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CHECKMATE BY THE
'NEUTRALS' IN PAK

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RUSSIAN ROCKETS HIT
EASTERN UKRAINIAN TOWN

MONEY 10

'INDIA'S ECONOMY SEEN
GROWING 9.2 % IN FY22'

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Yasin awarded life for terror funding

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Delhi Special court on Wednesday awarded life imprisonment to Kashmiri terrorist Yasin Malik in a terror funding case.

Special Judge Praveen Singh also awarded varying jail terms for various offences under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The court also imposed a fine of over ₹10 lakh on Malik.

The life term was awarded for two offences — Section 121 (waging war against the Government of India) of the IPC and section 17 (raising funds for the terrorist act) of the UAPA. All the sentences will run concurrently.

Earlier in the day, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) during the argument on quantum of sentence demanded death sentence for Malik, highlighting crimes and terrorism he committed in Kashmir for the past three decades. "Let's not go into all this. Stick to the facts. This is a terror funding case," said Judge Singh, who delivered the judgment by 6.15 pm.

"However, in my opinion, there was no reformation of this convict. It may be correct

that the convict may have given up the gun in 1994, but he had never expressed any regret for the violence he had committed prior to 1994.

"It is noticed that, when he claimed to have given up the path of violence after 1994, the Government of India took it upon its face value and gave him an opportunity to reform and in good faith tried to engage in a meaningful dialogue with him and as admitted by him, gave him every platform to express his opinion.

"However, as discussed in the order on charge, the convict did not desist from violence. Rather, betraying the good intentions of the Government he took a different path to orchestrate violence in the guise of political struggle. The convict has claimed that he had followed Gandhian principle of non-violence and was spearheading a peaceful non violent struggle.

"However, the evidence on the basis of which charges were framed and to which convict has pleaded guilty, speaks otherwise.

"The entire movement was planned to be a violent movement and large-scale violence ensured is a matter of fact," said the judgment convicting Malik to life imprisonment.



Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik being produced at Patiala House court in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

Court also imposes a ₹10 lakh fine on Malik

Malik's past catches up with him

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Life has come a full circle for chief of the banned Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Yasin Malik, who graduated from being a Pakistan-trained terrorist to a separatist force in the Kashmir valley during his anti-India career spanning over three decades.

On Wednesday, Malik, 56, was sentenced to a life term by a designated NIA court.

He has been in and out of jail several times dating back to his student activism days before the onset of militancy in J&K in 1990.

In his bid to mainstream himself, he "renounced" violence and donned the political cloak in 1994. Malik —

married to a Pakistani artist — had announced Gandhian way of protest after his release and sought to project himself as a moderate voice in separatist camp.

Malik was arrested in early 2019 in connection with a 2017 terror-funding case registered by National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Ultras kill famous TV artist in Valley

10-yr-old nephew gets bullet wounds

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Barely hours after Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik was awarded life imprisonment by the NIA court in a terror funding case, a famous Kashmiri TV artist and singer Amreena Bhat was gunned down by "unidentified" terrorists while her 10-year-old nephew received bullet injuries on his arm in Chadoora area of central Kashmir district of Budgam on Wednesday.

Amreena was a famous TV artist and singer. She appeared in many music videos and small skits uploaded on the social media platforms.

According to initial reports both Amreena and her nephew



were targeted at their home in Chadoora by the armed terrorists.

In a tweet Kashmir zone police said, "Around 7.55 pm, terrorists fired upon one lady Amreen Bhat daughter of Khazir Mohd Bhat and resident of Hushroo Chadoora at her home. She was shifted to hospital in an injured condition where doctors declared her

dead. Her 10-year-old nephew who was also at home received a bullet injury on his arm."

According to preliminary reports three terrorists of LeT terror outfit were involved in this heinous terror incident.

The security forces have launched a massive manhunt to track down the foot prints of LeT terrorists.

"The local police team has registered a case and also launched investigations in the case," official sources said.

Reacting to the murder, former J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah tweeted, "Shocked & deeply saddened by the murderous militant attack on Ambreen Bhat. Sadly Ambreen lost her life in the attack & her nephew was injured. There can be no justification for attacking innocent women & children like this."

Sidhu given job of Patiala jail munshi



MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu is all set to play a new innings in Patiala Central Jail. Once considered a frontrunner for the Punjab Chief Minister's post, the multi-faceted Sidhu will be playing the role of a "munshi" (a clerical job) within the four walls of the Patiala Central Jail, after he was sentenced to a year's rigorous imprisonment by the Supreme Court in a 1988 road rage case.

CAPSULE

ABHILASHA ARMY'S FIRST WOMAN COMBAT AVIATOR

New Delhi: Captain Abhilasha Barak on Wednesday became the first woman combat aviator of the Indian Army. She has been awarded the coveted 'wings' along with 36 Army pilots at a ceremony held at Combat Army Aviation Training School in Nashik, officials said. Captain Barak hails from Haryana and was commissioned into the Army Air Defence Corps in September, 2018.

LAKHIMPUR: ASHISH BAIL HEARING ON MAY 30

Lucknow: The Allahabad High Court will hear on May 30 the bail plea of Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, arrested in connection with the Lakhimpur Kheri violence that claimed eight lives in October last year.

'SHRI RAMAYANA YATRA' LAUNCH ON JUNE 21

Lucknow: The IRCTC is set to launch a 18-day 'Shri Ramayana Yatra' through a special tourist train on June 21 to take pilgrims to sacred places associated with the life of Lord Ram.

Sibal quits Cong, files RS papers with SP's support

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
LUCKNOW

Former Union Minister and senior Supreme Court lawyer Kapil Sibal filed his nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha seat from Uttar Pradesh as an Independent candidate backed by the Samajwadi Party and said he has already resigned from the Congress. Javed Ali Khan also filed his papers as SP candidate. There was speculation that the SP could field Sibal as a Rajya Sabha candidate.

Kapil Sibal — the lawyer who secured senior SP leader Mohammad Azam Khan's bail from the SC — after filing his papers, said he had resigned from the Congress on May 16. Sibal said his ideology was related to the party he had been with for three decades. His exit from the party is another jolt to the electorally battered Congress.



Sibal was accompanied by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and SP general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav to Central Hall of UP Vidhan Bhawan. "I have filed the nomination as an independent candidate. I thank Akhilesh for supporting me. I resigned from the Congress on May

16 and am no longer a senior Congress leader," he said.

The SP chief later said Sibal was being supported by the SP. A prominent member of the G23 which had sought an organisational overhaul in the Congress, Sibal's tenure as Congress' Rajya Sabha member ends in July.

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JNAC plans aerial surveys to map illegal structures

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Concerned over rising incidents of unauthorised constructions, civic body Jamshedpur Notified Area Committee (JNAC) will get drone mapping done of places, which have become centres of unauthorised constructions.

JNAC is going to conduct a 3D mapping survey of the city. This survey will be done by drone. At present, one crore 98 lakh 24 thousand rupees will be spent on this survey. An agency has been selected for the survey. After the report comes, the entire blueprint of the city will be on the computer of JNAC.

On Wednesday, MP Bidyut Baran Mahto and Jamshedpur East MLA Saryu Roy laid the foundation stone of this scheme in the premises of JNAC in Sakchi.



Moreover, the foundation stone of a total 36 schemes to be implemented from the funds of Urban Development and Housing Department, Jharkhand, Ranchi was also laid.

"Besides checking illegal coming up of buildings in violation of norms, what we need to ensure is accountability of officials concerned so that the illegality is checked while it is being

committed and not later," an official of JNAC.

He said with so much of advancement in technology, it had been decided that drone mapping of the city would be undertaken. "With the help of drone mapping we can have an exact count of buildings. Satellite imagery can be used to get a timeline and in case of dereliction of duty by officials, suitable action can be taken," he said.

The preliminary results have indicated that the use of drones for undertaking building mapping is successful and can help in checking illegal construction to a great extent. It will be useful to check illegal constructions, which are a major problem in most towns.

"The surveys can be carried out with drones. This

will be the first time that a civic body in the city has decided to carry a survey. We will take pictures of the city and then repeat the exercise after three or six months. If there are deviations, we will inform the officers concerned and they will seek explanations," the official said.

The official claimed that cases involving illegal structures always get tangled in court, with the judiciary usually granting a stay. "Once we do the surveys, we will have pictures. Pictures don't lie," the official said. He said the cost of the exercise would be determined later.

Manoj Kumar, a social activist said: "This is a welcome move and a great idea. This data must be kept online. It will stop the encroachers once and for all. But if they hide the data, then it serves no purpose."

Face off again between Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd and PTR

M FAIZAHMAD ■ DALTONGANJ

There is again a fresh bout of face off between the north division of the tiger reserve Palamu and the Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. And it is with regard to the third railway line.

Sources said the Rail Vikas Nigam Limited, project implementation unit Ranchi, has 'advised with utmost caution' to commence works between KMND - CPDR section which for the common users is between the Kumandi railway station and the Chhipadohar railway station of the east central railways of the Dhanbad division of the railways.

The Rail Vikas Nigam Limited has advised to be strictly within the railway 'RoW' which is right of way.

The railway works are varied like demarcation, laying of sleepers and tracks, bridges, signalling system, uprooting of trees etc all for the third railway



Kamal Dah jheel in tiger reserve Palamu. PNS

line which on completion will see together with two railway lines of yester decades, 120 to 130 traffic of trains a day in the core area of tiger reserve Palamu.

Sources said much the Rail Vikas Nigam Limited speaks of its right of way, the crux of the issue is that commencement of railway works between KMND and

CPDR section is resisted by the north division authorities of the tiger reserve Palamu.

Sources said the tiger reserve officials did not allow commencement of railway works between KMND and CPDR section today.

A head on tussle is most evident between the Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd and the tiger reserve Palamu, said sources. Lower rung railway officials refuse to speak to the media saying they are not competent to speak to the media.

Hence it is always the version of the tiger reserve Palamu that comes first and handy.

Kumar Ashish deputy director North division of the tiger reserve Palamu said today we have disallowed the Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd to commence works between KMND and CPDR section.

He said we did this as our state board of wild life Jharkhand whose chairman is the chief minister who

holds the forest environment and climate change department, presiding over the state board of wild life meeting on 3.2.2022 had not recommended for the railway works between KMND - CPDR section citing adverse effects on the habitat and wildlife besides the fragmentation of the tiger reserve Palamu.

Kumar Ashish said the state board of wild life matters most in such issues which involves national park, tiger reserve, wildlife habitat and when the state board of wild life has declined to recommend railway works, the Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd has no right to commence work.

The deputy director North division of the tiger reserve Palamu said we have written to the DC and the SP Latehar to ensure that Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd does not violate the no recommendation resolution of the chairman of the state board of wildlife.

3.93 lakhs voters to use their voting rights in 4th phase

SHAILESH SHARMA ■ HAZARIBAG

In the fourth phase of panchayat election in five blocks of Hazaribag district, 3,93,150 voters will use their voting to determine the fate of 1227 candidates on 1020 booths. The voting will be held from 7 am to 3 pm on 27 May.

Hazaribag Deputy Commissioner Nancy Sahay said that the district admin-

istration is fully prepared to conduct the election on 27 May. In a meeting the administration has instructed all the employees and officers to conduct a free and fair poll in the fourth phase.

In the fourth phase elections will be held in Katkamsandi, Katkadag, Hazaribag, Keradari and Barkagaon blocks of the district. In all five blocks

1227 candidates are in the field to test their fate on four different posts.

In five blocks 10 candidates for zila parishad, 88 for Mukhiya's, 103 for panchayat simiti member and 1026 posts for ward members are in the five blocks.

The DC further said that for the 10 posts of zila parishad members 84 candidates are in the field. For

88 mukhiya posts 637, for 102 panchayat simiti members 417, and for the 676 post of ward members 1731 candidates are in the field.

In fourth phase of election out of 393150 voters 205372 male, 187777 female and one voter is transgender. All the polling personnel and sector magistrates will move to sectors on 26 May. The five blocks

have been distributed in 181 sectors for conduct of smooth election in the areas.

She further said that the control room will work 24 hours to listen to the problems of the voters on polling day. The third and fourth phase counting will be held on 31 May in the campus of Krishi Utpadan Bazar Simiti Ranchi- Patna road.

Felicitation programme organised for BIT Mesra faculty mentors

PNS ■ RANCHI

BIT Mesra faculty mentors felicitated programme by Samsung PRISM for Industrial Research & Student Internship was successfully organized at Seminar Hall-2, here on Wednesday.

The programme was started by Dr. Vijay Nath, Institute Coordinator Samsung PRISM. He addressed the audience and described all the details about conduction and coordination with Samsung PRISM and successful programme strategies. He further described the institute's journey with Samsung PRISM in detail.

Dr. S.S. Solanki, Professor, and Head of the ECE Department appreciated the successful efforts of BIT Mesra and Samsung PRISM. He emphasized the importance of such programmes, which would train faculties as well as students in their early stages of graduation, and make them aware of actual industry-



level problems and provide solutions accordingly.

Following him, Dr. Sandip Dutta, Professor & Head, CSE addressed the gathering and described other successful stories of collaboration between industry giants and BIT. In his speech, he focused on the need for industrial training during the early days of graduation which in turn would help the students to get placement without much pressure.

Dr. C. Jeganathan, Dean (Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship) addressed the gathering and

focused on students' problems in agriculture sectors. He motivated the students to undertake projects which could help in enhancing the life of villagers using new trends and technologies. He congratulated all BIT Faculty Mentors, the focal people from Samsung PRISM, and students who made this project truly successful.

Dr. Jeganathan felicitated all mentors with an academic kit sent by Samsung PRISM to appreciate the work outcome of the BIT mentors.

The list of Faculty Mentors

who were appreciated with the felicitation kits are as follows: Dr. M.K. Mukul (Dept. of Electronics and Communication Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Aminul Islam (Dept. of Electronics and Communication Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. I Mukherjee (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. B.K. Sarkar (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Mesra Campus, Mr. Ankur Agarwal (Dept. of Electronics and Communication Engg.) Jaipur Campus, Dr. Sukalyan Chakraborty (Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Shruti Garg (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Sanjeet Kumar (Dept. of Electronics and Communication Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. J. Sahay (Department of Electronics and Communication Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. P. Saxena (Dept. of Electronics and

Communication Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Sumit Srivastava (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Prajna Parimita Dash (Dept. of Electronics and Communication Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Om Prakash (Dept. of Mechanical Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Sanchita Paul (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. M. M. Agarwal (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Jaipur Campus, Dr. D. K. Upadhyay (Dept. of Electronics and Communication Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Itu Snigdha (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Mesra Campus, Dr. Sudip Sahana (Dept. of Computer Science and Engg.) Mesra Campus.

Dr. Jeganathan informed the students that the work would continue in the near future and the institute has planned programs for joint publications & patents in the future. With this, the felicitation program was drawn to its conclusion.

Koushik Chatterjee to head TNFD's India Consultation Group

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Tata Steel's executive director & chief financial officer, Koushik Chatterjee, will head Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) India Consultation Group.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos yesterday it was announced the formation of six national consultation groups including one in India which will be convened by Confederation of India Industries (CII).

This is part of the strategy to expand outreach and engagement in markets where significant interest in the work of the Taskforce has already been established. The consultation with market participants and other stakeholders will be on their nature-related risk and opportunity management to inform the design and development of the TNFD's recommendations.

The Consultation Groups are market-led, with a convening organisation from the private sector bringing together business, finance, public sector, and civil society organisations to discuss nature-related business and finance issues and the future adoption of the global TNFD framework.

The India Consultation Group will be chaired by Tata Steel's executive director & chief financial officer, Koushik Chatterjee, who is also part of a task force comprising 34 individuals



representing financial institutions, businesses, and market service providers, leading the efforts to develop TNFD's nature-risk framework. Chatterjee had joined the TNFD task force in 2021, shortly after its official launch in June of the same year as a representative of the Steel sector which has both a large impact and dependency on nature.

On his appointment as the Chair, Koushik Chatterjee said: "The formation of the country-specific TNFD Consultation Groups including that in India in partnership with Confederation of Indian Industry will provide Indian corporations an opportunity to further mainstream the discussion on nature-related business and financial risks and opportunities. It is important that corporations understand and adopt the nuances and perspectives of nature-related risks and opportunities which forms an important element of the Sustainable Development Goals. I am

very confident that the TNFD India Consultation Group will not only provide inputs and feedback to the TNFD but also help Indian companies on the preparation and adoption of the TNFD framework."

The other five consultation groups include Australia & New Zealand, Japan, Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Additional Consultation Groups are expected to be announced throughout 2022 and 2023 based on demand and interest from market participants.

Tata Steel has a long history of leadership in sustainability practices, including measurement and awareness of the consumption of natural capital. Tata Steel is a signatory to the Task Force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures and has identified transition risks and opportunities to decarbonise its operations over a period and plans to mitigate these risks across all geographies.

Man thrashed to death in Dhanbad

PNS ■ DHANBAD

One Prem Rawani resident of Baliapur has been thrashed to death by the brother and his friends of his so-called girlfriend.

The incident took place in Barmasia locality late on Tuesday evening..

Interestingly, the accused Tinku, Babban and Nitish Mahto played DJ on unusually high volume to sub-

side the cry of victim while thrashing told neighbours of the accused to police while investigating.

Prem was called by the girl late in the evening and was taken away to the room where he was beaten severely. The accused also pulled nails of his legs too in the course of beating him and later he was admitted to SN-MCH by them.

One of the friends also in-

formed his family members that Prem has been admitted to hospital after met with an accident. However before they could reach hospital doctors declared him dead. Prem's uncle Daruka has filed case of murder with Baliapur police station naming aforementioned ruined three as main accused.

Police have launched an investigation but none of the accused could be arrested.

