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## Uddhav jolted! SC lets EC decide on real Sena

Court allows EC to hear Shinde's plea for claim on party, symbol

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a big setback to Uddhav Thackeray, the Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the Election Commission to go ahead with the hearing of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde group's plea seeking recognition as the real Shiv Sena and allocation of the party's bow-and-arrow poll symbol to it.

Justice DY Chandrachud, heading a Constitution bench, rejected the plea of the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction seeking to restrain the EC from deciding the State's ruling Shinde camp's claim over the "original" Shiv Sena.

"We direct that there would be no stay of the proceedings before the Election Commission," the bench also comprising Justices MR Shah, Krishna Murari, Hima Kohli and PS Narasimha said. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Thackeray faction, challenged Shinde's locus to approach the poll panel seeking claim over the party and its election symbol. Sibal argued that Election Symbol Order can be invoked only when the claimant belongs



Shiv Sena (Uddhav faction) general secretary Subhash Desai (L), with party leaders Anil Parab and Arvind Sawant, comes out of the Supreme Court after a hearing on Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde's plea staking claim on the party symbol, in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

to the same political party but claims to be of a rival group.

"I am saying Shinde is no longer in the party and membership has been given up. How does the EC hear him then? Sibal said, referring to the disqualification notice issued against Shinde and some other Shiv Sena MLAs who had rebelled against then Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in June this year.

Senior advocate Arvind Datar, appearing for the poll panel, said the Election Commission is free to decide who constitutes the aspect of majority.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Maharashtra Governor BS Koshiyari, contended that the Election Commission is only deciding which faction is the "real" party and so it should be allowed to proceed with

Shinde's plea. Shinde group's counsel and senior advocate NK Kaul submitted an election symbol is not the property of an MLA and to which faction it belongs has to be decided by the Election Commission, asserting the poll panel cannot be prevented from taking any decision on the issue.

The bench was hearing pending cases related to the political crisis in Maharashtra that began with Shinde group's revolt against Uddhav Thackeray's leadership which led to the fall of the three-party Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government in the State.

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Will go by 'rule of majority': CEC

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday evening said the EC will apply the transparent process of the "rule of majority" in the Shiv Sena split issue. He was reacting to the questions from the media on the SC order allowing the Election Commission to decide on the Shiv Sena claims by Shinde faction. "There is a set procedure. That procedure mandates us and we define it in terms of a very transparent process by judging and applying the "rule of majority".

## Gehlot off the hook, but his loyalists to pay price

Cong notice to 2 Raj Mins, MLA; Gehlot speaks to Sonia as bids to defuse crisis on

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

Congress observers for Rajasthan on Tuesday gave a clean chit to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, but in a hardening of stance the party issued show-cause notices to two of his Cabinet Ministers and an MLA.

On the recommendation of Ajay Maken and Mallikarjun Kharge, the two central

observers, the Congress disciplinary committee issues show-cause notice to Rajasthan Ministers Shanti Dhariwal and Mahesh Joshi, and MLA Dharmendra Rathore. All three considered hardcore Gehlot's loyalists.

The Congress panel has asked the three Rajasthan leaders to reply within 10 days why action should not be taken against them for grave indiscipline.

"This show cause notice is being issued seeking your reply within 10 days as to why disciplinary action not be taken against you as per the provisions of the constitution of the Indian National Congress," the notice by disciplinary panel secretary Tariq Anwar said.

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## Shashi in race, Bansal picks form; no word on Raj CM's candidature

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajasthan political crisis has forced the Congress high command to take a fresh view on the candidature of Ashok Gehlot as an "official" nominee for the post of presidential in the upcoming organisational poll.

Amid reports that Congress interim president

Sonia Gandhi and several senior leaders were hugely upset with Gehlot for the Rajasthan drama, Sonia held hectic parleys with senior party leaders, including Kamal Nath, Pawan Bansal, Ambika Soni, and AK Antony, to decide the future course of action.

Until a couple of days ago, Gehlot had been the "accepted" candidate of the high command.

Amid the suspense about Gandhi family preferred candidate, the party's central election authority chairman Madhusudan Mistry said AICC treasurer Pawan Kumar Bansal and former Union Minister Shashi Tharoor collected the nomination forms.

Mistry said while Tharoor is in the race, Bansal might have collected it for someone else. While the nomination filing dates end on Friday, Mistry said he had no information on whether Gehlot was going to file his nomination papers.

The remark comes amid speculation that the Rajasthan Chief Minister may be dropped as a candidate for the Congress president post even as he made attempts to pacify the Gandhis.

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Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi being presented her QR-coded voter ID card and final list of delegates of electoral college by Congress Central Election Authority Chairman Madhusudan Mistry, in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

## Spike in oil price breaking India's back: Jaishankar

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India, which has a USD 2,000 per capita economy, is concerned over the spike in the price of oil due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and it is "breaking our back," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

Addressing a joint press conference with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken after holding bilateral talks, Jaishankar said there is a very deep concern among developing countries about how their energy needs are addressed.

Speaking about the Ukraine war, he said, "We have taken the position privately, publicly, confidentially and consistently that this conflict is not in anybody's interest."

The best way forward is to return to dialogue and diplomacy, he said.

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## 170 PFI activists arrested in pan-India crackdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 170 people allegedly linked to the radical Popular Front of India (PFI) were detained or arrested in searches across seven States on Tuesday.

The latest round of searches came just five days after a similar pan-India crackdown against the group accused of espousing radical Islam. The searches were conducted following the inputs from the intelligence agencies and leads generated after the interrogations of the 106 PFI activists arrested on September 22.

So far nearly 300 activists/sympathisers have been arrested in two rounds of the searches within a week.

The searches were mostly conducted by State police teams spread across Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Delhi, Maharashtra, Assam



A member of Popular Front of India (PFI) arrested by Assam Police being produced before a court in Guwahati on Tuesday. PTI

and Madhya Pradesh.

On September 22, multi-agency teams spearheaded by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested 106 leaders and activists of the PFI in 15 States for allegedly supporting terror activities in the country.

The NIA alone had arrested 45 people following searches at 93 locations in 15 States. The NIA is investigating 19 PFI-related cases (including the five in which the searches were conducted on Thursday).

Continued on Page 2

## Man kills wife for refusing to wear burqa

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a shocking development, a 36-year-old man stabbed his wife to death after she refused to follow Islamic tenets or wear burqa at Tilak Nagar in north-central Mumbai.

Three years ago, accused Iqbal Shaikh fell in love with and married Rupali Chandanshive — who was a Hindu woman prior to her marriage, converted herself to Islam after her marriage with the accused and became Zara — and were living together with their two-year-old son Ali.

However, their marriage ran into trouble after Shaikh and Zara began to quarrel over her refusal to wear burqa. This led to their separation a few months ago with Zara going back to her parents with her son Ali. A few weeks ago, Zara moved to a rental accommodation at the neighbouring Chembur locality.

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## Abe was a great leader, believed in Indo-Japan friendship, says Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/TOKYO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday paid glowing tributes to former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and said he was "a great leader, a phenomenal individual and someone who believed in India-Japan friendship". Modi recalled this as he attended the state funeral of the longest serving Japanese Prime Minister who was shot dead on July 8 during a political campaign in Nara, southern city of Japan.

Representatives from over 100 countries, including more than 20 heads of state and governments, attended Abe's funeral in Tokyo.

"When I was in Tokyo earlier this year, little did I imagine I would be back for the solemn programme of former



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo. PTI

PM Abe's state funeral. He was a great leader, a phenomenal individual and someone who believed in India-Japan friendship. He shall live on in the hearts of millions!", Modi tweeted, sharing a photograph of him paying tribute to Abe.

## UP Govt defers appointment of CJI's son as its lawyer in SC

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government on Tuesday deferred the appointment of Shreyash Lalit — son of Chief Justice UU Lalit — as its senior counsel in the Supreme Court.

The latest order said the appointment of Shreyash as its senior panel lawyer in the apex court would be on hold until further orders.

On September 21, the UP Government had appointed four lawyers, including Shreyash, to represent its matters in the apex court. Along with Shreyash, the appointment of two other lawyers — Nidhi Goyal and Namit Saxena — has also been deferred. No reasons have been cited for it.

The CJI's son secured a law degree from the Faculty of Law at Delhi University in 2017. He then pursued a master's degree from the University of Cambridge in 2018.

## CAPSULE

**DELHI LIQUOR SCAM: BIZMAN VIJAY NAIR HELD**  
New Delhi: The CBI arrested businessman Vijay Nair on Tuesday in connection with the Delhi Excise Policy scam case in which Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is also an accused, officials said. P3

**ANKITA MURDER: BIKE, SCOOTER RECOVERED**  
Dehradun: The SIT probing the Ankita Bhandari murder case on Tuesday recovered a grey Activa and a black Pulsar motorcycle, which were used in taking Ankita to the Chilla canal into which she was drowned.

**HC BARS CID FROM PROBING COAL SCAM**  
Kolkata: The Calcutta HC on Tuesday barred the Bengal CID from probing the multi-crore coal smuggling case saying once the CBI the case the State agency had no business to intervene in the matter.

## HC restrains AAP from libel against L-G, asks party to take down posts

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In an interim relief to Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday restrained the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) from making "false" allegations of corruption against him and his family members.

The High Court has also directed them to take down the alleged libelous hashtags, videos of press conferences/interviews, posts, tweets, re-tweets, comments, captions and taglines similar thereto against Lieutenant Governor within 48 hours. The HC held they were made "without factual verification, in order to tarnish the reputation" of the Lieutenant Governor.

Continued on Page 2

## SC hearings' live-streaming a hit, day 1 draws 7L views

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The first day of the Supreme Court live-streaming of three Constitution Bench hearings, received overwhelming response and more than seven lakh views.

Court 1, which heard petitions challenging the Constitutional validity of the ten per cent quota for economically weaker section (EWS), had nearly 2.5 lakh views.

Court 2, which was hearing cases arising out of the Shiv Sena crisis and the issue concerning the scope of legislative and executive powers of the Central and Delhi Governments over control of services in the national Capital,



Apex Court's website. The SC had last week decided to begin live-streaming of Constitution Bench cases starting September 27.

The decision was taken at a full-court meeting convened by Chief Justice of India UU Lalit last week. The decision was unanimous and the hearings will initially be telecast live on YouTube till the court develops its own platform to host the live telecast of proceedings.

On September 27, 2018, then Chief Justice of India Dipak Mishra had delivered the landmark judgment on the live telecast or webcast of important proceedings in matters of constitutional importance, saying "sunlight is the best disinfectant".

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## Dada Saheb Phalke goes to Asha Parekh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran actor Asha Parekh will be honoured with the Dada Saheb Phalke award for 2020, the highest recognition in the field of Indian cinema, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur said on Tuesday.

Parekh, 79, will be presented with the award during the 68th National Film Awards ceremony, to be held on Friday.

The five-member Dada Saheb Phalke Award committee — comprising Asha Bhosle, Hema Malini, Poonam Dhillon, Udit Narayan, and TS Nagabharana — decided on Parekh's name for the honour, Thakur told reporters in his constituency Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh.

"They decided in the meeting that this time Asha Parekh ji will be honoured with the



Dada Saheb Phalke Award, which will be presented during the National Film Awards ceremony. It is a matter of pride for

the Ministry to announce this prestigious award for the veteran actress," said the Union Minister.

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NCR-PULSE

KEJRIWAL TO LAUNCH ACTION PLAN TO FIGHT POLLUTION
New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will launch his government's 15-point action plan to fight air pollution in winter on September 30, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Tuesday.

SEMINAR HELD ON BHAGAT SINGH'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY
New Delhi: Delhi Government on Tuesday organised a seminar at the Delhi Secretariat on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Shaheed-e-Azam Sardar Bhagat Singh.

GOVT TO GIVE SAMMAN RASHI TO CORONA WARRIORS' FAMILIES
New Delhi: The Delhi Government will provide a Samman Rashi of Rs 1 crore to the families of 28 corona warriors who lost their lives during the COVID-induced pandemic while serving the patients and society.

STATE BJP DELEGATION MEETS ELECTION PANEL CHIEF
New Delhi: Under the leadership of state General Secretary Kuljeet Singh Chahal and Harsh Malhotra, a delegation of state BJP met the President Election Committee Vijay Dev on Tuesday and gave their suggestions for the upcoming corporation elections.

25-YR-OLD WOMAN ENDS LIFE DUE TO DOWRY HARASSMENT
New Delhi: A 25-year-old woman allegedly ended her life by hanging herself over dowry harassment in southeast Delhi's Govindpuri area.

AAP LASHES OUT AT BJP-RULED MCD FOR DENGUE
New Delhi: The AAP on Tuesday lashed out at the BJP ruled municipal corporation and claimed that their sloppiness in preventing the breeding of dengue mosquitoes and pathogens has become a menace to the safety of people of Delhi.

UNDERTRIAL PRISONER MOLESTS JUNIOR DOCTOR
New Delhi: An undertrial prisoner allegedly molested a junior resident doctor at Delhi's Mandoli jail and also tried to rape her.

SC order on Sena symbol: Shinde says 'It's a big relief'

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Supreme Court's ruling that the Election Commission would decide on the dispute between the Shiv Sena factions led by Uddhav Thackeray and Eknath Shinde evoked a mixed response, with chief minister welcoming the apex court's court and Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray saying the SC order was not a relief to the Shinde camp.



EC to decide on the Sena symbol matter, chief minister Eknath Shinde said: "It is a big relief for that the Supreme Court has rejected the Shiv Sena's plea to stay the proceeding in the party symbol case."

While hearing the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena petition seeking to restrain the Election Commission from deciding on the allotment of party's bow-and-arrow symbol, a SC Constitutional bench headed by DY Chandrachud said that there would not be any stay on the Election Commission's proceedings to decide as to who was the "real" Shiv Sena — Eknath Shinde or Uddhav Thackeray.

Talking to media persons after the apex court allowed the

laws. We were expecting this decision," Shinde said, adding that his group had full faith in the Election Commission.

In a relating development, NCP leader and MP Supriya said: "It is unfortunate that the two factions of the Shiv Sena are slugging it out in the courts as to whom the party symbol belonged to. Late Thackeray must be turning in his grave seeing the ongoing litigation before the Supreme Court and Election Commission."

Maharashtra Congress' chief spokesperson Atul Londhe said the Supreme Court's ruling would not benefit the Shinde camp much.

"Basically, the issue of eligibility of 16 MLAs including Eknath Shinde has not been resolved yet, the hanging sword of disqualification remains on them and the existing government in the state is unconstitutional, and until their eligibility is decided, the Shinde camp has no right to take any constitutional decision," Londhe said.

3 JeM terrorists killed by forces in 24 hours in J&K



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A day after eliminating one of the top Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commanders late on Monday night, two more local terrorists were eliminated by the joint team of security forces in the South Kashmir district of Kulgam on Tuesday.

According to police, the encounter was launched at Ahwato area of Kulgam late Tuesday evening after receiving confirmed reports about the presence of terrorists in the area.

During the cordon and search operation the terrorists opened fire on the security

forces and in the ensuing encounter both the terrorists were eliminated. Both the slain terrorists were categorised as terrorists and have been identified as Mohammad Shafi Ganie of Batpora, Kulgam & Mohammad Asif Wani of Yawar of Takiya Gopalpora, Kulgam. They belonged to JeM terrorist outfit.

Security forces also recovered 02 AK 47 rifles and ammunition from the encounter site.

Late Monday night, a JeM Commander identified as Abu Hurairah was eliminated by the security forces in Batpora area of Kulgam. Two civilians and a jawan received injuries during the operation.

Shashi in race, Bansal picks...

From Page 1
Gehlot spoke to Sonia and tried to explain that he had no role in rebellion by the Congress MLAs. The date for 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. In the last 24 hours Sonia met several leaders, including Mistry, who handed over her QR-coded identity card for the party president's election. He also briefed Sonia about how many people have collected the nomination forms and about the delegates.

Sonia also held meetings with Ambika Soni, KC Venugopal, Girija Vyas, Mukul Wasnik, Verrappa Moily and Mohsina Kidwai whereas a separate meeting with AICC in-charge for Himachal Pradesh Rajeev Shukla and HP PCC president Pratibha Singh regarding elections in poll bound Himachal, sources said.

SC...

From Page 1
In a unanimous decision taken at a recent full court meeting headed by the CJI Lalit, the apex court decided to live-stream proceedings of all Constitution bench hearings from September 27, four years after the path-breaking announcement by Justice Misra.

On August 26, for the first time since its inception, the Supreme Court live-streamed proceedings of a bench headed by then Chief Justice (since retired) N V Ramana through a webcast portal. It was a ceremonial proceeding as Justice Ramana was to demit office that day.

Man kills...

From Page 1
Late on Monday evening Zara's parents learnt that she had been attacked. Her parents rushed to her new rental residence where they found Zara in a pool of blood with several stab wounds on her neck and hands. They rushed her to the state-run Rajawadi Hospital at Ghatkopar in north-east Mumbai, where she succumbed to stab injuries.

Eyewitness accounts revealed that Shaikh had assaulted Zaru fatally and fled the scene of crime.

The Tilak Nagar Police have arrested Shaikh and booked him for alleged murder of Zaru.

Spike in oil price breaking...

From Page 1
"Look, we have concerns about the price of oil but we are a USD 2,000 per capita economy. When the price of oil is breaking our back and it's our big concern," he said.

Jaishankar was responding to a question on a cap on Russian oil. "In the past when we have been able to contribute something, we have been open to it," he said.

"Right now there are some issues," he said "You have to understand that in the last few months the energy markets are already under very great stress. Countries in the global south have found it difficult to compete for limited energy, not just in terms of escalating prices

but often in terms of availability"

"Our concern right now is that energy markets already under stress must soften up. We would judge any situation frankly by how it affects us and other countries in the global south. There is a very deep concern among developing countries about how their energy security needs are addressed or not," Jaishankar said.

India's crude oil imports from Russia have jumped over 50 times since April and now it makes up for 10 per cent of all crude bought from overseas.

Russian oil made up for just 0.2 per cent of all oil imported by India prior to the Ukraine war.

HC restrains AAP from libel against...

From Page 1
After the High Court order, Lt Governor Office sources said, "The order has vindicated LG's stance and called out AAP's mud-slinging campaign."

Responding to the High Court, the AAP on Tuesday said that it "completely disagrees" with the interim order that directed the party and its leaders to take down alleged libelous posts, videos and tweets posted against him.

"We completely and politely disagree with the order (of the court). We will study it thoroughly, discuss it with lawyers and let you know our next course of action," AAP leader Durgesh Pathak said

while responding to a query pertaining to the court order.

The order came on a defamation suit filed by Saxena against AAP and five of its leaders -Sanjay Singh, Atishi, Durgesh Pathak, Saurabh Bhardwaj and Jasmine Shah - for levelling "false" and "derogatory" allegations against him. The controversy erupted when AAP MLA Pathak, during a Delhi Assembly in late August, accused Saxena of corruption involving the change of demonetised notes in 2016 during his tenure as head of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC). AAP has alleged a Rs 1,400-crore scam and demanded a CBI probe against Saxena.

Uddhav joited! SC...

From Page 1
Shiv Sena break up had resulted in a slew of petitions getting filed in the Supreme Court by the rival factions,

and the apex court referred those to a five-judge bench on August 23, saying the conflict had raised several Constitutional questions related to defection, merger and disqualification. It had asked the EC not to pass any orders on the Shinde faction's plea that it be considered the "real" Shiv Sena and granted the party's poll symbol, the bar which was lifted on Tuesday.

Though the Shinde faction has formed a coalition Government with the BJP in Maharashtra and enjoys the support of an overwhelming majority of MLAs who had won on Shiv Sena tickets, the Election Commission cannot recognise it as the original party simply on that basis.

170 PFI activists arrested in pan-India...

From Page 1
As many as 46 PFI cadres have been convicted in NIA cases till so far and 355 persons have been chargesheeted by the agency.

The synchronised searches were conducted by police teams that fanned out across their respective States on Tuesday and made arrests in a swift manner.

While 25 persons each were arrested in Assam and Maharashtra, 57 were detained in Uttar Pradesh, officials said. In Delhi, 30 people were detained followed by 21 in Madhya Pradesh, 10 in Gujarat and six in Maharashtra's Pune. Besides, several persons were also arrested in Karnataka.

In Uttar Pradesh, the raids across 26 districts were jointly carried out by the Anti-

Terrorist Squad, Special Task Force and the local police simultaneously. Documents and evidence were collected, Additional Director General (law and order) Prashant Kumar said.

Further action will be taken based on the evidence collected, Kumar said while adding that 57 people were taken into custody.

There was no immediate reaction from the PFI, which was formed in 2006 and claims to strive for a neo-social movement ostensibly for the empowerment of marginalised sections of India.

It is, however, suspected by the security agencies to be involved in insidious activities and promoting radical Islam. The organisation was formed in Kerala and moved its head-

quarters to Shaheen Bagh in the national Capital in 2008.

Following the continued crackdown against PFI, the outfit is likely to be banned across the country.

Of the 25 PFI activists arrested in Assam in the fresh crackdown, 10 were held in Goalpara, five were nabbed in Kamrup (Rural) and three in Dhubri, followed by arrests in Barpeta, Baksa, Darrang, Udalguri and Karimganj.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had earlier said his Government has been urging the Centre to ban the outfit for allegedly creating an ecosystem for terror activities.

In the national Capital, Delhi Police's Special Cell carried out the searches in multiple locations, including Nizamuddin and Shaheen Bagh. "We have conducted raids at multiple locations in the national Capital, including Shaheen Bagh and Nizamuddin. So far, we have detained 30 people associated with the PFI," a senior police officer said.

Paramilitary forces were deployed in several places in the city where the raids were conducted.

"We have taken preventive measures and as part of it, we have deployed paramilitary forces in respective areas of the districts to ensure law and order situation and maintain peace and tranquility in the area," a senior police official said.

No case has been registered as the investigation is underway, police said. The operation started after 12.30 am and continued till early morning, police said.

In Maharashtra, 25 activists were arrested from six districts, including Aurangabad, Thane and Nanded. Other than this, Pune police detained six people linked to the PFI and its political wing Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), officials said.

