

## OPINION 6

HINDUS' INCOHERENT  
ANGST ABOUT IDENTITY

## WORLD 9

READY TO TALK WITH  
PUTIN, SAYS ZELENSKYY

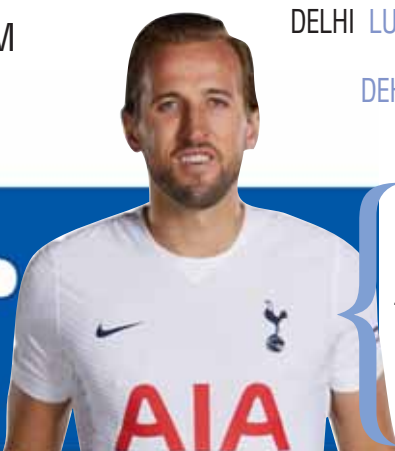
## MONEY 10

RELIANCE TOP-RANKED INDIAN FIRM  
ON FORBES GLOBAL 2000 LIST

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY MAY 14, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

## the pioneer

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SPURS BEAT  
ARSENAL 3-0  
IN DERBY  
12 SPORT27 dead, 12 injured in  
Mundka building blaze70 rescued but  
toll may go up  
as NDRF

continues search

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

In a tragic incident, 27 people were killed in the national Capital after a massive fire broke out in a four-storey commercial building near outer Delhi's Mundka Metro Station in West Delhi on Friday evening. Around 12 people were injured in the incident while as many as 70 people were rescued. The search operation was still going and the NDRF team had reached the spot at the time of filing of this report to retrieve people suspected to be trapped or buried under the debris.

The Government has announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh for the kin of the dead, and ₹50,000 for the injured. Police have detained Harish Goel and Varun Goel, who had leased the building from Manish Lakra, the owner of the building. They both used to live on the top floor while around 150 people used to work in the building.

It is suspected that there



Firefighters try to douse a fire which broke out in a building at Mundka, in West Delhi on Friday

PTI

were only two exit gates in the building and locals said that the workers had to escape after breaking the glass of the windows on the ground floor.

According to Atul Garg, Director, Delhi Fire Service (DFS), a call was received about the blaze at 4.40 P.M. following which 24 fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

"The fire broke out in a building near pillar number 544, Mundka Metro Station," said Garg, adding that more than 100 firemen are on the spot. According to Sameer Sharma, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), a Police Control Room (PCR) call was received at Mundka police station at

around 4.45 P.M. regarding a fire in an office. A police team immediately reached the spot and put in their best efforts to rescue the workers.

"Police officers broke the windows of the building to rescue the people and got 12 injured people admitted to hospital.

Continued on Page 2

Sonia calls for urgent, big  
ticket reforms in Congress  
Says situation demands extraordinary  
steps, slams PM for polarisationPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
UDAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday called for urgent reforms in the party as "extraordinary situations demand extraordinary action" and also launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi accusing him of keeping the country in a state of permanent polarisation, "brutalising" minorities and "threatening" political opponents.

The party, which is holding a three-day Chintan Shivir in Udaipur also held discussions on enforcing the 'One family, one ticket' formula, granting exemption to only another family member who has been doing "exemplary work" for the party for a period of at least five years. This will leave scope for members of the Gandhi family to contest polls and allow other senior leaders to get their sons and daughters accommodated in the ticket list.

Sending out a clear message to Congress ranks while launching the brainstorming conclave, Sonia said the party will have to change its style of functioning and urged them to keep the organisation above their personal ambitions and pay back their debt to the



Congress interim President Sonia Gandhi greets Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot during the party's 'Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir', in Udaipur

PTI

party as it had given a lot to everyone.

She urged around 450 delegates to deliberate with an open mind but send out a single message of a strong organisation, resolve and unity. "In one way this (Congress transformation) is the most fundamental issue. Our revival is only possible through collective efforts. Such collective efforts will not be deferred. This Shivir is the start of the journey," Sonia said.

The three-day 'Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir' is

being held in the backdrop of a string of electoral defeats and dissent in the party for the past many years.

"The circumstances before our organisation are unprecedented. Extraordinary situations demand extraordinary action.

I am fully alert to this. The organisation has to bring changes within itself, not just to stay alive but to move forward. We are in dire need of improvement and a changing strategy," she also said.

Continued on Page 2

Protests erupt in Kashmir  
over Rahul Bhat's killingThree terrorists  
killed, hundreds of  
Kashmiri Pandit  
employees offer  
to resign

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A day after the killing of a Kashmiri Pandit man Rahul Bhat by terrorists, Kashmiri Pandit Government employees held protests on Friday, demanding relocation to safer places outside the Valley. At the same time, security forces grounded down three terrorists in an encounter that broke out in Brar Aragam area of Bandipora on Friday. Sources said two of the three ultras were involved in the attack on Bhat.

Protests erupted at the Sheikhpura camp, located in Budgam district of central Kashmir, where Kashmiri Pandit employees have been given makeshift accommoda-



Members of the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal burn an effigy during their protest over the killing of Rahul Bhat, in Jammu on Friday

PTI

tions. The police used batons and tear gas shells to disperse the protestors who were marching towards the airport road, seeking an audience with Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha. The migrant employees were moving peacefully in the area when local police requested them to disperse. When they refused to budge and kept marching on, police used force and lobbed tear gas shells. A sit-in protest also continued in

Vessu, Qazigund area of Anantnag district on Friday where migrant employees offered mass resignations to register their protest against the failure of the Union Territory administration to protect them.

Seething with anger the aggrieved employees also demanded speedy justice and the "severest" punishment for killers of Bhat.

Continued on Page 2

India denies  
stopping  
issuance of visas  
for LankansPIONEER NEWS  
SERVICE ■ NEW  
DELHI/COLOMBO

India on Friday brushed aside reports that it had stopped issuing visas in Sri Lanka and said there were some problems as the staff in the High Commission, mostly locals, were not able to attend office.

Operations will resume soon and New Delhi is committed to ease of travel for the Sri Lankans, it assured.

In another development, Indian High Commissioner to Colombo Gopal Baglay called on newly-appointed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and conveyed greetings and good wishes.

They discussed continued co-operation for economic recovery and stability in Sri Lanka through democratic processes.

As regards the visa issue, the Indian High Commission said the disruption was caused by operational difficulties.

Continued on Page 2

SC: Will not postpone  
NEET-PG-2022 as it  
will hit patient carePIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to postpone the NEET-PG-2022 examination on a plea of doctors, saying the delay would cause an unavailability of doctors and seriously affect patient care. A Bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant said postponement of the examination would create "chaos and uncertainty" and would affect the larger section of students, who have registered for the test.

"There are two categories of students -- one which is seeking postponement and the larger category of over two lakh six thousand candidates -- who would be affected by the postponement after having prepared for the examination", the Bench said.

The Judges noted that the Government was trying to bring the schedule of examination back on time as it was affected due to the pandemic.



"As the country gets back on the rails, which was derailed due to the pandemic, the time schedule laid down by this court must be adhered to", said the Bench.

On May 10, the top court had agreed to hear the plea of doctors seeking postponement of the NEET-PG 2022 which is scheduled to be held on May 21 on grounds that it will clash with the ongoing counselling for NEET-PG 2021.

Tesla puts brakes  
on India entry due  
to tariff deadlock

New Delhi: Tesla Inc has put on hold plans to sell electric cars in India, abandoned a search for showroom space and reassigned some of its domestic team after failing to secure lower import taxes, three people familiar with the matter told agencies.

The decision caps more than a year of deadlocked talks with Government representatives as Tesla sought to first test demand by selling electric vehicles (EVs) imported from production hubs in the United States and China, at lower tariffs.

But the Indian Government is pushing Tesla to commit to manufacturing locally before it will lower tariffs, as high as 100 per cent on imported vehicles.

Tesla had set itself a deadline of February 1, the day India unveils its budget and announces tax changes, to see if its lobbying brought results, the sources with knowledge of the company's plan told Reuters. When Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's Government did not offer a concession, Tesla put on hold the plans to import cars into India, added the sources.

Continued on Page 2

Twitter deal  
on hold for  
now: Musk

Detroit: Elon Musk said Friday that his plan to buy Twitter is "temporarily on hold" as he tries to pinpoint the exact number of spam and fake accounts on the social media platform, another twist amid signs of turmoil over the proposed \$44 billion acquisition. Musk has been vocal about his desire to clean up Twitter's problem with "spam bots" that mimic real people and appeared to question whether the company was underreporting them.

Detailed Report P10

Prannoy wins decisive match  
against Denmark to steer India  
to historic Thomas Cup final

Bangkok: HS Prannoy produced a lion-hearted effort in the decisive fifth match as the Indian men's badminton team scripted history by reaching the title clash of the Thomas Cup Final for the first time ever with a 3-2 victory over Denmark in

an edge-of-the-seat semifinal, here. Indian team, which never went past the semifinals after 1979, showed tremendous fighting spirit as it came from a match down to outwit the 2016 champions.

Detailed Report on P11

UAE President  
Sheikh Khalifa  
passes away

PTI ■ DUBAI

UAE president and ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan passed away on Friday, the Ministry of Presidential Affairs said. He was 73. India, a friendly country has declared one day State mourning on his demise.

"The Ministry of Presidential Affairs condoles the people of the UAE, the Arab and Islamic nations and the world over the demise of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the president of the UAE," the official WAM news agency said in a statement. Sheikh Khalifa served as the President of the UAE and ruler of Abu Dhabi since November 3, 2004.

The Ministry of Presidential Affairs has announced 40 days of mourning on passing of the President.

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No light at end of tunnel for winged guests  
Light pollution kills one million migratory birds every year

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Light pollution is creating havoc with life of migratory birds as at least one million of them are dying every year by running into lampposts and electric billboards on high rise buildings.

The rise in artificial light globally by at least 2 per cent per year is also impacting birds in the breeding and winter seasons, disrupting feeding and other vital behaviours, experts said on the eve of the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD).

This year WMBD will focus on one such man-made threat: Light pollution.

In India a number of foreign birds find shelter every year. At least, 229 species of birds arrive in the country every year, including Asiatic Sparrow-Hawk, Harriers,

Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Pacific Golden Plover, Graylag Goose, Bar-headed Goose, Northern Shoveller, Tufted Duck, and more.

Pointing out that light pollution also risks seriously altering migratory birds' behaviours, from migration and foraging to vocal communication, and disturbing their precise internal clocks, experts have called upon policy makers to take steps to reduce the impact of light pollution on birds across the globe.

Attracted by artificial light at night, particularly when there is low cloud, fog, rain or when flying at lower altitudes, migrating birds become disorientated and may end up circling in illuminated areas. Depleted energy reserves put them at risk of exhaustion, predation, and fatal collision with buildings. Executive Secretary Amy Fraenkel of the



Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) said, "Natural darkness has a conservation value in the same way as clean water, air, and soil.

A key goal of World Migratory Bird Day 2022 is to raise awareness of the issue of light pollution and its negative impacts on migratory birds.

Solutions are readily available, and we hope to encourage key decision-makers to adopt measures to address light pollution."

Executive Secretary Jacques Trouwillez of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) said, "An enormous diversity of birds, active at night, experience the impacts

of light pollution. Many nocturnally migrating birds such as ducks, geese, plovers, sandpipers and songbirds are affected by light pollution causing disorientation and collisions with fatal consequences. Seabirds such as petrels and shearwaters are attracted by artificial lights on land and become prey for rats and cats."

The guidelines on light pollution covering marine turtles, seabirds, and migratory shorebirds were endorsed by the CMS Parties in 2020. Among their recommendations, the guidelines set forth six principles of best lighting practices.

According to the statement by the UN Environment guidelines on light pollution covering marine turtles, seabirds, and migratory shorebirds were endorsed by the CMS Parties in 2020.

Continued on page 2



# BJP to be major gainer in RS poll

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party will be the major beneficiary and increase its tally in Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh. The three opposition parties in UP — Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress — will be the major losers in the upcoming election to 11 seats of the upper House of Parliament from UP.

Uttar Pradesh sends 31 members to Rajya Sabha and they are elected by members of UP assembly.

Among the 11 retiring MPs from the state, five are from the BJP, three from the SP, two from the BSP and one from the Congress. The BSP with a single MLA and Congress with two MLAs are not in the race in this Rajya Sabha election.

With 403 elected members in the UP assembly, a candidate will require at least 37 votes for victory. The outcome of the recently held state assembly election has changed the equa-

tion this time. With 273 MLAs, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance will be able to get seven members elected easily, while SP and its allies (Rashtriya Lok Dal and Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party), with the strength of 125 legislators will be able to ensure victory of three candidates. For the 11th seat, both SP and BJP will be trying to win the support of other parties, including Raja Bhैया's Jansatta Dal Loktantrik and the Congress which have two MLAs each and the lone legislator of Mayawati's BSP.

Kapil Sibal from Congress, BSP general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra, and Reoti Raman Singh of Samajwadi Party are among the members whose terms are ending. After the retirement of Sibal, the Congress' representation in the upper House from Uttar Pradesh will be nil. After the retirement of the two BSP MPs Satish Chandra Mishra and Ashok Siddharth, the party will have only one member,

Ramji Gautam in the upper House of Parliament.

The five retiring BJP Rajya Sabha members include Zafar Islam, Shiv Pratap Shukla, Sanjay Seth, Surendra Nagar, and Jai Prakash Nishad.

The SP members completing their term include former UP Legislative Council Chairman Sukhram Singh Yadav, whose son Mohit has joined the BJP. Besides Yadav, the tenure of Reoti Raman Singh and Vishambhar Prasad Nishad will also end in July.

The Election Commission of India on Thursday announced that voting will be held on June 10 to fill 57 Rajya Sabha seats from 15 states, including 11 from Uttar Pradesh. These seats will be falling vacant due to the retirement of members between June and August. The election commission has announced May 24 as the date of notification for Rajya Sabha polls. The voting is to be held on June 10 and the results will be announced the same day.

## SC stays Patna HC order directing Bihar DGP to produce Sahara Group chief Subrata Roy before it

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday stayed the Patna High Court order directing the Director General of Police (DGP), Bihar, to produce Sahara Group chief Subrata Roy before it on May 16 in a matter in which it was said that some companies of the Group were not returning money to the investors.

The apex court also stayed the separate order passed by the high court which had on February 11 directed to add Sahara Credit Cooperative Societies Limited and Roy as opposite parties to a bail petition pending before it and later, directed him to personally appear before it.

On April 27, the high court had directed Roy to personally appear before it noting that Sahara Group and other companies, which have been taking deposits till about one month back, are directed to come up with a plan for the return of investment of the investors.

A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and J B Pardiwala issued notice on the petition filed by Sahara chief challeng-

ing the high court orders.

"Issue notice. Stay of operation of the impugned judgement and order qua the petitioner," the bench said and posted the matter for hearing on May 19.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioner, informed the bench that earlier in the day, the high court has passed an order directing the Bihar DGP to produce Roy before the court on May 16 at 10.30 AM.

"We are informed that pursuant to the impugned order, the high court has issued further order today which has the effect of directing higher authorities (police department) to produce the petitioner (Subrata Roy) before the court," the apex court observed.

"In terms of this order, we stay the operation of that direction given by the high court," the bench said, adding that all concerned would act upon the order of the top court.

Sibal told the bench that the high court had passed these orders while hearing an anticipatory bail plea which has nothing to do with the petitioner.

## MVA seeks action over death threat to Pawar

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Having taken serious cognisance of a tweet — being perceived as a "death threat" to Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar, the ruling MVA constituents — NCP, Shiv Sena and Congress on Friday demanded stringent police action against the "pervert" youngster who put out the tweet. The Shiv Sena and Congress targeted the Opposition BJP for being behind the questionable "death threat" tweet posted by one @NikhilBhamre8 in Marathi on May 11. The tweet posted @NikhilBhamre8 read thus: "Time has come for the 'Gandhi' of Baramati... And for Baramati to prepare a Nathuram Godse.... Baramati Uncle apologise". The tweet has been "liked" and "retweeted" by scores of twitter users during the last two days.

Pawar's staunch supporter and NCP's Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad posted the screenshot of the questionable tweet on Friday and demanded stringent action against @NikhilBhamre8.

## Three held for impersonating as Army personnel to smuggle liquor

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

A crime branch unit of the Gurugram police held three accused including fake army personnel with fake ministry of defence identity card for smuggling expensive liquor from Gurugram to Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the police said on Friday.

The police have also recovered 224 expensive illegal liquor, 1 car (Maruti S-Presso) and 02 fake ID cards from their possession.

According to the police acting on a tip-off, a team of crime branch unit Sector-39 led by inspector Samer nabbed the accused from Krishna Chowk in Palam Vihar area on Thursday along with illegal liquor.

The accused have been identified as Gulshan Khanna, Ravi resident of Gurugram and

Rathore Ashishbhai of Panchmahal, Gujarat.

"The accused disclosed that Gulshan and Rathore used to collect liquor from different places in Gurugram", Preet Pal Sangwan, ACP (crime) said.

## Delhi Govt gives nod to induct 1500 Low Floor Electric Buses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Friday gave nod to induct 1500 Low Floor Electric Buses in its public transportation fleet in the national Capital.

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) had already provided approval for procurement of 921 buses under the Grand Challenge Scheme of Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) which comes under FAME-II (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric vehicle) category and remaining 579 buses under non FAME-II category.

According to officials, for the 579 buses in non-FAME category, the city Government will provide a subsidy of Rs 262.04 crores. In response to the tender floated by CESL on January 20, Tata Motors emerged as the most successful bidder for operation of these buses in Delhi.

"The city Government will also spend a total of Rs 7,606.45 crores on operation, maintenance, and development of the infrastructure related to these buses," said the official.

# HC acquits man in 24-yr-old case

**Decides 15-yr-old appeal; expresses concern over delay in disposal**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has set aside a man's conviction in a 24-year-old case relating to the abduction of a woman to compel her for marriage in which the appeal was pending in the high court since 2007 while expressing "serious" concerns over delay in disposal of criminal appeals.

The high court allowed the appeal of Jasbir Singh who has challenged his conviction and three years imprisonment for the offences of abducting a woman to compel her for marriage and criminal intimidation and said the material witnesses have not been examined and there are certain contradictions in the testimony of the prosecution witnesses with no explanation for the delay in lodging the FIR.

Justice Chandra Dhari

Singh noted that the criminal appeal has been pending in the high court for disposal since 2007 and "the delay in disposal of criminal appeals pending in the high court is a matter of serious concern to all those involved in the administration of criminal justice".

"The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasised the fact that speedy trial or disposal of the criminal appeals pending before high courts are a fundamental right implicit in the broad sweep and content of Article 21 (right to life and personal liberty) of the Constitution.

"The aforesaid Article confers a fundamental right on every person not to be deprived of his life or liberty except in accordance with the procedure prescribed by law. If a person is deprived of his liberty under a procedure which is not reasonable, fair, or just, such deprivation would be violative of his fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution," the high court said in its May 12 order.

## UP Govt to rid villages of plastic waste

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the aim to get rid of plastic waste in villages, the Yogi Adityanath government has made plans to set up collection centres for plastic waste at 250 places in the state in the next two years and use the waste plastic for road construction.

"The Panchayati Raj department is preparing an action plan for the preparation and selection of sites in development blocks in the next six months so that waste plastic collection centres could be set up there," a government spokesman said.

Plastic, which causes pollution, reduces the groundwater level by destroying the fertility of the land. Its use increases the risk of cancer along with respiratory and skin diseases. Plastic is so dangerous that it can even stop the development of the fetus. The smoke released from burning polythere is damaging the ozone layer, which is a major cause of global warming.

# ISI hand in RPG attack in Punjab; 6 arrested

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Police on Friday claimed to have cracked Mohali's Rocket-Propelled Grenade (RPG) attack case with the arrest of six people, including a woman. They have launched a manhunt to nab

The State police chief VK Bhawra claimed that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was involved in the attack and the key conspirator is gangster Lakhbir Singh Landra from Tarn Taran, a close associate of Pakistan-based wanted terrorist Harvinder Singh Rinda.

