC, and said he would continue to work for the Shiv Sena.

"I am not interested in seeking a trust vote tomorrow. Let them (the rebel MLAs) take credit for bringing down the son of Balasaheb Thackeray. I do not want to take away that happiness from you... I will henceforth sit in the Shiv Sena Bhavan (Party headquarters). You cannot snatch away the Shiv Sena from me," Uddhav said, while addressing the people across the State live on Facebook.

Later in the night, Uddhav drove to Raj Bhavan at Malabar Hill in south Mumbai from his private residence "Matoshri" at Bandra in north-central Mumbai and formally handed over the resignation to the Governor.

Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari accepted the resignation and asked him to officiate as Chief Minister until alternate arrangement is made, Raj Bhavan sources said.

Uddhav drove himself in a Mercedes to the Raj Bhavan, accompanied by his sons Aaditya and Tejas as well as Shiv Sena leaders Neelam Gorhe and Arvind Sawant and others. Shiv Sena workers accompanying him shouted slogans at his convoy reached the Raj Bhavan.



Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray pays tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, in Mumbai on Wednesday

Uddhav — who assumed office as the Chief Minister on November 28, 2019 in his capacity as the head of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government comprising the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress — had on the second day of rebellion within his party said he was prepared to quit both his posts as the CM and the party chief, if the rebels were to meet him and express their lack of confi-

dence in his leadership.

Uddhav's resignation came at the end of nine-day-long drama that saw his senior minister Eknath Shinde — apparently working in tandem with the Opposition BJP — move along with 30-odd Sena MLAs out of Mumbai to land at a Surat Hotel, from where he flew them to Guwahati where more Sena MLAs joined the rebel MLAs at another five star hotel. The rebel group's strength

swelled to 39 when they flew from Guwahati to Goa on Wednesday night en route to Mumbai.

In his brief speech where he did not hide his disappointment over the manner in which he party MLAs betrayed him leading to the fall of his Government, Uddhav said: "There were only four Sena ministers in the State Cabinet meeting today. I would like to thank Sharad Pawar sahib and Sonia Gandhi ji for the support extended to my government. At today's meeting, the NCP and Congress ministers did not oppose the proposal of renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad. The people who ought to have supported were nowhere around and those from whom I expected opposition, supported me."

Uddhav welcomed the Supreme Court's decision refusing to intervene in the Governor's decision ordering

him to take a vote of trust on the floor of the Assembly on Thursday.

Paying a backhanded compliment to Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari for the "extraordinary hurry and diligence shown" by him to act on a letter submitted by the Opposition seeking floor test by me, Uddhav said: "Less than 24 hours after the BJP made a request to him that I be asked to seek confidence on the floor of Assembly, the Governor ordered me to prove my majority on the floor of the House. How I wish the Governor had shown democratic practice and due diligence in acting on our Cabinet's recommendation seeking nomination of 12 prominent persons from the Governor's quota."

Later, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said Maharashtra has lost a sensible and cultured Chief Minister in Uddhav Thackeray.



Former Maharashtra CM and BJP leader Devendra Fadnis being fed sweets by Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil after Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray resigned from Maharashtra CM's post, during a party meeting, at Taj President Hotel in Mumbai on Wednesday

The verdict that sealed MVA Govt's fate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

While refusing to stay the floor test in the Maharashtra Assembly on Thursday, the Supreme Court on Wednesday night ruled that the same will be subject to the final outcome of the petition filed by Shiv Sena Chief Whip Sunil Prabhu challenging the Maharashtra Governor's direction to the Chief Minister to prove majority of Maha Vikas Aghadi Government.

Now that the Chief

Minister has resigned, this preconditioning about the "final outcome" may not be relevant any more. For the argument's sake, even if the MLAs are subsequently disqualified, the die has been cast and Uddhav Thackeray has no hope of staging a comeback in the numbers game.

After hearing all sides for more than three hours on Wednesday on Governor's order for a floor test by the Shiv Sena-led Government in Maharashtra, a Supreme Court Bench comprising Justices

Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala delivered the order around 9 pm, refusing to stay the floor test.

However, the court issued notice on Shiv Sena Chief Whip Sunil Prabhu's petition to all parties to respond and tagged the case with rebel MLA's case against disqualification notice, scheduled for July 11 hearing.

The apex court said the final outcome of the floor test will be subject to the disqualification case. The court allowed jailed Ministers Nawab Malik

and Anil Deshmukh to attend the floor test.

"We are not staying the floor test. We are issuing notices. You can file counter. We will hear on merits along with other cases on July 11. The result of tomorrow will depend on the final outcome of this petition," the court directed, adding that the results of tomorrow will be subject to the final outcome of the petition before the court.

Senior Counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Prabhu, said the entire voting

pool will change if the floor test is held after disqualification. "The decision of the Speaker will change the pool who will be voting. Before plunging into the pool, the size has to be noted," he said.

"If on July 11, the court decides the petition, say the Speaker's bar is lifted, and certain MLAs are disqualified, then the test could have concluded the next day," said Singhvi, arguing that the case before the top court will become infructuous.

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VP election on August 6, nomination till July 19

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The election to the post of Vice President will be held on August 6, the Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday announced.

As per the poll panel, the notification for the election to decide the successor of M Venkaiah Naidu will be issued on July 5 and the last date for filing of nomination papers will be July 19. The votes will be counted on August 6.

Naidu's term as Vice President ends on August 10. The BJP-led NDA has a clear edge in the poll in which the members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, including nominated members, are eligible to vote.

As per Article 68 of the Constitution, the election to fill the vacancy caused by the expiration of the term of office of the outgoing Vice President is required to be completed before the expiration of the



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu being greeted by a young girl near Kelambakkam in Chennai

term. At a meeting also attended by Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar finalised the schedule for the Vice Presidential poll.

The scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on July 20 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is July 22.

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5% GST on pre-packed flour, papad, paneer

28% tax on casino, online gaming put off for deliberation

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In what will further hurt the middle class, pre-packed and labelled wheat flour, papad, paneer, curd, and buttermilk will be taxed at 5 per cent after the GST Council on Wednesday decided to stop allowing exemptions on such items while raising rates on a host of others.

The GST Council, at a two-day meeting here, accepted recommendations for rate rationalisation made by different groups appointed by it, resulting in tax changes, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters. The tax rate changes will come into effect from July 18.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairs the 47th meeting of the GST Council in Chandigarh on Wednesday

However, the council decided to refer the report of the GoM (Group of Ministers) on casinos, online gaming and horse racing back to the panel for further deliberation.

The Finance Minister of Goa wanted further discussions on the GST rate to be applicable on casinos and in that context both online gaming and horse racing too would be relooked. The panel had recommended 28 per cent GST levy on all three activities and

equalled them to gambling. The report is expected to be ready by July 15 and would be taken up by the council in its next meeting in August.

The ending of the exemption would mean the pre-packed and labelled meat (except frozen), fish, paneer, lassi, honey, dried leguminous vegetables, dried makhana, wheat and other cereals and puffed rice (muri) will now attract a 5 per cent tax.

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Udaipur killer has links with Pak outfit: Police

PNS/AGENCIES ■ JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

One of the two prime accused in the brutal killing of a tailor in Udaipur has links with the Pakistan-based organisation Dawat-e-Islami and had visited Karachi in 2014, the Rajasthan Police chief said on Wednesday.

A day after the brutal murder of Hindu tailor Kanhaiya Lal Teli in Udaipur by two radical Muslims, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) took over the probe into the terror incident from the Rajasthan Police.

The police have detained three more people in connection with the killing so far, Director General of Police (DGP) ML Lather said at a press conference in Jaipur.

"One of the accused, Ghous Mohammad, has links with the Karachi-based Islamist organisation Dawat-e-Islami.



Streets wear a deserted look amid restrictions following the murder of tailor Kanhaiya on Tuesday, in Udaipur on Wednesday

He had visited Karachi in 2014. So far, we have detained five people, including the two prime accused," Lather said. Meanwhile, a policeman was slashed with a sword during a protest march in Rajsamand district's Bhim town, where police used tear gas to stop a stone-pelting

mob from advancing towards a mosque.

In Udaipur, hundreds took part in a funeral procession for Kanhaiya Lal.

Stones were hurled at a burial ground and some people tried to vandalise its gate as the procession passed by.

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CAPSULE

RANDOM COVID TESTS ON INBOUND FLYERS

New Delhi: In view of a fresh spike in Covid cases being reported from various pockets of the country over the last six weeks, the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday issued fresh guidelines on Covid-19 surveillance, seeking sewage or wastewater surveillance as well as random screening of all international passengers coming to India. In a letter written to the health secretaries of the States, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan wrote that there should be random screening of 2 per cent of international flyers coming to India using RTPCR.

LIGHTNING KILLS 17 IN UP IN TWO DAYS

Ballia/ Fatehpur: Ten people were killed after being struck by lightning in Ballia and Fatehpur districts, pushing the death toll due to such incidents in the state to 17 in two days.

Amarnath yatra begins amid tight security

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Undeterred by the looming terror threats, the first batch of 4,890 pilgrims embarked on the Amarnath yatra on Wednesday under unprecedented security cover.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flagged off the convoy of 176 light and heavy motor vehicles after performing traditional prayers at the base camp at Jammu.

Chief Secretary Arun Mehta, senior police and administrative officers, along with local politicians, attended the ceremony and prayed for peace, prosperity and a safe spiritual journey for pilgrims.

The LG is scheduled to perform pratham pooja inside the holy cave shrine on Thursday.

The atmosphere inside the base camp was upbeat since early morning as a large number of pilgrims from different



Jammu & Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha flags off the first batch of pilgrims for the Amarnath Yatra 2022 after conducting a puja at the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu on Wednesday

States were seen singing praises of Lord Shiva and chanting vedic mantras before embarking on the journey.

So far around 3 lakh pilgrims have registered themselves for the yatra this year. The shrine board authorities are expecting the largest ever footfall of 6 to 7 lakh pilgrims

this year.

The shrine board authorities have also made elaborate arrangements for spot registration to facilitate rush of pilgrims.

For the first time, a Radio Frequency Identification tag has been issued to the pilgrims by the shrine board, while

drone cameras have been deployed across base camps and yatri niwas to maintain tight vigil. Pilgrims have been extended helicopter services from Srinagar for the first time this year.

The Amarnath yatra was cut short in 2019 days ahead of Abrogation of Article 370. However, the yatra remained suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made along the entire yatra route. The Centre has deployed over 350 companies of paramilitary troops to guard the yatra route and base camps along both the Baltal and Pahalgam axis.

J&K's regional parties, including the National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), have welcomed the pilgrims and asked people to ensure their security and safety.

RJD Bihar's largest party after Owaisi's 4 MLAs shift loyalty

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

Four of the five MLAs of the FAIMIM in Bihar on Wednesday defected to the RJD, helping it become the largest party in the 243-strong Assembly with a strength of 80 MLAs, three more than that of the BJP.

Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav, who hailed this as strengthening of secular forces, himself drove the four MLAs to the Assembly. The MLAs submitted a letter to Speaker Vijay Kumar Sinha requesting him to accept their group's merger with the RJD.

Yadav was also present

with them in the Speaker's chamber. The MLAs who have jumped ship are Syed Ruknuddin Ahmed (Baisi), Shahnawaz Alam (Jokihat), Mohd Izhar Asfi (Kochadhaman) and Mohd Anzar Naemi (Bahadurganj).

The party, headed by Asaduddin Owaisi, which won five seats and cut into RJD-led alliance's vote on several seats in the 2020 Assembly elections is now left with only its State president Akhtarul Iman.

All the five seats that the AIMIM had won fall under the Kishanganj and Araria Lok Sabha constituencies, which have the highest concentration of Muslim population in Bihar.

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Rupee all-time low at 79.03/\$

Mumbai: The rupee depreciated 18 paise to close at a record low of 79.03 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by persistent foreign capital outflows, a strong dollar overseas and surge in crude oil prices.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 78.86 against the greenback and finally settled at 79.03, down 18 paise over its previous close.

During the session, the rupee touched an all-time low of 79.05 against the American currency.

On Tuesday, the rupee plunged by 48 paise to close at the record low of 78.85 against the US dollar.

The domestic unit has lost 1.97 per cent so far this month and has eroded a staggering 6.39 per cent since the start of this year.

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NCR-PULSE

WOMAN HELD AT IGI AIRPORT FOR SMUGGLING COCAINE

New Delhi: Delhi Customs officials have arrested a woman from Liberia at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport for allegedly smuggling cocaine worth Rs 13.26 crore into the country. The passenger was intercepted after her arrival from Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa on Sunday. During a personal search of the woman, the customs officials noticed a bag containing 11 kurtas with large buttons randomly stitched onto them.

DRIVER STABBED BY WIFE DURING QUARREL AT PALAM

New Delhi: A driver was allegedly stabbed and wounded by his wife during a quarrel between them in south Delhi's Palam village area. Sanjay, the husband, sustained minor injuries during the incident which happened Monday, and is stated to be in stable condition. The couple who tied the knot three years ago, got into a fight around 11.30 pm, and it was during the fight, the wife stabbed the husband and injured him, said police.

BJP'S PROTEST AGAINST UDAIPUR MURDER CANCELLED

New Delhi: BJP leader Kapil Mishra on Wednesday said the protest, which was scheduled to take place at Jantar Mantar against the brutal murder of a tailor by two men in Rajasthan's Udaipur, has been cancelled. Mishra took to Twitter and posted a communication by Delhi Police denying permission to hold the protest. Today's programme at Jantar Mantar is being cancelled on the basis of the conversation and letter received from the Delhi Police. We do not want to create any challenges for the law and order situation.

20-YR-OLD ARRESTED FOR KILLING BROTHER-IN-LAW

Gurugram: A 20-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing his brother-in-law, an ex-army man, police said on Wednesday. Accused Naveen has revealed that he shot Harvinder, 38, to death over monetary matters. According to the police, they received information that a man had been shot at in the head in Basai Enclave under Sector-10 police station limits on June 27 and that he had been receiving treatment. However, he died by the time the police reached the hospital. Rupesh Kumar, Harvinder's nephew, informed the police that the man was lying in a pool of blood on the bed late on Sunday.

PATHAK INSPECTS SEWAGE WORK AT RAJINDER NAGAR

New Delhi: Newly elected AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak on Wednesday conducted an inspection in three areas to begin sewerage work in Rajinder Nagar. In his first day in office, Pathak went to the Gurudwara along with senior officials working in the constituency and instructed them to build a new sewerage line, sewerage treatment plant, new water pipeline and gym in the park of the old age home of the Gurudwara. Pathak also reviewed the ongoing rain water harvesting work on Shankar Road that is being carried out by the PWD and ordered a quality check of the construction work.

FIR LODGED ON GIRL BEING ABUSED IN VIDEO

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has registered an First Information Report (FIR) days after a video of a girl being threatened and abused by a man was circulated widely on social media. The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) had taken suo-moto cognizance of the purported video and sent a notice to Delhi Police Cyber Crime Cell on June 26 seeking urgent action in the matter. In the purported video, a man could be heard hurling extreme abuses to a little girl and making hurtful comments on the religious community the girl belongs to, the panel had said.

70 PROTESTERS FROM BAJRANG DAL HELD

New Delhi: Nearly 70 protestors from the Bajrang Dal were detained on Wednesday after they staged a demonstration at Jantar Mantar against the brutal killing of a tailor in Rajasthan's Udaipur, police said. The officials said the Vishwa Hindu Parishad did not have prior police permission to hold the protest.

GOVT DEPTS WARN AGAINST LEAVE SANS APPROVAL

New Delhi: The Delhi government's social welfare and women and child development departments on Wednesday warned taking disciplinary action against officials proceeding on leave without approval. The departments had earlier issued circulars to clarify that the competent authority for approving any kind of leave to officers working as deputy directors, senior superintendents and above is the Secretary.

DELHI LOGS 1,109 NEW COVID CASES

New Delhi: Delhi logged 1,109 COVID-19 cases with a positivity rate of 5.87 per cent and one fatality, according to data shared by the health department here on Wednesday. Delhi had reported less than 1,000 single-day infections in the last two days. Wednesday's cases were detected out of 18,886 tests conducted the previous day. With the fresh infections, Delhi's case tally climbed to 19,34,009. The death toll due to the infection rose to 26,261.

VP election on...

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For the 16th Vice-Presidential Election, the Electoral College consists of 233 elected members of the Rajya Sabha, 12 nominated members of the Rajya Sabha and 543 elected members of the Lok Sabha. The voting is done by the secret ballot.

Open voting and showing the ballot to anyone under any circumstances in the case of presidential and vice-presidential elections are totally prohibited, the EC cautioned,

adding that parties cannot issue whip to its MPs in the matter of voting.

A nomination paper of a candidate has to be subscribed by at least 20 electors as proposers and by at least other 20 electors as seconders. An elector can subscribe to only one nomination paper of a candidate as either a proposer or a seconder. A candidate can file a maximum of four nomination papers. The security deposit for the election is ₹15,000.

RJD Bihar's largest party...

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Talking to the media persons, Yadav said all the four MLAs "come from the most impoverished, flood-ravaged region of the State" reeling under the "apathy of a Government that does not care for health, education and other types of public welfare".

In the last Assembly polls, the RJD had won 75 seats. It won another seat earlier this year when it snatched Bochahan from the NDA in a by-election.

Meanwhile, the BJP, which had been enjoying the status of the single largest party when it weaned away all three MLAs of ousted Minister Mukesh Sahni's Vikassheel Insaan Party a few months ago, raising its strength to 77, testily reacted to the development.

State BJP spokesman Nikhil Anand alleged, "Owaisi may have sold his MLAs by taking money from the RJD."

Fadnavis, Shinde to decide next course of action: Patil

PTI ■ MUMBAI

BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis and rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde will now decide the next court of action, state BJP chief Chandrakant Patil said on Wednesday night. Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray resigned earlier in the evening, a day before a scheduled floor test in the state Assembly.

The state BJP unit has asked all its MLAs to gather in Mumbai. To a question about the BJP's next move, as it is the single largest party in the Maharashtra legislative assembly, Patil said, "The next steps will be decided by Fadnavis and Eknath Shinde."

He also said BJP workers



"should observe restraint in victory." Fadnavis told reporters that "I will tell the party's stand tomorrow for

sure." There will be another round of meeting at the official residence of Fadnavis later tonight, sources said.

Jindal alleges receiving threats via e-mails

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi BJP media head Naveen Kumar Jindal on Wednesday alleged that he had received threats via e-mails, which also had videos of the Udaipur "beheading" incident. He also demanded security for himself and his family.

"This is not the first threat. I have received hundreds of threats through social media, phone calls and messages in the past one month but Delhi Police has not strengthened my security cover although I have written half a dozen times to officials, including the commissioner of police," he said.

Kumar was expelled from the BJP, where he headed media cell of party's Delhi unit, while national spokesperson of the party Nupur Sharma was suspended last month, over their remarks on the Prophet.

"This morning around 6.43 am, I have

received 3 emails with a video of brother Kanhaiya Lal's throat being slit. They (accused) threatened me and my family with such threats. I have informed the Police Control Room," Jindal tweeted. He also attached screenshots of the alleged e-mail threats.

Jindal's Y+ security cover was withdrawn in September last year. He said he has been currently provided with only two policemen although he felt "real danger" after the Udaipur incident.

"I live with my wife and mother. I have shifted my children to some other place since the threats were issued to me. I have to often go out when I am exposed to any eventuality as only one policeman accompanies me while the other stays back at my house," he said.

Two men with a cleaver killed Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur city's Dhan Mandi area on Tuesday and posted videos online that said they were avenging an insult to Islam.

AAP slams LG for infringing on Delhi Govt's admin power

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday heavily came down on the recently appointed Lieutenant Governor (L-G), V K Saxena for unduly infringing in Delhi's administrative processes.

The AAP reaction came after Saxena stayed the already approved appointments of public prosecutors and standing counsels of the Delhi Government.

Addressing a press conference at party headquarters, the AAP legislator from Kalkaji, Atishi said that L-G has no right to stay the appointment of Delhi's Public Prosecutor-Standing Council that was approved by the Delhi High Court.

"From the day the L-G took oath, he is trying to sabotage and destabilize the constitutional setup of the city. He has raised questions on a file related to the appointment of public prosecutors and stand-

ing counsels of the government. The recruitment process to appoint public prosecutors, standing counsels, and additional standing counsels began in 2021," said Atishi adding that it was approved by the then L-G, Anil Baijal June 24, 2021.

"The new LG had stalled the recruitment process which was approved by the previous LG and 40 judges of the Delhi High Court. It has become abundantly clear that the LG has a problem with the Delhi Government, but what's more

The verdict that sealed MVA...

From Page 1

Singhvi questioned the act of the Governor in showing undue haste in calling for floor test. "The Governor is bound to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. Here he may act on the advice of Ministers or not, but definitely cannot act on the advice of the Opposition," he contended.

Senior Counsel Neeraj Kishan Kaul, appearing for Eknath Shinde, said the Speaker cannot decide disqualification proceedings when no-confidence motion against him is pending. "You (Speaker) are seized of a matter, you know there are proceedings against you. You cannot proceed at all. It is a jurisdictional issue," Kaul said.

"When the CM has lost confidence in the House, the moment the CM shows reluctance, it shows that he knows he has lost the majority. This is all the more reason to have a

floor test," Kaul argued.

"Assuming a floor test takes place, who are competent to participate," asked Justice Kant.

"Tomorrow if these people are disqualified, then the pool changes... the Supreme Court has clarified that there is no connection with the floor test," Kaul responded.

"If you are sure about the majority, then just go ahead with the floor test. There is no need for people to go to Surat, Guwahati, let there be a floor test. And they are piggy backing on our petition by relating it to the floor test and asking for relief. If you want to prevent horse trading, then the best way to do it is floor test," said Kaul, claiming they are the "real Shiv Sena".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Governor, contended that the argument that the top court had interdicted the jurisdiction of the Speaker is incorrect.

