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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

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.

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.

## 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 president 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.



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

## 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 in relation to one another.

## 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

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).

## 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.

## 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

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 Shreeyash Lalit — son of Chief Justice UU Lalit — as its senior counsel in the Supreme Court.

The latest order said the appointment of Shreeyash 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 Shreeyash, to represent its matters in the apex court. Along with Shreeyash, 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.

**COBBLER SET ABLAZE OVER MONEY DISPUTE**  
New Delhi: A 48-year-old cobbler has sustained severe burn injuries after two men allegedly set him ablaze over monetary dispute near New Delhi railway station.

**HC BARS CID FROM PROBING COAL SCAM**  
Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday barred the Bengal CID from investigating 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, retweets, comments, captions and taglines similar thereto against Lieutenant Governor within 48 hours. The HC held they were made "with-out factual verification, in order to tarnish the reputation" of the Lieutenant Governor.

## 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 Misra 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".

## 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.

# Ex-Rourkela Bar president Bal ends life

**PNS ■ ROURKELA**  
Ramesh Bal (64), former president of the Rourkela Bar Association and former Chairman of the Rourkela Municipality was found hanging at his residence at Daily Market here on Tuesday.  
The reason behind Bal taking the extreme step was yet to be ascertained.  
Bal was residing in his in-laws' house along with wife, sister-in-law (wife's elder sister) and mother-in-law and was suffering from kidney-related ailment.  
Besides, he was distressed due to his ill health and other



social reasons. It was suspected that is why he committed suicide. Plant Site police station IIC said that Bal has self-declared his suicide and there is no scope of provocation for ending his life.  
According to sources, Bal went to his bed room after having dinner on Monday

night. But he was found hanging from the ceiling fan of the room on Tuesday morning.  
Police have recovered the body for postmortem and initiated investigation to ascertain the circumstances under which he died. His cremation would be held after arrival of his sons, who are residing in Bengaluru and Mumbai, said family sources.  
On his demise of many prominent personalities, trade union, social organisations have expressed grief. Thousands of people rushed to his house to pay their last respects.

# N'rangpur: Fake godman held for raping minor

**PNS ■ NABARANGPUR**  
A resident of Jhatiapara village under Raigarh block in Nabarangpur district has been arrested by the Chhattisgarh police on the charge of raping a minor girl in Bishrampur in the neighbouring State. The accused was identified as Buduram Andakari.  
According to reports, Buduram posing himself as a spiritual healer had been treating villagers. Claiming that he was possessed by the

spirit of Lord Hanuman, he had been cheating people in his village as well as Chhattisgarh.  
On September 19, a family from Chhattisgarh had visited the self-styled godman at his village for treatment of their daughter, who was complaining of stomachache. They returned back on the same day after consulting Buduram.  
On September 22, he went to the girl's residence in Chhattisgarh and started some rituals to cure her. As directed by him, the family confined him along with the girl in a room. After he left the place, the victim revealed to her parents about being sexual assaulted by the godman.  
Later, based on the victim's family's complaint, a team of the Bishrampur police led by IIC Ravi Shankar nabbed Buduram from his village. A case has been registered under the POCSO Act for the crime and he was produced in court.

## INBRIEF

**AAP TO HOLD BLOOD DONATION DAY TODAY**  
Bhubaneswar: The Aam Aadmi Party will observe the Saheed Bhagat Singh birth anniversary on September 28 as Blood Donation Day throughout India. AAP Odisha spokesperson Ranga Charan Pradhan, Bhubaneswar Metropolitan convener Jayasuriya Kanungo and State general secretary Soumya Ranjan Swayam have given a call to the people of Odisha to celebrate the day and organise blood donation camps. A blood donation camp will be organised at the Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar.



**BBSR: E-SCOOTERS WORTH LAKHS DAMAGED IN FIRE**  
Bhubaneswar: A major fire broke out at an electric scooter service centre at Bomikhal here damaging vehicles worth lakhs on Monday night. Though the reason behind the mishap was yet to be ascertained, it was suspected that an electrical short circuit might have led to the outbreak of fire as a battery was put on charge inside the service centre. Locals initially spotted smoke billowing out of the service centre. Fire Service personnel rushed to the spot and doused the flames.



**CHAND MOST-ADMIRED INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL**  
Bhubaneswar: Former Nalco CMD Dr Tapan Chand received the award for the most-admired industry professional of the State at the inaugural News18 Odia "#Atma Nirbhar Odisha: Odisha Business Leadership Awards 2022" held here on Monday. Industries Minister Pratap Deb and News 18 Group editor Rajesh Raina conferred the award on him. Chand, who has worked in the steel, coal and aluminium sectors in private as well as public enterprises, was shortlisted for excellent management and CSR for betterment of the society.



