

OPINION 6

CLIMATE FINANCE IS THE
PIVOT OF COP27

WORLD 8

BOMBED NOT BEATEN: KYIV FLIPS
TO SURVIVAL MODE

MONEY 10

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DIPS TO
7.2% IN Q2: NSO SURVEY

RANCHI, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 25, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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INDIA TO FACE
BLACK CAPS IN
1ST ODIC TODAY
12 SPORTWhat's tearing hurry in
picking Goel as EC: SC

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

As the bench questioned the "lightning speed" with

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

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

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

is bound to answer the questions of the court.

The top court said the 1985-batch IAS officer got voluntary retirement from service in a single day, his file was cleared by the Law Ministry in a single day, a panel of four names was put up before the Prime Minister and Goel's name got the nod from the President within 24 hours. The bench, which also comprised Justices Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and C.T. Ravikumar, said none of the four names in the panel were "carefully hand-picked" by the Law Minister so that they could complete a six-year tenure.

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

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

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

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

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



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

PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jama Masjid revokes ban on
women's entry after L-G's call

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After his diktat banning the entry of a lone girl or a group of girls into the Jama Masjid created a furore and saw Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's intervention, Shahi Imam Ahmed Bukhari on Thursday revoked the order.

The order barring the entry of women "who come alone" and use it as a place to "meet boys for dating" led to widespread outrage with National Commission for Women and the Delhi Commission for Women condemning the decision as "repressive" and "unacceptable."

Saxena spoke to Bukhari and requested him to rescind the order. The Shahi Imam agreed with the condition that the visitors respect and maintain the sanctity of the mosque.

Earlier, the Jama Masjid also posted signs outside the



A woman leaves the Jama Masjid in New Delhi on Thursday. The administration of Jama Masjid had put up notices outside the main gates banning the entry of 'girls', whether alone or in groups

PTI

mosque notifying tourists that girls are not allowed inside. "Jama Masjid mein ladki ya ladkiyon ka akele daakhla mana hai (the entry of a girl, or girls is not permitted to enter in Jama Masjid alone)," reads the notice by the administration.

However, the order said, women will be permitted to enter the mosque with their husbands or families. The notices, which have no date, came up a few days ago outside the three main entry gates, sources in the famed mosque's administration said.

Hatred, infidelity
lead to chopping of
woman in SitapurPREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■
LUCKNOW

With the Shraddha Walker murder case in Delhi making headlines in the national media, a similar incident has been reported from Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh where a man has been arrested for chopping his wife into pieces.

"My wife was addicted to drugs and she left home to stay with different people. This disturbed me as I could not tolerate her sleeping with other men so after all my attempts failed to check her behaviour, I decided to get rid of her," confessed Pankaj Maurya, the husband, arrested for brutally killing his wife Jyoti, alias Sneha, in Sitapur.

"With the help of my friends, I chopped my wife into pieces and disposed of them in different localities," he said.

The police recovered the body parts of Jyoti from Gulariha area. Pankaj and his friend Durjan Pasi have been arrested.

This sensational killing came close on heels to the brutal murder of Shraddha Walker by her live-in partner Aftab Poonawalla, who killed her and saved her body into 35 pieces in Delhi.

Besides Sitapur, another such brutal killing over 'hatred' came to light last week in Azamgarh, where a lover beheaded a girl, chopped her body into six pieces and threw them in a well. The accused, Prince Yadav, arrested by the police earlier this week, also confessed to have developed "hatred" for his lover Aradhana Prajapati (24) after she married another youth when he went to Dubai for a job.

Pulwama-famed ISI head
named Pak Army chief

Lt Gen Asim Munir
crossed swords
with Imran Khan

PNS/AGENCIES ■
NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD

Lt General Asim Munir, a former Inter Intelligence Services (ISI) chief on Thursday was named as the new chief of the all powerful Pakistan Army. He was the spy agency head during the Pulwama fidayeen attack in Kashmir in 2019 where 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed.

Given the Pakistan Army and ISI's role in fomenting terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir and its hard stance vis-à-vis peace talks with India to restore normalcy, the Indian security establishment is not optimistic about any change in the present tense situation



between the two neighbours, sources said.

Munir will take over from incumbent General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who is set to retire on November 29 after a three-year extension. He declined another extension. Munir, a Frontier Force Regiment officer, is reported to be close to the outgoing chief, sources said.

Incidentally, Munir was all set to retire on November 27, two days before Bajwa before the announcement was made on Thursday. Reports

indicated Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif followed the principle of appointing the senior most officer as the Army chief. He will be the 17th Army chief of Pakistan.

As the Pakistan Army has dominated the country's politics for more than 50 years and greatly influenced its foreign policy, especially concerning India, the security establishment here will take a guarded approach and wait and watch how things unfold in the next few months after Munir takes over, sources said.

CAPSULE

INDIA UPSET AT MENTION
OF MODI BY US OFFICIAL

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

SHRADDHA MURDER:
AFTAB'S KNIVES SEIZED

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

Israeli-Palestinian conflict catches up with Qatar World Cup

AP ■ DOHA

It was uncharted territory for the Israeli journalist. Wandering through the rustic outdoor marketplace in Doha before the start of the World Cup, he zeroed in on a Qatari man in his traditional head-dress and white flowing robe and asked for an interview.

"Which channel?" the Qatari asked. The journalist replied he was from Kan, Israel's public broadcaster.

The Qatari was stunned. "Where?"

"Israel," the journalist repeated. A split-second later, the interview was over.

The exchange ricocheted around social media, reflecting the latest political flash point at the first World Cup in the Arab world — never mind that neither Israeli nor Palestinian national teams are competing in the tournament. Controversy has followed

Israelis and Palestinians pouring into Doha, revealing just how entrenched and emotive their violent century-old conflict remains, including Israel's open-ended occupation of lands Palestinians want for a future state.

Palestinians shared footage of the Doha encounter between the Qatari man and the Israeli journalist, along with other clips of Palestinians and Qataris angrily confronting Israeli reporters live on TV. They viewed it as proof that although Qatar has permitted Israelis to fly directly to Doha and receive consular support for the first time in history, the conservative Muslim emirate has no intention of cozing up to Israel.

Israel's Channel 13 sports reporter, Tal Shorrer, said he has been shoved, insulted and accosted by Palestinians and other Arab fans during his live reports from the tournament.



Portugal's Otavio, left, chases the ball during the World Cup group H soccer match between Portugal and Ghana, at the Stadium 974 in Doha on Thursday

AP

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Jam@Streets back with renewed vigour

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR:

The usually busy Bistupur Main Road is all set to wear a festive look with people from different walks of life participating in fun-filled Jam@Streets scheduled on November 27.

On the stretch starting from the Bistupur police station to the N road traffic signal, the citizens will come out to bond with each other and enjoy healthy activities like cycling, yoga and aerobics and entertainment at the same time.

□Jam@Streets is being organised after a gap of almost three years. It is an innovative way we want to instill a sense of belonging to the citizens here. They come out every Sunday to spend time with their friends and family on the streets. Jam@Streets Day is akin to a street festival with goodies which can be in-



divulged in by the whole family. It will have sporting events like roller skating, badminton, basketball,

yoga, cycling, aerobics, golf and much more. Together with games, there will be rock bands adding to the Sunday euphoria with selfie corner, street painting, magic show, dandiya, □said an official of Tata Steel UISL.

After a break of three years, the Tata Steel Utilities and Infrastructure Services Limited and Tata Sports Department are collaborating to bring the popular Sunday morning event back to Bistupur on November 27 between 6 am and 8:30 am.

This event had been started by Tata Steel in 2016 and had continued till 2019 before taking a break. The outbreak of Covid and subsequent lockdowns lengthened the break to three years.

The earlier editions of Jam@Street too had seen an overwhelming response

with thousands participating in its various events.

On the occasion, the official said that the event provides an opportunity for the whole family to blend together and indulge in different activities.

□Similar events are being held at different cities in India under different names like Raahgiri at Delhi and Bhubaneswar, Happy Street at Kolkata and similar initiatives are being undertaken at other cities also. We have tried to bring the joy and fun of the street to our city too, □said the official.