"I must say first of all, that the argument that your lordships have interdicted his jurisdiction of the speaker, I say it is fallacious," he submitted. He said the question boils down to whether the office of the speaker or deputy is being misused.

"Answer is 'yes'. When I receive a motion of no confidence, the confidence where it can be tested is the floor. I can always ask some member to generate disqualification proceedings under Chapter 10," he said. The Speaker cannot decide the voter list or electoral college, said Mehta.

The SG further contended that the Governor cannot ignore direct threats to 39 MLAs. "Horse trading is one way of winning a majority, but there are direct threats to the 39 MLAs. The Governor cannot ignore such issues," he said, adding that the floor of the Assembly is where democratic powers originate.

Last victim identified in Delhi's Mundka fire Geeta Devi cremated on Wednesday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Over a month since a blaze ripped through a building in Outer Delhi's Mundka killing 27 people, Geeta Devi, the victim last to be identified, was cremated by her relatives on Wednesday.

According to Sameer Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), outer district, last rites of Geeta Devi were performed in a cemetery in northwest Delhi's Sultanpuri area.

"May the soul of all the 27 deceased in this incident rest in peace. The relatives of Geeta came from Bihar. After the post mortem, our staff went with them for cremation," Sharma said.

In a picture shared by police, a policeman is seen helping in the funeral of the deceased.

Earlier, police had said that the body of Geeta Devi was kept in the hospital, as she was an orphan and her husband too had died. She did not have any children.



The Forensic Science Lab had initially faced difficulty in confirming her identity due to unsatisfactory results from the blood samples collected from her "siblings", but at length she was connected with her relatives, who cremated her.

On May 13, at least 27 people were gutted or asphyxiated after a roaring fire engulfed a commercial building in Delhi's Mundka area.

Rupee all-time...

From Page 1

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the green-back's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.13 per cent higher at 104.64.

The rupee depreciated following risk-averse sentiments and weaker regional currencies, Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities said, adding "high demand and tighter dollar liquidity following quarter-end rebalancing weighed on a local unit(rupee)".

The sentiment remains feeble for the rupee amid foreign fund outflows and fear of dollar shortages following quantitative tightening from the US Federal Reserve.

"The short-term outlook

for spot USD/INR remains bullish and one can see a level of 79.10 in the coming days, while on the lower side support has been shifted to 78.38," Parmar said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures advanced 0.34 per cent to USD 118.38 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 150.48 points or 0.28 per cent lower at 53,026.97, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 51.10 points or 0.32 per cent to 15,799.10.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,244.44 crore, as per stock exchange data.

5% GST on pre-packed flour, papad, paneer...

From Page 1

Similarly, an 18 per cent GST will be levied on tetra packs, fees charged by the banks for the issue of cheques (loose or in book form).

Maps and charts, including atlases, will attract a 12 per cent levy. Goods that are unpacked, unlabelled and unbranded will continue to remain exempt from the GST.

Besides, a 12 per cent tax will be levied on hotel rooms costing less than Rs 1,000 a day. At present, this falls under the exempted category. A 5 per cent GST will be levied on hospital room rent above Rs 5,000 per day (excluding ICU).

Tax rates have been raised to 18 per cent on products such

as printing, writing or drawing ink, knives with cutting blades, paper knives and pencil sharpeners, LED lamps, drawing and marking out instruments. Solar water heaters will now attract 12 per cent GST as compared to 5 per cent earlier.

Some services such as work contracts for roads, bridges, railways, metro, effluent treatment plants and crematoriums too will see tax going up to 18 per cent from the current 12 per cent.

Tax has, however, been cut on the transport of goods and passengers by ropeways to 5 per cent and on ostomy appliances to 5 per cent from 12 per cent.

Renting of truck, goods carriage where the cost of fuel is included will now attract a lower 12 per cent rate as against 18 per cent.

The GST exemption on the transport of passengers by air to and from north-eastern States and Bagdogra has now been restricted to economy class.

Services rendered by regulators such as the RBI, the IRDA and the SEBI will be taxed and so will be on renting of a residential dwelling to business entities. Also, electric vehicles whether or not fitted with a battery pack, are eligible for the concessional GST rate of 5 per cent.

The GST Council also

the accused had links with Dawat-e-Islami, Lather said that it cannot be ruled out as both of them were equally involved.

Lather said that looking into all the perspectives and on directions of the Chief Minister, it was considered as act of terror, so investigation was started after registering a case under the UAPA.

Lather said Ghouse Mohammad in 2014 had visited Dawat-e-Islami, Karachi. The outfit has its offices in Mumbai and Delhi, he said.

Detained accused Riaz works as a welder and Ghouse is into some petty works. "It is also found that the distinct weapon used to hack Kanhaiya

was made by Riaz around four-five years ago," said the DGP.

On the trans-border connection of the two prime accused, he said all digital evidence is being looked into.

A case has been lodged under IPC sections 302, 452, 153(A), 153(B), 295(A) and 34, and sections 16, 18 and 20 of UAPA, 1967. Lather also said a case was lodged against Kanhaiya Lal on June 10 by one Nazim at Dhan Mandi police station over an alleged objectionable post hurting sentiments of a community.

On June 11, Kanhaiya was arrested and released on bail the next day, he said.

On June 15, Kanhaiya filed

a complaint at the police station that four-five people were following him and his life was in danger. The SHO failed to assess the gravity of the situation and effective action was not taken on the Kanhaiya's complaint, the State police chief said, adding the issue was resolved amicably without any legal action. "The assistant sub-inspector was suspended yesterday, and today the SHO has been suspended for negligence," he said.

Meanwhile, a team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrived in Udaipur, he said, adding the case has been transferred to the NIA and the State police will assist them.



safe and secure environment to the women in national Capital.He should not try to overturn the decision of the

elected government because the people of Delhi will have to suffer because of your action," said Atishi.

CM: Free ration to continue till Sept 30



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a big relief to poor people of the national Capital, the Delhi Cabinet on Wednesday decided to continue providing free ration to almost 73 lakh residents till September 30. The Cabinet has also approved proposals to procure 1,950 buses, including 1,500 electric and 450 CNG AC buses, and issue fresh tenders for another 4,800 buses, taking the fleet to over 11,000 on the Capital's roads by December 2024 and smart urban farming initiatives to encourage the urban farming and terrace gar-

dening scheme to grow fruits and vegetables for both self consumption and for market purposes. After the Cabinet meeting, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the Delhi Government has been supplying ration for free to almost 73 lakh citizens since April 2020. The proposal to this effect was moved by the Food and Civil Supplies department for the extension of the supply of free ration for NFSA beneficiaries for another four months from June to September 2022. The chief minister said that the Delhi government has been providing free ration to

Cabinet OK's proposal to buy 1,950 modern buses

NEW DELHI: On the procurement of buses, Kejriwal said the Delhi Cabinet has approved a proposal to procure 1,950 modern buses for Delhi's public transport fleet. This includes 1,500 electric buses and 450 CNG AC buses. The new buses will start coming from August-September 2022; and by September 2023 will be inducted. "The procurement for these buses will end in September of the following year, although deliveries will begin in August of the current year. Presently there are more than 7,200 buses in the public bus fleet of Delhi. Additionally, 4,800 bus tenders



will be released soon, as some of the buses will need to be replaced because they will no longer be functional in a few years. According to our calculations, Delhi's roads will be served by 11,910 buses by the end of 2024. This meets the needs of Delhi residents, and we will reach the goal in the following 2.5 years," he said.

the people for the last couple of years. "The government offers ration at a nominal rate from ration shops however for the last few years, we've been giving that for free too. We have extended this scheme till 30th September and will continue supplying

free ration for the coming months too," he said. The Delhi Government distributes free ration to beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. The city has over 2,000 fair price shops, 17.77 lakh ration card holders and around 72,77,995 benefi-

Delhiites to get training for growing fruits, veg

NEW DELHI: Elaborating the Smart Urban Farming Initiative approved by the Cabinet, the Chief Minister said the Delhi Cabinet approved the Smart Urban Farming Initiative, which will benefit nearly 25,000 families in the first year from the 1,000 workshops that will be conducted. Kejriwal said the Delhi Government will tie up with the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) for imparting special training to people for growing fruits and vegetables for self-consumption and as an entrepreneurial venture under its Smart Urban Farming Initiative. "Nearly 400

awareness workshops and 600 entrepreneurship training programmes will be organised across Delhi under the initiative. We hope that about 25,000 families in the national capital will benefit from the Smart Urban Farming Initiative in its first year," he stressed. Noting that urban farming is a unique project where people from all walks of life can start small-scale farming of fruits and vegetables within the confines of their balconies and terraces, he said that the government will support urban farmers with seeds and other essentials. SR

ciaries. NFSA beneficiaries include needy people like migrant workers, unorganised workers, construction workers, domestic helpers and those who do not have ration cards. Under the free ration scheme, five kg of food grains are provided free of cost to the needy

according to the eligibility prescribed under the NFS Act 2013. This includes four kg of wheat and one kg of rice per person per month. In December 2021, the Delhi government had extended the free ration scheme till May 31, 2022.

Monsoon likely to hit Capital by Friday: IMD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi continued to reel under oppressive and warm weather on Wednesday as the national Capital recorded a maximum temperature of 40.9 degrees Celsius at Safdarjung observatory while humidity levels oscillated between 51 per cent and 70 per cent. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicts arrival of monsoon in Delhi by Thursday or Friday. According to the IMD, the heat index (HI) is what the temperature "feels like" to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature. HI is calculated for shady areas. Whereas, wet-bulb temperature is the lowest possible temperature that can be reached through evaporation of water in any given air condition. It takes into account temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle, and cloud cover, etc. And is considered the best metric to calculate and monitor heat stress on the human body. A wet-bulb temperature of 35 degrees is considered the maximum limit of humidity that humans can handle. Beyond this, the body can no longer effectively cool itself

through perspiration. The IMD has issued an orange alert, warning of moderate rainfall in the city on June 30. The maximum temperature will come down to 33-34 degrees Celsius by July 1. Senior IMD scientist R K Jenamani said there is a prediction of good rainfall in the city on June 30 and the arrival of the monsoon can be declared on Thursday or Friday. According to IMD data, the monsoon covered Delhi 29 times in June and 33 times in July in the last 62 years. The IMD had in 2020 revised the date of monsoon arrival in Delhi from June 29 to June 27. Since June 1, when the monsoon season starts, Delhi has received just 24.5 mm of rainfall against the normal of 66.7 mm. All of it came between June 16 and June 20. The sizzling heat also pushed the peak power demand to 7695 MW on Wednesday, the highest in this month. As per realtime data of State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC), city's peak power demand clocked 7695 MW at 3.10 PM on Wednesday while on Tuesday it was 7601 MW. The previous high in Delhi was 7409 MW recorded on July 2, 2019.

Water supply will be available with low pressure, says DJB



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

For the first time since 1965, the water level in Yamuna dipped to the lowest 666.80 feet against the normal level of 674.50 ft, leading to shortage of water supply in most parts of the national Capital. The water supply will be available with low pressure. According to the Delhi Jal Board, due to less receipt of raw water in Delhi

Sub Branch (DSB), Carrier Line Channel (CLC) and reduction of pond level at 666.80 ft against the normal level of 674.50 ft in River Yamuna at Wazirabad, the water production has been affected adversely in Chandrawal and Wazirabad Water Treatment Plants. "The DJB has done rationalization of water in whole city. Therefore, water supply will be available at

low pressure in the morning and evening of July 30 and so on till the sufficient water is released by Haryana in DSB, CLC and in River Yamuna," said a senior DJB official. "The areas likely to be affected are Civil lines, Hindu Rao Hospital and adjoining areas including KamlaNagar, ShaktiNagar and adjoining areas of KarolBagh, Pahar Ganj, NDMC areas, Old and New Rajinder Nagar, Patel Nagar (East & West), Baljeet Nagar, Prem Nagar, Inderpuri Kalkaji, Govindpuri, Tugalkabad, Sangam Vihar, Ambedkar Nagar, Prahladpur, Ramleela Ground, Delhi gate, Subhash Park, Model Town, Gulabi Bagh, PunjabiBagh, Jahangirpuri, Moolchand, South Extension, Greater kailash, Burari and parts of Cantonment areas and South

Delhi," said the DJB in a statement issued on Wednesday. "Therefore, public is advised to make judicious use of water and water tankers shall be available on demand," the statement added. Earlier, this month DJB's Vice Chairman Saurabh Bhardwaj had expressed concern over the Yamuna's dipping water levels. He had urged the Haryana government again to release more water into river to get a proper water supply. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also asked Haryana government to release water in the Yamuna. "The water level of Yamuna is continuously decreasing. I request the Haryana Government to cooperate. I will request the L-G also to ask the Haryana government to do the same," Kejriwal had said.

CBI arrests deputy chief general manager of DTC, 5 others in ₹91 K bribery case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested a deputy chief general manager of the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and five others in a bribery case involving an amount of Rs 91,000 for the appointment of two candidates as consultants in the corporation. Following the arrest, the CBI also conducted searches in which cash amounting to Rs 40 lakh (approximately) was recovered from deputy CGM Shakil Ahmed, they said. Besides Ahmed, the agency has also arrested his former personal assistant Sunil, Depot Manager, Sector 3, Rohini, Kirti Bala Malik, retired DTC official Mahender, retired assistant traffic inspector

Saffuzzama and DTC official Jeetu, the officials said. It is alleged that the accused indulged in illegal activities in the appointment of a retired assistant traffic inspector (ATT) to the post of consultant in the DTC in lieu of undue advantages of varying amounts, they said. "During investigation, the Dy CGM and Regional Manager (North), DTC was caught while accepting a bribe of Rs 91,000 in lieu of the appointment of two candidates as consultants in the DTC. Five other accused, including the bribe giver, were also caught," CBI Spokesperson Joshi said. He said searches were conducted at the premises of the accused in Delhi, Gurugram and Sonipat, among other places.

Remove online booster pumps from water supply lines: NDMC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has issued an advisory to the city residents and its consumers to remove online booster pumps from the water supply lines from Wednesday. According to NDMC, the advisory has been issued to the New Delhi area residents and consumers to immediately remove their online booster pumps from the water supply lines. The civic body advisory stated that consumer may install or continue the usage of booster pumps for lifting water from their surface tanks or underground reservoir to overhead tanks if required. NDMC also said that the installation of online booster pumps directly on water supply pipeline is illegal and is not permissible for direct filling of underground tanks or overhead tanks. "The installation

of booster pumps on water supply pipeline is the main cause of contamination, causing difficulty in maintaining uniform pressure and affecting the distribution network of water supply pipelines," said the senior NDMC official. "It also causes disturbance in water management of NDMC area and affects the proper delivery of water supply to each and every consumer. It also increases the electricity consumption & additional load on total electricity supply," added the senior NDMC officials. NDMC has also informed the residents and consumers that if any online booster pumps are found on the water supply lines, action shall be initiated against the defaulter which may result in permanent disconnection of their water connections besides taking other legal actions against the defaulter.

Tripura MLA booked for molesting woman at Tripura Bhawan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The sitting Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) MLA Mevar Kumar Jamatia has been booked by Delhi Police in a sexual harassment case. The incident took place at Tripura Bhawan in Delhi on Tuesday night around 9.30 pm. According to Amrutha Guguloth, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), New Delhi district, a complaint of molestation at Tripura Bhawan on Tuesday night was received. "A police control room (PCR) call regarding the same was made at around 2.35 am by the complainant. The accused has been served with a notice under section 41-A (notice of appearance before police officer in all the cases where the arrest of a person is not required) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) CRPC," said the DCP. "An First Information Report (FIR) has been registered under sections 354 (uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty) and 354(A) (sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)," said the DCP. Meanwhile, Ranjit Das, the Joint Resident Commissioner of the Tripura Bhawan, also issued a letter, to Tripura Government and through the letter he apprised of the incident that happened on Tuesday night. "It is to inform that a team of Delhi Police had visited Tripura Bhawan twice yesterday night and met a woman



student studying in Delhi and staying in Bhawan temporarily. They recorded her statement regarding her complaint against Mebar Kr Jamatia, MLA. The police team visited again in the early morning and took both the woman and Mebar Kr Jamatia to the police station," the letter by Joint Resident Commissioner stated. After the BJP-IPFT alliance Government came to power in March 2018, IPFT General Secretary Jamatia and President Narendra Chandra Debbarma became Ministers. In May this year, due to the internal feud, Tripura's ruling alliance partner IPFT further, the tribal party's supremo Narendra Chandra Debbarma had formed a disciplinary committee to assess the alleged anti-party activities of errant party leaders, including Mevar Kumar Jamatia, who was dropped from the Cabinet. Jamatia, who served as the IPFT general secretary, was Debbarma's protegee and was included in the Biplab Deb cabinet as the forest and tribal affairs minister. However, he fell out with his mentor after he was elected IPFT president at a central committee conference of the regional party organised on April 2-3.

Portal launched to help you connect with safai sainiks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has launched a website portal where the residents can directly connect with swachhta or safai sainiks and maalis deployed in the city. There are around 57,000 swachhta or safai sainiks and 5,000 maalis in the Capital, as per officials. An exclusive portal was launched on the MCD website (mcdonline.nic.in) consisting of comprehensive information system on 'swachhta sainiks' and maalis. Under trial for some time, this new website launched today contains detailed information - including phone numbers, about Zone, Ward and street/park wise deployment of 'Swachhta /Safai Sainiks' and Maalis (Gardeners) by the Civic Agency. "With this first of its kind initiative in Delhi, hapless citizens who had been till now running from pillar to post to get their basic sanitation and hygiene related needs addressed, and were approaching senior officials and public representatives with their grievances will now get much needed relief" said the officials. Available in public domain at the click of a button, these



comprehensive lists also contain the details of the supervisory Sanitation Inspector and Chowdhrys (for gardeners). According to the officials it will enable people to directly contact the concerned safai sainik or gardener, allotted to specific streets and parks to address their sanitation/hygiene and cleanliness needs. It will also ensure efficient delivery of services, transparency and accountability by empowering the common citizens to not only contact the service provider directly but also reach to his/her supervisor in case their complains are not redressed. Upon opening the Home Page on the website, any citizen can click on 'Select on Service Area'; thereafter go to the tab 'Portal'. Upon clicking the required Zone, the system leads to a menu where the list of deployed Safai Sainiks and Maalis can be accessed.

Release grants to 12 Delhi Govt funded DU colleges: AAP's DTA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP's Delhi Teachers' Association (DTA), has urged Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday to immediately release the grants of the 12 Delhi University (DU) colleges funded by the city Government. In a statement, DTA president Hansraj Suman said that a delegation of teachers from the 12 colleges met him and said thousands of academic and non-teaching staff are not getting their salaries on time and thus, facing a financial crisis. "The teachers in some colleges have not received their salaries for two months. The teachers have told Suman that months have passed since they were promoted and they have not been paid arrears to date. Similarly, their medical bills have not been cleared," the statement read. Suman said not only the salary payments have been affected due to the non-release of grants, but medical bills, retirement benefits and other development expenses are also pending in these colleges. He demanded from the Delhi government that the arrears for the promotion of the teachers should also be released soon. "The DTA has urged the chief minister and the deputy chief minister to help the 12 fully-funded colleges by the Delhi government without any further delay in releasing the funds so that the salaries and other dues are paid to the teachers and staff in this

extremely difficult and stressful time," the statement read. The teaching and non-teaching staff of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College (DDUC) staged a sit-in protest last week against the non-payment of salaries (for the past two months). Apart from DDUC, the other colleges funded by the Delhi government are -- Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Shaheed Rajguru College of Applied Sciences for Women, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, Keshav Mahavidyalaya, Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies, Bhagini Nivedita College, Acharya Narendra Dev College, Maharishi Balmiki College of Education, Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences, Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Science and Maharaja Agrasen College. The DUTA had urged vice-chancellor Yogesh Singh earlier to convene a special meeting of the Executive Council of the university to consider the "remedial measures" to deal with the current financial crisis in the colleges funded by the city government. In a statement dated June 17, the DUTA had said the university should consider the takeover of the 12 colleges funded by the Delhi government. It had pointed out that these colleges were short of funds to pay the salaries and other dues of the teachers and employees because of the non-release of funds by the government.

Former GM of pvt firm held for misappropriation of ₹ 2cr funds

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a former general manager of a private firm for alleged misappropriation of funds worth over Rs 2 crore using shell companies registered in the names of his family members. According to police, the accused has been identified as Nitin Sainger. The case was registered on the complaint of a company official. The complainant firm publishes more than 35 custom magazines, including 12 in-flight magazines, in five countries— India, Kingdom of Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Bangladesh and Singapore, they said. In its complaint, the firm alleged that Nitin, the then general manager, international sales division, in collusion with his wife Sandhya Singh, father Yogendra Singh Sainger



and sister-in-law Sushma Singh, "dishonestly and intentionally" created false documents and together misappropriated funds of the company, a senior police officer said. The officer said Nitin misappropriated funds of the com-

paignant firm by routing them via three shell companies registered in the name of his family members— Global Media LLC, PR Communicque and Media Friends — in conspiracy with Sandhya, Yogendra, Sushma and others. Nitin's modus operandi was to misrepresent to the clients vide his official email, saying the above three (shell) companies were the international representatives of the complainant firm, police said. Once Nitin received advertisement orders from the clients, he used to take payments in his shell companies. He forwarded these orders to the complainant company through false invoices after siphoning huge margins from these payments, the officer said. "It came on record that the accused persons have cheated the complainant company to the tune of around Rs 2.25

crore till date. "Nitin, in violation of his employment contract, indulged in activities which were in conflict with the interest of the company and in conspiracy with other accused persons used the company's resources for his personal use," Joint Commissioner of Police (EOW) Chhaya Sharma said. After resigning, Nitin joined another competitor company in 2017 and diverted around 25 per cent clients of the complainant firm there, police said. During investigation, it was revealed that funds to the tune of Rs 2.25 crore were misappropriated by Nitin through various shell companies in connivance of his family members, police said. Relevant emails and their headers were also collected and analysed which confirmed that the email resources of the complainant firm were used by

the accused through which he used to induce international clients to route their business through shell companies controlled by him and his family members, Sharma said. It was also revealed that Nitin created false bills through which he claimed re-imbursements of the expenditure incurred during tours and hotel bills of his stay abroad, they said. The police arrested Nitin on Monday, Sharma said. In 2012, he joined the complainant firm as GM, international sales, and left in 2017. Currently, he is engaged as a freelancer in Media Friends Company which is owned by his wife, police said. Nitin was previously involved in a case registered at IP Estate police station with the same modus operandi which was filed by one of his previous employers— a news organisation, police added.

