

OPINION 6

THE SUDDEN SPURT
IN AFGHAN BLASTS

WORLD 9

AT LEAST 4 KILLED, 10 HURT AFTER
BLAST NEAR KABUL MOSQUE

MONEY 10

RUPEE FALLS 19 PAISE TO CLOSE
AT LIFETIME LOW OF 80.98/\$

DEHRADUN, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹2

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NOVAK DJOKER
AWAITING WORD
ON AUS OPEN
11 SPORT

Urban Naxals armed with anti-India funds, says PM

Massive funding
by global bodies
hinder India's
growth, says Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday claimed that "urban Naxals" have been receiving massive funding from different global organisations to hinder development in India and cited the example of his home State to assert that though "it took some time to thwart these conspiracies" the people of Gujarat ultimately "came out victorious."

Inaugurating the National Conference of Environment Ministers in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat via video conferencing, the Prime Minister highlighted that the conference is being held when India is setting new goals for the next 25 years.

"Today's new India is moving ahead with new thinking, new approach," said the Prime Minister and further went on to add that India is a rapidly developing economy, and it is continuously strengthening its ecology as well.

"Our forest cover has increased and wetlands are also expanding rapidly," he said.

Pointing to the "complications" involved in getting environmental clearance, the Prime Minister said the development



Prime Minister Narendra Modi digitally addresses the National Conference of Environment Ministers being held in Ekta Nagar, Gujarat, on Friday

of modern infrastructure and efforts to improve the standard of living of the countrymen is "hindered" and gave the example of Sardar Sarovar Dam which was initiated in 1961 by Pandit Nehru but got considerably delayed.

He said it took decades to complete its construction due to the "conspiracies" carried out in the name of the environment.

Claiming that "urban Naxals" hindered the development of India by taking crores of rupees from different global organisations and foundations, Modi said due to their conspiracies the World Bank had refused to give a loan to increase the height of the Sardar Sarovar dam.

"It took some time to thwart these conspiracies, but the people of Gujarat came out victorious. The dam was being described as a threat to the environment, and today the same dam has become synonymous with protecting the environment," the Prime Minister added.

He also urged everyone to stay alert from such groups of urban Naxals in their respective states. Sardar Sarovar dam was opposed by the "Narmada Bachao Andolan" movement headed by social and environmental activist Medha Patkar, raising concerns about its "destabilising impact" on the local tribal population.

The PM urged the State Environment Ministers to

speedily deal with obstacles put up in the name of the environment highlighted the importance of the parivesh portal for the single-window forest, wildlife, environment, and coastal regulation zone clearances.

He said over 6,000 proposals for environmental and 6,500 for forest clearance were pending with the states. He called for clearing them sooner as projects worth thousands of crores of rupees will be stuck due to the pendency.

Modi underlined the need for bringing about a change in the work environment so that the pendency goes down and clearance is expedited.

"Expedited clearances should also take care of the rules and give priority to the development of the people... It is a win-win situation for both the economy and ecology. ...we have to remember the faster the environment clearance is available, the faster the development will also take place," he said in his address at an Environment Ministers' conference.

The Prime Minister remarked that today the world is joining India because of its track record of fulfilling its commitments.

"Gir lions, tigers, elephants, one-horned rhinos, and leopards have increased in numbers over the years. New excitement has returned from the homecoming of Cheetah in Madhya Pradesh a few days ago," the Prime Minister added.

Be vigilant for hate crimes: Govt to Indians in Canada

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Friday asked Indian nationals in Canada and students heading to that country to "remain vigilant" against what it called a "sharp increase in hate crimes, sectarian violence and anti-India activities."

Canada is home to 1.6 million people of Indian origin and non-resident Indians. They account for more than 3 per cent of Canada's population.

The advisory came in the backdrop of a diplomatic row over a so-called referendum by "pro-Khalistan" elements on a separate homeland for Sikhs.

"There has been a sharp increase in incidents of hate crimes, sectarian violence and anti-India activities in Canada. The Ministry of External Affairs and our High Commission/Consulates General in Canada have taken up these incidents with the Canadian authorities and requested them to investigate the said crimes and take appropriate action, the release said. The perpetrators of these crimes have not been brought to justice so far in Canada, the MEA said.

Indian nationals and students from India in Canada may also register with the High Commission of India in Ottawa or the Consulates General of India in Toronto and Vancouver through their respective websites, or the MADAD portal madad.Gov.In, the Ministry said.

The registration would enable the High Commission and the Consulates General to better connect with Indian citizens in Canada in the event of any requirement or emergency, it added.

Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi on Thursday described the referendum as a "farfetched exercise held by extremist and radical elements". He also said it was "deeply objectionable" that this was allowed in a friendly country.

Though the Canadian Government has said it respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India and that



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In win for Uddhav-Sena, HC allows its Dussehra rally at Shivaji Park

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In what came as a shot in the arm for beleaguered leader Uddhav Thackeray, the Bombay High Court on Friday granted permission to the faction of the Shiv Sena headed by him to hold Dussehra rally at the historic Shivaji Park in north-central Mumbai, after holding that the action by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to deny permission to hold the rally to the Sena led by him was "abuse of law".

Quashing an order passed earlier by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) refusing permission to hold the Dussehra rally at Shivaji Park, a HC bench of Justices RD Dhanuka and Kamal Khata noted, "Our view is that decision taken by BMC is not a bonafide decision."



Granting permission to the Uddhav-led Shiv Sena to hold the annual Dussehra rally at Shivaji Park anywhere between October 2 to 6, 2022, the HC bench observed that the police were at liberty to video-record the rally and in the event of any untoward behaviour, the same could be taken as a ground for refusing permission to the party for its rally next year.

Turncoat Nitish backstabbed BJP in bid to work for PM ambitions: Shah

PTI ■ PURNEA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday flayed former ally Nitish Kumar, accusing the Bihar Chief Minister of "backstabbing" the BJP and trying to fulfil prime ministerial ambitions while "sitting in the laps of Congress and RJD".

At a rally held in Purnea, Shah asserted that the "jodi" of Kumar and RJD president Lalu Prasad will be "wiped out" (soopda saaf) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and, a year later, the BJP will win a majority on its own in the State Assembly elections.

Widely regarded as the BJP's principal strategist, Shah arrived in Bihar on his first trip since the party was robbed of power in the upheaval last month.

He, however, refrained from joining issue with the contention of Kumar's JD(U)



Union Home Minister Amit Shah during BJP's 'Jan Bhavna' rally, in Purnea on Friday

PTI

that the BJP had tried to "break" the party.

"The number of seats won by Kumar's party in 2020 Assembly polls was nearly half of our tally. BJP showed magnanimity ('badappan') in backing him as the CM in keeping with its earlier promise. But,

with the Lok Sabha polls nearing, his prime ministerial ambitions got the better of him and he backstabbed us," alleged Shah.

The JD(U) has been indirectly blaming the BJP for the fall in its tally in the last Assembly polls when the Lok

Janshakti Party, then headed by Chirag Paswan, fielded many saffron party rebels against candidates of the Chief Minister's party.

Shah mocked the seven-party ruling "Mahagathbandhan", which also includes three Left parties, for raising apprehensions that the BJP leader's two-day trip of Seemanchal region could lead to communal polarisation in the area, which has a high concentration of Muslims.

"The new regime has led to an atmosphere of fear in these border districts. But with (PM) Narendra Modi around, none of you need to be afraid. All of you have been elated over scrapping of Article 370, which wiped off a stigma from the forehead of Mother India. I challenge Lalu and Nitish to utter a word in appreciation of the move," Shah said.

Jaishankar recounts moments of his work relationship with PM

ANI ■ NEW YORK

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who contributed to a special book titled "Modi@20: Dreams Meet Delivery" which commemorates 20 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in public life, read excerpts from the book and shared candid moments of his work relationship with the Prime Minister.

"Modi@20: Dreams Meet Delivery" is a compilation of chapters written by S Jaishankar, Amish Tripathi, PV Sindhu, Anupam Kher, Amit Shah and Sudha Murthy, among others. In the book, Jaishankar penned down how he first met Modi and shared the same with members of the Indian-American Community in New York.

The External Affairs



Minister very eloquently recalled the first time he met PM Modi back when he was the ambassador in China and Prime Minister Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat.

"No question he stood out. And I frankly liked Modi, before I met Modi," Jaishankar expressed. He distinctly remembered PM Modi's eye for detail and preparedness. "He wanted a political briefing, which normally Chief Ministers are not bothered about, but he gave me an excellent reason.

Rajiv, M Srinivas named AIIMS' DG, Director

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Dr Rajiv Bahl, who has been working as the Head of Research on Maternal, Newborn Child, and Adolescent Health and Ageing, World Health Organization, and M Srinivas, Dean of ESIC Hospital and Medical College in Hyderabad, on Friday were appointed as new Director-General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi respectively.

Dr Bahl will replace Balram Bhargava while Dr M Srinivas will take over the new post from Dr Randeep Guleria, who has been AIIMS Director since 2017.

PFI 'flash hartal' brings Kerala to grinding halt, HC starts suo motu case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Political bigwigs in Kerala, the past masters in organising hartals and bundhs, were taken back on Friday by the way the Popular Front of India (PFI) and its political wing SDPI brought the State to a grinding halt to protest against the arrests of their 18 leaders on Thursday by the National Investigation Agency.

The hartal that stood out because of the widespread rioting and attacks unleashed by the activists of the PFI made a division bench of the Kerala High Court to initiate suo motu proceedings against the leaders of the outfit who issued the hartal call.

Justices AK Jayasankaran Nambiar and CP Mohammed Nissar termed the Friday's

hartal an act of contempt of court and asked the Government to act against the PFI leaders who issued the hartal call. The Kerala Government told the court that more than 70 KSRTC buses were destroyed, forcing the authorities to cancel the services.

For the first time in the State, ambulances ferrying patients to hospitals were pelted with stones by the PFI activists who also deflated the wheels of the emergency vehicles. The activists covered their faces to escape identification.

PFI activists assaulted shopkeepers who defied the hartal and destroyed their commodities and belongings. A petrol bomb was thrown at the RSS office resulting in heavy damages.

Bhagwat's mosque visit not a deviation from RSS ideological line: Indresh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has said its chief Mohan Bhagwat's visit to a mosque and madrasa in Delhi on Thursday was not a deviation from its ideological line and slammed the Congress for saying Bhagwat's outreach to the Muslim community was due to the "impact" of the party's "Bharat Jodo Yatra".

Senior RSS leader Indresh Kumar also criticised the Congress for saying Bhagwat's meeting with All India Imam Organisation chief Umer Ahmed Ilyasi was influenced by the same factor.

The Congress has misunderstood the Sangh's line and it should "repent" for it, Kumar, a national executive member of the RSS, told



reporters on the sidelines of an event organised to mark the 104th "Haifa Victory Day" at the Teen Murti Chowk here.

His remarks came a day after Bhagwat, taking forward his outreach to the Muslim community, visited a mosque and a madrasa here and held discussions with Ilyasi, who termed him "rashtra pita".

Sonia, Priyanka to join Rahul in Bharat Jodo Yatra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

In what would give a major boost to the ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her daughter Priyanka Gandhi would join it on entering Karnataka.

The party also refuted claims by a section of the media and the BJP that Rahul has returned to the national Capital leaving the Bharat Jodo Yatra midway in Kerala. Congress chief spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said the former Congress chief is stationed at a container camp in Kerala's Chalakudy as per the rest day schedule.

Karnataka State party chief DK Shivakumar said the party has made elaborate preparations for the Karnataka leg of the yatra.

The party has given

Gehlot first leader to announce his name for Cong prez poll

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/KOCHI

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot became the first person to announce his candidature for the AICC presidential poll on Friday, a day before the nomination process begins, and said Rahul Gandhi has told him that no one from the Gandhi family should become the next party chief.

P5

responsibility to leaders to facilitate Sonia and Priyanka's presence in the yatra, he said.

Sonia has just returned after treatment from abroad.

UP does away with anticipatory bail in rape & POCSO Act

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Strictly going with the zero Tolerance policy of his Government towards sexual crime against women and children in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday took another major decision by withdrawing the anticipatory bail provision in such crimes in Uttar Pradesh.

Yogi claimed that the Government is sensitive towards crimes against women and children and would take all strict steps towards curbing such heinous crimes by sending the accused to jail.

"The morale of such criminals who cause serious injury to not only the body of women and children but even their soul will be broken by this decision of the Government and unwavering faith in the State's law and order will be generated," said a Government spokesman.

VS speaker cancels 228 ad hoc appointments in Vidhan Sabha

These appointments were made during the tenure of Govind Singh Kunjwal & Prem Chand Agarwal as speakers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In a landmark decision, unprecedented in the history of Uttarakhand, the Assembly speaker Ritu Khanduri has cancelled 228 appointments in the Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha. The speaker has sent a proposal to the Uttarakhand government to cancel these ad hoc appointments made in the year 2016, 2020 and 2021. Though no action has been taken in the appointments made prior to 2011, the speaker however has sought legal opinion on these appointments which are permanent in nature. Khanduri has also cancelled 22 appointments done through the Uttarakhand Purva Sainik Kalyan Nigam Limited (UPNL) in the Vidhan Sabha.

Acting on the recommendations of the three-member expert committee, the Assembly speaker has also cancelled



the process initiated by her predecessor Prem Chand Agarwal for recruitment to 32 posts in Vidhan Sabha and suspended the Vidhan Sabha secretary Mukesh Singhal.

On September 3, Khanduri had appointed a three mem-

ber committee headed by former bureaucrat DK Kotia to investigate the controversial appointments made in Vidhan Sabha during the tenure of speakers in the past. On late Thursday night the committee handed over the 214 page report to the speaker.

Acting swiftly the speaker took a decision on Friday to cancel 150 ad hoc appointments made in the year 2016 (speaker Govind Singh Kunjwal), six made in the year 2020 and 72 in 2021 (speaker Prem Chand Agarwal). Khanduri announced her decision in a press conference in Vidhan Sabha on Friday afternoon. The speaker said that on September 3, she had promised that she would not hesitate to take a strong decision in the interest of the State and would try to fulfill the aspirations of the youngsters of the State. She said that the expert committee has found gross irregularities in the ad hoc appointments made in the Vidhan Sabha in the year 2016, 2020 and 2021 and has recommended their cancellations.

Expert committee found gross irregularities in VS appointments

PNS ■ DEHRADUN



The three-member committee headed by DK Kotia was given a time of one month by the speaker but the committee submitted its report in only 20 days. The report submitted by the committee has 214 pages and few annexures. The committee found that no selection committee was set up for making the ad hoc appointments, no advertisement was issued, no competitive examinations were held, the names of eligible candidates were

not sought from the employment exchange and no applications were invited. It found that the appointments were made on individual applications. The committee in its report quoted that violation of right to equality given in article 14 and 16 of the Indian constitution occurred in the process as the eligible interested candidates were not given an opportunity. In its report the committee said that the department of Personnel in a GO dated Febru-

ary 6, 2003 had issued a stay on all ad hoc, contractual and daily wages appointments in the government departments and the appointments in Vidhan Sabha were made in violation of this order. The

speaker praised the members of the committee DK Kotia, Surendra Singh Rawat and A S Noyal for the hard work they put in to submit the report before time.

Vidhan Sabha secretary Mukesh Singhal suspended

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Ordering an inquiry to investigate the role of the secretary of Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha Mukesh Singhal in the whole issue, the speaker Ritu Khanduri has suspended him. The Vidhan Sabha secretariat had issued an advertisement in the year 2021 to recruit 32 employees to various posts.

A written examination was held on March 20 last year but its result has not been declared yet. For this examination the selection of Lucknow based agency RSM Technosolutions was made. Interestingly this agency is under scanner for its role in the paper leak case of UKSSSC. The committee

found that a payment of Rs 59 lakh was made to this company within two days of submitting bills last year. Singhal's role has been found suspicious in making this payment. He has also been accused of getting undue promotions during the tenure of Prem Chand Agarwal as speaker.

Khanduri said that she would undertake many reforms in the Vidhan Sabha secretariat which include right sizing of the employees, e-office and e-Vidhan Sabha. She said that necessary changes in the process of promotions and service rules would be made in the Vidhan Sabha.

Assembly & government united against corruption, says CM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has welcomed the Vidhan Sabha speaker Ritu Khanduri's decision on the recommendation of the high level committee to cancel ad-hoc appointments made in the Assembly from 2016 to 2021. Dhami said that the Assembly and State government are united against corruption.

It will be recalled that earlier when the questionable appointments to various posts in the Vidhan Sabha had come to light, the chief minister had clarified the stand of the government and had requested the Assembly speaker for a probe into the questionable appointments. Khanduri then formed a high level committee

and directed it to complete its inquiry in a time bound manner. In its report, the committee recommended that 150 appointments in 2016, six in 2020 and 72 in 2021 should be cancelled.

The CM said that the government is working with a commitment to ensure good governance and that no type of corruption will be tolerated. He said that after irregularities were found in Uttarakhand Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UKSSSC) and other recruitment exams, the government transferred these exams to the Uttarakhand Public Service Commission (UKPSC) to ensure transparency.

The examination process is underway with focus on maintaining transparency with the commission having issued the calendar of examinations in the first stage. Dhami took stern decisions after receiving complaints about malpractices in exams organised by UKSSSC for various class C posts. In the UKSSSC paper leak case, 41 accused persons have been arrested so far while chargesheet has been filed against 18 accused. Further, judicial remand of 21 accused under the Gangster Act has also been approved. Dhami stressed that the government will not allow injustice with the State's youth. He exhorted them to work hard and prepare enthusiastically for recruitment exams.