The Madhya Pradesh Police detained 21 people from eight districts for their links with the PFI, State Home Minister Narottam Mishra said.

India, Pak both partners but with difference, asserts US

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

A day after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar raised doubts about the decision to sell F-16s to Pakistan, the US said India and Pakistan were both its partners with different points of emphasis.

This reaffirmation came after Jaishankar questioned US decision to sell the F-16 sustenance package and said the USA was not fooling anybody by saying these aircraft were given to fight terrorism.

In an effort to allay India's apprehensions, the US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said late Monday, "We don't view our relationship with Pakistan, and on the other hand, we don't view our relationship with India as a relation to one another."

Dada Saheb...

From Page 1
Parekh, an eminent actor whose career spans close to five decades, started her acting career at the age of 10.

Known for starring in over 95 films that include "Dil Deke Dekho", "Kati Patang", "Teesri Manzil", "Baharon Ke Sapne", "Pyar Ka Mausam", and "Caravan", she is considered one of the most influential actresses of all time in Hindi cinema.

She started her career as a child artist with the 1952 film "Aasmaan" and went on to star in Bimal Roy's "Baap Beti" two years later.

Parekh made her debut as a leading lady in Nasir Hussain's 1959 movie "Dil Deke Dekho", in which she starred opposite Shammi Kapoor.

Also a director and producer, Parekh had helmed the acclaimed TV drama "Kora Kagaz" in the late 1990s.

The screen legend also served as the first female chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) from 1998-2001.

Gehlot off the hook, but his loyalists to...

From Page 1
Disciplinary action had been sought against Dhariwal, who had figured prominently in the rebellion by the party legislators, Minister and Congress Chief Whip in the Assembly Joshi and Rathore for holding a parallel meet of MLAs and not allowing the Congress Legislature Party to meet.

AICC sources said the report drafted by Mallikarjun Kharge and Ajay Maken did not hold Gehlot responsible for the developments in the state since Sunday afternoon.

On his part, Gehlot spoke to the Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday evening and told her that he has no role in the political crisis in the State triggered by refusals of nearly 90 Congress MLAs to attend a CLP meeting and accept Sachin Pilot as Gehlot's successor.

The telephonic talk between Gehlot and Sonia was first after the high drama in Jaipur last Sunday when nearly 90 MLA defied the directive of the High command and paid no heed to central observers Ajay Maken and Mallikarjun Kharge as well.

There are clear indications that both Gehlot and Congress leadership in Delhi did not want to go for a showdown. Sources said senior leader Anand Sharma and Ambika Soni met with Sonia and then spoke to Gehlot to resolve the crisis. Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath, who flew to Delhi on Monday, met Sonia. He is also reported to have talked to Gehlot.

Gehlot has already conveyed to Sonia his apology for the trouble in his home State. Gehlot is likely to visit Delhi on Wednesday. Sachin reached the national Capital on Tuesday evening and is expected to call on Sonia.

The observers, who had met MLAs in the State, termed as "indiscipline" the action of 82 MLAs in the State, setting

conditions for the party leadership for appointing Chief Minister Gehlot's successor.

Party's chief whip in the State, Mahesh Joshi, said the meeting of the MLAs loyal to Gehlot was not called to mount pressure on the party's high command. He said the MLAs have expressed their view so that it reaches the high command. Joshi said this while reacting to Maken's "indiscipline" remark for holding the meeting.

"MLAs are ready for a one-on-one conversation. This is democracy. Do you think we will refuse to hold one-on-one talks with observers? The observers came and we had a family discussion. The chief minister asked me to bring Shanti Dhariwal to his residence. It was Gehlot's leadership which saved the Government when, a few days ago, the Congress Government in Madhya Pradesh was toppled. Sonia is like a mother to all Congress workers. She her-

self refused the PM post and offered it to a great economist like Dr Manmohan Singh. Rahul is walking 1,000 kilometres to save the party. The Congress is not going to be weakened. We are not against any member of the Gandhi family," said Khachariwah.

The Pilot camp has claimed that many of the MLAs were misled about the time and venue of the meeting and were called to the house of Gehlot loyalist Dhariwal to boost numbers. They cited the statements of some MLAs, including that of Indira Meena, to back their claim.

Another MLA Ganga Devi said she is with the party, Sonia and Rahul and whatever the party's high command decides, she would stand with them.

Devi said she did not hand in her resignation letter. Rajasthan MLA Prashant Bairwa said he could not attend the meeting but visited Joshi's residence and resigned.

Public Notice
This is to inform general public that Mr. Chandan Kumar & Mrs. Jyoti Kumar have acquired the entire Second Floor without roof rights, said floor on built up property bearing No. G-1588, area measuring 100 sq. yds. i.e. 83.6 sq. mtrs. Approx., out of Khanda No. 76719, situated in the area of Village Hissal, Delhi state colony known as G-1 Block, Uppan Nagar, New Delhi vide Sale Deed dated 02.08.2018 Doc. No. 18177 executed by Mr. Birbal Aggarwal & Mrs. Pooam and Now, Mr. Chandan Kumar & Mrs. Jyoti Kumar are intending to sell the above said property to Mr. Manish Kumar & Mrs. Pratima and further, Mr. Manish Kumar & Mrs. Pratima are mortgaging the above said property with Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd. in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Ohawani, Mr. Sudhar Jain (Advocates), Law Vidhas, Noida, Unit no. 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-30), Noida Suchash Plaza, Delhi-110034 or contact at 939671772/9819228336 (M).

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to general public at large that my client Axis Bank Ltd, having one of its Branch at 9-1/533, 2nd Floor, Janakpuri, Opposite Metro Pillar No 566, New Delhi-110058 intends to grant Loan facility to Sh. Harpreet Singh and jointly to the above said property to Mr. Manish Kumar & Mrs. Pratima and further, Mr. Manish Kumar & Mrs. Pratima are mortgaging the above said property with Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd. in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Munesh Ohawani, Mr. Sudhar Jain (Advocates), Law Vidhas, Noida, Unit no. 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-30), Noida Suchash Plaza, Delhi-110034 or contact at 939671772/9819228336 (M).

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल
यात्रिक विभाग ( मुख्यालय ) गोविंदपुरा ( बी.एच.ई.ए. )
चतुर्थ निविदा आमरण घोषणा-प्र
भोपाल, दिनांक 26.09.2022
निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु दो लिफाफा पद्धति के अनुसार म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग में केन्द्रीकृत व्यवस्था के अंतर्गत पंजीकृत ठेकेदार परसेन्टेज मोडर बंद निविदाये निर्धारित प्रपत्र पर ऑनलाईन आमंत्रित की जाती है।

M.P. HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER 2022\_MPHID 223434 (1st CALL)
Online Percentage Rate bids for the following works are invited from registered Contractors/firms of repute fulfilling registration criteria.

# 30 with links to PFI detained

Paramilitary out in northeast, central, southeast Delhi, Rohini to keep peace



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Special Cell has detained 30 people allegedly associated with the Popular Front of India (PFI) from multiple locations, including Nizamuddin and Shaheen Bagh, on Tuesday, as part of a crackdown against the outfit. Paramilitary forces have been deployed in northeast, central, southeast and Rohini districts of Delhi where the raids were conducted. Meanwhile, Delhi Police has also imposed Section 144 in the city's Jamia Nagar and said that it is not related to the coordinated action being taken against the PFI, as the order is 10 days old. The raids began at around 12.30 AM on Tuesday and continued till early morning. "We have conducted raids at multiple locations in the

A Popular Front of India member being produced at Patiala Court after a nationwide raid spearheaded by the National Investigation Agency, in New Delhi. As many as 170 activists of the Popular Front of India were arrested on Tuesday in early morning raids. PFI Photo

national Capital, including Shaheen Bagh and Nizamuddin. So far we have detained 30 people associated with the PFI," a senior police officer said. According to Suman Nalwa, the Delhi Police Public Relations Officer (PRO), in a "joint, coordinated action" against the PFI, 30 people have been detained so far. "The district heads were asked by top officials to assist the Special Cell teams in identifying and locating people linked with the PFI," sources said. No case has been registered as the

## Shun assembly, Sec 144 in: JMI to students, staff

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) has issued a notice asking its students and teachers not to assemble in and around the campus as police have imposed restrictions under Section 144 of the CrPC in the entire Okhla area.

In a notice, the Chief Proctor of the university said, "The SHO of the Jamia Nagar Police Station has informed that the restrictions have been imposed since September 19 as information was received that some people or groups may indulge in activities prejudicial to the maintenance of peace."

The SHO further said that the restrictions would be in place in the entire Okhla (Jamia Nagar) area for 60 days till November 17, unless withdrawn earlier. The police have, however, denied that the order

is related to the ongoing action against the PFI. In view of the order, all students, and teaching and non-teaching staff of JMI is advised not to assemble in and outside the campus in groups or as part of any march, agitation, dharna or meeting, the Chief Proctor's notice stated. The notice came a day after Jamia's teachers announced a peaceful protest march. An order was issued by the Assistant Commissioner of Police of New Friends Colony stating that Section 144 of the CrPC was imposed in the Jamia Nagar area on September 19.

As per the order, the police have prohibited the carrying of 'mashals' or torch, live flames, live fire candles or live fire in any form in processions, rallies or functions in the entire jurisdiction of the sub-division of New Friends Colony.

investigation is underway, said a senior police officer. Delhi Police Commissioner, Sanjay Arora also held a meeting with Joint CPs, Special CPs and Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) at police headquarters. "Officials have been asked to monitor the situation and counter any rumour, misinformation and asked to be vigilant towards the activities of any mischievous or anti-social elements."

The officials have been asked to hold meetings with members of Aman (peace) committees and request them to appeal to the people to

maintain peace," said a source. The crackdown comes five days after similar pan India searches against the group often accused of being linked to radical Islam.

Formed in 2006, the PFI claims to strive for a neo-social movement ostensibly for the empowerment of marginalised sections of India. It is, however, often accused by law enforcement agencies of promoting radical Islam. The organisation was formed in Kerala and is headquartered in Delhi. Following the mega crackdown, the PFI stares at a possible countrywide ban.

# CBI arrests bizman Vijay Nair in Excise Policy case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested businessman Vijay Nair in connection with the Excise Policy case on Tuesday evening. Nair, who was abroad for quite some time, was called for questioning at the agency's office on Tuesday.

Sources said Nair was arrested for his alleged role in "cartelisation" and "conspiracy" related to alleged irregularities in the allocation of liquor licences in the city.

The CBI's FIR has alleged that Arjun Pandey, an associate of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister, Manish Sisodia, had once collected about Rs 2-4 crore in cash from liquor businessman Sameer Mahendru on behalf of Nair.

Nair's link with AAP sparked controversy during the Excise Policy investigations, with BJP IT Cell chief Amit Malviya tweeting, "Sisodia had called some journalists for interaction but grew uncomfortable and called it off when asked about Vijay Nair, accused number 5 in the excise scam, the only non-bureaucrat, a non-liquor business owner in the list of 16, purported to be close to Kejriwal. Who is Nair?"

Nair is associated with several companies, including Only Much Louder, Babblefish and Motherswear. The Weirdass Comedy, Motormouth Writers and Rebellion Management, engaged in online gaming, betting and comedy shows are other companies that can be indirectly associated with Nair, including through his co-directors, officials said, citing Registrar of Companies records.

The FIR was registered by the CBI on a reference from the office of Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena routed through the Union Home Ministry.

Besides Sisodia, the CBI has named as accused then Excise Commissioner Arava Gopi Krishna, then Deputy Excise Commissioner Anand Kumar Tiwari, Assistant Excise Commissioner Pankaj Bhatnagar, nine businessmen and two companies.

The CBI in its FIR had alleged that Sisodia and other accused public servants recommended and took decisions pertaining to the Excise Policy 2021-22 without the approval of competent authority with an intention to extend undue favours to the licencees post tender.

It said that Nair, Manoj Rai, former employee of Pernod Ricard, Amandeep Dhal, owner of Brindco Spirits, and Sameer Mahendru, owner of Indospirits, were actively involved in irregularities in

the framing and implementation of the Excise Policy brought in November.

The agency had alleged Amit Arora, Director of Buddy Retail Pvt. Limited in Gurugram, Dinesh Arora and Arjun Pandey are "close associates" of Sisodia and were "actively involved in managing and diverting the undue pecuniary advantage collected from liquor licensees" for the accused public servants. The CBI had

alleged that Radha Industries managed by Dinesh Arora received Rs 1 crore from Sameer Mahendru of Indospirits. The agency alleged that Sunny Marwah's Mahadev Liquors was granted L-1 licence under the policy. It also alleged that Marwah, who was on the board of firms of the deceased liquor baron Ponty Chadha, was in close contact with the accused public servants and regularly paid bribes to them.

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## CBI threatened Nair with arrest for refusing to implicate Sisodia: AAP

NEW DELHI: Following Vijay Nair's arrest by the CBI, the AAP released a statement saying that Nair is the communication in-charge of AAP. He was responsible for developing and implementing communication strategies in Punjab earlier and Gujarat now.

He has nothing to do with the Excise Policy and strangely, he has been arrested now in the case. "Vijay Nair was called for questioning in the last few days and was pressurised to name Manish Sisodia. When he refused to do that, he

was threatened with arrest. His house was raided twice in the last one month but nothing was found," it said. "This is a part of BJP's ongoing attempt to crush AAP and obstruct our Gujarat campaign."

The whole country is watching how BJP is completely rattled by AAP's growing popularity across India.

We strongly condemn these unconstitutional and illegal methods being adopted by BJP. All allegations against Vijay Nair and AAP leaders are false and completely baseless," it said. SR

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## Sisodia must answer questions on Excise Policy, says Patra

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday slammed the Aam Aadmi Party following the Delhi High Court's interim order restraining its leaders from levelling alleged defamatory allegations against Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, saying this shows how low Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-headed party can stoop to "cover up" its corruption.

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said it was high time Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia answered questions raised by his party over the alleged corruption in the now-withdrawn Excise Policy brought by the AAP Government in Delhi. Sisodia pocketed a huge amount of money, he alleged while talking to reporters.

The High Court earlier restrained AAP leaders from levelling alleged defamatory allegations against Saxena and directed them to take down the alleged libelous posts, videos and tweets against him on social media.

Saxena had sought an injunction against AAP, its leaders Atishi Singh, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Durgesh Pathak and Sanjay Singh, and Jasmine Shah, vice chairperson of the Dialogue and Development Commission, to delete or take down the alleged false and



libelous posts or tweets or videos circulated and issued on social media against him and his family.

Patra said Kejriwal has a history of levelling false allegations and referred to his apology to a number of leaders, including BJP's Arun Jaitley and Nitin Gadkari, against whom he had levelled various allegations. "As far as the AAP is concerned, they shout the allegations but whisper the apology," he added.

The AAP leaders had levelled allegations against Saxena related to channelising demonetised currency in November 2016 while acting as chairman of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC). He denied the charges and moved the court against the AAP leaders.

BJP IT Department in-charge Amit Malviya said, "Kejriwal's shoot and scoot policy hits Delhi High Court's block, which has slammed AAP for running a campaign of

## Graft must be exposed irrespective of political leaning: AAP on HC order

NEW DELHI: The AAP on Tuesday said that it "completely disagrees" with the Delhi High Court's interim order that directed the party and its leaders to take down alleged libelous posts, videos and tweets posted against Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena and also restrained them from making any further allegations against him.

The AAP said it will study the court order thoroughly in consultation with the lawyers and decide its next course of action in the matter. "We strongly believe that elected representatives and political parties have a duty to bring up matters of public importance before citizens. We respect

judiciary of our country but under no circumstances can we be deterred from raising matters of corruption against any powerful individual," said AAP, in a statement issued on Tuesday evening. "We expect that Central Government should set up an independent enquiry into matters which are related to corruption charges irrespective of their political affiliation," it said. "Truth must prevail in public discourse and is a valid defence before any proceeding."

"We will not hesitate to speak the truth at any cost and will take recourse to all available legal remedies for protection of our rights," the AAP said.

calumny against Delhi LG, has passed an injunction order in his favour. "Kejriwal's tryst with embarrassment is not new but this might be among one of this last."

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta has targeted Delhi CM saying that it is the old habit of Kejriwal to first lie and then apologise. "Even earlier, he went to court and apologized for the false allegations leveled against many leaders. The

Court has once again exposed the lies of Kejriwal and said that it is very shameful to make false allegations against a person holding a constitutional post on social media," Gupta said.

LG Saxena tweeted "Satyameva Jayate" (truth alone triumphs), soon after the High Court order. Sources in the LG office said, "The order has vindicated the LG's stance and called out AAP's mud-slinging campaign."

# 23 Twitter accounts blocked for showing child pornography: IFSO

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police on Tuesday said it has blocked 23 accounts on Twitter for showing child pornographic content.

According to Prashant Gautam, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (IFSO), after receiving the information, we immediately registered an FIR on September 20 and seized the evidences.

"We wrote to Twitter to block the accounts and sought details of the accounts from the microblogging site. We immediately formed four teams — two technical and two working on ground. The investigation is underway and we are also



waiting for the reply from Twitter regarding the accounts," said the DCW. "In last operation which was conducted along with the district police across the national Capital in December 2021 and January 2022, the IFSO has registered a total of 189 cases and arrested 132 people," he added.

The IFSO is planning to conduct another operation in a few days, officials said.

Meanwhile, Delhi Commission for Women said that it was not satisfied with the replies received from both Twitter and Delhi Police officials in the Child Pornography complaint. On September 20, the DCW had issued summons to Delhi Police and social media platform 'Twitter' regarding presence of several tweets on Twitter which were displaying child pornography.

"These tweets were openly depicting videos and photographs of sexual acts involving children. Almost all the tweets were portraying children completely naked and many of them also depicted brutal rape and other non-consensual sexual activities with children and women. Shockingly, some of these videos even depicted

rape with children and women while they are asleep," the DCW official said.

"Twitter India Policy Head Samiran Gupta and Twitter Inc. Compliance Officer Vinay Prakash appeared before the Commission on September 26. They informed that all the accounts flagged by the commission have been deactivated. However, they submitted an incomplete reply. "They sought time from the Commission to submit a detailed reply and the same has been granted," said DCW. "Further, senior officers from Delhi Police appeared before the Commission and informed that an FIR has been registered in the matter on September 20, under sections 67(67A)/67B of Information Technology Act.

# Yamuna River crosses danger mark

Water enters homes in low-lying areas near river; DDMA says all depts working to avert flood

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

With the water level in the Yamuna River crossing the danger mark and low-lying areas in the national Capital getting inundating, claims of timely evacuation by the authorities have fallen flat. Flood-hit residents, struggling to save their homes and belongings claimed that the authorities concerned have not visited the area.

The Pioneer team visited low-lying areas of Yamuna Bazar, Old Railway Bridge, Kudesia Ghat and Wazirabad, and saw that most of the houses were filled with water till knee level and the residents, mostly comprising daily wagers are yet to get any assistance from the authorities. The residents are unable to send their children to school due to the flooding in their homes. Our belongings are ruined and even the TV has been damaged by the water," Kumar said.

Meanwhile, a senior official said that teams were on the field and announcements were being made on the Public Announcement system to keep people living on the shores of the Yamuna away from the river banks. "People have been evacuated to safe places in Sub-divisions Seelampur and Karawal Nagar and Kanchan Colony besides areas under the Shahdara



four years. During the pandemic in 2020 and the next year, the water level was normal and we were living comfortably. Now the water has entered our homes. What were the authorities doing for the last three years when they had time to prepare a plan to mitigate floods in the houses along the banks? Raju questioned.

"Another resident of Kudesia Ghat, Bablu Kumar, a vegetable seller said that his cart is stuck in the water and there is fear of snake bites as several reptiles can be seen in the waters. "I am not able to send my children to school today as their uniforms were soiled due to the flooding in our homes. Our belongings are ruined and even the TV has been damaged by the water," Kumar said.

Meanwhile, a senior official said that teams were on the field and announcements were being made on the Public Announcement system to keep people living on the shores of the Yamuna away from the river banks. "People have been evacuated to safe places in Sub-divisions Seelampur and Karawal Nagar and Kanchan Colony besides areas under the Shahdara

district," he said.

Sushil Singh, Special Chief Executive Officer, DDMA said that a meeting was convened under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary Revenue-Divisional Commissioner, Delhi Government KR Meena in which all the officials including the District Magistrate (DMs) of the five districts, DDMA officials, Irrigation and Flood Control department officers from Delhi, UP and Haryana were present.

The meeting was held to review the preparedness following the flood situation in the city. "The Divisional Commissioner inspected the Okhla barrage, the ITO barrage and other low-lying areas in districts including, South East, East, Central, and North District with the DDMA officials and the DMs," Singh said. "Despite the constant discharge of water from the Hathnikund Barrage, no casualties were reported due to the increased water level as all the concerned departments have been coordinating to avert the flood situation in the national Capital. The water level in the river is expected to stabilise and reduce from tonight," he added.

# CAG: Non-verification of land records led to YEIDA losses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

Uttar Pradesh Government's Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) had purchased a land parcel in Gautam Buddh Nagar in 2015 but not verifying land records led to a loss of ₹2.71 crore, a CAG report has revealed.

Further, the YEIDA also incurred an expenditure of ₹0.10 crore as "stamp duty" on purchase of the land against an area not available in records, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)'s compliance audit report for the year ended March 2020 revealed.

The report, tabled recently in the UP Assembly states that the UP Power Transmission Corporation Limited had requested (June 2012) YEIDA to allot 75 acre (30.3514 hectare) land in village Jahangirpur in Gautam Buddh Nagar near the Yamuna Expressway for the construction of 765 KV sub-station.

A proposal for acquisition of land for sub-station was initiated (September 2012) by YEIDA officials which was approved the same month by its then chief executive officer (CEO). The YEIDA executed (December 2012 to December 2015) 159 sale deeds for the purchase of 54.365 hectare land spread over 150 khasras, it noted. "The Audit noticed (March 2019) that out of 150 khasras of revenue records,

the actual area in 17 khasras was 6.3990 hectares. The YEIDA, however, overlooked the area actually available in land records or verification reports submitted by the District Authority, and purchased an area measuring 7.98935 hectares through executing sale deeds relating to aforesaid 17 khasras," the CAG report noted.