He also informed that vehicular movement from 6.00 am to 10.00 am will be restricted on Main Road, Bistupur on Sunday. People wanting to go to the railway station will have to take Kharkai Link Road to reach Kharkai Bridge and then to Volts roundabout.

Workshop on Official Language held at CTPS

PNS ■ BOKARO

The Human Resources Department of Chandrapura Thermal Power Station (CTPS) held a workshop on Official Language Rules and Acts in the conference room of Units 7-8 here today. The workshop was inaugurated by Chief Engineer and Project Head Sunil Kumar Pandey, Devbrat Das, SK Sharma, Anirudh Nonia, and Anil Kumar Singh by lighting the lamp.

Speaking on the occasion Pandey said, we should work in Hindi and try to persuade others to do so as



well. And by doing this the power and importance of the Hindi language will amplify. □But we ought not to utilise complex phrases in order to keep the communication straightforward, □ he added.

□If we are familiar with a word in English and it is beneficial in Hindi, we should only use Devanagari to spell it, □ added Pandey.

Chief Engineer Devbrat Das stated that Hindi should

be used in daily work. We can complete the entire task by writing in Hindi and knowing the colloquial language.

Anirudh Nonia, the Rajbhasha faculty member of Bharat Coking Coal Limited, shed light on the legal, practical, and social aspects of the official language and informed the present trainees about potential fields of knowledge.

The ceremony was conducted by Assistant Manager Anil Kumar Singh. After the completion of the workshop, Pandey distributed certificates to all the

trainees. Besides others, Vinod Kumar, Ram Kumar Dubey, Sujit Kumar, Satyanarayan Singh, Virendra Pandey, Dukhan Manjhi, KN Singh, Shankar Samai, Baldev Singh, Thakur Prasad, Ranjit Kumar Nirala, Premchand Mahto, Jitendra Kumar, Dubraj Kindo, Ramesh Rajak, MD Mohiuddin, Ramratan Tuddu, Kishan Vishwakarma, Suman Kumar, Kumud Kumar Kamal, Vinod Kumar, Anand Kumar, Dharendra Kumar Sinha, Shrikant Mishra, Akshay Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar were present there.

Banks achieve 77 per cent target in priority sector ACP

SHAILESH SHARMA ■ HAZARIBAG

The banks which are doing the business in the district through their branches have achieved 77 per cent of the target of priority sector in the last three months. The target is allotted by the district administration in every financial year to every bank under ACP (Annual Credit Plan). NABARD has announced in the review meeting that we have decided to spend Rs 2,162 crores in the next financial year in different sectors.

A meeting of DLBCC (District Level Bankers Co-ordination Committee) was held in the seminar hall of deputy commissioner office under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Nancy Sahay. In the meeting the LDM (Lead Bank Development Manager) Sudhakar



Pandey presented the progress of banks in the field of government plans, which are run by the banks.

Pandey mentioned the present position of CD Ratio (Credit Deposit Ratio), achievement of Kisan Credit Card, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Self Help

Group, agriculture loan, PM Mudra Yojana, PM Jan Dhan Yojana phase 2, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana, Jeevan Joyti Bima Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana and other plans.

In the meeting the DGM of NABARD said that they have planned to spend Rs

2,162 crores on National Priority and on the demand of Central and State government policy.

The LDM said that the target for the financial year 2021-22 was Rs 1615.72 crores in priority sector; the bank has distributed Rs 1248.53 crores, which is

77.27 per cent of the target.

The secretary of DLBCC cum Deputy Development Commissioner Prerna Dixit said that after reviewing the progress of the bank, it has come to the light that the progress of some banks is not satisfactory. She has directed to all bank managers that they must clear all applications, which are pending.

The DC said that the banks have achieved 40 per cent target, which is good. She suggested all bank managers to achieve 45 per cent target by the last month of this financial year. She warned all the managers, whose progress is not satisfactory, they improve their working style and show the progress in the next meeting, otherwise the administration will complain to their headquarters.

CCL organises One-Day Workshop on CMPF/Pension claim issues

PNS ■ RANCHI

A workshop on CMPF and Pension Claim was organized at the Convention Center of CCL Headquarters. Director (Personnel) Harsh Nath Mishra, Chief Vigilance Officer (CCL/CMPO) S. K. Sinha, Additional Commissioner of CMPO Shivraj Kumar Sinha attended the Workshop. GM (Admin.) U. P.Narayan, GM (Legal) Partho Bhattacharjee and a large number of officers and employees were also present on the occasion. The main objective of the workshop was to discuss in detail about the anomalies and



problems in CMPF and pension claims and to rectify them.

While addressing the workshop, Director (Personnel) Harsh Nath Mishra directed the dealing personnel present in the auditorium from different areas in-

cluding CMPFO and CCL HQ to clear the pending cases at the earliest. He said that it is our moral responsibility to ensure that the personnel who have retired after serving for a long time do not have to make repeated visits to the office for

CMPF and pension. Chief Vigilance Officer S. K. Sinha also emphasized on early disposal of pending CMPF/pension cases by removing anomalies.

Speaking on the occasion Additional Commissioner Shivraj Kumar Sinha said that the documents related to CMPF and pension claims need to be executed flawlessly with care. For this, he also gave necessary guidelines to all the officers and employees who came from the headquarters and regions. Chief guest Shivraj Kumar Sinha informed everyone in detail about the delay in CMPF and

pension payment and the technical reasons involved in them. He told everyone through powerpoint how to fill the CMPF and pension forms in the right way so that there is no error in it. He also told the people in detail about the various provisions of CMPF Scheme 1948. He further said that organizing this one-day workshop will surely benefit everyone a lot.

The Chief Manager (Personnel), CCL, S. K. Tiwari gave the vote of thanks and the team CCL, especially the pension department, played an active role in organizing the workshop.

Children below five more at risk of flu

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

The Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) and the World Health Organisation recommend annual vaccination for children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years. Children are vulnerable to the flu throughout the year especially during the winters and monsoons.

It may take about 2 weeks to develop antibodies after getting the vaccination, which is why it should be taken 2 to 4 weeks before the monsoon or winter.

Speaking about the need for Annual 4in1 Flu vaccination, Dr. Sudhir Mishra, MD Pediatrics, FIAP, Consultant Pediatrician, Vice President IAP said, □Chil-

dren under five years must be protected against the flu, which could be a serious infection. An effective way to prevent flu is by giving them the annual 4 in1 flu vaccination. The best time to take the flu vaccination is right before the winter season, when the flu infections can increase.□



Children may have serious complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis because their immune sys-

tem is not fully developed. Studies show that 11% of outpatient children under 5 years of age with acute respiratory infections had flu in India.

There are many flu viruses that can cause infection. One amongst these is the H1N1 virus which is a type of □swine flu□ virus. 4-in-1 flu vaccination can help protect against the most common four variants.

REGION

BJP leaders hold Jan Akrosh Rally in Daltonganj

M F AHMAD ■ DALTONGANJ



Annapurna Devi minister of state for education government of India led a Jan Akrosh Rally in Daltonganj, accompanied by the MP Palamu V D Ram, three of the 4 MLAs Alok Chourasia, Shashibhushan Mehta, Pushpa Devi and senior party leaders Shyam Narain Dubey, Prem Singh, Manoj Singh, Binod Singh, Aruna Shankar (mayor) Mangal Singh (deputy mayor) Vijayanand Pathak (district president BJP) Sheo Kr Mishra, Narendar Pandey, Shyam Babu (district general secretary) Sujata Singh, Durga Johri, Uday Shukla, Shyama Devi and others. The theme of the rally was remove this government of Hemant Soren citing plethora of reasons like mounting and rampant corruption, deteriorating law and order, rising crimes, appeasement to the minority, joblessness among the youths etc. The BJP leadership here spoke about mine, sand, chips and the neck deep corruption of this government and its head.

Annapurna Devi spoke about the local representative of the MLA Hemant Soren Pankaj Mishra of the JMM who had stashed crores without a known source of income asking people if the MLA's representative has so much wealth one can think of the wealth of the MLA.

