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DURAND FAULTLINES
ON CRICKET PITCH

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OCCUPIED UKRAINE DESPITE OUTCRY

MONEY 10
DECriminalISING SOME GST
OFFENCES: GOVT

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PFI banned for 5 yrs under anti-terror law

Front accused of links with terror groups ISIS, JMB

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday banned Popular Front of India (PFI) and several of its associates/fronts for five years under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, accusing them of having "links" with global terror groups like ISIS and Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and involvement in radicalisation.

The move follows pan-India searches against the outfit and several arrests and detentions in the last one week.

Besides the PFI, the associated outfits banned under the UAPA include Rehab India Foundation, Campus Front of India, All India Imams Council, National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation, National Women's Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala.

With the ban, the PFI joins a dubious club of 43 proscribed outfits notified by the Union Home Ministry, including Communist Party of India (Maoists), Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-



Police personnel deployed at Popular Front of India (PFI) office building, at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

Mohammad, Hizbul Mujahideen, al-Badr; global terror groups al-Qaeda and ISIS, Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, a host of Khalistani terror groups like Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) and several insurgent groups of the North-East.

The notification banning the PFI will be followed by a number of actions against the outfit, including seizure of its properties, freezing of bank accounts and a complete pro-

hibition of its activities. The Centre will also move a tribunal within 30 days from the date of the publication of the notification for adjudication of whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring the association unlawful.

The ban on the 16-year-old outfit came after over 300 persons allegedly linked with PFI were detained or arrested in raids across seven States on Thursday and Tuesday. The crackdown against the group

had led to the seizure of several dozen properties and digital records among others.

In a Gazette notification late on Tuesday night, the Union Home Ministry said some PFI founding members are leaders of the SIMI and the PFI has linkages with Jamat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

It said there had been many instances of international linkages of PFI with global terrorist groups such as the ISIS.

Tharoor-Digvijaya bout likely, Kharge ready to contest poll

Congress MP urges 'Vadra bahu' Priyanka to fight party prez poll

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The election to the office of the Congress president could boil down to a contest between Shashi Tharoor and Digvijaya Singh unless there is a last-minute reconciliation between the Gandhis and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot or a wild card entry at the behest of the party high command.

While Tharoor has gone on record saying he would contest the poll, Digvijaya is reaching Delhi and may file his nomination papers in a day or two. The last date for filing of nomination is Friday.

Another senior party leader Mallikarjun Kharge is also ready to throw his hat in the ring, subject to endorsement by party chief Sonia Gandhi.

In an interesting twist to the entire saga, a Congress MP has suggested Priyanka Gandhi to contest the election as she is no more a family member of Gandhi as she is married to a Vadra family.

Digvijaya, who is part of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, has been asked to reach Delhi. Singh said he would "file nomination if the high command asked me to do so". "I have not discussed (the matter) with anybody. I have not sought permission from the high command. Leave it to me whether I will contest or not," Singh added days after rejecting any possibility of contesting the poll.

Gehlot, meanwhile, has sought time from party chief Sonia Gandhi to discuss the crisis in Rajasthan Congress. He reached Delhi by a chartered flight around 10.15 pm. After refusing to accept Sachin Pilot as his successor, Gehlot has fallen from the grace of the Gandhis.

Several senior leaders have advised the party high command to pull him out of the



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Wayanad on Wednesday. PTI

race for the party chief.

Ever since the Rajasthan crisis on Sunday, Sonia has been meeting senior party leaders. On Wednesday, she met senior party leader AK Antony.

Meanwhile, Congress MP Abdul Khaleque battled for Priyanka Gandhi to take on the mantle of party presidency, saying, "Being daughter-in-law of the Vadra family, she is no longer a member of the Gandhi family as per Indian tradition."

Even as the Congress high command is smarting over the humiliation heaped on it by Gehlot and his loyalists, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal on Wednesday said, "There is no drama in Rajasthan. Everything will be clear in a day or two. Media may see this as a drama but at least you are discussing the INC president election... we are doing it in a very democratic manner, it will end in two days smoothly."

US visitor visa wait time for Indians 833 days, China 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Compared to those living in China and Pakistan, the wait time at the US Embassy in New Delhi for a Visitor Visa is as high as 833 days and from Mumbai it is still higher at 848 days. This means it could take about 2 years and 4 months for visas under this category to be issued.