**WEAVERS' MARKET OPENS IN JAJPUR VILLAGE**  
Jajpur: A special market for weavers of Gopalpur village, under Rasulpur block in Jajpur district was opened in the Balunkeshwar market on Sunday. The weavers will sell their garments in the market, which will remain open every Sunday. On the first day, over 40 weavers sold their clothes. There was a transaction of over Rs 9 lakh. More weavers will be included in the fold to sell their products in the coming days, said the organisers. Earlier, the weavers used to sell their products to the textile cooperatives in the village. Now, they can sell the products to any customer in open market.



**ROTARY AWARD FEST IN BRAHMAPUR ON SEPT 29**  
Brahmapur: The Rotary Club of Brahmapur Midtown will organise the "Nation Builder Award" ceremony to thank teachers and recognise their contributions to nation building at Dharmanager 3rd Lane on September 29. Apart from Rotarians, a large number of intellectuals, teachers and scribes would participate in the event, sources said.

**GIRL RESCUED IN BRAHMAPUR UNITED WITH PARENTS**  
Brahmapur: A three-year-old girl, who was wandering aimlessly in the old bus stand area here and rescued by the traffic police two days back, ultimately got united with her parents. The girl was identified as Ipsita. She was unable to speak her name and address correctly. When the message was widely circulated in the social media, the family members came to the traffic police and received their child here on Sunday.

**TRIRANGA SEVA FETED FOR BLOOD DONATION DRIVE**  
Brahmapur: The Triranga Seva Union, Hinjilicut was felicitated during the 5th Golden Field Festival and State Level Upliftment Festival organised at Brahmapur by "Bipada Ra Bandhu" and Odisha Sangathan. Triranga Seva was felicitated for its massive blood donation campaign in sensitizing people to donate blood for humanitarian services. Various organisations playing leading roles in the field of social services were also felicitated.

**NALCO DONATES PCR VAN TO GANJAM POLICE**  
Brahmapur: A team of Nalco officials handed over a PCR van bearing No.OD-02-CC-2409 to Superintendent of Police of Ganjam Brijesh Kumar Rai on behalf of the company as a part of their 'service to humanity' programme at Chhatrapur on Sunday. Rai appreciated the noble gesture.

**AHIMSA RATH WELCOMED IN PARADIP**  
Paradip: The Ahimsa Rath reached Paradip on Sunday. The chariot which is spreading the Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence. Paradip Municipality Chairman Basant Biswal and Councillors and ADM Dr Kanhu Charan Dhir welcomed the chariot. Audiovisuals on the Noncooperation Movement based on Ahimsa, adopted and practised by Mahatma Gandhi during the Indian struggle for freedom, were played back before the audiences. Cultural programmes were performed by schoolchildren. The chariot is travelling for 15 days across the State and will conclude its journey on Gandhi Jayanti on October 2.



**Home Guard attempts to rape widow**  
Flees as woman chases him with chopper  
**PNS ■ BALESWAR**  
A Home Guard allegedly attempted to rape a 44-year-old widow at the latter's house at Kaithagadia village under the Khaira police station in Baleswar district on Monday.  
The accused Purnachandra Das visited the woman's home on the pretext of correcting the widow pension form filled by her.  
Finding her alone, Das locked the door and tried to sexually assault her.  
As the victim raised an alarm, the accused threatened to strangle her.  
However, the woman managed to get hold of a chopper and chased the accused. Sensing trouble Das fled from the spot abandoning his shoes, uniform at the spot.  
The matter came to the fore after the victim lodged a complaint with the police. Based on her complaint, the Khaira police have registered a case and started an investigation.

# 'BJD Gopalpur in-charge has no role in kidnapping'

**Charges by BJP baseless: BJD**  
**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**  
Reacting to the allegations made by the Ganjam district BJP against the BJD that Gopalpur BJD in-charge is patronizing anti-socials, former BJD MLA and senior leader of the party Dr Ramesh Chandra Chyau Pattnaik told reporters that all the allegations are false and baseless.  
The BJD leader in charge of Gopalpur Assembly constituency to whom the BJP is unfortunately pointing a finger has absolutely no role with the alleged incident of kidnapping, he said.  
The BJD leader in charge of Gopalpur constituency is a fine gentleman with rich administrative and political experience having exceptionally good relation with the people of Gopalpur. The leader is also doing hard work and overseeing all the development works and people welfare schemes of the Gopalpur Assembly segment initiated by the BJD Government in public interest, said Chyau Pattnaik.  
The BJP perhaps is not able to tolerate the growth and popularity of the ruling BJD and its myriad people welfare schemes in the region, he added.