"Canada-based gangster Lakhbir Singh alias Landra has emerged as the key handler, who provided the RPG, AK-47, and the local network of criminals for logistic support to carry out the terror attack at Punjab Police Intelligence Headquarters in Mohali on Monday evening," said the Director-General of Police (DGP) while addressing



Punjab DGP VK Bhawra, along with ADGP Internal Security RN Dhoke and Mohali SSP Vivek Sheel Soni, addressing the media at Punjab Police headquarters at Chandigarh on Friday

the media at Punjab Police headquarters at Chandigarh.

Thirty three-year-old Landra, who had fled to Canada in 2017, is a close aide of Harvinder Singh alias Rinda and had joined hands with Babbar Khalsa International (BKI). Rinda is close to BKI chief Wadhawa Singh and the ISI. "Landra is based in

Canada...He is still involved in making ransom calls to doctors, businessmen, singers, etc," said DGP Bhawra.

The DGP said that the police have also arrested six people for their involvement in planning and providing the local logistic support to the attackers for carrying out the attack.

# Protests erupt.....

From Page 1

Meanwhile, in Jammu, the mortal remains of Rahul Bhat were consigned to flames after the body arrived from Kashmir in the wee hours. The entire neighbourhood in Durga Nagar area of Jammu had converged outside the residence of Rahul to pay their homage and perform the last darshan.

Meenakshi, who brought back the mortal remains of her husband after traveling during the night, wept inconsolably on reaching their Durga Nagar home in Jammu.

"My husband used to say everyone behaves nicely with him and nobody can harm him. Yet nobody protected him, they (terrorists) must have asked someone about

him, otherwise, how would they've known. I am left alone. He was everything for me," she said.

Rahul leaves behind a seven-year-old daughter and aging parents. Rahul's father Bitta Jee Bhat retired from active police service years ago. Bitta Jee Bhat has also demanded a high-level inquiry to ascertain how the killers entered a Government office. "I have lost everything. My son is not alive. My only demand is to deliver justice to me," he said.

Close family members and siblings remembered Rahul as a 'fearless' and helpful human being.

After performing rituals, the funeral procession was joined by hundreds of local residents and Kashmiri Pandits in the area.

# Tesla puts...

From Page 1

For months, Tesla had scouted for real estate options to open showrooms and service centres in the key Indian cities of New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru but that plan is also now on hold, two of the sources said.

Tesla did not respond to an email seeking comment.

An Indian Government spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Tesla has assigned additional responsibilities for other markets to some of its small team in India. Its India policy executive Manuj Khurana has taken on an additional "product" role in San Francisco since March, his LinkedIn profile shows.

As recently as January, Chief Executive Elon Musk had said Tesla was "still working through a lot of challenges with the Government" in regard to sales in India.

But the strong demand for Tesla's vehicles elsewhere and the standoff over import taxes prompted the shift in strategy, the sources said.

Modi has sought to lure manufacturers with a 'Make in India' campaign, but his Transport Minister, Nitin Gadkari, said in April it would not be a "good proposition" for Tesla to import cars from China to India.

But New Delhi had clinched a win in January, when German luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz said it would start assembling one of its electric cars in India.

## India denies stopping...

From Page 1

"High Commission categorically denies that it or the Indian Consulates-General or the Assistant High Commission of #India in #SriLanka have stopped issuing visas. In the past few days, there were operational difficulties due to the inability of our Visa Wing staff, most of whom are #SriLankan nationals, to attend office," the Indian High Commission tweeted.

"We are striving to return our functioning to the normal levels soon. We remain committed to facilitating ease of travel for #SriLankans to #India. #SriLankans are welcome in #India just as #Indians are in #SriLanka," it said.

Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, meanwhile, has said he looks forward to closer ties with India during his term and thanked India for its economic assistance to the country as it tackles the worst economic crisis since independence. Wickremesinghe, 73, was sworn in as Sri Lanka's 26th prime minister on Thursday to stabilise the country's debt-ridden economy and end the political turmoil.

"I want a closer relationship and I want to thank Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi," Wickremesinghe said, referring to the Indian economic assistance to his country. India has committed more than USD 3 billion to debt-ridden Sri Lanka in loans, credit lines and credit swaps since January this year. On Thursday, it said it looked forward to working with the new Sri Lankan government formed in accordance with the democratic processes and New Delhi's commitment to the people of the island nation will continue.

# 27 dead, 12 hurt....

From Page 1

On preliminary enquiry it has been learnt that the building is a four storey one used commercially for providing office space to companies," said the DCP.

"The fire started from the first floor of the building which houses the office of a CCTV camera and router manufacturing/assembling company. Over 50 employees/workers of the company were reportedly rescued while rescue teams have so far recovered 27 bodies," said the DCP.

Following the fire, thick fumes of black smoke could be seen billowing out of the ill-fated building. The firemen used the fire truck ladder to reach the maximum possible height to spray water on the blaze. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Ram Nath Kovind and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal have expressed their condolences.

"Distressed by the tragic fire accident at a building near Mundka Metro Station in Delhi. My condolences to the bereaved families. I wish for speedy recovery of the injured," tweeted the President.

# Sonia calls for.....

From Page 1

She stressed that the Congress' revival would only happen with grand collective efforts, and those cannot be put off. Noting that the shivir is an important step in this journey, she said, "We are not oblivious to the recent failures, nor are we oblivious to the struggle we have to undertake to win. We are not unaware of the expectations of the people."

The Congress president asserted that all have gathered to take a collective and individual resolve to bring the

## UAE President...

From Page 1

Flags will be flown at half-mast and Ministries, departments, federal and local institutions will suspend work starting Friday, it said.

Sheikh Khalifa was elected to succeed his father, late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who served as the UAE's first president since the union in 1971 until he passed away on November 2, 2004.

Born in 1948, Sheikh Khalifa was the second president of the UAE and the 16th Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. He was the eldest son of Sheikh Zayed.

Since becoming the president of the UAE, Sheikh Khalifa has presided over a major restructuring of both the Federal Government and the Government of Abu Dhabi.

## No light at...

From Page 1

Among their recommendations, the guidelines set forth six principles of best lighting practices and call for Environmental Impact Assessments for relevant projects that could result in light pollution.

These should consider the main sources of light pollution at a certain site, the likely wild species that could be impacted, and facts about proximity to important habitats and migratory pathways.

"New guidelines focusing on migratory landbirds and bats are currently being developed under CMS. They will be presented to CMS Parties for adoption at the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS in 2023," said the statement.

tory", constant denigration of its leaders, especially Jawaharlal Nehru and the systematic move to distort, deny and destroy their contributions, their achievements and their sacrifices. "It means glorifying the killers of Mahatma Gandhi," the Congress chief said.

She also charged that the Centre was using fear to make the bureaucracy, corporate India, sections of the civil society and the media fall in line.

Urging leaders to air their views frankly and openly during discussions at the Shivir, she said, "I urge you to openly put forward your views, but only one message should go out and that is of a strong organisation, resolve and unity.



# Raze illegal constructions at Delhi BJP chief's house: AAP

Pathak warns of 'bulldozer justice' if MCD does not take action against Gupta

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The demolition drive turned murkier in national Capital with Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) threatening to carry out anti-encroachment drive at residence of Delhi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief, Adesh Gupta.

Senior AAP leader Durgesh Pathak demanded civic bodies to demolish unauthorised construction at Gupta's residence by 11 am on Saturday, failing which party will get them razed using bulldozers.

"It has been weeks since illegal construction at Gupta's residence and office was exposed but MCD refuses to take any action on it," said Pathak. He alleged that Delhi BJP president's 'political office'

in West Patel Nagar, too, was an "illegal construction" as it was an encroachment on land of a civic body-run primary school. Pathak said his party had earlier written to mayor and commissioner of civic body concerned demanding a probe into alleged unauthorised constructions at Gupta's residence and office, but no action was taken.

"This can't be done anymore. I demand BJP-ruled MCD that unauthorised constructions at Gupta's residence and his illegal political office be demolished tomorrow by 11 am," Pathak said. "Else, we will go to his residence taking bulldozers and bring down unauthorised constructions there. We will also take action against his illegal office," he added.



Meanwhile, the Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah urging him to stop the destruction. Sisodia also claimed that civic bodies are planning to raze 63 lakh dwellings in the national capital.

The AAP will oppose demolition drive and I have written to Union home minister to seek his intervention in matter, said Sisodia adding that they are even ready to go to jail. Sisodia said that of these, 60 lakh houses are in unauthorised colonies while remaining three lakh are those

where people have extended their balconies or covered them. "We have learnt that notices have been sent to them. This will lead to a huge destruction in national capital. Almost 70 per cent of the population of Delhi will be rendered homeless," said Sisodia.

"I have written to him (Shah) saying that this (demolition drive) should be stopped. If bulldozers are to be used, they should be used to demolish the houses of those BJP leaders and civic body representatives who took bribes to allow such structures to be constructed," said Sisodia.

In letter, Sisodia said there are 1,750 unauthorised colonies where nearly 50 lakh people live and 860 slum clusters which are home to around 10 lakh people. "In Delhi, the BJP has a plan to run bulldozers on these colonies. Every day, some BJP leader reaches a colony with a bulldozer," Sisodia said in letter written in Hindi.

## Govt to form panel to overcome shortage of land for tree plantation, says Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government has decided to set up a nine-member committee to suggest alternatives to overcome the shortage of land for tree plantation in the national Capital.

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Friday made the announcement while rejecting a request by the Delhi Development Authority to revise the compensatory plantation scheme guidelines and bring down the number of saplings to be planted for every tree felled from 10 to 2.

"The DDA wrote to the Delhi Forest Department saying they do not have land for compensatory plantation. They have requested us to make changes in the guidelines. We are rejecting the request considering the status of the environment in Delhi," said the Minister.

"The Government will instead ask the DDA to inform how much land is available for plantation in the Capital. It has also been decided to set up a



nine-member "Green Cover Development Committee" to suggest alternatives to overcome the shortage of land for tree plantations," said Rai.

The panel will have members from the Public Works Department, DDA, Forest Department, municipal corporations, School of Planning and Architecture, Central Public Works Department, Delhi Urban Arts Commission and the IARI-PUSA.

It will look at options like space available on the roofs of government buildings, vertical greening etc. Rai also said government will ask Dehradun-based Forest Research Institute to conduct a third-party audit

of tree transplantation in Delhi. "Over last two to three years, 27 agencies and departments have been allowed to transplant trees for their developmental work.

Prominent among them are National Highway Authority of India, National Capital Region Transport Corporation, National Buildings Construction Corporation, Delhi Metro, Delhi Jal Board, Public Works Department, Central Public Works Department, Rail Land Development Authority and MCD," said Rai.

"We had directed them to submit a report on the number of trees transplanted, their locations and their survival rate by May 13. A report suggests a project-wise survival rate of up to 55 per cent. However, some agencies have performed poorly," Rai said.

Based on FRI audit report, government will blacklist agencies and departments which have fared badly and review their permission for construction work, the minister said.

## Jamia extends online application deadline till May 25

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) in the national Capital on Friday extended the last date of submission of online application forms for all graduate and postgraduate courses till May 25.

The deadline for registration has been extended for all JMI programmes such as post-graduate, undergraduate, post-graduate diploma, advanced diploma and diploma programmes, except for the PhD programme.

Earlier, May 13 was the last date for submission of the admission forms. The university said this was done as the last date for registration for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) has been extended to May 22.

According to a notification issued by the Jamia, in view of the extension in the last date of CUET Admission form, the Vice-Chancellor, JMI has very kindly approved the extension in the last date of filling of online application form for all Jamia programmes like PG/UG/PG Diploma/Advanced Diploma/ Diploma programmes and Foreign Nationals/NRI wards except PhD programmes for the academic session 2022-2023 from 13.05.2022 to 25.05.2022.

"The applicants who have applied for JMI programmes under CUET are also required to fill the JMI registration form on the university examinations website till 25.05.2022," the notification read.

The university had earlier announced that admission to 10 courses will be through the CUET. Last month, JMI released its admission prospectus and said online admission forms were made available from April 14.

Jamia Millia is also likely to postpone entrance tests for admission to its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as their dates are overlapping with CBSE Class 12 board exams.

The revised schedule is likely to be issued soon. As per the schedule, entrance tests to courses not covered under the CUET were to be conducted by the institution from June 2.

## Power demand in Capital touches 6,805 MW



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The power demand in the national capital on Friday clocked 6805 MW, breaking all previous records in the month of May. According to the sources in discoms, the city's peak power demand broke the record created just a day earlier. It not only clocked the sea-

son's highest of 6805 MW at 15:23 pm, but also the highest ever in the month of May. "Yesterday, Delhi's peak power demand clocked 6780 MW in the afternoon, highest ever in the month of May till then.

Just hours later, this record too was broken, when the peak power demand clocked 6800 MW at 11:07 in the night," they said. "Delhi's peak

power demand in May had never crossed the 6000 MW in 2021 and 2020. In 2019, it had crossed the 6000 MW mark only on three occasions - May 29 (6020 MW), May 30 (6240 MW) and May 31 (6461 MW)," sources said.

"Earlier, in April 2022, the peak power demand had been higher on 100 per cent of the corresponding days in respect to that of April 2021, 2020 and 2019.

Moreover, on seven occasions in April 2022, city's peak power demand 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 and 6036 MW on April 30," sources added.

## 'Temp touches 42.5 degrees Celsius, 3 notches above normal'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The maximum temperature in the national Capital on Friday settled at 42.5 degrees Celsius which is three notches above the normal for this time of the year, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The minimum temperature recorded at the Safdarjung Observatory was 28.1 degrees Celsius, which is three notches warmer than the normal temperature for this season, as stated in the IMD data.

The relative humidity on Friday morning at 8:30 was recorded at 62 per cent and 35 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 42.5 degrees Celsius, 44 degrees Celsius, 45.4 degrees Celsius, 46.1 degrees Celsius, 44.7 degrees Celsius, 43.8 degrees Celsius and 42.6 degrees Celsius respectively, stated the

IMD data. The IMD predicted "Heat wave spells over Northwest and Central India during next three days and reduction thereafter."

"No significant change in maximum temperatures is very likely over Northwest India during the next three days and fall by 2 to 3 degree Celsius," IMD said.

"Rise in maximum temperatures by 2 to 3 degree Celsius is very likely over East India during the next two days and no significant change," it said.

While informing about the health concerns, the IMD said that heatwave could lead to moderate health concerns for vulnerable people such as infants, elder people and people with chronic diseases.

"Increased likelihood of heat illness symptoms in people who are either exposed to sun for a prolonged period or doing heavy work," it said.

The Met department uses four colour codes for weather warnings -- "green" (no action



A mother and daughter use an umbrella to shield themselves from the heat on a hot summer day, in Gurugram, PTI Photo

needed), "yellow" (watch and stay updated), "orange" (be prepared), and "red" (take action).

## CM calls meeting of AAP MLAs over bulldozer action

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has called upon a key meeting with all Aam Aadmi Party legislators on Saturday on the anti-encroachment drives conducted by the BJP-ruled civic bodies.

The meeting will begin at 11 am on Saturday at Kejriwal's official residence in Civil Lines. Officials said on Friday that a strategy will be chalked out at the meeting to counter the BJP's politics over the anti-encroachment drives.

Earlier in the day, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said he had written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and urged him to stop the "destruction" in the name of anti-encroachment drives by the BJP-ruled municipal bodies.



The deputy chief minister also slammed the "bulldozer politics" of the BJP and claimed that the civic bodies were planning to raze 63 lakh dwellings in the national capital. In the past few days, the three civic

bodies in Delhi have conducted demolition drives in a number of areas, including Shaheen Bagh, Madanpur Khadar, New Friends Colony, Mangol Puri, Karol Bagh, Khyala and Lodhi Colony.

## Anti-encroachment drive held at Samaypur Badli Metro Station

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) on Friday conducted anti-encroachment drive to remove the illegal encroachment in Samaypur Badli Metro Station, Rohini Sector 18 Metro Station and Prem Nagar area, during which 75 temporary structures were cleared from public land. The drive was not carried out at Bawana due to non availability of police force.

According to the Commissioner of NMC, Sanjay Goel, the civic body removed temporary encroachments from Samaypur Badli Metro Station to Rohini Sector 18 Metro Station in Rohini Zone and Prem Nagar area in Karol Bagh Zone.

"The encroachment removal drive was not carried out at JJ Colony in Bawana area

due to non availability of police force," he said.

"During the demolition drive in Rohini Zone from Samaypur Badli Metro Station to Rohini Sector 18 Metro Station around 75 temporary structures and Jhuggies along with permanent platforms, six wooden tables and wooden boards were removed with the help of one JCB bulldozer and six dumpers. Total six trucks of malba were removed from the site," Goel said.

"In Prem Nagar, about 1000 sq meters of area got vacated with the help of local police and 25 municipal staff. Around 15 rounds of trucks and 60 rounds of garbage were removed from the site.

After the removal of garbage from the site, leveling work of the entire plot has been started," he informed. Meanwhile, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation

(SDMC) also removed the illegal encroachment in Gopal Nagar, Najafgarh, Dichaon Kalan, Roshanpura, Subhash Nagar and Vishnu Garden and razed over 15 illegally constructed rooms and 42 tin sheds.

According to a senior SDMC official, in an intensive drive, 15 illegally constructed rooms were razed in Goyla dairy and 42 tin sheds were dismantled. The civic agency squad also destroyed 40 Khors as well as six permanent stairs.

"In Najafgarh Zone, anti-encroachment drives were carried out in Gopal Nagar, Najafgarh, Dichaon Kalan, Roshanpura's Firdi Mor, Som Bazar and Tuda Mandi red light area.

About 2000 metres of area was made encroachment free and 13 articles were seized," he said. "In West Zone, anti-encroachment drives took



place in Milap Nagar market, Shyam Nagar Khayala road coming under Subhash Nagar and Vishnu Garden areas. Nearly 1400 metres area was freed from illegal encroachment. The civic body team had seized 20 articles and

impounded two vehicles," he added. On other hand, the NMC also wrote a letter to (SHO) of Pushpanjali Enclave police station, demanding the adequate force including women police officials, to remove illegal structures.

## NCR PULSE

### COPS BUST GAMBLING CLUB, BOOK 17

**New Delhi:** Delhi Police has arrested 17 people after they busted a gambling club in Sadar Bazar area of north Delhi. According to a statement from police, they got information about the club on Wednesday, following which they raided a house in Choron ki Gali, Basti Julhan. The police found a gambling den being operated there and arrested 17 people who were indulging in the offence.

### DDC SIGNS MOU WITH OP JINDAL UNIVERSITY

**New Delhi:** The Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi (DDC), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with O. P. Jindal Global University (JGU) on Friday. Through the strategic partnership, DDC Delhi aims to mentor and support budding public policy scholars and practitioners in conducting robust research that generates new ideas, bridges the gap between ideas and policy design, and leads to strong, inclusive and thorough policy implementation, said official.

### MAN BOOKED IN CYBER-FRAUD CASE

**Noida:** A 48-year-old man arrested in a cyber-fraud case last week and lodged in judicial custody in a Greater Noida jail, died of cardiac arrest. Police said Sanjay Mandal, who hailed from Faridabad in Haryana and was arrested in a cyber-fraud case on May 6, prima facie died of a cardiac arrest on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday.

### CITY GOVT LAUNCHES 'DELHI FILM POLICY 2022'

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Government on Friday launched 'Delhi Film Policy 2022'. While launching policy, Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia said that Delhi Film Policy 2022 will create massive employment and economic development opportunities in Delhi along with attracting tourism to the national capital. "The policy will help Delhi evolve as a brand, with more coverage on silver screen and will instill a sense of pride among people of Delhi," said Sisodia.