Speaker's decision puts minister Agarwal in tight spot

Minister was consistently defending his decision on appointments now cancelled by Khanduri

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The findings of the expert committee set up by the Assembly speaker Ritu Khanduri on the controversial backdoor appointments in the Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha have put the role of former speakers of the Vidhan Sabha under a cloud. On the recommendation of the committee, the speaker Ritu Khanduri has cancelled the ad hoc appointments made during the tenure of her predecessors Prem Chand Agarwal and Govind Singh Kunjwal. Interestingly both Agarwal and Kunjwal were consistently claiming that the appointments made by them in Vidhan Sabha were as per the rules which the expert committee has rejected after conducting an investigation. Out of the two, Agarwal and Kunjwal, the former is now the cabinet minister holding Finance, Parliamentary Affairs and Urban Development portfolios in Pushkar Singh Dhami cabinet. Pressure is now mounting from all quarters on Agarwal to leave the cabinet position on moral grounds. The minister is currently on a study tour of Germany with a team of officers of Housing and Urban Development department.

Sources state that CM Dhami, who has maintained a stand of zero tolerance for corruption and has ordered STF probe into the Uttarakhand Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UKSSSC) paper leak case which is successfully unearthing the case, is also under pressure to act against Agarwal. As per the findings of the committee 78 appointments were made by Agarwal during his tenure. Out of them 72 appointments were made in December last year just ahead of the imposition of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) due to Assembly elections. Citing the GO of department of Personnel on ban on ad hoc appointments, the then Finance secretary Amit Singh Negi had refused to release the budget for the new appointments in Vidhan Sabha. Interestingly the salaries of these employees were released on March 30 this year, a day after Prem Chand Agarwal took charge of the finance portfolio.

Both Agarwal and Kunjwal had claimed that the Uttarakhand High Court (HC) had approved these appointments. The fact however is that the HC had issued a stay on regularisation of the employees appointment on an ad hoc basis in Vidhan Sabha. The Pioneer in its edition of September 4 had carried a report- 'Former Speakers claim on clean chit by High Court on VS appointments false?' - on this claim of

the former speakers and had mentioned that the HC had not approved the appointments in Vidhan Sabha.

Employees turn emotional after removal decision

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The decision of the Assembly speaker Ritu Khanduri to cancel 228 ad hoc appointments on Friday shocked the Vidhan Sabha employees. Immediately after addressing the press conference in which she had announced her decision, Khanduri went to her chamber. As the news of her decision spread, a large number

of affected employees gathered outside her office. These employees, most of whom were women, confronted the speaker when she came out of her office and tried to gherao her.

They asked the speaker the reason for their removal and what they will now do for livelihood. The security per-

sonnel on duty safely took the speaker away from the agitated employees. Many female employees were seen weeping. "We should have been given a chance to present our case. In one sudden decision we have been asked to leave. We have families, we have taken loans. What will we do now?" asked one of the employees.

Act against politicians for backdoor appointments in VS- Mahara

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara has demanded that action should be taken against the politicians responsible for making backdoor appointments in Vidhan Sabha. In a statement he said that cancellation of the appointments done after 2016 from Vidhan Sabha by speaker Khanduri is actually not justice. He said that from day one the Congress party was demanding that all the appointments done in Uttarak-



hand Vidhan Sabha should be investigated. Mahara said that the action should be taken on

the politicians who shed morality and appointed their relatives and favoured ones in the Vidhan Sabha through the backdoor. He added that the involvement of the senior officers of the administration should also be investigated in the case. Challenging the expert committee set up by the speaker, Mahara said that the actions of the Vidhan Sabha speaker cannot be investigated by any bureaucrat.

Shopkeepers to protest against illegal shops and stalls in Paltan Bazaar

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Local shopkeepers will stage a protest against illegal shops and stalls being set up in Paltan Bazaar area claiming such setups are the cause of rise in crimes like pickpocketing, theft and eve teasing in the area. According to them, people facilitating such illegal vendors do not pay any kind of taxes to the government while probably earning lakhs of rupees every day whereas a normal shopkeeper in Paltan Bazaar provides employment to many and pays tax. The shopkeepers said that many have bought shops through loans and many pay considerable rent to run their shops in Paltan Bazaar but illegal activ-

ity is severely affecting the business of the shopkeepers. The president of Doon Valley Mahanagar Udyog Vyapar Mandal (DVMUVM) said that such illegal shops and stalls are not just affecting the business but also harming the sanctity of Paltan Bazaar which is visited by thousands of people every day. He said, "Crimes like eve teasing, pickpocketing, theft and chain snatching have increased significantly in the marketplace. People are becoming apprehensive of coming to Paltan Bazaar which has always been among the most visited places of the city." Masson said that the people setting up these il-

legal shops possibly belong to Uttar Pradesh and even the authorities have failed to stop them despite their multiple attempts in the past few months. "The district administration had shut all such illicit shops and markets being operated here on May 27 after our appeal for action. However such shops and stalls have started operating again from this month but the authorities are yet to take any action against them. It has once again started affecting our business and law and order in the area considering which, all local shopkeepers will stage a protest on Saturday."

management officer Devendra Patwal informed that the debris have been removed from Helgud and the vehicles are being made to pass carefully. The police, State Disaster Response Force and Border Roads Organisation personnel were also deployed on the spot.

Gangotri highway reopened after 40 hours

PNS ■ NEW TEHRI

The national highway to Gangotri which was blocked at Helgud on Wednesday evening following heavy rains was reopened for traffic after about 40 hours on Friday morning bringing relief to travellers and pilgrims stuck in different locations. The risk of landslide is persisting on the highway.

The landslide zone activated at Helgud about a month ago caused blockage of the highway on Wednesday. About 3,000 travellers and pilgrims were reported to be stuck at various points of the route. The administration had advised the travellers to stop at secure locations. Disaster

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-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

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MODI SHOULD MEET LEADERS FROM OTHER PARTIES MORE: NAIDU

This will help clear misunderstanding
Opp leaders may have about PM's methods: Ex-VP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should meet more often with the political leadership from all sides which may help clear some "misunderstandings" the Opposition parties might have about his methods. Speaking at the launch of a book on the Prime Minister's speeches, Naidu praised the



Prime Minister for his achievements across diverse sectors like healthcare, foreign policy, and technology. But at the same time, Naidu said that despite the

PM's achievements, some sections still have some reservations about his methods "because of some misunderstandings, maybe out of some political compulsions". "Over a period of time these misunderstandings will also be cleared. The Prime Minister should also often meet more and more sections of the political leadership ... this side and that side," the former V-P said adding political parties should also keep an open mind and respect the mandate of the people. "They must also be open-minded. You all should also understand that you are rivals not enemies. All parties must respect each other, the institution of the prime minister, institution of the president,

institution of the chief minister. All institutions should be respected that has to be kept in mind by one and all," Naidu said. The current government, he said, is working under the broader philosophy of 'Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhawantu'. Naidu listed out the Direct Benefit Transfer as the biggest achievement of the Government and said it freed people from the shackles of middlemen, ensuring endpoint delivery of welfare measures. The former Vice-President along with Union I&B Minister Anurag Thakur and Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan released a book 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas - Prime Minister Narendra Modi Speaks (May 2019-May 2020)'. Naidu said, "India is now a force to reckon

with, its voice is now heard across the world. In such a short span, it is not an ordinary thing. This is because of his actions, because of the guidance he is giving to the people and because of progress that India is making." Naidu retired from the top constitutional post on August 10, 2022 after his term ended as the 15th Vice President of India. The Kerala Governor lauded the PM for enacting a law to ban the practice of triple talaq among Muslims. He said even the first PM Jawaharlal Nehru had said his biggest regret was that he could not make laws to alleviate the problems faced by Muslim women. "Nehru could not take the bold decision to deliver justice to Muslim women. Modi dared to do it. We will under-

stand the importance of this decision only decades later," Khan said. Khan said that a common thread runs through the book and that is the Prime Minister's concern for marginalized section and women empowerment. He highlighted that the twin issues of availability of toilets and water connectivity had needed urgent Government intervention for very long but had been lagging even as many Governments came and went. It was only the current dispensation that took up this mission on war footing from the beginning, he said. For his part, Thakur said the book, brought out by the Publications Division, focuses on 86 speeches of the PM on various subjects from May 2019 to May 2020.

US: F-16s supply to Pak not designed as message to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

Days after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh expressed India's concern to his US counterpart Lloyd Austin over supply of F-16s to Pakistan, the US has said "it is not designed as a message" to New Delhi for its neutral stand on Russia regarding the ongoing Ukraine conflict.

Making his country's stand clear regarding the issue, Ely Ratner, Assistant Secretary of Defence for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, said late Thursday its decision to provide a USD 450 million sustenance package for Pakistan's F-16 fleet is associated with America's defence partnership with Islamabad which is primarily focused on counterterrorism and nuclear security. He also said the US has a limited security partnership with Pakistan. However, New Delhi says Pakistan's F-16s are not used for counter-terrorism operations and instead pose a threat to India. The US official's reaffirmation came in the backdrop of Rajnath on September 14 talked about India's apprehensions about the F-16 deal during his telephonic talks



with Austin. It was the first ministerial level objection registered by India. "I conveyed India's concern at the recent US decision to provide sustenance package for Pakistan's F-16 fleet. Look forward to continuing dialogue with Secretary Austin to further consolidating India-US partnership," Rajnath tweeted after talks. Earlier, the ministry of external affairs reportedly expressed its concern during meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu. He was here to take part in the Quad Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). On September 8, the Biden administration approved the 450 million dollar F-16 fighter jet fleet sustenance programme to Pakistan, reversing the decision of the previous Trump administration to suspend military aid to Islamabad for providing safe havens for the Afghan

Taliban and the Haqqani network. In a notification to the US Congress, the State Department made a determination approving a possible foreign military sale for sustenance and related equipment arguing that this will sustain Islamabad's capability to meet current and future counterterrorism threats by maintaining its F-16 fleet. Responding to a question, Ratner, said the recent US action with Pakistan on F-16 is not designed as a message to India as it relates to its relationship with Russia. "The decision inside the US government around the F-16 issue was made predicated on US interests associated with our defence partnership with Pakistan which is primarily focused on counterterrorism and nuclear security and as the (Defence) Secretary Lloyd Austin made clear to (Defence) Minister Rajnath Singh during their call last week, this case did not include any upgrades or munitions," he said. "We have been engaging with our Indian counterparts, both in advance of the announcement to preview it and during my visit with Assistant Secretary (Donald) Lu in Delhi as well.

New telecom draft bill to bring OTT platforms under licensing regime

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The new telecom draft bill seeks requirement of licence for internet calling facilities like Whatsapp, Zoom and Google platforms and OTT apps for operating in India. Union Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday said that new telecom bill, which will replace the 137-year-old Indian Telegraph Act, is expected to be in place in 6-10 months. The bill also seeks to replace the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933 and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950. "Based on the consultation process, we will create the final draft. That draft will then go through committee processes of Parliament. Then it has to go to Parliament. I see a timeline of 6-10 months but we are not in a hurry," said Vaishnaw, giving detailed presentation in a press conference. While the Government has sought reference from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India on licensing framework for internet and calling messages, the bill clearly shows the Government intent to bring the OTT apps under the licensing regime. "OTT already comes under regulation by

interpretation of what is a telegraph. The consultation process for its regulation has already started. The focus of this bill is that we have to make a light touch regulatory environment. Wherever required there should be strict effective regulation and in rest of the places there will be light touch regulation," the Minister said. The bill proposes all internet calling and messaging apps to comply with the Know Your Customers (KYC) provision when they come under telecom licence ambit. The Minister said the first fundamental thought in the bill is about protection of users and every consumer has the right to know who is making the call. "If calls can take place from different platforms then every platform needs to come under the same kind of regulation. This is not only in India, this is the thought process across the world. Technology has brought so many changes that the distinction between voice call and data call has disappeared," Vaishnaw said. He said that KYC norms will also help in curbing cyber frauds. The Minister said that it is the fundamental duty of users to give correct information while take services from oper-

ators. The bill proposes up to one year imprisonment for giving false identity for availing telecom services. He said that telecom service providers will be given an option to shift to the new rule. The bill proposes to slash the maximum penalty of telecom operators to Rs 5 crore from Rs 50 crore per circle imposed at present. The bill proposes a penalty in the range of nil to maximum Rs 5 crore. The Government in the bill has proposed a provision to waive fees and penalty of telecom and internet service providers. Vaishnaw said that the government will focus on continuity of service in case a company goes for insolvency as at the end the spectrum will come back to the government. The bill proposes an enabling framework for the Centre to address defaults in payment by a licensee, registered entity or assignee. In case of extraordinary circumstances, the government can decide to defer the due payment, convert a part or all of the amounts into shares of the entity, write-off the amount or a part of it or even provide relief from payment of such amounts or a part. The draft also has a provision for a refund of fees in case a telecom or internet provider surrenders its licence.

Mexico proposes UN peace panel with Indian PM among members to broker Russia-Ukraine peace

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/PITTSBURGH

With the Ukraine conflict unabated for the last seven months, Mexico has proposed to the United Nations to set up a committee including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pope Francis and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to mediate permanent peace between Russia and Ukraine. This proposal by Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Luis Ebrard Casaubon while participating in a UN Security Council debate on Ukraine in New York late Thursday came days after Modi's message to President Vladimir Putin on September 16 that "today's era is not of war." Putin told Modi that he was aware of India's concerns over the Ukraine conflict and that Russia will do everything possible to end it as soon as possible. The two leaders held bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO). Modi's message to Putin was welcomed by French President Emmanuel Macron in UN earlier this week. The US and United Kingdom also

lauded Modi for this stand. "Based on its pacifist vocation, Mexico believes that the international community must now channel its best efforts to achieve peace," Casaubón said. "In this regard, I would like to share with you the proposal of the President of Mexico, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, to strengthen the mediation efforts of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, through the formation of a Committee for Dialogue and Peace in Ukraine with the participation of other heads of state and government, including, if possible, His Excellency Narendra Modi and His Holiness Pope Francis." He said objective of committee would be to generate new mechanisms for dialogue and create complementary spaces for mediation to build confidence, reduce tensions and open way for lasting peace. Casaubon said Mexican delegation will continue with necessary consultations to contribute towards generating broad support for mediation efforts led by UN secretary-general as well as for committee, "whose formation we hope will proceed with support of UN member states that so decide".

Prophet remark row: FIRs against Navika transferred to Delhi Police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday clubbed and transferred to the Delhi Police all FIRs registered against journalist Navika Kumar over the controversial remarks made by ex-BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma on Prophet Mohammad during debate in Times Now channel moderated by her. A bench of Justices MR Shah and Krishna Murari

said no coercive action would be taken against Kumar for a period of eight weeks so that she can avail remedies in the interim period. Apex court also granted liberty to Kumar to move the Delhi High Court for quashing of the lead FIR. The court also said that any FIR registered in the future against Kumar in the matter will also be transferred to the Delhi Police. "The petitioner shall be at liberty to approach the Delhi High Court

seeking the relief of quashing of FIRs. We have not expressed any opinion on merits," the bench said. The Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of Delhi Police will probe matter. The apex court on August 8 had granted interim protection from arrest to Kumar and issued notices to Centre, West Bengal government, and others on plea of journalist seeking quashing of proceedings initiated against her.

SC stays graft case proceeding against BSY

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed proceedings against former Karnataka Chief Minister and senior BJP leader BS Yediyurappa in an alleged corruption case. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Hima Kohli issued notice to the private complainant on a plea challenging the Karnataka High Court order restoring complaint against Yediyurappa and others. "There shall be a stay of proceedings so far as the petitioner is concerned," the bench said. The Karnataka

High Court on September 7 had restored a private complaint against Yediyurappa and his family members. The complainant had accused him of taking bribe for awarding Government contracts. A Sessions court had earlier dismissed a plea seeking a probe into the allegations of corruption against Yediyurappa as then Governor had refused to sanction it. TJ Abraham, a social activist, had lodged the complaint alleging that Yediyurappa and his family members had taken bribe from

Ramalingam Construction Company and other shell companies in return for awarding Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) contracts.