'Sikhs must register under Anand Marriage Act'

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR



All India Sikh Students Federation has written a letter to all the Gurdwara Committees of Jharkhand, urging them to inform the Sangat of their area about the Sikh Anand Marriage Act. In this regard, Satnam Singh Gambhir said that there was a long-standing demand of Sikhs to implement the Sikh Anand Marriage Act, which was fulfilled four years ago. Appealing to all the Gurdwara Committees of Jharkhand, Gambhir said that they should suggest to the families having Anand Karaj in their Gurdwara Sahib that they must get their Anand Karaj registered under the Anand Marriage Act and get the proof from the government department under the Anand Marriage Act. Giving information in this regard, Satnam said that the All India Sikh Students Federation had continuously struggled to get the Sikh Anand Marriage Act implemented, whose happy result came to the fore when the Jharkhand government, understanding the sentiments of the Sikhs, implemented it in Jharkhand as well. Had done it.

Exciting day for reading at PAS Bokaro

RAHUL SHARMA ■ BOKARO



The Primary Section of The Pentecostal Assembly School organised a "Reading Day" on 24th November. The day was set apart for reading activities. Students of Std.1 and 2 also presented a play, □The Day the Crayons Quit□ on the occasion. Students of Prep - 5 enjoyed giving wings to their imagination. Prep students are entertained by reading the Dr. Seuss books. Class 1 students were involved with the "Peppa Pig" story books along with fun and learning activities. Class 2 got to read Fairy Tales while students of standard 3 - 5 brought their favourite story books to the school. Not only did they read their books but also shared with their friends. They also made a book-mark and wrote their favourite reading quotation. Students enjoyed role plays and story dramatization activities. Principal Dr. Karuna Prasad motivated students to read and enjoy the experience.

Arogyam Hospital organizes free health camp

AVINASH ANJAN ■ HAZARIBAG



HZB Arogyam Superspeciality Hospital organized a free health camp at Banadaag under their mission "Arogyam Swasthya Sankalp Seva Mahotsav". This free health camp was organized at Banadag Old Block Office at High School premises. In this camp, more than 350 women, men and children were given the benefit of medical care by a team of expert doctors. This camp was organized under the guidance of Arogyam Hospital Director Harsh Ajmera, Administrator Jaya Singh, Senior Doctor Rajat Chakraborty. In the camp, Director Harsh Ajmera and Administrator Jaya Singh personally talked to the patients and got them treated by the doctors of Arogyam, as well as got many health-related tests done for free. The team of doctors and experts treated people with dedication and also provided free medicines. At the same time, more than a dozen health workers gave health related information to the patients. Former Zilla Parishad member Priyanka Kumari, present as a guest on this occasion, praised Arogyam Hospital for the free check-up camp. About the camp, Director Harsh Ajmera said in his address that we have resolved to provide health facilities to the people of Sadar assembly constituency. It has been decided to organize health camps in every village and panchayat in a series manner. So, that the sick elderly child who cannot reach the hospital can get proper treatment as well as medicines.

12 IEDs recovered from Maoists' hideout

NITYANAND DUBEY ■ GARHWA

Again one more time Garhwa police got a big success on Wednesday in Budha and Thalia village area on Budha Pahad, which is called the stronghold of Naxalites. In a joint operation by Police, COBRA and CRPF 172 Battalion, 12 IEDs, hidden in a pit by the rebels, were recovered. Garhwa SP Anjani Kumar Jha informed that IEDs recovered were defused on the spot. According to SP, during the operation being run under the joint aegis of Police and CRPF-172 Battalion and Cobra against Maoists, twelve cane IED bombs kept hidden in a pit at the forest, around one kilometer away from Budha village of Bhandaria police station area, exploded on Wednesday. At present, Naxalite activities have been curbed in the district. The Maoists were keeping the explosives hidden in order to harm the police engaged in the campaign to eliminate the Naxalites. During the campaign itself, the soldiers were noticed. At present, the police have geared up to completely wipe out the Naxalites in the Budha Pahad area with full promptness. A campaign is being run for the same purpose.



CM attends Jharkhand Day programme at IITF, encourages artists

Soren welcomes people to beautiful Jharkhand

PNS ■ RANCHI

Countrymen should come to Jharkhand. I welcome all of you to Jharkhand. Come here and see how beautiful Jharkhand is and it has the potential to move forward. When you come to this State full of natural beauty, then the land here will fascinate you,” said Chief Minister Hemant Soren, addressing as the chief guest at the Jharkhand Day function organized at the International Trade Fair in Delhi on Thursday.

The CM said that it is a matter of pride for Jharkhand. “Today, the tribals and natives of Jharkhand are engaged in creating their own distinct identity educationally, socially and politically and today there is a situation of competition everywhere. Everyone has his own ability and skill, on the strength of which he makes his identity, the Pragati Maidan



Chief Minister Hemant Soren lighting the lamp to inaugurate Jharkhand Diwas programme at the 41st India International Trade Fair-2022 in New Delhi on Thursday. CM Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Soren, Labour Minister Satyanand Bhokta and Principal Secretary to CM Vinay Choubey were also present on the occasion. PNS

where I had come years ago during my studies, today I have come there as a guest. The children of Jharkhand's family, which could not get proper food for two times, represent the country in sports. Today, the present government is engaged in grooming all those talented children and is coming in front of the country everyday with new thinking to pave a better way for the coming generation,” he

said.

The artists of Jharkhand enthralled everyone with Paika, Panch-Parganiya, Mundari, Manbhum Chhau, Nagpuri dances at the Jharkhand Day celebrations organized at the International Trade Fair. While the artists gave their best, the Chief Minister of Jharkhand reached among them and encouraged them.

Before joining the Jharkhand Day celebrations,



Chief Minister Hemant Soren being felicitated by Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh during Jharkhand Diwas programme at the 41st India International Trade Fair-2022 in New Delhi on Thursday.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren toured the Jharkhand Pavilion at the Indian International Trade Fair 2022 and encouraged the participants from Jharkhand participating in the fair. The Chief Minister showed special interest in Palash, Jharcraft, Khadi, Agriculture, Organic Agriculture stall of Animal Husbandry Department, Forest Department's stall, Energy Department's Jareda stall, Small and Cottage Enterprises Develop-

ment Board's stall. Along with the Chief Minister, Labour Minister Satyanand Bhokta, MLA Dinesh William Marandi, Chief Secretary Sukhdev Singh, Industries Secretary Vandana Dadel, Secretary to Chief Minister Vinay Kumar Choubey and others were present on the occasion. It is known that Jharkhand has left an indelible mark by participating in the International Trade Fair as a partner state.

Governor Ramesh Bais inaugurates Expo Utsav

PNS ■ RANCHI

The famous expo festival of JCI Ranchi was inaugurated by Governor of Jharkhand Ramesh Bais at Morabadi ground. This year the expo is being held at the famous Morhabadi Ground from 24 to 28 November. In the expo, more than 325 stalls have come from India and abroad in eight hangars and all the stalls are ready for decoration.

Ex-Chairman Anant Jain welcomed the Governor taking the stage and handed over the stage to the Chairman. President Sourav Sah while addressing the gathering said that the expo was not held for two years due to Covid-19 and



Governor Ramesh Bais lighting the lamp to inaugurate the 'EXPO UTSAV-2022' at Morhabadi Ground in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Ratan Lal

people were eagerly waiting for it, so without taking much time, he sounded the bugle of the expo and announced its inauguration. After this, Expo Chief Abhishek Kedia told that this year sand artists have come in the expo from Puri. There is QR scan system so

that as soon as you come inside the expo, you will get information about all the stalls of the entire expo. Keeping Digital India in mind, the entire expo has been made a WiFi zone so that people do not face any problem in buying and selling goods. He fur-

ther said that a start-up zone has come in the new area, in which new businessmen and their business get a boost. The expo has attractions like Pink Hangar, Real Estate Apna Ghar Hangar, Bristow Cafe, Phangola, Food Court, Furniture Zone, Auto Zone, Premium Hangar.

After this, addressing the gathering, Governor Ramesh Bais said that the economy will get a new momentum through JCI Expo and he praised JCI Ranchi and said that such a grand event will enhance the dignity of Ranchi and Jharkhand. Along with that, from the stage, Bais talked about promoting Hindi as our national language. He

congratulated JCI for organizing the expo festival in a grand manner.

