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THE DEMOLITION OF SHRINES IN MEDINA

WORLD 8

LANKA MISSES ADB PAYMENT, PM TELLS PARLIAMENT

MONEY 10

GOM FOR 28% GST ON CASINOS, RACE COURSE, ONLINE GAMING

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY MAY 19, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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China builds bridge at Pangong face-off site

2nd Chinese bridge 15 km from LAC will enable PLA to rush troops, tanks to border front quickly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

China is constructing a bridge on its side at the Pangong Tso (lake) there to enable its troops to rush to the front in the shortest possible time. This even as talks are on to defuse tension at the border in Ladakh. The first stand-off between the two Armies took place in May in 2020 snow-balling into a major crisis.

The latest development came to light after satellite images captured the scene of China constructing the second bridge at the lake, sources said here on Wednesday. It will enable China to rapidly deploy tanks and armoured columns. The first bridge built was for troops and later used as a service bridge for construction of the second bridge. It is just 15 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The construction of the first bridge finished last month in about a year, sources said. China is building the second



bridge simultaneously from both sides for speedy construction. It is broader and stronger to enable the tanks to cross over from one side to another, they said.

The first bridge has cut down travelling time at the 180-km loop from Khurnak to the southern banks through Rudok. Now, the route is just 50 km, thereby giving China an edge in logistical terms.

Damien Symon, a geospatial intelligence researcher, who keeps track of Chinese activities along the LAC, posted satellite images of the new

construction on Twitter.

Symon, who uses the handle @detresfa_ said a "larger bridge" is being developed parallel to the first one, adding the likely aim of the construction is to "support larger/heavier movement" (of the military) over the lake.

China is rapidly strengthening its military infrastructure after Indian troops captured several strategic peaks on the southern bank of the Pangong lake in August 2020 after the Chinese PLA attempted to intimidate them in the area.

India too has been con-

structing bridges, roads and tunnels in the border regions as part of overall efforts to enhance military preparedness.

The latest development comes at a time when China Foreign Minister Wang Yi came to India in March to hold talks on the LAC issue with his counterpart S Jaishankar. It was the first visit by a Chinese Minister to India since the stand-offs erupted at the LAC in 2020.

India and China have held 15 rounds of military talks so far to resolve the eastern Ladakh row. As a result of the talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area.

India has been consistently maintaining that peace and tranquillity along the LAC are key to the overall development of the bilateral ties. At present, more than 50,000 troops each from both sides have been deployed there for the last two years.

In fact, the two sides maintained the troop strength even during the harsh winter months at the LAC. Prior to 2020, the two Armies used to withdraw to their bases during the winter months where the temperature dips minus 20 degrees.

Hardik resigns, accuses Cong of working against national interests

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Congress working president Hardik Patel on Wednesday resigned from all party posts and took to Twitter to share the letter to party president Sonia Gandhi in which he made scathing remarks against the party leadership, including Rahul Gandhi.

In his resignation letter months ahead of the Gujarat Assembly elections, the young Patidar leader accused the Congress of "working against the interest of the country and society". Patel, who joined the Congress in 2019 promising to die as a Congressman, said in his letter that whenever he raised issues of the people of Gujarat, senior Congress leaders were busy checking messages on their mobile phones, and some leaders were "enjoying abroad" when the party and the country needed them.

"Today, after mustering courage, I am resigning from my party post and primary membership of the Congress. I hope my followers and people of Gujarat will welcome my step. I believe that I will be able to serve the State better after this step," Patel said in a tweet.

Patel claimed that despite several attempts to steer the Congress in the right direction, the party has constantly been working "against the interests of my country and our society".

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Delhi LG Baijal quits, cites personal reasons

Centre may appoint successor with a political background

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal on Wednesday submitted his resignation to President Ram Nath Kovind, citing personal reasons. Baijal, a 1969-batch IAS officer, was appointed as the 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi on December 31, 2016 after the sudden resignation of his predecessor Najeeb Jung.

Baijal had often been at loggerheads with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over several issues. In 2018, the strife between Baijal and the Delhi Government escalated into an ugly confrontation after Kejriwal and his Ministers staged a dharna at Baijal's office alleging that IAS officers posted with the State Government were not cooperating with elected representatives. There was acrimony over the non-approval of the doorstep delivery of ration scheme by Baijal.

The tense relations between the LG and the AAP dispensation became less frequent after the Supreme Court ruling in July 2018 that states the LG of Delhi is bound by the "aid and advice" of the Delhi Government.

In July 2021 also, the LG



and the APP Government were at loggerheads when Baijal overturned the Delhi Cabinet's decision to appoint a panel of lawyers of its choice to argue cases related to the farmers' agitation, triggering sharp reactions from Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

There is no clarity about Baijal's replacement but sources indicated that the Centre may appoint a person with a political background as Delhi's new

LG as against a bureaucrat as per a long-standing practice.

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MCDs to be formally merged on May 22

New Delhi: The three municipal corporations of Delhi will be formally merged on May 22, the Central Government announced on Wednesday. P3

CAPSULE

SC OK'S OBC QUOTA IN MP LOCAL BODY POLLS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday permitted reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the local body elections in Madhya Pradesh. The SC permitted the State to notify the quota pattern.

LEFT FRONT IN KERALA WINS 24 OF 42 WARDS

Thiruvananthapuram: The Left front won 24 out of the 42 wards across 12 districts of Kerala where by-elections for the local bodies were held recently, an outcome that would boost its confidence in the run-up to the by-poll for the Thrikkakara Assembly constituency scheduled at the end of this month.

12 KILLED AS FACTORY WALL COLLAPSES

Morbi (Guj): At least 12 labourers lost their lives when a wall collapsed at a salt packaging factory in Gujarat's Morbi district on Wednesday, officials said. The fatal incident took place at Sagar Salt factory situated inside the Halvad industrial area in Morbi in Gujarat, said State Labour and Employment Minister and local MLA Brijesh Merja.

SC orders release of Rajiv's assassin after 30 yrs in jail

Cong accuses Govt of petty politics for AG Perarivalan's release from prison

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/CHENNAI

The Supreme Court Wednesday ordered the release of AG Perarivalan, who has served over 30 years in jail in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. Congress slammed the Centre for creating "a situation" in the court to get the killer of a former Prime Minister released for their "petty and cheap politics", but the DMK, the AIADMK and the CPI wholeheartedly welcomed the verdict.

The SC bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao said the Tamil Nadu State Cabinet's advice recommending the premature release of all seven convicts in the case was binding on the Governor. The apex court also discarded the Centre's argument that the



AG Perarivalan, convict in Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, with his mother at his house in Jolarpet, Tirupattur, on Wednesday PTI

President exclusively has the power to grant pardon in a case under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, saying this would render Article 161 (power of Governor to grant pardon) functionless.

The bench, also comprising Justice BR Gavai, held that States have the power to advise and aid the Governor in case of pleas of pardon under Article

161 made by convicts in murder cases. Article 142 of the Constitution deals with the Supreme Court's power to exercise its jurisdiction and pass order for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.

The Centre had earlier defended the Tamil Nadu Governor's decision to send the mercy plea of Perarivalan to the President.

Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj had said that only the President can decide the plea regarding remission, commutation and mercy plea of an individual convicted under the Central law.

On March 9, the top court had granted bail to Perarivalan while taking note of his long incarceration and no history of complaints when out on parole.

SC has been hearing pleas, including the one in which Perarivalan sought suspension of his life sentence in the case till the Multi Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA) probe is completed.

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Tourists visit the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Museum on International Museum Day, in Mumbai on Wednesday PTI

Indrani gets bail in Sheena Bora murder case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday granted bail to Indrani Mukerjea, the prime accused in the murder of her daughter Sheena Bora, saying six-and-a-half years in prison is too long a term and that the trial will not be completed anytime soon.

A three-judge bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao noted that Indrani has been in jail since 2015. He said the trial could not be over soon as out of 237 witnesses cited by prosecution only 68 have been examined till date.

"We do not intend to make comments on the merits of the case as it might be detrimental to the interests of the parties. Taking into account that petitioner has been in custody for six-and-a-half-years and even if 50 per cent witnesses are given by prosecution, the trial would not be over soon, we are of the considered view that the petitioner is entitled to be released on bail.

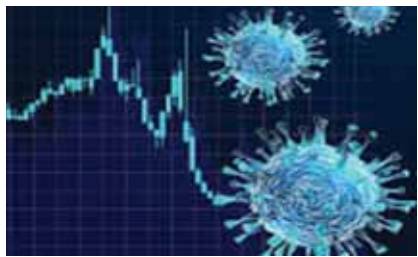
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Post-corona eco recovery on BRICS summit agenda

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BEIJING

Issues including economic situation post-corona pandemic will figure prominently at BRICS foreign ministers summit in Beijing on Thursday. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will take part in it through video conference. The high-profile meet takes place against the backdrop of the ongoing Ukraine conflict. Brazil, China, India, Russia and South Africa are members of the BRICS.

Besides Jaishankar, South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor, Brazilian Foreign Minister Carlos Franca and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will attend the meeting chaired by China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.



Yi had visited India in late March and held bilateral dialogue with Jaishankar on the stand-offs for the last two years at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. It was the first visit by a Chinese minister to India since the face-off erupted at the border.

Giving details of the upcoming BRICS conclave, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said in Beijing that the minister will have a "BRICS+" dialogue with their counterparts

from emerging markets and developing countries. He, however, did not disclose the names of the countries taking part in the BRICS+ dialogue. China holds the chair of the BRICS this year.

About China's expectations of the BRICS foreign ministers meeting, Wang Wenbin said the meeting will send a "clear message" of unity and make preparations for the annual summit of the five-member bloc.

"We will send a clear message of BRICS countries working together in solidarity, upholding true multilateralism, staying united in fighting Covid-19, and promoting peaceful development," he said.

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Job scam: HC orders Bengal Min Partha to appear before CBI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after ordering CBI investigation against junior Bengal Education Minister Paresw Adhikari, the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday ordered veteran Trinamool Congress leader and Cabinet Minister Partha Chatterjee to appear before the Central investigating agency in cases related to the "illegal" appointments in Group D posts in Bengal schools.

Chatterjee, who is presently the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, was the Education Minister when large-scale irregular appointments to Groups D, C and teachers' posts took place. A close confidant of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Chatterjee on Wednesday evening appeared before the CBI.

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Pollution killed 90 lakh people in 2019

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Pollution claimed 90 lakh lives in 2019 — equivalent to one in six deaths worldwide — with India topping the list by registering over 23 lakh mortalities, according to a study published on Wednesday in The Lancet Planetary Health. Globally, air pollution alone contributed to 66.7 lakh deaths.

In India, out of 16.7 lakh air pollution-related deaths, 9.8 lakh were caused by PM2.5 pollution, and another 6.1 lakh by household air pollution.

Although the number of deaths from pollution sources associated with extreme poverty (such as indoor air pollution and water pollution) has decreased, these reductions are offset by increased deaths attributable to industrial pollution (such as ambient air pollution and chemical pollution), the report noted.

Overall, global ambient air

pollution was responsible for 45 lakh deaths, and hazardous chemical pollutants for 17 lakh, with 9 lakh deaths attributable to lead pollution.

Nearly 93 per cent of India lives in areas where air quality is below WHO's standards, says the study. In an update of a 2015 estimate on premature deaths caused by pollution, the study said data from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors Study

2019 (GBD) showed that pollution "remains responsible for approximately nine million deaths per year."

According to the report, air pollution is most severe in the Indo-Gangetic Plain which covers New Delhi and many of the most polluted cities. Burning of biomass in households was the single largest cause of air pollution deaths in India, followed by coal combustion and crop burning.



Between 2000 and 2019, economic losses caused by modern forms of pollution — ambient, chemical and lead pollution — have increased and are now "conservatively estimated to amount to approximately 1 per cent of GDP" in India.

The study noted that despite India's considerable efforts against household air pollution, including through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana programme, the number of deaths remained high.

It pointed out that India has developed a National Clean Air Programme, and in 2019 launched a Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region.

However, India does not have a strong centralised administrative system to drive its air pollution control efforts and consequently improvements in overall air quality have been limited and uneven.

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India ready to share tech skills with Jamaica: Kovind



PTI ■ KINGSTON

India is ready to partner with Jamaica and share its technical skills, knowledge and expertise which could transform the Caribbean country's education and businesses, President Ram Nath Kovind has said, expressing confidence that convergences and complementarities between the two nations will be mutually beneficial.

Addressing the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament of Jamaica on Tuesday, Kovind said: "Fifteen thousand kilometres away from India, I feel very much at home before you. And why should I not, when this House has many distinguished members with Indian lineage." He said Jamaica has welcomed Indians

with open arms and given them dignity and respect. As a result, not just politics; but business, music, sports, dress, and food have all witnessed a rich Indian presence.

The President said Jamaica's strategic position in the vicinity of some of the largest global economies, and its talented pool of English-speaking youth, provide it with an excellent opportunity to become a 'knowledge highway' and benefit from the Fourth Industrial Revolution. "India shares Jamaica's 'Vision 2030' goals of empowering its people and ensuring a secure, cohesive, and just society while becoming a prosperous and sustainable economy," he said.

"India is ready to partner with Jamaica and share its technical skills, knowledge and

expertise which could transform Jamaica's education and businesses." Top Jamaican businesses already source software and take backroom technical support from technology companies based in India," the president said, adding India is poised to become a knowledge economy that creates, disseminates and utilises knowledge to promote growth and development.

"With ample natural resources, strategic location, young population and dynamic leadership, Jamaica is poised for even greater economic success," the President said.

He said Jamaica's leadership in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) region, international rules-based behaviour and the desire to shoulder greater responsibility make it a partner of choice for other countries.

He said India and Indians are taking the lead in research and development on cutting-edge technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Meta-verse that form the basis of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

India is also the hub of start-ups and innovative technologies and is among the top three countries having the largest number of Unicorns.

4 held for rape of 13-year-old girl abducted in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 13-year-old girl was allegedly gangraped in the national Capital by more than five people, including a juvenile. Police said that they have apprehended Mohit (20), Aakash (19), Shahrukh (20) and one juvenile.

According to Bentia Mary Jaiker, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, on April 24, a girl at around 5 pm went to the market to purchase vegetables and she had taken an auto rickshaw.

The auto rickshaw was driven by accused Shahrukh and he instead of dropping her at Shani baazar, called his friends Akash and one juvenile and took her to Okhla where they gave her intoxicated cold drink and physically abused her in the Auto.

Thereafter, they accused took the girl to JJ Camp, Tigri where Salman Chetty along with four other boys raped her. On April 25 morning Chetty along with others took the victim to a small town Kosi Kalan in Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh. They kept her there for one day and on April 26, they brought her back to Tigri where she was kept till April 30. The DCP said that a missing complaint was regarding the girl was also received by the police on April 26 and subsequently a case was registered. On May 2, the girl was found by the police at Saket Metro police station.

Delhi-Meerut corridor: NCRTC invites firms for last-mile connectivity

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) implementing the Regional Rapid Transit System on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor, has invited leading mobility players to provide various feeder modes at stations with a view to ensure last-mile connectivity to commuters.

According to a statement, since the 17-km long priority section between Sahibabad and Duhai that has five stations will become operational by 2023, the process of exploring various options for last-mile connectivity for commuters has been set in motion.

The NCRTC has taken into consideration the global parameters of the distance of last-mile connectivity travelled by commuters and the modes of transport used by them, it said. It said the distance up to 500 metres area is often walkable and the distance up to one km falls in cycling zone.

However, the distance up to 3 km requires the services of e-rickshaw, bike taxis or scooter rentals while distance of more than 3 km is considered as the zone of auto-rickshaw, taxi/cab and shuttle bus, it said.

"The NCRTC after deliberation has extended an invite to the mass providers of these various modes of transportation. It will also take the help of other agencies, where necessary to push it into action," the statement read. "This initiative will ensure fast, organised, green and affordable variety of commute options and door to door connectivity. It will also create varied opportunities for mobility providers at RRTS stations in Delhi, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Murad Nagar, Modinagar and Meerut," the statement read. It said people often hesitate to use public transport because of the unavailability of last-mile connectivity.

Also, the congestion around the stations due to the lack of any organised system for autos and e-rickshaws not only creates chaos and traffic jams but also leads to an increase in commute time, it added.

"In line with its aim to encourage people to switch to public transport from their private vehicles and to provide a solution for traffic problem, NCRTC came up with plan to facilitate last-mile connectivity for commuters through various feeder modes at stations," the statement said.

Delhi LG...

From Page 1

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, which gave primacy to the L-G over the elected Government, had come into effect in April last year after the notification of the Act by the Union Home Ministry.

In March, speculation about Bajjal's exit was rife after a cryptic tweet by Kejriwal. "Is Mr Praful Patel, Administrator of Lakshadweep, being made the next LG of Delhi?" Kejriwal had tweeted.

In his long-standing career, Bajjal was appointed the Home Secretary in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government. Later, when the Congress-led UPA Government came to power, he was transferred to the Urban Development Ministry. During his tenure in the Urban Development Ministry, he oversaw the planning and implementation of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). He retired from service in 2006 as Secretary of the Urban Development Ministry. After retirement, he was actively associated with JNNURM launched by the Manmohan Singh Government.

At one time he also served as the Vice-Chairperson of the Delhi Development Authority and was also the Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Airlines. During his service, he was also appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Prasar Bharati Corporation, the Development Commissioner of Goa and Counsellor in-charge of the Indian Aid Programme in Nepal.

He has served on the executive council of the Vivekananda International Foundation think-tank and multiple corporate boards including IDFC bank. He has also served as an advisor on the National e-Governance Advisory Group (NAG), Advisory Group for Integrated Development of Power, Coal, and Renewable Energy. He was on the committee on implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in Central Government.

SC orders...

From Page 1

The CBI, in its affidavit of November 20, 2020, had told the apex court that the Tamil Nadu Governor has to take a call on grant of remission to Perarivalan. Later, the Governor referred the mercy plea to the President of India saying he lacked the power to decide it.

The mercy plea has been pending since then and the apex court said till the time the legal issue over the power to grant remission is decided, it would grant the bail to the convict.

In its May 1999 order, the top court had upheld the death sentence of four convicts -- Perarivalan, Murugan, Santhan and Nalini. In April 2000, the Tamil Nadu Governor had commuted the death sentence of Nalini on the basis of the State Government's recommendation and an appeal by former Congress president and Rajiv Gandhi's widow Sonia Gandhi. On February 18, 2014, Supreme Court had commuted the death sentence of Perarivalan to life imprisonment, along with that of two other prisoners -- Santhan and Murugan -- on the grounds of an 11-year delay in deciding their mercy pleas by the Centre.

Meanwhile, Congress expressed pain and disappointment over the release of Pararivalan and slammed the Government for creating "a situation" in the court to get the killer of a former Prime Minister released for their "petty and cheap politics". Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said there is a sorrow and fury not only in every Congress worker over the development, but in every citizen who believes in India and Indianness.

"A terrorist is a terrorist and should be treated as one. Today, we are deeply pained and disappointed at decision of Supreme Court ordering release of Rajiv Gandhi's assassin," he said. "Tamil Nadu Congress President K S Alagiri said while "we don't want to criticise" the SC judgement, we want to affirm that they (the seven convicts) are murderers and not innocent."

Welcoming the judgement, Chief Minister M K Stalin said it could find a place in the "justice-law-political-administrative history". He recalled that the State had placed firm arguments in court on Perarivalan's plea before the SC.

FIR against DU professor for social media post

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) against an associate professor of Delhi University's Hindu College for his objectionable social media post.

The FIR was lodged against Ratan Lal on Tuesday night based on the complaint filed by a Delhi-based lawyer referring to Lal's social media post claims about 'Shivling' found inside the Gyanvapi mosque complex. In his complaint, advocate Vineet Jindal said Lal shared "derogatory, inciting and provoking tweets on the Shivling".

Pollution killed...

From Page 1

"India has developed instruments and regulatory powers to mitigate pollution sources but there is no centralised system to drive pollution control efforts and achieve substantial improvements," the study said adding that in 93 per cent of the country, the amount of pollution remains well above the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

Professor Kalpana Balakrishnan, Dean (Research), Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (Deemed to be University), Chennai, and one of the authors of the report, stressed the need for a radical shift in the approach to pollution management efforts.

Man shot dead in Daryaganj, investigation underway

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 48-year-old man was shot dead allegedly by unidentified persons in central Delhi's Daryaganj area.

The deceased has been identified as Moinuddin Qureshi. According to Shweta Chauhan, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Central district, on Tuesday, Daryaganj police station received information from a man named Kamal Ahmad about the firing on Qureshi.

"The injured was shifted to the Lok Nayak Hospital where the doctors declared him dead," said the DCP. Qureshi received two gunshot wounds. "Police

have registered a case of murder under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and other relevant section of Arms Act based on the statement of Rukumuddin, the deceased's brother," said a senior police official.

The police said the footage of CCTV cameras are being scanned to ascertain the people involved in the incident.

"Police teams are scanning through CCTV camera footage to identify the culprit and ascertain the sequence of events. Teams have been formed and an investigation is underway to know the motive behind the murder," said the senior police official.

DDA issues provisional notice for Consortium formation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has issued provisional notice for the formation of a Consortium for three sectors, sectors 10-A in Zone N and sectors 2, and 3 in Zone P-II, in the national capital under Land Policy 2018.

According to a senior DDA official, the validity of the notice shall be 90 days from the date of issuance.

The authority is also issuing a public notice to all land owners for filing any objections with respect to the list of land owners who have pooled their land under policy. If there are any objections on the list, the

land owners may express their representations on portal to Commissioner (Land Pooling) within 45 days of the issue of this Public Notice. "The list of land owners who have come forward under the policy can be viewed on DDA's Website under Land Pooling Notices Tab," he informed.

"The Sectors are Sector 10-A in Zone N and Sector 2, 3 in Zone P-II. Provisional notice for consortium formation is issued with a condition that remaining un-pooled land owners have to come together and form contiguous land as a single entity with an implementation plan, for which they will get 90 days period.

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given to the General public that Sh. Ajay Gupta was absolute owner of Property bearing no. 923-A, measuring 100 sq. yds. out of property no. 54, Gali no. 60, Northern side, out of Khassa no. 2231, situated in the area of Village Chowki Mubarakabad, Delhi, abadi known as Lekhu Nagar, Tri Nagar, Delhi-35 vide Relinquishment Deed dated 13.05.2022, Doc. No. 7515 and Now, Sh. Ajay Gupta is intending to sell the above said property to Mr. Sanjay Jain vide Sale Deed. Further Mr. Sanjay Jain is mortgaging the above said property to Axis Finance Limited in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Northex Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).