# 'A teacher is a motivator, mentor to students'



**ICSI holds conf on 'Empowering Educators'**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) Bhubaneswar Chapter organised a conference for school and college teachers on "Empowering Educators" at DDCE, Utkal University, on Tuesday.  
Chief guest Prof (Dr) Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, Vice-Chancellor, SOA University, said, "A teachers is a motivator, mentor, father, mother to the students." He should be a good human being, building character for the students, provides morality and human value and service to humanity.  
On the New Education Policy (NEP), he said the NEP is not quantity of education but quality of education and it should not be based on class-based orientation but should be quality, innovation and skill-based education.  
Prof (Dr) Yogesh Pratap Singh, Registrar, National Law University of Odisha, in his keynote address talked about "Performance Appraisal for Teachers". A teacher has to undergo 50 hours' various training programmes, workshop, he said and stressed upon the importance of legal education. Recognising the contribution of teachers, the NEP gives them autonomy and innovative teaching methods, he added.  
Guest of Honour Prof Krishna Chandra Rath, Director, DDCE, Utkal University, said teachers are role models for the students and a teacher should create a healthy learning culture in the schools and colleges.  
Prof (Dr) Samson Moharana, Professor and Dean, Birla School of Commerce, Birla Global University, emphasised on teachers' empowerment. He said that without students, there is no role for the teachers. Teaching is a passion. A teacher cannot go to the classes without proper preparation.  
The others who addressed the conference included Dr JK Sisugoswami, Principal, MBS Public School; CS Mayank Tiwari, Asst Professor of Law, NLUO; CS Prabhat Kumar Nayak, Past Chairman, ICSI Bhubaneswar Chapter.

# Missile tested successfully

**PNS ■ BALESWAR**  
The DRDO on Tuesday conducted two successful test flights of the Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) missile from a ground-based portable launcher at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, said an official release.  
VSHORADS is a Man Portable Air Defence System (MANPAD) designed and developed by the DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian industry partners.  
VSHORADS missile incorporates many novel technologies including miniaturised Reaction Control System (RCS) and integrated avionics, which have been successfully proven during the tests. The missile, meant for neutralising low altitude aerial threats at short ranges is propelled by a dual thrust solid motor.  
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the new missile would give further technological boost to the Armed Forces.

# Young Pratik gets Biz Leadership Award



**PNS ■ BALESWAR**  
Pratik Jena, a 23-year-old budding entrepreneur of Baleswar, received the State-Level Atmanirbhar Odisha, Business Leadership Award 2022 in the category of 'Best Young Entrepreneur of the Year' on Sunday in a function in Bhubaneswar.  
Jena received the award from Minister of Industries, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Energy Pratap Keshari Deb.  
Feeling encouraged with the award, Jena said, "We are contributing to the growth of foreign reserve of the country by exporting seafood of international standard. Our company, principally in a step towards empowering women, has engaged about 90 per cent women in its workforce. Further, we are involving farmers in the ecosystem for inclusive growth to make them financially-independent."  
Jena, managing director of Highland Agro, has created a niche for himself in the business of aquaculture and seafood processing and exports within a span of three years. He is son of former Baleswar MP RK Jena and working president State women wing of BJD Subasini Jena.  
Notably, Pratik Jena has completed BSc and Business Management from a school in London.

# Project Durga trains girls in self-defence

**Helpline launched for safety; career counselling given**  
**MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH**  
The Sundargarh police on Monday launched a new project of young girls 'Durga' coinciding the International Daughter's Day which was observed on Sunday and ahead of festive season, to train young girls in self-defence.  
With a slogan of "Shashakt Sundargarh and Surakshit Sundargarh", the project was inaugurated by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Western Range, Rourkela Niti Shekhar as chief guest.



A 24X7 dedicated "Naari Helpline" to be managed under the guidance of Sundargarh SP Nath will assist women in countering their plights such as eve-easing, harassment, stalking and cyber crimes etc. The helpline number would be very soon dispensed across all the schools, girls' hostels, colleges and other places under Sundargarh police, to lessen the density of crimes against women.  
Similarly, a special professional guidance session was conducted on Tuesday at 10.30 am where the girls could directly interact with career professionals and explored the opportunities.  
Olywood actress Archita Sahu, Sundargarh SP Sagarika Nath and ASP Surendra Majhi were present.  
Over 312 girl students from various educational institutions under Sundargarh police district were trained during the two-day programme.  
The project 'Durga', includes three activities like self-defence training, a Naari