BJP terms Udaipur murder as ‘terror attack’



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday accused the Congress-led Gehlot Government in Rajasthan of pursuing “vote bank politics of appeasement” and termed the killing of tailor Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur as a “terror attack”.

The party also saw a pattern in the State Government’s failure to prevent such terrorist incidents in the past. BJP leader and Union Minister Anurag Thakur lashed out at Ashok Gehlot over the killing saying the State Government

remained a “mute spectator” as the Congress’ internal rivalries affected law and order. The Information and Broadcasting Minister was responding to reporters’ questions on the killing of Lal Monday.

At a separate Press conference, BJP spokesperson and former Union Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore said Lal’s killers filmed the incident and made the video viral in an attempt to terrorise society and accused the State police of not acting on the complaint of the deceased and allowing a free-run to the ‘jehadi nexus’ in

the State. He said the Chief Minister who is also Home Minister is treating the terrorist act as a “simple murder” and accused the Congress Government of pursuing “vote-bank politics of appeasement”. Rathore charged the Congress Government in Rajasthan was responsible for Lal’s killing and that it has taken many steps during its tenure to appease one community.

“Festivals of different religions are given different treatment by the State Government,” he said while leveling charge of appeasement on the Gehlot government. “Not a single week has gone by in the last six months when terrorist, jihadi incidents have not happened in Rajasthan. The Government of Rajasthan is solely responsible for this,” he said adding the Gehlot Government is seen as “giving support to terrorist organisations”.

The BJP spokesman said fundamentalist are running a free-run and “sleepers” have penetrated the state and “law and order has turned zero”. “Police intelligence is being used for political intelligence”, he alleged and sought to know as to why the Chief Minister was there if he was to look at the Prime Minister to do everything. On a question that the opposition has blamed BJP for creating a negative atmosphere, Rathore hit-out at

them saying such arguments are dished-out to justify ‘Jehadi’ killings. BJP spokesman, however, said National Investigation Agency is “competent enough” to unravel conspiracy and terrorist nexus and will investigate as who was giving protection to them in state.

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje also slammed the Gehlot government over the beheading incident in Udaipur saying “policies of incitement and appeasement” led to the Communal violence in state. “..it has become clear that due to the instigation and appeasement of the state government morale of criminals is high”.

Due to this policy of the state government, a situation of communal frenzy and violence has arisen in the state”, Raje tweeted. The tailor was killed on Tuesday by two men, who had posted videos online that said they were avenging an insult to Islam.

Tailor’s killing un-Islamic, say Muslim bodies



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prominent Muslim organisations on Wednesday condemned the brutal killing of a tailor in Udaipur, calling it “un-Islamic” and asserting that no person has the right to take law into one’s hands.

Bodies like All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind issued statements condemning the murder of Kanhaiya Lal by two men who had posted videos online that claimed they were avenging an insult to Islam.

Delhi Jama Masjid Shahi Imam Syed Ahmed Bukhari called the killing an “act of cowardice” and “an act against Islam”. Islam is a religion of “peace and tranquillity”, he said.

In its statement, the AIMPLB said such acts were against the principles of Islam and no one should take law in their hands.

“Insulting holy personalities of any religion is a serious crime. BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma made derogatory remarks about the holy Prophet of Islam, which is very sad for Muslims.

“The Government not taking any action against Nupur Sharma is like rubbing salt on the wounds. But despite this, taking the law into one’s own hands and killing a person by declaring him a criminal is a condemnable act,” the statement issued on behalf of AIMPLB general secretary Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani.

“Neither the law allows it nor does the Islamic Shariah justify it. Therefore, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board strongly condemns the incident in Udaipur (Rajasthan),” the statement said.

The board also urged the Government to make stringent laws regarding disrespectful comments against holy personalities and take immediate action in such cases.

The board also appealed to the Muslim community to act patiently and not take law into their own hands as well as not indulge in any such action that might disturb communal harmony in the country. Both the Arshad Madani and Mahmood Madani factions of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind condemned the incident and

called it “un-Islamic”.

In a statement, Maulana Arshad Madani said that just as “we had opposed mob-lynching in many places, we also consider this an inhumane act”.

“We are always against anyone taking the law into their own hands. The Udaipur incident is a very tragic, un-Islamic and inhumane act, it is highly condemnable. The law of the state would work accordingly in this case as well,” he said.

Madani also said that whatever happened “due to derogatory words” was bad, but in order to maintain law and order and communal harmony in the country, it is necessary to show tolerance and patience.

“Just as we oppose this incident, we are strongly opposing insulting the dignity of any religious figure,” Arshad Madani said.

“We once again demand the government to immediately arrest those who have insulted the Prophet and punish them severely according to the law so that no one will dare to do so again in the future,” he said.

India’s desi mRNA Covid-19 vaccine approved for 18+

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved country’s first indigenously developed mRNA vaccine GEMCOVAC-19 against Covid-19. The vaccine has been given approval for restricted emergency use for those aged 18 years and above.

Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd., a subsidiary of Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd., announced that its mRNA vaccine — GEMCOVAC-19 — against Covid-19 received the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the office of the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI),” said a statement from the vaccine

manufacturer Gennova Biopharmaceuticals on Wednesday. It is a two dose vaccine to be administered intramuscularly at 28 days apart.

The vaccine will be sold under the brand name GEMCOVAC-19. GEMCOVAC-19 is the very first mRNA vaccine developed in India and only third mRNA vaccine to be approved for Covid-19 in the world.

“These vaccines are highly efficacious because of their inherent capacity of being translated into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm. mRNA vaccines are considered safe as mRNA is non-infectious, non-integrating in nature, and degraded by standard cellular mechanisms”, said the vaccine manufacturer.

Those talking of appeasement forgot Shambhu incident: Congress to BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

The Congress on Wednesday asserted that the Ashok Gehlot Government in Rajasthan was aware of its “raj dharma” and said action in the brutal killing of a tailor would be taken in accordance with law, unaffected by the religion or caste of those involved.

Two men with a cleaver murdered a tailor in Udaipur and posted videos online, claiming that they are avenging an insult to Islam.

Gehlot said the Rajasthan Police has booked the two men who brutally murdered Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur a day before under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The case will be investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) of Rajasthan Police will fully cooperate with the probe agency, he said. Gehlot made the remarks after chairing a

high-level meeting in which he reviewed the situation in Udaipur. Gehlot also convened an all-party meeting at his residence over the Udaipur incident. Congress’ media department head Pawan Khara said the party condemns the incident and said the Gehlot Government had acted swiftly in the matter.

“The Ashok Gehlot Government got the accused arrested within six hours. An all-party meeting has been called in the evening. This whole matter has been fast-tracked. On the basis of what came up during the probe, Ashok Gehlot has assured all help to the NIA,” Khara said at AICC Press conference.

“With the atmosphere being vitiated in the entire country for the last two months, Gehlot has been urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah that they address the country, take steps to stop the spread of hatred in society, and appeal for maintaining peace,”

he said.

Khara alleged that polarisation is evident in every nook and corner of the country, and asked why this was not the case earlier. The Congress spokesperson asserted that whoever is found guilty in the probe, strictest action will be taken against that person “There should be no doubt regarding that.

Hitting out at the BJP over its claim that terror outfits are flourishing in the Rajasthan due to its ‘appeasement policy’ towards one community, Khara said, “Those talking of appeasement forget that in 2017 in Rajasthan’s Rajsamand district, Shambhu Lal Regar had made a video while murdering someone and people of a particular party had climbed atop a court complex in his favour and hoisted their flag after removing the tricolour.”

Those talking of appeasement forget the murder of inspector Subodh Singh and that his murderers were garlanded, Khara said.

India slams UN Human Rights for comments on Teesta, calls it unwarranted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking exception to a comment by the UN Human Rights office regarding the arrest of social activist Teesta Setalvad and two others, India on Wednesday termed them as “unwarranted.” It also said it constitutes an interference in India’s independent judicial system.

The sharp reaction by the ministry of external affairs (MEA) here came a day after the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) voiced concern over the arrest and detention of Setalvad and called for her immediate release. “#India: We are very concerned by the arrest and detention of #WHRD @TeestaSetalvad and two ex-police officers and call for their



immediate release. They must not be persecuted for their activism and solidarity with the victims of the 2002 #GujaratRiots,” the UN Human Rights office said in a tweet on Tuesday.

Making India’s stand clear, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, “We have seen a comment by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) regarding

legal action against Teesta Setalvad and two other persons. The remarks by OHCHR are completely unwarranted and constitute an interference in India’s independent judicial system. Authorities in India act against violations of law in accordance with established judicial processes. Labelling such legal actions as persecution for activism is misleading and unacceptable,” he said.

SC stays Tripura HC order seeking scrutiny of security cover of Ambani, family

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the orders of the Tripura High Court on a PIL challenging the grant of security cover to industrialist Mukesh Ambani and his family members in Mumbai.

A vacation bench of Justices Surya Kant and JB Pardiwala issued notice to the PIL petitioner before High Court on Centre’s plea by which it had challenged the two orders of the High Court dated May 31 and June 21.

“Issue notice that is returnable on July 21.

“Meanwhile, implementation of orders dated May 31 and June 21 shall remain stayed”, the bench said in its order.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Centre, said further proceedings before

the High Court on the PIL shall also be stayed as Tripura has nothing to do with the security of individuals provided in Mumbai.

He said if the proceedings are not stayed, then again he will have to knock on doors of the top court.

The bench told Mehta, “When we have stayed the orders of High Court do you think there will be a need for you to come here. Even if the need arises, we are here”.

The Tripura High Court had on a PIL filed by one Bikash Saha had passed two interim orders on May 31 and June 21 and had directed the Central Government to place the original file maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) regarding threat perception and assessment report of Ambani, his wife and children based on which security has been granted to them.

‘Rotavirus survives for up to 3 days in lake water’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As pollutants, microplastics can be harmful to the environment and animal health. But now a team of scientists have found that the microplastic also acts as a potential surface for the lethal virus to move into the freshwater.

For instance, they found that Rotavirus, which causes diarrhoea and an upset stomach, was surviving for up to three days in lake water by attaching itself to the surfaces of microplastics.

Microplastics are tiny plastic particles that result from both commercial product development and the breakdown of larger plastics. As a pollutant, microplastics can be harmful to the environment and animal health Previous

studies have focussed only on the spread of such viruses in sterile hospital settings, however, the new study published in the journal Environmental Pollution has shown how they are present in the fresh water as well.

This study has come close on the heels of an almost similar report by researchers at IIT-Bombay which has found the presence of microplastics in food, air and water at the institute’s Powai campus.

The study conducted by the Centre for Environmental Science and Engineering, published on June 24 in the Elsevier journal Environmental Research, analysed 35 samples each of ambient air and drinking water, and 10 samples of food and deduced that an individual at the campus may be ingesting between 1,414 to 2,610 microplastic particles

per day, with cooked food being the dominant mode.

Professor Richard Quilliam, lead researcher from the varsity whose study has been published in journal Environmental Pollution said, “We found that viruses can attach to microplastics, which allows them to survive in the water for three days, possibly longer,” said “Even if a wastewater treatment plant is doing everything it can to clean sewage waste, the water discharged still has microplastics in it, which are then transported down the river, into the estuary and end up on the beach.

We weren’t sure how well viruses could survive by ‘hitchhiking’ on plastic in the environment, but they do survive, and they do remain infectious.” The researchers tested two types of viruses – those

with an envelope, or “lipid coat” around them, such as the flu virus (they tested bacteriophage Phi6), and those without: enteric viruses, such as rotavirus and norovirus (they tested rotavirus strain SA11).

They found that in those with an envelope, the envelope quickly dissolved, and the virus was deactivated, whereas those without an envelope successfully bound to the microplastics and survived.

“Viruses can also bind to natural surfaces in the environment. However, plastic pollution lasts a lot longer than those materials,” said Quilliam.

“This research is very much a proof-of-concept for conducting more research into how long pathogens can survive by binding to microplastics, as we only tested for three days, and what happens to them next.”

Global warming to impact water resources, agriculture: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Global warming is expected to increase the intensity and frequency of future drought in several global regions, adversely affecting the water resource, agriculture, and energy sectors, as per a study by the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES).

“Given that the current water management practices and existing infrastructures in these sectors are based on historical statistics or experiences, under a changing climate, these practices and infrastructures may eventually become insufficient. “Therefore, it is critical to better understand when severe drought conditions expressed as “unprecedented” will become frequent,” said the study. The projected impacts of warming show significant

regional disparities in their intensity and the pace of their growth over time,” said the corresponding lead author Yusuke Satoh, a research associate professor at Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology. “Regarding precipitation and temperature, preceding studies report the timing at which the impact of climate change emerges.

However, no study had successfully estimated the timing in terms of drought focusing on river discharge at a global scale,” added Tokuta Yokohata, a coauthor and a Chief Senior Researcher of the Earth System Risk Analysis Section at the Earth System Division, NIES. “A temporal evaluation about future drought conditions in comparison to our historical experiences is essential to take appropriate climate change strategies, especially for cli-



mate adaptations, in the long term and in time.”

The paper published in Nature Communications estimates the periods when drought conditions will shift to an unprecedented state in a warmer world. The research group evaluated changes in drought day frequency for 59 global subcontinental regions until the end of the 21st century. They estimated the time of first emergence (TFE) of consecutive unprecedented drought, which is the first onset of exceedance beyond the

maximum bound of the historical climate variability during the reference period (1865-2005) that occurs consecutively for a certain number of years.

“Appropriate and feasible climate mitigation and adaptation plans are essential for overcoming the expected extraordinarily severe dry conditions. Particularly regarding adaptation, it is crucial to improve our preparedness in the given time horizon before unprecedented drought conditions emerge,” said Satoh.

Lightning claims 2 dozen lives in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Rains and thundershowers gave the much needed relief to the people but also played havoc in the eastern parts of the Uttar Pradesh, where lightning and thunderstorms claimed about two dozen lives.

According to information received here, the spire of a temple built in Kashi Vishwanath Dham also collapsed due to rain and lightning on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed grief at the death of people due to lightning and expressed condolences to the bereaved families. He also directed senior officers to extend all possible help to the family members of the victims.

Two deaths were reported from Kanpur and one from Fatehpur due to lightning. A minor girl died after being struck by lightning in Prayagraj. The girl was in the house of her maternal grandfather.

Two minor children died due to lightning in Varanasi.

These incidents took place in Mirzamurad police station area where 11-year-old Hemant and 15-year-old Prabhat, residents of Adamapur village, died after being struck by lightning. In Varanasi, a former cook of a government school working in a field was also struck by lightning, and died on the spot.

A 15-year-old boy and a 50-year-old woman died due to lightning at two different places in Bhadohi. Besides, three more people, including a teenager, died after being struck by lightning late in the evening on Tuesday in Bhadohi. Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Bharti said that Shashi Bhushan Dubey (45), Sukhna Devi (60) and Ankit Gautam (45) died of burns.

Two children died due to lightning in the Baldi Rai area of Sultanpur district on Tuesday. Police officer Rajaram Choudhary said that three children were grazing their buffaloes on Tuesday afternoon in the Dihwa village under Baldiray police station area when suddenly it started rain-



ing with thunder, during which all the three children were scorched after being struck by lightning. He said the relatives of the victims and villagers took the three children to the hospital where Shatrughan (11) and Amit (13) died during the treatment while the third child Aham (8) was undergoing treatment.

According to a report received from Maharajganj, Raghuvvar Nayak (45) and Khushi (16) died after being

struck by lightning in the field in Badi village under Nichlaur police station. Additional District Magistrate Satya Prakash Mishra said that two other people also sustained burns in this incident.

Three people lost their lives in Ballia's Bairia, Dokati and Sikanderpur due to lightning. In Mirzapur's Lalganj, two people, including a teenager, died after being hit by a thunderstorm while one person each died in Siddharthnagar and Basti due to lightning.

Meanwhile, as many as 26 passengers were injured, three of them seriously, when a private bus hit a road divider and overturned on Agra- Lucknow Expressway on Wednesday. The injured were admitted to a community health centre and three of the injured were referred to the district hospital.

According to reports, the bus was coming from Chhapra in Bihar and was on its way to Delhi. Most of the passengers were sleeping when the accident took place. It is presumed that the driver had dozed off and lost control of the vehicle.

Mamata, Bengal clerics condemn Udaipur killing

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee too joined the group of leaders in condemning the brutal murder of a tailor at Udaipur in Rajasthan by some religious fanatics.

Taking to the Twitter the Chief Minister wrote "violence and extremism are unacceptable, no matter what! (might be the provocation). I strongly condemn what happened in Udaipur." She further appealed for calm saying "as the law takes its own course of action, I urge everyone to maintain peace."

Two men from a particular community carrying a cleaver murdered a tailor and posted online videos of the brutal act saying that they were avenging the insult to Islam by eliminating the tailor belonging to another community.

The victim has made a social media post where he had supported BJP leader Nupura Sharma for her alleged remarks against Prophet Muhammad.

Curiously the Chief Minister who had from a public rally attacked Sharma for her offensive statements promising legal action against her would not condemn the Udaipur attack in a similar manner.



Banerjee had on Tuesday told a public rally at Asansol that "those who are spreading hatred and creating animosity among communities in the country are let off ... they are not being touched ... they are even being given protection whereas those who are criticizing such acts are being arrested," adding in reference to Nupur Sharma case that "we will not spare her ... my Government has already taken action and she had been summoned."

She also condemned the arrest of journalist, Md Zubair and social activist Teesta Sitlvald for fighting the cases of the victims of Gujarat riots.

Meanwhile, a group of Bengal Imams too condemned the Udaipur killing saying Islam never permitted taking

someone's life.

Md Yahia Chairman of Bengal Imams Association an organization of Muslim clerics on Wednesday condemned the killing of the Udaipur tailor saying "no true Muslim will support a heinous crime as this," and asked for exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of the crime.

"There are people who are out to malign religions ... no religions preach violence ... there is no issue that cannot be settled through legal way ... such acts must be condemned and strict actions must be taken against the perpetrators of such crimes," he said.

Another cleric from Nakhoda Masjid however said, "an entire community must not be judged by the acts of a few persons."

Mumbai building collapse: Owner who had rented out flats arrested

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Police on Wednesday arrested a 40-year-old man who had allegedly rented out his flats in the ill-fated building in suburban Kurla which collapsed and claimed the lives of 19 persons.

A case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder was registered earlier in the day against some flat owners and others at Nehru Nagar police station in connection with the Monday midnight's incident.

Most of those who died in the incident were tenants.

Dilip Vishwas, the arrested man, was a contractor by profession, and named in the First Information Report, said a police official.

He had allegedly rented out his flats in the building, locat-



ed in Naik Nagar Housing Society, he said.

As per the FIR, flat owners including Rajni Rathod, Kishore Chavan, Balkrishna Rathod and Vishwas rented out their flats even though the building had been declared as dilapidated by the civic body BMC.

A case under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 304 (2) (culpable homicide not

amounting to murder), 338 (causing grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 34 (common intention) has been registered against them.

Senior BMC officials had claimed that residents of the building, constructed in 1973, had undertaken to carry out repairs, but apparently no repairs were carried out.

High tea at Raj Bhawan at J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Reaching out to the leaders belonging to different political parties Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Wednesday hosted them over high tea at Raj Bhawan, Srinagar.

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor held deliberations focusing on the smooth conduct of the Amarnath yatra with these leaders.

National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah, Peoples Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti, BJP unit Chief Ravinder Raina, Peoples Conference Chairman Sajjad Lone, President of Jammu and Kashmir Apni party Altaf Bukhari, CPI(M)



leader Mohammad Yousef Tarigami, JKPC president G A Mir, PDF president Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen and several others were invited for the high tea.

Significantly, PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti chose to stay away from the meeting.

During the meeting, it is learnt, JKNC President Dr Farooq Abdullah advised Lt-Gov Manoj Sinha to separately convene another meeting to deliberate on the prevailing political situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Hope Cong fades away paving way for new political era: Owaisi

PTI ■ BHOPAL

AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday said Congress is losing its relevance fast and should wither away which will pave the way for the beginning of new politics in the country.

Taking a swipe at Congress, the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief also said Narendra Modi could become the prime minister twice because of Congress' (performance).

He dismissed the allegation that the AIMIM cuts into the votes of Congress in elections. ".....If that is the case then it seems Pragna Thakur (BJP MP from Bhopal) won the election and also the 22 legislators of Congress joined hands with BJP to bring Shivraj Singh Chouhan to power again due to AIMIM," he said

sarcastically.

"You see that Congress is going down. We expect the Congress will not only be weakened but should fade away so that a new politics can begin in the country. Narendra Modi became the prime minister twice due to Congress," Owaisi told reporters.

The Hyderabad MP said Congress's politics will finish if Muslims understand the exact share of their representation in political leadership.

He said the poor condition of Congress could be gauged from the fact that it failed to gather even 100 people when its leader (Rahul Gandhi) was summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning.

Owaisi appealed to Muslim residents of the Hindi heartland to ensure their adequate representation in local bodies and

the Assembly, and create leadership in alliance with Dalits and STs.

He said some legislators have been representing their respective constituencies for three decades but have failed to develop the education infrastructure, resulting in the lowest literacy among Muslims.