Hazaribag MP meets Governor Ramesh Bais

AVINASH ANJAN ■ HAZARIBAG

Hazaribag MP cum Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Jayant Sinha met Jharkhand Governor Ramesh Bais and discussed many important issues related to the state with him and mainly he requested to the Governor to provide 50 acres of land to develop Vinoba Bhawe University of Hazaribag as an education city.

Sinha told the Governor that it is the good fortune of Vinoba Bhawe University that there is 3 acres of fallow land between All India Radio, Hazaribag and University Law College and about 200 acres of fallow land on the west side of the university.

He said that if this land is made available to the university, it will help a lot in the development of education here for the coming 50-100 years. If this university will be able to provide the system of higher education



to the children of rural areas of Hazaribag, then it will be a big contribution in the development of the Hazaribag area. The new courses offered by this university will not only lead to academic development of the students but will also increase employment and self-employment opportunities and this work will prove to be a milestone for the development of the region.

Sinha has requested the

Governor to provide at least 50 acres to Vinoba Bhawe University. He also said that new energy is obtained by getting the guidance of the respected Governor. His co-operation has always been available in accelerating the multifaceted development of Hazaribag parliamentary constituency. On behalf of all the residents of the area, heartfelt thanks to him for his cooperation and guidance.

XISS to hold its 61st Convocation Ceremony today

PNS ■ RANCHI

As many as 295 graduating students of batch 2020-22 of Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS), Ranchi, will be receiving their PGDM certificates during its 61st Convocation Ceremony on Thursday from 4:30 pm onwards.

Ashish Kumar Srivastava, CEO & MD, PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited and also a celebrated alumnus of the Institute is the Chief Guest of the ceremony, scheduled to be held at the Fr Herman

Rasschaert Memorial Auditorium.

A total of 295 students of Batch 2020-22 will receive their diplomas in the ceremony, where top rank holders from all programmes will be bestowed with 12 gold, 09 silver, 05 bronze medals and 03 cash prizes respectively.

Meanwhile, 30 students will also be awarded with Institutional Scholarships worth Rs 9.5 lakhs namely Fr Michael Van den Bogaert SJ Memorial Scholarships for meritorious students of SC/ST category, Fr Michael

Albert Windey SJ Memorial Scholarship for meritorious students on the whole open to all, and Fr Louis Francken SJ Memorial Scholarship for overall performance of all categories of students.

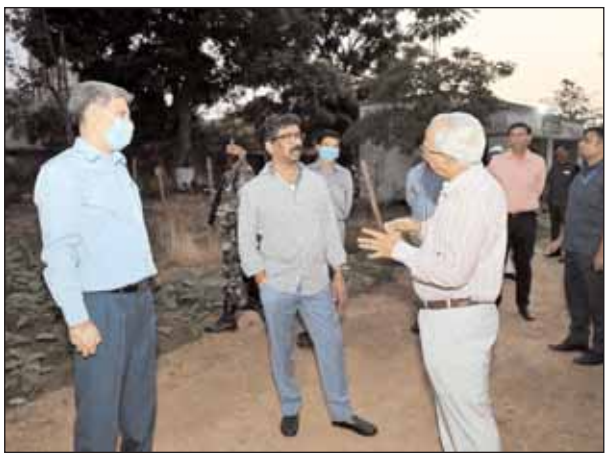
The ceremony will see the participation of students from across the country along with their parents and esteemed alumni as well. The ceremony will be telecasted on XISS's Official Youtube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/c/XavierInstituteofSocialServiceRanchi>

‘Important Centre for animals-birds’ vaccine production in Ranchi soon’

CM inspects construction of vaccination centre at Animal Health and Production Institute

PNS ■ RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today inspected the GMP/GLP level Vaccine Drug Production Laboratory, Kanke under the Animal Health and Production Institute. He inspected the production unit of the laboratory and the building being constructed under the quality control unit and gave several instructions to the concerned officials. The CM said that this is a very important scheme of the Animal Husbandry Department in the State. Vaccines for animals and birds will be manufactured here. The government is trying to start it soon. In this regard, the en-



Chief Minister Hemant Soren visiting the Biodiversity Park of Birsa Agricultural University at Kanke in Ranchi on Wednesday. PNS

tire plan will be reviewed very soon after a meeting of senior officials, so that the work of vaccine production can start from here.

The CM said that the Drug Production Laboratory was planned in 2014. There has been a delay in its launch. In such a situation,

according to today, the need to change it is felt. A detailed action plan will be prepared for this, so that now it can be started within the stipulated time. Any hindrance in this will be removed immediately.

The CM directed for some changes in the build-

ing of the Vaccine Production Laboratory. He said that provision of lifts and ramps should also be made here, so that the work of transportation of goods can be done smoothly. He said that there is a need to make it more and more useful. It is known that it is being constructed at a cost of about 28 crore 69 lakh 90 thousand rupees.

The officials of the Animal Health and Production Institute told the Chief Minister that the construction of the laboratory building was almost complete. Now, preparations are being made to install the equipment. They said that about one crore vaccines will be produced every year in this laboratory. Here 6 types of vaccines will be made for animals and birds. This includes Galghotu (HS), BQ, Anthrax, Swine Fever and Poultry Vaccine (Ranikhet).

The Chief Minister also

visited the Biodiversity Park of Birsa Agricultural University. The Chief Minister stressed on starting organic farming here and said that there should also be a system for supply of crops and vegetables produced from here in the country and abroad. Along with this, a plan should also be made to open a retail outlet here, so that the local people can take advantage of it.

Chief Secretary Sukhdeo Singh, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Rajiv Arun Ekka, Secretary, Building Construction Department Sunil Kumar, Secretary Agriculture Department Abu Bakr Siddiqui, Vice Chancellor of Birsa Agricultural University Onkar Singh, and Director of Animal Health Production Institute, Dr. Vipin Mahatha and many other officials were present on the occasion.

Three polling personnel die in road accident in Ranchi

PNS ■ RANCHI

In a tragic incident in the Burhmu area of Ranchi district, three people returning from the duty of Panchayat elections died in a road accident late on Tuesday night. One person was seriously injured in the accident.

The dead include Parmit Munda, Suraj Munda and Sawana Oraon. The name of the injured person is Bablu Munda, who is being treated at a nearby hospital in Burhmu.

The three deceased were residents of Manki of Khalari police station area. Duty of all these was in Silli on Tuesday in the Panchayat elections. The injured Bablu Munda said that this incident happened at 12 O'clock in the night. He said that the vehicle hit the tree at high speed due to uncontrolled movement. Due to the force of the collision, three died on the spot. The Burhmu police brought the bodies of all three to the police station.



Mangled remains of a crashed vehicle, at Burhmu in Ranchi on Wednesday. PNS

Today, all the three bodies will be handed over to the relatives after post-mortem.

Meanwhile, District Election Officer cum Deputy Commissioner Ranchi, Chhavi Ranjan has expressed deep condolences on the death of police vehicle driver Pramod Kumar Singh returning from election duty in a road accident.

The DC has directed the

concerned officer to take necessary information from the Circle Officer and SHO regarding the accident and provide assistance to the dependents as per rules.

It may be mentioned here that while returning from election duty on NH-33 near Basida of Bundu police station area, police vehicle driver Pramod Kumar Singh died after being hit by an unknown vehicle.

ED raids premise of Prem Prakash in money laundering case

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday detained Prem Prakash in connection with the money laundering case involving suspended mining secretary Pooja Singhal. In the afternoon the ED carried out raids at multiple locations in Ranchi, Patna, and Sasaram in Bihar and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, all related to Prem Prakash.

In Ranchi, his houses at Harmu and Argora Bypass were raided by the ED officials. A large number of CRPF personnel were deployed during the raid. But neither Prem Prakash nor any family member was present. In the presence of a magistrate, his flat at Vasundhara apartment at Argora Bypass was opened. In the meantime, the ED start-

ed looking for Prem Prakash. Sources said that the ED officials detained him from a place outside of Ranchi. He was first taken to the ED office where he was questioned at length. Later on, he was taken to his Harmu residence. Till the time the report was filed raids were going on. Sources said he was seen in Jamshedpur in the morning.

Prem Prakash enjoys good relations with many bureaucrats as well as politicians. He is accused of having parked unaccounted money of several politicians and bureaucrats in the shell companies. Notably, on Tuesday, the ED raided the premises of Vishal Choudhary and Nishit Keshri who are linked to several IAS officials. Prior to this, the ED had questioned former JMM treasurer Ravi Kejriwal who is accused of running shell

companies.

Prem Prakash is seen as a man who was active during the previous BJP government of Raghubar Das. His name surfaced during the interrogation of the accused and some suspects. Besides, documents and evidence collected during raids have hinted at his role in money laundering. He is a respondent in the PIL 4290/2021 filed by Shiv Shankar Sharma in the matter related to shell companies.

Meanwhile, suspended IAS officer Pooja Singhal was today produced before the special PMLA court as her remand period ended today. She was sent to judicial custody till June 8. The ED requested the court to allow it to interrogate Singhal in jail, to which the court gave its permission. Singhal will remain in jail like normal inmates and will be taken care of by prison doctors.



Suspended IAS officer Pooja Singhal comes out of a special ED court where she was produced in connection in a money laundering case, in Ranchi on Wednesday. Pix by Ratan Lal

Singhal sent to judicial remand at Birsa Munda jail

PNS ■ RANCHI

The special PMLA court of Prabhat Kumar Sharma in Ranchi on Wednesday sent IAS Pooja Singhal to the judicial remand till June 8. The court directed the jail authority to produce her before the court in the next hearing via video conferencing. The Enforcement Directorate arrested her on

May 11 for involvement in money laundering. She is accused of the MGNREGA scheme scam in Khunti during her tenure as DC of that district.

The ED requested her judicial remand as her police remand period was over on Wednesday. As per the rule the police remand can't be extended for more than 14 days. The ED secured her

police remand thrice on the ground that her interrogation was required to know the source of money and properties raised by her besides investment made in the construction of the Pulse Hospital. After her production, she was taken to the Birsa Munda Central Jail where she was lodged.

During the hearing, ED lawyer BMP Singh request-

ed the court to allow the ED to question her in judicial custody as required. The ED said that the investigation is at a crucial stage and new evidence is coming, hence, the ED may need to question her. The ED requested the court to pass an order to the jail superintendent to allow the ED to question her inside the jail. The court on this directed the ED to file a

separate petition to seek permission along with the reasons. The court would pass the order in the light of the reasons explained.

Before being taken to the court, she was examined by a doctor of Sadar hospital RK Jaisawal who checked her blood pressure, pulse, oxygen level, and others. The doctor declared her fit to be taken to the court.

BJP ditched people of India in last 8 years: Congress

PNS ■ RANCHI

On May 28, after completing the journey of eight years, the BJP government at the Center will step into the ninth year, its achievements will also be lauded, but with the responsibility of being a vigilant political Opposition, the Congress party considers it necessary to show the mirror to BJP government at the Center, said JPCC president Rajesh Thakur in a press conference here on Wednesday.

“Today, after eight years, the whole country is forced to live in an atmosphere of hatred and fear. The darkness of



JPCC President Rajesh Thakur along with others during a press conference at Congress Bhawan in Ranchi on Wednesday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

bigotry-conservatism is being spread. Minorities, especially Muslims, Christians and Sikhs have been targeted. By sowing the seeds of division in the society and making the basis of this politics of appeasement, BJP seeks electoral victory,” he added.

Thakur further said that

there are no more issues of development, roads, schools, education, hospitals, industries, employment, agriculture, growth in the elections. BJP sponsored issues are – cremation ground, bulldozers, loudspeakers, heat removal, temple Vs mosque Vs church Vs gurudwara, changing the

names of streets, division of society in the name of food and clothing etc. Unfortunately, a large section of the media is also being used by the BJP in serving this cult of hatred.

The JPCC chief said that the biggest achievement of the BJP government at the Center in the last eight years has been that the Central agencies are being misused more and more to topple the democratically elected non-BJP governments in the states.

“Due to the increasing economic inequality in the country, the wealth of the 142 richest people increased by Rs 30 lakh crores in a year, but the

income of 84 per cent of the households of the country decreased. Far from getting 15 lakhs in every account, the savings money was also looted. Due to the declining economy, the value of our rupee fell to 77.56 against 1 US dollar, which is the biggest fall in 75 years. On the other hand, the debt of the country increased from Rs 55 lakh crore in the year 2014 to Rs 135 lakh crore in the year 2022. The Modi government takes a loan of Rs 4,000 crore every day. There is a debt of Rs 1,00,000 on every citizen of the country,” said Thakur.

Congress again pitches demand for Rajya Sabha seat

PNS ■ RANCHI

Congress party today once again pitched a claim for Rajya Sabha seat in State. The State Congress leadership for the past couple of weeks have been raising the issue of Rajya Sabha seat with the theory that in the last Rajya Sabha poll, Congress party supported JMM based on which JMM patriarch and party president Shibu Soren got elected to the upper house. The Congress leadership claims that this time it is JMM's turn to make sacrifices so that Congress candidate gets elected to Rajya Sabha.

The State Congress in this connection on Wednesday held a press conference demanding Rajya Sabha seat

for the party. State Congress president Rajesh Thakur

appealing to JMM leadership said that JMM should show bigger heart and sacrifice the Rajya Sabha seat for Congress. He said coordination among alliance partners is essential.

He said, in the Rajya Sabha elections, JMM supreme Shibu Soren was supported by all the parties of the alliance. Everyone was unanimous in his name, this time the Congress party wants a seat in the Rajya Sabha. He said, “Senior leaders of our state have met Chief Minister Hemant Soren and apprised

him about the demand. The final decision on Rajya

Sabha elections will be taken in Delhi. The leaders of JMM and Congress will hold a meeting in Delhi very soon regarding this. Congress National President Sonia Gandhi will lead the meeting.”

Sources said that

Chief Minister Soren in this connection is likely to meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi in coming days. For Rajya Sabha seat, names of senior Congressman and former Union Minister Subodhkant Sahay, former MP Furqan Ansari and former Congress state in-charge Ajoy Kumar are do-

ing the rounds, however, the final decision will be taken in Delhi. Name of former union minister Kapil Sibal as consensus candidate of both JMM and Congress was also doing the rounds, however, today Sibal was declared Samajwadi party candidate for RS.

Congress heavyweight Kapil Sibal, who resigned from the party on May 16 filed nomination as an Independent candidate with backing from the Samajwadi Party for Rajya Sabha poll.

Kapil Sibal was a member of the G-23 group of Congress leaders who demanded organisational reforms in the party. Sibal had been open about his grievances and sought changes.

Notification for elections to two Rajya Sabha seats in Jharkhand was issued on Tuesday. The last date for filing nomination forms is May 31. The nomination papers of the candidates will be scrutinized on June 1 while candidates can withdraw their names by June 3. Voting for the Rajya Sabha elections will be held on June 10.

The notification for RS poll has commenced but till date no parties have declared the name of their candidates. Two Rajya Sabha seats in Jharkhand will be vacant as tenure of two Rajya Sabha members, Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Mahesh Poddar from Jharkhand is expiring on July 7, 2022.

Mandar bypoll on June 23

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Election Commission of India today announced bye elections for 3 Lok Sabha seats and seven Assembly seats in six States to be held on June 23. This also includes the bypoll in the Mandar Assembly segment of Jharkhand.

As per the Election Com-

mission notice, notification for the polls will be issued on May 30 and by June 6 candidates can file their nomination papers. The scrutiny of nomination papers will conclude on June 7, while the last date for withdrawal of nomination will be June 9. Counting of votes and results will be declared on June 26.

Notably, the Mandar bye election was necessitated after former MLA Bandhu Tirkey was convicted in a disproportionate assets case by a special CBI court a few weeks ago.

A Special CBI court sentenced Tirkey with three years of rigorous imprisonment in the last week of March 2022.



Members of JCI Ranchi alongwith kids during the concluding day of their three-day summer camp in Ranchi on Wednesday. PNS

2K registered unrecognised parties to face EC action

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to act against over 2,000 Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) whose numbers saw a 300 per cent increase in the last two decades with most coming into existence just before Lok Sabha or Assembly elections. Saying it is placing the facts in public domain so that the citizens know the affairs of the political parties, the EC said in 2019, of the 2354 RUPPs only 623 contested even as 87 RUPPs were found to be non-existent on ground. Many RUPPS do not comply to the statutory requirements. Alarmingly, the RUPPs combined claimed Income Tax exemption in the range of 100 crore to 608 crore.

This is the first time that the poll body has decided to act against RUPPs for flouting rules, including failure to furnish a contribution report and communicate any change in its name, head office, office bearers and address to the poll panel. The EC said that it has been reported that income tax

exemptions have been taken to the tune of Rs 445 crores in 2018-19 by 199 RUPPs and Rs 608 crores in 2019-20 by 219 RUPPs. Of these, 66 RUPPS have claimed income tax exemption without submitting contribution reports in Form 24A as mandated under section 29C of the Act.

In view of the fact that there are 2174 RUPPs, which have not submitted contribution reports, the list shall be sent to the Department of Revenue for taking all consequential action as per the RP Act 1951 read with the relevant provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961 and other statutory/regulatory regime including not granting exemption / withdrawing exemption, if already granted/ examining liability of wrongly claiming exemption as the case may be.

The poll body has directed chief electoral officials of state and union territories to put this order on their websites for compliance and for affording an opportunity to anyone aggrieved by above action. "Action to be initiated against those receiving donations without due statutory compliances.

Action initiated against three registered unrecognized political parties (RUPPs) reported to be involved in Serious financial impropriety," the EC said in a statement.