# Spirit of Navaratri: Seeing divine presence in weaker sex



**UMA SHANKAR PRASAD**  
On a cold December night, many candles were lit. It was a lasting image of solidarity for a young girl. It brought to light a nation's resolve. But since then many nights have gone by with or without candles, with little or absolutely no solidarity.  
These nine nights of Navaratri, however, are all about light. The spirit of Navaratri says that nights can never exert their dark powers if days work hard enough to preserve their light. But to understand the magnanimity

of light, one has to be a little enlightened oneself; one has to have an open mind with absolute focus and a large heart with unwavering resolve. The mysteries of light and night are not for blabber mouths to understand. Solidarity and resolve require a bit of steel. And what better time to enlighten one to instill that most-most-required steel than now when our utmost reverence is at the feet of The Mother. In her presence, we may find it hard to contend ourselves with our half-hearted, half-baked and half-convicted realities.  
At her feet, a society darkened by unspeakable crimes can now confess. From 'divine to dirt', women in this nation live a topsy-turvy life. And, our larger Indian society is for so many decades now underlining an urgent need to improve the status of its women, to make cities and villages safe for them and to



empower them. All these things are magnanimously agreed upon. Many steps have been taken. Much has been achieved. For a young girl who was violated, brutalized and killed, the society has already taken up her cause and has condemned the incident in strongest possible manner. Every time a woman is violated, words stronger than winds defend her right to dignity. Every time a woman is assaulted, beaten up in the unlit corners of bedrooms or in very well-lit political party office, the society surely does condemn the sheer show of solidarity to the weaker sex before it looks the other way.  
And despite society's well-meaning gestures offered for so long now, the darkness does not dissipate. In fact, it is growing stronger and stronger! The light of the day demands that we shed some light within. The sharp pain in the heart when some called this nation where girls are raped cannot be just an affront on the ego but a thought-provoking rebuff that needs hard introspection. A survey suggests that rape happens every 16 minutes in India. So, is it a mere law and order problem? Can this happen without any social backing? Society will definitely not instigate rapes, but has it not been looking the other way for far too long?  
The Goddess has blessed this beautiful creation. To please Her, eulogies alone won't do. Let everyone of us know that high moral ground. Let this country awake to its darkness and open windows to the divine light of reasoning and action permeate deep enough so that everyone can see the divine powerful presence in the weaker sex.  
(The writer is a columnist and Editor, Margadarshi, Main Road, Khordha, Mobile No. 6370675562)

# CM exhorts to showcase C'garh's glorious culture

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Tuesday underlined the need to showcase the glorious culture, tradition and history of Chhattisgarh to the world.

Addressing the Tourism Conclave to mark World Tourism Day, he said: "Chhattisgarh was once known for Naxalism, minerals and underdevelopment. Tourism remained neglected for a long time. The entire focus was only on tackling the Naxalite menace.

"It created a sense of fear among tourists. Even families used to raise concern of safety on a Bastar visit and take a sigh of relief only after



Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel is blessed with splendid natural beauty and has immense tourism potential. It is one of the best destinations for travel aficionados. Efforts are on to make the state a first choice of travel enthusiasts", he said.

speaking about the uniqueness of the state's rich culture, he said its history begins with the Indian epic Ramayana.

There are archaeologically important sites where Nagajuna (Indian Mahayana Buddhist thinker and scholar-saint) had given his contributions (Sirpur), he said.

Tourism Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu spoke on the initiatives taken on the Ram Van Gaman tourism circuit.

He said special emphasis will be given on developing Gaurata -- the highest peak in the state -- as a popular tourist spot.

# CTB-IRCTC ink MoU to promote tourism



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Tourism Board (CTB) signed a MoU with the Indian Railway Catering and

Tourism Corp (IRCTC) on Tuesday to promote tourism in the state.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel was present as the papers were exchanged at the

Tourism Conclave here. IRCTC will promote the tourist places of the state through its social media platform to attract tourists from all over the country to Chhattisgarh.

# AIIMS-R official killed in road accident, 14 injured



STAFF REPORTER ■ JAGDALPUR

A 35-year-old nursing officer of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here was killed and 14 others

were injured on Tuesday when a bus they were in plunged into a culvert in Bastar district in Chhattisgarh. The incident took place when the 15 occupants,

including 13 nursing officers of AIIMS-R, were headed to a tourist destination in Jagdalpur, Bastar Senior Superintendent of Police Jitendra Meena said.

The driver lost control over the steering possibly because he fell asleep following which the bus initially hit a slab and then fell into a culvert near Bhanpuri village, Meena said. An Assistant Nursing Superintendent, Sumesh C, died on the spot. Fourteen others were injured.

The police admitted two nursing staffers at community health centre in Bhanpuri. Twelve others including the driver were shifted to the Jagdalpur Medical College for better treatment.

# Tree felling starts in Hasdeo Arand region amid protests

STAFF REPORTER ■ AMBIKAPUR

Amid protest by locals and green activists, the Chhattisgarh Forest Department on Tuesday started felling trees in Pendramar-Ghatbarra villages of Hasdeo Arand region in Surguja district.

The police were deployed to facilitate the tree felling. Fourteen people were detained for allegedly instigating locals to oppose the action, a police official told The Pioneer.



