

OPINION 6

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TO SURVIVAL MODE

MONEY 10

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BHUBANESWAR, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 25, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4



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What's tearing hurry in picking Goel as EC: SC

AG objects to SC's observation: Arun's profile more vital than his voluntary retirement for new job appointment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday questioned the "haste" and "tearing hurry" in appointing Arun Goel as the Election Commissioner.

Goel's appointment file showed the entire process to place him as the Election Commissioner took less than 24 hours after the 1985 batch IAS officer got voluntary retirement from service.

The SC went through the original file of Goel's appointment as an EC. The Centre placed the file before the bench in pursuance of Wednesday's direction given by the SC.

The Centre vehemently resisted the observations, with Attorney General R Venkataramani saying the whole issue pertaining to the appointment of Goel be looked into its entirety. The SC reserved the matter for judgment.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice KM Joseph perused the Centre's original file pertaining to Goel's



appointment as EC. "What kind of evaluation is this? Although, we are not questioning the merits of Goel's credentials but the process," asked the judge pursuing the files.

"This was moved on November 18. Then the names are examined. Then the Prime Minister comes in ... Is it (usually) done in such haste, with such tearing urgency," Justice Joseph asked Attorney General R Venkataramani, who was appearing for the Central Government. "You did it in one day. On November 18. The file shows it," he added.

"According to your first page, this vacancy has been since May 15. Can you show us that from May to November, what was it that weighed on the Government that everything must be done superfast in November. We know that where there is a will there is a way," Justice Ajay Rastogi said. He also said the notification of appointment was issued the very same day, November 18.

As the bench questioned the "lightning speed" with

which Goel was appointed as an EC and also that his file did not even move within departments for 24 hours, the Centre through Venkataramani vehemently urged the bench not to make observations without looking into the entire issue pertaining to the appointment process.

During the hearing, lawyer Prashant Bhushan attempted to make submissions before the bench when the Attorney General was arguing. "Please hold your mouth for a while," the top-most law officer told Bhushan.

The top court reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas seeking a collegium-like system for the appointment of ECs and the Chief Election Commissioner and asked the parties to file written submission in five days. Justice Ajay Rastogi, who is also a part of the bench, told Venkataramani, "You have to listen to the court carefully and answer the questions. We are not on individual candidates but on the process." The Attorney General said he

is bound to answer the questions of the court.

The top court said the 1985-batch IAS officer got voluntary retirement from service in a single day, his file was cleared by the Law Ministry in a single day, a panel of four names was put up before the Prime Minister and Goel's name got the nod from the President within 24 hours. The bench, which also comprised Justices Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and CT Ravikumar, said none of the four names in the panel were "carefully hand-picked" by the Law Minister so that they could complete a six-year tenure.

Venkataramani responded that there is a mechanism and criteria for selection and there cannot be a scenario where the Government has to look back at every officers' track record and ensure that he completes the six-year tenure. Referring to Goel's appointment, the Attorney General said his profile is important and not the voluntary retirement which is being made an issue.

The bench said the 1991 Act says the EC's tenure is of six years and the Government has to ensure that the person who holds the post completes the stipulated period.

The top court said it is "struggling" to find the reasons and objects on how the Law Minister selected a panel of four names who were not going to complete the stipulated six-year tenure.

Pilot 'gaddar', took money from BJP to topple my Govt: Gehlot

Raj CM's attack widens fissures in Cong ahead of poll next year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

On a day when former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot joined Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi in their ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday made a shocking claim that he has enough proof that the BJP paid Pilot and his few associate MLAs ₹10 crore each to stage a rebellion against his Government two and half years ago.

In an interview to NDTV, Gehlot termed Pilot a "gaddar" (traitor) and said he did not know when the high command indicated to make Pilot Chief Minister since he is the only point man of high command in the State. "I do not have any indication. I am with the high command," he said.

On the question of the Gehlot camp not accepting Pilot, he said, "How will they accept the man who has committed betrayal? Our MLAs and I myself have suffered because of him."

This is the second time in a month that Gehlot vented his anger against Pilot in public. But today he virtually challenged the high command by indicating he would not accept Pilot as his replacement at any



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with his sister and the party's general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and party leader Sachin Pilot during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday

cost. Gehlot's next move will be keenly watched now. His relation with Gandhis, in particular, all but ended after he refused to relinquish the post of CM for Pilot and head the Congress as its president.

Gehlot's scathing attack on Pilot has further widened the fissures in the Congress party in Rajasthan, where Assembly polls are slated next year. The Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, is also set to enter Rajasthan next weekend.

Pilot chose not to react directly and attack Gehlot, but he said it was unbecoming

of an experienced person like him to use such language and the priority should be to fight to defeat the BJP as well as strengthen Rahul's hand.

Pilot said, "Gehlot has been calling me 'nikamma, naakara, gaddar and so on' but it was not part of his upbringing to use such language."

"I have seen Gehlot's statements today aimed against me. Someone who is so experienced, senior and whom party has given so much, it is unbecoming of someone with such experience to use this language, make such completely false and baseless alle-

gations. It serves no purpose when we have to fight BJP unitedly....Previously also Ashok Gehlot ji has been making such allegations against me for a long time," the former Union Minister said.

The priority right now is to win the Assembly elections in Gujarat where Gehlot is the senior observer of the party and it is also important to strengthen the hand of Rahul, who has spent the last three months walking 2,000 km in the Bharat Jodo Yatra to challenge divisive forces, and that of the party, Pilot said.

2 women Maoists gunned down in Balagir

No place for violence in democracy: DGP SAROJ MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Police during an intelligence-based operation in the Gandhamardhan Hills of Balangir district on Thursday neutralised two ACM-rank woman Maoists, said DGP Sunil Kumar Bansal at a Press meet here.

Two INSAS Rifles were recovered from their possession. From the police database, it was revealed that the uniformed women Maoists belonged to Balangir-Bargarh-Mahasamud (BBM) Division. Both are natives of Chhattisgarh and carried a bounty of Rs 4 lakh each on their heads, Bansal said.

He said that getting specific inputs of the presence of Maoist Dalams in the border



area of Odisha, five teams were deployed.

In one such anti-Maoist operation a team of the Special Operations Group (SOG) spotted five ultras in the Gandhamardhan Hills and challenged them around 10.30 am. In the subsequent gun battle two Maoists were gunned down. Their bodies were recovered during combing operations.

Three other ultras managed to escape from the spot. Combing operations are still

on to capture on neutralise them, he said.

The DGP once again appealed to the Maoists to shun violence and invited them join the social mainstream. The surrender policy of the State Government is excellent and positive. In a democratic nation there is no place for violence.

If one has any difference of opinion it can be discussed. But one segment can't be allowed to pick up arms in a democratic nation, he said.

Archana honey-trap case BJD MLA's brother appears before ED

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Gangadhar Samal, businessman and brother of Dhenkanal BJD MLA Sudhir Samal, appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) here on Thursday and was questioned in connection with the Archana Nag honey-trap and extortion case.

Gangadhar, owner of a car showroom, had allegedly made financial transactions of Rs 30 lakh with Archana.

Earlier, businessman Amiyakant Das had been questioned by the ED on the Rs 10 lakh deposited by him in Archana's account. Das claimed he had given the money for treatment of Archana's husband Jagabandhu Chand.

On Wednesday, Archana's elusive associate Shradhanjali Behera had been interrogated for about 12 hours and the investigating agency is said to have traced huge deposits in her account.

Film producer Akshay Parija



also appeared before ED for the second consecutive day in connection with the case. He was subjected to a marathon grilling by the investigating agency.

Meanwhile, Archana and Jagabandhu's associate Khageswar Rout's three-day remand ended on Thursday. He would be sent to judicial custody. The ED had earlier registered a money laundering case against Archana, Jagabandhu and their two associates.

Archana and his husband allegedly amassed over Rs 30 crore between 2018 and 2022 by blackmailing businessmen, politicians and film producers. The ED has traced Rs 2.5 crore of those deposits.

Opp seeks CM's scalp on Archana issue



Uproar in Assembly

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The first day of the State Assembly's Winter Session on Thursday witnessed uproarious scenes with Opposition members storming the Well of the House demanding resignation of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik over the lady black-mailer Archana Nag issue.

Speaker Bikram Keshari

Arukha had to adjourn the House till tomorrow as the Congress and the BJP shouted slogans by rushing to the Speaker's podium.

After the House assembled after the obituary reference at 5 pm, the Opposition raised the Archana issue. Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra targeted the Government and demanded resignation of the CM. He alleged that the CM has been a mute spec-

tator to the issue.

"Since there are allegations that several influential persons including ruling party leaders are involved in the sex scandal case, the Chief Minister who has remained a mute spectator has no moral right to stay in office. He should resign," Mishra told reporters outside the Assembly.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Majhi (BJP) also demanded the CM's resignation.

CAPSULE

INDIA UPSET AT MENTION OF MODI BY US OFFICIAL

New Delhi: India is upset at a reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a US State Department official while defending the immunity it had extended to Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Sultan, who is facing allegations of killing journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

SHRADDHA MURDER: AFTAB'S KNIVES SEIZED

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has seized five knives from the flat of Mehrauli murder accused Aaftab Amin Poonawala, who underwent a marathon polygraph test of nearly eight hours on Thursday at the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) here, officials said. However, police said the saw allegedly used by Poonawala to cut his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar's body is yet to be recovered.

In Assembly

Rs 16,800-cr State Supplementary Budget presented

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government presented a Supplementary Budget of Rs 16,800 crore for the financial year 2022-23 in the State Assembly on Thursday.

Panchayati Raj Minister Pradip Amat presented the budget on behalf of Finance Minister Niranjana Pujari, who was not present in the House.

Amat said the Supplementary Budget is aimed at fulfilling the requirement of funds for public welfare and developmental activities in the State.

The budget will be utilised for additional requirement of

funds for completion of the important ongoing projects, drought relief packages to farmers for crop loss during Kharif season, etc.

As per the budget, the total outlay for the administrative expenditure is Rs 4,934 crore.

Additional provision of Rs 2,610 crore has been proposed in the Supplementary State-ment of Expenditure, 2022-23 against the differential year-end balance available in State Disaster Response Mitigation Fund.

Besides, Rs 200 crore has been provided for assistance to the farmers affected with crop loss during Kharif season in 2021 and Rs 306.65 crore has



been allocated for irrigation facility, farmers' welfare and food security.

A total sum of Rs 867 crore is allocated for public healthcare, Rs 2,084 crore for education, sports and skill development sector.

Earlier in the day, the Winter Session of the Assembly commenced and it will continue till December 31 with a total of 33 working days.

The House began proceedings by paying obituary to the departed members. Members, cutting across party lines, condoled the demise of former Ministers and MLAs who passed away during the intervening period of

last session and the ongoing one.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had moved the obituary reference and expressed his profound grief over the death of former Ministers Bijaya Ranjan Singh Bariha and Golak behari Nayak, former members Bishnu Charan Sethi, Kapil Narayan Tiwary and Gopanaraya Das.

Leader of Opposition (BJP) Jayanarayan Mishra, Congress Legislature Party leader Naraisingha Mishra, CPI(M) MLA Laxman Munda and Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha paid rich tributes to the departed members.

Govt fixes ₹7,409 cr for 'The Ashok' hotel under National Monetisation plan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has fixed an indicative value for Delhi's iconic "The Ashok" hotel at ₹7,409 crore under the national monetisation programme, according to sources.

The Ashok and hotel Samrat are among the eight ITDC assets listed under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last year.

The sources said investor consultation has already been undertaken and a Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs note for the sale of the sprawling 25-acre property in the heart of Delhi is under consideration.

Govt asks DMs for special screenings of ‘DAMaN’



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
With Odia movie 'DAMaN' riding high on its cinematic success and garnering a spectacular response from people across Odisha, the State government has facilitated its special screenings at the district and

sub-divisional levels. All district Collectors have been requested to arrange special screenings at their nearby theatres either at district or sub-divisional level as per their suitability. As the theme of the movie is based on the Odisha Government's scheme for

malaria eradication namely 'DAMaN' (Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakaran), the decision for special screenings aims to motivate Government officials to augment healthcare services in inaccessible areas. 'DAMaN' revolves around and chronicles the success of

the government's health scheme in malaria-endemic Malkangiri district. The movie also carries a positive message on the efforts and contributions of both the Government and the public in implementing health initiatives in remote areas. Keeping the movie's essence in view, the Government has facilitated officials at the district and sub-district levels, especially those belonging to the Health and Family Welfare Department and other senior district officers to view the film through special screenings. This is to motivate dedicated and hardworking Government officials. The cost for all this is being borne by the Health Department, an official release stated.

Casteist remark slur on Khordha DM



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Khordha Collector K Sudarshan Chakravarthi landed in controversy as his Personal Assistant (PA) Hemant Kumar Bhoi has accused the IAS officer of abusing and harassing him mentally by making racist and

casteist remarks. Bhoi's wife Sabita Nayak on Thursday lodged a written complaint in this regard with the Khordha police mentioning that the Collector would be responsible if anything happens to him or his family. The complainant has also alleged that the Collector was not allowing her husband to enter the office and asking him to supervise cooks and gardeners at the bureaucrat's residence. "The Collector has been harassing me mentally for the last two months. I am being rebuked by him regularly over petty matters. I am unable to bear it further. My wife today lodged a police complaint seeking justice," said Bhoi. Till the filing of this report, the Collector was yet to comment on the allegations.

Dist status demand Bandh held in Titilagarh, Kantabanji



PNS ■ BALANGIR
Various organisations observed a 12-hour bandh in Titilagarh and Kantabanji demanding district status for these two regions. A Kriyanusthana Committee called the bandh in Titilagarh. Members of the committee urged the people of the area to extend their support to the dawn-to-dusk bandh from 6 am to 6 pm. The agitators have congregated at various junctions in the area to press their demands. While shops and business establishments remained closed, vehicular movement came to a halt due

to the strike. Similarly, the Kantabanji Zilla Sangharsh Samiti called the bandh in Kantabanji over the demand of district status for it. The agitators blocked roads at various places affecting vehicular movement. Shops and educational institutions remained closed in view of the bandh. Besides, the Santala Traders' Association and the Santala Vikash Parishad observed the bandh in Santala demanding sub-division status for the area. Movement of vehicles between Kalahandi and Balangir districts on NH-26 was affected due to the bandh.

Online ticket sale for Hockey World Cup

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
The online sale of tickets for 'FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 Bhubaneswar-Rourkela' began on Thursday from 1 pm on Paytm Insider (www.insider.in). After buying the tickets online, spectators need to redeem those for a physical ticket at the tournament box office of the stadiums in

Bhubaneswar and Rourkela. An individual user can only purchase two tickets. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had on Wednesday purchased the first ticket form Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey paying Rs 500. The sporting event will be held from January 13 to 29, 2023 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and the Birs Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela.

Book on effects of globalisation on State



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
A research book "Socio-Cultural History of Odisha: Pre and Post Globalisation Period" written by Dr Manas Ranjan Debata was released by

Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal here recently. The book seeks to trace the socioeconomic and cultural history of Odisha in the pre and post-globalisation periods. It debates upon the cultural

traits of Odisha and examines the factors that led to the globalisation process. It also critically analyses the positive and negative impact of globalisation on the socio-economic situation in the

State and makes a comparative analysis of the society and culture in Odisha during pre and post-globalisation periods. The book has been published by Subhi Publications, New Delhi. Debata has been awarded the Degree of Doctors of Philosophy in History under the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2020 from the Sambalpur University and PhD in the convocation in February 22, 2022 at Jyoti Vihar, Burla. Debata retired as Additional Secretary to State Government i April 2021.

Temp to fall by 3 to 5 degree in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Cold conditions are likely to return due to a sharp fall in the minimum temperatures in different parts of the State in the coming days. The night temperature is very likely to fall gradually by 3 to 5 degree Celsius at many places over the districts during the next four to five days, the Regional Office of the IMD here predicted. Even though the overall weather conditions would remain dry, the fall in minimum temperature is likely cause inconvenience to

people in different parts of the State. On Wednesday night, five places recorded a minimum temperature of 15 degree Celsius and below. Jharsuguda was the coldest place in the State at 12.4 degree followed by Sundargarh 13 degree, Keonjhar 14 degree, Bargarh 14.6 degree and Nabarangpur 15 degree. Besides, shallow to moderate fog is likely to occur at one or two places in the districts of Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Balangir, Gajapati and Ganjam on Friday, the weather office said.

Peon murder: Accused confesses to crime

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
A day after a school peon was found dead near the Paikarapur hill under the Chandaka police limits near here, police arrested a 20-year-old youth after the latter confessed to the crime here on Thursday. The deceased Bansidhar Jena of the Retang area, a peon at the Paikarapur School, was stoned to death by the accused Guna alias Prakash Balwant

Ray of the same village when the latter was in an inebriated state. Police said Bansidhar and Guna had gone to have dinner together. After food and alcohol, they went to Mundia. Bansidhar reportedly made offensive statements towards Guna's parents. Provoked by the abuse, Guna attacked Bansidhar. As the latter fell and hit a rock, Guna went ahead and smashed his head with a stone leading to

Bansidhar's death at the spot. Guna then fled back home. After Bansidhar's family found his body, his son Jyoti Ranjan filed a case with police alleging that his father was stoned to death. Police tracked down Guna, who confessed to the crime and surrendered. Guna said he was angry over Bansidhar's comments and attacked him when he was drunk. Police, however, said the murder was preplanned.

"The accused had planned the murder over past enmity. He was holding grudge against Bansidhar as the latter had earlier passed similar offensive remarks against one of his cousins who is a transgender. When Bansidhar again passed comments at the character of Guna's parents, he flew into a rage and committed the crime in a drunken state," Zone 5 ACP Ramesh Chandra Bisoi told the media.

Ragging at VSSUT Student thrashed by seniors in hostel

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR
A second year student of the Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT) at Burla in Sambalpur district was allegedly ragged by his seniors in the hostel of the educational institution on Wednesday night.



The victim, identified as Anubhav Khamari, lodged a complaint in this connection with the Burla police. A case was registered while further investigation by police was underway. The VSSUT authorities said that action would be taken against those found guilty. "I had gone to the ground

floor of the hostel last night, during which 15-16 senior students intercepted me. They held my collar near the stairs, abused me and thrashed me. I sustained injuries in the attack," said Anubhav, a student of Electronics and Telecommunication Department of VSSUT.