## Gupta raps Sisodia for his remarks on demolition drive

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief Adesh Gupta on Friday slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia over his remarks on the ongoing demolition drive by the civic bodies across the Capital.

Gupta said that if Sisodia were concerned about the poor, then he would have given slum dwellers pucca houses and provided them tap water, rations and helped them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

His remarks come after Sisodia, the Delhi Deputy Chief Minister, claimed that the civic bodies are planning to raze 63 lakh dwellings in the national capital.

Sisodia had also written a letter to Amit Shah, the Union Home Minister urging him to stop the "destruction" ensuing in the national capital due to



the anti-encroachment drive by the BJP-ruled municipal bodies. Hitting out at Sisodia over this, Delhi BJP president Gupta said, "I can understand your pain and panic because encroachments by Rohingyas and Bangladeshis are being removed who indulge in rioting and crimes, and are then given shelter by AAP leaders and MLAs."

Addressing an online briefing earlier, Sisodia had said, "I have written to him (Shah) saying that this (demolition drive) should be stopped. If bulldozers are to be used, they should be used to demolish the houses of those BJP leaders and civic body representatives who took bribes to allow such structures to be constructed."

Claiming that Sisodia was not at all worried about poor people, Gupta asked him to stop indulging in politics over the encroachment drive against Rohingyas and Bangladeshis. An anti-encroachment drive in Delhi's Madanpur Khadar on Thursday sparked protests and pelting of stones where local people claimed that legal structures were bulldozed.

AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, who was part of a protest in the southeast Delhi locality, was arrested on charges of rioting and obstructing public servants in discharge of their duty, police officials said.

## Amanatullah gets bail, Delhi Police declares him 'Bad Character'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has declared Amanatullah Khan, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) legislator from Southeast Delhi's Okhla, as "Bad Character" (BC) of Jamia Nagar area. Meanwhile, a Delhi Court on Friday granted bail to AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, arrested in a case of alleged rioting and obstructing public servants from discharging their duty, saying he is no longer required for custodial interrogation.

According to police, the proposal for declaring Khan as a bad character was sent on March 28 by the Jamia Nagar police station in Southeast district and approved on March 30. Khan had been previously involved in 18 cases. "Most of the cases registered against him are related to intimidation, threatening, hurt, riots causing hindrance duties of public servants and causing enmities



between two groups and communities," as per the document by Jamia Nagar police station. According to the police, a person who has involvement in several cases, including that of murder and attempt to murder, and can disturb peace in an area is declared as a "bad character". Police keep an eye on such people.

Khan and five others were arrested on Thursday on the charges of rioting and obstructing public servants from discharging their duty, hours after the Okhla MLA

took part in a protest against an anti-encroachment drive in the Madanpur Khadar area in southeast Delhi. The anti-encroachment drive sparked violent protests and pelting of stones with locals alleging that many legal structures were bulldozed.

Esha Pandey, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district had said on Thursday Amanatullah Khan and five other supporters have been arrested for rioting and obstructing public servants in discharging their duty.

The FIR has been registered under sections an 186 (Obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 34 (Acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) FIR on the complaint of South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).



# SC refuses to pass interim status quo order on survey of Gyanvapi complex

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to grant an interim order of status quo on the survey of the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The apex court agreed to consider listing the plea of a Muslim party against the survey of the Gyanvapi premises, when mention was made.

The Bench comprising Chief Justice NV Ramana and justices J K Maheswari and Hima Kohli was told by senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for the Muslim side in the Gyanvapi mosque case, that a plea has been filed against the survey being conducted at the Varanasi site.

"We have filed in relation to a survey which has been directed to be conducted in relation to the Varanasi property. This (Gyanvapi) has



been a mosque since time immemorial and this is clearly interdicted by the Places of Worship Act," Ahmadi said.

He said the direction to conduct a survey has been passed and an order of status quo be passed at the moment. "I do not know anything. How can I pass such an order? I will read. Let me see," the CJI said. The Muslim side has

been referring to the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 and its section 4 which bars filing of any suit or initiating any other legal proceeding for a conversion of the religious character of any place of worship, as existing on August 15, 1947.

A Varanasi local court on Thursday rejected a plea to replace the advocate commissioner it had appointed for conducting a videography survey of the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex here and ordered the completion of the task by May 17.

The district court also appointed two more lawyers to help the advocate commissioner carry out the survey at the mosque, which is located close to the iconic Kashi Vishwanath temple. It ordered the police to register FIRs if there are attempts to scuttle the exercise.

## SC seeks Centre, J&K admin, ECI replies on plea against delimitation commission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from the Centre, the Jammu and Kashmir administration and the Election Commission of India on a plea of two Kashmir residents challenging Government's decision to constitute the delimitation commission for redrawing the Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies in the UT.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and MM Sundresh issued notice to the Centre and Election Commission of India and sought their responses within six weeks and said the rejoinder affidavit shall be filed in two weeks thereafter. The bench said

the delimitation commission was formed sometime back and asked the petitioners, where were they during that time and why did not they challenge the Constitution of the commission.

The counsel said as per the delimitation order, it is the Election Commission that is empowered to do any changes.

The bench told the counsel, who was making objectionable submissions, to choose his words properly and said that Kashmir was always part of India and just a special provision was removed.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said effectively the plea is two-fold and that delimitation can be conducted only by the ECI and not the delimitation commission.

# CBI books Army officer posted at Port Blair for graft



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has booked an Army officer posted at Port Blair for alleged corruption and graft from different private suppliers in connivance with field officers in procurement of ration and other materials for canteen stores department.

It is alleged that Lt Col Abhishek Chandra, the then Station Staff Officer SSO (Contract and Victualling) had demanded bribes from different suppliers during 2018.

The CBI action came following Government sanction to the CBI to proceed with the probe against the officer.

The FIR alleged that Chandra in 2018 entered into criminal conspiracy with Subham Choudhary of Kolkata-based Rochak Agro Food Products Ltd and its representative Dayal Chandra Das to "extend favours" in return for bribes.

Chandra allegedly misused his official position and ensured award of the contract for supply of food items including spices to Base Victualling Yard, Minnie Bay, Port Blair, Andaman without Price Negotiation Committee (PNC) to Rochak Agro Food Products Pvt Ltd., Kolkata and also extended favour in return of bank guarantee of the said company, deposited for the previous contract with BV Yard, Port Blair, it alleged.

In return for the favours, Chandra allegedly demanded and agreed to accept a bribe of Rs 75,000 from Choudhary either in the form of two cheques issued from the account of anyone except the favoured company or in the form of two gift vouchers of jewellery brand Tanishq.

Choudhary could not arrange gift vouchers so

Chandra allegedly got the amount deposited in two bank accounts in Bokaro (Jharkhand) through NEFT.

It was also alleged that Chandra had demanded a bribe of Rs three lakh from a representative of another supplier based in Port Blair. On June 6, Muthu, the representa-

tive, allegedly tried to pay Rs 1 lakh as part payment but Chandra refused and demanded the full amount. Muthu then used debit cards to withdraw money from the ATM and made a payment of Rs 2.5 lakh to Chandra, the FIR alleged.

Chandra had also directed Das to negotiate with the officers posted in BV Yard so that they "do not raise hue and cry" regarding late arrival of consignment or discrepancy in materials ordered and supplied.

Das allegedly paid a bribe of Rs 10,000 in March 2018 to one Routh who was posted in BV Yard for not raising any objection with respect to the supplies of Rochak Agro Products.

## 1 serving, 2 retired IAF officers get life sentence for custodial death of cook 27 years ago

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A special CBI court in Ahmedabad has sentenced two retired and one serving officers of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to life imprisonment for the custodial murder of a cook 27 years ago, officials said here on Friday.

Girija Rawat, a cook at the air force station in Jamnagar, was tortured to death in November 1995 after it was suspected that he stole liquor from the canteen.

The convicted officers are Anoop Sood, then a Squadron Leader at the Air Force-I in Jamnagar, and then Sergeants Anil K N and Mahendra Singh Sherawat.

Sood, who retired as Group Captain, claims to be an orientation programme speaker and a trained commando from the NSG on his social media profile.

Anil also retired from the IAF, while Sehrawat was still serving. The CBI had taken over the case on February 22, 2012 on the orders of the Gujarat High Court on a plea of Rawat's wife.

"...It was further alleged

that on November 13, 1995, 10-12 Air Force Police Officials, including then Squadron Leader Anoop Sood, conducted searches at the residence of Rawat and took him with them

forcibly to confess about stealing of liquor from the Air Force Canteen," CBI Spokesperson R C Joshi said.

He said Rawat's wife visited the guard room in the evening seeking release of her husband.

"She was told that her husband would be released soon. The accused allegedly tortured him which caused his death. On November 14, 1995, she was informed about the death of her husband and was asked to collect the body," Joshi said.

After thorough investigation, the CBI filed a charge sheet on July 30, 2013 against the accused on the charges of criminal conspiracy and murder, he said.

"The trial court found the said accused guilty and convicted them (recently). Three accused were acquitted by the court and one accused expired during the trial," Joshi said.

# Seminar to discuss threat to democracy from dynasty politics

With PM hitting out at dynastic politics, think tank RMP is taking the discourse further

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeatedly hitting out at dynastic politics asserting it deprived the common man his rightful place to participate in the political process, the Mumbai-based RSS-BJP-linked think tank Rambhau Mahalgi Prabodhini (RMP) is taking the discourse further.

A day-long seminar to discuss the impact of "dynasty based political parties" on the health of democratic process in the country and "ways and means to regulate" party formation will be

organised here on May 19 and the recommendations will be submitted to the Election Commission of India for its consideration.

The seminar organised at Nehru Memorial Auditorium will be inaugurated by BJP president J P Nadda. According to Rajya Sabha member Vinay Sahasrabudhe, who is also Vice Chairman of the RMP, the discussion would cover aspects like "democratic deficit" due to dynastic parties and "possible regulatory framework for preventing mushrooming of dynasty based political parties". Besides Nadda, RMP

Chairman Devendra Fadnis, senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani as also representatives of "non-dynastic parties" like Union Minister RCP Singh of JD (U), AIADMK's M Thambidurai and AGP's Birdendra Prasad Baishya will share their views on "dynasty-ism."

Academics like Prof



Anand Ranganathan and Prof Sandeep Shastri will also speak at this Seminar. JNU Vice Chancellor Santishree Jyotiraditya Scindia, (who incidentally hails from the royal Scindia family and his aunt Vadsundhara Raje, ex-Rajasthan Chief Minister; too is in the party).

Last week he said, "Dynastic politics has no place in the BJP and the Prime Minister believes that party workers be rewarded based on their work and not as per family affiliations."

The 'anti-dynasty theme' was recently also raised by the Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, (who incidentally hails from the royal Scindia family and his aunt Vadsundhara Raje, ex-Rajasthan Chief Minister; too is in the party).

dynast but other key office bearers also come from the same family, organisers of the seminar said that such practices dilute democratic credentials and cause a serious harm to the institution of political parties," said a statement by the think-tank without naming any political parties including Congress, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, National Conference or the DMK.

The 'anti-dynasty theme' was recently also raised by the Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, (who incidentally hails from the royal Scindia family and his aunt Vadsundhara Raje, ex-Rajasthan Chief Minister; too is in the party).

Last week he said, "Dynastic politics has no place in the BJP and the Prime Minister believes that party workers be rewarded based on their work and not as per family affiliations."

Sahasrabudhe sought to say that the total monopoly of dynasties over political parties "serves as a death-knell to internal democracy in parties". "Under the existing mechanism in such dynasty driven parties a single family controls practically everything, party finance, party membership, party candidacy, and also decisions about alliances and political partnerships. This serves as a death-knell to internal democracy in Parties", said Sahasrabudhe.

"A party giving candidature to sons and daughters of its leaders is one thing and a family acquiring total control of a party is totally different. The latter is most detrimental to the cause of democracy," he said.

In India, out of the 50 major political parties from the 2700 registered and recognised parties, at least 4/5th are dynasty based. This phenomenon "seriously narrows down the available choices for a voter as it afflicts the element of competition," he said.

# Rajnath to launch two indigenously designed, built warships on May 17

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will on May 17 concurrently launch two indigenously designed and built warships at the Mazgaon Docks Limited (MDL), Mumbai. The two ships are destroyer 'Surat' and frigate 'Udaygiri'.

While the Surat is a Project 15-B destroyer, Udaygiri is a Project 17-A frigate, officials said here on Friday. The Project 15B class of ships are the next generation stealth guided missile destroyers of the Indian Navy being built at the Mazgaon Docks.

'Surat' is the fourth ship of Project 15B Destroyers which heralds a significant makeover of the P15A (Kolkata Class) destroyers and is named after the commercial capital of the state of Gujarat and also the second largest commercial



hub of western India after Mumbai. Surat city has a rich maritime and ship building history and vessels built at the city in the 16th and 18th centuries were known for their longevity (of more than 100 years).

The ship 'Surat' has been built using the block construction methodology which involved hull construction at two different geographical locations and has been joined

together at MDL. The first ship of this class was commissioned in 2021. The second and third ships have been launched and are at different stages of outfitting and trials.

'Udaygiri', named after a mountain range in Andhra Pradesh, is the third ship of Project 17-A Frigates. These are follow-on of the P-17 Frigates (Shivalik Class) with improved stealth features, advanced weapons and sensors and platform management systems.

'Udaygiri' is the reincarnation of erstwhile 'Udaygiri', the Leander class anti-submarine warfare frigate, which saw numerous challenging operations in its illustrious service to the country spanning over three decades from 1976 to 2007.

Under the P-17A program, a total of seven ships, with four at the MDL and three at the Garden Reach Shipbuilders

and Engineers, Kolkata are under construction.

Various novel concepts and technologies like integrated construction, mega block outsourcing, project data management project lifecycle management have been adopted for the first time in indigenous warship design and construction in this project. The first two ships of P-17A project, were launched in 2019 and 2020 at MDL and GRSE respectively.

Both P-15B and P-17A ships have been designed in-house by the Directorate of Naval Design (DND), which has been the fountainhead for all warship design activities of the nation and during building phase at Shipyard, around 75% of orders for equipment and systems have been placed on indigenous firms including MSMEs which is a true testament of 'AatmaNirbharta' in the country.

# Senior IAS officer appointed as chairperson of CBSE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior IAS officer Nidhi Chibber has been appointed as the chairperson of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in a top-level bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre on Friday. Chibber, a 1994 batch Indian Administrative Service officer of Chhattisgarh cadre, is currently Additional Secretary, Ministry of Heavy Industries.

Vivek Kumar Dewangan, a 1993 batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, has been named Chairman & Managing Director, REC Ltd., Ministry of Power. He is currently Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Power.

While S Gopalakrishnan, Additional Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has been appointed as Additional Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Rakesh Sarwal, Additional Secretary, NITI

Aayog will be Managing Director, National Waqf Development Corporation Ltd., Ministry of Minority Affairs, the order said.

Aditi Das Rout, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development has been promoted as Additional Secretary in the same ministry. Shyam Bhagat Negi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Coal will be Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat.

Manisha Sinha, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance has been appointed as Additional Secretary, in the same department and Kumar Anugreh Prasad Sinha will be Additional Secretary of the National Disaster Management Authority.

Sinha, a 1992 batch IAS officer, is currently working in his cadre state Punjab. Amar Nath, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, has been posted as

Additional Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

Vikas Sheel, Additional Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare has been named as Additional Secretary and Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation while Alok Shekhar, who is presently working in his cadre state Punjab, will be Additional Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Rakesh Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs will be Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Surendra Singh, Joint Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has been appointed as Additional Secretary in the same department. Pravir Pandey, a 1992

batch officer of Indian Audit and Accounts Service, has been appointed as Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Vandana Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has been named as Additional Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ajay Tewari, currently Joint Secretary in Ministry of Labour & Employment will be Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power.

Alka Nangia Arora, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has been named as Joint Secretary and Financial Advisor, Department of Agricultural Research and Education by temporarily downgrading the post of Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor in the department, the order said.

# President Kovind to visit Jamaica, Saint Vincent and Grenadines from May 15 to 21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the first ever visit by an Indian head of state, President Ram Nath Kovind will visit Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) from May 15 to 21. This visit to the two countries is reflective of a commitment to Small Island Developing States and Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Giving details of the President's schedule, Secretary (East) Ministry of External Affairs Saurabh Kumar said here on Friday, Kovind will present cricket kits to aspiring Indian cricketers during his visit to the two countries including Jamaica and St. Vincent and Grenadines

(SVG).

The President will also hold discussions with his counterpart Governor-General Susan Dougan and will also meet Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves. Kovind will address the Parliament of SVG. Kumar said the SVG has about 7,700 people of Indian origin settled in the SVG.

As regards his itinerary in Jamaica, the President will hold delegation-level talks with his counterpart Patrick Allen, the Governor-General of Jamaica. Kovind will also meet Prime Minister Andrew Holness. He will also address the Joint Sitting of the two Houses of the Jamaican Parliament.

Jamaica and India have friendly relations. Jamaica is

also one of the Girmitya countries with a 70,000 strong Indian diaspora, who acts as a living bridge with India," the ministry said. The visit comes at a significant milestone as 2022 is the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Jamaica, it added.

Jamaica and SVG are active members in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The first-ever Head of State visit to these countries is a continuation of India's high-level engagement with the countries in the Caribbean region and emphasizes our continued commitment to work with Small Island developing countries, the external affairs ministry had said a few days back.

# Monsoon to hit Kerala on May 27, five days early: IMD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

South-west monsoon, considered as the lifeline of India's agri-based economy, is likely to bring first showers to Kerala by May 27, five days earlier than the normal onset date, the weather office announced on Friday.

"This year, the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala is likely to be earlier than the normal date of onset. The monsoon onset over Kerala is likely to be on May 27 with a model error of four days," India Meteorological Department (ID) said.

In 2009, the south-west monsoon had reached Kerala on May 23. Weather scientists attribute the early onset of southwest monsoon over

Kerala to the influence of the remnants of cyclone Asani that triggered the cross-equatorial flow, a key factor for the seasonal rains. The early arrival of the south-west monsoon comes at a time when parts of north-west India were experiencing extremely high maximum temperatures.

On Thursday, the weather office had forecast the onset of south-west monsoon over Andaman & Nicobar islands on May 15, nearly a week ahead of schedule.

"In association with enhanced cross equatorial winds, conditions are becoming favorable for the advance of Southwest Monsoon into South Andaman Sea, Nicobar Islands and some parts of southeast Bay of Bengal, around May 15,"

the IMD said in a statement.

At the same time, the weather office made it clear that past data suggest that there is no association of the date of monsoon advance over the Andaman Sea either with the date of monsoon onset over Kerala or with the seasonal monsoon rainfall over the country.

The IMD said due to strong westerly flow from Arabian Sea to south peninsula India in lower tropospheric levels fairly widespread light/moderate rainfall with isolated thunderstorm/lightning/gusty winds likely over Kerala, Mahe, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, south interior Karnataka and Lakshadweep over the next five days.

# Security preparedness for Amarnath Yatra reviewed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Friday reviewed the security preparedness for the Amarnath Yatra scheduled to begin on June 30 after a gap of two years.

The Home Secretary reviewed the security preparedness for the Amarnath Yatra with top officials of paramilitary forces and the Jammu and Kashmir administration, officials said.

About 10,000 paramilitary personnel (100 companies) in addition to Jammu and Kashmir Police are expected to be deployed along the two pilgrimage routes via Pahalgam and Baltal, they said. About three lakh pilgrims are likely to

take part in the yatra, which is expected to end on August 11. CRPF Director General Kuldeep Singh and BSF DG Pankaj Singh, along with other officers, attended the meeting physically, while Jammu and Kashmir officials attended it through video conference.

The annual pilgrimage to the cave shrine located in the upper reaches of south Kashmir could not be carried out in 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic, while it was cut short in 2019 just before the abrogation of Article 370. Amarnath pilgrimage will be a big security challenge for the government as Jammu and Kashmir has been witnessing a number of targeted killings in recent weeks.



