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THE IDEA OF
UNIVERSAL EQUALITY**WORLD 8**
NO DEAL WITHOUT RUSSIAN
WITHDRAWAL: ZELENSKY**MONEY 10**
INVESTORS' WEALTH TUMBLES ₹6.27
LAKH CRORE AFTER RBI RATE HIKE

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY MAY 5, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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11 SPORT

CAPSULE

NAVNEET, HUSBAND GET
BAIL WEEK AFTER ARREST

Mumbai: More than a week after they were arrested in an alleged case of sedition, Amravati MP Navneet Rana and her husband and MLA Ravi Rana were granted bail by a court here on Wednesday. While the Independent legislator couple from eastern Maharashtra were yet to be released from prison, a team of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) visited their flat in Mumbai for inspection of alleged illegal construction.

BSF STUMBLES UPON
CROSS BORDER TUNNEL

Jammu: The jawans of the Border Security Force (BSF) Wednesday claimed to have stumbled upon a small opening, suspected to be a cross border tunnel, in the Samba area of Jammu frontier.

RAIN COOLS DELHI, NO
HEATWAVE TILL SUNDAY

New Delhi: A hailstorm and a bout of rain in parts of Delhi on Wednesday brought a much-needed respite from the tormenting heat. The impact will linger for another day. The temperature will start rising from Friday with heatwave conditions returning by Sunday, weather forecasters said.

EMIs set to rise as RBI raises repo, CRR rates

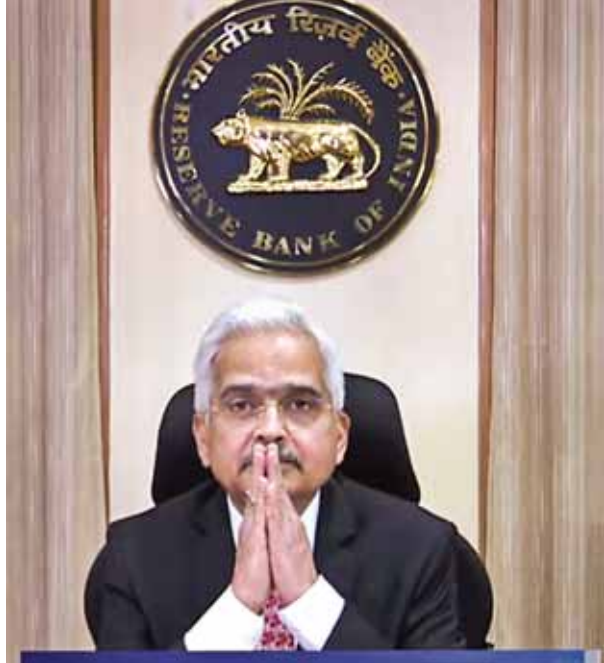
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
MUMBAI

All retail loans, including home loans, car loans, or personal loans, are likely to become expensive after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) hiked its key interest rate by 40 bps on Wednesday. The Central bank said it has decided to tighten its monetary policy due to a sharp rise in inflation, geopolitical tensions, high crude oil prices, and a shortage of commodities globally.

The move was expected in view of growing suggestions by experts to end the accommodative stance and go for a tough measure to tame inflation that has remained stubbornly above the target in recent months. However, the RBI's repo rate hike accompanied by an increase in the cash reserve ratio was a "double whammy" for the markets, and more such tightening moves can be expected from the Central bank, analysts said on Wednesday.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,307 or 2.29 per cent to close at 55,669, while the broader NSE Nifty moved 392 points or 2.29 per cent down to settle at 16,678. Mid-and small-cap shares were weak as Nifty Midcap 100 fell 2.12 per cent and small-cap 2.35 per cent.

The increase in repo rate —



Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das digitally delivers a statement PTI

the rate at which RBI lends to commercial banks — to 4.40 per cent from a record low of 4 per cent is the first since August 2018 as well as the first instance of the RBI Governor-headed monetary policy committee (MPC) holding an unscheduled meeting for raising interest rates.

The RBI also hiked the cash reserve ratio (CRR) by 50

basis points to 4.5 per cent, which will now require banks to park more money with the Central bank and leave them with less to loan to consumers. This would drain ₹87,000 crore of liquidity from the banking system, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said in a video address announcing the rate hike decision.

He, however, did not men-

tion anything about the reverse repo rate and hence it remains the same at 3.35 per cent.

The standing deposit facility rate is now at 4.15 per cent while the marginal standing facility rate and bank rate stand at 4.65 per cent. The MPC retained its accommodative monetary policy stance — meaning it can cut interest rates to support growth — at a time when globally inflation is rising alarmingly.

Persistent inflation pressures are becoming more acute, particularly on food, Das said, adding that there is a risk if prices stay at this level for "too long" and expectations become unanchored.

"Inflation must be tamed in order to keep the Indian economy resolute on its course to sustained and inclusive growth," he said.

Increases in fuel and food prices, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and sustained pandemic-related supply chain disruptions, have been above the RBI comfort zone of 2-6 per cent for three months in a row. Headline inflation in March rose to a 17-month high of 6.95 per cent and it may be above the target band in April too.

The MPC is scheduled to meet on June 8 and analysts expect it to again raise the repo rate by at least 25 bps.

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Modi meets 'friend' Macron to boost strategic bilateral ties

Ukraine war also on talks agenda

PTI ■ PARIS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met French President Emmanuel Macron here on Wednesday and discussed issues of bilateral and mutual interests as well as regional and global developments, amid Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

"PM @narendramodi and President @EmmanuelMacron meet in Paris. This meeting will add momentum to the India-France friendship," the Prime Minister's Office tweeted along with a photograph of Modi and Macron hugging each other.

Macron held a tete-a-tete with Modi before the delegation-level talks at the Elysee Palace—the official residence of the French President.

"A meeting between two friends. An opportunity to translate the renewed mandate of President @EmmanuelMacron into a renewed momentum for the India-France Strategic partnership," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

Modi, who arrived in Paris from Denmark on the final leg of his three-nation Europe tour, will hold extensive talks with Macron, who was re-elected to the top post over a week back. His visit comes amid the Ukraine crisis, which



has united much of Europe against Russia.

The two leaders are also expected to discuss how to ensure cessation of hostilities in Ukraine and mitigate the global economic consequences of this conflict.

On Tuesday, Macron spoke with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and urged Moscow to rise to the level of its responsibility as a perma-

nent member of the UN Security Council by ending this devastating aggression, an Elysee statement said.

The Ukraine issue also figured prominently at the second India-Nordic summit attended by Prime Minister Modi and his counterparts from Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark in Copenhagen on Wednesday.

Related report on P4

Delta may return this summer as Omicron on last legs: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The highly contagious Delta or a different coronavirus strain might re-emerge to take the shape of an outbreak this summer as the Omicron sub variants may burn themselves out in the next couple of months, a modelling study conducted in Israel has warned.

The finding, published in the journal *Science of The Total Environment*, suggests that while Delta wiped out the variants that preceded it, Omicron has not eliminated the deadly variant which could re-emerge.

Researchers from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) in Israel developed sensitive arrays that can differentiate variants from each other in wastewater which continues to give indications of where the coronavirus is active, even when PCR and rapid testing of people declines.

They monitored sewage in

Beer-Sheva city of Israel from December 2021 to January 2022 and noticed a "disturbing interaction" between the Omicron and Delta variants.

The researchers built a model which predicts Omicron is burning itself out while Delta is just biding its time.

"Of course, there are a lot of factors involved, but our model indicates there could be another outbreak of Delta or another coronavirus variant this summer," said professor Ariel Kushmaro from BGU in a statement.

Until now, the researchers said, whenever a new, dominant, variant appeared, it overpowered its predecessor after a short parallel period.

However, in contrast to the expected dynamics whereupon the Delta variant diminishes as Omicron variant increases, results received from wastewater detection indicated a cryptic circulation of Delta even with the increased levels

of Omicron, they said.

"According to the developed model, it can be expected that the Omicron levels will decrease until eliminated, while the Delta variant will maintain its cryptic circulation," the authors of the study noted. "If this comes to pass, the mentioned cryptic circulation may result in the reemergence of a Delta morbidity wave or in the possible generation of a new threatening variant," they added.

According to the researchers, including Karin Yaniv from BGU, Omicron is spreading swiftly around the world with record morbidity reports. Unlike the Delta, the dynamics of the Omicron variant have shown different characteristics, they said.

The researchers noted that the deployment of wastewater-based epidemiology is recommended as a convenient and representative tool for pandemic containment.

Will release Rajiv assassin as you can't argue: SC to ASG

Court rejects Govt suggestion to wait till Prez takes call on mercy plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the Tamil Nadu Governor was bound by the decision of the State Cabinet on the release of AG Perarivalan, who has served over 30 years of his life-term in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

The court disapproved of the Governor's action of sending the mercy plea to the President saying it cannot shut its eyes to something against the Constitution. The top court refused to agree with the Centre's suggestion that the court should wait till the



President decides on the issue.

A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao and BR Gavai told the Centre that the Governor was bound by the aid and advice of the Tamil Nadu Council of Ministers under Article 161 of the Constitution, while directing the Centre to submit its response by next week.

"It is a matter to be decided by the court, the decision of the Governor was not even needed, he is bound by the decision of the Council of Ministers. We will have to look into this," the bench told the Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj, appearing for the

Centre.

Nataraj submitted that the file has been referred by the Governor to the President.

"If the President refers it (mercy plea) back to the Governor, there is no need to discuss this issue at all... The President himself will decide if the Governor could have referred the file to him or not. Whether the reference is right or not, that call must be taken by the President first," said the Additional Solicitor General.

"We will pass the order to release him from jail as you are not ready to argue the case on merits... We cannot shut our eyes to something that is happening against the Constitution and will have to go by the Bible which is the Constitution. There is nobody above law. There are certain powers conferred to dignitaries, but the working of the Constitution should not come to a grinding halt," the apex court said.

10 years after Kuwaiti couple's murder, CBI to prosecute Indian

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After ten years of a double murder in Kuwait, the CBI will now probe it back at home.

The CBI on Wednesday registered a case against an Indian national for allegedly murdering a Kuwaiti couple in that country over a decade back. The move follows a pending request from the Ministry of External Affairs at the behest of the Kuwaiti authority through its embassy here.

The accused, Santosh Kumar Rana, has already been awarded the death sentence in Kuwait in absentia for the double murder at Kuwait, according to the contents of the FIR and connected documents.

He allegedly murdered Kuwaiti nationals Fahad Ben Nasser Ibrahim and his wife

Salama Faraz Salem. The accused was working with the couple as a servant.

As per the allegations, the victims were holding back the passport of the accused to prevent him from leaving that country and also subjected him to undergo circumcision surgery against his Hindu religious beliefs.

After the murders, the accused is alleged to have retrieved his passport by intentionally destroying the safe owned by the victims resulting in damage of Kuwaiti Dinar 37,500.

India and Kuwait have an extradition treaty which inter alia provides for extradition in cases that attract a punishment of over one year. This makes it a fit case for extradition.

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Erase US academician's defamatory texts against historian: HC to Twitter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed Twitter to take down certain defamatory tweets posted by US-based academician Dr Audrey Truschke against historian Vikram Sampath over allegations of plagiarism. Justice Amit Bansal, who was dealing with an application by Sampath for removal of the tweets, said that the tweets are defamatory in nature and contain links to the "very same letters" whose publication was restrained by the court earlier and a prima facie case is made out on behalf of the plaintiff.

Sampath's application forms part of his defamation lawsuit against Truschke and others over the allegations of plagiarism against him concerning his work on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. The court noted that in spite of interim orders passed against her, Truschke "continues to post

defamatory material against the plaintiff" on Twitter and has failed to enter an appearance before it.

"A prima facie case is made out on behalf of the plaintiff... In view of the fact that the defendant no.1 (Truschke) has not submitted to the jurisdiction of this Court and is not appearing in these proceedings, the defendant no.4/Twitter is directed to take down the following tweets as mentioned in prayer 'a' of the present application," the court said in its order dated May 2.

"In my view, the tweets with regard to the subject matter of the present application are defamatory in nature and there is a link posted in the said tweets to the very same letters, the publication of which was enjoined by this Court vide orders dated February 18, 2022 and February 24, 2022," it added. The court also granted four weeks to Truschke to file her reply to the plea.

SHO rapes gangrape survivor who went to police station to lodge FIR

Accused cop on run suspended, arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 13-year-old gangrape survivor, who had gone to file her complaint, was allegedly raped by the in-charge of a police station in Lalitpur.

Accused Station House Officer Tilakdhari Saroj has been suspended and a case has been registered against half a dozen persons, including the cop, at the Pali police station. Saroj, who was on the run, was arrested in Prayagraj, confirmed ADG Prayagraj, Prem Prakash. Three of the other accused have been held.

Reports said on Tuesday, the girl's father lodged an FIR, alleging that his daughter was lured to Bhopal by four men — Chandan, Rajbhan, Harishankar, and Mahendra Chaurasia — on April 22 and was gangraped for four days.



He said the teenager somehow escaped and reached home and went to the police to file a complaint where the SHO raped her before handing her over to the Childline Welfare Committee.

When the teenager was questioned by the Childline officials, she narrated the whole incident, after which the Childline Welfare Committee reached out to the Lalitpur Superintendent of Police.

Following this, the SP

immediately registered a case of gangrape against six people, including the SHO.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the Chief Secretary, the DGP and the Government of Uttar Pradesh seeking a report within four weeks.

Meanwhile, sources confirmed that when the victim reached Pali police station, her aunt was called to pick her up and told to bring the girl back the next day to record her statement. The aunt did not tell the girl's parents of her whereabouts and instead took her back to the police station the next day, where SHO Saroj took the girl to a separate room and raped her, the FIR says. The girl's aunt has also been named in the FIR.

Lalitpur police said they have charged the SHO for rape and under the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act.

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Govt wheat buy to drop as exports up; Secy says it won't affect PDS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's wheat procurement is set to decline by more than half to 19.5 million tonnes in the current rabi marketing year amid higher exports and a likely fall in output. Union Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, however, did not see any difficulty meeting the domestic demand under the Public Distribution System.

The secretary also ruled out the possibility of imposing any curbs on wheat exports as farmers are getting higher than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their produce.

Addressing a Press conference, Pandey said, "We don't see a case for any control on exports.Wheat exports are on and in fact the Government is facilitating the traders."

New export markets such as Egypt, Turkey and some European Union countries are opening for Indian wheat. Agri-export promotion body APEDA is facilitating the ship-



ments, he said.

Pandey said private traders have contracted for the export of 4 million tonnes for the current quarter, and 1 million tonnes have been shipped already.

Indian traders have a window for exports till June when the wheat crop from Argentina will arrive, thereby increasing the global availability and reducing pressure on India, he added. Wheat exports stood at a record 7 million tonnes in

the 2021-22 fiscal.

Amid a rise in demand for wheat for export, the secretary said farmers are selling their produce to private players at more than the MSP. This has resulted in lower procurement by Government agencies.

The fall in Government procurement, he asserted, goes in "favour of farmers" as they are getting higher than the MSP offered by the Government agencies.

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Loudspeaker row: Raj posts Bal’s video to score point over Uddhav

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

With no let-up in his aggression over his call for removal of loudspeakers from religious places, MNS chief Raj Thackeray on Wednesday posted an archival video clip of late Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray on his Twitter handle that showed the latter declaring that if his party came to power in the State, namaz on roads would be stopped and loudspeakers would be removed from mosques, even as his party workers played “Hanuman Chalisa” at some places in the city and the neighbouring Thane district.

Talking to media persons at his residence “Shiv Thirth” at Dadar in north-central Mumbai, the MNS chief claimed that in “90 to 92 per cent” of 1,140 mosques across the metropolis, azan was not played on loudspeakers in the morning. He thanked those molavis for not playing at their



mosques and “from their cooperation, they have understood the (sound) issue we are talk-

ing about”. Not wanting to take any chances, the police had made elaborate security

arrangements around mosques in the city and adjoining satellite cities like Thane, Kalyan,

Navi Mumbai, Vasai, Bhayandar and Dombivli. Muslims offered prayers at many mosques.

In an apparent effort to carry out the threat handed out by Raj Thackeray that his party workers would recite “Hanuman chalisa” in front of mosques if loudspeakers were not removed from there by May 3, MNS workers played Hanuman Chalisa on a loudspeaker near a mosque at Charkop locality in north Mumbai on Wednesday morning.

Before long, a video put out by the MNS went viral. The video showed a MNS worker, holding the party flag, was seen playing the Hanuman Chalisa on a loudspeaker from a high-rise building here. In the background, the ‘azan’ could be heard from a loudspeaker of a nearby mosque.

Similarly, in the neighbouring Thane, some MNS activists played “Hanuman

Chalisa” on a loudspeaker at Indira Nagar locality. However, the fact remained that no mosque was located in the vicinity. Meanwhile, the MNS chief posted an archival video containing a portion of late Sena chief Bal Thackeray’s speech.

In the speech, late Thackeray is seen saying: “The day my government will come to power in Maharashtra, we will stop Muslims from offering prayers on the roads.

The religion should be like that it should not come in the way of national interest, it should not inconvenience people and if Hindu religion is inconveniencing people, I want people to come and tell me about it. And I will deal with it. (When my government comes to power) loudspeakers will be removed from mosques”.

The intention behind Raj playing the archival video of late Thackeray is to prove a point over his cousin and chief

minister Uddhav Thackeray and establish how the latter was deviating from the principles of his father and late Thackeray. The MNS chief, in a statement posted on his twitter handle on Tuesday night, had reminded Uddhav Thackeray what late had stated that “all loudspeakers need to be silenced”.

“Are you going to listen to this (late Balsaheb’s words)? Or are you going to follow the non-religious Sharad Pawar who is responsible to keep you in power?. Let the people of Maharashtra witness what is going to follow,” he had asked his cousin and Sena president Uddhav.

Earlier, at a news conference that he addressed on Wednesday morning, Raj had said that he had spoken to Mumbai’s Joint Police Commissioner Vishwas Nangare-Patil (Law and Order) and the latter told that in of the total 1140 mosques, azaan was played in only 135 mosques at

5 am on Wednesday. “I asked him what kind of action was taken against those 135 mosques where azaan was played on loudspeakers,” Raj said. The MNS chief wondered as to how the police were giving permission to play azan loudspeakers on 365 days in a month.

“The police should give permission to them on a day to day basis and not for all 365 days in a year. The sound permission should be given on the basis of the Supreme Court ruling,” Raj said.

Raj said that a majority of mosques in Mumbai and elsewhere in Maharashtra were unauthorised. “Nagre Patil briefed me about the number of applications received and the number of sound permissions given to mosques,” he added.

In a related development, the city police detained several MNS workers gathered outside party chief Raj Thackeray’s residence here

EMIs set to rise as RBI raises repo, CRR rates

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“The MPC judged that the inflation outlook warrants an appropriate and timely response through resolute and calibrated steps to ensure that second-round effects of supply-side shocks on the economy are contained and long-term inflation expectations are kept firmly anchored,” Das said.

The Governor, however, added that the monetary stance remains accommodative and actions will remain calibrated. “In the MPC’s view, monetary policy response at this juncture would help to preserve macro-financial stability amidst increasing volatility in financial markets,” he added.

Deloitte India economist Rumki Majumdar said the rate hike was expected in June. “The surprise move by the RBI to raise the policy rates a month earlier suggests that it does not want to wait and watch but act quickly before inflation derails the growth recovery.

However, making it costlier to borrow will affect consumers and businesses (especially MSMEs) and impact credit growth, which has been low since 2019. Economic activity will also likely see some restraint.”

As the economy normalises, there is a rising concern about demand growing at a pace faster than supply, thereby, leading to demand-pull inflation. Besides, global inflation is also a concern.

High commodity, edible oil, metal, and fertiliser prices due to the Russia-Ukraine crisis are adding to production costs.

Both cost-push and demand-pull inflation drivers have been indicating that the RBI will have to act on price pressure worries.

The Central bank had reaffirmed its accommodative stance in February -- a step

criticised by some economists as too benign on the risk of rising prices. The RBI last month said that it would begin prioritising inflation over supporting growth. “This is precisely in line with the stance of withdrawal of accommodation”, which was announced at the last MPC meeting in April, Das said.

The RBI has cut the repo rate by 250 basis points since February 2019 to help revive the growth momentum. The Monetary Policy Committee has been on a prolonged accommodative stance to support growth.

In its response to the pandemic, monetary policy had shifted gears to an ultra-accommodative mode, with a 75 bps reduction in the policy repo rate on March 27, 2020, followed by another reduction of 40 bps on May 22, 2020.

In April, it raised its inflation forecast to 5.7 per cent for the current fiscal (2022-23), up from 4.5 per cent, and said it sees gross domestic product (GDP) growth during the year at 7.2 per cent compared to a previous expectation of 7.8 per cent.

From October 1, 2019, all banks were mandated to lend only at an interest rate linked to an external benchmark, such as the RBI’s repo rate or Treasury bills yield. As a result, monetary policy transmission by banks has gained traction.

For two years, the RBI kept interest rates at a record low to support the economy.

The six-member MPC had last held an off-policy cycle meeting on May 22, 2020, to perk up demand by cutting the repo rate by 40 basis points to a historic low of 4 per cent in wake of uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic.

The rate hike comes after 11 consecutive times, the last being just a month back, of the RBI holding interest rate at a record low of 4 per cent.

Noida: Medical intern from Delhi immolates self in park; woman found hanging at home

PTI ■ NOIDA

A 23-year-old woman from Delhi, who was doing her internship with a hospital, immolated herself at a park here on Wednesday, with officials saying it is suspected that she was battling a mental health condition.

A hand-written note was found at the spot where the woman, a resident of Greater Kailash in the national capital, killed herself, they said. “Police recovered a two-litre empty bottle of diesel, a purse, a mobile phone and a hand-

written note. The note purportedly stated that she was ending her life as she was upset over a mental health condition”, an official told PTI. Information was received around 4.30 pm about a woman setting herself on fire at a park in front of a housing society in Sector 93A, the official from the Phase-2 Police Station said, adding that “local police rushed to the spot and later, forensic experts also reached there”.

Details of what triggered her to take the extreme step are yet to be ascertained, police

said.

The officials said that it is suspected that she was suffering from depression. Mental health experts believe depression is treatable and suicide preventable if first observers, like parents or spouse or friends, recognise the behavioural changes in a person and talk to them in order to not let them doubt their self-esteem.

In the another incident, the body of the woman was found hanging from the ceiling of her rented accommodation in Barola village, under the Sector-49 Police Station, here,

a police spokesperson said. She lived alone as her husband is working in Uttarakhand, the official said. “The matter was reported to the 112 emergency service after which police reached the spot and found the body. The woman hailed from Bihar. Her husband currently works at a private company in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, and she was staying alone,” the spokesperson said.

The families of the deceased in both cases have been informed and further legal proceedings are being carried out by police.