Queried on a proposal before the Maharashtra government demanding that Aurangabad city be renamed Sambhaji Nagar, Owaisi said the Maha Vikas Aghadi should first face the floor test in the state Assembly (on Thursday as directed by the state governor).

The Shiv Sena should take care of its flock and the government instead of Aurangabad, which is facing a water crisis, he said referring to the political crisis in Maharashtra.

Muslim bodies in UP demand stern action against Udaipur killers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Muslim clerics and organisations in Uttar Pradesh have condemned the beheading of a tailor by Islamic extremists at Udaipur in Rajasthan on Tuesday and have demanded stern action against the accused who have been arrested.

Prominent Shia cleric Maulana Kalbe Jawwad said the murder of a person at his shop by criminal elements was most dastardly and condemnable. He said the gov-

ernment should act fast and take tough action against those who had violated the law.

Maulana Jawwad added that Islam does not permit such acts and Muslims condemn this act.

Maulana Jawwad said the government should also take action against anti-social elements who were in the habit of making provocative statements and vitiating the atmosphere. He said that had action been taken against those making provocative

statements, such a situation would not have arisen.

The Shia cleric said under the prevailing circumstances in the country it was the first duty of every citizen of the country to maintain peace and harmony in the country.

Imam of Aishbagh eidgah, Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali, also condemned the incident and demanded stern action against the accused. He appealed to the people to maintain peace and social harmony.

UP Madarsa Shiksha

Parishad chairman Ifitikhar Ahmed Javed also condemned the incident. He said such incidents in the cover of religion tarnished religion as well as the image of the country at the global level. Bunkar Beradrana Tanzeen, an organisation of the weavers' community of Muslims, also condemned the Udaipur incident. Its president Sardar Ikramuddin said, "We condemn this incident. There is no place for such persons in Islam who commit violence against innocent people."

Ally Rajbhar attacks Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Continuing his tirade against the senior ally Samajwadi Party, Om Prakash Rajbhar, who heads the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, said on Wednesday that "can Akhilesh Yadav point out one election that he has won on his own?"

Akhilesh Yadav has drawn flak from allies after the Samajwadi Party's debacle in the by-polls to Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha seats.

Rajbhar said Akhilesh Yadav had become the chief minister of UP in 2012 because of his father Mulayam

Singh Yadav's "largesse".

"The 2012 election was fought under Mulayam Singh Yadav's strong leadership," he said, listing out a string of losses under Akhilesh Yadav -- the assembly elections in 2017 and earlier this year; and the Lok Sabha polls in 2014 and 2019.

He added, "Akhilesh Yadav could not retain even the strongholds of his party."

"The Samajwadi Party is harming itself. A party whose chief does not campaign in elections, what election will that party fight? He should step out of air-conditioned rooms and go to the ground.

No one will join you if you sit in AC rooms," Rajbhar added.

The SBSP chief has been repeatedly using the "AC room" jibe against Akhilesh Yadav. However he has repeatedly clarified that he would not quit the alliance.

Continuing with his jibes, Rajbhar added, "How many villages has Akhilesh Yadav visited? How much grassroots leadership has he built? Let him ask Mulayam Singh Yadav and his uncle Shivalp Singh Yadav and they will tell him about blocks and villages they had visited in last couple of decades." Rajbhar's party has considerable influence among

the non-Yadav Other Backward Classes in eastern UP. He was part of a rainbow coalition stitched by Akhilesh Yadav ahead of the UP assembly elections to add to his party's Yadav-Muslim core base. With 125 seats -- Samajwadi Party won 111 -- the opposition alliance improved its position but could not unseat the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance in UP.

In 2017, Rajbhar had contested the assembly polls as part of the BJP-led coalition. But he left the coalition in May 2019 -- after the Lok Sabha elections.

Driven by property greed, toddler 'sacrificed' to appease deity

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A self-styled exorcist killed a two-and-a-half-year-old boy in the name of "sacrifice" in Kheragarh tehsil of the Agra district.

The accused, Bhola alias Hukam Singh, a self-styled exorcist who was arrested by the police on Tuesday night, killed Hrithik "to please Chamad Mata" in the village.

As per the police, the accused confessed that on June 15, he kidnapped the son of Ramavatar, a resident of Barigwan, after seeing him playing alone near a well and took him to his room and strangled him to death and placed the toddler's body at the feet of the deity.

The self-styled exorcist later put Hrithik's body in a

sack and hid it in the bushes. The body was recovered by the police and the villagers on June 16 last. The police, however, zeroed in on the accused on Tuesday night, and he told the police that at 4 o'clock in the morning of June 16, he had thrown the child's body in the dry river Kibar.

It is learnt that one Sheru of the village saw Bhola taking Hrithik with him but was threatened by the exorcist of dire consequences if he disclosed it to anyone. Despite the threat, Sheru mustered courage and provided a tip-off to the police which finally led to the arrest of the accused.

Agra's Superintendent of Police (West) Satyajit Gupta said that the victim's father had filed a missing complaint on June 16. Gupta said that the

accused had killed the boy "for sacrifice" after his exorcism was not working.

Sources also confirmed that Bhola tried to take advantage of a property dispute between two families. He believed that offering a young child to the goddess would solve his problems. He chose the kid from the opposing family itself for the sacrifice. After murdering the child, he offered the child's blood to the goddess, wrapped the body in a sack, and dumped it in the river.

The property dispute involved Ramavatar and his stepfather, Gareeba. Bhola had thought that after Ritik's death Ramavatar would leave the village and he would purchase Gareeba's property at a throw-away price.

UP CM stresses safety of people during floods

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stressing on the safety of people during floods, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered field officers to be on their toes to provide relief to the people affected by floods and asked them to ensure that relief reached the people at the earliest.

"The highly sensitive embankments should be inspected by the district magistrates and district police chiefs while the remaining embankments should be inspected by officials of the level of deputy collector and deputy superintendent of police. For a quick response, assistant engineers should be made in-charge of embankments and they should be put on 24x7 alert mode. Keep an eye on the condition of the breach in embankments during the initial days of rain

so that major damage can be prevented," Yogi said during a review meeting held here on Wednesday.

There are 523 embankments of 3,869 kilometre length constructed on various rivers in the state.

The chief minister said efforts had been made in the last five years to find a permanent solution to the problem of floods, which was a factor in extensive loss of life and property in the state. He said good work had been done by inter-departmental coordination in the last five years for the protection of public life from floods and this year also, with better coordination, quick action and better management, the safety of people should be ensured in the event of floods.

As per the government record, there are 24 districts which are in the 'very sensitive'

category from the point of view of floods. They include Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Lakhimpur Kheri, Gorakhpur, Basti, Bahraich, Bijnor, Siddharthnagar, Ghazipur, Gonda, Ballia, Deoria, Sitapur, Balrampur, Ayodhya, Mau, Farrukhabad, Shravasti, Budaun, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh, Sant Kabir Nagar, Pilibhit and Barabanki.

Saharanpur, Shamli, Aligarh, Bareilly, Hamirpur, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Rampur, Prayagraj, Bulandshahr, Moradabad, Hardoi, Varanasi, Unnao, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur and Kasganj are in the 'sensitive' category.

"We have to make concerted efforts to prevent water-logging. By June 30, the work of cleaning drains should be completed," the chief minister said.

1 held in connection with Meerut house blast

PTI ■ MEERUT (UP)

One person has been arrested in connection with the blast in a house here that left a woman dead and seven others injured, a senior official said on Tuesday. Police, however, did not disclose the name of the arrested accused.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rohit Sajwan said on Tuesday that one person has been arrested in connection with Monday's blast.

Earlier in the day, police had said the blast took place as firecrackers being illegally manufactured inside the house in Summer Garden Colony caught fire.

Sajwan said during an on-site investigation by a field unit of police, evidence of firecrackers being manufactured in the house was found.

2 LeT terrorists killed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

On the eve of the start of Amarnath yatra two more terrorists belonging to the Pakistan based Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terrorist outfit were gunned down by the joint team of the security forces in Nawapora area near Mir Bazar in South Kashmir district of Kulgam on Wednesday.

Inspector General of Police Kashmir Vijay Kumar said both the terrorists have been identified as categorised local terrorists of proscribed terror outfit LeT.

He said it was an important encounter as the operation site was very close to the National Highway (Yatra route).

Murder most foul

The Udaipur incident is another reminder that timely action can prevent a situation from unravelling

The gruesome murder of Kanhaiya Lal, a tailor in Udaipur, is a reminder to all, especially the political class, that there is a lot that is rotten in the statecraft and politics of India. The killers, Gos Mohammad and Riyaz Akhtari, not only slaughtered Lal in his shop but also shot a video of their misdeed. They cut his throat with a cleaver and, according to the police, wanted to behead him but couldn't. In another video, the murderers not only gloated over the killing but also threatened to kill Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The case has been handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Meanwhile, in Udaipur, after a few violent incidents, curfew has been imposed; in entire Rajasthan, large gatherings have been disallowed for a month; mobile internet services have been shut down for 24 hours across the State. The authorities are alert now, but a little action and some alertness earlier by the local cops could have preempted the murder and the unfortunate situation that has arisen now. What led to the murder is still not quite clear. There are reports that Lal supported former BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma, who was recently in the news for her controversial remarks about Prophet Muhammad. But it has also been reported that Lal did not know how to operate a mobile phone. When he was arrested following a complaint against him, he told the police that it was his child who, while playing a game, had shared an objectionable post by mistake. Lal was arrested but was bailed out the next day, that is, June 11.

Whatever be the truth, it is undeniable that he had informed the police that he was receiving death threats, and yet no action was taken. ADG (Law and Order) Hawa Singh Ghumaria told a newspaper, "Then, on June 15, he submitted a written complaint that he is getting death threats and sought police protection. The SHO concerned called the persons who were allegedly issuing the threats. And then, five-seven responsible persons from both the communities sat down and reached an agreement. In a handwritten note, Kanhaiya Lal said he doesn't need any more action against anyone. Hence, the police did not proceed on the security threat." All this may be correct, but what was local intelligence doing? That Gos Mohammad and Riyaz Akhtari were quite radicalised is evident from not just their crime but also their belief that anyone offending their Prophet has to be executed. As they said in their video, "Gustakh-e-Nabi ki ek hi saza, sar tan se juda (There is only one punishment for disrespect to the Prophet, beheading)." This is a favourite slogan of Pakistan's Muslim fundamentalists. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has denounced Lal's murder, as also have other prominent leaders. Typically, they appeal to people to maintain peace. There is something that our political masters also need to do: Strengthen the law-enforcement apparatus and detox politics.



Men walk at the Nokian Tyres manufacturing plant in Vsevolozhsk, outside St Petersburg, Russia

Unsettled queries in *l'affaire* Nupur

There's no merit in demands to lynch anybody without first appreciating the circumstances under which the person may have uttered angry words

In the emotional thrust and parrying of viewpoints over Nupur Sharma's remarks, some fundamental points have been lost sight of. Now that an authentic video of the TV programme is no longer available, we can only go by inferences and deductions and try to answer some fundamental questions based on these. What exactly did Nupur say that sparked this outrage both domestically and in Islamist nations? Indications are that she alluded to some details of the Islamic Prophet's life. Did she invent these details to malign Islam and mock its followers? If so, she deserves the strongest condemnation and a harsh punishment. If, however, what she mentioned was derived from Islamic sources, then her misdemeanour falls in the category of an unfortunate choice of words or a tactless iteration in the heat of debate. In that case, her immature simplicity was her only sin, quite understandable in somebody in her 30s. And that requires at best a reprimand from her party, the BJP, and an admonition to be more circumspect and to avoid such indiscretions.

The veracity of the above scenarios notwithstanding, was the overblown reaction to an off-the-cuff remark on national TV discussion, in response to provocation, proportionate and justifiable? Are the rabid chants of *sar-tan-se-juda* asking for her beheading, in Kanpur and elsewhere, condonable in civilised society? Should it be par for the course for any community to make children hold up posters asking for somebody's head? And all this when Nupur had already apologised unconditionally?

Something forgotten in the present overcharged discourse is what Nupur stated in a video flicker, since gone missing; that she cannot remain silent when her *Mahadev* is insulted and that she had made the remarks in anger. What did her Muslim interlocutor on the TV debate say about Lord Shiva that she was referring to? And why are his comments muted and lost in the din of her universal condemnation by the secular lobby in India and the Islamist one abroad?



In the pan-India protests after Friday prayers, the posters at different locations had an eerie commonality — of image, banner text. The similarity across distant locations points to coordinated planning and execution. Were the protests orchestrated by vested interests out to undermine the Modi Government by sowing discord between communities? Were these instigators, inimical to Indian national interest, inspired and funded by foreign agencies?

Now about the protests abroad. Does Qatar have any right to demand a public apology from the Government of India when in 2010 it had given shelter and honorary citizenship to artist MF Husain who, after painting Hindu goddesses in the nude, refused to appear before court and fled the country? Almost every Islamic nation, as well as the 57-member OIC, initially lambasted India for the intemperate remarks by somebody not holding any Government position. The Pakistan press lamented that "the idea of India was facing an existential crisis", presumably because the idea was secular, quite forgetting that the country itself is a theocratic State that unabashedly persecutes minorities.

An Arab newspaper point-



THE SIMILARITY IN PROTESTS ACROSS DISTANT GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS POINTS TO COORDINATED PLANNING AND EXECUTION. WERE THE PROTESTS ORCHESTRATED BY VESTED INTERESTS OUT TO UNDERMINE THE MODI GOVERNMENT BY SOWING DISCORD BETWEEN COMMUNITIES?

ed out that Nupur's Muslim copanellist was not blaspheming Ram or Sita when in anger she uttered the offending remarks. While that may well be true, she was instead provoked probably by the worst blasphemy possible for Hindus — the ritual washing of feet, *Vazoo*, by Muslim worshippers at Gyanvapi mosque That surely is an offence much greater than a tactless, angry remark.

Why was the reaction overblown? The Grand Mufti of Oman exhorted all Muslims to rise as one nation, there were calls in the Gulf countries for boycott of Indian goods, and there were reminders of India's dependence on the Gulf countries for oil imports and inward remittances.

Under Modi, India has tried its best to improve relations with the Gulf countries and obtained significant success. Modi himself has paid several visits to the region, been received warmly and had national honours bestowed on him. Pakistan often invokes the Islamic Ummah for undermining India; it did so this time also, especially with OIC. However, since its credibility is rather low, many Islamic countries did not take long to recover from the initial kneejerk reaction. The Iranian Foreign

Minister after his recent visit to New Delhi approved of the Indian Government's handling of the controversy and its fall-out. The Kuwait Government has taken strict action against the anti-India protesters, even deporting some expatriates and banning them from entering the country again.

Domestically, it was a god-send opportunity for the Opposition to malign Modi and BJP. Though religious figures like the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid in Delhi distanced themselves from the unruly protests and violent rioting, leaders who cultivate the simple, unaware Islamic vote bank played to their gallery and feigned righteous indignation. The fact that major rioting started 10 days after the TV episode lends credence to the allegation that mob anger was built up over time deliberately by leaders like Owaisi. One of the downsides of democracy is that unscrupulous politicians may pander to the rabble's irrational sentiments for electoral gains at the cost of social cohesion; this episode illustrates it vividly.

(A former banker, the writer's love for words and ideas has turned him towards writing columns. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUND BITE

The deputy CM (Manish Sisodia) is unnecessarily politicising a desirable administrative action.



Delhi L-G —VK Saxena



French President —Emmanuel Macron

More layers, characters and mysteries will unfold when the audience will watch *Shamshera* on the big screen.



Director —Karan Malhotra



Indian spinner —R Ashwin

It is clear from the brutal daylight murder that miscreants feel confident under this State Government.



Former Rajasthan CM —Vasundhara Raje

A soldiers' soldier

Sam Bahadur, the architect of the 1971 victory against Pakistan, deserves the Bharat Ratna

He is the only military commander in modern times who can be described as the "soldiers' soldier". Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw, or Sam Manekshaw, led India in the 1971 war against Pakistan which resulted in the birth of Bangladesh. How he won the war despite odds like shortage of weapons and manpower has been recorded in golden letters in military history. He was the country's Chief of Army Staff from 1969 to 1973 and was promoted as India's first Field Marshal in January 1973. An Army commander who never hesitated to speak his mind to the highest political leadership, Sam Manekshaw is not a name to be remembered only on his birth or death anniversaries because he was much more than a military chief. Born as the son of a doctor in a middle class family, Sam could have opted for any profession of his choice but he ended up in the military academy. The story of Manekshaw as a soldier, officer and commander is folklore. Bravery, gallantry, intelligence and the willingness to go to the extra mile to realise his mission endeared him to his officers and subordinates.

The best example of his professional prowess was the decision of his British commander Major General David Cowan honouring a critically injured Manekshaw, then a captain fighting on the Burma front in 1942, with a Military Cross. The award was in recognition of his valour and fighting spirit against the Imperial Japanese Army. Since a dead man cannot be awarded the

Military Cross, the British commander decorated Manekshaw, who was fighting for his life after being felled by Japanese bullets. The appointment of Manekshaw as CoAS was a morale booster to the Indian Army which has not looked back since. India owes a lot to Sam for the win in the 1975 World Cup Hockey Championship at Kuala Lumpur. It was Sam who asked MAM Ramaswamy, an industrialist in Chennai, to pay for the air tickets of the Indian team with the day's Government looking the other way. Each person who has met him at least once has many things to reminiscence about this legendary soldier. This great son of India is a real Bharat Ratna and it would be ideal to honour him with the top civilian award during the 75th anniversary of India's freedom.

PROBE SHOULD BE FAIR, UNBIASED

Sir — The reports suggest that the PMO has responded to a letter by the Contractors' Association of Karnataka, in which the body alleged that the Ministers and MLAs demand hefty commissions of about 40 per cent for giving approval to development projects in the State. Meanwhile, the contractors' association president has said the relevant documents pertaining to the case have been submitted to the officer sent by the Union Home Ministry. It's a positive development as the Centre has taken an initiative to dig out the truth in the serious charges of corruption.

However, the Centre's initiative to probe the menace of corruption among Ministers making headlines shouldn't become an eyewash and a ploy to give the clean chit to the BJP leaders — just to blunt the Opposition attack. The corruption deals between the Ministers and contractors executing Government projects are an open secret. The investigation shouldn't end up as an image makeover exercise ahead of the Assembly elections. Also, the Prime Minister's oft-repeated public statement "Na khaunga, na khane doonga" should hold good universally. Transparency and fairness should be the prime criteria to make the investigation convincing and justifiable.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

31% RS MPS FACE CRIMINAL CASES

Sir — It's a big shock to the citizens that 31 per cent of the Rajya Sabha members across political parties have criminal cases against them, according to Association for Democratic reforms, National Election Watch. The Members of Legislative Assemblies elect the required number of MPs to the Rajya Sabha. The RS also includes men of integrity excelling in arts, literature, games and social service as they are nominated by the President on the Government's advice. Though ours is the biggest democracy, the way these leaders are elected is concerning for the democ-

Modi makes a point at G-7



In his address to the G-7 Summit recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's concern for global development and its betterment was noteworthy. Through his worthy words, the Prime Minister mentioned the utmost contribution made by India that was aimed at throwing a major light on the ultimate goal of global development. With special emphasis on the contributions made by the country, he further reiterated that we are the country that has been able to transform robustly with the help of concept of women-development to women-led develop-

racy as several ills need to be cured.

Thanks to former Chief Election Commissioner TN Seshan for bringing reforms in election procedures and implementing the existing rules strictly. It gave good results but not totally. Many things still have to be strictly implemented due to interference by politicians of ruling parties as they go by their convenience, resulting in the disappointment of citizens. But when the Elders are sent to the Rajya Sabha, everything should be transparent. When many RS members are involved in criminal cases, how can they feel comfortable with the title of Elders?

JP Reddy | Telangana

THE INTERNATIONAL ASTEROID DAY

Sir — June 30, the International Asteroid Day, will have everyone looking toward the skies. The day was founded after the 2014 release of the film *51 Degrees North*, which seeks to explore what would happen if an asteroid were to strike London. The film's creative team (many of whom are actual

scientists) wanted to raise more awareness about the threat of asteroids to earth, and how we can help protect ourselves. To make that happen, they formed a foundation, and in 2015, they celebrated the world's first International Asteroid Day. There are over one million asteroids in space that could potentially strike the earth, but modern scientists have discovered only about one per cent of them.

To combat this real and actual threat, the Asteroid Day's founders as well as a host of accomplished scientists, created the 100X Asteroid Declaration. The declaration aims for scientists to work towards increasing the rate of asteroid discovery to 100,000 per year within a decade. The International Asteroid Day focuses on spreading the word of the declaration and helping fellow earthlings prepare for a potential asteroid impact.

Sarthak Sharma | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

LET'S BE THE CHANGE THAT WE WANT TO SEE

We have to develop a culture that springs from non-violence



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

In the past couple of years, there has been a growing concern across the world with regards to ruthless killings of whistleblowers, most of whom were courageous citizens who fought to secure the truth at the risk of their lives. These whistle blowers play an essential role in exposing corruption, fraud, mismanagement and other wrongdoing that threaten public health and safety, financial integrity, human rights, the environment and the rule of law.

By disclosing information about such misdeeds, these courageous people have helped save countless lives and billions in public funds, while preventing emerging scandals and disasters from worsening. Hence, such violent resistance to truth and its custodians in innumerable cases across the world shows extreme moral degradation of our society and the erosion of values. What kind of society would punish its whistleblowers and stifle the truth? Perhaps that's the question we all need to ask ourselves. When muscle and money power call the shots everywhere, it is obvious that truth will always be on the run and evil on a perpetual chase.

The dictum of might is right has been strengthened by the depiction of violent episodes in history as well as through religious writings. There are many religious scriptures that show that even the Almighty showed His might by decimating the evil forces by means of a violent war to contain unrighteousness in the world. Hence, using force to set a wrong right or to discipline a wrong doer has been adopted as a norm by humans at all levels of existence.