SOCIAL CANVAS

Rapid industrialisation needed to end Odisha backwardness

Dr Harekrushna Mahtab as Industry Minister of Independent India was eager to see establishment of a number of dams and industries in Odisha. In a letter to the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1948, he sought for the help of the Central Government to build dams over the Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani rivers for multipurpose use of their water. He also sought cooperation from the Centre for industrial development in the State with help of foreign companies. He was also looking for support for construction of a new capital. Former Odisha Chief Ministers Harekrushna Mahtab and Biju Patnaik and present Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik were in charge of the Union Ministry of Industry, Steel and Mines. And among others from Odisha those who held the same ministry were Nityananda Kanungo, Dillip Ray, Braja Kishore Tripathy and Dharmendra Pradhan. But in terms of industrialisation, Odisha is still way behind other developed States. Why Odisha remains backward in industrialisation though it is the most advantageous compared to others having a long coastline and rich mineral resources is a pertinent



MANAS JENA

question. Other minerals-owning States like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh don't enjoy this privilege. Almost all the coastal States of India are becoming urbanized and industrially developed but Odisha is an exception. Many countries of the world which have got independence after the World War II have excelled in industry and economic growth but this has not happened in India where still there are backward States and regions that have not utilised their natural resources and manpower. The Annual Survey of Industries 2019 by the NSO reported on the industrial development of the usually backward States such as Bihar, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. In spite of many advantages such as a vast sea coast and mineral resources,

Odisha continues to remain backward in industrialisation. Not a single national manufacturing hub is promoted in the State. The top ten most industrialized States include Goa, TN, Maharashtra, Gujarat, UP, AP, Telangana, Kerala, Rajasthan and Haryana. It is estimated that nearly 60 per cent of the total factories are in five most industrialised States like TN, Maharashtra, Gujarat, UP and AP. It is being reported that during the last 25 years of liberalization these States have seen visible growth of factories. TN has the highest number of factories i.e. 38,131 till 2018 from 16,617 in 1990, followed by Maharashtra, Gujarat, UP and AP. Odisha is a major supplier of migrant workers to these States. The State has only 3,063 factories. The number is even less than Bihar and Chhattisgarh. In terms of employment, Odisha has engaged about 3 lakh persons whereas TN has engaged more than 25 lakh persons. Kerala which is geographically smaller than Odisha has 7,696 factories. The State has employed 3, 50,000 persons. The economic growth of TN is put together on a port based economy, trade and manufacturing, having well-built

infrastructure such as three major ports, 15 minor ports and eight airports with rail and road networks. The minerals are mostly sold out from Odisha for the last 70 years without any value addition. The mineral and metallurgical products, steel and aluminum constitute a major share of the State's total export. They are being shipped to China, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan, USA, Vietnam, Russia, Canada, Iran, UK, Germany, Spain, Australia, and UAE mostly from the Paradip port. But the coastline also remains unexplored. The coastal highway and minor ports have not been developed like other States. The farmers, fisher folks and forest based communities of the State remain backward and underdeveloped; still a majority of them depend on traditional ways of cultivation, and mostly paddy is the principal crop. The quality of life and living standard is one the poorest in the country with low wage rate and distress migration. Odisha is not featured among top ten developed States of India. Internationally, its IMR and MMR are just equal to the condition of Ethiopia and sub Saharan Africa. There have been continued huge

regional imbalances within the State and persistent inequality in socio-economic status among different ethnic and social groups. In the process of slow growth of industrial and manufacturing based employment, as well as the service sector, the rural youth prefer to migrate to industrially advanced States and metropolises in search of employment as a better option for their future. The trend of migration has been increasing in recent times due to frequent visits of natural calamities that affect the agricultural economy more. It is not emerging as an attractive economic destination; rather it is seen as a labor supplier State. Maybe a countable few Odias are better placed at national and international level but that has not been able to change the overall image of the State. There is wider scope for rapid industrialisation in Odisha which can change both material and social conditions of the majority of people. Many of our historically unresolved social issues such as caste, gender and ethnic based discriminations are closely linked to feudal agrarian economic system. The landless labourers, sharecroppers, small and marginal

farmers and forest dwellers have no future in the ongoing agrarian economy of the State. For the last 70 years, the State has not initiated any agrarian reform to change the feudal mode of production relation as it is found that still the real tillers have no land to cultivate and are deprived of all kinds of State protection. Social and economic inequalities can be addressed by improving production and growth of all sectors of the economy and not just banking on traditional agriculture. Social justice ideas in our constitution must be reflected in our changing economic systems in order to remove economic and social inequalities and to ensure a decent standard of living of working people. Unfortunately during the last 72 years inequality remains an issue of concern. There are a host of schemes for people living in slums and hamlets but they have failed to ensure wellbeing of the people by reducing poverty. The political parties in the State fighting elections have no development agenda before the people for the whole State; rather they are routinely giving freebies to get votes. These days, ruling parties are engaged in bribing

people with liquor, feast and cash to woo voters. In a modern constitutional State with multiparty democracy, it is the duty of political parties to drive the people towards building a developed society but unfortunately the ruling parties are not serious about the condition of the economy. They are more interested in continuing in power by only managing voters without development. The subsequent State Governments for last 72 years have been more focused on relief and rehabilitation, State charity and welfare model to address the issues of poor and very less attention has been paid to long term visions of economic growth with capital investment such as industrialisation based on its many forms of natural advantages and also potential human resource development through quality education and skill development. It is not true that Odisha is not developing at all, but the fact is when there is a comparison with other industrially developed States, its position remains at the bottom of many socio-economic indicators because of its slow growth. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

In Kendrapada

45 injured as crackers go off in idol immersion fest

33 critical; 10 in ICU

RAJESH BEHERA
■ KENDRAPADA

Nearly 45 persons, including women and minors, sustained burn injuries late on Wednesday night in a fire cracker mishap at Balia Bazar under the Kendrapada Sadar police limits during the Kartikeswar immersion.

The conditions of 33 who sustained grievous burn injuries were stated to be critical as they received more than 50% burn. They were referred to the SCB Medical College Hospital at Cuttack, informed police sources. As



many ten of the victims have been admitted to the ICU.

As per reports, a firecracker bursting competition was being held among different puja pandals. A spark from firework fell on a stock of firecrackers, which was to be



used during the competition.

It resulted in a major explosion leaving the participants of the procession injured. The victims were initially rushed to the Kendrapara District Headquarters Hospital.

District Collector Amrit Raturaj rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital to take stock of the situation and to arrange free treatment for the injured at the SCB. He directed a probe into the incident.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak also discussed with the SCB authorities to provide free and best medical treatment.

Senior Congress leader, Ganeswar Behera who was at the spot requested the CM to provide free treatment to the injured persons and also declare compensation for the injured persons from State exchequer.

Couple dies hit by truck in Deogarh



Locals block road to Sambalpur

PNS ■ DEOGARH

Vehicular movement was disrupted as locals blocked the Sambalpur-Deogarh route following the death of a couple in a road mishap on NH-49 near Tileibani Chhak in Deogarh district on Thursday. Sarat Sahu, a farmer of Asurkhol village, and his wife Visakha were going to their field to collect the harvested produce when a truck hit their

bullock cart from behind. While they died on the spot, one of the bullocks too was killed instantly after coming under the wheels of the truck and another bullock was grievously injured.

The driver and the helper of the truck managed to flee from the scene. As the news spread, locals gathered at the spot and blocked the road demanding compensation for the family of the deceased. Police reached the spot to bring the situation under control.

In Kendrapada

Cong stages Mati Pain Madichala stir



Submits memo for CM

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Hundreds of Congress activists on Wednesday took out a rally to the district Collector office and held a demonstration demanding the Chief Minister to fulfil various demands concerning the development of the district.

Led by former Congress MLA of Kendrapada and DCC president Ansuman Mohanty, senior leaders Ganeswar Behera, Sura Routray, Debendra Sharma, Chinmaya Behura and Dharanidhar Nayak, the party supporters

staged a demonstration giving slogan "Mati Pain Madi Chala."

They demanded setting up a medical college at Kendrapada, university status to Kendrapada Autonomous College, proper drainage and sewerage in the township, passenger train on Paradip - Haridaspur railway line, cold storages in various parts of the district, a bridge over Kantia nala to connect Singhagaon with block and district headquarters town and renovation of dilapidated rooms and building of Government College at Ayeba etc. The party handed over a memorandum to Sub Collector, Kendrapada Basant Niranjan Behera.

In Bhadrak

Man thrashed to death by wife, sons, daughter

PNS ■ BHADRAK

In a shocking incident, a man was thrashed to death allegedly by his wife, three sons and a daughter at Daulatpur village under the Pirahat police limits in Bhadrak district on Wednesday night.

According to reports, a dispute was prevailing between Babua Das and his wife. He was sleeping outside the house in night, during which his wife, sons and daughter attacked him with an iron rod.

The victim sustained critical injuries in the incident and was

rescued by one of his relatives. He was initially rushed to the Tihidi Hospital and later shifted to the Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospital as his condition deteriorated. However, he was declared dead at the hospital.

The mother of the deceased lodged a complaint with police, on the basis of which cops detained one of his sons and started investigation.

Though the exact reason behind the attack was yet to be ascertained, it was suspected that the incident was fallout of an extramarital affair.

K'pada electrocution in Laxmi Puja

NHRC seeks ATRs from authorities in 4 weeks

RAJESH BEHERA
■ KENDRAPADA

The National Human Rights Commission sought Action-Taken Reports (ATRs) from the Principal Secretary, Department of Energy, Government of Odisha and the district Collector and the Superintendent of Police, Kendrapada over electrocution death and injuries during the Gajalaxmi Puja at Kana Kasoti village in the district this year.

Acting on a petition filed

by rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy, the NHRC issued a notice and sought for ATRs from all the three authorities within four weeks.

Tripathy mentioned that one Biswajit Lenka was electrocuted to death and 13 others were injured during immersion of the idol of Goddess Laxmi on October 18. The iron rod of the DJ touched a low lying live electric wire. He cited it as a case of negligence of the

authorities who sanctioned the procession but could not visualise and prevent the fatal incident.

Tripathy further alleged that if the Energy Department had taken care of electric wires earlier, the fatal incident could have been averted.

He requested the Commission for a free, fair and impartial inquiry of the incident; actions against the errant officials and recommendation of exemplary action to check

such fatal incidents in future, including compensation to the next of kin of the deceased and free and appropriate medical care of the injured.

The NHRC in its order stated that "complaint be transmitted to the District Magistrate, Kendrapada, the Superintendent of Police, Kendrapada, and the Principal Secretary, Department of Power/Energy, Government of Odisha, calling for an Action Taken Report within four weeks."

Ridley eggs laying begins in R'kulya mouth

PNS ■ CHAHATRAPUR

An Olive Ridley turtle was spotted at the Rushikulya river mouth spreading happiness among the nature lovers here and indicating the breeding time of the turtles, which generally begins from November to January.

The turtle was spotted on the beach in front of the Ma



Gangadevi Pith, a village on the Rusikulya river. The turtle came up on the beach and laid 132 eggs in the sea.

The Forest Department soon collected the eggs from

the place and kept them in a hatchery at Lugabandh. This year, three hatcheries have been established by the Forest Department at Lugabandh, Luga Podam

Peta and Prayagi in Ganjam block for the protection of the turtle eggs. On Tuesday morning, a patrolling squad of the Forest Department reported another Olive Ridley turtle floating on the sea water. Already, a ban has been imposed on mechanised fishing there which will remain in force for the next seven months.

Women protest against Astaranga liquor shops

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Scores of women in Astaranga in Puri district cutting across party lines staged a demonstration against establishing liquor shops in their area. Astaranga is a tourist place of importance.

Women activists, youths, social workers, lawyers and intelligentsia of the district are up in arms against a burgeoning liquor market with five on-shops going to be set up, with two on-shops and one off-shop already set up by now in the area.

The callous district administration working in tandem with the reckless proposals endorsed by the



Excise Department has thrown all concerns of public health into the winds, the women protestors alleged.

There are two colleges nearby along with a boys' high school and a girls' high school at a stone throw distance from the liquor bazaar.

"All the protest rallies and petitions of the general public have fallen in deaf ears of the

him stands as a mute witness to this ugly dishonor perpetrated by the administration, opined a journalist and social worker of the locality.

The malevolent designs of the Excise Department is clear from the fact that, while recommending for one Parida Bar-cum-Restaurant on-shop, the third one, they have safely forgotten to mentioned another on-shop namely "Royal Hotel and Lodge on-shop which was established before to it and which exists at a distance of 40 meters from each other. This is a gross violation of the excise rules that at a rural cultural center three liquor shops now have come into being within a short distance, ie, a radius of half km.

INBRIEF

CM OPENS HAPPIEST MINDS IT CENTRE IN BBSR

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated a 'Happiest Minds IT Development Centre' at the Fortune Towers here on Thursday. The centre will have capacity for more than 1000 employees as the company is looking to expand its capacity to serve global clients. Patnaik said: "Odisha is now fast emerging as a technology resource hub of India creating jobs for our youth. Most of the IT companies have set foot in Bhubaneswar." Happiest Minds Technologies Executive Chairman Ashok Soota spoke on the occasion.



AUDIT WEEK: BLOOD DONATION CAMP HELD

Bhubaneswar: A blood donation camp was organised in collaboration with the Capital Hospital Blood Bank, Bhubaneswar at the main office building of the Accountant General here on Thursday on the occasion of Audit Week 2022. Principal Accountant General Bibhudutta Basantia inaugurated the camp. Principal Accountant General AK Behera, Accountant General VS Jadon and all Deputy Accountants General were present. Jadon along with 57 staff members donated blood.



HIGHEST PARCEL LOAD DRY CARGO VESSEL AT PARADIP

Paradip: The Paradip Port Authority (PPA) achieved another milestone in its performance under EXIM Trade. The port successfully berthed the cape vessel MV QUORN at KICTPPL Coal Terminal on November 19. The vessel carried the highest-ever import coal cargo of 1, 35,861 tonnes. MV QUORN's length is 292 meter, beam 45 meter with a draft of 15.4 meter. It is the highest parcel load of import dry cargo with highest draft for any import vessel to have berthed at the Paradip Port harbour. The Tata Steel is the importer and agent of the cargo and the vessel.



NAVY WARSHIP INS GHARIAL AT PARADIP PORT

Paradip: Indian Navy warship INS Gharial docked at the Paradip Port on Monday night as the Navy is all readied to celebrate the upcoming Navy Day on December 4. As a



curtain raiser to the main event, the Navy unit here conducted a two-day free medical checkup camp. The entrance gate of the Paradip Port was opened for public to get entry into the ship for medical services. The warship left the port on Thursday.

5-DAY CHILDREN'S FILM FEST IN B'PUR

Brahmapur: The Sankalpa Senior Secondary School at Ralaba near Brahmapur organised a five-day International Children's Film Festival in the school from November 21 to 25. The



festival was inaugurated by former Director of All India Radio Dr Hrushikesh Panigrahi and educationist Sudipta Panigrahy. Both of them advised the students to be honest as well as punctual and gentle inside and outside the school campus. They also thanked chairman, Sankalpa Secondary School ET Rao. The festival was organised for the second time in the campus. The festival is being held in about 15 languages from 20 countries on their monuments.

Electrocution death & human rights

Electrocution death has been a major threat in our country as the number of death is increasing in an alarming rate. As per the NCRB data, in the last decade (2011 - 2020), about 1.1 lakh people have lost their lives due to electrocution. It reflects that, nearly 11,000 electrocution deaths happen every year.

It is pertinent to note that, zero electrocution deaths were found from Sikkim, Chandigarh, Ladakh and Lakshadweep. In Odisha, 97 were electrocuted in 2021. There were 1,248 deaths due to accidental fires out of whom 386 people died due to electrical short circuits. The number is considered as the highest in the country. It is evident that, more numbers of electrocution deaths and accidents are found in domestic spheres. Mostly the people in domestic sphere lack the basic knowledge of risks of electrocution and casual towards the electrocution.



SITAKANTA TRIPATHY

However, the electrocution death due to negligence and casual approach of electricity officials and department is a major concern in a democratic country like India which ensures Right to Life under Article 21 of the constitution. The Protection of Human Rights Act also ensures safe and secure life to each and every person. The casual approach and negligence of the Energy Department grossly violates fundamental rights and basic

human rights of the victims.

Electrocution deaths are the combination of both medical and legal affairs. To prove the electrocution deaths is a medical affair but it is difficult to prove the negligence of the state causing such death. These fatal incidents should be remedied in order to prevent future electrocution at the same site. Every such fatal incident is potentially avoidable, since every such injuries or deaths are due to either equipment malfunction, mistake of the victim or the Energy Department. Each of the electrocution death is an eye-opener for the future plans and programmes.

The major causes of electrocution deaths are short circuits which are found both in domestic and public spheres. Due to lack of awareness and negligence amongst people and public servants these types of problems have been continuing. Till date there is no permanent solution

of the problem.

One of the common features of our electricity supply is snapping of lives wires. During different natural calamities and disasters like storms, heavy rains, floods and waterlogging, the problem becomes more grave which are mostly due to poorly constructed electricity poles and lack of maintenance of the wires. The Indian road sides are mostly featured with loosely hanging electric wires. This is considered as one of the risk factors during cultivation season, different religious and social processions.

In different fairs and festivals the electricity connections are mostly not done professionally. Sometimes the organisers make it done through unfair means. While getting permissions for such occasions stringent rules regarding electricity connections are not followed. For this people bypass adequate precautions and preventive measures.

It is also found that, the appointments of casual workers in the Energy Department are professionally not sound. Due to inadequate payments they are also not focussed to their jobs. On the other hand the privatisation of Energy Department has not brought a drastic fall in the fatality rate. Rather the companies are lingering the legal procedures to avoid the compensation to the electrocuted victims. It is difficult to prove the culprits of electrocution death and to find out the errant officers as there are many loopholes of the law to overcome the allegations.

The village level Electric Mitras (friends) should be trained properly to face the challenges of hanging cables, power-cuts during storms, lightning or any other natural disastrous situations. If possible the substitutes for Electric Mitras should be appointed. Along with this they should be given the responsibility

to find out the issues like electric fencing for the protection of agriculture fields and hunting the animals and inform proper authorities to stop such practice.

Underground cabling may be considered as one of the solution mechanisms to reduce electrocution accidents and death. As it is a costlier affair, the different Governments are yet to practice it. They should remember life is more costly than expenses. The electric wires passed in the villages and across the agricultural fields need regular supervision and maintenance like the supervision of the railway tracks.

While giving permissions for the construction of the houses the distance of the electric wires and poles need to be verified.

The police should be cautious towards the electric connections while giving permissions for different social gatherings, functions and festivals.

Legal aids should be provided free

of cost to the marginalized communities to fight for different electrocution deaths. The compensation amount for the electrocution death caused by the negligence of the public authorities like other unnatural deaths should be fixed by the State.

Like other departments, the Energy department also needs social audit. Both the rural and urban decentralised bodies should be given power to scrutinise the electricity issues on regular intervals. The houses which got free electricity connections need to be supervised on regular intervals from the safety point of views. The grievance redressal mechanisms should also be supervised regularly. From the human rights viewpoints, the State should consider that the safety and security of people from electricity is as important as electricity connection to all villages.

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Shah: Do research to highlight correct history

Country just cannot progress and take a leap into future without taking pride in its past, says HM at function to honour Ahom general Lachit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday exhorted historians and research scholars to identify 30 kingdoms that ruled for over 150 years besides 300 historical personalities, and conduct research in order to bring out correct history and relegate distorted history to the place it deserves.

Speaking at the plenary function to mark the 400th birth anniversary of iconic Ahom General Lachit Barphukan who defeated Mughals in a war in Assam, Shah said, "I have also been a student of history. We have been hearing that history has been distorted, it does not reflect the true past. But who is stopping you from recording correct history and all the other distorted accounts will then fade away as the truth has its own power. The time has come to rewrite history."

Asserting that a country just cannot progress and take leap into the future without taking pride in the past, the Home Minister recalled the contribution of Assamese General Lachit Barphukan who checked the onslaught of the Islamist Mughal armies.

"Had it not been for the



Union Home Minister Amit Shah being felicitated by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma as Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal looks on, during the 400th birth anniversary celebrations of Ahom commander Lachit Barphukan, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Thursday, Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

contributions of valiant warrior, true nationalist and the love for the motherland of Ahom General Lachit Barphukan, the history of the Northeast would have been different, the Northeast would not have been a part of the country," he said.

He outlined that the Ahom kings ruled the region for six centuries and faced 22 invasions from the Mughal armies but even when there were spells of defeat, the victory of the enemies could not last led to the recapture of the lost territories.

He highlighted that when the Rajput king Ram Singh, son of Raja Jai Singh of Amber, a strong general himself holding significant sway from Kandahar to Bengal, when defeated by army of Lachit Barphukan, admitted that every soldier of Barphukan was trained not just in cavalry,

archery and battlecraft but also in operations of naval boats. The Ahom army also used intelligence gathering and modulating operations based on inputs extensively in battle craft.