# TN Min takes jibe at ‘Hindi will fetch job’ claims

Points out at pani puri sellers

PTI ■ COIMBATORE/CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy on Friday asserted that the State Government will continue with the two-language formula as its policy, and decried any attempts of alleged Hindi imposition and questioned claims that learning the language will fetch jobs.

Taking a dig on those who insist jobs will be available for people learning Hindi, the Minister asked who are selling ‘pani puri’ in the Coimbatore now, an obvious reference to the predominantly Hindi-speaking vendors involved in the trade in the city. He, however, later clarified his comments on pani puri sellers did not amount to ‘profiling.’

His comments came at the 37th convocation of Bharathiar University in Coimbatore, presided over by state Governor R N Ravi, also the varsity Chancellor, where the minister reiterated the ruling



DMK’s stand against ‘imposition’ of Hindi, a claim which Ravi sought to dismiss by saying “there is no question of imposition of Hindi or any other language on anyone.”

Ponmudy said he used the platform to highlight Tamil Nadu’s sentiments over the language issue as the Governor would convey them to the Centre. He recalled that English and Tamil have been in vogue in Tamil Nadu for long and that the same will continue while students were not against learning other languages, including Hindi.

Many said you will get jobs if you learn Hindi. Is it so...Look here in Coimbatore, who is selling pani puri. It is them (Hindi-speaking individuals),” he said.

“If a cat can go through a hole, can’t a rat,” he asked cryptically. Ponmudi said students of the state were ready to learn any language and that they were not against other languages including Hindi.

Noting that the state government was ready to adopt good schemes in the New Education Policy (NEP 2020), the minister said there should not be any imposition of Hindi and students can prefer any language as the third option, but the state will follow the system prevailing now. Alleging Hindi imposition through NEP 2020, the Tamil Nadu government has already said the two-language policy, comprising Tamil and English, will continue to remain in practice.

“We don’t want to agitate against the good things in NEP. We are ready to follow them. But at the same time, in Tamil Nadu we should have our own language. India is a land of unity in diversity. In Tamil Nadu we should follow our own education system... We should follow certain good policies from the NEP,” Ponmudy added.

# Heatwave sweeps western Raj; Barmer, Jaisalmer worst hit

PTI ■ BARMER/JAISALMER

Streets in many places in western Rajasthan bear a deserted look during much of the day as if a lockdown is in place, with people keeping indoors due to the heatwave.

Barmer recorded the highest day temperature of 48.2 degree Celsius on Thursday while the mercury soared to 47.2 in Jaisalmer.

The Meteorological Department has issued a red alert for Bikaner, Churu, Jaisalmer, Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jhunjhunu, and Kota districts for May 14.

It said the situation is likely to continue for next two days, after which some respite may be expected.

Meanwhile, dust storms coupled with heatwave in rural areas have disrupted the routine life.

“The heat is unbearable. As the day progresses, conditions become tougher and it becomes a challenge to go out in the afternoon,” Sunil Kumar, a trader in Barmer, told PTI.



He said the sale of ACs and coolers has suddenly shot up and customers visit either in the morning hours or in late evening hours to avoid heat-stroke.

The heatwave persists till late in the night and before sleeping on the roof, people sprinkle water to reduce the impact of the heat.

Generally, people used to take bath in the evening but due to the scorching sun, water of the tanks kept on the roof turns too hot to use.

Be it Barmer or Jaisalmer, people start the day quite early and finish morning routine work by 8-9 am.

“The situation is such that

even the use of water from tanks kept on the roof late in the evening can scorch the body. Even in the morning, we try to take a bath before the sun rise,” Barmer resident Ram Suthar said.

Most business establishments lower their shutters and roads remain almost empty.

To minimise the impact of sunlight, shopkeepers in Jaisalmer’s Pokaran town use green nets.

“It is too hot and blistering heat has made all of us suffer. Roads remain almost empty from 12 to 5 pm, and it feels like a lockdown like situation,” Jai Bhati, a local vendor in Jaisalmer said.

# BJP shares Pawar speech, calls him ‘Hindu hater’; NCP says video edited

PTI ■ MUMBAI

An NCP youth wing leader on Friday approached the cyber cell of Mumbai police seeking action against the BJP for uploading an alleged edited version of Sharad Pawar’s recent speech in order to portray him as a “Hindu hater”.

The @BJP4Maharashtra on Wednesday tweeted a short video of the speech and claimed that “atheist Sharad Pawar always hated Hindu religion” and he would not have achieved his political success without taking such a stand. However, some social media users pointed out it was an edited video and Pawar, in the speech made at an event on May 9 in Satara, was in fact referring to a poem by Jawahar Rathod that deals with casteism and untouchability.

In his complaint to the police, Suraj Chavan, president of the state unit of the



NCP’s youth wing, said, “An attempt was made to create a divide in communities and cause law and order problems by sharing such a tempered video on Twitter. Action must be taken against the Twitter handle (of the BJP) as per sections 499, 500, 66A and 66E.” Pawar had told reporters on Thursday that he was reading out lines from a poem that depicts the pain of the labour class, but went to take a swipe at the BJP by saying those who wanted to spread disinformation were free to do so.

# Panama Papers: ED seizes ₹88.30 L after raids in MP, Goa

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized Rs 88.30 lakh in cash after it searched the premises of a man, whose name figured in the Panama Paper leaks, in Madhya Pradesh and Goa as part of money laundering investigation against him.

The ED has conducted searches at four premises based at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) and Goa in a money laundering case registered against Sanjay Vijay Shinde.

“Sanjay Vijay Shinde figured in the Panama Paper Leaks, wherein, names of various individuals were revealed who had beneficial interests in various offshore entities.

Sanjay Vijay Shinde had beneficial interests in a British Virgin Islands based offshore entity, in whose Singapore-based bank account, more than Rs 31 crore were deposited by various offshore entities,” the ED said in a statement.

The Income Tax Department filed a prosecution complaint against Sanjay Vijay Shinde under provisions of



Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015. Subsequently, investigation under provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was initiated by the ED.

Searches were conducted at the four premises related to Shinde, including the residential premises at Goa and Bhopal, the premises of his then employer VS Dempo Holdings Pvt Ltd, Goa and the premises of RPM Sonic Adventures and Caravan Resorts at Bhopal.

It said a cash amount of Rs 88.30 lakh and various incrim-

inating documents were recovered from the premises and further investigation is under progress.

**Dubbed ‘Panama Papers’,** An investigation of a stockpile of records from Panamanian legal firm Mossack Fonseca by the Washington-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) in 2016 was dubbed as ‘Panama Papers’. It named several world leaders and celebrities who allegedly stashed money abroad in offshore companies.

As many as 426 India-linked cases figured in the Panama Papers.

# ED files chargesheet against two PFI leaders under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a Supplementary Prosecution Complaint (charge sheet) against two leaders of the Popular Front of India (PFI) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) before the Special PMLA Court, Lucknow with a prayer for awarding punishment to the accused.

The Court has taken cognizance of the offence of money laundering against the duo.

Earlier, a Prosecution Complaint had been filed by the ED on February 6 last year against five office bearers / members of PFI and its student wing Campus Front of India.

The latest supplementary prosecution complaint has

been filed against PFI leaders Abdul Razaq Peediakkal alias Abdul Razak BP and Asharaf Khadir alias Ashraf MK who, in association with other PFI leaders and members associated with overseas entities, were developing a residential project - Munnar Villa Vista Project (MVVP) at Munnar, Kerala.

The motive of the accused was to launder money collected from foreign countries as well as within the country and to generate funds for PFI to finance its radical activities, the ED said in a statement.

“Investigation established that ‘proceeds of crime’ in the form of unaccounted & unexplained cash as well as foreign funds were parked in MVVP and were projected as untainted,” it said.

# West Bengal School Service commission recruitment scam Judicial panel recommends criminal proceedings

Justice RK Bag (retd) committee submits report showing how 381 people were illegally appointed in Group C posts circumventing panel of candidates

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A judicial panel instituted by the Calcutta High Court to look into an alleged West Bengal School Service Commission recruitment scam has submitted a damaging report before the court that threatens to implicate a flock of senior Government staff and Ministers, sources said.

Recommending criminal proceedings against four former SSC officials and the then president of the autonomous institution, Justice RK Bag (retd) committee on Friday submitted a report showing how 381 people were illegally appointed in Group C posts circumventing the panel of candidates who had cleared the recruitment tests. The said 381 appointees had not

even appeared for the examinations. The report says that recommendations for appointment were made by an advisory panel allegedly created during when TMC General Secretary Partho Chatterjee was the Education Minister. The advisory panel thus created by the ministry did not have any legal validity as the SSC is an autonomous body — with its own time-tested recruitment procedures — the judicial committee has said.

According to sources another 222 successful candidates — whose names figured in the waiting list — were given appointments upon the recommendations of the advisory committee much after the date of appointment had elapsed.

The report has also held the

then West Bengal Board of Secondary Education and the five-member advisory panel headed by SP Sinha — created by the Education Ministry to supervise the appointment procedures — responsible for the recruitment scam.

The Division Bench of justices Subrata Talukdar and Ananda Kumar Mukherjee hearing the case would pass an order on May 18.

The Single Bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay had earlier ordered a CBI investigation into the matter asking the central agency to go to the extent of arresting any one — even a minister. The ordered was stayed by the Division Bench.

Similar recruitment cases involving hundreds of aspirants

for primary and secondary teachers’ posts as well as Group D staff are pending in the High Court while the aspirants who had cleared the tests and whose names appeared in the waiting lists were still holding dharnas.

According to sources appointments were made in lieu of crores of rupees.

“We have reports that anywhere between Rs 5 and Rs 15 lakh were accepted for Group D and Group C and teachers’ posts. According to Group D employees who had earlier lost jobs following the order of the single Judge Bench “not only the Trinamool Congress but also some turncoat leaders from East Midnapore who are now in the BJP had also accepted cash for appointment...”

# Maha: Firm owner arrested for GST fraud of ₹8 crore

PTI ■ THANE

Officials of the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) have busted racket involved in generating fake input tax credit worth Rs 8 crore and arrested the proprietor of a firm dealing in trading of construction material, an official said on Friday.

Acting on a specific input, the anti-evasion wing of the CGST Thane Commissionerate initiated an investigation against J.J. Lime Depot, which deals in trading of construction material, he said.

The probe revealed that the firm had fraudulently claimed input tax credit of Rs 8.05

crore and had also issued bogus invoices of more than Rs 40 crore for passing on of this tax credit, without any supply of goods, in gross violation of provisions of the CGST Act, 2017, the official said.

In his statement, recorded during the investigation, the proprietor of the firm admitted that he had issued fake invoices to many Mumbai-based infrastructure companies, for commission, he said.

The firm’s proprietor was arrested on Thursday under the CGST Act, 2017 and has been remanded to judicial custody for 14 days, the official added.

# DS Chauhan assumes additional charge as UP police chief

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (Intelligence) Devendra Singh Chauhan assumed the additional charge of the State’s DGP on Friday, two days after Mukul Goel was removed from the top post. Chauhan is an IPS officer of the 1988-batch.

DGP (Intelligence) Chauhan on Friday assumed the additional charge of the Uttar Pradesh police chief at the police headquarters here.

He will hold the additional charge till the appointment of a permanent director general of police (DGP), Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi had said on Thursday.

Following Goel’s removal from the post on Wednesday, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar was given the additional charge of the state police chief. The officer had also a courtesy meeting with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the day.

“I thank the chief minister from my heart for giving me the opportunity to serve the public as the (acting) DGP of Uttar Pradesh Police,” Chauhan said in tweet on the official Twitter handle of the UP DGP.

“The UP police will work with complete integrity and honesty according to the priorities of the government while maintaining team spirit like a family,” he added.

# Rape victim attempts self-immolation outside DM office in Aligarh

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

A woman, a rape victim, tried to commit suicide by pouring petrol on herself outside the DM’s office. Meanwhile, the eyes of the security personnel fell on her. They surrounded her and caught her. This woman was hurt due to the lack of action in the case of rape on the pretext of a job.

As soon as the matter came to the notice, the DM called the women’s police station, after which a report was filed on behalf of the victim woman against Dr. Saud Ali, former principal of Aligarh Muslim University’s Tibbia College, on charges of rape and

cheating. The victim has been sent for medical examination.

A 24-year-old woman resident of the metropolis reached the collectorate. On meeting DM Selva Kumari J, she told that in the year 2018, she got a temporary job as a ward attendant in Tibbia College and Hospital, Aligarh. Dr. Saud Ali, who was the principal during that time, called her and said if you arranged five lakh rupees, then he will make the job permanent. When she talked about not having money, Dr. Saud Ali proposed to have a physical relationship and on her refusal, Dr. Said Ali started harassing her.

# Woman tied to pole, heckled in Meghalaya

PTI ■ SHILLONG

A woman was tied to a pole at a market place at Jowai in Meghalaya and heckled for alleged pickpocketing prompting police to initiate action against those involved, officials said on Friday.

An updated video of the incident went viral on the social media on Friday.

It showed the woman being taken to a shed by unknown people during the daytime, asked questions and then being tied to a pole amidst jeering by onlookers.

Children, young people and women present at the spot

were seen making fun of her.

Her shawl and her bag, which she was seen carrying to the shed, could not be viewed in the video when she was being tied to the pole or afterwards. A senior police official told PTI, “An officer and a team from the women police station in the area have been sent to investigate the matter. All the people seen in the video will be called for questioning.”

He said, “Perpetrators will be dealt with in accordance with the law”.

Meghalaya Police, which was tagged along with Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, said on Twitter, “Action has

been taken by @Jowai\_Police in this regard.” Details were, however, not given.

The person who posted the image of the woman tied to the pole said that the superintendent of police of West Jaintia Hills district had been informed of the matter on Thursday.

“I hope the perpetrators are dealt with and the woman is safe and rehabilitated,” he said in his post. Women’s rights activist Agnes Kharshiing condemned the incident.

“We demand immediate arrest of all those involved in torturing the woman,” she told PTI.

# ‘Disease free India campaign’ launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of the 4th Naturopathy Day celebration here, “Disease Free India Campaign” has been launched with an aim to ensure better well being of the society amidst Covid-19 crisis.

Those present on the occasion included Dr Mahenderbhai Munjapara, Union Minister of State for Ayush, Raju Bisht, Member of Parliament, Jayaprakash, Founder Surya Foundation, Dr. Ishwar Basavaraddya, Director, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Prof (Dr) K Satyalakshmi, Director , National Institute of Naturopathy, Dr Raghuvendra Rao, Director, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy among

others. On the occasion of ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ with the support of National Institute of Naturopathy, Union Ministry of Ayush to propagate the Naturopathy, INO-Surya Foundation has organized approximately 500 naturopathy camps

in which more than 50 thousand people from rural and urban area of India have participated.

“Today, there is a need to expand naturopathy scientifically to common men as an option to the costly allopathic system,” Dr. Anant Biradar, National President-INO said.

He added that in this direction, INO-Surya Foundation



has been working for the last 25 years. “More than one lakh yoga naturopathy doctors, students and other people have joined this campaign from all over the country whose motive is to realize the dream of Self Health Reliance of Father of Nation Mahatma Gandhi ji and to reduce the health budget of family and country,” he said.







FIRST COLUMN

THE JAPANESE HAVE THEIRS, WE'LL SOON HAVE OURS

It's all about commuting from home to work and back!



R C **ACHARYA**

Urbanisation the world over has spawned transport systems ranging from bicycles to horse drawn carriages, buses, cars, trains. The ultimate in trains being the 'Bullet' trains which first appeared in Japan in 1964. Typically, a commute should last no more than 2 or 3 hours beyond which sustaining it on a daily basis, 5 days a week, months on end, would be somewhat inconvenient. The urban sprawl has been somewhat limited by this need to commute where typically the Railway commuter systems world over such as the Delhi Metro, London tube, or New York Transit system running at an average speed of 100 kmph would cover 200 kms in 2 hrs. However, the Japanese found a way to beat this limit by introducing trains with an average speed of 250 kmph, the bullet-shaped nose of the lead bogie earning it the name — 'Bullet' train. It connected Osaka 500 kms away to Tokyo, enabling a daily commute in just 2 hours. Rising out of the ashes of the Second World War II, Shinkansen was a bold reassessment of Japanese national pride, and involved concerted effort by the Government, business and the scientific community to place priority on train travel. These state-of-the-art trains run on dedicated tracks laid usually on concrete to minimise maintenance, and have few level crossings, enabling them to maintain an accident-free record for the last almost 60 years. Tokaido Shinkansen, covering 515 km between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka, was the first service, serving a number of major cities Shin-Yokohama, Shizuoka, Nagoya, and Kyoto en route.

Laid with tracks having a curve radius of no less than 4 km, the speed could now be raised to 260 km. Serving the major cities of Shin-Osaka, Shin-Kobe, Okayama, Hiroshima, Kokura, and Hakata, the line was a precursor to a nationwide Shinkansen network. Now, most trains attain a maximum speed of 300 kmph. A new station complex at Shinagawa, just south of Tokyo station, was opened in October 2003, which allowed some trains to start and terminate there, thereby increasing the number of trains on the Tokaido line from 11 to 15 per hour, that is, one every four minutes. In all, nine lines, ranging from the smallest of Hakata-Minami with just 8.5 km run by JR West, and the longest of Tokyo-Hachinohe of 593 km, totalling 2556 km are now in operation. Japan, being a relatively small country, the short runs at high speeds have successfully made the nation virtually a suburb of Tokyo. And to keep commuters happy, trains run, as suburban trains of Mumbai do, on some sections at three-and-half-minute intervals during peak hours. Back home, we still have to dream about our own "Bullet" trains soon becoming part of the Indian scenery running between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, making the 492-km journey in just two hours against the seven now taken by the super-fast Shatabdi Express. In the process it would also put fast growing tier 2 cities such as Surat, Valsad, Bharuch, and Vadodara, on a quick transit map connecting to India's financial capital, Mumbai. With trains running at an average speed of 250 kmph, completing a journey from city-centre to city-centre in just under two hours would also save a traveller the hassles of a long commute to and from the airport, security checks and uncertainty created during foggy days. Trains may be delayed, but you don't have to cool your heels in the passenger lounge waiting for the announcement to board. Last but not the least, they will always reach you to the intended destination, and in one piece.

*(The writer is a former Member, Railway Board. The views expressed are personal.)*



SANJEEV **SINGHAL**

# Sustainability - road to a better future

## Sustainability emphasizes the need for society to conserve resources, protect natural ecosystems, minimize pollution and promote social equity

Man kind is facing the greatest threat of climate emergency which is being termed as "Code red for humanity". Industrialization, urbanization and increasing population has led to unprecedented crisis catalysed by over exploitation of natural resources, and their contamination with toxic chemicals and pollutants. There are far-reaching impacts of ever-increasing greenhouse gases on our planet. According to estimates of various agencies like, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) this will result in rise of earth temperature by 02 °C by 2050.

Global warming is giving rise to natural calamities like, flood, drought, melting of glaciers, etc. As per a United Nations report the human-caused rate of extinction of species of both plants and animals at present is hundreds of times higher than the natural rate in the past and as the situation is turning out it can be thousands of times higher in near future. Across the world, people are facing challenge of availability of potable water, pure air to breathe and also ever an alarming problem of land degradation.

"The Global Risks Report 2022" issued by World Economic Forum states that over a 10-year horizon, the health of the planet dominates concerns: environmental risks are perceived to be the five most critical long-term threats to the world as well as the most potentially damaging to people and planet, with "climate action failure", "extreme weather", and "biodiversity loss" ranking as the top three most severe risks. Human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world, despite efforts to reduce the risks. People and ecosystems least able to cope are being hardest hit. Non-degradable wastes being generated is increasing every minute and are the cause of contamination of natural resources and also causing harm to the humans. As per a recent report, a mass of plastic waste named as "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" approximately 1.6 million km in size, twice the size of Texas, is floating on the surface of Pacific Ocean.