CBI arrests NHAH CGM for accepting bribe

New Delhi: The CBI on Friday said it has apprehended a Chief General Manager of National Highways Authority of India (NHAH), Regional Office, Patna for accepting a bribe of Rs 5 lakh in a bribery case. During searches, the CBI recovered cash to tune of Rs 60 lakh from house of arrested CGM, CGM Sadre Alam, posted at Regional Office in Patna, was caught taking bribe from two employees of a private company, officials said. It is alleged that Alam was seeking bribe

from officials of a Nashik-based private company in exchange for clearing inflated bills and manipulation of measurement books. Meanwhile, Enforcement Directorate on Friday said illegal mining worth Rs 35 crore has been carried out by certain stone crushers and related entities in Una district of Himachal Pradesh. The agency said it recently raids against accused allegedly involved in illegal activity and seized "incriminating" documents and Rs 15.37 lakh "unaccounted" cash. PNS



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with former captain of India women's national cricket team Mithali Raj, during a meeting PTI

‘Herbal drug ‘BGR-34’ cuts down obesity, improves body metabolism’

It modulates hormonal profile, lipid profile and triglyceride level while bringing down fat level in body: Doctors at AIIMS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Anti-diabetic ayurvedic drug 'BGR-34' is effective in cutting down obesity along with improving metabolism mechanisms of patients afflicted with the chronic disease, a team of doctors from the country's premier health institute AIIMS, Delhi has found. Led by Dr Sudhir Chandra Sarangi, Additional Professor, Department of Pharmacology AIIMS, the team reached this conclusion following a study spanning three years. Comprising a range of ingredients from medicinal plants, this drug has been developed after an intensive research by scientists of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and is being marketed by AIMIL Pharmaceuticals. The study was aimed to

investigate whether BGR-34 was effective on its own or along with other allopathy drugs, and if yes, then at what level. The results found that the herbal drug was enough not only in reduction of fasting blood sugar through modulation of hormonal profile along with a significant body weight reduction, but there were other benefits also. The drug also modulates hormonal profile, lipid profile and triglyceride level while bringing down leptin mark which is effective in controlling fat. Triglyceride, in excess quantity, is harmful for the health as it is a bad cholesterol. Similarly, controlled lipid profile keeps heart diseases at bay while disturbance in hormonal profile can result in poor sleep, noted the authors about the research based on various health parameters, according to the study. In contrast, modulation of hormonal profile was found to be significant, resulting in increased insulin level. The study initiated in March 2019 will soon be published in a research journal. One in six people with diabetes in the world is from

India. The numbers place the country among the top 10 countries for people with diabetes, coming in at number two with an estimated 77 million diabetics. China leads the list with over 116 million diabetics. Diabetes can increase the risk of health complications, including cardiovascular disease, kidney failure, stroke, blindness, and circulatory issues, which could necessitate the amputation of toes, feet, or a part of the leg. Dr Sanchit Sharma, Executive Director, AIMIL Pharmaceutical said herbal-based ayurveda medicines are finding huge acceptance among people who are more keen into taking preventive health measures in the backdrop of rising non-communicable diseases due to lifestyle changes, among others. "To cater to this increasing demand, the government too has taken various measures to boost the availability of these products based on time-tested medicinal plants as immunity boosters. This will go a long way in achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Healthy India'," he added.

CISF doing non-core duties at 60 airports will be replaced by private security personnel: AAI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Airport Authority of India (AAI) on Friday said that Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel performing non-core duties at 60 airports in the country will be replaced by private security personnel. The move will reduce the security expenditure, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said, and added that "these CISF personnel can be deployed at other airports which will further strengthen the security set-up." "In line with the decision of the central government, a total of 1,924 private security agency personnel will be deployed at 60 airports in place of CISF personnel, posted at non-core duty posts," AAI said in the release. AAI also said it has appointed 581 security personnel from Directorate General Resettlement (DGR)-sponsored security agencies for non-core posts at 45 airports. "These security personnel will be deployed after completion of the aviation security (AVSEC) training pro-

gramme at selected airports," it said. It also said that as many as 161 DGR personnel for 16 airports are attending AVSEC training programmes and they will be deployed after completion of training from Saturday. Already 74 DGR security personnel have been deployed at Kolkata Airport from early this month after attending the AVSEC training programme, the statement said. The deployment process of the remaining security personnel is under process, it added. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) issued a circular in this regard in May. Hiring of private guards is also expected to lower aviation security costs at airports because their salaries are estimated to be lower than that of CISF personnel. At present, airports bear the expenses of security cover provided by the CISF and this is recovered from passengers in the form of an aviation security fee. Airports will be reimbursed for costs related to deployment of private agency guards, a source said. At present domestic and international passengers are charged an aviation security fee of ₹200 and \$12, respectively.

‘Rahul told me no one from Gandhi kin should be Cong prez’

Gehlot first to announce candidature for AICC chief’s job

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot became the first person to announce his candidature for the AICC presidential poll on Friday, a day before the nomination process begins, and said Rahul Gandhi has told him that no one from the Gandhi family should become the next party chief.

He also said the call on his successor to head the Rajasthan Government will be taken by

the party’s interim president, Sonia Gandhi, and the Congress’s Rajasthan in-charge, Ajay Maken.

Gehlot’s remarks came a day after former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi battled for the "one-man, one-post" concept in the party, in line with the Chintan Shivir reforms earlier this year.

With Shashi Tharoor likely to be the second contender and the names of several others also doing the rounds for joining the fray, Gehlot said the aim should be that all Congress members work together after the poll to strengthen the party.

Talking to reporters in Kochi, the 71-year-old leader said, "I will fix the date (to submit the nomination papers) after going back (to Rajasthan), but I have decided that I will have to contest. It is a question of democracy and let us make

a new start."

Gehlot also said Rahul Gandhi has told him that he respects the wish of the party workers that he should take charge of the organisation but no one from the Gandhi family would become the next Congress president.

"I requested him multiple times. He has clearly said 'I know, everyone wants me to take it up, PCCs have passed resolutions, the workers want it. I have a lot of respect for them but due to certain reasons, we have decided that a non-Gandhi family person should become the president,'" Gehlot said.

With Thiruvananthapuram MP Tharoor likely to enter the poll fray, Gehlot said other "Congress friends" may also contest but what matters is unity and the need to strengthen the organisation at all levels.



"There are Congress friends. Even if they contest, there is no issue. After the results, we should work together to strengthen the Congress at the block, village and district levels and also move forward making our (Congress) thought process as the base, so that we emerge as a strong opposition," he added.

Considering the present situation in the country, there is a need for a strong Opposition, the veteran Congress leader said.

Later in the day, talking to

reporters in Shirdi, Gehlot said the debate on "one man, one post" is unnecessary and he would like to serve the people of his state all his life. He also said his statements on wanting to serve the people of Rajasthan are being interpreted in different ways.

With the speculation over Rahul Gandhi contesting the AICC presidential poll coming to an end with Gehlot’s remarks, Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury hailed the former party chief for taking a "principled" stance and called him a "natural leader".

"It was the universal demand from the workers of our party that Rahul Gandhi should assume the charge of AICC president. But from the very first day, he has been declining the job. He has decided that someone from outside

the Gandhi family should take it up," Chowdhury told PTI.

"It is a very principled stand. He is a natural leader. When he says anything, he will draw the attention of the country. He certainly holds a special place in the heart of the common Congress worker," he said.

Rahul Gandhi does not hanker for posts, Chowdhury said, adding that he could have taken up a ministerial berth in 2009, but had declined it.

In another related development, a day after Congress leader Gaurav Vallabh taunted Tharoor over his probable AICC presidential poll bid, the party asked its spokespersons and communications department office-bearers to refrain from commenting on any colleague contesting the election.

Vallabh had also voiced support for Gehlot, who many

believe enjoys the backing of the party’s current leadership.

According to sources, All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh, in a message to the spokespersons and office-bearers of the party’s communications department, said, "I would strongly urge all spokespersons and office-bearers of the communications department of the AICC to refrain from making any comment of any kind on any colleague of ours contesting the election for the post of Congress president."

Even as the race for the Congress president’s post is heating up, veteran leader and Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh said he is not interested in becoming the party chief.

Several senior leaders’ names such as that of former

Union minister Manish Tewari, former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath, Mukul Wasnik and Mallikarjun Kharge were doing the rounds as possible contenders, but many of them have privately ruled out running for the top post.

According to a notification issued by the party on Thursday, the process for filing nominations for the election will be held from September 24 to 30. The date for a scrutiny of the nomination papers is October 1, while the last date for withdrawal of nominations is October 8. The final list of candidates will be published at 5 pm on October 8.

The polling, if needed, will be held on October 17. The counting of votes will be taken up on October 19 and the results will be declared the same day.

Kurmis’ rail-road blockade in Bengal for SC status enters 4th day

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Life continued to remain stranded as the rail and road blockade organised by the Kurmi community of Jangalmahal area of Bengal entered its fourth day on Friday. The members of the Kurmi community that have been demanding Scheduled Caste status and inclusion of the Kurmali language in the 8th schedule of the Constitution said the movement would continue till they did not get a positive assurance from the State and the Centre.

The movement --- that started on Tuesday with a Rail-Roko and on Thursday spilled over to NH 6 blocking the one of the busiest national highways of the country --- has affected large parts of Purulia, West Midnapore, and Jhargram districts of Bengal, a helpless State administration said adding they had nothing in their hand and that the Centre should immediately intervene.

Bengal minister Firhad Hakim said that the movement ahead of the festive seasons was likely to affect lakhs of people and urged the Prime Minister to intervene. "This is a movement of 75 years ... the Trinamool Congress too had raised the issue in Parliament and now it remains on the Centre to take steps ... we request the Prime Minister to intervene so as to find an amicable way out," the senior Bengal minister said.

While the South Eastern Railways sources said that at least 159 trains --- including Bombay Mail, Geetanjali Express --- and those running via Kolkata-Nagpur route had

been suspended indefinitely, sources in the State transport department said thousands of trucks carrying essential items including foods and vegetables and other perishable products were stranded along the national highway. Bus services connecting Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha via this route had also been interrupted sources said.

Five different Kurmi outfits of the Jangalmahal area have collaborated to bring bring pressure on the Centre and the State even as its leader Ajit Mahato said "we have been making our demands for the past 75 years ... we are bhoomiputras (sons of the soil) and yet our demand has not been met ... now enough is enough ... the government will have to listen to us ... though we do not want to put the fellow citizens of the country into trouble ... the movement will continue if our demand is not met."

Mahato’s statement came amid reports that the State Government had sent a letter forwarding their demand to the Union ministry of Tribal Affairs. "We have done out bit ... now it is up to the Centre to take a call," said a senior bureaucrat.

According to the Kurmi leaders the community had lost its Scheduled Tribe status post Independence despite the fact that they were registered as STs till 1931.

Meanwhile, Kharagpur BJP MP and party national vice president Dilip Ghosh whose constituency too has been affected by the blockade blamed the Trinamool Congress for the "mischief." He said, "even we have



supported this demand in Parliament ... in fact such things are done in a particular manner and not by blocking the rail or road traffic ... it has been instigated by the TMC to turn the attention from the corruption charges and the public unrest that it has been facing in recent times."

The last time a similar movement was witnessed was in 2006 when then opposition leader Mamata Banerjee had blocked the national highway during his anti-land acquisition movement at Singur for more than two weeks.

No anticipatory bail in rape, crimes under POCSO in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Strictly going with the zero tolerance policy of his Government towards sexual crime against women and children, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday took another major decision by withdrawing the anticipatory bail provision in such crimes in Uttar Pradesh. Yogi Adityanath claimed that the Government is sensitive towards crimes against women and children and would take all strict steps towards curbing such heinous crimes by sending the accused to jail.

"The morale of such criminals who cause serious injury to not only the body of women and children but even their soul will be broken by this decision

of the Government and unwavering faith in the state’s law and order will be generated in the minds of women and children in society," claimed a Government spokesman while confirming the withdrawal of the anticipatory bail provisions in such crimes.

The spokesperson said that in view of the need to make the present law more stringent towards crimes of rape against women and sexual assaults against children, the Government had decided to ensure stringent action in rape and POCSO Act crimes. He said action had been taken to abolish anticipatory bail to the offenders involved in such crimes by amending the provisions of law relating to such offences.

Herald case: ED notices to AP, Telangana Cong leaders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued notices to some Congress leaders from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in connection with its ongoing money laundering investigation against the National Herald newspaper owned by the Congress party.

While some of the politicians belonging to the party have been summoned for questioning here over the next few weeks, others have been given notices to explain certain payments made to Young Indian, the company that owns National Herald. At least four leaders have been issued the notices, officials said.

Earlier this week, Karnataka Congress President

D K Shivakumar had told reporters after finishing his questioning session with the ED here that he was questioned about certain transactions made by him to this company in the past.

"Surprisingly, they (ED officials) have asked me about the payment from one of my trusts, from me and my brother, to Young Indian," he told reporters on September 19.

Shivakumar said he had sought more time from the agency to furnish details about his assets and liabilities.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi and her son and MP Rahul Gandhi, apart from some other Congress leaders, have been questioned by the ED over the last few months in the case.

Congmen asked not to comment on those contesting prez polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Congress Spokesman Gourav Vallabh slammed his party colleague Shashi Tharoor over his probable AICC president poll bid, the party on Friday urged all its spokespersons and communication department office bearers to refrain from commenting on any colleague contesting the elections.

Vallabh, who voiced support for Ashok Gehlot had hit out at Tharoor over his probable AICC president poll bid, saying his "only major contribution" to the party was to send letters to Sonia Gandhi when she was hospitalised.

According to sources,

AICC general secretary in-charge Communications Jairam Ramesh said in a message to all spokespersons and office bearers of the communication department, "I would strongly urge all Spokespersons and office bearers of Communications Department of AICC to refrain from making any comment of any kind on any colleague of ours contesting the elections for the post of Congress President."

We all have our individual preferences but our job is to only highlight that the Congress is the only political party to have a democratic and transparent system in place for election to the post of its president," the sources said.

To arm troops better, Army issues RFI for rifles, bulletproof jackets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to enhance fighting capabilities of frontline troops guarding the borders and boost indigenous manufacturing capacities, the Army has issued a request for information (RFI) for nearly 4,25,000 carbine rifles and more than 47,000 bulletproof jackets.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in July this year had given the nod for proposals worth Rs 28,732 crores for rifles, bullet proof jackets and armed swarm drones.

The two critical items, rifles and bullet proof jackets,

used by infantry troops guarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China and the Line of Control (LOC) with Pakistan besides counter-terrorism operations will be procured from domestic manufacturers.

After zeroing in on the most suitable vendors, the Army proposes to issue the tender by late October or November, sources said here on Friday after the RFI was issued on Thursday.

The Army proposes to procure 5.56mm close quarter carbines with an effective range of at least 200 metre, as per the RFI which also highlighted other specifications including accuracy and reliability.

Considering the demand

of enhanced protection against the threat of enemy snipers to our troops deployed along the LOC in Jammu and Kashmir, and in close combat operations in counter-terrorism scenario, the DAC gave the nod for Bullet Proof Jackets with Indian Standard BIS VI level of protection, the defence ministry had said on July 26 while giving details of the DAC meeting.

The Army has issued RFI for 47, 627 jackets.

It also said to combat the current complex paradigm of conventional and hybrid warfare and counter-terrorism at the LAC and other borders including the LOC, the DAC approved the induction of

four lakh Close Quarter Battle Carbines.

This is set to provide a major impetus to the small arms manufacturing industry in India and enhancing AtmaNirbharata in small arms, they said.

As regards unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), they said in the recent conflicts across the world, drone technology proved to be a force multiplier in military operations.

Accordingly, to augment the Indian Army’s capability in modern warfare, the DAC gave the nod for procurement of Autonomous Surveillance and Armed Drone Swarms under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category.

Jammu celebrates 127th birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Jammu, the city of temples, on Friday celebrated the 127 birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh, the last Dogra ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, by converging here at the Tawi Bridge where they distributed 'laddoos', cut cakes, burst fire crackers, sang patriotic and dogri folk songs in front of his larger than life statue. The political leaders belonging to the different political parties took turns to pay their tributes and recorded their presence at the venue in order to claim the Dogra Maharaja’s legacy. In the evening, a large number of

local residents converged at the Maharaja Hari Singh park, located on the banks of river Tawi where they lit up earthen lamps (diyas). Scintillating fire-works lit up the Jammu skyline to mark the celebrations.

The Union Territory administration had last week declared the birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh, which falls on September 23, as an annual holiday across the region.

"Maharaja Hari Singh was a great educationist, progressive thinker, social reformer and a towering man of ideas and ideals. The public holiday will be a fitting tribute to

Maharaja Hari Singh Ji’s rich legacy," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had tweeted after declaring the public holiday.

On one hand, the members of the Royal family in Jammu performed traditional pooja and organised events to mark the celebrations and on the other hand the common residents took out processions across different parts of the Jammu city and converged at the Tawi bridge to pay tributes to the last Dogra ruler.

"I want to congratulate the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the 127th birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh ji. Grant of holiday on his birth

anniversary is a victory for all the people of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the youth of Jammu," grandson of Maharaja Hari Singh and former legislator Vikramaditya told reporters.

Brandishing swords, hundreds of youth wearing saffron turbans, holding flags of Yuva Rajput Sabha were seen shouting slogans in jubilation. A separate procession was taken out by the members of the Yuva Rajput Sabha from Bantalab area of Jammu.

They reached the venue of the celebrations at the Tawi bridge enroute different parts of the city. Meanwhile traffic

remained disrupted on different routes and the main Tawi bridge was also declared out of bound for larger duration of the day leading to long traffic snarls.

Some of the activists belonging to the Yuva Rajput Sabha also clashed with media persons after few among them raised the issue of bursting heavy decibel crackers and brandishing swords standing atop SUV’s and other vehicles. The policemen and traffic police personnel stationed along the different routes failed to prevent the chaos on the city roads. At the Tawi bridge, the BJP leadership led

by its president, Ravinder Raina participated in the celebrations.

Congress party led by its working president Raman Bhalla also took part in the celebrations and asserted that it was time for the central government to fulfil another demand of restoration of Jammu and Kashmir’s statehood.

Former minister and MP Choudhary Lal Singh of Dogra Swabhimana Sangathan also took out a victory rally and said it was time to fight for restoring Jammu and Kashmir’s statehood.

Several other prominent



organisations including Dogra Sabha celebrated the birth anniversary.

Similar celebrations were

also held in Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Reasi, Doda, Kishtwar and Rajouri districts.