NCM chief refuses to comment on move to bring UCC in U’khand, other States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

National Commission for Minorities (NCM) chairperson Iqbal Singh Lalpura on Wednesday refused to comment on some BJP-ruled states proposing to implement the Uniform Civil Code, saying without going through the draft legislation he would not like to make a remark.

On repeated queries at a press conference, he said the commission will go through the draft of the common code, when it comes before it, to see if there is any deficiency in it which interferes with somebody’s right to religion and fol-

low religious practices. “The draft (of the Uniform Civil Code) has not come to me. We will see the draft and discuss it. We have people (members) from all minority communities here (in the NCM). We cannot comment on this without knowing the draft (legislation),” Lalpura said.

“Whatever is there in the draft that has to be seen in order to find out if there is any deficiency in it. The draft (law) has to be seen in the light of all existing codes to understand if they (state governments) are making them (existing codes) better or they

are taking away something personal from the communities,” he said. Lalpura said that “you have to see in totality, are they interfering in the religious activities of a religion or somebody’s freedom of religion”.

Discussions over the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is gaining pace in the country after the Uttarakhand government under Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami approved the constitution of a committee to implement the proposed code in the state soon after the BJP returned to power winning assembly polls in March. Implementing the

UCC was one of the poll promises of the BJP in the state.

Last month, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said that the state government is also thinking seriously in the direction of the implementation of the UCC in the state, and favoured its expeditious implementation in the country as well.

With the BJP pulling out all stops to retain power in Himachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur recently lauded the UCC as a good concept and said his government was open to implementing it.

Yogi suspends ex-DM of Ghaziabad

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has suspended Ghaziabad’s former District Magistrate Nidhi Kesarwani, a 2004 batch IAS officer, for alleged irregularities in land acquisitions for Delhi-Meerut Expressway and Eastern Peripheral Expressway. The IAS officer from Manipur cadre is presently on Central deputation and so the state government has forwarded the matter to the Centre for further action against her. “Following the policy of zero tolerance towards corruption, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered the suspension of the then DM of Ghaziabad, now on Central deputation.

Govt wheat buy...

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However, about the overall foodgrain management situation, the Secretary said, “We are still in a surplus situation.” “...The Government’s wheat procurement has reduced. But the availability and procurement of rice are sufficient to meet the demand under the National Food Security Act,” he added.

Pandey said the Government’s wheat procurement has touched 17.5 million tonnes so far, and the total purchase is likely to reach 19.5 million tonnes in the 2022-23 marketing year, much lower than the last year.

Another 2 million tonnes of wheat is expected to be procured from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, he said. Earlier Government had fixed wheat procurement target at 44.4 million tonnes for 2022-23 marketing year as against an all-time high of

433.44 lakh tonnes in the previous marketing year. The rabi marketing season runs from April to March but the bulk procurement ends by June.

Pandey attributed the fall in wheat procurement to several factors, including higher market prices of wheat in some states compared to the MSP, stocks being held by farmers and traders in anticipation of further price rise and lower than estimated production in some States.

The Agriculture Ministry has revised downwards the estimate for wheat production by 5.7 per cent to 105 million tonnes in the 2021-22 crop year ending June, from earlier projection of 111.32 million tonnes, as crop productivity has been affected due to early onset of summer, he said. India’s wheat production stood at 109.59 million tonnes in 2020-21 crop year (July-June).

141 arrested in Jodhpur communal clash, curfew clamped for 2nd day

PNS ■ JAIPUR

As many as 141 people have been arrested so far in connection with communal clashes over the hoisting of a flag before Eid in Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot’s constituency Jodhpur where a curfew continued for the second consecutive day on Wednesday.

The situation is under control and no fresh incident of violence has been reported, police said. Nearly 1,000 police personnel have been deployed to maintain law and order.

Earlier, the authorities issued orders imposing a curfew till Wednesday midnight besides suspending mobile internet services. DGP M L Lather said 141 people have been arrested and 12 FIRs were registered in Jodhpur. Four FIRs were registered by police and eight lodged by people, he said.

He said nine policemen were injured in the violence. Tensions broke out the night intervening Monday and Tuesday over putting up of Islamic flags on the Jalori gate circle, which led to stone pelting. The situation was brought under control in the early hours on Tuesday with heavy deployment of police but tensions escalated again in the morning after prayers at an Eidgah close to the Jalori gate circle. Shops, vehicles and

houses were pelted with stones near the Jalori gate area. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday appealed to people to maintain peace and harmony and has sent two ministers Rajendra Yadav and Subhash Garg to Jodhpur.

The clashes triggered a war of words between Gehlot and the BJP. Talking to reporters Gehlot on Wednesday accused the BJP of instigating riots on the “orders of its high command”. Targeting BJP leaders, Gehlot said they are trying to defame the Congress party’s government in the state as they are “unable to digest peace”. “The BJP is nervous. Therefore, they are instigating riots,” he told reporters in Udaipur.

“They have instructions from their high command to defame the Rajasthan government and create instability as much as they can,” the CM alleged.

Earlier on Tuesday, the BJP targeted the state government over law and order. Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat claimed that police are working under pressure.

Shekhawat threatened that he, along with other party leaders, will sit on a dharna at the Jalori gate circle if rioters are not arrested. State BJP president Satish Poonia had alleged that communal incidents are taking place “under patronage of state government.”

NCR PULSE

DIRECT FIGHT WITH BJP IN HP: AAP

New Delhi: Senior AAP leader Satyendar Jain on Wednesday claimed that there would be a ‘direct contest’ between the Arvind Kejriwal-led party and the BJP during the Himachal Pradesh polls due later this year, and his party will emerge victorious. At a press conference, he said, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Himachal Pradesh) head and advocate, Anender Singh Nauti, along with his thirty associates have joined the AAP. Some of the members who joined were present during the press meet.

DPCC TO INSPECT INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION: RAI

New Delhi: The Delhi Government has deployed a seven member task force of the DPCC to inspect industrial pollution. Delhi’s Environment Minister, Gopal Rai, said that so far, 1280 industrial units have been inspected as part of DPCC’s special effort, which was launched as part of the Summer Action Plan. “DPCC has deployed a 7-member task force to monitor work as part of this initiative. In addition, all of Delhi’s 1607 registered industrial units have been converted to PNG,” said Rai.

SISODIA HOLDS PWD REVIEW MEETING

New Delhi: Delhi’s Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia held a review meeting with expert consultants and officials of the Public Works Department on the streetscaping of 16 roads, going on in the pilot phase across Delhi. He did a digital walk-through of the designs for beautification and also gave suggestions to make these roads better. He also reviewed the beautification design for a road in South Delhi with the officials of DTTDC.

KAILASH GAHLOT MEETS COVID WARRIOR’S KIN

New Delhi: Delhi’s Revenue Minister, Kailash Gahlot on Wednesday met the relatives of nursing officer ChinniChing and Safai Karamchari Seema, who lost their lives to the Covid-19 infection and handed them an ex-gratia of Rs one crore. Kailash Gahlot said that ChinniChing was working as a nursing officer, while Seema worked as a Safai Karamchari at the Lok Nayak Jaiprakash Hospital in the city.

2 PEOPLE DIE, 2 INJURED IN HIT-AND-RUN CASE

Noida: Two people died in separate road accidents, while two more suffered injuries in a hit-and-run case in Uttar Pradesh’s Greater Noida. A carter truck driver died after the vehicle rammed into an unidentified vehicle on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway around 2 am on Wednesday. A 28-year-old man returning from work after a night shift died on Tuesday morning after his e-rickshaw was hit by a carter truck near the LG roundabout. In another incident, two men were injured after their motorcycle was hit by an SUV near the ATS roundabout at around 4 PM on Wednesday.

MAN HELD FOR HITTING A WOMAN IN AMAR COLONY

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested a 25-year-old man for allegedly hitting a woman during a brawl in southeast Delhi’s Amar Colony area. The incident took place on Friday night. The woman in her complaint said she had taken a cab on Friday night from Hauz Khas to Surya hotel in New Friends Colony area. When her cab reached Okhla Mandi road the cab driver stopped the car as due to traffic. Suddenly, a man, wearing black shirt, started abusing the cab driver.

MEMBER OF BABA AND NANDU GANG HELD

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested a 25-year-old member of Baba and Nandu gang from Delhi’s Bakhtawarpur area. Deepak, a resident of Jhajjar in Haryana, was arrested on Monday night. After getting information that Deepak will come to Bakhtawarpur to meet his associate, police laid a trap. On seeing the police, he tried to escape but was nabbed, said police.

LONG-STANDING DUES NOT PAID: PATHAK

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Durgesh Pathak, on Wednesday, alleged that due to non-payment by the Central Government, agencies have refused to collect garbage from streets of Delhi. Pathak said that it is for the first time in Delhi’s history that a party has stopped giving funds to the company responsible for waste management and disposal in the national capital. Pathak also said that, soon all the garbage management companies of Delhi will stop picking up trash from homes because of their long-standing dues with the BJP led municipal corporation.

INITIATIVE ON SCIENTIFIC DISPOSAL OF E-WASTE ANNOUNCED

New Delhi: The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Wednesday announced that its initiative on scientific disposal of E-waste has received 2393 applications and a total of 909 people have availed of the service, said a senior official.

SHO rapes...

From Page1

“The SHO has been suspended and he is a named criminal so teams have been formed to arrest him. An NGO brought girl to my office. She had given them details. After I was informed of it, I ensured that a case was registered,” Lalitpur district police chief Nikhil Pathak said in a statement. Other police officers posted at police station have also been removed from duty and a DIG-level officer will be investigating case, claimed another senior officer.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra attacked Yogi Adityanath Government over Lalitpur incident and claimed that truth of prevailing law and order situation in UP has been concealed under so-called bulldozer propaganda.

“If police stations are not safe for women then where would they go to seek justice?” she asked. She also asked Government whether they were serious about increasing presence of women cops in police stations or forwarding justice to fairer sex or Mission Shakti was another propaganda of Bharatiya Janata Party like all other slogans.

Capital facing water shortage for want of good Yamuna flow

Delhi Govt has written to Haryana asking it to release more water in river

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After facing a coal crunch in power plants that supply electricity, now the national Capital is reeling under a water shortage. Amid the rising temperatures, the water levels at the Wazirabad pond are depleting alarmingly due to poor water flow in the Yamuna. The Delhi Government has written to the Haryana Irrigation Department, for a second time in a week, asking it to release additional water in the river to prevent disruption in the Capital's water supply.

According to officials, the water level at the Wazirabad Barrage dropped to 672.30 feet

on Wednesday morning, against the normal level of 674.5 feet.

"Also, as the raw water flow in the Carrier-Lined Channel has decreased from 683 cusec to 566 cusec, the water production is affected," the official said.

Haryana supplies a total of 610 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to Delhi through two canals — Carrier-Lined Channel (CLC) and Delhi Sub-Branch (DSB) — and the Yamuna.

The CLC and DSB get water from Hathni Kund via the Munak canal and the Bhakra Beas Management Board. Besides, Delhi receives 253 MGD from Uttar Pradesh through the Upper Ganga Canal and 90 MGD is drawn from Ranney wells and tube wells installed across the Capital.

The low level at the Wazirabad pond and the poor flow in the CLC has reduced the operational capacity at several Water Treatment Plants



(WTPs), including Chandrawal, Wazirabad, Haiderpur, Nangloi, and Dwarka, another official said.

Chandrawal and Wazirabad WTPs have a capacity of 90 MGD and 135 MGD, respectively. The two plants lift raw water from the Wazirabad pond, treat it and supply it to northeast Delhi, West Delhi, North Delhi, Central Delhi, South Delhi, including Delhi Cantt and New Delhi Municipal Council areas.

The Haiderpur WTP, the largest in Delhi which supplies around 225 MGD of water is

facing operational issues.

Due to excessive floating material choking the filter beds, the treatment process has slowed down at the Haiderpur WTP, the DJB said in a statement.

"DJB is endeavouring to rationalise the supply, however water will be available at low pressure till the situation improves. Affected areas include North Delhi, northwest Delhi, West Delhi and parts of South Delhi," it said.

According to Government data, Delhi required 1,380 MGD of water in 2021, while

the DJB could only supply around 950 MGD.

The Government has now targeted increasing the water supply to 998 MGD to meet the growing demand this summer and to 1,180 MGD by June 2023. Residents in southeast Delhi are the worst affected by the water supply crisis, as per reports. The worst-affected regions are Trilokpuri, Mayur Vihar, Pandav Nagar, Chilla Village, Karawal Nagar, Bhajanpura, Seelampur, Kashmiri Gate, Mori Gate, Sadar Bazar, Patparganj, Ganesh Nagar, Mandawali, and Laxmi Nagar. "People in various parts of Delhi are concerned about water scarcity and have filed many complaints with the DJB. The Board says that things are improving or that they would be better soon. However, in certain regions, individuals claim that there was previously water in the taps for 10 minutes, but that it has suddenly vanished," Leader of the Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said.

DMRC helps police solve murder of builder; 2 nabbed

One minor boy was tracked through Metro card and apprehended from Rajiv Chowk station while the other was held from Mukundpur Village

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Wednesday apprehended two juveniles in connection with the murder of a 77-year-old builder in North Delhi's posh Civil Lines area. Ram Kishore Agrawal was stabbed multiple times by the two juveniles before they decamped with ₹11 lakh along with jewellery from his house. Both the juveniles are from Madhubani in Bihar. The main suspect used to work at the builder's house as a domestic help two years ago but was removed over allegations of theft. He wanted to take revenge as well as earn a quick buck.

According to the police, one suspect was tracked through his Metro card and arrested from Rajiv Chowk station while the second suspect was apprehended from Mukundpur Village.

Ram Kishore Agrawal was found dead in his home on May 1 at around 6:52 AM. Agrawal used to live on the ground floor of his two-storey house while his son and his family lived on the first floor.

"During the investigation all the family members, servants and guards of the area were interrogated at length. After examination of the spot, there seemed to be a strong

possibility that someone privy to the topography both outside and inside the house was involved," said Ravinder Singh Yadav, Special Commissioner of Police, Crime.



"As per footage from various CCTVs in the area, the suspects were seen fleeing on a bike after committing the crime. The CCTV footage also revealed that the suspects had taken an e-rickshaw while on the way to Civil Lines to commit the crime. It was also established that the suspects had used the Metro network frequently in order to retrace the area while planning the crime," said the Special CP.

"The CCTV footage of the Delhi Metro network and areas close to Civil Lines was analysed and the cameras were monitored round-the-clock in search of the suspects. Because of this, one of the suspects was detected," said Yadav, adding that with the assistance of DMRC staff the suspect was nabbed from the platform of Rajiv Chowk Metro Station.

"On questioning, the criminal disclosed his involvement in the crime and revealed that his associate was hiding near Mukundpur Village. Following this, a police team conducted a raid and the second criminal was also nabbed," said Yadav adding that a bag containing over Rs 10 lakh in cash, some foreign currency, two watches and some stolen ornaments was recovered from his house.

"One of the juveniles told the police that he had worked at the victim's house as a domestic help around two years

ago, hence, he knew everything about the victim's house, the details of the family members and their daily routine," said the Special CP.

"In order to earn easy money, he roped in a friend from his native village and started planning the crime meticulously. He called his friend from the village about a week prior to the incident," said Yadav.

"Accordingly, both of them purchased a toy pistol from the Lajpat Rai Market and two vegetable knives from Chawri Bazaar. On April, 30 at about 10:00 P.M. they reached the victim's house and parked a stolen bike nearby and left the spot as they knew that early morning entry with a bike would not be possible from the gate because of the guard stationed at the entry barrier," said Yadav.

"As the juvenile knew the routine of the house, they reached the victim's house in the morning and jumped the boundary wall. They locked the guard inside his room and entered the house. They entered Agrawal's bedroom while he was watching TV. Both overpowered Agrawal and slit his neck and stabbed him in his stomach and neck. They looted cash and jewellery from the cupboard and fled on the bike that was already parked near the house," said the Special CP.

Delhi's construction workers to get free bus travel pass

Sisodia gives passes to 100 workers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



welders, carpenters, crane operators among others.

"Our construction workers are builders of the nation and play a crucial part in the country's economic prosperity," Sisodia said.

Sisodia on Wednesday also distributed 100 free passes to construction workers at a function held at the Delhi Secretariat. This is in addition to the 14 welfare programmes being run by

the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board (DBOCWWB). Delhi has 12 lakh construction workers, 10 lakh of whom are registered with the DBOCWWB.

Sisodia said that in Delhi, only a few construction workers get accommodation near their work site and a majority of them travel to the work site or labour chowk from the outskirts of the

national Capital, which puts a major economic burden on them. To end their travel-related woes, the Kejriwal Government has launched the 'Free Bus Travel Pass' scheme for them in DTC buses across the city."

Construction workers can register for free passes on the DTC's website or at one of the 34 registration booths set up by DBOCWWB and the passes would be issued to them shortly. "They won't have to do the rounds of offices to get the pass or waste their entire working day waiting in line," added Sisodia.

He urged construction workers to assist other members of the community in registering with the DBOCWWB so that they, too, could take advantage of the Government welfare pro-

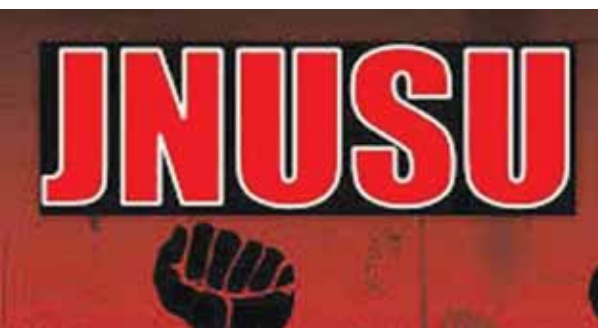
grammes.

"I travel from Narela to Gurugram for work by bus and Metro. It costs me Rs150-200 per day, which is nearly half of what I earn per day. In such a situation, I am unable to save for my family. A free travel pass from the Delhi Government will now assist me in saving for the future," said Shahood Alam, a construction worker

Another construction worker, Mohammad Shamsad said, "I am a painter and POP worker. My everyday commute to work across the city costs me around Rs 3,600 per month. When I didn't have enough money, I had to stay at the construction site. With this pass, I can now travel back home for free every day."

JNUSU demands allotment of hostel for 2021 batch students

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



Earlier, on Tuesday, the JNUSU wrote to JNU Vice-Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, requesting the commencement of physical verification of documents and hostel allotment for the batch.

"Despite the permission to open all educational institutions in full capacity, JNU still remains shut for the batch of 2021", the JNUSU noted.

The 2021 batch students "have still not been allotted hos-

tel rooms and the batch has to make do with online classes. Many of them are facing a lot of issues due to the online classes," the letter read.

"Since there are more than 1,500 seats available in the hotel and since the first semester has also come to an end, we on the behalf of JNUSU would request the physical verification of documents and hostel allotment for the batch to start on an immediate basis," it added.

L-G reviews status of seven biodiversity park projects

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi Anil Baijal on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the status of the project of seven Biodiversity Parks constructed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). In the meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the DDA, Manish Kumar Gupta, noted that the maintenance and environment expert Prof. CR Babu, and others stakeholders were also present.

According to a senior DDA official, spread over 3000 acres, these parks are models of urban environmental sustainability and resilience and are one of the first of their kind in the country.

"The network of seven Biodiversity Parks in Delhi harbour a diversity of wildlife including medicinal plants in ecologically sustainable biotic communities and rendering

multiple ecological services including Carbon sequestration, Oxygenation, recharge of groundwater aquifers and economical, educational and recreation benefits to the urban society," he said.

"During the meeting, while appreciating the efforts and achievements made over the past 20 years in establishing these parks, LG emphasized that the maintenance and sustainability of these parks was a continuous process rather than a one-time task," he said.

"Baijal underlined that all efforts had to be made to ensure that there was no mutual infringement of surrounding human settlement and the flora and fauna in the parks and human-wildlife conflict was avoided at any cost. He directed officials to ensure that no encroachments took place in the demarcated areas in the future," he added.

2 girls sexually assaulted by man in EDMC-run school

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two eight year-old girls were allegedly sexually assaulted by a man in the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) run school in Delhi's Bhajanpura area. The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) said that the man allegedly entered the classroom and undressed himself and even urinated in front of the students. A senior Delhi Police official said they have registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) and special teams have been formed to nab the accused.

The DCW said that when the students informed the principal and class teacher about the incident, they were told to keep quiet and forget it. The incident occurred on April 30.

While the DCW has issued a notice to the police and Commissioner of the EDMC in connection with the matter, there was no immediate reac-

tion from the civic body officials about the stranger gaining entry to the classroom.

The civic body-run schools have students up to class 5. In its notice, the DCW said April 30, after the school assembly, students were waiting for their teacher inside the class when an unknown man entered the classroom.

"Allegedly he removed the clothes of a girl and muttered obscenities at her. Then he walked over to another girl and removed her clothes and his clothes as well. Thereafter, the accused closed the door of the classroom and urinated in front of the students," the DCW said in its notice.

"This is a serious matter and warrants immediate action," it said.

The DCW has sought from the police a copy of the FIR, details of the accused, whether the victims have been produced before a child welfare committee, and details of action taken against the class teacher and principal under the POCSO Act.

Rain, hail give Delhiites relief from heat

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhiites on Wednesday got a relief from the blistering heat-wave and humidity as some parts of the national Capital witnessed a spell of hailstorm, rain and gusty wind. According to the residents of Rohini, Pitampura, and Paschim Vihar, the hailstorm started around 2 pm along with a bout of rain and strong winds.

Earlier in the morning, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a yellow alert, warning of a dust storm, thunderstorm, or hail storm with winds gusting up to 50 kilometres per hour in the national capital. It later updated the alert to the orange category.

"A hailstorm and rain occurred at a few places in Delhi while cloudy skies persisted over most parts of the capital, which pulled the mercury down by a few notches in the evening," said Mahesh Palawat, Vice President (Meteorology and Climate Change), Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency. This type of weather is not unusual in April and May, he added. "The impact will linger for another day and the maximum temperature will start increasing from Friday.



However, no heatwave is predicted for another four to five days," Palawat said.

The Met department uses four colour codes for weather warnings — "green" (no action needed), "yellow" (watch and stay updated), "orange" (be prepared) and "red" (take action).

The maximum temperature in the capital city on Wednesday set-

led at 39.1 degrees Celsius which is one notch above than the normal for this time of the year, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The minimum temperature recorded at the Safdarjung Observatory was 28.8 degrees Celsius, which is four notches warmer than the normal temperature for this season, as stated in the

IMD data.

The relative humidity on Wednesday morning at 8:30 was recorded 64 per cent and 37 per cent in the evening at 5:30.