"This has resulted in payment against 1.59035 hectare land which was not actually available in respective khasras or verification reports. The YEIDA paid ₹13.60 crore as compensation, annuity and additional compensation for purchase of 7.98935 hectares of land. Consequently, due to not reconciling purchased land with land records/verification reports, the YEIDA suffered a loss of ₹2.71 crore on purchase of 1.59035 hectare land," the report said.

"Further, the YEIDA also incurred an expenditure of ₹0.10 crore as stamp duty on the purchase of land against an area not available in records," it stated.

The CAG report mentioned that in its reply, the YEIDA accepted (July 2021) that there was a difference of 1.5935 hectare between area mentioned in 17 sale deeds and revenue records. Further, it stated that purchase of land was done on basis of land records made available by District Authority, according to report.



Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture Meenakshi Lekhi lights the ceremonial lamp at the beginning of the performance of the dance drama 'Shri Ram' by Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra in New Delhi

# Sisodia lays stone for 3 underpasses

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for three new underpasses at Shalimar Bagh here that will be constructed at a cost of ₹59.5 crore.

The underpasses will ease traffic congestion around Mukarba Chowk and Haiderpur Badli Metro, it said. "The first underpass will be constructed at Gate No.3 of Haiderpur Badli Metro Station for pedestrians and NMTVs moving towards Badli. The second underpass is 50 meters

## Features and benefits of underpass

- Total 3 underpasses will be constructed
- 1.35 lakh kgs of carbon emission will be reduced annually due to the construction of underpasses
- Underpasses will save 58,000 liters of fuel annually

in length, 9.6 meters wide and six meters high which will be used by vehicles coming from Badli, Outer Ring Road towards Shalimar Bagh," said Sisodia. "At present vehicles going towards Badli or Outer Ring Road have to use a loop while moving between

Mukarba Chowk and Shalimar Bagh. With upcoming underpass, they will have to travel 1.5 kilometers less," said Sisodia. "Third underpass will be built for vehicles playing between Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar to Azadpur via elevated road coming up in future.

# US, India vow to strengthen defence ties

Defence & security cooperation key pillar of India-US ties, tweets Jaishankar after meeting US Def Secy Austin



Secretary Lloyd Austin in the US capital. Jaishankar drove down to the Pentagon for a meeting with Austin. The US has emerged as one of the biggest weapons supplier to India having sold equipment worth over 15 billion dollars in the last ten to 15 years. These include C-17 transport planes, P-8 I long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft and C-130 J planes besides other weapon platforms. Jaishankar tweeted after the meeting

"Defence and Security cooperation is a key pillar of the contemporary India-US partnership. We noted the steady progress in policy exchange, interoperability, defence trade, service exercises and military-industrial cooperation." "Exchanged perspectives on the Ukraine conflict, Indo-Pacific developments, maritime challenges and regional issues," he added. The two leaders reviewed priority lines of effort to deepen bilateral

defence cooperation, as the United States and India progress toward a more advanced stage in their partnership, according to a Pentagon readout of the meeting.

Austin and Jaishankar committed to expanding information-sharing and logistics cooperation to drive deeper operational coordination between the US and Indian militaries.

"They also discussed new opportunities for bilateral defence industrial cooperation in support of India's contributions as a regional security provider, including the launch of a new defense dialogue later this year as the United States and India work more closely together across space, cyber, artificial intelligence, and other technology areas," the Pentagon said.

During the meeting, the two leaders underscored the value of the deepening collaboration between the US, India,

Australia, Japan, and European partners. In this context, the US looks forward to working with India and like-minded partners to promote security, prosperity, and transparency throughout the region, including through the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, the Pentagon said.

Welcoming Jaishankar to the Pentagon, Austin recollected his recent phone call with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. They exchanged perspectives on a range of issues of shared interest, spanning recent developments in East Asia, the Indian Ocean Region, and the global reverberations of the Ukraine crisis, the readout said.

The Pentagon said Austin and Jaishankar reaffirmed their commitment to working together as steadfast partners to advance the United States and India's shared vision for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

# Nadda may get extension till Lok Sabha 2024 polls

BJP president can get two consecutive terms of three years each under BJP's amended constitution



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Opposition Congress makes moves to elect its new party president, the ruling BJP leadership is expected to give its incumbent national president J.P. Nadda an extension till the conclusion of the Lok Sabha polls by April-May 2024.

According to sources, Nadda whose tenure has witnessed big wins in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand-beating anti-incumbency- will not be disturbed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the middle of fast and furious poll preparations for the General Elections.

Nadda, who took charge of the BJP from Shah in 2020, is likely to get an extension and the party may not be "changing the horse midstream", sources said. Nadda's three-year term is scheduled to end on January 20, 2023.

A spate of states is also to elect new assemblies from later this year to the time of Lok Sabha polls including Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh (Nadda's home state), Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha - some of which are BJP-ruled. It is going to be a tough contest for the saffron party.

Under the amended BJP constitution, the party president can get two consecutive terms of three years each. There is also a provision that after the organisational election and preparing for 2024 elections, sources said. Former chief minister of Gujarat Vijay

Shah was also given extension as the BJP president in 2019 till the Lok Sabha elections. Earlier, some speculations were rife that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had been given the charge if Nadda is not to get the extension. Another name which was doing the rounds was that of Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav.

# BJP chief discusses ways to strengthen party in meet with State in-charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Back from his hectic tour in different States, including Kerala, BJP president J.P. Nadda, who will again be on a two-day visit to Odisha this week, held a meeting here with party's State in-charges on Tuesday and discussed ways to strengthen the organisation and prepare for the 2024 general elections which are barely 18-months away.

This was Nadda's first meeting with the party's newly-appointed State in-charges. Nadda would be visiting Odisha from September 29 to "strengthen the organization" in the State.

Besides Nadda, BJP's general secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh was also present in the meeting that took place at the party headquarters here, they said.

Extensive discussions took place during the meeting on strengthening the organisation and preparing for 2024 elections, sources said. Former chief minister of Gujarat Vijay

## IN SHORTS

**CONSTITUTION BENCH TO HEAR ON DEMONETISATION**  
New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday constituted another five-judge constitution bench which will hear five crucial cases including the challenge to the Central government's 2016 decision to demonetize Rs 500 and Rs 1000 currency notes.

**ED RAIDS CODA PAYMENTS INDIA THREE PREMISES**  
New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday raided three premises pertaining to Coda Payments India Pvt Ltd in connection with an ongoing investigation under PMLA, 2002 against Coda Payments India Pvt Ltd, 'Garena Free Fire' mobile game and froze bank account balance of Rs 68.53 Crore

**DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TESTS SHORT RANGE MISSILE**



New Delhi: The DRDO on Tuesday conducted two successful test flight of Very Short Range Air Defence System missile from a ground based portable launcher at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.

# Rajnath reviews upcoming DefExpo 2022 preparations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With less than a month to go for the prestigious event, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday reviewed the preparations of the forthcoming DefExpo 2022 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat at a meeting here. The five-day international exhibition starts on October 18.

He also called upon the Indian defence industry to identify and manufacture state-of-the-art cost-effective products and technologies to realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a 'New India' that not only caters to its own

needs, but also fulfils international requirements. Addressing fifth annual session of Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) here, he asserted that the government fully understands the importance of a fool-proof security apparatus and is constantly working towards bolstering all dimensions of national security to take the country to greater heights.

"Only a secure and strong nation can achieve the heights of success. No matter how rich or knowledgeable a nation is, its prosperity is threatened if national security is not ensured. We are focussing on national security and economic pros-

perity to make India one of the strongest countries in the world," he said. Meanwhile, during the review meeting for the DefExpo, the defence minister was briefed by officials about the extensive arrangements being made by multiple stakeholders for the event, officials said.

The 12th edition of DefExpo will be the biggest ever as a record 1,136 companies have registered for the event as on September 27, 2022 and the numbers are expected to rise. The event is being planned in largest ever total area of over one lakh sqm (previous edition being 76,000 sqm).

# Modi, Kishida meet, discuss bilateral ties



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/TOKYO

India and Japan on Tuesday renewed their commitment to further strengthen their strategic ties and global partnership during a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Fumio Kishida in Tokyo.

The two leaders also discussed the entire gamut of their bilateral ties and Modi conveyed his deepest condolences over the sudden demise of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

The Prime Minister underlined the late Japanese leader's contributions in strengthening the bilateral partnership as well as his vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

Modi, who arrived here to attend the state funeral of Abe, met Kishida ahead of the ceremony and the two leaders renewed their commitment towards further strengthening the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, and in working together in the region and in various international groupings and institutions.

"The two leaders had a productive exchange of views on further deepening bilateral relations. They also discussed a number of regional and global issues," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a brief statement. Paying respects to Abe, Modi said "I am feeling very sad about the sudden death of former premier Abe... He took Japan-India relations to a greater level and also expanded it in many areas." Modi

recalled that when he visited Japan last time, he had a long conversation with Abe. "India is missing Shinzo Abe," he added. "I am confident that under your leadership, India-Japan relations will deepen further and achieve greater heights," Modi told Kishida.

"Along with Abe San, you in the role of Foreign Minister have taken the India-Japan relationship to new heights and also expanded it further in many areas. And our friendship, the friendship of India and Japan, also played a major role in creating a global impact. And for all this, today, the people of India remember Abe San very much, remember Japan very much. India is always missing him in a way. But I am confident that under your leadership, India-Japan relations will deepen further, and scale to greater heights. And I firmly believe that we will be able to play an appropriate role in finding solutions to the problems of the world," Modi said.

On his part, Kishida thanked Modi for taking India-Japan ties to new heights and assured that he will continue to cooperate with him to realise the vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

Kishida visited India for the annual summit in March while Modi visited Japan for the Quad Leaders' Summit in May. "These meetings underscored the two leaders' commitment towards deepening India-Japan ties, particularly in the context of shaping a post-pandemic regional and global order," Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said on Monday ahead of the Prime Minister's visit to Japan.

# Murmu nod to Haryana law which declares all child marriages void

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to a legislation of Haryana under which every child marriage that has been solemnised will be considered as "void ab initio" (having no legal effect from inception), thus making a marital relationship between a man and a girl aged between 15 and 18 years illegal. The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Haryana Amendment) Bill, 2020 was enacted following a Supreme Court ruling.

The apex court had declared that the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, being a special law, prevails over the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and sex with a minor wife aged between 15 and 18 years, in accordance with the prevailing exception 2 of section 375 of the IPC, is arbitrary and violative of the Constitution.

The apex court invalidated the existing exception 2 of section 375 of the IPC, under which sexual intercourse between a man and his wife aged between 15 and 18 years



does not amount to the offence of rape as defined under section 375. But according to the provisions of section 6 of the POCSO Act, this falls within the definition of rape.

The Supreme Court has also observed that it would be wise for all the state legislatures to adopt the route taken by Karnataka to make child marriages void and thereby, ensure that sexual intercourse between a minor girl and her husband is a punishable offence under the POCSO Act and the IPC. "Accordingly, the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Haryana Amendment) Bill, 2020 was enacted and the legislation has now received the presidential assent," a home ministry official said.

# SC reserves verdict on pleas challenging 10% EWS quota in Govt jobs, admission

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas challenging the validity of the 103rd Constitution amendment providing 10 per cent reservation to economically weaker sections (EWS) persons in admissions and government jobs.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice U.U. Lalit reserved the verdict on the legal question of whether the EWS quota violated the basic structure of the Constitution after hearing a battery of senior lawyers including Attorney General KK Venugopal and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta in the marathon hearing that lasted for six-and-a-half-day.

Academician Mohan Gopal had opened the arguments in the case before the bench, which also comprised justices Dinesh Maheshwari, S Ravindra Bhat, Bela M Trivedi, and J B Pardiwala, on September 13 and opposed the EWS quota amendment by terming it as "deceitful and a backdoor attempt" to destroy the concept of reservation. Senior lawyers including Ravi Verma Kumar, P Wilson,



Meenakshi Arora, Sanjay Parikh, and K S Chauhan and advocate Shadan Farasat also assailed the quota, saying it also excluded the poor belonging to the Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) categories, and defeats the creamy layer concept.

Tamil Nadu, represented by senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, also opposed the EWS quota, saying the economic criteria cannot be the basis for classification and the top court will have to revisit the Indra Sawhney (Mandal) judgement if it decides to uphold this reservation.

Attorney General and

Solicitor General vehemently defended the amendment, saying the reservation provided under it was different and had been given without disturbing the 50 per cent quota meant for the socially and economically backward classes (SEBC).

Mehta argued that the EWS quota was "necessitated" to benefit the general category poor, a "large segment" of the population not covered under any existing reservation scheme.

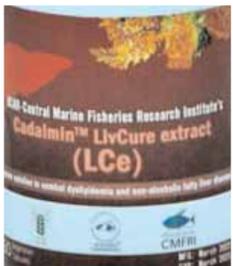
Senior advocate Gopal Sankarnarayanan, appearing for NGO 'Youth for Equality', supported the EWS quota scheme, contending it was "long overdue" and a "right step in the right direction."

The top court heard as many as 40 petitions and most of the pleas, including the lead one filed by Janhit Abhiyan in 2019, challenged the validity of the Constitution Amendment (103rd) Act 2019.

The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha cleared the bill on January 8 and 9 in 2019 respectively and it was then signed by then President Ram Nath Kovind. The EWS quota is over and above the existing 50 per cent reservation to SCs, STs, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

# CMFRI scientists develop herbal remedy for fatty liver

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Indian scientists from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have developed a herbal remedy from seaweeds, also known as "wonder herbs of the ocean", to treat non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), a condition in which excess fat deposits in the liver. A leading cause of chronic liver, NAFLD prevalence in India is about 9 per cent to 32 per cent.

Named as Cadalmim™ LivCure extract, the product is a unique blend of 100 percent natural bioactive ingredients extracted from seaweeds with an eco-friendly green technology to improve liver health, said Kajal Chakraborty, Principal Scientist at the Marine Biotechnology, Fish Nutrition and Health Division of the Central Marine Fisheries

Research Institute (CMFRI), a CSIR lab. Pre-clinical trials showed that LivCure extract proved to have the potential to inhibit different enzymes and various target receptors associated with dyslipidemia and pathophysiology leading to NAFLD, he said.

Bioactive pharmacophore leads from seaweeds were used to develop the nutraceutical product. "This helps improve liver health, reduce the dispo-

sition of fatty substances, and maintain other liver/lipid parameters within the clinically acceptable limits", the expert explained.

The nutraceutical does not have any side effects as established by detailed preclinical trials. "It has proved that long-term oral administration of this product will not lead to general organ or systemic toxicity", Chakraborty added.

The CMFRI will soon transfer the technology to the interested pharmaceutical firms for commercial production of the nutraceutical. A Gopalakrishnan, Director of CMFRI said. He added that "Seaweeds are often termed as the wonder herbs of the ocean due to their potential pharmaceutical properties. Recently, this marine macroflora is gaining immense attention in nutraceutical industries due to its protective function against

various chronic diseases", he said.

CMFRI scientists have been developing a plethora of nutraceuticals based on marine plants aiming to combat a series of lifestyle diseases, such as type-2 diabetes, arthritis, cholesterol, hypertension, hypothyroidism and osteoporosis, and to improve immunity, an official statement said here. Out of these nutraceuticals, eight products are from seaweeds and one from green mussels.

In a bid to cash in on the huge potential of seaweed farming, India has already launched various seaweed cultivation plans in several coastal states, aiming to provide employment to 6-7 lakh people, particularly women. Known as 'miracle plants of sea', seaweeds can be used for medicine, fertilizer, animal feed and food and in many other sectors.

# Stray dogs may be used for new vaccine trials: CPCSEA

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that might invite protests from the animal welfare activists, the Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) under the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, has recommended that stray dogs may be used for new vaccine trials and challenge studies of vaccines subject to adhering to the guidelines of the Committee.

Incidentally, the proposal has come at a time when there have been increasing reports of stray dogs' attacks and bite cases.

The panel in its 101st meeting, "recommended that stray dogs may be used for new vaccine trials and challenge studies of vaccines, however, they must be quarantined and rehabilitated as per the guidelines of CPCSEA."

In cases of the batch testing of established vaccines except for challenge studies, dogs coming to the clinics can be used for safety and/or potency trials, it said in a circular, signed by CPCSEA member-secretary Dr SK Dutta, Joint Commissioner (Animal Welfare in the Ministry) to all registered research and other establishments and nominees of the Committee. According

to the mandate of the CPCSEA, the panel is duty bound to take all such measures as may be necessary to ensure that animals are not subjected to unnecessary pain or suffering before, during or after performance of experiments on them.

According to the norms, animal research plays a key role in developing successful vaccines for humans. Before promising vaccine candidates can be tested in humans, they must first be tested for safety and effectiveness in animals as required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

To do this, scientists first determine whether a vaccine candidate can stimulate an adequate and safe immune response.

This important step is often conducted using small and then, potentially, larger animal models of disease. Mice are frequently used because they

reproduce rapidly, have a well-characterized immune system and a defined genome. Syrian hamsters are another important animal model for Covid-19 because disease in those animals closely resembles the disease in humans.

As far as stray dogs are concerned, their number is estimated to be around 1.6 crore in India while there were around 17.01 lakh dog bites in 2021. The highest number of street dogs is in Uttar Pradesh, followed by Odisha, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

The four states with the highest incidents of street dog bites are Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Gujarat. India accounts for 36 percent of the world's rabies deaths. Around 20,000 people die annually in the country due to rabies, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

# Once bitten, twice shy: India to boost firepower at LAC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Even though stand-offs have ended at most of the friction points at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in Ladakh, India is not taking any chances and has further bolstered its firepower by deploying artillery weapons including rockets and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). More than 100 K 9 Vajra howitzers will also be deployed there soon. Some Vajra are already positioned there.

The artillery units of the Army have deployed K-9 Vajra

Tracked Self-Propelled Howitzers, ultra-light M-777 howitzers, Pinaka rocket systems and Dhanush gun systems, sources said here on Tuesday while outlining plans for operational readiness to meet any challenge.

The Army plans to equip its Artillery units along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) with a range of up to 90 kms.

The Army is looking at procuring UAVs having a range of 15-20 kms as well as those having capabilities to carry out surveillance at a range of up to 80kms having

an endurance of four hours. At present, almost all UAVs in the Army's inventory are being operated by the Army Aviation units.

Sources said the Army is set to procure a new batch of 100 more K-9 Vajras howitzers, in addition to 100 such guns ordered in 2017.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has cleared the proposal for ordering 100 more K9 Vajras. The Request for Proposal (RFP) will be issued soon.

The K9 Vajras were originally procured for deployment in deserts, but following the eastern Ladakh standoff,

the Army deployed a significant number of the howitzers in that high-altitude region. Minor adjustments were made for deployment of the tracked howitzers in eastern Ladakh.

The Army is also procuring winterisation kits so the howitzers work in sub-zero temperature, sources said adding the Vajra guns are roaring in high altitude area along Northern borders.

They also said the Army is in the process of procuring Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) and Mounted Gun Systems (MGS).

Induction of more advanced Pinaka weapon sys-

tems is in the offing, adding six more regiments of the systems are being procured and their delivery would commence soon.

The new Pinaka regiments will be equipped with electronically and mechanically improved weapon system capable of firing variety of ammunition over longer ranges, sources said.

One regiment of Pinaka has been inducted along Northern borders in high altitude area after extensive validation, they said, adding the defence ministry has already approved procurement of guided extended range rockets

for Pinaka.

The Army is also in the process of procuring 'Loitering Munition System' thereby augmenting its surveillance, target acquisition and precision strike capability.

On the indigenously developed ATAGS, sources said it is in advanced stages of trial. This gun system has many firsts to its credit -- 25-litre chamber, long range, as also rapid and sustained rates of fire. User trials on the gun systems have been satisfactorily conducted and that there are few procedural issues that are being taken care of, they added.



## Agencies being misused against us: Didi

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday targeted the central agencies for "victimising and humiliating" senior Trinamool Congress leaders including Firhad Hakim and late Subrato Mukherjee by arresting them on frivolous charges.

The Chief Minister who was inaugurating the Durga Puja of Ekdalia Evergreen Club once patroned by Mukherjee said the veteran Bengal politician --- who passed away last year --- was felt immensely humiliated after he was arrested by the CBI. The central agency had arrested in Narada pay-of case.

Mukherjee who subsequently got bail is known to



have told his Cabinet colleague Hakim who too was briefly arrested in the case that he felt like killing himself and those who arrested him. "Bobby (Hakim) quoted Subrato da as saying that he wished he had two bullets ... one to shoot his tormentors and the one to shoot himself," the Chief Minister said.

"Even they have filed cases against me ... they are doing it to many senior politicians ...

though this is not the time for raising political issues one cannot forget the humiliating that was heaped on Subrato Mukherjee just a few months before his death," the Chief Minister, one of whose senior cabinet colleagues Partha Chatterjee recently went to jail on charges of corruption in school level recruitments said.

"The people who are sending agencies against us will do this till there is that 'umbrella' on their heads ... once that umbrella goes then they too will fall down," Banerjee said while from a similar Durga Puja inaugural programme at Tridhara Sanmilani Club in South Kolkata.

Attacking her critics the Chief Minister said "there are some people whose only busi-

ness is to spread disinformation against us ... they sit in the television channels and spread canards for cash."

Stopping short of naming the opposition BJP, the Chief Minister said "they only give us bad name without doing anything constructive for the State whereas there own government up there is selling out everything to the private players."

Banerjee on Tuesday electronically inaugurated 400 Durga Pujas throughout Bengal. She also physically inaugurated many more Pujas in Kolkata as a part of her public relations exercise. This year Durga Pujas have received special attention in the wake of its recognition as a world heritage event by the UNESCO.

## HC bars CID from probing coal scam

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA**

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday barred the Bengal Criminal Investigation Department from investigating the multi-crore coal smuggling case saying once the Central Bureau of Investigating the case the State agency had no business to intervene in the matter.