There are 87 RUPPs, whose address of communication, was statutorily required as registration requirement under section 29A(4). Any change in address was required to be communicated to the EC under section 29A(9), which they have not complied. "These RUPPs have been found to be non-existent after a physical verification carried out by the respective Chief Electoral Officers. The names of such non-existent RUPPs shall be deleted from the list and benefits under the Symbols Order (1968) withdrawn" the EC said.

As per data shared by the poll body, of the 2354 RUPPs over 92 per cent have not filed their Contribution Report in 2019 to the poll body.

The data showed that nearly 2056 RUPPs, which have failed to furnish Annual Audit Account of the (5) concerned financial year, are indicative of gaps in vital financial information including bank

account, PAN, authorized signatories pertaining to those RUPPs, statement of assets and liabilities, contributions received, details of donors and expenditure.

"Any RUPP aggrieved by any action may approach concerned CEO with full facts within 30 days of the issue of this direction with all evidences inter-alia including proof of existence, other legal and regulatory compliances made till now such as submission of year wise annual audited accounts, contribution report, expenditure report, if any, updation of office bearers including authorized signatories for financial transactions including bank account) and operations under the Symbols Order 1968," the EC said.

The poll body further said that 100 RUPPs, which have failed to furnish Election Expenditure Statements after the contest of election(s), have violated the directions of Election Commission. They may approach concerned CEO with full facts within 30 days of the issue of this direction for remedial action, if any, to avoid any consequential action.

MP Karti booked in visa-for-bribery scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a money laundering case against Congress MP Karti Chidambaram and others in connection with the visas-for-bribery scam entailing irregular issuance of visas to 263 Chinese nationals in 2011 when his father P Chidambaram was the Union Home Minister.

The ED has filed the case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) taking cognisance of a recent CBI case related to the scam.

The case pertains to allegations of Rs 50 lakh being paid as kickbacks to Karti and his close associate and Chartered Accountant S Bhaskararaman by a top executive of Vedanta Group company Talwandi Sabo Power Ltd. (TSPL), which was setting up a power plant in Punjab, according to the CBI FIR.The CBI had raided the premises of the Chidambaram family and arrested Bhaskararaman last week, even as Karti is likely to depose before it on Thursday.

This is the third money laundering case against Karti with the INX Media and



Aircel-Maxis cases being probed by the agency for the last few years.

The ED will probe the possible "proceeds of crime" that could have been generated due to the alleged illegal activity in the visa case and once prima facie evidence is gathered, it can attach those assets, they said.The accused persons in the case will be questioned as part of the investigation, they further said.

Karti, 50, has denied all the allegations. In a statement posted on his Twitter handle on Tuesday, he said "if this is not harassment, not a witch hunt, then what is." Meanwhile, Karti has been summoned by the CBI for questioning on Thursday in connection with visa scam. He has been asked to join the probe within 16 hours after he returned from Britain.

Honcho held under PMLA for causing ₹155 cr loss to bank



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Ashok Kumar Mittal, Director of Karnal-based Mahesh Timber Pvt. Ltd. in a bank fraud case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) for diverting funds to Singapore through fake imports, causing a loss of Rs 155 crore to the bank.

The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the CBI here for criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery and criminal misconduct of a public servant against the accused firm, its directors and others.

"Ashok Kumar Mittal is the key director of Mahesh

Timber Pvt. Ltd. who allegedly connived with the bank officials and fraudulently got Letter of Credit limits enhanced from Rs 21 crore to Rs 195 crore, which were diverted to his Singapore based entities on account of fake imports. The accused firm and its directors caused overall wrongful loss to the bank to the tune of Rs 155 crore and wrongful gains to themselves in this manner," the ED said in a statement.

Mittal was non-cooperative during the investigation and withheld relevant information apart from misleading the investigation. After the arrest, he was produced before the Special Court, Panchkula, Haryana on Tuesday and has been remanded to ED custody for four days, the agency added.

Indian-Bangladeshi Navy bilateral exercise underway

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen ties in the maritime domain, the four-day third edition of Indian Navy-Bangladesh Navy bilateral exercise "Bongosagar" is now on in Bangladesh.

Giving details of the exercise, navy officials said here on Wednesday, the drill commenced at Port Mongla, Bangladesh on Tuesday. The harbour phase of exercise is scheduled for two days followed by a sea phase in the northern Bay of Bengal from Thursday.

Exercise 'Bongosagar' is aimed at developing a high degree of interoperability and joint operational skills through the conduct of a wide spectrum of maritime exercises and operations between the two navies.

Indian naval ships Kora, an indigenously built guided missile corvette, and Sumedha, an indigenously built offshore patrol vessel, are participating in the Exercise. The Bangladesh Navy is being represented by Abu Ubaidah and Ali Haider, both guided missile frigates.

The harbour phase of the exercise includes professional and social interac-



tions, and friendly sporting fixtures, in addition to the tactical level planning discussions on the conduct of the exercises at sea.

The sea phase of the exercise would

facilitate ships from both the navies to participate in intensive surface warfare drills, weapon firing drills, seamanship evolutions and coordinated air operations in a tactical scenario.

CJI-chaired panel deliberated upon issue of tenure of 23 NCLT members: Centre to SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that a committee chaired by the Chief Justice of India had held a meeting on April 20 in which the question regarding the tenure of 23 members of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has been deliberated upon. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told a vacation bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Bela M Trivedi that the committee, which also comprises apex court judge Justice Surya Kant and Secretary of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, is seized of the issue and the next meeting is likely to be held within a week or 10 days.

Mehta said the committee had considered all aspects of the matter, including verifica-



tion reports of character and antecedents, which are considered to be one of the important factors for the assessment of the suitability of the 23 members for extension of their term of office keeping in view the sen-



stive nature of their duties.

"Now, I am given to understand that the next meeting is scheduled in a week or 10 days," he said while requesting the top court to hear the matter on June 15. Mehta said the next retirement of one of the NCLT members is on June 20. The bench was hearing a plea that has raised issues about the tenure of the members of the tribunal.

The apex court noted the submissions of senior advocate

Maninder Singh, who appeared for the petitioner and submitted that term of all the members of the 2019 batch would come to an end on July 3, 2022, though the term should legitimately be for a period of five years.

"List the proceedings on June 15, 2022," the bench said, adding, "We request the Solicitor General to appraise the court of the developments which have taken place in the meantime."

Delhi HC seeks Centre stand on plea to regulate online gaming

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the stand of the Central Government on a petition to regulate online gaming and stop the games that are not games of skills but chance.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Sachin Datta issued notice on the petition by lawyer Atul Batra who said in his plea that his concern was that online games of chance are promoted as games of skill and that online gambling is as bad as any substance addiction. Noting that betting and gambling is a State subject, the court asked the

petitioner to implead the Delhi Government as a party to the petition. Central government counsel said that various ministries are deliberating on the issue, which concerns a State subject, and the Centre, therefore, cannot legislate upon it without the consent of the State. In the petition, the petitioner stated that if online gambling and betting are not regulated, it is likely to cause immense damage to the society at large as youngsters with impressionable minds can fall prey to such games, which will have an adverse effect on their personal and professional life.

The petitioner sought appropriate action against an entity offering an online crick-



et game involving money on its website and prima facie promoting a game of chance.

The petitioner said that under the Information and Technology Act, the Centre is

empowered to issue appropriate instructions to ban the operation of illegal gambling online websites. The matter would be heard next on November 16.

Captain Abhilasha becomes first woman officer to join Aviation Corps as combat pilot

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Captain Abhilasha Barak has become the first woman officer to join the Army Aviation Corps as a Combat Aviator or pilot. Fifteen women officers had expressed their desire to join Army Aviation Corps but only two officers were selected after Pilot Aptitude Battery Test and Medical examination.

Giving details of the momentous achievement, the Additional Directorate General of Public Information, defence ministry on Wednesday described it as a "Golden Letter Day" in the history of the Indian Army Aviation Corps.

It flies Chetak, Cheetah and Dhruv helicopters and forms the life line for troops guarding the Siachen glacier and other inaccessible forward posts along the Indian borders. The helicopters are used for reconnaissance besides medical evacuation and disaster relief.

Upon successful completion of her training, Captain Barak was awarded the Coveted Wings along with 36 Army pilots, the directorate post said. The post, shared on Instagram, also features a set of pictures from the ceremony.

It said "Golden letter day in the history of Indian Army aviation. Captain Abhilasha Barak becomes the first woman officer to join Army Aviation Corps as Combat Aviator after successful completion of training."

"Captain Abhilasha Barak has been awarded the Coveted Wings along with 36 Army Pilots by Director General and Colonel Commandant Army Aviation. Young Aviators are now ready to spread their wings in Combat Aviation Squadrons," it read. The Army Aviation wing of the Royal Air Force(RAF) in India came into being took place in 1942. In August 1947 the first Indian Air Observation Post-flight was raised.

The present day Army Aviation Corps was established on November 1, 1986. It was "immediately inducted into Operation Pawan," which has been described as a "crucial test" for the Corps that had been newly formed. It was the first major participation by the Corps in the Indian Peace Keeping Force(IPKF)operations in Sri Lanka.

At present, women are given the responsibility of air traffic control and ground duty in the Aviation Department. Now Barak will take over the responsibility of the pilot. The Corps candidates are trained at the Combat Army Aviation Training School, Nashik. In June, last year, for the first time, two women officers were selected for helicopter pilot training.

The IAF already has started inducting women officers as fighter pilots and in 2018, Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi became the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft.

Some antivirals may shorten monkeypox symptoms: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Some antiviral medications might have the potential to shorten symptoms of monkeypox and reduce the amount of time a patient is contagious, according to a study of seven patients diagnosed with the rare viral disease in the UK between 2018 and 2021.

The cases analysed in the study, published on Tuesday in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal, represent the first instances of in-hospital transmission and household transmission outside of Africa.

The research also reported the patient response to the first off-label use of two different antiviral medications -- brincidofovir and tecovirimat

-- to treat the disease.

The study found little evidence that brincidofovir was of clinical benefit but concluded that further research into the potential of tecovirimat would be warranted.

The researchers also report detection of monkeypox virus in blood and throat swabs.

As optimum infection control and treatment strategies for this disease are not yet established, data from the study could help inform global efforts to further understand the clinical features of the disease as well as transmission dynamics, they said.

"As public health officials are trying to understand what is causing the May 2022 monkeypox outbreaks in Europe and North America -- which



have affected several patients who reported neither travel nor an identified link to a previously known case -- our study offers some of the first insights into the use of antivirals for the treatment of monkeypox in humans," said Hugh Adler of the Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, UK.

"Although this latest outbreak has affected more

patients than we had previously encountered in the UK, historically monkeypox has not transmitted very efficiently between people, and overall the risk to public health is low," Adler, lead author on the paper, said. With international travel returning to pre-pandemic levels, public health officials and healthcare workers around the world must remain vigilant to the possibility of new cases

of monkeypox, said Nick Price of Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, senior author on the paper.

Of the seven UK monkeypox cases analysed in the study, four were imported from West Africa with three further cases occurring due to human-to-human transmission within the case clusters.

Monkeypox, a close relative of the smallpox virus, is a rare disease classified as a High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) by the UK Health Security Agency.

There are currently no licensed treatments for monkeypox and there is limited data on the duration of its contagiousness, with the incubation period ranging from five to 21 days.

Financial support to rare disease patients increased from ₹20L to ₹50L under RAN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Following a demand from activists, the Union Health Ministry has increased the financial support from 20 lakh to 50 lakh for treatment of patients suffering from rare diseases under the umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi (RAN).

"Beneficiaries for such financial assistance would not be limited to BPL families, but extended to about 40% of the population, who are eligible as per norms of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, their treatment in Government tertiary hospitals only," as per the official state-

ment of the Health Ministry.

The RAN was set up to provide financial assistance to patients, living below the poverty line and who are suffering from major life threatening diseases, to receive medical treatment at any of the super speciality Hospitals/Institutes or other Government hospitals.

The financial assistance to such patients is released in the form of a 'one-time grant', which is released to the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital in which the treatment has been received.

The Government had in May last year approved the National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021, aiming to

lower the high cost of treating rare diseases in India..

Activists like Saurabh Singh, co-founder-director of Rare Disease India Foundation (RDIF), have been pointing out the need for higher funds for the sector.

He had been urging the Government to address the gaps in providing life-saving treatment to those requiring it. Singh has suggested that the annual budgetary allocation of Rs. 25 crore under the RAN for 2021-22 that has not been spent could be immediately used to treat patients with diseases under Group (3) such as Gaucher, Pompe, Fabry disease and MPS I and MPS II.

Gyanvapi row: Fresh plea on ban on Muslims’ entry to be heard

PNS ■ VARANASI

A fresh petition in the Shringar Gauri-Gyanvapi Mosque complex lawsuit seeking a ban on the entry of Muslims in Gyanvapi complex was on Wednesday transferred to the court of civil judge (senior division/fast track) from the court of civil judge, senior division.

The fast track court will hear the petition on May 30.

International general secretary of Vishwa Vedic Sanatan Sangh, Kiran Singh, on Tuesday last had filed a fresh petition in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar in the Shringar Gauri temple-Gyanvapi complex matter seeking a ban on the entry of Muslims in the Gyanvapi complex in which the Gyanvapi mosque is located.

The petitioner also demanded that the entire Gyanvapi complex be handed over to Hindus and sought permission for worship of 'Shivling' claimed by the Hindu side to have been found in the wuzu khana of the Gyanvapi



complex. The civil judge (senior division) had accepted the petition.

District Judge Dr Ajay Kumar Vishvesha on Wednesday transferred the petition to the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division/ Fast Track) Mahendra Kumar Pandey. The fact track court posted the hearing for May 30.

It is learnt that the court of the district judge will hear the maintainability of the Shringar Gauri-Gyanvapi mosque com-

plex lawsuit on Thursday. The five women filed a petition in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar seeking permission to worship in the Shringar Gauri temple and preservation of the idols located in the Gyanvapi mosque complex.

The defendants, including the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee, which looks after the management of the Gyanvapi mosque, had moved an application in the Supreme

Court under Order 7, Rule 11 of the Civil Procedure Code (CrPC), raising question on the maintainability of the suit. The apex court on May 20 had transferred the petition to the court of the district judge from the court of the civil judge, senior division and directed him to hear the application moved by the defendants on priority basis. The court of district judge on Tuesday posted the hearing on the maintainability of the suit first on May 26.

TN BJP leader hacked to death in Chennai in broad daylight

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to make an official visit to Chennai to dedicate to the nation Rs 31,400 crore worth infrastructure works built as centrally-sponsored projects, a popular BJP leader in the State was murdered in front of hundreds of onlookers at Chintadripet, a city suburb on Tuesday evening at 7.50.

Two motorcycle borne gangs hacked to death K Balachander (30), Chennai Central District Secretary of the BJP's Scheduled Caste Wing in front of a crowd who ran for their lives after watching the gruesome murder.

Balachander who was accompanied by a security guard was on his way to a tea shop while the gangs of unidentified persons struck him, killing him on the spot and withdrew from the scene as fast as they made their appearance.

Hours before the incident, C Sylendra Kumar, director general of police (law and order), Tamil Nadu Police had told reporters at Avadi, another



BJP leader K Balachander

city suburb that law and order was under control in the State and there were no reports of any unpleasant happenings. "Tamil Nadu is a very peaceful State. No instance of caste or communal clash in Tamil Nadu or firing or deaths due to spurious liquor has been reported in the State," Babu had told reporters at Avadi Police Commissionerate.

K Annamalai, BJP State chief took to the social media within hours and said that nobody was safe in Tamil Nadu. He asked the Police to

arrest all the accused in the murder of the party functionary. Karu Nagarajan, senior BJP leader who staged a sit-in in front of the Government hospital where Balachander's body was taken for autopsy asked reporters whether Chennai was the political capital of Tamil Nadu or murder capital.

In an embarrassment to the M K Stalin-led Government, a popular TV channel friendly to the DMK, aired a news on Wednesday stating that Chennai has seen 18 murders in the last 20 days. The report contained the details of the murders with date, time and information about the victims.

But Shankar Jiwai, Commissioner, Chennai City Police, described the news as wrong. "There has been a 25 per cent reduction in the number of murders," said Jiwai while speaking to reporters.

No arrests have been made in the Balachander murder case at the time of going to Press though hectic combing operations are underway across the city. This is Prime Minister's first visit to Tamil Nadu after the change of Government in the State in last May.

Tripura CM calls on President, Shah, Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The new Chief Minister of the poll-bound Tripura Dr Manik Saha, who had this month replaced Biplab Kumar Deb, called on President Ram Nath Kovind, Home Minister Amit Shah and defence Minister Rajnath Singh here on Wednesday.

The change in the north East state was affected by the BJP central leadership as elections to the Tripura assembly are about Year away and the change is aimed at reducing the anti-incumbency of four year-rule of Deb as CM.

It was Saha's first visit to the national Capital since taking charge as the chief minister of the northeastern state on May 15.

Saha said he met the home minister and sought his continuous guidance for all-round development of Tripura.

"Delighted to meet the Union Home Minister Hon'ble Shri @AmitShah ji. Requested him for his continuous guidance so that I can devote myself to the all round development of Tripura as Chief Minister of the state," Saha tweeted.

SSC RECRUITMENT SCAM MAY GO BEYOND ₹15K CR

CBI grills senior Bengal Minister for 8 hrs as more scams surface

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation probing the School Service Commission recruitment scam following a Calcutta High Court order on Wednesday subjected Bengal Industries Minister and former Trinamool Congress secretary general Partho Chatterjee to intensive 8-hour grilling.

Chatterjee, was the State Education Minister when the large-scale recruitment scam that saw junior Education Minister Paresh Adhikari's daughter Ankita landing a teacher's job by-passing empanelled candidates took place. The said teacher has since been dismissed from service following a court order.