The weather stations at Ridge, Ayanagar, Mungeshpur, Najafgarh, Pitampura, Palam, and Lodhi Road recorded maximum temperatures of 39.3 degrees Celsius, 38.6 degrees Celsius, 39.6 degrees Celsius, 40.5 degrees Celsius, 39.3 degrees Celsius, 38.4 degrees Celsius and 38.0 degrees Celsius respectively, stated the IMD data.

The weather station said that the thunderstorm with gusty winds is very likely over Northwest and Northeast India today; over Peninsular India till tomorrow and over East India till 06th May, 2022, and abatement thereafter.

"Fresh spell of Heatwave conditions likely to commence over central India from 05th May and spread to over northwest India from 06th May, 2022," said IMD.

"Formation of a Low-Pressure area over South Andaman Sea around 06th May 2022 and intensification into Depression during subsequent 48 hours with north-westwards movement," IMD added.

Capital's power demand reaches 6,247 MW

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The capital's peak power demand on Tuesday clocked 6,247 MW a little before midnight. "On Monday, Delhi's peak power demand had clocked 6,194 MW at 3.34 pm. It was the highest peak power demand ever recorded in the first week of May. But, later in the night at 11:30 pm, the peak power demand had clocked 6247 MW, surpassing the peak power demand recorded in the afternoon," sources said.

"On six occasions in April 2022, Delhi's peak power demand has clocked the highest ever in April, each breaking the previous record in quick succession. On April 19, it was 5735 MW, 5761 MW on April 20, 5781 MW on August 21, 5786 MW on April 27, 6050 MW on April 28, and 6197 on April 29," said sources.

"Delhi's peak power demand had breached the 7000 MW for the first time — peaking at 7016 MW in 2018. This expected peak power demand of around 8200 MW is an increase of around 285 per cent over the peak power demand of 2879 MW in 2002," sources stated.

Modi, Nordic nations discuss ways to boost partnership

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday held separate meetings with the Prime Minister of Norway Jonas Gahr Store and the Prime Ministers of Sweden and Iceland, Magdalena Andersson and Katrin Jakobsdottir respectively, on the sidelines of the 2nd India-Nordic Summit in Copenhagen.

This was the first meeting of Modi with the premiers of Norway and Sweden. Modi, who arrived in Denmark on Tuesday from Berlin on the second leg of his visit to three European nations, met his counterparts ahead of the second India-Nordic Summit in the Danish capital.

Prime Minister Modi and the Prime Minister of Norway discussed "the potential for deepening engagement in areas like Blue Economy, renewable energy, green hydrogen, solar and wind projects, green shipping, fisheries, water management, rainwater harvesting, space cooperation, long term Infrastructure investment, health



and culture", said Ministry for external affairs (MEA).

Discussions also took place on regional and global developments. As members of UNSC, India and Norway have been engaging with each other in the UN on global issues of mutual interest. In the meeting that Modi had with Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena the two leaders reviewed the progress made in the bilateral partnership. They also expressed satisfaction at the progress made by the Lead IT initiative. This was a India-Sweden joint global initiative to set up a Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT) in September 2019 at the UN

Climate Action Summit to help guide the world's heaviest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting industries towards the low-carbon economy, according to the MEA.

Its membership has now grown to 35 with 16 countries and 19 companies. Both leaders also discussed possibilities of deepening cooperation in areas like innovation, climate technology, climate action, green hydrogen, space, defence, civil aviation, Arctic, polar research, sustainable mining and trade and economic ties. Discussions also took place on regional and global developments, according to an MEA statement.

According to the MEA,

Modi and his Iceland counterpart Katrin Jakobsdottir, recalled their first meeting during the 1st India-Nordic Summit in Stockholm in April 2018.

They noted that this year both countries are celebrating the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations. MEA said both leaders discussed ways to further strengthen economic cooperation especially in the sectors of geothermal energy, Blue Economy, Arctic, renewable energy, fisheries, food processing, education including digital universities, and culture.

Geothermal energy, in particular, is an area where Iceland has special expertise, and both sides stressed on collaboration between universities of both countries in this sector.

Modi lauded Prime Minister Jakobsdottir's personal efforts at promoting gender equality and briefed her on India's advances in this regard. Discussions also took place on expediting the India - EFTA trade negotiations, the MEA said.

Will look into issue of sealed cover jurisprudence: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will look into the issue of "sealed cover jurisprudence" which is usually adopted by Government and prosecuting agencies by handing over "confidential" documents to the court in a sealed cover.

The bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant, and Bela M Trivedi was told by senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for a TV channel, that time has come when the court gives an authoritative pronouncement on the "sealed cover jurisprudence" which is being adopted by the Governments and prosecuting agencies.

Dave said recently in a case of a Gujarat MLA (Jignesh Mevani) who was arrested in Assam, some sealed cover documents were handed over to the Gauhati High Court.

"In Assam again this same sealed cover jurisprudence was adopted in the case of one Gujarat MLA who was arrested there. It is time that the



court gives some authoritative pronouncement on the issue", he said.

The bench said, "Yes, yes. We will certainly look into it but for now the Centre has sought two weeks time to file their reply. We will give them four weeks' time in view of the upcoming summer vacation".

The apex court was hearing a matter concerning the Malayalam news channel 'MediaOne'. On March 15, the top court had stayed till further

orders on the January 31 directive of the Centre revoking the license of Malayalam news channel 'MediaOne' and banning its telecast on security grounds. It had deprecated the practice of handing over documents in a sealed cover by Government agencies.

The court had directed that the news and current affairs channel will continue its operations as it was operating prior to the ban of the telecast.

Earlier, Kerala High Court

had upheld the Centre's decision to bar the telecast of the Malayalam news channel and dismissed the plea of Madhyamam Broadcasting Ltd — which operates MediaOne — challenging the Central Government's January 31 decision.

The HC had said the decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to deny security clearance was based on intelligence inputs received from various agencies.

BJP to discuss strategy for Raj polls on May 20-21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP will hold an important meeting of its key organisations at Jaipur on May 20-21 to discuss election strategy in the poll-bound Rajasthan which is to elect a new Assembly, next year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address one of the sessions virtually, according to sources.

While elections are due in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat by this year end, the Assembly polls are also due in seven other key States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tripura, Meghalay, Mizoram and Nagaland in 2023.

BJP president JP Nadra will chair the Jaipur meet with all its national office-bearers besides state party chiefs, in-charges and general secretaries (organisation) in the states attending the conclave.

This will be first physical



meeting of these key leaders responsible for running the party's organisation nationwide since COVID-19 broke out in early 2020 and lockdown imposed.

The meeting of all these leaders will be on May 20, while all state general secretaries (organisation) will also meet the next day.

The state presidents and general secretaries (organisation) to submit a report on activities under taken by the

party in their respective state.

The BJP is seeking to make a comeback in Rajasthan where the Congress-led-Gehlot government is trying hard to retain the power and announced a number of schemes including bringing back the old pension scheme for the state government employees.

The Congress is also holding its three-day "chintan shivir" from May 13 at Udaipur in the state.

Cognitive impairment due to Covid similar to that in 50-70 yrs of age

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Cognitive impairment as a result of severe Covid-19 is similar to that sustained between 50 and 70 years of age and is the equivalent to losing 10 IQ points, according to a study. Published in the journal eClinicalMedicine, the study suggests that the effects are still detectable more than six months after the acute illness, and that any recovery is gradual at best.

In the study, a team of scientists from the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London found that Covid-19 survivors were less accurate and slower in their responses during the assessments. These cognitive deficits were still detectable when the patients were followed up six months later. The effects were strongest for those who required mechanical ventilation.

tion.

"Cognitive impairment is common to a wide range of neurological disorders, including dementia and even routine ageing, but the patterns we saw — the cognitive 'fingerprint' of Covid-19 — was distinct from all of these," said Professor David Menon from the Division of Anaesthesia at Cambridge. The team analysed data from 46 individuals who received in-hospital care, on the ward or intensive care unit for the illness between March and July 2020. Out of these, 16 patients were put on mechanical ventilation during their stay in the hospital.

By comparing the patients to 66,008 members of the general public, the researchers estimate that the magnitude of cognitive loss is similar on average to that sustained with 20 years of ageing between 50 and 70 years of age. This is equivalent to the loss of 10 IQ



points, according to the researchers' estimations.

Survivors scored particularly poorly on tasks such as verbal analogical reasoning, a finding that supports the commonly-reported problem of difficulty finding words. They also showed slower processing speeds.

The patients' scores and reaction times began to improve over time, but the researchers say that any recovery in cognitive faculties was gradual at best, and likely to be

influenced by a number of factors including illness severity and its neurological or psychological impacts.

"We followed some patients up as late as ten months after their acute infection, so we were able to see a very slow improvement. While this was not statistically significant, it is at least heading in the right direction. However, it is very possible that some of these individuals will never fully recover," Menon added.

Venugopal, Maken, Gehlot to take stock of preparations for Cong's Chintan Shivir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/UDAIPUR

The Congress on Wednesday sent senior party leaders KC Venugopal, Ajay Maken and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to take stock of the preparations for the party's three-day 'Chintan Shivir' (brainstorming session) to be held in Udaipur.

The leaders will stay at Udaipur, also called the city of lakes, for the day to finalise the preparations for the party's brainstorming camp. "They are in Udaipur to visit hotels and to review the preparations for the shivir," a party

spokesperson said. The 'Chintan Shivir' will be held from May 13-15. The party has named the brainstorming session as — 'Nav Sankalp Shivir' — primarily for the 2024 general elections.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi also reviewed the preparations in a meeting with Venugopal, party leaders Ambika Soni, Randeep Surjewala and Mukul Wasnik on Tuesday at her residence. The party has formed various committees which have been meeting regularly to put forth the agenda for the session and the latest on the subjects were also discussed. About 400 top

party leaders are expected to attend the camp. Senior leaders including those in the Congress Working Committee, members of parliament, state in-charges, general secretaries, and state presidents will participate in the Chintan Shivir. Most of these leaders are likely to reach Udaipur by May 12 while party chief Sonia Gandhi will be there on the first day and last of the session.

Sources several party resolutions are also expected to be passed in the camp and a way forward for organizational overhaul and complete revamp is to be discussed. The party is also preparing simultaneously

to elect a new party president as Sonia has several times announced to relinquish the post due to ill health most of the times and at the backdrop of regular talks and resentment from senior leaders seeking for complete change in the system.

The two AICC general secretaries — Venugopal and Maken — and the Rajasthan Chief Minister were accompanied by the party's state unit president Govind Singh Dotasra, AICC sources said. While Venugopal and Maken reached the venue from Delhi, Gehlot arrived from Jaipur. Dotasra has been camping in the city for the last two days.

Get identification process done by May 25 in banks to get pension, ex-servicemen told

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry has assured that the pension of 58,275 ex-servicemen will be credited to their accounts by Wednesday and urged them to get their identification process done by May 25 in their respective banks.

This advisory was issued following reports that these former soldiers had not got their due pension for the month of April. The Ministry said here on Wednesday the disbursement was delayed as their banks could not confirm their identification by April 30.

In order to avoid hardship,

a one-time special waiver was accorded to these 58,275 pensioners to get their identification done by May 25, it said. It also said their pensions for the month of April will be credited by the end-of-day on Wednesday.

Banks have to annually conduct identification of defence pensioners by November. However, due to COVID-19 last year, the government extended the window for annual identification from November 30, 2021, to March 31, 2022, the ministry said.

Its online pension disbursement system SPARSH successfully disbursed monthly pension to

over five lakh pensioners -- including 4.47 lakh pensioners who have migrated from legacy system to SPARSH - till March 31 this year.

However, during the processing of pension for the month of April, it came to light that the identification of around 3.3 lakh pensioners was not updated, it said.

To overcome the issue, the department had shared a list with the banks to share the updated identification data, and as a result identification status of more than 2.65 lakh pensioners was updated on SPARSH by April 25 this year, leading to successful processing of pension for all these pensioners, it said.

However, banks (the previous pension disbursing agency) could not confirm identification for 58,275 pensioners and neither was their identification received directly on SPARSH by the time of monthly closing. Hence, these pensioners were not paid their April pension by April 30, the ministry said.

It also said the pension for the month of April 2022 has now been processed and pension is due to be credited by end-of-day on May 04, 2022. All such pensioners are being informed about pending annual identification through SMS and email.

PUBLIC NOTICE
To be known to all that my client, Kiran Bansal W/o Bhagwan Dass C/o Kishan Trading Company Old Gram Market, Sunam Sangrur-148026, Allottee/Purchaser/Owner of Flat No.760, Pocket 81, Loknagar Puram, Delhi vide DDA File No. L4 83(63)2011/DDA-10/LN. The original documents i.e. Possession letter and NOC of Water and Electricity of the above said Flat has been lost. An F.I.R./DDR No. 017 dated 30/11/2021 to this effect has been lodged in Police Station Anaj Wandi Patiala(Punjab). Patiala If Any Person(s) Claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone no. 9463690940 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director Housing or Director Housing, DDA, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi.

UGC frames guidelines to promote fitness in higher educational institutions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ensuring a vibrant campus life, participation in sports activities and developing a Students Services Centre (SSC) for managing problems related to stress and emotional adjustment, are among the new guidelines

framed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for promotion of physical fitness in higher educational institutions.

"The main objective of these guidelines is to promote physical fitness and sports activities among students, inculcate a positive attitude and develop a supportive network of students.

Rates of obesity have reached epidemic proportions: WHO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an observation that rings alarm bell for authorities here in India with children gulping down food having high salt, sugar and fats in India, the World Health Organization (WHO) has blamed digital marketing of unhealthy food products to kids and online gaming that compels them to a sedentary life for the main drivers of obesity in Europe.

According to the WHO European Regional Obesity Report 2022, rates of overweight and obesity have reached "epidemic proportions", with only the Americas having a higher level of obese adults than Europe.

The global health body added that while nearly 60 per cent of adults and a third of children are overweight or obese, the last two years of

Covid-19 pandemic made that worse.

"Obesity knows no borders. In Europe and Central Asia, no single country is going to meet the WHO Global NCD target of halting the rise of obesity," said Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, while presenting the report at the European Congress on Obesity.

"The countries in our Region are incredibly diverse, but every one is challenged to some degree. By creating environments that are more enabling, promoting investment and innovation in health, and developing strong and resilient health systems, we can change the trajectory of obesity in the Region."

Environmental factors unique to living in modern Europe's highly digitalised societies are the major drivers of obesity.

Besides, the digital marketing of unhealthy food products to children, the report also blamed the easy access to unhealthy foods through meal delivery apps for the rising cases of obesity.

"Emerging evidence highlights the role of meal delivery apps in extending the physical food environment and providing convenient access to unhealthy food and beverage options with the swipe of a finger," the report said.

It added that the proliferation of online gaming which promotes sedentary behaviour by reducing opportunities for physical activity is contributing to the rising tide of overweight and obesity in the European Region. Increased body fat raises the risk of many diseases, including cancer, Type-2 diabetes, heart problems and lung conditions. It is also the main cause of disability, the report

said. It estimates obesity is leading to 1.2 million deaths every year in Europe, corresponding to more than 13 per cent of all deaths. Addressing obesity is critical to achieving the sustainable development goals, the report added.

In India, different studies estimate that the prevalence of obesity is around 40% and according to the Indian Journal of Community Medicine, India has more than 135 million obese people. Another report by the National Centre for Biotechnology Information has predicted that by 2030, 27.8% of all those overweight in the world would be Indians.

In India, the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) has also planned to conduct yet another study to check the rising obesity across the nation and the effect of the pandemic.

Permission for phase 2/3 study of Covaxin as booster dose sought for 2-18 years

NEW DELHI: Bharat Biotech has sought permission from India's drug regulator to conduct a phase 2/3 study of its Covid vaccine Covaxin as a booster dose among those aged two to 18 years. Presently, the precaution dose of Covaxin and Covishield is administered to all those aged above 18 who have completed nine months after the second dose. The Hyderabad-based firm had on April 29 submitted an application to DCGI seeking permission to conduct phase 2/3 trial to evaluate the safety, reactogenicity and immunogenicity of Covaxin as a booster dose in healthy volunteers aged 2 to 18 years," according to a news report by an agency.

PNS

M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD.
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)
Nishitha Parisar, Bijalee Nagar, Govindpura, Bhopal-23
Phone No. : 0755-2602033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636
Ref. : MD/MK/04/NIT/288

Date : 04.05.2022

TENDER NOTICE

MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from manufacturers through e-tendering.

Sr. No.	Tender Specification Number	Particulars	Approx. Value (Rs. Lakh)	Tender Fee including GST (in Rs.)	Date of Pre-Bid Conference	Date of Opening of Tender
1.	MD/MK/04/776	Procurement of LT 3 Phase 4 wire 40-200 Amp Class1.0 accuracy composite static Tri vector Energy Meter Cat-C (AMR Compatible) with Box.	307.28	11800	20.05.2022 03.00 PM	31.05.2022 03:30 PM

Other details and full Tender documents would be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. Website <https://mplenders.gov.in> shortly.

M.P. Madhyam/104660/2022

CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

Shah on Bengal visit to work on 2024 poll plan



PNS ■ KOLKATA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will embark on a three-day visit to Bengal from May 5 apparently to work out strategies for next year's rural polls and 2024 general elections.

Shah whose visit comes more than a year after his party suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the ruling Trinamool Congress in last year's Assembly elections ---

where he will address a public rally and a conference of the party workers. The next day Shah is likely to join a BSF programme at the Teen Bigha Corridor in Cooch Behar district of North Bengal, party sources said adding the Home Minister will also visit Kolkata the same day to hold a meeting with senior BJP leaders and MLAs.

"This is the perfect time for Mr Shah's visit as we are in the midst of a statewide programme protesting the TMC-led post-poll violence ... his presence will greatly motivate the workers," said a BJP state committee member.

The Home Minister is also likely to take up the issues related to intra-party bickering involving senior leaders like former State president Dilip Ghosh and his successor Sukanto Majumdar. This apart the present alienation of party MPs Shantanu Thakur and Arjun Singh is also likely to be discussed, sources said.

The TMC and the Left would also keenly follow Shah's visit particularly at a time when the BJP leaders in North Bengal have started raising voices in favour of a separate State, sources said.

PC appears for firm divested by TMC Govt, heckled by Congress lawyers

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Lawyers attached to the Congress Party on Wednesday shouted slogans and showed black robes to senior party leader and advocate P Chidambaram who appeared at the Calcutta High Court for a company which had acquired the State-run Metro Dairy allegedly divested by the Trinamool Congress Government at an "exorbitantly low price."

Public interest litigation was earlier filed by Bengal Congress president and party Lok Sabha Leader Adhir Chowdhury questioning the transfer of the public sector unit. The former Union Home Minister was appearing for the defendants in the case.

Even as a group of advocates including their women colleagues protested before Chidambaram who kept on walking inside the court building, advocate and State Congress youth leader Kaustav Bagchi asked why the party in Bengal would have to suffer for senior leaders like him who had no consideration for the lives and prestige of the hundreds of Congress workers who were dying at the hands of the Trinamool Congress goons in



Bengal every day. "These leaders are acting like dalals (agents) of the TMC ... they have no consideration for the party men who are suffering at the hands of the TMC ... they have no consideration for the way the Congress is fighting against a corrupt regime in Bengal ... otherwise he would have not come to shamelessly appear for the TMC-backed defendants who are charged with a multi-crore scam," said Bagchi adding he was protesting not as a lawyer but a Congress worker.

Another advocate said "after the kind of protest that he has seen in the High Court ... and the kind of anger that is

there among the Congress lawyers we hope he will not appear again for the sake of some narrow interests."

Senior Congress leader and MP Pradip Bhattacharya too condemned Chidambaram's appearance in a case lodged by PCC president and which if fought successfully could unearth yet another scam perpetrated by the TMC.

"The party is suffering in Bengal due to the Trinamool Congress ... our workers are being attacked, humiliated and killed by the TMC goons and there senior leaders are appearing for them in Bengal ... what message will it send to the rank and file," Bhattacharya said.

40% of newly-elected MLCs in UP have criminal records, reveals ADR

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The recent UP Vidhan Parishad biennial elections to 36 seats saw nearly 40 per cent candidates having criminal antecedents being elected to the Legislative Council (upper House).

According to the analysis released by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) on Wednesday, out of the 35 MLCs analysed, 14 have declared criminal cases against themselves.

Nine MLCs have declared serious criminal cases, including cases related to murder, attempt to murder, bribery etc while three MLCs have declared cases related to murder (IPC Section 302) against themselves. Four MLCs have declared cases of attempt to

murder (IPC Section 307). Out of 33 MLCs of the Bharatiya Janata Party elected in the biennial polls, 13 have criminal cases against them while one of the two independents have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

Meanwhile, out of the 35 newly-elected MLCs, 33 are crorepatists. Thirty-three MLCs from BJP and two Independent MLCs have declared assets worth more than Rs 1 crore. The average of assets per MLC in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council elections is Rs 17.39 crore.

Meanwhile, seven MLCs have declared their educational qualification to be between 8th pass and 12th pass while 28 MLCs have declared having an educational qualification of graduation or above.



Mumbai court grants bail to Rana couple

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After 11 days of incarceration, a Mumbai court on Wednesday granted bail to Independent MP from Amravati Naveent Rana and her MLA-husband Ravi Rana in the case involving their arrest over threat to recite "Hanuman Chalisa" in front of chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's private residence "Matoshri" at Bandra in north-west Mumbai.

While granting Navneet and Ravi Rana bail against a bail bond of Rs 50,000 each, Special Judge RN Rokade directed them not to indulge to similar offences and also not to interact with the media.

The Judge also directed the Mumbai police to give a 24-hour notice to the Rana couple before summoning them for questioning in connection with the two cases in which they have been booked.

Ranas were arrested on April 23 for offences registered initially against them under sections 153A (causing enmity between different groups), 34 (common intention) and later under section 124A (sedition) of IPC for challenging the government machinery and making remarks against Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in a controversy arising out of their threat to recite "Hanuman Chalisa" in front of Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's Bandra residence. They were also booked under provisions of the Bombay Police Act for causing a law and order situation in the city. Navneet and Ravi Rana were on April 24 remanded by a holiday court in judicial custody for 14 days. The Rana couple subsequently moved the city court seeking bail and the court sought a reply from the state government and scheduled the hearing of the case for April 29.

Rooting for Ranas' bail, their lawyers -- Senior Advocate Abad Ponda and Advocate Rizwan Merchant -- had among other things told the court that the Rana couple's arrest was illegal, contrary to



law and against constitutional rights, that they should have been issued before their arrest and that that there was no mens rea under Section 153A of IPC or intention to cause ill will or hatred feelings of persons mentioned in the section.

The Rana counsels had also told the court that the call to recite Hanuman Chalisa outside the residence of the CM could in no way be treated as an attempt to incite one community against another and that the call did not attract provision of section 153(A) is not attracted.