This alarming situation is the major attention area and it is the need of the hour that Governments and non-government organizations involving individuals, communities, countries, and the globe as whole, aligns themselves with the basic principles of 'sustainability'. Human society and economy are thriving on nature, and only harmonious existence will allow Homo sapiens to persist and thrive on this planet.

Sustainability emphasizes the need for society to conserve resources, protect natural ecosystems, minimize pollution and promote social equity. In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development, also popularly known as the Brundtland Report, defined development



A MASS OF PLASTIC WASTE NAMED AS "GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH" APPROXIMATELY 1.6M KM IN SIZE, TWICE THE SIZE OF TEXAS, IS FLOATING ON THE SURFACE OF PACIFIC OCEAN

*(The writer is a C.A. and Chairman, Sustainability Reporting Standards Board. The views expressed are personal.)*

Reporting is gaining momentum year on year due to stakeholder's ever-rising demands for more transparent and better communication regarding their sustainability practices, initiatives and performance. Much like their global counterparts, Indian corporates too are leaning towards the reporting frameworks to demonstrate their ability to create, preserve and grow value for a diverse stakeholder base.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has a strong tradition of service to the country towards sustainable as well as economic development. ICAI through Sustainability Reporting Standards Board (SRSB), has taken several initiatives in the sustainability domain and is working to strengthen the sustainability reporting ecosystem in the country. With a view to strengthen sustainability reporting ecosystem in the country, important publications like, Background Material on Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) and Standard on Assurance Engagements (SAE) 3410 "Assurance Engagements on Greenhouse Gas Statements" have been released. Sustainability Reporting Maturity Model (SRMM) Version 1.0, a comprehensive scoring tool, has been developed to measure their sustainability performance in terms of four levels of maturity of sustainability reporting namely Level 1 to Level 4. Publication on "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Accountants Creating Sustainable World - Part 1, 2 and 3" has been developed to encourage all stakeholders to contribute towards the attainment of SDGs. ICAI

Sustainability Reporting Awards 2020-21 and ICAI Sustainability Reporting Awards 2020-21 are being conducted to recognize, reward and encourage Excellence of Businesses in Sustainability Reporting and bring to light their outstanding contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Capacity building of the chartered accountants in this emerging area is being done by conducting online Certificate on Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting. Awareness initiatives like, Carbon Footprint Challenge, ICAI Sustainability Literacy Drive, Corporate film on Simple Steps to make our Planet Sustainable, Champions of SDGs and SDG Videos have also been undertaken. Contributing to the initiatives of SEBI to create an ecosystem via Social Stock Exchanges, ICAI is in the process of developing Social Audit Standards and working on Certification Course for Social Auditors.

ICAI is partnering with stakeholders, government, regulators, and others to help maximize contribution to SDGs and also collaborating with international bodies in advancing sustainability agenda. ICAI also welcomes the announcement of formation of new International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) by the IFRS Foundation (IFRSF) and extends full support towards convergence to a single set of sustainability reporting standards. New initiatives have been planned in the area of Sustainable Finance, Green Bonds, ESG rating and Climate related Financial Disclosures. ESG Talk show, sustainability awareness quiz, training program for board members on ESG, tree plantation drive are other initiatives in pipeline. All these initiatives are focused towards promoting sustainable organizations that create long-term value for investors and society.

A sustainable future requires that homo sapiens live within planetary boundaries in harmony with nature. Governments and policymakers should work together to enhance national implementation and strengthen institutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by the target date of 2030, leaving no one behind. As individuals, we all should contribute in addressing this global crisis by changing our mindset and habits and adopting sustainable choices in our day-to-day life. A healthy planet will thrive and nurture happy and safe survival for present and future generations.

Venture Capitalists to provide strategic direction to startups

The role of venture capitals has to be much more than selecting a good business to provide funding and should extend to value-creation



HIMA BINDU **KOTA**

*(The writer is Associate Professor at Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal.)*

fact, according to KPMG report, in 2020, revenue of atleast 30 percent of Indian startups declined by about 80 percent, whereas 70 percent of them had the probability of running for the next three months only.

Apart from business environment created by government and a robust banking network, a strong venture capital industry is one of the crucial requirements to develop successful startups. Overall, the success of start-ups is a collaborative effort of both entrepreneurs and venture capitalists.

Venture capitalists work in a highly competitive environment and yet typically generate a mediocre return. Add to this the high failure rate of entrepreneurs, a better working strategy is a critical need of the hour

high risk, technology-oriented companies that operate in a fast and volatile environment with constantly changing paradigms. They work with entrepreneurs with an idea but fairly less experience about implementing the idea, identifying and putting together a competent team and developing the customer base. The lack of experience and an established record of performance of startups make investments in them extremely risky and uncertain. According to Harvard Business School's entrepreneurship professor Shikhar Ghosh, about three-quarters of startups backed by venture capitalists are not successful enough to return cash to their investors. Therefore, the role of venture capitals has to be much more than selecting a good business and provide

funding and should extend to value-creation. In addition to providing strategic direction, most venture capitalists are already extending their support to various functional aspects of start-ups. Firstly, venture capitalists help in team building in start-ups by identifying and recruiting appropriate talent, which is the most important asset of a start-up. Secondly, providing support to the administrative activities like accounting, legal and other routine organizational responsibilities can free up founders' time which can be further used for growing business. Thirdly, venture capitalists help start-ups in building the right skills for all employees and the leadership team. Fourthly, probably the most important, is providing strategic focus by defining the

target market, underlining the scope of the product or service, identifying the competitive advantage and providing appropriate strategic direction. Additionally, support to building a customer base is an essential encouragement. And lastly, the most important aspect of venture capitalist and entrepreneur relation is access to its network. Venture capitalists also provide performance metrics to startups to monitor, measure and report their performance at their early stage.

So, on what basis should a venture capital fund decide the extent of its involvement in a startup - at a very basic level, the participation is only financial; the next level is mentorship and guidance; and the advanced level is operational. The decision is ought to be made by analyzing its assets and resources. The most common and important resource of a VC is cash that represents the absolute amount of funds available. If the cash resources are strong, VCs would invest in an administrative function that would add value to a startup, and in case the cash resources are not strong, VCs can introduce the startups to their network which can meaningfully assist them. Brand resources are also very important for a VC which can be evaluated by the frequency of their citing in print, electronic and social media. Network resources are perhaps the most crucial of all contributions towards the growth of startups. Introductions to members of personal networks can help startups in either time-savings or cost-savings or both.



# Zelenskyy says he's ready to talk with Putin



AP ■ ROME

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says that he's ready to talk with Russian President Vladimir Putin and that "we must find an agreement," but with no ultimatum as a condition.

Zelenskyy also told Italian RAI state TV in an interview scheduled to be broadcast on Thursday night that Ukraine will never recognize Crimea as part of Russia, which annexed

that part of southern Ukraine in 2014.

"Crimea has always had its autonomy, it has its parliament, but on the inside of Ukraine," Zelenskyy said, in excerpts of the interview that RAI released earlier on Thursday.

The interviewer asked the Ukrainian leader about a comment by French President Emmanuel Macron cautioning against any humiliation of Putin.

"We want the Russian army to leave our land, we aren't on Russian soil," Zelenskyy replied. "We won't save Putin's face by paying with our territory. That would be unjust."

In another comment, Zelenskyy sounded a forward-looking note. "We have to think of the future of Russia. I, as president of Ukraine, say these are our neighbors. There will be other presidents, other presidents and other generations" of Russia, Zelenskyy said.

# UN: Ukraine war child rights crisis with school attacks

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The war in Ukraine is a "child rights crisis" where education is under attack, nearly 100 youngsters have been killed in just the last month, and millions more have been forced to flee their homes, the UN children's agency said Thursday.

Omar Abdi, deputy executive director of UNICEF, told the UN Security Council that children are paying "an unconscionably high price" in the war, with 239 confirmed killed and 355 wounded since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24. He said the actual numbers are much higher.

"These attacks must stop," he said. "Ultimately, children need an end to this war -- their futures hang in the balance."

Abdi said the school year came to a standstill after Russia invaded its smaller neighbour, and as of last week, at least 15 of 89 UNICEF-supported schools in the country's east had been damaged or destroyed in the fighting.

"Hundreds of schools across the country are reported to have been hit by heavy artillery, airstrikes and other explosive weapons in populated



areas, while other schools are being used as information centres, shelters, supply hubs or for military purposes -- with long-term impact on children's return to education," Abdi said.

In mid-March, over 15,000 schools resumed education in Ukraine, mostly through remote learning or in-person hybrid options, he said. "It is estimated that 3.7 million (37 lakh) children in Ukraine and abroad are using online and distance learning options," he said. But, Abdi said "enormous obstacles" to education remain, including school availability, resources, language barriers and movement of children and their families. Less than five per cent of refugee pre-school children are estimated to be enrolled in public kindergartens, he said.

Abdi and many council members spoke about what he called a "horrifying attack" on a school in the eastern Ukrainian town of Bilohorivka last weekend, when a bomb hit while women and children sheltered in the building.

US deputy ambassador Richard Mills said the blast killed as many as 60 people, many of them children. "And reliable reports indicate that when first responders arrived at the school to assist victims of the bombing, Russia's forces opened fire on them," he added.

Ukraine's UN ambassador, Sergiy Kyslytsya, said only 30 civilians were rescued and the school that had once been filled with joyful children "was turned by a Russian pilot into another mass grave".

British Ambassador Barbara Woodward said there is evidence "that Russia is committing four of the Security Council's six grave violations against children in times of war" -- violations listed in a 1999 council resolution that condemned the targeting of children in conflict as well as recruiting and using children as soldiers.

# Ukraine puts Russian soldier accused of killing a Ukrainian civilian opened Friday, the first war crimes trial since Moscow's invasion of its neighbour.

AP ■ KYIV

Scores of journalists packed inside a small courtroom in the Ukrainian capital where the suspect appeared in a small glass cage for the start of a trial that has drawn international attention amid accusations of repeated atrocities by Russian forces.

Vadim Shyshmarin, 21, is accused of shooting a 62-year-old Ukrainian man in the head in the northeastern village of Chupakhivka. He could get up to life in prison.

The killing occurred in the early days of the war, when Russian tanks advancing on Kyiv were unexpectedly routed and tank crew retreated.

Shyshmarin, a member of a tank unit that was captured by Ukrainian forces, admitted that he shot the civilian in a video posted by the Security Service of Ukraine.

"I was ordered to shoot," said Shyshmarin, of the killing on Feb. 28. "I shot one (round)



at him. He falls. And we kept on going."

Shyshmarin's video statement is "one of the first confessions of the enemy invaders," according to the Ukrainian security service.

The trial comes as Russia's campaign to take Ukraine's east slowly grinds on - but its invasion has resulted in widespread repercussions beyond the battlefield.

Two and a half months after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent a shiver of fear through Moscow's neighbors, Finland's president and prime minister announced Thursday that the Nordic country should apply right away for membership in NATO, the military defense pact founded in part to counter the Soviet Union.

# Russia took losses in failed river crossing, officials say

AP ■ KYIV

Russia lost significant numbers of troops and important equipment when Ukrainian forces thwarted their attempt to cross a river in the east, British officials said Friday, another sign of Moscow's struggle to win decisive victories and salvage a war gone awry.

Ukrainian authorities, meanwhile, opened the first war crimes trial of the conflict, in proceedings that will be closely watched by international observers eager to ensure atrocities are fairly prosecuted. A Russian soldier stands accused of killing a Ukrainian civilian in the early days of the war.

The trial gets underway as Russia's campaign in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland of the Donbas makes faltering progress.

Ukraine's airborne forces command has released photos of what it said was a damaged Russian pontoon bridge over the Siversky Donets River and several destroyed or damaged Russian military vehicles nearby. Ukrainian news reports said troops thwarted Russian passage across the river earlier this week, leaving dozens of tanks or military vehicles damaged or forcing troops to abandon them.

Britain's Defense Ministry said Friday that Russia lost "significant" elements of at least one battalion tactical group -- about 1,000 troops -- as well as equipment used to quickly deploy a makeshift floating bridge while trying to cross the river.

"Conducting river crossings in a contested environment is a highly risky maneuver and speaks to the pressure the Russian commanders are under to make progress in their operations in eastern Ukraine," the ministry said in its daily intelligence update. They have struggled to do so, even after diverting troops from other parts of the country to the Donbas, the statement said.

# Russian threats push Finland towards joining NATO

AP ■ KYIV

Finland's leaders Thursday came out in favour of applying to join NATO, and Sweden could do the same within days, in a historic realignment on the continent two-and-a-half months after Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine sent a shiver of fear through Moscow's neighbours.

The Kremlin reacted by warning it will be forced to take retaliatory "military-technical" steps. On the ground, meanwhile, Russian forces pounded areas in central, northern and eastern Ukraine, including the



last pocket of resistance in Mariupol, as part of its offensive to take the industrial Donbas region, while Ukraine recaptured some towns and villages in the northeast.

The first war-crimes trial of a Russian soldier since the start

of the conflict is set to open Friday in Kyiv. A 21-year-old captured member of a tank unit is accused of shooting to death a civilian on a bicycle during the opening week of the war.

Finland's president and prime minister announced that the Nordic country should apply right away for membership in NATO, the military defence pact founded in part to counter the Soviet Union. "You (Russia) caused this. Look in the mirror," Finnish President Sauli Niinisto said this week. While the country's Parliament still has to weigh in, the announcement means Finland is all but certain

to apply -- and gain admission -- though the process could take months to complete. Sweden, likewise, is considering putting itself under NATO's protection.

That would represent a major change in Europe's security landscape: Sweden has avoided military alliances for more than 200 years, while Finland adopted neutrality after its defeat by the Soviets in World War II. Public opinion in both nations shifted dramatically in favour of NATO membership after the invasion, which stirred fears in countries along Russia's flank that they could be next.

# India exploring options to minimise impact of Russian war on its students studying in Ukrainian universities

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

India has said that it is exploring options to minimise the impact on the education of Indian students in Ukrainian universities, as several of them, mostly studying at medical colleges, were worried about their future after fleeing the war-torn East European country.

India's Deputy Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador R Ravindra, during a briefing on the human-

itarian situation in Ukraine at the UN Security Council, said the impact of the situation on the education of children has been severe and further aggravated the pandemic-related challenges that children were already facing.

He said that the situation has affected foreign students, including those from India. India facilitated the safe return of about 22,500 Indians, mostly students, from Ukraine after Russia launched a large scale military aggression against it.

"We are exploring options to minimise the impact on our students' education. We appreciate the relaxations made by the Ukrainian Government for this academic year in respect of medical students," Ravindra said.

Ravindra reiterated that India supports calls for guarantees of safe passage to deliver essential humanitarian corridors. He also noted that the food security challenges emanating from the conflict "requires us to respond by going beyond constraints that bind us presently.

# Turkey's leader opposes letting Finland, Sweden join NATO

**Helsinki:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday said his country is "not favourable" toward Finland and Sweden joining NATO, indicating that Turkey could use its status as a member of

the Western military alliance to veto moves to admit the two countries. "We are following developments concerning Sweden and Finland carefully, but we are not of a favourable opinion," Erdogan told

reporters. The Turkish leader explained his opposition by citing Sweden and other Scandinavian countries' alleged support for Kurdish militants and others whom Turkey considers to be terrorists. **AP**

# UK adds Putin's ex-wife, alleged girlfriend to sanctions list

AP ■ LONDON

The UK Government on Friday added further names to its list of financial sanctions aimed at Russian President Vladimir Putin, including his former wife and a retired gymnast allegedly in a relationship with him, in reaction to the ongoing conflict with Ukraine.

# US in close touch with India on standing up against Russian aggression: White House

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The United States continues to be in close touch with India about its efforts to rally the world to stand up against Russian aggression, the White House said on Thursday.

"We continue to remain in close touch with India about our efforts to rally the world to stand up against Russian aggression. That means implementing and abiding by sanctions that have been put in place," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference.

US Deputy Security



Advisor Dileep Singh recently took a trip to India to have a conversation about that, she said.

"We continue to encourage countries to speak out about Russian aggression. And obviously on COVID-19, we have been an important partner with India in providing supply and vaccines in

their times of need over the course of the last 15 months and certainly will continue to work with them on that," Psaki said in response to a question.

Responding to another question, Psaki said she is sure President Biden would travel to two Quad countries -- India and Australia -- in the future. Biden is scheduled to travel to Japan and South Korea later this month.

"I am sure he will, in the future. But we have two foreign trips we are still trying to finalise at this point. And so I do not have any predictions about when," Psaki said.

# India abstains from UNHRC resolution on deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS/GENEVA

India abstained in the UN Human Rights Council on a resolution on the deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression, in which the Council reiterated its demand for an immediate cessation of military hostilities.

The Geneva-based Council on Thursday closed its 34th special session after adopting the resolution. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 33 in favour, China and Eritrea voting against and 12 abstentions, including India, Armenia, Bolivia, Cameroon, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Pakistan, Senegal, Sudan, Uzbekistan and Venezuela.

Since January this year, India has abstained on procedural votes and draft resolutions in the UN Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council that

deplored Russian aggression against Ukraine. India's Permanent Representative to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, at the session said that India's position on the Ukraine conflict has been steadfast and consistent.

"We remain deeply concerned at the unfolding developments in Ukraine. We have constantly called for immediate cessation of violence and an urgent end to hostilities," he said, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reiterated this in his interactions with global leaders, including the leaderships of Russia and Ukraine. "India continues to believe that pursuing the path of dialogue and diplomacy is the only way out," he said.

In the resolution as orally revised, the Human Rights Council reiterated its demand for an immediate cessation of military hostilities against Ukraine, to refrain from any human

rights violations and abuses in the country, refrain from any State-sponsored disinformation, propaganda for war or advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, related to the aggression against Ukraine.

The Council also requested the Commission of Inquiry to conduct an inquiry, consistent with its mandate and international standards, and in coordination with other national and international mechanisms, to address the events in the areas of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy regions in late February and March 2022, including their gender dimension, with a view to hold to account those responsible.

Pandey said that the impact of the Ukraine situation is being felt beyond the region as oil prices are skyrocketing, there is shortage of food grains and fertilisers in the world.

# Moldova is wary amid fears fighting may spread

AP ■ WEISSENHAUS (GERMANY)

Moldova's foreign minister says the small Eastern European country is on alert for any signs the conflict in neighboring Ukraine could spill across the border.

Foreign Minister Nicu Popescu told reporters Friday on the sidelines of a G-7 foreign ministers' meeting in Germany that "the situation is of course fragile, but it is nonetheless relatively calm. We do not face an acute military crisis today." At the same time the government has been preparing for "the full spectrum of options," he said.

"Our interior ministry, defense ministry, intelligence services are on high alert," Popescu said, citing the presence of Russian troops in the separatist Moldovan region of Transnistria.

Transnistria is a disputed, Russian-backed breakaway state that borders southwestern Ukraine. Popescu said the Moldovan government was in regular contact with the de facto authorities in Transnistria "because we all have a commitment and an obligation and a duty to keep peace in the entire Moldova, which includes the Transnistrian region."