Presidents and secretaries of other organizations of the city were present on the occasion. Chamber President Kishor Mantri also ensured his presence. Other ex-presidents, secretaries, ex-expo chiefs and other members of the organization were also present on the occasion. With this, the expo started from today and now every day some or the other events will continue to happen. Tomorrow's event also has a programme of Expo Treasure Hunt, Dog Show, and Expo Silver Tambola.

Student lawmakers stress on road safety, security measures

CHHATRA SANSAD

PNS ■ RANCHI

The second Jharkhand Student Parliament unanimously passed a Bill that would strengthen the safety of pedestrians and occupants of motor vehicles. The student legislators stressed on the importance of road safety and drew public attention on the ways to strengthen safety measures that would lead to saving of numerous lives lost to accidents.

The second student Jharkhand Parliament is an innovative programme that has been conceptualised by the Speaker of the Assembly to imbibe in the youth of the State the knowledge and understanding of the working of the legislatures. Speaking at the student

Parliament, the Speaker said that the youth of the country should be actively engaged in the pressing questions that our society faces and how they are deliberated in the legislature. He said that when youth understand the functioning of legislatures they would be able to get their voices heard in critical debates that shape society.

The session saw the student legislators focus on road safety and accidents along with other issues. The young legislators also passed the Jharkhand Road Safety Bill 2022 and voted that it be restored. The speaker, on the occasion, was Mariyam Khalkho, Geeta Shreya was the Chief Minister, and Sakshi Priya was the Opposition Leader.

Question Hour began with Khushi Lal Pandit of



Assembly Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahto presents a certificate to students during Second Jharkhand Student Parliament-2022 at State Assembly in Ranchi on Thursday. Rural Development Minister Alamgir Alam, MLAs Amit Mandal, Stephen Marandi and others are also seen in the picture. Pix by Vinay Murmu

the ruling party questioning his own party members regarding the Hit and Run Compensation plan, and asking if it was offering help as promised. The minister in-charge replied in the affirmative and said a sum of Rs 25000 is provided to the families of those that die in road acci-

dents. He further added that a total of 548 people in the past five years have been given the compensation.

Twenty four student parliamentarians from the 24 districts of the state participated in the second Jharkhand Student Parliament. The participants went

through an extensive two day orientation program to sensitize them about constitutional provisions, law making, the role and responsibilities of the legislature. The Research and the Training Centre of the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly and PRS Legislative Research undertook the orientation of the student legislators and anchored the student Parliament.

A panel of experienced and young legislators chaired by Speaker Rabindrnath Mahato, Stephen Marandi, CP Singh, Amit Mandal and Deepika Singh judged the student Parliament. The winners of this year's second Jharkhand Student Youth Parliament were 1. Piyush Kumar, 2. Muskan Kumari Sinha, 3. Sakshi Priya.

Civic polls likely to be postponed due to ST quota

PNS ■ RANCHI

The proposed Civic polls next month is likely to be postponed due to a deadlock on the issue of reservation of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in municipal bodies. Last week the Governor gave its consent on the proposal of the State Election Commission to hold elections in all the 48 municipal bodies of the state. After Raj Bhawan consent, notification was to be issued by 23 November, but it appears that it may take three to four months to decide the schedule for fresh elections. According to the new rules in the light of the Municipal Bill 2021, the State Election Commission published the reservation roster for the elections, in many municipal bodies of the Scheduled Area, reservation for tribal communities (ST) on single posts was abolished. Tribal bodies

have raised their voices against abolishing reservation of ST in some seats. The post of Mayor in Ranchi which was earlier reserved for ST has been abolished and the Capital Mayor post has been reserved for SC.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) of Jharkhand, held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, on this issue on Wednesday, in which the opinion was formed that ST reservation should be maintained in scheduled areas with tribal majority population. It was decided that the Advocate General would be consulted in this regard and after the approval of the State Cabinet, a proposal would be sent to the Central Government in this regard.

Obviously, a decision in this regard will be taken only after the approval of

the Center and after that elections to the municipal bodies can be held.

Explain that according to the order issued by the President of India under the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, 10 states of the country including Jharkhand have been declared as Scheduled Areas.

A Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) is constituted in these states, which advises the government on matters related to the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes.

The importance of this constitutional body can be understood from the fact that it is known as the mini assembly of tribals. This mini assembly has intervened on the reservation in the municipal body and because of this the municipal elections have been postponed for the next few months.

Corrupt people sitting at the helm of power in State: Marandi

PNS ■ RANCHI

If corruption is to be curbed in the state, then first of all the corrupt people sitting at the top of the power have to be curbed, because as long as there are corrupt people at the top, those at the bottom will also continue to do corruption. Today Jharkhand Investigation Agency is doing the same work,” said BJP Legislature



BJP Legislature Party leader Babulal Marandi addresses party workers during a protest at Giridih district on Thursday. PNS

Party leader and former Chief Minister Babulal Marandi on Thursday while addressing the 'Hemant Hatao Jharkhand Bachao Jan Aakrosh Yatra' meeting at Jhanda Maidan in Giridih.

Attacking Congress, JMM and RJD, Marandi said that whenever these parties formed the government in the country or in the State, then these people only looted the country or the State. These people form government and do politics just for money. “I say that the name of Jharkhand Mukti

Morcha should be Jharkhand Mudra Mochan Party,” he said.

He said that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha deviated from the aim of creation of a separate State and engaged in currency redemption. If they wanted, Jharkhand would have become a separate state in 1991 itself, but Congress people did the work of buying that movement and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha people did the work of selling the movement. The people in whose lap Hemant Soren is doing politics today, the same people had also done the work of sending his father to jail because at that time there was a government of their allies at the center and in Bihar.

Marandi said that if BJP had

not formed the government at the Center under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Jharkhand would not have become a separate State today. Therefore, when the State was formed by the BJP, the development would also be done by the BJP.

Marandi said that Congress ruled the country for 50 to 60 years, but remember that there were no roads till the villages, there was no electricity, people used to struggle with the problems of drinking water. But when the BJP government was formed in the country and also in the state When the BJP government was formed, today the villages of the state were connected to the cities through roads, bridges were built across the rivers, electricity was provided to the villages. Today roads and electricity have reached almost all the villages of Jharkhand.

But today Hemant Soren's government has completed its 3 years and in these 3 years, not a single step has been taken in the direction of development. Neither has been able to construct 1 km of road nor has been able to construct a bridge.

He alleged that the schemes of the Central Government,

whether it is the scheme of drinking water, the scheme of providing ration to the poor, the scheme of Ayushman or any other public interest scheme, all these schemes have been implemented by the state government. The grains sent by Modi are being black marketed.

He said that today the law and order situation in the state has completely collapsed. Illegal mining of other minerals including sand, coal, iron, stone is going on in the state and is being sent to other states. Police are engaged in recovery of money. Women are not safe, the morale of criminals has increased, but the government is not concerned about it.

In a democracy, the people are the master of the state, so today I have come among you to say that the government of Hemant Soren to whom you have entrusted the power of the state for development, but that government of Hemant Soren turned out to be a government of robbers. All of you should convey this message from here to your homes in the villages and tell people how Soren's government is looting the state and emptying the state's treasury.

INBRIEF

Programme on prevention of diabetic neuropathy

An awareness program related to the treatment and prevention of Diabetic Neuropathy disease was organised on Thursday at the Central Super Specialty Hospital, East Central Railway, Patna. Hospital's ACH Director (Physician) Dr. Sanjay Kumar Gupta and ACH Director (Nephrology), Dr. Kaushal Kumar, gave a lecture on the causes, treatment and prevention of diabetic neuropathy. Along with this, about 100 patients suffering from this disease were also benefited.



OPS students shine in 'Voice for India'

Voice for India (a body of Government) organised Quiz Competition and Youth Parliament Contest on 19th and 20th November, 2022 at Vivekanand Vidya Mandir, Dhurwa. A group of students from classes 8, 9 and 11 participated and won laurels for Oxford Public School. All of them reached the final level and received Certificate of Participation. In Youth Parliament, Arya Raj of std. 11 secured the first rank and received a cash prize of Rs 2,000 along with Memento and certificate of Excellence. Md. Quamar Alam of Std. 11 also won the first prize with cash prize of Rs 1000 and memento along with Certificate of Participation. The 5th Jharkhand Jeet Kune- Do Championship 2022-23 was organised at Paramveer Albert Ekka Stadium, Gumla from 4th to 6th November 2022. Aleena Danish of std 6 won Silver Medal in under 14 category. Many received certificate of participation.