Indrani gets bail...

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"Petitioner is directed to be released on bail subject to satisfaction of the trial court and the same conditions imposed earlier (on Peter Mukerjee)," the bench also comprising Justices B R Gava and A S Bopanna said. Former media baron Peter's marriage to Indrani ended during her period of incarceration in 2019. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi appeared for Indrani, who is currently lodged at the Byculla women's prison in Mumbai following her arrest in August 2015. The senior lawyer said Indrani has been in jail for over six years and she is a lady entitled to special dispensation under section 437. Peter, co-accused in the case, has already been granted bail in 2020.

Hardik resigns...

From Page 1

"Hence, I wish to draw your attention to certain very important issues...Over the last three years, I have found that the Congress and its leadership, both at the Central and State levels, have been merely reduced to opposing everything. Be it the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, revocation of Article 370 from Jammu & Kashmir, the implementation of GST, India wanted a solution to these issues for a long time and the Congress only played the role of a roadblock," he said in the letter.

When it came to issues related to India, Gujarat and the Patidar community, the Congress's only stand was to oppose whatever the Central Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi did, he said. "Congress today has

been rejected in almost every State of India, because the party and its leadership have not been able to present a basic road map to the people," Patel said.

Hardik claimed that whenever he approached senior Congress leaders on serious issues of the people, they were busy scrolling messages on their mobile phones. "The lack of seriousness about all issues is a major problem with the party's senior leadership. Whenever I met senior leaders, I always felt that they were not really interested in hearing about problems concerning the people of Gujarat, but were engrossed in what messages they had received on mobile phones and other such trivial things," he said in the letter.

Apparently targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his foreign visits, Patel said, "Whenever our country faced challenges and when the

Congress needed leadership, party leaders were enjoying abroad." He said it is unfortunate that big leaders of the Gujarat Congress are "far away" from issues of the State, and are more focused on ensuring that "chicken sandwiches for leaders coming from Delhi are delivered on time". Hardik Patel had gained prominence in 2015 after he led the agitation seeking reservation for the Patidar community in the State. He was made the Gujarat Congress working president in July 2020.

Targeting him over the move, senior Congress leader from Gujarat and party's national spokesperson Shaktisinh Gohil accused Patel of betraying his Patidar community for personal gains, while State Congress in-charge Raghu Sharma accused him of indulging in "back door dealings" with other parties and also claimed that he lacked discipline.

Post-corona eco recovery on BRICS summit agenda

From Page 1

"BRICS enjoys global influence as a cooperation mechanism of emerging markets and developing countries. In the face of a once in a century pandemic and changes, the BRICS mechanism has special significance for deepening cooperation on emerging markets and developing countries and promoting post-Covid world economic recovery," the foreign ministry spokesperson said.

The Foreign Ministers meeting was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping during China's chairmanship of the five-member bloc in 2017, he said. As the BRICS Chair for 2022, China looks forward to enhancing communication and coordination with fellow BRICS partners on the new challenges in the international situation and major international and regional issues, he said. "On sidelines of this year's foreign ministers meeting we will also hold BRICS plus dialogue where BRICS foreign ministers will exchange views with Foreign Ministers of some emerging markets and developing countries on global governance," he said. It is believed that this dialogue will further enhance solidarity, political consensus and provide emerging markets and developing countries a bigger say in global governance so as to better safeguard common interests, Wang Wenbin added.

Job scam: HC orders...

From Page 1

He dis so hours after a division bench turned down his appeal seeking modification of the single bench judgment.

Earlier, the single Bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay directed Chatterjee to appear before the CBI on Wednesday, failing which, the agency was asked to take him into custody for interrogation if it so wished.

The single bench order was challenged by the Bengal Minister in the Division Bench of Justice Subrata Talukdar, which, after hearing the case, preserved the earlier order on Wednesday.

Subsequently, Chatterjee moved the Division Bench of Justice Harish Tandon seeking modification in the single Bench order — to the extent of restraining the CBI from arresting him.

The Bench of Justice Tandon, however, dismissed his plea on technical grounds leaving the Central agency free not only to interrogate but also arrest him if it so wished.

Hundreds of candidates who had appeared for selection tests failed to get jobs even after their names appeared in the panel whereas others who had not even appeared for the School Service Commission examinations managed to secure employment.

This led to lawsuits from multiple quarters from Group D and C aspirants to those who had appeared for the posts of teachers at Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary (plus II) sections.

Chatterjee is accused of appointing a five-member panel that had allegedly prepared recommendation letters for giving appointments to hundreds of fake candidates triggering suspicion whether jobs were provided for cash.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
(E-Auction Notice)

The Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PS, Northern Railway, Delhi division, New Delhi invites e-Auction for allotment of contracts of parking sites for a period of three (03) years.

Name of work with its location	Contract of Parking lots over Delhi Division for a period of Three(03) years on "As is where is Basis"
SN E-Auction Lot Number	Stations/Location
1 Parking-DLI-DEE-TW-38-22-1	Parking lot (area 105.52 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Delhi Sarai Rohilla (DEE) Railway Station.
2 Parking-DLI-GZB-TW-43-22-1	Parking lot (area 2450.18 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Ghaziabad (GZB) Railway Station, City Side.
3 Parking-DLI-PNP-TW-45-22-1	Parking lot (area 477 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Panipat (PNP) Railway Station, 1st Entry.
4 Parking-DLI-SNP-TW-46-22-1	Parking lot (area 1522.56 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Sonipat (SNP) Railway Station, 2nd Entry.
5 Parking-DLI-PNP-TW-44-22-1	Parking lot (area 390 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Panipat (PNP) Railway Station, 2nd Entry.
6 Parking-DLI-GGN-TW-41-22-1	Parking lot (area 582.31 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Gurgaon (GGN) Railway Station.
7 Parking-DLI-PM-TW-39-22-1	Parking lot (area 414.70 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Palam (PM) Railway Station.
8 Parking-DLI-GZB-TW-49-22-1	Parking lot (area 1088.49 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter at Ghaziabad (GZB) Railway Station, Bhoor Side.
9 Parking-DLI-DEC-MX-57-22-1	Parking lot (area 709 Sq. Mtrs) for Cycle-Scooter-Car at Delhi Cantt (DEC) Railway Station.

Date & Time for e-auction	Start: 30.05.2022 at 14:00 hrs, Close: 30.05.2022 at 15:50 hrs
Website particulars where complete details of E-Auction can be seen	https://ireps.gov.in

All contractors who intend to participate in the e-auctions conducted through E-Auction Leasing module of IREPS should fulfil following mandatory requirements before they can submit their bids:

- Registration on IREPS for E-Auction Leasing module-Active IREPS User Account for E-Auction Leasing Module
- Payment of One Time Registration Fee
- Current Account in State Bank of India
- Integration of SBI Bank Account with IREPS Account
- Lien Marking of Funds
- Updation of Turnover Details
- Contractors who do not have IREPS account for any module of IREPS can submit their online request for registration by clicking on New Vendors/Contractors (E-Tender/E-Auction Leasing) link on IREPS Home page.

Railway Authority to contact, in case of any query	Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Commercial Branch, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055. Email: pkg.delhidivision@gmail.com Tel: 011-23743084
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No.: 23AC/393/E Auction/2022 Dated: 18.05.2022 1175/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Khattar troubling Delhiites by blocking Yamuna water: Bhardwaj

Delhi being given its due share of water, Haryana CM had said earlier on the issue

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) Vice-Chairman, Saurabh Bhardwaj, on Wednesday alleged that Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar is deliberately troubling the people of the national Capital by obstructing the release of water in the Yamuna.

Addressing a press conference, Bhardwaj said that Delhi is still short of 65 million gallons per day (MGD) of water and this has impacted supply in north, northwest, south and central Delhi, besides areas under the New Delhi Municipal Council.

“We have been talking to the officials of the Haryana Government, but I think Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar is deliberately creating such a situation. This shows what his intentions are,” Bhardwaj said.

“Haryana has been releasing less water in the Yamuna and the river has dried up. Khattar would have tried resolving the issue if he had the right intentions. It shows that he is deliberately troubling the people of Delhi,” he added.

Bhardwaj said Khattar will have to bear the repercussions as a large number of people from Haryana living and working in Delhi are grappling with

a shortage of water.

Khattar had on Tuesday accused the AAP Government in Delhi of politicising the matter and presenting false data.

“It is unfortunate that they are telling lies, doing politics on the issue and presenting false figures. The fact is that they are being given water as per their share. They are being given 1,050 cusecs of water,” the Haryana CM had said.

Delhi Water Minister Satyendar Jain had on Tuesday said water supply in the city has reduced by six-seven per cent with the Haryana Government failing to provide Delhi its share of raw water despite the Supreme Court’s order.

“Adequate supply of water is a fundamental right of the people of Delhi and the Haryana Government is depriving the people of their rights by obstructing water supply,” he had said.



The DJB on Tuesday shot off another letter to the Haryana Irrigation Department, asking it to urgently release 150 cusecs of additional water in the “almost

dry” Yamuna.

This was the fourth time in less than three weeks that the DJB has written to the Haryana Irrigation Department.

The water level in the Wazirabad pond has fallen to a critical low of 669 feet, the lowest so far this year, against the required level of 674.50 feet, it said.

“The (Yamuna) river has turned almost dry at the Wazirabad pond. This has reduced water production by 65 MGD at our vital water treatment plants at Wazirabad and Chandrawal, which cater to the requirement of the entire central Delhi, parts of west Delhi, north Delhi,” the letter read.

The curtailment of water production has severely affected water supply in the administratively sensitive areas of south Delhi and New Delhi, including diplomatic areas, President’s House, Supreme

Court, High Court, embassies, other institutional buildings and establishments of national and international importance, it said.

“Against Delhi’s potable water requirement of 1,260 MGD, only 819 MGD was produced against the desired production of 875 MGD on May 16... As adequate raw water was not available through the river Yamuna,” the DJB said.

Haryana supplies a total of 610 MGD to Delhi through two canals, CLC (368 MGD) and DSB (177), and the Yamuna (65 MGD).

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

BJP responsible for Mundka fire deaths, alleges AAP

Lodge FIR against former, present Delhi BJP chiefs, for unintentional murder, probe bribe angle: Bhardwaj

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday blamed Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta and his predecessors Manoj Tiwari and Satish Upadhyaya for the deaths of 27 people in the Mundka fire tragedy.

The AAP demanded a case of unintentional murder lodged against them and a probe to ascertain who took the bribes.

Saurabh Bhardwaj, the AAP’s spokesperson said that with the suspension of three MCD officials, it has been proved that BJP president Adesh Gupta, his predecessors Manoj Tiwari and Satish Upadhyaya are responsible for the deaths of the 27 people.

He said the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) let “unauthorised” industrial activity continue in the building where the fire broke out, even though a Supreme Court-appointed committee had sealed it.

“The unauthorised industrial activity continued there because the building owner

“WHENEVER WE TALKED ABOUT CORRUPTION IN THE MCD AND ITS BUILDING DEPARTMENT, THEY CAME OUT TO DEFEND IT”

Manish Lakra, who has been arrested in connection with the case, was a BJP man and had close links with the leaders of the saffron party, including Master Azad Singh, the uncle of West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma,” Bharadwaj charged.

Upadhyaya, Tiwari and Gupta have been the successive Delhi BJP presidents during the time the building was being constructed, when unauthorised commercial activities began on its premises and when the fire tragedy occurred, he pointed out.

“Whenever we talked about corruption in the MCD and its building department, they came out to defend it during their respective terms. Why was Gupta giving a twist to the fire incident? Did he take a bribe?” Bhardwaj asked.

“They are responsible for

the deaths of the 27 people... We demand that an FIR be lodged against them for unintentional murder and a probe conducted to ascertain if the bribe went only into their hands or did they share it with top BJP leaders also,” he said.



Commercial building which was gutted in fire near Mundka Metro Station in New Delhi

Retired HC judge must probe tragedy, demands Delhi Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress has demanded a probe by a retired High Court judge into the Mundka fire tragedy that claimed 27 lives on May 13.

Blaming the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government in the city for alleged negligence, Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar claimed on Wednesday that the building at Mundka where the fire broke out did not

have a fire clearance certificate, “yet it was functioning as a shopping complex.”

He also alleged that “high corruption” in the Delhi Government was responsible for the operation of the “illegal” building.

The Delhi Government’s decision to conduct a probe into the incident by a District Magistrate was intended to cover up its lapses as the question arises that how such a ille-

gal building, without fire safety clearance, was allowed to operate in a crowded area, Kumar said in a statement.

He alleged that the terms and conditions given to the District Magistrate for holding the probe were intended to “save the BJP and AAP politicians, the Mayor, Councillors and Ministers from any blame as there was high corruption behind the functioning of this illegal building.”

“A retired High Court judge will hold an impartial enquiry, covering angles such as how a liquor vend was allowed to operate in this illegal building, how this liquor vend, which was sealed, was de-sealed by the North Delhi Municipal Corporation,” Kumar said.

The Delhi Congress also raised a question over “how power and water connections were given to this illegal building.”

“Why did the Central Government’s National Disaster Response Force reach the fire accident site hours late?” Kumar asked.

The NMC has suspended three officials in the Narela zone for alleged laxity in duty following the massive fire at Mundka.

MORPHOLOGICAL RIDGE PROJECTS

Review curbs, DDA asks Chief Secretary

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Wednesday wrote a letter to the Delhi Chief Secretary, urging him to review restrictions imposed by the Forest Department on developmental work in the “morphological ridge” area.

According to documents, the DDA has challenged the Forest Department’s decision to impose curbs on several projects in the morphological ridge area, saying the term “morphological ridge” neither has “legal sanctity nor any scientific background to it”.

“It is pertinent to mention that the issues related to such an morphological ridge have resulted in major economic implications for the DDA and service providing agencies and hampered developmental activities within the area,” the letter said.

The letter further stated, “The DDA has already spent crores (of rupees) on the acquisition of land parcels which



have subsequently been allotted to various Government agencies such as National Investigation Agency, Central Bureau of Investigation, Delhi Police, IGNOU, Urban Institute of India, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade and South Asian University.”

A senior Forest Department official said certain areas in the Capital have been classified as “morphological ridge” based on the data provided by the Geological Survey of India.

“We have briefed the Chief Secretary about it... Soon, we’ll put up all the documents on our website. If the DDA wants to challenge it they should approach the Supreme Court,” he said.

At 40.6C, City’s max temp normal; heatwave new spell from today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital on Wednesday witnessed a maximum temperature of 40.6 degrees Celsius, which was normal for this time of the year.

The minimum temperature recorded at the Safdarjung Observatory was 29.3 degrees Celsius, which was three notches above the normal for this season.

The relative humidity on Wednesday morning at 8:30 was recorded at 36 per cent and 30 per cent in the evening at 5:30. The weather stations at Ridge, Ayaznagar, Mungeshpur, Najafgarh, Pitampura, Palam, and Lodhi Road recorded maximum temperatures of 41 degrees Celsius, 41.2 degrees Celsius, 41 degrees Celsius, 42.1 degrees Celsius, 41.2 degrees Celsius, 42 degrees Celsius and 40.6 degrees Celsius respectively, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The IMD said that the fresh spell of heatwave conditions is likely over Northwest and Central India from 19th May 2022.

“Southwest Monsoon further advanced into some more parts of South Bay of Bengal, entire the Andaman Sea and Andaman and Nicobar Islands and some more parts of East-central Bay of Bengal,” predicted the IMD.

“Heavy to very heavy rainfall spell over Kerala and Coastal and South Interior Karnataka during next two days,” said IMD.

On Sunday, Delhi saw a tormenting heatwave pushing the mercury to 49.2 degrees Celsius at Mungeshpur in northwest Delhi and 49.1 degrees Celsius at Najafgarh in the southwest parts of the city.

Meanwhile, the peak power demand in the national capital on Wednesday clocked 6665 MW at 3:16 in the afternoon.

Order CBI probe into maintenance of old DTC buses, Gupta urges Shah

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After the national Capital reported several incidents of buses catching fire this season, Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta wrote a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah urging him to order a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the maintenance of old Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses. He also claimed that the buses running in the Capital city were catching fire because they were old and had reached end of life.

According to the Delhi BJP chief’s letter, “A ₹50 lakh tender has been awarded for the maintenance of the old DTC buses for three years and still the smells of corruption.”

Gupta wrote, “There was a provision for phasing out these buses after running for 7.5 lakh kms or completing 12 years. But the Kejriwal Government wrongly changed the provision, making it 15

years.”

“The lives of Delhiites are in danger due to the negligence of the Delhi Government. A big accident might occur any day,” the Delhi BJP chief said, urging Shah to order a CBI probe into the matter.

Gupta further alleged that no new bus has been bought for the DTC since Arvind Kejriwal became Chief Minister of Delhi. The number of DTC buses has come down from 6,200 to 3,700, he claimed.

According to a DTC official, “At present city has only two electric buses but by the next week 100 more e-buses will arrive for the public service. The buses will be officially inaugurated by the chief minister or the transport minister.”

Last month, the Delhi Government formed a six-member committee to find the root cause of DTC buses catching fire. The committee’s report is awaited.

DDA launches demolition drive in Kalyanpuri; AAP MLA detained

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Wednesday conducted a demolition drive in Kalyanpuri’s Khichripur area, to remove illegal structures from public land, during which almost two *bigha* land was cleared. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Kuldeep Kumar was detained for allegedly obstructing the drive.

According to a senior police officer, the AAP MLA from Kondli (East) reached the spot at the time of the demolition and started to protest against the drive.

A senior DDA official said the encroachment removal exercise on DDA land of Village Khichripur was scheduled for execution.

“A court case titled Hari Ram Vs DDA is pending in the High Court. The encroachers have filed multiple applications seeking a stay order against the demolition of the encroachment, but the High Court has rejected the stay application of the encroachers. In a recent order dated 06/05/2022, the court questioned DDA for not taking possession of the land since 2019 and directed the authority to take over the possession of land forthwith,” he informed.

“The demolition programme on the land under reference was earlier scheduled thrice, but could not be carried out due to the non-availability of sufficient police force. The demolition programme on the land under reference was again fixed for today in accordance with the above facts, which has been only partially carried out due to protests by the locals, around two *bigha* land has been cleared,” he added.



Police take away AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar during an anti-encroachment drive by the DDA at Khichripur village, in New Delhi on Wednesday

Farmhouses, shops demolished in Bhondsi, Sohna in Gurugram

Gurugram: A team of the District Town and Country Planning (DTCP) on Wednesday carried out a demolition drive in the villages of Bhondsi and Sohna in which commercial farmhouses, shops and under-construction structures were demolished. RS Bhath, District Town Planner (Enforcement), said that the colonies were being developed in violation of rules, without necessary permissions from the competent authority.

“We conducted the drive after a complaint was received on the CM’s window. We will conduct such drives in future to build people’s trust in the CM’s window. The department will soon recommend filing of FIRs against those who were involved in developing illegal colonies. Notices were also issued to plot owners earlier as well,” Bhath said.

During the drive, six unauthorised colonies in approximately 35 acres located in the area were demolished with the help of three earthmovers. 100 policemen were present at the spot to deal with any untoward incident.

Three earthmoving machines were pressed



into service to demolish illegal constructions.

“All six colonies were in initial stages and demarcation of plots by way of DPCs, boundary walls was being done. Commercial farm houses spread in over 2.5 acres and under construction shops and road network was demolished,” Bhath added.

MCDs to be formally merged on May 22

New Delhi: The three municipal corporations of Delhi will be formally merged on May 22, the Central Government announced on Wednesday.

According to a notification issued by the Union Home Ministry, the Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2022 will come into effect from May 22.

The legislation was approved by Lok Sabha on March 30 and by the Rajya Sabha on April 5. President Ram Nath Kovind had given his assent on April 18.

“In exercise of the powers conferred by Sub-Section (1) of Section 3 of the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2022 (10 of 2022), the Central Government hereby appoints the 22nd day of May 2022 on which the Municipal Corporation of Delhi shall be constituted,” another notification said.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi was trifurcated in 2011 when Sheila Dikshit was the Chief Minister of Delhi and the Congress-led UPA was in power at the

Centre. According to the legislation, the unification of the municipal corporations in Delhi will ensure synergised and strategic planning and optimal utilisation of resources.

Several Opposition parties, including the AAP, had opposed the legislation to reunify the MCDs in Parliament.

Replying to the debates, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said the move was necessitated due to the “step-motherly treatment” meted out to the civic bodies by the Aam

Aadmi Party (AAP) Government in Delhi.

“This Bill is in accordance with the Constitution. The Centre has the power to enact laws in the Union Territory of Delhi... This Bill, from no angle, is an attack on the federal structure,” Shah had said, allaying the concerns raised by some Opposition members.

Delhi is only a Union Territory and not a full state, he had said, adding that, Parliament has the competence to frame laws for Delhi. **PTI**

CBI books Karti's frontman in cash-for-visa scam case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Post-day-long searches in the cash-for-visa scam allegedly masterminded by Lok Sabha MP Karti Chidambaram, the CBI on Wednesday arrested his Chartered Accountant and close associate/front man S Bhaskararaman.

Karti, son of former Union Home and Finance Minister P Chidambaram, along with Bhaskararaman and others are accused in a Rs 50-lakh bribery case for clearing visas of 263 Chinese nationals working at Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd (TSPL) in Punjab.

The bribery incident allegedly took place in 2011 when Karti's father P Chidambaram was the Union Home Minister.

Officials said the CBI took Bhaskararaman for questioning late on Tuesday night and he was arrested in the early hours of Wednesday.

In its FIR, the agency has alleged that Bhaskararaman was approached by Vikas Makharia, the then Associate Vice President of TSPL, for the reissuance of project visas for 263 Chinese workers working at the Mansa-based power plant which was in the process



of being established.

The CBI FIR, which contains the findings of the investigating officer of the Preliminary Enquiry (PE), has alleged that Makharia approached Karti through his "close associate/front man" Bhaskararaman.

"They (accused persons in the case) devised a backdoor way to defeat the purpose of ceiling (maximum number of project visas permissible to the company's plant) by granting permission to reuse 263 project visas allotted to the said Chinese company's officials," officials said.

Project visas were a special type of travel document introduced in 2010 for the power and steel sectors for which detailed guidelines were issued

during senior Chidambaram's tenure as the Home Minister but there was no provision of reissuance of project visas, the FIR alleged.