"The Forest Department started cutting trees in the Pendramar-Ghatbarra forest for the second phase of the Parsa East Kente Basin (PEKB) coal mine," Surguja Collector Kundan Kumar told the media.

"The felling was not for any new project but for an area where necessary clearances have already been given," he added.

In the wake of protests by tribals and backed by Chhattisgarh Minister and local MLA T.S. Singh Deo, the Surguja administration

had earlier issued instructions to halt the pre-mining work in the area where three coal mine projects allotted to the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd (RRVUNL) were to begin.

Singh Deo in June visited village Ghatbarra in Hasdeo Arand in support of the locals.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had declared the next day said if Singh Deo did not want trees to be cut down for coal mines, then not a single branch will be chopped.

# Chendru the 'Tiger Boy' is CTB memento

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Tuesday unveiled a statue of 'Chendru' and his tiger friend Tembu as the memento mascot of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board.

Baghel also released the 'Talking Comics' to connect children with tourism at Tourism Conclave organized to mark the World Tourism Day here.

Chendru and Tembu are depicted as tourism icons in the comic.

He also released a video



of the state song based on 'Kathak Bhava' and a coffee table book featuring tourist places in the state. The book

has information about all the tourist places of the state. It can be used as a tourist guide.

# Chendru and the Tiger

Chendru Mandavi, of primitive tribe Muria, hailed from Narayanpur district in Chhattisgarh. He had rescued a tiger cub (in 1959) and brought it home. He cared for the tiger (Tembu) till it was fully grown. He used to play with it like a toy.

Swedish film director Arne Sucksdorff made a 90-minute movie titled 'Jungle Saga' in 1960. It won an Oscar, making Chendru a celebrity. Astrid Bergman Sucksdorff, Arne's wife, later wrote a book titled 'Chendru: The Boy and the Tiger'. He died on September 18, 2013.



# C'garh govt cracks whip on substandard seeds, fertilizers

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has acted sternly against the sale of substandard seeds, fertilizers and pesticide. Show cause notices have been served to vendors selling items of poor quality.

The Agriculture Department is testing samples of chemical fertilizers, seeds and pesticides from the vendors.

A press communique said district-level officers are raiding suspects and



collecting samples of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides which are tested for quality control.

In the Kharif season, 99 samples of seeds and 109 samples of chemical fertilizers have been found substandard. Their sales have been banned with immediate

effect. The Agriculture Department has issued show cause notices to the concerned firms and summoned them.

The Additional Director, Agriculture (Fertilizer), S.C. Padam, said the target was to collect 5,000 samples of seeds, 3,000 samples of fertilizers and 500 samples of plant protection drugs.

Teams have collected 2,907 samples of seeds so far. Likewise, 1,946 samples of chemical fertilizers have been collected from various organizations.

# Chhattisgarh gets Centre's nod for pulse procurement

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh received approval from the Union Agriculture Ministry on Tuesday to procure moong, arhar and urad at minimum support price (MSP) in the Kharif marketing season 2022-23.

The procurement of moong and urad will be from October 17 to December 16. Arhar's procurement will be from March 13 to May 12, 2023, an official communication said.

The move aims to encourage farmers to grow pulses and promote the cultivation of pulses in the state.

The maximum estimated quantities to be procured in the Kharif season 2022-23 are moong (372 tonnes), urad (6,180 tonnes) and arhar (6,342 tonnes).

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel had sought approval for the procurement at MSP.

He had provided detailed information on pulse production, estimated quantity to be procured at support price and preparations being made for the purchase. Farmers will get Rs 6,600 per quintal for moong and urad and Rs 7,755 per quintal for arhar. The state government has given complete exemption from payment of Mandi fee and farmer welfare fee.

# Relaxing mind, deep sleep keeps one healthy: Experts

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Everyone must relax and enjoy regular sleep, leading neurosurgeon Dr. Daljit Singh said here.

He was speaking at a three-day annual conference of the Cerebrovascular Society of India Neurovascon-2022 at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here.

Eminent neurosurgeons at the conference agreed that a healthy mind and deep sleep of six to eight hours daily were a must.



"To keep our mind healthy, we should sleep well without failure. Deep sleep washes out much stress in

the mind and thus keeps everyone healthy and active," Singh said.

Dr. Singh gave newer insights into 'Brain Oedema' and explained new drugs and treatment protocols to consultants.

Another leading neurosurgeon, Dr. Anil Karapurkar, Senior Consultant at the Beach Candy Hospital, explained the journey of neurovascular interventions in India.

Dr. Karapurkar passed the success mantra to new surgeons. "Be confident but not proud, do your duty

without expecting any return, hope for the best, prepare for the worst, and love one, love all."