Effectively, a person applying for a visitor visa now is expected to get an appointment in January 2025.

For China, the US Visitor Visa could, however, be collected within two calendar days straight!

Indians who apply in the US Embassy in New Delhi in visitor, student/exchange visitor, and all other non-immigrant visa categories will have to wait for 833, 430 and 390 days respectively.

From Mumbai the wait is



Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar shakes hands with Secretary of State Antony Blinken during a press conference at the State Department in Washington on Tuesday. AP | PTI

848, 430, 392 days, and from Kolkata, the visa wait in the three categories is 767, 444 and 360 days respectively. From Chennai the visa delay is to the extent of 780 days, 29 days and 415 days respectively.

The US Embassy in India on Tuesday announced it has opened the appointments for all categories of visas.

However, the Embassy clarified that the wait time remains high due to high demand.

Centre extends free rations by 3 months

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday extended by three months its programme to provide free rations to the poor at a cost of ₹44,762 crore as it looked to ease pain from high inflation.

The scheme to provide five kilogram of wheat and rice free of cost to 80 crore poor every month, which was ending on Friday, will now run through December 31, 2022, I&B Minister Anurag Thakur said.

The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was started in April 2020 to help the poor whose livelihoods were shattered by a nationwide lockdown aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus. The scheme has been extended multiple times and was to

end on Friday. "At a time when the world is battling with the effects of Covid on its decline and insecurity due to various reasons, India has been successfully maintaining food security for its vulnerable sections while taking necessary steps to keep availability and affordability for common man," an official statement said.

Diwali gift: Govt hikes DA by 4%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of Diwali festival, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday increased the dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief by 4 per cent effective July 1, benefiting 41.85 lakh Central Government employees and 69.76 lakh pensioners.

Cabinet OK's ₹10K cr to upgrade Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad rly stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday approved ₹10,000 crore for the redevelopment of the New Delhi Railway Station, Ahmedabad station and Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.

The design will include a spacious roof plaza with all passenger amenities at one place along with spaces for retail, cafeterias, and recreational facilities.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday. The stations will be connected on both sides of railway tracks. Facilities like food court, waiting lounge, playing area for children and a place to sell local products will be made available.

"New Delhi Railway Station will integrate train services with buses, auto and metro rail services.

Ahmedabad railway station redesign is inspired by Modera's Sun temple. CSMT's heritage building won't be touched but buildings nearby will be re-developed," Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the media.

To make the stations comfortable, there will be proper illumination, wayfinding/signages, acoustics, lifts/escalators/travelators.

Master plans have been prepared for smooth movement of traffic with adequate parking facilities, a statement from the ministry said.

There will be integration with other modes of transportation like metro, bus and other modes of transport, the statement said.

Green building techniques will be used, with solar energy, water conservation and recycling and improved tree cover, it added.

R Venkataramani named Attorney General of India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior advocate R Venkataramani was appointed as the Attorney General of India on Wednesday for a term of three years, according to a notification.

He will succeed KK Venugopal, whose term will end on September 30.

Venugopal, 91, was appointed to the post in July 2017. He was reappointed as the top law officer of the country for three months on June 29.

Venugopal had expressed his unwillingness to continue in the constitutional post due to his advanced age.

Another senior advocate, Mukul Rohatgi, had a few days ago declined the offer to be the attorney general.

Rohatgi had been the attorney general in the first Narendra Modi government between June 2014 and June 2017. Venugopal had succeeded him.

Ravi Kishan duped of ₹3.25 crore, builder booked

PIANS ■ GORAKHPUR

Actor-politician Ravi Kishan has allegedly been duped of ₹3.25 crore, police said. Kishan, who is the MP from Gorakhpur Sadar and a film actor, has filed a complaint at Gorakhpur Cantonment police station against a builder for duping him of ₹3.25 crore.

The police have said that a complaint has been registered and appropriate action will be taken after the investigation. The case has been filed under Section 406 of the Indian Penal Code.

Anil Chauhan picked as CDS, Military Secretary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday appointed Lt General (retired) Anil Chauhan as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The decision came nearly ten months after the first CDS, General Bipin Rawat, died in a helicopter crash on December 8 last year. Both Rawat and Chauhan belong to the Gorkha Rifles.

The Defence Ministry said the CDS will also function as Secretary to Government of India, Department of Military Affairs, with effect from the date of his assumption of charge and until further orders.