In an affidavit opposing the bail pleas made by the Rana couple, the Mumbai police had told the court: "The plan to recite 'Hanuman Chalisa' at the private residence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister at Matoshree bungalow is big plot

to create a challenge to the law and order situation and to the maintenance of law and order by the Government established by the rule of law to such an extent that the collapse of law and order can be pleaded and the recommendation can be made for dissolution of the present government by the Governor of Maharashtra".

During the course of the

arguments on Ranas' bail pleas, Special Police Prosecutor Pradip Gharat told court that place in question where recitation was to happen belonged to the Chief Minister of State. "While citizens have right to criticize government, the same has to be done within a limit, and if that limit is crossed, it will fall under ambit of Section 124A of IPC," he said.

Shiv Sena workers visit Navneet Rana's Mumbai house

PNS ■ MUMBAI

In an indication of brewing trouble for the Rana couple on other fronts, a team of the Shiv Sena-ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) visited Independent MP Navneet Rana and her husband and MLA Ravi Rana's residence at Khar in north-west Mumbai for inspection of the alleged illegal construction on the eighth floor of the building where the couple lives. However, the

apartment of the Ranas, who live on the eighth floor of the Lavie building, was locked when the BMC team comprising seven officials visited the place at around 12.30 pm for inspection.

The BMC had reportedly gone to the Lavie building after receiving a complaint that there was some illegal construction on the eighth floor of the building. With no one around at Ranas' residence, the BMC team returned without inspection.

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Akhilesh: Law, order deteriorating rapidly in CM Yogi's rule

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday slammed Bharatiya Janata Party government, alleging that law and order situation was deteriorating rapidly in Yogi Adityanath Government 2.0. Akhilesh Yadav alleged that criminals had a free run in Uttar Pradesh. He said police joining hands with criminals and were targeting common people.

"Everyday heinous crimes are committed in the state and now policemen are involved in serious crimes like rape and murder. It appears that UP is on top in 'ease of doing crime index'," the SP chief said.

Listing incidents of crime, Yadav said in Ghaziabad, a doctor couple was attacked while police refused to register their FIR. He said a schoolboy was killed by local criminals in Jaunpur and distraught father was running from pillar to post to seek justice.

He said the policemen, already facing charges of rape and murder in Chandauli district, again indulged in a horrendous crime in Lalitpur district where a minor girl was gang-raped in police station.

AAP, RLD slam UP Govt over Lalitpur rape incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Rashtriya Lok Dal, on Wednesday, condemned the Lalitpur incident in which policemen have been accused of gang-raping a rape survivor who had gone to the police station to seek justice in her case.

In a statement, RLD national secretary Anil Dubey said the allegation of gang-rape of a rape survivor was a slur on the face of UP Police.

He said the act of the policemen was shameful and fell in the category of heinous crime. He said the government should get a case registered against all the policemen involved in the crime and should terminate all of them from service.

Dubey further demanded trial of the case in a fast track court so that the victim could get justice. Dubey said the UP

Police were gaining notoriety of being autocratic and anarchist and of harassing the people in garb of discharging duty. The RLD leader asked how a person could get justice if those entrusted with task of protecting common men acted as predators. He said government should run bulldozers on houses of culprits after getting a case registered against them and terminating them from service. "Strict action by state government is need of the hour to prevent such incidents in future," he said.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxists-Leninist) said the Lalitpur incident had exposed the Yogi Adityanath government's claims on women's security. He was referring to a SHO in Lalitpur who allegedly raped a gang-rape survivor who had gone to the police station to lodge an FIR.

West Asian delicacy claims life of student in Kerala



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Travelers planning to visit Kerala have been asked to be "extra cautious" about the eateries they prefer to have their food. The development is in the backdrop of the death of Devananda, a 16 year-old-school at Kasaragod, the northern most district of Kerala.

The Kerala High Court's Division Bench issued notice to Government of Kerala asking it to report to the court details of action taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

Devananda had consumed shavarma, a popular West Asian recipe with the youngsters. More than 25 students who ate the Arab food have been admitted to various hospitals in the district following complaints of food poisoning.

This is not the first time shavarma is causing havoc in the State. Many deaths have been reported from various districts and the administration had banned the sale of this food for months.

The eatery "Ideal Food Point" at Kasaragod's Cheruvathur has been found to be operating without permission and license from the local self body or the department of food safety. The food

inspectors who seized the eatery found to their shock that the entire stock had e colli bacteria. "The meat which has been used to make shavarma was rotten and old stock. This could be the reason for food poisoning.

There were complaints in the past that old meat is transported to Kasaragod from Chennai to be sold to these eateries," said Sukumaran Paeriyachoor, former headmaster of Government Vocational Secondary School and founder of Saparya, an initiative for social causes.

While the manager and the chef have been arrested, Kunhi Mohammed, proprietor of Ideal Food Point is absconding. He has been asked to get in touch with the investigation team for collecting more details.

An office bearer of the Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association told The Pioneer that a majority of the eateries, especially the vendors trading junk food operate without license.

"Political patronage helps them to conduct the business without any questions being asked. The only way to remain safe is to avoid this unauthorized eateries," said the official who did not want his name to be quoted.

Saparya, in a statement released on Wednesday requested parents and children to stay away from shavarma till it is proved that the recipe does not have any hazards.

"Instead of waiting for the Government to issue an order, the civil society enforce a self-made boycott of fast food items like shavarma taking into account the future of our children.

Parents have a responsibility of keeping their children away from shackles of shavarma. Devananda is not the first victim to be claimed by shavarma," said Saparya statement.

Small opening found in Samba area suspected to be tunnel: BSF



MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The jawans of the Border Security Force (BSF) Wednesday claimed to have stumbled upon a small opening, suspected to be a cross border tunnel, in the Samba area of Jammu frontier.

For the last couple of days a special anti-tunnel drive was being carried out in the general area following inputs about the presence of cross border tunnel which might have been used by the members of the suicide squad of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) to infiltrate inside the Indian territory on April 21.

A day later the JeM terrorists were neutralised in the Sunjwan area on April 22. An ASI of CISF also attained martyrdom in the terror attack. The senior BSF authorities in Jammu remained tight-lipped before the news was circulated on social media.

Later, a BSF spokesman of Jammu frontier in a brief statement confirmed, "A small opening found in a general area near fencing in the Samba area is suspected to be a tunnel. However due to darkness further search could not be carried out. Detailed search will be carried out early in the morning at first light".

It is learnt the JeM terrorists had managed to breach the several layers of multi tier security ahead of the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi attended the Panchayati Raj diwas celebrations in Palli Panchayat of Samba on April 24 besides launching several infrastructure development projects.

Earlier, on January 13, 2021 a 150 meter long and 25 to 30 feet deep cross border tunnel was detected in the Bobiya area of Samba sector. BSF had also exposed Pakistan's complicity in aiding and abetting terrorism, by detecting a 20-25 feet deep and 160 metre long cross border tunnel, along the International border in Regal area of Samba sector on November 22, 2020.

The tunnel was believed to be used by the four member fidayeen squad (members of a suicide squad) of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), to infiltrate inside the Indian territory before they were neutralised at Ban Toll Plaza near Nagotra on November 19.

Another 'rat hole' tunnel, which was at least 25 feet deep and 170 metres long, was detected by the Border Security Force (BSF) jawans along the International border in Galar village of Samba sector on August 28, 2020.

Azam Khan refuses to meet OP Rajbhar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mohammad Azam Khan, the Samajwadi Party MLA lodged in Sitapur district jail for over two years, on Tuesday, refused to meet Om Prakash Rajbhar, the president of Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party and an ally of the SP.

The refusal by Azam Khan to meet Rajbhar is seen as a rebuff to SP president Akhilesh Yadav. Azam Khan, the Muslim face of the Samajwadi Party, is upset with Akhilesh Yadav for doing nothing at political level for his release from the jail.

Earlier, Azam Khan, the former MP from Rampur, had refused to meet a SP delegation led by party MLA Ravidas Mehrotra. Azam Khan had, however, met Congress leader Pramod Krishnam in jail in April.

On the other hand, Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief and estranged uncle of the SP chief, Shivpal Singh Yadav had a long meeting with Azam Khan in jail. Shivpal Yadav had indicated that after Eid efforts would be made for floating a third front or a new political party. Shivpal Yadav is busy mobilising support for Azam Khan. He had alleged that Samajwadi Party did not do enough for Azam Khan's release. Earlier, Shivpal Yadav had said, "There are small cases against Azam Khan. The Samajwadi Party should have fought his battle, but it was

not done. Azam Khan has also been a member of Lok Sabha. The identity of SP was struggle and movement. We are with Azam Khan and he is with us." In April, Fasahat Ali, a close aide of Azam Khan, had also alleged that Azam Khan was being ignored by SP leadership

and he was left to die in jail. Faced with multiple challenges, the SP is busy keeping its flock together. Nothing seems to be working in their favour. The SP, which looked strong during the UP elections, is now downcast and seems to have hit a political dead-end.

Azam Khan should tender apology for his misdeeds: Sanjay Nishad

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As leaders of many political hues have lined up to meet senior Samajwadi Party leader Mohammad Azam Khan in jail, Fisheries Minister in Yogi Adityanath Government, Sanjay Nishad, said that Azam Khan should tender an apology for his misdeeds so that he could be released.

"Azam Khan sahib has been denied bail time and again and this shows that the nature of his crime is serious.

The time has come for this senior politician to admit mistakes he has committed and should tender an apologetic admission in writing (mafina-ma)," Nishad told a group of reporters here on Wednesday.

He said that Azam Khan was a senior political leader and should do social service. "This is only way he can come out of jail," the minister said. Azam Khan is facing 77

charges ranging from misappropriation of funds to grabbing government land and is in jail for almost two years. "I want to thank Azam Khan that he has distanced himself from Samajwadi Party leaders. This shows his character. He can still extend his service to society," Nishad said.

He said the previous governments had only worked in favour of a particular caste while Yogi government was working for all sections of society. "I want to thank Yogi ji that he has given complete freedom to the administration. The message is clear, if anyone does something wrong, take action against person," he said.

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief and SP president Akhilesh Yadav's uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav met Azam Khan in jail about 10 days ago and after meeting he said that injustice was being done to Azam Khan.

Aborting justice?

Withdrawing legal cover to pro-choice women is regressive and undemocratic

The beacon light of American democracy dims a bit as the United States Supreme Court holds a majority, conservative view that abortion cannot be a constitutional right of women. If the justices care to turn their opinion into a directive - the conservatives have a 6-3 majority - that would overturn the famous Roe vs Wade judgment. The country has no federal law protecting women's right to abortion. The Roe ruling was instead performing that function. If it becomes infructuous, the states will have to decide on abortion laws. That will divide the country like never before because Conservative states will bring in restrictive laws while the democrats are bound to remove all restrictions. Where does that leave American women and their right to choose? At the intersection of democracy on the one hand, and religious orthodoxy and vote-bank politics on the other. President Joe Biden was quick to hope that the court would not overturn Roe. As quickly, he also turned it into a Democrat campaign tool for the November by elections in which he expects a tough fight from the Republicans. He asked the Americans to elect pro-choice candidates to the Senate and House of Representatives so that the legislature could adopt legislation to codify Roe. This is the root of the problem: politics. It has made women suffer insults and ignominies for the last 50 years. Americans still remember that Biden who is pro-choice today had, as a Senator in 1982, voted for a constitutional amendment that would have let states overturn Roe and explained it off saying that as a practising Catholic he was a "victim" of "my background". Republican Richard Nixon was the first Presidential candidate to launch an anti-abortion campaign to woo Catholic voters and conservatives. He won the 1972 election and abortion became a political issue, forever dividing the Republicans and



Democrats. The Republicans thereafter even forged alliances with evangelical groups and painted themselves pro-family. Ronald Reagan who backed less-restrictive abortions as governor launched his 1980 Presidential campaign by calling for the appointment of anti-abortion judges. Democrat Bill Clinton played safe by calling for "safe and rare" abortions. Donald Trump was a determined pro-lifer as he raked in Catholic and conservative votes in 2016. He, like George W Bush before him, appointed three conservative justices to the Supreme Court leaving the democrat justices in a minority. Trump's presidency encouraged states like Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi to ban abortions as early as six weeks, before most women even know they are pregnant. These actions may have been calculated to convince the Supreme Court to "revisit" the Roe decision which they did, as the leaked draft opinion reveals. In the United States that vouches for civil rights and chastises other countries for abusing human rights, the growing dislike for pro-choice women is an anachronism that takes the sheen off the American Dream. The question also is what exigency makes the court think of overturning Roe. Is conservative justice the new frontier justice?

PICTALK



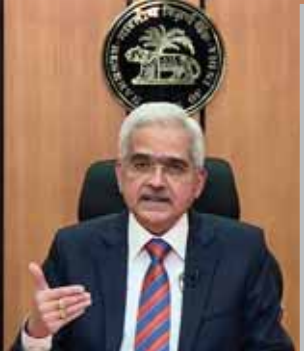
People take a stroll with umbrellas after rainfall at Ridge in Shimla

PTI

An expected RBI move

The interest rate hike will add to the woes of the common man

The RBI's decision to hike the interest rate by 40 basic points has not come as a surprise. The writing was clear on the wall. The sharp rise in inflation, geopolitical tensions, high crude oil prices, and shortage of commodities globally are the reasons cited by the RBI governor Shaktikanta Das to justify the interest rate hike. Except for the stock market players, any saner elements would have foreseen that the RBI was bound to act, and act now, to cool the overheated economy. In fact, experts have been critical of the Central bank's accommodative instance. For the last couple of months, they have been saying that it was time for the RBI to go for tightening its monetary policy. It will be erroneous to put the entire blame for rising inflation on the Ukraine war. Things had turned messy even before the Russian troops landed on Ukraine soil in the last week of February. In fact, retail inflation hit nearly 7 percent in March and held above the upper end of the RBI's target band of 2-4 percent for the third month in a row. The RBI in April raised its inflation forecast to 5.7% for the ongoing fiscal, up from its 4.5% in February. However, The decision will come as big blow to the common man, who is already reeling under all-round rise in the prices of consumer goods, fuels, and other essentials. To begin with, people will have to pay higher monthly EMI on their loans. All retail loans, including home loans, car loans or personal loans, are likely to become expensive. However, the rate hike will bring some cheers to those who have made long-term fixed deposits in banks, The interest rate on such deposits is expected to go up proportionately. The repo rate high will herald a big negative for the real estate sector. After several years of de-growth, the housing construction sector was picking up. The prospective buyers of properties tend to withhold such purchases till the time the interest rate starts cooling off. The interest hike will also impact the prices of cement, steel, glass, pipes, labor cost, etc. At a time when joblessness has become a serious issue at the national level, the slowdown in real estate will add to the problem. Consider the fact that the real estate sector is one of the biggest job sectors in the country.



The idea of universal equality

Freedom becomes more meaningful if it stands under the shade of the tree of tradition, treating all citizens equally in the eyes of law

The truly learned, with the eyes of divine knowledge, envisions the inner soul of a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog eater, equally. Equality is not a new concept. Inequality is... it is a concept that keeps creeping into society, repeatedly raising its ugly head, despite the efforts of Elders, Sages, Social reformers, etc.

So how come inequality is such a persistent problem? It is so because we don't realise that all inequalities are at the level of the physical body. From God's point of view, we're all equal. All athmas are part of paramathma, but they get embodied based on their karmas... not as a punishment, but as an opportunity to better themselves. Any inequality, whether of colour, caste, creed or gender, is inevitable, at that physical level only.

Unfortunately, mankind thrives on highlighting these temporary differences and creating divides, forgetting the oneness of all beings. We must realise that we have to help others to develop skills to cross this ocean of worldly existence.

Everyone says they believe in Equality and then shrug off its implementation as someone else's responsibility. Unless each one of us practices it in our day to day lives, it will only remain a slogan or a topic for essays and speeches.

The word Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same... it means that everyone will have the opportunity to evolve to their optimum level. A bush will get the opportunity to become the best bush, not a tree... a tree will get the opportunity to become the best tree, not a forest.

Over the centuries, many great men have struggled to make the concept of equality take root in the heart of humans. The legacy that a great man leaves behind can be ascertained by the number of hearts he has touched.

Sri Ramanujacharya Swamy, who graced this world in the 11th century, is one of the most important exponents of Sri Vaishnavism. His legacy is not



just how many hearts he has touched, but how many 'souls' he has transformed.

We are blessed to be part of his lineage and carry forward his torch that has been passed down to us by our purvaacharyas. Almost five decades of his life was spent serving all beings as a service to God and propagating the one concept closest to his heart... Equality.

Sri Ramanujacharya was born more than a thousand years ago when the norms of society were even more rigid than they are today. Entering a temple, chanting mantras, learning Vedas was taboo for women, people from 'lower' castes, and the downtrodden.

The world identifies Bharat with casteism, not realizing that it began as a division based on vocations. It's unfortunate that untouchability burst forth as an issue.

Sri Ramanujacharya, like the spring season, quietly set out to help many a flower to bloom to its potential. He shared the mantra with everyone - irrespective of caste. He shared the mantra, which he himself had received from his guru, after traversing 100 miles on foot, 18 times. He shared the mantra at the cost of his guru's wrath and the possibility of facing Hell. He



ALL OUR ANCIENT SCRIPTURES TALK ABOUT EQUALITY. IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA, 5.18, LORD KRISHNA SAYS, VIDYA VINAYA SAMPANNE BRAMHANE GAVI HASTHINI SUNI CHAIVA SVA PAKE CHA PANDITHA: SAMADARSINI

shared it with all. The only qualification he wanted was that they should be devoted and eager to learn.

In the times of Ramanujacharya, temples were the hub of knowledge, employment, and culture. They were the universities, shopping centres, and meeting points. But they were under the control of one section of society, one particular caste.

Sri Ramanujacharya, encouraged inclusiveness by allotting 50 percent of the tasks in temples to persons belonging to the rest of the castes. That's the reason, from then on, there were no restrictions based on caste, to enter temples. However, the relapse of casteism occurred during the foreign rule in Bharath. Caste was used as a ploy to divide and rule.

Sri Ramanujacharya was born in a Brahmin family, but he was desirous of having the leftover food of a great devotee from Kanchi, called KanchiPurna, though he was from a lower social status. He said social status is not a barrier when you truly enjoy and cherish the companionship of people with a common goal.

He gave importance, at par with the Vedas, to the songs sung by alvars, Tamil poet-saints, about the glory of



CHINNA JEEVAR SWAMY

the Divya Desams. Some of these alvars were of the lower castes, but their songs were made mandatory in the temples.

Sri Ramanujacharya showed his concern for women in those tough days and opened learning channels for women. This is 1000+ years ago... I bet there were no social media to create awareness... it was a single Acharya who sensed the need to educate all, so that everyone could experience knowledge... irrespective of their gender.

Sri Ramanujacharya is that gigantic reservoir from which all present-day schools of thought that advocate Equality has flowed out as creeks, rivulets and tributaries. This is a historical fact.

It's been over a thousand years that this divine personality sanctified the earth by his presence. The world is advocating his ideology, without giving credit to him. His name remains in the shadows. So, the magical essence is missing and values are disappearing in society.

Today, the world is fraught with divisiveness. Invisible, but invincible, walls have been built, dividing society. Equality has become just another name. We feel that the effulgence of Sri Ramanuja's ideology is the dire need of the hour. His form and his words can inspire society. What better time to experience this inspiration, than the millennium of his birth!

That is why the Statue of Equality has emerged. Let the Statue reverberate within you, echoes of Equality. Let these echoes become a yearning for Equality. Let this yearning get translated into actions leading to Equality.

(Writer Sri Chinna Jeevar Swamy is known for his spiritual discourses on Sri Vaishnavism. He is the designer and planner of the Statue of Equality, a statue dedicated to Ramanuja, in Hyderabad, India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ENGLISH BREAKS MANY BARRIERS

Sir — In the article "English and the struggling community" published in May 4 issue, the author has tried to show with great accuracy that the knowledge of the English language has a very close relationship with the development of the Dalit community. It has been tried to show that the international language like English has helped the Dalit intellectuals in the society in putting their point and views effectively.

The richest and most admirable aspect of the knowledge of the English language is that it makes a person from local to global. Today, the way globalization is at its peak and the students of our country are moving towards foreign countries for education and jobs, in such a scenario, English is the only language whose knowledge will help them in their pursuit. Respect for the national language and mother tongue is essential. But if you want to take your voice to every corner of the world, then you can do that work only with English. In today's competitive era, if anyone thinks of climbing the ladder of success without the knowledge of English then it is just a fantasy because they do not want to accept the reality. Without the knowledge of the English language, the condition of a person remains like a frog in a well. The knower of this international language can address people from every stage of the world and understand other people's views. English is available before us as a powerful means of effective communication. **Rajender K Sharma | Haryana**

IS THIS DEMOCRACY?

Sir — World Press Freedom Day was celebrated on May 3. Its echo was heard in India too. But it was a very muted celebration. Because India is ranked 150th among 180 countries in terms of freedom of the press. Do we deserve to be called the biggest democracy? The government may not agree with this ranking, but the fact remains that in 2021 46

Loudspeaker politics



One of the days we associated political leaders with public service. These days, we find them making provocative speeches to become relevant in politics. The ability to stoke communal tensions has come to be considered as a virtue in a leader. Who cares if such elements should be put where they belong to — behind bars. The exhorta-

tion made by MNS chief Raj Thackeray to his party men to play the Hanuman Chalisa over the loudspeaker in twice the volume in front of mosques if Muslims don't stop playing the azaan by May 4 must be seen in this context of politics of communal polarization. Raj Thackeray spoke like a bully and arrogated to himself the 'divine right to decide what is to be done and what is not to be done by sections of the society.

What is resented by the Hindutva hardliners is not the sound of azaan per se; it is the source of azaan — the mosque and what it symbolizes — Islam that they have a problem with. The clamor for the removal of loudspeakers from mosques has more to do with religious intolerance and part of a design to erase India's multi-religious identity than with the wish to reduce noise pollution. **G.David Milton | Kanyakumari**

journalists in India lost their lives in course of their work. It's indeed unfortunate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi refuses to hold any press conference in India.

Why is the head of the biggest democracy afraid of questions? Why didn't he hold a single press conference in eight years of his rule? In the biggest democracy, there is no rationale for one-way dialogue. How will this go? In such a situation, our ranking in press freedom will slip down further. **Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur**

KCR'S MAGIC TOUCH

Sir — This refers to 'Eid Mubarak to Muslims' (The Pioneer May 3). Since the formation of Telangana, people have observed that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao holds all religions in high esteem. A magnanimous man, he releases crores of festival funds and different schemes for the welfare of the poor every year. KCR is an able and resourceful politician. He has no religious discrimination. He does not nurse any grudge and rancor towards any religion. He is

leaving no stone unturned to nip fascism and fanaticism in the bud. He is going out of his way to fortify the secular fabric of the country and castigating religious intolerance. He is propagating and promoting communal harmony, peace, and tranquillity among all religions.