Prof. (Dr.) Nitin M. Nagarkar, Director, AIIMS Raipur, discussed the state-of-the-art healthcare facilities available with the neurosurgery department in the Institute.

The conference attracted around 250 delegates from across the country. Experts from the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Canada also took part through both online and offline modes.

**न्यायालय जिला दण्डाधिकारी रायपुर (छ.ग.)**  
**नोटिस :**  
 क्रमांक/240/स-121/स/2021-22/1230  
 रायपुर, दिनांक 12 सितम्बर 2022

प्रति, मेसर्स एच. एस. खिन्सा  
 ओ. आशा वाट्टू, पति रामधर वाट्टू  
 भवानी नगर, खैरपुरवाडी जिला - रायपुर

आपके प्राधिकृत अधिकारी बैंक ऑफ इंडिया सेक्युलर शाखा जिला रायपुर को ओ. एस. अरुण उल्लसकर रसिक अधिकांशता ने आदेशन पर/रायपुर पर मय दस्तावेज प्रस्तुत कर, आवेदन पर से आपके बैंक के 85,70,616.00 रुपये का कर्ज दिया था, और आपके स्वामित्व की अचल संपत्ति बैंक के पक्ष में बंधक रखी गयी थी। आपके द्वारा कर्ज की अवस्थिति नहीं की जा रही है। निम्नके कारण बैंक ने आपके अधिनियम की धारा 13 के तहत नोटिस जारी किया कि आप कर्ज की अवस्थिति मंगी करके एवं अन्य सूचना रूपमा 63,09,011.33 अदा करें, अन्यथा बंधक रखी गई संपत्ति बैंक अपने हक में प्रारंभ कर लेगी कि जानकारी दी जाकर, बैंक के पक्ष में आपके द्वारा दिये गये कर्ज के एवज में बंधक रखी संपत्ति का कब्जा हिलाने जाने का निवेदन किया है।

2. अपने प्राधिकृत अधिकारी बैंक ऑफ इंडिया सेक्युलर शाखा जिला रायपुर से 85,70,616.00 रुपये का कर्ज प्रारंभ कर मीमा आम्दी प.ह.नं. 06 तस्वील अम्बुनूर जिला रायपुर स्थित ख.नं. 906/1 रकमा 0.160 हे. भूमि बैंक के पक्ष में बंधक रखा गया है।

3. अतः आपके द्वारा दिये गये कर्ज के एवज में उक्त की बंधक रखी गई अचल संपत्ति को हिलाने अधिनियम का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले प्रमुख और प्रतिनिधि हित प्रकल्प अधिनियम 2002 की धारा 14 में उल्लेखित कर्ज को प्रकल्प करने को आपकी न अधिनियम में उल्लेख नहीं करवाती गयी अतः आप स्वयं आजाद अपने निष्पक्ष अधिकांशक के कारण से कर्ज से संबंधित एवं बंधक रखी गई संपत्ति से संबंधित दस्तावेज लेकर पक्ष प्रस्तुत करने हेतु दूर न्यायालय में पेशी दिनांक 31.10.2022 को ठीक 3.00 बजे उपस्थित होना अनिवार्य है। निम्न लिखित में उपस्थिति नहीं होने की वदता में आपके विरुद्ध एक पक्षी कार्यवाही की जाकर प्रकरण में निष्पक्ष ले लिया जायेगा। आज दिनांक 12 सितम्बर, 2022 को मेरे हस्ताक्षर एवं न्यायालय की मुहर से जारी किया गया।

जिला दण्डाधिकारी, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

# US, India vow to strengthen defence ties

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



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON**

India and US have resolved to further strengthen their defence and strategic ties with focus on new opportunities for bilateral defence industrial cooperation. The two countries also committed to expanding information sharing and logistics co-operation for deeper operational co-ordination between the two militaries.

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.

# 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

national president can start. 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

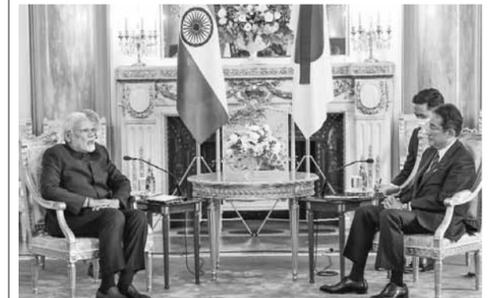
Rupani, former Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb, BJP's general secretaries Arun Singh, Vinod Tawde, Tarun Chugh, Prakash Javadekar and Sunil Bansal were also present.

Earlier this month, the BJP appointed Tawde as its new in-charge for Bihar, Rupani for Punjab and Deb for Haryana. BJP MP Harish Dwivedi continues to be co-in-charge for Bihar, the party had said.