HC sentences Mukhtar to 5 years’ imprisonment in 23-year-old case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court on Friday sentenced former Bahujan Samaj Party MLA and mafia-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari to five years’ imprisonment in a 23-year-old case related to the Gangsters Act.

Justice DK Singh passed the order while overturning Mukhtar Ansari’s acquittal by a special MP-MLA court in 2020. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on Ansari.



State counsel Rao Narendra Singh said the FIR was lodged with Lucknow’s Hazratganj police in 1999 and a special court had acquitted Ansari in 2020. The state had filed an appeal against acquittal in 2021. The High Court on Friday

allowed the state government’s appeal and sentenced Ansari to five years in jail, he said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Mukhtar Ansari was awarded seven years’ jail term in another case for threatening a jailer and pointing a pistol at him. In 2003, the then Lucknow district prison jailer SK Awasthi had lodged an FIR with the Alambagh police, alleging that he was threatened for ordering a search of people who came to meet Ansari. A trial court had acquitted Ansari in this case also.

ED confiscates ₹200 cr property of former BSP MLC Haji Iqbal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Enforcement Directorate sleuths in Lucknow have attached a property worth Rs 200 crore of former MLC of Bahujan Samaj Party and mining mafia Haji Iqbal alias Balla on Dehradun-Mussoorie Road.

Mining don Haji Iqbal belongs to Saharanpur district and is facing several criminal and money laundering cases.

Sources said the market value of Iqbal’s ill-gotten property located on Mussoorie

diversion was worth more than Rs 200 crore. About two days ago, the officials of ED’s Lucknow branch had gone to Dehradun in Uttarakhand and pasted a notice on the property regarding the legal action.

The ED officials, after gathering information and evidence about Haji Iqbal’s Dehradun property, concluded that it was acquired around 15 years ago from ill-gotten money.

The ED attached the property under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.



A lioness with its three cubs at the Sarthana Zoo in Surat on Friday.

PTI



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Uphill task

If Gehlot is elected as Cong chief, he will have to strive hard to revive the party

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is said to be leading the race for Congress president; and this is not because he is a party stalwart, which he is, but because he enjoys the blessings of the Gandhi family. A non-family member will head the ‘grand old party’ after decades since senior leader Rahul Gandhi said no family member should head the party. So, in effect, Gehlot is the family’s nominee. Former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor, who was considered close to the family but later joined the rebel G-23 group, is reportedly keen to take on Gehlot. Some other leaders may also enter the fray. The Kerala MP, however, has failed to enthuse many leaders. The Congress units in 10 States, including in his home State, have reportedly opposed him. Some of Tharoor’s party colleagues in Kerala have said they would support only those who recognise the Nehru family’s prominence. Gehlot clearly enjoys that support but the 71-year-old Congress veteran is not very happy,



for the Congress president’s post comes with conditionality: He has to leave the top office in Rajasthan. This will be a bitter bite for him as his *bête noire* in the State, Sachin Pilot, is likely to succeed him. There are media reports suggesting that he wanted the next Chief Minister of his choice, a demand that doesn’t seem to have been acceded to. For the top Congress leadership, the intra-party election may be an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone: Get a non-family party president, thus blunting the BJP’s attacks of the GOP being a family-run party; and putting an end to the Gehlot-Pilot tussle in Rajasthan.

The interim chief of the Congress, Sonia Gandhi, before her meeting with Gehlot, had an hour-long chat with Pilot. While the proposed arrangement — Gehlot as the Congress chief and Pilot as Rajasthan Chief Minister — will suit the party’s top brass, it may not exactly delight Gehlot. He may head the country’s oldest political party but, with Pilot as the Chief Minister, the old warhorse will have hardly any say in his own home State. The reasons are obvious: There was a lot of bad blood between Gehlot and his former Deputy Chief Minister, Pilot. The Congress will hope that Gehlot, if elected, would focus on the new job rather than bemoaning the loss of the previous one. The bigger issue would be the interference of the family in running the party. If that continues, and in the manner the interference continues, the chances of party revival will be considerably diminished. While Rahul has been consistent in his criticism and condemnation of the Narendra Modi regime, and his Bharat Jodo Yatra has also gained some traction, his and his family members’ performance has been, to put it mildly, suboptimal. Some of the Gandhis’ decisions have been completely bereft of rationality. Gehlot, if elected, will have a lot of baggage to deal with. Reviving the party will be an uphill task.

PICTALK



A child participates in the ‘Pedal For Peace’ cycle race organised by Jammu and Kashmir Police, in Srinagar

PTI

New-look PM CARES

The PM’s fund has three new trustees, including the illustrious Ratan Tata

The Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES) is all set to enter a new phase. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has decided to widen its board of trustees. Three new trustees were inducted in a meeting chaired by the PM himself. The Union Home Minister and the Finance Minister are already the fund’s trustees. The three new members are former Supreme Court judge KT Thomas, former Deputy Speaker Kariya Munda and industrialist Ratan Tata, all of them octogenarians. The Advisory Board to PM CARES would have Rajiv Mehrishi, the former Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Sudha Murthy, former Chairperson, Infosys Foundation, and Anand Shah, co-founder of ‘Teach for India’ and former CEO of Indicorps and Piramal Foundation. This now gives PM CARES some semblance of a public trust rather than a government body. Modi said the participation of new trustees and advisors will provide ‘wider perspectives to the functioning of the PM CARES Fund’ as their vast experience in public life would impart further vigour in making the fund more responsive to various public needs. It is true though this should have been done at the time of formation of the fund.

In fact, the fund drew flak from all quarters for being ‘redundant’ as the Prime Minister Relief Fund already existed for such exigencies. So what was the need to have such a fund in the first place? Besides, they objected to the fact that the Government kept it away from the CAG audit’s

ambit. The Government’s stand has been that it doesn’t get Government funding, rather only private funds. However, that is debatable as PM CARES has allegedly received multi-million funds from PSUs, Government departments, etc which run on exchequer’s money. It goes without saying that once the name of Ratan Tata is associated with PM CARES, it would give validation to its motives and ensure transparency. Besides, if the fund has to have respectability, the money must be used judiciously. Unfortunately in the past, there were reports of substandard medical equipment being bought by the PM CARES money. Every penny counts and must be spent transparently, whether the money is received from a private enterprise or a PSU. Let’s hope that Ratan Tata’s trusteeship brings about a radical change in the PM CARES disbursal of funds.

The sudden spurt in Afghan blasts

Will Taliban be able to defeat a resurgent Islamic State of Khorasan Province, which is carrying out terror strikes to undermine the regime?

The continuing explosions in Afghanistan — the latest at the time of writing being the one that killed at least three in Kabul on September 21, 2022 — have been attributed to or claimed by the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), an affiliate of the Daesh or Islamic State. Many also call the organisation, which made its appearance in Afghanistan in 2014 (2015, according to some), the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan (ISIS-K).

These blasts and other terror strikes are aimed at undermining the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. As Asfandiyar Mir, a senior expert at the US Institute of Peace, points out in a Wilson Centre paper, dated October 8, 2021, “ISIS-K sees the Taliban as an irreconcilable enemy that needs to be militarily defeated.” While “sustained military hostilities” have aggravated the enmity between the organisations, “the main cause remains their sectarian difference”. The ISKP subscribes to the “Jihadi-Salafism ideology — and plays up the ‘purity’ of its anti-idolatry credentials, the Taliban subscribe to ‘an alternative Sunni Islamic sectarian school, the Hanafi madhhab,’ which ISKP regards as “deficient”. The two groups also differ over the role of nationalism. The ISKP’s fierce rejection of it “runs counter to the Afghan Taliban’s aims of ruling over Afghanistan”.

The blasts and other forms of terror strike have, no doubt, seriously undercut the Taliban narrative that their rule has brought security to Afghanistan. They also raise the question whether the Taliban regime itself is secure. Of course, it is one thing to trigger explosions and quite another to defenestrate the Taliban regime. It is always difficult to prevent terror strikes including bomb blasts. The initiative lies with the perpetrators and Governments can only react *post-facto*. Preventive action can only be taken if advance information is available as a result of deep and extensive penetration of the organisation concerned by intelligence agen-



cies, which, again would depend in a great measure on how porous or impenetrable the organisation is. Given the continuing frequency and spread of the blasts and other attacks by the ISKP, the Taliban have clearly not been able to penetrate it.

Inability to prevent terror strikes does not mean that the Taliban regime is set to collapse. It has a large army of trained fighters and has inherited the arms, ammunition, military aircraft and vehicles and combat infrastructure left behind by the United States. Nevertheless, the Taliban do face serious problems. Writing for the US Council of Foreign Relations’ Centre for Preventive Action, Seth G Jones, Harold Brown Chair and Director, Transnational Threats Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies, they do not control law and order outside most cities; nor have they been able to establish basic services. The economy is in shambles. As a report in *The Economist* datelined June 8, 2022, and titled ‘*The Taliban Government has proved surprisingly good at raising money*’, states, in “the last four months of 2021, the economy contracted by more than a third compared with the same

“
THE ISKP HAS SHOWN REMARKABLE RESILIENCE. SUSTAINED ATTACKS BY THE US FORCES, THE PREVIOUS AFGHAISTAN GOVERNMENT FROM 2016 TO 2021, HAD SEVERELY WEAKENED IT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TOLERANCE IS ON THE WANE

Sir — Tolerance is the intrinsic characteristic feature of Indian culture and civilisation but unfortunately it is waning, which is a cause of serious concern to political parties, Government and the general populace. Since ancient times, the quality and doctrine of tolerance guided us and it formed part of our life and whole governance; thus we should protect this intrinsic beauty of our nation at all costs. If it requires any sacrifice, we should be prepared for it and should never let it down it under any circumstances. The bane and politics of intolerance and hatred has become a reality and fashion in the 21st century India.

It is an irony that everything is politicised by politicians purely for vote bank politics and appeasement policy. The politics of intolerance has affected our coexistence and mutual brotherhood. The creed of intolerance is threatening our secularism, pluralism and the Hindu-Muslim amity/unity. Therefore, we should not allow the culture of intolerance and hatred to flourish in India as it is against our age-old values of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam, which means that the whole world is one family and it is central to all our endeavours.

Vivek Koul | Jammu

A POLITICAL WITCH-HUNT

Sir — The political witch-hunt in Telangana is talk of the town as many business people who are close to the ruling TRS are feeling scared as the ED and CBI have started investigating many cases against them and some have even been arrested. Though political witch-hunt is nothing new, it is being seen more of since the BJP Government is determined to fight corruption in business, politics and funding elections through black money. But it should apply to all, whether BJP-ruled States or the Opposition party ruled States. Many States are worried and agitating at the raids.

Disrupting life for no reason



Public in Kerala had to face a lot of problem during the one-day strike called by a faction which was protesting against the raid and arrests made by the NIA over the radical outfit’s alleged involvement in terror-related activities including involvement in funding terrorism and terrorist activities, organising training camps and radicalising people to join banned organisations. At many places, buses and vehicles were blocked and shops closed by the protesters. Many KSRTC buses were damaged and

commuters hurt at many places.

The pain, anxiety and anguish felt by the common man as a result of such unwanted protests and hindrances, blocking the everyday life of citizens, can never be understood by those stupefied due to political power and radical influence. Complete chaos and disruptions lead to so many problems and confusion in public life. Punishment to all such elements will definitely reduce such anti-public behaviour. It is really surprising to see the leaders of political parties and factions, who lead such protests, justifying such strikes. Other than the leaders and the members of the parties who call these strikes, nobody supports or is interested in such protests that cause only difficulties and hardships to the common man. Rather than getting the support, they can expect only fear and animosity from the public.

M Pradyu | Kannur

Regarding the raids in Telangana, it comes as no surprise especially since the witch-hunt was started by the ruling party. Despite a plethora of corruption and land grabbing complaints against various political leaders and even Ministers, the Government never looked into any complaints. But now many Opposition leaders are being harassed by police and arrested for petty cases. Even public gatherings and rallies are not permitted but, after the High Court’s intervention, the Government had to permit public meetings and rallies. Even journalists were harassed and arrested for commenting against the Government.

JP Reddy | Telangana

CRACKDOWN ON THE CORRUPT

Sir — The CBI has arrested Rishi Kamlesh Agarwal, the founder of ABG Shipyard Limited, in connection with an alleged bank fraud of more than ₹22,842 crore. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had booked Agarwal, a former chairman of the company, then executive director Santhanam Muthaswamy and

directors Ashwini Kumar, Sushil Kumar Agarwal and Ravi Vimal Nevatia on February 7. Agarwal was called for questioning on Wednesday at the CBI headquarters, during which the investigating officer suspected that he was not cooperating in the probe and was evasive in responses. He was, therefore, arrested. The CBI had registered the case on a complaint from the SBI for the alleged offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust and abuse of official position under the IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act. The SBI with an exposure of ₹2,468.51 crore was part of a consortium of 28 banks and financial institutions led by ICICI Bank. The ABG Shipyard, being a major player in Indian ship building industry, operated from its shipyards located at Dahej and Surat in Gujarat with capacity to build vessels up to 18,000 dead weight tonnage (DWT) at Surat shipyard and 1,20,000 DWT at Dahej.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Afghanistan’, Christina Goldbaum states that since the Taliban seized power, the ISKP has grown in reach and expanded to nearly all of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. She further cites Abdul Sayed, a security expert who tracks the ISKP and other jihadi groups, as saying that the ISKP carried out 119 attacks in Afghanistan in the last four months of 2021 against 39 in the corresponding period of 2020. The ISKP has also doubled its strength in Afghanistan from around 2,000 to 4,000 since the Taliban’s return to power. This is both a result of escape/release of its fighters from prisons that followed, those disillusioned by Taliban and many of the former Afghan Government’s military and intelligence agency (the National Directorate for Security) personnel joining it, the last two perceiving it to be the most effective opponent to the Taliban. Clearly, the Taliban have a major problem at hand. So has the world. The establishment of their version of sharia rule worldwide through global terror strikes is an integral part of the ISKP’s agenda.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

Shashi Tharoor should not contest. We’re still requesting Rahul Gandhi to become Congress chief.



Cong LS chief whip —K Suresh



Canada condemns Putin’s irresponsible escalation of war, his partial military mobilisation, his nuclear threats.

Canada PM

—Justin Trudeau

He (Ranbir Kapoor) did not take anything for *Brahmastra*. *Iske bagair hum yeh film bana hi nahi paate*.



Director —Ayan Mukerji



When you are coming back from an injury, it’s the most difficult phase for any athlete.

Indian grappler

—Bajrang Punia

We will use guerrilla warfare tactics... (and) will uphold the tradition of 56 years.



Sena (Thackeray) leader —Ajay Choudhary

FIRST COLUMN

REMOVE CODIFIED BIAS ON WAQF PROPERTIES

The Waqf Act is the outcome of politics of appeasement



SHSHANK SAURAV

The Waqf Board in Tamil Nadu has claimed ownership of an entire village. Media reports claimed that Muslim resettlement in this area happened in 1927-28 and the Wakf Board has claimed its stake on the property of village temple also. There have been many such instances where people who were dwelling the property were unaware of the fact that it has been claimed as Wakf property by the board.

The Wakf Act was initially passed by Parliament in 1954 and subsequently Wakf Act, 1995, was enacted for the purpose of better administration of Aukaf (i.e., assets donated for religious or charitable causes).

However, this law has become a tool to grab the assets and innocent people are harassed due to its draconian provisions. The Act empowers the Waqf Board to declare any property as Waqf property based on the survey carried out by its team. If this is not enough, Section 6 specifies that the aggrieved party has to appeal to the Tribunal constituted under the Act and there is a limitation period of one year for raising the dispute.



This legislation is drafted in such a way that it is not necessary for the Board to give a notice to the person whose property is sought to be declared as Waqf property and if the aggrieved party has not litigated within a period of one year, then he has no legal recourse!

Section 40 of the Act reiterates this power of Waqf Board and any property shall remain vested with it until revoked by the Tribunal. Section 83 read along with 85 gives exclusive powers to the Tribunal and parties aggrieved by the decision of the Tribunal can approach the High Court. Plight of the common man can be understood when his property is declared as Waqf asset without his knowledge and then he is expected to litigate it within a period of one year, otherwise it is gone forever. Even if he litigates it with the Tribunal then the next recourse is at High Court level, which is out of reach for most of the Indians.

It is pertinent to note that in a matter related to Wakf Act, 1954, the Supreme Court had decided that the limitation of one year for initiating the litigation is not applicable for non-Muslims (Board of Muslim Wakf, Rajasthan versus Radha Kishan and Others, 1978), but in order to appease the Muslims, section 6 was amended in 2013 and now there is a uniform time limit of one year for all the aggrieved parties.

Rajindar Sachar, chairman of the Sachhar Committee, in his 2006 report estimated the value of Wakf property at Rs 1.2 lakh crore. The Wakf Board owns around six lakh acres of land. Sachhar suggested survey of Wakf properties and amendments to the Wakf Act which were duly incorporated in the law by way of amendment in 2013.

Indian history is full of partiality against the Hindus and nothing changed even after Independence. Jawaharlal Nehru got Hindu Code Bills passed by Parliament but he didn't dare to touch the practices of other religions. Dr. BR Ambedkar was in favour of a uniform civil code, but Nehru insisted on changing the Hindu laws only and gave liberty to the others. Charitable & Endowment Acts were enacted by state governments in the 1950s to manage the Hindu temples but a central legislation was passed in 1954 to protect the Wakf properties.