Shah also highlighted that the great warrior rose from the ranks despite being a descendant of the royal family and placed his love motherland above every other consideration.

The Assam government is celebrating at a national level even to mark the 400th birth anniversary of Lachit Barphukan, the iconic general of Assam from November 23 to 25 here.

Son of great warrior-statesman Momai Tamuli Barbarua, Lachit Barphukan was born on November 24, 1622, and grew up during a turbulent period of Assam's history.

40mn kids missed measles jabs: WHO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a spike in measles cases in pockets of States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana and Jharkhand, the WHO and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have set off an alarm pointing out that globally a record high of nearly 40 million kids have missed a dose of the measles vaccine last year due to hurdles created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is likely to result in the spiraling of cases given that the air-borne viral disease is highly contagious. In India, as preventive measures, the Centre has already asked all the States to consider administering one additional dose of Measles and Rubella vaccines to all children, aged 9 months to 5 years, in vulnerable areas.

So far, a high number of cases has been reported from certain districts of Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala and Maharashtra where the contagious disease has claimed 11 kids and infected



over 223. However, to prevent the disease from spreading and to achieve herd immunity, the Government will have to ensure that at least 95 per cent of children need to receive the vaccine as also been suggested by the WHO and the CDC in their joint report released recently.

As per the US CDC, India has the highest number of cases in the world between April and September 2022. Pakistan is seventh on the list

with 3,635 cases, while the US has 33 cases so far.

Terming Measles, an "imminent threat" around the world, the top health bodies noted that despite a two-dose vaccine that is more than 97 per cent effective at preventing infection being available for decades, gains made at beating back the potentially dangerous childhood disease have been lost during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To prevent the disease from

India slams US report on rights, religious freedom

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking exception to a US report claiming that religious freedom and related human rights are under threat here, India on Thursday termed them as "biased and inaccurate."

Making this observation here, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also said the US Commission for International Religious Freedom's latest observations continues to be guided by its prejudices and pursues a motivated agenda.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is a Congressional-appointed body. Its recommendations are, however, not mandatory to be implemented by the US State Department.

Religious freedom and related human rights in India are under ongoing threat, the USCIRF alleged on Tuesday in an unusual year-end update of the status of its assessment of religious freedom in the country.

Asked about the report at a media briefing, Bagchi said,



by the International Religious Freedom Act. The US State Department has refused to incorporate the commission's recommendations so far.

India upset at 'unnecessary' reference to Modi by American official

New Delhi: India is upset at a reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a US State Department official while defending the immunity it had extended to Saudi Arabian ruler Mohammed bin Sultan, who is facing allegations of killing journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

"Frankly, I fail to understand how the comment on Prime Minister Modi was either relevant, necessary or contextual," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said responding to questions about a US official referring to Modi while explaining the reasons for granting immunity to the Saudi ruler. **PNS**

'Right to regulate issue of bank notes entirely with RBI'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Calling the demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 currency notes "deeply flawed", senior lawyer P Chidambaram told the Supreme Court on Thursday the Union Government cannot on its own initiate any proposal relating to legal tender which can only be done on the recommendation of the RBI's central board.

Chidambaram, appearing for one of the petitioners opposing the Centre's 2016 decision, submitted before a five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Justice SA Nazeer that the right to regulate the issue of bank notes is entirely with the Reserve Bank of India. "The Central Government cannot on its own initiate any pro-

posal relating to currency notes. It can only be on the central board's recommendation.

This decision making process should be struck down. ...This is the most outrageous decision making process which makes a mockery of the rule of law. This process must be struck down for being deeply flawed," Chidambaram told the bench which also comprised Justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian, and BV Nagarathna.

Noting that demonetisation was a major economic decision which impacted every citizen of the country, the senior lawyer questioned the power of central government to invoke Section 26 of the Reserve Bank of India Act to demonetise currency notes and submitted that Section 26(2) gives power to Centre to cancel only certain series of cur-

rency notes and not the entire notes of a denomination.

Chidambaram, who argued for the whole day, alleged the possible "horrendous consequences" of demonetisation were not assessed, researched or documented. "Over 2,300 crore currency notes were demonetised while the government's printing presses could only print 300 crore notes per month. This gross mismatch meant it would take several months to print notes.

The Government did not even consider that over 2,15,000 ATMs would have to be recalibrated. In fact, in initial days ATMs did not take the Rs 2,000 note. The government did not take into account that two-third of bank branches were located in metros and only a third were in rural areas," he said.



SC to set up 5-Judge Bench to hear constitutional validity of Nikah Halala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it will set up a new five-judge Constitution bench to hear the pleas challenging the constitutional validity of polygamy and 'nikah halala' among Muslims.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Hima Kohli and J B Pardiwala was urged by lawyer Ashwin Upadhyay, who has also filed a PIL on the issue, that a fresh five-judge bench was needed to be constituted as two judges of the previous bench have demitted office.

Many Muslim women also approached the apex court for banning 'nikah halala' after the verdict banning triple talaq. "We will form a bench," the CJ responded. Upadhyay, in his PIL, has sought a direction to declare polygamy and 'nikah halala' unconstitutional and illegal. The apex court had in July 2018 considered the plea and referred the matter to a Constitution bench already tasked with hearing a batch of similar petitions. The apex court had issued notice to the Centre on the petition filed by a woman named Farjana and tagged Upadhyay's plea to a batch of petitions to be heard

by the Constitution bench. The lawyer's petition sought declaring extrajudicial talaq a cruelty under Section 498A (husband or his relatives subjecting a woman to cruelty) of the IPC.

It claimed nikah halala is an offence under Section 375 (rape) of the IPC, and polygamy a crime under Section 494 (Marrying again during life-time of husband or wife) of the IPC, 1860.

The apex court, which on August 22, 2017 banned the age-old practice of instant 'triple talaq' among Sunni Muslims, had on March 26, 2018 decided to refer to a larg-

er bench a batch of pleas challenging the constitutional validity of polygamy and 'nikah halala'. While polygamy allows a Muslim man to have four wives, 'nikah halala' is a process under which a divorced Muslim woman has to first marry another person, consummate it and get a divorce from the second husband, if the couple were to remarry after a compromise. The apex court has already issued notices to the Law and Justice Ministry, the Minority Affairs Ministry and the NCW at that time. Some petitions have also challenged the practices of 'Nikah Mubah' and 'Nikah Misyar'.

Centre joins hands with Microsoft to digitise 36 Eklavya model schools

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to digitally transform Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and impart quality education to its tribal students, the Centre has joined hands with Microsoft. In the first phase, 36 EMRS have been selected for the digital transformation.

"Digital Transformation of EMRSs can play a key role in improving the learning experience for both students and teachers, where focus shall be on integration of digital technologies to improve teaching and learning.

Access to technology can lead the way forward for access to knowledge," said Asit Gopal, Commissioner, National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), an autonomous organization established under the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry. He was speaking at an online workshop organized for EMRS principals and school heads on



"Education Transformation Framework" (ETF), in collaboration with Microsoft Corporation India Private Limited recently.

Emphasizing on the imperative need of digital transformation in EMRSs, Gopal said that such change keeping in with changing times can play a key role in improving the learning experience for both students and teachers, where focus shall be on integration of digital technologies to improve teaching and learning.

Gopal asserted that in the first phase, 36 EMRSs have been selected which shall walk their way forward to digitally transform schools and enhance the technological skills by use of Microsoft software and

application. The Union Tribal Ministry hopes to enroll 3.5 lakh students and recruit 36,000 teachers in its 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) for tribal students schools targeted to be functional by 2026 across the country. Presently, as of November, a total of 688 EMRSs have been sanctioned, of which 392 are functional where around 105463 students are enrolled.

The current workshop on EMRSs digitization was first in its journey of transformation, other components include professional development of teachers using Microsoft Technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) applications; building exposure of students to AI and Coding; sharing of Coding Curriculum for Grade 6th to 12th & AI curriculum for Grade 8th to 12th; workshop on Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE) program etc, shared an official from the Ministry. Last year, the

Ministry on May 17 had inked a pact with Microsoft to help Tribal schools such as EMRS and Ashram Schools have digital transformation. As per the MoU, Microsoft is preparing bi-lingual Artificial Intelligence (AI) curriculum for tribal students in English and Hindi languages that will be taught at all EMRS schools to upskill both educators and students in next-generation technologies.

The project could not take off last year in full swings owing to the restrictions posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the official said.

He explained that as part of the MoU, the teachers will also be trained in using productivity technologies like Office 365 and AI applications in teaching in a phased manner, where they can even earn certificates from Microsoft Education Centre. Microsoft will also mentor students from EMRS on AI projects to help pursue the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SC Collegium recommends transfer of 7 HC judges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud on Thursday recommended transfer of seven high court judges to different High Courts in the country.

The list of High Court judges, who have been recommended for transfer, does not include Justice Nikhil S Kariel of the Gujarat High Court. Media reports on Justice Kariel's proposed transfer to Patna High

Court had triggered protests by lawyers in the Gujarat High Court and later a delegation of bar leaders had met the CJ who was claimed to have assured them that the matter will be looked into.

The resolutions of the Collegium, which also comprises Justices S K Kaul and S A Nazeer, were uploaded on the apex court website. Seven judges, who have been sought to be transferred, included Justice V M Velumani, a judge in the Madras high court. He would be

joining Calcutta High Court.

Justice Battu Devanand has been sent from Andhra Pradesh High Court to Madras High Court. Justice D Ramesh has been transferred from Andhra Pradesh High Court to Allahabad High Court, while Justice Lalitha Kanneganti has been sent from Telangana High Court to Karnataka High Court. Justice D Nagarjun has been shifted from Telangana High Court to Madras High Court, while Justice T Raja has been sent from Madras High Court to

Rajasthan High Court.

Justice A Abhishek Reddy has been transferred from Telangana High Court to Patna High Court. Lawyers at Telangana High Court had also protested the proposed transfer of Justice Reddy and later a delegation of bar leaders had met the CJ.

The Collegium, in another meeting held on November 23, 2022, also approved proposal for elevation of two advocates as judges in Rajasthan High Court. The advocates

whose names have been approved are -- Anil Kumar Upman and Nupur Bhat. The three-member Collegium, which takes decisions with regard to high court judges, has also approved proposal for elevation of six Judicial Officers as Judges in Rajasthan High Court. The judicial officers whose names have been cleared are-- Rajendra Prakash Soni, Ashok Kumar Jain, Yogendra Kumar Purohit, Bhuvan Goyal, Praveer Bhatnagar, and Ashutosh Kumar.

Qatar denies extending an invitation to Naik

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has raised the issue regarding the issue of its wanted fugitive Zakir Naik's extradition with Qatar and will continue with its efforts to make him face legal procedures here.

This assertion by the ministry of external affairs here on Thursday came following reports of Naik, now a Malaysian national, being invited to Qatar, where he is scheduled to deliver religious lectures



throughout the ongoing FIFA World Cup. Qatar reportedly has denied extending an invitation to Naik for the inauguration of the FIFA world cup on November 20 in Doha. The denial sent to India through official channels also said also

said deliberate disinformation was being spread by third countries to damage relations between the two countries.

The reported denial came after India informed Qatar that Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar's visit for World Cup inauguration on November 20 will be called off if Naik was invited for the event. Explaining India's stance, ministry of external affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said on Thursday "He [Zakir Naik] is an accused in India, under Indian law.

Slugfest over K'taka-Maha boundary dispute escalates

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The political heat over the inter-state border row has escalated with Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai hitting back at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis terming his statement on the issue "provocative".

"No village in Maharashtra will go to Karnataka! The state government will fight strongly in the Supreme Court to get Marathi speaking villages in Karnataka including Belgaum-Karwar-Nipani!", said Fadnavis.

In a retort, Bommai, terming it a provocative statement, said: "His (Fadnavis) dream will never come true. Our government is committed to protecting our state's land, water and borders."

He further said that there was no question of giving up any space in the border districts of Karnataka.

In fact, he said: "Our demand is that the Kannada speaking areas of Maharashtra

like Solapur and Akkalkot should join Karnataka."

The dispute over Belagavi dates back to the 1960s after the reorganisation of States on linguistic lines.

Earlier this week, the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra appointed two ministers to coordinate with the legal team regarding the court case on the dispute set to come up in the Supreme Court.

Bommai said soon after that the State has deployed a battery of top lawyers, including Mukul Rohatgi and Shyam Diwan, to fight its case.

Bommai said since 2004, the Maharashtra government has filed a case in the Apex court over the border issue. "So far they have not succeeded and they will not succeed in future as well. We are geared up to strengthen our legal battle."

The Karnataka CM had claimed that the Panchayats in Jath Taluka in Sangli district of Maharashtra had passed a resolution in the past to merge with Karnataka when there was a severe drought situation



and acute drinking water crisis, and his government has evolved schemes to help them by providing water.

Responding to this, Fadnavis told reporters in Nagpur on Wednesday: "These villages (in Jat Taluk) had introduced a resolution on the issue of water scarcity in 2012. Presently, none of the villages have introduced any resolution."

Karnataka has repeatedly maintained that the Mahajan Commission report on the border issue is final, and "there is no question of letting go even an inch of Karnataka's border". Bommai reiterated this



week that there is no example to show that what had been done under the States Reorganisation Act was reviewed.

"The border dispute is a political tool used by all parties in Maharashtra. But they will never succeed," he had said.

Shinde said earlier this week: "Late Balasaheb Thackeray was always a staunch supporter of the state's demand to make Belgaum (Belagavi) a part of Maharashtra. We have concentrated our focus on solving the issue. If required, the number of lawyers would be increased".

Time to generate income from electricity instead of getting it free: Modi in Gujarat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of the controversy over the efficacy of political freebies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, while campaigning in Gujarat, said it was time to generate income from electricity instead of getting it for "free".

Modi, who was electioneering in Modasa in Aravalli district in North Gujarat, made reference to free electricity to hit out at AAP which has for the second-time entered into the assembly poll fray and promised free electricity besides Rs 1000 to all women above age of 18 saying "it is not revadi –freebie- but their rights".

Modi said only he knows the art through which people will be able to earn money from electricity. The Prime Minister also slammed the Congress, saying it believes in the formula of "divide and rule" and focusses only on how to be in power.

AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has said his party would provide free electricity up to 300 units per

month if voted to power in Gujarat.

The opposition Congress has also joined the sop competitiveness and mentioned in its election manifesto that the party will also provide free electricity up to 300 units if voted to power in Gujarat, where the Assembly polls are scheduled on December 1 and 5.

On Thursday, Modi said he wants to see people across Gujarat earning money from excess electricity generated from solar rooftop systems instead of just getting it for free.

"You must have seen how the entire Modhera village (in Mehsana district) is now running on rooftop solar power. They are using electricity as per their need and sell excess power (to the government). I want to replicate this system across Gujarat," he said.

"Under this system, you can earn money by selling excess electricity generated from solar panels. Only Modi knows this art wherein people will be able to earn from electricity," said the PM.

He told the audience that a woman from Modhera is now planning to buy a refrigerator



and an air-conditioner as electricity has become affordable after the installation of rooftop solar power.

"She told me that though her family was able to afford the appliances earlier, they refrained because they could not bear the running cost. Now, they can afford it because electricity is free. I am working to bring this revolution at the doorstep of each and every household in Gujarat," the Prime Minister said.

Modi also slammed the Congress, saying the opposition party only believes in the formula of "divide and rule"

and it only focuses on how to get power.

"Rajasthan is near your border, have you seen any development in that state? Have you seen any good news coming out of that state? The Congress cannot do development," he said.

In another public rally at Palanpur in Banaskantha district in North-East Gujarat, Modi said the upcoming Assembly election in Gujarat is all about deciding the state's destiny for the next 25 years.

Voting in Banaskantha district will be held in the second phase on December 5.

PM package: Pandits seeking relocation hope Modi will address safety concerns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Thousands of PM package Kashmiri Pandit employees, currently sitting on a dharna for 197 days in support of their single point demand of relocation to a safer area outside the Kashmir Valley, are pinning their hopes on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to understand their pain and address 'safety' concerns raised by them in the wake of targeted killings in the recent months.

The PM package employees on Thursday organised a sit in dharna outside the Press Club in Jammu where representatives of the Kashmiri Pandit employees while raising serious concerns over the indifferent attitude of the Union Territory administration made a passionate appeal to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the matter before it is too late.

The Kashmiri pandit package employees staged a massive



protest demonstration under the banner of All Migrant (Displaced) Employees Association, Kashmir to press their demand of relocation /attachment to Jammu.

They were also demanding that the government should frame a committee to look into their matter seriously. The agitating employees also wanted the government to frame a committee to initiate a process of dialogue with the employees so that an amicable and satis-

factory solution would be found on this vital issue.

Expressing their anguish over the callous attitude of the government towards them, the protesting employees said that the administration must understand that the issue of package employees is purely a security concern which they would not compromise at any cost. It was the duty of the government to ensure security of employees on which it has failed, they also said.

Pak handlers continue to rely on drones to airdrop arms, IED, cash in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Pakistan-based handlers of different terrorist outfits continue to rely on drones to airdrop arms and ammunition consignment for ferrying them to different parts of the Kashmir Valley via the International Border districts of Jammu. On Thursday, the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Police along with the special operations group recovered one suspicious package, possibly dropped by a drone from Pakistan, in the Vijaypur area of Samba district.

The J&K Police recovered one steel Improvised Explosive Device (IED), two pistols, 4 magazines, several batteries and a watch from the package. They also recovered cash of around Rs 5 lakh from the package. Briefing media persons in the border area, Additional SP



Samba, Surinder Chaudhary said, "Police team from Vijaypur Police Station recovered one suspicious sealed packet today in the field near Chhani Manhasan in Samba, following reliable inputs. The spot is undisturbed and intact."

According to the preliminary information, this is a case of a drone dropping from Pakistan's side attempting to smuggle in weapons and cash to the Indian side for carrying out terror-related activities in J&K. As per the officials, there was a movement of a drone that was spotted in the area of Vijayapur which is opposite to Sialkot-Pakistan border.

Opp stalling appointments in court: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With her Government having suffered a massive loss of face in the wake of the school-level recruitment scam that saw a number of TMC leaders, including Ministers, legislators and senior functionaries going to jail, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday hit back at the Opposition for spiking her efforts to make fresh appointments in schools by filing "politically motivated cases".

Speaking in the State Assembly the Chief Minister said, "whenever we go to make fresh appointments some people with ulterior motive move the court to stall the recruitment process ... consequently a lot of public money is wasted in contesting the law suits ... this is very unfortunate."

The Chief Minister also appealed to the (High) Court to consider the situation while giving its orders. "From the floor of the State Assembly I would like to make an appeal to the (High) court to take cog-



nizance of the predicament we are while passing its judgments," she said.

Banerjee's statement came almost in tandem with a Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court on Thursday turning down the State's appeal to set aside a single Bench order seeking the appearance of the State Education Secretary regarding a particular case.

Earlier the Bench of Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay had directed the senior IAS officer to appear before it and reveal the name of the persons who had asked the School Service Commission to seek the Court's direction to make fresh appointments on supernumerary posts

specially created by the government apparently to regularise the appointments of

ineligible teachers who had purchased their posts for lakhs of rupees.

The scam involving thousands of illegal appointments saw senior TMC leader and Education Minister Partha Chatterjee and MLA Manik Bhattacharya going to jail.

The Division Bench preserved the single Bench order directing the Central Bureau of Investigation to find out who had directed the SSC to seek the Court's direction to regularise the ineligible candidates which the Judge said would go a distance in identifying the kingpin behind the multi-crore SSC scam.

The Opposition BJP and the Left had for long been alleging that the topmost leadership of the Bengal ruling outfit had masterminded all the scams that Bengal had witnessed in the past more than one decade.

