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PUTIN'S ENDGAME
BEGINS WITH KHERSON

WORLD 8

PM DEUBA WINS FROM DADELDHURA;
NEPALI CONGRESS AHEAD IN POLL TALLY

MONEY 10

'TAX COLLECTION TO EXCEED BUDGET
ESTIMATE BY ₹4L CR'

DEHRADUN, THURSDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹2

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PEP GUARDIOLA
PENS NEW DEAL
WITH MAN CITY
11 SPORT

Submit files on Arun Goel's pick as EC, SC asks Centre

We want to see what prompted step to choose EC at short notice, SC tells AG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting the need for independence of the Election Commission and its members, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to produce the original records related to the recent appointment of Arun Goel as Election Commissioner.

The Constitution Bench headed by Justice KM Joseph wanted to know whether there was any "hanky panky" and rejected Centre's objections in producing the original file, saying it wants to know whether everything was "hunky dory" in the appointment process as claimed by the Government.

The five-judge Constitution bench rejected the objections put forth by Attorney General (AG) R Venkataramani over its insistence on going through the file while it was hearing the larger issue of appointment of Election Commissioners and Chief Election Commissioner.

The AG told the bench, also comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and CT Ravikumar, that the court is

dealing with the larger issue of appointment of ECs and the CEC, and it cannot look at an individual case flagged by advocate Prashant Bhushan.

"I take serious objection to this and have my reservation to the court seeing the file amid the hearing of a Constitution bench," he contended.

Earlier on Monday, the Bench observed that the selection to Election Commission should be by a body headed by the Chief Justice of India. Bhushan argued that when the Bench started hearing a batch of pleas seeking a collegium-like system for the appointment of ECs and the CEC last Thursday, the Government appointed Goel as an EC on November 19.

"We want to see what prompted the step. We want to see what the mechanism is. We will not treat it as an adversarial (move) and keep it for our record, but we want to know as you claim that everything is hunky dory. Since we were hearing the matter and appointment was made amid, this may be interlinked. You have time till tomorrow. Produce the documents," the court told the AG.

The Bench observed that Bhushan had told the court last Thursday that an interlocutory application has been filed seeking filling of one vacancy in the Election Commission and the next day the appointment was made. Bhushan, who



appeared on behalf of petitioner Anoop Baranwal and made his rejoinder submission, said after the court started hearing the matter, the Government hurriedly appointed an Election Commissioner.

"This Election Commissioner was, till Thursday, working as a secretary-level officer in the Government. Suddenly, he was given VRS on Friday and appointed as an Election Commissioner," Bhushan said. He added, they (Government) appointed someone in a single day and no one knows what process was followed and what safeguards were taken. Justice Joseph said, as far he recalls, it takes three months for a person to get voluntary retirement.

"You need to produce before us the original file regarding the appointment of this officer. If there is no illegality, then you should not be afraid," Justice Joseph said. Venkataramani protested the way Bhushan flagged the issue of Goel's appointment amid the hearing of a larger matter and wanted the court to look into it. Justice Hrishikesh Roy told Venkataramani that with

his objection it looked like he was prejudging the mind of the court.

Justice Joseph told the Attorney General, "Please tell us whether you will produce the files or not unless you have an objection to that. If not, we will leave the matter at that and close the hearing." AG Venkataramani said the court need not travel that far and that he was only trying to satisfy himself whether it would be appropriate for the bench to look into the file of an isolated incident amid the hearing of a larger issue.

"If there is a need to show (the files) to the court, we will certainly show it. If any wrong has happened, I, as Attorney General, would myself bring to the notice of the court. It is my duty as the law officer. This court cannot look into an isolated incident just because it was flagged by someone. The post has been vacant since May," he said.

Justice Joseph said the court is only looking into the mechanism and see whether everything was according to the process. "If you feel you should not disclose the file, then let us know. You have time till tomorrow. If you are busy, you can ask someone to place the file before us," he said.

On November 19, Goel, a 1985-batch IAS officer of the Punjab cadre, was appointed as an Election Commissioner.

Delhi man stabs parents, grandma, sister to death

Drug addict was back from rehab centre recently

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a gruesome incident, a 25-year-old man, a drug addict who recently returned from a rehabilitation centre, killed all his family members in Southwest Delhi's Palam area.

The accused, identified as Keshav, allegedly stabbed his parents, sister, and grandmother to death over a dispute.

According to police, all four were found lying in a pool of blood. They have been identified as Dinesh Kumar (50), his wife Darshan Saini (40), mother Deewano Devi (75) and daughter Urvashi (18).

As Keshav went on the stabbing spree, the screams of his family members alerted some of their relatives, who live in the same building, and neighbours.

According to a police officer, they received information around 10.30 pm on Tuesday about a quarrel on the upper floor of a house in Palam. Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Manoj C said when a police team reached there, it found four members of the family dead.

The "caller" Kuldeep Saini (26) and his relatives caught hold of the accused and handed him over to the police, he said.



(Inset) Keshav (in red), with his mother, sister, father and grandmother. A cop at their house after the ghastly murders on Wednesday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

On being handed over to the police, Keshav warned his cousin Saini, "When I come out of jail, it will be your turn."

Saini lives on the first floor of the building and his uncle's family lives on the second.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Keshav did not have a stable job. He used to

work in a company in Gurugram and left the job a month ago, police said. Prima facie it seems the accused killed his family members following an argument, police said.

Keshav's relatives said they are shocked and completely devastated. "Around 10 pm, I heard my cousin Urvashi (Keshav's sister) calling my

Married man kills girlfriend, shoots self; hospitalised

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman was shot dead by her 38-year-old paramour inside a room at an OYO hotel in Narela area of Northwest Delhi.

The accused, identified as Praveen, alias Situ, had also attempted to commit suicide by shooting himself in the head but he survived and is undergoing treatment at Sanjay Gandhi hospital.

The victim has been identified as 39-year-old Geeta. She checked into the OYO hotel on Tuesday with the accused, officials said.

According to a hotel staff, the couple had a heated argument, and the man, apparently, in a fit of rage, shot his girlfriend in her chest. After killing her, he also tried to kill himself.

name and screaming for help. When I went upstairs, I saw that the gate just outside the main door was locked and there was silence. I knocked on the door and asked Keshav to open it. But he insisted that I leave as it was their family matter," Kuldeep recalled.

Aaditya meets Nitish, Tejashwi in bid to woo Biharis for BMC polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena (Uddhav) leader Aaditya Thackeray, along with party MP Priyanka Chaturvedi and Anil Desai, met Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his Deputy and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav in Patna on Thursday.

Aaditya, who was on a one-day visit to Bihar, was accompanied by Tejashwi when they called on Kumar at his residence. Aaditya's decision to call on Kumar and Tejashwi is seen as a clever move to influence millions of Bihar voters residing in Mumbai and whose support will be crucial for Shiv Sena (Uddhav) in the upcoming BMC elections.

The BJP has already started a campaign to woo the North Indian voters.

Addressing the media



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar presents a 'shawl' to Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader Aaditya Thackeray during a meeting, in Patna on Wednesday. Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav is also seen PTI

after the meeting, Aaditya said, "We've been in touch with each other but could not meet due to Covid. We discussed various topics but did not discuss politics. Sure this friendship will continue."

Aaditya sought to distance himself from the distant "anti-migrant" stance that the Shiv Sena, founded by his late grandfather Bal Thackeray, has often been accused of.

Sushant manager's death mystery solved; CBI says 'it's accident'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has concluded that the death of Mumbai-based talent manager Disha Salian was an accident and not a case of suicide. Disha's death in 2020 had become a controversial issue following numerous allegations of foul play and cover up.

The 28-year-old had managed several stars in her career, most notably Sushant Singh Rajput, who himself died less than a week after Disha.

Even as there was no separate FIR or complaint into Disha's death, the matter was investigated by the CBI in connection with Sushant's death which is also being probed by the CBI.



Disha died on the intervening night of June 8-9, 2020 reportedly after falling off the balcony of a 14th floor apartment in Mumbai's Malad.

Rajput's body was found five days later, BJP leader Nitish Rane had alleged that the deaths were linked and there was foul play. Now, a CBI probe has reportedly found that Disha fell after losing balance under the influence of alcohol.

Meghalaya villagers torch Assam's forest office

PNS/AGENCIES ■ MUKROH/GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

A group of villagers from Meghalaya allegedly torched a forest office in Assam's West Karbi Anglong district late on Tuesday night ostensibly as a reaction to the killing of six people in violence that occurred earlier in a disputed area along the border between the two States.

At least two vehicles — one in Mukroh village where the violence took place on Tuesday and another in Meghalaya's capital Shillong — were set ablaze by separate mobs, officials said.

Mukroh village, 30 km east of West Jaintia Hills district headquarters of Jowai, is located around 10 km from the interstate border inside



Remains of a temple after it was vandalised by miscreants following violence at a disputed Assam-Meghalaya border location that killed six people, in West Karbi Anglong district, on Wednesday PTI

Meghalaya.

In New Delhi, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said Assam-Meghalaya border is peaceful and the recent clashes along the inter-State boundary had erupted between locals and forest

guards.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function in the national capital, Sarma also asserted that the incident was not at all related to the long-standing border dispute between the two Northeastern States.

CAPSULE

AFTAB WILL KILL ME: SHRADDHA TOLD POLICE

Mumbai: Shraddha Walkar had two years ago complained to police in Maharashtra that her live-in partner Aftab Poonawala, who is accused of brutally murdering her and then sawing her body in 35 parts, tried to kill her and she feared he would cut her into pieces and throw her away.

RANSOMWARE ATTACKS CRIPPLES AIIMS

New Delhi: The server for National Informatics Centre's eHospital used at AIIMS-New Delhi has been down since 7 am, affecting the healthcare centre's outpatient department (OPD) and sample collection services. All these services are running on manual mode.

SCOTLAND LOSES COURT FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE

London: The devolved Government of Scotland on Wednesday lost a major SC battle in London when judges ruled that a second referendum on its union with the UK cannot go ahead without the approval of the UK Parliament. **P9**

Didn't invite Naik: Qatar on hate preacher's visit

Canards on Zakir's invite a bid to spoil bilateral ties, FIFA WC host tells India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Qatar has clarified that it did not extend any official invitation to India's fugitive Zakir Naik for the ongoing FIFA World Cup opening ceremony. Doha 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 the World Cup inauguration on November 20 will be called off if Naik was invited for the event.

Qatar reportedly informed India through official channels that no official invitation was extended to the Indian fugitive to witness the opening ceremony from the VVIP enclosure. Reports said Naik could have travelled to Qatar from Malaysia on a private visit.

In the first response by the Centre to Qatar's reported invitation to Naik, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday said he was sure India will take up the matter and would convey its views in the "strongest possible terms" to the concerned authorities.

Asked about Qatar reportedly inviting Naik to the FIFA World Cup, Puri said, "I have no knowledge of that". When asked if India will lodge a protest, he replied, "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. I have as much access to information as you have."

"You can ask me my views on Zakir Naik. My views and your views are the same on that," he said. Replying to a related question, Puri said, "We (India) have our views on him and I am sure they will be conveyed in the strongest possible terms to the concerned authorities."

A BJP spokesperson in Goa had also called for Indians to boycott the World Cup on the issue.

Naik has been wanted by India since 2016 for alleged money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches in Malaysia. In March 2022, the Union Home Ministry declared Naik founder of Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) an unlawful association under the UAPA and banned it for five years.

Day 2 shocker! Japan vanquish Germany

AP ■ DOHA

Another World Cup day, another World Cup shock. Substitutes Ritsu Doan and Takuma Asano scored late goals on Wednesday to give Japan a come-from-behind 2-1 victory over Germany at the World Cup. Both Doan and Asano play for German clubs.

Ilkay Gundogan had given four-time champion Germany the lead with a first-half penalty. But Doan, who plays for Freiburg, pounced on a rebound to equalise in the 76th minute after Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer blocked a shot from Takumi Minamino.

Then Asano, who plays for Bochum, sprinted clear of Nico Schlotterbeck and beat Neuer from a narrow angle in the 83rd minute of the first competitive meeting between the two nations.

The match was played a day after Argentina's 2-1



Germany's soccer team players cover their mouths as they pose for a group photo before the World Cup group E soccer match between Germany and Japan, at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha on Wednesday AP

upset loss to Saudi Arabia.

Before Wednesday's game, Germany's players covered their mouths during the team photo in an apparent rebuke to FIFA following its decision to stop plans to wear armbands to protest discrimination in host nation Qatar.

Nancy Faeser, Germany's Sports Minister, attended the match at the Khalifa International Stadium and was sitting beside FIFA president Gianni Infantino while wearing the same "One Love" armband that FIFA had outlawed with its threats of consequences.

US's Walmart manager opens fire in break room, kills 6

AP ■ CHESAPEAKE

A Walmart manager opened fire on fellow employees in the break room of a Virginia store, killing six people in the country's second high-profile mass shooting in four days, police and a witness said Wednesday.

The gunman, who apparently shot himself, was dead when police found him, Chesapeake Police Chief Mark G Solecky said. There was no clear motive for the shooting, which also put four people in the hospital.

The store was busy just before the attack Tuesday night with people stocking up ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday, a shopper told a local TV station.

Employee Briana Tyler said workers had gathered in the store's break room as they typically did ahead of their shifts. **Detailed report on Page 9**

Doctor donates blood to save patient's life before operating him

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In an act that restores faith of many in doctors and humanity, a doctor from Government Doon Medical College (GDMC), Dr Shashank Singh, senior resident, orthopaedics donated blood to his critically ill patient before operating on him later. A patient with severe fractures in his left arm and thigh was admitted to the hospital on November 7. After his condition stabilised in the next few days, doctors decided to operate his thigh but could not do so as he needed blood transfusion before the operation. The patient's daughter offered to donate her blood but she couldn't due to medical issues. Nobody else came forward to donate blood causing delay in his operation. When Dr Shashank was made aware of the issue, he donated his blood to the patient on Wednesday besides later operating on him. The Head of the Department, Orthopaedics, Dr Anil Joshi also appreciated the humanitarian and kind gesture of Dr Shashank towards his patient. The GDMC principal



Dr Ashutosh Sayana also praised Dr Shashank and said that every doctor and medical

staff should have such kind sentiments towards their patients.

Vikram and auto rickshaw operators to gherao Vidhan Sabha on Nov 28

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Vikram and auto rickshaw unions of Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Vikasnagar and Laksar will gherao Vidhan Sabha on November 29 to stage their protest against the transport department's decision of banning petrol and diesel operated Vikram and auto rickshaws from next year. After the regional transport office (RTO) of Dehradun declared the ban on the operation of auto rickshaws and Vikrams older than a decade after March 31 and on the remaining after December 31, 2023, several unions came together to form an alliance under Uttarakhand Vikram, Auto Rickshaw Parivahan Mahasangh to fight the department against the decision. A Press conference was held in Dehradun on Wednesday by the president of the newly formed federation, Vinay Saraswat. He said that

the RTO has stated that auto rickshaws and Vikrams operators would be able to continue the operation with clean fuel vehicles like BS VI vehicles, CNG fuelled or electric hybrid vehicles after the ban of their respective vehicles

rickshaws in a phased manner and till then, the department can strengthen the structure to run clean fuel vehicles which are almost non-existent at present.

They said that operation of



but they actually lack proper planning and execution.

He said that the livelihood of thousands of people depends on these auto rickshaws and Vikrams and the sudden ban within a few months would affect many. The union members said that they want the authorities to give them the time till 2025 to eliminate Vikrams and auto

Vikram and auto rickshaw generates a considerable amount of revenue for the State government and they should consider how the ban would affect it too. They said that they would gherao Vidhan Sabha on November 29 to present this issue together at a bigger level to get the government's attention towards the issue.

Doon varsity to host Int'l conference on Bhartiya women

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Doon University in association with the SNDT Women's university Mumbai and Samwardini Nyas would organise a two day international conference to discuss the issues and concerns related to the Indian women. The conference, 'Bhartiya Women: a true perspective' would commence on November 25 in Doon University. The conference would be inaugurated by the Governor of Uttarakhand Lieutenant General (Retd) Gurmit Singh while the valedictory session would be

said that the Indian women have their own perspective that is very different from the western views. She said that the conference is being organised in the backdrop of a survey done on Indian women in the year 2019. The survey done on the sample size of 75,000 women shows that the true perspective of women's concerns is somewhat different from what is being taught in the universities. Dangwal said that discussions on different aspects of Indian women such as their specialities, capabilities, challenges and possibilities would be done during the conference.



The convenor of the Samwardhini Nyas, Madhuri Marathe said that the objective of the conference is to put the narrative about

presided over by the Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari. Interacting with the media persons, the Vice Chancellor (VC) of Doon University Surekha Dangwal

the Indian women in right perspective. The VCs of many universities and experts from different parts of the country and abroad would take part in the deliberations.

Separate accidents claim two lives in mountainous districts

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The ongoing spate of road accidents continued in mountainous districts of Uttarakhand with the deaths of two people in two separate but severe road accidents in Rudrapur and Bageshwar on Wednesday. The police informed that 35-year-old Mithilesh, a local of Kameda Trijuginaraan village in Rudrapur, was on his way to Sonprayag early Wednesday morning in his vehicle when it crashed and fell down the hilly road. The accident was so

from inside the vehicle. In another accident, a car carrying a 60-year-old woman named Kunti Devi along with her son Harish Pandey (28) who was driving fell into a 250-metre deep gorge near Ghingartola in Bageshwar late Tuesday night. According to the police, the accident was noticed by some villagers who called the police at the accident spot. When the police arrived, the mother was found dead at the spot and the son sustained serious injuries. He



severe that the victim died at the spot and his dead body got trapped inside the vehicle. The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) was called by the local police that had to use machines to retrieve the body

was immediately taken to the hospital for treatment. The police in both cases have stated that the respective drivers allegedly lost control of the vehicles that caused the accident.

Haridwar Police recovers 21 stolen two wheelers

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

In a major achievement, the Haridwar police busted a gang of vehicle thieves on

station areas by the gang.

Out of the four arrested



Wednesday and recovered 21 two wheelers from their possession. The Police arrested four persons and solved as many as ten cases of theft of vehicles.

The two wheelers was stolen from different police

accused, two are local while the other two are residents of other districts.

The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Haridwar Ajai Singh said that information was received that a gang of vehi-

MCD, CPCB officials confiscate banned plastic items in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The representatives from Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have started assisting the sanitation team of the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) in conducting an anti-plastic campaign that started on Tuesday. The corporation seized over 600 kilogrammes of single-use plastics in the past two days including over 500 kilogrammes on Tuesday and 150 kilogrammes on Wednesday from several big shops of Paltan Bazaar, Moti Bazaar and Hanuman Chowk as per the recent order of Dehradun district magistrate Sonika. The MCD started its four-day anti-plastic campaign to target big shops that keep huge stocks of single-use plastics.

The CPCB representatives also accompanied the sanitation team of the corporation during the inspections. The chief municipal health officer Dr Avinash Khanna said that the MCD started the campaign to take action against

the usage, storage and transportation of single-use plastic in market places. The CPCB representatives have been accompanying the MCD team during inspections to help them analyse and understand what the officials should focus on while running anti-plastic campaigns and conducting inspections, informed Khanna.

He said that the sanitation team issued 43 challan on Tuesday and collected a fine of over Rs one lakh and 25 challan on Wednesday collecting about Rs 70,000. He said that more premises will be inspected and penalised accordingly this week. Some local shopkeepers also appealed to the MCD officials during the inspection to release a list of banned plastic items along with their respective pictures and put them on outside the shops to make it easier for every shopkeeper to understand which item should not be kept in their shops.

THDCIL stall attracts visitors at Rise in UP exhibition

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The THDC India Limited is among the participants at the Rise in Uttar Pradesh, a mega exhibition being organised from November 22 to 24 at Ghaziabad. THDCIL's corporate communication department, Rishikesh has displayed a stall which is attracting visitors at the exhibition organised as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

THDCIL is one of the premier

power generators in the country with installed capacity of 1,587 MW with commissioning of Tehri dam and hydro power project (1,000 MW), Koteshwar HEP (400 MW) in Uttarakhand, wind power projects of 50 MW at Patan and 63 MW at Dwarika in Gujarat, 24 MW Dhukwan small hydro project at Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh and 50 MW solar power project at Kasaragod, Kerala to its credit.

Pauri police bust gang of ATM thieves

PNS ■ PAURI

The Pauri police have foiled the plans of a gang to commit ATM theft in the Kotdwar town. The police arrested two persons of the gang in Kotdwar on Wednesday. The arrested are the residents of Haryana.

equipment for cutting ATM, oxygen cylinder, a mini LPG cylinder, gas cutter, pliers, knife and a country made pistol from the car. The occupants of the vehicle Nishar Khand and Saad Mohammed were arrested by the police under the section 401 of Indian penal code and 25 Arms act. On interrogation the accused accepted that their plan was to commit theft from ATMs of the area.

As per the police, a team of the Kotwali police station stopped a suspected car having registration number of Haryana during the checking on Wednesday. On checking of the car the team recovered

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. DME acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tender against Tender No. MC-4-ST-CAMC-CE-SPARMV-22 Closing Date/Time 14.12.2022, 15:00 Hrs. and will be opened any time after closing on website. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Information regarding this tender is available on website www.ireps.gov.in & can be seen / downloaded.