The Congress government at the Centre implemented the Places of Worship Act, 1991, which intends to bar the Hindu's claims on other holy shrines.

(The author is a policy analyst)

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya

had a vision for world

SUMMEET BHASIN

His philosophy of integral humanism gave centre-stage to the poorest of the poor in statecraft; so much so that it is the ideological philosophy in India

Rank communism and capitalism are now dead. But integral humanism of Deen Dayal Upadhyay is not only alive, but is the ideological philosophy in India. The post-Independent Indian politics has found a deep ideological anchor in the thoughts of Deen Dayal Upadhyay.

In the philosophy of Deen Dayal Upadhyay, which requires wider debate and discussion among academicians, there is a balance of human life with nature. Now that the 77th United Nations General Assembly is taking place, the world leaders among others face the grave challenge of climate change and deepening social inequity. The developed world, both led by capitalism and communism, wrecked the environment with their reckless exploitation of the natural resources.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the self-centeredness of the developed world, as they stock-piled vaccines, while the poor in the least developed countries waited for the life-saving medicines and vaccines. It's the time of crisis when the depth of an ideology is tested, and the integral humanism of Deen Dayal Upadhyay shone brightly on the world stage, as India delivered vaccines, medicines, food, Covid-19 kits to small and big nations alike, making no difference, with sole abiding ideal that each life be saved and nurtured.

In the Modi government, the integral humanism of Deen Dayal Upadhyay has found the finest expressions in the statecraft, while the BJP has embarked on the path of social democracy to execute the words of the top ideologue of the party in action.

When a child is born, he or she first becomes aware about himself or herself, and with the passage of time starts knowing about the family, society, state and nation. The human entity lives a life in a give and take with the surroundings, including nature. Thus, human beings, animals and vegetation strike a balance of co-existence, which was underlined by Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay. If one stops caring for another, there will be imbalance, which will have consequences for all. Climate change is a consequence of the developed world being unkind to the basic principle of coexistence.

But the Modi government, while rolling out the Ujjwala scheme not only thought of the wellbeing of the poorest of the poor in the country, but also of the environment. Women were exposed to smoke, becoming unwell with several diseases when they grew old, while trees were felled to burn the kitchen fire. The Ujjwala scheme thought of the wellbeing of women and nature in line with the core mantra of the philosophy of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay.

The greater significance of the ideals of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay is that one should exemplify the life principle, and that should be the abiding duty of the



UNDER THE JAM TRINITY, THE MODI GOVERNMENT HAS BROUGHT TO LIFE THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA, AS MASSIVE SCALING UP OF THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF THE WEAKER SECTIONS OF SOCIETY WAS CARRIED OUT

(The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre)



person for the self, family, society, state and the nation. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay was once travelling in a bus, and it so happened that he requested the person sitting next to him to play news on his transistor set. But the person saw that Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay was carrying a transistor set himself. So, he enquired if there is any issue with his transistor set to which Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay replied that he couldn't renew the license of his radio set. Such a commitment to align the laws of the land with the life practices is central to the idea of a state and the people being in a symbiotic relationship.

Rajpath has been renamed Kartavyapath to remind all, including the people, the politicians, the officials and the ministers, that they have duties for the nation, society and citizens and that must be their life principles. This is the mantra being conveyed by PM Modi, which he has spoken of on several occasions, including from the ramparts of the Red Fort as recently as this year's Independence Day.

Probity in life is the basic minimum for a healthy society and a great nation. No society can take care of its people if there is no probity. The people have to be honest, and they should be seen often being honest. Honesty cannot be a hidden jewel. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay lived his ideals. The BJP workers and others who read about him greatly benefit from the scale of probity in his life.

Once Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay was travelling in a train, he got to know that Guruji (MS Golwalkar) was also in the train in the first compartment. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay went to the first compartment and after a while he got down at his destination station. There he straightaway went to the office of the station master, and paid the fine for travelling a part of the journey while he had the ticket for the second class.

Such individual attributes when shared at mass level in the society can help shape the character of a great nation. The political class, the officials, the judiciary, and other members of the civil society have to demonstrate the credible attribute of probity in personal and public life.

Such was the significance of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay that when he passed away the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee said that the "sun of our life has gone, and now we have to seek guidance with the earthen lamp". Vajpayee had succeeded Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay as the president of Jansangh, and when he became Prime Minister of India, the government conceived Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) to help the rural parts of the country access the urban amenities. Vajpayee further embedded the philosophy of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay in his statecraft, as he spearheaded connectivity at a scale that was never seen in the country in roads, telecommunication, infrastructure, amenities and services. Besides, a nation that has self-belief can take care of the national interests also while being unafraid of others, which was demonstrated in Vajpayee carrying out the Pokharan II nuclear tests and Modi delivering body blow to the terror infrastructure in Pakistan through the Balakot and the surgical strikes in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack

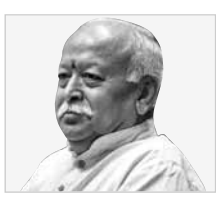
On September 25, we all will commemorate the birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay to reaffirm to live by his ideals, the philosophy of integral humanism, and further accelerate the welfare of the poorest of the poor in the country so that they are not only taken care of but also made to stand on their feet.

Under the JAM trinity, the Modi government has brought to life the political philosophy of Deen Dayal Upadhyay, as massive scaling up of the financial inclusion of the weaker sections of the society was carried out in the recent few years, which again was an extension of the work done under the Vajpayee administration when India was given the affordable tools to communicate with mobile phones.

The Mudra, Suraksha Bima, Sukanya Yojna and others are all aimed to fulfil the political ideology of Deen Dayal Upadhyay, which again is being scaled up with the target of 100 per cent saturation of all schemes, including the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I'M NOT HAPPY WITH THE ATMOSPHERE OF DISHARMONY; IT'S COMPLETELY WRONG. ONLY THEN THE COUNTRY CAN MOVE AHEAD. —RSS CHIEF MOHAN BHAGWAT



THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS OF MUSLIMS' LOYALTY AND WANT THEM TO PROVE THEIR PATRIOTISM AT EVERY TURN. MUSLIMS ARE ALSO INDIANS. —FORMER CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER SY QURAISHI



The SCO has a long-term regional agenda

The outcome of the SCO in Samarkand shows that the members are bracing for a larger role on the world stage

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit of the eight-nation influential grouping took place amid the growing geo-political turmoil largely triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and China's aggressive military posturing in the Taiwan Strait. Launched in Shanghai in June 2001, the SCO has eight full members, including its six founding members—China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan joined as full members in 2017.

Leaders of Russia, China, India, and other SCO member states attended high-level meetings in Uzbekistan's historic city of Samarkand,



PK VASUDEVA

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

focusing on regional and global stability, security, and economy. In the run-up to the main event, Uzbekistan, which held the SCO chairmanship this year, has hosted a total of more than 80 SCO-related events, with more than 40 documents signed, including the leaders' summit declaration.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held separate bilateral meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Uzbek President Shaykat Mirziyoyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. However, there was no bilateral meeting between Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Modi began his comments by telling Putin that the

"era of war" is over, indicating India's discomfort with Russia's attack on Ukraine for the first time in public, although New Delhi has not criticised Russia for its action thus far. "I know that today's era is not of war and we have spoken to you many times on the phone that democracy, diplomacy and dialogue are such things that touch the world," Modi said. His remarks on Ukraine have been widely appreciated by the Western and European countries.

Modi during his speech at the summit said, Covid-19 and Ukraine situation resulted in hurdles in the global supply chain, resulting in a food and energy security crisis. In April 2022, WHO inaugurated its Global Centre

for Traditional Medicines in Gujarat. This was the first and only global center by WHO for traditional treatment. India will take an initiative for a new SCO working group on traditional medicines, said Modi.

"India's economy is expected to grow at the rate of 7.5 per cent this year. I'm glad that ours is one of the fastest growing economies among the largest economies of the world," he added.

Security, Iran's nuclear programme, Afghanistan, and reforms of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) were discussed at the summit. The SCO's growth is probably one of the key features of this year's summit. A memorandum on Iran joining the SCO as full-time member has been

adopted with Minsk of Belarus starting its accession as well. The organization also accepted Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar as dialogue partners, with an agreement being reached on the Maldives, Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait, and Myanmar becoming new dialogue partners.

There were a number of important statements coming from SCO leaders on the second day of their work in Samarkand. Xi spoke against colour revolutions, while Putin pointed at the fundamental transformations which have taken place in world politics and the economy, calling them irreversible.

Being part of the SCO founders' pool, Russia and China communicated actively in Samarkand, with Putin

and Xi meeting one-on-one, as well as in trilateral format with Mongolian leader Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh.

The summit's final declaration focused on members' confirmation that the organization is not directed against other countries, with SCO nations agreeing not to interfere in the internal affairs of states. There were several important security-related issues in the declaration, such as the need to implement a plan on Iran's nuclear programme, a call to create an inclusive government in Afghanistan, and an affirmation of the need to observe the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Besides being successful in organizing a productive summit, Uzbekistan's officials also managed to draw the organization's attention to an issue that is of particular importance for Tashkent itself, namely the need for Afghanistan to be accepted by the SCO family, with the topic being mentioned in the final declaration of the summit. Uzbekistan's leader Shaykat Mirziyoyev also pointed at the need to lay out a long-term plan for the SCO's development.

"The President of Uzbekistan [Shavkat] Mirziyoyev actually mentioned that we need to develop the strategy for the SCO's future to 2040," said Marat Aitov, who is the head of the department of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

TEARS AND HUGS FOR RUSSIANS CALLED UP TO FIGHT IN UKRAINE

AP ■ ZAPORIZHZHIA (UKRAINE)

Russia escalated its military and political campaign Thursday to capture Ukrainian territory, rounding up Russian army reservists to fight, preparing votes on annexing occupied areas and launching new deadly attacks.

A day after President Vladimir Putin ordered a partial mobilization to bolster his troops in Ukraine, dramatic scenes of tearful families bidding farewell to men departing from military mobilization centers in Russia appeared on social media.

Video on Twitter from the eastern Siberian city of Neryungri showed men emerging from a stadium. Before boarding buses, the men hugged family members waiting outside, many crying and some covering their mouths with their hands in grief. A man held a child up to the window

of one bus for a last look.

In Moscow, women hugged, cried and made the sign of the cross on men at another mobilization point. A 25-year-old who gave only his first name, Dmitry, received a hug from his father, who told him "Be careful", as they parted. Dmitry told Russian media company Ostorozhno Novosti he did not expect to be called up and shipped out so quickly, especially since he still is a student.

"No one told me anything in the morning. They gave me the draft notice that I should come here at 3 pm. We waited 1.5 hours, then the enlistment officer came and said that we are leaving now," he said. "I was like, Oh great! I went outside and started calling my parents, brother, all friends of mine to tell that they take me."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in some of his harshest comments so far



in the nearly seven-month-old war, lashed out at Russians succumbing to the pressure to serve in their country's armed forces and those who haven't spoken out against the war.

In his nightly video address, he switched from his usual Ukrainian language into Russian to directly tell Russian citizens they are being "thrown to their deaths."

"You are already accomplices in all these crimes, murders and torture of Ukrainians," Zelenskyy said, wearing a black T-shirt that said in English: "We Stand with Ukraine," instead of

his signature olive drab T-shirt. He said Russians' options to survive are to "protest, fight back, run away or surrender to Ukrainian captivity".

Western leaders derided Putin's mobilization order as an act of weakness and desperation. More than 1,300 Russians were arrested in antiwar demonstrations Wednesday after he issued it, according to the independent Russian human rights group OVD-Info. Organizers said more protests were planned for Saturday.

Putin's partial call-up of 300,000 reservists was short on details, so much so that the Russian military announced Thursday it had set up a call center to answer questions.

In Washington, Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon's press secretary, said the US believes that it will take Russia time to train and equip the new troops and that doing so may not solve

command and control, logistics and morale issues.

Concerns about a potentially wider draft sent some Russians scrambling to buy plane tickets to flee the country, and Zelenskyy claimed Thursday that the Russian military is preparing to draft up to a million men. A Kremlin spokesman earlier denied such claims. German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser offered concrete support to potential deserters. She told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung that anyone who "courageously opposes Putin's regime and therefore puts himself in the greatest danger" can apply for asylum in Germany.

In the Kremlin's territory annexation campaign, pro-Moscow authorities in four Russian-held regions of Ukraine plan voter referendums starting Friday on becoming part of Russia — a

move that could expand the war and follows the Kremlin's play-book from when it annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula after a similar referendum. Most of the world considers the 2014 annexation of Crimea to have been illegal.

Voting on the referendums in Ukraine's Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions is scheduled to last through Tuesday. Foreign leaders have called the votes illegitimate and nonbinding.

In Luhansk, billboards reading 'With Russia Forever' and 'Our Choice-Russia' appeared on the streets, while volunteers distributed ribbons in the colours of the Russian national flag and posters reading, 'Russia is the future. Participate in the referendum!'

On the battlefield, Russian and Ukrainian forces exchanged missile and artillery barrages as both sides refused to concede ground.

Norway's PM on Ukraine: 'The war has to stop'

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Norway's prime minister, Jonas Gahr Store, believes the world — with one notable

holdout — is on the same page: "The war has to stop."

"I heard it from China. I heard it from India. I heard it from African colleagues. And I

think that's an important message because Russia has tried to say No, there are different views," Store told The Associated Press on Thursday, following the morning's UN Security Council meeting.

"And of course, countries word their opinions in different ways. But in this there has been consistency. The war has to stop."

As a NATO member whose border with Russia stretches well over 100 miles (just under 200 kilometers), Norway's geographical and geopolitical location has proved relevant in the context of the crisis. It's also an elected member of the Security Council.

Store had a blunt assessment of the way Russian President Vladimir Putin has tried to justify Russia's actions.



"The narrative of President Putin when he is giving a reason for mobilizing and for continuing the war, I believe that narrative is false. It is not true," Store told the AP.

"I mean, it's based on Russia being under threat, pressure, being under some kind of attack by the West. I am a prime minister in a NATO country and bordering Russia, a European country. I belong to the West or whatever you may call it, but this is simply not true."

Store does not believe Russia poses a threat to Norway's own territorial integrity, but labeled the aggression "unacceptable". He also censured Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's late arrival and early departure from the meeting.

"He chose not to listen to any of the interventions. He spoke and he left after he had spoken, which is, to me, a sign of, in a way, insecurity," he said.

Since the war's outbreak, Norway has supplanted Russia as Europe's biggest supplier of natural gas. Norway has thus far resisted the European Union's demand for gas price caps, with Store telling the AP that the limits "would not resolve the fundamental issue, which is that there is a shortage of gas."

Store is a proponent of renewable energy sources, particularly offshore wind farms, and thinks that the conflict-driven energy crisis might accelerate the shift — "paradoxically, it will help."

Norway is a founding member of NATO and within the Schengen Area, but it is not a member of the European Union. While Store's party supports accession, the prospect has long been unpalatable to the Norwegian populace.

Store says a "pretty stable majority" prefers the status quo, but he has seen "some" movement in the opinion polls. Pointing to Sweden and Finland's recent shift in policy, he said that the war has instead highlighted the importance of NATO.

Moscow-held regions of Ukraine in 'sham' vote to join Russia



AP ■ KYIV

Voting began on Friday in Moscow-held regions of Ukraine on referendums to become part of Russia, Russian-backed officials there said.

The Kremlin-orchestrated referendums, which have been widely denounced by Ukraine and the West as shams without any legal force, are seen as a step toward annexing the territories by Russia.

The votes are being held in the Luhansk, Kherson and partly Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions. The vote, which asks residents if they want their regions to be part of Russia, is certain to go Moscow's way.

That would give Russia the pretext to claim that attempts by Ukrainian forces to regain control are attacks on Russia itself, dramatically escalating the seven-month war.

The referendums follow Russian President Vladimir Putin's order of a partial mobilisation, which could add about 300,000 Russian troops to the fight. The balloting will continue for five days through Tuesday.

As the votes was getting underway in the occupied regions, Russian social media sites were full of dramatic scenes of tearful families bidding farewell to men departing from military mobilisation centres.

In cities across the vast country, men hugged their weeping family members before departing as part of the draft. Russian anti-war activists, in the meantime, planned more protests against the mobilisation.

Election officials will be bringing ballots to people's homes and setting up makeshift polling stations near residential buildings during the first four days of the referendums, according to Russian-installed officials in the occupied regions, who cited safety reasons. Tuesday will be the only day when the voters will be invited to come to regular polls. Polls also opened in Russia, where refugees from the occupied regions can cast their votes. Denis Pushilin, separatist leader of Moscow-backed authorities in the Donetsk region, called the referendum on Friday "a historical milestone".

Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, addressed the occupied regions Friday in an online statement, saying: "If you decide to become part of the Russian Federation — we will support you."

Valentina Matviyenko, chair of Russia's upper parliament house, said that residents of the occupied regions were voting for "life or death" at the referendums.

US calls on world to tell Russia to stop its nuclear threats

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The United States called on other nations to tell Russia to stop making nuclear threats and end "the horror" of its war in Ukraine as all three countries' top diplomats spoke — but didn't quite meet — at a high-profile UN Security Council meeting on Thursday.