Bansal will act as a regional in-charge and will look after BJP's work in West Bengal, Telangana and Odisha, it had said. Party spokesperson Sambit Patra was named the coordinator for eight north-eastern states while national secretary Rituraj Sinha was appointed the joint-coordinator, the BJP had said in a statement.

Nadda held 'Lok Sabha prava's' meet too which was attended by B L Santosh, Dharmendra Pradhan, Sambit Patra, Vinod Tawde and G Kishan Reddy among others.

# 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.

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.

# 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).

# 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 Castes (SCs), 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).

# 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

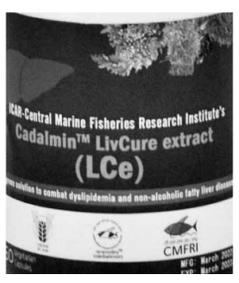
**DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TESTS SHORT RANGE MISSILE**



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.

# 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 CadalmimTM 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

# 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 Ekalia 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-off 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 Sankmilani 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 world.  
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.

## Raids against PFI continue, more than 36 detained for interrogation in UP

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**  
Raids against the Popular Front of India members continued on Tuesday as the joint team of Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) and Special Task Force (STF) on the inputs of National Investigation Agency (NIA) raided the premises of PFI members at several locations, particularly in western Uttar Pradesh. The sleuths picked up over three dozen suspects for interrogation.  
Meanwhile, ADG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar said that people associated with PFI and its affiliated organisations have been raided by STF, ATS and police simultaneously in several districts, including Meerut, Bulandshahr, Ghaziabad, Shamli. During this, a total of 27 people were detained and legal action will be taken on the basis of the evidence recovered.  
According to reports, on the basis of disclosures made by 106 PFI members held during the first raids by NIA on September 22, the investigative agency continued to target the PFI members as they, with the help of local ATS, again raided several places, including in Uttar Pradesh, since the wee hours of Tuesday.  
Sources said the Lucknow unit of the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) raided the bases of the radical Islamic organisation PFI in Bulandshahr on Tuesday and arrested of two of its members.  
However, according to information received from sources, the ATS detained about two dozen people for questioning from the Siana



area of Bulandshahr. The ATS raided the house of PFI member Khaliq Ansari at 4 am on Tuesday at Mohalla Uparkot in Bulandshahr City Kotwali area and took him into custody. All mobile phones and documents belonging to Khaliq's family were also confiscated by the ATS. Khaliq Ansari has also been the city president of the Samajwadi Party (SP). At present, he is said to be an active member of MP Asaduddin Owaisi's party AIMIM and Bharatiya Kisan Union.  
Khaliq also owns a school called Green Field. Meanwhile, his family claimed that Khaliq Ansari had joined PFI four months ago and resigned from its membership a month later.  
The family claimed that a large number of police personnel took Khaliq Ansari with them. The ATS also arrested a person named Afzal in Mohalla Chaudhriyan of Sayana. Afzal is a lawyer by profession and practises in Meerut.  
After Bulandshahr, the raids were conducted at the locations of PFI in Aligarh and suspects were taken to the Quarsi police station for further

interrogation.  
In Shamli, the teams of NIA and ATS detained four people associated with PFI and its political wing SDPI. Sources said that the security agencies picked up four suspects from different places while raiding Kairana and intensive interrogation was going on.  
At night, the teams of ATS and NIA reached Mamaur village of Kairana from where two people (Maulana Zahid and Sabir) were picked up.  
According to sources, Maulana Zahid is the elder brother of Maulana Sajid, who was arrested earlier. Sabir is said to be the younger brother.  
Apart from these, Jabir from Paonti Kalan village and Sarwar Ali from Gogwan village were also picked up by the security agencies.  
In search of the PFI members, the ATS team also raided localities under the Lisadi Gate and police station and Sarurpur area of Meerut. The ATS took half-a-dozen people to grill them in the local police stations. Some objectionable items were also recovered from them.

## Akhilesh set to be re-elected SP chief third time in a row

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**  
Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav is all set to be re-elected as the national president for the third consecutive term at the party's national convention in Lucknow on Thursday. The meeting of the state executive of the party will be held on Wednesday.  
Party's Uttar Pradesh unit chief Naresh Uttam Patel is also likely to retain his post, SP sources said. Akhilesh Yadav and Naresh Uttam were elected to the posts they are holding at the SP's national convention in Agra on October 5, 2017. The first day session will commence at 10:15 am with the hoisting of the party flag by



Akhilesh Yadav. Later, Yadav will deliver the inaugural address which will be followed by presentation of economic and political resolutions.  
SP general secretary and returning officer Ram Gopal Yadav will complete the process of the election of party's national president. The valedictory address will be delivered by Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday.