Department	C&W	Tender No.	MC-4-ST-CAMC-CE-SPARMV-22
Name of work	"Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) of CUMMINS ENGINE (02 Nos. NTA 14R.430 and 02 Nos. OSB5.9G1) of SPARMV-67 for Three Years at C&W Depot Haridwar on single Tender basis through OEM."		
Tender Type	Single	Bidding system	Single Packet System
Tender closing Date & Time	14.12.2022 15:00 Hrs.		
Advertised Value	Rs. 70,30,667.72/-	Validity of Offer (Days)	45 Days
No. MC-4-ST-CAMC-CE-SPARMV-22 Date – 22.11.2022		3119/2022	

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NOTICE FOR SHIFTING OF PREMISES
TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is the notice to the General Public that we are shifting this office premises on or before dated 28th February, 2023.

CURRENT ADDRESS
Sanwal Plaza, 1st Floor, Durga City Centre, Delhi - Nanital Road, Haldwani - 263139, Uttarakhand
NEW ADDRESS (POST SHIFTING)
317, 1st Floor, Thandi Sadak, Opposite H.P. Petrol Pump, Near Krishna Hospital, Nanital Road, Haldwani-263139, Uttarakhand Sd/-, Authorised Officer, PNB HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

Sr. DEN/CMB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against following tenders closing date 20.12.2022 16.00. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money **only through online payment modes** available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender No. Date	249-DRM-MB-22-23 22.11.2022	250-DRM-MB-22-23 22.11.2022	251-DRM-MB-22-23 22.11.2022
Name of Work	Installation of Water Recycling Plant at DDN station under ADEN/HW.	Heavy repair of track on Bridges in the section of ADEN/RK under DEN.	Augmentation of facilitating for Automobiles loading/unloading (02 wheeler) at Jwalapur goods shed under ADEN/HW.
Tender Closing Date Time	20.12.2022 16:00	20.12.2022 16:00	29.11.2022 16:00
Advertised Value (Rs.)	19264000.00	6999664.73	9171491.75
Earnest Money (Rs.)	246300.00	140000.00	183400.00
Bidding Start Date	06.12.2022	06.12.2022	06.12.2022
Validity of Offer (Days)	60 Days	60 Days	60 Days
Period of Completion	12 Months	12 Months	6 Months

Tender No.: 74-W/2/3/WA/Publication Dated: 22.11.2022 3121/22

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

RECRUITMENT OF MERITORIOUS SPORTS PERSONS IN CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE AGAINST SPORTS QUOTA

This is with reference to Advertisement published in Employment News Edition 29th October 4th November 2022 at page-87 and Addendum No. R.II-21/2022-TRG-15 dated 09/11/2022 likely to be published in Employment News shortly.

- Post: Head Constable** (General Duty)- 322 Posts (Male-257 & Female-65).
- Last date of receipt of Applications: -27th November, 2022 (12th December, 2022** for residents of far flung areas).
- Age Limit:** Between 18 to 23 years as on closing date of receipt of application.
- Educational Qualification:** 10+2 or equivalent from a recognized Board/University and Sports Qualification.
- Physical Standard:** Height for Male Candidate- **170Cm**, Female-**157 Cm**. Other physical standard as per the details in the advertisement Relaxation is permissible as per Govt. guidelines.
- Pay Scale:**
a) Revised Pay Scale as per 7th CPC pay matrix: **Level-4 (Rs. 25500-81100)**
b) Other Allowances: The above posts carry Dearness Allowance. HRA and any other allowances as admissible in CRPF time to time as per Government orders.
- Distribution of Vacancies:**
a) For details of Discipline/Event/Weight Category /Position/Specialisation wise vacancies, please visit CRPF website <http://www.cpf.gov.in>.
b) The number of advertised vacancies are tentative and subject to change at any stage.
c) New Defined contributory pension scheme implemented vide Government of India, Ministry of Finance OM No. 1(7)(2)/2003/TA dated 07/01/2004 will be applicable to candidates selected for appointment.

HOW TO APPLY:-

The eligible and desirous candidates may download the application forms from CRPF website <http://www.cpf.gov.in>. Application form duly filled along with relevant documents and requisite application fees (if applicable) in the form of Crossed Indian Postal Order / Demand Draft / Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of the authority as mentioned in advertisement may please be send to respective Recruitment Centers. Detailed Notification / Advertisement along with Physical Standards, Medical Standards, Educational Qualifications, Sports Qualifications, Selection process, Requisite forms etc. are available at CRPF website <http://www.cpf.gov.in>

CBC 19140/11/0009/2223

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Branch: Dharampur/Branch DP Code (18518)
DEHRADUN

POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Canara Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security interest Act, 2002 (Act. No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice calling upon the Borrower/Surety/Owner/s as given below to repay the amount mentioned below within 60 days from the receipt of the said notice. The borrower/Surety/Owner/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Surety/Owner/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.** The Borrower/Surety/Owner/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property, and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Canara Bank, Dharampur Branch** for the amount detailed below and interest together with expenses thereon.

S. No.	Branch & Name of the Borrower/Guarantor	Description Of Immovable Property	Date of Demand & Possession Notice	Amount Outstanding
1.	Branch: Dharampur Dehradun: Borrower/Guarantor: 1. Smt Shanta Bisht W/o Late Shri Ashish Bisht Legal Heir of Late Shri Anoop Singh Bisht 2. Guarantor: Jagdamba P Uniyal S/o G C Uniyal In Wor -king Capital of Anoop Singh Bisht.	Property In the name Of Late Shri Anoop Singh Bisht Emt of all that property bearing property no. 56 MIG MDDA Colony Kedarpuram Distt- Dehradun - 248001. Boundaries: East: Park, West: Road, North House no. 58 MIG, South- Common Staris.	Date of Demand Notice 30.08.2022 Date of Possession notice 23.11.2022	Rs. 5,78,362.25 as on 30.08.2022 + Future Interest + other expenses

Date - 23.11.2022 Place: Dehradun Authorized Officer, Canara Bank

CS SS Sandhu directs officers to submit report within a week

New reforms are needed the field of agriculture and horticulture : Purushottam

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

All the officers attending the three day 'Shashakt Uttarakhand @ 25, Chintan Shivir at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) Mussoorie would have to submit a report within a week. The chief secretary SS Sandhu gave this order to the bureaucrats on the second day of the conclave on Wednesday. He said that brainstorming being held during the Chintan Shivir is the real introspection. "We will have to give a comprehensive thought to whatever new and innovative ideas are emerging in this Shivir," he said. Discussions on the topics of agriculture, horticulture, tourism, forests and others took place in the Shivir on Wednesday. Secretary, agriculture BVRC Purushottam gave a presentation on animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries. He said that new reforms are needed in the field of agriculture and horticulture and there is a need to improve the quality of seeds in mountainous districts. He said that the department is focussing on improving the health of the soil in the mountainous areas of the state. Purushottam said that by emphasising on the organic sector, benefits to at least 50,000 farmers could be provided. He suggested that focus on resource, technology and innovation should be done in the mountainous parts. Purushottam opined since different departments are working in this sector efforts to bring them together should be done. He also suggested that instead of release of different Govern-



ment Orders (GO), comprehensive GOs should be issued.

The secretary was of the view that land reforms are needed to be done again for focussing on cluster farming and this would also help in promoting contract farming. He informed that the department has taken a target to make five centres of excellence in five different fruits in the State. In the conclave the efforts made by the Nainital district magistrate Dhiraj Gabriyal were appreciated in the sector of cluster based agriculture. In his presentation the secretary said that to improve the livestock, we should take them from outside the State and Badri cows should also be promoted. By doing this, employment will also get a boost, he said.

CM Dhami occupies backbench to listen discussions

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami sprang a surprise when he reached the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) Mussoorie unan-

nounced on Wednesday to attend the ongoing 'Shashakt Uttarakhand @ 25, Chintan Shivir. He took a position in a back seat and listened to the discussions. While addressing the Shivir on the first day on Tuesday Dhami asked the officers to come out of the 10 am to 5 pm work culture and focus on solving the issues rather than lingering them on.



Transport department planning to increase fares every year

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The transport department is working on a plan to increase the fares of public transport every year.

The department has already drafted a proposal to present in the meeting of the State Transport Authority (STA) which is scheduled to be held on November 25. Most of the time when the transport department proposes an increment in the fare following the procedure like holding meetings with officials and representatives of transport unions, the officials said that it usually faces stiff resistance either from the transport operators or public for increasing the fare. Since the process to de-



termine the fair price takes several months considering objections of parties involved and other factors, the fair is increased after two to three years. Sometimes the transporters express their dissatisfaction with the increased fare while the general public usually see it as a sudden rise in the fare that potentially affects their financial aspects, said the

officials. Talking about the proposal, the joint transport commissioner Sanat Kumar Singh said that the department will present the proposal in the STA meeting for automatic increase in the fare at a fixed rate every year. The process is fol-

lowed in many government bodies like for regular increase in the rate of electricity and water bills but since the fare is increased usually in two to three years, the rate of fare increase appears sudden and high, said Singh. "We are planning to increase the fare of public transport like bus, Vikrams, auto rickshaws and others every year at a certain

rate so that the new fare would not be much higher than the previous one.

The rate would be determined as per the inflation but the department would try to keep it economical to all," Singh said. He added that the department will also propose to bring uniformity in the rules of the department in Dehradun, Almora, Haldwani and Pauri. He said, "In some areas, it is easier to get the permit for Vikrams but difficult to get the same for taxis and vice versa which poses problems to transport operators. Further action will be taken if the proposals get approved in the STA meeting."

HC admits the petition challenging election of Khanpur MLA

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In what can be termed as a setback for the independent MLA from Khanpur, Umesh Kumar, the Uttarakhand high court (HC) has termed the petition challenging his election as admissible. Accepting the petition on Wednesday, the single bench of Justice Ravindra Maithani rejected the contention of the counsels of Umesh Kumar that the petition is not admissible and should be rejected. The next hearing in the case would be on November 29.

In the petition, Devaki

that Khanpur MLA has hidden some important facts and information in the affidavit submitted in the election commission at the time of filing of his nomination papers for the assembly elections. The petitioner submitted a list of 29 criminal cases against Kumar which are pending in different courts and said that he has made a mention of only 16 cases in his affidavit and deliberately withheld information about other cases. The petition also claims that money was used by Kumar to influence voters and requested that



Kalan Haridwar resident Virendra Kumar has claimed his election should be countermanded.

Harish Rawat attacks BJP govt in Bharat Jodo Yatra

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The former chief minister Harish Rawat has accused the State government for being non serious on the sensitive Ankita Bhandari murder case. Rawat attacked the union and the State governments for failure to provide employment, control inflation and price rise on the second

Landora on Wednesday.

Bhagwanpur MLA Mamta Rakesh, Jhabreda MLA Virendra Jati, former MLA Qazi Nizamuddin, Congress Kisan unit State President Sushil Chaudhary, Rishipal Balyan, Sushil Parmar, Aditya Rana and others accompanied



day of his Bharat Jodo, Haridwar Zindabad Yatra on Wednesday. The Yatra commenced from Uddalheri village in Manglaur assembly constituency on Tuesday. It took a night halt at Nasirpur on Tuesday. The Yatra reached

the former CM in his Yatra on Wednesday. Interestingly the Piran Kalier MLA Furkan Ahmed who was conspicuous by absence from the Yatra on the first two days, said that he would join it on Thursday. The Yatra would end on November 25.

No differences within the State Cong: Pritam Singh

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

After having made the organisation of the Uttarakhand Congress uncomfortable by holding a massive protest in Dehradun on Monday, the senior leader of the party and MLA from Chakrata assembly constituency, Pritam Singh has clarified that there are no differences within the party. Large number of Congress leaders including 14 out of 19 MLAs of the party had attended the protest on the call given by Singh. Interestingly the organisation of the State unit of the party including the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara was conspicuous by its absence from the protest. The protest was being dubbed as the show of strength by the camp headed by Pritam Singh.



the end of the upcoming winter session of assembly. Though Singh is denying it, his supporters are assertive in claiming that injustice has been done towards their leader.

They point out that Singh was removed from the post of PCC president before the assembly election of 2022 to make way for Harshiv Rawat supported Ganesh Godiyal and was placated by the party by the post of Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the last assembly. His supporters opine that after the defeat of the Congress party in the assembly elections, Pritam who won from his family bastion of Chakrata for sixth consecutive time was not offered the post of the LoP in the assembly which he should have got.

“ The Chakrata MLA appears to have emerged as a rallying point of the leaders disgruntled with the State leadership of Congress”

The six time MLA told The Pioneer that the State government has proved to be a failure on all fronts. Singh said that he personally feels that the issues should not be allowed to die. He however added that the party organisation is active in cornering the government on the issues concerning the general public. Singh said that he is grateful to the leaders, legislators and general public for coming out in big numbers to make his protest march call to the State secretariat a great success. He said that he would continue to raise the issues of

To make things difficult for him Karan Mahara who was deputy leader of Congress legislature party (CLP) in the last assembly and who was defeated in the high stake assembly election of 2022 from Ranikhet was made the PCC president by the party high command.

The political analysts opine that the Chakrata MLA has emerged as a rallying point of the leaders disgruntled with State leadership of the Uttarakhand Congress.

FRI deemed to be University to hold sixth Convocation

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The sixth convocation of Forest Research Institute (FRI) Deemed to be University, Dehradun would be organised on Saturday (November 26). The director of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) Dehradun, Bharat Jyoti, would be the chief guest while the Chancellor FRI Deemed to be University and Director General (DG) Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun Arun Singh Rawat would preside over the ceremony. The dean (academics) of the uni-

versity, H S Ginwal informed that convocation will bring the entire University together to witness the conferring of degrees to individuals across the academic and research disciplines. The Registrar of the university A K Tripathi said 115 Ph D degrees in various disciplines of Forestry and 389 masters degree in Forestry, Wood Science and Technology, Environment Management, and Cellulose and Paper Technology for the years 2018-20, 2019-21 and 2020-22 will be conferred during the convocation.

CM greets athletes Himanshu Kumar and Sachin Bohra

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami met the young athletes Himanshu Kumar and Sachin Singh

Dhami also expressed confidence that the duo has a bright future in the field of sports.



Bohra at his residence on Wednesday.

Giving best wishes to both the athletes for the upcoming games, the CM said that the state government will provide all possible help to such talented players in the future.

In the recent 37th national junior athletics competition held in Guwahati, Assam Himanshu Kumar had won gold medal in the five kilometre walk in the under 16 category while Sachin bagged silver in the 10 KM walk in the competition.

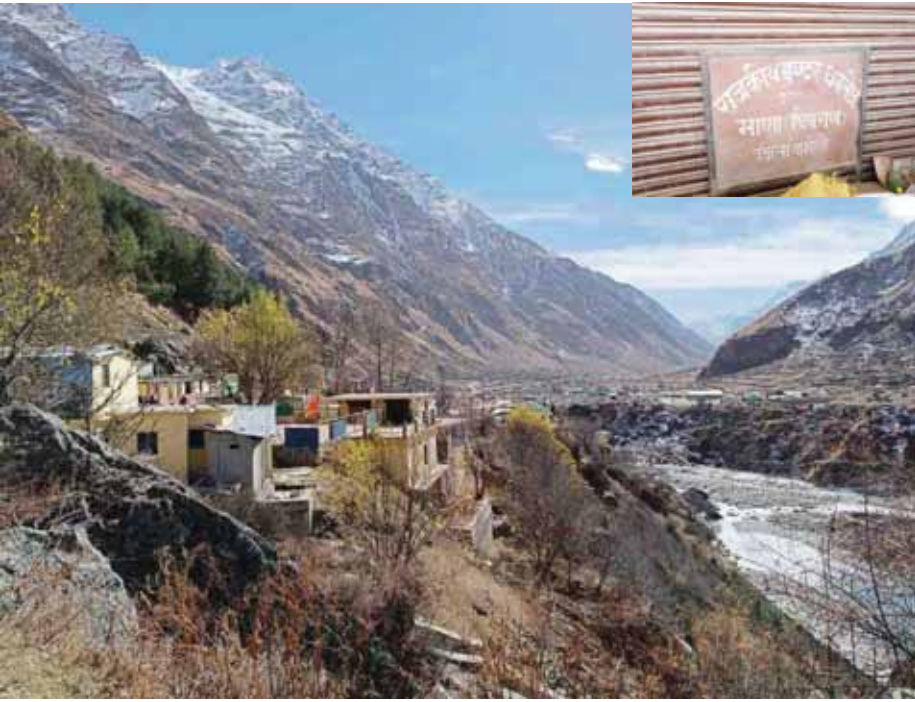
Enjoying adulation, border village Mana suffers from lack of basic facilities

There is no health centre and school in the last Indian village frequented by more than 10 lakh people in a year

Gajendra Singh Negi ■ MANA

Popularly known as the 'last Indian village', Mana located near the Indo-China border has emerged as one of the favourite offbeat tourist destinations of the country which has significantly improved the economic condition of the migratory population of the quaint village. However, lack of basic facilities like health, education and connectivity continue to be a bane for the village located at the lofty altitude of 3,219 metres. There is not even a single health worker in the entire village which has more than 200 families and the only government primary school of the village was closed way back in 1993. Though the village is connected by a road, there is no mobile network in the area.

Nestled in a picturesque valley of the Saraswati river and in the cool shadow of the snow clad towering mountains, the village shot to prominence recently when the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed it as the first and

not the last village of the country during his visit last

month. He also appealed to the tourists and pilgrims to

buy at least one local product to boost the economy of the area during his visit to Mana. The record breaking arrival of the pilgrims in Badrinath shrine this year which is less than five kilometres from here has also resulted in increased footfall of the tourists in the village.

The Pardhan of the village, Pitamber Molpha told The Pioneer that lack of health services is a major issue. "There is no health worker, we have to take our patient to the nearest health centre in Badrinath or beyond. It is not only a problem for us but also for the tourists. More than 10 lakh people visited the village in this season," he said.

Sandip Aswal the owner of the famous 'India's last tea shop' told this correspondent that mobile connectivity is an issue in the area. He said that due to the lack of the school in the village, the residents here prefer to keep their wards in

the Ghingran village which is near Gopeshwar town. It is pertinent to mention here that like other villages located in such high altitudes, the residents of the Mana move to Ghingran during winters. This place is at a distance of about 105 kilometres from Mana. Till the early nineties the primary school staff also used to move from Ghingran to Mana in summers and vice versa in the winters.

When contacted by this correspondent the director of health services, Garhwal, Dr Bharti Rana said that appropriate action would be taken if the district health department of Chamoli sends a proposal to set up a Primary Health Centre (PHC) or a health post in Mana. She however added that the health department is already working on a plan to strengthen the health facilities in the Char Dhams.

Why did Cong not support tribal woman Prez: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Citing how the Congress did not support Droupadi Murmu in her election as the first tribal President of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday questioned how could the Opposition party and its leader Rahul Gandhi talk about tribal welfare. Continuing his offensive against the opposition party in poll-bound Gujarat, Modi also said the "Congress model" meant "nepotism, casteism, sectarianism and vote bank politics".

Modi returned to Gujarat after a day's break and held a series of public meetings. The BJP is seeking the mandate for the seventh time facing Congress and AAP as its political rivals in the two-phased poll slated December first and 5th.

Addressing a public rally at the tribal-dominated Mahuva village in Surat dis-

trict where Rahul also had held his first election meeting taking time off from his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', the Prime Minister asked "why Congress did not support tribal woman in presidential election if the opposition party was so concerned about tribals?"

In his rally, Rahul had accused the BJP of taking away the rights of tribals and alleged that soon their 'jungles' too will be taken away by 'two-three industrialists'.

Modi referred to Rahul and his ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' saying "a person is conducting a foot-march to get back power. "In his speech, he talks about tribals. I want to ask him, why Congress did not support the BJP's woman tribal candidate in the presidential election? Instead, they fielded their own candidate to defeat her," the prime minister asserted.

"Despite Congress' efforts Droupadi Murmu became



President "with the blessings of tribal people," he added.

"Why did Congress never think of making an Adivasi (tribal) our President? It was the BJP which made a tribal person, that too, a woman, our country's President for the first time and sent a message to the world," Modi said.

Continuing his offensive against the Congress, Modi in another rally at Mehsana in North Gujarat said the "Congress model" meant nepotism, casteism, sectarianism and vote bank politics. "This

model has not only destroyed Gujarat but India too. That is the reason why we have to work hard to take the country ahead today," he said.

He said the BJP compelled other parties to talk about development during polls. The prime minister also addressed poll rallies at Dahod, Vadodara, and Bhavnagar during the day.

Modi hoped that Gujarat will witness a record voter turnout in the upcoming state polls, particularly by the youth and first-time voters.

Experts rush to areas hit by measles

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the number of cases of highly-infectious measles on the rise in Ranchi, Ahmedabad, and Malappuram as in Mumbai, the Centre on Wednesday rushed teams of high-level experts to these areas. Measles death count has surged to 11 in Mumbai alone while the case count there has reached 220.