"As per prevalent guidelines, deviation in rare and exceptional cases could be considered and granted only with the approval of the Home Secretary. However, in view of the above circumstances, the deviation in terms of reuse of project visas is likely to be approved by the then Home Minister..." the FIR further alleged.

Makharia allegedly submitted a letter to the Home Ministry on July 30, 2011, seeking approval to reuse the project visas allotted to his company, which was approved within a month and permission

was issued, officials had said on Tuesday when the agency conducted coordinated searches at 10 locations, including Karti's residence in Chennai and Delhi. "On August 17, 2011, Makharia, on being directed by Bhaskararaman, sent a copy of the above letter dated July 30, 2011 to him through e-mail which was forwarded to Karti... Bhaskararaman after discussion with P Chidambaram, the then Home Minister, demanded an illegal gratification of Rs 50 lakh for ensuring the approval," the FIR further alleged.

The payment of the said bribe was routed from TSPL to Karti and Bhaskararaman through Mumbai-based Bell Tools Ltd with payments camouflaged under two invoices raised for consultancy and out of pocket expenses for Chinese visas related works. However, the Mumbai-based firm was never engaged in any kind of work relating to visas, rather it was in an entirely different business of industrial knives, the agency has alleged.

Makharia had later thanked Karti and Bhaskararaman in an email for the visa reuse permission, it added.

SC appoints CoA to manage affairs of football union

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday appointed a three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) headed by former top court judge AR Dave to manage the affairs of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and adoption of its constitution in line with the National Sports Code and model guidelines. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant and PS Narasimha said the CoA will comprise two earlier members--Dr SY Qureshi, former Chief Election Commissioner and Bhaskar Ganguly, former captain of the Indian Football Team besides Justice (ret'd) Dave. The apex court said the current state of affairs is not in the interest of proper governance of the federation. It directed the CoA to forthwith take charge of the AIFF and assist the court by providing inputs to the court in facilitating the adoption of the constitution by the AIFF in accordance with the National Sports Code and model guide-

lines. The bench said the CoA will prepare electoral rolls for the purpose of conducting elections to the executive committee of AIFF as per the constitution to be submitted by the two-member committee (ombudsman) of Qureshi and Ganguly.

"The committee of administrators shall carry out day-to-day governance of the All India Football Federation", the bench said, adding the CoA will be at a liberty to take the assistance of the erstwhile committee of the federation in holding of tournaments and selection of players and other affairs. The bench said the newly constituted committee of administrators shall sit in Football House at Dwarka or any other place of convenience.

The top court clarified that this is pro-tem arrangement in order to facilitate the holding of elections and handing over the affairs to the democratically elected body in accordance with the constitution. It added that it is anticipated the elections are held at the expeditious date.

SC permits reservation for OBCs in local body elections in MP

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Wednesday permitted reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the local body elections in Madhya Pradesh.

The apex court, which had passed an order on May 10 and noted that no reservation for OBCs can be provisioned until the triple test formality is completed "in all respects" by the state government, permitted the state to notify the reservation pattern local body wise as delineated in the reports of the dedicated commission.

A bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar passed the order on an application filed by the state seeking modification of the May 10 order and permitting the conduct of elections based on recently notified delimitation.

In the application, the state government had also urged the court to permit it to notify reservation for OBCs based on the recommendation of the OBC Commission in the second report of May 12 and for the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes with-



in four weeks.

"We also permit the state of Madhya Pradesh to notify the reservation pattern local body-wise as delineated in the reports of the dedicated commission, to be adhered to by the State Election Commission. That be done within one week from today. The State Election Commission shall issue election programme in respect of concerned local bodies thereafter within one week," the bench, also comprising Justices A S Oka and C T Ravikumar, said in its order.

"For the time being, we permit the Madhya Pradesh State Election Commission to notify the election programme for the respective local bodies keeping in mind the delimitation notifications already issued by the state government as on this date, i.e., till today; and also the reports submitted by the dedicated Commission, referred to above," it said.

Navy, DRDO successfully hold maiden test of anti-ship missile

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/BALASORE (ODISHA)

Giving a boost to self-reliance in niche missile technology, the Indian Navy in association with the Defence Research and Development (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully conducted the maiden test of an anti-ship missile. It was fired from a Seaking helicopter.

The indigenously developed air launched naval anti-ship missile test took place at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. The mission met all its objectives. The missile followed the desired sea skimming trajectory and reached the designated target with high degree of accuracy, validating the control, guidance and mission algorithms, officials later said. All sub-systems performed satisfactorily and the sensors deployed across the test range and near impact point tracked the missile trajectory and captured all events.



The missile employed many new technologies, including an indigenously developed launcher for the helicopter. The missile guidance system includes state-of-the-art navigation system and integrated avionics. The flight test was witnessed by senior officers of the DRDO and the Indian Navy.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO, Navy and associated teams for the maiden developmental flight test. He said India has attained a high level of capability in indigenous design and development of missile systems.

Chief of DRDO Sateesh Reddy said the system will strengthen offensive capability of Indian Navy. The Navy has been steadily enhancing its overall combat capability to effectively protect India's maritime security interests, particularly in the Indian Ocean region.

The test-firing of the new missile came over a month after an anti-ship version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully test-fired jointly by the Indian Navy and the Andaman and Nicobar Command.

The Navy is strengthening its operational capabilities and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday launched two frontline warships of the Indian Navy.

The ships — INS Surat and INS Udaygiri — were launched at the Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL) in Mumbai. INS Surat is the fourth guided-missile destroyer of the P15B class, while INS Udaygiri is the second stealth frigate of the P17A class.

Rajnath undertakes sortie on Navy's P8-I Long Range Warfare aircraft

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh undertook a sortie on the Indian Navy P8-I Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance Anti-Submarine Warfare aircraft during his visit to Mumbai.

During the mission, long range surveillance, electronic warfare, imagery intelligence, anti submarine warfare (ASW) missions and search and rescue capabilities employing the state-of-the-art mission suite and sensors were demonstrated, officials said here on Wednesday.

The flight crew for this sortie comprised two Pilots and seven Naval Air Operations Officers including three women officers.

"I undertook a sortie on board the Navy's maritime patrol aircraft. I witnessed their combat capability closely. I can confidently say that my trust in the Indian Navy has grown even stronger. The Navy is fully capable of protecting our nation," Singh said later. The induction of P8I aircraft commencing 2013, have significantly enhanced Indian Navy's persistent surveillance operations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).



At present, India has 12 such aircraft manufactured by Boeing with the first aircraft inducted into service in the Indian Navy in 2013. While the Indian Navy uses it for maritime operations, the aircraft was also used in eastern Ladakh in 2020 and 2021, when the standoff with China was at

its peak, to keep an eye on Chinese troops and their manoeuvres. The first order for the planes was given by India in 2009 for eight aircraft. The order had a clause allowing the purchase of four more aircraft later and India placed an order for four more aircraft in 2016.

Researches of Cong's Vallabh forces Govt to reconsider sale of several PSUs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress' repeated attacks on the Modi Government on issues of price rise, inflation, unemployment and several other social and political issues may not have yielded the desired results but its opposition to the sale of some profit-making Public Sector Units (PSU) did force the ruling regime to hold the decisions.

Barring the sale of national carrier Air India, the "sell-off" of other profit-making PSUs Concor, Central Electronics Limited (CEL) and State-owned Pawan Hans Helicopters could not materialize due to the pressure mounted by the Congress which made the researches by its national spokesman Prof



Gaurav Vallabh the basis for its opposition.

The latest in the line of Congress stalling a sale by the Government is that of the Pawan Hans Limited to Star9 Mobility Private Limited. On April 29, an empowered cabinet group had given the green signal for Star9 Mobility to buy the Government's 51 percent stake in the loss-making Pawan Hans.

However, Vallabh, a professor at the prestigious XLRI, Jamshedpur, raised questions

over the majority stakeholder Almas Global Opportunity Fund and the background of the winning bidder Star9 Mobility.

After concerns were raised, the Government then put the decision on hold. Vallabh said it took much effort and research to come up with "fool-proof documents" and the chain of "loopholes".

Prior to this, Vallabh's research-based attack even prevented the sale of CEL to a little-known firm on grounds of gross undervaluation. The Congress alleged the Rs 210-crore highest bid made by the city-based Nandal Finance & Leasing was grossly undervalued. It claimed that the valuation of the CEL, using different methods, was between Rs 957 crore and Rs 1,600 crore.

The government later

examined it through the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM).

In September last year, the strategic sale of Container Corporation of India (Concor), a unit of Indian Railways, was put on hold due to doubts raised by Vallabh in the sale process. He had questioned how the government could hand over railway land acquired from farmers of our country at a concessional rate or free of cost to a private party for commercial use in a "backdoor arrangement".

Vallabh had come into limelight after he took on the then Jharkhand chief minister Raghubar Das in the 2019 Assembly elections in a triangular contest wherein Saryu Rai emerged winner as an independent candidate.

Rahul slams Centre, says India going the Lanka way

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday hit out at the Central Government over rising inflation and unemployment in the country, saying India looks a "lot like Sri Lanka" and the Union Government should not distract people.

"Distracting people won't change the facts. India looks a lot like Sri Lanka," he said on Twitter.

Rahul shared graphs of unemployment, petrol price and communal violence showing similar images of India and Sri Lanka citing various sources including armed conflict location and event data project, Lok Sabha unstarred



question, CMIE, Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell and Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The graphs showed unem-

ployment rising from 2017 in both countries, peaking around 2020- the year India imposed a lockdown to fight

the coronavirus- and dipping slightly the next year.

The second pair of graphs compares petrol prices in India and Sri Lanka, on the rise since 2017 and soaring around 2021. The third set of graphs shows communal violence rising sharply in 2020-21 in both countries. The Congress has been accusing the government of distracting people with other issues to hide its failures and issues of price rise and unemployment.

The party has been attacking the Government over the issue of price and inflation and rising unemployment and has said that the situation in India is going the Sri Lanka way, where the prime minister had to resign in view of the deteriorating situation.

Critical global indicators of climate crisis broke records in 2021 with extreme weather: UN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

From rising oceans to the levels of heat-trapping emissions in the atmosphere—the critical global indicators of the climate crisis broke records in 2021, a UN report said on Wednesday even as it painted a bleak future for the world which is witnessing erratic weather conditions at a faster pace.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) State of the Global Climate in 2021 report said, "It (climate change) wreaked a heavy toll on human lives and well-being and triggered shocks for food and

water security and displacement that have accentuated in 2022.

Global annual mean temperature difference is considered from pre-industrial conditions (1850-1900) for six global temperature data sets (1850-2021).

The report confirmed that the past seven years have been the warmest seven years on record and that year 2021 was "only" one of the seven warmest because of a La Nina event (ocean phenomenon in the Pacific) at the start and end of the year. "This had a temporary cooling effect, but did not reverse the overall trend of rising temperatures.



The average global temperature in 2021 was about 1.11 (plus/minus 0.13) degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level.

"It is just a matter of time before we see another warmest year on record," said WMO

Secretary-General Professor Petheri Taalas. "The heat trapped by human-induced greenhouse gases will warm

the planet for many generations to come. Sea level rise, ocean heat and acidification will continue for hundreds of years unless means to remove carbon from the atmosphere are invented.

Similarly, the WMO report's key findings include record high ocean heat -- much of the ocean experienced at least one 'strong' marine heatwave at some point in 2021; ocean acidification findings reiterated the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) conclusions that open ocean surface pH is now the lowest it has been for at least 26,000 years and current rates of pH change

are unprecedented.

Global mean sea level reached a new record high in 2021, after increasing at an average 4.5 mm per year over the period 2013 -2021, which is more than double the rate between 1993 and 2002 and is mainly due to the accelerated loss of ice mass from the ice sheets and in case of cryosphere, the glaciological year 2020-2021 saw less melting than in recent years, but there is a clear trend towards an acceleration of mass loss on multi-decadal timescales.

"Extreme weather has the most immediate impact on our daily lives. Years of investment in disaster preparedness

means that we are better at saving lives, though economic losses are soaring. But much more needs to be done, as we are seeing with the drought emergency unfolding in the Horn of Africa, the recent deadly flooding in South Africa and the extreme heat in India and Pakistan," Taalas said. "Early Warning Systems are critically required for climate adaptation, and yet these are only available in less than half of WMO's members. We are committed to making early warnings reach everyone in the next five years, as requested by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres," he said.

Migrants seek evacuation from Kashmir

PNS ■ JAMMU

Unrelenting Kashmiri migrant employees, employed under Prime Ministers package, Wednesday evening took out protest marches outside different transit camps in support of their one point demand of safe evacuation from Kashmir Valley.

After the merciless killing of Rahul Bhat these migrant employees have not attended their duties in their respective offices. Though senior officers including Divisional Commissioner Kashmir PK Pole and Inspector General of Police, Kashmir range, Vijay Kumar have personally visited several of these transit camps and interacted with the migrant employees to convince them to stay put in Kashmir valley but it appears the migrant employees are in no mood to pay attention to their appeals and suggestions.



Wearing black bandanas and holding placards the protesting employees were heard shouting slogans against the UT administration headed by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

Referring to the assurances given by the senior officers, a kashmir migrant employee claimed that when IGP himself

is telling us to avoid protest in the open and advising us to stay inside the camps, how can we trust him to provide us better security at the workplace. "We are not ready to become sitting ducks for terrorists, We are ready to die for our motherland but with dignity not as scape-goats", claimed migrant employees. Earlier in the day,

the divisional administration in Kashmir directed all the heads of departments to ensure that the Kashmiri Pandit employees serving in the valley are posted only in less vulnerable areas such as towns and district headquarters to ensure their safety and security. "We had a meeting with all heads of departments and chief

engineers. I have told them to ensure that the Kashmiri Pandit employees are posted in less vulnerable areas like towns and district headquarters," Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir P K Pole told reporters here.

Pole evaded a direct reply when asked if the government is willing to consider the demands of the protesting employees such as shifting them to Jammu. He said the administration will resolve the service-related matters concerning the Kashmiri Pandit employees within a week.

"Eventually, all government employees have to follow a code of conduct. We are looking into it.... They will not be posted in remote or vulnerable areas, the issue of couples being posted in different areas will also be addressed. They will be posted closer to their colonies so that their commuting time is also less," Pole said.

DMK, allies hail SC order on release of Rajiv's killer

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHEN-NAI



The Supreme Court order releasing A G Perarivalan, one of the accused in the 1991 assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, has been welcomed by the DMK and its trusted allies in Tamil Nadu. The Dravidian major and a number of fringe elements like VCK, MDMK, the Communists and various frontal organisations of the LTTE operating in the State were demanding from rooftops for the release of all the accused held in connection with the case.

It was on May 21, 1991 Rajiv Gandhi who was campaigning for the party candidate at Sriperumbudur Lok Sabha constituency was assassinated by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam terrorists operating in Tamil Nadu with impunity. The DMK was extending full support to the LTTE which had made the southern districts of the State their base camp. Even as this matter is on its way to the Press, the Congress leaders in Tamil Nadu have not reacted publicly to the decision.

The Supreme Court order to release Perarivalan (50) from imprisonment comes three days prior to the 31st anniversary of the martyrdom of Rajiv

Gandhi. All the accused in the assassination case were sentenced to death by the trial court and was upheld by the Supreme Court. But the delay in taking a decision over their clemency petitions to the President of India saved them from the gallows. Nalini, one of the prime accused was pardoned by the then Governor of Tamil Nadu at the instance of the then chief minister M Karunanidhi and her death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Efforts are on to get the six other assassins too released and the mission has full political patronage of Chief Minister M K Stalin.

It is a strange paradox that the Congress (of which Rajiv Gandhi was the president at the time of his murder) is finding itself in a no-man's land in this crucial hour. No senior leaders of the party in the State, including P Chidambaram, the main party ideologist, has dared to tell anything against the move by the DMK to get the assassins released. Chidambaram is at

the mercy of Stalin as the decision on the former's Rajya Sabha dreams depend on the moods of the DMK president.

For the Congress in Tamil Nadu, Rajiv Gandhi is just a symbol to observe May 21 and August 20 anniversaries and to forget him. Rajiv Gandhi's biggest contribution to India, the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, a NewGen public school concept has no place in Dravida Nadu. Tamil Nadu is the only State in India which does not permit the opening of Navodaya Vidyalayas offering free public school education to students from rural areas and a cosmopolitan atmosphere similar to the elite Doon School where Rajiv Gandhi was fortunate to get admission.

The new education policy launched by Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1987 remain a non-starter in Tamil Nadu. Congress has not opened its mouth to demand the setting up of the poor man's public schools in the State.

While the Congress continues condemning the Sangh Parivar for its soft corner for Nathuram Godse, the assassin of the Father of the Nation, the party is silent over DMK and other Dravidian outfits offering poojas to the slain LTTE chief V Prabhakaran, the master brain behind the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

Latest victim of targeted killing cremated in Rajouri

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The mortal remains of Ranjit Singh, the latest victim of targeted killing in Kashmir valley, were consigned to flames by his minor son at his native village of Sunderbani in Rajouri district on Wednesday.

Singh was killed in a grenade attack on a newly opened wine shop in Dewan Bagh area of Baramulla late Tuesday evening.

He is survived by his wife, four daughters and a minor son. According to family members, Singh left home only two weeks ago to earn his livelihood. He along with three other employees received injuries in the grenade attack. Singh, later, succumbed to his injuries in the hospital.

One of the daughters, holding her minor brother in her lap, appealed to the UT administration to do justice with the family. "We need justice. Our father was earning his livelihood when he was targeted and killed. He was innocent. How can we survive, who will look after our family and feed us after his untimely death in a terror attack? Before the cremation ceremony was performed the local administration had to persuade the agi-



tating family members to lift the dharna in the middle of the road. BJP leader Ravinder Raina and Surinder Choudhary also attended the cremation ceremony.

Soon after the mortal remains of Ranjit Singh reached his native Bakra village in Sunderbani area of Rajouri a large number of local residents along with family members blocked traffic on the Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch National Highway.

The angry residents demanded severest punishment for the perpetrators of terrorist violence while shouting slogans.

The protesters were demanding an ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh for the family of the deceased and employment to one of the family members. According to official sources, the district administration led by Deputy Commissioner Rajouri visited the spot to pacify the aggrieved family members.

The district administration immediately handed over a cheque of Rs 1 lakh to the family of Ranjit Singh while an assurance was given to employ one of the family members in the government job and an amount of 4 lakhs would be released soon.

BJP playing religious card to distract people from core issues: Maya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati, alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies were distracting people by targeting religious places to divert attention from key issues like inflation, poverty and unemployment.

The BSP chief also warned that such an attempt could worsen the situation anytime.

The BSP chief, in her statement issued on Wednesday, said, "In order to divide the attention of the people suffering from the ever-increasing poverty, unemployment and skyrocketing inflation in the country, the BJP and its allied organisations are selectively targeting religious issues. It is not hidden and it can worsen the situation at any time."

The BSP chief said that there was a conspiracy to provoke people on religious grounds and added, "Years after independence, the manner in which religious sentiments of people are being instigated as part of a conspiracy, under the pretext of Gyanvapi, Mathura, Taj Mahal and other places, will not strengthen the country. The BJP needs to take



note of it."

Addressing a press conference in Lucknow, Mayawati said, "The way they (BJP) are changing the names of places belonging to a particular community, it will make a dent to the spirit of brotherhood and affect communal harmony in the country. It will increase hatred. This is alarming. People belonging to all communities must be on alert. This will neither do good to India nor to the common people of the country."

On Tuesday, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre, saying that Gyanvapi-like incidents were a part of the party's "hate calendar", and were a deliberate attempt to avoid addressing issues of inflation and unemployment.

Cong accuses BJP of cheap politics for Perarivalan release

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday expressed pain and disappointment over the release of former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convict A G Perarivalan, and slammed the Government for creating "a situation" in the court to get the killer of a former prime minister released for their "petty and cheap politics".

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said there is a sorrow and fury not only in every Congress worker over the development, but in every citizen who believes in India and Indianness. "A terrorist is a terrorist and should be treated as one. Today, we are deeply pained and disappointed at the decision of the Supreme Court ordering the release of Rajiv Gandhi's assassin," he said.

It is condemnable and very unfortunate that the assassin of a former prime minister has been released, he said. "Today is a sad day for the country. There is sorrow and fury not only in every Congress worker, but in every Indian who believes in India and Indianness, who believes in fighting against extremism and every force that challenges the sovereignty and integrity of India," he told reporters.

He also wondered if the lakhs of convicts facing life terms should be freed. This is not a question about Rajiv Gandhi, but about a prime minister who was killed, he said, adding the soul of every person fighting against terrorism has been hurt.

"Rajiv ji had sacrificed his life for the country, not for the Congress. And if today's government creates a situation in

the court to get his killers released for their petty and cheap politics, then it is very unfortunate and it is condemnable.

"We condemn this in the strongest possible way. All Indians must see what kind of governments are in power today and what are their attitude towards extremism is," he said. Invoking its extraordinary power under Article 142 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court Wednesday ordered the release of A G Perarivalan, who has served over 30 years in jail in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

A bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao said the Tamil Nadu state cabinet's advice recommending the premature release of all seven convicts in the case was binding on the governor.



Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad activists try to break a police cordon during their protest march towards the Bikash Bhawan demanding corruption-free education and safety of women in Kolkata on Wednesday~ PTI

UP Government all set to develop temple information system

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to develop an online Integrated Temple Information System consisting of description, details and history of all the temples of the state as well as their route maps for the convenience of tourists.

The Religious Affairs department has already communicated to the managing director of the UP Electronics Corporation regarding sanctioning of Rs 1 crore for the purpose. The fund would be released by the Finance department soon. The corporation is likely to develop the software and upload the above men-



tioned details about the temples in the next six months, a press release said. It is worth mentioning here that the Religious Affairs department has proposed a whopping Rs 1,000 crore budget for the financial year 2022-23, against Rs 32.52 crore spent in 2017-18 and Rs 614.88 crore in 2021-22.

In the next 100 days, the UP government proposes to work on the Kashi Vishwanath

Corridor project. The department also plans to operate the Kailash Mansarovar Bhawan in Ghaziabad and work on construction of the second phase of Vedic Science Centre at a cost of Rs 934.46 lakh.

Furthermore, the government plans to form a board in the next couple of years for implementation of welfare schemes for elderly saints and priests.