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प.सं. 208      **Date Extension Notice/Corrigendum-01**      दि. 13.05.2021

Due to unavoidable reasons the Date of Submission & opening of the e-NIT No. 01/DGM/Kishau/KCL/2022-23 invited by the office of the Deputy General Manager, Kishau Project, Dakpathar is being extended as below:  
**Last date & time for submission of bids on the Portal :** Upto 21.05.2022 at 17:00 Hrs.  
**Last Date & time of Offline Submission of document (in original) :** Upto 23.05.2022 at 17:00 Hrs.  
**Date & time of opening of bids on the Portal :** On 24.05.2022 at 12:00 Hrs.  
The Corrigendum has been uploaded on the e-Procurement portal <https://uktenders.gov.in>.  
Other Terms & Condition will remain same.  
Information regarding Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation etc. of tender may be obtained from the website.  
Full & Further Details of tender can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://uktenders.gov.in>.  
Dy. General Manager Kishau Project

**"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"**

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**  
**ICICI Bank**  
Whereas  
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.  
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Bhavesh Kumar/ Neha Sharma/ M/s Bhavesh Kumar Huf/ LBLUD00005076880/ LBLUD00005331735	House Comprised in Khasra No.699, Khatta No.1601/1994, Situated at Village Barewal Awana, H.B No.157, Abadi Known as Kalka Ji Enclave, Tehsil & Distt. Ludhiana Punjab/ May 10, 2022	December 15, 2021 Rs. 1,14,62,390/-	Gurgaon

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.  
**Date : May 13, 2022**  
**Place: Gurgaon**  
**Authorized Officer**  
**ICICI Bank Limited**



# Opp parties in Lanka not to become part of Wickremesinghe Govt

## Would support its economic recovery prog from outside

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Most of the Opposition parties in Sri Lanka on Friday announced that they would not become a part of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's interim government but would support its economic policies from outside to help the debt-ridden island nation's early recovery.

The 73-year-old United National Party (UNP) leader was appointed as Sri Lanka's 26th prime minister on Thursday as the coun-

try was without a government since Monday when President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's elder brother and prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned after violence erupted following an attack on the anti-gov- ernment protesters by his support- ers. The attack triggered wide- spread violence against Rajapaksa loyalists, leaving nine people dead and wounding over 200 others.

"We cannot become a part of this Rajapaksa-Wickremesinghe government," Wimal Weerawansa, a legislator for the independent group from President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's SLPP said.

Former President Maithripala Sirisena's SLPF central committee has also decided not to be part of the government.

The Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) said they would also not be part of the government



while the main Opposition Samagi Jana Balavegaya (SJB) said United National Party (UNP) leader

Wickremesinghe has no legitimacy as he was not even elected in the 2020 parliamentary election.

SJB general secretary Ranjith Madduma Bandara said the party would not accept ministerial posi- tions and called for Wickremesinghe's resignation.

JVP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake said the decision taken by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to appoint Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister, is one that was made with zero regard to the voice of the people. The JVP leader ridiculed the decision, saying the appointment has no legitimacy and has no demo- cratic value.

"Wickremesinghe is a person who held the post of Prime Minister, formed governments, and yet could not even win a single seat at the last General Election. He did not even have the required number of votes to enter parliament. If an election is used to measure the consent of the people, elections have shown that he

has no mandate, and that is why the people sent him packing," he said.

The interim government idea was mooted by the powerful Buddhist clergy and civil society as a means to find a solution for the ongoing economic crisis. With Mahinda Rajapaksa's resignation on Monday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said he was talking to political parties to set up an inter- im government.

Wickremesinghe, who had been sworn in as the prime minister of Sri Lanka on five occasions before, said his primary task was to tackle the worst economic crisis with assistance from all parties.

The new prime minister, who has only his seat in the Parliament, said he commanded a majority coming from both sides.

Sri Lanka's worst economic cri- sis has provoked widespread protests

calling for political reform and the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. On April 1, President Rajapaksa imposed a state of emer- gency, lifting it five days later. The government reimposed a state of emergency on May 6 after police fired teargas and arrested students protesting near parliament, which was adjourned until May 17.

Although the protests have been overwhelmingly peaceful, the police fatally shot a protester on April 19, and on several occasions have used teargas and water can- nons against protesters. The author- ities have made numerous arrests and repeatedly imposed curfews. The political crisis was triggered in late March when people hurt by long hours of power cuts and essen- tial shortages took to the streets demanding the resignation of the government.

## Missile attack kills 10 Syrian soldiers: Report

AP ■ BEIRUT

A missile struck a Syrian mili- tary bus in the country's north early on Friday, killing 10 soldiers, Syria's state-run media and an opposition monitor said.

It wasn't immediately clear who was behind the attack, one of the deadliest since a truce deal reached more than two years ago.

The official news agency SANA said "terrorists" targeted the bus in the western countryside of Aleppo, in the Anjara area. Nine soldiers were wounded in the attack, the report said.

There was no claim of respon- sibility. The area is dominated by the al-Qaida-linked militant group, Hayaat Tahrir al-Sham.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights -



a war-monitoring group with a network of activists on the ground - reported the attack but said that Syrian opposition forces fired the missile and that the 10 killed were government-allied fighters.

Most of Syria has returned to government control after a decade of war, with the exception of the

opposition-held bastion of Idlib in the northwest and nearby areas, and the oil-rich northeast, held by US-backed Syrian Kurdish groups.

The violence has largely tapered off in most of the country, but few among the nearly six million refugees scattered across the globe have returned.

### US-SHOOTING

## Several hurt after shots fired outside Arkansas graduation

AP ■ HOT SPRINGS (US)

Several people were injured after a large fight broke out and shots were fired outside of an Arkansas convention center where a graduation ceremony had taken place, police said.

The shooting happened Thursday night outside of the Hot Springs Convention Center, which had hosted a graduation ceremony for Hot Springs World Class High School, The Sentinel-Record reported.

The fight and subsequent shooting happened in a parking lot adjacent to the convention center, said Hot Springs Police Officer First Class Omar Cervantes. He said "multiple people" were injured but did not have an exact number or the nature of their injuries.

The injured were taken to hospitals and their conditions weren't immediately released. No arrests have been announced.

## China reacts guardedly to Wickremesinghe's appointment

PTI ■ BEIJING

China, one of the largest creditors of Sri Lanka, on Friday reacted warily to the appointment of Ranil Wickremesinghe as the coun- try's Prime Minister suc- ceeding pro-Beijing Mahinda Rajapaksa, saying it supports the government's efforts to sustain stability in the face of chaos.

"As a traditional, friend- ly country to Sri Lanka, we closely follow the latest devel- opments, and we also support the Sri Lanka government's effort to sustain stability," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here.

He was replying to ques- tions, seeking China's reac- tion to United National Party (UNP) leader Wickramasinghe's appoint- ment considering that he had a history of probing Chinese investments and whether Beijing will offer debt relief to Sri Lanka like India.

Zhao reiterated Beijing's earlier call to all political parties in Sri Lanka to main- tain solidarity, sustain stabil- ity, and overcome difficulties together but gave no indication whether China will step in to help the debt-ridden island nation like India which has committed more than USD 3 billion in loans, credit lines and credit swaps since January this year.

Public Notice

For Disposal Of Medical Records Older Than 31-12-2017

**SAVE SIGHT CENTRE**

A-14, opp, Adarsh Nagar Metro Station Gate No.1, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi-110033.

With reference to the advertisement given on 06-05-2022 we hereby inform that the Medical Records of patients in save sight centre hospital A-14,opp, Adarsh Nagar Metro Station Gate No.1, Adarsh Nagar Delhi till 31-12-2017 have been destroyed.

MRD Incharge Save Sight Centre Hospital.

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Notice is hereby given that Mr. Sanjay Singhal, Mr. Arvind Singhal & Mr. Sachin Singhal partners of M/s. SAS International are the absolute owners of Industrial Property Bearing No. D29, (area measuring 1500 sq. mtrs), situated in the Industrial Area at Surajpur, Site-1, Village-Kasna, Greater Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, (U.P.) vide Lease Deed dated 2/1/07, whereas they have lost the following Documents pertain to the said property:-

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Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)

Shop No. 5 & 6, Pkt-E, CSC, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi-91, Mob. 9810063351

## N Korea reports 6 deaths after admitting Covid-19 outbreak

AP ■ SEOUL

Six people have died and 350,000 have been treated for a fever that has spread "explosively" across North Korea, state media said Friday, a day after the country acknowledged a COVID-19 outbreak for the first time in the pandemic.

North Korea likely doesn't have sufficient COVID-19 tests and said it didn't know the cause of the mass fevers. But a big coronavirus outbreak could be devastating in a country with a broken health care system and an unvaccinated, malnourished population.

The North's Korean Central News Agency said of the 350,000 people who developed fevers since late April, 162,200 have recovered. It said 18,000 people were newly found with fever symptoms on Thursday alone, and 187,800 are being isolated for treatment.

One of the six people who died was infected with the omicron variant, KCNA said. But it wasn't immediately clear how many of the total illnesses were COVID-19. North Korea imposed a lockdown Thursday after acknowledging its first COVID-19 cases. Those reports said tests from an unspecified number of people came back positive for the omicron variant.

It's unusual for isolated North Korea to admit to the outbreak of any infectious disease, let alone one as menacing as COVID-19, as it's intensely proud and sensitive to outside perception about its self-described "socialist utopia."

While North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had occasionally been candid about his worsening economy and other problems, he had repeatedly expressed confidence about pandemic response and wasn't seen wearing a mask in public until Thursday.

State TV showed Kim wearing a mask as he entered what the broadcast described as the country's headquarters of its pandemic response, which appeared to be Pyongyang's landmark Koryo Hotel. He took off the mask and smoked a cigarette while talking with officials.

KCNA said Kim criticized officials for failing to prevent "a vulnerable point in the epidemic prevention system." He said the outbreak was centered around the capital, Pyongyang, and stressed all work and residential units should be isolated from one another while residents should be provided every convenience during the lockdown.

"It is the most important challenge and supreme tasks facing our party to reverse the immediate public health crisis situation at an early date, restore the stability of epidemic prevention and protect the health and well-being of our people," KCNA quoted Kim as saying.

The spread of the virus may have been accelerated by a massive military parade on April 25, where Kim gave a speech and show- cased his army and weaponry in front of tens of thousands of people.

Cheongs Seong-Chang, an analyst at South Korea's Sejong Institute, said the pace of the fever's spread suggests the crisis could last months and possibly into 2023, causing major disruption in the poorly equipped country.

According to the latest figures from the World Health Organization, North Korea reported to the U.N. Agency that it tested 64,207 people for COVID-19 in 2020 through March 22 this year, a small number that may indicate insufficient tests for a population of 26 million.

## Imran seeks review of Pak SC verdict on Speaker ruling on no-confidence vote

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has filed a review petition in the Supreme Court, challenging the apex court's April 7 decision on the ruling of the then National Assembly speaker on the crucial vote of no-confidence.

In a major blow to Khan, the Supreme Court had struck down then National Assembly Speaker Qasim Suri's controversial move to dismiss a no-confidence motion against the crick- eter-turned-politician.

Suri, who is associat- ed with Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, on April 3 dismissed the no-confidence motion against the ex-premier, claiming that it was linked with a "foreign conspiracy" to topple the government and hence was not main- tainable.

Minutes later, President Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly on the advice of Khan who had effectively lost the majority.

The Express Tribune newspaper reported on Friday that in his review petition on Thursday,

Khan pleaded that Article 248 of the Constitution barred any other institu- tion from interfering in the affairs of Parliament and Suri's ruling was in accordance with Article 5, when he rejected the no-confidence motion.

The review petition, filed through Imtiaz Siddiqui and Chaudhry Faisal Hussain, stated that Article 248 did not make the applicant answerable for exercising any consti- tutional powers before any court. It contended that the bench had erred to appreciate the provisions of Articles 66, 67 and 69,

the report said.

The Apex Court has erred to appreciate the mandate of the Constitution which ensures that Parliament, as well as the members/offi- cers thereof, the President as well as the Prime Minister, are not answer- able in the exercise of their functions as well as discretionary powers before any Court," the plea said.

Also, their discharge of constitutional obliga- tions could not be called into question before any court under the Constitution, it added.

## Biden admin to release \$45bn for nationwide internet

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration is tak- ing the first steps to release USD 45 billion to ensure that every US resident has access to high-speed internet by roughly 2028, inviting governors and other leaders on Friday to start the application process.

Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo is overseeing the distri- bution and said that universal access to broadband internet would be akin to the electrification of rural America during the 1930s, a recog- nition that the internet is a utility needed for US residents to function in today's economy. "There's more than 30 million Americans who don't have internet," Raimondo said."And in this day and age with- out high-speed internet, you can't go to school, can't go to the doctor, can't do simple things. Think of how many times in a day you Google something or go online."

The funding is part of the USD 65 billion for broadband in the USD



1 trillion infrastructure package that President Joe Biden signed into law last November.

That bipartisan package is one of the policy achievements that the Democratic president is trying to sell to voters ahead of the mid-term elections, though it's unclear how much the message will resonate when much of the country is focused on high inflation, cultural differences and political identity.

Former President Donald Trump has dismissed the infra- structure spending as "fake" even though the broadband spending was one of his own priorities.

His Agriculture Department said in 2020 that it had invested USD 744 million on rural internet connectivity, a sum that was mean- ingful yet insufficient.

Raimondo is travelling to Durham, North Carolina. She'll announce that governors can send their letters of intent to receive the broadband money, which comes from three programmes totalling USD 45 billion. Each state would then get USD 5 million to help it consult with residents and write its plan.The Commerce Department recognises that internet needs vary by state. The money could be used to lay fibre optic cable, build out Wi-Fi hotspots or even reduce month- ly charges in places where price is the main challenge.

After the administration's announcement on Monday that it would provide a USD 30 monthly subsidy to low-income households, Raimondo noted that states could use the additional money from these programs to make the service free to some users.

## No environment for fruitful, constructive dialogue with India, says Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has ruled out any imminent talks with India due to the absence of a proper "envi- ronment" for "a fruitful, constructive dialogue".

The remarks by Foreign Office spokesman Asim Iftikhar came in response to questions on ties with India during a weekly briefing on Thursday.

He was asked about talks in the context of overtures by the new gov- ernment and the appoint- ment of a trade minister in Delhi.



Iftikhar said there was a national consensus on this issue and successive governments had pursued the same policy of seeking peaceful settlement of dis- putes with India.

"In diplomacy, you never shut the doors," he said.

Iftikhar said that not with standing Pakis- tan's desire for a

diplomatic resolution of disputes,"the environment for a fruitful, constructive dialogue is not there". India has repeatedly told Pakistan that it desires normal neighbourly rela- tions with Islamabad in an environment free of terror, hostility, and violence. India has said the onus is on Pakistan to create an environment free of terror and hostility.

Hopes for the revival of talks between the two countries were rekindled after Pakistan decided to appoint a trade minister at its High Commission in New Delhi after more than

two years.

However, the com- merce ministry in a state- ment on Thursday ruled out any change in the trade policy toward India.

Pakistan Prime Minister Sharif and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi had exchanged messages after the former was elected as the prime minister to suc- ceed Imran Khan. Soon after he was elected as Pakistan's Prime Minister, Sharif in his inaugural speech had raised the issue of abroga- tion of Article 370 in Kashmir.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform general public that Mr. Suraj has acquired the Entire Ground Floor without roof rights, "said floor" on Plot bearing no. 5, area measuring 15'12 ¼ out of Khassa no. 272 min, situated in village Saddapur, Mohan market east Rotash nagar, Shahdara, Delhi on POA basis vide Notarised GPA, ATS dated 13.02.1985 & Will, executed by Mr. Mahendra Kumar and Now, Mr. Suraj is intending to sell the above said property to Mr. Pawan kumar Aggarwal vide Sale Deed. Further Mr. Pawan kumar Aggarwal is mortgaging the above said property with Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Chawari/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066701712/9818228636 (M).

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

My client Mr. Bhupesh Kumar Chandra is the registered owner of freehold Entire First Floor of Bultup Property No. 15 and 16 (old) New No. A-70, land measuring 75 Sq.Yards, out of Khassa No. 230, Village SindhoraKalan, Colony known as Sri Nagar Colony, Delhi by virtue of registered Sale Deed dated 02.03.2021 and Original Sale Deed dated 19.08.2009 in favour of Mr. Ravi Shankar Sharma and Mrs. Priti Sharma have been lost/misplaced and now my client is mortgaging the said property with LIC HFL. If anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall also inform within 7 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, than our client shall procure that title of the said property is unencumbered and clear.

Karnal Singh, Advocate,  
K-8, Basement, Jangpura Extension New Delhi  
Contact No. 9811163363 & 9953683363

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to the public at large, on behalf of our client, **Mrs. Preeti Bhasker W/o Mr. Bhanwar Singh R/o 47, Kadambari Apartments Sec-9, Rohini, New Delhi, ("Owner") Mrs. Savitri** be the owner of schedule property from **POI through DDA** by virtue of Conveyance Deed which was duly registered with the concerned Sub-Registrar-VII, Delhi, as Document No. 1685, in Addl. Book No.1, Volume No. 2838, on pages 52-53, on 25/01/2008 & Allotment Letter is stated to have been lost, an FIR dated 29.07.2017 (**Police Station: Crime Branch, Delhi**) bearing **LR No.1265856/2017 & SO No. 430 / 2014** was also lodged (**LOST CONVEYANCE DEED & ALLOTMENT LETTER**). Public are warned not to deal with the Document and any person receiving or dealing with the said Document would do so at their own risk and responsibility (**including criminal liability**) and our client shall not be liable in any manner whatsoever for any loss incurred by such person (s) on account of any such unauthorized dealing, our client will proceed to take such action including applying to concerned authorities for issue of duly Certified Copies / Certified True Copies / Duplicate Copies of the Document.

**Schedule Property**

Flat No.-47, in the Layout Plan of Delhi University Staff Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Presently Known as Kadambari Apartments, situated at Plot No. 19, Sector-9, Rohini, Delhi-110085.

**Sachin Maheshwari & Associates (SMA)**  
(Law Offices)  
**Sachin Maheshwari Advocate**  
**Phone No.- 011-42236352**

**KISHAU CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A JV OF GoI & GoP)

**H.O.: LAKHWAR BHAWAN, TONS COLONY, DAKPATHAR, DEHRADUN-248125**  
**(Telephone: 01360-222799 Fax-01360-222799) CIN No U78999UR2017SG007521**

११. 20१८ **Date Extension Notice/Corrigendum- 01** Rto: 13.05.2021

Due to unavoidable reasons the Date of Submission & opening of the e-NIT No. 01/DGM/(Kishau)/KCL/2022-23 invited by the office of the Deputy General Manager, Kishau Project, Dakpathar is being extended as below:

**Last date & time for submission of bids on the Portal** : Upto 21.05.2022 at 17:00 Hrs.

**Last Date & time of Offline Submission of document (in original)** : Upto 23.05.2022 at 17:00 Hrs.

**Date & time of opening of bids on the Portal**: On 24.05.2022 at 12:00 Hrs.

The Corrigendum has been uploaded on the e-Procurement portal **https://uktenders.gov.in**.

Other Terms & Condition will remain same.

Information regarding Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation etc. of tender may be obtained from the website.

Full & Further Details of tender can be seen from the e- procurement portal **"https://uktenders.gov.in"**.

Dy. General Manager Kishau Project

**"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"**

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE**

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

**Whereas**

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

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

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Bhavesh Kumar/ Neha Sharma/ M/s Bhavesh Kumar Huf/ LBLUD000005076880/ LBLUD000005331735	House Comprised in Khassa No.699, Khatta No.1601/1994, Situated at Village Barewal Awana, H.B No.157, Abadi Known as Kalika Ji Enclave, Tehsil & Distt. Ludhiana Punjab/ May 10, 2022	December 15, 2021 Rs. 1,14,62,390/-	Gurgaon

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

**Date : May 13, 2022**  
**Place: Gurgaon**

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



# Twitter deal temporarily on hold, says Elon Musk

AP ■ LONDON

Elon Musk said on Friday that his plan to buy Twitter for \$ 44 billion is “temporarily on hold” as he tries to pinpoint the exact number of spam and fake accounts on the social media platform, another twist amid signs of internal turmoil over the proposed acquisition.

Musk, who has been vocal about his desire to clean up Twitter's problem with “spam bots” that mimic real people, appeared to question whether the company was under-reporting them.

In a tweet, the Tesla billionaire linked to a Reuters story from May 2 about a quarterly report from Twitter that estimated false or spam accounts made up fewer than five per cent of the company's “monetisable daily active users” in the first quarter.