The officials in the Union Health Ministry are keeping their fingers crossed, fearing Measles outbreak in more States as they cited the WHO and UNICEF observations shared early this year on the global status of the air-borne viral disease mainly affecting kids aged 1-2 years. The spike in cases may hamper the Ministry's aim to eliminate Measles in the country by 2023. The global agencies had noted that pandemic-related disruptions, increasing inequalities in access to vaccines, and the diversion of resources from routine immunization are leaving too many children without protection against Measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases. The Ministry has already shot off a letter to all the States to keep a tab and take pre-

cautions against the air-borne viral infection. "Recently, increased numbers of measles cases are being reported from certain districts of Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Kerala and Maharashtra. A rapid rise in the number of cases and some mortality due to Measles has also been observed specifically in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and certain other Districts of Maharashtra.

"This is of particular concern from a public health point of view. It is also clear that in all such geographies, the affected children were predominantly unvaccinated and the average coverage of Measles Rubella Coverage vaccination (MRCV) among the eligible beneficiaries is also significantly below the national average," says the circular.

According to the WHO, Measles cases increased by 79% compared to the previous year in the first two months of 2022. In India, the first dose coverage of the measles vaccine dropped to 88% in 2020 from 100% in 2018. The relaxation of movement restrictions is another factor that heightens the risk of larger outbreaks.



The agencies had flagged concern that outbreaks of measles could also forewarn outbreaks of other diseases that do not spread as rapidly. According to data released by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), India has reported the highest number of measles cases in the world between April and September 2022. Measles is a severe viral respiratory illness that is marked by a prodrome of fever (can go as high as 105 F) and persistent cough, malaise, coryza, and conjunctivitis. These symptoms are followed by a maculopapular rash. The rash usually appears about 10-14 days after a person is exposed to the virus.

For achieving the goal of

elimination by 2023, each district must mobilise all resources optimally to achieve at least 95% measles rubella coverage vaccination II by 2 years of age or at the latest by 5 years of age, as per the Ministry.

"States have been advised to administer one additional dose [special dose for measles and Rubella for Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)] to all children of 9 months to 5 years in vulnerable areas ie geographies which are showing recent increase in numbers of Measles cases. This dose would be in addition to the primary vaccination schedule of first dose at 9-12 months and second dose at 16-24 months," as per the Ministry's circular.

Rajnath calls for resolute global efforts to counter transnational terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday called for urgent and resolute global efforts to counter transnational and cross-border terrorism.

Stressing this point, he also said India advocates a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and underlined the need for peaceful resolution of disputes while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.

The minister made these observations in the 9th Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

The ADMM Plus is an annual meeting of Defence Ministers of ten ASEAN countries and its eight dialogue partner countries, viz., India, USA, Russia, China, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. The year 2022 also marks the 30th Anniversary of India-ASEAN relations.

During his address, Rajnath called for urgent and resolute global efforts to counter transnational and cross-border terrorism, terming it as the gravest threat to regional and global security.

He pointed out that the global security environment has transformed fun-



damentally over the last few decades, with terrorist groups creating inter-linkages across continents backed by new-age technologies to propagate ideologies, transfer money and recruit supporters.

Rajnath reiterated India's commitment to nurturing practical, forward-looking and result-oriented cooperation between India and ADMM Plus countries for enhancing the maritime security in the region and safety of the global commons. He asserted that India advocates a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region and calls for peaceful resolution of disputes while respecting the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.

In this context, he stated that the ongoing ASEAN-China negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea should be fully consistent with international law, in particular United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and should not prejudice the legitimate rights and interests of nations that are not party to these discussions.

He called upon all the member states to work together with a positive intent, towards a stable, safer and more secure world for our future generations.

Waiting period for business, tourist visa to US nearly 3 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Even as the US recently assured that the waiting time for visa clearance for Indians will be reduced, those wanting to travel there on a business or tourist visa will have to wait for nearly three years or nearly 1,000 days.

This long period is for those Indians wishing to travel to the US on a visitor visa-B1(business) and B-2(tourist). A search on the US State Department website shows that the waiting period for B1/B2 visa interview is 961 days (as on November 23).

For those living in Delhi, the waiting time is 961 days while for Hyderabad, it is 994 days. Chennai residents will have to wait for 948 days to get an appointment, while in

Kerala, the waiting period is 904 days. Residents of Mumbai will have to wait for 999 days. The astronomical wait times mean that a first time B1/B2 applicant may now get date for interview in the year 2025.

The US State Department had said earlier this month that it is committed to facilitating legitimate travel to there while safeguarding national security.

The issue of long wait time for Indians was flagged by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during his visit to the US in September where he had raised the issue of visa applications backlog with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

A few days back, the US State Department said visa processing is rebounding faster than projected and is expected to reach pre-pandemic levels in Fiscal Year 2023.

Cong leader moves SC seeking review of verdict upholding 10% reservation to EWS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Congress leader on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court seeking review of its verdict upholding the 10 per cent reservation introduced in 2019 for the economically weaker sections (EWS) in educational institutions and government jobs that excluded the poor among the SC/ST/OBC categories.

The plea filed by Jaya Thakur has sought review of the November 7 verdict saying there was error apparent on the face of records in the judgement.

The review petition has been filed through advocate Varinder Kumar Sharma.

In its landmark judgement, a five-judge Constitution bench had said that the use of basic structure doctrine as a "sword" to "stultify" the State's effort to do economic justice cannot be countenanced.

It had delivered a 3:2



majority decision in favour of the 103rd Constitution Amendment.

While upholding the 10 per cent reservation introduced in 2019 for EWS in admissions and government jobs that excluded the poor among the SC/ST/OBC categories, the apex court had said it is not discriminatory or violative of any essential feature of the Constitution.

Treating the EWS as a separate category is a reasonable classification and the 50 per cent ceiling on the total reservation under the Mandal judgement is "not inflexible", the judges had said while dismissing the petitions challenging the validity of the law.

Prosperous Indo-Pacific hinges on peaceful maritime domain: Indian Navy chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With increasing tension in the Indo-Pacific region as China is flexing its muscle there, Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said here on Wednesday a prosperous Indo-Pacific hinges on a peaceful maritime domain. He also said India has all along called for a "free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous region."

Underlining this factor, he also said maritime terrorism and proliferation of advanced technologies have "further complicated the security matrix."

The Navy chief said the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) holds immense potential for synchronising and syn-



ergising the collective efforts towards achieving a peaceful region.

He made these assertions in his inaugural address at the three-day fourth edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) here. The IPRD is an apex-level international annual conference of the Indian Navy that seeks to foster exchange of ideas and promote deliberations on regionally relevant maritime issues.

The theme of IPRD-2022 is

"Operationalising the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)", which was articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 14th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Bangkok on November 4, 2019.

"It is amply clear that a prosperous Indo-Pacific hinges on a peaceful maritime domain. The maritime security pillar of the IPOI seeks to manage this crucial element through cooperative engagement between friends and partners," the Navy chief said.

In this, the Indian Navy has been guided by the inclusive vision of SAGAR which literally means oceans, and expands as 'Security and Growth for All in the Region', and is underpinned by the values of 5 S's - 'Samman' (Respect),

'Samvaad' (Dialogue), 'Shanti' (Peace), 'Samridhhi' (or Prosperity) and notably, 'Sahyog' (or Cooperation), he said.

Elaborating upon the security environment in general, and maritime security in particular, the Navy chief said while the possibility of a traditional inter-state conflict cannot be ruled out, there is an increased risk to the rules-based order emanating from disputes of jurisdiction, undermining of UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea), piracy and armed robbery, illegal human migration, drugs and arms trafficking, and illegal unreported and unregulated fishing.

Maritime terrorism and proliferation of advanced tech-

nologies have further complicated the security matrix. Inevitably, given its increased centrality in global affairs, the Region has witnessed increased presence of maritime security forces from a multitude of nations - regional as well as extra-regional, Kumar said.

He said the Indo-Pacific today represents a "strategic geography where most of us have found convergence in our interests and aspirations". However, in navigating the path together, there are numerous challenges that must be overcome.

Kumar said these challenges could be viewed as a "trinity of 3 I's" — imperatives at home, influences from outside and some intrusive paradigms".

Special forces of India, Indonesia engage in joint exercise 'Garuda Shakti' in Indonesia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Special Forces of India and Indonesia are currently engaged in a joint exercise 'Garuda Shakti' in Sangga Buana training area Karawang, Indonesia. It is the eighth edition of the series of bilateral exercises under this banner.

The latest 13-day exercise commenced on November 21 and aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the Special Forces of both armies. The scope of the joint exer-



cise includes orientation to advance special forces skills, sharing of information on weapon, equipment, innovations, tactics, techniques and procedures and lessons learnt from various operations under-

taken. The joint training will also focus on a high degree of physical fitness, tactical drills, techniques and procedures and will culminate in a 48-hour long validation exercise.

US women diplomats take to streets of Delhi with 'personalised auto-rickshaws'

ANI ■ NEW DELHI

Leaving behind their bullet-proof vehicles, four US women diplomats have taken to the streets of the capital with their "personalized auto-rickshaws" in their "out-of-the-box" diplomacy style.

Ann L Mason, Ruth Holmberg, Shareen J Kitterman and Jennifer Bywaters love to go with their Black and Pink three-wheelers by driving themselves for all their work including the 'official trips'.

These diplomats have taken to the common man's commute not just for fun, but also to set an example. Speaking to ANI, the diplomats shared their experience of learning this distinct mode of transport and how diplomats driving the auto-rickshaws is a rare exception!

"From Detroit to my auto rickshaw, I've had a lifelong love of vehicles and so everywhere I've been there's been something special about a vehicle but really none more special in my opinion than an autorickshaw. When I was in Pakistan, before coming to India, I was in armoured vehicles and they were big, beautiful vehicles. But I would always look out on the street and I would see the autorickshaws going by and I always wanted to be in the autorickshaw. So when I got to India and had the opportunity to buy one, I took it immediately," said Ann L Mason to ANI.

"For me it was terrifying. Yes, learning to drive the autorickshaw was completely new for me. I had never driven any vehicle with a clutch, never driven a motorcycle only automatic cars, my whole life," she



said when asked about how hard was it to learn, maintain an auto and get a license.

On being asked about her inspiration behind the idea, Ann said that her mother is her inspiration who inspired her to take chances and experiment in life.

"My inspiration is my mother, my mother always took chances. She travelled around the world, she was in

the Vietnam War and she did so much with her life. Life and she always taught me to do interesting things and take a chance because one you might not get another opportunity and two you never know what you might experience. My daughter also drives the autorickshaw and so learning from them every day, the interesting things that how they see the world," she added.

ED seizes ₹16 cr of Alphageo in form of fixed deposits under FEMA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized Rs 16 crore of Alphageo (India) Ltd. in the form of fixed deposits under the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act.

An investigation against Alphageo India Ltd. was initiated by ED on the basis of information received that the company had transferred and parked certain funds in the United Arab Emirates in contravention of FEMA.

In a separate case, the agency has attached Rs 3.25 crore in a money laundering case linked to dacoity in Kerala.

"During investigation, it was revealed that Alphageo is a Hyderabad-based company which is engaged in providing seismic survey services to various oil exploration and production companies in India, and abroad.



The company has been importing various equipment for seismic data acquisition from several suppliers based in France, Singapore, Netherlands, etc," the ED said in a statement.

Investigation further revealed that equipment for seismic data acquisition was directly received from various suppliers by Alphageo. However the payment for the same has been routed through an entity Matrix Group DMCC, maintained and controlled by Rajiv Saxena, a Chartered Accountant based in Dubai and a hawala operator for these imports, the ED said. Further investigation

revealed that by way of over invoicing bills for these imports, Alphageo has parked funds into the account of Matrix Group DMCC for the personal benefit of Dinesh Alla, Chairman and Managing Director of Alphageo (India) Limited in contravention of provisions of FEMA.

An amount of USD

25,34,628 was held outside India in contravention of Section 4 of FEMA.

The equivalent value of the foreign funds parked in the United Arab Emirates by Alphageo amounting to Rs 16 crore has been seized in India under FEMA. Further, investigation in the matter is under progress, it said.

ED attaches ₹3.25 crore cash as proceeds of crime relating to robbery, kidnapping under PMLA

New Delhi: The ED has attached cash to the tune of Rs 3.25 crore for being 'Proceeds of Crime' relating to a robbery and kidnapping case under PMLA. The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of scheduled offence invoked in the FIR registered by Kottakkal Police Station, Kerala in the said case. "The amount attached by ED is the Proceeds of Crime which was recovered by the Kottakkal Police from the possession of two robbers while they were trying to escape after robbing and kidnapping an auto rickshaw driver who was carrying this huge amount of cash in his auto," it added.

No Maha village will go anywhere: Fadnavis on Bommai’s remarks

Due to water crisis Maharashtra border villages wanted to merge with K’taka, CM had claimed

PTI ■ NAGPUR | MUMBAI

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday said no village in Maharashtra has sought merger with Karnataka recently, and there is no question of any border village “going anywhere”.
Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had claimed on Tuesday that some village panchayats in Jat taluka of Maharashtra’s Sangli district had passed a resolution in the past seeking to merge with Karnataka when they were facing a severe water crisis.

The Karnataka Government had devised schemes to help them by providing water, and his Government was seriously considering the proposal of Jat villages, he said.

“These villages had introduced a resolution on the issue of water scarcity in 2012. Presently, none of the villages have introduced any resolution,” Fadnavis told reporters in Nagpur. When he became Maharashtra Chief Minister, his government entered into an agreement with Karnataka to sort out the water issue, he said.

A water supply scheme was chalked out for the Jat villages when Girish Mahajan was water resources minister in his cabinet, the BJP leader added. “We are now going to give approval to that scheme. Perhaps because of Covid, the previous (Uddhav Thackeray-led) government could not approve it,” Fadnavis added.



“Presently, none of the villages have raised such demand (of merger with Karnataka). The demand is of 2012,” he said.

“Not a single village of Maharashtra will go anywhere,” Fadnavis stressed. Sudhir Mungantiwar, BJP leader and Maharashtra minister, blamed Jawaharlal Nehru for the long-pending dispute.

“The dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka is actually the gift of late prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru,” he said without elaborating.

The case is now before the Supreme Court and any resolution passed by village panchayats would not affect the court’s verdict, he told reporters.

“If resolutions are to be taken so seriously, then what about the villages in Karnataka which have passed resolutions seeking to join Maharashtra,” he asked. Earlier in the day, another Maharashtra Minister Shambhuraj Desai said the Karnataka Chief Minister’s

claims should not be taken seriously. The decades-old border dispute over Belagavi (earlier Belgaum) between Maharashtra and Karnataka is in news again due to recent

statements from both sides.

On Monday, Bommai had said he had formed a formidable legal team of senior lawyers to deal with the border dispute when it comes up in the Supreme Court.

On Tuesday, the Maharashtra government appointed Chandrakant Patil and Shambhuraj Desai as nodal ministers to coordinate with the state’s legal team regarding the pending court case. Talking to reporters here, Desai said, “As Maharashtra has reconstituted its team to take forward the Karnataka border dispute in the Supreme Court, Bommai has come up with some ridiculous old demand. It should not be taken seriously.

The villages in Jat tehsil had reportedly passed a resolution more than a decade back to pressurise the then state government to address their demand of water supply from the Krishna river.” There is no such official documentation or resolution available with the Maharashtra government, he added.

21 TMC leaders, MLAs in touch with me, says Mithun

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Weeks after top Bengal BJP leadership declared that the Mamata Banerjee Government would not sustain beyond the month of December leading to speculations about central designs vis a vis Bengal cinestar-turned saffron politician Mithun Chakrabarty has said that at least 21 TMC leaders including MLAs were in direct touch with him. Chakrabarty who was in Bengal to campaign for the BJP in several districts ahead of the next year’s panchayat elections said: “not all the Trinamool men are corrupt

... and those who are not corrupt prefer to maintain silence in that party ... among these silent leaders at least 21 are in direct touch with me ... take this hint and track them you will find why some people have started saying that TMC is on the verge of a big fall.”

State BJP president Sukanto Majumdar however, was quick to dispel “rumors” saying his party in the Centre had no intention to pull down the TMC Government. “We will not topple the Government ... it will fall on its own ... we will come to power through democratic means and getting people’s mandate,” he

‘Aftab will cut me into pieces’ Shraddha filed plaint in 2020

She withdrew complaint after cops visited their house, says Mumbai Police

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Call centre employee Shraddha Walkar had two years ago complained to police in Maharashtra that her live-in partner Aaftab Poonawala, who is accused of brutally murdering her, tried to kill her and she feared he would cut her into pieces and throw her away, an official said here on Wednesday. Based on her written complaint dated November 23, 2020, the personnel of Tulinj police station in Palghar district visited the place, where Walkar and Poonawala resided, twice and recorded her statement. Walkar then told the police that she had lodged the complaint “in a fit of rage” and the issues between her and Poonawala were resolved. She



told the police that she was withdrawing her complaint, after which the case was closed, he said.

The official said the officer who visited their house at that time had counselled them and also warned Poonawala.

In her complaint to Tulinj police in Palghar in November 2020, Walkar alleged that, “Poonawala has been abusing me and beating me up.”

“Today, he tried to kill me



by suffocating me and he scares and blackmails me that he will kill me, cut me up in pieces and throw me anyway. It’s been six months he has been hitting me. But I did not have the guts to go to police because he would threaten to kill me,” Walkar said in the complaint.

“His parents are aware that he beats me and that he tried to kill me,” she told the police.

Walkar also said in the letter that Poonawala’s parents

knew about them living together and they visited them on weekends. “I lived with him till date as we were supposed to get married anytime soon and had the blessing of his family. Henceforth, I am not willing to live with him so any kind of physical damage should be considered coming from him as he has been blackmailing me to kill me or hurt me whenever he sees me anywhere,” she stated in the letter.

Talking to PTI, a top official of the Mira Bhayandar-Vasai Virar (MBVV) police commissionerate, said that after Walkar’s complaint, police officials twice visited Regal Apartment, Vijay Vihar Complex near ARC Bhavan in Vasai town, where the live-in partners resided, and recorded her statement, in which she said she was withdraw the case against Poonawala as the issues between them were resolved.

“Our officer counselled them properly and warned Aaftab too. He recorded Walkar’s statement and closed the case,” the official said.

Govt staff, cops clash at DA rally

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Several Government servants and many pensioners were injured and detained by the police following a skirmish between the men in uniform and government staff, thousands of whom on Thursday marched towards the State Assembly demanding hike in the dearness allowance.

Thousands of State Government employees marched towards the Assembly pulling down the barricades leading to the police crackdown, on Thursday noon sources said. The employees had been asking for a hike in DA as per a Calcutta High Court order.

The High Court had earlier ruled that the DA a rightful claim of the employees and directed the Government to clear the dues within a given deadline. The Government however failed that deadline and pleaded that it did not have sufficient funds.

Gurjar faction vows to stop yatra if Pilot not made Raj CM; Sachin says BJP trying to create trouble

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI | BHOPAL | JAIPUR

The ongoing ‘tussle’ between Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot has now hit the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra led by former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi after a threat by a Gurjar outfit to disrupt the Yatra if its demand to make their leader Pilot the chief minister is not accepted.

The yatra is currently traversing in Madhya Pradesh where party General Secretary and member of the Gandhi family, Priyanka Gandhi, is scheduled to join her brother Rahul during the next two days.

Gurjar Arakshan Sangharsh Samiti leader Vijay Singh Bainsla has threatened to oppose Rahul Gandhi’s yatra in the State unless his demands, including making Pilot, a prominent face from the com-

munity, the chief minister are not accepted. Bainsla has also accused the Congress government of not fulfilling the promises made to the community.

Reacting to the development Pilot distanced himself from such threats and instead accused the BJP of trying to create “disturbances”.

“The BJP may try to create disturbances...But it is ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ and it will be successful. We will all welcome the yatra with unity,” he said.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, too, said his government will try to address Bainsla’s grievances. “This is democracy and everyone has the right to speak. We are ruling on the basis of the Constitution and the right to speak cannot be taken away. If there is any demand or suggestion, we will hear it out and try to address the grievances,” he said.

CV Anand Bose takes oath as Bengal Guv

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

CV Anand Bose a retired IAS officer of the 1977 batch on Thursday took oath as the new Governor of Bengal. He replaced La Ganesan the acting Governor who was given the joint charge of Manipur and Bengal after former Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was elevated to the post of Vice-President of India.

Bose, whose father was a member of Indian National Army and was an associate of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose gets the last part of his name from the iconic freedom fighter.

“My father who was an associate of Netaji kept my name after him,” the new occupant of the Kolkata Raj Bhavan earlier said. He was selected by the Centre as the new Governor of the State on November 17.



Calcutta High Court Chief Justice Prakash Shrivastava administers oath to retired IAS officer C.V. Ananda Bose as West Bengal Governor, at Raj Bhawan in Kolkata, on Wednesday

CV Anand Bose was administered the oath of office by Calcutta High Court Chief Justice Prakash Shrivastava in the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Speaker Biman Banerjee, former Governor Gopal Krishna

Gandhi, Left Front Chairman Biman Bose and other dignitaries.

Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari however skipped the programme amid allegations that he was not properly invited.

Semi-nude body of BDC member’s wife found in UP; rape before murder suspected: Police

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a suspected case of rape and murder, Mirzapur police recovered the semi-nude body of a Block Development Committee (BDC) member’s wife lying on the banks of river Harrai. The incident sent shockwaves in the district.

The local police sent the body for autopsy and started investigations. The BDC member expressed apprehension of the possibility of rape before murder and lodged a report against unknown persons.

“The body has been sent for autopsy. Prima facie it appears the victim was raped before being murdered. She was missing for the past three days,” police officials said on Wednesday.

The woman had gone to her parents’ house to attend a function last Sunday. Her whereabouts were not known since Monday morning when she left the place to catch a bus for her husband’s house.

The kin of the victim had lodged a missing report at the Vindhyachal police station. On



Tuesday evening, some woodcutters spotted the body lying on the banks of river Harrai, and alerted the police.

After getting information about the body, Kotwali’s rural police station in-charge Vipin Singh along with his team rushed to the spot for investigation.

The body was sent for autopsy. The mangalsutra and the cell phone of the victim were found missing.

After SC’s observations, Opp parties accuse BJP Govt of weakening EC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Wednesday accused the BJP government of weakening the Election Commission and raised doubts over the selection of poll panel members after the Supreme Court asked the Centre to produce the file on the recent appointment of Arun Goel as election commissioner.

The Congress, TMC, JD(U), RJD and the Left parties said the Election Commission should be above board to ensure free and fair polls, and some of them demanded that key appointments of the poll body be made by a special panel like in the case of the CBI Director.

Congress spokesperson and senior lawyer Abhishek Singhvi said the Centre should never object to showing appointment papers regarding Arun Goel to the apex court, especially since a Constitution bench is seized of the issue of appointment of EC members.

“Does the Centre have something to hide? Daal mein kya kuchh kaala hai? Yaa daal hi kaali hai?” Singhvi said.

JD(U) secretary general K C Tyagi said the Supreme Court’s remarks are very alarming and depict the state of affairs in the Election Commission.

“The Election Commission should be neutral and fearless. The SC’s remarks reflect the manner in which the EC has been lax in some cases and sometimes tilts in favour of the ruling party. We welcome the SC remarks and the EC should draw lessons from it,” Tyagi told PTI.

The JDU leader also said the Chief Justice of India should be taken into confidence while appointing ECs and must be part and parcel of the appointment process.

SC directs all State electricity regulatory panels to frame norms for fixing tariff

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed all state electricity regulatory commissions to frame regulations under the law prescribing terms and conditions for determination of power tariff within a period of three months.

The important direction from the top court came in a verdict by which it dismissed the appeal of TATA Power Company Limited Transmission (TPC-T) against a judgement of the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) which had upheld the grant of electricity transmission license to Adani Electricity Mumbai Infra Limited (AEMIL).

“We direct all State Regulatory Commissions to frame Regulations under Section 181 of the (Electricity) Act on the terms and conditions for determination of tariff within three months from the date of this judgment,” the court said.

While framing these guidelines on determination of tariff, the Appropriate Commission shall be guided by the principles prescribed in Section 61, which also includes the NEP (National Electricity Policy) and NTP (National Tariff Policy 2006), it said.

Granting relief to the Adani group firm, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices A S Bopanna and J B Pardiwala said, “The threshold limit not having been notified by MERC, it was open to MERC to allot the HVDC project either under the RTM (Regulated Tariff Mechanism) or the TBCB (Tariff Based Competitive Bidding) route.”

SC four special Benches to hear criminal, tax, land related pleas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud Wednesday said that four special Benches will sit in Supreme Court from next week.

The special Benches will be constituted to handle criminal appeals, land acquisition matters, direct and indirect taxes related cases and motor accident claims cases, said CJI.

CJI Chandrachud also said that that Justice Surya Kant will head the Bench dealing with land acquisition matters.

“There will be a special bench from next week onwards to deal with direct and indirect sales tax matters solely,” CJI said on previous day.

Hindu outfits to join drive to make easy-to-understand FOPL warning on packaged foods mandatory

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Organisations like Akhil Bharatvarshiya Brahmin Mahasabha, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Patalpuri Sanatan Dharma Raksha Parishad and several saints from Varanasi have joined health experts and activists in seeking mandatory easy to understand front-of-pack-labelling (FOPL) warnings on pre-packaged foods.

They have written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this regard, even as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), has proposed a Health Star Rating (HSR) label in its draft notification.

They were of the opinion that FOPL with a warning be made compulsory so that consumers can get the right to choose healthy options when picking foods laden with high sugar, salt and fat.

Naveen Giri, President of Akhil Bharatvarshiya Brahmin Mahasabha, said: “FOPL with warning level can prove to be the most effective, which helps the consumer to make healthy choices, how much sugar, fat and salt is in the packaged food, which will help in preventing serious diseases especially non-communicable diseases.”

Speaking to reporters here at a press conference here on Wednesday, Dr Arun Gupta, public health expert and convener of NAPI felt that HSR will not only fail to enable consumers to make healthy choices but also mislead them about their nutritional value.

Ashim Sanyal of Consumer Voice too agreed with Dr Gupta arguing that the decision was based on an Indian Institute of Management (IIM)-Ahmedabad study commissioned by the FSSAI while voices of the health experts and AIIMS reports have been ignored.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Neutrality needed

The SC has expressed its unhappiness over the appointment of CEC and other commissioners

The Supreme Court's remarks on the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the specific reference of TN Seshan, the legendary CEC during 1990-96, are allusions to the widespread perception that the poll panel is being managed by the Government. The commission hasn't done much to dispel this perception. It is generally believed that it delayed the announcement of Assembly polls in Gujarat because Prime Minister Narendra Modi had to attend a few functions in the state, and its announcement would have forced their cancellation. Whatever may be the truth, it is undeniable that the apex court's remarks just fell short of calling the incumbent CEC and two commissioners unworthy of the offices they occupy. The five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Justice KM Joseph said that the "situation on the ground is alarming." The Bench included Justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy, and CT Ravikumar. It said that the system should be such that the "best man" is selected as the CEC. It also slammed the Government for just paying "lip service" to the independence of Election Commissioners. The court told Attorney General R Venkataramani, "What is important is that we put a fairly good procedure so that apart from competence, someone of strong character is appointed as the CEC." The apex court was responding to four public interest litigations (PILs) urging it to issue directives to the Centre for setting up an impartial and independent selection panel to suggest names to the President for CEC and ECs.



On his part, Venkataramani said the situation has not become such that a judicial interference is required to regulate appointment of CEC and ECs. The court may intervene only if the aberrations in the selection are patently destructive of the independence of the commission or fundamental rights of citizens are impacted, he added. The Bench, however, was far from convinced. "You will have to take some steps," it said. It criticised the political class by saying that successive governments have "completely destroyed" the independence of the commission by ensuring no CEC got the full six-year term. Government supporters may grumble that such remarks are judicial overreach, but then it is the duty of the powers that be to ensure that Constitutional bodies like the EC are not only impartial but also appear to be impartial. If the commission is seen as favouring the party in power, it is the Government's duty to get rid of that impression. Elections are crucial for any democracy, and equally crucial is the neutrality of the people responsible for conducting elections. It is also in the interest of all politicians that institutions like the Election Commission remain neutral and independent. Power being a coquette, it flits around quicker than anyone can imagine. Those who are in power today may not be tomorrow; at that time, they bemoan the undermining of democratic institutions, as many Congress leaders do these days. The commission is one such institution.

PICTALK



Taj Mahal during sunset in Agra,

PTI

Election time Gujarat

The BJP is ignoring AAP and Kejriwal like they don't exist and focusing only on Congress

The Gujarat election is turning out to be quite exciting. The BJP sailed through 2017 even with its low performance though with slim margins. At that time only Congress was its only challenger and it was one to one fight. This time the entry of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has changed the election landscape. Interestingly enough the BJP is factoring in the presence of a third force, either deliberately or oblivious to its growing clout, especially in the cities. Though may not win as many seats as claimed by its leaders but would definitely make a difference especially where the winning margins would be narrow. Even the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has trained his guns on Congress saying it must not be considered a weak opponent, giving the impression that the fight is primarily between Congress and the BJP. AAP is does not figure in its scheme of things. The Prime Minister has served as Gujarat's chief minister for three terms, and knows the state and its people as back of his hand.



He is harping upon the development and deliberately underplaying the emergence of Aam Admi Party. The prime minister understands that it is not easy this time in Gujarat given the long rule of the BJP in the state and not much to showcase in administration and development, more so after the Morbi bridge disaster so he is skillfully deflecting the attention to the congress misrule and playing victim card with ammunition generously provided by the Congress itself. He lashed out at Congress leader Madhusudan Mistry's recent "aukaat" jab and the old personal attacks on him, including "Maut ka saudagar" -- by Sonia Gandhi -- and "neech aadmi" and "chaiwala" -- by Mani Shankar Aiyar. But then these are rather old and have been used successfully but will they work this time remains to be seen.

But it is rather surprising or an astute move to ignore AAP which has you like it or not emerged as a potent force especially in the cities, the stronghold of the BJP. The BJP is trying to focus on the south Gujarat which has 35 seats. The BJP returned to power in the 2017 election with support from South Gujarat and this is where AAP is also trying to make inroads. Interestingly Congress which the BJP says is its opponent is silent and rather late. AAP, however, has gone all out in south Gujarat. Will the BJP strategy work, we will know soon.

Putin's endgame begins with Kherson

Russia's Ukraine expedition hasn't gone the way Putin wanted it. With the fall of Kherson, it may not be long before Russian soldiers retreat



DEEPAK SINHA

On 30th September of this year, in defiance of International Law, President Putin in a public display of bravado signed treaties absorbing the four occupied regions of Ukraine into Russia; Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia. In his speech at the ceremony, broadcast live, he stated that the people of those Regions were "our citizens forever".

However, it has not quite turned out that way. Just four weeks later we witnessed a rather bizarre event, as General Sergei Surovikin, Commander of Russian Forces in Ukraine, reported on the ground situation in Kherson to General of the Army and Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu on live TV. In this, he stated, "that it was impossible to supply the city of Kherson, and that its defense would be futile". He proposed a military retreat "in the near future" to the opposite bank of the Dnipro River. Shoigu agreed with his assessment and ordered him to "start with the withdrawal of troops and take all measures to ensure the safe transfer of personnel, weapons, and equipment across the Dnipro River."

Without a doubt, this televised event was staged for the domestic audience, especially the repeated emphasis on the saving of lives. Conscription and the humongous casualties being suffered, one report suggests over a lakh killed and wounded, is not doing much for Putin's popularity. It may also have been an attempt by Putin, noticeably absent, to distance himself and blame the military. That would rankle the rank and file who are paying heavily for his initial miscalculations.

What is truly inexplicable, and militarily questionable, is for a division plus of elite Airborne Forces to abandon their positions without a fight. The adverse impact it must have had on their morale is not difficult to gauge. It is true that Kherson, located on the West Bank of the Dnipro River, has been cut off from Russian supply lines due to extensive damage to crossing



sites, but there are ways around that problem. Moreover, no people or government worth their salt, give up their own territory without a fight, especially if it is a vital communication hub. Just because we tend to do so, especially where the Chinese are concerned, does not make it a universal norm!

Defences in built-up areas, if properly organised and planned, can pose all kinds of problems for the attacker, from causing immense casualties to delay and disruption of plans, even allowing own forces to wrest the initiative. After all, Russia's legendary defence of Leningrad for 900 days against the German Army finally put paid for Hitler's ambitions and broke the back of Nazi Germany. More recently, the three months it took the Russians to finally capture Mariupol must have greatly impacted their overall plans and curtailed their ambitions.

There are some suggestions, laughable one may add, that pulling out these troops without getting embroiled in battle has not allowed Ukraine to claim victory. Others have suggested that this was done to make available highly trained forces to reinforce ongoing offensive

WHAT IS TRULY INEXPLICABLE, AND MILITARILY QUESTIONABLE, IS FOR A DIVISION PLUS OF ELITE AIRBORNE FORCES TO ABANDON THEIR POSITIONS WITHOUT A FIGHT

operations in the Donetsk Region. The latter seems unlikely as it would be at the cost of weakening the defensive perimeter, reportedly established east of the Dnipro River, guarding one of the major approaches leading into Crimea. There is absolutely no doubt that the loss of Crimea would be the death knell for the Putin Regime.

Then some suggest that while this has indeed been a tactical defeat, Russia is winning strategically. Protests within Western Europe against rising energy prices and inflation, because of the stoppage of Russian gas and oil supplies and sanctions against it, will result in increasing disunity within NATO and the EU. This, in turn, would adversely impact Ukraine as there would be a drastic reduction in the quantum of material and financial support being provided to it.

They are wrong on two counts. Firstly, Western Europe was staring down the barrel of Soviet guns for nearly fifty years following World War II. The feelings of vulnerability and fear have certainly not vanished overnight and the last thing they need is for Russia to sit on their doorstep once again. Such a

possibility would be sufficient motivation to ensure unity. Secondly, Putin's ambitious attempts at reinvigorating the Russian Empire, however unrealistic that may be, has scared off much of Eastern Europe that sees itself in his crosshairs and made it a fickle and untrustworthy neighbour and trading partner for the West. One that most would wish to avoid having dealings with in the future, especially with Putin there. A shift away from Russian energy supplies is almost a given.

Finally, one cannot help but ask the question as to why are we so keen to keep up relations with a receding power that can only hold us back. Of course, the chances are that the recent visit by the External Affairs Minister to Russia was not just about discussing our energy supplies but at the behest of the Americans who are keen to keep back channels open for dialogue with Russia. More so, since their influence and relationship with the Chinese are at quite a low point.

(The author, a military veteran, is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and a Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARMY IS READY TO TAKE POK

Sir — Glad to read that Northern Army Commander Lt General Upendra Dwivedi made a statement on Tuesday, November 22 that the Indian Army is ready to execute orders like taking back Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. He said as far as the Indian Army is concerned, it will carry out any order given by the Government of India. Whenever such orders are given, the army will always be ready for it.

The fact of the matter is that the military is always ready to make sure that ceasefire understanding is never broken as it is in the interest of both nations, but if broken at any time, the Indian army will give Pakistan a fitting reply, on the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan. However, it is always the government which does not take a decision but keeps the pot boiling. It is about time that the government took a decision which would end the problem once and for all. In fact it would be in the best interest of the people of PoK that its uncertainty ends. With this, the Indian government must immediately give order to the Indian Army to take back PoK rather than being a mute spectator.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

KERALA HC DOES THE RIGHT THING

Sir — The Kerala High Court has denied bail to a 31-year-old man who was charged under the POCSO Act for purportedly impregnating a 15-year-old girl who he claims to be his wife. It is an explicit criminal offense where he abducted a minor girl from West Bengal and sexually assaulted her.

The main intent of the POCSO Act is to protect children's safety, and modesty and shield them from any kind of physical, psychological, and mental abuse and clearly states that a child is any individual below the age of 18 years. If this case was child sexual abuse on the cover of marriage, it should not be absolved as it ruins all forms of child rights. It is also terrible to hear that marriage is acting as

Koshyari has lost his *hoshyari*



It seems Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has lost his "hoshyari". The Maharashtra Governor is often making controversial statements that are hurting not only Maharashtrians but all Indians. Now his excellency Governor of Maharashtra state talked indiscriminately about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Shivaji is not the only idol of Maharashtra and is not only known as a hero of Maharashtra but known as a hero across the country. Koshyari has said that Shivaji was an icon of "older days" and referred to Baba saheb Ambedkar and Union minister Nitin Gadkari as new "icons" of the country. Earlier Koshyari invited ire over a remark about reformist icon Savitri Bai Phule and also

said that Mumbai wouldn't be the country's financial capital if the Rajasthanis and Gujaratis communities were not in Mumbai. People in reputed positions should not talk loosely about the Great son of the soils. The person holding honourable positions should be cautious while speaking in public. The Governor of Maharashtra should understand that the ideals of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj never age and cannot be compared to any other great person in the world.

Another BJP leader Sudhanshu Trivedi has made a controversial statement that Shivaji has written five letters to Aurangzeb and apologized. BJP which is protesting Rahul Gandhi's controversial statements on Savarkar is maintaining a stoic silence on the comments made on Shivaji Maharaj by the Governor of Maharashtra and their parties spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi. BJP should spell out its stand on the comments made by his party men and the Governor of Maharashtra. The Governor of Maharashtra is constantly making statements that hurt the feelings of not only Maharashtrians but all Indians, and it is surprising why BJP is silent.

Zakir Hussain | Kazipet

a 'license' to indulge in these kinds of offences. Given the sharp increase in crimes against the children the government should take a serious note of this and come up with some concrete measures to curb this. Hence, we need more robust and unerring legislation to keep up with the pace of social crimes.

Ramala Divya | Hyderabad

A THRILLER OF A MATCH

Sir — It was a great thrill to watch the match between Argentina and Saudi Arabia in the FIFA World Cup tournament. Though Messi scored one goal within 10 minutes through a penalty and hoped to score many more, Saudi Arabia shattered his hopes by scoring two goals in less than ten minutes of the second half, much to the shock and disbelief of his team and everyone in the

football arena.

The last 30 minutes of the game was a fierce and terrific battle. Though Argentina strived hard and created many opportunities, it could not succeed, as the defence and goalkeeper of Saudi Arabia stood like a rock and effectively resisted every effort of the former. Nobody would have ever thought that Messi had to face such a crushing defeat, against Saudi Arabia, which is far behind in the FIFA ranking. While the game was a sumptuous feast for viewers all over the world, it will persist forever as a painful and shameful experience for Messi and his team, which remained unbeaten in the previous 36 matches.

TT Sarkaria | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

Swami Vivekananda was the golden representative of India's youth potential and talent,... his message is always relevant for society.



Vice president — Jagdeep Dhankhar



US Vice President — Kamala Harris

It's not just that audiences have seen much more content during the pandemic, it's also the way production technology has changed.



Actor — Ajay Devgn



Argentina Soccer Player — Lionel Messi

The people of Gujarat expect much from Arvind Kejriwal and that will propel the Aam Aadmi Party to victory in the state.



AAP Gujarat leader — Gopal Italia

FIRST COLUMN

WHERE SPIRITUALISM AND TOURISM CO-EXIST

Rishikesh welcomes tourists and spirituality buffs alike



NIHARIKA NIGAM

Do you know a place where the concept of heaven and haven go hand in hand? Where sacred chants on the Ganga are on one side and adventure sports are on the other? This is where tourists gather from all across the globe to seek peace and mastery in the art of life. Yes, we are talking about the mystic land of Rishikesh. Known for thousands of years for its cultural significance and lush green mountains with therapeutic waterfalls, here you can jump, float, relax, meditate, enjoy an evening by the bonfire and enjoy a cup of chai in the arms of nature!

Did you know that the Lakshman Jhula has a historical significance from Ramayana? Placed on the mystic Ganga, standing here will leave you mesmerised by sacred chants and the serenity of the river. If you want solitude to post on your Instagram, this is the place! Just like Lakshman Jhula, there are many stunning spots in Rishikesh: Triveni Ghat, Neer Garh Waterfalls, caves, ashrams, temples, Yoga retreats and much more. Oh! And while you are wandering the streets, do not forget to explore the shopping hubs, Teesri Manzil Temple and exotic cafes.

Extreme adventure sports are one of the significant reasons to visit Rishikesh, making it the official adventure capital of India. Barring the monsoons from mid-august to mid-September, adventures go on through the year here. As rafting resumes, tourism floods back into Rishikesh, and if you are looking for something mind-bending and



oh-so-exhilarating, bungy jumping is what will have brought you to Rishikesh. It is at Rishikesh that Bungy jumping began in India 12 years ago. Jump amidst the glorious natural landscape of the hilly region to experience the real deal. This also happens to be India's highest bungy platform.

Along with outward adventures, you can visit one of the yoga retreats in Rishikesh. The holy city is a hub for yoga training and meditation centres. There is a thriving culture of Ashrams which offer a myriad of workshops and stay options to harmonise from within—a much needed reset from the bustling city life. Get a pair of active wear that you can practice breathing exercises and yoga postures in. And if you are planning for a long vacation like a month, you can take one of the yoga certification courses to delve into the experience in detail.

The spot is filled with innumerable cafes. The Beatles cafe, themed upon the famed Beatles band, known to have composed some of their best works in Rishikesh, is one of the most popular touristy ones but there are so many more. Overlooking the Ganges, or the mountains, they offer a sight to behold and delicious pahaadi khaana with trance music- and even live bands often! Most have the classic hippie touch and feel, while some are the small Maggi shops that everyone loves amidst the mountains. Do not forget to wake up early and catch the classic aloo puri available locally.

Even if you are in Rishikesh for just a few days, brace yourself and enjoy every moment you spend in Rishikesh. As one of the most unique places in India, it is truly a treasure trove. Take back a huge bag of memories enough to last a lifetime!