The Yogi Adityanath government 2.0 also has an elaborate infrastructural plan for Ayodhya in the next five years. The government will be building main roads of Ayodhya, including Bhakti Path, at a cost of Rs 63.46 crore and Ram Janmabhoomi Path to Sugreev Fort Road) at a cost of Rs 35.07 crore.

Hathras custody death: Murder case against two cops; probe ordered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A murder case has been registered against two policemen and a magisterial inquiry has been ordered into the alleged custodial death of a 52-year-old businessman in Hathras. While the accused policemen have been also suspended along with two others including the station house officer, no one has been arrested so far.

According to reports, Raj Kumar alias Raju, a local businessman at Bisana village, was detained following a clash between two groups on Monday and brought to Chandpa police station along with another accused Akash.

While Akash had sustained injuries on his head during the clash, Raj Kumar had injuries on his leg.

"In the wee hours on Tuesday, Kumar complained of uneasiness and was shifted to a hospital. After medical treatment, the police team brought him back to the police station. Around 6:30 am, he again complained of uneasiness and was taken to hospital where he died during treatment," said a police officer.

A police officer said that during preliminary inquiry, it was found that the doctors had advised the police team to admit Kumar to the hospital but the cops took him back to the police station.

In a video, Kumar's son Manendra Thakur said, "Police took my father on the pretext of a medical examination. They thrashed him at the police station after which he died."

Millat Council chief says Hindus converted temples to mosques after embracing Islam

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an apparent bid to give a new twist to the row over the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, Maulana Tauqeer Raza, the head of Ittehad-e-Millat Council, has claimed that a large number of Hindus converted their places of worship to mosques when they embraced Islam and such mosques "should not be touched".

Maulana Tauqeer Raza is a prominent leader of the Sunni Barilevi sect of Islam.

"There are many mosques in the country where there were temples before. Those temples were not razed, just converted into mosques when people adopted Islam. Mosques should not be touched, and if

anything is done forcefully, Muslims will oppose the government," Maulana Raza said.

Issuing a threat of violence, Maulana Raza said, "The day Muslim youths become angry, the day I lose control over them, the day these youths take law in their hands, you will have no place to hide."

Justifying the plunder and violence during the Mughal rule, Maulana Raza said, "The Mughal rulers did not attack the temples."

Tauqeer Raza is the founder of the political party Ittehad-e-Millat Council in UP. Raza claimed that calling what was found in the Gyanvapi mosque a Shivling was actually making a mockery of Hinduism.

He claimed that Muslims did not need any legal fight as they had seen the judgement in the "Babri Mosque" case.

"This time, we will not appeal in any court. Hate mongers will find a 'Shivling' at every mosque in the country with a fountain. If they have their way, they will encroach all of them. I would like to see where these people will stop. Muslims have remained quiet to ensure peace in the country," he added.

Millat Council's Tauqeer Raza Khan is known for making incendiary remarks on religious issues and has issued provocative statements in the past.

In January this year, while speaking at a public rally in Bareilly, he had said "I see the

anger within my Muslim youths and I am afraid that the day this anger bursts out, the day I lose control over them... I want to warn my Hindu brothers that I'm scared that the day my Muslim youths are forced to take the law into their hands, you will not find a place to hide anywhere in India."

In April this year, while speaking against the demolition of encroachments in Bareilly, Raza had said, "The day Muslims come to the streets, one must understand that they will be uncontrollable. Therefore I warn the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in particular of consequences if he fails to correct this way of taking action with immediate effect."

Court to hear plea to demolish wall beneath 'wazu khana'

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Varanasi court, on Wednesday, posted May 19 as the date to hear an application filed by the advocates of the plaintiffs to demolish the wall beneath the 'wazu khana' of Gyanvapi mosque where 'Shivling' is claimed to have been found during the survey.

The court will also hear on the same day the application filed by the government lawyer to shift the fishes from the sealed wazu khana to safer place.

The lawyers of the plaintiffs in the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri case had submitted an application in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar, demanding demolition of the wall beneath the 'wazu khana' in Gyanvapi mosque complex

where a 'Shivling' is claimed to have been found during the survey of the Gyanvapi premises.

The government lawyer also filed an application in the same court demanding shifting of the fishes from the sealed wazu khana as their lives were at stake.

Both the applications were to be taken up for hearing on Wednesday but the court proceedings could not begin as



the lawyers were on strike. So the court posted the date for the next hearing on May 19.

The civil judge (senior division) had ordered the survey and videography of the Gyanvapi premises. The lawyers of the plain-

tiff have claimed that a 'Shivling' was found in the wazu khana of the Gyanvapi mosque during the videography and survey conducted for three days from May 14 to 16

under the leadership of Court Commissioner Ajay Kumar Mishra and two commissioners Vishal Singh and Ajay Pratap Singh in the presence of advocates of both plaintiffs and defendant and representatives of the government, district administration and Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

However, the advocates of the defendant claim that it is a fountain and not a 'Shivling'. After the claims and counterclaims, the court had ordered the district administration to seal the place where the 'Shivling' was claimed to be found during the survey. The court also prohibited the entry of any person in this area. However, the Supreme Court has allowed Muslims to offer namaz and perform religious observance without any impediment.

Hawking tuitions

Colleges promote coaching institutes on their campuses to make a fast buck

Commercialisation of education has reached brazen levels of exploitation. A few Delhi University colleges stand accused of tying up with private coaching institutes to allow them access to the college premises to conduct classes for various examinations. A college promotes private coaching classes for UPSC examinations. Another recommends on-campus classes for this year's Common University Entrance Test (CUET). Students taking admission to undergraduate courses are the targeted "clients". A three-year coaching session can cost up to ₹1.5 lakh per person. It is big money at no cost. These private centres gain legitimacy too, thanks to the collusion with colleges of repute. A group of students and teachers is protesting the tie-ups. Shockingly, public-funded institutions supposed to give subsidised education are involved in this commercial activity. The University Grants Commission and the Union Ministry of Education must nip this exercise in the bud. Private coaching classes for IAS aspirants have been around for decades, propagating the myth that cracking the exam is impossible without coaching. It is nothing but a myth, an expensive one because in recent years many candidates have made it to the IAS and other services without private coaching. A candidate from rural Bihar secured 10th rank last year with no coaching. The son of a cloth seller got into IAS with self-study. A girl from Haryana cleared the UPSC in her final attempt without attending coaching classes. A majority of successful candidates who hail from the countryside are clearing the examination on the strength of their fortitude.

This is not to say coaching classes should be avoided. Those who can afford the fees can go ahead. However, colleges cannot join the business by teaming up with private coaching centres. That is not their remit. The bane of the Indian education system is two-fold. One, the formal system of education is affected by an unscientific, even controversial, approach to selecting the curriculum and teaching and evaluation methods. Two, as a result, private tuitions are now a necessary evil, running a parallel system that is gradually eating into the core of formal education. The tie-up experiment deliberately undermines institutional education. China recently found out how deeply entrenched the malaise of private coaching is when it banned the expensive private tutoring industry; parents merely turned to the black market for tutors. This is not the only facet of commercialisation that plagues education in India. The Department of Education recently intervened in the money-making methods of private schools by warning them not to force parents to buy books, uniforms and even shoes from shops on the school premises or specific private vendors at expensive rates. It also asked schools not to change the colour or design of school uniforms for at least three years to plug an additional source of easy profit. Most private engineering and medical colleges exist for profit in the form of high capitation fees. What next? Home delivery of education?

PICTALK



People cross a waterlogged National Highway 15 after heavy rainfall in Darrang, Assam

PTI

Death by breath

Air pollution is the single largest killer in India, and climate change is compounding it

India has been hit by a double whammy: Climate change impact and spiralling pollution levels. Though the country has made significant strides against household air pollution, most notably through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana programme, it hasn't been enough to prevent it from the ignominy of having the world's largest estimated number of air pollution-related deaths. Rising temperatures and untimely rain are linked to climate change, which led to a manifold rise in vector-borne diseases in 2021. With last year recording the number of dengue infections at 1,93,245 and the number of deaths at 306, the figure was the highest since 2018. But that's not all — the country is likely to witness erratic and excess rainfall in various pockets towards the end of September, which might lead to a surge in dengue infections. Already, States receiving rains have started reporting an increase in vector-borne infections. For its part, the ICMR has attributed the rise in dengue cases to climate crisis, besides rapid urbanisation. Several global scientists and medical journals had earlier warned about the link between global warming and climate change, with the spread of diseases such as dengue and malaria. And it goes downhill: A rise in temperatures of nearly 3.7 degrees Celsius over the next 80 years may lead to the 'worst case scenario'.

As for the rising pollution levels, more than 6.6 million premature deaths were recorded across the globe due to air pollution in 2019, with India accounting for the highest share of these fatalities at 1.67 million, or 17.8 per cent. Overall, the various types of pollution wiped off nine million people though, if there's a macabre consolation, it's that the number has remained unchanged since the last analysis in 2015. Unfortunately, the nine million fatalities correspond to one in six reported deaths worldwide to various reasons. Besides air, water pollution was responsible for 1.36 million premature deaths while lead exposure claimed another nine lakh lives. However, alarm bells should ring as regards the ambient air pollution, which refers to air under the normal circumstances and which was responsible for 4.5 million deaths in 2019. The rising threat from ambient air pollution can be gauged from the fact that it had claimed a relatively lower 4.2 million lives in 2015 and 2.9 million way back in 2000.

The demolition of shrines in Medina

The tombs of the Prophet's family members at Jannat-ul-Baqi were in 1804, and again in 1925, razed in Medina but we don't see any protests

Every year, April 18 marks the World Heritage Day. The origin of this special day can be traced back to 1982 when the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) established it as the International Day for Monuments and Sites. Later, during its 22nd general conference, Unesco adopted it as the World Heritage Day. The dignity of a society is reflected in the value it attaches to its cultural heritage. The sum total of cultural heritage is a nation, community or group's language, books, literature, rituals, knowledge, traditions, performing arts, crafts, festive events, monuments and sites of historical relevance. It's, therefore, our moral and civic duty to preserve, conserve and protect our cultural heritage.

In India, the 500-years-old Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished on December 6, 1992, by a radical Hindu mob led by Sangh Parivar leaders. Intellectuals across the globe, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or region, condemned the demolition. Muslims across the world protested. Several lives were lost. In its landmark judgment of 2019, the Supreme Court held that the demolition was illegal and directed the authorities to allot an alternative plot for a mosque as compensation.

On the other hand, the more heinous crime of multiple demolitions of holy shrines, relics and heritage sites together with massacres took place in Saudi Arabia. This was done at the behest of Saudi Arab's Wahabi/Salafi rulers of Zionist ancestry who, wearing the cloak of Islam, in the middle of the 18th century introduced a new distorted version of Islam purely based on terrorism. This new cult was named 'Wahabism' in the name of its founder, Sheikh Muhammad Najdi-ibn-Abd-al-Wahab, who was born in the desert of Najd of Arabian Peninsula.

In 1744, sidelining the preachings of Prophet Mohammad, Najdi created 'Wahabism' cult. To gain manpower, he shrewdly found a pattern in Muhammad-ibn-Saud, a Bedouin tribal chief. Ibn Saud



Before demolition



After demolition

belonged to the Zionist tribe of Anza Ben Wael. Islam is not the original religion of Saudi Arab rulers. Najdi, also belonging to Zionist ancestry, got his daughter married to Ibn Saud's son Abd-al-Aziz.

The Quran states: "Prophet Mohammad was sent to the world as a mercy to mankind (21:107).... Allah abhors any disturbance of peace (2:205)." Whereas Wahabi ideology is enshrined in their book *Kitab-al-Twahid*, which prescribes the forceful conversion of Muslims and others to his Salafi/ Wahabi ideology; wherein, he manifestly says, "Follow my ideology, else get ready to be killed."

In 1766, Muhammad-ibn-Saud was killed and his son Abd-al-Aziz took over as Emir (temporal leader). He introduced firearms replacing conventional weaponry in the so-called holy war (jihad). He accelerated attacks in a spectacular bid to extend his territory and as British historian Charles Allen writes in his book, *'God's Terrorists — The Wahabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad'*: "Abd-al-Aziz issued every (so-called) holy warrior a *firman* (written order) addressed to the gatekeeper of Heaven, requiring him to be admitted forthwith should he die in battle." Since then, it has been the common schismatic, fraudulent practice

“THE MORE HEINOUS CRIME OF MULTIPLE DEMOLITIONS OF HOLY SHRINES, RELICS AND HERITAGE SITES TOGETHER WITH MASSACRES TOOK PLACE IN SAUDI ARABIA. THIS WAS DONE AT THE BEHEST OF SAUDI ARAB'S WAHABI/SALAFI RULERS OF ZIONIST ANCESTRY WHO, WEARING THE CLOAK OF ISLAM, INTRODUCED A NEW DISTORTED VERSION OF ISLAM PURELY BASED ON TERRORISM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ROW OVER CHAPTER ON BHAGAT SINGH

Sir — The decision of the BJP Government in Karnataka regarding the removal of a lesson on martyr Bhagat Singh from a school textbook is an insult to the sacrifices made by the iconic freedom fighter. The country will not tolerate such insult to its martyrs. The unfortunate matter came to light when some organisations, including the All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDSO) and the All India Save Education Committee (AISEC), claimed that the BJP-led Karnataka Government has taken a decision to omit a lesson on freedom fighter and martyr Bhagat Singh, a revolutionary from the State of undivided Punjab, in a revised Kannada textbook for students of Class X.

A wave of patriotism runs through the body even today when one reads about the unbridled courage of Shaheed Bhagat Singh in the face of fierce odds. With the aim of instilling deep values and the spirit of patriotism among today's youth, it is high time the Karnataka Government rolled back its decision and immediately reinstated the lesson on Bhagat Singh. To be fair to the State Government, however, the Karnataka Textbook Society in a late-night statement has clarified that the chapter has not been removed, and that the Kannada textbook of Class 10 is currently in the printing stage.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

ILLEGAL OCCUPANTS OF GOVT LAND

Sir — The nation is watching how the buildings that came up illegally on the Government's land are these days being demolished across the country. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have already moved amendments in their respective Assemblies and, after this judgment of the Supreme Court, all States can adopt the same measures as the UP and MP Governments. This way, massive funds can be raised by State Governments and these funds can then be utilised for development purposes and thus increasing the GDP of

Gyanvapi case harks us back



The *mandir-masjid* conflict is back in a negative sense, and quite ominously at that, as part of the RSS-BJP combine's unfinished agenda. The survey of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and the sealing of a portion of it following the purported discovery of a Shivaling in the ablation water tank — the mosque caretakers hold that the structure was part of the stone fountain — seem to mark the beginning of another chapter of civil strife. We

are filled with trepidation that things may go the turbulent Ayodhya way, which is the last thing the country wants at this stage. The design to do an Ayodhya in Varanasi is ill-disguised; the similarity of the script is writ all over.

The fear that the Ayodhya case could open a Pandora's box of similar claims has come true. It is inconceivable that the initiation of 'proceedings' for the removal of the mosque near the Kashi Vishwanath temple is allowed despite the Places of Worship Act, 1991, mandating maintenance of the character of all places of worship as they were on August 15, 1947, and the Supreme Court reiterating the law for maintaining *status quo* of all places of worship. We hope that the Supreme Court will rise to the occasion and save our secular democracy from being derailed. The inevitable feeling is that we are retreating from secularism.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

the each State, which would ultimately lead to an enhanced national GDP.

Since the illegal occupants of these lands are influential people, they will try their utmost that the Supreme Court verdict is not implemented expeditiously. In this regard, someone has to show courage as is being shown by the two States. However, the Governments must also ensure that that proper rules and procedures are followed and there should be no over-enthusiasm, as had happened in Jahangirpuri in Delhi where even the apex court's stay order was not implemented for nearly 90 minutes.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

NOT AT ALL IN GOOD TASTE

Sir — It is highly condemnable that S Gurumurthy, an RSS ideologue, part-time Director of the Reserve Bank of India and Editor of a Tamil political magazine *Thuglaq*, has referred to public sector bank employees as '*Kazhishadaika*', meaning toilet material or useless scum bugs, while addressing the anniversary meet of

his magazine. What is more shocking is that he used this unparliamentary, dirty and derogative diatribe in the presence of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who is also in charge of PSBs. It is also unfortunate that, later in her address, she didn't utter even a single word of dissent against such foul language by Gurumurthy.

The derogatory comment would have shocked Gurumurthy's diehard followers who attend the annual meeting of the weekly without fail because most of them are either retired or serving members of PSBs. However, they too have preferred to keep mum. Now the bank unions and associations have raised the issue with the Finance Minister and the Government, demanding Gurumurthy's removal from the RBI Board and an unqualified apology from him. This is not the first time Gurumurthy is facing the heat for his foul-mouthed deliveries.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



HASAN KHURSHID

of terror operators to misguide and exploit the youth for recruitment with the promise of Paradise. The history of Wahabism has been written with blood of innocent people. On June 2, 1792, Sheikh Najdi, the founder of Wahabism died, leaving behind 24 wives and 18 children. His son-in-law Abd-al-Aziz speeded up his violent actions and conversions.

In 1802, he attacked the holiest shrine of Hazrat Imam Husain in Karbala (Iraq), desecrating the shrine. Lieutenant Francis Warden wrote: "They pillaged the whole of it and plundered the tomb of Hazrat Imam Husain, slaying in the course of the day, with circumstances of peculiar cruelty, above 5,000 of the inhabitants. A huge amount of booty was seized."

In 1803, Abd-al-Aziz-ibn-Saud obtained a visit permit from the Shareef of Mecca on the pretext of performing Hajj; wherein, his Wahabi fighters laid waste in Islam's holiest shrine (Ka'aba), like the accursed Yazid-ibn-Muawiyah desecrated Kaaba in 682 A.D. According to TE Ravenshaw, author of *A memorandum on the sect of Wahhabis*: "They robbed the splendid tombs of the Mahomedan saints, who were interred there; and their fanatical zeal did not even spare the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid ul Nabavi) in Medina,

which they robbed of the immense treasures and costly furniture to which each Mahomedan Prince of Europe, Asia and Africa had contributed his share."

In 1804, a Wahabi gang of terrorists again crossed the great desert in the Hijaz and destroyed tombs of the Prophet's family members at Jannat-ul-Baqi, the ancient cemetery of Medina, and even despoiled the grave of Prophet Mohammad. Again in 1925 (On 8th Shawwal 1344 Hijri), Wahabi terrorists demolished the holy shrines of Hazrat Fatima Zahra, daughter of Holy Prophet, and his grandsons, Hazrat Imam Hasan, Hazrat Imam Zain ul Abedeen, Hazrat Imam Mohammad Baqar.

On December 6, every year marking the anniversary of the demolition of Babri Masjid, Muslims organise protests, file petitions in court. Whereas, on 8th Shawwal, 1344 Hijri (1925 AD), Saudi Arab rulers had razed the holy tombs of Prophet Mohammad's family, but surprisingly no Muslim of any sect reacts or protests against the pseudo-Muslim Saudi rulers. Is it because those perpetrators are not non-Muslims?

(The writer is a legal journalist and author. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

India and Nepal's friendship will benefit the entire humanity.



Prime Minister
— Narendra Modi

Countries applying to join Nato should expect a response.



Russian President
— Vladimir Putin

I do realise that I need to talk about my work ... Everybody has a big team to back them.



Actor
— Nargis Fakhri

The (Indian badminton players) believed...and showed good team spirit.



Badminton player
— Parupalli Kashyap

The BJP and PM Modi want to create two Hindustans; one for the rich, the other for the underprivileged.



Congress leader
— Rahul Gandhi

FIRST COLUMN

TOBACCO: WORST ENEMY OF WOMEN AND KIDS

Passive smoking snuffs out at least one million lives every year



RAMBHA PANDEY

We must work on strategies to make tobacco products out of the reach of people in the larger interest of the society and also save them as well as women and kids from exposure to second-hand smoke at home, work and in public places. Exposure to tobacco, either active or passive, is associated with not only health but also financial burden on the consumer, family, economy and ultimately the nation. In the case of women, tobacco use has all the more serious gender-related health complications like breast cancer, reproductive related health ailments besides its adverse impact on unborn babies. Contrary to the general perception, unfortunately tobacco consumption is widely prevalent among the fair sex in India. I remember, as a child when I used to visit my village, I saw many women, cutting across economic strata, engaged in consumption of a range of tobacco products. Beedi is particularly more common. It is just the tip of the iceberg. More and more women, particularly the younger generation, are indulging into smoking habits, viewing it as a fashion symbol. In this context, I would like to share an observation made by a recent study published in the journal 'Breast Cancer Research,' according to which, smoking is associated with a significantly increased risk of breast cancer, especially in those women who started smoking during adolescence or who have a family history of the disease. Spiralling rise in tobacco consumption by girls and women is directly linked to aggressive marketing strategies adopted by tobacco com-



panies that increasingly target this group, particularly in low-income and middle income countries like India. In a bid to earn quick bucks, players in the sector are not even sparing small children as they target them by selling candies alongside tobacco products. The Government must work on strategies to make these products out of the reach of people in the larger interest of the society; and also save them as well as women from exposure to second-hand smoke at home, work and in public places. First, it can be done through major amendments in the Cigarettes & Other Tobacco Products Act of Government of India (COTPA) having provisions such as ban on designated smoking zones that will help in cutting down tobacco consumption among the public and thus suffering from several ill effects of tobacco. In this regard, regular counselling is needed. Once the children become addicted to tobacco products like *gutkha*, khaini or cigarettes, it becomes difficult for them to shun the habit. While awareness and education of this vulnerable group is mandatory, stringent measures should be taken to ensure that such sin goods are not sold to the children. The Government must ensure that the cigarettes and other tobacco items should be out of the immediate eye contact of children when they purchase their candies in the shops. This gap in COTPA that allows 'point of sale' advertising and product displays, is being blatantly misused by tobacco players to target children and youth; so, this gap must be plugged immediately. At least we can do this much for our younger generation. The Government also needs to scrutinise and keep a tab on what is being shown in films; and if tobacco is promoted by celebrity film stars and cricketers. Media, on its part, can also play a major role in the campaign to stop the use of tobacco. The policymakers and authorities cannot afford to take their eye off the health hazards that tobacco is causing on its vulnerable and productive citizens before the epidemic becomes uncontrollable. After all, a stitch in time saves nine. *(The writer is Additional Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, DR BRAIRCH, AIIMS, Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)*

For Xi Jinping, things are not going as per plan

Xi has neither acknowledged the futility of his zero-COVID policy nor its disastrous social and economic consequences



GAURIE DWIVEDI

Of course to be the first leader in China to have more than two presidential terms, President Xi Jinping would have liked most of 2022 to be uneventful. At least till the 20th Party Congress slated for later this year. But suddenly too many events are now happening in China. Unfortunately for Xi Jinping, none are harbingers of good times. The crippling lockdowns and the gloomy economic scenario come just six months prior to the all-important meeting of top communist party leaders where Xi Jinping is expecting to be anointed as leader for life. At this point, there are about 345 million Chinese citizens in 46 cities who are living under strict Covid controls. Since authorities are struggling

(The writer is a senior journalist and author of "Blinkers Off, How Will The World Counter China". The views expressed are personal.)