The Court of Justice Rajshekhhar Mantha said that as the case was already being investigated by the CBI there was no need for the CID to intervene. The Judge also directed the Bengal agency to share its information with the CBI.

## Gujarat tops SDG-3 health index: UN-Niti Aayog report

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD**

Gujarat has emerged the top performers on overall health index among the States as per the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3) India for the year 2020-2021 titled Good Health and Well Being.

The dashboard report has been prepared jointly by the United Nations and Niti Aayog where 21 States and all UTs bagged a position in the category of Front Runners (score range between 65 and 99, including both). No State or UT was in the category of Aspirants (with Index score

less than 50). Gujarat topped amongst the States under the Goal 3 Index Score between 59 and 86 whereas under the UT Delhi figured between index of 68 and 90 for UTs.

Under the overall performance criteria while India scored 57, Gujarat scored 4th and under the SDG -3 Gujarat too emerged with a ranking 17 against India's 52.

Gujarat SDG excelled even in the categories of reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

"These indicators have been selected based on the availability of data at the sub-national level and to ensure comparability across States and UTs. Good health is essential to sustainable development and the Agenda 2030 reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of the two.

It takes into account widening economic and social inequalities, rapid urbanisation, threats to the climate and the environment, the continuing burden of HIV and other infectious diseases, and emerging challenges such as non-communicable diseases," said the report.

## Over 200 Sikh pilgrims to visit Pak on Oct 28

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Over 200 Sikh pilgrims will visit Hassan Abdal in Pakistan on October 28 to participate in the 'Saka Panja Sahib' centenary event at Gurdwara Panja Sahib, around 45 kms away from Rawalpindi.

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) president Harmeet Singh Kalka on Tuesday said that the pilgrims will reach Pakistan through the Attari-Wagah border checkpoint on October 28 and return to Amritsar on November 2.

They will also visit Lahore and other gurdwaras in Pakistan, including Nankana Sahib. "A total of 240 pilgrims from across India will reach Pakistan on October 28. Of them, 40 pilgrims will be sent by the DSGMC from Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad and Ghaziabad," Kalka said.

He stated the pilgrims must be inoculated with both doses of the Covid vaccine and must undergo a COVID-19 test 72 hours before departing for Pakistan. Besides a negative RTPCR report, the pilgrims will have to undergo a RAT test that will be conducted upon their arrival at the joint check post at the Attari-Wagha border.

"The bus/train fare will be around ₹6000/₹7000 in Pakistan during the visit. The accommodation for the visiting pilgrims will be arranged by the Pakistan government," DSGMC General Secretary Jagdip Singh Kahlon said. The DSGMC said it will set up a COVID-19 testing camp for the pilgrims at its office in Rakab Ganj Sahib.

## Jaiveer Singh slams Azam for refusing Y security



**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh on Tuesday slammed Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan for returning the 'Y' security provided to him by the Yogi Adityanath Government.

"It was the erstwhile Samajwadi Party Government which vitiated discipline in police and introduced the element of caste in police administration. Azam Khan is reaping what he had sowed when he was a Minister in the SP government," the Minister said.



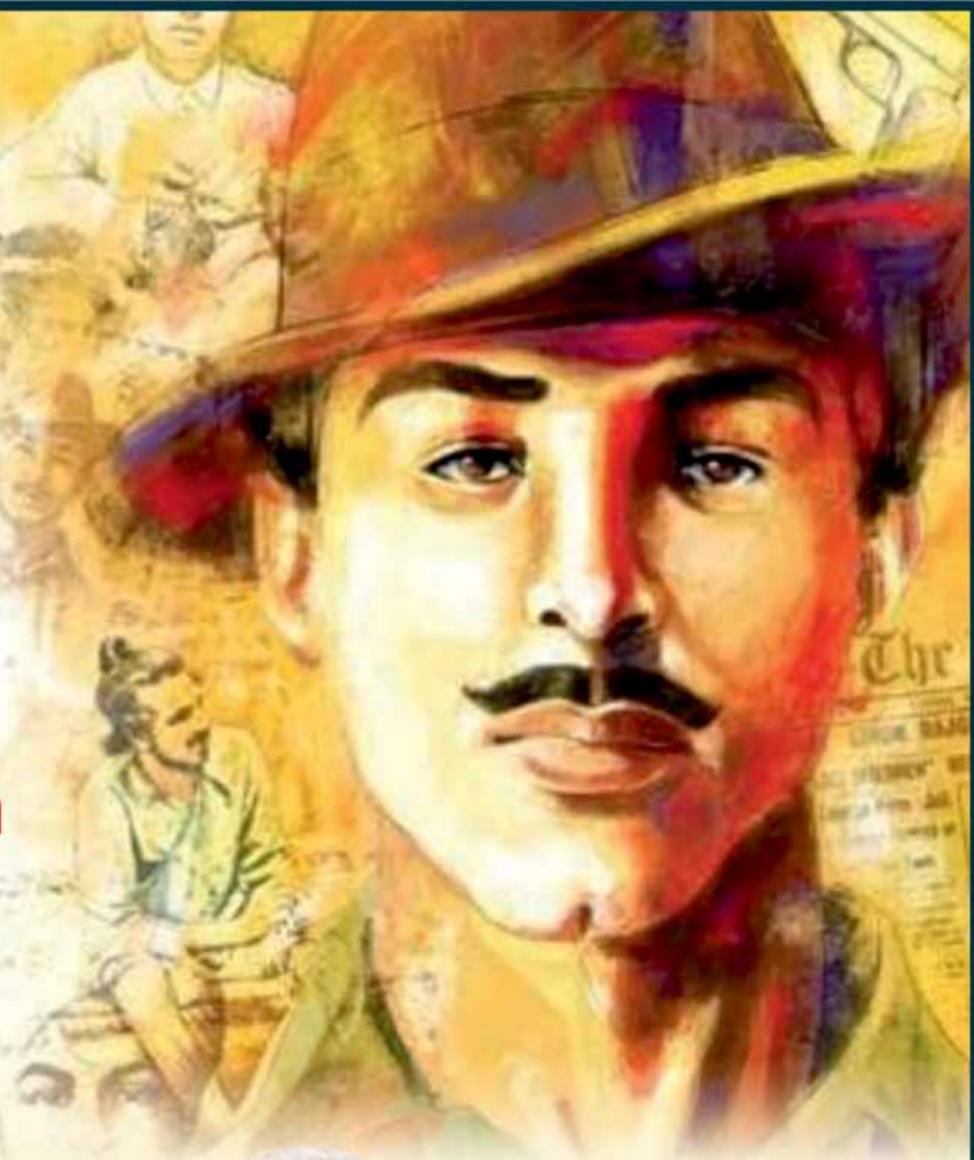
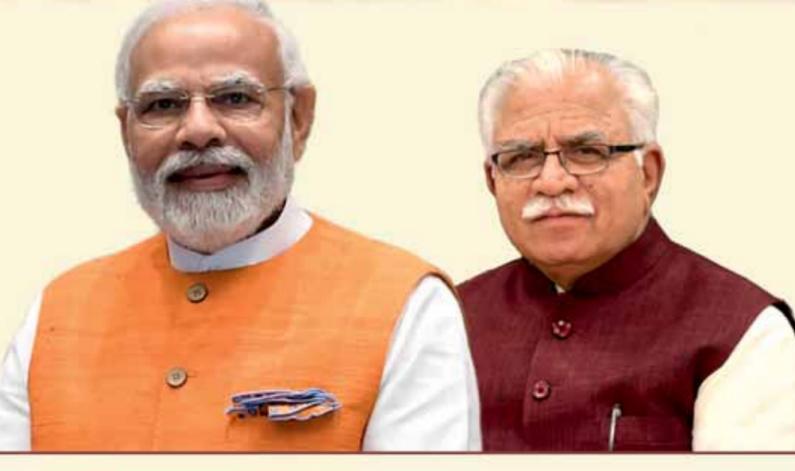
**Government of Haryana**

**75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**

# Nation Remembers the great revolutionary freedom fighter Shaheed-e-Azam Shaheed Bhagat Singh

## On his birth anniversary

**Wednesday, September 28, 2022**

**“Tributes to the true patriot and freedom fighter Shaheed Bhagat Singh on his birth anniversary.”**

**- Narendra Modi**

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Setback for AAP

Aam Aadmi Party's vicious campaign against Delhi's Lieutenant Governor backfires

The Delhi High Court's decision to restrain Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leaders from leveling "false" allegations against Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena is a rap on the knuckles for the Arvind Kejriwal-led party. More so because the court has also directed them to take down all libelous posts, videos, and tweets against him on social media. This is not the first time that AAP and its leaders have been forced to retract after making all sorts of allegations against senior leaders of various parties. From Nitish Gadkari to Arun Jaitley, Sheila Dikshit to Kapil Sibal, Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia to Ramesh Bidhuri, the AAP has a record of making unfounded allegations against its political rivals. At the height of the Anna Hazare movement, Kejriwal and his associates missed no opportunity in targeting their political rivals by doing everything possible to tarnish their images in a bid to project themselves as crusaders against corruption. After they came to power in 2015, leaders of the fledgling outfit were burdened with a slew of defamation cases. Realizing that the majority of his allegations were unsubstantiated, Kejriwal and senior leaders of his party went on an apology spree. It was expected that having learned their lessons and acquired some degree of political maturity over the years, the AAP leaders would be far more restrained in leveling allegations without producing any evidence. But the hit-and-run squad of the AAP seemed to still thrive on mudslinging. Delhi LG VK Saxena was this time the target of the AAP after he ordered a CBI inquiry into Delhi's excise policy. AAP leaders not only targeted Saxena but also tried to drag his daughter into their net.



Without producing a shred of evidence, they accused Saxena of laundering nearly ₹1,400 cr of demonetized currency in 2016 allegedly by putting pressure on employees of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, when Saxena was its chairman. The fact remains that Saxena had ordered an inquiry into the laundering of around ₹17lakhs by the KVIC treasurer and another employee. It is incomprehensible how AAP leaders arrived at the figure of ₹1,400 cr and flung it without a second thought at a constitutional functionary. Saxena not only rubbished the charges but also approached the Delhi HC against this mudslinging at him by AAP, its leaders Atishi Singh, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Durgesh Pathak, Sanjay Singh, and Jasmine Shah. Saxena has also sought damages and compensation of ₹2.5 crore along with interest from the political party and its five leaders. Saxena had earlier sent a legal notice to AAP and its leaders asking them to issue a press release "directing all members of the party and all persons associated with it, whether directly or indirectly, to cease from spreading and circulating false, defamatory, malicious and unsubstantiated statements". Now that the HC has ruled in his favor, AAP leaders may have a tough legal battle on their hands against the LG.

### PICTALK



Tourists being welcomed with flower petals at the Agra Fort on World Tourism Day, in Agra

# Facts, factoids and their interpretation



SANGRAM MISHRA

Though both sound similar, there is a vast difference between facts and factoids, and we must differentiate between their implications as well

The fact always states something actual as opposed to the imagination, whereas a factoid means an inaccurate statement or statistic believed to be true because of broad repetition. Now the question arises as to whether the facts can be affected by the deliberate spread of factoids. And here comes the issue of the problem of interpretation.

Any standard issue can be interpreted positively or negatively. Deliberate bias (the purposeful misrepresentation of data to advance an agenda) of the interpreter can negatively present a situation. Because of the importance of the tool of interpretation in influencing behavioural and electoral dynamics, some universities keep the problem of interpretation as a subject in a political science course.

The problem with interpretation is that it can present a factoid as a fact with continuous repetitions. The deliberate misrepresentation of facts or its distortion with bias or vendetta can precipitate unwanted situations undermining the position of the society, government, or nation. Freedom of expression doesn't confer the right to distort the facts, as this may foster serious implications.

Norman Mailer actually coined the word factoid. He used this word in his book Marilyn in 1973. He stated that factoids are news that have no existence before appearing in a newspaper or magazine meant to manipulate emotions in silent majority. Factoids though appear as facts but actually are not. Without exaggeration, it can be stated that the fangs of factoids or fake news can damage the democratic process and as such enormous part of public safety. Factoids also create mistrust affecting the social matrix. As it is Democratic system is always a soft target.

Factoids or fake information can be put under check by many regulatory bodies like the Press Council of India and the News Broadcasters Association



etc. Relevant sections of I.P.C can be attracted and used to curb factoids or fake news. Apart from that section 66 of the I.T Act, 2000, the use of civil and criminal cases of defamation can put wane on its spread. Many provisions of acts and laws can directly or indirectly control the spread of fake information.

Factoids or fake news (sophisticated disinformation campaigns) pose a threat to any system including a democratic one. Fake news factors have been researched in six different ways by E.C Tandoc and others. These include news satire, news parody, news fabrication, photo manipulation, advertising, and public relations and propaganda. Whatever manifestation it does appear, it does harm society and the nation. Examples are many in regard to the spread of factoids and fake news causing enormous damage to individuals and the country. In regard to the Problem of Interpretation, it can be said that all philosophies, both actual and possible, rest on cognitive activity either as correctly conceived or as distorted by mistaken orientations. Coming to the definition part, an Interpretation may be stated as the act of explaining,

reframing, or otherwise showing someone's own understanding of something. In lexicomic semantics interpretation as such means explaining; explicating; elucidating and projecting the hidden meaning of a parable. Interpretation enables effective communication between people all over the world. Proper interpretation of facts and their dissemination paves the way for a proper appreciation and perception of things for their appropriate utilisation. Any healthy developing nation needs (free flowing) dissemination of factual news sans distortion.

Positive interpretation has an affirmative connotation in any system of government. A half-filled up glass can be delineated either way as half full or half empty. A deliberate attempt to create perceptual distortion is deplorable. In any developing nation, the role of media (including social media) becomes important so as to present the right picture before the people discern reality and pursue socio-economic advancement.

**What is the solution to this problem?**

There is a saying that when communication stops, grapevine starts, meaning

thereby that when communication stops, rumours establish their obnoxious existence. Frequent announcement of facts over media is a must to throttle rumours or any kind of misinformation. The second point is that immediate appropriate legal action/actions should be taken against the persons responsible for creating smoke screens. Moreover, such deliberate actions should be nipped in the bud thereby giving no scope to anybody for spreading falsehood and going with impunity. Especially in any crisis situation not only the government but citizens should come forward to build up the confidence of the people with positive information.

In the case of factoid, there lurks the ugly intention for misinterpretation to the detriment of individual/society or the nation. Whereas dissemination of correct information based on facts along with positive solutions is not only the duty of the media but also every single citizen to get over the problems of intended misinterpretation and misrepresentation.

(The author is a superannuated senior IAS officer. The views expressed are personal.)



IN LEXICON SEMANTICS, INTERPRETATION AS SUCH MEANS EXPLAINING; EXPLICATING; ELUCIDATING AND PROJECTING THE HIDDEN MEANING OF A PARABLE

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BAN RABID OUTFIT PFI

Sir — The second round of crackdown on the Popular Front of India (PFI) continues with fresh arrests in a follow-up to the September 22 raids in a multi-agency operation spearheaded by the NIA for allegedly supporting terror activities in the country. Whenever the name of PFI is in the news, one can be sure that something terrible has happened somewhere in the country; such is the legacy of this outfit. Often, its members can be seen swearing by the Indian Constitution calling for upholding 'secular' ideals and democracy. However, in reality, PFI is a radical Islamic extremist organisation whose members have indulged in rioting to murder.

It also shares close links with banned Islamic terrorist organisation Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). The PFI is also accused of brainwashing Hindu women and marrying them off to Muslim men in order to change the nation's demography. In 2012, the Kerala Government had informed the State High Court that PFI's activities are inimical to the safety of the country and that it is "nothing but a resurrection of the banned outfit SIMI". It's high time the rabid outfit is banned just like its predecessor, SIMI.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

### CONGRESS IN CATCH-22 SITUATION

Sir — Whatever is happening in Rajasthan Congress is due to the faulty planning of its Central leadership without keeping in mind the ground reality. It may be the first time that the State leadership has challenged the Central leadership and the MLAs refused to meet the Central observers one on one, preferring to meet them collectively. Instead of meeting the observers, the legislators met the Speaker and submitted their resignations to him. These MLAs do not want that Deputy Chief Minister Rajesh Pilot be declared the Chief Minister.

## Top honour for Asha Parekh



Congratulations to veteran film actor-director-producer Asha Parekh, who will soon be feted with the Lifetime Achievement honour for her contribution to cinema at this year's Dadasaheb Phalke Awards by President Droupadi Murmu, Union Information & Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur has announced. The Dadasaheb Phalke selection jury decided to recognise and award Asha Parekh for her exemplary lifetime contribution to Indian cinema. The

Dadasaheb Phalke Award shall be presented to her at the 68th National Film Awards in Vigyan Bhawan. In a career spanning almost five decades, Asha Parekh started off as a child artiste at the age of 10 with *Maa* under the screen name Baby Asha Parekh, which was directed by Bimal Roy for Bombay Talkies.

Bimal Roy was asked to come to Bombay from Kolkata to direct the film for the studio, which was going through bad times. Producer Subodh Mukherjee and writer-director Nasir Hussain cast her as the heroine in *Dil Deke Dekho* opposite Shammi Kapoor, which made her a huge star. In 1992, she was honoured with the Padma Shri for her contribution to cinema. Three years later, Asha featured in *Andolan* and subsequently hanged her boots after her cameo appearance in the 1999 film *Sar Aankhon Par*.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

This happened in Punjab also last year when Channi was made the CM ignoring the sentiments of majority Congress leaders; the result is before us and Congress won only 18 seats whereas it earlier had 78 seats. Rahul Gandhi is already on the Bharat Jodo Yatra but there is an urgent need for course correction in the party, otherwise the purpose of this Yatra will be defeated. The Congress should adopt the midway path in Rajasthan so that both the groups are pacified. Keeping in view the nation's interests, the Opposition parties should contest the forthcoming parliamentary elections sincerely and unitedly.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

### NEED FOR SMART MEASURES

Sir — Our Finance Minister always seeks solace from others' failures. She never bothered to give an explanation about what went wrong with the economy, or why rupee is historically at the lowest today. The RBI has been deploying the dollar reserves to defend the cur-

rency and has exhausted billions of dollars of currency assets towards this end. The fundamental observations on India's continued devaluation of the rupee against the dollar show it is not a good sign. The reason remains the same: Energy, at the bottom of the inflation pyramid, must be secured at all costs.

Power is still very expensive and that'll drag India down and it'll have to step up the nuclear mix. Then there's the need to keep food, fuel and fertiliser costs under control and the rest will automatically follow. The same applies to inflation, hovering around 7-7.5 per cent whereas it's at least 8-9 per cent in the west and elsewhere. A kilo of vegetable costs ₹100 or more; all the food grains and other articles which are grown locally have also become costlier. It has become difficult for common people to survive.

CK Ramanathan | Ghaziabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Jaishankar's US visit

On an official visit, the Minister is taking on the US media and the administration alike

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is on 11-day US visit and his visit is turning out to be an exercise in plain speaking. The foreign minister arrived in the US on Sunday to attend the United Nations General Assembly. He took on the US media as well as the US administration for their anti-India stand. Right from the day, he arrived in the US Jaishankar has been meeting Indian Americans, and US press and met his US counterpart Antony Blinken. The reason for his visit officially is to 'enable a high-level review of the multifaceted bilateral agenda and strengthen cooperation on regional and global issues to further consolidate the India-US strategic partnership.' However, it is turning out to be a significant official visit that can redefine the US-India relations. To put things in perspective the Joe Biden administration has not been supportive of the Modi government's policies and practices. In fact, to make things worse the US press has been rather critical of Prime Minister Modi for his right-wing stance and rising hate crimes in the country. But then it is not about the Indian government but the country they are being critical of. Whatever happens in India must be resolved back home and in this regard, S Jaishankar's visit can be seen as critical.



The External Affairs Minister took on the US media in a hilarious way saying that they would report only the negatives and shun the good part. He also retorted to the US media's concerns about the situation in Kashmir. Ahead of a meeting with his US counterpart Antony Blinken, foreign minister S Jaishankar made no bones about India's concerns over the \$450 million sustainment package for Pakistan's F-16 fleet. Saying Washington was 'not fooling anybody' by claiming the fighter jets were meant for counter-terrorism purposes in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Jaishankar also said that the US-Pakistan relationship did not serve the interests of either country. In the present geopolitics, the US and India are natural allies as China's expansion is a big cause of concern for India and cannot be contained without the US on its side. The US also needs India to counter Putin's threats and use India as a mediator if need be, given India's proximity to Russia. But at the same time, India must assert its positions and make clear its national interests which Jaishankar is doing right now.

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## SOUND BITE

I am travelling to Tokyo to participate in the State funeral of former PM Shinzo Abe, a dear friend and a great champion of India-Japan friendship.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

Capitalism without competition isn't capitalism. It's exploitation... That's why I mobilized my entire administration to promote it in our economy.

US President — Joe Biden

Bollywood has been an inspiration to the global cinematic platform for its glorious cinematography, talented actors, timeless tunes, and storylines and I am proud to be a part of it.



Actor — Kajol

Peter Della Penna has shown up what was really happening at the non-striker's end. That is why the law is in place.

Cricket commentator — Harsha Bhogle

Today, billions of loans of big industrialists are being waived. But if a farmer or small trader is unable to repay, then he is put in jail.



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

## FIRST COLUMN

## THE RECIPE FOR ANARCHY

Moonlighting cannot be justified, for it fails loyalty test to contracts



PRAMOD PATHAK

Right and wrong, fair and unfair, ethical and unethical are no longer subjects that have standard definitions. Logic, convenience, personal interests, hedonism are the determining features that influence the judgment or opinion about an action or conduct. Universal benchmarks are missing.

These are strange times. No one likes to be wrong so everyone thinks he is right and defends his viewpoints with logic which veers largely around commerce. We are into an era of commerce. The moonlighting issue of the IT services is no different. It is also about commerce. But the matter needs to be discussed in a wider perspective. Ends cannot justify the means.