He started many beneficiary and lucrative schemes for the poor irrespective of their caste and creed. He has certainly lessened a big burden of the poor families of brides by extending help of Rs 1,00,116 under the Shaadi Mubarak scheme to Muslims and Pendli Patrika to Hindus. No Chief Minister in the past launched such generous schemes for the needy. He's one of the schemes Asara Pension to widows and single elderly persons is a blessing for the hard-pressed people. Muslims are indeed beholden to KCR for his efficient administrative skills as well as for making all special arrangements for performing Eid ul Fitr prayer all over Telangana. **Zubair Khan | Hyderabad**

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

My Denmark visit has been excellently productive. I thank the people of Denmark.



Prime Minister
— Narendra Modi



The police sub-inspector (PSI) recruitment scam in Karnataka was worth ₹300 crore.

Former Karnataka Chief Minister
— Siddaramaiah

I just focus on my work. That's all I would like to say on this (on falling out with Karan Johar).



Actor
— Kartik Aaryan



I think outside of playing for India, IPL gave me the platform to show my capabilities. Compete against the best in the world.

Indian cricketer
— Virat Kohli

The MNS will continue to play Hanuman Chalisa on loudspeaker till the loudspeakers play azaan.



MNS chief
— Raj Thackeray

FIRST COLUMN

SCHEDULED TRIBE STATUS FOR HATTIS OF HIMACHAL

The issue, hanging fire since 1967, is being raised again for it is election time



With the approaching State legislative elections in Himachal Pradesh, the issue of inclusion of three-lakh-strong “Hatti Community” in the list of Scheduled Tribes in the State has once again become prominent for all political parties. The community having presence in nine seats of two districts of Shimla and Sirmourhas threatened to boycott the elections if their long-pending demand is notmet. The issue has been hanging fire since 1967 when the Hatti Community residing in the Jaunsar Bawar area of Uttarakhand that share the border with the Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh were declared tribals but those who remained in Himachal Pradesh were not given the same status and benefits. Consequently, the Jaunsar Bawar area got all the benefit of reservation in jobs and experienced overall development in terms of infrastructure



development and education. The region produced a sizeable number of civil servants whereas their counterparts living in the Kamrau, Sangrah and Shillai areas of Himachal Pradesh are still lagging behind in all spheres of life including education and employment. Over the years, the simpleton people of the region have raised the issue time and again and approached all political parties for resolving their genuine demand. Sensing the mood of the people, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur met Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss this issue and assured the people that the State Government would complete all the required for malities for getting tribal status to the people of the region. Traditionally, the Hatti region had been a congress stronghold. But, of late, the BJP has made inroads by getting support of the Hatti Community in the Parliamentary elections. In 2009, for the first time, BJP promised to give ST status to the Hattis in its election manifesto and have been doing so in their subsequent manifestos as well. This led to their consolidation of votes in the region. In a rally in Nahan, district headquarter of Sirmour, in 2014, now Union Defence Minister and then the National President of BJP had gone to the extent of announcing the grant of Schedule Tribe status to Hattis. Not lagging behind, in 2016, the then Congress Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh pursued the issue with the Centre advocating for tribal status to the Trans-Giri region and DodraKwar in Rohru. However, the proposal was turned down on the ground that the Ethnography Report was inadequate and asked for a comprehensive Ethnographic study. Himachal Pradesh University conducted a study and fresh report was submitted in March by the BJP Government.

The Hattis inhabit an area between two rivers called ‘Giri’ and ‘Tons’. Tons divides it from the Jaunsar Bawar area of Uttarakhand.The Hattis who lives in the Trans-Giri area in Himachal Pradesh and Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand were once part of the royal estate of Sirmaur until Jaunsar Bawar’s separation in 1815. It is a well-knit community having common culture and way of life. The community derived its name from their tradition of selling homegrown vegetables, crops, meat, wool etc. at small markets called ‘Hattis’ in towns. There is a fairly rigid caste system among the Hattis. The ‘Bhat’ and ‘Khashi’ are the upper castes while the ‘Badhois’ are below them. Traditionally, inter-caste marriages are not acceptable. The two clans follow similar culture and traditions and inter-marriages between them are common and acceptable. Generally, during ceremonies, menfolk wear a distinctive headgear. Socially, the Hattis follow a social system of local governance. The community is governed by a traditional council called “*Khumbl*” which functions like the ‘Khap” panchayats of Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

Scientific approach to tackle noise pollution

Religious beliefs are indeed private and should not infringe on the fundamental rights of non-believers or members of other communities

The decision of the Uttar Pradesh Government to restrict the use of loudspeakers in public places is a progressive step taken by any government in present times. India is the only country in the world where ‘scientific temper’ is instilled in the constitution. We conduct lots of science popularization activities to impart scientific temper amongst its citizens, but our citizens rarely follow scientific principles in real life. Only when we face problems we look up to science for solutions. Noise through loudspeakers is a burgeoning problem across the country, be it in urban areas or rural areas.

Much of the noise is caused by vehicles, machines and political and cultural rallies and processions. But the noise made by religious groups is difficult to



(The writer is a science communicator and columnist. The views expressed are personal.)

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The ministry of finance has barred public sector undertakings from bidding for other Central Public Sector Undertakings which are on the block for privatisation.

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management has stated: “As a general policy, PSUs (Central/ State/ Joint)/State Governments and Cooperative Societies controlled by the Governments are not permitted to participate in the strategic disinvestment of other PSUs as bidders unless otherwise specifically approved by the Central Government in public interest”.

PSUs are undertakings in which the Centre/State Governments or jointly with central and/or State Governments have majority ownership (with shareholding of 51 percent or more) and control. If, the Government decides to shed at least 51 percent, it is termed as strategic disinvestment or to put it plain words, privatisation.

The logic given by MoF is that transfer of management control of the undertaking from the Government to any other Government organization or state Government will result in continuation of the “inherent inefficiencies” of state-run firms; hence such transfer would defeat the very purpose of the policy.

This is a candid acknowledgment that generally PSUs are prone to ‘inefficiencies’ and ‘mismanagement’. The overarching reason behind this is bureaucratic and political interference in the working of these undertakings - not merely in policy-making but also in their day-to-day functioning. Although things have improved under the Narendra Modi dispensation (courtesy its focus on a ‘policy driven state’, and increase in ‘transparency’), the basic ingredients remain intact.

Under Prime Minister Modi who is committed to what he himself described as ‘naa khaoonga, naa khaane doonga’, while it is hard to fathom cases of the ministers asking the managements of PSUs for favors, one cannot rule outgross interference in their working which undermines their ability to achieve high efficiency, keep costs low and stay afloat in a competitive environment.

The majority ownership and control by the Government gives the bureaucrat a feeling of exercising command (albeit remote) over management of the PSU. The latter readily acquiescing adds to the sense of bureaucratic power. Indeed, it is this perverse relationship that lies at the root of problems afflicting most of the PSUs.

The way forward is for the Government to relinquish majority ownership and control. It must not exercise even ‘indirect’ control in a PSU which would happen if another CPSU is allowed to bid for it. Therefore, the decision of the MoF is very apt. But, is the Government serious? The facts don’t instill confidence.

In 2017-18, Union Government sold 51.11 percent of its shareholding in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation

Limited (HPCL) - an oil refinery and marketing PSU - to another PSU in the upstream oil and gas segment namely, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). During 2018-19, it sold 52.63 percent of its stake in the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to Power Finance Corporation (PFC) - both PSUs in the power sector. Going forward, during 2019-20, it sold 100 percent of its shareholding in NEEPCO and 75 percent in THDC India Limited to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).

In all the aforementioned sales, the purchaser being another CPSU namely ONGC/PFC/NTPC, the Government continues to have effective ownership and control over the divested undertaking viz. HPCL/REC/ NEEPCO/THDC. This defeats the very purpose of the disinvestment policy.

Second, in her Budget speech for 2019-20, the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman had stated that the intent of the government was to change the existing policy from “directly” holding 51 percent or above in a CPSU, to one whereby its total holding, “direct” plus “indirect”, is maintained at 51 percent. This too militates against the objective of privatisation. To illustrate, let us take the case of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL). In addition to its direct stake of 51.5 percent, the Union Government holds more than 51 percent in other CPSUs, which in turn, hold shares in IOCL. Thus, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), which is 100 per cent owned by the GOI, holds 6.5 percent in IOCL. ONGC which is 63 percent Government-owned, holds 14 percent in IOCL. Oil India Limited (OIL), which is 60 per cent owned by the Union Government, holds five percent shares in IOCL.

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PSUs are undertakings in which the Centre/State Governments or jointly with central and/or State Governments have majority ownership (with shareholding of 51 percent or more) and control. If, the Government decides to shed at least 51 percent, it is termed as strategic disinvestment or to put it plain words, privatisation.

The logic given by MoF is that transfer of management control of the undertaking from the Government to any other Government organization or state Government will result in continuation of the “inherent inefficiencies” of state-run firms; hence such transfer would defeat the very purpose of the policy.

This is a candid acknowledgment that generally PSUs are prone to ‘inefficiencies’ and ‘mismanagement’. The overarching reason behind this is bureaucratic and political interference in the working of these undertakings - not merely in policy-making but also in their day-to-day functioning. Although things have improved under the Narendra Modi dispensation (courtesy its focus on a ‘policy driven state’, and increase in ‘transparency’), the basic ingredients remain intact.

Under Prime Minister Modi who is committed to what he himself described as ‘naa khaoonga, naa khaane doonga’, while it is hard to fathom cases of the ministers asking the managements of PSUs for favors, one cannot rule outgross interference in their working which undermines their ability to achieve high efficiency, keep costs low and stay afloat in a competitive environment.

The majority ownership and control by the Government gives the bureaucrat a feeling of exercising command (albeit remote) over management of the PSU. The latter readily acquiescing adds to the sense of bureaucratic power. Indeed, it is this perverse relationship that lies at the root of problems afflicting most of the PSUs.

The way forward is for the Government to relinquish majority ownership and control. It must not exercise even ‘indirect’ control in a PSU which would happen if another CPSU is allowed to bid for it. Therefore, the decision of the MoF is very apt. But, is the Government serious? The facts don’t instill confidence.

In 2017-18, Union Government sold 51.11 percent of its shareholding in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation

Limited (HPCL) - an oil refinery and marketing PSU - to another PSU in the upstream oil and gas segment namely, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC). During 2018-19, it sold 52.63 percent of its stake in the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to Power Finance Corporation (PFC) - both PSUs in the power sector. Going forward, during 2019-20, it sold 100 percent of its shareholding in NEEPCO and 75 percent in THDC India Limited to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).

In all the aforementioned sales, the purchaser being another CPSU namely ONGC/PFC/NTPC, the Government continues to have effective ownership and control over the divested undertaking viz. HPCL/REC/ NEEPCO/THDC. This defeats the very purpose of the disinvestment policy.

Second, in her Budget speech for 2019-20, the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman had stated that the intent of the government was to change the existing policy from “directly” holding 51 percent or above in a CPSU, to one whereby its total holding, “direct” plus “indirect”, is maintained at 51 percent. This too militates against the objective of privatisation. To illustrate, let us take the case of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL). In addition to its direct stake of 51.5 percent, the Union Government holds more than 51 percent in other CPSUs, which in turn, hold shares in IOCL. Thus, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), which is 100 per cent owned by the GOI, holds 6.5 percent in IOCL. ONGC which is 63 percent Government-owned, holds 14 percent in IOCL. Oil India Limited (OIL), which is 60 per cent owned by the Union Government, holds five percent shares in IOCL.

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

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Russia pounds Ukraine, targets supply of Western arms

AP ■ LVIV

Russian forces pounded targets across Ukraine, taking aim at supply lines for foreign weapons in the west and intensifying an offensive in the east, as the European Union moved Wednesday to further punish Moscow for the war with a proposed ban on oil imports.

The Russian military said Wednesday it used sea- and air-launched precision guided missiles to destroy electric power facilities at five railway stations across Ukraine, while artillery and aircraft also struck troop strongholds and fuel and ammunition depots.

The defence minister said a steel mill in Mariupol - the last pocket of Ukrainian resistance in that city - was sealed off, a day after Russian troops began storming it.

Ukrainian authorities, meanwhile, said attacks in the eastern Donbas region left 21 civilians dead.

The flurry of attacks over

the past day comes as Russia prepares to celebrate Victory Day on May 9, marking the Soviet Union's defeat over Nazi Germany. This year the world is watching for signs of whether Russian President Vladimir Putin will use the occasion to declare a limited victory - or expand what he calls a "special military operation" to a wider war.

While the Russian attacks were across a wide swath of the country, some were concentrated in and around Lviv, the western city close to the Polish border that been gateway for NATO-supplied weapons.

Explosions were heard late Tuesday in the city, which has seen only sporadic attacks during the war and has become a haven for civilians fleeing the fighting elsewhere. The mayor said the strikes damaged three power substations, knocking out electricity in parts of the city and disrupting the water supply. Two people were wounded.

The strikes on the train stations were meant to disrupt the delivery of Western weapons, Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Maj Gen Igor Konashenkov said, while the minister warned any such deliveries are legitimate targets.

Sergei Shoigu told top military brass Wednesday that the West was "stuffing Ukraine with weapons".

Western weaponry pouring into Ukraine helped to blunt Russia's initial offensive and seems certain to play a central role in the potentially decisive battle for Ukraine's Donbas, where Russian-backed separatists have been battling Ukrainian forces since 2014.

Moscow shifted its focus to the industrial region after failing to take Kyiv in the early weeks of the war.

The governor of the eastern Donetsk region, which lies in the Donbas, said Russian attacks left 21 dead on Tuesday, the highest number of known fatalities since April 8, when a

missile attack on the railway station in Kramatorsk killed at least 59 people.

Russia has deployed a significant number of troops in the region and appears to be trying to advance in the northern Donbas, as they try to cut Ukrainian forces off, according to an assessment from the British Defence Ministry.

However, Moscow's push has been slow as Ukrainian fighters dig in and use long-range weapons to target the Russians.The US believes Ukrainians in recent days pushed Russian forces about 40 km (25 miles) east of Kharkiv, a northeastern city that lies outside the Donbas but is key to the offensive there.

In another effort to consolidate their control in the east, Russian forces began storming the bombed-out steel mill in Mariupol on Tuesday, the city's last pocket of resistance. The renewed push to take the mill came after scores of civilians were evacuated



from the plant's underground tunnels after enduring weeks of shelling.

Shoigu said Wednesday that the fighters at the Azovstal

steel mill have been "securely blocked" inside, while Russian forces continue to demand their surrender. The mill's defenders have repeatedly

refused to lay down their arms.In addition to supplying weapons to Ukraine, Europe and the United States have sought to punish Moscow with

sanctions. The EU's top official called on the 27-nation bloc on Wednesday to ban Russian oil imports.

"We will make sure that we phase out Russian oil in an orderly fashion, in a way that allows us and our partners to secure alternative supply routes and minimises the impact on global markets," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

The proposals need to be unanimously approved to take effect and are likely to be the subject of fierce debate. Hungary and Slovakia have already said they won't take part in any oil sanctions, but von der Leyen didn't elaborate on whether they would receive an exemption, which appears likely. Von der Leyen also proposed that Sberbank, Russia's largest bank, and two other major banks be disconnected from the SWIFT international banking payment system.

AP evidence points to 600 dead in Mariupol theatre airstrike

AP ■ LVIV

She stood in just her Sbathrobe in the freezing basement of the Mariupol theatre, coated in white plaster dust shaken loose by the explosion. Her husband tugged at her to leave and begged her to cover her eyes.But she couldn't help it - Oksana Syomina looked. And to this day, she wishes she hadn't. Bodies were strewn everywhere, including those of children. Syomina had to step on the dead to escape the building that had served as the Ukrainian city's main bomb shelter for more than a week.

Syomina, her husband and about 30 others ran blindly toward the sea and up the shore for almost five miles (eight kilometers) without stopping, the theatre in ruins behind them.

"All the people are still under the rubble, because the rubble is still there," Syomina said, weeping at the memory. "This is one big mass grave."

Amid all the horrors that have unfolded in the war on Ukraine, the Russian bombing of the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater in Mariupol on March 16 stands out as the single deadliest known attack against civilians



to date. An Associated Press investigation has found evidence that the attack was in fact far deadlier than estimated, killing closer to 600 people inside and outside the building. That's almost double the death toll cited so far.

The AP investigation recreated what happened inside the theatre on that day from the accounts of 23 survivors, rescuers, and people intimately familiar with its new life as a bomb shelter. The AP also reconstructed a 3D model of the building based on witness accounts, two sets of floor plans of the theatre, pho-

tos and video taken inside and feedback from experts who reviewed the methodology.With communications severed, people coming and going constantly, and memories blurred by trauma, an exact toll is impossible to determine.

The AP investigation refutes Russian claims that the theater was demolished by Ukrainian forces or served as a Ukrainian military base. None of the witnesses saw Ukrainian soldiers operating inside the building. And not one person doubted that the theater was destroyed in a Russian air attack aimed with

precision at a civilian target with children in it.

The Russian siege of Mariupol started in the first days of March. The city soon ordered the entire theater opened as a bomb shelter, given its size, its unusually sturdy walls and its large basement.

About a week before the bombing, the theater's set designer used white paint to inscribe the word "CHIL-DREN" in Cyrillic letters on the pavement outside, in the hope of staving off an attack from above. The signs, painted in both the front and back entrances, were large enough to be read even from satellites.

On March 9, a Russian airstrike hit a maternity hospital just a few blocks away, and two or three pregnant women moved to the theater for safety, according to two theater employees. The women, along with families with small children, were given the most comfortable dressing rooms on the second floor. It would turn out to be their doom.

By March 15, around 1,200 people crammed into the building, sleeping in offices, corridors, balconies, the basement. The theater became a place where anyone could get food and water supplied by the

Red Cross or news about possible evacuations. Among those who showed up in the hope of evacuating on the morning of March 16 were the Kutnyakov family and their neighbours.

"We were immediately offered and poured tea," said Galina Kutnyakova, the 56-year-old matriarch. "You have to imagine, we had hardly eaten or drunk for six days. Everyone was so happy because of the hot tea."

The basement was full already. So were the first and second floors. They saw a spot on the third floor, near enormous windows that everyone knew would surely shatter into knives of flying glass if the building was hit. It was the only place available, so they took it. It was around 10 a.m.

Maria Kutnyakova, Galina's 30-year-old daughter, walked outside and heard a warplane. Then came the explosion.

She saw smoke rising from the enormous park with the theater at the center. The theater stood bare, with a huge chunk of its red roof on the ground. The meter (three-foot) thick walls by the field kitchen had disintegrated to dust. As people fled the opposite way, Maria Kutnyakova ran

into the hall looking for her mother and sister. Hoarse shouts for family members filled the air. At first she too shouted "Mom," but she quickly realized that everyone around her was shouting the same word. So she screamed the family name instead.

Someone answered, "Masha Kutnyakova!" It sounded like it came from somewhere in the ground, but only the dead lay there.

She went to the stairs down to the basement and bomb shelter. There, at the bottom, stood her sister, covered in plaster dust, with a cat.

Their mother escaped out of a side exit. They made their way with a crowd of about 50 people to Mariupol's Philharmonic, a nearby auditorium that also came under shelling at sunset."God, this is my cultural program for the day," Maria Kutnyakova told herself bitterly.

The theater now lies in ruins, with its side and center blackened by fire. Russian forces control the neighbourhood around it, and AP video shows heavy equipment swarming the rubble to further dismantle it. But the questions remain: How many bodies are there, and what happened to them?

No deal without Russian withdrawal, says Zelenskyy

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says his country could not accept a deal with Moscow that would allow Russian troops to remain in occupied territory.

Speaking Wednesday to participants in the Wall Street Journal CEO Council Summit, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces had halted the Russian offensive in what he described as the first stage of the conflict. In the second stage, he said, Ukraine would expel Russian troops from its territory and in the third, would move to fully restore its territorial integrity.

Zelenskyy said he would not accept a cease-fire deal that would allow Russian forces to remain in their current positions, insisting that "we will not accept a frozen conflict", but gave no further details. He warned that Ukraine would be drawn into a "diplomatic quagmire" like the peace agreement for eastern Ukraine that was brokered by France and Germany in 2015.

In 2014, Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula



and cast its support behind a separatist rebellion in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland called the Donbas. Russian President Vladimir Putin has named Ukraine's recognition of the Russian sovereignty over Crimea and its acknowledgement of the separatist regions' independence as key conditions for halting hostilities.

Zelenskyy emphasised that Putin must agree to meet him to negotiate any deal to end the fighting. He said it was important to continue peace talks, but noted that "until the Russian president signs it or makes an official statement I don't see the point in such agreements".

कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला दक्षिण बस्तर दन्तोवाड़ा (छ.ग.)

जिला निर्माण समिति

// :: मैनुअल पद्धति निविदा सूचना प्रथम बार :: //

:- निविदा क्रमांक-01 :-

क्रमांक / 270 / जि.नि.स./ग्रा.यां.सेवा/ 2022,

दन्तोवाड़ा दिनांक :- 02/05/2022

01. एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु मैनुअल निविदा दिनांक 15/05/2022 समय शाम – 5.00 बजे आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)
1	2
(1) जोनल निविदा – जलपद पंचायत दंतोवाड़ा (सेक्टर-1 एवं 2), गौदम (सेक्टर-1 एवं 2) कुआकोण्डा (सेक्टर-1 एवं 2) एवं कटेकल्याण अंतर्गत विभिन्न मंदों में स्वीकृत रु 20.00 लाख से कम लागत के भवन/गंव/नाली/ बाउड्रीवाल/सड़क/पुलिया/एवं अन्य प्रकार के निर्माण कार्यो का सम्पादन करना (विद्युतीकरण छोड़कर) प्रति 100.00 लाख (07 नग)	100.00 लाख (प्रत्येक नग)

2. उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्यो की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तों, घोरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञप्ति, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी कार्यालयीन अवधि में नोडल अधिकारी/कार्यवाहन अभियंता, (जिला निर्माण समिति) गा.यां.सेवा संगमग दन्तोवाड़ा में उपस्थित होकर दिनांक 06/05/2022 से 09/05/2022 समय शाम – 5.00 बजे तक लिया जा सकता है।

हस्ता/-
कलेक्टर
(जिला निर्माण समिति)
जिला दक्षिण बस्तर दन्तोवाड़ा (छगग)

Ro. No:- 90833/11
Ro. Date:- 04/05/2022

PUBLIC NOTICE

Inviting the objections/suggestions for approval of revised building plans for Tower-2 & Commercial Building falling in Affordable Group Housing Colony area measuring 5.11875 Acres (Licence No 84 of 2018 dated 10.12.2018) in Sector-70A, Gurugram Manesar Urban Complex being developed by Finian Estates Developers Pvt. Ltd. in collaboration with Pyramid Infratech Private Limited.