Urban forestry or unplanned forestry

Urban forestry is the only plausible and most effective nature-based solution for building green, sustainable and resilient cities

Today, over half of the world's population lives in urban areas and this proportion is estimated to increase to 66 percent by 2050. It is also estimated that India, China, and Nigeria will experience significant urban growth in the coming years, and by 2050, India is projected to add nearly 404 million urban dwellers.

A major factor behind this rise is an influx of millions of workers, students, and families seeking jobs, education, and a better quality of life. As a consequence, cities today are overcrowded, urban space is becoming more concrete, and urban infrastructure is under tremendous pressure. Further, urban sprawl and massive human intervention have depleted the urban ecosystems and increased urban vulnerability to climate change.

Urban management like ensuring adequate food supplies, clean water, clean air, energy, housing, education and green space has become this century's greatest development challenge for urban planners and city administrators. In many cities, the air quality index is also worrisome and air toxicity is compounding health problems such as respiratory diseases. Similarly, extreme temperatures and more frequent heatwaves are contributing to heat-related mortality and aggravating urban heat island effects. Today, many cities are fast running out of space needed for trees, forests, and animals, which are essential to make any city a liveable and healthy place.

Considering the current situation, urban forestry is the only plausible and most effective nature-based solution for building green, sustainable and resilient cities. Urban forestry is the "sustained planning, planting, protection, maintenance, and care of trees, forests, greenspace and related resources in and around cities and communities for the ecological, sociological, economic, aesthetic and public health benefits".

Urban greening can have a substantial impact on the lives of city dwellers. It can improve air quality by cooling and purifying the air, ground-level ozone and greenhouse effect; mitigates the heat island effect, thereby reducing air-conditioning needs, which in turn reduces the amount of fossil fuels required to generate electricity. The ability of urban forests to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide and act as a long-term carbon sink is a crucial factor in addressing the effects of global warming. However, the amount of carbon sequestered by trees depends upon the density of the wood, size, health and tree species. Trees canopies can also break rain velocity, reduce runoff flow rates and their roots stabilize soils against erosion, hence, reduce flooding and sedimentation in streams.

Similarly, urban forests provides habitat to animals; decrease wildfire risk; contribute to community economic stability by attracting businesses and tourists and provide a way for children to learn about nature and natural processes in an otherwise artificial environment. They also help in preserving and augmenting biodiversity; promoting men-

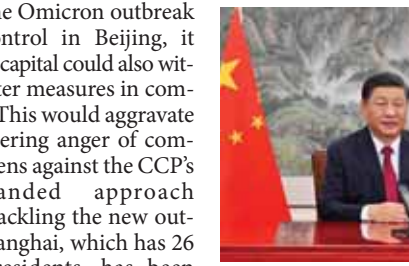
POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE BJP'S BULLDOZER POLITICS, FLAGRANT MISUSE OF POWER, ITS DADAGIRI AND HOOLIGANISM WILL NO LONGER BE TOLERATED. — DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL



IN DELHI, ROHINGYAS, BANGLADESHIS AND RIOTERS WILL NOT BE SPARED... AND BONA FIDE RESIDENTS WILL NOT BE HARMED. — DELHI BJP CHIEF ADESH GUPTA

to keep the Omicron outbreak under control in Beijing, it seems the capital could also witness stricter measures in coming days. This would aggravate the simmering anger of common citizens against the CCP's heavy-handed approach towards tackling the new outbreak. Shanghai, which has 26 million residents, has been locked up for over five weeks. It is unclear when the draconian restrictions will be lifted. Though there are no clear indications of any leadership challenge to Xi Jinping, growing public anger could become a catalyst for a larger movement. Any such possibility poses a major threat to his third presidential term. In the last two years, Xi's propaganda machinery has made comparisons between



China's handling of the pandemic and that of America. In fact, this is now one of the primary arguments to justify the President's impending third term made possible by constitutional amendments. Spiralling covid cases, draconian controls and outrage over lack of essential goods could become fertile ground for citizens to question both the communist party and its top-most leader. This could result in more than



MANY CITIES ARE ENTERING INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH ORGANISED CITIZEN GROUPS, NON-PROFIT AGENCIES AND PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE URBAN ECOSYSTEM AND TO DEAL WITH THEIR BUDGETING AND RESOURCE PROBLEMS

(The writer is a former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Uttar Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)



tal and physical well-being; providing space for recreation, enhancing community cohesion; generating employment in tree planting, care, and maintenance; providing clean drinking water, nutrition, wood fuel, and other benefits to vulnerable and low-income residents.

Thus, greening urban space can prove to be a panacea if properly planned and executed. Yet, they are often disregarded because their ecosystem services are neither well understood nor quantified by the decision-makers. Aarey Colony in suburban Mumbai is an example of infrastructure projects taking precedence over ecology.

In June 2020, the Government announced 'Nagar Van' scheme with a goal to establish 200 urban forests across country in the next five years. A similar initiative called the 'Urban Forestry Scheme' had also been launched in 2016. Unfortunately, there are no official details and figures available which outline progress of the project and what goals were achieved on planting "200 city forests" between 2016 and 2020.

A comprehensive plan for careful installation and long-term maintenance is necessary for all green infrastructure. Often, these well-intended initiatives fail to produce the desired benefits because city governments lack the skills, expertise and funds necessary for urban forestry management. It also fails due to wrong selection of species, improper placement of trees and inadequate care and ownership.

Therefore, plantation projects must take into account - native vegetation, urban forest dynamics, biodiversity, species composition, spatial variation of soil-water dynamics, costs associated with planting and managing designed spaces, since these factors play a significant role in the outcome. Selection of species are also important for urban forestry

because trees in urban areas face more stress in comparison to rural areas such as restrictive soil volume and crown space, soil pollution, air pollution, etc. Low species diversity, poor site condition and planting palettes that aren't conducive to changing climates are further threats to urban tree population. It is also essential to consider spatial and temporal dynamics in defining planting strategies and management goals because these factors greatly influence the environment.

Multifarious dimensions of trees require location-based management for maintenance and periodic treatments. It is also necessary to develop new skills to deal with the challenging issues for which we lack institutional memory and working plan. This necessitates intensive and extensive research and development particularly in the areas of architecture and engineering.

Hence, to ensure more sustainable urban forests, local policymakers have to identify and design local strategies that fit into their region's specific circumstances. Organizing and coordinating between various stakeholders can also be challenging, particularly when urban forests are spread across multiple jurisdictions. Further, political support for passing an ordinance remains elusive, even in places where public support for urban tree management is strong. Providing sustainable funding for tree care and management is another obstacle. In some cases, the maintenance responsibility of trees and forests remains obscure due to limited details of land ownership or tenure. Many times, the costs associated with training professionals and establishing a network for monitoring and assessing the health of the urban forest exceeds the budget of local Government.

However, proper maintenance is critical for a thriving urban forest, but

it demands time, resources and coordination between various stakeholders. Data on the current state of urban forests are vital, for assessing the impact of tree planting campaigns, maintenance need, tree replacement strategies, new planting opportunities and a comprehensive understanding of how to improve the quality of planning and forests construction in the future.

Many cities are entering into partnership with organized citizen groups, non-profit organizations and private landowners in order to effectively manage urban ecosystem and to deal with their budgeting and resource problem. There are instances where citizens have also participated in advisory commissions and provided inputs to local officials on urban forest policy and regulations. A partnership of this kind can contribute to innovative greening strategies that complement and augment existing programs, improve urban forest health, strengthen community social ties, increase environmental awareness and assist in addressing national and local issues more effectively. Furthermore, implementing advanced technologies such as remote sensing and geospatial artificial intelligence will help to monitor, assess and analyze the natural resources like, individual trees, vegetation changes, forest composition, etc.

Thus, modern technology combined with the desire for a greener city could lead to the incorporation of urban forestry and urban greening into smart city planning and operation. In addition, to address the problem of urban forestry holistically, a constitution of a 'Tree Commission' with mandate to radically change the planning, management and execution of urban green spaces with a multidisciplinary team must be created.

"should Xi be given a third term?" If economic activity continues to get hit, Chinese businesses will be forced to evaluate the consequences of Xi Jinping ruling China indefinitely. Of course, none of this will be out in the open, but Shanghai's lockdown will hit China's GDP by 2 percent. If Beijing comes under similar conditions, China's GDP will be further hit by 1 percent. This could become a catalyst to seek accountability from Xi and his coterie. Unlike any other country, there are fewer uncertainties in China's controlled political landscape. But it seems premature to predict the headwinds that could impact the outcome of China's most important event of the decade.

Lanka misses ADB payment, PM tells Parliament

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday said the country has missed a payment to the Asian Development Bank, blocking fresh funds amid warnings that the currency crisis-hit country could be locked out of multilateral funding in a new blow.

The ADB as well as the World Bank had just promised around 160 million each to Sri Lanka, Wickremesinghe said, but the loan from the Manila-based lender was blocked.

"Because we could not repay three million US dollars last month it is stuck," Economy Next news service website quoted Wickremesinghe as saying. The Prime Minister said his cabinet was "finding money for that". The ADB and the World Bank also continued to fund Sri



Lanka by repurposing loans after the country was cut off from capital markets when it was downgraded to CCC.

Sri Lanka now faces the prospect of being locked out of multilaterals, if their repayments are not maintained, the report said. Former finance minister Ali Sabry said in Parliament that new funding would not come until the country paid the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as, the World Bank. Sabry said the failure to pay the international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank was a "problem"."As the Prime Minister said there are some payments due to ADB. It is a very big problem." Sri Lanka has already suspended repayments for international sovereign bonds, commercial bank loans, Exim bank loans, and

bilateral loans. However, multilateral lenders and senior creditors were excluded.

He added that the country had on April 12 decided not to pay ISBs (International Sovereign Bond) and everyone else except multilaterals because the country had no option.

Sabry added that the country had to pay USD 78 million by April 18 to the ADB and USD 105 million to another Chinese bank. "We announced and defaulted."

Sri Lanka is now negotiating a loan with the IMF. The country had to pay USD 106.34 million this year but only managed to pay USD 12.4 million by April. The Prime Minister then said the debt-ridden country could not even pay a million dollars. "Whether the payment is a billion or 10 billion we do not have a million to pay," Wickremesinghe said,

promising to provide statistics to the parliament soon. Opposition legislator Harsha de Silva said the country was due to pay about USD 5.5 billion in 12 months, of which USD 2.5 billion was suspended, leaving about USD 3 billion to be repaid. The country's central bank is also deep in debt owing money to the IMF as well as the Reserve Bank of India and swap counterparties.

Sri Lanka was hit by chronic monetary instability between 2015 and 2022 as money was printed to keep interest rates down under "flexible inflation targeting" and "output gap targeting", triggering three currency crises, excessive foreign borrowing, and eventual default. Wickremesinghe on Wednesday also told Parliament that five members of his Cabinet will soon meet to approve the appointment of financial and legal advisors to

carry out discussions on debt restructuring. "The finance minister and I can go through the names nominated by the central bank and others for the financial and legal committees and the five members of the cabinet will approve the names," the Prime Minister told Parliament.

The Daily Mirror website cited the prime minister making the statement in a response to remarks by Sabry who said the appointment of financial and legal advisors had come to a standstill because the island nation did not have a full cabinet at the time when the economic crisis hit the country and went into hard default of loans.

When asked by de Silva about the cross default payments, the prime minister said that it was hard to come out with an exact amount. Dr de Silva said: "Sri Lanka is said to

have gone into hard default status today... It is said that there are cross-default clauses worth more than USD 11 million. Also, Sri Lanka has failed to appoint financial and legal experts to get on with debt restructuring."

"Some statistics which are available are wrong. Statistics have gone haywire," the prime minister replied. Sri Lanka is going through the worst economic crisis since independence in 1948. A crippling shortage of foreign reserves has led to long queues for fuel, cooking gas, and other essentials while power cuts and soaring food prices heaped misery on the people.

Earlier in the day, the newly appointed prime minister told the parliament that Sri Lanka has received USD 160 Million from the World Bank and that the country is looking at the possibility of using some

of the amounts to buy fuel. Angry protesters have blocked several roads here against ongoing fuel and gas shortages caused by the economic crisis. Miles-long queues were seen around every fuel station.

The economic crisis also triggered a political crisis in Sri Lanka and a demand for the resignation of the powerful Rajapaksa. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa sacked his Cabinet and appointed a younger Cabinet as a response to the demand for his resignation.

A continuous protest opposite his secretariat has now gone on for well over a month. On May 9, Gotabaya Rajapaksa's elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned as the prime minister to make way for the president to appoint an interim all political party government. Wickremesinghe was appointed country's new prime minister last Thursday.

Anti-Govt protesters from Lanka's Sinhala majority mourn Tamil victims of civil war

PTI ■ COLOMBO

For the first time, hundreds of anti-government protesters from Sri Lanka's majority Sinhala community in the country's south on Wednesday mourned the Tamil civilians, rebels and government soldiers killed in the final stages of the three-decade long brutal civil war that ended 13 years ago.

On May 18, 2009, the three decade-long bloody separatist campaign led by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to establish a separate Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern province of the island nation came to an end with the killing of the LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran by the Sri Lankan Army in Mullaithivu's Vellamulivaikkal.

Every year on May 18, while the armed forces celebrate the war victory, the Tamils mourn their dead during the final phase of the conflict. The anti-government protesters who are on the 40th day of their protest demanding the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa gathered outside his office and prayed for all those who died in the civil war, including Tamils

civilians, Tamil rebels and government soldiers."On May 18 we gather to remember and mourn all those who died, were killed and were disappeared in the war," said a statement from the organisers.

It added that May 18 is "to remember the thousands of Tamils elderly men women and children who were caught in a thin strip of land in Mullaivaikkal during the last stages of war and underwent untold suffering".

The Tamils allege that thousands were massacred during the final stages of the war that ended in 2009, a charge the Sri Lankan Army denies. At least 40,000 Tamil civilians may have been killed in just the final months of the civil war, according to a UN report.The Buddhist, Hindu and Catholic priests participated in the memorial.

The participants shared porridge which they said was the life saving food for the Tamils as they struggled in the midst of shelling and bombing. Dharmalingam Siddhathan, a Tamil legislator from the north, said that today was the first occasion when Tamil victims were publicly commemorated in the capital.

House Jan 6 panel unlikely to call Trump: Chairman

AP ■ WASHINGTON

House investigators are unlikely to call former President Donald Trump to testify about his role in the January 6, 2021 insurrection, relying instead on interviews with aides, family and others who were close to him at the time.

Mississippi Rep Bennie Thompson, the Democratic chairman of the nine-member panel investigating the attack, said Tuesday that it's "not our expectations" to call Trump, whose supporters broke into the US Capitol that day and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's victory.

Thompson said the panel hasn't made any final decisions, "but there's no feeling among the committee to call him as a witness at this point."

"We're not sure that the evidence that we receive can be any more validated with his presence," Thompson said. "I think the concern is whether or not he would add any more value with his testimony."

The comments come as panel prepares to hold a series of hearings and as members make final decisions about who to call for testimony.

Booker wins Democratic Senate nomination

AP ■ FRANKFORT (KY)

Charles Booker has won the Democratic primary election for the US Senate in his bid to stop a decadeslong winning streak by Kentucky Republicans.

Booker defeated three opponents in the Democratic primary. He will challenge Republican US Senator Rand Paul in the November election.

The fall campaign will feature sharply contrasting agendas. Paul promotes limited government while Booker supports sweeping health care and

anti-poverty programmes. The Bluegrass State hasn't elected a Democrat to the Senate since Wendell Ford in 1992.

Booker is back with his "hood to the holler" campaign agenda after narrowly losing the Democratic Senate primary two years ago.

He promotes social programmes such as Medicare for All and a basic universal income. Booker says such proposals would uplift people across Bluegrass State, including poor urban neighbourhoods and struggling Appalachian towns.

4 European nations to build North Sea wind farms, say reports

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Four European Union countries plan to build North Sea wind farms capable of producing at least 150 gigawatts of energy by 2050 to help cut carbon emissions that cause climate change, Danish media reported Wednesday.

Under the plan, wind turbines would be raised off the coasts of Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, daily Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten said.

The project would mean a tenfold increase in the EU's current offshore wind capacity.

"The North Sea can do a lot," Danish Prime Minister Frederiksen told the newspaper, adding the close cooperation between the four EU nations "must start now."

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo are scheduled to attend a North Sea Summit on Wednesday in Esbjerg, 260 kilometers (162 miles) west of Copenhagen. In Brussels, the Commission moved Wednesday to jump-start plans for the whole 27-nation bloc to abandon Russian energy amid Kremlin's war in Ukraine, proposing a nearly 300 billion-euro (\$315 billion) package that includes more efficient use of fuels and faster rollout of renewable power. The investment initiative by EU's executive arm is meant to help bloc start weaning themselves off Russian fossil fuels this year.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
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The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work:	
1. Name of work	Hiring of Truck and other allied works for miscellaneous work of track maintenance/renewal for two years in the section of ADEN/DLI & ADEN/NDLs under Sr. DEN-III/NDLS.
2. Approx cost of work	Rs. 62.36,735.66/- (Rupees Sixty Two Lakh Thirty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Five & Eighty Six Paise Only)
3. Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 1,24,700/- (Rupees One Lakh Twenty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Only)
4. Cost of tender document	Rs. 0.00/-
5. Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender	10.06.2022 @ 15:00 Hrs.
6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
* The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. * For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. * No manual offers are acceptable. * Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. 128-W/280/e-Tender Notice/ NIT-16-2022-23/W-3 Dated: 18.05.2022. 1162/22	

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संख्या: 35 /04 /डी0आर0(अधी0) /सेवा-2/ 2021-22 दिनांक : 18 मई, 2022
विज्ञप्ति
एतद्वारा सूचित किया गया है कि महिला कल्याण विभाग में अधीक्षिका चयन-2021 के लिए प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या :--A-2/DR(SFYS-2/2021 दिनांक 28 दिसम्बर, 2021 द्वारा दिनांक 17 जनवरी 2022 तक ऑनलाइन आवेदन एवं दिनांक 25 जनवरी, 2022 तक शैक्षणिक व अन्य अभिलेख आमंत्रित किये गये थे। ऑनलाइन आवेदन करने वाले अभ्यर्थियों के अभिलेखों के परीक्षण के क्रम में, अभ्यर्थियों से कतिपय अभिलेख वांछित हैं, जिसकी सूची आयोग की वेबसाइट पर प्रसारित की गयी है। उक्त सूची में सम्मिलित अभ्यर्थी अपने वांछित अभिलेख सचिव, उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग, हरिद्वार-249404 के कार्यालय में डाक द्वारा अथवा अन्य किसी भी माध्यम से कार्य दिवस (सोमवार से शुक्रवार) में दिनांक 02 जून, 2022 के साथ 6:00 बजे तक जमा कराना सुनिश्चित करें। इसके अतिरिक्त दिनांक 25 जनवरी, 2022 तक शैक्षणिक व अन्य अभिलेख प्रस्तुत न करने वाले अभ्यर्थियों के ऑनलाइन आवेदन निरस्त कर दिये गये हैं, जिनकी सूची भी आयोग की वेबसाइट पर प्रसारित की गयी है। यह भी सूचित किया जाता है कि अधीक्षिका के 01 पद के सापेक्ष अधिक्त संख्या में आवेदन प्राप्त होने के कारण अभ्यर्थियों की छंटनी के लिए दिनांक 23 जून, 2022 को स्क्रीनिंग परीक्षा, परीक्षा भवन, उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग, हरिद्वार केंद्र पर आयोजित की जायेगी। अर्ह अभ्यर्थियों को प्रवेश पत्र दिनांक 08 जून, 2022 से आयोग की वेबसाइट www.ukpsc.gov.in से डाउनलोड करने के लिए उपलब्ध कराये जायेंगे। अर्ह अभ्यर्थियों को प्रवेश पत्र डाक के माध्यम से प्रेषित नहीं किये जायेंगे।
(कैमंडर् सिंह) सचिव।

Canberra: Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Wednesday would not say who might represent nation at a summit with US, Indian and Japanese leaders in Tokyo just three days after Australian elections on Saturday.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said there were "conventions in place" to deal with election but did not elaborate on how those conventions would work if the result were close. "I'm sure depending on outcome of this Saturday's election that they'll be put in place," Morrison said. Opposition leader Anthony Albanese has said he would have himself

Pak begins talks with IMF to resurrect enhanced bailout package

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund began on Wednesday to resurrect an enhanced bailout package to support sagging economy of cash-strapped country.

Pakistan has repeatedly been seeking international aid to support its failing economy. The talks are being held in Qatari capital Doha, the finance ministry tweeted. The negotiations are expected to continue into next week, it said.

Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, Minister of State Aisha Ghous Pasha, Finance Secretary Hamed Yaqoob Shaikh, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Acting Governor Murtaza Syed, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Asim Ahmad and other senior officials from finance division are participating in talks taking place virtually.

Ismail who travelled to Washington last month and met with Fund officials had said that effort was not just to revive USD 6 billion IMF bailout package signed by former PM Imran Khan in 2019 but also to add another USD 2 billion to it.

Lawmaker's arrest is latest sex claim to roil UK Parliament

London: A UK Conservative lawmaker was released on bail Wednesday while police investigate allegations of rape and sexual assault against him, the latest in a series of sexual misconduct allegations that have led some to label Britain's Parliament a toxic workplace.

The legislator was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of indecent assault, sexual assault, rape, abuse of position of trust and misconduct in public office.

Police, who identified the suspect only as a man in his 50s, said the arrest followed a report of alleged offenses that took place in London between

2002 and 2009. House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle told lawmakers that "a member has been arrested in connection with an investigation into an allegation of very serious criminal offenses."