According to sources Chatterjee was asked a whole range of "uncomfortable" questions that he either circumvented or replied in a round-about manner. Chatterjee had

created a five-member screening panel comprising among others his own personal assistant and officer on special duty in order to advice the SSC which is presumed to be an autonomous body responsible for appointments in school level.

A judicial committee appointed by the High Court by Justice RJ Bag had indicted not only the minister but the aforementioned panel and even recommended criminal proceedings against the offenders saying the formation of the screening committee was an illegal act.

When asked as to why he went out of the way to appoint the screening panel or under whose supervision it worked, Chatterjee reportedly said that he had no control over the committee. When asked as to who controlled the committee or for that matter if any outsider was controlling it he

allegedly feigned ignorance, sources said adding he also failed to answer why he did not take action when reports of irregularities were coming in.

Sources in the CBI which has been grilling five senior State government officials who were in the screening committee and through whom the scam was operated said "Chatterjee's statements and the statements given by the five officials were not matching." They even said that the statements given by Chatterjee and his former Deputy Paresh Adhikari too contradicted at places."

The senior minister who has been asked to furnish his income details was on Wednesday asked to reduce his statements in writing for perusal.

While CBI sources said that the Minister could be summoned again they claimed that information regarding an

alleged newly constructed international school in West Midnapore and multiple apartments and hotels were also being collected.

While prima facie at least one thousand people were illegally given jobs by passing the empanelled candidates the High Court has directed the CBI to find out the total number of illegal appointments — which the petitioners' lawyers Firdous Shamim said could run into thousands — and money trail if any behind such recruitments.

Saying that it was a "multi-layered scam equivalent to Vyapam scam or chit fund" Shamim said illegal appointments took place in Group D, Group C, Primary, upper Primary, secondary and higher secondary level involving thousands of teachers.

"The rate for illegal appointments hovered anywhere between Rs 5 lakh for

the Group D level to Rs 20 or Rs 25 lakh for Higher Secondary level," he said adding "roughly it could involve a total scam of Rs 15,000 crores — and this is by the lower side."

Already about 600 people have been identified and lost their jobs and many more hundreds or even thousands could face a similar fate, sources said.

Meanwhile, there were more recruitment scams reported in other departments too, sources said. Protests were staged in front of the Calcutta University by aspiring professors who complained of a massive scam in the recruitment process of college teachers by the College Service Commission. CSC chairman Dipak Sarkar however denied such allegations. Similar scams were reported in the Health Department with the aspiring nurses staging protests outside the health ministry for the past two days.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress is likely to get 11 Rajya Sabha seats in the upcoming election cycle with some of its top leaders, including P Chidambaram and Jairam Ramesh, eyeing another term. This will also help the Congress strengthen its party position in the Upper House of Parliament from the current 29 to 33 members.

Some other top Congress leaders, including Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Mukul Wasnik, Randeep Surjewala, Ajay Maken and Rajeev Shukla, are waiting in the wings to get a Rajya Sabha nomination. Of the 55 vacancies arising in the Rajya Sabha in the next two months, seven Congress members — Chidambaram (Maharashtra), Ramesh (Karnataka), Ambika Soni (Punjab), Vivek Tankha (Madhya Pradesh), Pradeep Tamta (Uttarakhand), Kapil Sibal

(Uttar Pradesh) and Chhaya Verma (Chhattisgarh) — will be completing their terms.

The Congress will be gaining three to four seats in the Upper House if it manages to get all the three seats that are falling vacant in Rajasthan. While the party will get two seats in Chhattisgarh, where it is in power, it will get one seat each in Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Maharashtra, where it shares power with other like-minded parties.

The Congress is also likely to get one seat each in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka on the strength of its MLAs in these states. Sources said while Chidambaram and Ramesh are hopeful that the party leadership would give a nod to them for another term, there are a host of other leaders who are waiting for a Rajya Sabha berth for some time now.

Chidambaram is eyeing

the lone Rajya Sabha seat from Tamil Nadu. He has already met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK leader M K Stalin. However, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's team is pushing for a young face in Praveen Chakravarty, the head of the party's Data Analytics department, for the seat.

Three-time Rajya Sabha member Ramesh will get a fourth term if his name is cleared for the lone seat in Karnataka, from where Surjewala is also a contender.

In Haryana, Surjewala, Kumari Selja and Kuldeep Bishnoi are vying for the lone seat, but former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda is pushing for the nomination of Anand Sharma. The former Union minister is a prominent member of the "Group of 23" and is considered close to Hooda, who is also a member of the grouping.

After Nitish, Pawar raises ‘caste-based’ census issue

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Making a strong case for the reservations for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday rooded strongly for the conduct of a 'caste-based' census by the Centre to determine the quantum of reservations for OBCs in the country.

Addressing a state convention on reservations organised by the NCP's OBC Cell at the YB Chavan Centre here, Pawar slammed the Narendra Modi-government at the Centre and the RSS that supports the government, for opposing the caste-based census in the country.

"The OBCs are not asking for anything free. They are merely demanding reservations as their right. The reservations cannot happen unless there is a caste-based national census. The SC and ST communities benefited by way of reservations made in the Constitution, We should make

similar reservations to the OBCs," the NCP chief said.

"For the purpose of providing reservations to the OBCs, we need to ascertain their exact population. Only way to ascertain the OBC population in the country is to conduct a caste-based national census. Once the caste-based national census is done, we will know what exactly is the OBC population in the country. The reservations for them can be decided on the basis of their population," Pawar said.

At the convention attended by the OBC leaders from across the state, north Maharashtra representative Umesh Nemade moved a resolution demanding a "caste-based" national census so as to pave the way for reservations for the OBCs living across the country.

Coming down heavily on the Modi government at the Centre for resisting a "caste-based" census in the country, Pawar said: "Yesterday, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar

once again raised the issue of caste-based census. But till the Modi-led BJP is in power at the Centre, I don't think caste-based census will happen in the country. This is because the mindset of the BJP and its ideological allies is different".

Pawar said that RSS joint secretary Bhyajji Joshi had gone on record that his organisation was totally opposed to the caste-based census on the assumption that it would vitiate the atmosphere in the country. "I would like to know from him: how will the atmosphere get vitiated? When there is an imbalance in the society, we need to do something. The NCP is prepared to do whatever it takes to create awareness in the society," he said.

When he targeted the BJP and RSS for their resistance to "caste-based" census, the NCP chief was apparently alluding to an affidavit filed by the Centre before the Supreme Court on September 23 last year that a "caste-census", stating that a caste

census in 2021 "would not be feasible" and that it had taken a "conscious policy decision" to not to seek information regarding any other caste, except SCs and STs.

The Centre had filed an affidavit to this effect in the apex court in response to the Maharashtra government's plea to count Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the upcoming census.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and former Bihar CM Jitan Ram Manjhi too have for some time been mounting pressure on the Modi government to get a clear count on OBCs. Even Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale is in favour of the caste-based census.

Pawar said that the ruling MVA in Maharashtra — comprising Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress — would go in for the upcoming civic polls only after the resolution of the OBCs reservations issue.



NCC cadets perform a routine drill during their annual Army Training Camp, at Nagrota on the outskirts of Jammu.

Photo | PTI

NAS report on school education system in country released

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Education Ministry on Wednesday released the National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 report which assesses the health of school education system in the country by conducting comprehensive evaluation survey of children's learning competencies at classes III, V, VIII and X with a cycle period of three years. It reflects the overall assessment of school education system. The last NAS was held in 2017.

The NAS 2021 was held on 12.11.2021 at all India level and covered Government Schools (Central Government and State Government); Government Aided Schools; and Private Unaided Schools. Subjects covered are Language, Mathematics & EVS for class 3 & 5; Language,

Mathematics, Science & Social Science for class 8 and Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Science and English for class 10.

According to the Department of School Education and Literacy, about 34 lakh students of 1.18 lakh schools in 720 districts from both rural and urban areas have participated in NAS 2021. The National Report Card has been released and placed in the public domain on nas.gov.in. It will enable analysis of results and remedial action at the appropriate levels. The objective of NAS 2021 is to evaluate children's progress and learning competencies as an indicator of the efficiency of the education system, so as to take appropriate steps for remedial actions at different levels. It will help to unravel the gaps in learning and will support state/UT governments

in developing long term, mid-term and short-term interventions to improve learning levels and orient on differential planning based on NAS 2021 data.

The report is based on the performance in all subjects through disaggregation by gender (female, male), Area (Rural and Urban), Management of schools (Government, Government aided and Private unaided) and Social Groups (Schedule Caste (SC), Schedule Tribe (ST), Other Backward Communities (OBC) and General. This nation-wide survey was administered by the CBSE in one single day at the same time. The survey was managed through the technology platform designed and developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).

UP Finance Minister to present budget today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna will present the first budget of the second term of the Yogi Adityanath-led Bharatiya Janata Party Government on Thursday.

The budget for the next fiscal 2022-23 is expected to be the biggest ever and is likely to be over Rs 6 lakh crore. The size of the 2021-22 budgets was Rs 5, 50 Lakh crore.

Official sources said the budget would be paperless and inclusive and would cater to the aspiration of all sections of society.

The Uttar Pradesh government had on December 16, 2021 presented an interim budget for 2022-23 in the state

legislature, proposing an expenditure of Rs 5,45,370.69 crore and estimated receipts of Rs 5,44,836.56 crore. This left a deficit of Rs 534.13 crore.

The budget is likely to accommodate the promises made by the BJP in its election manifesto ahead of the 2022 UP assembly elections. The budget is likely to be focused on the agriculture sector. The BJP had promised free power to farmers in its election manifesto. Free power to farmers is likely to entail additional expenditure of Rs 1,800 crore on the state's finances.

The government is also likely to announce the creation of a stabilisation fund for ensuring remunerative prices for the crops of tomato, onion and potato.

BJP starts week-long campaign to strengthen party for 2024 elections

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday started a week-long campaign to strengthen the organisation and boost outreach activities in around 74,000 electoral booths across the country where it is relatively weak. The move is keeping the next Lok Sabha elections in mind. BJP president J P Nadda addressed a 'Booth Empowerment Campaign' event at the party headquarters here, the party said in a tweet. The meeting was attended by several Union ministers and leaders from across the country. The campaign will continue till May 31.

The BJP has formed a committee chaired by party vice president Bajjayant Panda

and including vice president Dilip Ghosh, general secretary CT Ravi, and the party's Scheduled Caste (SC) Morcha head Lal Singh Arya as its members.

The party has identified around 74,000 booths across the country that are to be strengthened under the campaign. All party MPs have been asked to strengthen 100 weak booths in their respective constituencies and a 30-member team will be formed for the purpose, party sources said.

Similarly, party MLAs have been given the task of strengthening 10 weaker booths in their constituencies, sources said adding the BJP's Rajya Sabha MPs have been given the responsibility of strengthen-

ing polling booths in those Lok Sabha constituencies where the party lost.

The weaker booths have been identified on the basis of the results of the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections and state assembly polls, they said adding these booths have been divided into various categories on the basis of demography, organisational strength and other aspects.

A similar exercise was initiated by the BJP in 2016 and the party had identified around 115 constituencies in six states — Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala — and the Northeast. The party had never been able to win these constituencies till that time.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Cost of ‘service’

The Govt is set to discuss the contentious issue of applying ‘service charge’ to restaurant bills

Tipping is not just about slipping some money to a waiter. Ideological battles were fought over it in the past. Today, the Governments square off with restaurateurs over it, pitting the customer’s right of choice against the waiter’s fruits of labour. On June 2, the Department of Consumer Affairs and the National Restaurants Association of India will meet to thrash out a contentious issue: Are eateries collecting service charge — tipping in legalese — by default even though it is voluntary. The question is, do restaurants ‘force’ them to pay the service charge? At least that is the allegation against the eateries. The other is that the service charge is fixed arbitrarily. Eateries are also accused of misleading customers about the legality of the service charge. The service charge is a transaction between the customer and the waiting or serving employees. It involves the staff offering the service of serving the customers and the latter, if happy, tipping the staff. When the tip is part of the bill in the form of a charge, it is called a service charge. Restaurants are not involved in this transaction at all, except by facilitating the voluntary collection of the service charge from customers instead of individual tipping. Why then is the Government inviting only the restaurants’ bodies for the talks and not the employees’ unions? Many customers are truly ignorant about service charge; many are still confused between service tax and service charge.



Many cannot be sure that the restaurant has calculated the service charge before charging GST and other taxes. The restaurants argue they have done their duty by mentioning the service charge on the menu card and the bill. For that matter, the Government is still not clear whether the service charge is taxable. The logic of the Goods and Services Tax is that all services are taxable. Even service charge, apart from service tax? The Government’s service charge guidelines of 2017 are only advisory. No legislation backs them. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, does not refer to tipping or service charge. Against this backdrop, what will the June 2 meeting achieve other than issuing “advice” to the restaurateurs’ body? In the meanwhile, who will protect the interests of the waiting staff? A tip attests to the waiter’s abilities. The best waiters corner the maximum tips. It is they who, apart from food and ambience, contribute to a restaurant’s popularity. The service charge, on the other hand, is a level playing field for all waiters. They receive an equal share of the charge irrespective of their efficiency levels. For all waiters, however, tips represent extra income that makes a major difference in their lives. There may be cases where the employers are keeping a portion of the service charge with themselves. Why not bring in legislation that protects the interests of these waiters by legalising tipping if the service charge system is so complicated? That is the real issue.

PICTALK



Tourists ride a horsecart as clouds hover in the sky at Dadar beach, in Mumbai

Checkmate by the ‘Neutrals’ in Pak

No one in Pakistan has any doubt over the long, deep and dirty hands of the Pakistani military, called the ‘establishment’, in all sovereign decisions

The Pakistani Army’s complicated relationship with democracy started with its first native chief, Gen Ayub Khan. Ayub’s selection baptised the ‘institution’ with the political culture of out-of-turn nomination to the Chief of Pakistani Army Staff for posterity (Ayub was the junior-most Maj Gen in the Pakistani Army and his name was not even in the first consideration list). Soon the ambitious General took over the formal reins from the civilian politicians and promulgated the creatively deceptive concept of ‘Basic Democracy’ — a farcical system legitimising his iron-fisted dictatorship whilst providing a semblance of democracy. A similarly out-of-turn and ostensibly pliant General Zia-ul-Haq was to repeat the Ayub feat by deposing the civilian Government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

The even more unhinged dictator in General Zia immediately promised a restoration to democracy after taking over, “My sole aim is to organise free and fair elections”, and within months shifted his stance to ‘retribution first, elections later’ — he stayed on for the next 11 years till he died in a mysterious plane crash. In 1999, yet another out-of-turn and supposedly ‘safe’ Gen Pervez Musharraf grabbed power in a *coup d’état* and promised ‘true democracy’ which he claimed wouldn’t be the “evil of sham democracy” but he, too, hung around for another nine years!

Much wisdom has dawned on the subsequent Pakistani Army Chiefs like Pervez Kayani, Raheel Sharif and, most recently, Qamar Javed Bajwa. All of them have preferred a more discreet, ‘democratic’ and highly effective way of running the show, without attracting international opprobrium. They have effectively ‘chosen’ civilian Governments as per their topical interests, extended their terms unilaterally to six-year terms (Pervez Kayani and Qamar Bajwa) or, like Gen Raheel Sharif, managed to twist



legislations towards securing their own interests in plum post-retirement roles (currently heading the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition).

No one in Pakistan has any doubts of the ‘establishment’s’ (Pakistani military’s) long and deep hands in all sovereign decisions. The once out-of-favour with the Pakistani military, Nawaz Sharif, had called the Generals as ‘*Khalai Mukhloq*’ (aliens or the invisible hand) as the ‘establishment’s’ hand in elevating Imran Khan to power in 2018 was undeniable. Obviously, as the beneficiary of the Pakistani military’s favour, Imran had dissed all murmurs about the military’s extra-constitutional abilities as he probably assumed that he’d be able to defang the Generals over time — he tried but failed miserably.

Ultimately, a desperately struggling Imran struggled to nuance the military’s claimed apolitical and neutral stand when the tables turned, and he had become an outsized nuisance for the Generals. Facing a no-confidence vote, Imran had invoked a stinging appeal for support by saying, “Allah did not allow us to be

ULTIMATELY, A DESPERATE IMRAN STRUGGLED TO NUANCE THE MILITARY’S CLAIMED APOITICAL AND NEUTRAL STAND WHEN THE TABLES TURNED, AND HE HAD BECOME AN OUTSIZED NUISANCE FOR THE GENERALS

neutrals as only animals are neutrals!” Clearly, the Generals were not amused and they remained ‘neutral’ to Imran’s extreme discomfiture. Soon the dejected and ejected Imran was left lamenting, “Neutrals weren’t actually neutral.” Today, as the vainglorious Imran replots his journey back to political relevance, he is left hoping in sarcasm, “I also say to my Army that you said you are neutral, so now remain neutral.” Deep down, Imran would know better of the shift in tide and circumstances of his equation with these so-called ‘neutrals’.

Meanwhile, in a curious closing of the loop, it is the Sharif family (deposed and hounded out of Pakistan in the 1999 military *coup d’état*) that is singing hosanas of the Pakistani military’s ‘neutrality’!

Tellingly, no Pakistani Prime Minister has ever completed his/her tenure and almost all were tripped through extra-constitutional or judicial intervention that invariably could be traced back to the shadowy Generals at the Rawalpindi Military General Headquarters (GHQ). Only three Prime Ministers were able to go



BHOPINDER SINGH

beyond the four-year mark. The fissures in each case were triggered by political efforts to undermine or diminish the Pakistani Military — in Imran’s case, his grandstanding in delaying the transfer of his preferred spy chief ie, then DG of ISI, General Faiz Hameed, was tantamount to crossing the traditional ‘red lines’ of non-interference in certain matters. Imran could no longer be trusted to walk the line of the ‘establishment’s’ formula for Pakistani governance, and thus had to be removed.