In fact Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari on Wednesday said that in December the "biggest thief in the government and the Trinamool Congress will go to jail."

Tharoor looking for larger role in Kerala Congress?

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Factionalism and groupism in Kerala unit of the Indian National Congress which were in the backburner have made a comeback to the forefront thanks to some close associates of Shashi Tharoor, MP and the party's glamour boy.

Tharoor who lost the race for the post of party president has returned to Kerala and is

busily mobilising support for his bid to become the party's southern face. The immediate reason for his new found love for Kerala is the possibility of him being dumped as party candidate from Thiruvananthapuram in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. The London born Shashi Tharoor has been representing the Lok Sabha constituency of Thiruvananthapuram since 2009 but his

rivals in the party want the High Command to replace him as he has "dared to challenge the supremacy of the Nehru-Gandhi family".

MK Raghavan, MP who represents Kozhikode constituency, is drumming up support for Tharoor while K Sudhakaran, president of KPCC



maintains a studied silence over the issue. But Leader of Opposition VD Satheeshan has made it known that Tharoor is not indispensable.

Vernacular media and some young political observers are spreading the word that Tharoor is the man of the hour. "But this view is

held only by persons who do not know the ground realities in politics," said Mohammed Shiyaz, the Ernakulam District Congress Committee chief who is one of the young leaders on the rise. "The Congress has to be led by leaders who are accessible to the cadre and not by people who make appearance in television. All our present and past leaders belong to that genre. K Karunakaran, A K

Antony, Oommen Chandi, are some of the examples. Leaders who claim visibility in national media would not be able to lead the party," Shiyaz told *The Pioneer*.

Tharoor is on a mission to "rock" the Malabar region dominated by Muslims. His stance against the Supreme Court verdict allowing 10 per cent reservation to EWS among the upper caste has gone well with

the Islamist organisations. But Tharoor, a Nair has earned the wrath of Nair Service Society, a collective of Nairs who constitute 18 per cent of Kerala population. Congress in Kerala is doing well as was shown by the assembly by-poll result of Thrikkakkara which was won by the party with an unprecedented margin. The reservations expressed by AICC General Secretary KC

Venugopal, the former leader of opposition Ramesh Chennithala and VD Satheeshan point to the reality that Tharoor is not welcome in the State. If Venugopal, Chennithala, Sudhakaran and Satheesh (who are all the eyes and ears of the Congress High Command) put up a resistance, Shashi Tharoor's "literary talents" would come a cropper in Kerala.

Able-Eves workshop for divyangs to be held on Nov 27

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

What is common between Ira Singhal, Suvarna Pradeep Raj and Divanshi Joshi? Apart from being persons with disabilities, they did not give up despite all odds. The trio, among 25 other women with disabilities who have made their name in their respective fields, will be sharing their journey riddled with negligence and complications at Able-Eves Workshop for Empowerment of Women with Disabilities to be held here on Sunday.

The workshop will be inaugurated by Singhal who is suffering from scoliosis with 62% locomotor disability, will have sessions around inclusion and empowerment of women.

The other speakers will include Devanshi Joshi, a national awardee with Down Syndrome, Abha Khetarpal, president, Cross the Hurdles, Iytha Mallikarjuna, CEO, Inclusive Divyangjan Entrepreneur Association, Richa Sahni, Head of Corporate Partnership, Atypical Advantage, Suvarna Pradeep Raj, International Para-Athlete and Soujanya Rao, Gynaecologist-CMO (SG)/Comdt. (Medical) CRPF.

Pradhan holds talks with Edu Ministers of Mauritius, Tanzania, Zimbabwe & Ghana

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan held a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Mauritius, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ghana, on Thursday.

During a meeting with Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mauritius, Pradhan said, "India remains committed to work together with Mauritius and provide assistance in building capacities in all areas of education and skill development."

Pradhan, during his meeting with Deputy Minister of Education, Ghana, John Ntim Fordjour proposed setting up of institutional mechanisms and joint working groups between India and Ghana from pre-school to research.

Pradhan held a meeting with Raymore Machingura, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Zimbabwe and with Zanzibar's Minister for Education and Vocational Training, Lela Muhamed Mussa.

TRS MLAs' poaching: BJP leader among 4 named as accused

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Senior BJP leader B L Santhosh and three others were named as accused by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the case of alleged conspiracy to poach four TRS MLAs, officials said on Thursday.

Following directions from the Telangana High Court, the SIT, probing the case, also issued a second notice to BJP National General Secretary (Organisation) Santhosh, who is yet to appear before it.

In the fresh notice, he has been asked to appear before SIT for questioning on November 26 or November 28, official sources told PTI.

Based on the investigations so far, the SIT filed a memo in a special Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) court here adding the names of Santhosh and two persons from Kerala-Jaggu Swami and Tushar Vellapally, besides B Srinivas, as accused in the case, they said.

Three persons -- Ramachandra Bharati alias Satish Sharma, Nanda Kumar and Simhayaji Swamy, were already named as accused in the case after a complaint was



lodged by TRS MLA Pilot Rohith Reddy, among four legislators, against them on October 26.

As per the FIR copy, Rohith Reddy alleged that the accused offered him Rs 100 crore and in return the legislator had to leave the TRS and contest as a BJP candidate in the next Assembly election.

The Telangana High Court on Wednesday had directed the SIT to again serve notice on Santhosh under Section 41A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to Santhosh.

Earlier, the Telangana SIT had issued notices to Santhosh and the two persons from Kerala to appear before it for questioning on November 21. However, they did not turn up before the probe panel. Srinivas, who was also summoned by the SIT, had appeared before it.

Mukroh clashes: Meghalaya CM in Delhi for talks

PTI ■ SHILLONG

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on Thursday led a cabinet delegation to New Delhi to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah and discuss the tense border situation between Assam and the hill state following clashes in Mukroh village, and also demanded a federal probe into the violence.

The meeting, comes a day after the Assam Cabinet announced that it will hand over the probe into the violence to the CBI, and asked the state police to show restraint while dealing with civilian disturbances. Trouble started after Assam forest guards intercepted a Meghalaya vehicle carrying what was suspected to be illegally felled timber in West Karbi Anglong district along the Assam-Meghalaya border in the early hours of Tuesday. In the melee that followed, five tribal villagers from Meghalaya and a forest guard were killed.

Tension brewed in border areas in the aftermath of the incident, with an Assam forest office being burnt down by angry villagers as well as some vehicles from neighbouring states.



People light earthen lamps as part of celebrations for 400th birth anniversary of Ahom Commander Lachit Borphukan in Nagaon district on Thursday



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Undead

The National Anti-profiteering Authority will live on as a part of Competition Commission of India

The Government has given the Competition Commission of India (CCI) the mandate that the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) enjoys. The reason is that the NAA will cease to exist by the end of this month. The NAA has a mandate to ensure that reductions in goods and services tax (GST) are passed on to consumers. It was meant to check any profiteering by businesses; hence the name. The decision is reportedly in accordance with a recommendation by the GST Council, which has representation from the Centre as well as state governments. So now, even as the NAA will cease to exist, its work will be carried out by the CCI mandarins. Right from the beginning—that is, 2017 when the NAA came into being—it was an affront to the business class. In fact, the very word ‘profiteering’ has a ring of dirigisme around it; this is the reason that Leftists use it quite often. It presupposes that all businesspersons are unconscionable, blood-sucking villains who exploit their employees and fleece their customers. Added to the malice is the erroneous notion that government can control or check prices by coercive means. Right from the brutal regime of Alauddin Khilji to the pre-1991 days of Nehruvian socialism, such controls were put in place; they never brought any relief to the man on the street; invariably they led to shortages, black-marketing, and corruption. One of the most anti-business decisions in the last few years has been the setting up of the NAA.



It was supposed to complete its work of monitoring GST rollout in two years, so it was given a two-year term. But that was not to be. As the famous economist Milton Friedman said, nothing is so permanent as a temporary government programme. The NAA kept getting extensions; what was supposed to die in 2019 is still alive—and will remain so. It needs to be mentioned here that it is not just the Narendra Modi Government that is responsible for the perpetuation of a price control mechanism; the entire political class is involved in it, for the GST Council includes various states. The NAA perpetuation highlights a disturbing fact: our political masters have little faith in economic reforms. What liberalisation they have carried out in our country, they have done under compulsion, not by choice. This is not surprising, for liberalisation is essentially the process of the retreat of the State from the processes of economy; it involves less regulation, less intervention in the market. While all this is good for the economy and the people at large, it is not so good for politicians and a section of intellectuals who are ideologically wedded to the theories which are predicated upon the big State. Besides, there are a lot of people—bureaucrats, economists, technocrats, et al—who grew up reading and internalising Leftwing books. This is the reason that Leviathan marches on and abominations like NAA never die.

PICTALK



People light earthen lamps on 400th birth anniversary of Ahom Commander Lachit Borphukan in Nagaon

PTI

demonetization woes

The People have the right to know if demonetisation was a masterstroke or a blunder.

As the hearing on the demonetization gets underway in the Supreme Court, new facts and new arguments might tumble out after six years when the Prime Minister Modi had announced demonetization on November 8, 2016; banning high-denomination currency notes of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 and replacing them with the new currency notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 2000 denomination. The standard argument at that time was that it would be a big blow to the black money and the economy would be purged in one stroke. The government sticks to its argument in the affidavit submitted to the apex court saying that it was a ‘well-considered decision’ taken after duly consulting the Reserve bank of India. The Union government filed the affidavit in response to a batch of 58 petitions that had challenged demonetisation. A five-judge constitution bench comprising Justices S.A. Nazeer, B.R. Gavai, A.S. Bopanna, V. Ramasubramanian, and B.V. Nagarathna is now hearing the matter again.



The new facts that have come to light through an RTI give a very different picture than what the govt would have us believe. The RBI was not in favour of demonetization as it maintained that black money in the country was not in the form of currency notes but its opinion was brushed aside. The govt submitted that demonetisation was executed on the specific recommendation of the RBI's Central Board. However, according to RTI activist Venkatesh Nayak, who accessed the minutes of the 561st Meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the RBI through a RTI application, Para 4.4 of the minutes seems to indicate that the Board was simply not aware of this planning before the tabling of the Deputy Governor's memorandum on the subject at its meeting less than six hours before the Prime Minister announced the decision to the country. The minutes provide that the Board was only “assured” that the matter had been under discussion between the Central government and the RBI. Nayak noted that the RBI's directors had – contrary to the government's stand – opined that most of the black money is not held as cash but in the form of real estate, jewellery etc. The matter is subjudice and it is for the court to decide upon the validity of the claims made by both sides but one thing is clear; there is more to demonetization than meets the eye. Apart from bringing hardships to people, it did not succeed in either curbing the black money or ending terrorist funding. Will people ever know the truth?

Climate finance is the pivot of COP27

The fight against climate change is not developing nations vs. developed ones. It's against the fatal fallout of climate change vs the existence of humanity.

The global mean temperature of the planet is 1.15 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial average and we have been having the conference of parties (COP) every year since 1995, wherein world leaders come together to think of solutions to fight the looming dangers of climate change. This year the summit at Sharm El-Sheikh was attended by world leaders arriving in their respective private jets, close to 400 of them, contributing significantly to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. One would think what a great way to kickstart the discourse around climate change.

Over the last decade or so, green washing has become a norm and we all have assumed that someone else would take care of the problem of climate change. The corporations have used the issue of climate change to fill in their coffers and the global leaders have done little to help either. Lip service has been the norm as far as climate change is concerned. Every year, these conferences signal hope. Eminent leaders from different parts of the world make pledges, talk of achieving net zero emissions by so and so year, promise aid to emerging economies and so on. But when it comes to progress on ground, the results are invariably dismal. They paint a sorry picture of our fight towards climate change. It is demoralizing and one can't help but give in to the gnawing cynicism around these summits.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said, “A third of Pakistan got flooded. We have seen Europe's hottest summer in 500 years. The Philippines got hammered. The whole of Cuba was in blackout. And ... in the United States, Hurricane Ian has delivered a brutal reminder that no country and no economy is immune from the climate crisis.” All these events serve as a brutal reminder for entire humanity to get its act together.

The COP27 summit did set its agenda right with focus on mainly four focus aspects of mit-

igation, adaptation, finance and collaboration. What needs to be seen is how many countries significantly contribute to the said areas in all earnestness. One of the major themes of COP27 has been loss and damage. It is only this year that the developed nations agreed to put the subject into the formal agenda. An important issue for the group of developing nations, called G77, their leaders underscored how they needed aid from the wealthy nations to mitigate the causes of climate change and prepare against the fallouts of it in future. A positive headway has been made at the summit in this direction with respect to the creation of a ‘loss and damage’ fund. The fund may help the emerging economies to address the harmful effects of natural disasters like droughts, floods and cyclones etc. However, the details of how it will be used to stop climate change and who the list of donors would be is still unclear.

Back in 2009, the developed nations had made a pledge to supply \$100 billion every year by 2020 to less wealthy nations to help bring down further rises in temperature. But what happened to that? Wealthy nations have



THIS YEAR'S COP WAS CALLED THE COP FOR IMPLEMENTATION BECAUSE PLEDGES ALONE DON'T MAKE THE CUT. ONE NEEDS A DETAILED ROAD MAP AND MORE TRANSPARENCY WITH RESPECT TO CLIMATE FINANCE

clearly not delivered on the promise to date. The \$100 billion won't even make the cut, as developing nations have clearly outlined that they would need \$6 trillion to \$11 trillion to meet climate targets. It is crucial for aid to come through to developing nations, without which they won't be able to make much progress on reducing greenhouse emissions.

Speaking at a press conference at COP27, John Kerry, the U.S. presidential envoy on climate, asserted that the negotiations won't end with rich countries signing up for open-ended liabilities. The emerging nations rallied against making a ‘loss and damage fund’, but the wealthy nations shrugged off the idea by saying they favoured existing financial channels.

This year's COP was called the COP for implementation, because pledges alone don't make the cut. One needs a detailed road map and more transparency with respect to climate finance. A case in point: The US president, Joe Biden, gave an assurance at the summit that the US would hit its climate targets by 2030 and apologized for pulling out of the Paris agreement. However,

he and other world leaders hardly explained why the promises made earlier were not met to date. Biden rightly said that the world faced a ‘pivotal moment’ in the fight against the climate crisis. But failed to lay out the steps that humanity should take.

With the COP27 having come to an end, some inspiration has been rekindled. What global leaders do in the coming years will be watched carefully, but at the same time, the citizenry all across the world must also do what they can at individual level. We need more people actively raising clamour around this subject. Young climate warriors need to come about and for that, introducing climate change as a subject in school curriculum will prove to be a step in the right direction.

Hope is clearly not a good strategy to adopt in view of climate change. Therefore, one must strive to surpass all hurdles, shun inhibition, deliberate and make a sincere endeavour to avert the global catastrophe awaiting us. We owe this to our collective future generations.

(The author writes on news pertaining to women rights, and social and environmental issues. Views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Sir — The climate emergency is a direct consequence of heavy land use and agriculture, transport, buildings, industrial processes and use of polluting energy sources. Without profound changes to these sectors and a drastic cut to carbon footprints, there is little hope of protecting the planet from the worst effects of a warmer world.

The UN environment programme (UNEP) stands at the core of the action in the fight against climate change. We call for greater responsibility from countries and recognition of the benefits of integrating natural systems into concrete climate action. A global fund for “loss and damage”, providing financial assistance to poor nations stricken by climate disaster is a solution. The deal was far from perfect, with several key elements flawed or lacking. Some countries on limiting temperatures to 1.5C represented progress on the Cop26 conference in Glasgow last year, but efforts for phasing out fossil fuels were weak. Countries have now agreed to finalise the details of the fund by 2024. Let's hope for the best.

Mithlesh Panwar | Ujjain

MANAGING LIFESTYLE DISEASES

Sir — Despite the best advances in technology and drug research, the modern medicine is yet to find successful curative management of not only disorders like diabetes, hypertension, chronic gastrointestinal disorders etc but almost all neurological diseases and the psychiatric illnesses also, what to talk of the recent covid19 pandemic across the world. Even the best invention and abuse of antibiotics or hormonal interception and other drugs for neurological or psychiatric drugs have caused havoc of dangerous side effects rather than providing sustained relief to the patients. On the other hand Ayurveda along with Yoga offers drugs along with procedures such as Panchkarma and Yoga provides hope towards a healthy and happy life.

The need of the hour is to acknowledge the handicaps of modern medicine

Traffic congestion in Bengaluru



In light of exponential expansion of Bengaluru horizontally and the setting up of a large number of Information Technology parks(IT), increasing the number of vehicles and more so after Corona-19 people have started going to offices Physically.I would like to give some suggestions to ease out the traffic congestion in Bangalore,which can be examined. Though in these trying circumstances, Bengaluru traffic is doing good work.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

ic, the Assembly elections in Gujarat have become money-spinner for a large number of powerloom workers in Surat. Over a lakh workers are engaged in weaving, dyeing and stitching the election material and tricolour for the last month to meet the high demand from the political parties.

Workers are busy round the clock for stitching saffron colour caps for the BJP at a factory in Surat, Gujarat ahead of Gujarat Assembly Election and it is a make or break situation at present. Again, for 32 years BJP has had a stronghold as Modi and Amit Shah both hail from the same state and work in tandem to achieve a dream of winning again. The BJP IT section is also busy making the dream come true. The elections are indeed a boon to workers.

CK Dorai Ramani Suresh | Ghaziabad

ELECTIONS PROVIDING JOBS

Sir — After struggling for two years with no work due to the COVID-19 pandem-

SOUND BITE

The current challenge is to save the law and the democracy and we will do anything to save it.



Bihar Deputy CM — Tejshwi Yadav



What happened was everybody – Germans, French, Italians, everybody, (US President) Joe Biden – saw that there was simply no option. Because you couldn't negotiate with this guy (Putin). That's the key point.

Former UK Prime Minister — Boris Johnson

I have had people wanting to jeopardise my career, take away from my work, make sure I wasn't cast just because I was doing well in what I was doing. In India, very few of us are happy for somebody else's success.



Actor — Priyanka Chopra



One-day cricket was probably my best format in international cricket, so it's nice to be playing some white ball and Ford Trophy. I'm really looking forward to it.

New Zealand cricketer — Ross Taylor

I am sure India took it up and will take it up. But the point is he is a Malaysian national and if he is invited somewhere... whether they knew, I have no knowledge of that.



Union Minister — Hardeep Puri

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FIRST COLUMN

INDIA-UAE TRADE PACT:
PATH TO PROSPERITY

India is close to starting free trade negotiations with GCC



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Qatar was in news, not just for dazzling the world with billions of dollars of investments for showcasing and hosting one of the largest sports events of all time, the FIFA world cup, but also for pulling off one of its kind supply deals with China. Qatar signed a 27-year natural gas supply deal with China, which is being touted as one of the longest in the history of hydrocarbons.

The agreement according to Chinese government officials would also provide access to the strategic North Field South Project in (NFS) in Qatar. The NFS expansion project is a mega LNG transport train which promises to make Qatar one of the largest natural gas traders in the world in a decade. The expansion project allows international enterprises participation and so far all western big names from Total, Shell, Exxon Mobil, etc., are partners for helping Qatar reach its stated target. In comes China, with a long agreement with Qatar and it also wants to have full access and share in the hydrocarbon-led geopolitical rubric playing out. This agreement with China comes at a time when the European Union is scrambling for securing natural gas supplies from sources other than Russia.

The traditional European inertia to get into long term binding contracts is one of the other reasons such agreements between the West and Qatar are not maturing. In the middle of all this, India is close to starting Free Trade Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of which Qatar is an important member. The GCC is an intergovernmen-



tal, political, economic union consisting of six Arab nations. India has had a framework agreement with the GCC since 2004. The framework, according to the commerce ministry, provides for exploring ways and means for extending and liberalizing trade relations and initiating dialogue towards a free trade agreement.