He said the lawmaker would stay away from Parliament while police were investigating.

"I, the House of Commons Commission and the House service take the safety of our staff and parliamentary community as a whole very seriously and are ensuring any necessary measures are taken in respect of MPs, employees and staff," Hoyle said. (AP)

Indian nurses drive UK's health service foreign intake

PTI ■ LONDON

Indians are driving a rise in foreign nurses coming in to boost the workforce of the UK's National Health Service, according to official figures released in London on Wednesday.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) data for 2021-22 shows 37,815 Indian nurses on the council's register of those qualified to work in the UK, up from 28,192 the previous year and a jump from 17,730 four years ago. The Philippines remains the top-most source country with 41,090 nurses and Nigeria is third with 7,256 nurses on the register.

"Our register is at the highest level ever. This is good news considering all the pressures of the last two years. But a closer look at our data reveals some warning signs," said Andrea


Sutcliffe, Chief Executive and Registrar at the NMC. "The total number of people leaving the register has risen, after a steady and welcome fall over the previous four years. Those who left shared troubling stories about the pressure they've had to bear during the pandemic.

A focus on retention as well as attracting new recruits needs to be part of a sustainable workforce plan to meet rising demands for health and care services," she said.

In total there were 48,436 joiners, up from 34,517 the previous year and 38,317 in 2019-2020, which was seen as a welcome sign for the health service coping with nursing staff shortages.

The NMC found that of all the joiners almost half (48 per cent) had trained overseas and of those, 66 percent had trained in India or the Philippines.

PUBLIC NOTICE



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

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Ashwani Attrish, Upendra Kumar Attrish, 19143, Ais Greens Paradise, Plot No. GH-03, Sector- Chi-4, Gautam Buddha Nagar Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. A/c No. LBLMRT00001879994	Flat No.-19143, 14 Th Floor, Building No.-19, Ais Greens Paradiso, Plot No-GH-03, Sector- Chi-4, Greater Noida, Noida, Uttar Pradesh	25/03/2022 Rs. 27,30,228/-	30/12/ 2021
2.	Divya Pandey, Shyam Baboo, House No. 28, Sector-12, Block-M, Pratap Vihar, Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh. A/c No. LBLUC00003877461	Flat No-1103, Tower C-3, Block-C, 11th Floor, Excella Kutumb, Village Bakkas, Sultanpur Road, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	25/03/2022 Rs. 13,72,131/-	06/12/ 2021
3.	Hari Om Agarwal, Krishna Devi, Baghpat Road Malayana Part Village Krishnapura Near over Bridge Uttar Pradesh. A/c No. LBMRT00001485479	House over Khasra No.1038, 1040 & 1041, Mohalla Krishna Puram, Village Malayana, Pargana & Tehsil & District Meerut, Uttar Pradesh	06/04/2022 Rs. 3,53,268/-	10/01/ 2022

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : May 19, 2022
Place: Delhi NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited


ICICI Bank

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi-110005

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]

Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of movable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Prabhat Arora (Borrower), Mr. Sudesh Lal Arora (Co-Borrower) LBDEL00004132477 LBDEL00004966577 LBDEL00005121577	Shop No. G-52, Ground Floor, Plot No. 9-B and 9-C, Cross River Mall, Shahdara, Delhi-110032. Area: 738.84 Sq. Ft	Rs. 1,11,47,965/- as on May 10, 2022	Rs. 1,17,70,000/- Rs. 11,77,000/-	June 6, 2022, From 12:00 Noon to 02:00 PM	June 27, 2022, From 11:00 AM Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on website ([URL-Links-\[disposalhub.com\]](http://URL-Links-[disposalhub.com])) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagors/ noticees are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **June 24, 2022 before 05:00 PM** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi- 110005**, and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **June 24, 2022 before 05:00 PM** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, Delhi- 110005** on or before **June 24, 2022 before 05:00 PM**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank in favour of **"ICICI Bank Limited"** payable at **Delhi**.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 8657476284** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/9810029926/ 01244233933**.

Please note that Marketing agencies **1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augoe Asset Management Pvt Ltd** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: May 19, 2022

Place: Delhi/ NCR

**Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited**

PUBLIC NOTICE	
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.	
VEHICLES FOR SALE	
1) CB_LPT1412 HR38AA1748-YOM 2019 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 811775	
2) E_1075SG EICHR_VECV DL1LY2263-YOM 2017 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 471671	
3) 1075 GOODS EICHR_VECV HR38W6540/HR38W8105-YOM 2017 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 439020	
PER VEHICLES	
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS	
"AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/ OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 02.06.2022 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY). BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELTA CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P) UP-201313 OR CONTACT :RAJESH ANTIL KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT:07126685775/09711173320 EMAIL-abhinav.lal@kotak.com / rajesh.antil@kotak.com	

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE No. ELS_SRE_T-22RT1 dtd. 14.05.2022	
Open tender through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRS, Electric Loco Shed, Khanalampura Yard, Northern Railway, Saharanpur (Ambala Division) for and on behalf of the President of India from the registered tenderer on web site www.ireps.gov.in for the following work upto 11:00 hrs on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter:-	
Open Tender No.	ELS_SRE_T-22RT1
Name of work	"Overhauling of Air Dryers (SIL, FTRTIL, Knorr, Trident & Prag make) of WAG-7 & WAG-9 Electric locomotives for a period of Two years."
Date of Closing/Opening	07.06.2022
Approx. Cost.	Rs. 22,78,233.26/-
Earnest Money	Rs. 45600/-
Completion period	02 Years
Validity period	45 days
Cost of tender form	"Free of cost"
1. Tenderer(s) should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of Works Tenders. 2. Tenderer are required to upload self-attested scanned copies of all related eligibility documents as per conditions. 3. Taxes & Charges will be applicable as per extant rule. 4. For details, please log on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in .	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	
1172/2022	

Interrogation, uncertainty for soldiers abandoning Mariupol

AP ■ KYIV

Russia said Wednesday that nearly 1,000 Ukrainian troops at a giant steelworks in Mariupol have surrendered, abandoning their dogged defense of a site that became a symbol of their country's resistance, as the battle in the strategic port city appeared all but over.

Ukraine ordered the fighters to save their lives - and said their mission to tie up Russian forces is now complete - but has not called the column of soldiers walking out of the plant a surrender. The fighters face an uncertain fate, with Ukraine saying they hope for a prisoner swap but Russia vowing to try at least some of them for war crimes.

It's not clear how many fighters remain inside the stronghold, Ukraine's last in a city now largely reduced to rubble. Both sides are trying to shape the narrative and extract propaganda victories from what has been one of the most important battles of the war.

Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Maj Gen Igor Konashenkov said Wednesday that 959 Ukrainian troops have now abandoned the Azovstal

plant since they started coming out Monday. At one point, officials put the number of fighters holed up in the mill's sprawling network of tunnels and bunkers at 2,000.

The figures, if confirmed, suggest that Moscow might be within touching distance of being able to claim that all of Mariupol has fallen. That would be a boost for Russian President Vladimir Putin in a war where many of his plans have gone awry.

But already another setback loomed: Sweden and Finland both officially applied to join the NATO military alliance on Wednesday, a move driven by security concerns over the Russian invasion. Putin launched

the invasion on Feb 24 in what he said was an effort to check NATO's expansion but has seen that strategy backfire.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said he welcomed the applications, which now have to be weighed by 30 member countries.

Beyond its symbolic value, gaining full control of Mariupol would also allow Russia to deploy forces elsewhere in the Donbas, the eastern industrial heartland that the Kremlin is



now bent on capturing. It would also give Russia an unbroken land bridge to the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, while depriving Ukraine of a vital port.

For months, the soldiers have they defended the plant against the odds, but on Tuesday Ukraine's defence minister said he had issued a new order to the fighters to "save their lives".

"Ukraine needs them. This is the main thing," Oleksiy Reznikov said.

What will now happen to the fighters isn't clear. At least some have been taken to a former penal colony in territory controlled by Russian-backed separatists. Ukraine says it hopes they can be exchanged for Russian prisoners of war and that negotiations are delicate and time-consuming.

But in Moscow, there are mounting calls for Ukrainian troops to be put on trial. Russia's main federal investigative body said it intends to interrogate the troops to "identify the nationalists" and deter-

mine whether they were involved in crimes against civilians. Also, Russia's top prosecutor asked the country's Supreme Court to designate Ukraine's Azov Regiment a terrorist organization. The regiment has roots in the far right.

The Russian parliament planned to take up a resolution Wednesday to prevent the exchange of Azov Regiment fighters, Russian news agencies said.

Ukraine's deputy defence minister, Hanna Maliar, said negotiations for the fighters'

release were ongoing, as were plans to pull out others still inside the mill. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said "the most influential international mediators are involved" in the evacuation.

Mariupol was targeted by Russia from the outset of the invasion. The city was largely flattened in steady bombardments, and Ukraine says over 20,000 civilians have been killed. But the fighters in the steel plant held out, as the rest of the city fell to Russian occupation.

Britain's Defence Ministry said in its daily intelligence report Wednesday that Ukraine's defence of Mariupol "inflicted costly personnel losses amongst Russian forces".

More than 260 Ukrainian fighters - some of them seriously wounded and taken out on stretchers - left the ruins of the Azovstal plant on Monday and turned themselves over to troops on the Russian side who patted them down and took them away on buses.

Others were taken way on Tuesday. Seven buses carrying an unknown number of Ukrainian soldiers were seen arriving at a former penal colony in the town of Olenivka,

about 88 km (55 miles) north of Mariupol.

It was impossible to confirm the total number of fighters brought to Olenivka or their legal status. While both Mariupol and Olenivka are officially part of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, Olenivka has been controlled by Russia-backed separatists since 2014 and forms part of the unrecognised "Donetsk People's Republic". Prior to the rebel

takeover, penal colony No. 120 had been a high-security facility designed to hold prisoners sentenced for serious crimes.

Footage shot by The Associated Press showed that the convoy was escorted by military vehicles bearing the pro-Kremlin "Z" sign, as Soviet flags fluttered from poles along the road. About two dozen Ukrainian fighters were seen in one of the buses.

Ukraine hopes to swap steel mill fighters for Russian POWs

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian fighters extracted from the last bastion of resistance in Mariupol were taken to a former penal colony in enemy-controlled territory, and a top military official hoped they could be exchanged for Russian prisoners of war.

But a Moscow lawmaker said they should be brought to "justice". The Russian parliament planned to take up a resolution on Wednesday to prevent the exchange of Azov Regiment fighters, who held

out for months inside the Azovstal steelworks plant while Mariupol was under siege, according to Russian news agencies.

Ukraine's deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar said negotiations for the fighters' release were ongoing, as were plans to rescue fighters who are still inside the sprawling steel mill.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said "the most influential international mediators are involved" in the plans. Officials have not said how many remain inside.

In Ukraine, limbs lost and lives devastated in an instant

AP ■ KYIV

There is a cost to war - to the countries that wage it, to the soldiers who fight it, to the civilians who endure it. For nations, territory is gained and lost, and sometimes regained and lost again. But some losses are permanent. Lives lost can never be regained. Nor can limbs.

And so it is in Ukraine.

The stories of the people who undergo amputations during conflict are as varied as their wounds, as are their journeys of reconciliation with their injuries. For some, losing a part of their body can be akin to a death of sorts; coming to terms with it, a type of rebirth.

For soldiers wounded while defending their country, their sense of purpose and belief in the cause they were fighting for can sometimes help them cope psychologically with amputation. For some civilians, maimed while going about their lives in a war that already terrified them, the

struggle can be much harder.

For the men, women and children who have lost limbs in the war in Ukraine, now in its third month, that journey is just beginning. The explosion that took Olena Viter's left leg also took her son, 14-year-old Ivan, a budding musician. Her husband Volodymyr buried him, along with another boy killed in the same blast, under a guelder rose bush in their garden. Amid the fighting, they couldn't get to the cemetery.

"How am I going to live without Ivan? He will remain in my heart forever, like the fragment that hit him," she said. When she's alone, Olena cries.

Bombs rained down on Olena's village of Rozvazhiv, in the Kyiv region, on March 14. Ivan and four others died; Olena was one of about 20 who were wounded.

At first, "I was thinking, Why did God leave me alive?" said Olena, 45, her soft voice breaking. Hearing Ivan was dead, she begged a neighbor to get his rifle and shoot her.

But Volodymyr pleaded with her, saying he couldn't live without her.

Now, she endures the devastation of the loss of her child, and the physical pain of the loss of her leg, cut below the knee.

"Every day I get used to some new type of pain. I am thinking what kind of new pain will I see in the future," she said. She has yet to accept either of her losses.

"I am still not accepting myself as I am now," Olena said. "I really liked to dance. I was doing sports. I don't know, I need to learn."

She can't yet imagine what it will be like to walk again. Perhaps, Olena said, her life was spared because she was meant to do something, to help others, perhaps as a volunteer or by donations to a music school in Ivan's memory.

"At the moment, I don't know what I would want to do. I should keep searching. ... I must learn how to live. How? I do not know yet."

Russia soldier pleads guilty over war crimes

AP ■ KYIV

A Russian soldier facing the first war crimes trial since the start of the war has pleaded guilty to charges of killing a Ukrainian civilian.

Sgt Vadim Shyshimarin pleaded guilty to the charges during his trial in Kyiv on Wednesday. The 21-year-old soldier could get life in prison if convicted of shooting a Ukrainian man in the head through an open car window in a village in the northeastern Sumy region on Feb 28, four days into the invasion.

Ukraine's Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova has previously said her office was readying war crimes cases against 41 Russian soldiers for offenses including bombing civilian infrastructure, killing civilians, rape and looting.

It was not immediately clear how many of the suspects are in Ukrainian hands and how many could be tried in absentia.

Russia says it is expelling 27 Spanish diplomats after announcing the expulsion of



dozens of diplomats from France and Italy. Moscow said on Wednesday the move is in response to the expulsion of Russian diplomats last month from Spain.

Earlier, the Russian Foreign Ministry said the country was expelling 34 French and 24 Italian diplomats. Multiple European countries expelled Russian diplomats last month after accusing Russian forces of killing civilians in Bucha and other towns outside Kyiv, accusations the Kremlin has fiercely denied. The European Commission is proposing a nine-billion euro (\$9.5 billion) loan to Ukraine to help the war-torn country.

NATO chief hails 'historic moment' as Finland, Sweden apply

AP ■ BRUSSELS

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday that the military alliance stands ready to seize a historic moment and move quickly on allowing Finland and Sweden to join its ranks, after the two countries submitted their membership requests.

The official applications, handed over by Finland and Sweden's ambassadors to NATO, set a security clock ticking. Russia, whose war on Ukraine spurred them to join the military organisation, has warned that it wouldn't welcome such a move, and could respond.

"I warmly welcome the requests by Finland and Sweden to join NATO. You are our closest partners," Stoltenberg said. "All allies agree on the importance of NATO enlargement. We all agree that we must stand together, and we all agree that this is an historic moment which we must seize."

"This is a good day at a critical moment for our security,"

a beaming Stoltenberg said, as he stood alongside the two envoys, with NATO, Finnish and Swedish flags at their backs.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has demanded that the alliance stop expanding toward Russia's borders, and several NATO allies, led by the United States and Britain, have signaled that they stand ready to provide security support to Finland and Sweden should he try to provoke or destabilise them during the time it takes to become full members.

The countries will only benefit from NATO's Article 5 security guarantee - the part of the alliance's founding treaty that pledges that any attack on one member would be considered an attack of them all - once the membership ratification process is concluded, probably

in a few months.

For now though, the application must now be weighed by the 30 member countries. That process is expected to take about two weeks, although Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has expressed reservations about Finland and Sweden joining. If his objections are overcome, and accession talks go as well as expected, the two could become members within a few months. The process usually takes eight to 12 months, but NATO wants to move quickly given the threat from Russia hanging over the Nordic countries' heads.

Canada, for example, says that it expects to ratify their accession protocol in just a few days. Stoltenberg said that NATO allies "are determined to work through all issues and reach rapid conclusions."

Zelenskyy opens Cannes Film Festival, links war and cinema

AP ■ CANNES (FRANCE)

The 75th Cannes Film Festival kicked off Tuesday with an eye turned to Russia's war in Ukraine and a live satellite video address from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who called on a new generation of filmmakers to confront dictators as Charlie Chaplin satirised Adolf Hitler.

After tributes and musical numbers, Zelenskyy was streamed live for the formally attired audience who had gathered for the premiere of Michel Hazanavicius' zombie comedy "Final Cut."

Zelenskyy, dressed in his signature olive green shirt, drew a thunderous

standing ovation and spoke at length about the connection between cinema and reality. He referenced films like Francis Ford Coppola's "Apocalypse Now" and Charlie Chaplin's "The Great Dictator" as not unlike Ukraine's present circumstances.

Zelenskyy quoted Chaplin's final speech in "The Great Dictator," which was released in 1940, in the early days of World War II: "The hate of men will pass, and dictators die, and the power they took from the people will return to the people."

"We need a new Chaplin who will demonstrate that the cinema of our time is not silent," implored Zelenskyy.

The Ukrainian president pushed

filmmakers not to "stay silent" while hundreds continue to die in Ukraine, the largest war in Europe since WWII, and show that cinema "is always on the side of freedom."

The war is to be a regular presence in Cannes, where the festival has barred Russians with ties to the government from attending this year.

Set to screen are several films from prominent Ukrainian filmmakers, including Sergei Loznitsa's documentary "The Natural History of Destruction." Footage shot by Lithuanian filmmaker Mantas Kvedaravicius before he was killed in Mariupol in April will also be shown by his fiancée, Hanna Bilobrova.

Even "Final Cut," the latest film from "The Artist" filmmaker Hazanavicius, was renamed from its original title, "Z," after Ukrainian protesters noted that the letter Z to some symbolizes support for Russia's war in Ukraine.

Formally attired stars including Eva Longoria, Julianne Moore, Bérénice Bejo and "No Time to Die" star Lashana Lynch were among those who streamed down Cannes' famous red carpet Tuesday.

More star-studded premieres - "Top Gun: Maverick," "Elvis" - await over the next 12 days, during which 21 films will vie for the festival's prestigious top award, the Palme d'Or.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Mrs. Rajesh Bidhuri wife of Shri Balraj Bidhuri intends to purchase Entire Ground Floor, measuring 450 Sq. Yds., (having two units: Front Portion and Rear Portion) (each portion measuring 225 sq. yds., each portion having covered area of 94 sq. mtrs.) and half terrace rights of Second Floor, of Property No. 32, Block B measuring 450 Sq. Yds., situated at Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi from (1) Mrs. Rajni Shargma, (2) Mrs. Pramila Gurti, (3) Mrs. Manorama Mattoo (being 1st class legal heirs of Late Shri Prem Nath Raina) and (4) Mr. Anil Kumar Raina (inherited the same by virtue of Registered Will dated 10.04.2007). If anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall inform within 7 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, than our client shall presume that title of the said property is unencumbered and clear.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client, Krishna Kumari Sardana S/o Late V.P. Sardana R/o P-406, Anupam Apartment, Arjun Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110032, Allottee/ Purchaser/Owner of Society Built-up Flat No.-P-406, Situated in The Layout Plan of The Railway Employees CGHS Ltd., Known As Anupam Apartments, 4 CBD Shahdara, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi-110032. The original documents i.e. Share Certificate & Allotment Cum Possession Letter of the above said flat has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR /LR NO. 411929/2022 dated 13/05/2022 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person (s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9891110614 with - in 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (GH) or Director (GH), DDA, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi

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.	Gulab Singh/ Savita Devi / LBDEL00001943880	House No- 433, Ashoka Enclave, Sector- 35, Faridabad, Faridabad/ May 13, 2022	December 21, 2021 Rs. 5,24,045/-	Delhi/ NCR
2.	Pankul Rathore/ M/s Spaak Super Infra India Pvt Ltd/ Khairon Rathore/ LBFD000002022053	Flat No- 01 And 02, 2nd Floor, Royale Retreat III, Charmwood Village, Suraj Kund Road, Faridabad, Haryana/ May 13, 2022	December 21, 2021 Rs. 1,25,82,377/-	Delhi/ NCR
3.	Rashmi Jain/ Kamal Jain/ LBFD000001107325	Flat No. 322 A, Block- D, DLF Model Town, Sector- 11, Faridabad (Haryana)/ May 13, 2022	October 16, 2021 Rs. 8,21,862/-	Delhi/ NCR
4.	Surendar Kumar/ Madan Lal Aggarwal/ LBDEL00001198455	Plot No. 613, Sector- 37 Urban Estate Faridabad/ May 13, 2022	November 15, 2021 Rs. 6,85,795/-	Delhi/ NCR
5.	Moushumi Roy/ Dhrubajyoti Roy/ LBFD000002869583	Flat No- B- 608, 6th Floor, Floridaa, Tower B, Sec 82, Haryana, Faridabad/ May 13, 2022	August 30, 2021 Rs. 17,40,453/-	Delhi/ NCR
6.	Rajeev Singh/ Sandhya Singh/ LBFD000002396051	Flat No. A- 1001, 10th Floor, Type- B, Tower-A, Happy Homes, Sec- 86, Village Budena, Faridabad/ May 13, 2022	December 13, 2021 Rs. 11,89,405/-	Delhi/ NCR

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

Date : May 19, 2022

Place: Delhi NCR

Authorized Officer

ICICI Bank Limited

KOVALAM INVESTMENT AND TRADING COMPANY LIMITED

CIN : L65910PB1981PLC023058
Regd. Office : Premises Oswal Woollen Mills Limited, G.T. Road, Sherpur, Ludhiana-141003 PB
Ph. : +91-161- 5066805, Email : kovalam@downmahar.com

INFORMATION REGARDING 40th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF KOVALAM INVESTMENT AND TRADING COMPANY LIMITED TO BE HELD THROUGH VIDEO CONFERRING (VC)/ OTHER AUDIO VISUAL MEANS (OAVM).

NOTICE is hereby given that the 40th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Shareholders of Kovalam Investment and Trading Company Limited (the Company) will be held on Monday, the 27th day of June, 2022 at 04:00 P.M. through Video Conferencing (VC)/ Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM) in compliance with applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and rules issued thereunder read with General Circular numbers 14/2020, 17/2020, 20/2020, 02/2021, 19/2021, 21/2021 and 2/2022 dated April 08, 2020, April 13, 2020, May 05, 2020, January 13, 2021, December 08, 2021, December 14, 2021 and May 05, 2022, respectively, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA") (hereinafter collectively referred to as "MCA Circulars"), and Circular number SEBI/HO/CFD/CMD/ICIR/P/2020/079 dated May 12, 2020 , SEBI/HO/CFD/CMD2/CIR/P/2021/11 dated January 15, 2021 and SEBI/HO/CFD/CMD2/CIR/P/2022/62 dated May 13, 2022 issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) (hereinafter collectively referred to as "SEBI Circulars"), to transact the businesses, as set out in the Notice convening the 40th AGM of the Company.