IWCZ holds eye check-up camp

Inner Wheel club of Jamshedpur Zest organised an eye check-up camp in collaboration with Poornima Netralayam near Kharkai Bridge. The camp was organised for the local slum dwellers in which around 60 people benefited. Among them four were selected for cataract surgery. The club organised the surgery of the selected patients on December 1. Members present were president Nisha Gadia, Madhu, Usha, past president Neeta and Prity.



Shah: Do research to highlight correct history

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

“Had it not been for the



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

40mn kids missed measles jabs: WHO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

To prevent the disease from

India slams US report on rights, religious freedom

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



“We consider these biased and inaccurate observations about India by USCIRF. They (USCIRF) have a tendency to consistently misrepresent facts and this shows their lack of understanding of India, our constitutional framework, plurality and our robust democratic system.”

“Given its past record, we are not surprised to see that USCIRF continues to be guided by its prejudices and pursues a motivated agenda that calls into question its own credibility,” Bagchi said.

In its 2022 Annual Report earlier this year, the USCIRF had recommended that the US Department of State designate India as a “country of particular concern” for engaging in or tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as set forth

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

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

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

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

Some facts about measles

- Just 81 per cent of children globally have received 1st dose & 71 percent received 2nd dose, the lowest coverage seen worldwide since 2008.
- There were 9 million cases of measles and 128,000 deaths around the world with at least 22 countries experiencing “large and disruptive outbreaks.”
- No region of the world has achieved and sustained measles elimination. Since 2016, at least 10 countries that had previously eliminated measles reported outbreaks – including the US.
- One infected patient can infect at least 10 close contacts, not protected either through masking or vaccination.

spreading and to achieve herd immunity, the top health bodies say that at least 95 per cent of children need to receive the vaccine. The report found that specifically, 25 million missed their first dose and 14.7 million missed their second dose last year.

“The paradox of the pandemic is that while vaccines against Covid-19 were developed in record time and deployed in the largest vaccination campaign in history,

routine immunization programs were badly disrupted, and millions of kids missed out on life-saving vaccinations against deadly diseases like measles,” said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, in a statement.

“Getting immunization programs back on track is absolutely critical. Behind every statistic in this report is a child at risk of a preventable disease,” the statement continued.

IAF to hold joint humanitarian assistance & disaster relief exercise with ASEAN countries

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force will conduct the annual joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercise ‘Samanvay 2022’ from November 28 to 30 at Air Force Station, Agra to assess the efficacy of institutional disaster management structures and contingency measures.

Along with involvement of various stakeholders from the country, the exercise will see participation by representatives from the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) countries as well.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will be chief guest for the capability demonstration events planned during the exercise on 29 November, IAF officials said here on Thursday.

The exercise will comprise a seminar on disaster management, a ‘Multi Agency Exercise’ involving static and flying displays of various HADR assets and a ‘Table Top Exercise.’ ‘Samanvay 2022’ will promote a synergistic approach towards HADR by various national and regional stakeholders involved



in disaster management including the civil administration, the Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Authority (NDM), National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) besides others.

This multi agency engagement is expected to contribute in the evolution of institutional frameworks for effective communication, interoperability, cooperation and their application for successful conduct of HADR.

The exercise also aims to provide a unique platform for exchange of domain knowledge, experience and best practices with the participating ASEAN member countries.

‘Right to regulate issue of bank notes entirely with RBI’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



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

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

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

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

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

rency notes and not the entire notes of a denomination.

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

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



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Centre joins hands with Microsoft to digitise 36 Eklavya model schools

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SC Collegium recommends transfer of 7 HC judges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

joining Calcutta High Court.

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

Rajasthan High Court.

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

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

whose names have been approved are -- Anil Kumar Upman and Nupur Bhat. The three-member Collegium, which takes decisions with regard to high court judges, has also approved proposal for elevation of six Judicial Officers as Judges in Rajasthan High Court.

The judicial officers whose names have been cleared are-- Rajendra Prakash Soni, Ashok Kumar Jain, Yogendra Kumar Purohit, Bhuvan Goyal, Praveer Bhatnagar, and Ashutosh Kumar.

Qatar denies extending an invitation to Naik

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

Slugfest over K'taka-Maha boundary dispute escalates

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

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

like Solapur and Akkalkot should join Karnataka."

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

month if voted to power in Gujarat.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

and it only focuses on how to get power.

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

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

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

The Kashmiri pandit package employees staged a massive



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

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

factory solution would be found on this vital issue.

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

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

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



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

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

Opp stalling appointments in court: Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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



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

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

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

specially created by the government apparently to regularise the appointments of

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

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

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

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

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

Tharoor looking for larger role in Kerala Congress?

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Mukroh clashes: Meghalaya CM in Delhi for talks

PTI ■ SHILLONG

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

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

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



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

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Undead

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

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

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

PICTALK



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

demonetization woes

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

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



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

Climate finance is the pivot of COP27

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



SHREYA GARG

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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

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

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

Mithlesh Panwar | Ujjain

MANAGING LIFESTYLE DISEASES

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

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

Traffic congestion in Bengaluru



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

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

in the management of certain diseases and syndromes to join hands with the scholars of Ayurveda to overcome the most disgusting conclusions in the management of such disorders where Ayurveda presents the hope towards a better life. Not only India but the entire world population also can be benefitted by the encouraging results that the integrated research may conclusively offer curative management of certain diseases such as Parkinsonism et. al. The super specialist medical institutions shall have to initiate with or without government's support to reach the wisdom of Ayurveda to begin integrated research for certain diseases where Allopathy has limited approach with hazardous side effects.

Dr Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

ELECTIONS PROVIDING JOBS

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

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

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

CK Dorai Ramani Suresh | Ghaziabad

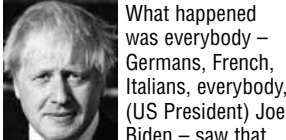
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SOUND BITE

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



Bihar Deputy CM — Tejshwi Yadav



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

Former UK Prime Minister — Boris Johnson

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



Actor — Priyanka Chopra



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

New Zealand cricketer — Ross Taylor

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



Union Minister — Hardeep Puri

FIRST COLUMN

INDIA-UAE TRADE PACT:
PATH TO PROSPERITY

India is close to starting free trade negotiations with GCC



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

BJP aims record haul in a three-way poll



DEEPAK K UPRETI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To defend its Gujarat fort and make



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

VOTES FROM SOME MACHINES SHOULD BE "INVALIDATED."

— OUTGOING BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT JAIR BOLSONARO



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

— THE PRESIDENT OF LULA'S WORKERS PARTY GLEISI HOFFMANN



RBI must opt for alternatives to digital currency

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

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

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

KALYAN SUNDARAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

acted only matters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bombed not beaten: Kyiv flips to survival mode

AP ■ KYIV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ukraine works to restore power after devastating strikes

AP ■ KYIV

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

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

The strikes also caused power outages in neighbouring Moldova.

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

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

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

Efforts to restore power, heating and water supplies dis-



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

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

Governor of the Poltava region Dmytro Lunin said "an optimistic scenario" suggested that electricity will come back to residents of his central Ukrainian region on Thursday. "In the next few hours, we will start supplying energy to critical infrastructure, and then to the majority of household consumers," Lunin said on Telegram, noting that power has already been restored for 15,500 people and 1,500 legal entities in the region.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Poland upsets some by rebuffing German air defence system

AP ■ WARSAW

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

When Germany recently offered Warsaw Eurofighter planes and Patriot air defence

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

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

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

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



Zelenskyy accuses Russia of 'crimes against humanity'

IAN S ■ KIEV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indonesian rescuers focus on landslide as quake toll rises

AP ■ CIANJUR (INDONESIA)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Data from National Disaster Mitigation Agency showed that 100 of the 272 confirmed deaths were children. Monday's magnitude 5.6 quake injured more than 2,000 people, damaged at least 56,000 houses and displaced at least 62,000 people to evacuation centers and other shelters. The agency said 171 public facilities were destroyed, including 31 schools.