However, despite two formal dialogues in 2006 and 2008 the GCC, according to the Government of India, could not persuade its member countries to move further to a Free Trade Agreement level negotiation. Regional economic issues among the Arab states, their bilateral relations with India played a significant role in the delay.

The recent pandemic has made Gulf countries willing to expand their economic clout beyond hydrocarbons; this has led to a change in the mindset. India signed a CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) with one of the most influential GCC countries, the UAE, earlier this year. This CEPA allows India's goods to have preferential access for 97 per cent tariff lines, which accounts for 99 per cent of India's exports to the UAE. India primarily exports gems and jewellery, textiles, leather footwear, sports goods, plastics, furniture, wood products, engineering products, pharma and medical devices to the UAE.

India's major import from UAE is primarily energy. The CEPA, one of the first off the block, agreed by India after it has been dragging its feet on getting into binding trade agreements for more than a decade aims to achieve \$115 billion bilateral trade of goods and services in just five years. India had earlier walked out of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, one of the largest economic partnerships, citing a China dictated framework.

India now realises the importance of trade as a significant contributor to the national GDP. India realises that trade in goods and services will be a key contributor towards the economy reaching \$40 trillion in the next two decades. India signed a Free Trade Agreement with Australia earlier. Similarly, a free trade agreement negotiation with the UK has been progressing for more than six months now. FTA negotiations with GCC, if concluded successfully, could be another milestone in India's multi trillion-dollar economic path.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

BJP aims record haul in a three-way poll



DEEPAK K UPRETI

The BJP is set on its target again, lest an undercurrent shakes it off or throws a fractured delivery

After 27 years in the saddle in Gujarat, the Bharatiya Janata Party wants to do it again. And when one says it is 'the BJP contesting the poll' in Gujarat, it actually translates into Prime Minister Narendra Modi who may have vacated Gandhinagar in 2014 but it is he who is seeking mandate for the seventh time in the western Indian state in 2022 and in turn in his decisive run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Another win for the saffron party tiding over almost three-decade anti-incumbency would possibly press a 'delete' button on the Congress and allow the 'third-factor' Aam Admi party (AAP) to rise in the western shores.

Ironical as it may sound for the BJP backers, the Congress despite the BJP's 'double-engine' domination over the power, in last 2017 state elections not only increased its Assembly seats tally but also improved upon its vote share. In contrast, there has been a steady decline in the number of seats collected by the BJP since 2002.

The BJP's seats at 99 went downwards in 2017 from 116 of 2012 Assembly results, but its vote share at 49.1 increased by 1.25 per cent. The Congress, which had won 60 seats in 2012 Gujarat assembly elections, had gained significantly in 2017 by winning 77 seats. The main opposition party had thus not only improved its position by 17 seats but also collected 41.5 per cent vote share, a jump of 2.57 per cent from 2012 Gujarat Assembly polls.

The Congress could not gather enough steam in 2017 to beat the BJP, which had the formidable advantage of its well-oiled organizational machinery and Modi's 'realpolitik' checks and balances to keep the voters interest in the party vis-a-vis a faceless Gujarat Congress and its unimaginative central leadership.

As the stage is set for 2022 December one and five poll for the 15th Gujarat assembly polls, the dynamics of Gujarat elections can be read as "waveless" which could be won by technical management which is 'right selection' of candidates coupled with 'right booth handling' that is ensuring good turnout of the support base.

Palpably anxious of declining number of seats in successive assembly polls, the BJP has denied tickets to 40 of its sitting MLAs and given place to the fresh and young, not loaded with the burden of anti-incumbency. With winnability being the prime factor for all political parties vis-à-vis the 'ideology', the BJP too has, so far, blessed 10 out of 19 Congress MLAs who resigned and joined the BJP after the 2017 elections with its tickets.

In contrast, Congress has, 'understandably', retained most of its sitting MLAs as party candidates. It is indeed a game of reshuffling of the available players on the ground for both the parties and creating a 'new rainbow' before the voters.

To defend its Gujarat fort and make



PALPABLY ANXIOUS OF DECLINING NUMBER OF SEATS IN SUCCESSIVE ASSEMBLY POLLS, THE BJP HAS DENIED TICKETS TO 40 OF ITS SITTING MLAS AND GIVEN PLACE TO THE FRESH AND YOUNG, NOT LOADED WITH THE BURDEN OF ANTI-INCUMBENCY

it 'unbreachable', the BJP has selected the Congress turncoat Patidar Hardik Patel, 29, who crossed-over to the saffron party in July from 'Viramgram', his home town, which had been twice won by the Congress. The roping in of the leader of 2015 OBC reservation stir would further consolidate the BJP's hold over the influential Patel community.

Among other young and new faces also include Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja's wife Rivaba, 28, who is the BJP candidate from Jamnagar North seat. Before joining the BJP, she served as the leader of the Rajput Community's throwback organisation 'karni Sena'.

The choice of Kantilal Amrutiya, 60, for the Morbi assembly seat, which witnessed a bridge collapse disaster, killing over 135 people, is another reflection of the BJP's 'careful micro-management' of seat distribution. Following the tragedy, the saffron party denied ticket to the sitting MLA of Morbi and selected Atrutiya after videos showed him jumping into the river to save lives. A former MLA, Amrutiya had lost in 2017 assembly polls.

Apart from the main rivals of the past – Congress and the BJP -- the entry of AAP has introduced an X factor in the Gujarat polls, leaving political players wondering which way it would impact the elections and to whose advantage. The freebie announcements by AAP's mercurial leader Arvind Kejriwal has prompted many to anticipate that it may nibble into the urban votes of the BJP and may do less

harm to Congress which is rather strong in rural pockets of Gujarat.

The BJP's state president CR Patil thinks otherwise, saying the AAP would cut into Congress votes and thus help BJP's prospects. The AAP has banked heavily on the Patidar community and fielded its Gujarat president Gopal Italia from Katargam in Surat as well as former Patidar agitation leader Alpesh Kathiriya from Varachha in Surat city.

Currently, campaigning most aggressively, the AAP is now banking on its success in Gujarat in 2021 civic polls when it ousted congress from the Surat municipal corporation, winning over Patidar votes. The AAP also won one seat in Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation.

In the 2022 Gujarat poll, the AAP is not without some resonance and digging deep to create its place as against the well-entrenched BJP and Congress. The AAP's approach to Patidars and fielding of backward community member Isudan Gadhvi as the chief Ministerial candidate indicates its calculated long-term planning after scoring victory in Punjab.

The 'Hindutava' card of Kejriwal, however, may not pay its dividend against the BJP which has its master key with itself.

The main challenger to the ruling BJP, the Congress is currently on to its 'door-to-door' silent campaigning, bridging the connection it left uncovered in 2017.

As for the BJP, its 'guarav yatra' apart, the Prime Minister has laid out a slew of mega projects in

Gujarat, two of which shifted from Maharashtra to convince voters that continuity in its governance would ensure uninterrupted 'development' in the state with the guarantee of funds from the central government. The hair-splitting analysis of television anchors notwithstanding, the election match in Gujarat, in a way, seem to be dominated by 'turncoats', including the likes of Hardik Patel and Alpesh Thakor.

Italia, one-time Patidar agitation spearhead and close associate of Hardik, who is famous for hurling a shoe at a BJP minister Pradipsinh Jadeja outside the legislative assembly 2017, is now an AAP nominee. The BJP is set on its target again, lest an undercurrent shakes it off or throws a fractured delivery.

The 'facts' laid-out can, however, be deceptive at times. In 1985 Congress in Gujarat returned to power with 149 seats and 55 per cent votes and in the 2002 assembly poll BJP won 127 seats and gained 49.8 per cent of the votes and cycles are slowly reversing again.

If journalism is said to be 'history written in a hurry', it would not be irrelevant to quote historian EH Carr from his noted book 'What is History?' to put elections in a perspective.

"It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context... a fact is like a sack—it won't stand up till you have put something in it..". Please, take your pick from Gujarat!

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

VOTES FROM SOME MACHINES SHOULD BE "INVALIDATED."

— OUTGOING BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT JAIR BOLSONARO



NO MORE PROCRASTINATION, IRRESPONSIBILITY, INSULTS TO INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY .THE ELECTION WAS DECIDED IN THE VOTE AND BRAZIL NEEDS PEACE TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE.

— THE PRESIDENT OF LULA'S WORKERS PARTY GLEISI HOFFMANN



RBI must opt for alternatives to digital currency

Many transactions can be made compulsory through digital mode and there can be limits on cash payments

The Reserve Bank of India on October 7 released a concept note on Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). The purpose behind the issue, as claimed by the RBI, is to create awareness about CBDCs in general and the planned features of the Digital Rupee (e?), in particular. It explains the objectives, choices, benefits, and risks of issuing a CBDC in India. The Note also seeks to explain Reserve Bank's approach towards introduction of the CBDC, which has been launched on a pilot basis now.

As explained by the RBI the e? will provide an additional option to the currently available forms of money. It is substantially not different from banknotes, but

KALYAN SUNDARAM

(The author is a retired banker)

being digital it is likely to be easier, faster and cheaper. It also has all the transactional benefits of other forms of digital money.

The RBI claims that its approach is governed by two basic considerations – to create a digital Rupee that is as close as possible to a paper currency and to manage the process of introducing digital Rupee in a seamless manner.

The concept paper lists out the following as features of CBDC:

- CBDC is sovereign currency issued by Central Banks in alignment with their monetary policy
- It appears as a liability on the central bank's balance sheet
- Must be accepted as a medium of payment, legal

tender, and a safe store of value by all citizens, enterprises, and government agencies.

- Freely convertible against commercial bank money and cash
- Fungible legal tender for which holders need not have a bank account
- Expected to lower the cost of issuance of money and transactions.

There can be two types of currencies which are used for settlement of transactions. One is physical currencies and another digital form of currency. As we have now all the bank deposits which can be transacted through digital platforms are part of digital currencies only. So whose custody is not important. How digitally it can be trans-

acted only matters.

Hence the question arises why there should be a digital currency from the RBI now? If the aim is to completely wipe out the physical currency, it is a different matter. Not only is our country, no other country in the world is aiming for any such proposition.

Our bank accounts provide seamless digital transactions by means of debit cards, credit cards, NEFT, RTGS, IMPS, UPI etc. Now in this concept paper RBI broadly defines CBDC as the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is akin to sovereign paper currency but takes a different form, exchangeable at par with the existing currency and shall be accepted as a

medium of payment, legal tender and a safe store of value. Hence, it is almost identical to the digital transactions provided by banks except the sovereignty.

The RBI says that the key motivations for exploring the issuance of CBDC in India among others include reduction in operational costs involved in physical cash management, fostering financial inclusion, bringing resilience, efficiency, and innovation in payments system, adding efficiency to the settlement system, boosting innovation in cross-border payments space and providing public with uses that any private virtual currencies can provide, without the associated risks. Again, these are already available for digital

transactions through bank accounts.

The RBI claims that CBDCs have some clear advantages over other digital payments systems, as it being a sovereign currency, ensures settlement finality and thus reduces settlement risk in the financial system. This may be theoretically and conceptually true. But then this undermines the banking system we have under the same RBI regulation. If any bank fails in any settlement system, then it will speak about RBI's supervision.

As per the scheme, the CBDC issued will be the liability of the RBI and whoever wants to have this will have to pay to RBI to acquire this CBDC. Hence it is similar to deposits obtained by com-

mercial banks. But the RBI has decided not to pay any interest on this. As it is primarily introduced as a method of payments like cash, it would not bear interest.

Instead of going in for CBDC, the RBI can further improve penetration of digital transactions by making many transactions compulsory through digital mode. There can be limits on cash payments. There can even be restricted use of cheques. This will reduce cost for the economy as well as arrest illegal and unaccounted transactions.

Irrespective of the form of money, in any economy, money performs three primary functions—medium of exchange, a unit of account and a store of value.

Bombed not beaten: Kyiv flips to survival mode

AP ■ KYIV

Residents of Ukraine's bombed but undaunted capital clutched empty bottles in search of water and crowded into cafés for power and warmth on Thursday, switching defiantly into survival mode after new Russian missile strikes a day earlier plunged the city and much of the country into the dark.

In scenes hard to believe in a sophisticated city of 3 million, some Kyiv residents resorted to collecting rainwater from drainpipes, as repair teams laboured to reconnect supplies. Friends and family members exchanged messages to find out who had electricity and water back.

Some had one but not the other. The previous day's aerial onslaught on Ukraine's power grid left many with neither.

Cafés in Kyiv that by some small miracle had both quickly became oases of comfort on Thursday.

Oleksiy Rashchupkin, a 39-year-old investment banker, awoke to find that water had been reconnected to his third-floor flat but power had not. His freezer thawed in the blackout, leaving a puddle on his floor.

So he hopped in a cab and crossed the Dnieper River from left bank to right, to a café that he'd noticed had stayed open after previous Russian strikes.

Sure enough, it was open, serving hot drinks, hot food and with the music and WiFi on. "I'm here because there is heating, coffee and light," he said. "Here is life."

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said about 70 per cent of the Ukrainian capital was still without power on Thursday morning.

With cold rain falling and the remnants of a previous snowfall still on the streets, the mood was grim but steady.

The winter promises to be a long one. But Ukrainians say that if Russian President Vladimir



Putin's intention is to break them, then he should think again.

"Nobody will compromise their will and principles just for electricity," said Alina Dubeiko, 34. She, too, sought out the comfort of another, equally crowded, warm and lit café. Without electricity, heating and water at home, she was determined to keep up her work routine. Adapting to life shorn of its usual comforts, Dubeiko said she uses two glasses of water to wash, then ties her hair in a ponytail and is ready for her working day.

She said she'd rather live without power than live with the Russian invasion, which crossed the nine-month mark on Thursday.

"Without light or you? Without you," she said, echoing remarks President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made when Russia on October 10 unleashed the first of what has now become a series of aerial onslaughts on key Ukrainian infrastructure.

Klitschko said in a Telegram statement that power engineers "are doing their best" to restore electricity.

Water repair teams were making progress, too. In the early afternoon, Klitschko announced that water supplies had been restored across the capital, with the caveat that "some consumers may still experience low water pressure." People lined up at public water points to fill plastic bottles. In a strange new war-time first for her, 31-year-old Health Department employee Kateryna Luchkina resorted to collecting rainwater from a drainpipe, so she could at least wash her hands at work, which had no water.

She filled two plastic bottles, waiting patiently in the rain until they had water to the brim. A colleague followed behind her, doing the same.

"We Ukrainians are so resourceful, we will think of something. We do not lose our spirit," Luchkina said.

Ukraine works to restore power after devastating strikes

AP ■ KYIV

About 70 per cent of the Ukrainian capital was left without power, Kyiv's mayor said on Thursday, a day after Moscow unleashed yet another devastating missile and drone barrage on Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Wednesday's renewed Russian attack on Ukrainian infrastructure caused power outages across large parts of the country, further hobbling Ukraine's already battered power network and adding to the misery for civilians as temperatures plunge.

The strikes also caused power outages in neighbouring Moldova.

Russia has been targeting Ukraine's power infrastructure following a string of battlefield setbacks its forces suffered during the full scale war it launched February 24, exactly nine months ago on Thursday.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said in a Telegram statement that "power engineers are doing their best to get (electricity) back as soon as possible" and added that the water supply has been restored in about half of Kyiv on the left bank of the Dnieper River.

Ukraine's General Staff reported on Thursday morning that Russian forces fired 67 cruise missiles and 10 drones during Wednesday's "massive attack on residential buildings and energy infrastructure" in Kyiv and several other regions in Ukraine.

Efforts to restore power, heating and water supplies dis-



rupted by the Wednesday attacks were underway elsewhere in Ukraine as well.

Ukraine's energy minister Herman Haluschenko said three out of four nuclear power stations that are fully functioning and which had been forced offline by Wednesday's strikes were subsequently reconnected to the grid.

Governor of the Poltava region Dmytro Lunin said "an optimistic scenario" suggested that electricity will come back to residents of his central Ukrainian region on Thursday.

"In the next few hours, we will start supplying energy to critical infrastructure, and then to the majority of household consumers," Lunin said on Telegram, noting that power has already been restored for 15,500 people and 1,500 legal entities in the region.

Lunin added that water supplies resumed in several parts of the city of Poltava, and four boiler stations have started to heat regional hospitals.

The Kirovohrad and the Vinnytsia regions were reconnected to the power grid early on Thursday, adding to more

than a dozen other regions that were reconnected on Wednesday night, according to Deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office Kyrylo Tymoshenko.

In the southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region, power has been restored for up to 50 per cent of consumers, Gov Valentyn Reznichenko said, but noted that "the situation with energy is complicated."

As Russia continues to assail Ukraine's power network, Ukrainian authorities started opening what they call "points of invincibility" — heated and powered spaces where people could go for hot meals, electricity to recharge their devices and to connect to the internet.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, said on Thursday morning that a total of 3,720 such spaces have been opened across the country.

According to the initiative's website, various venues have been converted to such points including government buildings, schools and kindergartens and emergency services offices.

Poland upsets some by rebuffing German air defence system

AP ■ WARSAW

Poland's government says an anti-missile system which Germany offered to send to Ukraine, a proposal that is a likely non-starter for Berlin because it would significantly ratchet up NATO involvement in Ukraine.

Poland's surprising response to Berlin's offer was welcomed by Ukraine, which is desperate to protect its airspace as barrage upon barrage of Russian missiles have knocked out power across the country.

But Germany's defence Minister Christine Lambrecht stressed that use of NATO defence systems outside its territory needs to be agreed by all member states.

"It is important to us that Poland can rely on allies to stand by each other, even in difficult times, and especially Poland in its exposed position," Lambrecht told reporters in Berlin. "That's why we have offered to support air policing and Patriots, but these Patriots are part of an integrated air defence of NATO, that is, they are intended for NATO territory," the minister said.

"If they are used outside the NATO area, then it has to be agreed with NATO and with the allies beforehand."

In Poland, critics of the populist ruling party accused it of sacrificing the country's security with a war next door in Ukraine for the sake of a domestic political struggle which exploits anti-German sentiment for short-term gain.

The Rzeczpospolita daily called the new proposal by Poland's leaders "shocking," arguing that it would require sending German soldiers operating the system to Ukraine, and "that, in turn, would involve NATO in a direct clash with



Russia, something the alliance has been trying to avoid from the beginning."

"This proposal affects Poland's credibility and, worst of all, its security. The Germans get a clear signal that we do not want their help, so the defence potential of the Polish sky will be lower," deputy editor Michal Szuldrzynski wrote.

"In the worst war in Europe since 1945, this is an unforgivable mistake."

Poland's populist ruling party, facing elections next fall with its popularity dented by 18 per cent inflation, has been ratcheting up its anti-German messaging, long a staple of the party's campaign rhetoric.

Party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski has also been trying to link his domestic opponents, particularly Donald Tusk, a former European Union leader, to Germany, saying on Sunday that if Tusk's party wins next year, Poland would find itself "under the German boot."

When Germany recently offered Warsaw Eurofighter planes and Patriot air defence

missile batteries, Poland's Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak initially said it was an offer he would accept with "satisfaction." The offer came after two men were killed when an apparently stray Ukrainian defence projectile fell in Poland near the border with Ukraine on November 15.

But Poland's tune changed after Kaczynski gave an interview to the state news agency PAP on Wednesday, saying that the offer is "interesting," but that "it would be best for Poland's security if Germany handed the equipment to the Ukrainians."

Since then, both Blaszczak and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki have repeated the position of Kaczynski, the country's most powerful leader.

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, NATO beefed up its defences along its eastern flank, including Poland, while Warsaw has worked to strengthen the nation's own military with massive armaments purchases.