Today, the Pakistani military has further denied any imminent threat to national security or the alarmist ‘international conspiracy’. Making it worse for Imran is the careful recalibration of the Sharif-Bhutto combine towards the Generals, and the deliberate assertion by the Pakistani military spokesperson that General Bajwa seeks no further extension == both moves deflate Imran’s expected aspersions and stridency against the ‘neutrals’. Somewhere along the line, Imran had managed to create a dangerous divide within the ironclad ‘establishment’ with purported factionalism between a General Bajwa and a possible faction led by Imran’s politically beholden/preferred, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed. This was unprecedentedly and unexpectedly brazen interference into the insular affairs of the Pakistani military, even by the standards of the hugely egotistical Imran. For now, the possible succession of Lt Gen Faiz Hameed as the Pakistani military chief has been checkmated, as has been the possibilities of a civilian dispensation attempting to usurp the powers of the incorrigible Generals.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA MUST CONSOLIDATE GAINS

Sir — While India has joined the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), a forum to enhance cooperation among 13 countries in areas such as clean energy, supply chain resilience, decarbonisation, digital trade and infrastructure, it is seen as a counter to the RCEP, from which India has stayed away. At a time when every country is trying to secure its own economic interests, India must be wary that all IPEF members except India and the US are part of the China-backed trading agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and yet have chosen to be a part of the US-led initiative.

The dream of a win-win situation for all members can only be realised if this framework provides a level playing field. Otherwise, it will become only a tool for the assertion of America’s hegemony considering the fact that the latter’s previous initiatives like Blue Dot Network and Build Back Better Initiatives had made little headway towards changing the region’s infrastructural needs. India has a favourable balance of trade with the US, about \$33 billion of trade surplus from January to December 2021, the exports to America were valued at more than \$73 billion, way above imports worth around \$40 billion.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Sir — The Union Government’s decision to reduce the taxes on petrol and diesel to curtail the inflation rate is strategic in nature. The cost of movement of goods and people directly adds to the cost escalation of every product and it has come to a point where the “consumption” factor goes a hit and demand automatically gets for a nosedive under compulsion. It, therefore, leads to excess supply pushing the graph further down to hit the bottom of the line, drastically affecting the economy in the long run. This price reduction and correction process was supposed

America and its gun culture



Salvador Ramos, an 18-year-old gunman, opened fire at a Texas Robb Elementary School, killing at least 19 children, two adults (including a teacher) as he went from classroom to classroom. It was the deadliest school shooting since the 2012 massacre in Newtown, Conn. The US Constitution gives all its citizens the right to own a gun, and guns are as easy to find in stores across America as grocery shopping in any country. Hence no one

is surprised that how much untrue it is that America has launched a decisive fight against terrorism, and calls itself the ‘big brother’ of humanity. It may declare itself the champion of democracy in the world, but it has never been able to do anything to stop the prevailing gun culture there.

As a result, in the last five decades, more than 1.4 million people have died due to America’s gun culture. Interestingly, hours after the attack, US President Joe Biden who was in Japan appeared ready for a fight in an address to the nation. “As a nation, we have to ask when in God’s name are we going to stand up to the gun lobby?” Biden asked. “Why are we willing to live with this carnage?” It remains to be seen whether Biden will take specific action to control the powerful gun lobby.

Bidyut K Chatterjee | Faridabad

to be taken up much earlier by the Government.

Taxing corporations and companies drives them away to another country, resulting in more job losses, reduction in IT revenues, more NPAs from failed businesses, and so on. While the rich must be taxed more heavily than they are now, middle income groups need to pay up their fair share. The cess collected by the Union Government is used to pay back the loans borrowed by State Governments on account of the GST revenue deficit to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. When people didn’t have objection to collecting doles, they shouldn’t object to paying their taxes either.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

COURTS SHOULD DISMISS SUCH CLAIMS

Sir — The current situation of disgruntled communal elements trying to dig and explore mosques like Gyanvapi Masjid, saying Hindu temples existed under such structures, encouraged by politically-affiliated religious groups, has stemmed from the manner in which the Babri

Masjid was allowed to be demolished and the Supreme Court’s verdict to hand over the disputed site in Ayodhya to the Hindu claimants. It is also a blunder and flagrant violation of the law by the honourable courts by repeatedly entertaining such claims which are in contravention to the ‘Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991’.

It is an open secret that such moves are encouraged by the powers that be with a motive to reap political benefits. It is time the Supreme Court intervened, put an end to this menace and upheld the spirit of the Places of Worship Act and preserve communal peace. If this is not done urgently, India will have to lose its great name as a land of great values and heritage. Further, any more demolitions similar to that of the Babri Masjid would confirm that we too are a bunch of barbarians, like those who are said to have demolished other religious structures.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Warming warning

The unusual and unseasonal prolonged spells of high temperatures are here to stay, reveal studies

If alarm bells on deteriorating weather conditions in India are not ringing just about yet, it’s better to double-check the power supply. In a bad omen for our planet, it has been found that climate change made the extreme temperatures that baked north-west India and Pakistan in April and May over 100 times more likely and also increased the chances that such heat waves will occur more frequently by the end of the century. To put it in simpler terms, without accounting for climate change, a heat wave exceeding 2010’s average temperature could happen once in every 312 years, according to an attribution study published recently. Taking climate change into account, however, the probabilities increased to once in every 3.1 years in the current climate, and to once in every 1.15 years by the end of the century. Climate change is already making extreme weather events such as heatwaves more intense and more frequent, and will continue to do so in future. India and Pakistan’s heatwave is also extraordinary in its duration — extremely high temperatures started as early as in March.

In another surprising revelation, a study has found that, contrary to popular perception, biomass emissions (stubble burning and increased heating requirements) rather than bursting of fireworks drive the poor air quality in the Capital during the days immediately succeeding Diwali. The study, conducted by IIT-D researchers before, during and after Diwali, threw light on the pollution sources impacting the ambient air

quality in the Capital. The team discovered that biomass burning-related emissions rose steeply in the days following Diwali, with the average levels rising almost twice as compared to the pre-Diwali concentration. Also, the organic PM2.5 indicated a significant rise in both primary and secondary organic pollutants in the days following Diwali. Shockingly, the study discovered that the metal content in PM2.5 levels rose by 1,100 per cent ... and the fireworks alone accounted for 95 per cent of the metal PM2.5 during the Festival of Lights. However, the impact of the fireworks was noticed to plummet within around 12 hours after the day of the festival. What makes these studies important is the result which provides crucial insights into a topic of long-standing debate and concerns between air quality experts and the policymakers. Hopefully, this newfound knowledge will help alleviate the problems emanating from the extreme air pollution events in the Delhi-NCR areas.

SOUNDBITE

I’m absolutely sure the India-US friendship will continue to be a force for good.

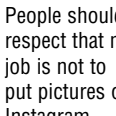


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



I’m committed to making the US-India partnership among the closest we have on earth.

US President — Joe Biden



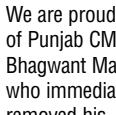
People should respect that my job is not to put pictures on Instagram... It’s to make good films.

Actor — Amitabh Bachchan



Thank you Roland Garros. Thank you, Mister Tennis. I love you (on retiring)!

French tennis professional — Jo-Wilfried Tsonga




We are proud of Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann who immediately removed his Minister found involved in corruption.

AAP’s national convener — Arvind Kejriwal


FIRST COLUMN

SOME BRANDS ARE AGGRESSIVELY CAPITALISING ON CANCEL CULTURE

A new public sphere in a network society




UTTAM CHAKRABORTY



G REJIKUMAR

Understanding cancel culture and a new public sphere are becoming imminent. Constructing and deconstructing the suitability of such culture is largely contextualized and is heavily relied on the cultural context. It has invariably attempted to redefine Jürgen Habermas’ public sphere, especially the future of the public sphere in a network society. In the digital arena, the argumentative discussions on the public sphere are increasingly relevant and yet problematic. There is a little denial that public sphere is subjected to dramatic change and re-change. Reasons and passion in the public sphere are many and it has been increasingly interdisciplinary in approach. Over the years, cancel culture is getting more apparent from comedy to cricket. A product of internet culture, it has spread its wings across the globe including India. Several celebrities have faced severe backlash for their alleged deeds or narratives which were deemed offensive and inappropriate in the public. The butterfly effect of social media is adding to the cancel culture. The dark holes of disinformation are becoming rampant. The pandemic situation across the globe had added to the woes of the public. On the other hand, it has different implications in brand communication. Some brands are aggressively capitalizing on this culture and using this trend as branding. Of course, this needs to be handled with utmost care. Whether cancel culture actually works or not, it remains debatable. Cancel cul-



ture has become a common phenomenon in our society. To be precise, cancel culture means a practice of withdrawing support for public figures or companies or even against an individual after they have done or said something considered objectionable or offensive. It is generally discussed in the social media in the form of group shaming.

Cancel culture attempts to enforce some degree of accountability on an individual even though it demands a series of arguments and deliberations on the topics or individuals or institutions. This culture surfaced across nations when the #MeToo movement gained traction in 2016 in the US where people resorted to social media to cancel or boycott public personalities of repute. Last year #BanNetflix was getting viral for alleged inappropriate content. Cancel culture as a medium of showing disbelief towards a person or any organization or thought is nothing new in India. In the year 2019, the former US President Obama appealed to discard the cancel culture. The actor and activist Jameela Jamil claimed that cancel culture as pointless and is a waste of time. The names of JK Rowling and Harry Potter rose to some extent. Cancel culture has shared some common space in the pandemic and online trolling. According to reports, online hate speech rose 20% during the pandemic. However, it was often normalized in most of the circumstances.

Cancel culture has its own implications on brands and brand communication. The trolling in the Internet has become a common phenomenon. It has caused a stir in the recent times. One of the renowned jewelry apps had to face the wrath of the consumers for one of their promotional advertisements. A popular TV show anchor is being alleged trolled for not providing promotional space for a film. Cancel culture has encroached into the space of marketing and advertising. Usually, brands are politically non-partisans However, in apolarisedworld, brands are slowly taking political patronage. Boycotting has become a mainstream consumer reaction. Consumers are increasingly demanding the brands to take a stand on any social or political issue. Consumers are also aware of the fact that several brands use societal issues as a marketing ploy to sell more of their product. Cancel culture is thus negotiating its space in the public sphere.

(Chakraborty is an Assistant Professor and teaches at Jaipuria Institute of Management, Lucknow.Rejikumar is working as a professor at Department of Management, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kochi)

Pak oppression stoking Baloch ‘azadi’ fires



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

Balochs say the CPRC ignores them and is Punjab-centric. The Gwadar-Karachi route goes through developed areas of Punjab and Sind while bypassing Balochistan districts


Balochistan is Pakistan’s biggest occupied province, making about 44% of the country’s total land area. With a coastline of 770 kilometres, Balochistan also shares borders with Iran and Afghanistan, and 40% of the world’s oil travels via Gwadar port, located near the opening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Pakistan’s display of unified nationalism is met with ethno-nationalist opposition from Balochs, Pashtuns and Sindhis, who have been protesting against their political and economic marginalisation since the formation of Pakistan.The Punjab-centric planning and implementation of projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have worsened the conflict between the state and the Azadi-seeking forces. A takeover of Gwadar port and subsequent exclusion of the Baloch firms, workers and fishermen from Gwadar-linked CPEC projects, and various developmental policies apart from exploiting its natural resources have exacerbated pre-existing secessionist sentiments in Balochistan. Furthermore, the Eastern route or alignment of the Chinese Project connects Gwadar and Karachi through the developed portions of Punjab and Sind while leaving behind several districts of Balochistan. The Baloch mainstream parties have thus opposed the project entirely and have called for complete freedom.

Further, political discrimination against the Shia Hazara community in Quetta has also been a human rights issue. Shia Hazaras are considered Iranian spies by Sunni sectarians. Restrictive practices in Rawalpindi are evident in the massacre of Shia Hazaras and their lack of mention in the national media. Nevertheless, East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was the only region to achieve liberation from all forms of tyranny.

Today, the unification of various Baloch rebel groups- Baloch Republican Army (BRA), United Baloch Army, Baloch Raji Ajoi Sangar (BRAS) to form a Baloch National Army (BNA) or the ‘Azadi brigade’ might result in the establishment of a Baloch territory carved out from Pakistan. If Rawalpindi increases its atrocities, the Balochs might retaliate further by calling all the Balochs in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan to unite and form a ‘Greater Balochistan’. The recent suicide bombing of Shari Baloch calls for the attention of the intensification of the freedom struggle in Baluchistan. Several disgruntled Pakistani factions have hailed Shari Baloch’s decision to oppose the CPEC and Rawalpindi. On social media sites like Twitter, Sindhi separatists have expressed their admiration for her bravery. It is an indication that the Baloch National Army would expand to include Sindhi factions in the future.

Until now, the Baloch rebel groups’ classic modus operandi used improvised explosive devices and hit-and-run attacks apart from the protests. Suicide bombing by Shari Baloch has commonalities with the



PAKISTAN’S MAJOR FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY FLAW HAS PRIMARILY BEEN AN ANTI-INDIA APPROACH. VIEWING THE MUSHROOMING OF JIHADIST ORGANISATION FROM THIS LENS, IT HAS ONLY AIMED TO RECEIVE AID FROM EITHER OF THE POWERS WHILE TRYING TO DESTABILISE INDIA

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal.)



sophisticated nature of the attacks carried out by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its affiliates. The TTP aims to establish an Islamic Emirate of Pakistan, very similar to what the Taliban did in Afghanistan. TTP recruits are primarily from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and thus it has sympathies with the BLA. However, a catch is that the TTP swears its allegiance to the Afghan Taliban and is backed by Al Qaeda. This makes TTP a dicey player between BLA and the Pakistan forces.

Interestingly, it is possible that TTP’s leader Noor Wali Mehsud has allied with the Baloch rebels? Till now, independent acts have been carried out by TTP (North-West of Pakistan) and BLA (South of Pakistan). However, that might not be the case any longer. From a Pakistani perspective, the Afghan Taliban’s takeover might have driven out the US and posed severe issues for its allies, yet, the Taliban’s aspirations and capabilities to function independently of Rawalpindi cannot be ruled out. There have been statements from the Taliban “ministers” seeking an independent role in its ‘national’ and regional affairs. Moreover, the Taliban might have the revenge objectives of post 9/11 developments wherein Pakistan cleverly helped the U.S. crush the Taliban. One might assume that the Taliban has been going slow to oppress TTP’s rearming and a resurgence for the reasons mentioned above, apart from forging alliances with Baloch rebels.

If one can recall, in the early 2010s, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Balochistan (TTB) emerged on TTP lines. TTB aspired for the complete exit of foreigners from Baluchistan apart from fighting the Pakistani security forces and law enforcement agencies to convert Pakistan into a battlefield. The organisation recruited indigenous fighting units and foreign fighters primarily of the Afghan-Pashtun tribes. However, the Baloch are traditionalists and not fundamentalists, and hence the assumptions and possibilities of TTP and BLA finding convergences for their operational synergies is a strong possibility. The ‘Azadi Brigade’ can also be joined by the ISKP (Islamic State - Khorasan Province), proving further detrimental to Pakistan’s interests.

Although the intensity and the number of attacks against the Pakistani military establishments increased after the US exit from Afghanistan, the recent extension of the ceasefire between TTP and Pakistan, mediated through the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network, reminds us of 2020 when in a surprising move the truce and subsequent mergers between TTP with its splinter groups and rivals moderated by the Al-Qaida. Important groups which merged with TTP were a faction of the sectarian group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and the splinter groups of TTP- Hakimullah Mehsud faction, Jamaatul-Ahrar (JuA), and its sub-splinter Hizbul-Ahrar (HuA).The mergers gave a predominant position to the TTP, which equalled the Afghan Taliban’s position in Kabul. Despite ideational and strategic divergences, the ceasefire raises essential questions. Rawalpindi might be trying to establish another regional Sunni proxy terror alliance in Balochistan with Jaish ul-Adl,first to suppress the Baloch movement and second to revive the Iranian Jundullah organisation while creating instability in Sistan and Balochistan province.Pakistan would want the

‘destructive forces’to be diverted elsewhere.

Whether the BLA fights along with the TTP or Pakistan and finally succeeds in creating instabilities, the Chinese CPEC is bound to be in the doldrums for violence plays an essential role in the region. A pertinent question is whether Pakistan is playing the same game with China as it played with the U.S. in Afghanistan? By attracting the Chinese money and infrastructure to Balochistan and Iran; encouraging Iran to remain isolated while simultaneously attempting to bring the extremist group under a single umbrella to launch offensive actions against Baloch citizens, groups, as well as Iranian Baluchistan, does it not hint at the same methodology as it adopted in the last decade for ousting the US? If the violence between factions intensifies, the Chinese Projects and its citizens will be affected. In an extreme case, would not the Chinese be forced to abandon their projects the same way the U.S. and the NATO forces were forced to leave their airbases?