“Twitter deal is temporarily on hold pending details supporting calculation that spam/fake accounts do indeed represent less than five per cent of users,” Musk said, indicating



he's sceptical that the number of unauthentic accounts is that low.

It wasn't clear whether the issue could scuttle the deal. Stocks of both Twitter and Tesla swung sharply in opposite directions, with Twitter's stock tumbling 18 per cent, and shares of Tesla, which Musk had proposed using to help fund the Twitter deal, jumping five per cent.

Musk has already sold off more than USD 8 billion worth of his Tesla shares to finance



the purchase.

Wedbush analyst Dan Ives, who follows both Tesla and Twitter, said Musk's “bizarre” tweet will lead Wall Street to either think the deal is likely falling apart, Musk is attempting to negotiate a lower deal price, or he is simply walking away from the deal with a USD 1 billion penalty.

“Many will view this as Musk using this Twitter filing/spam accounts as a way to get out of this deal in a vastly changing market,” Ives wrote.

He added that the Musk's use of Twitter rather than a financial filing to make the announcement was troubling and “sends this whole deal into a circus show with many questions and no concrete answers as to the path of this deal going forward.”

Investors have had to weigh legal troubles for Musk, as well as the possibility that acquiring Twitter could be a distraction from running the world's most valuable automaker. **PTI**

# Fisheries subsidies: WTO talks to resolve sticky issues

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) will hold intensive negotiations from May 16-20 in Geneva to resolve contentious issues related to the proposed global deal on curbing harmful fishing subsidies, ahead of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) next month.

The chair of the negotiations, Ambassador Santiago Wills of Colombia, has said this 'Fish Week' will be an opportunity for members to work on finalising the draft agreement, according to a WTO statement.

“WTO members on May 16-20 will hold intensive negotiations aimed at resolving remaining issues for a global deal to curb harmful fishing subsidies ahead of the MC12 next month,” it said.

Members are negotiating a proposed fisheries subsidies agreement. The objective is to discipline subsidies for sustainable fishing and eliminate IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing subsidies and prohibit them from contributing to overcapacity and overfishing.



“MC12 is now scheduled to begin on June 12 — that is only four weeks away. So now is the time to end decades of negotiations and conclude the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations so that the results can be adopted by ministers,” the chair said in a video message.

The 12th ministerial conference, the highest decision-making body of the WTO, is scheduled to meet on June 12-15 in Geneva.

“Ultimately, we should not be negotiating against each other but against the unrelenting depletion of global fish stocks so vital for livelihoods, food security, and a healthy

planet,” he said.

The contentious issues which are yet to be resolved include matters related to special and differential treatment, and non-specific fuel subsidies.

India has time and again emphasised that it is keen to finalise an agreement on fisheries subsidies in the WTO as irrational benefits and over-fishing by many countries are hurting domestic fishermen and their livelihood.

The country wants an equitable and balanced outcome as it provides support to its small and marginal fishermen who depend on the sector for sustenance. **PTI**

# Govt fixes LIC issue price at ₹949 a share; policyholders, retail investors get discount



**New Delhi:** The government has fixed the issue price of LIC shares at Rs 949 apiece, the upper end of the IPO price band, ahead of the listing of the country's largest insurer on May 17.

However, LIC policyholders and retail investors have got the shares at a price of Rs 889 and Rs 904 a piece, respectively.

The Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) closed on May 9 and shares were allocated to bidders on May 12. The government sold over 22.13 crore shares or 3.5 per cent stake in LIC through the IPO at a price band of Rs 902-949 a share.

The retail investors and eligible employees of LIC were offered a discount of Rs 45 per equity share over the issue price, while policyholders got

a discount of Rs 60 per share.

As per the prospectus filed by LIC on May 12, the offer price of the share sale has been fixed at Rs 949 per equity share.

Shares were allocated to policyholders and retail investors after applying the discount applicable to them.

The share sale fetched the government around Rs 20,557 crore. The LIC IPO -- India's largest to date -- closed with nearly 3 times subscription, predominately lapped up by retail and institutional buyers, but foreign investor participation remained muted.

So far, the amount mobilised from the IPO of Paytm in 2021 was the largest ever at Rs 18,300 crore, followed by Coal India (2010) at nearly Rs 15,500 crore and Reliance Power (2008) at Rs 11,700 crore. **PTI**

# Vodafone Idea debt a challenge; fundraise critical for competitiveness, say analysts

**New Delhi:** Even as debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea's financial performance in the March 2022 quarter has been in line with the industry expectations, the long-pending fundraise is crucial for the company to remain competitive, say analysts.

According to a JP Morgan report, high leverage makes the value of Vodafone Idea (VIL) equity complicated and very sensitive to small changes in assumptions, thus largely unforecastable.

“We expect value to migrate to debt holders, including the government of India, which is effectively the largest creditor via spectrum obligations including AGR dues,” the report said.

VIL expects the government to complete the conversion of around Rs 16,100 crore dues into 33 per cent stake in the company in the coming weeks, a top official of the firm said.

During the company's earnings call, Vodafone Idea CEO Ravinder Takkar said as part of the telecom reforms package, the company has opted for converting government dues into equity and its proposal has been confirmed by the Department of Telecom (DoT).

Post the conversion, the government will hold a 33 per cent stake in the company while promoters' holding will



come down from 74.99 per cent to 50 per cent, he said.

“We have already opted for deferment of spectrum and AGR dues as well as conversion of interest arising from such deferment into equity.

“The net present value of the interest liability on moratorium period amounting to Rs 161.3 billion towards AGR dues and deferred spectrum liabilities have been confirmed with the DoT. With this we expect the conversion sub process to conclude in the coming weeks,” Takkar said.

JP Morgan said that the March 2022 quarter was a decent one but fundraise still remains critical for VIL's com-

petitiveness.

“The board has approved another Rs 100 billion (Rs 10,000 crore) of fundraise and the company is in talks with investors and lenders. We believe fundraiser is critical to improve competitiveness,” the report said.

VIL has reported narrowing of its consolidated losses to Rs 6,563.1 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year, while its Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) improved sharply on a sequential basis aided by tariff hikes in November last year.

VIL's losses were at Rs 7,022.8 crore a year ago,

according to a company filing.

Its revenue from operations rose 6.6 per cent year-on-year to Rs 10,239.5 crore in Q4 FY22. Seen sequentially, the revenue was up 5.4 per cent supported by tariff hikes effective November 25, 2021, the company said in a statement.

The realisation per user measured in terms of ARPU -- a key metric for telcos -- rose to Rs 124 for the just-ended quarter from Rs 115 in the preceding three-month period. This translated into a sequential increase of 7.5 per cent in ARPU, although the company's subscriber base declined to 24.38 crore against 24.72 crore in Q3 FY22, primarily due to the tariff hike.

Takkar also said the industry needs more tariff hikes.

“We would like to see ARPU going up to Rs 200 in the short term and then further increase to Rs 250 or higher in the longer term,” he said.

As on March 31, 2022, the total debt (including interest accrued but not due) of the group was Rs 1,97,878.2 crore.

The company has around Rs 8,160 crore of payments due over the next 12 month.

An IIFL Securities report said that the moratorium on government payouts until October 2025, refinancing of maturing debt bonds and recent tariff hikes provide near-term relief. **PTI**

# Ford shelves plans to make EVs in India



**New Delhi:** US auto major Ford has shelved plans to manufacture electric vehicles in India for exports despite getting approval from the government for production-linked incentives.

The company, which in September last year had announced that it would stop vehicle production at its two plants in the country as part of a restructuring exercise, said it is exploring other alternatives for its manufacturing facilities at Chennai and Sanand in Gujarat.

As part of the ongoing business restructuring in India, Ford has continued to explore possible alternatives for its manufacturing facilities. This included applying for the production-linked incentives scheme, which allowed us to explore utilising one of the plants as a potential EV manufacturing base, a Ford India spokesperson said.

“After careful review, we have decided to no longer pursue EV manufacturing for

# Maruti allots site for new ₹11K cr manufacturing facility in Haryana

**New Delhi:** The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Friday said it will invest Rs 11,000 crore in the first phase of its new manufacturing facility in Haryana.

The company on Friday completed the process of allotment of an 800-acre site at IMT Kharakhda in Sonapat district with HSIIDC (Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited), the auto major said in a regulatory filing.

The new plant's first phase with a manufacturing capacity of 2.5 lakh units per annum is expected to be commissioned by 2025, subject to administrative approvals.

In the first phase, the investment would be over Rs 11,000 crore, MSI said.

“The site will have space for capacity expansion to include more manufacturing plants in the future,” MSI noted.

At present, MSI has a cumulative production capacity of around 5.5 lakh units per quarter or about 22 lakh units per annum across its manufacturing plants in Haryana and Gujarat. **PTI**

# SBI Q4 profit jumps 41% to ₹9,114 cr on fall in bad loans



**New Delhi:** The country's largest lender SBI on Friday reported a 41 per cent surge in standalone net profit at Rs 9,114 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2022, helped by decline in bad loans.

State Bank of India (SBI) had registered a profit of Rs 6,451 crore during January-March period of 2020-21, the lender said in a regulatory filing.

Total income of the bank during the March quarter increased marginally to Rs 82,613 crore, from Rs 81,327 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal.

On a consolidated basis, the bank reported a 56 per cent

increase in net profit at Rs 9,549 crore, compared to Rs 6,126 crore in the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal.

With regard to asset quality, gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of the bank declined to 3.97 per cent of gross advances as on March 31, 2022, as against 4.98 per cent by the same period of 2021.

Net NPA or bad loans too came down to 1.02 per cent as on March 31, 2022 from 1.50 per cent in the year-ago period. For the entire financial year 2021-22, the bank reported a 55 per cent rise in standalone profit at Rs 31,676 crore, from Rs 20,410 crore in the previous financial year. **PTI**

# India-UAE trade pact to create huge job opportunities, boost economy: Goyal

**Mumbai:** The comprehensive trade agreement between India and the UAE will help in creating huge job opportunities and boost growth of the domestic economy, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

The bilateral pact, officially dubbed as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is expected to increase the bilateral trade in goods to over USD 100 billion and trade in services to over USD 15 billion within five years.

It came into effect from May 1. The agreement opens the door for many sectors, particularly labour-intensive ones such as textiles, gem and jewellery, pharmaceuticals and agriculture, Goyal said while briefing the media along with the UAE Minister for Economy Abdullah Bin Touq Al Marri here. The ministers launched the India-UAE Start-up Bridge at the India-UAE Partnership Summit, organised by industry body CII here.

“Clearly millions of jobs will be added if our exports which are now at about USD 36 billion, which is about nearly Rs 2.5 lakh crore, grows as we are planning. And my own guess estimate is this partnership

can finally go up to about USD 250 billion of bilateral trade on both sides.

“So my sense is that this will give a big boost to economic growth, to jobs. And the opportunities it opens not only in the UAE, but in the larger ground for the African region. (It) should significantly give a bump up to the Indian economy as well,” Goyal said.

He added that the pact would not only open doors for Indian businesses to UAE but also to other countries as UAE is a transit point for large parts of Africa, CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries, and the Gulf region.

CIS countries include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Tajikistan.

Further, Goyal said that Indian pharma products will get immediate access to the UAE market and “we believe (bilateral) trade will grow to at least to USD 100 billion in the near future....Our own commitment is to take it to a much higher level.”

According to the minister, the framework is expected to add a million jobs in India and provide opportunities to the startup ecosystem in the coun-

try and has huge potential for engagement on skill development and education.

“We are looking at significant investments as the UAE has committed over USD 100 billion of investments into India in manufacturing, infrastructure, (and) service (s). So the business will get a booster shot,” the minister said.

He informed that there are a large number of startups which have emerged in the last six years, with more than 65,000 registered with the ministry. India also has over 100 unicorns with the third largest startup ecosystem in the world, he said.

The UAE minister said the pact will add 1.7 per cent GDP growth to their economy.

He also said the agreement is not just on products and commodities but also into services, adding that there are other opportunities that can come along.

“Now, the growth that we're looking at, that we want to reach USD-100 billion dollars from USD 40 billion or so today, in the next decade... Our economic modelling showed that this is an opportunity of growth, it can actually reach that number,” the minister said. **PTI**

# Swiggy to acquire Dineout



**New Delhi:** On-demand convenience platform Swiggy on Friday said it has entered into a definitive agreement with Times Internet to acquire dining out and restaurant tech platform Dineout for an undisclosed sum.

Dineout, which serves diners across its network of 50,000 restaurants in 20 cities, will continue to operate as an independent app post the acquisition, Swiggy said in a statement. Founders of Dineout -- Ankit Mehrotra, Nikhil Bakshi, Sahil Jain and Vivek Kapoor -- will join Swiggy once the acquisition is completed, it added.

“The acquisition will allow Swiggy to explore synergies and offer new experiences in a high-use category,” Swiggy CEO Sriharsha Majety said.

Dineout co-founder & CEO Ankit Mehrotra said, “We strongly feel that with Swiggy's deep understanding of the ecosystem and our shared passion for a superior consumer and restaurant experience, our joint forces will help provide a holistic platform in this industry. **PTI**

# Reliance top-ranked Indian firm on Forbes Global 2000 list

**New Delhi:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd climbed two spots to No. 53 on Forbes' latest Global 2000 list of public companies worldwide. Forbes Global 2000 ranks the largest companies in the world using four metrics: sales, profits, assets and market value, Forbes said releasing the 2022 ranking of the world's top 2,000 companies.

Reliance is the top-ranked Indian firm on the list, followed by State Bank of India at No. 105, HDFC Bank at No. 153 and ICICI Bank at No. 204.

Other top 10 Indian firms on the list include state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) at 228 rank, Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd (HDFC) at No. 268, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) at No. 357, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) at No. 384, Tata Steel at No. 407 and Axis Bank at No. 431.

“Energy and banking sector corporations were among the highest-ranking Indian companies in Forbes' Global 2000 list of public companies this year,” the publication said. Oil-to-telecom-to-retail conglomerate Reliance, which

recorded sales of USD 104.6 billion between April 2021 and March 2022, became the first Indian company to generate over USD 100 billion in annual revenue. “On the Global 2000, Reliance climbed two spots to No. 53 among all public companies worldwide and ranked first among Indian companies,” it said. “Earlier this year, Forbes estimated Ambani's net worth to be USD 90.7 billion, landing him at No. 10 on this year's billionaires list.”

Mukesh's father Dhirubhai launched the business in the early 1960s, starting with import and export licences for nylon, rayon and polyester.

Today, the company's businesses include plastics and petrochemicals, mobile telecom services and retail.

With a market cap of USD 56.12 billion, SBI grabbed the No. 2 spot on the list of India's largest. “The bank, headquartered in Mumbai, has 24,000 branches and 62,617 ATMs across the country. Private sector banks ICICI and HDFC followed next on the Global 2000 list of Indian companies, highlighting the growth of the banking sector in India.” **PTI**





the pioneer

# INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

11

DANIEL SAMS HASN'T SHOWN THE TALENT HE HAS WITH THE BAT. WE SPOKE ABOUT PUTTING HIM UP THE ORDER BUT HE HASN'T GRABBED THAT OPPORTUNITY

— SHANE BOND

## SRH face KKR in battle of survival



PTI ■ PUNE

Smarting from four straight losses, Sunrisers Hyderabad will need to sort out their bowling issues when they face an inconsistent Kolkata Knight Riders, as both the teams look to stay afloat in the IPL play-offs race here on Saturday.

A series of losses after a five-match winning streak has dragged SRH down to the sixth spot with 10 points and they would need to win all their remaining three games to harbour any hopes of making it to the play-offs.

KKR, however, are on the brink of elimination and their woes were compounded with the ruling out of pace spearhead Pat Cummins owing to a hip injury.

Shreyas Iyer's men have just two more matches to go and wins in both will only take them to 14 points, which might not be enough with Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bangalore already sitting pret-

ty in the top four with 14 points from 12 games.

One of the main reasons behind SRH's awful run in the last few games is injuries to frontline bowlers -- Washington Sundar and T Natarajan -- and the sudden loss of form of speedster Umran Malik.

It culminated in SRH conceding more than 190 plus runs in each of the last four games.

While Sundar had injured his bowling hand again, death over specialist Natarajan had picked up a niggles. But coach Tom Moody was hopeful of the duo's return against KKR.

Malik, who looked fast and furious in the earlier games clocking 150kmph consistently, has gone wicket-less and conceded too many runs in the last few matches and his form will be key for SRH.

Fazalhaq Farooqi and Karthik Tyagi were taken to the cleaners by RCB in their last game, adding to SRH's problems.

In batting, SRH have the

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quality but skipper Kane Williamson will have to take more responsibility as he has just one fifty to show for this season. Although Abhishek Sharma has given them solid starts, the youngster has not been able to anchor the innings.

Rahul Tripathi, Nicholas Pooran and Aiden Markram, too, have been among runs but SRH batters will need assistance from their bowlers, who will have to ensure that they limit their opposition to a reasonable total.

KKR, on the other hand, are paying the price for making constant changes to their playing XI and are staring at elimination after losing seven of their 12 games.

KKR, however, are coming into the match after beating Mumbai Indians in their last game and they would look to end things on a high.

The 2021 finalists have struggled in the power play this season but with Venkatesh Iyer, who was dropped due to his lean run, back in the mix, KKR produced a good effort against MI.

The seasoned Tim Southee and Cummins produced a solid effort after returning to the XI, sharing four wickets against MI. However, KKR were dealt a massive blow as the team management confirmed that Cummins has been ruled out of the remainder of the IPL with a mild hip injury and has already left for Australia for rehabilitation.

## PUNJAB'S GOT TALENT



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Punjab Kings buried Royal Challengers Bangalore under a deluge of runs as they kept their play-off hopes alive with 54-run victory, riding on superb half-centuries from Jonny Bairstow and Liam Livingstone in an IPL match here on Friday.

Bairstow (66 off 29 balls) and Livingstone (70 off 42 balls) propelled Punjab Kings to 209 for 9 in a must-win game and the scoreboard was always going to be telling as RCB were restricted to 155 for 9 in 20 overs.

While Punjab remain in the mix

with 12 points from as many games, the margin of victory considerably improved their net run-rate to +0.210 and RCB despite having 14 points from 13 games are at a -0.323.

RCB will have to win their final game and move to 16 points but also now need to have some rub of the green with a few favourable results going their way.

It was another day and another failure for Virat Kohli (20), who got a faint under-edge tickle on his gloves before it hit his thigh pad and bobbed up to short fine leg off a Kagiso Rabada (4-0-21-3) delivery.

Rabada was literally unplayable

on the day as he worked good pace and hit the ideal fuller length for better part of his spell.

Rishi Dhawan (4-0-36-2), perhaps the weakest link in Punjab attack, then made up for his lack of pace by hitting immaculate length as Faf du Plessis edged one to Jitesh Sharma behind stumps and Mahipal Lomror's rasping pull shot was taken by Shikhar Dhawan.

Rajat Patidar (26) and Glenn Maxwell (35) did add 64 runs but they were never in the game with both departing in quick succession.

And when Dinesh Karthik (11) was snuffed out by the brilliant

### ► pointstable

Po.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	GT (Q)	12	9	3	0	18	0.376
2.	LSG	12	8	4	0	16	0.385
3.	RR	12	7	5	0	14	0.228
4.	RCB	13	7	6	0	14	-0.323
5.	DC	12	6	6	0	12	0.210
6.	PBKS	12	6	6	0	12	0.023
7.	SRH	11	5	6	0	10	-0.031
8.	KKR	12	5	7	0	10	-0.057
9.	CSK	12	4	8	0	8	-0.181
10.	MI	12	3	9	0	6	-0.613

### ► boundarymeter

4s	1650
6s	854

Arshdeep Singh (4-0-27-1) with a wide yorker and a catch by short third-man on the circle, RCB fizzled out in a jiffy.

Earlier, Bairstow's opening blitzkrieg found its ideal match in Livingstone's finishing carnage.