To change this scene, patchwork solutions will no longer suffice. Because we need a complete transformation that can emerge when we change the powers we use. From the power of might, we now have to shift to the power of right and develop a culture that springs from non-violence.

Discarded as a theoretical tool and reduced to a mere embellishment in books, non-violence is actually a magic wand that can protect against the wrong and wrongdoer. One should not forget that we have already witnessed that the policy of an eye for an eye has made the whole world blind, so we need to now make use of the power of values to connect and correct.

The great potential of non-violence needs to be explored—a value which asks its users to refrain from aggression not just in action but also in words and even thoughts. The simplicity of non-violence lies in the fact that it can be used by anyone and at all levels—personal, social and global. Peace, spirituality and self-sustainability will be dominant in a culture nourished by non-violence. It will naturally ooze with security and brotherhood and any anti-social elements will soon be forced to the road of guilt and self-realisation.

Ideals that we struggle and fight for today—freedom, justice and equality—will be natural there. From a place where anything can happen to anyone at any time, the world will be transformed to a place where everything would happen at the right place, at the right time and in the right manner. There, the right would not just be right but right would be right.

Is it all as simple as it sounds? Yes, it is! Together, we all can, through spiritual empowerment, create such a way of life, but the fundamental rule for it is self-change. Most of us have wasted much of our precious time and energy in checking others and the quality of people at the social level, without realising that the creation of a fair society would begin from personal change that would work from the inside out. This change would be contagious which would spread through all of us, thus triggering a social transformation at global level. So, Let's Be the Change.

(The author is a spiritual educator and popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal, and the UK)

Higher education has to become meaningful

Indians going to the US for education need to be informed about the world-class institutions India has



LN JHUNJHUNWALA

My mind goes back to 1945 and 1946. I was a postgraduate student in pure mathematics. We were just six students. Shree Satyen Bose was our Professor. He used to wear Dhoti Kurta (snow-white). Our classes were on the 3rd floor and there were no lifts.

Bose and Einstein were collaborating on some research which resulted in the discovery of the Bose-Einstein (Bosen) theory. Bose used to love me and was keen that after finishing studies, I go to study astronomy at Mount Wilson observatory in America. He was disappointed when I did not continue my studies.

I came from a very poor family. My mother died of tuberculosis without proper treatment for want of funds in 1936. My family had great expectations from me, that I would earn money as I was brilliant in education. But I became brilliant in business. I started learning business from my uncle in 1946 side by side with studies.

I came into business full-fledged in 1946 and retired in 2000. I have been very close to the Ramakrishna Mission since 1951. The mission had a splendid educational institute at Narendrapur in the suburb of Calcutta with about 3,000 students. Of the top 10 students in Calcutta University, at least two students were from Narendrapur. I was dreaming of having something like Narendrapur but on a tiny scale run by the Ramakrishna Mission monks.

Shree Arjun Singh was the human resource development minister. He belonged to Madhya Pradesh where I had established a technologically challenging graphite electrode plant. I had become very close to him. He would attend lectures of Swami Atmanandaji, whom we used to invite to Bhopal for lectures.

The mission had a number of educational institutions but no university. They decided to establish one at Belur Math in their large compound on the banks of the Ganges. They decided to send a delegation of monks to meet Arjun Singh. Knowing my closeness with him, they asked me to accompany them. His response was good; the next meeting was fixed after a month.

The Ramakrishna Mission had three subjects in mind for the University: (i) disaster management whose practical experience they had in floods and famines; (ii) rural development; and (iii) poverty alleviation. I was keen that they included mathematics so that their performance could be compared internationally.

I met Arjun Singh alone and requested him, while interacting with them, to emphasise on mathematics. He was enthusiastic. The ministry did their homework. An additional secretary and other officers attended the meeting. Five senior monks of the mission and I attended the meeting. On Singh's emphasis, mathematics was agreed upon.

He was highly impressed that the proposed vice-chancellor was a scholar of



SATYEN BOSE AND EINSTEIN WERE COLLABORATING ON SOME RESEARCH WHICH RESULTED IN THE DISCOVERY OF THE BOSE-EINSTEIN (BOSEN) THEORY. BOSE USED TO LOVE ME. HE WAS DISAPPOINTED WHEN I DID NOT CONTINUE MY STUDIES

The author is Emeritus Chairman, LNJ Bhilwara



physics and was teaching it to graduates of the mission college and another monk, Mahan Maharaj, was a great scholar of mathematics and famous internationally.

The mission pointed out that the mathematics education would be expensive. Faculty will have to be paid liberally. As there are Nobel Laureates in other subjects, mathematics also has able laureates. The mission wanted a grant of Rs 40 crore and Singh agreed to that.

The mission started looking for a mathematics scholar to start this course. Fortunately, there was a Bengali mathematician, Abhijeet Dutt, at the Kyoto University who was engaged in research with Japanese students. He was keen to come to Bengal. With his coming back, the RK Mission University became a hub of mathematics in India. The board of governors included four monks of the mission and four officials of the Ministry. Singh nominated me on the board. He told the mission that I had vast experience in dealing with the bureaucracy and that I would be helpful. Thus I became a board member.

Unfortunately, Arjun Singh passed away in 2011. Dealing with the ministry became difficult.

The senior Sanyasinis of Sarda Math once came to visit the university. Abhijeet Dutt welcomed them in his half pants and a sports T-shirt. The Sanyasinis were not very comfortable. Nobody told anything to the professor but he started feeling uncomfortable. He resigned and went back to Kyoto. This was unfortunate. I wish the mission had handled the professor better.

After the demise of Arjun Singh, I found my name had disap-

peared from the board without my knowledge. I was not happy.

In 2020, I came across an IIT dean. I informed him that I have four thousand students studying for higher secondary at four places where we have schools. I requested his assistance. He visited one of our institutes and was highly impressed with our research activities. We were looking forward to some kind of association with IIT. But nothing came up.

Recently, my daughter became very enthusiastic for our schools. Therefore, I fixed a meeting with the Dean of an IIT. The Dean was warm and he briefed me about their activities in mathematics research done by postgraduate mathematicians.

Similarly, I am now associated with the Harish-Chandra Maths research institute at Allahabad. With my daughter's involvement and my good health and alert mind, I am hopeful that I will be alive to see India produce an able laureate in mathematics.

I requested the Vice-Chancellor, Swami Atmapiyanadaji, to include artificial intelligence and I donated Rs 15 lakh for that. He was also thinking about artificial intelligence. One of his students is teaching artificial intelligence at the South African University; he has agreed to join soon. I hope something emerges.

I look across at my friends and my own family. My grandson went to the United States to study mathematics. After two years, he wanted to specialise in some branch of mathematics whose expertise was available at Cambridge; he moved to Cambridge. I was hopeful that

he would make his mark internationally but he lost interest in mathematics.

It is difficult for me to evaluate whether his education abroad for five years did him some good. He took up music and joined Fayaaz Dagar, where I also joined him to renew my interest in vocal music. He lost interest in vocal music too and joined sarod, and moved to Bombay because his teacher was in Poona.

One of my grandsons from my daughter's side did his graduation abroad and entered the business. It is difficult to conclude whether his foreign education was helpful.

Similarly, my granddaughter from my daughter's side did architecture in the US with great enthusiasm. On her return, she joined an architecture firm where she did well. But she is no longer in the field of architecture.

The younger generation of rich people is not accustomed to hard work for a livelihood.

They are guided by their temporary whims.

The US earns billions of dollars from students coming from China and India. India spends a large amount in foreign exchange on Indians studying abroad. Affluent families send them abroad even after higher secondary education. After graduation, the US is well equipped for studies in artificial intelligence, space travel, mathematics, etc. But what do we get?

The Institute of Science in Bangalore and the Atomic Research Institute are world-class. IITs are growing well. Indians going to the US for education need to be informed about the international status of some such institutions.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

AS HEAD OF THE FAMILY, I TELL YOU THE TIME HAS NOT PASSED YET. I APPEAL TO YOU... WE'LL RESOLVE ALL DIFFERENCES.
—SHIV SENA CHIEF AND MAHARASHTRA CM UDDHAV THACKERAY



ALL THE MLAS HERE (GUWAHATI) ARE HAPPY AND UNITED. THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY. WE'LL ALL GO TO MUMBAI SOON.
—REBEL SENA LEADER EKNATH SHINDE

Murmu: NDA's choice for inclusive democracy

Draupadi Murmu struggled to raise her children, while also becoming a foremost social and political worker

Democracy serves people best when it's inclusive.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance, by picking up former Jharkhand governor Draupadi Murmu as its candidate for the July 18 Presidential election, has abided by the inclusive Dharma of democracy.

The two successful candidates of the NDA in the past who made to Rashtrapati Bhavan equally emphasised inclusivity and most suitable to hold the top Constitutional post. APJ Abdul Kalam, India's missile man, not only lived to give the country strategic deterrence but also became a role model for all, particularly youth. His life was a living testimony to the Indian tradition of pursuit of knowledge and humility.



SUMET BHASIN

The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre (@Sumetbhasin)

In Ram Nath Kovind, India got a President who was most humble and democratic, who opened the doors of Rashtrapati Bhavan for the people while being most courteous in his conduct and discharge of the duty. The political commentators sought to bracket him as the BJP's Dalit bet, but he eventually proved that he could conduct the Constitutional duties most efficiently.

Murmu struggled all her life but beat the odds to raise her children, while also becoming a foremost social and political worker. From being a legislator, she proved her mettle in Odisha as a minister and thereafter as the governor of Jharkhand.

She would be the first tribal President of India since the

NDA has the support of the Biju Janata Dal and the YSR Congress for the July 18 election. The BJP has for long been pursuing an inclusive agenda. Even in 1996, when the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government fell in 13 days despite being the single largest party, it had the largest number of the tribal MPs in its ranks. The BJP's foremost commitment to take all sections of society has been an abiding principle.

Murmu will be a candidate in the Presidential election at a time when the Narendra Modi-led government has given a new hope to the tribal population in the country by taking his mantra of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Viswas aur Sabka Prayas' to every nook and corner of the country, including the tribal areas in Jharkhand, Odisha

and Chhattisgarh. During the rule of the United Progressive Alliance, Leftwing or Maoist extremism was at its peak; people talked about the Red Corridor, connecting the hotbed of Maoist violence in Nepal to the deep forests in Sukma in Chhattisgarh. The violence cost several lives of paramilitary forces.

The NDA government set out for course correction right at the outset, and gave hope to the tribal youth that they can see better future in the mainstream of society, as several welfare schemes brought benefits to the people without hassles, without paying bribes. The government's honesty was visible, and the tribals of the country turned their backs to violence.

In the last few years,

Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Odisha have largely been peaceful, with a decline in Maoist violence.

When Murmu takes the oath of the office as the President of India, the tribal population will see the fulfillment of their political aspirations. They will see that one from among them is the first citizen of India.

The Aspirational District programme of the Central government was envisioned with clear objective that the gains of the development must reach the poorest of the poor, in accordance with the true of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya.

The tribals have seen that they have been brought in the mainstream of the economy with financial inclusion, pucca houses with toilets, pension

schemes and so on. They don't need to fall for the allurements of the evangelists to embrace their religion.

The elevation of Murmu to the post of the President of India will be the firm democratic empowerment of the tribal population, as well as women of the country. She has thoroughly been a spiritual person and her association with Brahmakumaris is well known. She was sweeping the floor of a temple a day after her name was announced by the BJP president JP Nadda; people have seen how humble a person she is. She stands for simplicity, spirituality.

She is a Constitutionalist, a firm believer in the Indian Constitution's capacity to fulfill the aspirations of all sections of society. Her life is also a living

testimony of perseverance. She never lost hope even when she faced personal losses. In her, India will have a President who will give hope to the vast majority of the people that all hardships can be won over with honesty and patience.

While the Opposition parties were busy in elimination rounds to find a candidate for the Presidential election, the BJP was thinking of national interest. When the BJP named Murmu as its Presidential candidate, even the rivals suggested that the contest has become one-sided. The Opposition candidate, Yashwant Sinha, can save his lost reputation by gracefully withdrawing from the Presidential election to pave way for the unanimous election of Murmu as India's President.

AIDE: TRUMP DISMISSED JAN 6 THREATS, WANTED TO JOIN CROWD

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Former US president Donald Trump rebuffed his own security's warnings about armed protesters in the January 6 rally crowd and made desperate attempts to join his supporters as they marched to the Capitol, according to dramatic new testimony before the House committee investigating the 2021 insurrection.

Cassidy Hutchinson, a little-known former White House aide, described an angry, defiant president who was trying that day to let armed protesters avoid security screenings at a rally that morning to protest his 2020 election defeat and who later grabbed at the steering wheel of the presidential SUV when the Secret Service refused to let him go to the Capitol.

And when the events at the Capitol spiralled toward violence, with the crowd chanting to "Hang Mike Pence", she testified on Tuesday that Trump declined to intervene.

Trump "doesn't think they're doing anything wrong", Hutchinson recalled hearing from her boss, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows.

Hutchinson's explosive, moment-by-moment account of what was happening inside and outside the White House offered a vivid description of a Republican president so unwilling to concede his 2020 election defeat to Democrat Joe Biden that he acted out in rage and refused to stop the siege at the Capitol.

It painted a damning portrait of the chaos at the White House as those around the defeated president splintered into one faction supporting his false claims of voter fraud and another trying unsuccessfully to put an end to the violent attack.

Her testimony, at a surprise hearing announced just 24 hours earlier, was the sole focus at the hearing, the sixth by the committee this month. The account was particularly powerful because of her proximity to power, with Hutchinson describing what she witnessed first-hand and was told by others in the White House.

Hutchinson said that she was told Trump fought a security official for control of the presidential SUV on January 6 and demanded to be taken the Capitol as the insurrection began, despite being warned earlier that day that some of his supporters were armed.

The former aide said that she was told of the altercation in the SUV immediately afterward by a White House

CAPITOL RIOT PROBE



security official, and that Bobby Engel, the head of the detail, was in the room and didn't dispute the account at the time.

Engel had grabbed Trump's arm to prevent him from gaining control of the armored vehicle, she was told, and Trump then used his free hand to lunge at Engel.

That account was quickly disputed on Tuesday, however. Engel, the agent who was driving the presidential SUV, and Trump security official Tony Ornato are willing to testify under oath that no agent was assaulted and Trump never lunged for the steering wheel, a person familiar with the matter said.

The person would not discuss the matter publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

As the events of January 6 unfurled, Hutchinson, then a special assistant to Meadows, described chaos in White House offices and hallways.

Trump's staff — several of whom had been warned of violence beforehand — became increasingly alarmed as rioters at the Capitol overran police and interrupted the certification of Biden's victory.

Trump was less concerned, she said, even as he heard there were cries in the crowd to "Hang Mike Pence!" Hutchinson recalled that Meadows told aides that Trump "thinks Mike deserves it".

The president tweeted during the attack that Pence didn't have the courage to object to Biden's win as he presided over the joint session of Congress.

The young ex-aide was matter-of-fact in most of her answers. But she did say that she was "disgusted" at Trump's

tweet about Pence during the siege.

"It was unpatriotic, it was un-American, and you were watching the Capitol building get defaced over a lie," Hutchinson said, adding that, "I still struggle to work through the emotions of that."

Trump denied much of what Hutchinson said on his social media platform, Truth Social. He called her a "total phony" and "bad news".

Members of the panel praised Hutchinson's bravery for testifying and said that other witnesses had been intimidated and did not cooperate.

"I want all Americans to know that what Ms. Hutchinson has done today is not easy," said Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, a Republican who led questioning.

Some of Hutchinson's former colleagues, too, defended her account. Mick Mulvaney, who preceded Meadows as Trump's chief of staff, tweeted that he knows Hutchinson and "I don't think she is lying."

Sarah Matthews, a former Trump press aide who has also cooperated with the committee, called the testimony "damning".

As she described the scene in the White House after the election, Hutchinson depicted a president flailing in anger and prone to violent outbursts. Some aides sought to rein in his impulses. Some did not.

At one point on January 6, Hutchinson said, White House counsel Pat Cipollone barreled down the hallway and confronted Meadows about rioters breaching the Capitol. Meadows, staring at his phone, told the White House lawyer that Trump didn't want to do anything, she said.

Earlier, Cipollone had worried out

loud that "we're going to get charged with every crime imaginable" if Trump went to the Capitol after his speech at the rally, Hutchinson recalled.

Before the crowd left for the Capitol, Hutchinson said she also received an angry call from House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy, who had just heard the president say he was coming. "Don't come up here," McCarthy told her, before hanging up.

Hutchinson told the panel that Trump had been informed early in the day that some of the protesters outside the White House had weapons. But he responded that the protesters were "not here to hurt me", Hutchinson said.

She quoted Trump as directing his staff, in profane terms, to take away the metal-detecting magnetometers that he thought would slow down supporters who were gathering for his speech on the Ellipse, in back of the White House.

In a clip of an earlier interview with the committee, she recalled the president saying words to the effect of: "I don't f-in' care that they have weapons."

As a White House insider, Hutchinson told stories of a raging president who was unable to acknowledge his defeat. At the beginning of December, she said, she heard noise inside the White House around the time an Associated Press article was published in which Attorney General William Barr said the Justice Department had not found evidence of voter fraud that could have changed the election's outcome.

She said she entered a room to find ketchup dripping down a wall and broken porcelain. The president, it turned out, had thrown his lunch at the wall in disgust over the article. Trump denied it in his social media posts.

In the days before the attack, Hutchinson said she was "scared, and nervous for what could happen" on January 6 after having conversations with Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, Meadows and others.

Meadows told Hutchinson that "things might get real, real bad", she said. Giuliani told her it was going to be "a great day" and "we're going to the Capitol."

Eventually, both men would seek pardons related to what happened that day, Hutchinson said. A person familiar with the matter denied that Meadows had ever sought a pardon. The person spoke on condition of anonymity.

Iran report says nuclear talks in Qatar to end without deal

AP ■ DUBAI

Indirect negotiations between Iran and the US over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers will end on Wednesday in Qatar, authorities in Tehran said.

A semiofficial news agency reported the talks wouldn't break a diplomatic deadlock over the accord. The US State Department and the European Union, which is mediating the talks in Qatar, did not immediately acknowledge an end of the negotiations in Doha.

However, the semiofficial Tasnim news agency, believed to be close to Iran's hard-line Revolutionary Guard, described the negotiations

as finished and having "no effect on breaking the deadlock in the talks". Tasnim claimed that the American position did not include "a guarantee for Iran benefiting economically from the deal," quoting what it described as unnamed "informed sources".

"Washington is seeking to revive the (deal) in order to limit Iran without economic achievement for our country," the Tasnim report claimed.

US Special Representative Rob Malley spoke to the Iranians through EU official Enrique Mora during the talks. Mora then took messages to Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani.

Higher fuel prices spark social unrest in South America

AP ■ DANIEL POLITI

Police in Argentina blocked a major entry point to the capital's centre on Tuesday to keep a group of truckers from joining a downtown protest, adding traffic snarls in Buenos Aires to a series of disruptions caused by anger over rising prices and shortages of fuel across South America, largely as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Cars were backed up for several kilometers (miles) until truckers agreed to open up a lane to regular traffic as they moved to take a protest over diesel shortages and prices that has been going on for weeks to Argentina's capital.

Argentina is one of several countries in South America to see reverberations from increasing fuel prices, largely as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine. In Peru, truckers launched an indefinite strike on Monday to protest higher fuel prices while in Ecuador, at least five people have been killed during more than two weeks of a protest led by Indigenous people that has as its main rallying cry a demand for lower gasoline prices.

The reverberations of higher prices are also hitting executive offices. In Brazil, the chief executive of state-run oil giant Petrobras resigned last week amid political pressure due to curb prices.

Nepal imposes ban on sale of street food items in Kathmandu as cholera cases touches 12



PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal on Wednesday banned the sale of street food items in the Kathmandu valley in an effort to contain the spread of cholera disease in the capital city.

The decision to ban the sale of street food items was issued by the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) as 12 positive cases of cholera were reported in the area since Sunday.

"As the number of cholera patients have been increasing in Kathmandu at present, the sale and distribution of food items has been banned for the time being," said Balram Tripathi, the Chief of the Health Department of the metropolis.

The KMC has also warned of action against those who breach the order.

Last week, the Lalitpur Metropolitan City decided to stop the sale and distribution of

Pani Puri in the metropolis, claiming that cholera bacteria were found in the water used in Pani Puri.

The KMC has also requested the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control to check the level of food hygiene in hotels and restaurants across the city.

Tripathi said that the Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited has been urged to keep eye into the condition of the water pipeline and sewage system.

The KMC has also instructed of that state's decades-old ban on virtually all abortions, in a flurry of activity set off at courthouses across the US by the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Statewide bans or other restrictions that were either left on the books for generations, tied up by legal challenges or specifically designed to take effect if Roe were to fall are now in play as a result of last week's Supreme Court ruling eliminating the constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy.

Roughly half the states are expected to prohibit or severely limit the procedure now that the high court has left it up to them.

Since Friday, judges have agreed to allow bans or other restrictions to take effect in Alabama, Ohio, South Carolina and Tennessee.

But abortion bans remained temporarily blocked in some states, including Louisiana, Texas and Utah.

Decisions are pending in other places, including Florida and Indiana. Abortion rights advocates also dropped some of their legal efforts in Indiana, Minnesota and Missouri.

Some clinics initially turned patients away soon after the high court ruling came down, but then reopened as judges ruled in their favour. That happened in Louisiana on Tuesday.

In Houston, a Democratic city in a conservative State, a judge blocked enforcement for now of a statewide ban on virtually all abortions.

Abortions in Texas are still prohibited at about six weeks because of a law that took effect last year.

Yemen car bomb targeting security official kills 4

AP ■ SANAA

A car bomb targeting a top provincial security official in the southern Yemen city of Aden killed four people Wednesday and wounded 10 others, Yemeni officials said.

A car carrying explosives detonated while the convoy of a security official from a neighbouring province was driving by, the officials said. Three of his guards were wounded, but the dead were all civilians.