Pakistan’s major foreign and security policy flaw has primarily been an anti-India approach. Viewing the mushrooming of the Jihadist organisation from this lens, it has only aimed to receive aid from either of the powers while simultaneously trying to destabilise India. Soon, Islamabad would be a victim of its homegrown terror and might enlist as a nation that dug its own grave. Joseph Nye once stated, “Important political leaders never just followed their interests - they were concerned about the interests of their people”. Islamabad has never produced a leader of that kind.With more chaos, terror, external loans and inflation, it would not be wrong to predict that ‘Azad Balochistan’ would see the light of the day very soon.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

UTTAR PRADESH IS ON TOP IF WE LOOK AT THE STATISTICS ON CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN. THE STATE GOVERNMENT IS NOT SERIOUS. — SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV



ANY KIND OF CRIME IS UNFORGIVABLE. THE GOVT IS TAKING STRICT ACTION... ESPECIALLY THOSE COMMITTING CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN. — CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH


Messed up post-COVID job statistics in India

MGNREGA job demand was less in 2021-22, meaning people who migrated to villages after COVID got their jobs back in urban areas

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) says that though the GDP has bounced back post-Covid, its biggest impact has been on employment. Employment reached only 40.18 crores in 2021-22 as against 40.89 crores in 2019-20. Unemployment which was 3.29 crore in 2019-20 reached 3.33 crore in 2021-22 — an increase of only 4 lakhs.

The CMIE concludes that though the decrease in employment has been nearly 7 million i.e. 70 lakh, the increase of unemployment is only 4 lakh, indicating that the people who got unemployed during this period have given up hope of employment and they are now out of the race for employment.

It’s notable that for some time, due to some reasons, the employment related data in the




ASHWANI MAHAJAN

(The writer is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

country is not being published by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). It is natural that in the absence of official figures, the figures of institutions like CMIE get space in the media. However, their credibility is questionable.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) guarantees at least 100 days of employment in every financial year to every rural unemployed. So, when people are unemployed, they are entitled to get 100 days of employment under MGNREGA. In such a situation, even if a person is getting casual employment anywhere and if he remains unemployed for 100 or less days, then he can seek employment under ‘MGNREGA’.

This logically means that if



unemployment rises, the demand for MNREGA will also increase. For example, in 2020-21 due to lockdown in cities and decline in economic activities, employment decreased and people migrated to villages, then in those days the number of ‘MGNREGA’ beneficiaries increased to 7 crores from

merely 5 crores before the lockdown.

Interestingly, the period (2021-22) for which the CMIE report is talking about a rise in unemployment, demand for MGNREGA employment was actually 6.55 percent less than the previous year. That is, it can be said that during the Corona period, people who had migrated to the villages had got employment back in the urban areas. In this sequence, if we look at the figures of April 2022, it is found that in April 2021, 2.62 crore people had sought work under ‘MNREGA’, whereas in April 2022, only 2.33 crore people sought work under MGNREGA, that is, a decline of 11.15 percent. Analysts believe that the fall in demand for employment under MGNREGA is due to increased employ-

ment in urban areas. This figure is in stark contrast to the report published by CMIE, which says that people have moved out of the labour force, giving up the hope of employment due to the loss of employment opportunities. Instead of giving its own value judgement about unemployment, CMIE should have taken note of the MGNREGA figures to arrive at a conclusion.

The CMIE report states that even if 7.5 percent GDP growth is achieved in 2022-23, the unemployment rate will increase rather than going down. For this they talk of employment elasticity with respect to GDP. But we have to understand that the recovery after Covid in the economy is not a normal recovery. This recovery accompanies some

fundamental changes in the Indian economy. All indicators of the economy are pointing towards these changes.

Significantly, in the last quarter of the last financial year (2021-22), the monthly average of GST collection was 1.42 lakh crore. The unprecedented GST collection of ₹1.68 lakh crore in the first month of this financial year (April 2022), is definitely pointing towards an upsurge in the economy. In March 2022, 7.7 crore e-way bills were generated, 13 per cent more than 6.8 crore e-way bills generated in February 2022. This clearly shows a sharp recovery in the economy.

Significantly, due to the shortage of semiconductors in the country, many of our industries including automobile, electronics, telecom have been

affected. Despite that, rising GST revenue is indicating an uptick in manufacturing in the economy. It is true that imports have also increased during this period, due to which the revenue of GST has increased, but where the revenue of GST has reached ₹1.68 lakh crore, the share of import GST in this revenue is ₹36705 crore, which is greater than import GST of March 2021 by 5608 crores only. It’s notable that import GST in March 2021 was ₹31097 crore. This implies that domestic businesses have definitely grown during this period, resulting into this huge increase in GST.

The Government should soon publish robust official NSSO data and present the correct picture of employment in the country.

Russian rockets hit eastern Ukrainian town of Pokrovsk

AP ■ POKROVSK (UKRAINE)

The Russian rocket strikes came early in the morning in the eastern Ukrainian town of Pokrovsk on Wednesday, shaking buildings, jolting people out of bed and sending chunks of concrete and jagged pieces of metal flying through the air.

One of the two rockets left a crater at least three metres deep, remnants of the projectile still smoldering as nearby residents picked through the debris of their homes, trying to salvage whatever they could.

A row of low terraced houses nearby suffered significant damage, with roofing tiles blown off, door frames ripped from the walls and pieces of brick, concrete and asphalt scattered on the ground. Four civilians were wounded, said Pavlo Kyrilenko, head of the Donetsk military administration.

At least one of them suffered a head wound and was ferried to the local hospital by ambulance, blood seeping through the bandages and trickling down the side of his neck.

The strikes in Pokrovsk were among several over the past two days that have hit towns and villages as Russia pressed forward in its offensive in the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland.

"There's no place left to live in, everything is smashed," said Viktoriya Kurbonova, a mother-of-two who lived in one of the terraced houses.

The windows had been blown out by an earlier strike about a month ago, and they had replaced them with plastic sheeting. That, she said, probably saved their lives as at least there was no glass flying around.

She had been asleep when the strike hit, just metres from her house. "There was a really big flash and a lot of dust," Kurbonova said, standing outside her home still in her pajamas, her legs and arms blackened by soot.



Her four-year-old son wandered around, clutching a toy train, while her two-year-old daughter smiled in a stroller nearby.

"I was reaching for my child and I couldn't find him in the dust," she said. The boy had been sleeping in the same room as her, while her daughter had been in the next room with Kurbonova's mother. They were all shaken, but none were hurt.

Kyrilenko said Russian strikes killed 12 civilians the previous day in the Donetsk region, and wounded another 10. Another strike on the city of Kramatorsk, northeast of Pokrovsk, hit a multi-story building under construction, damaging it and blowing out windows in nearby buildings but causing no casualties.

"Russians continue hitting the cities that are away from the front line," Kyrilenko said on his Telegram channel. "They would like to kill as many civilians as possible and cause panic. That is why the only good choice is evacuation. Evacuation saves lives."

The governor of the neighbouring Luhansk region, Serhiy Haidai, said at least six civilians had been killed and eight wounded over the past 24 hours in shelling in the town of Sievierodonetsk, at the heart of the Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine.

Russian forces have been attempting to encircle Sievierodonetsk and cut off

Ukrainian forces there. Haidai accused the Russians of deliberately targeting shelters where civilians were hiding.

Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces in the Donbas for eight years and hold large swaths of territory.

Sievierodonetsk and neighbouring cities are the only part of the Donbas' Luhansk region still under Ukrainian government control.

EU seeks more clout against sanctioned Russian oligarchs

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union's executive arm entered sensitive legal territory on Wednesday with a proposal to confiscate the frozen assets of oligarchs who try to violate the bloc's sanctions over Russia's war in Ukraine.

The European Commission proposed two EU laws that would require the 27 member states to cede a degree of jealously guarded national sovereignty over

criminal matters.

One piece of draft legislation seeks new European rules on freezing and confiscating the assets of people blacklisted by the EU.

The second legislative proposal aims to expand the list of acts deemed to be "EU crimes" by including breaches of European sanctions.

Both initiatives need the approval of EU governments in a scrutiny process that usually takes many months and can even last for years.

The bloc's heads of government are due to discuss options for using the frozen assets of sanctioned Russian oligarchs to support the reconstruction of Ukraine during a two-day summit next week.

"There is no time to lose," Margaritis Schinas, a European Commission vice-president in charge of security matters, told reporters in Brussels. "Many times we see assets recovery and confiscation of the small fry, whereas the big sharks find ways to

evade."

While the EU has spent decades crafting common rules on various areas of criminal law, European sanctions against Russian leaders and oligarchs over the past three months have added impetus to calls for a stronger European framework.

The EU has imposed asset freezes and travel bans on more than 1,000 people, including over 30 oligarchs, in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publically notified that PLOT No. A-438, SECTOR 151, NOIDA, DISTT. GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH allottee of SHRI VIKRAM SINGH RANA S/O LATE JAGAN SINGH R/O C-415 SECTOR-22, NOIDA, DISTT. GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH shall be mutated on the basis of Will Deed to the following person:-
The Will Deed was registered by SHRI VIKRAM SINGH RANA S/O LATE JAGAN SINGH R/O C-415 SECTOR-22, NOIDA, DISTT. GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH in favour of SHRI JOGINDER SINGH RANA & SHRI DHARMENDRA CHAUHAN BOTH S/O LATE VIKRAM SINGH RANA R/O C-415 SECTOR-22, NOIDA, DISTT. GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH. Because Will Deed is registered, so it is Publically Notfy that the mutation application of the aforesaid property is going to apply through Will Deed in the name of SHRI JOGINDER SINGH RANA & SHRI DHARMENDRA CHAUHAN BOTH S/O LATE VIKRAM SINGH RANA R/O C-415 SECTOR 22, NOIDA, DISTT. GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH. If someone has/have any objection he/she move our objection with proof within 30 days from this notice in the Residential Plot Department, Noida Authority.
Mr. Joginder Singh Rana and Mr. Dharmendra Chauhan, sons of Late Vikram Singh Rana, resident of C-415, Sector-22, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

PUBLIC NOTICE

RAMAN VIHAR COOP. GROUP HOUSING SOCIETY LTD. Plot No.5A, Sector-11, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075
In pursuance to rule 19(2) of DCS rules, 2007, applications are invited from general public of Delhi who fulfill the conditions laid down in rule-19 & 20 of DCS Rules, 2007 for filling up one vacancy in Raman Vihar CGHS Ltd. (Regd. No. 872(GH) for proposed three bedroom flat (Tentative cost of flat 87.31,610/-) (having area approximate 1750 Sq. Feet), which has arisen due to resignation of member. Interested persons can collect the application form in person from society office ie Plot No.5A, Sector-11, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 between 10.00 am to 4.30 pm free of cost and the same have to deposited along with the amount of Rs. 87,31,610/- which includes Share money, admission fee, land & Construction money and Equalization money through Pay order/ Demand Draft within 15 days of issue of this notice in favour of Raman Vihar Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Secretary-Raman Vihar CGHS Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publically notified that the Plot/Property No. 79, Block-A, Sector-30, Noida, has been allotted in the name of Suren Kumar S/o Shri Kashmiri Lal Rao 283/53A, Vishnu Garden, New Delhi presently residing at 1/265, Subash Nagar (Opp. Ajanta Cinema), New Delhi, had sold/transfer the said property, on the basis of GPA to the following persons:-
The GPA of the above said property has been executed by the original allottee in favour of Gurcharan Ahuja S/o Shri Sant Lal Ahuja R/o House No. 370, First Floor, Chandi Wala Gali, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi-110055 which is registered in the office of Sub Registrar Noida Vide Block No.Volume No. on pages..... to..... at Document No..... dated 16.11.1987 and the Agreement to Sell of the above said property was executed by the original allottee in favour of Shri Sant Lal Ahuja S/o Late Shri Gurdass Mal Ahuja & Smt. Raj Kumari Ahuja W/o Shri Sant Lal Ahuja both R/o House No. 927, Sector-28, Noida registered in the office of Sub Registrar Noida Vide Block No.Volume No. on pages..... to..... at Document No..... dated 16.11.1987. At present the agreement to sell holders Shri Sant Lal Ahuja expired on 22.04.2019 & Smt. Raj Kumari Ahuja expired on 09.02.1998.
Now the above said property is going to be transferred in favour of Pramod Ahuja & Sunil Ahuja both S/o Late Shri Sant Lal Ahuja Both R/o A-79, Sector-30, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddh Nagar, U.P. through the GPA, if any one has/have any objection he/she may submit his/her, objection in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority along-with sufficient proofs within 30 days of the publication this notice.
Gurcharan Ahuja

Now the above said property is going to be transferred in favour of Pramod Ahuja & Sunil Ahuja both S/o Late Shri Sant Lal Ahuja Both R/o A-79, Sector-30, Noida, Distt. Gautam Buddh Nagar, U.P. through the GPA, if any one has/have any objection he/she may submit his/her, objection in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority along-with sufficient proofs within 30 days of the publication this notice.
Gurcharan Ahuja

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) M&M SCORPIO REG. NO. DL8CAC1371-YOM-2014
 - 2) FORCEFORCETFB REG. NO. HR3823433-YOM-2019
 - 3) CB_AL_ECOMET_1412_ASHOK_LEYLAND LIMITED- REG. NO. UP14HT8964-YOM-2019
 - 4) TATA ACE- REG. NO. UP15ET9861-YOM-2021
 - 5) SUPRO MINI ENGNN. LHM6K24141-YOM-2021
 - 6) TATA MOTOR ULTRA 1518 REG. NO. UP14HT4779 YOM 2018
 - 7) EICHER 10.49 REG. NO. DL1LAB4102-YOM-2018
 - 8) CB_TATA LPT 1109 FULLY BUILT REG. NO. UP16ET4703-YOM-2017
- UNDER HYPOTHECAE WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS IN ORDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS WITH IN 3 DAYS AT
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., 3RD FLOOR, PLOT NO 7, SECTOR 125, NOIDA-201313 OR
CONTACT: ABHINAV LAL / RAJESH ANTIL
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. Cont.No.7798988481/9711173320
E Mail - abhinav.lal@kotak.com

Union Territory of JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SPECIAL SUB DIVISION GUREZ

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Fresh e-NIT No (39) EE/SSDG/1391-1401 2022-23 Dated:-21-05-2022

For and on behalf of lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders are invited in two cover system with 50 meters depth from registered Water Well Drillers/Contractors as per the details given in tender document.

Sr.No 1. Particulars of the work :- Laying and fitting of GI pipes including replacement /improvements of damaged / wornout pipes and Construction of Intake Chamber near head site, 0.10 lac gallon SR, Protection work at head site, Sluice Chamber, Cattle Trough, Anchor/Saddle block, Chain Link fencing around structures for Retrofitting of WSS Agnikoot Baduab for 100% coverage of FHTCs "Under JJM).

Estimated Cost (Lacs):- Rs. 36.74
Tender fee (in Rs) :- Rs. 1100/-
Earnest money Deposit :- Rs. 73840/-
Time of Completion of work (days) :- 60 Days
Class of Contract :- AAY/BEE

Sr.No 2. Particulars of the work :- Laying and fitting of GI pipes including Construction of protection works/ head works at head site, Intake Chamber near head site, 0.02 lac gallon SR, Sluice Chamber, supporting pillars for RWM at spots, cattle trough for Retrofitting of WSS Check Bayant Tulail for 100% coverage of FHTCs "Under JJM).

Estimated Cost (Lacs):- Rs. 19.98
Tender fee (in Rs) :- Rs. 800/-
Earnest money Deposit :- Rs. 39960/-
Time of Completion of work (days) :- 60 Days
Class of Contract :- AAY/BEE/CEE

Sr.No 3. Particulars of the work :- Laying and fitting of GI pipes including Construction of protection works/ head works at head site, Intake Chamber near head site, 0.05 lac gallon SR, Sluice Chamber, supporting pillars for RWM at spots, Chain Link fencing around structures, cattle trough for Retrofitting of WSS Dangithal Tulail for 100% coverage of FHTCs "Under JJM).

Estimated Cost (Lacs):- Rs. 32.71
Tender fee (in Rs) :- Rs. 1100/-
Earnest money Deposit :- Rs. 65420/-
Time of Completion of work (days) :- 60 Days
Class of Contract :- AAY/BEE

Sr.No 4. Particulars of the work :- Laying and fitting of GI pipes including Construction of protection works, Intake Chamber near head site, 0.25 lac gallon SR, Sluice Chamber, supporting pillars for RWM at spots, Crate work, Chain Link fencing around structures, Cattle troughs, PST near head site for Retrofitting of WSS Gulshanpora for 100% coverage of FHTCs "Under JJM).

Estimated Cost (Lacs):- Rs. 35.02
Tender fee (in Rs) :- Rs. 1100/-
Earnest money Deposit :- Rs. 70040/-
Time of Completion of work (days) :- 60 Days
Class of Contract :- AAY/BEE

Sr.No 5. Particulars of the work :- Laying and fitting of GI pipes including Construction of protection works/ head works at head site, crate protection work at sports, Intake Chamber near head site, 0.06 lac gallon SR, Sluice Chamber, supporting pillars for RWM at spots, Chain Link fencing around structures, cattle trough for Retrofitting of WSS Javdara 1st for 100% coverage of FHTCs "Under JJM).

Estimated Cost (Lacs):- Rs. 61.02
Tender fee (in Rs) :- Rs. 1600/-
Earnest money Deposit :- Rs. 122040/-
Time of Completion of work (days) :- 60 Days
Class of Contract :- AAY

Position off under : Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)
The tender inviting authority is Executive Engineer, Special Sub Division Gurez. The awarding authority is District Jal Jeevan Mission (DJJM).