Akhilesh had first taken over as SP's national president after replacing his father Mulayam Singh Yadav in January, 2017. Naresh Uttam Patel replaced Akhilesh's uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav at the party's emergency national convention held in January 2017 amidst the Yadav family feud. The SP organised another meeting of the national executive in Agra in October 2017 and Akhilesh was re-elected as the party president while Naresh the state president.  
During the Agra convention, the SP also amended its constitution and increased the term of the party president from three to five years. After

the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly poll results, Akhilesh had on July 3 dissolved the national and state executives of the party. The SP is currently busy with its membership drive.  
Akhilesh on Tuesday accused the BJP of vitiating the political atmosphere of the country by pursuing divisive politics which only generates hate. He alleged that the BJP made an attempt to hijack the democratic process and values.  
The SP chief alleged that the BJP government in UP had derailed the development process and development projects started during the Samajwadi Party government had been damaged.

## 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.

## Yogi Govt rejigs UP planning commission, names it STC

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**  
Taking a cue from the Centre, the Uttar Pradesh Government reconstituted the State Planning Commission and re-named it as State Transformation Commission. The decision was taken in the Cabinet meeting here on Tuesday.  
"The State Transformation Commission (STC) will be headed by the Chief Minister while the Finance Minister, both the deputy CMs, agriculture minister, social welfare minister, panchayati raj development minister, industrial development minister, jal shakti minister and urban development minister will be its members," Energy Minister AK Sharma said while briefing

reporters here on Tuesday.  
The deputy chairman of the STC will be an economist or social scientist of fame. Other members include chief secretary, additional chief secretaries and principal secretaries of different departments, including finance, agriculture, rural development, medical and health, industrial development, and planning.  
The commission will also have non-govt members, who are experts in the social sector, agriculture and economy. These nominated members will have a term of three years, which can be extended up to two years.  
"This commission will act as a think tank and formulate policies after having discussions with experts of different

departments. Policy formation is the big work which involves new skills and innovation," Sharma said, adding that it would also help in making UP a \$1-trillion economy.  
He said the STC would work with the available resources in the state. The problems that the state is facing will be identified by the commission and ways will be found for resolving the same. Use of the PPP model will also be discussed. The present scheme and their outcome will be evaluated by the commission.  
The Planning Commission in UP was set up in 1972 and it helped the state government in formulating policies by identifying need-based areas.

## UP Govt to further strengthen security system of banks, ATMs

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**  
In order to further strengthen the security system of banks, the state government on Tuesday said that all safety measures should be in place to avert any untoward incident. Instructions were also issued to make internet banking better and more convenient.  
Addressing the 29th meeting of the State-Level Security Committee at the Reserve Bank of India in Gombi Nagar on Tuesday, Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad said that surveillance systems and data storage need to be made more effective to further strengthen the security system of banks.  
Adequate arrangement of CCTVs should be made mandatory in all branches, currency chests and ATM booths while security equipment, alarms, sirens,

etc installed in banks should be checked regularly, he said.  
For proper arrangements for fire safety in banks and currency chests, the standards laid down in the fire audit were also discussed in detail. Instructions were given to officials concerned to make adequate arrangements for fire prevention in all banks and conduct fire audit compulsorily. From time to time, it will also be monitored by the officials of the bank and fire department. Instructions were also given to the officials concerned to strictly check the circulation of counterfeit currency.  
Various points related to safe movement of cash used in the currency chests of banks, especially for their transportation to other states, were discussed in detail. Discussions were also held on making the security system of currency-

chests and ATMs more effective. Special emphasis was laid on strengthening effective coordination between bank branches and local police stations.  
The meeting was attended by Home Secretary BD Palson, Regional Director of Reserve Bank of India (Lucknow) Dr Balu Kenchappa and Regional Director of Kanpur Reserve Bank of India Dr Ishan Shukla, along with representatives of major banks working in the state, senior police officers, etc.



People perform Garba dance on the first day of nine-day long Navratri festival in Ahmedabad on Monday (PTI)

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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 Gadhkar 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.

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### PICTALK



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

# Facts, factoids and their interpretation

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



SANGRAM MISHRA

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 cognitional 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,



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

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.)

## 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](mailto: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.

## SOUNDBITE

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



US President — Joe Biden

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



Actor — Kajol

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.



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 Fertilisers 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.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

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

(The author is head of literacy, The Acres Foundation)

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 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-Russo 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'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 practical 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 mother 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.

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 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 Dilip 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, s/o 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 11/05/2012, 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 aforesaid 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 impersonation 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, LGF, 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-12011,**  
**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 chopped 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.

AP

## 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 medallists 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. Belgium are ranked second while Germany are fourth.

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 medallist 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 medallist 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, Harid Pandya 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.

Harshal 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  
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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 Tristan 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, Dwayne 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, Harshal 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 tourney.

"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.

Harshal 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 take 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-pace 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.

## 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.

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