The top security official for Lahj province Brig. Saleh Sayed was not seriously hurt, added the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media.

Videos from the scene showed the dead and injured lying in a minibus, while a cloud of black smoke rose from the explosion site.

Colombia truth commission gives scathing report on civil war

AP ■ BOGOTA (COLOMBIA)

A Truth Commission presented its final report on Colombia's armed conflict on Tuesday, urging the government, military and rebel groups that are still fighting in the countryside to recognise the suffering victims have endured and ensure that political disputes are no longer solved through violence.

The commission is made up of academics and representatives of civil society groups and was set up as part of a 2016 peace deal between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces

of Colombia that ended five decades of conflict in which at least 450,000 people were killed.

It was tasked with documenting war crimes and publishing its findings in a digital format that will be available to the public. The commission also issued a series of recommendations aimed at stopping future conflicts from taking root in Colombia, including changes to drug policy and transformations in the nation's military forces.

The commission's final report is based on interviews with 30,000 war victims, military leaders, former guerril-



la fighters and five former Colombian presidents.

The 900-page report said 50,000 people were kidnapped between 1990 and 2018 as a result of Colombia's armed conflict, often by rebel groups who kept hostages for ransom.

It also mentioned that more than 7 million people were forced to flee their homes and that 56,000 civil-

ians were killed by Colombia's armed forces, including 6,300 people who were murdered in remote areas and presented to authorities as rebel fighters killed in action.

The report called for major changes to Colombia's military and police forces, which have received more than \$8 billion from the U.S. Over the past two decades.

It said the military's objectives should be re-evaluated and that all human rights violations committed by security forces should be tried by civilian courts.

The truth commission's report also discussed drug

related violence in Colombia and called on the nation's government to regulate the drug trade so that its profits go to government agencies and not drug trafficking groups. It suggests that Colombia restart peace negotiations with the National Liberation Army, Colombia's largest remaining rebel groups.

The Truth Commission's recommendations are not legally binding. But some will likely be implemented by Colombia's new government which will take over in August. President-elect Gustavo Petro attended the ceremony where the report

was presented to the public and said its recommendations would "effectively become part of Colombia's history."

The leftist senator, who was once a member of a rebel group, said during his campaign that he will re-establish diplomatic relations with neighbouring Venezuela whose socialist government is not recognized by the United States. Petro has also called for reforms to Colombia's defense forces, suggesting he police should stop being used for military operations and be placed under greater civilian oversight.

Verdict looms in trial over 2015 Paris attacks

AP ■ PARIS

Over the course of an extraordinary nine-month trial, the lone survivor of the Islamic State extremist team that attacked Paris in 2015 has proclaimed his radicalism, wept, apologised to victims and pleaded with judges to forgive his "mistakes".

For victims' families and survivors of the attacks, the trial for Salah Abdeslam and suspected accomplices has been excruciating yet crucial in their quest for justice and closure. At long last, the court will hand down its verdict on Wednesday. Abdeslam faces up to life in prison without parole on murder and other counts, the toughest sentence possible under France's justice system.

The historic trial in Paris is of 20 men suspected of critical roles in the ISIS massacres that killed 130 people on November 13, 2015.

Israeli troops kill Palestinian during West Bank raid

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian man early on Wednesday in the occupied West Bank during clashes that broke out during an arrest raid, Palestinian officials said.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said that Mohammad Marei, 25, was wounded by Israeli gunfire near Jenin during an arrest raid by the Israeli military and later died.

The Israeli military said that while troops arrested two Palestinians in the northern West Bank city, Palestinians "hurled explosive devices" at soldiers, who responded with gunfire.

It confirmed that a Palestinian was shot, but gave no additional details about the man's condition. The army said no troops were injured in the overnight arrest raids.

Recent months have seen a rise in deadly violence in the West Bank. The Israeli military has carried out near-daily raids



following a string of deadly attacks by Palestinians inside Israel that killed 19 Israelis, with several of the attackers coming from the northern West Bank town of Jenin.

Several dozen Palestinians have been killed in Israeli military raids. Most of the dead were alleged to have opened fire on Israeli forces or hurled stones or firebombs at them. The dead also include two apparent passersby.

Nearly 500,000 Israeli settlers live in more than 130 set-

tlements scattered across the West Bank, many of which are fully built up and now resemble suburbs or small towns. Nearly three million Palestinians live in the West Bank under Israeli military rule.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war and the Palestinians want it to be the main part of their future state. Israel views the West Bank as the biblical and historical heartland of the Jewish people.

Abortion ban takes effect in Tennessee, paused in Texas

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A federal court has allowed Tennessee to ban abortions as early as six weeks into pregnancy, while a Texas judge temporarily blocked enforcement of that state's decades-old ban on virtually all abortions, in a flurry of activity set off at courthouses across the US by the overturning of Roe v. Wade.

Statewide bans or other restrictions that were either left on the books for generations, tied up by legal challenges or specifically designed to take effect if Roe were to fall are now in play as a result of last week's Supreme Court ruling eliminating the constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy.

Roughly half the states are expected to prohibit or severely limit the procedure now that the high court has left it up to them.

Since Friday, judges have agreed to allow bans or other restrictions to take effect in Alabama, Ohio, South Carolina and Tennessee.

But abortion bans remained temporarily blocked in some states, including Louisiana, Texas and Utah.

Decisions are pending in other places, including Florida and Indiana. Abortion rights advocates also dropped some of their legal efforts in Indiana, Minnesota and Missouri.

Some clinics initially turned patients away soon after the high court ruling came down, but then reopened as judges ruled in their favour. That happened in Louisiana on Tuesday.

In Houston, a Democratic city in a conservative State, a judge blocked enforcement for now of a statewide ban on virtually all abortions.

Abortions in Texas are still prohibited at about six weeks because of a law that took effect last year.

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फ़ोन नं. 384 दिनांक : 29 / 06 / 2022

TENDER NOTICE

Office of Executive Engineer (M&G) Kulhal Power Station, Kulhal, invites sealed tenders for following works:
Tender No.: 08/UJVN/EE (M&G)/KPS/2022-23 Annual Maintenance Contract for 33kV and 11 kV lines from 33/11kV Substation Kulhal
Tender No.: 09/UJVN/EE (M&G)/KPS/2022-23 Supply of Manually Hydraulic MS Pick/Drop garbage disposal trolley and other miscellaneous items for Kulhal Power Station.
Estimated cost : Rs. 978056/-, Rs. 552000/- GST Extra
Date of availability of bid document on website : 30/06/2022 11:00 Hrs.
Last date for submission of tender : 21/07/2022 15:00 Hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvnl.com"
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"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

US to boost military presence in Europe for Russia threat

AP ■ MADRID

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday said the US will significantly increase its military presence in Europe for the long haul, including by establishing its first permanent presence in Poland, to bolster regional security after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Meeting NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at the opening of the alliance's annual leaders' summit in Madrid, Biden said "NATO is strong and united" and that steps to be taken during the gathering will "further augment our collective strength".

Biden opened his participation in the summit by announcing the permanent basing of a US military garrison in Poland.

He also said the US is sending two additional F-35 fighter jet squadrons to the UK

and will send more air defense and other capabilities to Germany and Italy.

"Today I'm announcing the US will enhance our force posture in Europe and respond to the changing security environment as well as strengthening our collective security," he said.

Stoltenberg, who earlier on Wednesday said the alliance was facing its biggest challenge since World War II because of Russia's aggression toward Ukraine, welcomed Biden's announcement.

"This really demonstrates your decisive leadership and strength in the trans-Atlantic bond," Stoltenberg said, thanking Biden for the "unwavering support from you and from the US to Ukraine."

Biden said the US will permanently station the US Army V Corps forward command in Poland, a move that he said would strengthen US-NATO



inter-operability across the alliance's eastern flank.

The move marks the first permanent basing of US forces on NATO's eastern edge.

Biden added that the US is also stepping up its rotational

deployments of troops to Romania and the Baltic region.

Celeste Wallander, an assistant US secretary of defence for international affairs, told reporters that having a permanent presence in Poland will be

key to helping NATO navigate the changed security environment in Europe caused by Russia's invasion. The US supplies the bulk of NATO's military power.

US officials emphasised that the permanent basing applied only to headquarters units, not combat troops, and was therefore consistent with a 1997 agreement between NATO and Russia in which the alliance agreed not to permanently base combat troops in Eastern Europe as it aimed to build more constructive ties in the post-Cold War environment.

Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Pawel Jablonski told Poland's state PAP news agency that the decision to add US command structure was a "manifestation of the ever closer cooperation between the US and Poland" and would give NATO allies a frontline insight into the Russian threat.

The combat units Biden is sending to Romania and the Baltic region are on rotational deployments, rather than permanent assignment, to remain in compliance with that agreement.

"There has been no communication with Moscow about these changes, nor is there a requirement to do that," John Kirby, a spokesman for Biden's National Security Council.

Biden announced on Tuesday after arriving for the summit that the US would base two additional destroyers at its naval base in Rota, Spain, bringing the total number to six.

The US currently has more than 100,000 service-members deployed across Europe, up by about 20,000 since just before Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine began four months ago.

Biden predicted that meetings this week would make for a "history-making summit" as leaders were set to approve a new strategic framework, announce a range of steps to boost their defense spending and capabilities, and clear the way for historically neutral Finland and Sweden to join NATO.

Biden said Putin thought NATO members would splinter after he invaded Ukraine, but got the opposite response instead.

"Putin was looking for the Finland-isation of Europe," Biden said. "You're gonna get the NATO-isation of Europe. And that's exactly what he didn't want, but exactly what needs to be done to guarantee security for Europe."

Turkey, the last remaining holdout to approve the Nordic countries' accession into NATO, reached an agreement on the eve of the summit late

Tuesday to support adding them to the 30-nation alliance.

While the White House said the US was not a direct party to the negotiations, a senior administration official said Biden spoke with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday to encourage him to clear the way for Sweden and Finland to join. The two leaders are set to meet on Wednesday afternoon to discuss other issues, the White House said.

Biden will also sit down on Wednesday with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who are attending the NATO summit as the alliance looks to strengthen its ties in the Indo-Pacific region and address challenges from China.

The White House said the three leaders would also discuss North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Putin has become 'a terrorist': Zelenskyy



■ EDITH M. LEDERER

The Ukrainian leader began his speech listing Russia's attacks in recent days and giving the first names and ages of many of the victims. He ended his address asking the 15 Security Council members and others in the chamber to stand in silent tribute to commemorate the "tens of thousands" of Ukrainian children and adults killed in the war.

All members rose including Russia's deputy UN ambassador Dmitry Polyansky.

When he took the floor later, Polyansky protested against giving Zelenskyy a second opportunity to address the Security Council, a decision by Albanian which holds the council presidency this month.

The Russian envoy said the Ukrainian president's video address violated the council's traditions and existing practices which state that leaders who wish to speak to the council must be present in the chamber.

"The U.N. Security Council should not be turned into a platform for a remote PR campaign from president Zelenskyy in order to get more weapons from participants at the NATO summit" starting Wednesday in Madrid, Polyansky said.

He claimed that there was no Russian strike on the shopping centre in Kremenchuk, saying Russian precision weapons struck hangars in the Kremenchuk road machinery plant with weapons and ammunition from the United States and Europe destined for Ukrainian troops in eastern Donbass.

The shopping centre was some distance away but the detonation of ammunition "created a fire which then spread to the shopping centre," Polyansky said.

The Russian envoy told Western nations that by supplying weapons to Ukraine they were prolonging the time when Ukraine's leaders "will sit down at the negotiating table with a realistic position rather than with slogans."

"We began a special military operation in order to stop the shelling of Donbass by Ukraine and so that the territory of this country, which has been turned into anti-Russia at the behest of a number of Western countries, as well as its nationalist leadership, ceases to pose a threat to Russia or the inhabitants of the south and southeast of Ukraine," he said. "And until those goals are achieved, our operation will continue."

US deputy ambassador Richard Mills, like many other Western ambassadors, accused Russia of destroying the shopping center, saying the attack "fits into a cruel pattern, one where the Russian military kills civilians and destroys civilian infrastructure in Ukraine."

He stressed that there is ample publicly available evidence "that Russia, and Russia alone" is responsible for this and other attacks.

Ukrainian survivor: Only 'monster' would attack mall



AP ■ KREMENCHUK (UKRAINE)

The mall was nothing extraordinary, but in the middle of a war it was an escape for those in this Ukrainian city who had decided not to flee. Then it exploded in a Russian airstrike.

In moments on Monday afternoon, a summer hangout became a hellish inferno. Life and death depended on a shopper's decision whether to heed yet another air raid siren and take shelter. Among those who stayed, at least 18 are dead, more than 20 are missing and scores are wounded.

The crowded mall in Kremenchuk, which housed the largest toy store in town, is now the latest shorthand for allegations of war crimes against Russia. As with earlier attacks on a theater, a train station and a hospital elsewhere in Ukraine, authorities in Moscow said the mall was not the target.

One day after the airstrike, the scene still smelled of charred debris. Grit hung in the air, irritating the skin and throats. Visitors laid red carnations, a spot of color in the still-smoking ruins.

Images on social media showed the burned body of a woman, white sneakers still intact, who appeared to have been caught in the blast as she tried to run. In another video, around the time of impact, a man could be heard calling for his mother.

One mall employee, who gave only his first name, Oleksandr, said he had stepped outside with a colleague for a cigarette when the air raid siren went off. He described the moment of impact.

"There was darkness in my eyes for two minutes," he said. "There was a black tunnel, smoke, fire. I started to crawl. I saw the sun up there, and my brain was telling me I needed to save myself."

Everything was on fire, he said. A blast wave threw him under a car. He couldn't hear. Bits of shrapnel were embedded in his leg.

"Thank God that was it," he said. "I was very lucky."

He estimated 1,000 shoppers and employees had been in the mall at the time, contradicting Russia's claim that it was empty.

Kateryna Romashnya had just reached the mall on her walk home from work when the explosion threw her to the ground and blew out nearby windows. Stunned, she estimated that 10-15 minutes passed before another explosion occurred.

'Reports of deaths of civilians in ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict deeply disturbing'

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

Voicing grave concern over reports of civilian deaths in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, India has said that critical civilian infrastructure in urban areas have become easy targets in situations of armed conflict.

Speaking at the UN Security Council Briefing on Ukraine on Tuesday, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador R. Ravindra said the conflict has resulted in the loss of lives and countless miseries for its peoples, particularly for women, children and elder-

ly, with millions becoming homeless and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries.

Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo told the Council that the Russian missile strike on a mall in the Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk killed 18 civilians and injured 59 and the final toll may be much higher.

"India remains deeply concerned over the situation in Ukraine," Ravindra said.

The Council meeting was also addressed virtually by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the second time that

leader spoke directly to the powerful 15-nation UN organ since the start of the conflict in February.

"Reports of deaths of civilians in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict are deeply disturbing and in this regard, we express our grave concern. In recent years, critical civilian infrastructure in urban areas have become easy targets in situations of armed conflict," Ravindra said.

India added that the issue of the protection of civilian objects in armed conflicts should be considered within the framework of applicable international law.

Ukraine's leader pushes for fuller NATO embrace, more arms

AP ■ MADRID

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy chided NATO for not embracing his embattled country more fully and asked for more weapons to fight Russia's invasion, as the leaders of the alliance met amid what his chief called its biggest crisis since World War II. Russia's invasion of its neighbour shattered Europe's peace, drove NATO to pour troops and weapons into eastern Europe on a scale not seen since the Cold War and is set to give the defence organisation two new members in Sweden and Finland.

Members of the alliance have also sent billions in military and civilian aid to Ukraine. But Zelenskyy lamented that NATO's open-door policy to new members did not apply to Ukraine.

"The open-door policy of NATO shouldn't resemble old turnstiles on Kyiv's subway, which stay open but close when you approach them until you pay," Zelenskyy said by video link. "Hasn't Ukraine paid enough?"

He asked for more modern artillery systems and other weapons and warned the leaders that they either had to provide Ukraine with the help it needed to defeat Russia or "face a delayed war between Russia and yourself".

Zelenskyy has acknowledged that NATO membership is a distant prospect. The alliance is trying to strike

a delicate balance, letting its member-nations arm Ukraine without sparking a direct confrontation between NATO and nuclear-armed Russia.

As 30 NATO leaders met in Madrid, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg acknowledged the alliance is "in the midst of the most serious security crisis we have faced since the Second World War".

US President Joe Biden, whose country provides the bulk of NATO's military power, said the summit would send "an unmistakable message ... That NATO is strong and united".

"We're stepping up. We're proving that NATO is more needed now than it ever has been," said Biden.

He announced a hefty boost in America's military presence in Europe, including a permanent US base in Poland, two more Navy destroyers based in Rota, Spain, and two more F35 squadrons to the UK.

But strains among NATO allies have also emerged as the cost of energy and other essential goods has skyrocketed, partly because of the war and tough Western sanctions on Russia.

There also are tensions over how the war will end and what, if any, concessions Ukraine should make to stop the fighting.

Money could also be a sensitive issue — just nine of NATO's 30 members currently meet the organisation's

target of spending two per cent of gross domestic product on defence.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, whose country does hit the target, urged NATO allies "to dig deep to restore deterrence and ensure defense in the decade ahead".

The war has already triggered a big increase in NATO's forces in eastern Europe, and allies are expected to agree at the summit to boost the strength of the alliance's rapid reaction force nearly eightfold, from 40,000 to 300,000 troops, by next year.

The troops will be based in their home nations, but dedicated to specific countries on NATO's eastern flank, where the alliance plans to build up stocks of equipment and ammunition.

Stoltenberg said NATO was undertaking "the biggest overhaul of our collective defense since the end of the Cold War".

The leaders are also set to publish NATO's new Strategic Concept, its once-a-decade set of priorities and goals.

The last such document, in 2010, called Russia a "strategic partner". Now, the alliance is set to declare Moscow its No. 1 threat. The document will also set out NATO's approach on issues from cybersecurity to climate change — and the growing economic and military reach of China.

For the first time, the leaders of

Japan, Australia, South Korea and New Zealand are attending the summit as guests, a reflection of the growing importance of Asia and the Pacific region.

Stoltenberg said China was not NATO's adversary, but posed "challenges to our values, to our interest and to our security".

Biden was due to hold a rare meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on the sidelines of the summit, focused on North Korea's nuclear programme.

The summit opened with one problem solved, after Turkey agreed on Tuesday to lift its opposition to Sweden and Finland joining NATO.

In response to the invasion, the two Nordic nations abandoned their long-held nonaligned status and applied to join NATO as protection against an increasingly aggressive and unpredictable Russia — which shares a long border with Finland.

NATO operates by consensus, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to block the Nordic pair, insisting they change their stance on Kurdish rebel groups that Turkey considers terrorists.

After urgent top-level talks with leaders of the three countries, alliance Secretary Stoltenberg said the impasse had been cleared.

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O.A. No. 312/2021
PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK
Versus ...Applicant
DINESH RANA ...Defendants
To,
1. Sh. Dinesh Rana S/o Sh. Bhup Singh Rana, R/o D-23, Near Gate No. 1, Sector-MU-1, Kasana Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, UP-201310 Defendant 1
2. M/s Morpheus Developers Pvt. Ltd. Regd. Office: House No. 1, Shiv Mandir Wail Gali Maujpur, Delhi-110053, Also at: 154, 5th Floor, Tower-A, The Corentum Tower, Plot No. A-41, Sector-62, Noida-201301, U.P. Defendant 2
Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 33,55,840.86 (Rs. Thirty Three Lacs Fifty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Forty and Paise Eighty Six Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before LD Registrar on 17-08-2022 at 10.30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.etribunal.gov.in) Phone No. 011-23748473
Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.
Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-
(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application/Software;
(ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by "Registrar/Recovery Officer-I" and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head.
(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748473.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 27th June of 2022.
by order of this Tribunal for Registrar
Respondent may contact under mention phone number for further enquiry.
Amit K. Dar, Ld. Registrar, DRT-I, New Delhi, Phone: 011-23748473
E-mail: drt1delhi-df@nic.in

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY
KANKE, RANCHI-834006, JHARKHAND
No.: 2501 NOTICE Date: 29.06.2022
Computer Based Test (CBT) for the posts of Clinical Psychologist, Assistant Psychologist, Pharmacist, Nursing Officer, Tailor and Cook will be held on 09.07.2022. Intimation to all candidates has already been sent to their email address. All candidates are requested to check their email and download their E-admit card for CBT along with necessary instructions from the CIP website (www.cipranchi.nic.in) and follow the instruction contained therein.
URL for downloading: <https://register.cbtextams.in/CIPRANCHI/admitcard/> Sd/-Director

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Walk-In-Interview Advt. No.06/2022
National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra requires qualified and experienced persons for the engagement as Officer on Special Duty, Training & Placement Officer and Assistant Engineer SG-II (Electrical) on contract basis. Interested candidates may appear for Walk-in-Interview on 11.07.2022 in the Board Room, Golden Jubilee Administrative Building of the Institute along with application, all original certificates and one set of attested copies of certificates, a recent Passport size photograph and an original identity proof for verification.
For more details, please visit our website: www.nitkkr.ac.in.
Sd/-Registrar Incharge

Public Notice
Trade Name of Member : Acumen Capital Market (India) Ltd Member of Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited (MCX)& M e m b e r ID: 10275, National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX)& Member ID: 00094, National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE)& Member ID: 08814 Bombay Stock Exchange Limited (BSE) & Member ID: 0156 & SEBI Regn No: IN2000170434 Registered office Address of Member **ACUMEN CAPITAL MARKET (INDIA) LIMITED**, S T R Building, Veekshanam Road, Kochi-682035 This is to inform that we have initiated the process of cancellation of our below mentioned Authorised Person (AP).