(The author is Director, Business Development at Jumpin Heights)

Unlock potential of MSMEs with schemes



DINESH KUMAR TYAGI

The MSME sector does not need more laws and regulation but handholding and government support to play a vital role in nation building

The importance of the MSME in the economic and social development of the country, especially for developing nations, has been established in various studies conducted by the international institutions. In India, the role of SME is proven by the fact that they contribute about 30 per cent of the GDP and 45 per cent of the total export. The MSME sector is the main source of providing employment opportunities in India – about 12 crore people are employed, thus playing a significant role in promoting equitable and inclusive growth.

The government mission of promoting startup culture in the country also hinges on the growth and development of the MSME sector, thereby, encouraging innovation and creativity among the youth and budding entrepreneurs. Despite the role MSME plays in socio-economic development, this sector is unable to perform up to the immense potential and talent of Indian entrepreneurs.

The challenges faced by the sector have been discussed many times by the academicians and government, which include non-availability of adequate credit, regulatory issues, skill development technology upgradation and marketing the products, beside procurement of raw materials. Non-realization of dues /bills timely for goods and services provided from large firms has also been a matter of major concern for the sector.

Another serious challenge has been the non-availability of reliable data about the MSME. Though there are reported to be more than 70 million MSME in the country, the registration on the government portal has been only 11 million of them.

The government policy has been to make it voluntary for registration and despite the simplification of the process and online system designed, the registration of MSME is very less at 15 per cent. Existing approach may need to be revisited to ensure every MSME register, which is the basis on which any support or policy initiative can be designed and made effective for addressing the sector's challenges.

Fortunately, the government initiative for labor registration through the Ministry of Labour and farmer registration by the Ministry of agriculture has been quite successful. More than 90 million farmers registered after the announcement of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna. These are all E-KYC authenticated and land details verified through land registration database.

Farmers' data is now very useful for the government to address some of their concerns. Even the Kisan Credit card scheme has a database of more than 50 million farmers. Thus, an appropriate incentive scheme, benefitting each one, can help and support the government in developing a reliable data base of the MSME sector. The other example is that of labour registration. The Ministry of



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THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR UTILISED THE NETWORK OF FIVE LAKH COMMON SERVICE CENTER WHO SUPPORTED IN ADVOCACY, MOBILISATION AND REGISTRATION OF MORE THAN 170 MILLION LABOURERS OUT OF TOTAL 283 MILLION REGISTERED SO FAR

Labour utilised the network of five lakh common service centres (CSCs) who supported in advocacy, mobilisation and registration of more than 170 million labourers out of 283 million registered so far. The registration exercise was taken as a mission and every agency of the government provided the desired support.

The incentive of Rs 20 provided by the Ministry to the CSCs for every registration played a significant role in this. Thus, the MSME Ministry needs to organize the registration on a war footing in a mission mode and utilize the CSC and postal department network with appropriate incentive. The MSME are generally apprehensive of the government regulation. The MSME units need to be locally supported in explaining the benefits of the registration.

In the case of MSME, some more incentive may be required to allay fears of government regulatory overreach. Universal Insurance scheme, similar to PM Fasal Bima Yojna can be one incentive. Beside every MSME shall be provided an MSME card like the Kisan credit card with three years cash credit limit (this will also help in addressing the liquidity issues). A digital identity for each MSME with a free domain name and a website can be other incentives.

The pension scheme designed for the MSME needs to be revisited and the limit of pension be enhanced to Rs 10,000 from the existing Rs 3000 (the existing scheme has been a non-starter for traders).

With such a comprehensive

package and mission mode approach, all the MSME in the country can be registered on the Udyam Portal and sectoral intervention by the various Central Ministries and state governments can be designed and implemented effectively, more transparently and within a defined time frame. Once there is an API for account, PAN and e-KYC, a reliable database for the MSME in the country can be developed and made the stepping stone for sustainable growth and exploitation of sectors full potential in nation building.

The issues faced by the MSME are quite similar to the ones faced by farmers. The MSME contribution to the nation's GDP is also significant. The MSME provides employment to a large section of the population and addresses the unemployment issues. The criticality of MSME in nation development can in no way be underestimated as compared to agriculture. Why is the requirement of MSME not supported as comprehensively as in the case of the farmers? One reason is that the collective bargaining power of MSME is not as strong as that of the farmers due to diversity in the activity and spread. The trader's organization CAIT needs to play a more effective role in enabling the sector to get government support.

There is a need to appreciate the role being played by the MSME in the country and reexamine the policy intervention. The approach to resolve the issue of untimely or nonpayment of dues of the MSME units by large companies or government agencies by enforcing the provisions of “the interest on delayed payment to small scale and ancillary industrial undertakings Act 1998” has not been much relevant in Indian Context. Similar provision has been made in the MSMED Act 2006. Even the requirement to mention the outstanding of the MSME in the annual account of the companies has not been able to solve the liquidity issues of the MSME.

There is a need to relook at the Factoring Act and free the sector from regulations which are hindering the growth and evolution of this intermediary who can to a great extent address the issues of liquidity of the MSME sector. There is a need to relook at the stamp duty provision for assignment of the debt. Making factors more flexible and incentivising them may be desirable as they can be an effective tool to enable to a large extent meet the liquidity concern of the MSME. Even the approach of including lending to MSME under priority sector and fix limit has very limited impact in resolving the issues of credit access to this sector.

The MSME sector does not need more laws and regulation but handholding and support in India. The inherent ability and talent of Indians to set up and build sustainable enterprises is widely recognized. Regulation should not impinge on innovation, flexibility and capability of this vast pool of resources, who are mainly youth, especially in small and medium towns and rural India. With digital India Initiatives, the approach to the MSME sector needs to redefine both at the Central and state level

(The author, an ex-IAS officer, is former CMD, Common Service Centre, IT Ministry)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE 14 NATIONS SUPPORT THE NEED FOR THE COUNCIL TO CONDEMN NORTH KOREA'S ACTIONS WITH A UNIFIED VOICE AND TO TAKE ACTION TO LIMIT ITS UNLAWFUL WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION — US AMBASSADOR TO THE UN LINDA GREENFIELD



THE LAUNCH OF THE NUCLEAR-CAPABLE Hwasong-17 MISSILE PROVES WE HAVE A RELIABLE WEAPON TO CONTAIN U.S.-LED MILITARY THREATS. — SUPREME LEADER OF NORTH KOREA KIM JONG-UN

India can play big global role with G20 Presidency

In a polarised world, India will set the global agenda with 200 G20 meetings across the country



SHIVAJI SARKAR

India takes the first step to assume the G20 presidency for the next one year in a world that is increasingly becoming complex. Prime Minister Narendra Modi leads the presidency in a world that is becoming more difficult to communicate. It is not similar to the Non-Aligned Movement, which was a third world action of balancing between the two key powers – the US and Russia.

India has given a call to end the Ukrainian War and Russian President Vladimir Putin has lauded Indian diplomacy from being free from pressure. India plans to make the presidency a grand show of diplomatic business. It will host over 200 meetings, addressing 32 different

(The author is a policy analyst)

sectors, during the period between December 1, 2022, and November 30, 2023, starting from Jammu and Kashmir.

The diplomatic effort could be unique to exemplify India's concern for global issues where G20 definitely occupies a significant position for controlling the major part of the globe's wealth, resources and the clout in the course of economic and other actions. For Modi, it will be significant to establish brand India for which he has already decided on a lotus G20 logo. Could it be a revival of an era where Gamal Abdel Nasser, former Egyptian President, Marshal Tito, former Yugoslav president, and Jawaharlal Nehru, first Indian prime minister, enjoyed a pivotal role in world politics?

The first spark was seen as Modi spoke in Bali, Indonesia, for a ceasefire in the Russia-Ukraine War in what is clearly an act of diplomatic grandstanding. Two months ago, Modi met Russian President Vladimir Putin and said something about this not being an "age of war" in what might be seen by some as an act of belling the cat. Has that set space for a possible Indian role?

The US has just at the nick of the G20 summit accepted India's right to access Russian oil. Is that a grand stand or just routine? The enthusiasm of the Indian diaspora is exhilarating. Heading a multilateral organisation even for a period of one year means a lot for a country that has been in the forefront of many diplomatic activities, including during the pandemic.

Still Indian ceremonial ascendancy at G20 has not made big news. Instead, the international media concentrated on the three-hour meeting of US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping to hash out some of the thorniest issues in their relationship, including tensions over Taiwan, the economy and return to climate negotiations. Biden and Xi made cautious promises to improve the relationship that is at its most acrid point in decades and he pledged his envoy to visit China soon.

That has not taken away

the thunder out of Modi's move but it must have made him rethink that the media reach of India needs a lot to do and remains as vantage as that of Indira Gandhi, who despite her NAM-Pool move could not do much to widen the Indian news coverage beyond a point. These well could be the guiding mantras for Modi as he leads India's presidency in the club of elite nations.

The next 200 G20 events in India would need a better glare to establish internationally an effort that the country would be making not only for itself but for a possible effort to mark Indian stamp on the global scenario. G20 Presidency is not merely a diplomatic meeting for India, it is a new responsibility and a measure of the world's trust in India. It needs a news system that can penetrate and make a mark. The minister for external affairs S Jaishankar would have to walk that extra mile.

That apart, Prime Minister Modi knows how to utilise an elite forum to give the best impressions. He has decided to widen the Indian ambit. India with G20 presidency will be inviting Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and the UAE as guest countries, as well as International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, and Asian Development Bank as guest international organisations. It will be a new dimension for

the G20, which otherwise keeps to a restricted norm.

The Finance Ministry has allocated Rs 100 crore for hosting the G20, which will have a grand summit in September 2023. It will be spent on the meets, summit and security arrangements for the world dignitaries. The 200 meetings would be held across the country, starting from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, a sharp move for pronouncing that a ticklish problem has been solved.

Whatever, it will be an eventful 2023, which will be occupied with critical international functions as also prepare for eight state assembly elections. It will be a rich and action-packed prelude to India's 2024 general Lok Sabha elections.

Power outages in Ukrainian cities, Moldova after new strikes

AP ■ KYIV

A punishing new barrage of Russian strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure on Wednesday caused power outages across large parts of the country as well as neighbouring Moldova, adding to damage to Ukraine's power network and misery for civilians as winter begins.

Multiple regions reported attacks in quick succession. In several regions, authorities reported strikes on critical infrastructure. Officials in Kyiv said that three people were dead and nine wounded in the capital after a Russian strike hit a two-story building.

Russia has been pounding the power grid and other facilities with missiles and exploding drones for weeks. The new strikes piled further intense stress on an energy system that is being damaged faster than it can be repaired.

Before the latest barrage, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had said that Russian strikes had already damaged around half of Ukraine's infrastructure.

Rolling power outages have become the horrid new normal for millions and the latest barrage affected water supplies, too.

Ukrainian officials believe Russian President Vladimir Putin is hoping that the misery of unheated and unlit homes in the cold and dark of winter will turn public opinion against a continuation of the war but say it's having the opposite effect, strengthening Ukrainian resolve.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Wednesday that "one of the capital's infrastructure facilities has been hit" and there were "several more explosions in different districts" of the city. He said water supplies were knocked out in all of Kyiv.

There were power outages in parts of Kyiv, while power was



out in the wider Kyiv region, in the northern city of Kharkiv, the western city of Lviv, the northern Chernihiv region and in the southern Odessa region.

In Moldova, Infrastructure

Minister Andrei Spinu said that "we have massive power outages across the country," whose Soviet-era energy systems remain interconnected with Ukraine.

There was a similar outage in Moldova on Nov. 15. The country's pro-Western president, Maia Sandu, said in a statement that "Russia left Moldova in the dark." She said that the

future of Moldova, a country of about 2.6 million people, "must remain toward the free world."

Power also was out in most parts of the western Khmelnytskyi region, governor Serhii Hamalii said on Telegram. He added that a nuclear power plant in the region was disconnected from the Ukrainian electricity grid.

The latest onslaught came hours after Ukrainian authorities said an overnight rocket attack destroyed a hospital maternity ward in southern Ukraine, killing a 2-day-old baby.

Following the overnight strike in Vilniansk, close to the city of Zaporizhzhia, the baby's mother and a doctor were pulled alive from the rubble.

The region's governor said the rockets were Russian. The strike adds to the gruesome toll suffered by hospitals and other medical facilities — and their patients and staff — in the

Russian invasion that will enter its tenth month this week.

They have been in the firing line from the outset, including a March 9 airstrike that destroyed a maternity hospital in the now-occupied port city of Mariupol.

First lady Olena Zelenska wrote on Twitter that a 2-day-old boy died in the strike and expressed her condolences. "Horrible pain. We will never forget and never forgive," she said. Photos posted by the governor showed thick smoke rising above mounds of rubble, being combed by emergency workers against the backdrop of a dark night sky. The State Emergency Service said the two-story building was destroyed.

Medical workers' efforts have been complicated by the succession of Russian attacks in recent weeks on Ukraine's infrastructure.

The situation is even worse

in the southern city of Kherson, from which Russia retreated nearly two weeks ago after months of occupation — cutting power and water lines.

Many doctors in the city are working in the dark, unable to use elevators to transport patients to surgery and operating with headlamps, cell phones and flashlights. In some hospitals, key equipment no longer works.

"Breathing machines don't work, X-ray machines don't work ... There is only one portable ultrasound machine and we carry it constantly," said Volodymyr Malishchuk, the head of surgery at a children's hospital in the city.

On Tuesday, after strikes on Kherson seriously wounded 13-year-old Artur Voblikov, a team of health staff carefully maneuvered the sedated boy up six flights of a narrow staircase to an operating room to amputate his left arm.

Strike on Ukrainian maternity hospital kills 2-day-old baby

AP ■ KYIV

An overnight rocket attack destroyed a hospital maternity ward in southern Ukraine, killing a 2-day-old baby, Ukrainian authorities said on Wednesday. Ukraine's first lady said the attack caused "horrible pain," vowing that "we will never forget and never forgive."

The baby's mother and a doctor were pulled alive from the rubble in Vilniansk, close to the city of Zaporizhzhia.

The region's governor said the rockets were Russian. The strike adds to the gruesome toll

suffered by hospitals and other medical facilities — and their patients and staff — in the Russian invasion that will enter its tenth month this week.

They have been in the firing line from the outset, including a March 9 airstrike that destroyed a maternity hospital in the now-occupied port city of Mariupol.

"At night, Russian monsters launched huge rockets at the small maternity ward of the hospital in Vilniansk. Grief overwhelms our hearts — a baby was killed who had just seen the light of day. Rescuers are working at the site," said the regional gov-

ernor, Oleksandr Starukh, writing on the Telegram messaging app. First lady Olena Zelenska wrote on Twitter that a 2-day-old boy died in the strike and expressed her condolences. "Horrible pain. We will never forget and never forgive," she said.

Photos posted by the governor showed thick smoke rising above mounds of rubble, being combed by emergency workers against the backdrop of a dark night sky.

The State Emergency Service said the two-story building was destroyed.

Vilniansk is in the Ukrainian-held north of the Zaporizhzhia region, and is about 500 kilometres (300 miles) southeast of Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

Pope links plight of Ukrainians today to Stalin's 'genocide'

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis on Wednesday linked the suffering of Ukrainians now to the 1930s "genocide artificially caused by Stalin," when the Soviet leader was blamed for creating a man-made famine in the country believed to have killed more than 3 million people. Francis' linking of the plight of Ukrainian civilians today to those killed by starvation 90 years ago, and his willingness to call it a "genocide" and squarely blame Josef Stalin, marked a sharp escalation in papal rhetoric against Russia.

As of this year, only 17 countries have officially recognised the famine, known as the Holodomor, according to the Holodomor Museum in Kyiv.

In comments at the end of his weekly Wednesday general audience, Francis renewed calls for prayers for the "terrible suf-



fering for the dear and martyred Ukrainian people."

He recalled that Saturday marks the 90th anniversary of the start of the famine, which Ukraine commemorates every fourth Saturday of November with a Day of Memory.

"Saturday begins the anniversary of the terrible genocide of the Holodomor, the extermination by starvation artificially caused by Stalin between

1932-1933," Francis said. "Let us pray for the victims of this genocide and let us pray for so many Ukrainians — children, women, elderly, babies — who today are suffering the martyrdom of aggression."

Academic opinion remains divided about whether the famine constitutes a "genocide," with the main question being whether Stalin intentionally wanted to kill Ukrainians as an

attempt to quash an independence movement against the Soviet Union, or whether the famine was primarily the result of official incompetence along with natural conditions. Regardless, the "great famine" seeded lingering Ukrainian bitterness toward Soviet Russian rule. The Vatican, in its 2004 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, lists Ukrainians along with Armenians and Jews as victims of 20th century genocides and said "Attempts to eliminate entire national, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups are crimes against God and humanity itself, and those responsible for such crimes must answer for them before justice."

Francis has repeatedly called for peace and an end to the war, has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine and has called incessantly for prayers for the "mar-

tyred" Ukrainian people.

But he has generally declined to assign blame or even name Russia or President Vladimir Putin, and has repeated the Kremlin's complaints that NATO was "barking at its door" in its eastern expansion.

The Vatican has a tradition of not calling out aggressors, believing that behind-the-scenes diplomacy is more effective than public denunciation. The Holy See is also eager to maintain relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, which has strongly backed the Kremlin in the war.

According to the Holodomor Museum, 16 states in addition to Ukraine have recognized the famine as genocide: Australia, Ecuador, Estonia, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the United States and the Vatican.

UNITED TEXTILES LIMITED						
Regd. Off:- 7th K.M. Stone, Barwala Road, Hisar						
CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092						
Statement of Audited Financial Results						
for the Quarter and Year Ended 30th September, 2022						
(Rs. in Lakhs, except per share data)						
Particulars	Quarter Ended			Half Year Ended		Year Ended
	30.9.2022	30.6.2022	30.9.2021	30.9.2022	30.9.2021	31.3.2022
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
I Revenue from operations	421.57	523.16	530.55	944.73	728.55	1767.61
II Other Income	0.38	1.55	0.62	1.93	1.32	6.51
III Total Revenue (I+II)	421.95	524.71	531.17	946.66	729.87	1774.12
IV Expenses						
(a) Cost of materials consumed	178.21	383.39	381.59	561.60	509.65	1177.82
(b) Purchases of stock-in-trade	22.45	-	-	22.45	-	-
(c) Changes in inventories of finished goods work-in-progress and stock-in-trade	(110.46)	29.03	10.83	(81.43)	(4.68)	(5.87)
(d) Employee benefits expense	7.70	13.22	10.51	20.92	18.60	46.56
(e) Finance costs	18.38	11.32	8.87	29.70	18.48	34.64
(f) Depreciation and amortization expenses	31.51	24.22	16.70	55.73	28.28	68.35
(g) Other expenses	273.77	61.41	101.57	335.18	156.92	448.80
Total expenses (IV)	421.55	522.59	530.07	944.14	727.25	1770.30
V Profit/(Loss) before exceptional items and tax (III-IV)	0.40	2.12	1.10	2.52	2.62	3.82
VI Exceptional items	-	-	-	-	-	-
VII Profit/(Loss) after exceptional items but before tax (III-IV)	0.40	2.12	1.10	2.52	2.62	3.82
VIII Tax expense:						
(I) Current Tax	1.90	0.06	1.66	1.96	2.12	2.54
(II) Deferred Tax	(1.65)	0.42	(1.89)	(1.23)	(1.96)	(0.91)
Total tax expense	0.25	0.48	(0.23)	0.73	0.16	1.63
IX Profit/(Loss) for the period from continuing operations (VII-VIII)	0.16	1.64	1.34	1.80	2.46	2.19
X Other comprehensive income (OCI):						
A. Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss						
(i) Re-measurement gain (losses) On defined benefit plans	-	-	0.13	-	0.25	0.42
Income tax effect on above	-	-	(0.03)	-	(0.06)	(0.11)
(ii) Equity instrument through Other Comprehensive Income (Gain on Fair Valuation of Long Term Investment)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Income tax effect on above	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Other Comprehensive Income (X)	-	-	0.10	-	0.19	0.31
XI Total Comprehensive Income (Comprising Profit/(Loss) and Other comprehensive income for the period) (IX+X)	0.16	1.64	1.44	1.80	2.65	2.50
XII OCI for the year	-	-	-	-	-	-
XIII Paid-up equity share capital (Rs. 10 Per share)	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00
XIV Reserve/Other Equity	-	-	-	-	-	741.32
XV Earnings per equity share						
(1) Basic	0.01	0.05	0.04	0.06	(0.08)	0.07
(2) Diluted	0.01	0.05	0.04	0.06	(0.08)	0.07
Note:						
1. The aforesaid results were placed before and reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 11th November,2022 and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on the same date. The Statutory auditors have carried out limited review of these financial results.						
2. There are no separate reportable segments as per the Indian Accounting Standard (Ind AS-100) on segment reporting.						
3. The figures have been regrouped/rearranged wherever considered necessary to facilitate comparison.						
Place : Hisar			For United Textiles Limited			
Date : 11th November, 2022			Vivek Aggarwal			
			(Whole Time Director)			
			DIN No. 07079208			

PUBLIC NOTICE									
It is to inform the public at large that Mr. Jagvir who is purchasing the Plot of Land area measuring 100 Sq. Yards, out of Khazra No. 174 situated in the area of Village Akabarpur Bahrampur, Patana, Loni, Tehsil & Distt. Ghazibad, Uttar Pradesh- 201001 from Mr. Prem Singh who had owner through General Power of Attorney dated 12.03.1993 from Mr. Mahipal and same to be financed & mortgaged by Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.									
If any Person having any type of claim/ right/title/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.									
Lucem Legal LLP									
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 2, Noida, UP-201301; Contact # 0120-4268379									

PUBLIC NOTICE									
Notice is hereby given to general public at large that my client Indusind Bank Ltd., having one of its Branch at New Tower, 12th Floor, Hyatt Regency Complex, Block-A, Distt. Centre, Bhihaji, Cama Place, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110066, intends to grant loan facility to Sh. Korki Khanna against security of Entire Ground Floor without roof/terrace rights including undivided proportionate ownership rights in the land underneath along with the rights to passage, easement and benefits, Built on Property bearing No.364, having area measuring 137.34 Sq. Yds in the layout plan of U.P. Samaj Co. Operative House Building Society Ltd. presently known as Despai, Patnapura, Delhi-110034 (hereinafter referred to as "Said Property"). Sh. Radhey Shyam was the recorded owner of the Said Property by virtue of Conveyance Deed dated 19.02.2001 duly registered as Document No. 3029 on 19.02.2001. Thereafter, Sh. Radhey Shyam died intestate on 26.09.2020, leaving behind only the legal heir i.e. Smt. Bharti on the basis of Surviving Member Certificate No. 30650003070800, who claimed to be the sole and absolute owner of the Said Property by virtue of Hindu Succession Law. Thereafter, said Smt. Bharti sold the Said Property to Smt. Anubha Jain vide Sale Deed dated 28.12.2020 duly registered as Document No. 9847 on 29.12.2020 and the same was mutated in the records of Municipal Corporation of Delhi vide Mutation Letter dated 29.12.2020. Any person(s) has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to right, title or interest in the said property in any manner whatsoever, must immediately contact the undersigned in writing along with all supporting documents in respect of their claim(s)/objection(s).									
If no such claim is received with in a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, then it will be presumed that no one has any paramount right, title, or interest in the said property and even if someone has any claim/objection, he/she/they have given up the same.									
Himanshu Ahuja (Advocate)									
Contact No.: 9810310373, 011-41830049									
E-mail address : alegal@msl.com									

UK adds artillery rounds, helicopters to military aid to Ukraine

PTI ■ LONDON

An additional 10,000 Artillery rounds will be provided by the UK to Ukraine in its conflict with Russia, UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace announced on Wednesday on a visit to Norway.