In a career spanning over nearly 40 years, Chauhan held several command, staff and instrumental appointments



and had extensive experience in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir and North-East India.

Born on May 18, 1961, Chauhan was commissioned into the 11 Gorkha Rifles of the Indian Army in 1981. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Military Academy.

In the rank of Major General, the officer commanded an Infantry Division in the critical Baramula sector in the Northern Command.

Tejashwi asked to appear in person in IRCTC scam hearing in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday directed Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav to personally appear before it on the CBI's plea seeking cancellation of his bail in the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) scam.

Granting time to Yadav's counsel to file a response, Special Judge (CBI) Geetanjali Goel directed the personal appearance of the RJD leader on October 18. Earlier on September 17, the court had issued a notice to Yadav in the application moved by the probe agency and sought his reply.

2nd century Buddhist caves, Vishnu sculptures found in Bandhavgarh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has stumbled upon a historically-rich treasure trove in Bandhavgarh, Madhya Pradesh. The ASI team has found 26 caves, mostly Buddhist, ranging from the 2nd century to 5th century, of the Mahayana sect and remains of Buddhist structures and mural inscriptions bearing names of cities like Mathura and Kaushambi in old scripts.

During the exercise held from May 20-June 27 in an area sprawling around 170 sq km at the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, the ASI's Jabalpur circle found many ancient sculp-



tures, including large monolithic sculptures of various avatars of Vishnu like "Varaha" and "Matsya", and "board games made in natural caves." "This is for the first time since the 1938 exploration by

archaeologist NP Chakravarti that ASI has explored Bandhavgarh. Many structures of the area had already been documented, we reported and documented many more structures now, including ancient

caves, temples, Buddhist remains, maths, sculptures, water bodies, mural inscriptions in old scripts like Brahmi and Nagari etc," said SK Bakpai, the ASI's Jabalpur Superintending Archaeologist.

One of the many historical finds is a large Varaha sculpture measuring 6.4 x 5.03 x 2.77 meters datable to (9th - 13th century CE). It appears to be the world's largest sculpture, the official said, adding that in the old inscriptions, names of the kings — Maharaja Shri Bhimsena, Maharaja Pothasiri and Maharaja Bhattadeva — have been engraved. Nineteen water bodies of different periods (2nd-15thCE) were part of the exploration findings.

Ganjam activist moves NHRC to protect animals

Seeks direction to Central, State Govt authorities

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA
■ BRAHMAPUR

Activist Rabindra K Mishra filed a petition before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on September 25 alleging increased animal cruelty in India since lockdown regime. Citing examples, Mishra said that during post-lockdown regime, 49 elephants were killed in 2021, followed

by spiralling rise in animal poaching and increase in illegal wildlife trade at an alarming level. Similarly, 74 tigers were dead in India in 2022. There is a rise in 'man-animal conflicts' due to deforestation in the name of infrastructural development, he alleged. He further pointed out that, with regard to Article - 21 of the Indian Constitution, the SC notably held that every species has a right to life and security. The highest court of the land provided rights to the

animals under in famous Jallikattu (bull taming) case rulings. He said the SC declared Article 51A (g) of the Indian Constitution to be the "magna carta of animal rights" in India and included the right to life of animals under Article-21 to value their lives as much as humans. Mishra cited the provisions of Article 51A (g) which states that, it is the duty of Indian citizens to protect and improve the natural environment and have compassion for all living

creatures. He further said that, the Directive Principles of State Policy under Article 48 of the Constitution lays the foundation of animal welfare. Referring to the 42nd amendment made under Article 48A, Mishra said that, the States should also endeavour to maintain and protect the ecology, forests, wildlife, and the environment in the country. However, he lamented that in the present scenario in the country there is a conflict between human rights and

animal rights which needs a serious introspection. Mishra, in his petition, appealed to the NHRC to advise the concerned authorities of the Central Government and all States to take up the issue on priority and to make the action taken reports of the State's public. He also filed another petition before the Union Government to provide NSAP grant to Odisha Government, so that 11,200 eligible beneficiaries will get their basic social security benefits.