Zelenskyy accuses Russia of 'crimes against humanity'

IAN S ■ KIEV

In his address to the UN Security Council, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Russia of committing "crimes against humanity" after a new barrage of missile strikes have caused widespread power outages across the war-torn nation.

"Russia has long been trying to turn the UN Security Council into a platform for rhetoric. But it was created as the world's most powerful platform for decisions and actions. Therefore, the Security Council must give a clear assessment of the actions of the terrorist state," he told the UN body in a video address on Wednesday.

"Ukraine proposes that the Security Council adopt such a resolution condemning all forms of energy terror. I confirm the invitation from Ukraine regarding the mission of UN experts to critical infrastructure facilities of our country that have been or may be hit by Russian missiles."

"It is necessary to give a proper assessment of damage and destruction. It should be stated that these are strikes against the very infrastructure that ensures the lives of tens of millions of people."

"The world should not be held hostage by one international terrorist," the President added.

The recent Russian attacks have damaged almost half of Ukraine's energy system and millions of people are without power as temperatures drop for winter.

Blackouts, both scheduled and unscheduled, have become common in many parts of Ukraine, as Russia aims regular waves of missile attacks at parts of the energy infrastructure.

According to the President, at least seven people were killed and more than 20 million others were left without electricity on November 8 when Russia carried out over a 100 missile strikes in what is believed to be Moscow's biggest wave of missile strikes since the invasion began on February 24.

As a result, nuclear power plants in the country also went off-line.

Later in his nightly video address to the nation, Zelenskyy said due to the missile strikes which even continued on Wednesday, the situation in Kiev remained "very difficult" and efforts would continue through the night to restore electricity.

Indonesian rescuers focus on landslide as quake toll rises

AP ■ CIANJUR (INDONESIA)

On the fourth day of an increasingly urgent search, Indonesian rescuers narrowed their focus Thursday to a landslide where dozens of people were believed trapped after an earthquake killed at least 272, more than a third of them children. Many of the more than 1,000 rescuers were using backhoes, sniffer dogs and life detectors — as well as their bare hands — to search the worst-hit area of Cijendil village in mountainous Cianjur district where a landslide set off by Monday's quake left tons of mud, rocks and broken trees.

Suharyanto, chief of the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, said the rescuers are planning to use more heavy equipment to search the landslide after using maximum human power. "Hopefully in the next two days, after the weather is good, we can use heavy equipment and more victims will be found," Suharyanto said. Rescue efforts were temporarily suspended Wednesday as heavy monsoon rains fell.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo visited Cianjur on Thursday and said rescuers will focus on one location where 39 people are missing.

"The search process will be our priority for now," Widodo said. "The soil is unstable, so you need to be careful," he warned.

He said distribution of relief supplies has been difficult because the injured and displaced are spread out and hard to reach. "We hope all victims can be found soon," said Henri Alfandi, chief of the National Search and Rescue Agency.

On Wednesday, searchers rescued a 6-year-old boy who was trapped for two days under the rubble of his collapsed house.

Data from National Disaster Mitigation Agency showed that 100 of the 272 confirmed deaths were children.

Monday's magnitude 5.6 quake injured more than 2,000 people, damaged at least 56,000 houses and displaced at least 62,000 people to evacuation centers and other shelters. The agency said 171 public facilities were destroyed, including 31 schools.

US increasingly fearful Putin will use unconventional weapons in Ukraine

IAN S ■ LONDON

Russian President Vladimir Putin could resort to using Novichok in mass chemical weapon attacks in Ukraine if his troops continue to lose ground, US officials fear, according to a media report.

As the progress of the war has gone increasingly in Kiev's favour, fears that Russia could take extreme measures to force Ukraine to surrender — such as launching a nuclear strike or a dirty bomb attack — have been rising, Daily Mail reported.

But according to six people with knowledge of the matter, Putin is prepared to use chemical weapons in a mass-casualty event before resorting to a nuclear confrontation with NATO.

According to the sources, cited by Politico, President Joe Biden's administration is working to ensure its western allies are prepared for such an attack.

The sources said that Washington predicts Russia will use chemical weapons in the event of further losses on the battlefield, or a total collapse of



Putin's army.

Top US officials strategising for such an attack believe Moscow could deploy chemical weapons Russia has been known to use in the past — including those used in the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny (on a flight to Moscow) and former Russian military intelligence officer Sergei Skripal (in Salisbury, Britain), Daily Mail reported.

Both were poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent and were hospitalised in a critical condition. Against the odds, they both survived the attack.

While in the past, the nerve agent has been used by Russia to target individuals, US officials have said it can also be used to carry out a mass-casualty event.

US aid to Ukraine puts pressure on Pentagon's arms stockpile

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The intense firefight over Ukraine has the Pentagon rethinking its weapons stockpiles. If another major war broke out today, would the United States have enough ammunition to fight? It's a question confronting Pentagon planners, not only as they aim to supply Ukraine for a war with Russia that could stretch years longer, but also as they look ahead to a potential conflict with China.

Russia is firing as many as 20,000 rounds a day, ranging from bullets for automatic rifles to truck-sized cruise missiles. Ukraine is answering with as many as 7,000 rounds a day, firing 155 mm howitzer rounds, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and now NASAMS air defense munitions, and thousands of rounds of small arms fire.

Much of Ukraine's firepower is being supplied through U.S. government-funded weapons that are pushed almost weekly to the front lines. On Wednesday, the Biden administration announced an additional round of aid that will provide 20 million more rounds of small arms ammunition to Kyiv. "We've not



been in a position where we've got only a few days of some critical munition left," Pentagon comptroller Michael McCord told reporters this month. "But we are now supporting a partner who is."

U.S. defense production lines are not scaled to supply a major land war, and some, like for the Stinger, were previously shut down.

That's putting pressure on U.S. reserves and has officials asking whether U.S. weapons stockpiles are big enough. Would the U.S. be ready to respond to a major conflict today, for example if China invaded Taiwan?

"What would happen if something blew up in Indo-Pacem? Not five years from now, not 10 years from now, what if it happened next week?" Bill LaPlante, the Pentagon's top weapons buyer, said, referring to the military's Indo-Pacific Command. He spoke at a defense acquisitions conference this month at George Mason University in Virginia.

"What do we have in any degree of quantity? That will actually be effective? Those are the questions we're asking right this minute," he said.

The Army uses many of the same munitions that have proven

most critical in Ukraine, including High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, known as HIMARS, Stinger missiles and 155 mm howitzer rounds, and is now reviewing its stockpile requirements, Doug Bush, the Army's assistant secretary for acquisition, told reporters Monday.

"They're seeing what Ukraine is using, what we can produce and how fast we can ramp up, all of which are factors you would work into, 'OK, how (big) does your pre-war stockpile need to be?'" Bush said. "The slower you ramp up, the bigger the pile needs to be at the start."

The military aid packages the U.S. sends either pull inventory from stockpiles or fund contracts with industry to step up production. At least \$19 billion in military aid has been committed to date, including 924,000 artillery rounds for 155mm howitzers, more than 8,500 Javelin anti-tank systems, 1,600 Stinger anti-aircraft systems and hundreds of vehicles and drones. It's also provided advanced air defense systems and 38 HIMARS, although the Pentagon does not disclose how many rounds of ammunition it sends with the rocket systems.

Philippines asks China for explanation over latest sea feud

AP ■ MANILA

The Philippines has sought an explanation from China after a Filipino military commander reported that the Chinese coast guard forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris in the possession of Filipino navy personnel in the disputed South China Sea, officials said on Thursday.

Sunday's incident off Philippine-occupied Thitu island is the latest flare-up in the long-seething territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

China has denied its coast guard forcibly seized the debris from the Filipino sailors.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson in Manila, Maria Theresa Daza, said without elaborating that a diplomatic note was relayed to China for "clarification from the Chinese side over the incident."

Vice Adm. Alberto Carlos, who heads the military's Western Command, said the Filipino sailors, using a long-range camera, spotted the debris drifting in strong waves near a sandbar about 800 yards (540 metres) offshore.

They set out on a boat and



retrieved the floating object and started to tow it back to Thitu Island. As they were travelling back to the island, "they noticed that a China coast guard vessel with bow number 5203 was approaching their location and subsequently blocked their pre-plotted course twice," Carlos said in a statement.

The Chinese coast guard vessel then deployed an inflatable boat with personnel who "forcefully retrieved said floating object by cutting the towing line" attached to the Filipino sailors' rubber boat.

The sailors decided to return to their island, Carlos

said, without detailing what happened.

Chinese coast guard ships have blocked Philippine supply boats delivering supplies to Filipino forces in the disputed waters in the past but seizing objects in the possession of another nation's military constitutes a more brazen act.

China's Foreign Ministry in Beijing has denied that the debris was seized forcibly.

"The Philippine side salvaged and towed the object first. After friendly consultation at the site, the Philippine side returned the object to China, and China expressed appreciation for that," ministry spokeswoman Mao

Ning said on Monday. "There was no such thing as interception or forcible seizure at the scene."

Responding to China's denial, top Philippine defense official Jose Faustino Jr. stood by the accounts of the Filipino navy personnel and said the debris was "rudely" taken from them by the Chinese coast guard. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said he would also seek clarification when he visits Beijing in January to meet China's leader Xi Jinping.

Faustino said a separate Philippine investigation was underway after Filipino villagers on Thitu reported hearing unexplained explosions on Sunday.

It was not clear where the thunder-like blasts, which caused slight tremors on the ground, came from and what were their nature. Villagers on the island were alarmed, officials said, adding they prepared an evacuation plan in case there would be a need for it.

Thitu, which Filipinos call Pagasa, or hope, hosts a fishing community and Filipino forces and lies near Subi, one of seven disputed reefs that China has turned into missile-protected islands in the disputed waters.

NEPAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Deuba's NC-led ruling coalition leads in counting

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's Nepali Congress (NC)-led ruling coalition was on Thursday on its way to winning Nepal's parliamentary elections and has bagged 40 seats out of 65 declared so far.

Out of the 275 Members of Parliament, 165 will be elected through direct voting, while the remaining 110 will be elected through a proportional electoral system.

Till now, the Nepali Congress has won 25 seats and is leading in 31 more.

The CPN-Maoist Centre has bagged 7 seats, CPN-Unified Socialist 6 and Rastriya Janamorchha and Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party one each. They all are part of the ruling coalition.

The Maoist Centre and CPN-Unified Socialist have been leading in 10 and 5 seats respectively.

The main Opposition CPN-UML led by former premier K P Sharma Oli has won 15 seats and is leading in 29 others.

The CPN-UML partners -



the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Janata Samajwadi Party - have won two and one seats respectively.

The newly-formed Rastriya Swatantra Party has won five seats and is leading in four seats.

Rastriya Prajatantra Party has won two seats and is leading in three seats.

Nagarik Unmukti Party, Janmat Party, Loktantrik Samajwadi Party, Rastriya Janamorchha and independent candidates have secured one seat each.

If trends continue, the NC-led five-party alliance will be in a position to form a coalition government.

However, the CPN-UML has secured the highest number of votes under the proportionate voting system, which gives it an advantage.

Under the proportionate system, the CPN-UML has so far received 3,65,505 votes whereas the NC and Maoist Centre received 3,37,328 and 1,61,069 votes respectively.

In Nepal's capital city Kathmandu, the CPN-UML could bag just one seat, down from the six it had bagged in 2017.

Out of the 10 seats in the district, the ruling Nepali Congress (NC) has secured five and Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) bagged four.



Long-time reformist leader Anwar sworn in as Malaysia PM

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Long-time opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was sworn in as Malaysia's prime minister Thursday, in a victory for political reformers locked in a battle with Malay nationalists for days after the divisive general election produced a hung Parliament.

Broadcast live on national television, Anwar took his oath of office Thursday evening in a simple ceremony at the national palace.

Malaysia's king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, named Anwar, 75, as the nation's 10th leader after saying he was satisfied that Anwar is the candidate who is likely to have majority support.

Anwar's Alliance of Hope led Saturday's election with 82 seats, short of the 112 needed for a majority.

An unexpected surge of ethnic Malay support propelled Former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's right-leaning National Alliance to win 73 seats, with its ally Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party emerging as the biggest single party with 49 seats.

Kim's sister makes insulting threats to Seoul

AP ■ SEOUL

The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attacked South Korea with a string of insults on Thursday for considering new unilateral sanctions against the North, calling its president and his government "idiots" and "a running wild dog gnawing on a bone given by the US."

Kim Yo Jong's diatribe came two days after South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it was considering additional sanctions on North Korea over its recent barrage of missile tests.

The ministry said it would also consider taking action against alleged cyber attacks by North Korea — believed to be a key new source of funding



for its weapons program — if the North conducts a major provocation like a nuclear test.

"I wonder what sanctions' the South Korean group, no more than a running wild dog gnawing on a bone given by the US, impudently will impose on North Korea," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by state media. "What a spectacle sight!"

She called South Korea's conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol and his administration "idiots who continue creating the dangerous situation."

She added that South Korea "had not been our target" when Moon Jae-in — Yoon's liberal predecessor who sought reconciliation with North Korea — was in power.

The comment could be seen as an attempt to foster anti-Yoon sentiment in South Korea.

"We warn the impudent and stupid once again that the desperate sanctions and pressure of the US and its South Korean stooges against (North Korea) will add fuel to the latter's hostility and anger and they will serve as a noose for them," Kim Yo Jong said.

Kim Yo Jong's official title is vice department director of the Central Committee of the North's ruling Workers' Party.

But South Korea's spy agency says she is the North's second-most powerful person after her brother and handles relations with South Korea and the United States.

While it's not the first time Kim Yo Jong has used crude invectives toward South Korea, North Korea is expected to further escalate military tensions on the Korean Peninsula given that she's in charge of relations with South Korea and wields some influences on the North's military, said analyst Cheong Seong-Chang at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea.

Body of Israeli teen, taken by militants, is returned

AP ■ JERUSALEM

The body of an Israeli teen that was taken by Palestinian militants from a West Bank hospital was returned to his family on Thursday, the Israeli military said. Relatives of Tiran Fero, 17, said Palestinian militants in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin entered the hospital where Fero was seeking treatment after a car crash. They disconnected him from hospital equipment while still alive, according to his father, and removed him from the hospital.

The Israeli military said Fero was already dead when he was snatched and that the circumstances of the teenager's death remained under probe. Incident threatened to ratchet up already boiling tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, but the body's return appeared to defuse that for now.

Ousted Lanka Prez summoned in court over presidential pardon to murder convict

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's ousted President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was issued a notice by the Supreme Court on Thursday over a presidential pardon granted by him to a former lawmaker of his party who was convicted in a murder of a party colleague in 2011.

Rajapaksa, who pardoned Duminda Silva-- a former parliamentarian during his Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party, has been issued a second summons since he left office in July this year.

Silva who was sentenced to death in 2017 for involvement in the 2011 murder of a party colleague and ex-MP, Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra, and four others, was freed in June 2021 after Rajapaksa granted him a presidential pardon.

However, the Supreme Court in May this year quashed the pardoning and



ordered Silva to be arrested again. He is expected to appear as a respondent before the Supreme Court on December 16 for the hearing of a fundamental rights petition filed by Premachandra's wife and daughter.

Similarly, in mid-October, the highest court issued a summons to him to appear in court over the 2011 disappearance of two rights activists Lalith Weeraraj and Kugan

Murugananthan from the northern province.

The disappearances took place 12 years ago soon after the end of the country's long civil war when Rajapaksa was a powerful official at the Defence Ministry under the presidency of his elder brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa.

At the time, he was accused of overseeing abduction squads that whisked away rebel suspects, critical journalists, and activists, many of them never to be seen again.

He has previously denied any wrongdoing.

Rajapaksa, 73, was ousted in a popular uprising against him in July this year following months of street protests that called for his resignation.

He fled to the Maldives in mid-July and announced his resignation from Singapore.

In early September, he returned to the country from Thailand.

Writer who accused Trump of 1990s rape files new lawsuit

AP ■ NEW YORK

A writer who accused former President Donald Trump of rape filed an upgraded lawsuit against him on Thursday in New York, minutes after a new state law took effect allowing victims of sexual violence to sue over attacks that occurred decades ago.

E. Jean Carroll's lawyer filed the legal papers electronically as the Adult Survivor's Act temporarily lifted the state's usual deadlines for suing over sexual assault. She sought unspecified compensatory and punitive damages for pain and suffering, psychological harms, dignity loss and reputation damage.

Carroll, a longtime advice columnist for Elle magazine, first made the claim in a 2019 book, saying Trump raped her in the dressing room of a Manhattan luxury department



store in 1995 or 1996.

Trump responded to the book's allegations by saying it could never have happened because Carroll was "not my type." His remarks led Carroll to file a defamation lawsuit against him, but that lawsuit has been tied up in appeals courts as judges decide whether he is protected from legal claims for comments made while he was

president.

Previously, Carroll had been barred by state law from suing over the alleged rape because too many years had passed since the incident.

New York's new law, however, gives sex crime victims who missed deadlines associated with statute of limitations a second chance to file a lawsuit. A window for such suits will open for one year, after which the usual time limits will be reinstated.

At least hundreds of lawsuits are expected, including many filed by women who say they were assaulted by co-workers, prison guards, medical providers or others.

In her new claims, Carroll maintains that Trump committed battery "when he forcibly raped and groped her" and that he defamed her when he denied raping her last month.

Trump said in his statement that Carroll "completely made up a story that I met her at the doors of this crowded New York City Department Store and, within minutes, swooned" her. It is a Hoax and a lie, just like all the other Hoaxes that have been played on me for the past seven years."

Carroll's new ability to sue Trump for rape could help her sidestep a potentially fatal legal flaw in her original defamation case.