The UK government said the additional rounds will enhance Ukraine's defensive capability and come as the first delivery of Sea King helicopters arrives in Ukraine to provide key search and rescue capabilities. It follows Britain's Royal Navy providing a six-week programme of Sea King training in the UK for 10 crews of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and associated engineers.

"Our support for Ukraine is unwavering. These additional artillery rounds will help Ukraine to secure the land it has reclaimed from Russia in recent weeks," said Wallace.



The additional military aid comes after British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited Kyiv at the weekend, where he announced a GBP 50 million package of defence aid.

That package included 125 anti-aircraft guns and technology to counter deadly Iranian-supplied drones, including dozens of radars and anti-drone electronic warfare capability.

Wallace is visiting Norway for a meeting of the Northern Group of defence ministers onboard the UK's aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Erdogan vows Syria ground invasion

Kurds prepare response

AP ■ QAMISHLI (SYRIA)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday he would carry out a land invasion into Kurdish areas in northern Syria.

Turkey has launched a barrage of airstrikes on suspected Kurdish militant targets in northern Syria and Iraq in recent days, in retaliation for a deadly November 13 bombing in Istanbul that Ankara blames on the militant groups. The groups have denied involvement in the bombing.

Ankara's allies, particularly Russia, have attempted to avert a ground incursion, but Erdogan said on Wednesday in a speech to his ruling party's legislators in Ankara that the air operations are "just the beginning" and that Turkey is determined to "close down all of our

southern borders...With a security strip that will prevent the possibility of attacks on our country."

Turkey has carried out a series of incursions into Syria since 2016 and already controls parts of northern Syria.

Erdogan said the new planned military offensive, to be carried out "at the most convenient time for us" would target the regions of Tel Rifaat, Mambij and Kobani, which is also known by its Arabic name Ayn Al Arab.

6 people, assailant dead in US shooting: Police

AP ■ CHESAPEAKE (US)

A shooter opened fire in a Walmart in Virginia late Tuesday, leaving six people dead, police said, in the country's second high-profile mass killing in a handful of days.

The assailant is also dead. The store in Chesapeake is now safe and will likely be closed for several days during the investigation, Officer Leo Kosinski said in the early hours of Wednesday.

It was not clear who the shooter was or what their motive might be.

"I am devastated by the senseless act of violence that took place late last night in our city," Mayor Rick W. West said in a statement posted on the city's Twitter account. "Chesapeake is a tightknit community and we are all shaken by this news."

A database run by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University that tracks every mass killing in America going back to 2006 shows this year has been especially bad.

The US has now had 40 mass killings so far this year, second to the 45 that occurred for



all of 2019. The database defines a mass killing as at least four people killed, not including the killer.

The attack at the Walmart came three days after a person opened fire at a gay nightclub in Colorado, killing five people and wounding 17. Earlier in the year, the country was shaken by the deaths of 21 when a gunman stormed an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Tuesday's shooting also brought back memories of another at a Walmart in 2019, when a gunman police say was

targeting Mexicans opened fire at a store in El Paso, Texas, and killed 22 people.

Kosinski said he couldn't say how the shooter died but that he didn't believe police fired shots.

The shooting had apparently stopped when police arrived at the store in Chesapeake, which is Virginia's second-largest city and lies next to the seaside communities of Norfolk and Virginia Beach.

Mike Kafka, a spokesman for Sentara Healthcare, said in a text message that five patients from the Walmart were being

treated at Norfolk General Hospital. Their conditions weren't immediately available.

Walmart tweeted early Wednesday that it was "shocked at this tragic event."

US Sen. Mark Warner said in a tweet that he was "sickened by reports of yet another mass shooting, this time at a Walmart in Chesapeake."

State Sen. Louise Lucas echoed Warner's sentiment, tweeting that she was "absolutely heartbroken that America's latest mass shooting took place in a Walmart in my district.

PM Deuba wins from Dadeldhura; Nepali Congress ahead in poll tally

Nepal elections

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected on Wednesday with a huge margin of votes for the House of Representatives for the seventh consecutive time, with his ruling Nepali Congress party leading in the election tally by winning 13 seats so far.

Elections to the House of Representatives (HoR) and seven provincial assemblies were held on Sunday. The counting of votes started on Monday.

Deuba secured 25,534 votes against his nearest rival Sagar Dhakal, an independent candidate in the Dadeldhura constituency in far west Nepal. Dhakal received just 1,302 votes. Deuba has never lost any parliamentary election in the five decades of his political career.

The 77-year-old Nepali Congress president Deuba is currently holding the post of Prime Minister for the fifth term.

Dhakal is a young engineer, who had a verbal squabble with Deuba during a public debate at a BBC's Sajha Sawal programme five years ago, after which he decided to challenge Deuba saying that now youths should get a chance in politics and senior people like Deuba should retire.



The ruling Nepali Congress has so far bagged 13 seats in the House of Representatives (HoR) while it is leading in 54 other constituencies.

Its ally parties -- CPN-Maoist and CPN-Unified Socialist, Lokatantraik Samajwadi Party -- are leading in 17, 7 and 3 seats respectively.

The CPN-UML led by former prime minister K P Oli has so far bagged three seats and is leading in 45 constituencies. Its ally parties -- the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Janata Samajwadi Party -- are leading in 5 seats each.

The newly formed Rastriya Swotantra Party has won three seats in the Kathmandu district.

Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Nagarik Unmukti Party

have bagged one seat each.

The CPN-UML has received the highest number of votes under the proportional electoral system with the party bagging 2,07,299 votes followed by the Nepali Congress with 1,83,352 votes. Rastriya Swotantra Party is in the third position with 95,598 votes while CPN-Maoist has received 86,433 votes. Similarly, the CPN Unified Socialist got 10,919 votes.

Out of 275 Members of Parliament, 165 will be elected through direct voting, while the remaining 110 will be elected through a proportional electoral system. Similarly, out of a total of 550 members of the seven provincial assemblies, 330 will be elected directly and 220 will be elected through the proportional method.

UK top court rules against Scottish independence vote plan

AP ■ LONDON

The UK Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday that Scotland does not have the power to hold a new referendum on independence without the consent of the British government.

The judgment is a setback for the Scottish government's campaign to break away from the United Kingdom.

The top court ruled that the Scottish Parliament "does not have the power to legislate for a referendum on Scottish independence."

Supreme Court President Robert Reed said the five justices were unanimous in the verdict, delivered six weeks after lawyers for the pro-independence Scottish administration and the Conservative UK government argued their cases at hearings in London.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said she was disappointed but would "respect" the judgment.

But, she said on Twitter: "A law that doesn't allow Scotland to choose our own future without Westminster consent exposes as myth any notion of the UK as a voluntary partnership and makes case for (independence)."

Trump's long-teased White House bid low key in 1st week

AP ■ NEW YORK

From the moment he left the White House in defeat last year, Donald Trump had teased the prospect of a third presidential campaign.

But in the week since he officially declared his candidacy, the former president has been uncharacteristically low key. There has been no massive stadium kickoff rally, notable for someone who has turned such events into a signature of his public life.

His newly reinstated Twitter account, which helped fuel his political rise nearly a decade ago, sits silent with its more than 87 million followers.

He hasn't announced plans to visit the key early voting states that will shape the contest for the Republican nom-

ination, nor has he sat for a round of high-profile interviews. Indeed, since his announcement speech, Trump hasn't held a public event.

"His lack of a schedule makes you wonder if he's really running or if this is just a business development opportunity or a diversion from the DOJ activity," said veteran GOP strategist Scott Reed, referring to Department of Justice probes into Trump's handling of classified documents and his efforts to overturn the 2020 election, which are expected to intensify in the coming weeks.

Trump, who never held public office before winning the presidency in 2016, has never valued the cadence and organisation associated with traditional campaigns.

And several aides noted



that Trump, who made his announcement unusually early and a week before the Thanksgiving holidays, is wary to draw attention away from the December 6 Senate runoff in Georgia, which will close out this year's midterm elections.

The aides, who insisted on anonymity to discuss campaign strategy, said Trump

will ramp up his schedule soon.

But the light-touch start to the campaign reflects the rushed and chaotic nature of his announcement, which came as midterm election votes were still being counted and even as some of his closest aides and allies had urged him to postpone until after the

Georgia runoff. It also comes at a moment of unique political vulnerability for Trump.

The former president, who has spent his post-White House years positioning himself as the undisputed leader of the GOP, is now facing heated criticism inside the party for contributing to a disappointing showing in this month's midterms.

And other Republicans are openly teasing presidential runs of their own, making clear they won't stand aside for Trump's nomination.

Meanwhile, the legal pressure on Trump is intensifying. Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed a special counsel last week to oversee the Justice Department's investigation into classified documents recovered from the former president's Mar-a-Lago

club in Palm Beach, Florida, as well as key aspects of a separate probe involving the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol and efforts to undo the 2020 election.

And on Tuesday, the Supreme Court cleared the way for the imminent handover of Trump's tax returns to a congressional committee after a three-year legal fight.

Still, Trump begins the race with an obvious head start. The former president had been acting like a de facto candidate for months and had long had a political operation in place.

After two presidential campaigns and four years in office, he also has longstanding relationships with state and local party leaders, including many who remain loyal to him.

Lanka Prez rules out early polls

Vows to crush anti-Govt street protests

PTIC ■ COLOMBO



The island nation survived with essential supplies being made available through dedicated Indian credit lines.

The Indian assistance was worth 4 billion dollars to help Sri Lanka tide over the economic crisis in the first half of the year.

Widespread unrest over the government's handling of the economic crisis turned into a political crisis. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets for months-long protests and ousted the former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in mid-July. Wickremesinghe succeeded him after Rajapaksa had fled the country and ordered the military to crackdown on protesters who had occupied government buildings.

On Wednesday, Wickremesinghe said that even if the protesters call him a "dictator" they would need to obtain police permission to stage street protests. "They can call me a dictator but must obtain police permission to stage street protests and cause road traffic."

"There is a plan to stage another Aragalaya (mass public protest) to oust the government. I will not allow that. I will put the military and use emergency laws to stop them if they try it again," Wickremesinghe said.

Wickremesinghe faced criticism for ordering the crackdown and detaining at least 20 protesters under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act.

One person dead, 21 injured after two explosions rock Jerusalem

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

One person was killed and 21 others injured in two separate explosions at bus stops at the entrances to Jerusalem, which is normally jam-packed in the morning. Four people were injured in the explosion.

The devices were packed with nails to maximise casualties and controlled by nearly identical remote devices, the police said in its initial response. Israel Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai said that "this is a framework of attack that we haven't seen for many years".

He called on the public to be alert for suspicious packages and said officers were scanning the city for other possible devices. It seemed like a coor-

Center, hospital officials said.

A second blast occurred shortly after at 7:30 AM at Ramot junction, another entrance to Jerusalem, which is normally jam-packed in the morning. Four people were injured in the explosion.

The devices were packed with nails to maximise casualties and controlled by nearly identical remote devices, the police said in its initial response. Israel Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai said that "this is a framework of attack that we haven't seen for many years".

He called on the public to be alert for suspicious packages and said officers were scanning the city for other possible devices. It seemed like a coor-

minated terror attack, he said.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility, however, the Hamas terror group hailed the twin attacks.

"The action conveyed the message to the occupation by saying that our people will stand firm on their land and cling to the path of resistance," Mohammad Hamada, a Hamas spokesperson said in a statement.

The main road leading to Jerusalem was closed as the police launched a massive search operation. Public Security Minister Omer Barlev spoke with the police chief and was expected to visit the scenes of the attacks, his office said.

Defence Minister Benny Gantz held an assessment with

the Shin Bet security agency chief, deputy army chief, and other senior military and police officials, following the attack.

Prime Minister Yair Lapid was to hold a separate assessment later in the day. The explosions come amid a tense phase of instability when concerns have been raised about a weakening Palestinian Authority and its slipping control over the West Bank.

The past several months have seen a series of attacks in Israel leaving 29 people dead.

The Israeli military has been carrying out a major anti-terror offensive in the Palestinian Authority-controlled West Bank following the attacks which have left over 130 Palestinians dead.

Workers protest, beaten at virus-hit Chinese iPhone factory

AP ■ BEIJING

Employees at the world's biggest Apple iPhone factory were beaten and detained in protests over pay amid anti-virus controls, according to witnesses and videos on social media on Wednesday, as tensions mount over Chinese efforts to combat a renewed rise in infections.

Videos that said they were filmed at the factory in the central city of Zhengzhou showed thousands of people in masks facing rows of police in white protective suits with plastic riot shields.

Police kicked and hit a protester with clubs after he grabbed a metal pole that had been used to strike him.

Frustration with restrictions in areas throughout



China that have closed shops and offices and confined millions of people to their homes has boiled over into protests.

Videos on social media show residents tearing down barricades set up to enforce neighborhood closures.

The ruling Communist Party promised this month to try to reduce disruptions by shortening quarantines and making other changes.

But the party is sticking to a "zero-COVID" strategy that aims to isolate every case while other governments relax controls and try to live with the virus.

Last month, thousands of employees walked out of the iPhone factory operated by Taiwan's Foxconn Technology Group over complaints about unsafe working conditions following virus cases.

A protest erupted on Tuesday over complaints Foxconn changed conditions for new workers who were attracted by offers of higher pay, according to Li Sanshan, an employee.

Li said he quit a catering job in response to advertising that promised 25,000 yuan (USD 3,500) for two months of work.

Search effort intensifies after Indonesia quake killed 271

AP ■ CIANJUR (INDONESIA)

More rescuers and volunteers were deployed on Wednesday in devastated areas on Indonesia's main island of Java to search for the dead and missing from an earthquake that killed at least 271 people.

With many missing, some remote areas still unreachable and more than 2,000 people injured in the 5.6 magnitude quake on Monday, the death toll was likely to rise. Hospitals near the epicentre on the island were already overwhelmed, and patients hooked up to IV drips lay on stretchers and cots in tents set up outside, awaiting treatment.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client that Mrs. Meena Devi Khushwaha is the owner of Built up Property bearing No. R2-23/A, area measuring 67 Sq. Yds., out of Khassa No. 15/3/2 & 3/1, Situated in the revenue estate of Village Khayla, colony known as Kavi Nagar extn., New Delhi, vide a Notarized GPA, Will and ATS dated 15.06.2004. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owner want to sell the said property to a person who intends to obtain loan from our client against the said property, if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of above owner over the said floor, its sale/mortgage/litigation, and any other objections, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, Unit Floor, 21, Shivaji Marg, New Nagar, N. Delhi-15
Ph: 011-41112527-28 kumarassociatesadvocates@gmail.com

NORTHERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

Ref: Tender Notice No. 63/2022-2023 dated 18.11.2022

Tender No. 77226003 opening date 09.01.2023 (SN. 11)

In reference to above tender, the earnest money amount has been modified from 0 to Rupees 335930/- . All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. The corrigendum has been published on website www.irps.gov.in Dt.21.11.2022 3122/2022

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NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of work and its location : 30-Elect-55-T-2022-23-E3
Electrical work for Energy efficiency & green energy works over Delhi division

Approx cost of the works : Rs. 70.78 lacs

Address of the office : Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

Bid Security : Rs. 1,41,600.00

Date & time of submission of tender : 19.12.2022, 12.00 Hrs.

Opening of tender : 19.12.2022, 12.00 Hrs.

Website & notice board : www.irps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

3114/2022

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Ph No. 0135-2708100 Fax No. 0135 - 2708109 Web site : www.siidcul.com

NIT No. - 85/SIDCUL/2022.

Golden Opportunity for Prosperous Developers for Tourist Village/ Villa/Natural Huts/Resort/Hotel/Wellness Resort near Tehri Lake

SIIDCUL invites online bids from prospective bidders for Allotment of land for developing as a Tourist Village/Villa/Natural Huts/Resort/Hotel/Wellness Resort on land parcel of 103249 sqm. near Tehri Lake at Madan Negi, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India. The bidders must furnish complete information as per the procedure laid down in the bid document. Detailed bid document can be downloaded from www.siidcul.com or www.uktenders.gov.in from 24.11.2022 to 20.12.2022. Further any corrigendum regarding the bid shall only be published in website only. Interested bidders can only submit the complete bid document on e-tendering website www.uktenders.gov.in latest by 20.12.2022 till 02:00PM.

Managing Director

सर्व हरियाणा ग्रामीण बैंक

प्रयोक्ता : पंजाब नेशनल बैंक Sponsored by: Punjab National Bank

Head Office, SHGB House, Plot No. 1 Sector 3, Rohtak

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed Tenders are invited for supply and installation of New Security Alarm System and AMC for existing Security Alarm System already installed by Bank for our Branches/Offices spread all over Haryana, from reputed Firms/Agencies having vast experience in the field. The proposal be sent to General Manager, Sarva Haryana Gramin Bank, Head Office, SHGB House, Plot No. 1, Sector-3, Rohtak. All the interested parties are advised to go through the detailed Tender guidelines available at Bank's website before submitting their Tenders. Bank reserves its right to reject any or all the bids without citing any reason. Corrections/Corrigendum, if any, will be placed on Bank website only. For more details visit our website www.shgb.co.in. Last Date of submission of Tenders: 14.12.2022 up to 4:00 PM Date of Opening of Tender (Tentative): 15.12.2022 at 11:00 AM

General Manager

DISTRICT POLICE -HEADQUARTERS, KATHUA

E- mail: sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in Fax/Phone No.: 01922-234010

LOOK OUT NOTICE

On 14.11.2022, one Farid Ali' S/O Alam Din R/o Bera Mohra Kothi Dedhi Mahanpur lodged a written report at P/S Basohli stating therein that on 04.11.2022 at about 1900 hours, his wife namely Arfan went missing from home. The complainant searched his wife everywhere but no any clue could be struck out. On this, missing report vide DDR No. 06 dated 14.11.2022 has been entered at P/S Basohli.

During the course of investigation, best efforts were made to locate missing Individual, whereas she is still un-traced.

As such Description Roll/Photograph of said missing individual is being shared with the appeal that anybody having clue/information about her whereabouts may inform us accordingly. The informer will be rewarded suitably:-

DESCRIPTION ROLL	PHOTOGRAPH
● Name	Arfan
● Husband	Farid Ali
● Permanent Address	Village Bera Mohra Kothi
● Present Address	Village Bera Mohra Kothi
● Tehsil	Mahanpur
● Police Station	Basohli
● Age	21 years
● Height	05 Feet 3 Inch
● Complexion	Wheatish
● Build	Average
● Eyes	Black
● Languages known	Dogri/Hindi/Gojri.