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Gaurav Sachdeva	Gaurav Sachdeva	Ram Leel Ground, 56/1, 1st Floor, Ashok Nagar, (W) Delhi, Tiaik Nagar, Delhi-110018	MCX : MCX / AP / 147243 NCDEX : NCDEX / AP / 124838 NSE CM : AP0610047521 NSE F&O : AP0610047521 BSE Cash : AP015601125129

Please note that the above mentioned Authorised Person is no longer associated with us. Any person henceforth dealing with the above mentioned Authorised Person should do so at their own risk. ACUMEN CAPITAL MARKET (INDIA) LIMITED (Name of the member) shall not be liable for any dealing with him. In case of any queries, investors are requested to inform ACUMEN CAPITAL MARKET (INDIA) LIMITED (Name of the Member) within 15 days from the date of issuing this notice.
*Mention as applicable For
Place : Kochi For ACUMEN CAPITAL MARKET (INDIA) LIMITED
Date : 30-06-2022 (Authorised Signatory)

Stocks halt 4-day winning run, Sensex down 150 pts

Weak global mkts stir fall

Mumbai: Snapping its four-day winning run, benchmark Sensex declined by over 150 points on Wednesday due to profit booking in IT, FMCG and banking shares following weak global trends and persistent foreign capital outflows.

In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 150.48 points or 0.28 per cent lower at 53,026.97 as 20 of its stocks ended with losses. During the day, it tumbled 564.77 points or 1.06 per cent to a low of 52,612.68 ahead of the expiry in the derivatives segment on Thursday.

The broader NSE Nifty declined by 51.10 points or 0.32 per cent to 15,799.10 with 34 of its constituents closing in the red. In the four-day rally to Tuesday, Sensex spurted by 2.59 per cent or 1,354 points while Nifty had gained 2.84 per cent or 436 points.

Among Sensex shares, Hindustan Unilever fell the most by 3.46 per cent. IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Wipro, HCL Technologies, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Bajaj Finance were the other major losers.

However, gains in NTPC, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, UltraTech Cement and ITC restricted a major fall in the barometer.

NTPC rose the most by



2.46 per cent while Reliance Industries advanced 1.98 per cent.

"Markets traded volatile for yet another session and lost nearly half a percent. Weak global cues were weighing on the sentiment in early trade which triggered a gap-down start however buying in select index majors trimmed the losses as the day progressed," Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd said.

Consumer confidence is declining rapidly due to the uncontrolled and constant rise in inflation, Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said. India had to bear the double-whammy effect of a dampening global equity market and rising crude prices as major suppliers like Saudi are unable to boost the output in the short-term.

"However, the domestic market was able to recover most of the losses due to the

strong movement of index heavyweights, PSUs, metals and oil & gas stocks before slipping some gains by the end of the day due to volatile global market," Nair said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge dipped 0.70 per cent and smallcap index declined 0.18 per cent.

Among the BSE sectoral indices, bank fell by 1.20 per cent, while FMCG (1.01 per cent), finance (1 per cent), teck (0.83 per cent), and telecom (0.54 per cent) also declined.

Energy, utilities, auto, metal, oil & gas, power and realty were the gainers. A total of 1,781 firms declined, while 1,521 advanced and 148 remained unchanged.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude gained 0.31 per cent to USD 118.3 per barrel ahead of the meeting of the oil cartel OPEC. **PTI**

India needs to form Green Hydrogen Corridors: NITI Aayog

New Delhi: India needs to form Green Hydrogen Corridors and governments can look at providing grants to startups as well as support entrepreneurs to promote green hydrogen, NITI Aayog said on Wednesday.

In a report titled 'Harnessing Green Hydrogen - Opportunities for Deep Decarbonisation in India', the Aayog also suggested that there is a need to facilitate investment through demand aggregation and dollar-based bidding for green hydrogen.

"Three hydrogen corridors should be developed across the country based on state grand challenges ... The governments can provide grants and loans to startups and projects, support entrepreneurs through incubators and investor networks, and put in place regulations that manage first-mover risks," the report said. The government can also use public procurement and purchase incentives (for green hydrogen) to create demand in niche markets and crowd in private investment, it added.

The report suggested that the government should promote export of green hydrogen and green hydrogen-embedded products through a global hydrogen alliance.

Green Hydrogen/ Green Ammonia is defined as hydrogen/ ammonia produced by way of electrolysis of water using renewable energy, including renewable energy which

has been banked and the hydrogen/ammonia produced from biomass.

Most large economies including India have committed to net zero targets.

Transition to green hydrogen and green ammonia is one of the major requirements for reduction of emissions, especially in the hard to abate sectors. The report predicted that hydrogen demand in India could grow more than fourfold by 2050, representing almost 10 per cent of global hydrogen demand.

In the longer term, steel and heavy-duty trucking are likely to drive the majority of demand growth, accounting for almost 52 per cent of total demand by 2050, it added.

Emphasising that the roadmap should also identify a timeline and scale of manufacturing support for electrolyzers, the report said India may aim for 25 GW of electrolyzers by 2030, while also investing USD 1 billion in R&D to catalyse the development of commercial green hydrogen technologies across the value chain.

It noted that radically improving the speed of regulatory clearances coupled with preferential treatment in public tenders will help catalyse local manufacturing.

The report suggested that grand challenges, public-private venture capital and financing test bench infrastructure could be part of the R&D investments. **PTI**

EV-bus manufacturers worried after DHI makes sporting FAME logo must in buses



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Months after the Department of Heavy Industries (DHI) notified an order making it mandatory for the Ev-buses operator(s) to place the FAME logo on both the sides of the vehicles prominently, the manufacturers are feeling the pinch with advertisement revenues taking a significant hit, according to sources close to funding agencies/lenders.

The order released by the DHI makes it compulsory for the manufacturers to get the FAME logo on the buses, at the spots which the manufacturers earlier used to lease out to potential advertisers for some revenue.

A couple of industry insiders told The Pioneer on the condition of anonymity that

this move has not gone down well with the operator(s) and has caused considerable losses for them as per early assessment.

Earlier in the contracts, advertisements were allowed on the FAME contracts-awarded products, ev-buses mostly, and the revenue generated from them used to go to the manufacturers or the Operator. The latest move has left them squandering for options to deal with it, with little or no mechanism to raise their concerns. According to sources, the new directions have been laid out retrospectively which impact the revenue. Industry experts see the move by the government as its intent to reduce overall cost for the state governments.

A top official of one of the major lending agencies said the manufacturers don't have any

issue with keeping the FAME logo on buses but with size and placement of the logo, which directly impacts their revenues. The loss becomes significant in the long run as the buses are to be operated and maintained for 12 years.

"Can the OEMs/Operators manage for 12 years making losses continuously? It might lead to a situation where the manufacturers start showing their inability to operate the buses," another official said, adding the "purpose of promoting Green mobility is getting defeated in the process".

The Indian EV sector is seeing a massive boom with both central and governments going full throttle in acquiring electric buses in their bid to ensure clean and green transportation. States after states are placing big orders for electric buses.

Gold declines ₹176 amid weak global trends



New Delhi: Gold price in the national capital fell by ₹176 to ₹50,649 per 10 grams on Wednesday, reflecting a decline in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal settled at ₹50,825 per 10 grams.

Silver also fell by ₹443 to ₹59,725 per kg from ₹60,168 per kg in the previous trade."Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi fell by Rs 176 in line with decline in COMEX gold prices," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities. **PTI**

Sebi issues ₹27 lakh recovery notice to individual in L&T Finance Holdings case

New Delhi: Capital markets regulator Sebi has sent a notice to an individual asking him to pay ₹27 lakh in a case pertaining to violation of insider trading norms in the matter of L&T Finance Holdings Ltd.

The notice came after Uday Agarwal failed to pay the fine imposed on him by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

Sebi has directed Agarwal to pay ₹27.01 lakh, which includes interest, all costs, charges and expenses, within 15 days. In the event of non-payment, it will recover the amount by attaching and selling their moveable and immovable properties.

He will also face attachment of his bank accounts and arrest, Sebi said in an order passed on Tuesday.

The regulator, through an order passed in November 2021, levied a fine of ₹25 lakh



on Uday Agarwal.

The regulator observed in its investigation that Agarwal being an insider traded in the scrip of L&T Finance Holdings while having possession of unpublished price-sensitive

information during trading window closure period, failed to obtain pre-clearance and failed to make disclosures for his trading and further made contra trades.

The Unpublished Price-Sensitive Information (UPSI) pertained to financial results for the period ended June 30, 2018. The period of UPSI was from July 7 to 20, 2018. **PTI**

FPIs permitted to participate in exchange-traded commodity derivatives market by Sebi

Mumbai: Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday allowed Foreign Portfolio Investors to participate in the exchange-traded commodity derivatives market.

At its board meeting, the watchdog also cleared amend-

ments to regulations governing mutual funds and portfolio managers.

According to a statement, the board has approved Sebi Annual Report: 2021-22. The report will be submitted to the central government. **PTI**

Ukraine conflict casts shadows on global food situation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

Expressing concern over food scarcity in the wake of the ongoing Ukraine conflict, India has said it exported more 1.8 million tons of wheat to countries suffering from shortage. It also flagged the issue of civilian deaths in the military action terming them as "deeply disturbing" and called for cessation of hostilities.

Highlighting these issues in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) briefing on Ukraine, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador R Ravindra also said the conflict has resulted in the loss of lives and countless miseries for its peoples, particularly for women, children and elderly, with millions becoming home-

less and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries.

Making this point, he said on late Tuesday India has all along favoured the path of peace, dialogue and diplomacy to end the conflict which began in February.

"We support all efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people of Ukraine, especially talks" between Ukraine and Russia.

He noted that India has also been sending humanitarian supplies to Ukraine and its neighbours, which include medicines and other essential relief materials.

Underlining that the impact of the Ukraine conflict is not just limited to Europe, Ravindra said the conflict is exacerbating concerns over food, fertilizer and fuel security, particularly in the developing countries. **PTI**

Marine exports up 30% to nearly USD 8 bn in FY22

New Delhi: Exports of marine products rose 30.26 per cent to USD 7.76 billion during 2021-22 as against USD 5.96 billion in previous fiscal year, the commerce ministry said on Wednesday. India shipped 13,69,264 MT (metric tonne) of seafood worth ₹57,586.48 crore during 2021-22."During 2021-22, the export improved in rupee term by 31.71 per cent, in USD terms by 30.26 per cent and in quantity terms by 19.12 per cent," the ministry said in a statement.

K N Raghavan, Chairman, Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), said India managed to do "all-time high" exports of USD 7.76 billion.

Frozen shrimp remained the major export item in terms of quantity and value. Its ship-

ments stood at USD 5.82 billion last fiscal year. The segment accounts for 75.11 per cent of the total dollar earnings.

The US is the largest market of frozen shrimp, followed by China, the European Union, South East Asia, Japan, and the Middle East.

Frozen fish, frozen squid and frozen cuttlefish, are also major items for exports.

"The US continued to be the major importer of Indian seafood in value and volume terms with an import worth USD 3,371.66 million, accounting for a share of 37.56 per cent in terms of dollar value," it added. It said China has emerged as the second largest seafood export destination for India in terms of quantity with an import of 2,66,989 MT worth USD 1,175.05 million. **PTI**

Ease of doing business: UT, States' ranking to be released on Jun 30

New Delhi: The Government will release the ranking of states and Union Territories (UTs) in terms of ease of doing business on June 30, the commerce and industry ministry said on Wednesday.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will release the assessment report of states/UTs under Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP), 2020 in the presence of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday, it said.

The exercise is aimed at triggering competition among states to improve the business climate to attract domestic and global investors.

BRAP 2020 includes 301

reform points that cover 15 business regulatory areas such as access to information, single window system, labour, environment, sectoral reforms and other reforms spanning across the lifecycle of a business.

Sectoral reforms have been introduced this time wherein 72 reforms were identified across nine sectors - trade license, healthcare, legal metrology, cinema halls, hospitality, fire NOC (no objection certificate), telecom, movie shooting and tourism.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), since 2014, has been releasing BRAP for steering business reforms to

create an investor-friendly ecosystem across the country. Till date, state rankings have been released for 2015, 2016, 2017-18 and 2019.

"DPIIT has undertaken a feedback-based exercise wherein feedback was taken from businesses on the quality of implementation of the reforms carried out by the states and UTs. The assessment is based on the feedback obtained from the actual users of respective states/UTs," it added.

In the last ranking released in September 2020, Andhra Pradesh topped the chart, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. **PTI**

Housing sales grow 4.5 times in Apr-Jun period in top 8 cities

New Delhi: Housing sales jumped over 4.5 times year-on-year in April-June across eight cities to 74,330 units on lower base effect, while demand was up 5 per cent from the previous quarter, according to PropTiger data.

Housing sales stood at 15,968 units in the April-June period last year and 70,623 units in the January-March quarter of 2022.

The price of residential properties rose 5-9 per cent annually, driven by rise in input costs, inflationary pressures and premium attached with ready-to-move-in inventory. Pune and Chennai saw

maximum appreciation at 9 per cent each.

In its latest 'Real Insight Residential' report, Australia's REA group-owned PropTiger.Com, said the YoY (Year-on-Year) growth in April-June 2022 is multi-fold due to the low base as demand in April-June 2021 was severely impacted owing to the second wave of the COVID pandemic.

On the sequential rise in sales, Vikas Wadhawan, Group CFO of REA India, said: "Even though the RBI increased the repo rate twice during the quarter, home loans remained largely affordable."

The biggest booster to

housing demand has been the increased importance of owning a property, he said.

This, he said, has been further backed by the consumer confidence in the overall economic scenario and impending income stability.

As per the data, housing sales in Ahmedabad rose sharply to 7,240 units in April-June 2022, from 1,280 units in the year-ago period. Sales were up 30 per cent from 5,550 units in the January-March quarter this year.

Bengaluru saw sales of 8,350 units in April-June, as against 1,590 units in the year-ago period. **PTI**

Steel prices likely to go up again from July 1 on high input cost: JSPL MD

New Delhi: After back-to-back downward corrections, steel prices are expected to rise from July due to high input costs, an industry executive said on Wednesday.

"While coal price is at ₹17,000 a tonne, iron ore prices by Odisha Mineral Corporation are still high. It is the main supplier of iron ore in Odisha," JSPL Managing Director V R Sharma told PTI on the sidelines of an event organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce here.

"The prices have already bottomed out. There is no chance of reducing them further. There will be an upward price correction from Friday, July 1 by (primary players) mainly on account of higher input



costs," he said.

Secondary steel makers have already increased the price of rebars by ₹2,000 to ₹55,000 per tonne in the last four days, Sharma said.

There are various other factors building pressure on steel makers, Sharma said, adding there are issues with the availability of coal. Rakes are also not available for the supply of

coal as most of them have been diverted for power sector.

Steel players use iron ore as raw material to make steel and coal to feed their captive power plants.

According to SteelMint, prices of hot rolled coil (HRC) are ruling in the range of ₹59,000-60,000 a tonne from its peak in May at ₹76,000/tonne. **PTI**

Expect govt to withdraw duties on steel items once inflation moderates: Sajjan Jindal

New Delhi: Terming duties imposed on steel products a "short-term headwind", JSW Group CMD Sajjan Jindal said he is hopeful of the government withdrawing the levies once inflation moderates. The duties were imposed last month with the objective of controlling inflation, the industrialist said.

Jindal's statement comes days after he along with other top industry leaders met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her office.

In a tweet on June 16, office of the Finance Minister, without sharing the details of the meeting had said, "Delegation of Indian Steel Association @steel_indian, including Shri @MPNaveenJindal - Chairman JSPL, Shri @sajjanjindal - Chairman JSW, Smt Soma Mondal - Chairman @SAILsteel & other senior members of the industry, calls on Smt @nsitharaman." **PTI**

Tata Tech joins Foxconn-led consortium to develop sustainable mobility solutions

New Delhi: Tata Technologies Ltd on Wednesday said it has joined the Foxconn-initiated MIH Consortium to promote development of sustainable mobility solutions and encourage collaboration within the industry.

The MIH (Mobility In Harmony Consortium) comprises more than 2,300 members in the field of software, hardware, and services.

The goal of this open electric vehicle alliance is to bring the strategic partners

together to build the next generation of EV, autonomous driving, and mobility service applications, the global engineering and product development digital services firm said in a statement.

"Tata Technologies is at the forefront of the eMobility revolution and our association with MIH Consortium reinforces our position as a key partner in the automotive value chain," Tata Technologies Managing Director and CEO Warren Harris said. **PTI**

Affordable fashion footwear brand store in Faridabad

Faridabad: Home grown affordable fashion footwear and accessories brand Khadim India Ltd has opened a new store in association with its franchisee partner SAR Retail Pvt Ltd in Faridabad.

"We are confident that the people of Faridabad will be delighted by our trinity of fashionable range of products, a great in store experience and affordable pricing."

We hope to make Khadim the first choice brand for footwear for the complete family," said Namrata A Chotrani, CEO, Khadim India Ltd. **PNS**





Serena brushes off retirement talk

AP ■ LONDON

Serena Williams brushed off any talk of retirement on Tuesday by insisting she is "motivated" to play at the US Open later this year despite a shattering Wimbledon defeat.

"The US Open was the place where I won my first Slam, it's super-special. There's definitely a lot of motivation to get better and play at home," the 40-year-old American said.

Williams was speaking after losing in her first singles match for a year when she went down 7-5, 1-6, 7/6 (10/7) to unseeded Harmony Tan, the world number 115, in the opening round of Wimbledon.

The 23-time major winner, who debuted at the All England Club in 1998, refused to speculate on whether or not she will be back at Wimbledon in 2023.

"I am just playing for right now. I see how I feel and go from there.

"Who knows where I will pop up."

Williams walked onto Centre Court for the evening match and quickly looked rusty. She was broken in her first service game.

Williams, far below her imperious best and apparently lacking fitness, bounced back, breaking in the fourth game to level at 2-2, buoyed by a supportive crowd.

The pair swapped further breaks but Tan, ranked 115th, broke again in the 11th game and held her nerve to close out the set 7-5.

Williams broke after a mammoth second game of the second set and went on to level the match 6-1.

The American was first to break in the decider but Tan levelled at 3-3.

Williams broke again in the ninth game, throwing her arms into the air in jubilation but faltered as she served for the match.

She faced a match point

on her own serve in the 12th game but saved it with a forehand volley, taking the contest into a third-set tie-break.

Williams stepped up a gear, winning the first four points as the match, under the Wimbledon roof, ticked past three hours.

But still her French opponent was not down and out, winning the next five points to edge ahead.

Williams, looking out of breath, could not find inspiration, netting when facing a second match point.

'I'M SO EMOTIONAL'

She finished with 61 winners but 54 unforced errors in the 3-hour, 11-minute evening match.

"I'm so emotional now," said Tan. "She's a superstar. When I was young, I was watching her so many times on the TV.

"When I saw the draw, I was really scared. She's such a legend. I thought if I can win one game, two games, that would be really good for me."

Twelve months ago, Williams quit her Wimbledon first-round match in tears after suffering an injury and she had not played singles tennis since until Tuesday.

Doubts had been growing about whether the former world number one — who has slumped to 1,204th in the rankings after her period of inaction — would return to the sport.

But she warmed up by teaming up with Ons Jabeur in the doubles at Eastbourne last week.

Williams won the last of her seven Wimbledon singles titles six years ago but reached the final in 2018 and 2019.

The American, who was given a wildcard for this year's tournament, remains stuck on 23 Grand Slam singles titles — agonisingly one short of Margaret Court's all-time record.

DJOKER IN 3rd ROUND, RUUD OUT

AP ■ LONDON

Top-seeded Novak Djokovic advanced to the third round at Wimbledon with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Thanasi Kokkinakis of Australia.

The six-time Wimbledon champion has won the past three men's singles titles at the All England Club.

The 26-year-old Kokkinakis is ranked 79th.

French Open runner-up Casper Ruud lost in the second round at Wimbledon.

The third-seeded Norwegian was beaten by Ugo Humbert of France 3-6, 6-2, 7-5, 6-4 on No. 2 Court.

Ruud was making his third appearance at the All England Club. His victory over Albert Ramos-Vinolas on Monday was his first at the grass-court Grand Slam.

Second-seeded Anett Kontaveit of Estonia was eliminated in the second round of Wimbledon, losing to Jule Niemeier of Germany 6-4, 6-0.

Kontaveit has never reached the fourth round at the All England Club, the only one of the four major tournaments in which she has failed to get that far. She was making her eighth appearance at Wimbledon.

It was Kontaveit's first match on grass this year.

On Tuesday, an off-key Nadal, already halfway to a calendar Grand Slam after winning the Australian Open and French Open, dug deep to beat Francisco Cerundolo 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4.

The two-time Wimbledon champion, who has not played at the tournament since 2019, thanked the crowd for their wholehearted support.

"It's not a surface that we play very often, and especially in my case, for different reasons, the past three years



I didn't put any foot on a grass court, so it always takes a while," said Nadal, 36.

"It was my first match and as I know, every day is a test and today was one of these important tests."

OUT FROM DOUBLES

A day after eliminating Serena Williams from Wimbledon in her debut at the grass-court Grand Slam, Harmony Tan surprised and angered her doubles partner by withdrawing

Murray to play Laver Cup in London

AP ■ LONDON

Three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray will play alongside Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer at the Laver Cup in London in September.

Murray will be making his debut at the competition, which is played in a Europe vs. World format and does not award ATP ranking points.

This will be the fifth edition. It's being held at the O2 Arena on September 23-25. Team Europe is 4-0 so far.

from that tournament on Wednesday with a thigh injury.

Tan, a Frenchwoman ranked 115th who beat the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion 7-5, 1-6, 7-6 (10-7) on Centre Court on Tuesday, was scheduled to team with Tamara Korpatsch for their opening doubles match on Wednesday.

"She just texted this morning. Let me wait here 1 hour before the match start," Korpatsch wrote in an Instagram post. "I'm very sad, disappointed and also very angry that I can't play my 1st Doubles Grand Slam.

"And it's really not fair for me ... I didn't deserve that."