- Critical Dates:**
I) Publish Date :- 23-05-2022 at 9.00 AM
II) Document Download Start Date :- 23-05-2022 at 9.00 AM
III) Clarification Start date :- 23-05-2022 from 10: A.M
IV) Clarification End date :- 30-05-2022 up to 6: P.M
V) Bid submission Start date :- 23-05-2022 from 10: A.M
VI) Bid submission End date :- 31-05-2022 at 4:00 P.M
VII) Date of Bid opening :- 31-05-2022 at 5.00 P.M

1. Bid documents can be accessed and downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in
2. The whole bidding process shall be completed online on tender portal www.jktenders.gov.in. The intending bidders can download the bid document from the tender portal and can submit their bids by uploading the month e tender portal.
3. The valid bids received shall be opened online in the office of the Executive Special Sub Division Gurez Bids must be accompanied by bid security and cost of Tender Document as specified in column 4 & 5 of the table and shall be payable at Srinagar.
a. The cost of tender documents should be in form of DD/TR/e challan in favour of Executive Engineer Special Sub division Gurez.
4. The hard copies of cost of tender document in shape of TR/e-challan, Earnest money in shape of CDR/FDR/BG and other relevant documents shall be obtained from the bidder who is declared as L1 after opening of financial cover.
5. The bid shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the last date of submission of bids. If any bidder withdraws his bid before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the same shall be considered to be in violation of bid security declaration and shall be dealt with accordingly and the bid shall be declared non-responsive.
6. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website www.jktenders.gov.in.
7. Queries by email if any should be made at.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Special Sub Division Gurez

IST LIMITED

CIN: L33301HR1976PLC008316

Regd. Office: Dharuhera Industrial Complex, Delhi- Jaipur Highway No.8, Kapriwas, Dharuhera, Rewari (Haryana)-123106

Head Office: A-23, New Office Complex, 2nd Floor, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

Phone No.: 011-41044511-14; Fax: 011-24625694; Email: istgroup.no@gmail.com; Website: www.istindia.com

EXTRACT OF FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2022

(Fig. in Lacs unless otherwise stated)

Sl No	Particulars	Standalone					Consolidated				
		Quarter Ended		Year Ended			Quarter Ended		Year Ended		
		31.03.2022 Audited	31.12.2021 Unaudited	31.03.2021 Audited	31.03.2022 Audited	31.03.2021 Audited	31.03.2022 Audited	31.12.2021 Unaudited	31.03.2021 Audited	31.03.2022 Audited	31.03.2021 Audited
1	Total Income	963.54	1031.16	1712.39	4388.52	3917.78	4554.16	4606.35	5264.83	18363.19	17711.85
2	Net Profit before exceptional items and tax	24.39	365.39	342.27	1202.04	969.39	2253.54	3349.33	3645.15	12771.24	13221.92
3	Net Profit after exceptional items before tax	24.39	365.39	342.27	1202.04	969.39	2253.54	3349.33	3645.15	12771.24	13221.92
4	Net Profit after tax	(32.05)	291.68	270.34	932.79	813.63	1562.43	2518.47	2653.56	9597.07	9518.26
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Net of Tax)	(33.77)	293.63	276.14	936.92	821.43	2226.47	1679.55	3036.29	10896.28	12037.58
6	Equity Share Capital (Face Value Rs. 5/- per share)	584.68	584.68	584.68	584.68	584.68	584.68	584.68	584.68	584.68	584.68
7	Other Equity	-	-	-	20121.37	19184.45	-	-	-	102670.86	91774.58
8	Earning Per Share (Face Value Rs. 5/- per share)	(0.27)	2.50	2.32	8.00	6.98	13.40	21.53	22.85	82.79	82.07
	Basic (Rs.)	(0.27)	2.50	2.32	8.00	6.98	13.40	21.53	22.85	82.79	82.07
	Diluted (Rs.)	(0.27)	2.50	2.32	8.00	6.98	13.40	21.53	22.85	82.79	82.07

NOTE:
The above is an extract of the detailed format of the Standalone and Consolidated Financial Results for the Quarter and Year ended 31st March, 2022 filed with the Stock Exchange (BSE Ltd.) under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Standalone and Consolidated Financial Results is available on the Stock Exchange website (www.bseindia.com) and the company's website www.istindia.com.

Place : New Delhi
Date : 24th May, 2022

By Order of the Board
Sd/-
(S.C. Jain)
Executive Director
DIN: 00902079

Saving the children: War closes in on eastern Ukrainian town



AP ■ BAKHMUT (UKRAINE)

Chunks of thick, twisted metal and wood splinters lie among the swings and slides in the playground outside a bombed-out school. Some streets away, a yellow bathtub dangles over the void left when part of an apartment building collapsed in a bombing.

The eastern Ukrainian town of Bakhmut has been coming under increasing bombardment in Russia's war, particularly over the last week, local officials and residents say, as Russian forces try to press forward in an effort to encircle and capture the key city of Sievierodonetsk to the north-east.

Moscow-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces in the Donbas for eight years and hold large swaths of territory. Sievierodonetsk and neighboring cities are the only part of the Donbas' Luhansk region still under Ukrainian government control.

Most of Bakhmut's population has already fled, and more are leaving every day. Evacuation minibuses run mainly by volunteers shuttle back and forth, sometimes even during bombardments, to get people out.

"Now it's a question of saving the children," said Olga Hordiyenko, 51, as she stood in a playground on Tuesday near her apartment building. "The Russians are shelling us,

so there's this burning issue to get the children out of here."

Ignoring the repeated background sounds of shelling, her three grandchildren, girls ages 7, 9 and 11, focused on learning dance moves from a video on their mother's mobile phone.

Hordiyenko and her daughter Anna Dyachenko, 28, wanted to leave on Tuesday but there was no room on the bus for them, they said. Instead, they would be leaving on Wednesday, heading to western Ukraine initially and then abroad to relatives.

"People say it's time to go, and we're happy to leave," Dyachenko said. But they still fear they will have nothing to come home to once the war is over.

"Here we have our apartment, our house," she said. "Everything will be smashed and destroyed."

With a pre-war population of around 85,000, there are now around 30,000 people left, Bakhmut City Council Secretary Ganna Petrieyenko-Poluhina said. While authorities are encouraging more people to leave, some are hesitant, she said.

"Life is the most important thing for a person. But people are tied to their homes, to what they remember," Petrieyenko-Poluhina said. "Every day we see that shelling happens more often, and people leave. We would like that more people leave."

'India's economy seen growing 9.2 % in FY22'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy is expected to have grown at 9.2 per cent in the fiscal ended March 2022, after having contracted by 7.3 per cent in the previous financial year, aided by resilience in the rural economy, uptick in bank credit and rising GST collections, a note by Bank of Baroda said.

As per government's advance estimates, the gross domestic product (GDP) in FY22 is projected to grow by 8.9 per cent. The National Statistical Office (NSO) will release the final GDP growth figures for FY22 on May 31.

Bank of Baroda (BoB), in a note on GDP expectations by its Economic Research Department, said it expects the economy to post higher growth in the last quarter ended March as mobility improved, allowing opening up of economy with much lower COVID-19 cases across states.

Contact-intensive sectors are expected to make stronger recovery, and the economy is projected to grow by 5.5 per cent in Q4 FY22 against 5.4 per cent in Q3, it said. A much needed pick up will be visible

in services sector, with travel and hospitality contributing significantly. Construction is also likely to edge upwards.

However, agriculture growth might be a tad slow as compared to government expectations (3.3 per cent against government estimate of 3.5 per cent) owing to lower yield of wheat crops, conflict between Russia-Ukraine and heat wave conditions, as per the research note.

BoB said these might pose downside risks to its projections. Industrial growth might be adversely impacted too. It said India's economy is poised to recover in FY22 after contracting by 7.3 per cent in FY21.

The main factors contributing to this kind of growth are -- resilience shown by the rural sector with normal monsoon and higher production of foodgrains; uptick in bank credit growth to push financial services and improvement in services sector with passenger traffic (-62 per cent to 59 per cent), rail freight (2 per cent to 15 per cent) and port cargo (-4.6 per cent to 7 per cent) leading the race.

Higher GST collections have also provided much needed support. "Against this backdrop, we expect GDP growth at

9.2 per cent in FY22," Bank of Baroda said. However, there are downside risks emanating from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, soaring of commodity prices and acceleration in global inflation going ahead, it added. Further, aggravating heat wave conditions have curbed wheat output and added some pressure to industrial growth.

A mix of both monetary (RBI frontloading with rate hike) and fiscal policy (reduction in excise duties) at play is expected to boost growth prospects, it contended.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects India's economy to grow by 9 per cent in FY22, while Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected India's growth at 7.5 per cent. "However, we expect the economy to do much better sequentially specially on the back of base effect and normalisation of economic activity.

"The overall impact of Omicron variant which resulted in the 3rd wave of COVID-19 seems to be relatively muted than was initially anticipated.

Further, rapid pick up in pace of vaccination programme is also expected to support growth," as per research note by the public sector lender.



Sensex tumbles over 300 points in volatile trade

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices wiped out early gains as volatility yet again ruled the markets, with the Sensex extending its decline to the third day running on Wednesday, falling over 300 points amid a sell-off in IT stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 303.35 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at 53,749.26. During the day, the benchmark hit a low of 53,683.16 and a high of 54,379.59. The broader NSE Nifty declined 99.35 points or 0.62 per cent to end at 16,025.80. From the Sensex pack, Asian Paints, TCS,

Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies and M&M were among the biggest laggards. In contrast, NTPC, Bharti Airtel, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Nestle, ICICI Bank and ITC were the prominent gainers.

Asian markets in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Seoul ended with gains, while Tokyo was marginally lower.

Exchanges in Europe were trading in the green in the afternoon trade. Stock markets in the US had mostly ended lower on Tuesday. International oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 1.37 per cent to USD

115.1 per barrel. Continuing their selling spree, foreign institutional investors offloaded shares worth a net Rs 2,393.45 crore on Tuesday, as per stock exchange data.

"Domestic indices wavered tracking mixed sentiments from global markets as investors assessed the possibility of a recession in the US followed by the Fed policy tightening.

"Global markets are awaiting the release of the Fed minutes, which will be evaluated for details on the path of the upcoming rate hikes," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Rupee edges up 3 paise to close at 77.54 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee recovered 3 paise to settle at 77.54 (provisional) against the US currency in a restricted trade on Wednesday as interventions by banks supported the local unit while a stronger dollar in overseas markets restricted the gains.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened higher at 77.54 against the greenback and moved in a range of 77.44 to 77.57 in the day trade. The rupee finally ended at 77.54, higher by 3 paise over its previous close of 77.57 against the American currency.

"Rupee traded with pendulum swing on a range fight between hedgers as participants from banks tried to support rupee whereas remittance

takers of dollar equally bought keeping rupee ranged between 77.47-77.60. The US Fed statement minutes later in the night might give some trend to the USDINR pair in futures," said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 303.35 points or 0.56 per cent lower at 53,749.26, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 99.35 points or 0.62 per cent to 16,025.80.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.36 per cent to 102.22. Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,393.45 crore, as per stock exchange data.



'Inflationary concerns may delay GST rate rationalisation'



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A GST tax rate rationalisation is likely to be delayed due to elevated inflation, sources said on Wednesday.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime taxes goods and services in four tax slabs of 5 per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent.

It was being considered to reduce these tax slabs possibly to 3, an exercise which would have involved raising taxes in some items and a reduction in others. But with inflation rate ruling at all-time high, such an exercise is likely to be delayed, sources said.

Govt's 29.5% stake sale in Hindustan Zinc Limited OK'd

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday cleared the Government's 29.5 per cent stake sale in Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL), which could fetch around Rs 38,000 crore to the exchequer. The decision would give a push to the Government's disinvestment drive in the current fiscal.

The government has budgeted Rs 65,000 crore from PSU disinvestment and strategic sale. The sale of 29.5 per cent stake representing over 124.96 crore shares would fetch around Rs 38,000 crore to the exchequer at current market prices, said officials.

Shares of HZL closed at Rs 305.05, up 3.14 per cent on the BSE. During the day, the scrip touched a high of Rs 317.30 a share. Hindustan Zinc was a Government-owned company

till 2002. In April 2002, the Government offloaded a 26 per cent stake in HZL to Sterlite Opportunities and Ventures Ltd (SOVL) for Rs 445 crore—thereby giving Vedanta group management control in HZL.

Vedanta group later bought 20 per cent from the market and another 18.92 per cent from the government in November 2003, raising its ownership in Hindustan Zinc to 64.92 per cent. This 20 per cent sale became a controversy and recently Supreme Court directed CBI to probe into the price variations between the first offloading and second offloading of shares happened during the Vajpayee Government.

Vedanta, led by mining magnate Anil Agarwal, recently said the company can buy just 5 per cent additional stake in the HZL considering the price of the shares on offer.

RBI issues norms for import of gold by qualified jewellers

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The RBI on Wednesday came up with norms for facilitating physical import of gold through India International Bullion Exchange IFSC (IIBX) or similar authorised exchange by Qualified Jewellers in India.

In addition to agencies nominated by the RBI and by DGFT, Qualified Jewellers (QJ) as approved by International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA) were permitted to import gold in January.

The RBI issued the guidelines in order to enable resident Qualified Jewellers to import gold through IIBX or any other exchange approved by IFSCA and the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

As per the guidelines, banks may allow Qualified Jewellers to remit advance payments for 11 days for import of gold through IIBX in compliance to the extant Foreign

Trade Policy and regulations issued under IFSC Act. "The advance remittance for import of Gold should not be leveraged in what-so-ever form for importing gold worth more than the advance remittance made," the Reserve Bank of India said.

In case the import of gold through IFSCA authorised exchange, for which advance remittance has been made, does not materialise, or the advance remittance made for the purpose is more than the amount required, the unutilised advance remittance shall be remitted back to the same bank within the specified time limit of 11 days.

RBI also said all payments by qualified jewellers for imports of gold through IIBX, shall be made through exchange mechanism as approved by IFSCA. Gold imports dipped by about 72 per cent to USD 1.72 billion during April, from USD 6.23 billion in the year-ago month.

Paper exports from India jumps 80% to all-time high of ₹13,963 cr in FY22: IPMA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Exports of paper and paperboard from India jumped nearly 80 per cent in FY 2021-22, touching a record Rs 13,963 crore, according to industry body IPMA.

The export growth has straddled across different grades of paper, said a statement from Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) while citing data released by Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S).

"In value terms, exports of coated paper and paperboard increased by 100 per cent, uncoated writing and printing paper by 98 per cent, tissue paper by 75 per cent and kraft paper by 37 per cent," said IPMA.

Paper exports from India have been on an uptrend since the last five years. India is

exporting papers to - UAE, China, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. "In volume terms, paper exports from India have gone up four times from 0.66 million tonnes in FY17 to 2.85 million tonnes in FY22.

Similarly in value terms, the figures for corresponding years rose from Rs 3,041 crore to Rs 13,963 crore," it said.

"Exports have been rising in the last few years due to capacity expansion and technological upgradation undertaken by Indian paper mills, leading to better product quality which has found wider acceptance globally," said Rohit Pandit, Secretary General, IPMA.

In the last five to seven years, paper mills in India have invested over Rs 25,000 crore to create new capacities and induction of clean and green technologies, he said.

Crude oil futures gain on spot demand



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Crude oil prices on Wednesday rose by ₹102 to ₹8,614 per barrel as participants widened positions on a firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for June delivery traded higher by ₹102 or 1.2 per cent at ₹8,614 per barrel in 6,907 lots. Analysts said the raising of bets by participants kept crude oil prices higher in futures trade.

Globally, West Texas Intermediate crude oil was up by 1.03 per cent at \$110.90 per barrel, while Brent crude traded 1.03 per cent higher at \$114.73 per barrel in New York.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

BEST AGROLIFE FY22 NET PROFIT JUMPS TO ₹104.76CR
Agrochemical firm Best Agrolife Ltd has reported a nearly three-fold jump in its net profit at Rs 104.76 crore in FY 2022. Its net profit stood at Rs 37.08 crore in the 2020-21 financial year, Best Agrolife Ltd (BAL) said in a statement. The company posted a 34 per cent increase in its revenue at Rs 1,210.79 crore in the period under review as against Rs 905.45 crore in the previous fiscal. "Our performance this year boosts our confidence and confirms that we are on track to achieve our strategic and financial objectives.

MANGO FESTIVAL FROM MAY 23
New Delhi: To refresh your taste-buds with ripe, sweet and delectable mangoes in this sweltering heat, Barista, a leading coffee chain, is starting a mango festival. The festival will be on in all Barista cafes in Delhi NCR, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kolkata from May 23. "The mango affair is very refreshing, natural and replenishes your body's lost minerals while battling out in the sun. We expect to have a great response to the festival," said Rajat Agrawal, COO, Barista Coffee Company.

EMPYREAN CASHEWS GROWS 101%
Mumbai: The revenue of Empyrean Cashews Limited, a leading firm engaged in processing raw cashew nuts, grew by 101 per cent touching Rs 12.41 cr for Q4FY22 and Rs 52.2cr for FY22. The firm is planning to set up 4 COCO outlets in Goa in Q2 FY23. Empyrean Cashew Ltd went public in March 2022.

Sebi to auction properties of Golden Life Agro India, Sunshine Agro Infra on June 16

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

To recover investors' money, Sebi on Wednesday said it will auction a total of five properties of Golden Life Agro India Ltd and Sunshine Agro Infra Ltd for a reserve price of Rs 11.5 crore on June 16.

The two companies raised funds from investors without complying with regulatory norms.

The properties put on the block include land parcels and a double storied building situated across West Bengal, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a notice.

Inviting bids for the sale of recovery proceedings against Golden Life Agro India and Sunshine Agro Infra and their directors, Sebi said auction of

properties will be conducted through online mode on June 16, 2022 during 10.30 am to 11.30 am. Out of the five properties being put on the block, three belong to Golden Life Agro India and remaining two relate to Sunshine Agro Infra.

Total reserve price of these properties is pegged at Rs 11.53 crore, as per notice. Quikr Realty has been appointed as e-auction service provider.

The regulator said bidders should make their own independent enquiries regarding encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims, among others, prior to submitting their bids.