In compliance to the above circulars, the electronic copies of the Notice of the 40th AGM and Annual Report of the Company for the financial year 2021-2022 will be sent to all the shareholders whose email IDs are registered with the Company/ Company's Registrar and Transfer Agent or Depository Participant(s). The Notice of the 40th AGM and Annual Report for the financial year 2021-2022, will also be available on the website of the Company at www.ownmahar.com and website of Stock Exchange i.e. BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com. Shareholders can attend and participate in the AGM through VC/ OAVM facility only. The instructions for joining the AGM are provided in the notice of AGM. Members attending the meeting through VC/OAVM shall be counted for the purpose of reckoning the quorum under Section 103 of the Companies Act, 2013.

Manner of voting at the AGM : Shareholders will have an opportunity to cast their votes remotely or e-voting during the AGM on the businesses to set forth in the Notice of the AGM through electronic voting system. The manner of voting remotely or e-voting during the AGM for shareholders holding shares in dematerialized form, physical form and for shareholders who have not registered their email addresses shall be provided in the Notice convening the AGM.

By order of the Board of Directors
For Kovalam Investment and Trading Company Limited

Sd./ (Jyoti Sud)

Place : Ludhiana
Date : May 18, 2022
Company Secretary

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -I DELHI

4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

O.A.No. 82/2020

Bank of India (Applicant) Versus Mr. Sanjeev Kumar & Ors. (Defendants)

To, (1) Mr. Sanjeev Kumar S/o Sh. Ram Chandra R/o H. No. 597, F-2, Shalimar Garden Extn. -1, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad (U.P.) 201005 (2) Mr. Manoj Arora S/o Sh. Shyam Sunder Arora R/o GF-4/244, Sector-4, Vaishali, Ghaziabad (U.P.) 201010 (3) M/s Rudra Buildwell Homes Pvt. Ltd. Through its Directors having its registered address D-53, Okhla Phase -1, New Delhi 110020 Also at : Having its administrative office at : A-66, Sector-63, Noida U.P. 201301 Also at : Through its Directors Rudra Aquacasa, Plot No. GH-05A, Sector-16, Greater Noida West -201303 (U.P.)

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of **Rs. 41,47,285.88 (Rupees forty one lakh forty seven thousand two hundred eighty five and eighty eight paise only)** against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld. Registrar on 02.06.2022 at 10:30 A.M. (For further details kindly visit DRT website www.etrribunal.gov.in (Phone Number : 011-23748473)

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose :- (1) All the advocates/litigants shall download the **Cisco Webex** application/software; (2) **Meeting ID and password** for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-I/and recovery officer-2 shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT official portal i.e. drt.gov.in under the public notice head. (3) In any exigency qua that, the advocates/litigants can contact the concerned official at **Ph. No. 011-23748473**. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 11th day of May, 2022.

By order of the Tribunal For Registrar, DRT-I, New Delhi

Respondent may contact under mention phone number for further enquiry. : Mr. Amit K. Dar, Ld. Registrar, DRT-I, New Delhi Phone No. 011-23748473 E mail : drt.delhi-df@nic.in

GoM for 28% GST on casinos, race course, online gaming

New Delhi: The panel of Ministers tasked to review the GST levy on casinos, race courses and online gaming has finalised its report, which will be taken up in the upcoming GST Council meeting.

The Group of Ministers, chaired by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, had in its previous meeting earlier this month unanimously decided on hiking the tax rate on these services to 28 per cent.

The GoM met again on Wednesday and finalised the method of valuing these services for the purpose of levying this tax.

“The Group of Ministers (GoM) on casinos, race courses & online gaming has come to a consensus. The report of our submissions will be handed over to Hon’ble FM, Smti. @nsitharaman Ji in a day or two & the matter will be presented in the next @GST_Council Meeting,” Sangma tweeted.

At present, services of casinos, horse racing and online gaming attract 18 per cent



GST.

The government had in May last year set up a panel of state ministers for better valuation of services of casinos, online gaming portal and race courses for levying Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The report of the GoM is likely to be taken up in the next meeting of the GST Council expected later this month.

Other state ministers in the eight-member GoM include Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, Gujarat finance minister Kanubhai Patel, Goa panchayati raj minister Mauvin Godinho, Tamil Nadu finance minister P Thiaga Rajan, Uttar Pradesh finance minister Suresh Khanna and Telangana finance minister T Harish Rao. **PTI**

Rupee falls 16 paise to record low of 77.60 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee on Wednesday declined by 16 paise to close at its fresh lifetime low of 77.60 against the US dollar amid unabated foreign fund outflows and a stronger greenback in overseas markets.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 77.57 and later hit the day’s low of 77.61 as the dollar rebounded in global markets following hawkish comments from US Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell.

Crude oil prices also surged over 1 per cent, which weighed on the rupee.

The local unit finally ended at its all-time low of 77.60, showing a loss of 16 paise over its previous close of 77.44.

“The dollar index took support near 103.50 and the capital market witnessed profit booking from higher levels, sending rupee into weakness,” said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities.

The US Fed chief asserted



that the central bank would increase interest rates as high as needed to contain a spike in inflation which threatens the foundation of the economy.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.3 per cent higher at 103.59.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 1 per cent to USD 113 per barrel.

Meanwhile, the 30-share

BSE Sensex settled 109.94 points or 0.20 per cent lower at 54,208.53. During the day, it hit a high of 54,786 and a low of 54,130.89.

The broader NSE Nifty dipped 19 points or 0.12 per cent to finish at 16,240.30.

Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers in the capital market on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,192.44 crore, as per stock exchange data. **PTI**

Inflation set to average to 9-yr high at 6.9% in FY-23: India Ratings & Research

Mumbai: The average headline inflation is set to accelerate to a nine-year high at 6.9 per cent in FY23, and the Reserve Bank may go for more rate hikes during the fiscal, a domestic ratings agency said on Wednesday.

The RBI will hike rates by another 75 basis points and possibly up to 125 basis points (1.25 percentage point) as well if the turn of events and data are very adverse, India Ratings and Research said in a note.

“The first rate increase by the RBI could be of the order of 0.50 per cent in the June 2022 policy and another 0.25 per cent in the October 2022 policy,” the agency said, adding that the cash reserve ratio could also be hiked by another 0.50 per cent to 5 per cent by the end of the fiscal.

In a surprise move, the RBI on May 4 hiked the repo rate at which it lends to the system by 0.40 percentage point, and also the CRR or the percentage of deposits banks have to park with the central bank

by 0.50 percentage point in an off-schedule meeting as it saw threats to the inflation target.

The Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) came at 7.8 per cent for April, making it another month where the RBI’s upper tolerance band of 6 per cent was missed. All the analysts are sure about more such hikes being in the offing and some sent to growth has a result of the same.

Retail inflation will increase till September 2022 and start declining gradually thereafter, it said, adding that it is expected to remain in excess of 6 per cent for four consecutive quarters starting fourth quarter of FY22 till third quarter of FY23.

It can be noted that under its pact with the government, the RBI is mandated to contain inflation inside 6 per cent and the number breaching for three consecutive quarters will lead the central bank to formally explain the reasons for the same. **PTI**

Cabinet amends biofuels policy, advances ethanol blending target to 2025-26

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved advancing the target of blending 20 per cent ethanol in petrol by 5 years to 2025-26 as well as allowing more feedstocks for the production of biofuels in a bid to cut reliance on imported oil for meeting the country’s energy needs.

The Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at its meeting on Wednesday approved the amendments to the National Policy on Biofuels, an official statement said.

The main amendment is for advancing the target of blending 20 per cent ethanol in petrol (20 per cent ethanol, 80 per cent petrol) to 2025-26 from 2030. Currently, about 10 per cent of ethanol is blended in petrol. Also, more feedstocks have been allowed for the production of biofuels which can be doped with auto fuels.

It also provides for promoting the production of bio-fuels in the country, under the Make in India programme, by

units located in Special Economic Zones (SEZ)/ Export Oriented Units (EoUs).

These decisions will help India, which depends on imports for meeting 85 per cent of its oil needs, to cut reliance on overseas shipments.

The Cabinet also approved granting “permission for export of biofuels in specific cases,” the statement said.

The amendments will also attract and foster developments of indigenous technologies which will pave the way for the Make in India drive and thereby generate more employment.

The existing National Policy on Biofuels came up in 2018. “This amendment proposal will pave the way for the Make in India drive. “Since many more feedstocks are being allowed for the production of biofuels, this will promote the Atmanirbhar Bharat and give an impetus to Prime Minister’s vision of India becoming ‘energy independent’ by 2047,” the statement added. **PTI**

Global storms hitting together prompted RBI to hike rate: MPC

Mumbai: Several global storms hitting together prompted the Reserve Bank to hike the key interest rate in an off-cycle review by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), said the minutes of the rate-setting panel that were released on Wednesday.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, as per the minutes, said the off-cycle monetary policy actions were aimed at lowering inflation and anchoring inflation expectations with a view to strengthening the medium-term growth prospects of the economy and protecting the purchasing power of the weaker sections of society.

The MPC after its meeting on May 2 and 4 had recommended raising the key interest rate (repo) by 40 basis points. The rate was hiked with immediate effect. It was the first hike since August 2018.

“As several storms hit together, our monetary policy response should be seen as an important step to steady the ship. The Indian as well as global evidence clearly shows



that high inflation persistence hurts savings, investment, competitiveness and growth,” the governor had said as per the minutes.

RBI Deputy Governor and MPC member Michael Debabrata Patra said at the meeting that in this milieu, a measured approach and a cool head is warranted.

“Recent incoming data

suggest that India’s macro-fundamentals, barring imported food and fuel inflation, are still intact and in sync with the recovery that has been tenaciously making its way through waves of the pandemic,” he said. All the six members of the panel had voted to raise the repo rate or short-term lending rate by 40 basis points to 4.4 per cent. **PTI**

SATTE 2022 aims to boost travel trade



SWARN KUMAR ANAND ■ NEW DELHI

Three-day long SATTE (South Asia’s Travel & Tourism Exchange) 2022 expo at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida, inaugurated on Wednesday by Shripad Yesso Naik, Union Minister of State for Tourism, has attracted over 36,000 industry buyers and trade visitors across multiple industry verticals like travel, wedding planning, and corporate travel.

Besides scores of foreign countries known for attracting

global tourists, many Indian States are taking part in the expo.

“SATTE is a hub of idea and knowledge sharing,” Naik said in his inaugural speech. On being asked by the Pioneer whether the industry is lobbying to ease luxury tourism by reducing taxes, etc, so as to attract high-value foreign tourists, Yogesh Mudras, MD of Informa Markets which is organising SATTE 2022, said, “This is an ongoing process. Industry bodies are in touch the Government functionaries on the issue.”

Patanjali Ayurved sells food ratalail biz to Ruchi Soya for ₹690 crore

New Delhi: B a b a Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurved Ltd will sell its food retail business to group firm Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd for Rs 690 crore as part of its strategy to focus on non-food, traditional medicine and wellness business.

Patanjali Ayurved Ltd had acquired Ruchi Soya through an insolvency process.

In a regulatory filing, Ruchi Soya informed that it has entered into a “Business Transfer Agreement” with Patanjali Ayurved Ltd to acquire the food retail business of the latter as a going concern on a slump sale basis.

The food retail business consists of manufacturing, packaging labelling and retail trading of certain food products along with manufacturing plants located at Padarth, Haridwar, and Newasa, Maharashtra. **PTI**

SRMIST student hired by Amazon in campus placement



Kattankulathur: SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) is proud to announce that one of our final year students Puranjay Mohan has been given an offer from Amazon Germany for Software development role (Embedded systems- Linux kernel developer) with a whopping CTC of One crore per annum (1 Lac + emoluments in Euros).

This was announced by Founder Chancellor of SRMIST Dr. T. R. Paarivendhar

at a press meet held at Ramada Plaza Chennai, Guindy. For press meet were also present Chancellor (Academics) P. Sathyanarayanan, Vice Chancellor C. Muthamizhchelvan, Registrar S. Ponnusamy and Director (Career Centre) Venkata Sastry.

Honouring the student with the Illustrious Student Award, T. R. Paarivendhar said, “Success of Puranjay will be a role model for others.” **PNS**

‘Decline in startup funding leads to 27% drop in PEVC investments in April’

Mumbai: A decline in bets on startups led to a 27 per cent drop in investments by private equity and venture capital funds in April 2022 at USD 5.5 billion, as per a report released on Wednesday.

However, the overall investment was 11 per cent higher than the USD 5 billion witnessed in the preceding month of March 2022, the report by industry grouping IVCA and EY, a consultancy, said.

Investments into startups by venture capital funds halved to USD 1.6 billion across 82 deals during April, which resulted in pulling down of the overall number.

The consultancy’s partner Vivek Soni acknowledged that rate tightening by the US Fed will reduce liquidity. **PTI**

Oilmeals exports up 10% to 3.34 lakh tonnes in April

New Delhi: Oilmeals export increased by 10 per cent in April to nearly 3.34 lakh tonnes on higher shipments of rapeseed meal, according to industry data.

In a statement, Solvent Extractors’ Association of India (SEA) said the export of oilmeals in April 2022 is provisionally reported at 3,33,972 tonnes compared to 3,03,705 tonnes in the same month last year.

Rapeseed meal exports increased to 2,29,207 tonnes during April from 93,984 tonnes in March 2022.

SEA pointed out that the exports of oilmeals fell to 23.8 lakh tonnes last fiscal year from 36.8 lakh tonnes in previous year. In term of value,



exports declined to Rs 5,600 crore from Rs 8,900 crore in 2020-21.

In the current year (2022-23), the exports of oilmeals are likely to be lower.

India is totally out priced in the international market in the case of soyabean meal due to high price of soybean in the domestic market.

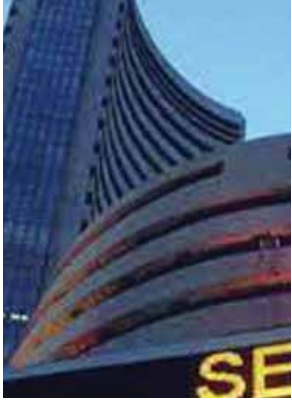
South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Bangladesh and Taiwan are the major importers of Indian oilmeals. **PTI**

Sensex snaps 2-day rally in see-saw trade; PowerGrid slumps 4.5%

Mumbai: Equity benchmarks surrendered early gains to close with modest losses on Wednesday, snapping their two-day winning streak as investors pared exposure to power, IT and bank stocks amid a mixed trend in global markets.

The rupee plunged to its fresh lifetime low against the dollar, weighed by persistent foreign fund outflows and a spurt in crude oil prices, which also dampened sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex soared in opening trade, before succumbing to bouts of volatility in the afternoon session. It finally settled 109.94 points or 0.20 per cent lower at 54,208.53. On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty dipped 19 points or 0.12 per cent to finish at 16,240.30.



PowerGrid was the biggest laggard in the Sensex pack, slumping 4.55 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, SBI, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, NTPC and Wipro.

In contrast, HUL, UltraTech Cement, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, ITC and

Axis Bank were among the gainers, advancing up to 2.02 per cent.

“With the support from Pharma and FMCG stocks, the domestic market had a steady run until the weak opening of the European market. UK’s soaring retail inflation number along with Fed Chair’s reassurance on bringing down the inflation, disturbed the sentiment, risking sharper rate hikes,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Retail inflation in the UK surged to a 40-year high of 9 per cent in April, official data showed. “The sharp rally in the previous session failed to add fizz in today’s trade, as the market did not capitalise on the firm start and rather turned range-bound to end marginally lower. **PTI**

Magenta ChargeGrid partners with Ather Energy to install EV charging stations

New Delhi: EV charging firm Magenta ChargeGrid on Wednesday said it has joined hands with the leading electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy to install charging stations.

The companies have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in this regard. The charging stations will be managed by Magenta under the ChargeGrid platform.

Under the partnership, integrated charging across two-three-four-wheelers will be provided at a single location, Magenta ChargeGrid said in a statement. **PTI**

Sanjivani Paranteral's promoter settles case with Sebi, pays ₹4.95 lakh

New Delhi: Sanjivani Paranteral Ltd’s promoter Ashwani Anamisharan Khemka has settled a case pertaining to alleged violation of disclosure norms with Sebi after paying ₹4.95 lakh.

The market regulator in an order passed on Tuesday said that the applicant (Ashwani Anamisharan Khemka) had filed the settlement application through its authorized representative to settle the proceedings without admitting or denying the findings of fact and conclusions of law.

As per the order, the applicant who is a promoter of

Sanjivani Paranteral Ltd (SPL) acquired 1,27,161 shares that is 2.15 per cent of the entity (SPL) from the market in October 2012.

Subsequent to the acquisition, the shareholding of the applicant increased from 7.95 per cent to 10.10 per cent. This triggered the disclosure requirement under SAST (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) regulations.

Thereafter, in 2016, the applicant disposed of 6,50,000 shares of SPL. Pursuant to this, the shareholding of the applicant reduced from 13.51 per cent to 2.49 per cent. This

transaction triggered the disclosure requirement under SAST norms.

The discrepancies were addressed by applicant and communicated to Sebi on February 2022.

Therefore, a high-powered advisory committee (HPAC) of Sebi considered the settlement terms proposed by the applicant and recommended the case for settlement upon payment of settlement charges of Rs 4.95 lakh.

The market watchdog approved the recommendation and the settlement was remitted on May 2022, the regulator noted. **PTI**

TVS Motor launches new iQube e-scooter model

Mumbai: TVS Motor on Wednesday expanded its electric scooter portfolio with the launch of a new iQube model in three variants with a host of features, including multiple charging options.

The iQube (base version) and iQube S come with a price range starting from Rs 98.56 lakh (on-road in Delhi) and Rs 1.11 lakh (on-road in Bengaluru), respectively, Manu Saxena, senior vice president for future mobility at TVS Motor Company, announced at the virtual launch event.

The company did not announce the prices for the top-of-the-line variant iQube ST, which offers “the best-in-class on-road range of 140 km”. The company said that the e-scooter can

be booked at an initial amount of Rs 999. Bookings for iQube and iQube S variants are also open on the company’s website from Wednesday with their deliveries available with immediate effect.

Both the scooters are available at the company’s outlets in 33 cities, it said, adding that TVS will be adding 52 additional cities in its retail network soon. “The launch of the new TVS iQube is a testament to our commitment of offering world class EV technology with never-before intelligent and personalised connected experience. The company has been investing in electric technologies for more than ten years now” said Sudarshan Venu, managing director, TVS Motor Company. **PTI**

Indian Overseas Bank shares climb over 4% after earnings

New Delhi: Shares of Indian Overseas Bank on Wednesday gained over 4 per cent after the company reported a nearly 58 per cent jump in its net profit in the quarter ended March 2022.

The stock jumped 4.12 per cent to settle at Rs 17.70 on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 5 per cent to Rs 17.85. At the NSE, it went up by 4.11 per cent and ended at Rs 17.70.

Public sector lender Indian Overseas Bank on Wednesday reported a nearly 58 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 552 crore in the fourth quarter of FY22, mainly due to lower provisioning for bad loans. The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 350 crore in the year-ago period.

However, the total income of the bank during the latest March quarter fell to Rs 5,719 crore as against Rs 6,074 crore in the same period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing. The bank’s interest income rose by 4 per cent in the fourth quarter ended March to Rs 4,215 crore. **PTI**



the pioneer

INDIAN
PREMIER LEAGUE

2022

11

OUR (SUNRISERS HYDERABAD'S) DEATH BOWLING HAS BEEN A STRENGTH OF OURS AND BHUVI'S ONE OF THE TOP DEATH BOWLERS OF THE TOURNAMENT

— KANE WILLIAMSON

LSG qualify for playoffs

De Kock's 140* & unbeaten opening stand (210) with KL script Lucknow's win

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

South Africa opening batter Quinton de Kock's scintillating century powered Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to a memorable win over Shreyas Iyer-led Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in Match No 66 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 at the Dr DY Patil Sports Academy in Navi Mumbai on Wednesday.

Two-time champions Kolkata were fighting for survival when Iyer & Co squared off against third-placed Lucknow on matchday 66 of the cash-rich league.

Winning the toss and opting to bat first against Kolkata, LSG skipper Rahul joined forces with veteran opener De Kock as the Lucknow batters tormented the potent bowling attack of the KKR side.

After reaching a score of 44 without losing a single wicket in the Powerplay, Rahul and De Kock remained keen on cashing on their respective starts against Kolkata.

The established opening pair of the LSG franchise ended up smashing multiple records by turning the tie into a high-scoring contest.

De Kock and Rahul scored the highest opening partnership in the history of IPL as LSG smashed 210-0 in the 20 over-contest.

While Rahul scored 68 off 51 balls, his partner-in-crime De Kock was a star-turnout for the Lucknow franchise.

De Kock's second IPL ton (140 off 70 balls) helped him in register-



ing the third-highest individual score in the celebrated T20 tournament.

In reply, KKR were reduced to 65-3 in 7.1 overs as Mohsin Khan got

the better of Venkatesh Iyer (0) and Abhijeet Tomar (4) during Kolkata's steep run chase of the 207-run target.

► pointstable

Po.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	GT (Q)	13	10	3	0	20	0.391
2.	LSG (Q)	14	9	5	0	18	0.251
3.	RR	13	8	5	0	16	0.304
4.	DC	13	7	6	0	14	0.255
5.	RCB	13	7	6	0	14	-0.323
6.	KKR	14	6	8	0	12	0.146
7.	PBKS	13	6	7	0	12	-0.043
8.	SRH	13	6	7	0	12	-0.230
9.	CSK	13	4	9	0	8	-0.206
10.	MI	13	3	10	0	6	-0.577

► boundarymeter

4s	1805
6s	941

Lifting KKR in the high-scoring clash, Nitish Rana (42) and captain Iyer (50) played scintillating knocks as Kolkata managed to bounce back after the powerplay.

After Sam Billings' fighting 36-run knock, Rinku Singh and Sunil Narine showed their batting pyrotechnics to put KKR in the driving seat.