Held alongside the annual UN General Assembly gathering of world leaders, the session followed a striking development in the war this week: Russia called up a portion of its reserves for the first time since World War II. At the same time, President Vladimir Putin said his nuclear-armed country will "use all means available to us" to defend itself if its territory is threatened.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken saw Putin's remark as particularly menacing given plans for referendums in Russian-controlled parts of eastern and southern



Ukraine on whether to become part of Russia.

Western nations have condemned those votes as illegitimate and nonbinding. But, in their wake, Moscow might then see any Ukrainian attempt to retake those areas as an attack on "Russian territory," Blinken warned.

"Every council member should send a clear message that these reckless nuclear

threats must stop immediately," he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov didn't mention his country's nuclear capacity or the new troop mobilization during his own remarks at the council meeting, which France called to discuss accountability for alleged abuses and atrocities during the nearly seven-month-long war.

Instead, Lavrov repeated

UN rights experts cite signs of war crimes in Ukraine

AP ■ GENEVA

A team of experts commissioned by the UN's top human rights body to look into rights violations in Ukraine said on Friday its initial investigation turned up evidence of war crimes in the country following Russia's invasion nearly seven months ago.

The experts from the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, mandated by Human Rights Council earlier this year, have so far focused on four regions — Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy.

Presenting their most extensive findings so far, they cited testimonies by former detainees of beatings, electric shocks and forced nudity in Russian detention facilities, and expressed grave concerns about executions in the four regions.

"We were struck by the large number of executions in the areas that we visited. The commission is currently investigating such deaths in 16 towns and settlements," Erik Mose, the commission's chairman, said.



He said his team had received and was documenting "credible allegations regarding many more cases of executions".

The investigators visited 27 towns and settlements, as well as graves and detention and torture centres; interviewed more than 150 victims and witnesses; and met with advocacy groups and government officials, he said.

"Based on the evidence gathered by the commission, it has concluded that war crimes have been committed in Ukraine," Mose said, without specifying who which side in the war committed the alleged crimes.

He said the team had examined two incidents of ill-treatment against Russian soldiers by Ukrainian forces.

World opinion shifts against Russia as Ukraine worries grow

AP ■ NEW YORK

The tide of international opinion appears to be decisively shifting against Russia, as a number of non-aligned countries are joining the United States and its allies in condemning Moscow's war in Ukraine and its threats to the principles of the international rules-based order.

Western officials have repeatedly said that Russia has become isolated since invading Ukraine in February. Until recently, though, that was largely wishful thinking.

But on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, much of the international community spoke out against the conflict in a rare display of unity at the often fractured United Nations.

The tide had already appeared to be turning against Putin even before Thursday's UN speeches.

Chinese and Indian leaders had been critical of the war at a high-level summit last week in Uzbekistan. And then the UN General Assembly disregarded Russia's objections and voted overwhelmingly to allow Ukrainian President



Volodymyr Zelenskyy to be the only leader to address the body remotely, instead of requiring him to appear in person. That shift against Russia accelerated after President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday announced the mobilisation of some additional 300,000 troops to Ukraine, signalling the unlikelihood of a quick end to the war.

Putin also suggested that nuclear weapons may be an option. That followed an announcement of Russia's intention to hold independence referenda in several occupied Ukrainian regions with an eye toward possible annexation.

Those announcements came at the very moment that the General Assembly, con-

sidered the premier event in the global diplomatic calendar, was taking place in New York.

Numerous world leaders used their speeches on Tuesday and Wednesday to denounce Russia's war. That trend continued on Thursday both in the assembly hall and at the usually deeply divided UN Security Council, where, one-by-one, virtually all of the 15 council members served up harsh criticism of Russia — a council member -- for aggravating several already severe global crises and imperiling the foundations of the world body.

The apparent shift in opinion offers some hope to Ukraine and its Western allies that increasing isolation will add pressure on Putin to negotiate a peace.

One day after Zelenskyy speech, US, Russia square off at UN

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

One day after Ukraine's president laid out a forceful case against Russia's invasion at the United Nations, the United States made its own assertions in front of the UN Security Council on Thursday about why Russia should face further censure and isolation.

Minutes later, Russia came right back, calling the claims unfair and saying Ukraine is to blame. Antony Blinken, the United States' top diplomat, spoke to Security Council members on Thursday, detailing allegations of what he called war crimes and other atrocities committed by Russia and urging them to "send a clear message" to the country to stop its nuclear threats.

Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, addressed the Security Council shortly afterward, repeating his country's frequent claims that Kyiv has long oppressed Russian speakers in Ukraine's east — one of the explanations Moscow has offered for the invasion.

Trump’s legal woes mount sans protection of presidency

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Stark repudiation by federal judges he appointed. Far-reaching fraud allegations by New York’s attorney general. It’s been a week of widening legal troubles for Donald Trump, laying bare the challenges piling up as the former president operates without the protections afforded by the White House.

The bravado that served him well in the political arena is less handy in a legal realm dominated by verifiable evidence, where judges this week have looked askance at his claims and where a fraud investigation that took root when Trump was still president burst into public view in an allegation-filled 222-page state lawsuit.

In politics, “you can say what you want and if people like it, it works. In a legal realm, it’s different,” said Chris Edelson, a presidential powers scholar and



American University government professor. “It’s an arena where there are tangible consequences for missteps, misdeeds, false statements in a way that doesn’t apply in politics.”

That distinction between politics and law was evident in a single 30-hour period this week.

Trump insisted on Fox News in an interview that aired

Wednesday that the highly classified government records he had at Mar-a-Lago actually had been declassified, that a president has the power to declassify information “even by thinking about it.”

A day earlier, however, an independent arbiter his own lawyers had recommended appeared skeptical when the Trump team declined to present

any information to support his claims that the documents had been declassified.

The special master, Raymond Dearie, a veteran federal judge, said Trump’s team was trying to “have its cake and eat it,” too, and that, absent information to back up the claims, he was inclined to regard the records the way the government does: Classified.

On Wednesday morning, Letitia James, the New York State attorney general, accused Trump in a lawsuit of padding his net worth by billions of dollars and habitually misleading banks about the value of prized assets.

The lawsuit, the culmination of a three-year investigation that began when he was president, also names as defendants three of his adult children and seeks to bar them from ever again running a company in the state. Trump has denied any wrongdoing.

At least 4 killed, 10 hurt after blast near Kabul mosque

AP ■ KABUL

At least four people are dead and 10 wounded after explosion went off near a mosque in Afghanistan’s capital of Kabul on Friday, with a hospital confirming the number of casualties.

A column of black smoke rose into the sky and shots rang out several minutes after the blast in the city’s diplomatic quarter.

The Italian Emergency Hospital in Kabul said it had received 14 casualties and that four people were dead on arrival.

Khalid Zadran, a spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the blast targeted worshippers leaving the mosque after Friday prayers.

Interior Minister spokesman Abdul Nafi Takor said the blast went off on the main road



near the mosque. He said the cause was under investigation. Takor said police teams were at the site and that an investigation was underway.

Mosques have previously been a target for attacks.

The blast took place near the Wazir Akbar Khan mosque which, in 2020, was struck by a bomb that killed two people, including the mosque’s prayer leader.



UK HM vows full force of law against Leicester thuggery

PTI ■ LONDON

UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman has met with local police officers and Hindu and Muslim community leaders in Leicester and assured them that thugs behind recent violent clashes would face the full force of the law.

During a visit to the eastern England city on Thursday, the Indian-origin Cabinet minister was briefed by the Leicestershire Police chief and also leaders from local temples and mosques on the “serious disorder” which has resulted in 47 arrests. The disorder came as tensions since an India-Pakistan cricket match at the end of last month continued to spill over into this weekend.

“I met with Leicestershire Police officers, the Temporary

Chief Constable for Leicestershire and local community leaders to discuss action being taken to protect local residents and restore safety and harmony in Leicester,” Braverman tweeted after her visit.

“We’ll work together on this, and I will do everything I can to support communities and our police. Those who bring disorder and thuggery to our streets will face the full force of the law and I thank all those brave police officers for keeping us safe,” she said.

With reference to reports of a protest by masked men outside a temple in Birmingham earlier this week, the Home Secretary said she had also spoken to the local West Midlands Police chief and that the situation there continues to be monitored.

Violent unrest continues in Iran State TV suggests death toll from unrest could be as high as 26

AP ■ DUBAI

Protesters across Iran continued to clash violently with security forces early on Friday following the death of a young woman in police custody, as Iranian state TV suggested the death toll from the unrest could be as high as 26, without offering details.

Although the scope of the protests across some dozen Iranian cities and towns remains unclear, the movement represents the widest unrest since 2019, when rights groups said hundreds of people were killed in a violent crackdown.

Iran has also disrupted internet access to the outside world, according to internet traffic monitor Netblocks, tightening restrictions on popular platforms used to organise rallies like Instagram and WhatsApp.

An anchor on state TV said late on Thursday that 26 protesters and policemen had been killed since the protests erupted last Saturday after the funeral of the 22-year-old



Mahsa Amini, without elaborating on how authorities reached that figure.

He said official statistics would be released later, but in past times of turmoil the Iranian government has not offered official death tolls.

The unrest has killed at least 11 people according to a tally by The Associated Press, based on statements from state-run and semiofficial media.

Most recently, the deputy governor of Qazvin, Abolhasan

Kabiri, said that a citizen and paramilitary officer had been killed in the unrest that rocked two cities in the northwestern province.

The crisis unfolding in Iran began as an outpouring over the death of Amini, a young woman from a northwestern Kurdish town, who was arrested by the country’s morality police in Tehran last week for allegedly violating its strictly-enforced dress code.

Her death has sparked

sharp condemnation from Western countries and the United Nations, and touched a national nerve.

Videos show Amini wearing a long black covering and state-mandated Islamic headscarf at the time of her arrest.

The police said she died of a heart attack and was not mistreated. But her family has cast doubt on that account, as have the many Iranians voicing pent-up anger over social and political repression on the streets.

Authorities have alleged that unnamed foreign countries and opposition groups are trying to foment unrest.

Videos on social media show protesters in Tehran torching a police car and confronting officers at close range. Elsewhere in the capital, videos show gunfire sounding out as protesters bolt from riot police shouting, “They are shooting at people! Oh my God they’re killing people!”

In the northwest city of Neyshabur, protesters cheered over an overturned police car.

Footage from Tehran and

Mashhad shows women waving their obligatory hijab head coverings in the air like flags while chanting, “Freedom!”

The chants have been scathing, with some calling for the downfall of the ruling clerics.

The protesters cry, “Death to the dictator!” and “Mullahs must be gone!”

London-based watchdog Amnesty International has accused security forces of beating protesters with batons and firing metal pellets at close range.

Videos show police and paramilitary officers using live fire, tear gas, and water cannons to disperse the demonstrations.

Iran has grappled with waves of protests in the recent past, mainly over a long-running economic crisis exacerbated by American sanctions linked to its nuclear programme.

In November 2019, the country saw the deadliest violence since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, as protests erupted over a rise in the state-controlled price of gasoline.

Hundreds for cancellation of Japanese ex-leader's funeral

AP ■ TOKYO

Several hundred protesters demanded the cancellation of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s state funeral as they shouted slogans and waved banners on Friday in a Tokyo park. “Abe’s policies supported war,” demonstrator Mayumi Ishida said, noting Abe consistently sought to raise defence spending.

Like others at the protest, Ishida said he feared Abe’s views heralded a step back to the days of Japan’s militarism preceding World War II.

Abe, who was assassinated in July, was Japan’s longest serving leader and one of its most divisive in the postwar period because of his revisionist view



of wartime history, support for a stronger military, and what critics call an autocratic approach and cronyism.

Opposition to the state funeral has also grown because of politicians’ close ties to the Unification Church. Social media posts attributed to the suspect in Abe’s assassination show he blamed the church for ruining his life, and police say he targeted Abe over his links to the organisation.

The government plan for his state funeral to be held on

Tuesday has galvanised public opposition against the ruling Liberal Democratic party, which has ruled Japan for nearly the entire postwar period.

Protests and marches opposing the state funeral have been popping up nationwide, drawing hundreds of people.

Earlier this week, a man set himself on fire by the prime minister’s residence in what was described as a suicide attempt in apparent protest of the funeral.

Yoshiko Kamata, a part-time worker at a convenience store, acknowledged the state funeral couldn’t be stopped, but it was a good opportunity to drive home her message that Abe never stood with regular people.

White House: GOP abortion ban would mean a nationwide crisis

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The White House and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists said Thursday that a Republican-led proposal to ban abortion nationwide after 15 weeks would endanger the health of women and have severe consequences for physicians.

“If passed and enacted, this bill would create a nationwide health crisis, imperiling the health and lives of women in all 50 states,” according to a preliminary analysis of the bill by Jennifer Klein, the White House Gender Policy Council chairwoman, that was obtained by The Associated Press.

“It would transform the practice of medicine, opening the door to doctors being thrown in jail if they fulfil their duty of care to patients according to their best medical judgment,” President Joe Biden himself said at a fundraiser that some GOP efforts to ban abortion were more extreme than his own Catholic faith.

“I happen to be a practising Roman Catholic. My church doesn’t even make that argument,” he said, referring to abortion bans that leave “no exceptions. Rape, incest. No exceptions.”

Catholic teaching is that abortion is prohibited, though life-saving surgery for the mother is permitted, even if it means

the baby will die as a result. The measure introduced last week by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., proposes a nationwide ban that would allow for rare exceptions. The federal legislation has almost no chance of becoming law in the Democratic-controlled Congress. GOP leaders did not immediately embrace it and Democrats are pointing to the proposal as an alarming signal of where Republicans would try to go if they were to win control of the Congress in November.

Many in the United States had believed the constitutional right to abortion, established by the Supreme Court almost 50 years ago, could never be overturned. But that protection was stripped away this year by the court’s conservative majority, and advocates are leaving nothing to chance.

A majority of those questioned in a July poll by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research said Congress should pass a law guaranteeing access to legal abortion nationwide.

Vice President Kamala Harris urged Democratic attorneys general at a meeting Thursday in Milwaukee to keep fighting for abortion rights in the states. She singled out Wisconsin’s Josh Kaul, who is up for reelection in November, for filing a lawsuit to challenge the state’s 1849 law banning abortion, with no exceptions for rape or incest.

Facebook violated rights of Palestinian users, report finds

AP ■ CALIFORNIA (US)

Actions by Facebook and its parent Meta during last year’s Gaza war violated the rights of Palestinian users to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, political participation and non-discrimination, a report commissioned by the social media company has found.

The report on Thursday from independent consulting firm Business for Social Responsibility confirmed long-standing criticisms of Meta’s policies and their uneven enforcement as it relates to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: It found the company over-enforced rules when it came to Arabic content and under-enforced content in Hebrew.

It, however, did not find intentional bias at Meta, either by the company as a whole or among individual employees.

Model who criticised Myanmar’s military fears repatriation

AP ■ BANGKOK

A model from Myanmar who denounced her country’s military rulers last year from the stage of a beauty pageant in Thailand said on Friday she fears she may be forced back home.

Thaw Nandar Aung, also known as Han Lay, told The Associated Press by phone that she has been stuck at Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi Airport since being denied reentry to Thailand when she arrived on Wednesday night from a short trip to Vietnam.

She has been living in Thailand but needed to exit and reenter in order to extend her stay.

She said she was seeking the assistance of the United Nations refugee agency to



avoid being sent back to Myanmar, where she feared harsh punishment from the military government she has criticised.