Vide this public notice to individual person jointly and severally who have made bookings/entered into Agreement for allotment of flat/Shop in the said colony (hereinafter referred as allottees). The building Plan earlier approved is now proposed to be revised for Tower-2 & Commercial Building in the project And Whereas, The office of Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana Chandigarh is seeking objections/suggestions against revised building plans of Tower-2 & Commercial Building. Accordingly, vide this notice, objections/suggestions are hereby invited on the changes in the building plan of the colony. A copy of the earlier approved building plans bearing no ZP-1270/AD(RA)/2019/2206 dated 23.01.2019 and revised plan bearing memo no ZP-1270/AD(RA)/2022/11235 dated 25.04.2022 are available for perusal at our office and also on website www.pyramidinfratech.com and displayed at our site office for information of all such existing allottees. The said approved building plans and the revised building plans can also be perused in the office of undersigned at Unit No. 501-508, 5th Floor, Unitech Trade Centre, Sector-43, Sushant Lok-1, Gurugram as well as in the office of Senior Town Planner, Sector-14, Gurugram, Haryana-122001.

If you have any objection /suggestion, you may file the same in our office and/or in the office of Senior Town Planner, Sector-14, Gurugram, Haryana -122001 within 30 days of the issuance of this notice i.e. 4th June, 2022, failing which it shall be presumed that there is no objection /suggestion at your end on the above said changes.

Contact Detail of **M/s Pyramid Infratech Private Limited**
Mr. Sunil Kumar, (Authorised Representative) Mob. No: 9811000240
Address: Unit No. 501-508, 5th Floor, Unitech Trade Centre, Sector-43, Sushant Lok-1, Gurugram

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby stated that the originals of all the title documents in respect of the following property owned by M/s. Texmaco Infrastructure and Holdings Limited (earlier known as Birla Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills) have been lost / misplaced somewhere and are not traceable:

Khasra numbers: 197 (0-12), 198 (0-17), 199 (0-3), 200 (1-00), 213 (33-03), 214 (0-15), 218(2-11) at Village Delhi Gaon, Tehsil and District Delhi and bearing Plot Nos. 6938 to 7157, 7167, 7184, 7158 to 7166, 7168 to 7177 and 7183 P.O. Birla Lines, Delhi-07, known as 'Birla Lines or officer flats earlier known as Acharwala Bagh.

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that no person / entity should deal with, use or transact in any manner, on the basis of the title documents, with respect to the above mentioned property, and any person / entity in custody of the title documents of the above mentioned property or having any knowledge thereof is hereby called upon to contact the undersigned.

Sanjay Pahwa
Mobile - 9873747274

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client, MOHD SHAMSUZZAMAN S/O BASHIR AHMED R/O B-5/8, DDA FLATS, SARAI KHALI, DELHI-110006, Allottee/Purchaser/ Owner of DDA MIG Flat No.B-5/8, on Second Floor, Situated At Sarai Khali, Sadar Thana Road, Delhi vide DDA FILE NO. M. 0381(17)93/5K/NP. The original documents i.e Demand Cum Allotment Letter, Possession Letter,NOC For Water&Electric Connection and 1st Chain of GPA(General Power of Attorney) of the above said flat have been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LR NO.363978/2022 dated 02/05/2022 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone: 999938512 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAB-H) MIG or Director (LAB-H) MIG, DDA, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi

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Sanjay Pahwa
Mobile - 9873747274

Pope's Ukraine diplomacy political, spiritual tightrope

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

His appeals for an Orthodox Easter truce in Ukraine went unheeded. His planned meeting with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church was

cancelled. A proposed visit to Moscow? Nyet. Even his attempt to showcase Russian-Ukrainian friendship fell flat.

Pope Francis hasn't made much of a diplomatic mark in Russia's war in Ukraine, seem-

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Real Estate & Construction

CZAR BUILDWELL PVT. LTD.

Sector - 95, Gurugram, Haryana

Licence No. 24 of 2020, HRERA No. 32 of 2020

DRAW OF FLATS

General public is hereby informed that E-Draw of flats, under Haryana Affordable Housing Policy 2013 amended from time to time, of the Project "Mahira Homes" Sector - 95, Gurugram (Project ID-68), being developer by M/s Czar Buildwell Pvt. Ltd., shall be conducted on **06-05-2022 at 4:45 PM at Park Plaza, B Block, Sushant Lok Phase 1, Sector 43, Gurugram, Haryana 122002.**

We have received 29 application against 148 number of units available for draw.

As per MHA guidelines draw shall be conducted with maximum strength of 50 persons including draw committee and staff at site, remaining applicant shall participate in draw online through below provided link of YouTube live.

https://youtu.be/vFxuN5_cQtE

Corporate Office - 311, 3rd Floor, Global Foyer Mall Sec - 43, Golf Course Road Gurugram - 122009, Email - info@mahiragroup.com, Contact No - 80000 80000

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice

Invitation of tender through E-tendering (e-Procurement Systems)

NIT No.	E-file No. 115332
Name of Work and Its location	Tender for "Work contract for upgradation of toilets as per scope of work including supply of materials for 10 LWSCZAC coaches at RCNK, SBN"
Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 75,71,694.50/- (Rs. Seventy-Five lacs Seventy-One Thousand Six Hundred Ninety-Four and Five zero paisa Only) Including GST 18%
Earnest Money	Rs. 1,51,400/-
Completion period of work	Six months of date of execution of work
Cost of Tender document on cash/by post	NIL
Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 11:00 hrs. on 18.05.2022 Opening of Tender at 11:30 hrs.
Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
No.: E-file No. 115332 Dated: 03.05.2022	1025/2022

Serving Customers with a Smile

ingly unable to capitalise on his moral authority, soft power or direct line to Moscow to nudge an end to the bloodshed or at least a cease-fire.

Rather, Francis has found himself in the unusual position of having to explain his refusal to call out Russia or President Vladimir Putin by name - popes don't do that, he said - and to defend his "very good" relations with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, who has justified the war on spiritual grounds.

While the long list of dead ends would indicate a certain ineffectiveness, it is par for the course for the Vatican's unique brand of diplomacy that straddles geopolitical realities with spiritual priorities, even when they conflict.

And in the case of Ukraine, they have: Francis has sought to be a pastor to his local flock in Ukraine, incessantly calling for peace, sending cardinals in with humanitarian aid and even reportedly proposing that a Vatican-flagged ship evacuate civilians from the besieged port of Mariupol.

But he has also kept alive the Holy See's longer-term policy goal of healing relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, which split from Rome along with the rest of Orthodoxy over 1,000 years ago. Up until recently, Francis held out hope that he would secure a second meeting with Russian Patriarch Kirill, even while Moscow bombed Ukrainian civilians.

Francis recently revealed that their planned June meeting in Jerusalem had been called off, because Vatican diplomats thought it would send a "confusing" message. But he also told an Italian newspaper Tuesday that he had offered to go to Moscow to meet with Putin, and wondered aloud if NATO's eastward



expansion hadn't provoked the war.

To his critics, Francis' continued outreach to Moscow even amid reported atrocities harks back to the perceived silence of Pope Pius XII, criticized by some Jewish groups for failing to speak out sufficiently against the Holocaust.

The Vatican insists Pius' quiet to be a pastor to his local flock in Ukraine, incessantly calling for peace, sending cardinals in with humanitarian aid and even reportedly proposing that a Vatican-flagged ship evacuate civilians from the besieged port of Mariupol.

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Orthodox Church with a statement saying both sides had expressed hope for a "just peace." Three weeks later, he kisses a battered Ukrainian flag brought to him from Bucha, where Ukrainian civilians were found shot to death with their hands bound.

The Vatican has a long tradition of this dual-faceted diplomacy. During the Cold War, the policy of "Ostpolitik" meant that the Vatican kept up channels of communication with the same Communist governments that were persecuting the faithful on the ground, often to the dismay of the local church.

Francis' decision to continue with the "classic Vatican diplomacy of Ostpolitik, of dialoguing with the enemy and not closing the door, is debatable," said the Rev. Stefano Caprio, professor of church history at the Pontifical Oriental Institute.

"Those who are upset that the pope isn't defending them more are right, but those from the diplomatic side who say We can't throw away these relations' are also right. They are obviously in contradiction," he said.

"But since we're not talking about an argument of faith - we aren't talking about the persons of the Holy Trinity - you can have opinions that differ from the pope," he added.

12 held for anti-Govt protest in Lanka

Opp leader Sajith told parliament that protesters had arrived at parliament gate to hand over letter to Speaker of parliament

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan police arrested 12 people for staging an anti-government protest near the Parliament building here on Wednesday and supporting the no-confidence against President Gotabaya Rajapaksa for mishandling the country's worst economic crisis.

The protesters holding placards and shouting slogans against the lawmakers were put into a bus and taken to a nearby police station by the policemen on duty as they approached the parliament building.

Main opposition leader Sajith Premadasa told parliament that the protesters had arrived at the parliament gate to hand over a letter to the Speaker of parliament.

Police minister Prasanna Ranatunga said the protesters had hooted at the parliamentarians and that was a breach of parliamentary privilege.

The arrest followed the

arrival of several thousands of student activists who poured onto the road leading to parliament where the riot police stood by. The police attempt to obtain a court order barring demonstrations near parliament on May 5 and 6 was rejected by the Kaduwela magistrate, the lawyers claimed.

Meanwhile, the Colombo magistrate court has issued an order to remove all structures placed on the pavement of Temple Tress, the office cum residence of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

The protesters who demand the resignation of Rajapaksa have been stationed there since April 26. The police in order to obstruct them had parked passenger buses on the pavement.

The protesters continued to carry on with their protest.

Responding to protests for the prime minister's resignation, minister Dinesh Gunawardena said Rajapaksa won't resign and would address



Parliament soon on the current situation.

Sri Lanka's main Opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) on Tuesday handed over to the parliamentary Speaker motions of no-confidence against President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the government for mishandling the country's worst economic crisis.

Sri Lanka is in the grip of an unprecedented economic turmoil since its independence from Britain in 1948. The crisis is caused in part by a lack of foreign currency, which has meant that the country cannot

afford to pay for imports of staple foods and fuel, leading to acute shortages and very high prices.

Months of lengthy black-outs and acute shortages of food, fuel and pharmaceuticals have triggered widespread protests calling for the government's resignation.

Sri Lanka needs at least \$4 billion to tide over its mounting economic woes, and talks with international institutions such as the World Bank as well as countries like China and Japan for financial assistance have been going on.

Lanka's Parliament to meet for crucial session after Opp submits no-trust motions against Prez, Govt

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Parliament is set to convene on Wednesday for a crucial session, a day after Sri Lanka's main Opposition party SJB handed over to the parliamentary Speaker motions of no-confidence against President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the government for mishandling the country's worst economic crisis.

Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) handed over to the parliamentary Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena motions of no-confidence, even as the government announced the appointment of a Cabinet sub-committee to look into the proposal for a new Constitution.

"We met the Speaker at his residence and handed over two no-trust motions, the first one against the President under Article 42 of the Constitution and the other against the gov-



ernment," Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) General Secretary Ranjith Madduma Bandara said.

"We want these taken as quickly as possible," Bandara said. Article 42 stipulates that the President is responsible to Parliament for the exercise, performance and discharge of

his functions.

Any motion needs seven days' notice before getting into the order paper for debate. The date has to be agreed upon at the party leaders' meeting where the business of the House is agreed upon.

The Parliament meets Wednesday for the first of eight sittings this month.

In the normal business listed for Wednesday, Finance Minister Ali Sabry is to inform the House of the talks with the IMF held in Washington last month. Sri Lanka reached out to the IMF for a possible bailout after suffering its worst economic crisis since independence. Sabry told reporters last week that Sri Lanka's foreign reserves were at zero levels. Meanwhile, a possible secret vote on Wednesday in parliament for the deputy speaker's position could become vital to prove the majority in the House, analysts said.

The SJB said they would

field a candidate for the post of Deputy Speaker of Parliament. The position has fallen vacant with the resignation of the incumbent Ranjith Siyamabalapitiya.

Siyamabalapitiya is part of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of the former President Maithripala Sirisena which had split from the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) coalition.

"We will be fielding our candidate for the position (deputy speaker) if the Speaker announces it today," Harshana Rajakaruna, a main opposition SJB legislator told reporters.

The vote would only be possible if president Gotabaya Rajapaksa acknowledges Siyamabalapitiya's resignation. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa is also expected to make an announcement on Wednesday, the ruling party sources said.

Japan PM, Pope discuss nuclear arms after N Korea test launch

AP ■ ROME

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met with Pope Francis and top Vatican officials in talks about the need for "a world free of nuclear weapons", the Vatican said Wednesday.

The meeting came as nuclear-armed Russia pressed its war in Ukraine and after North Korea launched a ballistic missile toward its eastern waters and vowed to speed up the development of its own nuclear arsenal.

Kishida and Francis spoke privately for about 25 minutes in a Vatican reception room. Kishida then met with the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and the Vatican foreign minister.

In a statement, the Vatican said the talks touched on bilateral and international relations "with particular attention to the war in Ukraine, stressing the urgency of dialogue and peace and expressing the hope, to this

end, for a world free of nuclear weapons".

Francis has changed church teaching on nuclear weapons, saying their mere possession was "immoral". He made the comments during a 2019 visit to Japan, where he paid tribute to survivors of the atomic bombs in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un recently vowed to speed up the development of his nuclear weapons "at the fastest possible pace" and threatened to use them against rivals. Speaking to reporters in Rome, Kishida said the North's actions that "threaten the peace, safety and stability of the international community are impermissible".

South Korean and Japanese officials reported Wednesday that North Korea had test-fired a ballistic missile.

Kishida said he planned to discuss the missile launch when he meets with Italian Premier Mario Draghi later Wednesday.

Beijing under semi-lockdown to curb Omicron spread, shuts down most of metros, buses

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's capital Beijing on Wednesday shut down several metro stations besides schools, restaurants and businesses and ordered daily COVID-19 testing of its 21 million people as it ramped up measures to prevent the spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant which has brought the financial hub Shanghai to halt for over a month. Beijing reported 53 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total to over 500 cases as the capital continues enforcing strict antiviral measures and postponed school reopening for a week as a precautionary measure.

The capital city on Wednesday closed over 40 subway stations, about 10 per cent of the total, and 158 bus routes.

Most of the suspended stations and services are in the Chaoyang district, the prominent area in the city housing the top leaders as well as diplomatic enclaves.

All kindergartens, primary



and middle schools and secondary vocational schools in Beijing have postponed resuming classes for a week until May 11, official media reported. When students will return to schools would be based on the COVID-19 situation, Beijing authorities said.

Those who really need to leave Beijing must present a nucleic acid test negative certificate taken within 48 hours and a green health code before boarding a plane or a train. Airports and railway stations will strengthen inspection, and spot checks will also be carried out on those leaving Beijing by road. Anyone who is unable to present a green health code will not be allowed to enter or leave Beijing, officials confirmed at the press conference, state-run Global Times reported.

Meanwhile, the city began

Trump passes test as kingmaker in Ohio

AP ■ COLUMBUS

The primary elections in Ohio and Indiana on Tuesday stood as the first real test of former President Donald Trump's status as the Republican Party kingmaker - and he passed.

Trump's chosen candidate, "Hillbilly Elegy" author and one-time investment banker JD Vance, won the crowded Republican primary for U.S. Senate in Ohio, giving Trump a strong beginning to primary season.

Vance, former State Treasurer Josh Mandel, businessman Mike Gibbons and former state GOP chair Jane Timken all vied for Trump's endorsement, increasingly adopting language that mirrored the former president's bombastic, populist style. In the



end, Trump went with Vance, who in 2016 said the celebrity businessman could become "America's Hitler" but has since become an avid supporter.

Vance wooed the former president by echoing his bashing of immigrants, skepticism about U.S. Military involvement overseas - even in support of Ukraine - and lies about Trump's defeat in the 2020 election. Lagging in the polls when he received Trump's endorsement three weeks ago, Vance

made it a centerpiece of his closing pitch and vaulted ahead of his rivals.

Vance will face Democratic U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan in November's general election as they compete for the seat held by retiring GOP Sen. Rob Portman. Trump won Ohio by 8 percentage points in 2020, and the state has swung to the right under his influence. Replacing Portman, a traditional Republican and no fan of Trump's, with Vance would move the Senate further in the former president's direction.

Ohio's Republican secretary of state, Frank LaRose, easily survived a primary challenge from John Adams, who denies that President Joe Biden won the 2020 election and ran as a full-throated skeptic of modern voting systems.

But Ohio's Republican pri-

mary still shows the power that Trump's election lies have on his party's base. An AP-NORC poll last year found two-thirds of Republicans believe Biden was not legitimately elected, even though the contest was free of any significant voter fraud and repeated investigations, audits and court cases have disproved Trump's claims.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I,Anju Kankra W/o Suresh Kumar Kankra R/o-91, Rangam Apt., Pkt-24, Sector-24,Sahini,Delhi-85 have lost original Possession Letter, Allotment Letter, Demand Letter, Site Possession Letter, Bank Challans, Payment Challans, All Payment Receipts of FlatNo-38,Pkt-13,Sector-24,Rohini Delhi-85. Finder Contact: 9711863636

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the original property documents i.e. (i) Auction/Bidder Letter (ii) Handing Over of Possession (iii) no object letter for water and electricity connection & (iv) Perpetual Lease of property bearing No. C-194, Vikas Puri, New Delhi which are standing in the name of SHRI SURINDER SINGH POPLI have been lost/misplaced and the advertiser has applied for issuance of duplicate copies of the above referred 4 property papers in lieu thereof. An NCR bearing LR No. 355339 of 2022 dated 29.04.2022 has already been lodged in this respect.
DEEPAK DIWAN ADVOCATE
CH. No. X-17-A, Civil Wing,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054.

BSES
BSES Rajghani Power Limited, New Delhi
CORRIGENDUM
EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF OFFER
Due to unavoidable circumstances, the last date of submission of tender against NIT NO. Head (PMG)/BRPL/E Tender/2022-23/1295 dated 22.04.2022 for Purchase of Power by BRPL has been extended till 09.05.2022 and the revised schedule is as follows:-
A. Last date of submission of RFP Bids including EMD 09th May, 2022 at 15:00 HRS
B. Opening of non financial technical Bids 10th May, 2022 at 11:00 HRS
BSES Rajghani power Limited,
For further details please log on to <http://www.bsesdelhi.com> & www.msicemumbai.com
Raghd. Off:- BSES Rajghani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Mahipal Place, New Delhi-110019
Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527
Telephone No. :- +91 11 4820 7235 Fax No. :- +91 11 39998980
Website :- www.bsesdelhi.com

CAPRI GLOBAL CAPITAL LIMITED
Registered & Corporate Office :- 502, Tower-A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013
Circle Office :- Capri Global Capital Limited 2nd Floor ,3B Pusa Road Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110005
APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]
Sale notice for sale of immovable properties
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on dates below mentioned, for recovery of amount mentioned below due to the Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor from Borrower mentioned below. The reserve price, EMD amount and property details mentioned below.

SR. NO.	1. BORROWER(S) NAME 2. OUTSTANDING AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED PROPERTY	1. DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD 3. DATE & TIME OF THE PROPERTY INSPECTION 1. E-AUCTION DATE: 09.06.2022 (Between 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.) 2. LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION OF EMD WITH KYC: 08.06.2022 3. DATE OF INSPECTION: 07.06.2022 (Between 10 AM to 2 PM)	1. RESERVE PRICE 2. EMD OF THE PROPERTY 3. INCREMENTAL VALUE RESERVE PRICE: Rs. 1,50,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Fifty Lacs Only). EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT: Rs. 15,00,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lacs Only) INCREMENTAL VALUE: Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand Only)
1.	M/s Cavana Clothing Private Limited ("Borrower") 2.Mr. Dipu Gupta 3.Mr. Pawan Kumar (Co-borrower) LOAN ACCOUNT NO. LNCGCDLT0000004201 AND LNBLCBA000049699 Rupees 3,74,89,153/- (Rupees Three Crores Seventy Four Lacs Eighty Nine Thousand One Hundred Fifty Three Only) along with interest from 30.04.2022 along with applicable future interest.	All Piece and Parcel of Unit No. 22-B, Ground floor, area admeasuring 4000 Sq.Fts. Universal Trade Tower, Sector-49, Gurgaon, Haryana		

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Capri Global Capital Limited Secured Creditor's website i.e. www.Capriglobal.in/auction/TERMS&CONDITIONSOFONLINEE-AUCTIONSALE:-

- The Property is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS, WHATEVER THERE & WITHOUT RECOURSE BASIS". As such sale is without any kind of warranties & indemnities.
- Particulars of the property / assets (viz. extent & measurements specified in the E-Auction Sale Notice has been stated to the best of information of the Secured Creditor and Secured Creditor shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission. Actual extent & dimensions may differ.
- E-Auction Sale Notice issued by the Secured Creditor is an invitation to the general public to submit their bids and the same does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or nay representation on the part of the Secured Creditor. Interested bidders are advised to peruse the copies of title deeds with the Secured Creditor and to conduct own independent enquiries /due diligence about the title & present condition of the property / assets and claims / dues affecting the property before submission of bids.
- Auction/bidding shall only be through "online electronic mode" through the website <https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net> Or Auction Tiger Mobile APP provided by the service provider MIS eProcurement Technologies Limited, Ahmedabad who shall arrange & coordinate the entire process of auction through the e-auction platform.
- The bidders may participate in e-auction for bidding from their place of choice. Internet connectivity shall have to be ensured by bidder himself. Secured Creditor /service provider shall not be held responsible for the internet connectivity, network problems, system crash own, power failure etc.
- For details, help, procedure and online bidding on e-auction prospective bidders may contact the Service Provider MIS E-Procurement Technologies Ltd. Auction Tiger, Ahmedabad (Contact no. 079-68136880/68136837), Mr. Ramprasad Sharma Mob. 800-002-3297/79-6120 0559. Email: ramprasad@auctiontiger.net.
- For participating in the e-auction sale the intending bidders should register their name at <https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net> well in advance and shall get the user id and password. Intending bidders are advised to change only the password immediately upon receiving it from the service provider.
- For participating in e-auction, intending bidders have to deposit a refundable EMD of 10% OF RESERVE PRICE (as mentioned above) shall be payable by interested bidders through Demand Draft/NEFT/RTGS in favor of "Capri Global Capital Limited" on or before 08-June-2022.
- The intending bidders should submit the duly filled in Bid Form (format available on <https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net>) along with the Demand Draft remittance towards EMD in a sealed cover addressed to the Authorized Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited Regional Office Plot no. 3B, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road, New Delhi 110 005 latest by 03:00 PM on 08-June-2022. The sealed cover should be super scribed with "Bid for participating in E-Auction Sale - in the Loan Account No. _____ (as mentioned above) for property of "Borrower Name".
- After expiry of the last date of submission of bids with EMD, Authorised Officer shall examine the bids received by him and confirm the details of the qualified bidders (who have quoted their bids over and above the reserve price and paid the specified EMD with the Secured Creditor) to the service provider MIS eProcurement Technologies Limited to enable them to allow only those bidders to participate in the online inter-se bidding /auction proceedings at the date and time mentioned in E-Auction Sale Notice.
- Inter-se bidding among the qualified bidders shall start from the highest bid quoted by the qualified bidders. During the process of inter-se bidding, there will be unlimited extension of "10" minutes each, i.e. the end time of e-auction shall be automatically extended by 10 Minutes each time if bid is made within 10 minutes from the last extension.
- Bids once made shall not be cancelled or withdrawn. All bids made from the user id given to bidder will be deemed to have been made by him alone.
- Immediately upon closure of E-Auction proceedings, the highest bidder shall confirm the final amount of bid quoted by him BY E-Mail both to the Authorised Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited, Regional Office Office/Plot no. 3B, 2nd Floor, Pusa Road, New Delhi 110 005 and the Service Provider for getting declared as successful bidder in the E-Auction Sale proceedings.
- The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the bid amount (including EMD) on the same day of the sale, being knocked down in his favour and balance 75% of bid amount within 15 days from the date of sale by DD/Pay order/NEFT/RTGS/Cnq favouring Capri Global Capital Limited.
- In case of default in payment of above stipulated amounts by the successful bidder / auction purchaser within the stipulated time, the sale will be cancelled and the amount already paid (including EMD) will be forfeited and the property will be again put to sale.
- At the request of the successful bidder, the Authorised Officer in his absolute discretion may grant further time in writing, for depositing the balance of the bid amount.
- The Successful Bidder shall pay 1% of Sale price towards TDS (out of Sale proceeds) (if applicable) and submit TDS certificate to the Authorised officer and the deposit the entire amount of sale price (after deduction of 1% towards TDS), adjusting the EMD within 15 working days of the acceptance of the offer by the authorized officer, or within such other extended time as deemed fit by the Authorised Officer, failing which the earnest deposit will be forfeited.
- Municipal / Panchayat Taxes, Electricity dues (if any) and any other authorities dues (if any) has to be paid by the successful bidder before issuance of the sale certificate. Bids shall be made taking into consideration of all the statutory dues pertaining to the property.
- Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful bidder only upon deposit of entire purchase price / bid amount and furnishing the necessary proof in respect of payment of all taxes / charges.
- Applicable legal charges for conveyance, stamp duty, registration charges and other incidental charges shall be borne by the auction purchaser.
- The Authorized officer may postpone / cancel the E-Auction Sale proceedings without assigning any reason whatsoever. In case the E-Auction Sale scheduled is postponed to a later date before 30 days from the scheduled date of sale, it will be displayed on the website of the service provider.
- The decision of the Authorised Officer is final, binding and unquestionable.
- All bidders who submitted the bids, shall be deemed to have read and understood the terms and conditions of the E-Auction Sale and be bound by them.
- For further details and queries, contact Authorised Officer, Capri Global Capital Limited: Mr. Sushil Gupta Mo. 7400445137.
- This publication is also 30 (Thirty) days notice to the Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantors of the above said loan account pursuant to rule 8(6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, about holding of auction sale on the above mentioned date / place.