At a time when KKR were on the cusp of a famous win, LSG's Even Lewis plucked a one-handed stunner to remove free-scoring Rinku (40 off 15 balls) in the final over.

In the end, Marcus Stoinis defended three runs on the final ball to script LSG's thrilling 2-run win over KKR at the Dr DY Patil Sports Academy.

RCB need big victory to remain in play-off race

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Runaway leaders Gujarat Titans would look to continue their winning momentum ahead of the play-offs while Royal Challengers Bangalore need a big victory to keep their last-four stage hopes alive when the two teams face each other in their final IPL league match here on Thursday.

Newcomers GT have so far had a dream opening season as they are already assured of a top spot in the standings with 20 points from 13 games.

RCB, on the other hand, have had a mixed bag this season, registering seven wins and six losses to occupy the fifth spot with 14 points from 13 matches.

But what could hurt RCB is their net run rate of -0.323. A win against GT would move them to 16 points but that might not be enough as they also need a few favourable results going their way.

Delhi Capitals, who are currently at fourth spot, can also secure 16 points if they beat Mumbai Indians in their last match and they have a much better net run rate than RCB at +0.255.

With back-to-back wins, RCB had the momentum going their way but that fizzled out after a big 54-run loss to Punjab Kings in their last match.

Virat Kohli's woeful run continued as he managed just 20 in the last match but the stage is set for the former India captain to play an impact knock to make a turnaround in his form and the fortunes of RCB.

Skipper Faf du Plessis, Mahipal Lomror and Dinesh Karthik would also be looking to play a big knock after their bats remained silent in the last few games.

Glenn Maxwell and Rajat Patidar have been getting starts but failed to convert them into big scores.

On the bowling front, Harshal Patel and



Wanindu Hasaranga have been brilliant for RCB. In fact, when all other bowlers were taken to task by Punjab batters in their last match, the duo bowled decent spells and in the process picked up four and two wickets respectively.

RCB, however, would be concerned over the form of Josh Hazlewood and Mohammed Siraj as they leaked runs against Punjab.

But du Plessis would be hoping for one complete performance from his side to keep RCB in the hunt.

GT, on the other hand, are the side to beat in this IPL. Even if they lose on Thursday, the Hardik Pandya-led side will finish at the top, which means it will get two chances to reach the final.

For GT, the key to success in their inaugural season has been the team effort.

GT's batting department has witnessed some inspirational performances from the likes of Wriddhiman Saha, Shubman Gill, David Miller, skipper Pandya and Rahul Tewatia.

The batting unit has been complemented superbly by a lethal bowling attack led by experienced Mohammed Shami and has the likes of young Yash Dayal, Lockie Ferguson and Alzarri Joseph.

Umran will be a great bowler for India: Vaas



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former Sri Lankan pacer Chaminda Vaas reckons rookie speedster Umran Malik, who has thrilled everyone with his pace in the IPL, will become a "great bowler" for India.

Playing for the Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL-15, the fast bowler from Jammu has been impressive with his pace and consistently clocked above 150 kmph in the speed gun.

He has so far taken 21 wickets, with best figures of 5/25 and is the fourth highest wicket-taker in the tournament.

"I think he (Umran) is getting better day by day and I saw him playing in the last IPL as well. He is bowling consistently and accuracy is important when it comes to T20. And he will

be a great bowler for India. He will be there with (Jasprit) Bumrah, I guess if India gives him a chance. He will go a long way," Vaas told reporters here.

The ex-left-arm seamer, who has 355 wickets in 111 Tests, is in the city to coach children of the 'Mumbai Cricket Club' led by coach Jwala Singh.

This IPL has also seen the emergence of young pacers like Mukesh Choudhary, Arshdeep Singh, Umran, Avesh Khan, Mohsin Khan and the 48-year-old attributed it to good first-class structure in India.

The IPL has seen Sri Lankan players like Wanindu Hasaranga, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Dushmantha Chameera among others perform well and Vaas feels it will pave the way for the younger cricketers in the island nation.

"Well, I am so glad that in this IPL, most of the Sri Lankan got opportunities and they believe in themselves that they can (play) a bigger role in the IPL. And the best example is Wanindu (Hasaranga). "Wanindu is a star and he has always performed well in the Sri Lanka team but here (in the IPL) he is doing amazing. Not only him but others are doing (playing) their part (well) and it is good for the future players of Sri Lanka to come and play in the IPL. It is a morale-booster for the youngsters," said Vaas.

"Dushmantha has come a long way. I was working with the national set-up for eight months and he has improved a lot. I am already pleased with his performance and he will be a future star," he added.

VVS likely to coach India on Ireland tour

PTI ■ MUMBAI

National Cricket Academy chief VVS Laxman is likely to coach the Indian team during the two-match series in Ireland next month as it coincides with the Test squad's preparation in England.

Head coach Rahul Dravid will be with the Test squad in England ahead of the series beginning with the one-off Test from July 1.

The four-day practice game against Leicester ahead of the Test will be played from June 24-27 and that coincides with the two T20s in Ireland on June 26 and June 28.

"In all likelihood, Laxman will be with the T20 squad in Ireland as Dravid will be busy in England with



HEAD COACH RAHUL DRAVID WILL BE WITH THE TEST SQUAD IN ENGLAND AHEAD OF THE SERIES BEGINNING WITH THE ONE-OFF TEST FROM JULY 1

the Test team," a BCCI source told PTI.

A similar situation arose last year when then head coach Ravi Shastri was with the Test team in England and Dravid, who was NCA head at that time, travelled with the limited overs

squad to Sri Lanka.

Laxman, who succeeded Dravid at NCA, had travelled with the triumphant India Under-19 side to the World Cup in the Caribbean earlier this year.

There is also a possibility that selectors pick different squads for England and Ireland series.

A full-strength team is expected to be picked for the England tour comprising one Test, three T20s and as many ODIs.

A week after the IPL final, India host South Africa for five T20 Internationals beginning June 9. The squad is expected to be picked on May 22 and all-format senior players like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah are likely to be rested.

England recall Broad and Anderson for New Zealand Tests

AP ■ LONDON

England on Thursday recalled James Anderson and Stuart Broad, their two most successful Test wicket-takers of all time, for the opening two fixtures of a three-match series against New Zealand.

The pair were controversially left out of the squad

from the recent tour of Caribbean, with England's 1-0 loss in a three-game campaign leaving them bottom of the World Test Championship table.

But they have now been named in a 13-man squad, with the first Test against New Zealand at Lord's starting on June 2 marking Ben Stokes's first match since he was



appointed as full-time England captain, replacing Joe Root.

Star batsman Root has retained his place in the squad.

England have called up Yorkshire batsman Harry Brook and Durham paceman Matthew Potts for the first time.

Brook gets his chance following a series of repeated failures by England's top order.

He has been in fine form for Yorkshire this season, scoring 758 runs at an average of 151.60 in the first division of the County Championship.

Potts has been given a chance after an injury crisis among England's quick bowlers ruled out Saqib Mahmood, Matthew Fisher, Jofra Archer, Mark Wood, Olly Stone and Ollie Robinson.



Williamson returning to NZ for impending birth of child

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Kane Williamson is returning to New Zealand to be with his wife for the impending birth of their child, the franchise announced on Wednesday.

"Official update: Our skipper Kane Williamson is flying back to New Zealand, to usher in the latest addition to his family," Sunrisers Hyderabad wrote on its official Twitter handle.

"Here's everyone at the #Riser camp wishing Kane Williamson and his wife a safe

delivery and a lot of happiness!" SRH said.

Williamson struggled big time this IPL season, scoring just 216 runs from 13 matches. Sunrisers Hyderabad have kept their slim play-offs hopes alive after registering a narrow three-run win over Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede stadium on Tuesday.

SRH take on Punjab Kings in their last league game here on Sunday in a must-win game.

However, even a win may not be enough for them to make it to the play-offs.

Even biggest of players can struggle: Ishan

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ishan Kishan has failed to live up to the most expensive player tag in this IPL but the Mumbai Indians wicketkeeper batter is not unduly worried about his form, saying even the best of cricketers "struggle" at some point.

The 23-year-old was bought by MI for a whopping Rs 15.25 crore at the IPL auction earlier this year. He scored 370 runs from 13 matches at an average of 30.83, with the help of three half-centuries.

He is, though, MI's second-highest run-getter in this IPL, a fact which showed the woeful form of most batters of the side.

MI were out of the play-offs reckoning long time back after losing eight matches on the trot.

"Even the biggest of players (can struggle), I have seen the likes of Chris Gayle taking time (to start hitting)," Kishan said at the post-match conference after MI lost by three runs to Sunrisers Hyderabad on Tuesday night.

"Every day is a new day, every match is new. Some day, you get a good start, some day, opposition bowlers come prepared and they bowl the balls at good areas.

"The planning inside the dressing room may be different from what

the outside people want."

He said his role was not about hitting straightaway without analysing the situation of the game.

"In cricket, it can never be sure that you have just one role and I will just go out and hit the ball. If you think about the team, it is more important to understand about your role," Kishan,

who scored 43 off 34 balls, said.

"If the opposition bowlers are bowling well you need to give respect to them and if you can save wicket it makes easier for the batters coming later.

"There cannot be just one situation. Some day, you need to go all out when you are chasing a big total, some day, you need to analyse the strength of

opposition team whether they have good bowlers to bowl at the death or not, or

whether we have to save wickets or not."

Kishan also said that MI could have won the match had Tim David, who had smashed 46 off just 18 balls with the help of three fours and four sixes down the order, was there till the end.

"Unfortunately, Tim David was run out. If he was till the end, he could have finished the game."

SRH head coach Tom Moody said had David's incredible innings not taken the game down to the wire, his side's chances of making the play-offs would have increased on net run rate.

SRH currently sit at eighth spot in IPL standings with 12 points, the same as Kolkata Knight Riders and Punjab Kings, but placed below the two on inferior net run rate.

"At the end of the day, you've got to win the game first and that was our priority. We managed to get enough runs ... But (if not for) an extraordinary innings from Tim David, we may have made a bigger impression on our net run rate," Moody said.

Asked whether tearaway pacer Umran Malik is ready for international cricket, Moody said, "Umran is still in a learning curve, he has bowled exceptionally well in this IPL. He had his moments.

"Like any young player who burst on the scene...You need to be measured in your approach. It's a big step up when you are in international cricket. There is no doubt that he will take that path in time, whether that time is in months or more.



Matthew Mott appointed as England's white-ball coach

AP ■ LONDON

Matthew Mott was Wednesday named as head coach of England's men's white-ball teams on a four-year contract.

The 48-year-old has been in charge of Australia's all-conquering women's team for the past seven years, winning back-to-back T20 World Cups in 2018 and 2020 and the 50-over equivalent earlier this year.

He also guided Australia's women to a record 26 successive ODI wins and their recent victory over England in the multi-format Ashes series.

Mott takes over a side, who are the reigning 50-over world champions, after beating candidates including former England

batsman Paul Collingwood to the job.

England now have separate head coaches in red and white-ball cricket for the first time since 2014, with former New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum announced last week as their Test match chief.

Mott, who has previously worked in the English game with county side Glamorgan, is expected to begin his reign with three ODIs away to the Netherlands next month.

"I genuinely believe that the time is right to play a role in helping the England men's ODI (one-day international) and T20 group continue to evolve as one of the best teams in the world," Mott said in an ECB statement.

DOWN TO THE WIRE

Liverpool take title race to final day with comeback win over Southampton



AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool ensured the Premier League title race will go to the final day of the season as the under-strength quadruple chasers survived a scare to beat Southampton 2-1 on Tuesday. After Liverpool defeated Chelsea on penalties in a gruelling FA Cup final just three days earlier, Jurgen Klopp took a gamble with nine changes at St Mary's. Despite effectively fielding a reserve team and trailing to Nathan Redmond's early strike, Liverpool hit back through goals from Takumi Minamino and Joel Matip.

The Reds are just one point

behind leaders Manchester City, with both teams having one game left. A title race for the ages will go City's way if they win against Aston Villa at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday. Klopp insisted at the weekend that he does not expect City to drop points against Villa. But Liverpool would be crowned champions for the second time in three seasons if they beat Wolves at Anfield and City fail to win. Klopp's side will be expected to do their part of the equation against Wolves, especially now their refreshed key players can return to the team. Sadio Mane, Luis Diaz, Andrew Robertson, Thiago Alcantara and Trent Alexander-Arnold were among

those left out against Southampton, while Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk were sidelined with injuries suffered at Wembley. City boss Pep Guardiola said he planned to watch the game on television and if he tuned in, it would have made for frustrating viewing as Southampton squandered the lead. But it was Riyad Mahrez's missed penalty in the final minutes of City's 2-2 draw at West Ham on Sunday which had given Liverpool renewed hope of catching the leaders. And the Reds, hoping to become the first English club to win all four major trophies in one season, will settle their history bid in the last two games of their incredible, marathon

campaign. First, Liverpool will try to avoid a repeat of 2019, when they beat Wolves on the last day but were still pipped to the title by City. Then they head to Paris to face Real Madrid in the Champions League final on May 28. **RELENTLESS PRESSURE** Southampton had lost seven of their previous 10 league matches, giving Klopp belief that his bold selection could pay off. He might have had second thoughts when Armando Broja weaved unchecked into the area, forcing Alisson Becker to save with his out-stretched leg. It was a warning Liverpool failed

to heed and Ralph Hasenhuttl's side took the lead after 13 minutes. Redmond sprinted away down the left flank, cutting inside to the edge of the area and unleashed a fierce strike that took a deflection off James Milner as it flashed into the far corner. With their title hopes in jeopardy, Liverpool showed the desire and character that inspired Klopp to label them "mentality monsters". Minamino has struggled to break into the Liverpool team on a regular basis and was sent on loan to Southampton last season. The Japan forward made the most of a rare Premier League start with a brilliant equaliser in the 27th

Nottingham Forest need penalties to reach playoff final



AP ■ LONDON

Nottingham Forest are one game away from returning to the Premier League for the first time since 1999 after edging out Sheffield United on penalties in a dramatic Championship playoff semi-final. Forest led 2-1 from the first leg and looked set for Wembley when Brennan Johnson blasted into the top corner on 19 minutes. However, the Blades fought back after the break as goals from Morgan Gibbs-White and John Fleck sent the tie to extra-time. The visitors were only denied a remarkable fightback by a brilliant save from Brice Samba five minutes from time as he spread

himself to block Ilman Ndiaye's effort. And Samba was the Forest hero in the shootout as he saved from Oliver Norwood, Conor Hourihane and Gibbs-White. Johnson, Cafu and Steve Cook scored from the spot for Steve Cooper's men to continue an incredible turnaround in fortunes at the City Ground. Forest were bottom of the table when Chris Hughton was sacked in September. They narrowly missed out on automatic promotion behind Fulham and Bournemouth, but will have another shot in the richest game in world football when they face Huddersfield at Wembley on May 29.

minute. Joe Gomez fizzed a pass into Jota and his perfectly weighted lay-off reached Minamino, who beat Alex McCarthy at the near post with a ferocious rising drive. Liverpool turned the screw and Milner's long-range effort was pushed away by McCarthy before Roberto Firmino fired over. Klopp's men monopolised over

70 per cent of the possession in the first half and it was the same story after the break. Liverpool's relentless pressure was rewarded in the 67th minute. Matip and Kyle Walker-Peters challenged for Tsimikas's corner and the ball looped in over McCarthy, forcing City to keep the champagne on ice for now.

Nikhat enters World C'ships final



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nikhat Zareen (52kg) was the lone Indian to enter the final, while two others signed off with Bronze medals in the Women's World Boxing Championships in Istanbul on Wednesday. Nikhat made short work of Brazil's Caroline De Almeida to

notch up a dominant 5-0 win. However, Manisha Moun (57kg) and debutant Parveen Hooda (63kg) settled for Bronze medals. While Manisha lost to Tokyo Olympics Bronze medalist Irma Testa of Italy by 0-5 unanimous decision, Parveen went down by a 1-4 split verdict to European cham-

pionship Bronze medalist Amy Broadhurst. Zareen, who is a former junior world champion, stayed calm and completely dominated her rival for a 5-0 win by unanimous decision in the last-four bout of the 52kg competition. The 2019 Asian Championships Bronze medalist Manisha, competing in her second world championship, tried hard to outdo her technically superior opponent with her power punches but Testa defended superbly. Six-time champion MC Mary Kom, Sarita Devi, Jenny RL and Lekha C are the only Indian women boxers who have won the world title and now Hyderabad-based Zareen has the opportunity to join the elite list. India's best performance in the event came in 2006 when the country snared eight medals, including four Gold, one Silver and three Bronze. In the last edition, four Indian boxers returned home with medals — Manju Rani clinched the Silver, while Mary Kom bagged an unparalleled eighth world medal in the form of a Bronze.



PTI ■ BANGKOK

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu huffed and puffed her way to the women's singles second round while Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy, the protagonists of India's historic Thomas Cup triumph, suffered contrasting fates in the opening round of Thailand Open here on Wednesday. Sindhu, seeded sixth and ranked seventh in the world, staved off a spirited challenge

from world number 62, USA's Lauren Lam 21-19, 19-21, 21-18 to set up a clash with Sim Yu Jin, who had played a pivotal role in Korea's Uber Cup win. Fresh from playing a major role in the Thomas Cup victory, Srikanth, seeded eighth, produced a gritty show to get the better of Brice Leverdez of France 18-21, 21-10, 21-16 in 49 minutes. The World number 11 Indian will next face Ireland's Nhat Nguyen, who defeated Hans-Kristian Solberg

Vittinghus of Denmark 21-12, 23-21 in the first round. Prannoy, who won the decisive third singles during the quarterfinals and semifinals of Thomas Cup, went down fighting 17-21, 21-15, 15-21 to Daren Liew of Malaysia. Among other Indians in the fray, Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam beat Thailand's Kittipak Dubthuk and Prinda Pattanawarittippan 21-12, 21-17 to enter the second round. Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto got a walkover



F1 not replacing Russian GP

AP ■ LONDON

Formula One has decided against replacing the Russian Grand Prix, which had earlier been canceled following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The announcement on Wednesday reduced the current season from a record 23 races to 22, the same total as last year. The Sochi race, originally scheduled for September 25, had been pulled from the calendar a day after Russia invaded Ukraine. "There will be no additional Grand Prix added to the calendar to fill the gap, meaning the 2022 calendar will run to 22 races," F1 said in a statement. Several cities had offered to host the race but freight rules, logistical and travel costs during a season when teams have tight budgets made it too difficult.



Medvedev loses on return

AP ■ GENEVA

World number two Daniil Medvedev lost at the Geneva Open on Tuesday in his first match after a hernia operation, leaving him short of practice ahead of next week's French Open. The US Open champion, back on the tour after surgery, was beaten 6-2, 7-6 (7/5) by French veteran Richard Gasquet in the round of 16. Medvedev underwent surgery last month after losing in the quarter-finals in Miami, missing the early clay-court season. Geneva is a warm-up event ahead of Roland-Garros but Medvedev will have to go into the second Grand Slam of the year short of match time on clay. It was the first time 35-year-old Gasquet had defeated a top two player since beating Roger Federer in 2005 — his only other victory over a top-two opponent in 38 attempts. World number 75 Gasquet faces either Italian qualifier Marco Cecchinato or Poland's Kamil Majchrzak in the quarter-finals. Last year's Geneva winner Casper Ruud, runner-up Denis Shapovalov and Reilly Opelka are the other top 20 players still in the Geneva draw.

AHF to conduct Olympic qualifiers independently if Asian Games not held by September 2023



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) on Wednesday said it will conduct the Olympic qualifiers independently if the postponed Hangzhou Asian Games is not held by September next year. The Asian Games, originally scheduled to be held from September 10 to 25 this year, has been postponed indefinitely earlier this month due to the worsening pandemic situation in

China. The new dates will be decided in future. But AHF's chief executive officer Tayyab Ikram said the Asian hockey body is closely monitoring the situation and is in regular consultation with Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). "The Asian Games is an Olympic qualifier for the continent, but we still have enough time in hand. If the Asian Games Games are postponed to September 2023, we will be in the same position to conduct the qualifiers. "We are closely monitoring the develop-

ments," he said during a virtual press conference ahead of the men's Asia Cup, to be held in Jakarta. "We do have a plan B, an independent Olympic qualifier tournament for Asia if the Asian Games are postponed beyond September 2023. We want to provide fair opportunity and even platform to our players. But we have to see the feasibility. We are very positive at this stage. "The pandemic in China is much more in a precautionary level now... We are closely monitoring the situation there. We will implement plan B if required." Asked if there is any time frame to fall back on plan B, Ikram said: "For us it is very clear if the decision is that Asian Games will be held in September 2023 or before, obviously the OCA has to make that decision, if that happens it's fine or else we will have to implement plan B. I'm not too concerned about the first half of 2023." The Hangzhou Asian Games is of high value for the hockey teams of the continent as Olympic berths are at stake in both men's and women's events. The winners will earn direct right to compete at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Meanwhile, the Asia Cup in Jakarta from May 23 to June 1 is a World Cup qualifier. Being the hosts, India have secured a direct entry in next year's World Cup but the Olympic Bronze medallists would look to defend their title in the Asia Cup. India will open their campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan on the opening day of the tournament.

Mushfiqur reaches 5,000 Test runs



AP ■ CHATTOGRAM

Mushfiqur Rahman hit a century on Wednesday while becoming the first Bangladesh batter to reach 5,000 Test runs, and his team then reduced Sri Lanka to 39-2 in its second innings on Day 4 of the series-

opening Test. Mushfiqur's eighth century, and first since 2020, helped Bangladesh take a 68-run lead after the home side was bowled out for 465. He was finally out for 105 when trying to sweep left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya. Sri Lanka, which was dismissed for 397, still needs 29 runs to erase the deficit. Tamim Iqbal top-scored for Bangladesh with 133. Liton Das made 88 and opener Mahmudul Hasan added 58. After the day's play was delayed by 30 minutes because of rain, Bangladesh, which resumed on 318-3, moved slowly in the morning session. Mushfiqur was 15 runs short of the 5,000-run milestone when play resumed and he hit the mark, in his 81st Test match, with two runs to fine leg off pace bowler Asitha Fernando. Mushfiqur helped Bangladesh then earn the lead and completed his eighth Test century off 270 balls, glancing Asitha Fernando for a boundary through fine-leg. It was, however, the slowest century for him in terms of facing balls.