If the courts ultimately hold that Trump's original disparaging comments about Carroll's rape allegation were part of his job duties, as president, she would be barred from suing him over those remarks, as federal employees are protected from defamation claims. No such protection would cover things he did prior to becoming president.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all that, my client SHRI PARASH RAM S/O Shri Ram Avadh R/o G-409, Gali No. 13/4, Tripaafactri Bhagratni Vihar, Johri Pur, Dayapur, Delhi-110094, have disowned his son DINESH from all his moveable and immovable estate. My client and his estate shall not be responsible in any manner for any act/deed done by his son any person dealing with them shall deal at his/her own risk & cost thereof and further shall be dealt with as per the law.
AMIT BATRA (Advocate)
26-B/1, D.B. Gupta Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, Mob: 9868066199

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all that, Sudesh Kapahi W/O Late Kewal Kumar R/O-UG Flat No. 4-B, First Floor, Block-A, Madipur, Delhi 1 am the legal owner of UG Flat No.4-B, first floor, Block-A, Madipur, Delhi, File No. L-73(11983)/MP/UG which is allotted by the DDA. Original Possession Letter & Water & Electric Connection NOC of the above flat has been lost. An FIR/NCR in this effect has lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No.104508/2022, Dated-24.11.2022. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No.999495288 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Any person claiming any right, interest, or having any objections with respect to this property can also personally inform/contact me.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR LOST OF DOCUMENTS
To be known to all that I, VIMAL GOEL S/O B. BHAGAT RAM, R/o B-3350, FIRST FLOOR, PASCHIM VIHAR, Delhi-110063, have lost his original property Document i.e. Possession, Possession slip, Allotment letter and Demand letter in respect of the Property Bearing No. Y-206, Y Block, Loha Mandi (W.H.S), NCR, New Delhi-110026, have been lost, an NCR vide LR No. 1014191/2022 against this effect has been lodged in Crime Branch Police Station Delhi.
Any persons claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 981114864 with 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-IV, Northern Railway, Delhi Division for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tender on prescribed form for the following work:
Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)
1. **Name of work with its location:** Upgradation of level crossing in DLI-BTI section of Sr. DEN-IV/DLI (NIT 62-W-IV-22-23)
2. **App. Cost of the work :** (1) Rs. 45,18,957.39
3. **Earnest Money :** (1) Rs. 90,400.00
4. **Date & Time of submission of tender and opening of tender :** Bidding Start date for work no. Up to 15:00 Hrs. on 02.12.2022 opening of e-Tender at 15:00 hrs. on 16.12.2022
5. **Website particulars published e-tender, notice location etc. complete details of tender can be seen and website where the tender form can be downloaded :** Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
No.: 128-W/260/Tender Notice/62-W/IV/22-23 Date: 23.11.2022 31/17/2022
Serving Customers with a Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const-I, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under Two Packet System for the under noted work:-
1. **Name of work and location :** Construction of 2-Lane Road over Bridges consisting of Bow String Girder of 1x33.480m C/C span (Launching in traffic block) including LHS of internal size 4.0x2.50m and other allied works in lieu of L-Xing No. 48 at Railway Km 48B-9 and L-Xing No. 49-A at Railway Km 49/590 between Baraut and Badi Hathi Railway station on Delhi Shahdara-Shantli section of Delhi Division, Northern Railway
2. **Completion Period of the work :** 18 (Eighteen) months from the date of issue of acceptance letter.
3. **Approx. cost of work :** Rs. 1,663.98 Lakh (Rupees Sixteen crore sixty three lakh and ninety eight thousand only).
4. **Earnest money amount (to be deposited Online) :** Rs. 9,82,000/-
5. **Date, Time for submission of e-tender and opening of tender :** Tender may be uploaded upto 11:30 hrs. on 16.12.2022 on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. The bidders can only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 16.12.2022.
Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document : Above tender document will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 24.11.2022 to 16.12.2022. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tender are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
No.: 220-Acs-1-1215/ROB-LC-48 & 49 Dated: 23.11.2022 3116/2022
Serving Customers with a Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
The Dy. Chief Engineer/TMC/Line, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-tender under One Packet System for the under noted work:-
1. **Name of work and location:** (1) POH (Periodic Overhaul) of FRM-1866 machine at NR Track Machine Workshop including mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, cabin repair and other ancillary works.
2. **Completion period of the work** (1) 120 Days.
3. **Approx. cost of work** (1) Rs. 93,17,143.00
4. **Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)** (2) Rs. 52,44,357.00
5. **Cost of Tender Document (to be deposited Online)** Rs. Nil.
6. **Similar Nature of Work** (1) IOH/POH/Major repair of track machines including electrical works, final testing and commissioning of ON Track Machines after IOH/POH.
7. **Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender** Tender document remain available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 02.12.2022 upto 15:00 Hrs. on 23.12.2022 Tender Bids may be uploaded from 10.12.2022 & upto 15:00 hrs on 23.12.2022 on IREPS web site. The tender will be opened soon after 15:30 hrs on 23.12.2022.
8. **Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document** The detailed tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in. Above tender document will be available for online submission of offer on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 10.12.2022 to 23.12.2022. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
Tender Notice No. 1-W-DY/CETMC-10-FRM-1866-22-23 & 11- WST-8083-8088 Dated: 23.11.2022 3133/2022
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that ASHA AZAD (UID No. 780489758817) wife of Late Sh. Priyank Raj Azad resident of House No. 41, Flat No.-3, Gali No. 1, Harijan Basti, Neb Sarai, New Delhi-110068, have agreed to sell the property mentioned in the schedule hereto, to my client vide Agreement dated 17.10.2022 free from all encumbrances.
All persons claiming an interest in the said property or any part thereof by way of sale, gift, lease, inheritance, exchange, mortgage, charge, lien, trust, possession, easement, attachment or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to make the same known in writing along with the documentary proof thereof, to the undersigned at his office at Office No.04, Street No. 02, Neb Sarai, New Delhi-110068 within 14 days from the date hereof, failing which the said sale will be completed, without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, shall be considered as waived.
Schedule
Description of the property
House No.41, Flat No.3 Gali No.-1, Harijan Basti Neb Sarai, New Delhi-110068.
Priyanka Raina Saini Advocate DELHI HIGH COURT Office Address:-04, Kharsa No.-139 Street No.-2, Neb Sarai, New Delhi - 110068. Mob. No.-7982726049

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to general public that my client is intending to purchase from Mrs. Shalini Garg, w/o Sanjay Garg, r/o House No. 333, sector 16, Faridabad Haryana 121002, Property with the following details: Agricultural Land bearing numbers: Mustil No. 69 Kila Nos. 22/2/2; Mustil No.73 Kila No. 2 & 9-A and having 50% share in Mustil No. 73 Kila Nos. 3, 8/1, 8/3, 13, 18 & 23/1 of village Samratthia, Tehsil Sohna, Dist. Gurgaon, Haryana.
May be further known that:
1. That Mrs. Shalini Garg have lost the original sales deed documents for the above-mentioned property vide Vaska No. 768 dt. 27/05/1994 and Vaska No. 5257 dt. 07/02/1996 both executed at Sub-Registrar office of Sohna Tehsil and I have lodged an FIR for the same with the Police.
2. That if any person happens to find the above said original documents they must urgently contact me for delivering the same against reasonable reward.
3. That if any person/entity (corporate or otherwise) has any right, title, interest, benefit, claim or demand in or to the above mentioned property or any part thereof by way of sale, exchange, gift, lease, tenancy, license, assignment, mortgage, charge, lien, trust, family arrangement/ settlement, encumbrance, inheritance, bequest, easement, possession, maintenance, development rights, order/ decree/ judgement of any Court or any other agreement, understanding or otherwise, such person/entity (corporate or otherwise) may lodge their claims and objection to me, against transfer of the above said property to my client by way of sales deed, with all documentary proofs supporting the claims and objections within 15 days of the date of publication of this notice failing which it shall be deemed that there are no claims or objections from anyone for the proposed sale of the above mentioned property to my client or that any such claims and objections shall be considered as waived and/or abandoned.
Date: 25/11/2022
Sanjeev Divivedi (Advocate)
48, Caganand Block, Tis Hazari Courts, ND-54
Mob: +91-99997 33612
placid_chap@hotmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
Subject: Transfer of ownership in respect of Residential Flat no. 204 on Second Floor, in Pocket-2, Sector-19, situated in the Layout Plan of Housing Estate at Dwarka, New Delhi.
In respect of 100% share upon the intestate death of Sneh Gupta resident of Residential Flat no. 204 on Second Floor, in Pocket-2, Sector-19, situated in the Layout Plan of Housing Estate at Dwarka, New Delhi.
WHEREAS Sneh Gupta was the owner of Residential Flat no. 204 on Second Floor, in Pocket-2, Sector-19, situated in the Layout Plan of Housing Estate at Dwarka, New Delhi.
WHEREAS the said Sneh Gupta has died on 29.11.2019.
WHEREAS Mr. Ajay Kumar Gupta and Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Gupta (sons) are the legal heirs of the said Late Sneh Gupta.
WHEREAS Mr. Ajay Kumar Gupta and Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Gupta intend to apply for the transfer of the said property in their favour as they are the only Class 1 legal heirs of the said Sneh Gupta.
If any person is having any objection against the transfer of said property Residential Flat no. 204 on Second Floor, in Pocket-2, Sector-19, situated in the Layout Plan of Housing Estate at Dwarka, New Delhi in favour of Mr. Ajay Kumar Gupta and Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Gupta (Sons), legal heirs of the said Late Sneh Gupta, he/she /they can submit objection in writing to the office of the undersigned, alongwith supporting documents within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which the concerned Authority may sanction the mutation of the property as per the records & may not entertain subsequent claim, thereupon.
Date: 25/11/2022
Mr. Subash Bhat (Advocate)
Add: Trinity Legal Partners, C-401, The Courtyard, Nirvana Country, Sector 50, Gurgaon, Haryana.
subash.bhat@trinitylegalpartners.com

Unemployment rate dips to 7.2% in Q2: NSO survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas declined to 7.2 per cent during July-September 2022 from 9.8 per cent a year ago, the National Statistical Office (NSO) said on Thursday.

Joblessness or unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons among the labour force. Joblessness was high in July-September 2021 mainly due to the staggering impact of Covid-related restrictions in the country.

The latest data based on a periodic labour force survey, underlining a decline in the unemployment rate amid an improved labour force participation ratio, point towards a sustained economic recovery from the shadow of the pandemic.

The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in April-June 2022 was 7.6 per cent in urban areas, the 16th Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) showed.

It also showed that the unemployment rate among females (aged 15 years and above) in urban areas declined to 9.4 per cent in July-September, 2022 from 11.6 per cent a year ago. It was 9.5 per cent in April-June, 2022.

Among males, the unemployment rate in urban areas dipped to 6.6 per cent in July-September 2022 compared to 9.3 per cent a year ago. It was 7.1 per cent in April-June 2022.

Labour force participation rate in CWS (Current Weekly Status) in urban areas for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 47.9 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022, from 46.9 per cent in the same period a year ago. It was 47.5 per cent in April-June 2022.

Labour force refers to the part of the population which supplies or offers to supply labour for pursuing economic activities for the production of goods and services and, therefore, includes both employed and unemployed persons.

NSO launched PLFS in April 2017. On the basis of PLFS, a quarterly bulletin is



brought out giving estimates of labour force indicators namely unemployment rate, Worker Population Ratio (WPR), Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), distribution of workers by broad status in employment and industry of work in CWS.

The estimates of unemployed persons in CWS give an average picture of unemployment in a short period of seven days during the survey period.

In the CWS approach, a person is considered unemployed if he/she did not work even for one hour on any day during the week but sought or was available for work at least for one hour on any day during the period.

Labour force, according to

CWS, is the number of persons either employed or unemployed on average in a week preceding the date of the survey. LFPR is defined as the percentage of the population in the labour force.

WPR (in per cent) in CWS in urban areas for persons aged 15 years and above stood at 44.5 per cent in July-September, 2022, up from 42.3 per cent in the same period a year ago. It was 43.9 per cent in April-June, 2022.

Fifteen Quarterly Bulletins of PLFS corresponding to the quarter ending December 2018 to the quarter ending June 2022 have already been released. The present Quarterly Bulletin is the sixteenth in the series for the quarter of July-September 2022.

Sensex hits record high, Nifty jumps 216 pts amid firm global equities

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex closed at an all-time high of 62,272.68 on Thursday, tracking a firm trend in global markets after the US Fed minutes indicated a slower pace of rate increase that bolstered investors' sentiment.

Extending its rally to the third straight day, the 30-share BSE benchmark rallied 762.10 points or 1.24 per cent to settle at 62,272.68, its record closing peak. During the day, it jumped 901.75 points or 1.46 per cent to its lifetime high of 62,412.33.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 216.85 points or 1.19 per cent to end at 18,484.10. During the day, it hit its 52-week high of 18,529.70, higher by 262.45 points or 1.43 per cent.

"Two triggers assisted the Sensex rally to record highs. One, in the mother market US, the market construct turned favourable with rising equities, declining bond yields and falling dollar. Two, macro developments in India show steady rise in credit growth and capex indicating strong economic recovery.

"Along with this, sharp correction in crude is a big pos-



itive. This has facilitated this Sensex rally led by large-caps, mainly the HDFC twins, Infosys, TCS and RIL," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Wipro, Power Grid, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, HDFC, HDFC Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the major winners.

Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the laggards.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended in the green, while Shanghai settled lower.

Equity exchanges in Europe were trading in the green in the afternoon trade. Wall Street had ended higher

on Wednesday.

"Led by broad-based buying, domestic indices witnessed solid gains as investors digested the latest Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes, which hinted that the rate hike cycle may be slowing down. The optimism was further boosted by falling crude prices and the declining dollar index. Crude oil prices dropped over talks of a possible price cap on Russian oil and a rise in US product stockpiles," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.46 per cent lower at USD 85.02 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth Rs 789.86 crore on Wednesday, as per exchange data.

Rupee gains 30 paise to close at 81.63 against USD



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 30 paise to close at 81.63 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday as a weak greenback in the overseas market and a rally in domestic equities boosted investor sentiments.

Forex traders said the dollar fell in international trade post the weak US data and dovish Fed minutes.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 81.72 and touched an intra-day high of 81.60 and a low of 81.77 against the greenback.

The local unit finally settled at 81.63, registering a rise of 30 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 26 paise to close at 81.93 against the US currency.

India to grow at 'moderately brisk rate', inflation to ease: FinMin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



India is well placed to grow at "moderately brisk rate" in the coming years on the back of macroeconomic stability, despite global monetary tightening, a finance ministry report said on Thursday.

It further said inflationary pressures will ease in the coming months with the arrival of kharif crops and at the same time job opportunities will increase with improvement in business prospects.

The 'Monthly Economic Review for October 2022' also cautioned that the US monetary tightening is a "future risk" which could lead to dip in stock prices, weaker currencies and higher bond yields, resulting in higher borrowing costs for many governments around the world.

It said a rapid deterioration in global growth prospects, high inflation, and worsening financial conditions have increased fears of an impending global recession.

The spillovers of the glob-

al slowdown may dampen India's exports businesses outlook. However, resilient domestic demand, a re-invigorated investment cycle along with strengthened financial system and structural reforms will provide impetus to economic growth going forward.

"In a world where monetary tightening has weakened growth prospects, India appears well placed to grow at a moderately brisk rate in the coming years on account of the priority it accorded (to) macroeconomic stability," the report said.

The ministry said, so far in current year, India's food security concerns have been addressed and will continue to receive the utmost priority from the government.

"Easing international com-

modity prices and new kharif arrival are also set to dampen inflationary pressures in the coming months," it said.

India's wholesale and retail price inflation fell in October after remaining high for most part of the year mainly due to supply chain disruptions following outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in February.

Retail or CPI inflation fell to 3-month low of 6.7 per cent, while wholesale or WPI inflation was at 19-month low of 8.39 per cent.

Russia and Ukraine are among the most important producers of essential agricultural commodities, including wheat, maize, sunflower seeds and inputs like fertilisers.

Together with other countries bordering the Black Sea, they constitute the world's breadbasket.

Along with an uncertain macroeconomic outlook, the year 2022 also brought to the fore the vulnerability and interconnectedness of the global food system to shocks, the ministry said.

Exporters demand fiscal incentives, credit at affordable rates in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Exporters on Thursday demanded fiscal incentives, tweaking in customs duties on certain products and credit at affordable rates in the forthcoming Budget to boost exports and create jobs.

In a pre-budget virtual meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said the depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar is affecting exports' competitiveness and the sector requires more support.

"Creation of employment is the biggest challenge faced by the country...We would urge the government to provide fiscal support to units which provide additional employment in the export sector," the exporter's body said.

It said that incentives may be provided based on twin criteria of growth in exports and the creation of additional jobs.

The body stated that at a time when global demand for



goods is declining, it has become fundamental to go for "aggressive" marketing.

It argued that the Rs 200 crore support given under Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme for promoting exports to USD 460-470 billion is just a "drop in the ocean".

"Therefore, for aggressive marketing, there is a need for the creation of an Export Development Fund with a corpus of minimum 0.5 per cent of preceding year's exports," it suggested adding a special scheme for goods exported by MSME can be introduced in the Budget.

On the direct tax front, it

has demanded an increase in the deduction for investment. On R&D, and procedural simplification by the abolition of TCS (Tax Collected at Source) has been sought.

It also asked for a 200 per cent tax deduction on the expenditure made by exporters for overseas marketing; and extension of tax incentives for the private sector to set up a global Indian shipping line to tap the market.

On loans to MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), FIEO said the credit rate is currently between 11-13 per cent and it may increase further in the next few months.

Issuers of municipal debt securities can issue green bonds: Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Thursday said issuers of municipal debt securities can issue green bonds in compliance with rules governing issue and listing of non-convertible securities.

A green bond is like any other bond where a debt instrument is issued by an entity for raising funds from investors. The proceeds of a green bond offering are 'earmarked' for use towards financing green projects.

Sebi (Issue and Listing of Municipal Debt Securities) or

ILMDS rules provide the framework for issuance and listing of municipal debt securities. It also specified the continuous disclosure and compliance requirements to be complied with by issuers of Municipal Debt Securities.

The ILMDS rules do not define 'green debt security'.

However, Sebi's (Issue and Listing of Non-Convertible Securities) or NCS norms defines green debt security. Further the regulator, in 2021, came out with operational guidelines providing the initial and continuous disclosure requirements for entities issu-



ing or proposing to issue green debt securities.

The regulator said it has received representations from market participants on the compliances an issuer under the ILMDS Regulations would have to undertake in case it is

desirous of issuing a green debt security, in the absence of similar provisions in the ILMDS norms.

"Accordingly, an issuer under the ILMDS Regulations may issue a green debt security if it falls within the definition of 'green debt security', as per...NCS Regulations," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

In addition to the requirements prescribed under the ILMDS rules, such issuer will have to comply with the provisions for green debt security specified in NCS rules.

Gold climbs ₹323; silver rises ₹639

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by Rs 323 to Rs 53,039 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid gains in the precious metal in overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at Rs 52,716 per 10 grams.

Silver also surged Rs 639 to Rs 62,590 per kg.

"Gold and silver prices rebounded from intraday lows after the dollar fell against its major crosses as the Fed meeting minutes suggest that the central bank was less hawkish as compared to expectations," said Navneet Damani, Senior

VP - Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

In the international market, gold was trading in green at USD 1,755.75 per ounce while silver was up at USD 21.55 per ounce.

"COMEX gold rose for the third day after the Federal Reserve's latest meeting minutes showed officials support moderating the pace of interest rate increase soon. After yesterday's Fed meeting minutes, the outlook for the yellow metal turns bullish and we could see metal heading towards USD 1,800 an ounce," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

SEA urges Govt to hike refined palm oil import duty to 20% to save local refiners



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Edible oil industry body SEA has written to the Union food minister Piyush Goyal to increase import duty on refined palm oil to 20 per cent from the current 12.5 per cent in order to protect domestic refiners.

The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) pointed out that the duty difference between crude palm oil (CPO) and refined palm oil is only 7.5 per cent, resulting in higher imports of refined palm oil and lower capacity utilisation of the domestic refining industry.

"The low duty difference of 7.5 per cent is a boon for Indonesian and Malaysia refiners. The duty difference between CPO and refined palmolein/palm oil needs to be increased from the current 7.5 per cent to at least 15 per cent.

"This may be done by increasing RBD Palmolein duty from the current 12.5 per cent to 20 per cent without any change in CPO duty," said the letter, signed by SEA President Ajay Jhunjhunwala and Atul Chaturvedi, Chairman of Asian Palm Oil Alliance (APOA).

The association has argued that a 15 per cent duty difference would help reduce refined palmolein imports and replace the same with crude palm oil imports.

WB FM Mitra criticises Centre for depending on China for trade



PTI ■ KOLKATA

In the backdrop of China's rising exports to India, former West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra Thursday took a dig at the Centre's dependence on trade with that country and termed it as a threat to the nation's security.

Mitra, who is currently the principal chief adviser to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, predicted that India's dependence on imports from China is set to double that of 2014.

"The dependence of India on China will widen Chinese premier Xi Jinping's Mona Lisa smile in the coming G20 summit in New Delhi September next year".

Chinese exports to India has witnessed a rise of about 31 per cent.

"Modi regime's 'China nirbhar' (dependence on China) is a threat to India's national security.

India's dependence on imports from China is set to double since 2014 (\$60 billion to \$120 billion in 2022). Now you can read more into Xi's 'Mona Lisa smile' at Modi at G-20," Mitra tweeted.

Rooftop solar capacity installations fall 29% to 320 MW in Jul-Sep: Mercom report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Rooftop solar capacity installations in India fell 29 per cent to 320 megawatt (MW) in July-September 2022, according to Mercom Research India.