One big IT company chairman has recently admitted that the company has fired 300 of its employees in the past few months for working for direct competitors. Now here comes another question. Does it imply that the employees working in one industry can work beyond office hours or weekends in some other industry that is not in the same business?

Not easy to answer because it cannot be considered ethical. Quite intriguing why this matter is not discussed in that context and even the chairman who described moonlighting as cheating is trying to soften his stand. It is not clear what he means when he says that employees can have a transparent dialogue with the organisation about their second or weekend work.



Why this ambiguity? Will the disclosure allow people to work for two different companies? Even if some companies may like to take a more generous view of the phenomenon, the fact remains that the practice of moonlighting cannot be a fair practice.

Rightly, some CEOs said that moonlighting is an ethical issue. Every employee who joins a company enters into a contract which has two aspects. An explicit one which is the appointment letter that mentions about the job conditions, duties and responsibilities, etc. But there is also an unwritten contract, the implicit one which requires that the employee should be devoted and loyal to the company.

Holding two jobs may thus be antithetical to this. Even if moonlighting may not exactly be about one person having two jobs, it certainly is some kind of opportunity cost that the company will have to bear. Full-time employment should not go along with part time employment. Conflict of interest of one kind or the other is likely to arise. And we have seen what kind of damage conflict of interest can do.

Moonlighting, of course, is not something which is a new phenomenon and has been a concern in the past, too. The only difference was that in those times people engaging in moonlighting would do it in a hush-hush manner as they realised fully well that it was not fair.

From teachers to doctors, earning extra money outside the scope of the respective jobs was happening. But people were not seeking approval for the act as its fairness was always under the cloud. Conscience during those days still existed. However, as commerce is driving everything these days, such values do not count.

Ethics is something that these days is only for the sake of writing essays or being taught in schools and colleges. It is no longer a practice. And even bigger irony is that some sections want it to be legalised and are creating pressure groups to justify moonlighting.

The big question is where is society headed for? Anomie ultimately leads to anarchy.

(The author is a former professor of management, IIT-Dhanbad)

## Free fertiliser industry by removing controls

A prospective buyer will have to think a hundred times before deciding to buy a fertiliser Public Sector Undertaking as these are prone to inefficiencies



UTTAM GUPTA

In a big-bang approach to privatisation of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) announced in the Budget for 2021-22, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had divided them in two broad categories - strategic and non-strategic. The strategic includes four subgroups: atomic energy, space and defense; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking, insurance and financial services, non-strategic includes all other sectors such as industrial and consumer goods, hotel and tourist services, trading, and marketing, etc.

As per the plan, the government would privatise all CPSUs in the non-strategic sector (all loss-making enterprises in this category will be closed). The government has made some initial moves in taking this forward. The CPSUs are undertakings in which the Union Government has majority ownership and control with shareholding of 51 per cent or more.

A Committee of Group Officers (CGO) headed by NITI Aayog CEO Parameswaran Iyer has reportedly prepared a note mentioning eight PSU firms in the fertilizer sector which may be taken up for privatization. These include among others Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd (RCFL), National Fertilizers Ltd (NFL), The Fertilizers And Chemicals Travancore Ltd (FACT) and Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd (FCIL), besides Projects & Development India Ltd (PDIL) whose privatisation is already under way.

Given the importance of plant nutrients in raising crop yield and achieving food security, for decades, successive political dispensations had considered fertilizer to be a strategic sector and encouraged setting up of fertilizer plants in the public sector besides formulating policies to attract private investment.

At the core of these policies, the government controls the maximum retail price (MRP) of fertilisers at a low level, without any relation to the cost of production and distribution which is higher. To ensure that the manufacturers don't suffer loss and remain viable despite shortfall in realization from sale to farmers, it reimburses to them the excess of cost over MRP.

Prior to the 1990s, for urea as well as non-urea fertilisers (around two dozen types of phosphate and potash fertilizers), manufacturers got reimbursement of the cost/subsidy on 'unit-specific' basis taking into account efficiency norms such as capacity utilisation, energy consumption, capital related charges or CRC, including return (albeit guaranteed) on shareholders funds, other fixed cost, delivered cost of gas and other inputs, etc.

Following decontrol of non-urea fertilisers (1992), the government progressively moved towards giving 'uniform' subsidies on per nutrient basis for all manu-



PSUs ARE PRONE TO INEFFICIENCY AND POOR MANAGEMENT COURTESY, BABUDOM AND POLITICAL INTRUSIONS. THIS WAS ADMITTED BY THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE WHICH, IN A RECENT ORDER, BARRED THE PSUs TO BID FOR OTHER PSUs

(The author is a policy analyst)



facturers of these fertilisers (since April 2010) even as they are free to fix the MRP. In case of urea, reimbursement of subsidy on unit-specific basis continues.

The policies led to proliferation of capacities in both the public and private sector (besides plants set up by cooperative giants such as Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Ltd or IFFCO). Meanwhile, majority of the fertilizer CPSUs have shown below par performance (for instance, during 2019-20, six CPSUs reported profit of a mere Rs 1,293 crore) even as a number of them especially those under FCIL and Hindustan Fertiliser Corporation of India Limited (HFCL) have been incurring losses year-after-year.

Some plants—Ramagundum (in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh), Talcher (Odisha) and Haldia (West Bengal) set up in the late 1970s/early 1980s—were babies born sick. These CPSUs have been on the ventilator for long with the Union government pumping in thousands of crores of rupees to keep them alive. But it was under the Narendra Modi-led Government that revival plans of the plants viz Sindri (Jharkhand), Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Barauni (Bihar), Talcher (Odisha) and Ramagundam (AP) were approved about five years back and commissioned in 2021/2022.

Now, as per the 2021-22 policy, all fertilizer CPSUs need to be put on the block. Having pumped in thousands of crores on their revival (close to Rs 40,000 crore in the aforementioned five plants), the Government's decision to privatize them is anomalous. Such a sale won't yield an

amount anywhere near the money invested in their revival. Yet, the sale has to happen as the policy demands so. There is another compelling reason.

The PSUs are prone to 'inefficiencies' and 'mismanagement' courtesy, bureaucratic and political interference. This was admitted by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) which in a recent order barred PSUs to bid for other PSUs. It observed that the "transfer of management control of the undertaking from the Government to any other Government organization or state Government will result in continuation of the 'inherent inefficiencies' of state-run firms".

But it is not going to be a cake walk. A major impediment has to do with the lengthy and cumbersome process of approvals and red tape. Under the extant procedures, the Niti Aayog identifies companies for strategic disinvestment which are then considered by the Core Group of Secretaries on Divestment (CGD), a long-drawn process by itself. It then goes to the Alternative Mechanism (AM)—a group of ministers, including those of Finance and Road Transport & Highways—for approval. Strategic divestment involves around 12 steps, which inevitably lead to delays in starting the process. And when the Government enters the market, the conditions may not be favorable. Another major impediment has to do with the very fact of all pervading control on almost every aspect of fertilizers viz. manufacturing/ import, handling, movement, distribution, pricing (this covers both the price paid by the farmer or MRP as well

as the price to the manufacturer), subsidy, including payment mechanisms. Each of these factors affects the financial health of a fertilizer firm.

In case of urea, the 'unit-specific' system of allowing cost and in turn, subsidy (cost minus MRP) makes the firm even more vulnerable to the whims and fancies of the bureaucrat (and his team of CAs) who determines how much of each of the cost components such as CRC, other fixed cost, delivered cost of gas and other inputs, etc., is to be allowed for subsidy payment.

A prospective buyer will have to think a hundred times before deciding to buy a fertilizer PSU as his ability to make a decent profit (despite his own high efficiency in running the plant) will depend on his ability to manage the bureaucrats. Being under PSUs where cost of plants were inflated resulting in high retention price, the dependence and resultant vulnerability post-acquisition will be even greater.

Given the current state of affairs, prospects of selling fertilizer PSUs are bleak. Things can change only if the government plays hardball to remove the two impediments. It should unshackle the process of share sale from red tape. It may set up a holding company (HC) where all its shares in PSUs are vested. The HC should be fully empowered to take all decisions with regard to valuation, quantum of shares, timing of sale, etc. Secondly, it should unshackle the fertilizer sector by removing all controls and giving subsidies directly to farmers.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY AGAIN THAT THE CLP MEETING WAS CALLED ON REQUEST OF THE CHIEF MINISTER.

—CONGRESS IN-CHARGE FOR RAJASTHAN  
AJAY MAKEN



THE CLP WAS CALLED BY THE HIGH COMMAND AS PART OF A CONSPIRACY TO REMOVE (ASHOK) GEHLOT AS THE CM.

—RAJASTHAN PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER  
SHANTI DHARIWAL

## Playtime is key to intelligence, academic success

Playtime must find place of importance in the day's routine of children, for key life lessons are learnt in this manner

The United Nations High Commission for Human Rights recognises play as a fundamental right for every child. Play time must be looked at as an opportunity to enhance overall development of children and not something that is adopted at the expense of academic achievement. Thus, play is not an antithesis to brain and whole child development, but an important aspect of it.

Very often, children are told that they can play once they finish their homework. In other instances, play time is used synonymously as organised sports classes. However, play is characterised by choice, wonder, and delight. Hence, children have to be provided with adequate



SMRITI PARIKH

opportunities both for structured and unstructured play.

Unstructured play, also known as free play, is predominantly child-led. Children design these experiences for themselves to seek moments of happiness and excitement. These opportunities look like making up games and creating rules of fair play. Play-time structured or led by adults, while beneficial, reaps limited benefits.

The idea is to make children participate in experiences that are self-directed moments. Research indicates that it is the unstructured moments in which children experience wonder and delight. During real play, children shape the meaning they derive from their worlds and

ascribe the same to other experiences.

In choosing types of games, critical thought and self-awareness are required. Children's day is scheduled for the routine of the day or the timetable of the school. Children get limited opportunities to experience agency and choice. While engaging in playtime, children are not only making conscious choices about who to play with but also what and how to play. They even make decisions regarding team members; when does one win, and strategize about how they can win. These decisions which seem insignificant are building blocks of executive functions.

Same skills are employed when organising self-study,

choosing careers, and also when making emotional life choices. Exposure to decision making and evaluating provides a framework for thinking.

Children acquire tools such as pros and cons, logical reasoning and even organising their emotions. They learn to collaborate with peers to arrive at a conclusion. Unstructured play gives students the language to communicate their own thoughts respectfully and negotiation tactics. Furthermore, team-based play inculcates essential leadership skills as well.

Play time, which engrosses children in a state of wonder, develops key areas of the brain responsible for constructing thought and imagination. These skills

are also useful for projection into the future. A child who can imagine make-believe scenarios during play would also be adept at imagining his or her success in the future. They would be able to think through who they want to be when they grow up. A core component of achievement is the ability to set vision and goals for an unknown tomorrow.

Playtime builds this awareness of scenarios that feel joyful and motivating. Such awareness helps them take better steps towards personal achievement, such as, staying in friendships, which bring a feeling of happiness and safety, choosing subject areas which instil pride, and eventually staying in professions, which harness

one's full potential.

Delight is an underrated aspect of a child's life. Much like adults, experiencing happiness provides encouragement to take on challenging situations and embrace resilience. Feeling truly satisfied empowers the child to do more.

When they experience delight, they find it within their potential to do something just a tad bit more challenging than what they could do the last time. So, the arena for hide and seek becomes larger and the introduction of special powers during play is often seen. Building the schema of tackling tough tasks after experiencing joy is essential for other aspects as well. One may notice children doing

simpler content before attempting to study the more difficult subjects. One might also notice children being able to do more challenging work when they are working with their friends. It is the feeling of happiness that propels them forward.

As long as we continue to look at playing as the opposite of academics, we are doing a disservice to children. As adults, we engage with play too, through board games or other party games. Try and remember how you felt in that moment, and how it might have impacted your functioning. Now imagine how much children could benefit if they got to experience joy that consistently. How well it might prepare them for a complex, challenging world.

# Russia to transfer wounded in school shooting to Moscow

AP ■ MOSCOW

More than a dozen people wounded in a school shooting in central Russia will be taken to Moscow for further treatment, authorities said Tuesday, a day after a gunman killed 17 people and wounded 24 others.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said a medical evacuation is planned for 15 of the injured, including 13 children and two adults. He said three of them are in critical condition.

The shooting in Monday took place in School No. 88 in Izhevsk, a city 960 kilometers (600 miles) east of Moscow in the Udmurtia region, and was one of the deadliest school shootings in Russia. The gunman, a 34-year-old graduate of the school, killed himself after the shooting.

School shootings aren't common in Russia, but have become more frequent in recent years.

A shooter killed six people in a university in Perm a year ago. Just months before that, a



gunman opened fire at a school in the city of Kazan, killing seven students and two teachers with a registered weapon. A student at a college in the Russia-annexed Crimean Peninsula killed 20 students and himself in 2018.

Russian authorities last year sought to tighten gun regulations in the wake of the shootings.

Russia's Investigative Committee identified the gunman in Izhevsk as Artyom Kazantsev and said he was wearing a black T-shirt bearing

"Nazi symbols." No details about his motives have been released, and an investigation is underway. But local officials said he was registered as a patient at a psychiatric facility.

The government of Udmurtia said 17 people, including 11 children, were killed in the shooting. Alexander Brechalov, the regional leader, said in a statement Tuesday that the victims included elementary and high-school students, as well as teachers, security guards and another school employee.

# Ukrainian POWs face systematic mistreatment: UN rights team

AP ■ KYIV

UN human rights investigators say Ukrainian prisoners of war appear to be facing "systematic" mistreatment — including torture — both when they are captured and when they are transferred into areas controlled by Russian forces or Russia itself.

The head of a monitoring mission set up by the UN human rights office said Tuesday that Russia must address such mistreatment, which amounts to a "grave violation" of international law.

The mission issued its first comprehensive look at rights violations and abuses commit-

ted by both sides of the war between Feb 1 and July 31 — covering the first months after Russian forces invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. The mission, which tracks the situation daily, has been monitoring rights in Ukraine ever since a conflict involving Russian-backed insurgents began in eastern Ukraine in 2014.

The report, based on a strict methodology to verify claims, documented crimes including enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, summary executions, torture, and sexual violence — much of which have been brought to light by rights monitors, advocacy groups and the news media in recent months.

The team hopes to chronicle rights abuses and violations in detail, in hopes that perpetrators can be held to account one day.

On prisoners of war, the team said it received "unimpeded access" to places of internment in areas controlled by Ukraine's government — but not in Russia or areas controlled by Russian forces or their affiliates.

In the cases it documented, the mission found that the "vast majority" of Ukrainian prisoners of war were subjected to "torture or cruel and degrading treatment by the detaining power," a statement from the mission said.

Matilda Bogner, the mission's chief, said such mistreatment of Ukrainian POWs "appears to be systematic, not only upon their capture, but also following their transfer to places of internment" both in areas of Russian-controlled Ukraine and Russia itself.

The team also found that some Russian POWs had been subjected to torture and ill-treatment, mostly during capture or during transit to places of internment.

Bogner called for investigations of all allegations of violations of international law, and prosecution as warranted, in connection with the situation in Ukraine.

# 98K Russians enter Kazakhstan after call-up, say officials

AP ■ TALLINN (ESTONIA)

About 98,000 Russians have crossed into Kazakhstan in the week since President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilization of reservists to fight in Ukraine, Kazakh officials said on Tuesday, as men seeking to avoid the call-up continued to flee by land and air into neighbouring countries.

Kazakhstan and Georgia, both part of the former Soviet Union, appeared to be the most popular destinations for those crossing by car, bicycle or on foot. Those with visas for Finland or Norway have also been coming in by land.

Plane tickets abroad had sold out quickly despite steep prices. Russia's Defense Ministry has said that only about 300,000 people with prior combat or other military service would be called up, but reports have emerged from various Russian regions that recruiters were rounding up men outside that description.

That fuelled fears of a much broader call-up, sending droves of men of all ages and backgrounds to airports and border crossings.

In announcing the number of Russians crossing the border, Kazakhstan Interior Minister Marat Akhmetzhanov said authorities will not send those who are avoiding the call-up back home, unless they are on an international wanted list for criminal charges.



Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a meeting on agricultural issues via videoconference in the Bocharov Ruchei residence in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, Russia, on Tuesday.

# German police raid yacht linked to Russian oligarch

AP ■ BERLIN

More than 60 police officers raided a luxury yacht in northern Germany linked to a Russian businessman in connection with alleged breaches of sanctions and money laundering rules, officials said on Tuesday.

The statement by Frankfurt prosecutors identified the suspect only as a 69-year-old Russian businessman. But German weekly Der

Spiegel identified him as oligarch Alisher Usmanov, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin.

Frankfurt prosecutors said the suspect of their investigation is alleged to have conducted several transactions between 2017 and 2022 using a complex network of offshore companies to hide the origin of the payments, which amounted to millions of euros.

Usmanov is subject to

sanctions in the United States and the European Union.

The raid comes the week after state and federal police searched 24 properties connected to Usmanov in the German states of Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein.

A spokesman with the Frankfurt prosecutor's office confirmed that Tuesday's yacht raid was part of the same investigation.

# Japan protests Russia's expulsion of official, denies spying

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan protested to Russia on Tuesday over the detention of a Japanese consulate official on espionage allegations, denying the allegations and accusing Russian authorities of abusive interrogation.

The official was detained on Sept 22 and interrogated with his eyes covered, his hands and head pressed and immobilised, Japan's Foreign Ministry said, prompting it to lodge a protest and to demand an apology.

On Monday, Russia's Foreign Ministry notified Japan's Embassy in Moscow that the official had been declared "persona non grata," or an undesirable person, on grounds he conducted illegal espionage activity and it ordered him to leave the country within 48 hours.

"The alleged illegal activity insisted by the Russian side is completely groundless," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters.

Matsuno said Japan's Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori summoned Russia's ambassador and strongly protested, demanding a formal apology from the Russian government and measures to prevent a recurrence.

The Russian authorities' treatment of the consulate official was "intimidating" during the interrogation, adding that such handling of consular officials violates the Vienna convention and a Japan-Russia treaty over consular affairs, Matsuno said. "It is extremely regrettable and absolutely unacceptable," Matsuno said.

The consular official has since been released with no health problems and is set to return to Japan on Wednesday.

The dispute is the latest example of worsening ties between the two countries over



Japan's sanctions against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Japan and Russia had expelled a number of diplomats, while Russia scrapped peace negotiations with Japan that includes talks on Russian-held disputed islands that Japan says the Soviets took at the end of the World War II.

Russia said Monday that it had detained a Japanese consulate official based in the eastern city of Vladivostok for soliciting "restricted" information, according to Russian news agencies.

"A Japanese diplomat was detained red-handed while receiving, in exchange for financial reward, restricted information about Russia's cooperation with another country in the Asia-Pacific region," the FSB, the KGB's successor agency, was cited as saying through its press service, without specifying the third country.

The FSB identified the official as Tatsunori Motoki, accusing him of seeking out information on "the impact of Western sanctions" on the surrounding Primoriye region, according to news agencies.

The Kremlin has repeatedly referred to Japan as a "hostile" country, a designation it shares with the US, EU countries and their Western allies, since Tokyo joined them in slapping sanctions on Moscow after Russian troops entered Ukraine on February 24.

# Preordained vote to wrap up in Russia-held areas of Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

The final day of voting was taken place in Russian-held regions of Ukraine Tuesday, a referendum that is expected to serve as a pretext for their annexation by Moscow but that is rejected as a sham by Kyiv and its Western allies.

As the vote was nearing its end, a senior Kremlin official issued the bluntest warning yet that Russia is prepared to use nuclear weapons to halt a Ukrainian push to reclaim Russia-occupied areas.

The five-day voting, in which residents are asked whether they want their regions to become part of Russia, has been anything but free or fair. Tens of thousands of residents had already fled the regions amid the war, and images shared by those who remained showed armed Russian troops going door-to-door to pressure Ukrainians into voting.

The balloting on Tuesday was held at polling stations.

The Kremlin is expected to move immediately to absorb the regions once the voting is over,

with President Vladimir Putin expected to declare their incorporation into Russia later this week. Russian media also speculated that Putin may follow up on last week's order of partial mobilisation by declaring martial law and shutting the nation's borders for all men of fighting age.

The mobilisation has triggered a massive exodus of men from the country, fueled protests in many regions across Russia and sparked occasional acts of violence. On Monday, a gunman opened fire in an enlistment office in a Siberian city and gravely wounded the local chief military recruitment officer. The shooting came after scattered arson attacks on enlistment offices.

In the latest move to stem the tide of men fleeing Russia to avoid mobilization, Russian officials declared plans to set up a military recruitment office right on the border with Georgia, one of the main routes of the exodus.

And trying to assuage public outrage, numerous Russian officials and lawmakers have



acknowledged that mistakes were made during the mobilisation - when military conscription offices were rounding up random people without military experience who weren't supposed to be called up - and promised to quickly correct them.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday once again denied the Russian mobilisation as nothing more than "an attempt to provide commanders on the ground with a constant stream of cannon fodder."

Zelenskyy vowed that the Ukrainian military will push efforts to take back "the entire territory of Ukraine," and has drawn up plans to counter "new types of weapons" used by Russia.

Putin has warned that once the Russia-held regions are absorbed, Moscow will defend its territory with "all available means," including nuclear weapons, raising fears of a sharp escalation of the seven-month conflict.

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security

Council chaired by Putin, spelled out the threat Tuesday in the bluntest terms yet, reaffirming that Moscow could use nuclear weapons against Ukraine if it sees a threat posed by it as too high.

Medvedev noted that the US and its NATO allies understand that "if a threat to Russia raises above a certain limit of danger, we will have to respond without asking anyone's consent and holding long consultations".

"And it's certainly not a bluff," he added.

Medvedev charged that the

US and its NATO allies won't dare to use nuclear weapons against Russia even if it makes a nuclear strike on Ukraine.

Jake Sullivan, the US national security adviser, said Russia would pay a high, if unspecified, price if it made good on veiled threats to use nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine.

"If Russia crosses this line, there will be catastrophic consequences for Russia. The United States will respond decisively," he told NBC.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Monday that Putin had told Turkey's president last week that Moscow was ready to resume negotiations with Ukraine but had "new conditions" for a ceasefire.