Any information related to the whereabouts of the subject may be communicated on following Contacts:-

1. DPO Kathua- 01922-234010 (Phone/Fax)
2. dpokathua@jkpolice.gov.in (Mail ID)
3. PCR Kathua- 01922-234311(Phone/Fax)
4. Police Station Basohli- 01922-251205

DIP/J-11993/22 Sr. Superintendent of Police, Kathua.

'Tax collection to exceed Budget estimate by ₹4L cr'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's tax collection will exceed the budget estimate by nearly ₹4 lakh crore in the current fiscal on the back of buoyant income tax, customs duty and GST mop-up, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said on Wednesday.

In an interview to PTI, he said the growth in tax revenues will continue to be higher than the GDP growth, helped by formalisation of the economy and better compliance.

For this financial year ending March 2023, the tax collection target set in the Union Budget is around ₹27.50 lakh crore.

Bajaj said the direct tax collection comprising personal and corporate taxes would be close to ₹17.50 lakh crore in the current fiscal. Mop up from indirect taxes (customs, excise and GST) would be close to ₹14 lakh crore.

The total tax collection is expected to be about ₹31.50 lakh crore in 2022-23, he said.

The Budget had pegged direct and indirect tax mop up at ₹14.20 lakh crore and ₹13.30



lakh crore for current fiscal, taking the total figure to ₹27.50 lakh crore.

"We are using a lot of data. We have data from income tax and GST departments, and MCA (Ministry of Corporate Affairs). We are also getting data regarding high value expenditure. Formalisation of economy and technology has helped improved compliance," Bajaj said.

Last fiscal, the direct tax collection grew nearly 50 per cent to ₹14.10 lakh

crore compared to 2020-21.

"The trend of higher tax collection than GDP growth will continue," Bajaj said.

He also said that even though there was a reduction in customs and excise duties during this fiscal, the government will be very close to the target set in the Budget.

The Budget has set a target of collecting ₹2.13 lakh crore and ₹3.35 lakh crore from customs and excise duties, respectively.

Markets end higher for 2nd day on firm global trends

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks ended higher on Wednesday amid buying in banking counters and a firm trend in global markets.

Continuing its previous day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 91.62 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at 61,510.58. During the day, it jumped 361.94 points or 0.58 per cent to 61,780.90.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 23.05 points or 0.13 per cent to end at 18,267.25.

From the Sensex pack, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Dr Reddy's, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Sun Pharma, Maruti, NTPC, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank were the major winners.

Power Grid, Tech Mahindra, Titan, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended higher.

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

"Following the global trend, domestic indices continued to cautiously build gains as investors braced for the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes. The declining dollar



index and falling bond yield provided short-term relief, while the FIIs' unpredictability kept investors at bay," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.05 per cent higher at USD 89.29 per barrel.

"Markets held on to modest gains in a volatile session ahead of the key FOMC minutes. Investors preferred to stay on the sidelines despite tomorrow being a November F&O series expiry day," said Prashanth Tapse - Research Analyst, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.54 per cent and midcap index advanced 0.20 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, oil & gas climbed 0.68 per cent, metal 0.65 per cent, financial services 0.53 per cent, energy 0.53 per cent, healthcare 0.42 per cent, and utilities 0.32 per cent.

India, GCC to launch free trade agreement talks today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will announce the launch of negotiations for a free trade agreement on Thursday, which aims at promoting two-way commerce and investments between the regions, an official said.

GCC is a union of six countries in the Gulf region -- Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

India's exports to the GCC member countries grew by 58.26 per cent to about USD 44 billion in 2021-22, as against USD 27.8 billion in 2020-21, according to data from the commerce ministry.

The share of GCC members in India's total imports rose to 18 per cent in 2021-22, from 15.5 per cent in 2020-21.

Bilateral trade has increased to USD 154.73 billion in 2021-22, from USD 87.4 billion in 2020-21.

"GCC officials will be here for the announcement," the official said.

India has already implemented a free trade pact with the UAE in May this year.

This would be a kind of resumption of FTA talks as earlier two rounds of negotiations had been held in 2006 and 2008 between India and GCC. Third round did not happen as GCC deferred its negotiations with all countries and economic groups.

India imports predominantly crude oil and natural gas



from the Gulf nations like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and exports pearls, precious and semi-precious stones; metals; imitation jewellery; electrical machinery; iron and steel; and chemicals to these countries.

Besides trade, Gulf nations are host to a sizeable Indian population. Out of about 32 million non-resident Indians (NRIs), nearly half are estimated to be working in Gulf countries.

These NRIs send a significant amount of money back home.

According to a November 2021 report of the World Bank, India got USD 87 billion in foreign remittances in 2021. Of this, a sizeable portion came from the GCC nations.

Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Plantation Management (IIPM) Director

Rakesh Mohan Joshi said that the Gulf region holds enormous potential for Indian exporters.

"India needs to have a long-term strategy to capture this market and FTA will definitely help in that," Joshi said.

According to commerce ministry data, the share of these six countries in India's total exports has risen to 10.4 per cent in 2021-22, from 9.51 per cent in 2020-21.

Similarly, imports rose by 85.8 per cent to USD 110.73 billion, compared to USD 59.6 billion in 2020-21, the data showed.

The UAE was the third-largest trading partner of India in 2021-22. India's bilateral trade with the nation increased to USD 72.9 billion in 2021-22 as compared to USD 43.3 billion in 2020-21.

Rupee falls 18 paise to close at 81.85 against US dollar



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 18 paise to close at 81.85 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday on dollar demand from importers and recovery in crude oil prices.

Forex traders said sustained foreign fund outflows and concerns over rising Covid-19 cases in China also weighed on investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 81.81 and later witnessed an intraday high of 81.74 and a low of 81.87 during the session.

The domestic unit finally settled at 81.85 against the American currency, registering a fall of 18 paise over its last close of 81.67.

"Indian Rupee depreciated

on Dollar demand from importers and recovery in crude oil prices. FI outflows also weighed on Rupee," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

However, the soft US Dollar and positive domestic markets cushioned the downside. The US Dollar declined on Tuesday on hopes that the Fed may cool down its pace of rate hikes.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.21 per cent to 106.99.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures advanced 0.91 per cent to \$89.16 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in capital markets as they offloaded shares worth ₹697.83 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

"We expect the Rupee to trade with a negative bias on concerns over rising Covid-19 cases in China and hawkish Fed speak. Though some Fed officials hint that they are open to a slower pace of rate hike, the US central bank will not pause its rate hike," Choudhary said.

Gold falls ₹40; silver climbs ₹110



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price declined by ₹40 to ₹52,797 per 10 gram in the national capital on Wednesday amid a fall in prices of the yellow metal in overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹52,837 per 10 gram.

Silver, however, climbed by ₹110 to ₹62,056 per kilogram.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,745 per ounce while silver was flat at USD 21.27 per ounce.

"COMEX gold edged lower in Asia as investors look to US Federal Reserve minutes due for release later tonight for fresh clues on the yellow metal's direction," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

FDI equity inflows dip 14% during April-Sept to \$ 26.9 billion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) equity inflows into India contracted by 14 per cent to USD 26.9 billion during the April-September this fiscal, according to the data of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

The inflows had stood at USD 31.15 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year.

The total FDI inflows (which includes equity inflows, re-invested earnings and other capital) too declined to USD 39 billion during the first six months of the current fiscal year as against USD 42.86 billion in the year-ago period.

During the first half of this fiscal, Singapore emerged as the top investor with USD 10 billion FDI. It was followed by



Mauritius (USD 3.32 billion), UAE (USD 2.95 billion), USA (USD 2.6 billion), the Netherlands (USD 1.76 billion), and Japan (USD 1.18 billion), the data showed.

The computer software and hardware sector attracted the highest inflows of USD 6.3 billion during the six-month period of this fiscal.

It was followed by services (USD 4.16 billion), trading (USD 3.28 billion), chemicals (USD 1.3 billion), automobile industry (USD 932 million) and construction (infrastructure) activities (USD 990 million).

Inox Green shares make tepid market debut; settle 9% lower

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Inox Green Energy Services, a subsidiary of Inox Wind, made a tepid market debut on Wednesday and ended with a discount of 9 per cent against the issue price of ₹65. The stock listed at ₹60.50, a fall of 6.92 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 10 per cent to ₹58.50. Shares of the firm ended at ₹59.10, a decline of 9 per cent.

On the NSE, the stock of the firm made its debut at ₹60, a discount of 7.69 per cent. It closed at ₹59.25, lower by 8.84 per cent. The company commanded a market valuation of ₹1,725.36 crore on the BSE. In traded volume terms, 34 lakh shares of the company were traded at the BSE and 4 crore shares at the NSE during the day.

Refund portal to be not accessible to PACL investors for 5 days due to technical issues: Sebi panel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A high-powered Sebi committee, which is looking into the refund process of PACL investors, on Wednesday said the refund portal will not be accessible to those investors for five days due to technical issues.

The committee, headed by retired Justice of India RM Lodha, is overseeing the process of disposing of properties to refund investors after verifying their genuineness. It has already initiated the process of refund in phases.

The panel was set up by Sebi in 2016 following a Supreme Court order.

The panel in October provided a facility for investors with claims up to ₹15,000, whose applications were found deficient, to correct the errors, if any, by logging in on the refund portal — sebiacpre-

fund.Co.In — and resubmit the applications for further processing.

The facility has been made available from November 1, 2022, to January 31, 2023.

"However, due to technical issues, the refund portal will not be accessible for re-submission for 5 days," according to a statement on Sebi's website.

PACL, also known as Pearl Group, which had raised money in the name of agriculture and real estate business, was found by Sebi to have collected more than ₹60,000 crore through an illegal collective investment scheme (CIS) over a period of 18 years.

In December 2015, the regulator ordered the attachment of all assets of PACL and its nine promoters and directors for their failure to refund the money, which was due to investors.

Airtel deploys 5G Plus service Nagpur International airport

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Wednesday announced the deployment of its '5G Plus' service at Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport Nagpur, making it the second airport in the state with the ultra-high-speed service.

The new terminal in Bengaluru, Pune and Varanasi are the other three airports that have Airtel 5G Plus, the company said in a statement.

"Airtel powers Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport with ultra-fast Airtel 5G Plus," the company said. Nagpur was one of the first eight cities in the country to get the 5G service.



The services are currently available at Ganesh Path, Nehru Nagar, Subhash Nagar, Hanuman Nagar, CA road and a few other locations.

Airtel said it is augmenting the network further to make the services available across the city in due course of time.

"Customers flying in and out of Orange City can enjoy high-speed Airtel 5G Plus across the airport terminal. Passengers can enjoy blazing speeds on their mobile phones

while they are at the arrival and departure terminals, lounges, boarding gates, migration and immigration counters, security areas, baggage claim belts, parking area etc.," it said.

All customers with 5G smartphones will be able to avail the high-speed Airtel 5G Plus on their existing data plans, and there is no need to change the SIM as the existing Airtel 4G SIM is 5G enabled.

George Mathen, CEO (Maharashtra and Goa), Bharti Airtel said: "I am thrilled to announce the beginning of a new chapter in Maharashtra as Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport, Nagpur becomes the second airport in the state to have the Airtel 5G Plus services after Pune airport".

Use HPR to build network of doctors for healthcare services: Irdai to insurers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Irdai has asked insurers to leverage the Health Professional Registry to build a network of doctors or other healthcare professionals for providing OPD and other health services.

As part of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, National Health Authority (NHA) has incorporated a Healthcare Professional Registry (HPR), a comprehensive repository of registered and verified practitioners of healthcare professionals, delivering modern as well as traditional healthcare services across India. "The General and Health Insurers offering health insurance policies can also consider leveraging on the Health Professional Registry for building up the network of doctors/physicians or other healthcare professionals for providing OPD or other healthcare services," Irdai said in a circular.

It further said the general insurers are advised to consider capturing HPR ID as verification to validate/authenticate the medical practitioners while issuing or renewing policies for medical malpractice under professional indemnity cover. This will enable digitisation and ease the process of buying and selling professional indemnity policies and push for HPR registration among healthcare professionals, said the circular.

Flomic Global Logistics custom Clearance operations in Nagpur

New Delhi: Flomic Global Logistics Ltd has started its freight forwarding & custom clearance operations in Nagpur. The firm had begun its warehousing operations a few months back and now have decided to extend its service offering further.

E-commerce firms are aggressively expanding their footprint in India, and Flomic aims to partner with them in their growth story. With online shopping becoming the new way of life, there has been a huge spike in demand for warehousing.

with even more destinations. The introduction of these new non-stop flights to New York, Milan, Vienna, Copenhagen, Paris and Frankfurt, is another step in that journey, which will accelerate as our aircraft fleet expands," said Campbell Wilson, CEO and MD, Air India.

Mumbai-New York service will complement the airline's existing daily service from Delhi to New York and four weekly flights to Newark Liberty airport, it said, adding that this will take Air India's India-US frequency to 47 non-stop flights per week.

India is grappling with the shortage of both cockpit and cabin crew.

Amid this shortage, the airline is looking to hire expat pilots and has also offered its cabin crew, who have opted to retire following the company's Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) scheme for its permanent employees earlier this year, to extend their service tenure by two months to January 31, 2023.

"A key element of our five-year transformation plan, Vihaan.AI, is to strengthen India's global network, connecting India's major cities



Air India said it continues to make progress in augmenting its fleet with newly-leased aircraft, and the return of existing aircraft to active service.

The international expansion comes at a time when Air

AI's flights to New York, Paris, Frankfurt

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tata Group-owned Air India on Wednesday announced the launch of new flights connecting Mumbai with New York, Paris and Frankfurt, starting February next year.

Besides, the full-service carrier also announced the resumption of non-stop flights connecting Delhi with Copenhagen, Milan and Vienna.

The Mumbai-New York (JFK International Airport) daily service will commence from February 14 next year, Air India said.

Zydus Lifesciences gets USFDA nod for generic drug to treat stomach ulcers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zydus Lifesciences on Wednesday said it has received final approval from the US health regulator to market its generic version of famotidine injection indicated to treat ulcers of the stomach and intestines. The approval granted by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) is for famotidine injection of strength 40 mg/4mL (10 mg/mL) and 200 mg/20 mL (10 mg/mL) multiple-dose vials, the company said in a regulatory filing. Famotidine injection is indicated to treat ulcers of the stomach and intestines and to prevent intestinal ulcers from coming back after they have healed, it added.

It is also used to treat certain stomach and throat problems such as erosive esophagitis, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, the company said. The drug will be manufactured at the group's injectable manufacturing facility at Jarod, near Vadodara in Gujarat, Zydus Lifesciences said.

AWS to launch 2nd infra region in Hyderabad

New Delhi:Amazon Web Services, Inc. (AWS), an Amazon.com, Inc. company (NASDAQ: AMZN), today announced the launch of its second AWS infrastructure Region in India—the AWS Asia Pacific (Hyderabad) Region. Developers, startups, entrepreneurs, and enterprises, as well as government, education, and nonprofit organizations, will have greater choice for running their applications and serving end users from data centers located in India.

CHAMPIONS OFF THE MARK

Giroud equals Henry mark as World Cup holders France sink Australia

AP ■ DOHA

Olivier Giroud joined Thierry Henry as France's all-time leading goalscorer with a brace as holders France recovered to beat Australia 4-1 and get their defence of the World Cup off to a winning start on Tuesday.

Australia took a shock lead at Al Janoub Stadium with the game just nine minutes old when Craig Goodwin scored.

France, whose build-up to the tournament was marred by injuries, saw left-back Lucas Hernandez come off hurt in the move that led to that goal.

However, they recovered to equalise through Adrien Rabiot before Giroud put them ahead with an easy finish in the 32nd minute for his 50th international goal.

Kylian Mbappe got his name on the scoresheet in the second half and Giroud sealed the win to equal Henry's record tally of 51 goals for France.

The win leaves them top of Group D after rivals Denmark and Tunisia drew 0-0 in Doha earlier.

At the age of 36, veteran AC Milan striker Giroud, who has 115 caps, is the oldest player to score for France at a World Cup.

Yet he almost certainly would not have been playing here had Karim Benzema been fit.

Instead, the withdrawal of the Ballon d'Or winner with a thigh injury on the eve of the tournament has played into the hands of Giroud, who was a key player for coach Didier Deschamps in France's triumphant 2018 World Cup campaign but didn't score in Russia.

It is not just Benzema who is missing for Les Bleus, with Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante -- their starting midfield duo four years ago -- also out of the tournament.



Centre-back Raphael Varane was not risked having not played since suffering a leg injury playing for Manchester United a month ago.

That meant Dayot Upamecano and Ibrahima Konate -- with nine caps between them -- played together in central defence while Rabiot joined Aurelien Tchouameni in midfield.

Australia stunned the world champions by scoring an early opener.

Mathew Leckie controlled the ball on the right and escaped Lucas Hernandez

before delivering a low ball across the face of goal for Goodwin to finish into the roof of the net.

Hernandez hurt his right knee trying to stop Leckie, although there did not appear to be any contact between the players.

The Bayern Munich defender was helped off, with his brother Theo coming on.

The younger Hernandez did not have the best introduction, giving the ball away and allowing Mitch Duke to hit a

Lucas Hernandez limps out of World Cup

AP N DOHA

France defender Lucas Hernandez will miss the rest of the defending champions' World Cup campaign after suffering a knee injury in Tuesday's opening match against Australia.

His absence comes with coach Didier Deschamps already grappling with a host of key players ruled out of the tournament in Qatar.

"Honestly, it's starting to become a big deal," said France captain Hugo Lloris.

"We sensed immediately it was serious," the Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper added after the match.

"It's the latest blow but we have to continue moving forward. It's going to make us stronger."

Deschamps must now juggle his options as his squad is reduced to 24 players.

shot from range that flew just wide.

Yet he played a part in the 27th-minute equaliser -- Antoine Griezmann's right-wing corner was cleared but the ball came to Hernandez on the left and his cross was headed in by Rabiot.

Five minutes later Rabiot was involved again as France went ahead, hounding Nathaniel Atkinson out of possession on the French left and playing a one-two with Mbappe before teeing up Giroud.

Germany lose against Japan

PTI ■ DOHA

Another World Cup day, another World Cup shock. Substitutes Ritsu Doan and Takuma Asano scored late goals Wednesday to give Japan a come-from-behind 2-1 victory over Germany at the World Cup.

Both Doan and Asano play for German clubs.

Ilkay Gundogan had given four-time champion Germany the lead with a first-half penalty. But Doan, who plays for Freiburg, pounced on a rebound to equalize in the 76th minute after Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer blocked a shot from Takumi Minamino.

Then Asano, who plays for Bochum, sprinted clear of Nico Schlotterbeck and beat Neuer from a narrow angle in the 83rd minute of the first competitive meeting between the two nations.

The match was played a day after Argentina's 2-1 upset loss to Saudi Arabia.

Before Wednesday's game, Germany's players covered their mouths during the team photo in an apparent rebuke to FIFA following its decision to stop plans to wear armbands to protest discrimination in host nation Qatar.

Nancy Faeser, Germany's sports minister, attended the match at the Khalifa International Stadium and was sitting beside FIFA president Gianni Infantino while wearing the same "One Love" armband that FIFA had outlawed with its threats of consequences.

It was only the third time Germany had lost its tournament-opening game after



defeats against Algeria in 1982 and Mexico in 2018. In the other World Cup openers for Germany, the team had won 13 matches and drawn four.

Germany outplayed Japan for much of the match with 24 attempts on goal compared to Japan's 11. Despite giving away the penalty, Japan goalkeeper Shuichi Gonda made a string of saves.

Germany next faces Spain on Sunday, while Japan takes on Costa Rica.

Germany's buildup was fraught by protests and political statements because of Qatar's human rights record and its treatment of migrant workers and members of the LGBTQ community.

Germany was playing at the World Cup for the first time since its shocking group-stage exit as defending champion in 2018, while Japan is appearing in its seventh straight World Cup and is looking to reach the quarter-finals for the first time.



Germany players cover mouths in protest for WC photo

AP ■ DOHA

Germany's players covered their mouths before their World Cup opener against Japan on Wednesday in protest at FIFA's refusal to allow rainbow-themed armbands.

Captains of seven European teams had planned to wear the anti-discrimination armbands during the tournament in Qatar as part of a campaign for diversity, but backed down over the threat of disciplinary action from football's governing body, including yellow cards.

The rainbow armbands had been viewed as a symbolic protest against laws in Qatar, where homosexuality is illegal. Germany's football federation said in a tweet moments after the photo protest that "human rights are not negotiable."

"This is not a political position; human rights are not negotiable," the DFB tweeted.

"To ban the armband is like banning our right to speak," the federation added. FIFA president Gianni Infantino was at the Khalifa International Stadium for the Germany-Japan match.

The German government spokesman, Steffen Hebestreit, said earlier in the day in Berlin that FIFA's decision to bar captains from wearing the "OneLove" armbands was "very unfortunate."

"The rights of LGBTQ people are non-negotiable," Hebestreit said at a regular press conference.