Special Instructions / Caution: Bidding in the last minutes/seconds should be avoided by the bidders in their own interest. Neither Capri Global Capital Limited nor the Service Provider will be responsible for any lapses/failure (Internet failure, Power failure, etc.) on the part of the bidder in such cases. In order to ward off such contingent situation, bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements / alternatives such as back-up power supply and whatever else required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.
Place:- Delhi/NCR Date :- 05-05-2022

Sd/- (Authorised Officer) Capri Global Capital Ltd.

Investor wealth tumbles ₹6.27 lakh crore after RBI rate hike

New Delhi: Investors became poorer by over Rs 6.27 lakh crore on Wednesday as markets crashed after the RBI hiked the policy rate by 40 bps in a surprise move.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex tumbled 1,306.96 points or 2.29 per cent to settle at 55,669.03. During the day, it plummeted 1,474.39 points or 2.58 per cent to 55,501.60.

In tandem with the slump in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms tumbled Rs 6,27,359.72 crore to stand at Rs 2,59,60,852.44 crore.

Home, auto and other loan EMIs are likely to increase after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) hiked its key interest rate by 40 bps in a surprise move on Wednesday in an effort to tame inflation that has remained stubbornly above target in recent months.

The increase in repo rate - the rate at which RBI lends to commercial banks -- to 4.40 per cent from a record low of 4 per cent is the first since August 2018, as well as the first instance of the RBI Governor-headed Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) holding an unscheduled meeting for raising interest rates.

The RBI also hiked the cash reserve ratio (CRR) by 50



basis points to 4.5 per cent, which will now require banks to park more money with the central bank and leave them with less to loan to consumers.

"RBI surprised the markets with a 40 bps hike in repo rate and a 50 bps CRR hike, in an off-cycle meet by the MPC on Wednesday. The markets have obviously been taken by surprise," said Unmesh Kulkarni, Managing Director Senior Advisor, Julius Baer India.

Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said,"Ahead of the Fed meeting

in the US, the Reserve Bank has created a stir in the Indian markets by suddenly increasing interest rates. Behind this, we saw a sudden drop in the benchmark indices."

Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Dr Reddy's and Maruti were the prominent laggards from the Sensex pack.

In contrast, PowerGrid, NTPC and Kotak Mahindra Bank closed in the green. In the broader market, the BSE mid-cap gauge tumbled 2.63 per cent and smallcap index declined 2.11 per cent. **PTI**

RBI's policy rate hike likely to hit housing demand: Realty industry

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank's decision to hike key policy rates will impact the growth of real estate industry and may hit the housing demand, according to industry players.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday hiked the benchmark lending rate by 40 basis points (bps) to 4.40 per cent to contain inflation. It also raised the amount of deposits that banks are required to maintain as cash reserve by 50 bps to 4.5 per cent to suck out Rs 87,000 crore of liquidity from the banking system.

Commenting on the policy, industry body CREDAI's President Harsh Vardhan Patodia, said,"The low repo rates had given a boost to the real estate sector during the course of the pandemic. Raising of repo rate by RBI is a surprise for real estate industry given the inflationary trends."

"We are witnessing trends of growth momentum in the realty sector and developers have largely stayed resilient in

the midst of challenges from the pandemic. Though this escalation will impact the buying power of consumers, we feel the impact will be taken in stride by the home buyers," he added.

Boman Irani, President, CREDAI-MCHI, said this sudden increase of repo rate coupled with inflation will indeed impact the industry's growth. "Given the escalations and skyrocketing prices of raw materials, buyers may become reluctant to borrow from banks at a higher rate of interest. Though RBI has maintained the benchmark lending rate at a record low for a long time, CREDAI-MCHI requests not to increase the rate further and to support the growth of industries," he added. Anarock's Chairman Anuj Puri said this hike signals an imminent end to the all-time low interest regime, which has been one of the major drivers behind home sales across the country since the pandemic began. **PTI**

LIC IPO: Policyholders' portion oversubscribed

New Delhi: LIC's public offer, the country's biggest-ever IPO, saw the policyholders' portion being oversubscribed on the first day itself on Wednesday, though overall subscription stood at just 66 per cent.

The government aims to generate about ₹ 21,000 crore by selling 3.5 per cent stake in the insurance behemoth.

The LIC initial public offering (IPO), open for retail and institutional investors, is set to close on May 9. The issue period also includes bidding on Saturday, May 7.

The portion reserved for policyholders was subscribed 1.9 times, while that for employees was fully subscribed during the first day itself, as per data available on the BSE.

LIC has fixed the price band at ₹ 902-949 per equity share for the issue. The offer includes a reservation for eligible employees and policyholders. The retail investors

and eligible employees will get a discount of ₹ 45 per equity share, while policyholders will get a discount of ₹60.

However, demand from qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) and non-institutional investors was muted.

The non-institutional investors' portion was subscribed 26 per cent while QIBs' portion was slightly higher at 33 per cent.

Retail Individual Investor category picked up nearly 50 per cent of the 6.9 crore shares set aside for this segment.

The share sale is through an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 22.13 crore equity shares. The shares are likely to be listed on May 17.

LIC has mopped up a little over ₹5,627 crore from anchor investors led primarily by domestic institutions. Anchor Investors (AIs) portion (5,92,96,853 equity shares) was subscribed at ₹ 949 per equity

India's oil import from Russia minuscule: Govt

New Delhi: India on Wednesday asserted that its energy purchases from Russia remain 'minuscule' in comparison to its total consumption and that legitimate energy transactions cannot be politicised as energy export from Russia are yet to be sanctioned.

The world's third-biggest oil-consuming and importing nation has in recent weeks snapped few cargoes available from Russia at deep discounts as part of its plans to diversify its import basket. These purchases have been commented upon.

"India's legitimate energy transactions cannot be politicized," the oil ministry said in a statement reacting to such reports."Energy flows are yet to be sanctioned."

It went on to state that the reports'make conjectures and try to sensationalize routine purchase of crude oil by Indian oil companies from Russia based' and this is a part of'a pre-meditated attempt to further destabilize an already fragile global oil market."

"India's energy needs are enormous with daily consumption of around 5 million barrels and a refining capacity of 250 million tonnes per annum," it said."For energy security and to fulfil its objective of providing energy justice



to each of its citizens, Indian energy companies buy from all major oil producers in the world."

It, however, did not quantify the purchases made from Russia.

"Our top 10 import destinations are mostly from West Asia. In the recent past, USA has become a major crude oil source for India, supplying almost USD 13 billion worth of energy imports, with almost 7.3 per cent of market share of crude oil imports," the statement said.

India, it said, has been constrained to pay ever-increasing prices charged by certain oil suppliers, which is leading India to diversify its

sources of procurement.

"Meanwhile, energy demand in India remains inelastic. At the current price levels, many countries in the immediate neighbourhood are facing severe fuel shortages and chaos due to high fuel inflation," it said adding the Government has ensured access to affordable energy to Indian citizens despite challenging times.

The ministry said Indian energy companies have been sourcing energy supplies from Russia, on a sustained basis, over the past several years."Yearly figures may have varied due to a variety of reasons, including operational necessities." **PTI**

Deadline to apply for production-linked incentive for steel manufacturing extended till May 31



New Delhi: The government has extended the deadline to submit applications under the production-linked incentive scheme for speciality steel till May 31, according to an official notification.

The deadline has been extended for the second time. Initially, March 29 was the last date for manufacturers to apply for the benefits under the PLI (Production-Linked Incentive) scheme for speciality steel. It was later extended till April 30.

"...The application window (for scheme) will be kept open up till May 31, 2022," according to the steel ministry notification dated April 28.

Earlier, an official in the ministry had told PTI that the government was considering modifications in the PLI scheme for speciality steel after steel makers raised certain concerns.

The government is working on a uniform incentive on the production of speciality steel and considering inclusion of more grades, especially those used in the defence sector, to the scheme, the official had said.

On July 22 last year, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had approved a Rs 6,322-crore PLI scheme to boost the production of speciality steel in the country.

The move is expected to attract an additional investment of about Rs 40,000 crore and create 5.25 lakh job opportunities. **PTI**

Coal Ministry to organise investors' meet on Friday

New Delhi: The coal ministry will hold a high-level Investors' Meet on Friday in a bid to attract investments from the private sector.

Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi will launch the event to be held in Mumbai.

"Joshi will be launching a high level Investors' Meet in Mumbai on 6th May, 2022 focussing on the topics of 'Launching of closed/discontinued coal mines of Coal India Ltd (CIL) on revenue sharing mode' and 'Coal Gasification; Way Forward'," the ministry said in a statement.

To be organised by the Ministry of Coal in association with CIL and FICCI, the Investors' Meet will also be addressed by Minister of State for Coal, Mines and Railways Raosaheb Patil Danve.

Coal Secretary Anil Kumar Jain and other senior functionaries of the ministry, CIL and experts from the sector will attend the day-long

meet. During the forenoon session, presentations and talks will be held on showcasing the opportunities in the launch of closed/discontinued coal mines and aspects pertaining to revenue sharing model.

For effective implementation of coal gasification projects in India, the afternoon session will be marked by address of both the ministers. Joshi will chair the session with a view to understand the expectation of the private sector to join the efforts of the government in achieving 100 million tonnes (MT) coal gasification by 2030.

India has a reserve of 307 billion tonnes of thermal coal and about 80 per cent of dry-coal produced is used in thermal power plants. Amid environmental concerns, the government has prepared a Mission document for Coal Gasification of 100 MT by 2030 as it is considered a cleaner option compared to burning of coal. **PTI**

UK Parliament asks Elon Musk to testify on Twitter

London: A British parliamentary committee scrutinising draft online safety legislation has invited Elon Musk to discuss his plans to buy Twitter and the changes he's proposing for the social media platform.

Parliament's digital committee asked the Tesla CEO on Wednesday to give evidence about his proposals" in more depth".

Musk said it's too early to give an answer.

"I am honoured and thank the Parliament for their invitation, but it would be premature at this time to accept, given that there has not yet been a shareholder vote" to approve the deal, he said by email.

The committee said it's interested in Musk's plans, especially his intention to roll out verification for all users, which echoes its own recommendations to the UK government.



Musk has said he wants Twitter to "authenticate all humans", an ambiguous proposal that could be related to his desire to rid the website of automated spam accounts.

The UK government's online safety bill, which is being examined by lawmakers in Parliament, would give regulators wide-ranging powers to

crack down on digital and social media companies.

Among the bill's measures aimed at combating online abuse is a requirement for the biggest platforms to give users the option to verify their identity and the choice not to interact with unverified users.

"At a time when social media companies face the prospect of tighter regulations around the world, we're keen to learn more about how Mr Musk will balance his clear commitment to free speech with new obligations to protect Twitter's users from online harms", committee chair Julian Knight said.

It's not the first time the committee has invited a tech boss to testify. In 2018, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg declined an invitation to answer questions as part of its investigation into fake news. **AP**

Gold falls by ₹134, silver declines ₹169



New Delhi: India's services exports set a new record of USD 254.4 billion (about Rs 19 lakh crore) in 2021-2022, the commerce ministry said on Wednesday.

The exports also hit an all-time monthly high of USD 26.9 billion in March, it said.

Telecommunications, computer, and information services, other business services and transport are the top contributors to the exports, it added."The new record achieved in 2021-22 beats the previous high of USD 213.2 billion in 2019-20," it said. **PTI**

Pfizer sets up Asia's first global drug development centre in Chennai

Chennai: US pharmaceutical company Pfizer has set up its global drug development centre at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras Research Park here, at an outlay of over Rs 150 crore.

The centre, which employs 250 scientists and technicians, would develop innovative formulations, small molecules and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs).

According to company, the centre would develop and support products in global markets and Pfizer's manufacturing centres, worldwide.

The facility is among 12 centres established worldwide, and the first in Asia.

Pfizer India, country manager, S Sridhar said,"The Pfizer's drug development centre at the IIT M Research Park is a positive opportunity to establish truly one of the most advanced laboratories that it is



setting up for research and development, in Chennai and opportunity to showcase the potential of R&D in the country."

"The world-class scientific, technology and innovation driven Research Park campus provides an ideal setting for the work. We are hopeful that the

proximity to IIT Madras and other technology Research Park start-ups will also improve academia and industry partnerships," he said in a statement. The company has invested USD 20 million (Rs 150 plus crore) in the centre spread across 61,000 square foot at the IIT-M Research Park. **PTI**

Honda drives in City e:HEV tagged at ₹19.49 lakh

New Delhi: Honda Cars India on Wednesday said it has launched City e:HEV priced at Rs 19.49 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi), marking its debut in the strong hybrid electric vehicle segment in the country.

The City e:HEV is the first car in the mainstream segment equipped with strong hybrid electric technology, the automaker said in a statement.

As per the company, the model, an extension of its City model range, features self-charging two-motor strong

hybrid system connected to a 1.5 litre petrol engine, entailing a peak power of 126 PS and fuel efficiency of 26.5 km per litre.

Honda has also introduced its advanced intelligent safety technology"Honda SENSING" for the first time in India with the new City e:HEV.

The company has reiterated its global vision to realise carbon neutrality and zero collision fatalities by 2050, it noted.

"Today, we embark on our electrification journey in India

with the launch of new City e:HEV, reaffirming our commitment to bringing the best and most meaningful technologies to the country," Honda Cars India President & CEO Takuya Tsumura stated.

The tremendous response received on the unveiling of the model last month reflects the acceptance of the strong hybrid technology in the mainstream segment, he added.

"We believe this self-charging hybrid electric model, which comes with first-in-seg-

ment advanced intelligent suite of safety technologies Honda SENSING, is the most practical solution available in the market and will help customers in making a smooth transition towards an electrified future," Tsumara said.

Besides great performance, the revolutionary self-charging two-motor strong hybrid system offers outstanding fuel economy of 26.5 km/l with ultra-low emissions, he added.

"We are manufacturing the City e:HEV in India in line with

our commitment towards the Indian Government's Make-in-India vision," Tsumara said.

The company is producing the model at its Tapukara, Rajasthan-based manufacturing facility.

Honda said it will begin the deliveries of the model from its dealer network across the country immediately after the launch.

City e:HEV offers three driving modes – EV drive, hybrid drive and engine drive, along with regeneration mode

during deceleration.

The model also comes with safety features, including collision mitigation braking system (CMBS), adaptive cruise control, road departure mitigation (RDM), lane keeping assist system (LKAS) and auto high-beam.

The sedan also comes equipped with 37 connected features which now work with smart watch devices in addition to already existing integration with Alexa and OK Google. **PTI**

MoCA extends term of GHIAL for another 30 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA). The extension is from March 23, 2038 up to March 22, 2068 for terms of the agreement dated December 20, 2004.

The GMR Group's statement said the extension granted by the MoCA is in terms of the concession agreement that was signed between the MoCA and the GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) on December 20, 2004.



AP ■ VILLARREAL

Liverpool held off a stirring comeback from Villarreal to reach the Champions League final on Tuesday as second-half goals from Fabinho, Luis Diaz and Sadio Mane secured a 5-2 aggregate victory.

Trailing 2-0 from the first leg, Villarreal sparked hopes of a remarkable turnaround in the return at the Estadio de la Ceramica after Boulaye Dia finished in the third minute and Francis Coquelin headed in another to level the tie at 2-2.

But Jurgen Klopp threw on Diaz for Diogo Jota at the interval to shake Liverpool into life and it worked, the visitors scoring three times in 12 minutes to kill off Villarreal's revival and advance to their third Champions League final in five years.

Liverpool will await the winner of Real Madrid and Manchester City, who play their second leg at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday, with City leading 4-3 from the opener last week.

Either City or Madrid will offer a sterner test than Villarreal, but after a chastening experience at Anfield last week, Unai Emery's side delivered a spirited performance that rattled Liverpool and showed why they knocked out both Juventus

TALE OF TWO HALVES

Liverpool comeback from 2 goals down to beat Villarreal 3-2 on the night and reach Champions League final

and Bayern Munich to reach the semi-finals.

Liverpool were careless, perhaps complacent even, in the first half but sensational in the second, finding an intensity and pace Villarreal were simply unable to match.

Diaz, who started on the bench but was integral to the fightback, was excellent again and may soon be an automatic starter for Klopp.

A banner draped behind the Villarreal goal at one end read "90 minutes from our dream" while before kick-off the stadium announcer shouted "it's possible, the comeback is possible!"

And if anyone inside the ground was still sceptical they were given an early injection of belief in the third minute as Pervis Estupinan swung in a cross from the left to Etienne Capoue at the back post.

Under pressure from Andy Robertson, Capoue skewed his finish horizontally, landing perfectly for the arriving Dia to sidefoot in.

Liverpool occasionally threatened on the break, with Mohamed

Salah rolling Estupinan down the left and feeding Jota in the middle but Geronimo Rulli was quick to rush out and claw the ball away.

But Liverpool lacked their usual control and precision, with Alisson Becker booting the ball into touch before Naby Keita's misplaced pass back to his own defence almost resulted in Giovanni Lo Celso earning a penalty.

The second goal came four minutes before half-time as Pau Torres launched a long ball from deep for Capoue to run onto.

Capoue's first touch cannoned away from him but he recovered, controlling and twisting away from Robertson before hanging up a superb cross with his left foot to the back post, where Coquelin climbed above Trent Alexander-Arnold and headed in.

SMARTING

The half-time whistle prompted huge cheers from the home fans, whose team were level in the tie, and a change from Klopp as Diaz

replaced Jota.

Liverpool looked like a team smarting from a scolding after the break. They were rushing now to take throw-ins, eager to find the intensity they had previously lacked.

Alexander-Arnold's deflected shot from distance looped onto the crossbar. Diaz volleyed over at the back post. And then Fabinho fired in, latching onto a Salah pass and shooting early through the legs of Rulli, who seemed to have expected the cross.

This was a more familiar Liverpool, hitting a level Villarreal could not match, and five minutes later they scored a second, restoring their two-goal advantage on aggregate.

Alexander-Arnold was given too much space on the right and floated a cross into the area where Diaz, off-balance, aimed an excellent header down and in.

Seven minutes later, Liverpool delivered the final blow, as Rulli rushed out to close down a launched ball forward but failed to get there

Klopp hails another 'special' final

AP ■ VILLARREAL

Jurgen Klopp said reaching a third Champions League final in five years with Liverpool felt just as special as the first after his team saw off a spirited fightback from Villarreal on Tuesday to keep their quadruple hopes alive.

"It feels like the first final because it's always so special -- it's the best club competition in the world," Klopp said. "Respect to Villarreal. Wonderful stadium and what they are doing here is incredible. It feels so special because it was so difficult for us.

"It was massive from the boys. Before the

game I said I'd like to read the headlines that the mentality monsters were in town. I didn't want us to defend the result but go for the win, and the second half was like this."

"To be in a final is never easy and to make this a third in five years is incredible from this group of boys," Liverpool's Andy Robertson said. "As fans and players, we should never take days like this for granted."

Liverpool were careless, perhaps complacent even, in the first half but sensational in the second.

Diaz, who started on the bench, was integral to the fightback, and may soon have to be an automatic starter for Klopp.

"He's been special," said Robertson. "The talent he has, the will he has to win. He fits us perfectly. He made a big difference."



Salah wants to face Real in final

AP ■ VILLARREAL

Liverpool's Mohamed Salah prefers to play Real Madrid in the Champions League final rather than face Premier League rivals Manchester City.

City currently hold a 4-3 advantage over Real Madrid in the other semifinal. The teams meet at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday to decide who takes on Liverpool at the Stade de France on May 28.

"I want to play Madrid. I have to be honest," Salah told *BT Sport* after Liverpool reached the final. "City's a really tough team, we played against them a few times this season, but I think, if you ask me personally, I would prefer Madrid."