US increasingly fearful Putin will use unconventional weapons in Ukraine

IAN S ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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



Putin's army.

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

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

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

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

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Philippines asks China for explanation over latest sea feud

AP ■ MANILA

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

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

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

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

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

They set out on a boat and



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

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

The sailors decided to return to their island, Carlos

said, without detailing what happened.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kim's sister makes insulting threats to Seoul

AP ■ SEOUL

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Body of Israeli teen, taken by militants, is returned

AP ■ JERUSALEM

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

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

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

PTI ■ COLOMBO

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

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

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

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



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

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

Murugananthan from the northern province.

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

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

He has previously denied any wrongdoing.

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

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

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

Writer who accused Trump of 1990s rape files new lawsuit

AP ■ NEW YORK

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

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

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



store in 1995 or 1996.

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

president.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NEPAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Deuba's NC-led ruling coalition leads in counting

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

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

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

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

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

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

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

The CPN-UML partners -



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

China's Covid cases touch record high

Deaths from the virus in months, officials have already implemented some restrictions in several districts, with shops, schools and restaurants closed.

The National Health Commission reported 31,444 local infections on Thursday, surpassing 29,317 cases recorded on April 13 during the height of the lockdown in Shanghai

where over 25 million people were confined to their homes for months, drawing public protests.

Also, there is growing anxiety in the capital Beijing, especially the sprawling Chaoyang district, home of the country's top leadership, besides the elite as the caseload in the district climbed to 1,648, perhaps the highest in recent times.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all that, I, **Sudesh Kapahi W/o Late Kewal Kumar R/O- LG Flat No. 4-B, First Floor, Block-A, Madipur, Delhi** I am the legal owner of LG FLAT NO.4-B, first floor, Block-A, Madipur, Delhi, File No. L-73(11983)/MP/UG which is allotted by the DDA. Original Possession Letter & Water & Electric Connection NOC of the above flat has been lost. An FIR/NCR in this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No.104/508/2022, Dated 24-11-2022. Any person claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 999495288 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. Any person claiming any right, interest, or having any objections with respect to this property can also personally inform/contact me.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR LOST OF DOCUMENTS
To be known to all that I, **VIMAL GOEL S/O B.S. BHAGAT R/O B-3/350, FIRST FLOOR, PASCHIM VIHAR, Delhi-110063**, have lost his original property Document i.e. Possession, Possession slip, Allotment letter and Demand letter in respect of the Property Bearing No. Y-206, Y Block, Lohia Mandi (W.H.S), NCR, New Delhi-110026, have been lost, an NCR vide LR No. 1014191/2022 against this effect has been lodged in Crime Branch Police Station Delhi.
Any persons claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 981114864 with 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

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

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const-I, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under Two Packet System for the under noted work:-
Description of the property
House No. 41, Flat No. 3 Gali No.-1, Harijan Basti Neb Sarai, New Delhi-110068
Priyanka Raina Saini Advocate DELHI HIGH COURT Office Address:-04, Kharsa No.-139 Street No.-2, Neb Sarai, New Delhi - 110068. Mob. No.-7982726049
PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to general public that my client is intending to purchase from Mrs. Shalini Garg, w/o Sanjay Garg, r/o House No. 333, sector 16, Faridabad Haryana 121002, Property with the following details: Agricultural Land bearing numbers: Mustil No. 69 Kila Nos. 22/2/2; Mustil No.73 Kila No. 2 & 9 and having 50% share in Mustil No. 73 Kila Nos. 3, 8/1, 8/3, 13, 18 & 23/1 of village Samarthia, Tehsil Sohna, Dist. Gurgaon, Haryana.
May it be further known that:
1. That Mrs. Shalini Garg have lost the original sales deed documents for the above-mentioned property vide Vaska No. 768 dt. 27/05/1994 and Vaska No. 5257 dt. 07/02/1996 both executed at Sub-Registrar office of Sohna Tehsil and I have lodged an FIR for the same with the Police.
2. That if any person happens to find the above said original documents they must urgently contact me for delivering the same against reasonable reward.
3. That if any person/entity (corporate or otherwise) has any right, title, interest, benefit, claim or demand in or to the above mentioned property or any part thereof by way of sale, exchange, gift, lease, tenancy, license, assignment, mortgage, charge, lien, trust, possession, easement, encumbrance, inheritance, bequest, easement, possession, maintenance, development rights, order/ decree/ judgment of any Court or any other agreement, understanding or otherwise, such person/entity (corporate or otherwise) may lodge their claims and objection to me, against transfer of the above said property to my client by way of sales deed, with all documentary proofs supporting the claims and objections within 15 days of the date of publication of this notice failing which it shall be deemed that there are no claims or objections from anyone for the proposed sale of the above mentioned property to my client or that any such claims and objections shall be considered as waived and/or abandoned.
Date: 25/11/2022
Sanjeev Divivedi (Advocate)
48, Caganand Block, Tis Hazari Courts, ND-54
Mob: +91-99997 33612
placid_chap@hotmail.com

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
The Dy. Chief Engineer/TMC/Line, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-tender under One Packet System for the under noted work:-
(1) POH (Periodic Overhaul) of FRM-1866 machine at NR Track Machine Workshop including mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, cabin repair and other ancillary works.
(2) POH (Periodic Overhaul) of WST-8083 & 8088 machine at NR Track Machine Workshop including mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical, cabin repair and other ancillary works.
1. **Name of work and location:**
2. **Completion period of the work**
3. **Approx. cost of work**
4. **Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)**
5. **Cost of Tender Document (to be deposited Online)** Rs. Nil.
6. **Similar Nature of Work**
7. **Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender**
8. **Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document**
Tender Notice No. 1-W-D/CETMC-10-FRM-1866-22-23 & 11-WST-8083-8088 Dated: 23.11.2022 3133/2022
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



Long-time reformist leader Anwar sworn in as Malaysia PM

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is to inform to the public at large that **Mr. Naresh Pal S/o Mr. Jai Singh** who is purchasing the Two Flat i.e. UNIT No. 206, (REAR LHS SIDE) HAVING AREA 800 SQ. FT. AND FLAT No. 205, (REAR RHS SIDE) HAVING AREA 400 SQ. FT., ON SECOND FLOOR, WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS OUT OF KHASRA No. 104MI, AT SIGNATURE APARTMENT-B IN THE VILLAGE OF KHORA, PARGANA LONI TEHSIL AND DISTT GHAGHARIA, (U.P.) PIN- 201309, from Mrs. Suran Yadav W/o Mr. Sukhveer Singh & Mr. Pradeep Yadav S/o Late Mr. Sukhveer Singh, who had owners through Khatauni Record, 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 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, disputes etc.
Lucern Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 2, Noida, UP-201301; Contact # 0120-4269379

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is notified that the Flat No. 59-D, Block-A-5, Sector-7/1, Noida (U.P.) has been allotted in the name of Baidya Nath Hembram S/o Late Shri Gopi Nath Hembram R/o College Tola Pawrah House No.14, Ghatsila East Singhumh Jharkhand, had sold the said flat on the basis of GPA to the following persons - A GPA was executed in favour of Lekh Raj Singh S/o Shri Adal Singh R/o House No. 111/186, Aali Village, Sarita Vihar, South Delhi-110076, on 09.12.2021 at Sub Registrar Sadar/ Gautam Budh Nagar, Vide Book No-IV, Volume no. 1701 on pages 317 to 336 at Document No. 1377 Dated 09.12.2021. That the agreement to sell was not registered. The said property is going to be transferred in favour of Pinki W/o Arun Kumar R/o H.No.197, Abrahampur Jundapur Urf Moazpur, PO-Khurji, Dist. Bulandshahr U.P. 203132, Now, I am one has/have any objection he/she may submit his/her objection in the Housing Department of Noida Authority along with sufficient proofs within 15 days of the publication of this notice. **Lekh Raj Singh**

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

Unemployment rate dips to 7.2% in Q2: NSO survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Labour force, according to

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

on Wednesday.