Even as the voting has continued in Russia-held areas, Russian forces have kept up their strikes across Ukraine. Overnight, Russian missile attacks targeted the southern areas of Zaporizhzhia and Mykolaiv, damaging residential buildings and other sites, officials said.

# Leaks on Russian gas pipelines raise concerns about sabotage

AP ■ WARSAW

A series of unusual leaks on two natural gas pipelines running from Russia under the Baltic Sea to Germany triggered concerns about sabotage on Tuesday, overshadowing the inauguration of a long-awaited pipeline that will bring Norwegian gas to Poland in efforts to bolster Europe's energy independence from Moscow.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki called the events "an act of sabotage", while Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said she could not rule it out after three leaks were detected over the past day on the Nord Stream 1 and 2



pipelines, which are filled with gas but not delivering the fuel to Europe.

An energy standoff over Russia's war in Ukraine halted flows on Nord Stream 1 and prevented them from ever starting in the parallel Nord Stream 2. Frederiksen, Morawiecki

and Polish President Andrzej Duda symbolically opened a valve of a yellow pipe belonging to the Baltic Pipe, a new system that will bring Norway's gas across Denmark and the Baltic Sea to Poland.

"The era of Russian domination in the gas sphere is coming to an end," Morawiecki declared. "An era that was marked by blackmail, threats and extortion."

No official presented evidence of what caused the Nord Stream problems, but in central Europe, where distrust of Russia runs high, there were fears that Moscow sabotaged its own infrastructure out of spite or to warn that all pipelines are vul-

nerable to attack.

The leaks emerged off the coast of Denmark and Sweden, raising the stakes on whether energy infrastructure in European waters was being targeted and leading to a small bump in natural gas prices.

"We can clearly see that this is an act of sabotage, an act that probably means a next step of escalation in the situation that we are dealing with in Ukraine," Morawiecki said.

Anders Puck Nielsen, a researcher with the Centre for Maritime Operations at the Royal Danish Defence College, said the timing of the leaks was "conspicuous" given the ceremony for the Baltic Pipe.

# German population hits record 84M due to Ukraine refugees

AP ■ BERLIN

The influx of Ukrainian refugees to Germany has pushed the country's population to a new all-time high of more than 84 million, the German Federal Statistical Office said Tuesday.

By the end of June, the country's population increased by 843,000 people, or 1%, compared to the end of 2021.

In comparison, the population grew by 82,000 people, or 0.1%, in the entire year of 2021.

Around 750,000 Ukrainian refugees came to Germany seeking safety from the Russian invasion in the first half of 2022.

Most of them were female, the statistical office reported, saying that by the end of June 501,000 more Ukrainian women and girls were living in Germany than at the end of 2021, while the number of Ukrainian men and boys increased by 248,000.

Germany experienced population increases of this magnitude before — both immigration-related — in 1992 and 2015.

In 1992, shortly after the fall of communism and Germany's reunification, about 700,000 people arrived, fleeing the war in Yugoslavia, and coming from Eastern Europe following the opening of the borders there.

# Patrol spots Chinese, Russian naval ships off Alaska island

AP ■ ANCHORAGE

A US Coast Guard ship on routine patrol in the Bering Sea came across a guided missile cruiser from China, officials said Monday.

But it turned out the cruiser wasn't alone as it sailed about 138 kilometers north of Alaska's Kiska Island, on September 19.

The patrol boat, known as a cutter called Kimball, later discovered there were two other Chinese naval ships and four Russian naval vessels, including a destroyer, all in single formation.

The Honolulu-based Kimball, a 127-metre vessel, observed as the ships broke formation and dispersed. A C-130 Hercules provided air support for the Kimball from the Coast Guard station in Kodiak.

"While the formation has operated in accordance with international rules and norms, we will meet presence with presence to ensure there are no disruptions to US interests in the maritime environment around Alaska," Rear Adm. Nathan Moore, Seventeenth Coast Guard District commander said.

The Coast Guard said



Operation Frontier Sentinel guidelines call for meeting "presence with presence" when strategic competitors operate in and around US waters.

The Kimball will continue to monitor the area. The Coast Guard did not immediately respond to questions about the incident from The Associated Press.

The Chinese and Russian formation came a month after NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg warned about

China's interest in the Arctic and Russia's military buildup there.

Stoltenberg said Russia has set up a new Arctic Command and has opened hundreds of new and former Soviet-era Arctic military sites, including deep-water ports and airfields.

China has declared itself a "near Arctic" state and plans to build the world's largest ice-breaker, he said.

"Beijing and Moscow have also pledged to intensify prac-

tical cooperation in the Arctic. This forms part of a deepening strategic partnership that challenges our values and interests," Stoltenberg said in a visit to Canada's north.

This wasn't the first time Chinese naval ships have sailed near Alaska waters. In September 2021, Coast Guard cutters in the Bering Sea and North Pacific Ocean encountered Chinese ships, some about 80 kilometers off the Aleutian Islands.

# Xi appears in public first time after returning from SCO summit

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday visited an exhibition of the Communist Party, appearing in public for the first time after his return from the SCO summit on September 16, which sparked rumours about his absence from the limelight ahead of next month's key Congress of the ruling party.

Xi on Tuesday visited an exhibition on the great achievements of the Communist Party of China and the country over the past decade, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Speaking at the exhibition, he called for concerted efforts to forge ahead determinedly toward a new victory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the report said. Accompanied by No. 2 leader and Premier Li Keqiang and other top CPC officials, Xi went around the exhibition.

In his speech, Xi highlighted CPC's and China's achievements under his leadership during the past 10 years.

The Party and the State have made historic achievements and undergone historic changes, providing a more per-



fect system, a more solid material foundation and more active spiritual power to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, he said.

"We should widely publicise the strategic initiatives, transformative practices, breakthroughs and landmark achievements over the past 10 years, and publicise the milestone significance of the great changes" in the last decade in the history of the Party, the history of new China, he said.

This is the first time official media reported on his public appearance after his return home from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on September 16.

# Appeals ruling leaves Trump fate in defamation suit in flux

AP ■ NEW YORK

A federal appeals court asked a Washington DC appeals court Tuesday to help it decide whether the United States should be substituted for former President Donald Trump as the defendant in a defamation lawsuit brought by a woman who says he raped her over a quarter century ago.

The 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan in a 2-to-1 decision reversed a lower court ruling that had concluded Trump must face the lawsuit brought in Manhattan federal court by columnist E. Jean Carroll.

But it stopped short of saying the US can be substituted for Trump as the defendant in the lawsuit. Instead, it asked The DC Court of Appeals, the highest court in the District of Columbia, to decide whether Trump's public statements denying Carroll's rape claims occurred within the scope of his employment as president.

Carroll maintains Trump defamed her with public comments he made after she wrote in a 2019 book that Trump raped her during a chance encounter in the mid-1990s in a Manhattan department store. Trump denied the rape and questioned Carroll's credibility and motivations.

The 2nd Circuit said Trump would be entitled to immunity as the defendant in the lawsuit if it was decided that his statements



came within the scope of his employment.

But it said courts have been inconsistent in previous rulings and that the D.C. Court of Appeals might be in the best position to answer the question.

Roberta Kaplan, an attorney for the longtime advice columnist for Elle magazine, alerted a Manhattan federal court judge in August that she plans to sue Trump in November when the Adult Survivor's Act take effect. The law offers a one-year "look back" to enable adult survivors of sexual attacks to bring civil claims when they otherwise would be barred by time requirements.

The law, signed by New York Gov. Kathy Hochul in May, was modeled after the Child Victims Act, which provided a similar window to bring lawsuits for people who had been sexually assaulted when they were children. That law expired a year ago.

# Tense Japan holds funeral for assassinated ex-leader Abe

AP ■ TOKYO

A tense Japan prepared Tuesday for a rare and controversial state funeral for assassinated former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the longest-serving leader in his nation's modern history and one of the most divisive.

Tokyo was under maximum security, with angry protests opposing the funeral planned around the capital and nation. Hours before the ceremony began, dozens of people carrying bouquets of flowers queued at public flower-laying stands at nearby Kudanzaka park.

Thousands of uniformed police mobilized around the Budokan hall, where the funeral is being held, and at major

train stations. Roads around the venue are closed throughout the day, and coin lockers at main stations were sealed for security. World leaders, including US Vice President Kamala Harris, were in town for the funeral.

Opponents of the state-sponsored funeral, which has its roots in prewar imperial ceremonies, say taxpayers' money should be spent on more meaningful causes, such as addressing widening economic disparities caused by Abe's policies.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has been criticised for forcing through the costly event to honour his mentor, Abe, who was assassinated in July. There has also been a widening controversy about Abe's and the governing party's decades-long



close ties with the ultra-conservative Unification Church, accused of raking in huge donations by brainwashing adherents.

Abe's alleged assassin reportedly told police he killed the politician because of his links to the church; he said his moth-

er ruined his life by giving away the family's money to the church.

Kishida says the longest-serving leader in Japan's modern political history deserves a state funeral. The government also maintains that the ceremony is not meant to force any-

one to honour Abe. Most of the nation's 47 prefectural governments, however, plan to fly national flags at half-staff and observe a moment of silence.

Opponents say Kishida's one-sided decision, which was made without parliamentary approval, was undemocratic, and a reminder of how prewar imperialist governments used state funerals to fan nationalism. The prewar funeral law was abolished after World War II. The only postwar state funeral for a political leader, for Shigeru Yoshida in 1967, also faced similar criticism.

"Spending our valuable tax money on a state funeral with no legal basis is an act that tramples on the constitution," organiser Takakage Fujita said at a protest on Monday.

About 1.7 billion yen (\$1.8 million) is needed for the venue, security, transportation and accommodation for the guests, the government said.

# Hurricane Ian lashes Cuba, aims at Florida as possible Cat 4

AP ■ HAVANA

Strengthening Hurricane Ian's rain and winds lashed Cuba's western tip, where authorities have evacuated 50,000 people, as it roared on a path that could see it hit Florida's west coast as a Category 4 hurricane.

Officials in Cuba's Pinar del Rio province set up 55 shelters, rushed in emergency personnel and took steps to protect crops in Cuba's main tobacco-growing region ahead of Ian's expected landfall early on Tuesday as a major hurricane.

The US National Hurricane Centre said the island's west coast could see as much as 14 feet (4.3 metres) of storm surge. "Cuba is expecting extreme hurricane-force winds, also life-



threatening storm surge and heavy rainfall," hurricane centre senior specialist Daniel Brown told The Associated Press.

After passing over Cuba, Ian was forecast to strengthen further over warm Gulf of Mexico waters before reaching Florida as early as Wednesday as a Category 4 storm with top winds of 140 mph (225 km/h).

As of Monday, Tampa and St. Petersburg appeared to be the among the most likely targets for their first direct hit by a major hurricane since 1921.

# Arizona abortion clinics send women to other states

AP ■ PHOENIX (US)

When an Arizona judge ruled last week that prosecutors can resume enforcing a near-total ban on abortion that dates to the Civil War, it fell to the staff at Camelback Family Planning to break the news to the women scheduled for appointments in the coming weeks.

The staff faced "crying, a lot of very, very angry people, denial," nurse Ashleigh Feiring said on Monday. One woman argued, "But I'm only five weeks (along)."

Women seeking abortions across Arizona were forced to find alternatives beyond the state's borders after the ruling, which clears the way for prosecutors to charge doctors and others who help a woman end a pregnancy unless her life is in danger.

The state's major abortion providers immediately



halted procedures and cancelled appointments.

Providers in neighbouring states, already seeing an increase in traffic from other conservative states that have banned abortion, were preparing to treat some of the 13,000 Arizona patients who get an abortion each year.

Planned Parenthood Arizona on Monday asked Pima County Superior Court

Judge Kellie Johnson to put her ruling on hold pending an appeal, saying it created confusion about the status of the law in Arizona.

Lawyers cited conflicts created by the abortion ban dating to 1864, a more recent law banning abortions after 15 weeks, and a variety of other laws regulating the processes and paperwork when terminating pregnancies.

Johnson's ruling lifted an injunction that was imposed after the US Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision guaranteed a right to abortion in 1973.

At the Camelback Family Planning clinic in central Phoenix, a young woman took off from work on Monday afternoon for an appointment to get medicine to help with an abortion. The 20-year-old is afraid she is prone to miscarriage and already miscarried two years ago.

# Singapore population rises by 3.4 % after 2 yrs of decline

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore's population grew by 3.4 per cent to touch 5.64 million as of June this year, after witnessing two straight years of decline due to the pandemic, according to an annual report issued by the National Population and Talent Division on Tuesday.

The number of citizens rose by 1.6

per cent to 3.55 million in June this year, while the non-resident population grew by 6.6 per cent during the same period, due to the easing of travel restrictions and the government's move to attract talented workforce from overseas.

Nevertheless, it still remained below the pre-COVID levels of 1.68 million in June 2019.

The largest increase was seen for



work permit holders in the construction and marine shipyard sectors, which typically employ a large number of South Asian migrant workers including those from India, Channel News Asia reported, citing the report.

Despite the growth, the total population in Singapore remained slightly lower than the pre-COVID level of 5.7 million as of June 2019, the report said.

# Harris focuses Asia trip on security, adds tour to Korea DMZ

AP ■ TOKYO

In meeting after meeting with Asian leaders on Tuesday, Vice President Kamala Harris emphasised the US commitment to regional security and the White House disclosed that she would visit the Demilitarised Zone dividing the rival Koreas.

An official said Harris would tour the border area between South and North Korea

on Thursday, at the end of her trip to Asia. The visit comes amid persistent concerns about North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes.

North Korea test-fired a short-range ballistic missile shortly before Harris left Washington, an apparent response to joint military exercises between the United States and South Korea that include the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan.

**NOTICE**  
In The Court Of The LD. District Delegate (Civil Judge Senior Division) at Siliguri Ref: Misc Judicial (Prob) Case No.13/2021  
Sri Sandyp Bhattacharya  
Son of Late Dip Kumar Bhattacharya Resident of Flat No.802, Garrison Tower, Omare Green Valley, Sector 41 & 42, P.O. Amar Nagar, P.S. Surajkund, Faridabad, Haryana 121003. -Petitioner  
Be it known to all that the above named Petitioner has filed the case under reference for granting probate of the WILL of the deceased Late Dip Kumar Bhattacharya who died on 09-08-2019 at Flat No.802, Garrison Tower, Omare Green Valley, Sector 41 & 42, P.O. Amar Nagar, P.S. Surajkund, Dist. Faridabad, Haryana 121003 & is the date fixed for hearing, on 05.11.2022. Persons interested may either personally or through lawyer appear in the case on the given date with all papers falling which the case will be heard ex-parte. Given under hand and seal of this Court this 05 day of August 2022.  
By Order  
Ajay Kumar Sarkar  
Shrinistad  
Civil Judge, Senior Division Court SILIGURI

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE (Through e-Tendering)	
Name of work with its location	Annual GM inspection in DUJ section of Delhi Division
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹ 24,40,624/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 48,800/- only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Singal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload for tender/closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time 19.10.2022 up to 15.00 hours
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.reps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055
Tender No. 558-Sig-16-M-Tender-1378	Dated : 26.09.2022 2520/22
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known to all concerned that Shop No. 4, Sector-12, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110022 is pending litigation between the owner Mrs. Raji Khanna, who Late Rajan Khanna (Advocate), r/o. Pocket-52, House No.94, 2nd floor, C.R. Park, New Delhi-110019 and the tenant Mr. Rajesh Kalia s/o. Late J.R. Kalia, having his business under the name and style of Mrs. Sakar Studio at Shop No. 19, Sector-12, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110022. The court of Sri Satyabrata Panda, Ld. Additional District Judge (District New Delhi) has been pleased to pass an order restraining Sri. Rajesh Kalia (tenant in possession) to deal with the said property in any manner whatsoever. Anybody dealing with the said Property is Hereto Warned Not Deal With Sri. Rajesh Kalia Or Any Body Acting On His Behalf Regarding The Shop/property. Anybody doing so shall be doing so on his own costs and consequences. SUSHI KHANNA Advocate Chamber No. 354, District High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi-110003

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known to the public at large that my client Babu Lal S/o Bhop Singh R/o 12/21, Block-12 Tirok Puri, Patparganj, East Delhi-110091 has disowned his son Tilak Raj S/o Babu Lal R/o 12/21, Block-12 Tirok Puri Patparganj, East Delhi-110091 from his all movable and immovable property. My client has no concern with his said son and will not be responsible for his any act done by him or on his behalf.  
SHAFIULLAH (ADVOCATE)  
Chamber No. 588  
Patalia House,  
New Delhi - 110001

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is hereby brought to the notice of public at large on behalf of my client that Original/Photocopies of below mentioned sale deeds for land measuring 9.5342 Hectare situated at revenue village Bhatiyapura, Prathipur Tehsil Tilhar, Paragana Nigohi and District Shahjahanpur U.P. are not lost and not available with present owner, Malbro International Private Limited, the said deeds are sale Deed No. No.1636 dated 19/02/2013, Deed No. 5179 dated 16/08/2007, Deed No 5424 dated 10/06/2011, Deed no 1148 dated 27/02/2004, Deed No 3973 dated 09/05/2011 Deed No. 10962 dated 29/12/2012, Deed No. 3379 dated 30/05/2008, Deed No. 4689 dated 01/06/2009 deed of 10/05/1999, Deed No. 1637 dated 28/11/2002, Deed No. 4601 dated 07/06/2001,

Deed No.10963 dated 29/12/2012, Deed No. 4406 dated 07/07/2007, Deed No. 5040 dated 03/08/2004, Deed No. 11005 dated 31/12/2012, Deed No. 4393 dated 06/07/2007, Deed No. 4587 Dated 20/06/2001, Deed No. 4615 dated 08/06/2001, Deed No. 4585 dated 20/06/2001, Deed No. 5052 dated 21/06/2001, Deed No. 4589 dated 07/06/2001, Deed No. 4604 dated 07/06/2001, Deed No. 4590 dated 07/06/2001, Deed No. 4539 dated 30/08/1995, Deed No. 3165 dated 19/06/2000, Deed No. 8379 dated 28/11/2002, Deed No. 2718 dated 07/05/2004, Deed No. 3777 dated 11/05/2010, Deed No. 11006 dated 31/12/2012, dated 10/05/1999, Deed No. 97 dated 12/01/1994, Deed No. 1950 dated 27/06/1994, Deed No. 2224 dated 22/03/2010, Deed No. 3069 dated 04/04/2013, dated 10/05/1999, Deed No. 3379 dated 30/05/2008, Deed No. 2756 dated 16/02/2019.

The Public at large is hereby informed that owner of aforesaid land measuring 9.5342 Hectare situated at revenue village Bhatiyapura, Prathipur Tehsil Tilhar, Paragana Nigohi and District Shahjahanpur U.P. has availed/shall avail credit facilities from HDFC Bank Ltd. against security of the aforementioned land with publication of this notice.  
Any person, who comes in knowledge or possession of aforementioned original sale/ title deeds, may please return the same to above mentioned property addresses or at below mentioned addressee.  
Any person or authority dealing with the said deeds and / or the aforesaid land 9.5342 Hectare, and/or deriving any benefit by imposition or claiming any interest in the aforesaid land, on the basis of said sale/title deeds or in any manner whatsoever, he/she/it shall do so at his/her/its own cost, expense, liability and risk or may also send his/her/their claims in writing to the undersigned along with documentary evidence in support of the claim within 15 days from date of publication of this Notice.  
Sushil Kumar Singh (Advocate)  
F-10, L.G.F. Jangpura Ext., New Delhi-110014

# PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Mapsko Builders Pvt. Ltd. (hereinafter known as the Developer) is in the process of undertaking of development of a residential group housing colony in Sector - 78 & 79, Gurugram (Haryana) over an area measuring 16.369 acres in the revenue estate of Naurangpur, Distt. Gurugram (hereinafter known as the Project) in accordance with the provision of License No. 38 of 2012 dated 22.04.2012 granted by Directorate of Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh (hereinafter known as DTCP).

And whereas, building plan of the Project have earlier been approved vide DTCP memo no. 18795 dated 20.09.2012 and further occupation certificate for all but one of the blocks/towers along with EWS (part), convenient shopping and community building (part) has also been received vide DTCP memo no. 9328 dated 03.06.2020. And whereas, the Developer has proposed to revise the planning of the balance FAR of the Project including the remaining block/tower and accordingly Developer has applied for approval of the proposed Revised Building Plans of the Project in consideration of which DTCP has issued in-principle approval of the proposed Revised Building Plans vide memo no. 28481 dated 19.09.2022.

And whereas, several individuals have made bookings/ entered into purchase agreement for allotment of flat/unit in the said Project (hereinafter referred as allottees), and whereas, DTCP has required seeking of objections, if any, against the said proposed revision in building plans of the Project.

Accordingly, vide this public notice objections are hereby invited from general public/any of the allottees in the Project on the proposed revision of the building plan of the Project. A copy of the earlier approved building plans & the now in-principally approved proposed revised building plans are available for perusal on our website "mapskogroup.com". The said building plans can also be perused at our site office located in the above-said project site as well as in the office of Senior Town Planner, HUDA Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram (Haryana).

It is most pertinent to mention here that in the Revised Building Plans under approval, no changes have been proposed in the already completed towers namely Tower A, Tower B, Tower C, Tower D, Tower E, Tower F, Tower G, Tower H & Commercial for which Occupation Certificate already stands granted.

Still, Objections, if any, may be filed in the office of Senior Town Planner, HUDA Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram (Haryana) within 30 days of the issuance of this notice failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed revision in the building plans.

Date : 27th September 2022  
for and on behalf of Mapsko Builders Pvt. Ltd.  
Ajay Gupta (Manager Legal)  
Authorized Representative/Manager  
Mapsko Builders Pvt. Ltd.  
6th Floor, Banni The Address,  
Golf Course Road,  
Sector-56 Gurgaon-122011,  
Haryana, Ph. 0124-4250610

# In Q1, jobs in 9 non-farm sectors rise by 10 lakh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Total employment in nine sectors rose by 10 lakh to 3.18 crore during January-March 2022 from a year-ago period, according to a quarterly survey released by the Union labour ministry on Tuesday.