While Bairstow laid the foundation with a 29-ball-66, Livingstone was equally good in his 42-ball-70 as the RCB bowlers had a day which they would like to forget in a hurry.

Bairstow, who was rusty during the earlier phase of the tournament, was back in his element with as many as seven sixes and four boundaries during a knock where he literally went hell for leather.

Such was his dominance that by the time six overs of Powerplay ended, Bairstow had hit seven towering sixes and Shikhar Dhawan (21 off 15 balls) rubbed salt to the wound with another one which made it eight in all.

Punjab Kings, which had set the template of blazing Powerplay starts, got 83 in six overs with Glenn Maxwell (1/17 in 2 overs), Josh Hazlewood (0/64 in 4 overs) and Mohammed Siraj (0/36 in 2 overs) being treated with utter disdain.

## Quality of execution matter more than raw pace: Nortje

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Umran Malik will surely play for India but to survive the rigours of international cricket, raw pace alone wouldn't be enough and the youngster will need to supplement his skills with quality execution, star South African pacer Anrich Nortje said on Friday.

Nortje, one of the fastest bowlers in world cricket and who has made a comeback in this IPL after a four-month lay-off due to a hip injury, spoke about the hardships related to his return and missing his new ball partner, Kagiso Rabada.

When asked about his assessment of India's new pace sensation, who is regularly hitting upwards of 90



miles per hour, Nortje sounded cautiously optimistic.

"I am sure Umran is going to be one of the key players for India in near future. Luck will also have to play its part. But most importantly, it's about the quality of what you deliver as we have seen fastest deliveries that are being awarded are going for boundaries," Nortje said.

"It doesn't matter at what pace it is bowled. Pace is not the be-all and end-all.

"It is about the quality of execution. And I believe he is improving on that aspect of having control with pace. Also at Sunrisers Hyderabad, under Dale (Steyn, fast bowling coach), Umran is in good hands. He has a lot of senior and experienced

players around him, so he will certainly improve," the Proteas speed merchant said.

### COMING BACK AFTER LONG BREAK

The current season hasn't been the best for Nortje as he got picked in only four of Delhi Capitals' 12 games, taking six wickets in them.

"It's been a long break but it's good to be out there on the field with the team and it was long time at home. I needed a break at the start (of my injury) but got very long at the end not knowing what's going on.

"It's really good feeling to get going again and obviously trying to bowl at Level I was bowling," the 28-year-old.

## India beat Denmark 3-2, reach Thomas Cup final



PTI ■ BANGKOK

HS Prannoy produced a lion-hearted effort in the decisive fifth match as the Indian men's badminton team scripted history by reaching the title clash of the Thomas Cup Final for the first time ever with a 3-2 victory over Denmark in an edge-of-the-seat semifinal, here.

Indian team, which never went past the semifinals after 1979, showed tremendous fighting spirit as it came from a match down to outwit the 2016 champions.

While world championships Silver medalist Kidambi Srikanth and world number 8 doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty kept India in the hunt, it was once again left to HS Prannoy to take the team home when the tie was locked 2-2.

Up against world number 13 Rasmus Gemke, Prannoy suffered an ankle injury after slipping on the front court while going for a return but the Indian continued after taking a medical timeout.

He looked in pain and his on-court movement also looked restricted but despite all odds, he produced a sensational performance to come up trumps 13-21, 21-9, 21-12 to etch India's name in the history books.

India will now take on 14-time champions Indonesia, the most successful team in the history. Indonesia edged out Japan

3-2 in their semifinal.

It was a creditable performance from the Indian team, which on Thursday had snapped a 43-year long wait by reaching the semifinals with a 3-2 win over five-time champions Malaysia, a feat last achieved in 1979.

It was always going to be an uphill task for India to tame the formidable Denmark, which had become the first European country in history to secure the title in 2016.

A lot rode on world championship Bronze medalist Lakshya Sen, given his recent win over Viktor Axelsen at the German Open Super 300 but he couldn't replicate his performance as the world number one scripted a comfortable 13-21, 13-21 win to hand Denmark a 1-0 lead.

Denmark decided to split their world number 9 pair of Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen into two halves with Astrup partnering Mathias Christiansen in the first doubles.

However, Rankireddy and Shetty dished out a gritty performance, holding their nerves in the final stages to beat Astrup and Christiansen 21-18, 21-23, 22-20 to bring India back in the contest.

The Indian pair faced five match points — two in the second game and three in third game — before converting one to bring joy back to the Indian

camp.

With the tie locked 1-1, world number 11 Srikanth and world number 3 Anders Antonsen engaged in a battle of supremacy in the second singles with the former coming out on top with a gritty 21-18, 12-21, 21-15 result to give India a 2-1 lead.

India's second doubles combination of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala, however, was no match for Anders Skaarup Rasmussen and Frederik Sogaard, losing 14-21, 13-21 as the tie was tentatively posed at 2-2 after the fourth match.

The experienced Prannoy then lost the opening game but, quite incredibly, led 11-1 in the second game, despite injury. He depended more on his attack to gather points even as Gemke failed to create pressure on the Indian.

Prannoy dominated the front court and soon roared back into contest with Gemke committing too many errors.

Prannoy, ranked 23rd, stamped his authority with his trademark smashes as Gemke's defence lay in tatters. The Indian was up 11-4 up at the interval and continued to dominate the proceedings.

Prannoy grabbed nine match points with a straight down the line smash and sealed it on the second opportunity as his teammates huddled together in celebration.

## Which 3 teams can join GT in IPL 2022 playoffs?

DRITI ATRI ■ NEW DELHI

With nine wins in 12 matches played so far, IPL debutants and table-toppers Gujarat Titans have confirmed their place in the Indian Premier League playoffs.

On the other hand, the two most successful teams in the tournament's history, Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings, are out of contention after having a disastrous season.

But the remaining seven teams are still in the fray for the three vacant spots, and the race to reach the last four is all set to go down to the wire once again.

While the likes of Rajasthan Royals, Lucknow Super Giants, and Royal Challengers Bangalore are in a more comfortable situation, one can't rule out Delhi Capitals, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Kolkata Knight Riders, and Punjab Kings as well.

KL Rahul-led Lucknow Super Giants have a better chance of making the playoffs than the other six franchises. They are currently in second place with 16 points and need only one more win to secure their position.

Under the leadership of Sanju Samson, the Rajasthan Royals have lit up the 2022 edition. And even though the Jaipur-based side has failed in the last few matches, they also have better chances of making it to the next round than the



others. They have two more matches to play, and a win will be enough to get them through.

After suffering 54-run defeat against Punjab Kings on Friday, Royal Challengers Bangalore now have 14 points from 13 matches and will need a win in their last league stage match to keep themselves alive.

If Rajasthan Royals, Lucknow Super Giants, and Royal Challengers Bangalore manage to win all their remaining matches, then irrespective of how others perform, others won't be able to qualify for the last four. But if the three teams mentioned earlier slip at any point, then DC, SRH, Punjab Kings, and KKR can sneak a chance.

For Delhi Capitals, the equation is simple; they need to win the remaining two matches anyhow if they want to reach the playoffs for the fourth consecutive year.

The same is the story with the Punjab Kings as well. Both DC and PBKS have 12 points from 12 matches.

Sunrisers Hyderabad will have to work harder than other teams to make it to the playoffs after four consecutive defeats. They have to win all the remaining three league stage matches and also keep their net run rate better than the others. KKR can only reach a maximum of 14 points and they need favours from other teams as well if they are to advance.

## Cummins leaves for Aus to recover from hip injury

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Kolkata Knight Riders pace spearhead Pat Cummins will not take part in the remainder of the IPL and has left for home to recover from a minor hip injury.

His franchise confirmed the development on Friday, few hours after a report in cricket.com.au said that the Australian Test captain, who was roped in by KKR for Rs 7.25 crore, is returning to Sydney for his rehabilitation ahead of the national team's tour of Sri Lanka next month.

"Pat Cummins has been ruled out of the remainder of the TATA Indian Premier League with a mild hip injury and has returned to Australia for two weeks of rest and rehabilitation," stated the official release. Cummins' recovery is expected to take a fortnight.

Before leaving for Australia, Cummins said, "I had an amazing time in India, and I would like to thank KKR for taking care of my family and me. I wish all the team members the best of luck for the remainder of the tournament. I will be watching the games and be cheering on."

Following the match against Mumbai Indians on Tuesday, Cummins, who bagged 3-22 from his four overs, underwent an MRI on his right hip.

KKR, who will take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in Pune on Saturday, has not asked for any replacement for Cummins.

Cummins played only five matches in the IPL this year and picked up seven wickets at a strike rate of 17.0.

With the bat, he scored 63 runs, which includes a blazing 14-ball 56 not out against Mumbai Indians - the joint fastest fifty in the history of the IPL — last month.







# Donnarumma says PSG must choose him or Navas next season

**AP ■ PARIS**  
Gianluigi Donnarumma has warned Paris Saint-Germain that they must choose between him and rival goalkeeper Keylor Navas next season.

Italian Donnarumma signed from AC Milan last summer to join veteran Navas, 35, who has been in the French capital since leaving Real Madrid in 2019.

Despite stressing his "very good relationship" with Navas, Donnarumma insisted it was out of the question to share the job next season.

"No, I think it will surely not happen like that, because I think the club will make choices," Donnarumma said.

"We're two good guys, we understand the situation, but it was hard, and for him too, but let's say that we managed it well."

Donnarumma said "yes of course" he wanted to stay next season with his contract running until 2026.

The 23-year-old lifted his first league title with PSG, while for Costa Rican Navas it was a second in France to join the La Liga trophy and three Champions League trophies he won in Spain.

"It's beautiful, it's my first league title, I'm very happy, and it's my first trophy with the Paris Saint-Germain shirt," said

Donnarumma. "I'm very proud to belong to a great, very ambitious club, always aiming higher."

Donnarumma arrived in France after being named the best player in the European championships which Italy won.

"The debut was not easy, because it was my first outside Italy, in a new club, a new city (but) pressure, no," explained Donnarumma, who had spent six years in Milan.

"I feel a big family behind me, a big club, the welcome was great, and after it was easier for me."

Donnarumma said it hadn't been an "easy" season, giving it seven out of 10.

"I know I can do more," he said. "I haven't played so many matches, only half, that wasn't easy. In the conditions I experienced, I couldn't give the maximum, but I'm convinced that I can give a lot more to this team and this club."

In addition to PSG's Champions League exit to Real Madrid in the last 16, Donnarumma's Italy failed to qualify for a second straight World Cup.

"It was hard, very hard," he sighed.

"The following days were very difficult, but there is no going back. What we did at the Euro will remain in history, we have achieved something incredible."

# It's Liverpool vs Chelsea in FA Cup final



**AP ■ LONDON**

Liverpool will bid to keep their quadruple chase alive in Saturday's FA Cup final against a Chelsea side hoping to welcome incoming owner Todd Boehly with victory at Wembley.

Jürgen Klopp's men have four matches left in their historic attempt to become the first English team to win all four major trophies in one season. They beat Chelsea to lift the League Cup in February and have reached the finals of the FA Cup and Champions League, where they face Real Madrid on May 28.

No English club has come this close to such an incredible clean sweep, but Liverpool know their hopes of winning the Premier League are starting to fade.

Manchester City moved three points clear of the second-placed Reds

with a 5-1 win at Wolves on Wednesday and need four points from their last two games against West Ham and Aston Villa to retain the crown.

If a second English title in three seasons proves beyond Liverpool despite their blistering form in the second half of the season, then winning two more cup competitions would be a memorable consolation.

First up is a rematch with Chelsea, who fought gamely in an intense League Cup final in February before Liverpool prevailed 11-10 in the shoot-out that followed a 0-0 draw.

Liverpool and Chelsea are the first English teams to meet in both domestic finals in the same year since Arsenal and Sheffield Wednesday in 1993.

Klopp's side will hope they emulate Arsenal, who did the cup double against Wednesday that season.

But, in their 60th game this season,



## Man City unveil Aguero statue

**AP ■ MANCHESTER**

One of the most famous moments in Premier League history has been immortalized outside the Etihad Stadium in Manchester.

To mark the 10-year anniversary of Sergio Aguero's title-clinching goal against Queens Park Rangers in 2012, Manchester City unveiled a statue of the Argentine striker celebrating his dramatic strike.

"Truthfully, it is a very beautiful thing for me, to see myself 10 years ago is very moving," Aguero said.

"In those 10 years, I was able to win a lot of trophies and was able to help the club become one of the most important in the world."

"I am very grateful to the club for making this statue in recognition of my football career in Manchester. It is something very special."

fatigue could be a threat to Liverpool's hopes of a first FA Cup triumph since 2006. In a bid to keep his stars fresh, Klopp made several changes in Tuesday's win at Villa, yet still lost Brazil midfielder Fabinho to an injury that rules him out of the final.

The history chasers will be back on league duty at Southampton on Tuesday and, aware of the strain on the squad, Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson called for one last push, starting at Wembley.

# Spurs win North London derby

**AP ■ LONDON**

Harry Kane scored twice as Tottenham beat 10-man Arsenal 3-0 on Thursday with a north London derby master-class that kept alive their hopes of finishing in the Premier League's top four.

Antonio Conte's side would have been eliminated from the race to qualify for next season's Champions League if they had lost to their bitter rivals on Thursday.

But Kane tormented Arsenal once again as the Tottenham striker opened the scoring with a controversial penalty.

Crucially, Arsenal's Rob Holding was sent off for two bookings in seven minutes.

Kane netted again before the interval and Son Heung-min bagged Tottenham's third goal in the second half.

Instead of sealing a return to the Champions League for the first time since the 2016-17 season, fourth-placed Arsenal now face a nerve-jangling conclusion to the top-four battle.

Arsenal still hold a slender advantage, but the end of their four-match winning run leaves them just one point ahead of fifth-placed Tottenham, with both sides having two games left.



Conte said several weeks ago that it would be a "miracle" if Tottenham reached the Champions League given their lowly position when he replaced the sacked Nuno Espirito Santo in November.

But their victory in arguably the biggest north London derby since Arsenal won the league at White Hart Lane in 2004 ensured that miracle could still come true.

Conte believes finishing in the top four is "like winning

a title in another country, a big achievement" given the depth of talent and wealth at the top of the Premier League.

To decide who takes the lucrative prize, Tottenham host struggling Burnley on Sunday then travel to relegated Norwich, while Mikel Arteta's men visit Newcastle on Monday and entertain Everton.

Arteta's bewildered expression throughout Arsenal's capitulation suggested it is far from certain he will be able to

lift his players to finish the job.

Third-placed Chelsea, five points above Tottenham, will likely need a draw from their last two games to be sure of their top-four place given their vastly superior goal difference.

As well as the huge European stakes for both sides, Tottenham also felt lingering resentment about Arsenal's successful appeal to have this fixture postponed in January due to Covid and injury problems.

# Benzema equals Raul's Real goal record

**AP ■ MADRID**

Karim Benzema continues to add his name to Real Madrid's record books, scoring his 323rd goal on Thursday to draw level with Raúl González as the club's second-highest scorer behind Cristiano Ronaldo.

Benzema netted in the first half of the team's 6-0 rout of last-place Levante in the Spanish league, with Madrid having secured the title a few rounds ago.

The result sealed Levante's relegation after five consecutive years in the first division.

Vinicius Júnior, Benzema's trusted attacking partner all season, scored a hat trick for Madrid as it continues to prepare for the Champions League final against Liverpool in Paris on May 28, when it will try to win a record-extending 14th European title.

Benzema is now 128 goals shy of the 451 scored by Ronaldo, who played at the club until 2018.

Benzema's close-range header in the 19th minute off a cross by Vinicius gave the French striker his league-leading 27th goal, which is nine better than any other player in the competition this season. He has scored more than a third of



## Lewa turns down Bayern extension

**MUNICH:** Robert Lewandowski has opened the door to a high-profile transfer after telling Bayern Munich that he will not be extending his contract beyond June 2023 when it expires, German media reported on Friday.

The 33-year-old Polish international forward has scored 343 goals for Bayern

and twice picked up FIFA's Player of the Year Award since joining from Dortmund in 2014.

"Goal machine Robert Lewandowski will leave the club no later than the summer of 2023," claimed the daily *Sport Bild*.

"In recent weeks, FIFA's 2021 Player of the Year told

Madrid's 77 league goals so far.

It was the 20th goal in the last 15 matches in all competitions for Benzema, who has been key in the team's run to the Champions League final, scoring decisive goals in every knockout round of the European tournament — including two hat tricks.

He could have added another goal on Thursday but unselfishly fed Vinicius the ball for the team's fifth after clearing the goalkeeper inside the area.

Vinicius had netted his first goal in the first half before closing the scoring in the final minutes for his maiden hat trick with Madrid. Ferland Mendy and Rodrygo scored their goals before halftime. Benzema was replaced in the 75th along with Luka Modric, who set up three of Madrid's goals.

# Tsitsipas sees off Sinner to reach Rome semis

**AP ■ ROME**

Stefanos Tsitsipas reached the semi-finals of the Italian Open on Friday after beating local hero Jannick Sinner 7-6 (7/5) 6-2 in a match which was stopped for over 10 minutes at match point after a spectator fell ill.

World number five Tsitsipas has already won the Monte Carlo Masters this season and reached the last four in impressive style against Italian Sinner, who was in his first ever Rome quarter-final.

Next up Tsitsipas will face Alexander Zverev, who made the semis after comfortably seeing off Cristian Garin, the only unseeded player left in the tournament, 7-5, 6-2.

It will be the third time in the space of a month that the German will meet the Greek in the last four, with the pair sharing the honours from clashes in Monte Carlo and Madrid.

The Greek finally took the opening set after breaking Sinner to take

the tie-break to 6-5 and from their his opponent didn't recover.

The fervent atmosphere was finally dampened when Tsitsipas broke Sinner in game three and world number 13 Sinner had no reply, losing his serve again to love in game seven.

Sinner's fate seem sealed but at match point for Tsitsipas someone in the crowd appeared to collapse and play was stopped amid loud whistles directed at the umpire who wanted to continue.

What seemed like an age passed before the spectator was stretched out of centre court and Tsitsipas could finally serve his match point, and a simple passing shot from Sinner's miscalculated drop shot sent him through.

### SABALENKA WINS

Tsitsipas will take number four spot in the world rankings on Monday after Rafael Nadal's shock third-round exit at the hands of Denis Shapovalov on Thursday night.



Shapovalov faces Casper Ruud knowing a win would give him a possible semi-final against Novak Djokovic, who is in action in the day's final match against Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Djokovic needs to beat Canada's Auger-Aliassime in order to maintain top spot in the world rankings, a position he has held for a record 369 weeks.

Aryna Sabalenka reached the women's semi-finals after beating Amanda Anisimova 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 and setting up a potential clash with world number one Iga Swiatek.

Third seed Sabalenka beat American Anisimova for the first time in five attempts and now awaits the result of Swiatek's last-eight match with Bianca Andreescu.

Anisimova had ended Sabalenka's Madrid title defence in the first round at the end of last month. Swiatek, the reigning champion in Rome, is on a run of 25 straight wins and gunning for a fifth tournament victory in a row.

## Nadal knocked out by Shapovalov



**AP ■ ROME**

Rafael Nadal crashed out of the Italian Open in the third round on Thursday after falling to a shock 1-6, 7-5, 6-2 defeat at the hands of Denis Shapovalov.

Defeat in Rome for 'King of Clay' Nadal casts doubt over his prospects at the upcoming French Open, where he has been crowned champion 13 times but faces a threat from teenage phenomenon Carlos Alcaraz.

The 35-year-old had been out for six weeks with a rib injury before returning for last week's tournament in Madrid, and he began limping in the third set.

Nadal has won an all-time record 21 Grand Slam titles in a glittering two-decade career which may now finally be reaching its downturn.

World number 16 Shapovalov, who had pushed Nadal all the way when knocked out at this stage of the tournament last year, will now face Casper Ruud in the quarter-finals.