People denied entry to Thailand are usually deported to their last point of departure, but the UN agency advised her she would be arrested in Vietnam and then repatriated to Myanmar.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Whom so ever it may concern
General public is hereby informed that my client namely Mr. Sah Kishan is the owner of the property bearing Plot area measuring 40 Sq. Yards i.e. 33.45 Sq. Meters, comprised in Khalsa No. 1420 Min situated at Mohalla Gadi Pirkhous, Pargana Dasa, Tehsil Dholana, District Hapur, Uttar Pradesh, by virtue of Gift Deed dated 22.08.2022 regd. at doc. No. 10054 and the same is to be financed & mortgaged with Punjab Capital and Housing Finance Ltd and the daughter of Sh. Jai Kishan i.e. Mrs. Megha has no objection regarding Sale/mortgage of aforesaid property by Sachin Kumar.
If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 days from date of this notice on below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.
Raghav Tiwari (Advocate)
Ch. 530, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi – 110001
Mob.: +91-9878188328

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, R.P. Punj s/o Lt. Kanahiya Lal Punj residing at 10, Pitniviya Road, New Delhi-110011 on behalf of the firm issue a public notice:
The original Leased guest house deed number I-3158 of 1968 compromising of ADDA, C.S Plot number 220 (part) Area 14.97 cotth, under Khatian No.147, 151, 145, J.L. No. 85,Mouza Gopinathpur, P.S Durgapur, dist: Burdwan, State:West Bengal ,in the name of the partnership firm Lloyd Insulation (Calcutta) have been lost.
Anybody finding, they may return the same to myself at my above mentioned residential address.
Date:20.09.2022 R.P. Punj
Place: New Delhi-110011 (Partner)

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the General public that, MRS. ANJU GUPTA is owner of a Built Up property with two Room set Stairs on Ground Floor one Room set on First Floor with the rights of Construction upto the last story, built on portion of Plot No. 45, area measuring 45 Sq. Yards, part of Rect. No. 29, Kila No. 12, Situated at "Jitar Nagar" in Village, Khureli Khas, Sahadara, Delhi-110051. vide REGISTERED GENERAL POWER OF ATTORNEY dated 18.10.1996 registration No. 3916 with Sub Registrar I, NEW DELHI. All persons are hereby informed that MRS. ANJU GUPTA is purchasing the above-mentioned property with FULLERTON INDIA-HOME FINANCE COMPANY, General public hereby informed that if anybody has any charge/interest/claim in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 67 days of the present.
Mrs. Prasoon Lata, Advocate, SG Associates (Law Firm) Unit No. 7, Basement, Plot No. C 78, Sector-2, Noida, UP 201301 E-MAIL: sgassociatespl@gmail.com, Ph: 7011172764, 8130200837

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PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform & notify the Public about the relocation of Tuglakabad Extension Delhi branch of SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. Effective from 23.12.2022
From: SBFC Finance Pvt. Ltd. TA - 95, 1st Floor, Tuglakabad Extension, New Delhi - 110019
To: SBFC Finance Pvt Ltd, A-86, 1st Floor, Arjun Nagar, Bhisam Pitahma Marg, Opp. Defence Colony, New Delhi - 110003
For more details, please contact:- SBFC FINANCE PVT.LTD. Phone: 9871627604

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.
VEHICLES FOR SALE
1) MAH SUPMAXITRK REG. NO. HR38Y1094-YOM-2018
2) TATAMOTORS TACEGOLD REG. NO. DL1AE2451-YOM-2020
3) TATAMOTORS LPT1109T REG. NO. UP40T2689-YOM-2012
4) TATAMOTORS TACEGOLD REG.NO. DL1LAE8982-YOM-2021
5) MAH BOL MT BS4 REG. NO. DL1LAE6889-YOM-2021
6) TATAMOTORS INTRA_V30 REG. NO. UP16HT1069-YOM-2021
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS WITH IN 5 DAYS AT BRANCH ADDRESS:
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK 3RD FLOOR, PLOT NO. 7, SECTOR 125, NOIDA-201313 OR CONTACT:-ABHINAV LAL KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT NO. 7798988481 E-MAIL - abhinav.lal@kotak.com

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Name of work and its location : 30-Elect-36-T-2022-23-E3
Electrical work in connection with Improvement of Air Conditioning System with installation of remote monitoring system & other allied works at RRI's having more than 100 routes over Delhi Division.
Approx cost of the works : Rs. 90.21 lacs
Address of the office : Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Bid Security : Rs. 1,80,400.00
Date & time of submission of tender : 17.10.2022, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender : 17.10.2022, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & notice board : www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
2491/2022

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. ELS_SRE_T-29 dtd. 22.09.2022
Open tender through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/ TRS, Electric Loco Shed, Khanalampura Yard, Northern Railway, Saharanpur (Ambala Division) for and on behalf of the President of India from the registered tenderer on website www.ireps.gov.in for the following work upto 11:00 hrs. on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter:-
Open Tender No.: ELS_SRE_T-29. **Name of work:** Provision of trap chamber for dust particle in BP pipe of 3-phase locos. **Date of Closing/Opening:** 14.10.2022. **Approx. Cost:** Rs. 10.79,194/- **Earnest Money:** Rs. 21,600/- **Completion period:** 06 Months. **Validity period:** 45 days. **Cost of tender form:** Free of cost.
1. Tenderer(s) should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of Works Tenders. 2. Tenderer are required to upload self-attested scanned copies of all related eligibility documents as per conditions. 3. Taxes & Charges will be applicable as per extant rule. 4. For details, please log on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in.
2492/2022
Serving Customers with a Smile

Corrigendum
Gujarat State Board of School Textbook
"Vidhyayan," Sector-10/A, Gandhinagar-382010
E-Tender/Two Bid
Tender No - 544714 / 2022-2024
The last date for online submission Request for proposal of empanelment for Job work of Offset Printing of Textbooks Year 2022-2024 for printing work are amendment as follows. For amendment in the tender and other details please visit: www.nprocure.com

N O	Particulars	Previous Date/Time	Now Date/Time
1.	Online Bid submission End Date & Time	Dt. 22/09/2022 05:00 p.m.	Dt. 29/09/2022 05:00 p.m.
2.	Last Date and Time For Receipt of physical Bid document Submission of EMD Tender Fees, Other Document	Dt. 23/09/2022 12:00 p.m.	Dt. 30/09/2022 05:00 p.m.
3.	Opening Technical Bid	Dt. 23/09/2022 15:00 p.m.	Dt. 01/10/2022 12:00 p.m.

Sd/-
Director
Gujarat State Board of School Textbook, Gandhinagar

NO/NF/PN/2022/G/1519

SUMMONS/NOTICE FOR SERVICE BY WAY OF ADVERTISEMENT IN A NEWSPAPER
To,
Respondent No. 1, Sh. Vinay Talwar, Resolution Professional, office at: 1, Link Road, Middle Basement, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-14
Respondent No.2, Registrar of Companies, Office at: Block No. 6, B-Wing, 2nd Floor, Shastri Bhawan 26, Haddows Road, Chennai: 600034, Tamilnadu.
Respondent No.3, Income Tax Department, Through Deputy Commissioner Of Income Tax, Office at: Circle 3(1), Delhi, Income Tax Department, CR Building, New Delhi-110002.
Respondent No. 4, Regional Provident fund Organisation, Through Regional Provident Fund Commissioner, Office at: Nidhi Bhawan, Regional Office, A-2C, Sector-24, Noida-201301, Uttar Pradesh
Respondent No. 5, Goods & Services Tax Department, through Principal Commissioner, Office at: C-56/42, Renu Tower, Sector-82, Noida (GB Nagar), Uttar Pradesh
Respondent No. 7, South Delhi Municipal Corporation, through Municipal Commissioner, Office At: S.P.M. Civic Centre, Minto Road, New Delhi-100002
Respondent No. 9, Springfield Society Resident Welfare Association, Office at: Sector Zeta-1, Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh
Respondent No. 10, TransUnion CIBIL Limited, Through Director, Office at: One World Centre, 19th floor, Tower 2A & 2B, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013
Whereas, the Applicant M/s Applied Electro Magnetics Pvt. Ltd. has instituted Application bearing IA No. 5373/2021 before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal: New Delhi (Special Bench) (Court-II) in (IB)-334(ND)/2017, in matter titled Nitin Gupta versus M/s Applied Electro-Magnetics Pvt. Ltd, inter-alia amongst you the Respondents.
This Public Notice is issued on behalf of M/S. APPLIED ELECTRO MAGNETICS PVT. LTD. for service by the way of publication of the aforesaid Application. You, the above named Respondents, please be informed that that the application bearing no. IA-5373/2021, pending before National Company Tribunal: New Delhi, Special Bench (Court-II) is listed for 18.10.2022. On 25.08.2022, the Hon'ble Court passed an order by directing that summons be served on Defendant 1 to 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10 by publication through Nationalized Newspaper.
Now therefore, If any of you fail to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the NODH i.e. 18.10.2022, the Petitioner will take judgement by default and may be granted the relief applied in the petition.
MANISH KAUSHIK (Advocate)
C-203, First Floor, Defence Colony, New Delhi-24, India
Ph.: 9818218885 manishkaushik.law@gmail.com

Sensex sinks 1,020 pts as rate hikes trigger global sell-off

Investors poorer by ₹4.90 L cr

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex tumbled 1,020 points while the Nifty crashed below the 17,350-mark on Friday as a flurry of rate hikes by global central banks spooked investors and sparked a global sell-off.

The rupee breached the 81-mark against the US dollar in intra-day trade for the first time ever, adding to the negative sentiment.

Investors' wealth eroded by over Rs 4.90 lakh crore on Friday amid a sharp fall in equities.

Sliding for the third straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,020.80 points or 1.73 per cent to close at 58,098.92.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty plummeted 302.45 points or 1.72 per cent to end at 17,327.35. PowerGrid led the Sensex losers' chart with a drop of 7.93 per cent, followed by M&M, SBI, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, HDFC and IndusInd Bank.

Only three counters managed to close in the green -- Sun Pharma, Tata Steel and ITC, spurring up to 1.53 per cent.



"A rise in the US 10-year bond yield and a strong dollar index influenced FIIs to flee emerging markets. Fall in liquidity in the banking system, a weak currency and a current premium valuation have set the market outlook bearish for the near term.

"With aggressive monetary policy action by central banks, the global growth engines are in a slowdown mode, whereas India is currently in a better position with a pickup in credit growth and an uptick in tax collection. The current volatility might persist for a while. Investors are advised to wait and watch until the dust settles," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

On a weekly basis, the Sensex lost 741.87 points or 1.26 per cent, while the Nifty declined 203.50 points or 1.16 per cent.

Joseph Thomas, Head of

Research, Emkay Wealth Management, said the domestic equity markets traded lower mainly tracking the developments in overseas markets, especially the US.

"The Fed rate hike and the stance that rate hikes would continue till inflation is contained displayed in ample measure an aggressive and hawkish Fed. Even if its costs a little bit of economic growth so be it, has been the stated approach....This has affected the equity markets, and this has sent its reverberations across the world.

"More than anything else, it is the expectations of higher interest rates and lower liquidity that is at the back of the mind of many an investor. High inflation, widening trade deficit, weakening currencies and a likely slowdown in growth may entrap some of the emerging market economies," he added.

Economists see RBI delivering another 50 bps hike next week

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Economists are unanimous in forecasting that the central bank has no other option but to deliver a 50 bps rate hike next week and take the terminal rate to 6.25 per cent by December.

Economists from SBI, UBS, Goldman Sachs, Barclays and Bank of Baroda in a rare unanimous call see the RBI-led monetary policy committee delivering a 50 bps hike on September 30, taking the overall repo rate increase 290 bps to 5.90 per cent since May this year.

Soumya Kanti Ghosh, the group chief economist at the nation's largest lender SBI, in a detailed note on Monday said, a half-percentage point hike in the repo rate looks imminent in an aggressive response to external shocks.

"We expect the peak repo rate in the cycle at 6.25 per cent. A final rate hike of 35 bps is expected in December policy," he said.

Liquidity has become deficit after 40 months which looks like another headwind for the central bank, he said, adding this may force the RBI to support the market through a change in the CRR and OMOs.

Echoing the views, Tanvee Gupta-Jain, the chief economist at UBS Securities India, said in the base case, she expects the MPC-RBI to front-load the rate hike cycle and raise the



repo rate by another 50 bps (versus 35 bps previously) next week taking the terminal repo rate to 6.25 per cent (previously 6 per cent) by December.

On the positive side, she said the large current account deficit, elevated CPI inflation and a stretched fiscal position are mostly led by supply-side factors rather than easy credit conditions pushing domestic demand.

Rahul Bajoria, the chief economist at Barclays India also raised the repo rate forecast to a 50 bps hike next week (35 bps previously) and a 35 bps hike in the December meeting (25 bps previously), with upside risk to the forecast if commodity prices are higher in Q4.

"We now expect 50 bps of further rate hikes in 2023 (75 bps previously) which would take the repo rate to 6.75 per cent by April 2023."

The British lender also expects the MPC-RBI to change its stance to neutral on falling commodity prices offer as it feels that inflation has peaked.

'Rice output may fall 13% to 96.7 million tonnes in kharif this year'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rice production may fall by 13 per cent to 96.7 million tonnes in kharif season this year due to fall in paddy acreage amid deficient rains in some parts of the country, according to Origo Commodities' initial estimates.

Earlier this week, the agriculture ministry released the first advance estimates for kharif season of 2022-23 crop year (July-June). As per the government data, rice production is likely to decline by 6 per cent to 104.99 million tonnes in the kharif season this year as against 111.76 million tonnes in kharif season of last year.

Established in 2011, Gurugram-based Origo Commodities is an agri fin-tech company focused on commodity supply chain, post harvest management, trade and finance. This is the first time the company has released the estimates for kharif crops. It will come up with a final estimate in November 2022.

In a statement, Origo Commodities said that rice production in kharif season for 2022-23 "is seen lower by 13 per cent y-o-y at 96.7 million



tonnes against 111.17 million tonnes in 2021-22".

"Paddy acreage has declined by around 9 per cent compared to last year while yield is projected 5 per cent lower from the last year.

The crop yield had adversely impacted due to deficient rain in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar," the company said.

As per the latest estimate of Origo Commodities, total kharif production for the crop year 2022-23 is estimated at 640.42 million tonnes, which is 2 per cent lower than the same period last year.

Total kharif production is

estimated lower due to likely fall in the production of paddy, groundnut, castor, jute, and sugarcane, the statement said.

Origo projects that cotton production may increase 8.5 per cent to 34.2 million bales (of 170 kg each) against 31.5 million bales in 2021-22, while soyabean output may rise 4.5 per cent at 12.48 million tonnes against 11.95 million tonnes in 2021-22.

Soybean acreage is almost flat compared to last year, while yield is estimated to gain by 4.7 per cent from the last year given the favourable rainfall distribution in the key soybean-producing states this year.

BUSINESS BRIEF

ISLRTC OBSERVES 'SIGN LANGUAGE DAY'

New Delhi: 'Sign Language Day' with the theme 'Sign Languages Unite Us' was celebrated under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous body under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 23rd 2022 at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi. Ever since the United Nations declared 23rd September as the International Day of Sign Languages, the ISLRTC celebrates it every year on 23rd September. This year National Implementation Committee (NIC) chaired by Hon'ble Home Minister inter-alia approved the event - "Sign Language Day" on 23rd Sep, 2022 to be conducted and celebrated by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment" (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), under "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebration.



BEST CFO-PSU AWARD CONFERRED ON PFC DIRECTOR (F)



Parminder Chopra, Director (Finance), Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) receiving the prestigious ET Ascent 'Best CFO-PSU' Award at a glittering ceremony held at Taj, MG Road, Bengaluru

Pioneer photo

'ORG WITH BEST WORKPLACE PRACTICES' TO NTPC

New Delhi: NTPC Ltd has been recognized as one of the "Top Organizations with Best Workplace Practices" at the Times Ascent Presents 21st Edition of ASIA PACIFIC HRM CONGRESS held in Bengaluru. The Award is endorsed by the CHRO Asia and the certification is provided by the World Federation of HR Professionals. The Award was received by Shri Milan Kumar, GM (HR), Northern Region. The Award is given to organizations which have embraced innovation as a part of their own 'cult' & built that into the fabric strategy of the business.



G RAVISANKAR POWERGRID'S NEW DIRECTOR (F)

New Delhi: G. Ravisankar has assumed the charge of Director (Finance) of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna CPSU of Government of India. Prior to this, he was working as Executive Director (Finance) at POWERGRID. He played a pivotal role in digitization of finance functions, establishment of bill processing hubs and ERP implementation and development. An accomplished technocrat, he has post qualification experience of 32 years, serving predominantly in POWERGRID (after a brief stint in NLC India Limited) in Construction office, Sub-stations, Regional Headquarters and Corporate Centre located in various parts of India. He has a vast experience in key finance functions viz. Resource Mobilisation, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, Commercial, Works Accounting and Retirement Benefits Fund Management.



HC PUTS IN ABEYANCE CCPA ORDER AGAINST FLIPKART

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Friday put in abeyance an order of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) asking online marketplace Flipkart to recall certain sold pressure cookers that allegedly did not meet quality standards. While directing that Flipkart's petition against the CCPA order be tagged along with a similar plea by e-commerce giant Amazon, Justice Yashwant Varma asked Flipkart to deposit the penalty of Rs 1 lakh imposed on it by CCPA and also notify the buyers of all the pressure cookers in question. The court sought CCPA's response to the plea by Flipkart and said the interim order which was passed in Amazon's case will also be extended the present matter. "The petitioner is entitled to the interim relief (as granted to Amazon earlier) on identical terms," the court said. On September 20, the court had kept in abeyance a CCPA order passed against Amazon for allegedly selling domestic pressure cookers that did not meet quality standards. It had asked Amazon to deposit within a week Rs 1 lakh penalty imposed on it and notify the buyers of all these 2,265 pressure cookers that these items do not meet the required quality standards. "Till the next date of listing while the petitioner shall be liable to notify the consumers of the 2265 pressure cookers sold on its platform of the order of the CCPA, further steps with respect to recall of those items and reimbursement shall be placed in abeyance till the next date," the court had said while listing the case for next hearing in November.

Rupee falls 19 paise to close at lifetime low of 80.98 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slumped 19 paise to close at a fresh lifetime low of 80.98 against the US dollar on Friday, weighed down by the strong American currency overseas and risk-off sentiment among investors.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency breached the 81-mark for the first time ever and slumped to 81.23 against the American currency.

It finally ended at 80.98, down 19 paise over its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee plunged by 83 paise -- its biggest single-day loss in nearly seven months -- to close at 80.79, its previous record low.

This is the third straight session of loss for the American currency during which it has lost 124 paise against the American currency.

Forex traders said escalation of geopolitical risk in Ukraine and rate hikes by the US Fed and Bank of England in a bid to contain inflation sapped risk appetite.

Further, the strength of the American currency in the over-



seas market, a negative trend in domestic equities, and risk-off mood amid escalation of geopolitical risk in Ukraine weighed on the local unit.

"Rupee fell to fresh all-time lows against the US dollar after the Fed raised rates earlier this week. Most of the currencies are under pressure as the dollar continues to strengthen," said Gaurang Somaia, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Somaia further noted that volatility in Yen remained elevated after the Bank of Japan intervened to curb sharp depreciation. The Bank of England raised rates by 50 bps.

"We expect the USD-INR (Spot) to trade sideways and quote in the range of 80.40 and 81.20," Somaia said.