Union Minister for Labour & Employment Bhupender Yadav released the report on Fourth Round (January-March, 2022) of Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) as part of the All India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES).

The nine selected sectors are manufacturing, construction, trade, transport, education, health, accommodation & restaurant, IT/BPO, and financial services.

The total number of employment in these nine sectors stood at 3.08 crore during January-March 2021.

During a press conference, S P Mukherjee, chairman of the expert group which brought out this QES, stated that the total employment was 3.08 crore on January 1, 2021 and 3.10 crore on January 1, 2022. Thus the number of employment in these nine sectors has increased by 10 lakh in that period.

The higher employment number also reflects recovery in economic activities after states lifted restrictions that were imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus infections in the wake of the second



Covid wave in April 2021 and had staggering impact.

The estimated employment increased from 3.14 crore in third quarter (October-December 2021) to 3.18 crore in 4th quarter (January-March 2022), a labour ministry statement said.

The AQEES has been taken up by the Labour Bureau to provide quarterly estimates about the employment and related variables of establishments in both organised and unorganised segments of nine selected sectors which account for a majority of the total employment in the non-farm establishments.

AQEES has two components — the 'Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)' and the 'Area Frame Establishment Survey (AFES)'. The former relates to the establishments employing 10 or

more workers whereas the latter relates to the establishments employing 9 or less workers.

The QES as part of the AQEES was launched in April, 2021 to capture important information in terms of employment and related variables in the organised sector of the economy.

In each quarter, information is collected from about 12,000 establishments. The first such report for the period April-June, 2021 was released in the month of September, 2021.

While releasing the 4th quarterly report, Yadav said that the employment is showing an increasing trend in the selected sectors of the economy. The total employment in these 9 selected sectors taken collectively was reported at 2.37 crore in the sixth Economic Census (2013-14).

# Sensex, Nifty end lower on selloff in metal, banking stocks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Key benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower for the fifth straight session on Tuesday in a volatile trade tracking losses in metal, banking and financial stocks.

Investors also remained concerned over persistent foreign fund outflows, traders said. After jumping nearly 560 points during the session, the 30-share BSE index ended 37.70 points or 0.07 per cent lower at 57,107.52. Similarly, the NSE Nifty shed 8.90 points or 0.05 per cent to close at 17,007.40.

Tata Steel was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.25 per cent, followed by Titan, SBI, Kotak Bank, Tech Mahindra, ICICI Bank and HDFC twins.

On the other hand, PowerGrid, IndusInd Bank, Dr Reddy's, HCL Tech and Nestle India were among the gainers.

"In search of a safer dollar and elevated bond yields, foreign investors are withdrawing from Indian equities, resulting in the decline of the domestic market.

In contrast to the recent trend of sector performance, banks and autos are exhibiting negative bias, while IT and pharma are showcasing resilience.

"Crude prices are closing down, despite expectations that OPEC+ will take more action



to cut production in the coming meeting, due to weakening global economy," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Of the Sensex constituents, 18 stocks closed lower, while 12 were in the green.

The BSE Midcap index declined by 0.01 per cent, while the BSE Smallcap index fell 0.49 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, Metal, Capital Goods and Banking indices fell the most, while Oil & Gas, Energy, IT and Healthcare were the top gainers.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul closed in the positive territory. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a mixed note in mid-session deals. International oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.78 per cent to USD 85.56 per barrel.

# RBI's rate-setting panel to start 3-day meet today

## Another rate hike likely

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel will start its 3-day deliberations on Wednesday amid expectations of yet another rate hike of 50 basis points to check high inflation, in line with similar actions taken by other major central banks, including the US Fed.

Based on the recommendations of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), the RBI had effected 50 basis points increase in repo rate each in June and August after raising the short-term lending rate by 40 basis points in an off-cycle decision in May.

The MPC, headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, is scheduled to meet during September 28-30. The decision will be announced on Friday (September 30).

The RBI, which has since May raised the repo rate by 140 basis points (bps), may yet again go for a 50-bps increase, which will take the key rate to a three-year high of 5.9 per cent, say experts. The present rate is 5.4 per cent.

The consumer price index (CPI) based on retail inflation, which had started showing signs of moderation in May, has again firmed up to 7 per cent



in August. The RBI takes into account retail inflation while framing its bi-monthly monetary policy.

The US Fed delivered the third consecutive rate hike after it raised the rates by 75 bps to take the target range to 3-3.25 per cent. The central banks of the UK and the EU have also gone for rate hikes to tame inflation.

In a report, Bank of Baroda said the monetary policy this time will be more closely watched, given the recent developments in the forex market following the Fed raising rates last week. The RBI's view on all issues will provide guidance to the market on repo rate, stance, growth and inflation projections, rupee, liquidity and global view.

"In the upcoming credit policy of RBI, which is sched-

uled on 30 September 2022, we expect MPC to raise the repo rate by another 50 bps. We expect rates to increase up till 6-6.25 per cent," the report said.

The government has tasked the RBI to ensure the retail inflation remains at 4 per cent, with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Since May, the central bank has cumulatively raised the interest rate by 140 bps in its effort to contain inflation. Despite this sharp hike, the RBI expects inflation to remain above its comfort zone and has retained the CPI inflation forecast at 6.7 per cent for the current fiscal year.

V Swaminathan, executive chairman, Andromeda Loans, opined that given the increase in rates in other economies, the RBI has no choice but to increase rates.

# Gas price review panel seeks more time to submit its report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government-appointed panel for reviewing the pricing of natural gas has sought more time to submit its report as it does a tightrope walk of striking a balance between the expectations of producers and consumers, sources said.

The panel headed by former planning commission member Kirit S Parikh was tasked to suggest a "fair price to the end-consumer" by the end of September.

Given the enormity of the task, the committee wanted 30 more days to finish the report but the Government wants it to wrap up the work by mid-October, two sources with knowledge of the matter said.

A decision on the exact duration of the extension will be taken next week after oil secretary Pankaj Jain returns from his overseas trip, they said.

Natural gas is a fossil energy source that formed deep beneath the earth's sur-



face. It is used to generate electricity, produce fertiliser, convert into CNG to run automobiles and piped to household kitchens for cooking and heating. It is also used in making glass, steel, cement, bricks, ceramics, tile, paper, food products, and many other commodities as heat sources.

Its prices remained docile till last year but have shot up in recent months, raising the cost of production of user industries in general and city gas operators that sell CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households, in particular.

To keep rates under check so that they do not add fire to already high inflation, the government formed the committee to review the way prices of gas produced in India are fixed.

# Wheat processors seek permission for imports under advance authorisation scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wheat processors have approached the government to seek permission for wheat import under the advance authorisation scheme, so that they can export value-added products, an official said.

An advance authorisation scheme allows duty-free import of inputs, which have to be mandatorily used in products that are required to be exported within a specified time. They are not allowed to sell the products in the domestic market.

"We have received the request from wheat processors. They are seeking policy change as at present there is a ban on wheat and its products' export. The ban also applies for goods imported under the advance authorisation scheme," a commerce ministry official said.

The directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT), under the ministry, would have to change the policy to meet their demand.

On May 13, India banned



wheat exports in a bid to check high prices amid concerns of wheat output being hit by a scorching heat wave.

In August, the government also prohibited exports of wheat flour, maida, semolina and wholemeal aata with a view to curb rising prices.

India's wheat exports stood at an all-time high of 7 million tonnes, valuing USD 2.05 billion, in 2021-22 fiscal on better demand for Indian wheat from overseas. Of the total wheat exports, around 50 per cent of shipments were exported to Bangladesh in the last fiscal.

Russia and Ukraine are

the major exporters of wheat, accounting for around one-fourth of the global wheat trade. The war between the two countries has led to global wheat supply chain disruptions, thus increasing the demand for Indian wheat.

Wheat flour exports from India have registered a growth of 200 per cent during April-July 2022 compared to the corresponding period in 2021.

As per the government estimates, wheat production is estimated to have declined to 106.84 million tonnes in the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) against 109.59 million tonnes in the previous year.

# Gold, silver prices fall by ₹195

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price fell by ₹195 to ₹49,580 per 10 gram in the national capital on Tuesday amid appreciation in the rupee, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹49,775 per 10 gram.

Silver also declined by ₹195 to ₹56,155 per kg from ₹56,350 per kg in the previous trade. The rupee settled 9 paise higher at 81.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday as the American currency retreated from its elevated levels.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,637 per ounce, while silver was flat at USD 18.69 per ounce. "In the physical market, gold demand has been seen from jewellery on expectation of better seasonal demand. However, the higher bond yields and a stronger dollar have been weighing on precious metals," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### JET AIRWAYS IN ADVANCED TALKS FOR LEASING PLANES; EXPECTS TO START OPS IN COMING WEEKS

Mumbai/New Delhi: Jet Airways is in an advanced stage of talks with aircraft makers and lessors to lease planes and expects to restart operations in the coming weeks, according to executives at the airline.



The once-storied carrier is now under the ownership of the Jalan-Kalrock consortium and its air operator certificate was revalidated by aviation regulator DGCA in May this year. The executives said the operations of Jet Airways will commence before the end of this year and the initial fleet plan is close to being finalised. Earlier, the airline had said it was targeting to launch operations in October.

### E-COM FIRMS SELL ₹24,500 CR GOODS IN FIRST FOUR DAYS OF FESTIVE SEASON SALES: REPORT

Mumbai: E-commerce firms have sold goods worth ₹24,500 crore (USD 3.5-billion) in the first four days of the festive season sales, a report said on Tuesday. According to the report by strategy consultancy firm Redseer, during this period each minute as many as 1,100 mobile phones amounting to around ₹11,000 crore were sold on large e-commerce platforms, driven by the premium phones. Besides, fashion saw a 4.5x jump in terms of Daily Average GMV (gross merchandise value) compared to business-as-usual (BAU) days to reach ₹5,500 crore in the first four days, it added.

# Rupee rises 9 paise to close at 81.58 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled 9 paise higher at 81.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday as the American currency retreated from its elevated levels.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 81.45 against the greenback. It witnessed an intra-day high of 81.30 and a low of 81.64 during the session.

It finally ended at 81.58, up 9 paise from its previous close.

This is the first gain after four consequent sessions of losses for the rupee, during which it lost 193 paise against the American dollar.

On Monday, the rupee plunged 58 paise to close at an all-time low of 81.67 against the dollar.

"Rupee consolidated in a narrow range after falling to fresh lows in Monday's session. There are some reports sug-



gesting that India's inclusion into the key government bond index could get pushed back to next year," Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said.

On the domestic front, the focus will be on the RBI policy statement due on Friday.

"Expectation is that the central bank could raise rates by 50 bps and maintain a hawkish stance. The pound plunged further after the Finance Minister sent the currency and its government bonds into freefall," Somaiya said. The focus will be on the durable goods and consumer confidence numbers that will be released from the US.

# India has fairly large forex reserve to deal with current situation: Economic affairs secretary

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth on Tuesday dismissed the concerns over depletion of forex reserve as "overblown" and said India has fairly large reserve to tide over the current situation.

Foreign exchange reserves were down for a seventh continuous week, dropping to USD 545.65 billion on September 16. The reserves, which have been dipping as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the currency amid a pressure caused majorly by global developments, had declined by USD 2.23 billion to USD 550.87 billion in the previous week.



"There has been a depletion as inflows have come down and trade deficit is higher...I don't see this as a concern, India has fairly large reserves to tide over this situation," Seth said.

After hitting a record low at 81.67 against dollar on Monday, the rupee recovered on Tuesday and closed at 81.58 against the greenback.

Finance minister Nirmala

Sitharaman on Monday had said "due to the strength of our microeconomic fundamentals, rupee is holding out well. The rate of fall of other currencies vis-à-vis against the US dollar has been sharply much more than the Indian rupee."

Speaking at CNN-News18's Townhall, she had said Indian currency is far better than many other currencies which have fallen far pathetically against the dollar.

"Now what is our strategy? The interventions, if at all, the RBI makes using the Indian reserves, which I think (USD) 75 billion has been used, essentially to stop fluctuations, the severe volatilities.

# Adani to invest \$100 bn across new energy, data centres

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Group will invest USD 100 billion over the next decade, primarily in new energy and digital space that includes data centres, Chairman Gautam Adani said on Tuesday, as the group bets big on India growth story.

As much as 70 per cent of this investment will be in the energy transition space, Adani, the world's second-richest person, said as he continued to reveal bit by bit the group's new energy plans.

The ports-to-energy conglomerate will add 45 gigawatts of hybrid renewable power generation capacity and build



3 Giga factories to manufacture solar panels, wind turbines and hydrogen electrolyser.

"As a Group, we will invest over USD 100 billion of capital in the next decade. We have earmarked 70 per cent of this

investment for the energy transition space," Adani, founder and chairman of Adani Group, said at the Forbes Global CEO conference in Singapore.

Starting off with a modest commodities business in 1988, the 60-year-old tycoon surpassed Jeff Bezos of Amazon, French business magnate Bernard Arnault and American businessman Bill Gates to become the world's second-wealthiest person with a fortune of USD 143 billion.

With interests spanning sea ports, airports, green energy, cement and data centres, the combined market capitalisation of the group's listed companies is USD 260 billion.

# Debt cost begins to pinch States again with 9 bps spike in last auction

PTI ■ MUMBAI

After falling for six weeks on the trot, the cost of borrowings for the States rose for the second week with the latest auction on Tuesday, when their average cost of debt rose by 9 bps to 7.65 per cent.

At the last auction, the average cut-off rose by 10 bps to 7.56 per cent, which was the first spike in the past six weeks.

The spike in average cost reflects the overall interest

tightening taking place in the system after the US Fed went ahead with its third 75 bps hike last week and said it will deliver at least two more to fight inflation, which is trending at over 40 years high.

The weighted average cut-off of state debt rose by 9 bps to 7.65 per cent from 7.56 per cent in the last auction, with the weighted average tenor remaining stable at 15 years. On the other hand, the 10-year Ge-Secs yield inched up by 3 bps

to 7.29 per cent, Aditi Nayar, the chief economist at Icrs Ratings said in a note.

The weighted average debt-off for the 10-year state debt increased by 12 bps to 7.67 per cent. Accordingly, the spread between the two widened to 38 bps from 29 bps. Fourteen states raised ₹27,800 crore in the last auction of the second quarter, taking the cumulative issuance to ₹2.8 lakh crore by 23 states during H1, which is 11 per cent lower than the year-

ago level and 31 per cent lower than the indicated amount of ₹4 lakh crore, as per the Icrs note. The states are borrowing less from the market as they got much more in tax devolution at ₹1.2 lakh crore in August from ₹58,300 crore in July.

While Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana did not participate in the latest auction, Andhra, Goa, Haryana, Kerala and Rajasthan borrowed ₹2,700 crore less than indicated.

# Battery makers get more time for safety norms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has deferred the implementation of additional provisions in the battery safety standards, which were to begin from October 1, to give manufacturers more time to comply with new norms, according to an official statement.

The statement said now additional provisions in the battery safety standards will be implemented in two phases --

first phase from December 1, 2022 and second phase from March 31, 2023.

Concerned over cases of fire incidents observed in electric two-wheelers, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) on September 1 introduced additional safety provisions in the battery safety standards, which were to come into effect from October 1.

The amendments include additional safety requirements

related to battery cells, on-board charger, design of battery pack, and thermal propagation due to internal cell short-circuit leading to fire.

"To strengthen the safety parameters for the testing of the batteries used in electric vehicles, Amendment-2, which was effective from 1st October 2022, was issued to both the Automotive Industry Standards (AIS)-156 and AIS-038.

"For the OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) to

be better equipped to comply/implement the provisions prescribed under the standards AIS-156 and AIS 038, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has decided to implement the Amendment 3 of the said AIS in two phases," the MoRTH said in a statement.

In April this year, cases of electric two-wheelers of manufacturers such as Ola Electric, Okinawa Autotech and PureEV catching fire were reported.

# England-Germany play 6-goal thriller

AP ■ LONDON

England will head to the World Cup on a six-game winless run, but eased some of the pressure on manager Gareth Southgate by fighting back from 2-0 down to salvage a 3-3 draw against Germany on Monday.

The Three Lions had already been relegated from the top tier of the Nations League and the knives were out for Southgate after his faith in Harry Maguire backfired for two German goals early in the second half.

Maguire has been publicly backed by the England boss despite being dropped at club level by Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag.

Ilkay Gundogan slotted home the opener from the penalty spot after Maguire had gifted possession to Jamal Musiala and then chipped down the Bayern Munich midfielder.

Kai Havertz then curled brilliantly into the top corner after Maguire was dispossessed in the German half.

England had failed to score from open play in any of their opening five games in Group A3.

But two goals in three minutes completely changed the atmosphere around Wembley and the scrutiny on Southgate's position heading to Qatar.

Luke Shaw was also restored to the starting line-up despite his lack of game time at Manchester United and started the fightback by volleying in at the back post.

Moments later, two of Southgate's substitutes combined to deadly effect as Bukayo Saka set up Mason Mount to curl home.

Harry Kane looked to have completed the turnaround from the penalty spot seven minutes from time after Nico Schlotterbeck's challenge on Jude Bellingham was punished following a VAR review.

Yet, there was more drama to come as



Nick Pope spilled Serge Gnabry's shot and Havertz pounced on the rebound to snatch Germany a point.

## ENG IN 'GOOD PLACE'

England captain Harry Kane said the Three Lions are in a good place heading into

the World Cup after a 3-3 draw with Germany.

"The mentality and fight of the team was shown out there today," said Kane, who moved to within two goals of matching Wayne Rooney's record of 53 goals for England.

"We didn't get the win but we can be proud of what we did and it puts us in a good place ahead of the World Cup."

England had not scored a goal from open play in their opening five games in Group A3, but Kane is confident they will respond to the heightened pressure of a

## Italy secure Nations League SF spot

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Italy, who will miss a second consecutive World Cup, again found consolation in Europe as they won 2-0 in Budapest on Monday to edge Hungary for first place in their Nations League group.

Giacomo Raspadori, who scored the winner against England on Friday, poked the ball home after Wilfried Gnonto had pounced on a poor Hungarian back pass to give Italy the lead in the 27th minute.

"We needed these matches to restore enthusiasm, even if the World Cup remains an open wound and we can not go back," said Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

"We have to start again, we have to do it for all of Italy."

Hungary, who started the final round of games top of Group A3, fought hard but Donnarumma made two miraculous saves in quick succession in the 50th minute from Loic Nego and Adam Szalai.

Two minutes later, Federico Dimarco met a Bryan Cristante cross at the back post to smash in his first international goal and Italy's 1,500th.

Donnarumma produced another outstanding to keep out a header from Callum Styles (55th).



Italy held on to follow the Netherlands and Croatia into the Nations League final four scheduled for June 2023.

"We were excellent for 70 minutes, the last 20 I didn't like too much," said Italy coach Roberto Mancini.

"We're happy, it's important to have reached the Nations League final four for the second time."

Spain or Portugal meet on Tuesday to decide the last ticket for a chance to succeed France as champion.

Italy, who fell to a low point in March, less than a year after their Euro 2020 title, when they failed to qualify for the World Cup, have another European final tournament to look forward to.

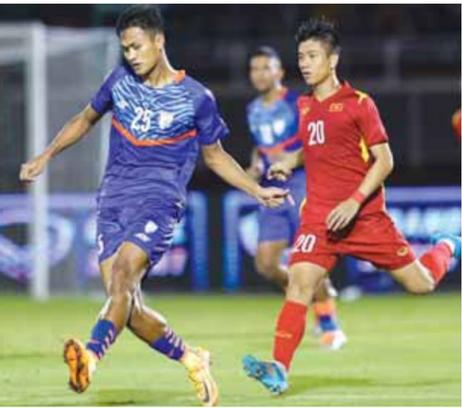
major tournament in two months' time.

"Major football tournament is different to any other football you play for England. The pressure is high and the concentration has to be high and I feel like we respond well to that," he added.

"We've upped our game as we've gone

along in the last two major tournaments.

"We dust ourselves down, we know we have to improve but there isn't that much time now with England before that first game. We'll go away with our clubs and hopefully everyone goes away fit, strong and is ready to come back in November."



## India suffer 0-3 defeat to Vietnam

PTI ■ HO CHI MINH CITY

India suffered a 0-3 thrashing at the hands of a higher-ranked Vietnam in the second and final match of the Hung Thinh Friendly Football Tournament here on Tuesday.

It was a reality check for the 104th ranked Indians after three convincing wins in June in the Asian Cup qualifiers and a 1-1 draw against Singapore in this tournament on Saturday as they were literally outplayed by the 97th ranked Vietnam in the second half.

Phan Van Duc (10th), Nguyen Van Toan (49th) and Nguyen Van Quyet (70th) scored for Vietnam to no reply from the Indians whose defenders had a mediocre outing, especially in the second half.

The Indians, however, were on equal terms with their opponents in the first half only to be blown away in the second

session.

Vietnam won the tournament with two wins from as many matches. They had also thrashed Singapore 4-0 in their opening match.

India and Vietnam had played many a memorable matches in the past, one among them being the 2002 LG Cup final which India triumphed 3-1 having come back from behind to win the trophy.

India and Vietnam last met in 2010 in an international friendly in Pune with the Blue Tigers running out 3-1 winners with Chhetri scoring a hat-trick.

But since then, Vietnam football has been on the ascendency and they have been able to compete with the top teams of the continent. Earlier this year, they reached the final round of the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and also made it to the last eight stage of the 2019 Asian Cup.

During the international

## Son's header lifts South Korea past Cameroon

SEOUL: Son Heung-min scored for the second straight match on Tuesday to lead South Korea to a 1-0 victory over Cameroon in their latest World Cup tune-up.

The star striker headed the ball home after an initial shot from Kim Jin-su was deflected by goalkeeper Andre Onana in the 35th minute, and South Korea then hung on for the win in front of 59,000 fans at Seoul World Cup

Stadium.