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Morocco hold Modric's Croatia



AP ■ AL KHOR

Morocco held Croatia to a 0-0 draw in their opening game of the World Cup on Wednesday, producing a spirited display against the 2018 runners-up led by Luka Modric.

Backed by Qatar's large Moroccan community at the Al Bayt Stadium, the Atlas Lions followed up north African rivals Tunisia's strong performance against dark horses Denmark a day earlier to frustrate Croatia.

Coach Zlatko Dalic had urged Croatia to exercise caution following Saudi Arabia's shock win over Argentina, a result Morocco captain Romain Saiss said had

"opened the door" for the tournament's less-fancied teams.

Morocco took the game to a Croatia side featuring four players who started the 2018 final but struggled to create genuine chances against a defence marshalled by the experienced Dejan Lovren.

Azzedine Ounahi strangely opted against shooting when well placed inside the area, with Hakim Ziyech and Achraf Hakimi heavily involved down the right without exerting undue pressure on Croatia.

Ivan Perisic fired just over from distance for Croatia after intercepting a dreadful pass from Selim Amallah, while goalkeeper Yassine Bounou blocked well with his legs to deny Nikola Vlasic from close range.

Modric, the former Ballon d'Or winner appearing at his fourth World Cup at the age of 37, then hammered over from the edge of the box.

Only once have Morocco gone beyond the group stage, in 1986, but they will rate their chances of advancing with games to come against an ageing Belgium team and Group F outsiders Canada.

Croatia pushed for a late winner but found Morocco's defence in unforgiving mood as Walid Regragui's side secured a valuable and deserved point.

Ronaldo Man Utd partnership a dream, but nothing lasts - Bruno Fernandes

AP ■ DOHA

Portugal midfielder Bruno Fernandes says it was a dream to play with Cristiano Ronaldo at Manchester United, but "nothing lasts forever".

The striker parted ways with the Premier League club by mutual consent on Tuesday and is searching for a new club, with Portugal due to kick off their World Cup campaign against Ghana on Thursday.

Along with Ronaldo's departure, Manchester United also issued a bulletin saying the club could be sold by owners the Glazer family.

Ronaldo, 37, had spoken in a controversial interview last week, where he lashed out at coach Erik ten Hag and the club itself, provoking his eventual departure.

"I don't feel uncomfortable, I don't have to pick a side. It was a dream come true to play with Cristiano at United but nothing lasts forever," Fernandes told a press conference on Wednesday.

"It is his career and we have to respect such decisions, every decision has to be respected regardless of whether you agree or not."

"We as players, but also as parents, brothers, we know it might be difficult to take some decisions but these decisions have to be for the wellness of ourselves and our families."

Ghana coach Otto Addo



RONALDO, 37, HAD SPOKEN IN A CONTROVERSIAL INTERVIEW LAST WEEK, WHERE HE LASHED OUT AT COACH ERIK TEN HAG AND THE CLUB ITSELF, PROVOKING HIS EVENTUAL DEPARTURE.

AP ■ DOHA

Son Heung-min will be able to play in South Korea's World Cup opener against Uruguay on Thursday despite wearing a mask after facial surgery, coach Paulo Bento said.

The Spurs attacker and South Korean skipper had surgery earlier this month after suffering fractures around his left eye in a collision during a Champions League match.

The 30-year-old has been training in Qatar in a mask and South Korean fans have been

thinks that Portugal will not be affected by Ronaldo's split from Manchester United.

"I don't care, it's not our problem and I don't think it's a big problem," Addo told a press conference Wednesday.

"Everybody wants to win and we're at World Cup level, I don't think this can disrupt anybody."

Black Stars captain Andre Ayew agreed with his coach and said Euro 2016 winners Portugal would be favourites for the clash at Stadium 974 in Doha.

"Portugal are the ones who are favourites on paper, we have to show on the field, that on paper is not what will happen on the pitch."

Son able to play in S Korea's WC opener



eagerly waiting on news of his availability.

"Son can play and will be able to play," Bento told a pre-match press conference on Wednesday.

The Portuguese coach added: "The fact he will be wearing a mask is not inconvenient for him, it is natural for him."

"We have stuck to the plan since we arrived here, also the way we integrated him into our group shows he has been natural. "We will see tomorrow how it will be. Our hope is that he will feel comfortable as far as possible." But Bento cautioned: "He knows and we know that after this injury we cannot take any risks."

Guardiola extends Man City deal

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Pep Guardiola said "I cannot be in a better place" as he announced he had agreed a two-year contract extension that will keep him at the Premier League champions until 2025.

The former Barcelona and Bayern Munich manager, 51, has won nine major trophies, including four Premier League titles, since taking charge at City in 2016.

"I am so pleased to be staying at Manchester City for another two years," said Guardiola in a club statement issued on Wednesday.

"I can't say thank you enough to everyone at the club for trusting me. I am happy and comfortable, and I have everything I need to do my job as best as possible."

The Spaniard added: "I



know the next chapter of this club will be amazing for the next decade. It happened over the last 10 years, and it will happen in the next 10 years because this club is so stable.

"From day one I felt something special being here. I cannot be in a better place."

Guardiola's current deal at the Etihad Stadium is due to

expire at the end of the season.

He has already extended his contract twice during his time at the club.

Guardiola, who has 271 wins from 374 matches in all competitions as City manager, said talks over his latest contract extension started soon after the team had retained the Premier League title in May.

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United's owners on Tuesday said that they were ready to sell the club, potentially bringing down the curtain on an acrimonious 17 years under the Glazer family.

On a tumultuous day for the English giants, it was earlier revealed that star player Cristiano Ronaldo has left the club with "immediate effect."

Weeks of turbulence appeared to have come to an end when United announced Ronaldo's contract had been terminated by mutual agreement to bring to an end his second spell at Old Trafford.

That dramatic announcement was eclipsed just hours later by the news the US-based Glazer family could also be on their way out.

"The board will consider all

strategic alternatives, including new investment into the club, a sale, or other transactions involving the company," United said in a statement.

The Glazers have been unpopular with supporters ever since a £790 million (\$934 million) leveraged takeover in 2005 burdened the club with huge debts.

Frustration towards the Americans has only grown during a nine-year decline in results on the pitch since Alex Ferguson's retirement as manager in 2013.

The Red Devils have not won the Premier League title since Ferguson's final campaign in 2012/2013 and have failed to win any trophy since



2017.

United currently sit fifth in the Premier League, 11 points behind leaders Arsenal.

"We will evaluate all options to ensure that we best

serve our fans and that Manchester United maximizes the significant growth opportunities available to the club today and in the future," added Avram and Joel Glazer, the

club's executive co-chairmen and directors.

The statement also recognised the need for investment in stadium redevelopment.

Old Trafford remains the largest club stadium in England with a capacity of 74,000 but has not had a significant upgrade since 2006.

News of the Glazers inviting investment comes just weeks after Liverpool's American owners, the Fenway Sports Group, indicated they were willing to sell.

Both United and Liverpool were involved in the failed European Super League (ESL) project that sought to create a US-style closed league format for Europe's elite clubs without the need to qualify or promotion and relegation.

I'VE MATURED AS LEADER, CAN TAKE TOUGH DECISIONS: DHAWAN

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dithering and indecision is a thing of past for Shikhar Dhawan, who as the leader of the pack does not hesitate in taking decisions which individuals may despise but are beneficial for the Indian team.

The left-handed batter is getting ready to lead India in the three-match ODI series against New Zealand, starting Friday.

It won't be the first time that Dhawan will wear the captain's hat as he has led a second-string Indian team in the past and enjoyed good results against Sri Lanka (2-1), South Africa (2-1) and West Indies (3-0).

The Delhi batter says his decision-making has improved over time, courtesy his presence of mind.

"As you play more, you get confident in the decisions you take. Earlier, there used to be instances where I would give an extra over to a bowler out of regard (for him). But now, as I have matured, even if someone is feeling bad, I will take a decision that will help the team," Dhawan told ESPNcricinfo.

Further talking about leadership skills, Dhawan said the key is to maintain balance and earn the players' faith. He is hardly seen feeling any pressure and keep the environment around him happy.

"When you play music on a string instrument, if the string is too loose, it won't sound right, or if it's too tight, it will break. So it is a question

of creating a balance. (As a captain) creating that balance is very important.

"You need to understand when to pull the string tight and when to leave it a bit loose. That is an art. It is a matter of timing. At this stage I also understand when to say things to the players and how much to say.

"If a bowler gets hit, it's important to know when to speak to him. I will not do it when they are hot in the head, but instead approach them later and speak with care. It also depends on the level you are leading at.

"If it is at the IPL, most players are mature, so you need to consider if you have to pull the string or not. At Ranji, you have to, at times, show firmness, because a youngster at that level is like a kaccha ghada (an unbaked clay pot), so you have to be firm to mould him. Finding that balance is the key," he explained his philosophy.

The 36-year-old was recently handed the captaincy of IPL side Punjab Kings, which has been struggling to reach the play-offs.

In season 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022 the side came close to making the play-offs but fell short of one or two wins.

"We can learn from our past and improve on our mistakes. Other than that, I won't dwell much on anything else and neither will I want my team to do that. There is no need of dragging back the past baggage," he insisted.

So how does he plan to



make a difference there?

"I will make sure that the support staff and I create an environment where the players are comfortable. I want my boys to be themselves while also understanding their responsibilities. I want us to be relaxed but also focused.

"We are playing the IPL. We are living our dream. And when you are living your dream, it should be full of happiness and not stress. With love you can conquer anything. The (IPL) trophy is not a challenge too far out of our reach," he said.

And he feels he can be that lucky charm for Punjab Kings as the IPL team he was part of have played finals -- Mumbai Indians, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals.

He was also part of Deccan Chargers but that team did not qualify for title clash. The same side had been rechristened Sunrisers Hyderabad.



SKY continues to stay at top

PTI ■ DUBAI

Star India batter Suryakumar Yadav retained his top spot while all-rounder Hardik Pandya reached joint-50th position in the latest ICC men's T20I batting rankings released here on Wednesday.

Suryakumar consolidated his position at the top of the rankings after his stupendous 111 not out in the second T20I against New Zealand.

Suryakumar has gained 31 rating points from the series and his 890 points keep

him 54 ahead of Pakistan's Mohammed Rizwan, who is placed second.

On the other hand, Hardik, who led India in the series against New Zealand, reached joint-50th among batters courtesy his unbeaten 30 in the final match.

In the bowlers' chart, seasoned pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has climbed two places to 11th, with left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh moving up a place to 21st.

Spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has jumped eight places to 40th.

Arshdeep says tricks of trade he learnt from Bhuvi is helping him

PTI ■ NAPIER

Young India left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh says the tricks of trade he has learnt from senior pros like Bhuvneshwar Kumar has helped him add variety in his bowling.

Arshdeep (4/37) registered career-best T20I figures on Tuesday against New Zealand in the rain-affected third match of the series, which ended in a rare tie via Duckworth-Lewis method here.

"I always try to learn from the

senior bowlers in the team (on knuckle ball), just like I am learning the hard length from you and the knuckle ball from Bhuvi bhai (Bhuvneshwar Kumar) and yorkers from (Mohammed) Shami bhai," Arshdeep said in an interaction with Siraj on bcci.Tv.

"I always try to improve myself everyday and contribute for the team whenever needed and hope to step-up and perform well."

Arshdeep was on the verge of taking a hat-trick towards the close of



New Zealand innings, removing Daryl Mithcell and Ish Sodhi in the first two deliveries of the 19th over, but failed to achieve the feat in the end.

New Zealand lost Adam Milne in the next ball but it was from a direct hit from Siraj from backward point.

"I even had a thought that I can take a hat-trick or a five-wicket haul. But you did make a run-out and gave a team hat-trick. The seniors advised me to bowl length and slower balls to deceive the opponent," Arshdeep said.

Siraj, who also registered career-best figures of 4/17 in Tuesday's match, said his plan to bowl hard lengths paid rich dividends for him.

"It feels great to perform like this for the country. I have been preparing myself for a long time to bowl hard length. It was not easy to bowl hard length here. My simple plan was to play hard length," Siraj said.

"Representing India is a different feeling altogether. My target in T20s is to pick up wickets but I always try to give less runs."

PCB to felicitate members of Pak team

PTI ■ KARACHI

The country's cricket board (PCB) will felicitate the members of the Pakistan team that finished runner-up at this year's Asia Cup and T20 World Cup at a grand reception in Islamabad on Thursday.

Members of the Pakistan Test squad have also been invited for the function which will be attended by diplomats, political personalities, former captains and players.

"The purpose is to honour and appreciate the players for their performances in two major tournaments," a source in the Pakistan Cricket Board said.

The source said that the players might also get some financial rewards for reaching the two finals.

Pakistan lost the final of the Asia Cup to Sri Lanka in UAE and then were beaten by England in the T20 World Cup summit clash in Melbourne earlier this month.

Last year also the Pakistan team led by Babar Azam managed to get into the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup in Dubai but were outdone by Australia.

The source said the PCB Chairman had already met with Babar Azam and the head coach, Saqlain Mushtaq and discussed with them future plans and the happenings and performances of players in the two big tournaments.

The source said there was

no danger to the captaincy of Babar as Ramiz had assured him of full support and backing.

FIRST TEST TO GO AHEAD

The first Test between Pakistan and England in Rawalpindi from December 1 to 5 will go ahead as scheduled despite the expected political unrest in that city and adjoining Islamabad, according to sources.

The decision to hold the Test at Rawalpindi Stadium came after PCB Chairman Ramiz Raja and the British High Commissioner in Pakistan met main opposition party chairman Imran Khan who has planned a massive rally in the twin cities on November 26 and 27.

According to sources, Imran, himself a former Pakistan captain, assured Ramiz and the British High Commissioner that there would be no disruption to the match nor would there be any security concerns for the English players.

The England team which is presently holding a training camp in Abu Dhabi will reach Islamabad on November 27.

The other two Tests will be played in Multan (December 9-13) and Karachi (December 17-21). The England team is touring Pakistan for the first time in 17 years. The PCB has already begun selling tickets for the first Test.

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia coach Justin Langer has hit out at the "cowards" in the national team, saying he "hated" that some players were going behind his back and leaking details from inside the dressing room.

The 52-year-old, who guided Australia to a 4-0 series win in the Ashes at home and a maiden T20 World Cup title last year, stepped down as chief coach in February after he was not offered a long-term contract

extension by Cricket Australia.

Langer had faced complaints about his "rigid" coaching style from senior players such as Aaron Finch, Pat Cummins and former Test captain Tim Paine.

"Everyone was being nice to my face, but I was reading about this stuff and half of it, I swear to God and on my kids' lives, I could not believe that is what was making the papers. A lot of journalists use the word 'source'. I would say, change that word to 'coward'," Langer was



quoted as saying by News Corp media.

"Because what do you mean 'a source says'? They've either got an axe to grind with someone and they won't come and say it to your face, or they're just leaking stuff for their own agenda. I hate that."

There have been numerous media reports in the run-up to the T20 World Cup about alleged discontent in the dressing room due to Langer's coaching style.

Langer, who had taken

Anurag Thakur interacts with youth delegation

PTI ■ PARIS

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur held an interaction with a 100-member youth delegation from Central Asian countries during a banquet dinner hosted by him here.

The delegation visited Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya, War Memorial in Delhi, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai Film City, Gateway of India in Mumbai during its stay in India from November 17 to 23.

Thakur said, "This is a one-of-its-kind International Youth Exchange Programmes having delegates from four central Asian countries together."

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

Veteran batter Martin Guptill has been released from New Zealand Cricket's (NZC) central contract, paving the way to pursue playing opportunities overseas after he recently lost his place in the white-ball teams.

The 36-year-old Guptill becomes the third New Zealand player to be released from their central contract.

Guptill joins Trent Boult and Colin de Grandhomme as New Zealand players to be released from their playing contract this year, with the trio set to seek opportunities in T20 leagues around the world.

"We understand Martin's position," NZC chief executive David White said on Wednesday.

"He's been a fantastic batsman for us for a long period of

Guptill released from New Zealand Cricket central contract



charge after Darren Lehmann quit following the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa, said it was difficult to resign as he was enjoying his job.

"We were number one in the world. I've never enjoyed coaching more and I've still got sacked. That's the hardest thing," Langer said.

Langer had a three-year long stint with the Australian team and after his resignation, Andrew McDonald took over as full-time head coach in April.

Youth World Boxing C'ships: 4 more boxers confirm medals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four Indian boxers, including Muskan and Tamanna, assured themselves of a medal after reaching the semifinals with dominating victories at the Youth men's and women's World Boxing Championships in La Nucia, Spain.

Youth Asian Championships silver medallist Kirti (+81kg) and Devika Ghorpade (52kg) were the other two boxers to confirm medals by securing their spots in the last-four stage.

With addition of four more medals, India's total medal count now climbs to 11, same as the last edition, held in Poland.

Tamanna began the day for India on an aggressive note as she outperformed Japan's Juni Tonegawa by unanimous decision in the women's 50kg quarter-final. Devika also notched up an easy 5-0 win against Germany's Asya Ari.

Muskan (75kg) and Kirti proved too strong for their respective opponents -- Mongolia's Zyeinyep Azimbai and Livia Botica of Romania - - as they were declared winners by the 'Referee Stops the Contest' verdict within the first three minutes of the bouts.

Vanshaj (63.5kg), Vishwanath Suresh (48kg) and Ashish (54kg) will lead India's charge in the men's semifinals at the prestigious event.

TN, Kerala qualify for Vijay Hazare knockout from Group C

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Tamil Nadu and Kerala qualified for the knockout phase of the Vijay Hazare Trophy one-day tournament after their Group C matches here on Wednesday were washed out.

Sent in to bat by Tamil Nadu captain B Indrajith, Kerala made 287 for 8 in 50 overs, thanks to a 95-run knock by Vathsal Govind (126 balls, 6 fours) and useful contributions from Vishnu Vinod (45), Abdul Basith (41) and Rohan Kunnumal (39).

Openers P Rahul (16) and Rohan Kunnumal (39) provided a rapid start for Kerala, taking the score to 44 in 5.3 overs before the former fell to M Mohammed (2/51).

Vathsal Govind joined Rohan and added 34 runs before the latter was castled by

R Sai Kishore (1/46).

Though skipper Sachin Baby fell after making only 4, Vishnu Vinod (45) and Vatshal Govind were involved in a 78-run stand for the fourth wicket.

Handy knocks by Abdul Basith (41, 35 balls, 2 fours, 3 sixes) and a four-ball 15 (2 fours, 1 six) by Nedumanuzkhy Basil (41) towards the end boosted Kerala's score to 287.

When Tamil Nadu began their chase, all eyes were on the record-breaking pair of N Jagadeesan and B Sai Sudharsan.

However, Sudharsan fell to Vaisakh Chandran for 5.

Jagadeesan, fresh after a world record 277 in the previous game against Arunachal Pradesh was on 23 (21 balls, 3 fours) with the score on 43 for 1 (7 overs) when rain halted proceedings and forced the



game to be called off.

Jagadeesan and Sudharsan had put on 416 for the opening

wicket on Wednesday for a new List A record.

Tamil Nadu with five wins

from seven games and two no-results topped the group with 24 points while Kerala finished

second with 20 (4 wins, 1 loss and 2 no-results).

Andhra's defeat to Chhattisgarh in the final game on Wednesday hurt their chances of advancing to the next phase and they finished with 18 points.

As the group topper, Tamil Nadu secured a berth in the quarterfinals while Kerala would play the pre-quarterfinals.

PUNJAB, J&K QUALIFY

Mumbai: Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir qualified for the knock-out stages of the Vijay Hazare Trophy from Group D with convincing wins over their respective rivals.

While Punjab beat Nagaland by six wickets, Jammu and Kashmir defeated Uttarakhand by nine wickets.

In another Group D match at the D Y Patil Stadium in Navi

Mumbai, Madhya Pradesh defeated Baroda by a massive 290 runs.

ASSAM, K'TAKA WIN

Kolkata: Assam and Karnataka qualified for the knock-out stage of the Vizay Hazare Trophy from Group B after winning their respective matches.

Both ended on 24 points with identical six wins and a loss but Karnataka topped group on better net run rate of 1.721 as against 1.360 of Assam.

Assam beat Delhi by 25 runs in their last group match to notch up their fifth win on the trot.

In another match here, Karnataka thrashed Rajasthan by 60 runs.

SAURASHTRA, UP IN K/O
New Delhi: Former champions Saurashtra and Uttar Pradesh

advanced to the knock-out stage of the Vijay Hazare Trophy from group A.

Four teams ended with 20 points each at the end of the group stage matches. However, Saurashtra (1.737) and Uttar Pradesh (0.604) qualified for knock-outs based on superior net run rate than Hyderabad (0.513) and Chandigarh (-0.031).

Akshdeep Nath and Saurabh Kumar scored fifties to help Uttar Pradesh notch a two-wicket win over Saurashtra.

In another match, Hyderabad thrashed Chandigarh by 110 runs.

Gujarat hammered defending champions Himachal Pradesh by eight wickets while Tripura inflicted a 240-run defeat on Manipur in the other games.