The country added 448 MW rooftop solar capacity in the same quarter a year ago, the research firm said in a report on Thursday.

During January-September, the installations at 1,165 MW were also down 11 per cent compared to 1,310 MW in the corresponding nine-month period of the last year, the report titled 'Mercom India Rooftop Solar Market Report Q3 2022' said.

In the third quarter of 2022, 46 per cent of rooftop solar capacity was installed in

the industrial sector, followed by 32 per cent in residential, commercial 21 per cent and the remaining in the government sector.

According to the report, at the end of Q3 2022, cumulative rooftop solar installations reached 8.3 GW.

"We are seeing rooftop solar installations trending down as costs have risen. The market is struggling with supply issues because of the Approved List of Module and Manufacturers (ALMM), and installers are finding it a tough

environment to operate in overall," said Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group.

The tendering process increased 46 per cent year-on-year to around 311 MW of rooftop solar projects in July-September 2022, of which 33 per cent were announced by the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency, 16 per cent by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and 51 per cent by other state agencies.

Gujarat became the leading state with the highest rooftop solar installations, followed by Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The top 10 states accounted for approximately 73 per cent of cumulative rooftop solar installations.

Need concentrated global push of millets amid challenges of Covid, conflict & climate: Jaishankar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said a concentrated global push for millets is needed as the three Cs of climate change, Covid-19 and conflict are impacting food security in some way or the other.

Millets are grown in 130 countries, including India, and a concentrated push by these countries for millets would enhance food security, increase self-reliance and global availability, the minister said.

Speaking at a pre-launch celebration of 2023 as the International Year of Millets, the minister shared how each of the 3Cs has impacted food security putting the global economy at risk due to the con-



centration of production centres and trade disruption.

He said de-risking the global economy requires more decentralised production and more self-reliance as well as "willingness" on part of the country not only to grow for themselves but to help each other.

Against this backdrop, the minister asked High Commissioners and Ambassadors to India to give much greater attention to food security and think of millets

from the point of view of international relations apart from its nutritional, production and climate benefits.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of State for Agriculture Shobha Karandlaje, Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi and Agriculture Secretary Manoj Ahuja were present at the event.

"Look at the state today of the world. I would like you to reflect on the relevance of millets to that. If there are three big challenges which we have experienced and continue to experience. They are to my mind are 3Cs: Covid, Conflict, and Climate. Each one of them some way has impacted food security," Jaishankar said.

South Korea holds Uruguay to 0-0 draw at World Cup The returning Son Heung-min could not inspire South Korea as the Tigers of Asia started their World Cup Group H campaign with a 0-0 draw against Uruguay in Qatar on Thursday

South Korea, with forward Son Heung-min wearing a mask to protect a broken left eye socket, always looked the more likely to score against the more experienced Uruguayans. The South Koreans were quicker, pressing from the

South Korea always looked

SOUTH KOREA
ATTACKED FROM THE
START AND SON
EXCITED THE CROWD
EVERY TIME HE
TOUCHED THE BALL.
HE MANAGED ONE
THREATENING ATTACK
IN THE FIRST HALF,
HOWEVER, AND DID
LESS IN THE SECOND

Uruguay coach Diego Alonso sent in Edinson Cavani for Luis Suarez in 64th minute as the pace of the match slowed until Valverde hit the post in the final minutes.



But the 2018 semi-finalists clung on to move top of what could prove a hotly-contested Group F after Croatia and Morocco's goalless draw earlier on Wednesday.

It was before David lashed the rebound over the crossbar.

to get that first goal.

"He had a scan to make

Akanji glanced wide at a

they were again caught napping at the start the second half.
Granit Xhaka and Remo

Only a desperate block prevented Haris Seferovic from adding a late second.

"I have no doubt that we will play the next game with the same spirit, if not more," Luis Enrique told reporters.



"(It won't happen) because there will be changes in the lineup, because they want to com-

The coach said he was surprised Germany lost their opening Group E game, although he

"Japan are a very good team, they're a dynamic team,

Ferran Torres netted twice, while Spain's other goalscorers were Dani Olmo, Marco Asensio and man-of-the-match Gavi.

"I hope we can compete



"The last match is history now," he said. "I think we are

Mohamad said Qatar had taken inspiration from shock wins for Saudi Arabia, who beat Argentina, and Japan, who beat Germany.

INDIA START 50 OVER AUDITIONS UNDER DHAWAN

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Copping a lot of flak for its archaic approach in T20Is, the Indian cricket team is expected to turn a new leaf in a different format as it takes on New Zealand in a three-match ODI series, which will mark the start of preparations for next year's World Cup.

India had endured a nightmare back in 2020 in New Zealand when Virat Kohli's side was blanked 0-3 in one of the most lopsided series where the bowling effort was below par.

Exactly 11 months are left for the marquee event in India and the series starting on Friday will give the team an initial idea about some of the middle-order slots and also the bowling arsenal in India's armoury.

With five seniors -- skipper Rohit Sharma, the talismanic Virat Kohli, team management's favourite KL Rahul, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and No.1 ODI all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja not part of this series, the management can only get a rough idea in which direction the team would move.

All these big guns will now play a lot of ODI cricket, starting with the Bangladesh series, and the team combination will undergo a sea change once they all come back in due course.

Just like the dilemmas of T20Is, Indian coach Rahul Dravid will have a lot on his plate but for now, his understudy VVS Laxman also needs to do a tight rope walking as far as this series is concerned.

Dhawan will be close to 38 during next year's World Cup and in ODIs in the last two years, he has scored nearly 1000 runs.



This is the only international format he plays. Since T20 got more precedence, his appearances has been pretty sporadic.

But to put things in perspective, both Kohli and Rohit have played one third of the ODIs that Dhawan played as they concentrated more on Tests and T20Is with World Test Championship and back-to-back T20 World Cups lined up.

In the meantime, Shubman Gill has shown his prowess as an ODI opener in a dozen of games he has played so far with an average of 57 plus and a strike-rate

of 100 plus.

But even in this format, Dhawan has been a cautious starter in Powerplays and then picked up pace. Team's philosophy will be the main thing along with a decision whether the Delhi southpaw would be persisted for next one year with Rohit, Rahul and Gill also there.

Rahul, in ODIs, has started batting down the order at times and Shreyas Iyer has been one of India's consistent ODI players despite his problems with short ball. Suryakumar Yadav, who is in the form of his life can't

Rahul, in ODIs, has started batting down the order at times and Shreyas Iyer has been one of India's consistent ODI players despite his problems with short ball.

be dropped from the middle-order if he is fit to play.

Sanju Samson, the phenomenal talent from Kerala, with his wide range of strokes can't be ignored for a long time either and Deepak Hooda brings his all-round skills to the table.

BOWLING ATTACK

Coming back to the series, there are three 50-over games in a space of five days and fast bowlers' recovery period will be paramount.

Deepak Chahar is expect-

ed to start and is likely to have the seasoned Shardul Thakur for company since both offer decent batting option lower down the order.

Arshdeep Singh is likely to be the third option but he has been constantly playing so there could be a chance to check out a Kuldeep Sen or an Umran Malik. The flip side is short ground. There is every chance that their pace could become a disadvantage. Washington Sundar is also likely to be in playing XI and due to the short dimensions of Eden Park ground, with its awkward angles, Dhawan might prefer an extra pacer instead of an extra spinner.

New Zealand's core for the series is more or less same like the T20s. With swing bowler Tim Southee, tearaway quicks Adam Milne, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry and spinner Mitchell Santner in its raks, the home teams' attack looks formidable on paper.

SQUADS

India: Shikhar Dhawan (captain), Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Deepak Hooda, Shahbaz Ahmed, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Deepak Chahar, Arshdeep Singh, Shardul Thakur, Kuldeep Sen, Umran Malik.

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (captain), Finn Allen, Devin Conway, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Michael Bracewell, Tim Southee, Matt Henry, Adam Milne, Jimmy Neesham, Mitchell Santner, Lockie Ferguson.

Not hurt that captaincy was taken away from me for Zimbabwe tour: Dhawan

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Shikhar Dhawan has a lot of faith in God's plans and purely for that reason it "didn't hurt him" when he was asked to hand back the India captaincy to KL Rahul during the tour of Zimbabwe.

Dhawan, who usually leads the India ODI team in the absence of Rohit Sharma, was named captain for the three-match ODI tour of Zimbabwe in August this year but later was demoted by the former national selection committee once KL Rahul was declared fit and available.

"I wasn't hurt as I believe certain things are predestined and whatever happens is for our own good," said Dhawan, who is back in the captain's saddle for the ODI leg of New Zealand tour.

"And if you look at it, after Zimbabwe, I again captained against SA at home and the same selection committee handed me the leadership reins. So I am not at all hurt by what transpired in Zimbabwe. There must be something good hidden somewhere (in God's design)," the veteran opener said. In fact, he believes in counting his blessings. In the twilight phase of his career, he got a chance to lead the national team.

"I am very fortunate that



at this juncture of my career, I have got a chance to lead India," he said.

He also explained how he rationalised Rahul's elevation in Zimbabwe and he was kept as his deputy. "Look in Zimbabwe, KL was made the captain because he is the vice-captain of the main team. And since he was going to Asia Cup (after that series) and in case Rohit got injured over there (in UAE) and Rahul had to captain, it was better that he captained in Zimbabwe and remained ready on leadership front.



Hardik's leadership skills can immensely help India in T20s: Miller

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

South Africa's go-to man in pressure situations, David Miller believes that as captain Hardik Pandya can infuse much needed fearlessness into India's T20 set-up with his exemplary clarity of mind and work ethic.

Hardik is seen as the leader of the Indian team at the 2024 T20 World Cup with current skipper Rohit Sharma not expected to carry on in the shortest format for another two years.

Miller, who has finally realised his rich potential and became one of the best finishers in the game over the last couple of years, said Hardik had played a crucial role in steering Gujarat Titans to the title on their IPL debut.

in the IPL, I feel he is a natural leader, People follow him. He allows you to play the way that you feel like you can. He is very inclusive as a leader, he wants everyone to be close to each other," the South African said.

"At the same time, he is clear with discipline. He has got a lot of good attributes of a leader.

"In IPL he got better and better as the season progressed and I see him doing that (with the Indian team as well)," Miller said.

India are in desperate need for a change in mindset, especially in the powerplay. Can Hardik effect that change and let the players not worry about fear of failure?" "Yes. He will make the players a lot better in the mindset. 100 percent.



World team chess: India edges out France, reaches last four

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

India defeated France in a thrilling tie-breaker to enter the semifinals of the FIDE World Team Chess Championship here. After the two sets of matches were shared by the teams by a 3-1 margin, the Indians won the blitz tie-break 2.5-1.5. Nihal Sarin and S L Narayanan did the star turn with victories over Jules Moussard and Laurent Fressinet respectively early on Thursday.

Vidit Gujrathi, India's top player, held the top French star Maxime Vachier-Lagrave to a draw in 45 moves while the experienced K Sasikiran was beaten by Maxime Lagarde in 55 moves but the wins by Sarin and Narayanan did the trick. India will take on Uzbekistan in the semifinals.

Earlier in the first of the two matches, Gujrathi pulled off a win over Lagrave and Narayanan defeated Fressinet. win.

Bilateral series require more context: Williamson

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson says increasing volume of cricket could be a reason for low attendance during the recent England-Australia series and going forward, bilateral series would require "more context" for attracting fans to the stadiums.

A sparse crowd witnessed the recent ODI series between the Ashes rivals Down Under. Only a handful of fans gathered at the MCG for the final match.

The series had started less than four days after England's T20 World Cup triumph Down Under.

"It was unfortunate to see, but it also shows the volume of cricket that's being held. Because no doubt the ICC tournaments are incredibly popular and there has been a lot of cricket on. They (Australia) also had a World Cup on. So, there was a lot on in their country too.

"So, we must ensure there is a lot more context as possible in games, especially the bilateral series," Williamson said on the eve of New Zealand's opening ODI against India.

The proliferation of T20 leagues around the world and a hectic international calendar has led to a debate over the existence of 50-over cricket.

Asked if ODI cricket is slowly dying, Williamson said, "It's tough."

"But yeah, it will settle somewhere. I don't know what it will look like. A lot of teams now have two teams at the moment.

"I don't know where it will settle, but there are always conversations about trying to make it more appealing in any context like rule change etc so..."

England's T20 World Cup triumph has intensified the debate on split coaching and picking different players for different formats and the Kiwi skipper feels the packed schedule also has a part to play with players needing rest.

"Yes, it appears to be happening more and more and

you can understand why. There is so much on and you can't do everything. That's why you see a lot of teams with those sort of make up."

A modern-day batting great, Williamson's credentials

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit made before Notary, Talcher vide LR no. 2093, dtd 23/11/2022, Leelabati Sahoo aged about 54 years wife of Kshetrabasi Sahoo, Vill/ Po. Bijigol, PS. NTPC, Dist. Angul hereby declared that my name has been mentioned in my HSC Certificate as Leelabati Sahu, where as in my Aadhaar, Voter ID card, Birth Certificate, Bank Pass Book, my name has been mentioned as Leelabati Sahoo. In my land documents my name mentioned as Lilabati Sahoo and in some other documents of land my name has been mentioned as Lilabati Sahu. Leelabati Sahoo w/o Kshetrabasi Sahoo and Lilabati Sahu, Lilabati Sahoo Leelabati Sahu w/o Kshetrabasi Sahoo of the above address is all one and same person for all purposes.

Office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No. IV, Nirman Soudha, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement

No- 7112 Date-23.11.2022

Bid Identification No- C.C. (R&B) - 04 of 2022-23

e - Procurement Notice No. 38

1	Name of the Work	1 No. Road Work
2	Total No of works	1 No. Road Work
3	Estimated Cost	Rs 40,50,836.00
4	Class of Contractor	B Class
5	Period of Completion	1 (One) Calendar Month
6	Type of Tender	Single Cover System
7	Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	From Dt.25.11.2022 to 17.30 hrs of Dt.01.12.2022
8	Last Date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal	Dt.01.12.2022 up to 17.30 hrs
9	Opening of Bid through online	Dt.02.12.2022 at 11.30-AM onwards
10	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Er. Trinath Behera, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No IV, BBSR

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>

The Tender Inviting Authority reserves the right to reject / cancel / modify the tender at any time without assigning any reason thereof.

N.B: Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above

OIPR-34135/11/0021/2223

Office of the NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, BALUGAON

Balugaon, Khordha, Odisha, Pin-752030, Email Id.eonac.balugaon2013@gmail.com

No. 2781 Dt. 24.11.2022

Tender Call Notice

Sealed tender are invited in the prescribed format from the interested reputed Manufacturer/Contractor/Firms for Supply, fixing erection of Entrance Structural Modified Night Version Gate as per IRC guideline at NAC Balugaon as per required quantity after finalization of quotation. The authority is not responsible for any postal delay and beyond the specified date and time. No application/quotation shall be entertained . The Quotation/Bidder or their authorized representatives may remain present at the time of opening of bid. If wish so the bid will decide on the design basis. If the last date of receipt and date of opening happens to a Govt. holiday, the next working day will be treated as last date of receipt and date of opening at the same time. The authority reserves the rights to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Cost of Schedule Paper	Rs.30,000/-
Last date for receipt of Tender Paper(Only by post in office hour)	Dtd.03.12.2022 up to 12.00 Noon
Opening of quotation & Venue	Dtd.03.12.2022 at 4.00 P.M.(Office of the Chamber of Executive Officer, NAC Balugaon

Yours faithfully,
Executive Officer,
N.A.C., Balugaon

OIPR-13148/11/0002/2223

as a T20 player has come under scrutiny after his underwhelming performance at the T20 World Cup and the 52-ball 61

in the second T20I against India.

"I still love playing all three formats, and enjoy changing

between the three, as a player I'm looking to keep improving and I certainly have the moti-

Phone-06842-253708
E-mail: rw_phulbani@yahoo.co.in

O-1301

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, PHULBANI

No.....5087.....RWDP, Dated the 11.11.2022

Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. Online Tender/10/SERWD PHULBANI/ 2022-23

1	Name of the work	:: Road Work (1No.)
2	Estimated cost	:: Rs. 58.82 Lakhs
3	Period of Completion	:: 6 (Six) Calendar Months
4	Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the Portal	:: From 01.12.2022 10.00 AM to 13.12.2022 Up to 05.00 PM
5	Last Date/ Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	:: 13.12.2022 up to 5.00 PM
6	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:: Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Phulbani

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR-25077/11/0014/2223

Superintending Engineer
Rural Works Division
Phulbani

WORKS DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ROURKELA (R&B) DIVISION
UDITNAGAR, ROURKELA

E-Mail Id - eeprdrkl@gmail.com

B-885

Government of Orissa "e" Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No.: 51 / 2022-2023 Dated: 17.11.2022

1.	Number of works:3(Three) number of Works
2.	Estimated cost: Rs. 59.23 Lakhs to 60.12 Lakhs
3.	Period of completion: 6(Six) calendar months
4.	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal: Dt. 30.11.2022 at 11.00 A.M.
5.	Last date/ Time for receipt of bids in the portal: Dt 08.12.2022 up to 05.00 P.M.
6.	Date of opening of Bid: Dt. 09.12.2022 at 11.30A.M.
7.	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid: Superintending Engineer, (R & B) Division, Rourkela , UditNagar.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tenderporissa.gov.in>

OIPR-34068/11/0031/2223

Superintending Engineer
R & B Division, Rourkela

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, ATHMALLIK FOREST DIVISION,
AT/PO: ATHMALLIK, DIST- ANGUL. - 759125.

E-mail: dfoathmallikt@gmail.com Tel: 9437004236

Tender Notice No. 7113/II/2022
Date: 20.11.2022

Short Tender Notice for Construction of Anti-Poaching Barrack, GPS Co-ordinates E-84.309277

N-20.922766 under Madhapur Range in Athmallik Forest Division

Sealed Tender is hereby invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Governor, of Odisha, invites Tender for following works from the eligible contractor as detail below.

1.	Name of the work: Construction of Anti-Poaching Barrack, GPS Co-ordinates E-84.309277 N-20.922766 under Madhapur Range in Athmallik Forest Division
2.	Place of Work: Athmallik Forest Division
3.	Period of Completion: 90 Days
4.	Commencement of download RFP document on website: www.odishaforest.in Dt. 20.11.2022 Time: 11.00 A.M.
5.	Last Date of bid submission (by messenger/courier/post): Dt.05.12.2022 01.00 P.M. Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik Division, PO/PS- Athmallik, Pin-759125, Dist. Angul.
6.	Date of General & Technical and Financial Bid opening: Dt.05.12.2022 Time:05.00 P.M. Office of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik Division, PO/PS- Athmallik, Pin759125, Dist. - Angul.
7.	RFP document Cost (Non-refundable): Rs. 1,000/- By DD issued by Nationalized Bank in favour of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik Division, Payable at Athmallik.
8.	Address for Bid submission- Office of DFO, Athmallik.
9.	EMD (Refundable): Rs. 20,000/- By DD issued by Nationalized Bank in favour of the Divisional Forest Officer, Athmallik Division, Payable at Athmallik.
10.	Bid validity period: 4 Months from the last date of submission of Bid.
11.	Latest Tender document and addendum/corrigendum, if any, will be published at the websites www.odishaforest.in
12.	Disclaimer: Notwithstanding anything else contained to the contrary in this tender document, DFO Athmallik reserves the right to cancel/ withdraw/ modify fully or partially the "Invitation of Bids" or to reject one or more of the bids without assigning any reason and shall bear no liability whatsoever consequent upon such a decision.

OIPR-08125/11/0011/2223

Sd/-
Divisional Forest Officer,
Athmallik Division.