Tan is scheduled to play No. 32 Sara Sorribes Tormo of Spain in the second round of the singles tournament on Thursday. Sorribes Tormo advanced by defeating American qualifier Christina McHale 6-2, 6-1.

The 24-year-old Tan is ranked 611th in doubles and has never played

in that event at Wimbledon. Korpatsch, a 27-year-old German who is ranked 298th in doubles, lost in the first round of the singles tournament but has never played a doubles match at any Grand Slam tournament.

Tan was two points from losing to Williams, a seven-time Wimbledon champion who hadn't played a singles match since injuring herself in the first round a year ago at the All England Club.

The match lasted 3 hours, 11 minutes.

"If you're broken after a 3 (hour) match the day before, you can't play professional (tennis). That's my opinion," Korpatsch wrote.

Tan and Korpatsch were scheduled to play 15th-seeded Nadiia Kichenok and Raluca Olaru on Wednesday in the first round of the doubles tournament. They were replaced in the draw by Valentini Grammatikopoulou and Peangtarn Plipuech.

CHARITY MATCH

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek of Poland will host a charity tennis tournament next month to raise funds for children and teenagers impacted by the war in Ukraine.

The event will be held in Krakow on July 23 and will feature a mixed doubles exhibition match. Ukraine soccer great Andriy Shevchenko will be a special guest.

Elina Svitolina of Ukraine will serve as umpire for the event. They hope to sell at least 10,000 tickets.

Swiatek has been wearing a pin with the Ukrainian colors during her matches. More than 4 million refugees crossed into Poland after Russia invaded Ukraine in February. Poland is providing them with free shelter, social and medical care, education and job opportunities.

Sindhu, Kashyap win; Saina loses in Malaysia

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Two stalwarts of Indian women's badminton, PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal, suffered contrasting fates at the Malaysia Open Super 750 tournament with the former progressing to the second round and the latter bowing out after losing her opener here on Wednesday.

Sindhu, a former world champion, dished out a fine performance to outwit Thailand's world number 10 Pornpawee Chochuwong 21-13, 21-17, but London Olympics Bronze medallist Saina went down fighting against American Iris Wang, ranked 33rd in the world, 11-21, 17-21 in 37 minutes.

Former Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap also made a positive return from injury as he prevailed 21-12, 21-17 over Korea's Heo Kwang Hee to advance to the second round in men's singles.

Sindhu, seeded seventh, will next face Phittayaporn Chaiwan, a 21-year-old from Thailand who held the number one ranking in world junior ranking and also was part of the Bronze medal-winning team at the Uber Cup in Bangkok.

Kashyap, ranked world



number 39, will meet Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn, who had won the German Open Super 300 in March.

B Sumeeth Reddy and Ashwini Ponnappa, who will be leading India's charge at the Commonwealth Games, couldn't get past world number 21 pairing of Robin Tabeling and Selena Piek of the Netherlands.

The Indian duo lost 15-21, 21-19, 17-21 after a 52-minute

battle.

Sindhu enjoys a 5-3 head-to-head record against Chochuwong, having won the last time they met, at the 2021 World Championship, and the Indian looked in good touch against the Thai, who struggled with her lengths and finishing strokes.

The match started with the duo playing at a good pace but it was Sindhu who dictated

terms with her better court coverage.

Chochuwong matched Sindhu in the rallies but faltered in her finishing.

The result was Sindhu led throughout the first game after securing a 4-1 advantage early on. Sindhu's front court play was more polished than her rival and she used the smashes and attacking returns to good effect whenever there was an opportunity.

Sushila looking to make up for 2018 WC miss

PTI ■ AMSTELVEEN

Ruled out of the 2018 FIH World Cup due to an injury, experienced India mid-fielder Sushila Chanu is looking to the upcoming edition of the tournament to make amends.

Sushila may have played 208 matches for India but the tournament in the Netherlands will be her maiden World Cup appearance.

"In 2018, I missed playing the World Cup in London due to an injury. Subsequently, I struggled with form which resulted in me missing out on the Asian Games that year. It was perhaps one of the biggest lows of my career.

"It was a difficult phase but I was determined to overcome it and earn my place in the squad again," recalled an emotional Sushila.

While the tournament starts on July 1, India begin their campaign against England on July 3.

The 30-year-old made a strong comeback and has played a significant role in the team's progress over the past four years after missing out on the Asian Games in 2018.



"For many of my teammates, it's their second outing at the World Cup but for me, it's a first. It is an emotional moment for me and I surely believe it will be a memorable one for us," she said on the sidelines of the team's practice match against Chile on Tuesday evening.

She was part of India's triumph at both the FIH Olympic Qualifications and the FIH Series Finals in Bhubaneswar. The 2014 Asian Games Bronze medallist also played a role in the team's historic fourth-place at the Tokyo Olympics last year.

Newcastle sign Botman from Lille

AP ■ NEWCASTLE

Newcastle have agreed a deal in principle to sign Dutch defender Sven Botman from French side Lille.

Botman, 22, completed his medical in Newcastle on Tuesday and is set to arrive on a five-year contract in a reported £35 million (\$42 million) transfer.

The Premier League club said they had held off competition "from a host of European sides to secure the highly-rated centre-back", with "the formalities of the transfer set to be concluded this week".

Botman's arrival continues Newcastle's rebuilding for the new campaign, with England goalkeeper Nick Pope having been signed from Burnley last week.

Newcastle also signed Aston Villa full-back Matt Targett on a permanent move following a successful loan spell during the second half of last season.

CHELSEA CLOSE TO SIGN RAPHINHA

Chelsea have leapfrogged London rivals Arsenal to move into pole position to sign Raphinha.

The Blues are understood to be on the verge of agreeing to a fee with Leeds United for the winger that could be worth



more than £55 million, reports David Ornstein of The Athletic.

However, the race for Raphinha's signature isn't yet finished.

Arsenal remain in pursuit after reportedly pledging to return with an improved offer following Leeds' rejection of their initial bid.

Tottenham Hotspur were also linked to Raphinha, while it's been reported that Barcelona previously agreed to personal terms with him but have failed to match Leeds United's valuation.

If Raphinha, who's under contract until 2024, does

decide on a move to Stamford Bridge, he'll join a retooling Chelsea outfit that's in the process of trying to complete another blockbuster transfer for Manchester City's Raheem Sterling.

Raphinha, who joined Leeds from Rennes for £17 million in 2020, scored 11 goals in 35 Premier League appearances last season.

If Arsenal miss out on the Brazilian, the disappointment could be eased by the anticipated arrival of Raphinha's compatriot, Gabriel Jesus. The Gunners are reportedly close to signing the 25-year-old for £45 million.



Neeraj primed to win medal in Stockholm Diamond League

PTI ■ STOCKHOLM

Buoyed by a strong start to the season, Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is primed to clinch his maiden Diamond League medal in his first appearance in four years in the prestigious one-day meet here on Thursday. The 24-year-old Chopra was second in the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku with a big national record throw of 89.30m before winning his event at Kuortane Games with a creditable 86.60m effort under treacherous conditions.

Both the events in Finland had strong fields, though the Turku line-up had more stars than at Kuortane, where Chopra slipped after an awkward release of his spear in his third attempt under slippery conditions due to rains. Luckily, he was up on his feet immediately and won the event without any injury.

This will be Chopra's first

competition in a Diamond League meet after his fourth-place finish in Zurich in August 2018 with an effort of 85.73m. He has taken part in seven Diamond League meets -- three in 2017 and four in 2018 -- but is yet to win a medal. He had two fourth-place finishes, the other one being in Doha in May 2018, where he had thrown 87.43m.

The prestigious one-day meet at the Swedish capital will be Chopra's biggest event ahead of the World Championships in Eugene, USA, next month. He will also be facing the toughest field of the season so far with all the three Tokyo Olympics medallists in fray.

Germany's Johannes Vetter, who has the maximum number of 90-plus throws among the active throwers, continues to be in the sidelines. He is not fully fit and also did not take part in the German nationals.

Playoff to decide Serie A title if 2 teams finish level

AP ■ MILAN

The Serie A title will be decided by a play-off if two teams are locked on points at the top of the table from next season, Italy's Football Federation (FIGC) announced on Tuesday.

In a statement, the FIGC said that it had approved regulations for the title decider, which will go straight to penalties should the two teams finish the match level.

This system has been in place in the past in Serie A but has only been used once, in 1964 when Bologna beat Inter Milan in Rome to claim the last of their seven league crowns.

FIGC chief Gabriele Gravina has in the past said that he would like every league title to be decided by play-offs.

Last season AC Milan were crowned champions after finishing two points ahead of local rivals Inter Milan.

MOTTA LEAVES SPEZIA

Thiago Motta has left Spezia after the Serie A club announced on Tuesday the termination of the former Italy midfielder's contract.

"Spezia Calcio announces that an agreement has been reached regarding the terms of the consensual termination of



the contracts of coach Thiago Motta and his technical staff," Spezia said in a statement.

Motta, who won the Serie A, Champions League and Italian Cup treble as a player with Inter Milan in 2010, led Spezia to Serie A safety last season.

The 39-year-old had a trophy-packed playing career, winning the 2006 Champions

League and two La Liga titles with Barcelona, as well as five Ligue 1 crowns and a host of domestic cups at Paris Saint-Germain.

Spezia are expected to announce Luca Gotti as their coach for the coming campaign.

Gotti has been out of work since being sacked by Udinese in December.

2 IN 2 FOR MEN IN BLUE

Hooda's maiden century helps India beat Ireland by 4 runs to pocket series 2-0

PTI ■ MALAHIDE

Deepak Hooda hit a master-class maiden century as India survived a mighty scare before defeating Ireland by four runs in a nail-biting high-scoring second T20 International to sweep the two-match series here on Tuesday.

Hooda scored 104 off 57 balls to become only the fourth Indian to hit a T20 International ton, while Sanju Samson contributed 77 off 42 balls to power India to a mammoth 225 for seven after opting to bat.

Ireland took the chase to the last over with skipper Andy Balbirnie (60 off 37), Paul Stirling (40 off 18), Harry Tector (39 off 28) and George Dockrell (34 not out off 16) shinning bright but they eventually fell short as rookie India pacer Umran Malik defended 17 runs in the final over.

Opting to bat, Hooda showed he belonged to the big stage with his scintillating stroke play, both off the front and backfoot.

While Hooda was elegant and at ease on the frontfoot, he was equally good on the backfoot, dispatching the ball over the midwicket boundary for a few sixes.

Hooda decorated his knock with nine fours and six hits over the fence.

He was ably supported by Sanju Samson, who, opening the batting in place of injured Ruturaj Gaikwad, played second fiddle but grabbed his opportunity with both hands.

Both Hooda and Samson's strokeplay down the ground were a treat for the eyes.

Ireland made a rollicking start to their chase, with Stirling and Balbirnie sharing 72 runs for the opening wicket off just 34 balls. Stirling went hammer and tongs from the world go.

Stirling took Bhuvneshwar Kumar to task, hitting the bowler for a six and three boundaries to pick up 18 runs from the opening over.

Stirling then clobbered skipper Hardik Pandya for a six. The open-



ing duo continued their attacking display to notch up Ireland's 50 for no loss in just four overs.

Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi broke the dangerous-looking 72-run opening stand in the sixth over, cleaning up Stirling.

In his next over, Bishnoi had Balbirnie stumped by Ishan Kishan but it turned out to be a massive no ball.

Balbirnie utilised the chance and clobbered all the Indian bowlers to all parts of the ground to keep Ireland at par with the asking rate.

He was particularly severe on young pace sensation Malik, dispatching the pacer's short deliveries over the fence as Ireland brought up their 100 in nine overs for the loss of two wickets.

Balbirnie notched up his sixth T20 International 50 off 34 balls and continued his onslaught for some time before being caught by Bishnoi off Harshal Patel.

But Tector, Dockrell and Mark Adair (23 not out off 12 balls) kept Ireland in the hunt till the last ball from which the hosts needed a six to

win the match and draw the series. Adair, however, could manage just one run as Malik lived up to his captain's call.

Earlier, India did not have the best of starts as they lost Ishan Kishan (3) early. The left-handed opener once again wasted an opportunity, nicking a Mark Adair delivery to Lorcan Tucker behind the stumps in the third over.

Hooda and Samson joined hands and the duo batted effortlessly, albeit handing two difficult chances, to share 176 runs off just 85 balls to lay

the foundation for India's huge total.

It was a one-way traffic after Kishan's dismissal as Hooda and Samson toyed with the Irish bowlers and did not let them settle down.

Except for a difficult chance which Paul Stirling dropped at extra off in the eighth over, Hooda played a perfect knock.

Samson too was handed a life in the ninth over when leg-spinner Gareth Delany dropped a difficult caught-and-bowled chance.

Samson too played some delightful strokes, particularly off the back-

Backed Umran for final over because of his pace

PTI ■ MALAHIDE

Express pace was the reason India skipper Hardik Pandya asked Umran Malik to bowl the final over of the second T20 International against Ireland here.

Ireland took the chase of 226 to the last over but fell short by four runs as Umran defended 17 runs in the last over on Tuesday.

"Not worried to be honest. Wanted to keep pressure out of my equation, wanted to be in the present. I backed Umran since he has pace. With his pace, it's difficult for people to hit," Hardik said, explaining the rationale behind giving Umran the crucial final over.

Deepak Hooda hit a blistering maiden century as India survived a scare before prevailing over their less fancied opponents in a nail-biting finish.

"I think we've come to play a game of cricket, so Ireland were going to show us what they have. Credit to them, they played amazing shots. At the same point of time, credit to our bowlers to cross the line."

"The crowd was amazing. Their favourite boys were Dinesh and Sanju, great to see them



enjoy them. Good for us to experience cricket in this part of the world too. Grateful to the fans," Hardik said to loud cheers.

Set an imposing target, Ireland showed a lot of heart and nearly pulled off what would have been a memorable victory.

"We are all pretty good, we did a lot of good stuff with the bat. We wanted to express and we did that. Bitterly disappointed, a bitter pill to swallow," Ireland captain Andrew Balbirnie said after the match.

foot during his half-century knock. He, however, was cleaned up by Adair in the 17th over.

Hooda brought up his maiden T20I century off 55 balls with a single to join the likes of Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul and Suresh Raina in the elite club of only four Indian centu-

rions in the format.

Once Hooda departed at the team score of 212, Surya Kumar Yadav (15) and skipper Hardik Pandya (13 not out) tried to accelerate the scoring but failed as India lost three wickets for the addition of just 14 runs in the last two overs.

If you don't have any option, then why don't you go there like a warrior: Hooda

PTI ■ MALAHIDE

The big-hitting Deepak Hooda believes himself to be "a warrior" when faced with the task of tackling the new ball in conditions favourable to bowlers.

Because, according to him, there is no other option but to just face the challenges head on when batting at the top of the order.

Riding his powerful striking abilities, Hooda hogged the limelight with a 57-ball 104 in India's second T20 International against Ireland here on Tuesday.

Batting at number three, Hooda became only the fourth Indian batter to score a century in the shortest format.

"I've never opened in an international game, but being a top-order batsman, you have to cope up to the challenges and you don't have any option."

"And if you don't have any option, then why don't you go there like a warrior. That's how I think, and things turned in my way. I'm happy about that," said Hooda after the match.



With young talents bursting at the seams, the 27-year-old all-rounder admitted that it is not easy to get into, and retain, one's place in the Indian team.

"To be honest, yes it is dif-

ficult to find a spot in the Indian team and then staying there. But at the same time when you're playing in India colours, that time you never think about yourself, you think about the

team."

"That's what I think about on the ground 'How can I contribute to the team in that situation'. I don't think more than that, try to keep things simple. Yes, it's a matter of pride for me that I'm playing for India, no matter if I'm scoring or not," said Hooda.

Walking in following the dismissal of opener Ishan Kishan in the third over, Hooda smashed nine boundaries and six sixes to score his maiden T20I century.

"To be honest, the Irish team played really well against us and we enjoyed playing against them."

"Between the first and second game, I think there was a difference in the pitch. In the first game, the conditions were overcast and the wicket was damp. But today the wicket was very good for batting, as is clear by the way both teams batted. So I felt the wicket was a big factor."

Hooda also revealed that a mindset change recently has helped him perform better.

"Being a cricketer, what

I've learnt lately is that you should not think too far ahead. How many ever series, look at it one game at a time. If my work ethic is good, I'm going to be in a good space of mind and I'm going to score, that's my thinking."

"Try to keep it simple, live in the present, play the situation well, and then automatically the outcome will come. Now or later, it will come," Hooda said.

During the course of the India innings, Hooda was associated in a record-breaking second-wicket partnership of 176 runs with Sanju Samson, who scored a career-best 77 on his return to the team.

It is the highest partnership by an India pair for any wicket in the format, surpassing the previous best of 165 by Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul in 2017 against Sri Lanka in Indore.

"To be honest, I was coming from a good IPL and wanted to follow the same performance. Happy with my intent. I like playing in that manner (aggressive) and these days I am batting up the order so getting some time."

Rohit ruled out of fifth Eng Test, Bumrah to lead India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jasprit Bumrah is set to become first fast bowler in 35 years to lead Indian Test team in the rescheduled 'fifth Test' against England as regular captain Rohit Sharma has been ruled out of the game after testing positive for COVID-19 for the second time on Wednesday.

The last pacer-captain that India had was the great Kapil Dev, who was removed from captaincy in 1987. Since then India has never had a speed merchant leading the team in traditional cricket.

"Rohit is out of this Test match, starting July 1, as his RT-PCR test has come positive again. He is still in isolation. Jasprit Bumrah, who is one of the vice-captains in absence of KL Rahul, will lead the team," a senior BCCI official said.

Bumrah will be the 36th cricketer to lead India in the longest-format since the country first played in 1932. The Gujarat pacer, who has 123 wickets in 29 Tests, has grown into world's best fast bowlers.

The Chairman of selectors Chetan Sharma had already said that he is being groomed as



a future leader.

PUJARA/VIHARI TO OPEN

With the experienced Rohit out of the playing eleven, seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara has a good chance of opening the batting with young Shubman Gill. The source said that Mayank

Agarwal has just been brought as "cover" and is not in the scheme of things as far featuring in the playing eleven is concerned. It is understood that the specialist batters in the set-up will be Pujara, Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Vihari and Rishabh Pant.

Oz reach 98-3 in reply to Sri Lanka's 212

AP ■ GALLE

Nathan Lyon took his 20th five-wicket haul to bowl Sri Lanka out for 212 before Australia reached 98-3 at stumps Wednesday on the opening day of the first Test.

Sri Lankan off spinner Ramesh Mendis dismissed David Warner (25) lbw and had Marnus Labuschagne (13) caught by Asitha Fernando in Australia's innings to finish the day on 2-35.

Steven Smith was run out for 6 after a mix-up with Usman Khawaja, who refused to run after calling Smith for a single.

Khawaja was batting on 47 with Travis Head on 6 at stumps.

Earlier, Lyon returned bowling figures of 5-90 and leg spinner Mitchell Swepson had 3-55 to help Australia bowl Sri Lanka out to a modest score.

Niroshan Dickwella top scored for Sri Lanka with 58, his 21st Test half-century. He added 42 runs for the sixth wicket with Angelo Mathews



(39) after Sri Lanka lost five wickets for 97 runs, and 54 runs for the seventh wicket with Mendis (22).

Lyon trapped Mendis lbw with just two runs added to the teatime score to end his part-

nership with Dickwella.

Dickwella edged Lyon to wicketkeeper Alex Carey and had Lasith Embuldeniya (6) as his fifth wicket.

Earlier, he dismissed Dimuth Karunaratne (28) and

Angelo Mathews (39), both caught by David Warner.

Australia's second spinner Mitchell Swepson took two consecutive wickets in the 37th over with identical deliveries.

Babar Azam surpasses Virat as world No.1 T20 batter for longest period

PTI ■ DUBAI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam has surpassed India's Virat Kohli in becoming the world No 1 T20I batter for the longest period of time after he maintained his top spot in the latest ICC T20 batting rankings.

Kohli was the No 1 ranked T20I batter for a total of 1,013 days during his reign last decade, but Babar has now surpassed this number following his long-standing stay at the top.

Among others, Ishan Kishan slipped two places but Deepak Hooda and Sanju Samson made huge gains at the ICC T20I Player Rankings following their sensational innings at the second and final T20I against Ireland.

Left-handed batter Kishan slumped to number 7 after scoring 26 and 3 in the two T20s against Ireland but Hooda, who smashed 47 in the first game and a maiden centu-



ry in the second match to power India to a series-clinching four-run win, galloped 414 places to 104th.

Samson was also rewarded for his knock of 77 as he reached the 144th spot in the batting chart.

Ireland's Harry Tector gained a massive 55 places to reach 66th position among batters with scores of 39 and 64 not out in the rankings, which was updated after the two-match India-Ireland series.

In the bowlers' list, pacer Harshal Patel moved from 37th to 33rd position while Ireland's Mark Adair climbed to 43rd from 45th.

In Test ranking, Joe Root hung on to his narrow lead as the top-ranked batter but there was some big movement behind him following the completion of England's home series against New Zealand.

New Zealand batting pair of Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell have attained career-best positions as has England spinner Jack Leach, after superb performances in the third match of their ICC World Test Championship series in Leeds.

Bavuma out of England tour

AP ■ CAPE TOWN

South Africa batsman and limited-overs captain Temba Bavuma was ruled out of next month's tour to England on Wednesday with a left elbow injury.

Bavuma will miss the three ODIs and three T20 games against England, two T20s against Ireland, and the three-match Test series against England. Bavuma was injured in this month's T20 series in India. He needs eight weeks to recover from the injury, Cricket South Africa said.

Keshav Maharaj will fill in for Bavuma as ODI captain and David Miller will stand in as T20 captain. Dean Elgar is the Proteas' regular Test captain but Bavuma is an important top-order batsman for the Test team.

Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada will be rested for the ODI games but is part of the T20 and Test squads. Young fast bowler Gerald Coetzee received his first call-up and is included in the T20 squad.