Liverpool and Salah have painful memories from meet-

ing Real Madrid in the 2018 final. A tearful Salah was withdrawn in the 31st minute after dislocating his shoulder in a contentious challenge with Sergio Ramos. Liverpool went on to lose 3-1 to the Gareth Bale-inspired Blancos in Kyiv.

"Hopefully, we'll win it from them as well," Salah said of the potential rematch.

The Reds are still competing for four major honors this season. After hoisting the League Cup in February, Liverpool have incredibly kept their other pursuits for silverware alive as they prepare for finals in the Champions League and FA Cup. They also sit just one point behind Manchester City in the Premier League table.



Emma Raducanu hopeful of Rome appearance



AP ■ MADRID

Emma Raducanu revealed she has been dealing with back pain and "some niggles" throughout the week in Madrid but is not too concerned any injury will keep her out of next week's tournament in Rome.

The British world number 11 suffered a tight 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 defeat to Ukrainian Anhelina Kalinina on Tuesday and said her back was restricting her from moving wide on the court in the opening set.

Raducanu received some treatment for her back and managed to move better as she levelled the match and forced a decider and says she leaves Madrid feeling positive about her game and progress on clay.

"I would have given myself a five percent chance of winning that match, and for it to almost happen, I think that was a positive thing," said the US Open champion.

"I was kind of struggling a bit with my back, to be honest. Throughout the week I have been carrying some niggles, and it's kind of just taking its toll, all of the matches at this kind of level.

"I think that's a good thing that I feel like I'm going through this and my body is building with each match I play."

Raducanu played her first ever tour-level tournament on clay just last month in Stuttgart and her Madrid was just her second outing on the surface.

"I'm feeling pretty positive. A lot of the time with me it's just overload and then three days, two, three days' complete rest and I'm okay to start training again," added Raducanu.

"Hopefully the plan right now is to still go to Rome."

Bournemouth promoted to PL

AP ■ LONDON

Bournemouth beat Nottingham Forest 1-0 on Tuesday to earn automatic promotion to the Premier League after two seasons in the second-tier Championship.

Substitute Kieffer Moore scored the only goal of the game in the 83rd minute as Scott Parker's side joined champions Fulham in the English top flight next season.

It was only the Wales international's third goal of an injury-ravaged Bournemouth career since his January transfer from Cardiff.

"First and foremost I'm delighted for the fans, and my players," Parker told *Sky Sports*. "They deserve this position. It means a lot.

"We never had control in the first half and we didn't want a basketball match. We spoke about control and calm and process. We didn't execute the game plan and in the second half we showed our dominance."

"This group is a young team, learning their trade in a promotion task," added Parker, who was relegated from the Premier League last season as Fulham boss. "One thing about



this group, if we need a result we dig deep and find it."

Forest, who needed a win to leapfrog the Cherries in the table, will now have to try to end their 23-year Premier League exile via the play-offs.

Third-placed Forest and Huddersfield are guaranteed places in the play-offs with one match of the regular season to go, with a clutch of clubs chasing the final two places.

Bournemouth started the

game brightly with Philip Billing forcing a good early save from Forest goalkeeper Brice Samba.

The home side had a huge let-off shortly before half-time when goalkeeper Mark Travers brought down Forest forward Sam Surridge inside the penalty box.

Travers was saved from conceding a penalty by the assistant referee's offside flag, but TV replays showed

Surridge had timed his run to perfection.

The Cherries grew more dominant as the second half wore on and got the goal their efforts deserved seven minutes from time.

Jordan Zemura's mazy run drew a foul on the edge of the penalty area and Billing rolled a free-kick cleverly into the path of Moore, who coolly fired the ball into the far corner.

Kane to lead NZ in Eng Tests

AP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand named a fit-again Kane Williamson as captain of their enlarged squad for the Test series in England, where he will hope the triumphs of a year earlier can be repeated.

An elbow injury sidelined captain Williamson from both of his country's recent home series draws against Bangladesh and South Africa.

The world class batsman has not played for New Zealand since November but returned to the crease last week for his IPL side, Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Williamson is relishing the chance to lead a 20-strong squad in England which features four players uncapped in the last decade.

The three-Test series falls a year after New Zealand beat the English on home soil for the first time in more than 20 years.

Immediately after last year's series, the New Zealanders remained in England to beat India in the one-off inaugural Test World Championship final in Southampton.

"Playing Test cricket in England is always something quite special and we know the



challenge is fierce," Williamson said.

"It's one of those places where conditions are unique. It's great to play them in their back yard.

"Our Test team's been fairly strong in terms of its consistency as a group for a while, so (the prospect of new players) is certainly something to be excited about."

Backup wicketkeeper Cam Fletcher has not played in any format for New Zealand while three players — allrounder Michael Bracewell and seamers Blair Tickner and Jacob Duffy — have played in shortened formats only.

There is a recall for top-order batsman Hamish Rutherford, who has not played a Test for seven years.

Ajaz Patel also returns, having been ignored during the home summer on seamer-friendly pitches.

The left-arm spinner's last Test was in the loss to India in Wankhede five months ago, when he became the third player to take 10 wickets in an innings.

Williamson is among five players involved in the IPL who are unlikely to be involved in two warmup matches — at Hove (May 20-23) and Chelmsford (May 26-29).

Novak delivers 'best performance of year'

AP ■ MADRID

Top seed Novak Djokovic described his straight-sets opening win over Gael Monfils in Madrid on Tuesday as his "best performance of the year" as he set up a showdown with Andy Murray.

The 20-time major champion ensured he would keep his number one ranking for at least another week by extending his winning record against Monfils with a 6-3, 6-2 victory at the Caja Magica.

Djokovic, who entered the contest 17-0 head-to-head against the Frenchman, needed a win in their second round match to avoid surrendering the top spot to second-placed Danil Medvedev.

"I would probably rate it as the best performance of the year,

I would say. I felt very good on the court," said Djokovic.

"I'm very pleased, considering, you know, that up to today I was not playing my best tennis in the few tournaments that I played this year and still kind of finding my rhythm, finding my groove."

The three-time Madrid champion is finding his rhythm, after not competing much this season, but arrived to the Spanish capital fresh from a runner-up showing at his home tournament in Belgrade.

The Serb saved three break points in his first two service games before he wrested control of the match from Monfils and grabbed a one-set lead in 47 minutes.

Djokovic had to save two break points as he served for the match before he booked a last-



16 clash with Murray, a 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 winner against Canadian 14th seed Denis Shapovalov.

It will be the first meeting between Djokovic and Murray since the Doha final in January 2017.

"In theory I should have no chance in the match, he's obviously number one in the world and I'm playing with a metal hip," said Murray, who is 11-25 against Djokovic in his career.

"It's a great opportunity for me to see where my game's at and to play against him again. We've had so many battles over the years at some of the biggest tournaments in the world."

Carlos Alcaraz won his first match as a top-10 player, opening his Madrid account with a 6-3, 7-5 triumph over Georgia's Nikoloz Basilashvili.

The Spanish teen sensation, who owns a joint ATP-leading three titles so far this season, extended his winning streak to six matches, having picked up the trophy in Barcelona 10 days ago.

The seventh-seeded Alcaraz, who turns 19 on Thursday, awaits Cameron Norrie or John Isner in the last 16 and could potentially square off with his countryman Rafael Nadal in the quarter-finals.

Sixth seed Andrey Rublev needed to rally from 0-3 down in the decider to overcome British wildcard Jack Draper 2-6, 6-4, 7-5.

The Russian world number eight, who beat Djokovic in the Belgrade final last week, dropped serve twice in the opening set and lost an early advantage in the second before

squeezing past the left-handed Draper, who is ranked 121 in the world and was making his ATP clay-court debut in Madrid.

Ukrainian Anhelina Kalinina produced a gritty performance to eke past US Open champion Emma Raducanu 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 and reach the quarter-finals of a WTA 1000 event for the first time.

Meanwhile, former US Open champion Bianca Andreescu's run came to an end at the hands of American 12th seed Jessica Pegula, 7-5, 6-1.

Andreescu served for the opening set but was broken. She then had a nosebleed during the changeover at 6-5. The Canadian saved four set points on her serve in game 12 but faltered on the fifth as Pegula snatched the lead.



the pioneer

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

12

WE DIDN'T PUT ENOUGH RUNS ON THE BOARD. IT WAS A TOUGH LOSS BUT SOMETHING THAT WE ARE GOING TO DISSECT AND TALK ABOUT AS A TEAM GOING FORWARD

— DAVID MILLER

RCB ROMP HOME, BOOST PLAYOFF HOPES

PTI ■ PUNE

Harshal Patel and Glenn Maxwell led a clinical bowling performance to help Royal Challengers Bangalore register a 13-run win over Chennai Super Kings, pushing the defending champions to the brink of elimination in the IPL here on Wednesday.

The quartet of Mahipal Lomror, who smashed a 27-ball 42, skipper Faf du Plessis (38 off 22), Virat Kohli (30 off 33) and Dinesh Karthik (27 not out off 17) did well to lift RCB to 173 for 8.

RCB bowlers then restricted the defending champions to 160 for 8, despite a fifty by opener Devon Conway (56).

While Maxwell ended with excellent figures of 2 for 22 off his four overs, Harshal was right on the money, snapping three wickets while giving away 35 runs.

Shabaz Ahmed (1/27), Wanindu Hasaranga (1/31) and Josh Hazlewood (1/19) also picked a wicket each.

With the win RCB moved to fourth position on the points table, while CSK were pushed closer to the brink of elimination as they remained at the penultimate spot.

Defending 174, like CSK, RCB bowlers leaked runs in the Powerplay but left-arm spinner Shabaz and Maxwell took a flurry of wickets between the 7th and 10th overs, including that of open-



er Rituraj Gaikwad (28).

Conway provided some resistance with a 37-ball 56 but he was sent back to the hut by Maxwell.

With 56 needed off the last five overs, Ravindra Jadeja tried to up the ante but the all-rounder, who has struggled with form all season, hit a slow delivery by Patel over

cover straight to Kohli's hands.

RCB's death over specialist then struck again, this time getting rid off the dangerous Ali, who was slowing finding his groove.

When Dhoni walked in CSK needed 52 off 24 balls which soon became 39 from the last two overs. The talismanic leader, however,

couldn't get his side over the line.

Earlier, the CSK spinners made full use of Dhoni's decision to bowl first as a fit-again Moeen Ali (2/28) and Maheesh Theekshana (3/27) shared five wickets. Ali rattled the RCB top-order, getting rid of the opening pair of Kohli and du Plessis, while

► pointstable

Po.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	GT	10	8	2	0	16	0.158
2.	LSG	10	7	3	0	14	0.397
3.	RR	10	6	4	0	12	0.340
4.	RCB	11	6	5	0	12	-0.444
5.	SRH	9	5	4	0	10	0.471
6.	PBKS	10	5	5	0	10	-0.229
7.	DC	9	4	5	0	8	0.587
8.	KKR	10	4	6	0	8	0.060
9.	CSK	10	3	7	0	6	-0.431
10.	MI	9	1	8	0	2	-0.836

► boundarymeter

4s 1350

6s 703

Theekshana snapped three wickets in the penultimate over.

Dwayne Pretorius (1/42) was the other wicket taker for CSK.

Lomror emerged as the top-scorer with his 27-ball knock, while Dinesh Karthik (26 not out off 17) hit some lusty blows towards the end to help RCB go past the 170-run mark.

Kohli and du Plessis batted with authority as the two veterans pummeled the inexperienced pace duo of Mukesh Choudhary (0/30) and Simarjeet Singh (0/21) in the Powerplay.

Delhi fight Sunrisers to stay alive in IPL

PTI ■ MUMBAI

All-rounder Lalit Yadav is running against time to repay the unshakeable faith that head coach Ricky Ponting has reposed in him as Delhi Capitals face a must-win situation to keep their shoddy IPL campaign alive against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Thursday.

This is the third IPL season for the lanky DC all-rounder, who is one of Ponting's favourite cricketers, and the Aussie legend has invested a lot in the man from Najafgarh.

However, modest returns of 137 runs from nine games with a strike-rate of less than 110 while batting in the middle-overs and an economy rate of nearly 8.5 with only four wickets, don't do justice to his enormous potential.

While numbers always don't tell the whole story but Lalit hasn't exactly been the best finisher for Delhi and despite his reputation at the domestic level, he has managed only six maximums in seven innings so far.

At least DC's eight points from nine games, with five defeats, show that all is not well in terms of combination as well as performances.

Anrich Nortje's retention has backfired

badly as the South African quick has hardly been of use and save Kuldeep Yadav (17 wickets) and partly Khaleel Ahmed (11), none of the other bowlers have looked menacing. Mustafizur Rahman has been good in patches but far from being the skiddy customer that he was between 2015-18.

Skipper Rishabh Pant (234 from nine games) showed glimpses of his destructive power but the team would want more from its skipper who is more than capable of hammering any attack into submission.

Pant's battle against India's fastest bowler Umran Malik will be a contest everyone will be looking forward to considering that the Jammu speedster only comes after powerplay, which could also be the time of the DC skipper's arrival to the crease.

Prithvi Shaw, who had started the tourney on a bright note hasn't been in his element in last few games and David Warner would ideally like to convert one of his fifties into a hundred.

It will be easier said than done against an attack that has Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Umran, T Natarajan and Marco Jansen who would be coming relentlessly at the DC batting unit to increase their points tally from 10 to 12.

The only good news for Capitals is Washington Sundar's absence.



'IPL showed people have different ways to succeed'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

IPL's all-time leading scorer, Virat Kohli, feels playing in the lucrative league for 14 years has made him realise that there is not just one template to succeed in the game in which he has attained superstar status.

It also helped him add a different dimension to his "understanding of the game", the former India captain said.

On IPL's impact on his life, Kohli said on 'Inside RCB' show on Star Sports, "I think outside of playing for India, IPL gave me the platform to show my capabilities, compete against the best in the world and share knowledge with them."

"I think that was the most important thing that added a different dimension to my understanding of the game. This helped me move ahead in a very progressive manner."

"I was picking brains of people that probably I wouldn't have come across otherwise on things like how to play in different conditions and what mind-set they have."

"You know, people have different ways to succeed so it



can't be just one template. So I used to be so excited and grateful for the opportunity to pick their brains and just learn from them day in and day out and that's for me has been the standout feature of IPL."

Apart from his sedate fifty in the last game against Gujarat Titans and a knock of 48 earlier in the tournament versus Mumbai Indians, Kohli has mostly struggled for runs this season.

The batting maestro has so far scored 186 runs in 10

matches at a below-par average of 20.67.

Kohli is the only player who has been with the same franchise from the very beginning of the IPL.

On his loyalty towards RCB (even though he still hasn't won a trophy for them in the IPL), Kohli said, "To be very honest I thought about it. Yes, I won't shy away from it and I have been approached many times as well to come into the auction somehow, put my name there and stuff."



Annual ICC Rankings: Men in Blue remain on top in T20

PTI ■ DUBAI

India under new captain Rohit Sharma finished the 2021-22 season as the world's number one ranked T20 team after a string of impressive performances at home but were a good nine points behind Australia in the annual Test rankings released by ICC on Wednesday.

The 'Black Caps' from New Zealand finished the last season as the world No.1 ODI team with the cut-off date being May 4, 2022. The England versus India series that began in 2021, will be included in the rankings once the final postponed Test is completed.

Australia have increased their lead over second-placed India from one to nine rating points while Pakistan have overtaken England to fifth position in the ICC Men's Test Team Rankings following the annual update carried out today," the ICC release stated.

"India have also gained a point to move to 119 while England have had the biggest decrease of nine points as their 4-1 series win over India in 2018 is now dropped from the rankings. England's 88 rating points is their lowest since 1995," the release added.

Australia, who beat England 4-0 in the Ashes in January, have moved from 119 to 128 rating points in the annual update that drops the 2018-19 season and reflects all series completed since May 2019.

We have to win every game from hereon to make it to finals: Warner

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Delhi Capitals have fluffed their lines during a few chases and the current mid-table "congestion" only means that they will have to win their remaining five games while checking out RCB's results, senior opener David Warner said on Thursday.

DC are currently seventh in the standings with eight points from nine games but with another five rounds left for a few teams and four for some of the others, save Gujarat Titans and Lucknow Super Giants, no team is sure of securing a top four berth.

Between slots fourth and ninth, teams are locked between 10 to 6 points and it can change in a matter of two games.

"Moving forward from where we are, we've obviously got to win every game to make it to the finals. There's a strong competition, two teams we have got to come against - Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad, who are pretty much similar points to us," Warner said ahead of their match against Kane Williamson's men.



"We could get that upper hand if we beat Sunrisers. We then go into the top four, but obviously, we need RCB to start losing as well. It's quite a congested table, but exciting for the rest of the tournament," he added.

Some of the matches went awry for DC as they didn't chase well and Warner admitted that.

"I think if you look at the

results, we've just missed out when we are chasing those big totals. We have managed to get so close, but they are the ones that hurt you."

Speaking ahead of the game against his former team, Warner expressed, "My thoughts are like every other game, just keep going through your processes till you have to do it, training and just get ready for the game."

When asked about his form and the experience of batting with Prithvi Shaw, the swashbuckling opener said, "We've got off to a good start. In the last match, we've fallen cheaply, both of us, and that can happen in this game because we have to play that high-level brand of cricket in the power play."

He emphasised on the role of the top three batters in the team and how at least two of the three getting big runs is making a difference.

"I think the most important thing is myself or him (Prithvi Shaw) or Mitch (Mitchell Marsh) scoring an 80 or 90 or even a hundred if we can, to post good totals or chase down big totals, and that's the key."

Coaches feel Sudharsan has talent to go places

PTI ■ CHENNAI

From shining in age-group and league cricket in Chennai to a breakout season in Tamil Nadu Premier League before being fast-tracked into the state white-ball teams, things moved rather swiftly for B Sai Sudharsan as he broke into the IPL.

The 20-year-old left-handed batter got himself noticed with a half-century for Gujarat Titans against Punjab Kings in an IPL game on Tuesday, albeit in a losing cause. The coaches, who saw him in his initial years, feel he is destined for bigger things in the game.

He impressed in the 2021 edition of TNPL in which he was the second highest scorer with 358 runs in eight innings at an average of 71.60. Sudharsan showcased his abilities for the formidable state side in the victorious Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy campaign and also the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

His rise through the ranks has not surprised TN coach M Venkataramana, who says Sudharsan has worked hard and has the talent to go places.

"He is talented, has a wide range of strokes and has worked hard," he told PTI.



Further, Venkataramana said, "Sai (Sudharsan) is a good athlete and works hard on his game. It is good to see him keep improving. He has a good range of shots and has the ability to bat long once he settles down, which is a nice quality."

"As he keeps working on his game and other aspects, he will get better."

State team assistant coach R Prasanna, a stalwart of TN cricket himself, said from the time he saw Sudharsan at an under-16 camp five years ago he knew that the left-handed batter had it in him to make it big.

"I saw him at an under-16 camp. I noticed he had the talent to score runs. Like all boys at that age, he was a playful lad and did not appear too focussed on fielding, fitness, etc. But he has changed phenomenally over the years."

"He has had the run-scoring knack and has worked hard to get the results. I am so happy for him," Prasanna said.

Getting cap from Rohit bhai gave me confidence to do well: Tilak Varma

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Young Mumbai Indians batter Tilak Varma, who has been one of the finds of the IPL season, said getting the cap from skipper Rohit Sharma gave him the confidence to perform well.

Varma has been the leading run-getter for Mumbai Indians this season, with 307 runs under his belt.

Although this has been a disastrous season for the five-time champions as they are out of contention for a play-off berth after suffering eight losses from nine games, Varma is one of the few positives for MI.

"I always liked Rohit bhai, so getting the cap from him really pumped me up and gave me confidence," Varma told mumbaiindians.Com.

Another advice which Rohit gave Varma was to enjoy the game.

"He (Rohit) keeps telling me that I shouldn't take pressure in any situation, and says, 'The way you enjoy and play, keep enjoying your game that way.'"

"He would say 'you're young, this is the time to enjoy it. If you ever lose that, it does-



n't come back. So the more you enjoy yourself and play, positive things will come to you. Bad days will come, good days will also come," added Varma of his captain.

Varma attributed his success to Rohit, saying his advice has worked for him.

"He (Rohit) has told me to always enjoy myself and that is something I remember always. It will stay with me for my life in general too. And it is working too. If I've started well, it's because of that," the middle-

order batter, who hails from Hyderabad, added.

Varma also said head coach and former Sri Lankan great Mahela Jayawardene makes suggestions about his batting.

"He (Jayawardene) talks to me about my batting and makes suggestions," Varma said.

"If I back myself to play a shot and get out in a game, he tells me to not stop myself from playing that same shot in the next game. Because that is my scoring shot, so you can get out on it too, but you'll get runs

from it also. He makes one mentally strong," he said.

Stressing that he has also developed strong friendship with young Dewald Brevis, Varma says it becomes easy to bat with the South African.

"Now we're so close we understand each other very well too, on the field and off it. So it's become very easy to bat with him (Brevis) in a match."

"When you are doing well on the field, automatically the bond becomes stronger off the field too," he signed off.

BCCI bans journo Boria Majumdar for two years

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BCCI has imposed a two-year ban on Boria Majumdar for "bullying" senior wicket-keeper Wriddhiman Saha and barred him from interviewing registered players and entering stadiums in country.

According to an internal communication by BCCI, sent to its state units on May 3, Majumdar won't be given media accreditation for two years as part of the sanctions ratified by the Apex Council of the cricketing body.

On February 25, the BCCI had formed a three-member committee a few days after Saha alleged on social media that he was bullied for an interview.

While Saha had initially refused to name the journalist, he later identified the scribe as Majumdar while deposing before the three-member committee, which comprised BCCI vice president Rajeev Shukla, BCCI treasurer Arun Singh Dhumal and BCCI councillor Prabhat Singh Bhatia.

Majumdar could not be reached for a comment following BCCI directive but a few days back he had accused Saha of doctoring and tampering with the screenshots of his WhatsApp chats with the cricketer for damaging his reputation.



BCCI interim CEO and IPL COO Hemang Amin in a letter to the state units wrote, "Mr Wriddhiman Saha has shared screenshots of messages sent by a journalist on social media platform, Twitter, wherein he stated that he felt bullied by the conduct of the said journalist. Mr Saha in the hearing named Mr Boria Majumdar as the journalist."

Amin further stated, "The BCCI Committee considered the submissions by both Mr Saha and Mr Majumdar and concluded that the actions by Mr Majumdar were indeed in the nature of threat and intimidation."

The sanctions imposed are — 2 year ban on getting any accreditation as a member of the press in any of the cricket matches in India, 2 year ban on getting any interview with any registered players in India and 2 years ban on access to any of the BCCI and member associations owned cricket facilities.