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

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

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

Rupee gains 30 paise to close at 81.63 against USD



PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



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

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

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

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

The spillovers of the glob-

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

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

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

"Easing international com-

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exporters demand fiscal incentives, credit at affordable rates in Budget

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

The body stated that at a time when global demand for



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

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

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

On the direct tax front, it

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

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

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

Issuers of municipal debt securities can issue green bonds: Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Sebi (Issue and Listing of Municipal Debt Securities) or

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

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

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



ing or proposing to issue green debt securities.

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

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

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

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

Gold climbs ₹323; silver rises ₹639

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

VP - Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

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

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

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



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

WB FM Mitra criticises Centre for depending on China for trade



PTI ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



centration of production centres and trade disruption.

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

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

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

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

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

SOUTH KOREA HOLDS URUGUAY TO 0-0 DRAW

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

AP ■ QATAR

This time it was South Korea holding South American power Uruguay to a 0-0 draw on Thursday, a result that probably favors the Asian team.

The draw at Education City Stadium was yet another early World Cup match with a surprising result. Argentina and Germany both lost their opening matches in major upsets.

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

opening whistle.

Some South Korean fans wore Batman-like masks in solidarity with Son.

However, in a match with few clear scoring chances, Uruguay had the best chances: Diego Godin hit the post with a header in the 43rd minute and Federico Valverde hit it in the 89th.

Uruguay will next face Portugal in Group H while South Korea plays Ghana.

South Korea attacked from the start and Son excited the crowd every time he touched the ball. He managed only one threatening attack in the first half, however, and did less in the second.

South Korea always looked

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

quicker than Uruguay, but not necessarily the more dangerous. The team's best chance came in the 34th minute when Hwang Ui-jo sailed a close-range attempt over the crossbar.

As the half wore on, Uruguay began to take more possession but always seemed more cautious, taking less initiative despite having the more experienced players.

Son went down in a heap early in the second half with Martin Caceres getting the first yellow card of the match.

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



Belgium spoil Canada's WC return

AP ■ DOHA

Michy Batshuayi's first-half goal proved enough for a below-par Belgium to squeeze to a 1-0 win over a Canada side playing their first World Cup match for 36 years on Wednesday.

Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois saved Alphonso Davies' early penalty and Batshuayi opened the scoring against the run of play in the 44th minute.

John Herdman's Canada, roared on by their vocal support.

Also had another strong penalty appeal turned down and dominated the second half to no avail.

Belgium were without injured record goalscorer Romelu Lukaku and struggled throughout with the pace of Canada's forwards.

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

Canada coach backs Davies after penalty woe

AP ■ DOHA

Canada coach John Herdman backed the decision to let Alphonso Davies take a crucial missed penalty against Belgium.

The Bayern Munich star has little experience of spot-kicks, and saw his tame ninth-minute effort comfortably saved by Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

A disappointed Davies did not stop to speak to reporters after the defeat.

Herdman said the Canadian team's "brotherhood" had trusted Davies to take the kick in what was Canada's first World Cup game since 1986.

"When you've got an 85 million dollar player with that sort of swagger, let him pick up the ball and take it," Herdman told reporters. "It was a big moment. We were waiting to get that first goal."

Embolo lifts Swiss to win over Cameroon

AP ■ DOHA

Breel Embolo scored against the country of his birth as Switzerland defeated Cameroon 1-0 to make a winning start to their World Cup campaign on Thursday.

Embolo struck three minutes into the second half at Al Janoub Stadium as Switzerland secured a vital three points in a group that includes tournament favourites Brazil and Serbia.

Cameroon have now lost their last eight World Cup matches going back to 2002.

Roger Milla was presented with an award before kick-off as the oldest goalscorer in World

Cup history, a reminder of past glories for Cameroon who have won just one game since reaching the quarter-finals 32 years ago.

Cameroon coach Rigobert Song, who played at four World Cups including with a 42-year-old Milla in 1994, opted for the in-form Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting to lead the attack in place of usual captain Vincent Aboubakar.

African teams had made an encouraging start in Qatar after all five failed to get past the group stage in 2018, but Cameroon will regret not making more of a first half they controlled.

Akanji glanced wide at a



corner as Cameroon switched off on the stroke of half-time but there was no such escape when they were again caught napping at the start the second half. Granit Xhaka and Remo

Freuler worked the ball out wide on the right to Xherdan Shaqiri whose low cross into the area was swept home by an unmarked Embolo, who chose not to celebrate against his birth country.

Choupo-Moting neatly weaved his way past a couple of defenders in the box but couldn't beat Sommer from a tight angle.

Andre Onana kept Cameroon in the game with a brilliant stop to deny Ruben Vargas who found himself completely free in an almost carbon copy of Embolo's goal.

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

Kane fit to face USA: Southgate

AP ■ DOHA

Gareth Southgate says England captain Harry Kane is fit to face the United States on Friday after his World Cup injury scare.

Kane suffered an ankle injury in the second half of England's 6-2 win against Iran in their Group B opener in Doha on Monday.

Three Lions boss Southgate on Thursday said Kane would be available for selection against the USA in their group game at the Al Bayt Stadium.

"Harry is fine. He has worked slightly separately from the group but all good for Friday night," Southgate told the BBC.

"He had a scan to make



sure everything is fine."

Southgate also said Harry Maguire was feeling better after the Manchester United centre-back was substituted having become ill in the closing stages of the Iran match.

"He was feeling ill and that was affecting his vision."

No Germany player safe after shock defeat: Flick

AP ■ DOHA

Germany manager Hansi Flick warned on Thursday that no member of his starting XI was safe ahead of their crucial weekend clash with Spain after a shock 2-1 loss to Japan.

Defeat against Spain would almost certainly condemn Germany to a second straight group-stage exit -- an unthinkable outcome for a nation that had reached at least the semi-finals in every World Cup this century before 2018.

Flick promised to "turn the screws" against a Spanish side fresh from thumping Costa Rica 7-0, after which manager Luis Enrique promised "to play against Germany in the same way".

Asked if Joshua Kimmich's place in defensive midfield was



guaranteed, Flick said his only priority was selecting a "top-notch" team.

"You can understand that we are discussing every matter of personnel and every position," Flick said. "We do that before every game. It's our job as a coaching team to set up the team

in such a way that it's top-notch."

Flick faced criticism over his picks, particularly his decision to name Borussia Dortmund centre-back Niklas Sule, who played Takuma Asano onside for Japan's second goal, at right back.

But the manager instead switched the focus to his team's misfiring attack, saying: "When you have two or three top-class chances, you have to close the game and put a lid on it."

"We lacked efficiency."

The coach confirmed that winger Leroy Sane, who was controversially left out of the squad by former coach Joachim Loew in 2018, could return against Spain after missing the Japan match with a knee injury.

"Leroy is on the pitch right now, he's training on his own," he said. "That's positive."

Enrique backs Spain to stay hungry after historic rout

AP ■ DOHA

Luis Enrique believes Spain's hunger will only increase after they recorded the country's biggest ever World Cup victory in an emphatic 7-0 thrashing of Costa Rica on Wednesday.

The 2010 champions dominated their opponents, who did not manage a shot at goal in the whole match, and in their second group game on Sunday face a desperate Germany, who were beaten 2-1 by Japan earlier.

Spain's previous record victory was a 6-1 thrashing of Bulgaria at the 1998 World Cup, a match in which Luis Enrique scored for La Roja.

However, while the Spain coach thinks that too much flattery can weaken a team's resolve, he is confident his side will stay grounded and focused.

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



"I have no doubts at all. It's true that praise weakens you, but don't worry about this group of players, I see them every day."

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

pete, to work hard.

"I doubt that would happen, it's never happened, this is a group of people ready to do things in the right way."

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

recognised Japan's threat.

"It was a surprise the way they started off, Germany, against Japan but there are surprises in football, you never know," said the coach.

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

they have a lot of quality, quality players.

"You never know in football. We're going to try to win the next match against them (Germany), we're going to try to beat them, that's the goal."

Despite the superb display at Al Thumama stadium, Luis Enrique says he is planning on changing his starting line-up against Germany.

La Roja have plenty of depth on the bench, with the likes of Barcelona forward Ansu Fati and Atletico Madrid's Marcos Llorente kept in reserve.

Debutant Alejandro Balde replaced Jordi Alba in the second half and impressed, while substitutes Carlos Soler and Alvaro Morata both scored.

"I don't know who will play," Luis Enrique told TVE.