On Friday Son had netted a free kick in a 2-2 draw against Costa Rica.

South Korea and Cameroon, who are both Qatar-bound for the World Cup, had few serious chances at goal prior to Son's header.

Lee Jae-sung's diving attempt in the fifth minute forced a tough save from Onana, while Cameroon's Moumi Ngamaleu fired a right-footed shot over



the net in the 26th.

Cameroon nearly levelled the score in the 43rd minute when Bryan Mbeumo's effort ricocheted off the body of defender Kwon Kyung-won and struck the crossbar.

South Korea had a chance to double their lead two minutes into the second half but Jeong Woo-yeong's header sailed over the net.

The Cameroonians' push for an

equaliser proved futile, with Olivier Ntcham sending his left-footed shot right of the net in the 51st minute.

Goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu helped the Koreans keep Cameroon at bay, proving up to the task when Martin Hongla tested him with a right-footed shot in the 70th. Son came close to grabbing a brace with an 87th-minute free kick but the shot landed on top of the goal netting.

## Bellerin calf issue adds to Barca injury worries



AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona's injury problems worsened after defender Hector Bellerin suffered a calf problem in training on Tuesday.

The club said in a statement they would examine the injury on Wednesday, with Bellerin potentially joining several other players on the sidelines.

During the international

## Allan leaves Everton for Al Wahda

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Brazil midfielder Allan left Everton to join Abu Dhabi-based side Al Wahda for an undisclosed fee on Tuesday.

Allan was allowed to move to the United Arab Emirates Pro League club after falling out of favour with Everton boss Frank Lampard.

The 31-year-old did not play a single minute for the Premier League team this season.

Lampard signed Idrissa

Gueye and Amadou Onana in the close season to fill Everton's central midfield roles.

Allan signed for Everton from Napoli in 2020 and played 57 games in his first two seasons with the Toffees.

He was able to leave Everton outside the Premier League transfer window as the UAE deadline is not until next week.

"Everton thanks Allan for his service and wishes him all the best for the future," the club in a statement.

break Barcelona have lost Ronald Araujo, Jules Kounde, Memphis Depay and Frenkie de Jong with thigh and hamstring injuries.

Uruguayan defender Araujo faces the longest absence after deciding to undergo surgery on a torn thigh muscle on Wednesday. He is poised to miss the World Cup and could be out for up to three months.

Bellerin joined in the summer

from Arsenal on a one-year deal and is the only natural right-back at the club. If his injury causes him to miss Saturday's clash with Real Mallorca then Barca may be short of cover.

Injured duo Kounde and Araujo have both been used there often this season, while converted midfielder Sergi Roberto is also an option, but is not fully fit himself.

## Carlsen accuses Niemann of recent cheating

AP ■ NEW YORK

Chess superstar Magnus Carlsen for the first time openly accused American Hans Niemann of cheating on Monday, saying the rising star had done so more recently and more often than he previously admitted.

The chess world has been shaken for three weeks by the Carlsen-Niemann controversy, since the 31-year-old five-time world champion withdrew from the Sinquefeld Cup in the US after losing to Niemann, 19.

Last week, the Norwegian's abrupt withdrawal from a match against Niemann in the Julius Baer Generation Cup online tournament reignited the furore.

In a letter published on Twitter and addressed "Dear Chess World," Carlsen said: "I believe that Niemann has cheated more -- and more recently -- than he has publicly admitted."

"His over the board progress has been unusual."

He did not specify the exact form of the alleged cheating, but added there was "more than I would like to say".

Niemann has acknowledged cheating online twice, when he was 12 and 16, but says he has never played fraudulently in a face-to-face match and is even willing



to play nude to prove his good faith.

In early September, the huge chess platform chess.com banned the American for cheating on the site.

During their Sinquefeld Cup match, Niemann did not seem tense or even to be "fully concentrating on the game in critical positions, while outplaying me as a black in a way I think only a few players can do", Carlsen continued in his letter.

He called cheating in chess "an existential threat to the game" and said: "I don't want to play against people that have cheated repeatedly in the past."

## India to open campaign against Spain on Jan 13 in Hockey WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hosts India will take on lower-ranked Spain in the men's Hockey World Cup opener at the newly-built Birs Munda International Stadium in Rourkela on the opening day on January 13.

Tokyo Olympics Bronze medalists India, who are currently world No. 5 in the FIH rankings, are clubbed alongside England (6), Spain (8) and World Cup debutants Wales (16) in pool D.

India will play their second match in Rourkela, against on England on January 15, before moving to the capital city of Bhubaneswar, where they will face Wales in their final group match on January 19.

Pool A is headed up by world number one Australia,



who got the bronze medal at the last World Cup in 2018. They were drawn along with 2016 Olympic champions Argentina, France and African champions South Africa.

Reigning world champions

Belgium are the top seed and they were drawn in Pool B along with 2006 winners Germany, Korea and Japan.

Pool C will feature last

edition finalists the Netherlands, ranked third in the world, along with Oceania representative New Zealand, Malaysia -- playing their ninth World Cup -- and debutants Chile.

As per the fixtures released by FIH on Tuesday, 2016 Olympic champions Argentina will take on South Africa, while world No. 1 Australia face France on the same day at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

While India's game starts at 7pm IST, the tournament will start in Rourkela with England taking on Wales in the first game.

Reigning champions and world No. 2 Belgium, who won the title in the 2018 in Odisha, will take on South Korea in Bhubaneswar.

## PKL is helping Kabaddi reach new heights in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pro Kabaddi, which began in 2014 as a televised professional sporting event that requires the skills of a footballer, rugby player, wrestler, and athletics will be having its 9th edition from October 7 when 12 teams will be vying for the podium finish.

Kabaddi is witnessing an increased footprint in terms of viewership as well as geographical spread. In fact, its short duration (40 minutes) lends its ability to become a popular sport, and since it is a physical contact sport with all the elements of drama and human emotions in full flow, it has successfully captivated masses particularly youth not just in India but globally too.

The fan base of this game has been growing in the country and abroad giving its hitherto unknown players a stardom and money to boot.

The progress of Kabaddi from a game that communities played as a means of exercise, and entertainment to a pro-

fessional level money-spinner for the players, coaches and administrators connected with sports can be ascribed to the marketing genius of current day sports management professionals and their ability to propel this game as an exciting and thrilling audience engagement -- live on the spot and on television medium.

Helping the sport reach out to the stars -- literally too, Coaches and Kabaddi players have achieved super stardom with following of their own. When it comes to star players, leading the pack is the popular team Patna Pirates that has won three thumping finals and featured in playoffs (level where teams next destination is to play semis) of all seasons in the league.

The team recently announced Neeraj Kumar, one of the most versatile kabaddi players in the current generation and an army man as skipper of Patna Pirates. Many players from Patna Pirates have become household names, and as a matter of fact that most players come from small towns of India. Ravi Shetty will be the coach.

## BWF Rankings: Prannoy returns to top 15, Lakshya remains at 9th

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy returned to the top 15 after a string of impressive performances in the latest BWF World Rankings released on Tuesday.

Prannoy, who reached back-to-back quarter-finals at the World Championships and Japan Open Super 750, jumped a spot to 15th. Young Lakshya Sen continued to be the top-ranked Indian at the ninth position in the men's rankings, while Kidambi Srikanth rose a rung to 11th.

Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu, who had skipped the World Championships and Japan Open due to an injury, remained static on sixth in the women's list.

London Olympics Bronze medalist Saina Nehwal, on the other hand, moved one place to 31st.

The men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who claimed their maiden Gold at the Commonwealth Games and a first-ever Bronze at World Championships, remained static at the eighth spot.

# INDIA'S DEATH BOWLING IN FOCUS VS SA

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

India will be looking to round off their T20 World Cup preparation with a marked improvement in their death bowling besides providing crucial game time to its untested players in the three-match series against South Africa, beginning here on Wednesday.

India skipper Rohit Sharma, expectedly, singled out death bowling as an area that requires improvement following the series win over Australia.

The hosts will be without two of their key bowlers, Harshad Patel and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who have been rested ahead of the ICC event next month.

Mohammad Shami, who is one of the World Cup reserves, is yet to recover from COVID-19 and will be missing the three games against the Proteas after being unavailable the rubber against Australia.

Harshad Patel did not have the best of times in his comeback series against Australia but he will be expected to get back to his best in the final three games before the World Cup.

His career economy rate stands at 9.05 but he conceded more than 12 runs per over against the Aussies.

Deepak Chahar, who is also on standby for the World Cup, did not get a game in the previous series and he could get a chance if the team decides to rotate its pacers over the three games.

Arshdeep Singh will return to bolster the team's resources in the slog overs, making an effective combination along-



India vs South Africa  
Live from 7:00pm IST  
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

side Jasprit Bumrah, who will aim to regain his full rhythm after coming back from injury.

In the series decider against Australia, Yuzvendra Chahal showed what he can do if the ball is gripping and turning after looking flat in the first two games. Keeping the Australian conditions in mind, the wily leg-spinner will be looking to up his game on docile pitches.

As Rohit spoke about the importance of giving all the players game time ahead of the World Cup, R Ashwin could get a look in.

In the batting department, K L Rahul would like to make the most of these three games after missing out in the last two games against Australia.

With Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are looking in good touch, it is important that Rahul too is in full flow before the team travels to Australia.

Dinesh Karthik got to play all of eight balls against Australia and Rohit has already said the designated finisher in the squad needs more time in the middle.

World Cup bound Deepak Hooda will end up missing all

the six games before the mega event as he has been ruled out of the South Africa T20s with a back injury. Shreyas Iyer is expected to take Hooda's place in the squad.

Over the next week, India will be competing against a team they are yet to beat at home in a bilateral series. South Africa and India will face each other in a group game in Australia and though conditions are totally different here, both teams can pick out areas to target in the coming three games.

"The pitches in Australia will be different and ground size will be a lot bigger, but as a bowler there is always something you can work on. It is a great opportunity to be bowling at these Indian batters and pick up on a few things and use against them in the World Cup," said Tabraiz Shamsi.

All eyes will also be on the young Tristian Stubbs who has made the World Cup squad on the back of his good show in franchise cricket.

**SQUADS**  
South Africa: Temba Bavuma (captain), Quinton de Kock,

Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Wayne Parnell, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Rilee Rossouw, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs.

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), KL Rahul, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Dinesh Karthik (wicket-keeper), R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Harshad Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah.



## Failed to defend targets because of dew: Rathour

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Defending targets in T20Is has been a grey area for the Indian team but batting coach Vikram Rathour surprisingly cited "dew" being a factor which was not the case when the team played in the recently concluded Asia Cup.

Since the Super 4s of the Asia Cup, India have played six T20Is and won three of them while losing three.

However, all the three defeats -- against Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Australia -- have come while defending targets.

Contrary to Rathour's claims, none of the Indian team members, who spoke to the media after the defeats against Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Dubai, blamed it on the dew factor making defending difficult.

"We are working on that area of getting better at defending targets. But to be fair to our bowlers, toss plays a vital role and every time we have not been able to defend are the places where there has been dew, so it gets easier to chase," Rathour said on the eve of the first T20I against South Africa here on Wednesday.

While Rathour might have referred to the match against Australia at Mohali where India couldn't protect a 200-plus target, he was sympathetic to the bowlers despite the kind of criticism they have faced of late.

"I won't be harsh on bowlers as they have been able to push the match till last over, every time, when we are looking to defend. It's one ball here and there but of course we are doing pretty well but hopefully we will get better," the former India Test opener said.

The batting coach also didn't agree that India aren't putting big enough targets when asked to bat first.

Asked if the batters in the middle decide on a possible target, the coach replied, "Definitely, it depends on the surface that we are playing on but when you say we haven't been able to put up good scores, I don't agree with that."

"I think batting first that was one of the concerns during

the last T20 World Cup but since then, we have been putting up par or par plus scores every time that we have batted first. So I don't think that's an issue."

### BOWLERS KNOW THEIR PLANS

The batting coach also said that the team management never try to coach people who are playing international cricket but rather encourages them to back their strengths.

Someone like Arshdeep Singh is always told to follow his own plans.

"At this level, we are not telling them anything. Arsh (Arshdeep Singh) has done extremely well in IPL in death overs, so we just support them to follow plans. They know where to bowl to each batter and follow their plans," he said.

"We expect them (bowling unit) to back their strengths. There are no specific areas I want Arshdeep to improve and he has the composure to handle pressure in difficult conditions."

### SHIFT IN BATTING PHILOSOPHY

The Indian top three of KL Rahul, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli had topped a lot of flak for their outdated approach in the T20Is but Rathour is happy with the shift in mindset since the last ICC tournament.

"There is a very visible shift in the way we are batting. The approach has changed we are trying to be more aggressive, we are playing with better strike rates and more intent, that is pretty evident. As a batting unit, we have done well."

### CHALLENGE

While giving optimum game time to the first team starters in the T20 World Cup is a priority, the other challenge will be to adapt to the Australian conditions.

"Adapting to Australian conditions will be the biggest challenge that we have. We want to give as much opportunities as possible to those playing in the World Cup but how that will happen depends on game situation."

## Nepal seeks Interpol's help to find fugitive cricket star

KATHMANDU: Nepali police have sought help from Interpol to locate the country's fugitive suspended national cricket captain, they said on Tuesday.

A Nepali court issued an arrest warrant for Sandeep Lamichhane earlier this month following an allegation of rape by a 17-year-old girl.

But the leg-spinner is thought to have remained in the Caribbean where he was playing in a tournament.

Interpol issued a "diffusion" notice against him on Sunday asking member countries for their co-operation locating him, Nepali police spokesperson Tek Prasad Rai said.

"We hope this will help the arrest of Lamichhane for the investigation of a rape complaint case against him," he said.

Lamichhane had pledged on social media on Sunday to return home "as soon as possible" to fight the accusation.

Without revealing his whereabouts, the 22-year-old posted on Facebook that he was in "isolation" due to his mental and physical condition, saying the arrest warrant had "made me mentally disturbed".

Lamichhane had been a poster boy for the rise of cricket in mountainous Nepal, which gained ODI status in 2018.

His big break came when he was snapped up by the Delhi Capitals for the money-spinning Indian Premier League in 2018, and he has since been Nepal's most sought-after cricketer.

After the arrest warrant was issued he was suspended as captain of the national team and he pulled out of the CPL, where he was playing for the Jamaica Tallawahs.

## Facing new ball quite a challenge in India: Bavuma

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

South Africa captain Temba Bavuma feels facing the swinging ball in the powerplay will be one of the main challenges for his team in the three-match T20 series against India, beginning here on Wednesday.

India relied on their batting might to bounce back from being 0-1 down to post a 2-1 win in the recently-concluded three-T20 series against Australia.

The focus will now shift to an identical match-up against the Proteas, the final dress rehearsal for both the teams before the T20 World Cup in Australia next month.

"Facing the new ball bowlers (in India) is quite challenging, they make the ball to swing and move in quite a bit, a bit more than what we are accustomed to in South Africa. That's obviously a challenge you have to manoeuvre around," the South African white-ball skipper said.

The chinks in India's pace

bowling armour were badly exposed in the three-match T20s against Australia.

In the series decider in Hyderabad on Sunday, the two seasoned pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar together conceded 79 runs from seven overs, with the latter claiming one wicket.

Harshad Patel, who is considered a death over specialist, also was a big letdown and the South African skipper knows what it takes to succeed in India.

"The key is to limit the damage and not allow the wickets to fall and try and get the momentum going. But yeah, Bhuvni and Bumrah they always challenge you with the new ball up front," he added.

Bhuvneshwar, by the way, is rested for the series ahead of the World Cup as the pace workload will be shared among Bumrah, Umesh Yadav, Patel and Arshdeep Singh.

India's batting looks in safe hands with Virat Kohli's return



to form and Rohit Sharma leading from the front.

"Obviously, those — Rohit and Virat — are big names with big pedigree behind them, and obviously as you saw in their last while their performances have boosted the confidence of the team.

"We expect to come leading from the front, and good for us to come up against the best. You expect those guys to bring a lot of confidence and X-factor into the team," the South African skipper said.

That said, Bavuma will have an 'unfinished business' as their last series — a five-match T20I rubber — ended in a 2-2 result after rain washed out the decider in Bengaluru.

"The last time we were here we were tested, we were challenged, but I think we answered it quite well. We expect this to be a good series, a competitive one as well. This is the last series before the World Cup, we will be looking to fill up the gaps whatever they are," he added.

## Harman moves up to fifth in ICC rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Riding on her stupendous show against England, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Tuesday jumped four spots to reach the fifth spot in the ICC Women's ODI Player Rankings.

She leads a bunch of India players who have made rapid gains in the rankings after the team's 3-0 sweep over England.

Kaur smashed a match-winning 143 not out off 111 deliveries in the second match in Canterbury.

Opener Smriti Mandhana and Deepti Sharma have also moved up in the latest update that considers performances in the last two matches of that series as well as the IWC series between the West Indies and New Zealand.

Mandhana, a formerly top-ranked batter who scored 40 and 50 in the two



matches, has moved up one place to sixth position while Sharma's unbeaten 68 not out in the third match at Lord's has lifted her eight places to 24th position.

Pooja Vastrakar (up four places to 49th) and Harleen Deol (up 46 places to

81st) are other India players to move up the batters' list while new-ball bowler Renuka Singh has galloped 35 places to take 35th position after grabbing four wickets each in the two matches.

Fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, a formerly top-ranked bowler, retired in fifth position.

England's Danny Wyatt, who scored 65 in the second match, has gained two slots to reach 21st position among batters while Amy Jones is up four places to 30th. Charlie Dean has progressed 24 places to get to 62nd among batters and one slot to 19th among bowlers.

West Indies captain Hayley Matthews has grabbed the No. 1 position for all-rounders in the ODI format for the first time in her career after aggregating 88 runs and grabbing five wickets in a 2-1 series win over New Zealand.

## India 'A' crush NZ 'A' by 106 runs in 3rd ODI to sweep series 3-0

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Shardul Thakur's blazing 33-ball 51 was well complemented by debutant Raj Angad Bawa's fine bowling show (4/11) as India 'A' crushed New Zealand 'A' by 106 runs in the third and final unofficial ODI to clinch the series 3-0 here on Tuesday.

Captain Sanju Samson (54 off 68 balls) and Tilak Varma (50 off 62 balls) also scored half-centuries after India opted to bat but it was Thakur's blitzkrieg down the order that took the home side to 284 all out in 49.3 overs.

Thakur struck four boundaries and three sixes during his 33-ball entertaining knock.

Chasing 285 for a victory, the visitors were bowled out for 178 in 38.3 overs despite getting a good start from the openers Chad Bowes (20) and Dane Cleaver (83 off 89 balls).

The 19-year old Bawa, who shone in the ICC Under-19 World Cup earlier this year, ran through the middle and lower order of New Zealand 'A' batting line-up with a four wicket haul.

The young all-rounder picked up three of the last four NZ 'A' wickets to fall for fine figures of 4 for 11 to finish as the best Indian bowler.

Earlier, Abhimanyu Easwaran (39 off 35 balls), brought into the playing XI in place of Prithvi Shaw, and Rahul Tripathi got off to a brisk start. The duo added 55 runs in



8.5 overs.

Samson, who came in at No.3, saw Tripathi (18) fall with the score at 65. The captain joined forces with the talented Tilak Varma to put together an impressive stand.

The two scored briskly and added 99 runs in 106 balls, with neither hesitating to go aerial. Varma fell to the left-arm spin of Rachin Ravindra for an impressive 50.

K S Bharat, playing his first game of the three-match series, did not last long, dismissed by Fisher for 9.

Samson looked good for a big score before falling LBW to medium-pacer Jacob Duffy for a 68-ball 54 (1 four, 2 sixes). Bawa fell to the same bowler for 5 and India 'A' slipped to 206 for 6.

Thakur, who batted with aplomb in the second match, came up with a blazing 33-ball 51 and his furious assault left the NZ 'A' bowlers clueless. His aggressive knock helped the host post a challenging total of 284.

For India, apart from Bawa, leg-spinner Rahul Chahar (2/39) and left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, grabbed two wickets including that of Robert O'Donnell (6).

Brief Scores: India 'A' 284 all out in 49.3 overs (Sanju Samson 54, Shardul Thakur 51, Tilak Varma 50, Michael Rippon 2/43, Jacob Duffy 2/45) beat New Zealand 'A' 178 all out in 38.3 overs (Dane Cleaver 83, Raj Angad Bawa 4/11, Kuldeep Yadav 2/29, Rahul Chahar 2/39).

## England 'offers' to be neutral venue for Indo-Pak Test series, BCCI 'not interested'

PTI ■ LONDON

England and Wales Cricket Board has informally offered to be the hosts if India and Pakistan plan to play a bilateral Test series but BCCI sources said chances of that happening in near future is "next to nil".

The UK daily 'Telegraph' reported that "Martin Darlow, the deputy chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, has held talks with the Pakistan Cricket Board during the current T20 series and offered England's grounds as venues for ideally a three-match Test series in future."

While the ECB has made the offer for its own commercial gains, the powers that be in the BCCI laughed off the



suggestions and said that no such possibilities might arise at least in next few years.

"Firstly, ECB spoke to PCB about an Indo-Pak series and that's a bit weird. In any case, a series against Pakistan is not something that the BCCI will decide but it is the decision of the government. As of now, the stance remains the same. We only play Pakistan at multi-team events," a senior BCCI official privy to India's position said on Tuesday.

India and Pakistan last played a short bilateral white-ball series back in 2012 in India and the last Test series dates back to 2007.

With the tense political relations between the neighbours, it is a big 'No' from BCCI irrespective of whether it is

played at home, away or a neutral venue.

The newspaper states precisely the reason why ECB made the "generous offer".

"The matches would attract big crowds in the UK, which has a large expat south Asian population," it said.

"The matches attract huge sponsorship revenue and television audiences." However, the paper made it clear that even "PCB is not keen on playing India at neutral venue but are grateful for the ECB's offer, which shows the growing relationship between the two boards."

It stated that with the big nations again starting to tour Pakistan, it will be a "retrograde step in their eyes" if they happen to play on a neutral venue.