'Govt for banks to collaborate with NBFCs and fintech companies'

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The government is in favour of banks working closely with the non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and fintech companies for co-lending and also push forward the digital route, an official said.

Speaking at a CII event here on Friday, Hardik Mukesh Sheth, director (banking operations) of the department of financial services, said that the government is pushing the public sector banks (PSBs) to work with the NBFCs and fintech companies to collaborate in the area of co-lending.

He also said that there is also a push towards the digital route, adding that new-age banking using technology has increased.

"There is a rise in loan disbursement using the digital channel," Sheth said.

The official said that all the 12 PSBs are making profits, and their non-performing assets (NPAs) have halved due to recovery. "None of the 12 public sector banks are under the prompt corrective action (PCA) of the RBI," he said.

Echoing the same, MD&CEO of Yes Bank

"None of the 12 public sector banks are under the prompt corrective action (PCA) of the RBI,"

Prashant Kumar said that NBFCs are critical not only for financial inclusion but also for raising credit offtake. He said fintechs are able to understand customer behaviour while the banks enjoy their trust.

According to Kumar, fintechs can help the banks in raising efficiency and collaboration between them can be way forward on increasing credit of the lenders. MD of State Bank of India (SBI), international global market, C Sreenivasulu Setty said that it is important to combine the trust of the banks and technology of the fintech companies to serve the customers.

"This has to be on a sustained basis. The banks are spending money to address this issue," he added.

Gold falls ₹139; silver declines ₹363



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price in the national capital fell by ₹139 to ₹50,326 per 10 grams on Friday amid a fall in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had finished at ₹50,465 per 10 grams.

Silver also fell sharply by ₹363 to ₹58,366 per kilogram from ₹58,729 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,665 per ounce, while silver was flat at USD 19.50 per ounce.

"Gold prices have capped downside despite of stronger dollar over recession worries as the US Federal Reserve committed to raise interest rates," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities.

Non-life insurers register 12 pc rise in gross direct premium income at ₹24,472 crore in August: Irdai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Non-life insurers registered a 12 per cent yearly growth in their gross direct premium income during August this fiscal at Rs 24,471.95 crore, data from insurance sector regulator Irdai showed.

In the same month a year ago, all the 31 non-life insurance companies in the domestic market had garnered a gross premium income of Rs 21,867.93 crore.

According to the data provided by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), a total of 24 general insurers witnessed a 9.3 per cent growth in



their collective gross direct premium income in August at Rs 17,101.75 crore as against Rs 15,648.63 crore in the year-ago period.

The five standalone health insurance providers reported a jump of 28 per cent in their gross direct premium income during the month at Rs 2,059.38 crore. The figure stood at Rs 1,609.75 crore in August 2021. The rest two specialised public sector insurers in the

non-life space witnessed a 15.2 per cent rise in their combined premium income in August 2022 at Rs 5,310.82 crore as against Rs 4,609.55 crore a year ago.

On a cumulative basis, all the 31 players' gross direct premium income in April-August period of 2022-23 rose by 18.57 per cent to Rs 1,02,357.29 crore. It was Rs 86,329.09 crore in same period of 2021-22.

Nestle plans to invest ₹5K cr in India by 2025: CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Global food & beverage conglomerate Nestle SA plans to invest ₹5,000 crore in India in the next three-and-a-half years by 2025, its CEO Mark Schneider said on Friday.

The move will help the company to accelerate its core business in the country and leverage new opportunities for growth.

The investment would be on capex (capital expenditure), setting up new plants, acquisitions and expansion of the product portfolio of the company. Nestle, which currently operates 9 plants across India is also looking at new locations to set up manufacturing capacity. The investment, which would be subject to clearances and approvals, will also help in creating more job opportunities in the domestic market.

TVS Motor rolls out celebratory edition of Jupiter Classic

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Two- and three-wheeler major TVS Motor has rolled out a celebratory edition of its scooter TVS Jupiter Classic, commemorating the 'fastest five million vehicles on road' milestone, the company said on Friday.

The TVS Jupiter Classic has been introduced at a price of ₹85,866 (ex-showroom New Delhi).

The scooter gets a premium rendition with black theme across its mirror, fender garnish, tinted visor and a 3D black premium logo.



In a statement, the company said diamond cut alloy wheels, premium leatherette seats with backrest are also provided in the scooter which is available in two colours -- Mystic Grey and Regal Purple.

"The new TVS Jupiter Classic is contemporised premium classic. This variant celebrates TVS Jupiter achieving the milestone of 'Fastest Five Million Vehicles on Road'. It is the acknowledgement and celebration of the fact that this has been made possible by the unprecedented faith and love millions of consumers have reposed in TVS Jupiter," TVS Motor, Senior Vice President (Marketing) - Commuters, Corporate Brand and Dealer Transformation, Aniruddha Haldar said.

FRENCH LESSONS FOR AUSTRIA



AP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappe starred as world champions France shrugged off injuries and off-field problems to beat Austria in UEFA Nations League match on Thursday.

France's build-up to their defence of the World Cup in Qatar in November and December has been marred by fitness issues surrounding a host of key players as well as other worries, but Les Bleus did not appear distracted as they outclassed the Austrians in Paris, winning 2-0.

Mbappe showcased his phenomenal

pace and strength on the way before finishing emphatically to put the hosts ahead in the 56th minute at the Stade de France.

The recalled Olivier Giroud doubled their lead nine minutes later, heading in Antoine Griezmann's cross to score his 49th international goal -- he is now just two goals short of Thierry Henry's French record.

"We did what we needed to do to get the victory, creating lots of chances and controlling the match," said France coach Didier Deschamps.

"There are lots of positives to take from the game."

Mbappe celebrated his goal by mimicking a photographer in an apparent nod to that row.

Just eight days shy of his 36th birthday, Giroud is France's oldest ever goal-scorer.

Coming exactly two months before they begin their World Cup defence against Australia in Qatar, the result also allowed France to stave off the threat of relegation from the top tier of the Nations League, a competition they won just last year.

Deschamps' side still need to win their last Group A1 game away in Denmark on Sunday to be certain of avoiding relegation, while qualification for the four-team finals

next June is already out of reach.

CROATIA SEE OFF DENMARK

Croatia, the 2018 World Cup runners-up, are on course to top the section after beating Denmark 2-1 in Zagreb.

Borna Sosa's 49th-minute opener for the hosts was cancelled out by a magnificent Christian Eriksen strike in the 77th minute.

However, Croatia's winner came just two minutes later through Lovro Majer.

Croatia are a point clear of the Danes before going to Vienna to play bottom side Austria on Sunday.

Netherlands see off Poland

AP ■ WARSAW

The Netherlands beat Poland 2-0 in Warsaw on Thursday to move closer to qualification for the Nations League finals, as Cody Gakpo and Steven Bergwijn continued their excellent starts to the season.

Louis van Gaal's men maintained their three-point lead over Belgium.

They will need only a point from their last game against the Belgians in Amsterdam on Sunday to be sure of securing top spot.

The Dutch appear to be in strong form ahead of their World Cup opener in Qatar against African champions Senegal on November 21, before further Group A games with the hosts and Ecuador.

Poland qualified for the World Cup with a play-off victory over Sweden but were toothless on Thursday.

The Dutch took a 14th-minute lead after an excellent team move ended with Denzel Dumfries squaring for Gakpo to tap into an empty net.

The PSV Eindhoven winger has now



scored eight goals in his last seven matches for club and country.

Poland finally created a good chance in the 53rd minute, but Arkadiusz Milik blazed over.

The Netherlands doubled their advantage seven minutes later as Vincent Janssen teed up Steven Bergwijn to score.

De Bruyne leads Belgium to victory

AP ■ BRUSSELS

Kevin De Bruyne score Kone goal and made the other for Belgium to secure a rare 2-1 win over Wales in Brussels and keep the Red Devils' slim chance of reaching the Nations League semi-finals alive.

De Bruyne claimed before the game that he was "bored" of facing Wales on the international stage, but Belgium had won just two of the previous eight meetings between the sides over the last 10 years.

That included a

famous victory for the Welsh in the quarter-finals of Euro 2016, but there was no repeat for the severely depleted visitors on Thursday.

Gareth Bale was left on the bench by Rob Page with one eye on managing his fitness ahead of their World Cup, while Aaron Ramsey and Ben Davies missed out through injury.

Belgium were also missing one of their key men in Romelu Lukaku, but Michy Batshuayi stepped up to replace the Inter Milan striker to continue his excellent goalscoring record at international level.

Batshuayi played provider for the opening goal as his pass was superbly stroked into the bottom corner by De Bruyne on 10 minutes.

The Manchester City midfielder then hit the post and Batshuayi passed up a great chance as Wales struggled to contain the waves of Belgian attacks.

The same two players combined for the second goal eight minutes before half-time as this time De Bruyne's teasing cross left Batshuayi with a tap-in for his 26th international goal in 46 appearances.

Unvaccinated Djokovic awaiting word on Australian Open

AP ■ LONDON

Novak Djokovic is still awaiting word on whether he will be allowed to return to the Australian Open in January after missing the tournament this year because he is not vaccinated against COVID-19.

"It's really not in my hands right now," Djokovic said on Thursday at the Laver Cup. "So I'm hoping I will get some positive news."

Djokovic is a 21-time Grand Slam singles champion -- a total that stands second among men, behind only Rafael Nadal's 22 and one ahead of Roger Federer's 20 -- and he has won a record nine of those trophies at Melbourne Park.

But he was deported from Australia last January after a 10-day legal saga that culmi-



nated with his visa being revoked; he originally was granted an exemption to strict vaccination rules by two medical panels and Tennis Australia in order to play in the Australian Open.

Australia has since changed its border rules -- since July 6, incoming travelers no longer have to have provide proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, or even provide a negative COVID test.

Jhingan unlikely starter for India in Singapore friendly

PTI ■ HO CHI MINH CITY

Senior defender Sandesh Jhingan might be rested during India's first FIFA international friendly against Singapore in the Hung Thinh Friendly Football Tournament here on Saturday.

Jhingan and teammate Chinglensana Singh didn't accompany the team due to travel document related issues and only boarded a 3 am flight on Friday morning.

As per sources in the team, head coach Igor Stimac might just rest Jhingan for the opening game and give him a start against Vietnam, a team that reached the quarter-finals of the 2019 Asian Cup.

Head coach Stimac, however, sounded confident yet cautious on the eve of India's first meeting with Singapore in 10 years.

The Croatian coach said though Singapore have made



huge progress in the past few years, India have the ability to tame their opponents.

"Singapore made big

progress in recent years. They have a new coach, who has made some changes in the system that often makes things

difficult for the opponents. But I will tell my players to play confidently against them and show what exactly we have in store for them," Stimac said.

Stimac believes that Singapore will play attacking football.

"Singapore are quite good especially in the high pressing area. I have observed the way they press the ball all over the pitch to make things which is making it tough for the rivals. So, there is one small advantage they have in this regard," added the coach.

The 55-year-old World Cupper is aware of some of the fitness challenges his team is facing.

Stimac didn't forget to mention that in terms of fitness levels and preparations, his team is slightly undercooked as the side has had only one full session in Ho Chi Minh City before coming

into the game.

"We should not ignore the fact that their fitness level is, at the moment, better than ours, but we need to be composed and get on the field with our morale high."

But he feels that he has enough players to keep the Singapore attacking line at bay.

"I think that we have enough players with technical ability who can find a way to escape from the such high press, and with many players in the middle making it tight and difficult. But we are going to find spaces on the weak positions and play as per our plan," Stimac quipped.

The Blue Tigers will be seen in action for the first time after their successful campaign in the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers in June where they played three matches and finished with a hundred per cent win record.

Kaka to make marathon debut in Berlin

AP ■ BERLIN

Former World Cup-winning footballer Kaka will make his debut at the Berlin Marathon on Sunday, saying he was "just as excited as I used to be before football matches."

Kaka, who played for Real Madrid and AC Milan before retiring in 2017, said his father's struggle with Covid-19 had inspired him to run the marathon.

"He was 45 days in hospital" Kaka said at the Berlin marathon press conference on Friday.

"Fortunately, he is with us today."

Kaka's father and brother will take part in the "family experience" of the marathon.

"He's not going to run, he's just walking, but we wanted him in this experience with us - it's more of a family experience."

Kaka said marathons were particularly special as sporting events because amateurs can take part side-by-side with professionals.

"I'm very excited... Of course, it's completely different than those guys (pointing to the professionals), this is something that is really good in marathons."

McEnroe upbeat on future of tennis despite Federer's exit

AP ■ LONDON

John McEnroe says Roger Federer and Serena Williams are "irreplaceable" but that tennis "goes on no matter what" as the Swiss prepares to play his final match on Friday.

Federer, a 20-time Grand Slam singles champion, will bring the curtain down on his glittering career in the Laver Cup at London's O2 arena alongside long-time rival Rafael Nadal.

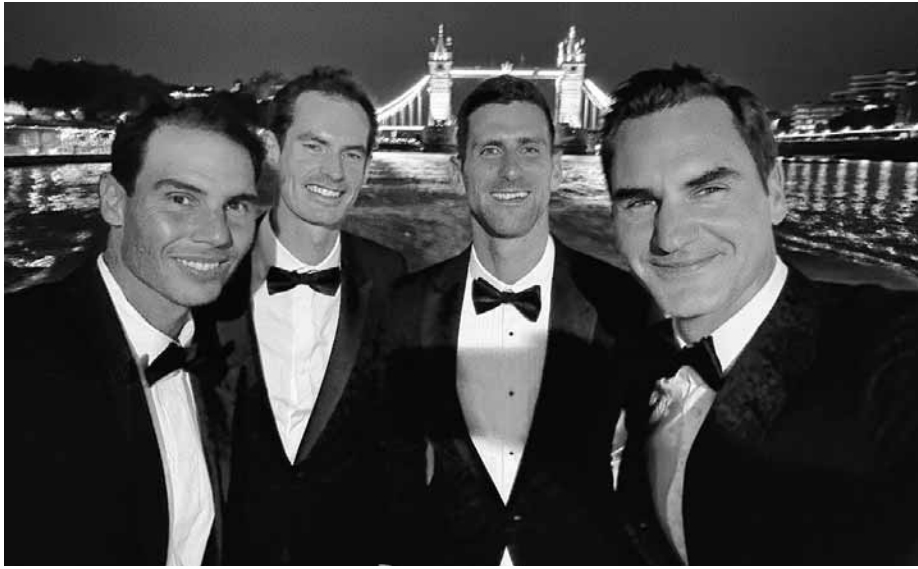
The two players, representing Team Europe, will take on Team World's Frances Tiafoe and Jack Sock in doubles in the evening session on the first day of the event.

The 41-year-old Federer's retirement comes hot on the heels of a similar decision by Williams, who won 23 majors in singles.

McEnroe, who is captain of Team World, admitted the sport would miss the two players but is optimistic about the future, just weeks after 19-year-old Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz won the US Open.

"These two players are irreplaceable," he said. "I don't think there is any question about that."

But he added: "The sport



goes on no matter what, and we have witnessed that in every sport over time.

"The opportunity is there to market these young kids in a way that I don't think we have successfully done before."

McEnroe, who won seven Grand Slam singles titles, said Williams had "brought electricity" to the recent US Open, where she lost in the third round.

But he said other players such as Alcaraz and America's Tiafoe, who lost to the Spaniard in the semi-final at Flushing Meadows, made it an "electrifying event".

Taylor Fritz, who is also part of Team World, said the two big retirements would be tough on a lot of fans but the future was bright.

"Serena and Roger probably have more fans than anybody in

tennis," said the American. "But, you know, there's so many more players."

"I think tennis is becoming so much more entertaining because you're seeing so many new people win."

"It's really exciting that going into these big events there are 10 different people that could potentially win. Hopefully their fans stay in the sport, want to keep watching."

Muguruza 'not scared' after latest exit in Tokyo

AP ■ TOKYO

Struggling former world number one Garbine Muguruza said she was "not scared" of her deepening slump after losing in the quarter-finals of the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Friday.

The number three seed lost 6-4, 6-2 to Russia's Liudmila Samsonova to continue a dismal run of results this year for the two-time Grand Slam champion.

Muguruza has not managed to string together more than two wins at a tournament and fell out of the world top 10 earlier this month.

But she said she had "already recovered" from her latest defeat and was looking forward to her next tournament.

"I don't think I have to be too sad about it -- I played good, she played better, and that's pretty much it," said the Spaniard, now ranked number 12 in the world.

"I don't want to overthink, I want to keep going. I've had worse losses where I didn't think that I played good but this one I felt like I was there."

Muguruza, who won the French Open in 2016 and Wimbledon a year later, started the year ranked number three



RADUCANU SURGES INTO KOREA OPEN SEMI-FINALS

AP ■ SEOUL

Emma Raducanu won three matches in a row at a tournament for the first time since her US Open triumph as she blew away Magda Linette to reach the Korea Open semi-

but has since lost in the first round of six tournaments.

Muguruza was the latest big name to fall at the Pan Pacific Open.

Top seed Paula Badosa, US Open semi-finalist Caroline Garcia and Wimbledon cham-

finals on Friday.

The 19-year-old Briton powered her way to a commanding 6-2, 6-2 victory in Seoul and will now face either top seed Jelena Ostapenko or 186th-ranked Victoria Jimenez Kasintseva.

Samsonova will play Zhang Shuai in Saturday's semi-final after the Chinese veteran beat Croatia's Petra Martic 7-5, 6-2.

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