"If we achieve our objective, which is playing seven games, it will be everyone, not just 11 players."

"I don't think I've ever repeated a line-up and I probably won't repeat one."

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

‘Qatar must find ‘A Game’ to avoid WC embarrassment’

AP ■ DOHA

Qatar coach Felix Sanchez hopes his team can bring their "A Game" against Senegal as the host nation battle to avoid setting an unwanted World Cup record.

Defeat on Friday would mean the earliest-ever exit for a host nation -- South Africa also went out at the group stage in 2010 -- but were still alive heading into their third match.

Reigning Asian champions Qatar became the first hosts to lose their opening game after freezing in a dispiriting 2-0 defeat to Ecuador.

Sanchez backed his players to overcome their stage fright against African champions Senegal and show their quality.

"We hope that now we are free from all the pressure that we had in the opening match," he said at his pre-match press conference on Thursday.

"I hope we can compete



and bring our 'A Game' and show that we can be more competitive than we were the other day."

"We are playing a very high-level team so we need to prove ourselves, play our game and see what happens."

Defender Ismail Mohamad urged Qatar fans not to write them off after only one game.

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

starting a fresh page with the team and preparing for the next match.

"I do think that the team is on the right path. I think that in the next match we will be better prepared and we will give it our all."

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

INDIA START 50 OVER AUDITIONS UNDER DHAWAN

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Copping a lot of flak for its archaic approach in T20Is, the Indian cricket team is expected to turn a new leaf in a different format as it takes on New Zealand in a three-match ODI series, which will mark the start of preparations for next year's World Cup. India had endured a nightmare back in 2020 in New Zealand when Virat Kohli's side was blanked 0-3 in one of the most lopsided series where the bowling effort was below par. Exactly 11 months are left for the marquee event in India and the series starting on Friday will give the team an initial idea about some of the middle-order slots and also the bowling arsenal in India's armoury.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

of 100 plus.

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

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

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

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

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

BOWLING ATTACK

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

Deepak Chahar is expect-

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

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

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

SQUADS

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

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

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

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

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

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

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

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

"I am very fortunate that



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

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



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

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

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

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

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

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

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

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

India are in desperate need for a change in mindset, especially in the powerplay. Can Hardik effect that change and let the players not worry about fear of failure?

"Yes. He will make the players a lot better in the mindset. 100 percent.

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

"Yes, it appears to be happening more and more and you can understand why. There is so much on and you can't do everything. That's why you see a lot of teams with those sort of make up."

A modern-day batting great, Williamson's credentials as a T20 player has come under scrutiny after his underwhelming performance at the T20 World Cup and the 52-ball 61 in the second T20I against India.

"I still love playing all three formats, and enjoy changing between the three, as a player I'm looking to keep improving and I certainly have the motivation.

HI to give complimentary tickets to Olympians and former players for men's WC

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

All the country's hockey Olympians and former international players will be given complimentary tickets to watch the upcoming men's World Cup in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, Hockey India announced on Thursday.

The 16-team men's showpiece is scheduled to be held from January 13-29.

The matches will be held simultaneously at the Kalinga Stadium here and the newly-built Birsamunda International Stadium in Rourkela.

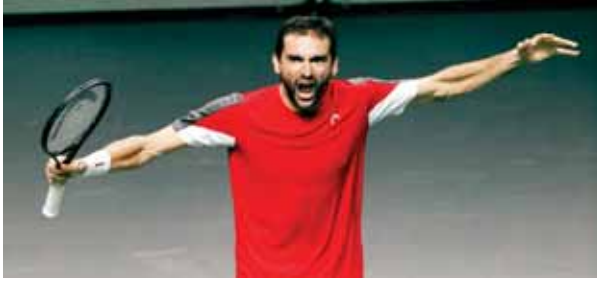
HI secretary general Bholanath Singh said it would be

a privilege for the national federation to invite all Indian stalwarts of the game, including the Olympians. "The presence of former Indian hockey players will certainly boost the morale of the Indian men's team in the men's World Cup," Singh said in a release.

"Keeping in mind the

immense contribution of former hockey stalwarts, Hockey India continues to recognise their efforts and welcome them in Odisha to watch the matches, inspire and cheer all the teams."

Earlier on Thursday, HI marked the 50-day countdown for the prestigious event by opening the ticket sales online.



Croatia beat Spain in Davis Cup

AP ■ SPAIN

Marin Cilic on Wednesday led Croatia into the Davis Cup semi-finals, knocking out six-time champions Spain who were missing Carlos Alcaraz and Rafael Nadal, the world's two top-ranked players.

World number 17 Cilic, a former US Open champion, fought back to defeat 13th-ranked Pablo Carreno Busta 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) as Croatia booked a semi-final clash against Australia.

Earlier, Borna Coric had set the 2005 and 2018 champions on their way, defeating Roberto Bautista Agut 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

Cilic, 34, who made his Davis Cup debut back in 2006, dropped the first set, gave up a break in the decider and was 1/4 down in the tiebreak before triumphing after three hours and 13 minutes on court.

His 20 aces helped alleviate the damage caused by 15 double faults as the 10,000-strong home crowd at the Palacio de Deportes was stunned into silence by Croatia who were runners-up to Russia in the 2021 final.

"It was incredible battle," said Cilic. However, he admitted that

the absence of US Open champion Alcaraz and 22-time Grand Slam title winner Nadal played into the hands of Croatia who had lost all of their three previous Davis Cup meetings with Spain.

"It would be much different. Rafa has been during all his career a leader of the team. He's one of the best Davis Cup players ever.

"Carlos, fantastic season for him. Such a pity for him to get injured."

Spain captain Sergi Bruguera lamented his team's exit.

"I think luck had a little bit of influence, and Cilic had a little bit more today," he insisted.

Coric, the world number 26, fired 14 aces past his 21st-ranked rival who he had already defeated on his way to the Cincinnati Masters title in the summer.

Bautista Agut had been on a seven-match winning streak in the Davis Cup, a run stretching back to 2019.

"I just think in general I was playing very smart. When I needed to attack, I did attack. When I needed to make a defence, I was defensive," said Coric.

7 Indians enter finals at Youth World Championships



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxers continued their dominance at the youth men's and women's World Championships as seven of them stormed into the finals after stunning victories in La Nucia, Spain.

Youth Asian champions Vanshaj and Vishwanath Suresh marched into the summit clash along with Ashish to maintain all-win record for

India in the men's semifinals, whereas Kirti (+81kg), Bhawna Sharma (48kg), Devika Ghorpade (52kg) and Ravina (63kg) advanced to the finals in the women's section.

While Vishwanath claimed 4-1 win over Juanma Lopez of Puerto Rico, Vanshaj (63.5kg) and Ashish (54kg) posted close 3-2 and 4-3 triumphs against USA's Deshawn Crocklem and Uzbekistan's Khujanazar Nortojiev respectively in their

thrilling semifinal bouts. Women boxers, on the other hand, recorded comfortable wins apart from Kirti's 3-2 victory against Kazakhstan's Assel Toktassyn.

Ravina and Bhawna out-punched their Kazakh opponents Assem Tanatar and Gulnaz Buribayeva respectively by unanimous decision. Devika got the better of USA's Aameedah Joy with a 4-1 margin.

Meanwhile, four other Indian women in action -- Tamanna (50kg), Kunjarani Devi Thongam (60kg), Muskan (75kg) and Lashu Yadav (70kg) -- signed off with bronze medals after defeats in their respective semifinal bouts.

Indian boxers asserted their supremacy at the prestigious championships as 11 out of 17 quarterfinalists went on to confirm medals -- highest for any country at the on-going edition, wherein close to 600 boxers have participated from 73 countries.



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

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

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

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

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

Sreenidi Deccan beat TRAU FC 1-0 in I-League



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Sreenidi Deccan FC registered a 1-0 win against TRAU FC in their I-League match at the newly-inaugurated Deccan Arena here on Thursday.

Playing their first match at the new home venue, Sreenidi Deccan took the lead in the 41st minute through David Castaneda Munoz, which ultimately proved to be the difference between the two teams.

It was Sreenidi's second win on the bounce after their loss in the first round. On the other hand, TRAU suffered their first defeat of the season.