Repos Energy partners Mahindra for doorstep fuel delivery

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ratan Tata-backed energy distribution startup Repos Energy has partnered with Mahindra for doorstep fuel delivery through the automaker's Furio trucks, a release said on Wednesday.

The Pune-based firm Repos is currently present across over 220 cities through its over 1,500 partners and more than 2,500 mobile petrol pumps.

The doorstep fuel delivery model has grown rapidly across the country and scaled up even faster in the post-Covid era, owing to many factors, such as structural constraints of the existing distribution model, changing buying behaviour of consumers and technological disruptions, according to the

release. Nagpur-based startup Navankur Infranergy has recently launched a mobile fuel station for the doorstep diesel delivery to various customers across Nagpur.

The mobile station, built on a Mahindra Furio 11 truck, with a double dispensing Alpha mobile pump, has been supplied by Repos Energy, according to the release.

Repos Energy has tied up with Mahindra to cater to doorstep fuel delivery demand through their Furio trucks, said the release.

"Mahindra's range of light and the intermediate commercial vehicle come with their inherent advantages to make it a perfect fit for fuel Bowser operation and ensure profitability," said Jalaj Gupta, Business Head for commercial

vehicles at Mahindra & Mahindra Limited. A major proportion of the diesel goes into fuelling industries, where it is often required in bulk.

These industries resort to procuring diesel from fuel pumps using improper receptacles like barrels and bowlers, which cause great losses in the form of spillage, pilferage, dead mileage, and manpower costs, he stated.

"Combining with the expertise of Repos Energy in fuel bowser business solution, we are introducing a compelling product offering to cater to the emerging need of industries," Gupta added. Doorstep diesel delivery in India has eased the way fuel is being delivered in the country, according to Chetan Walunj, co-founder of Repos Energy.

RBI cancels registration of 5 NBFCs due to irregular lending practices

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday said it has cancelled Certificate of Registration (CoR) of five NBFCs for violation of norms related to outsourcing and fair practices code in their digital lending operations.

Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) whose CoR stands cancelled are: UMB Securities Ltd, Anashri Finvest, Chadha Finance, Alexcy Traccon, and Jhuria Financial Services.

"The CoR of the (five) NBFCs have been cancelled on account of violation of RBI guidelines on outsourcing and



Fair Practices Code in their digital lending operations undertaken through third party apps which was considered detrimental to public interest," the RBI said.

It further said these companies were also not complying with extant regulations pertaining to charging of excessive interest and resorted to undue harassment of customers for loan recovery purposes.

Standard Chartered Bank settles case with Sebi in CG Power case, pays ₹4.97 cr



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Standard Chartered Bank has settled with markets regulator Sebi a case pertaining to alleged violations of regulatory norms in the matter of CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd after paying Rs 4.97 crore towards settlement charges. The order came after Standard

Chartered Bank (SCB) approached Sebi proposing to settle case pertaining to alleged violations of PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) rules "without admitting or denying findings of fact and conclusions of law", through a settlement order. "Pending enforcement proceedings for alleged defaults ... Are settled qua applicant," Sebi said in its settlement order passed on Wednesday.

The regulator further said it will not initiate other enforcement actions against the applicant for the defaults. Sebi had initiated proceedings through a show cause notice issued to

the bank in May 2021 for the alleged violations of PFUTP rules. In the show cause notice, Standard Chartered Bank was alleged to have benefitted a private limited company controlled by the promoter group companies, at the expense of a listed company (CG Power) to the detriment of the interest of the minority shareholders of CG Power.

As per the order, Avantha International Asset BV (AIABV), an entity related to the promoter group of CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd or CG Power, had taken a loan from SCB. In October 2017, SCB disbursed a loan of

Euro 44 million to CG International BV (CGIBV) which was transferred to AIABV on the same day to repay its earlier loan from SCB. The funds were later frozen by SCB at AIABV.

In February 2018, SCB disbursed another loan of Euro 44 million to CG Industrial Holdings Singapore Pte Ltd (CG Singapore) which was transferred to AIABV on the same day. On the same day, AIABV returned the funds received from CGIBV which were frozen and CGIBV utilized these funds for repayment of the loan taken from SCB in October 2017.



the pioneer

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2022

11

A lot of people counted David Miller out. But for us, he's always a match-winner from the time we bought him at the auctions. We always knew what he's capable of

— HARDIK PANDYA

Patidar 112* helps RCB post 207-4 vs LSG

Bangalore's No. 3 remained unbeaten and scored 12 fours, 7 sixes during his 54-ball knock in IPL 2022 eliminator

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Little-known domestic bulwark Rajat Patidar found his hour of fame as his magnificent 49-ball hundred propelled Royal Challengers Bangalore to an imposing 207 for 4 against Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL Eliminator on Wednesday.

Courtesy Patidar's 54-ball-112 not out which had 12 fours and seven huge sixes, RCB literally knocked the stuffing out of LSG attack with Mohsin Khan's superb 1 for 25 proving to be only saving grace.

On a day their famed batting duo trio of Faf du Plessis (0), Glenn Maxwell (9) and Virat Kohli (25) failed to enthrall a capacity Eden crowd, RCB's No. 3 played out of his skin as 90 runs came in fours and sixes off just 19 balls.

While most of the star-studded RCB batters struggled for timing, the 28-year-old looked effortless with his slices, punches, counter-punches and drives to tower over the rest.

And to make Patidar's story more interesting, he wasn't picked from auction this season and joined the team after start when a player called Luvnith Sisodia was injured.

Had Sisodia been alright, RCB

wouldn't have required services of Patidar, who made 65,000 at Eden Gardens stand on their feet.

He along with Dinesh Karthik (37 not out from 23 balls) put on a match-turning unbroken partnership of 92 runs from 41 balls as RCB scored 84 runs in the last five overs to prop up the total.

First, he showed the glimpses of his stroke-making skills to slam Krunal Pandya for three boundaries and one six inside the power-play to overshadow Kohli in a 66-run partnership from 46 balls.

Having cruised to his half-century in 28 balls, he took another 21 balls to reach his maiden hundred in T20s.

He got to the landmark pulling Mohsin Khan over square leg with a sweet-timing of the bat that summed up his effortless stay at the crease.

RCB lost three key wickets of a well-set Kohli, Maxwell and Mahipal Lomror in the middle overs to see their run-rate drop.

In-form Dinesh Karthik, who has played the role of a finisher to perfection for RCB this season, also survived some anxious moments against Ravi Bishnoi to start with.

But Patidar turned it around in the last over Bishnoi when he smacked the 'googly-man' for three



HISTORY MAKER RAJAT PATIDAR

➤ Rajat Patidar is the first uncapped player to score a century in the play-offs/knockouts of the IPL. The previous highest score by an uncapped was the 94 off 50 balls that Manish Pandey scored for Kolkata Knight Riders in the final of the 2014 IPL.

➤ He scored his century in 49 balls, which is the joint fastest ton scored by any played in the playoffs or knockouts of the IPL. Patidar equalled the record set by Wriddhiman Saha, who scored 115 off 55 balls for Kings XI Punjab in

the 2014 IPL final.

➤ Patidar's 112 not out has helped him go past a player who was recently inducted in RCB's hall of fame. He has surpassed the 89 off 47 balls that Chris Gayle scored against Mumbai Indians in 2011.

➤ This is the third-highest score by an uncapped player in the IPL. Patidar crossed the unbeaten 101 that Devdutt Padikkal scored for RCB against Rajasthan Royals last season. Manish Pandey is second

while Paul Valthaty tops the list.

➤ It is also the fifth instance of a player scoring a century in the playoffs/knockouts of an IPL tournament. Patidar's 112 not out is also the fourth highest score ever in the playoffs.

➤ Meanwhile, Patidar and Karthik's onslaught in the final overs helped RCB take as many as 88 runs in the death overs. That is the most scored by any team in this period of a match in the 2022 season.

sixes and two fours in succession in an over that read 1 6 4 6 4 6.

A sloppy LSG also helped his cause as Patidar, who got reprieves on 59, 72 and 93. After a 40-minute delayed start due to bad weather, Lucknow got off to a superb start when Mohsin got RCB skipper Faf du Plessis for a golden duck in the first over.

Having lost their skipper early, it was about bidding time as Kohli and Patidar opted for a wait-and-watch policy before the latter broke loose

against Krunal Pandya in the last over of the power-play.

Patidar slammed Krunal for three boundaries and one six in an over that yielded 20 runs to make it up for their slow start and cruise to 52/1 in six overs.

SACHIN, VIRU IMPRESSED

Patidar's binder earned him a lot of praise of social media and taking to Twitter, Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar and legendary Indian opener Virender Sehwag hailed him

for playing a match-changing knock for the Faf du Plessis-led side.

"Serious hitting by Rajat Patidar and nicely supported by @DineshKarthik. It's a great total but given how the surface is playing and the fast outfield, I feel it'll be a close game. Well played by @rcbtweets in the first half," Tendulkar said in his tweet. Tendulkar's former Team India teammate Sehwag also shared a special tweet for the middle-order batter of the Bangalore-based franchise.

You've got to swallow your ego sometimes and hang in there: Buttler

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Rajasthan Royals opener Jos Buttler had no qualms in admitting that he struggled to get going initially against Gujarat Titans in the first qualifier, saying sometimes you have to "swallow your ego" and hang in there without panicking.

This season's Orange Cap holder Buttler, who now has 718 runs in 15 games, initially failed to time the ball and was 39 off his first 38 balls.

But the opener shifted gears in style and smacked another 50 off his next 18 deliveries faced to lift RR's total to a challenging 188/6.

"I was determined to hang in there. It was a big game for us and we wanted to make sure to put a big score," Buttler said at the post-match press conference after RR's seven-wicket loss to GT on Tuesday.

"Sometimes you got to swallow your ego, if you are finding it hard, you are finding it hard. I don't try to force too much, don't panic.

"The opposition would prefer me to panic and get out, just try to hang in there. I knew at some point I would get away. I trusted myself. Today, it came late in the innings," he added.

Buttler also had plenty of luck go his way as he got two reprieves in the middle in his 89 off 56 balls.

It was Sanju Samson who gave RR a fiery start with his 47 off 26 and Buttler said the Royals skipper took some pressure off him.

"Yes I was finding it tough to start with and then Sanju came in and played well from



ball one. He took a lot of pressure off me. I wouldn't say it was my most fluent innings but I just tried to hang in there and managed to get a little bit away in the end."

The 189-run target proved insufficient for the Royals as David Miller and Hardik Pandya shared a 106-run unbroken partnership for the fourth wicket to seal a win and take GT to the final in their maiden IPL season. "We just could not break that partnership, if we managed to take a wicket and found a way to break that partnership, it would have been crucial for us. The deeper they took, the harder it became for us.

"But we are still alive in the tournament after finishing in the

top-two, we still got a chance. We're disappointed today, but still in the tournament," he added.

The Purple Cap-holder Yuzvendra Chahal and India senior off-spinner R Ashwin, who have a combined tally of 37 wickets this season, were wicketless and leaked 72 runs against the Titans. "Those two guys have been outstanding for us this season. It's a tough place for bowlers — spin or pace bowling.

"It's a small ground with a fast outfield. A lot of boundaries are available on this particular ground. So it is always going to be tough. There was a bit of dew also in the second innings," he said, throwing his support to the spin duo.

Hardik says his name 'always sells, no problem with it'

PTI ■ KOLKATA

In his short international career, Hardik Pandya has seen it all — highs and lows, injuries, surgery, being embroiled in controversies — but he says he faces them with a smiling face.

Putting behind all these, Pandya has shone not just as an all-rounder but as a leader, taking an under-rated Gujarat Titans to the final in a dream IPL debut season.

"People always talk, that's their job. I can't help," Pandya said after Titans win.

"The name 'Hardik Pandya' always sells. I've no problem with it, I just take it easy with a smiling face."

After making his international debut in 2016 following his success with Mumbai Indians, expectations skyrocketed with Pandya as he was compared with the legendary World Cup-winning India skipper Kapil Dev.

In 2019, Pandya was suspended for his loose talk on women on 'Koffee with Karan'. He later apologised to the inquiry



committee of the BCCI.

The 28-year-old star all-rounder made his last appearance for India against Namibia in the T20 World Cup in Dubai on November 8 and then struggled to manage his bowling workload

post his back surgery. Released by Mumbai Indians, Hardik was picked by Gujarat's for ₹15 crore ahead of this IPL season. Questions were raised when he was handed captaincy for a team making its debut, but Pandya has delivered,

be it with the bat, ball or in his 'Captain Cool' demeanour, much like his mentor MS Dhoni.

"Obviously Mahi bhai has played a big role in my life. He's a dear brother, a dear friend, and family to me," Pandya said. "...I've learnt a lot of good things from him. For me, it was more about being individually strong which I'm really proud of myself as well how I was able to manage all the parts."

Mostly coming at number four, Pandya is at the fifth spot in the chart for most prolific batters this season, with 453 runs at a 45-plus average and a healthy strike rate of 132.84.

Pandya has also come handy with the ball, giving crucial breakthroughs for his team. He has bowled 26.3 overs so far and taken five wickets with an economy of 7.73. "Before the captaincy as well, I always made sure that I approached all the situations in a cool-headed way. Generally, you make better decisions that way," he said about his recipe for success in this IPL.

Test rankings: Kohli, Rohit, Ashwin maintain their top-10 positions

PTI ■ DUBAI

Bangladesh's Liton Das and Sri Lankan veteran Angelo Mathews have made valuable gains in the ICC Men's Test Rankings after fine performances in the drawn first match while there has been no movement in latest top-10 list issued by the world body.

In the batter's list, Marnus Labuschagne maintained his pole position while India captain Rohit Sharma and his predecessor

Virat Kohli remained static at eighth and 10th place respectively. Similarly in bowling, Pat Cummins (901 points) has a 51-point lead over his nearest rival Ravichandran Ashwin, who is followed by countryman Jasprit Bumrah. India's Ravindra Jadeja also remained on top of the all-rounders' table.

With only Sri Lanka and Bangladesh engaged in a WTC series, it was inevitable that players from those two nations earned points.

AGENCIES ■ KOLKATA

After helping Gujarat Titans to seal a spot in the final of the ongoing Indian Premier League 2022 on Tuesday, star batter David Miller said continued backing from the team has played a big role in improving his game in this season.

Miller was the chief creator of GT's brilliant great seven-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals. David Miller played a ballistic knock of 68 from 38 balls and captain Hardik Pandya's 40 off 27 balls guided debutants Gujarat Titans to a

Gill feels he doesn't have to prove anything to anyone

KOLKATA: Chasing a challenging 189-run target, Shubman Gill along with Matthew Wade laid a solid foundation striking a 72-run partnership for the second wicket to pave way for a seven-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals here at the Eden Gardens Stadium on Tuesday to enter the final of the IPL. The GT opener scored 35 off 21 balls hitting five fours and one six. "Kolkata has always been nice to me, fortunately, it was one of those nights where we were on the winning side, happy we are in the final. After Saha got out, we got off to a good start in the powerplay, batting in the Eden Gardens is always fun," said Shubman.

Talking about the batting surface and his team, he said "We expected the surface to be better, but the ball was holding a bit and spinners were getting a bit of grip on this wicket. It's a new team but the way the support staff and players have come together has been tremendous to watch, we are all really enjoying our cricket."

Shubman further added that he played well for Gujarat and had a good season.

"There hasn't been any added pressure on me, I was picked (in the draft) because I have done well for my earlier franchises, I don't have to prove anything to anyone, I just had to contribute to my team and play well for them. It was nice to watch (from sidelines), a semi-final and your teammates are doing the job, it was amazing," he added. **PTI**

as Gujarat Titans became the 3rd team to reach the final in their debut season.

"It was a new team so there are a few butterflies here and there. From the first win, everything sort of aligned. You have to control what you can, can't think too much ahead. Concentrate on your breathing, and if it's in your area, you have to capitalise. We've got a few days off. There's a bus trip back, we'll have a few drinks and celebrate," said Miller.

Gujarat Titans will now wait to see who among Lucknow Super Giants, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Rajasthan Royals meet them in the title clash in Ahmedabad on May 29.

Mathews, de Silva keep Sri Lanka alive



AP ■ DHAKA

Angelo Mathews and Dhananjaya de Silva each hit a fifty and put on a 102-run partnership to keep

Sri Lanka going strong in the rain-hit second Test against Bangladesh on Wednesday.

Mathews remained unbeaten on 58 after de Silva went out with the same score to take Sri Lanka to 282-

5 at stumps on the third day, still trailing Bangladesh by 83 runs.

Rain washed out entire post-lunch session but the duo stepped up their scoring rate to make up for lost time, with de Silva striking nine fours before Shakib Al Hasan got his wicket.

The right-hander, who faced 95 balls, was initially given not out on a caught-behind appeal before Bangladesh successfully reviewed.

Mathews, who smashed four fours and a six, was batting with Dinesh Chandimal on 10 at stumps.

Bangladesh made early inroads after Sri Lanka resumed on 143-2, Ebadot Hossain bowling nightwatchman Kasun Rajitha for a duck with the second ball of the day.

A gem of a delivery from Shakib dismissed Dimuth Karunaratne for 80 soon afterwards, with the Sri Lankan skipper adding 10 to his overnight score.

Shakib tossed the ball up on off-stump and Karunaratne went for a drive but saw the flighted delivery dip and turn between bat and pad before crashing into his stumps.

Karunaratne, who was dropped on 37, struck nine boundaries in his 15th Test fifty.

De Silva hit Ebadot for three fours in one over just before the break after he and Mathews survived a difficult spell from the right-arm pace bowler and Shakib.

Shakib, the most successful bowler for Bangladesh so far, has claimed 3-59.