Rourkela man killed in C'garh; 4 held

PNS ■ ROURKELA

The Raigarh police in Chhattisgarh have detained four persons in connection with the alleged killing of a resident of Rourkela, whose body was found on a coal-laden truck in the neighbouring State. The deceased was identified as Srinivas Rao (28), a native of Deogarh district, who was working in a cloth store in the city. It was being suspected that the murder was fallout of his love affair with a girl of the city. Rao had developed relationship with the girl, to which her family members were opposing. Rao went missing on September 24, following which his relatives lodged a complaint in this connection with the Plantsite police. On Tuesday, they filed another complaint alleging that he was kidnapped. The Raigarh police on Wednesday informed their Rourkela counterparts regarding recovery of the body from the truck. A team of the Plantsite police went to Raigarh to bring back the body. The accused were being interrogated while further investigation was ongoing.

IN BRIEF

GHARIYAL BABY CAUGHT IN FISHERMAN'S NET IN MAHANADI

Athagarh: A two-foot-long baby ghariyal was rescued by forest officials from the possession of one Babuli Khatua, a fisherman of Gopinathpur of Badamba, in whose fishing net it was caught on Wednesday. The endangered animal was later handed over to the authorities of the Nandankanan zoo on the instruction of the Athagarh DFO, said Badamba Range Officer Rabindra Nayak. However, panic spread in the villages of the Mahanadi embankment area of Badamba apprehending presence of ghariyals in the river.



BLOOD DONATION CAMP AT PPA HOSP

Paradip: As part of Raktdaan Amrit Mahotsav, which commenced on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday on September 17, the Paradip Port Authority Hospital organised a blood donation camp in collaboration with the Vrishav Foundation Trust (VFT) and the Blood Bank, Red Cross Society, Cuttack. PPA Deputy Chairman AK Bose inaugurated the camp in the presence of Paradip Ladies' Club vice-president Suchismita Bose, PPA Hospital CMO Dr P Panda and VFT president Er Gangadhar Sethi. Total 106 units of blood were collected.

YATS PROGRAMME HELD IN BALESWAR

Baleswar: A Tata Steel Young Astronomer Talent Search (YATS) programme was organised in Basta and Baliaipal blocks of Baleswar district in collaboration with the Pathani Samanta Planetarium with an objective to identify and promote the talent of schoolchildren in the field in which 470 students participated. The theme for YATS 2022 is "Time to unravel the universe". Top two participants from each district of Odisha will be selected and invited to the grand finale on December 13 in Bhubaneswar. Top 20 winners will be awarded. The YATS is aimed at educating school students about the contributions of legendary Odia astronomer Pathani Samanta.



GURUPADMA AWARD TO GOURI SHANKAR SATAPATHY

Chhatrapur: Odia Lecturer Dr Gouri Shakar Satapathy of the Saheed Bhagat Singh College, Khandadeuli of Ganjam block has recently received the Gurupadma Award in a literature festival held in Bhubaneswar. Dr Satapathy is very popular in Ganjam district as a drama director, for which he had got the Urvasi Award earlier.



TRAI CONSUMER AWARENESS PROGRAMME IN PALLAHARA

Pallahara: A consumer awareness programme of the Telephone Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was held at Penderabasa here. It was organised by NGO Paribartan. Airtel, BSNL, JIO and Reliance representatives explained how to ensure the interest of a consumer by the service providers and how to prevent fraudulent activities by miscreants regarding installation different companies' towers, said trainer Sudhansu Das in a Press meet. Krushna Patra (Airtel), Pravas Pandhan (JIO), Gourahari Pradhan (BSNL) and Padmanabha Pradhan (Reliance) participated in the programme.



NYK ORGNAISES VISION-2047 IN P'KHEMUNDI

Paralakhemundi: The Nehru Yuva Kendra organised a programme titled Vision-2047 here on Wednesday. Various competitions like debate, dance, photography and painting were held among students. Local MLA K Narayan Rao, ADM Sangramsekhar Panda, EO of Paralakhemundi Municipality Jubilee Charan Behera, district youth coordinator of NYK Bijay Kumar Mahapatra were guests. Dr RK Pati, Bhagabat Padhi, Ramachandra Padhi, D Aruna, Manoj Kumar Padhi, Dwijen Padhi and other juries evaluated the performances of the students. The winners were facilitated.

NEHRU YOUTH CENTRE HOLDS YOUTH FEST AT BHAPUR

Bhapur: A block-level youth festival was organised at the Prahallad Junior College here by the Nehru Youth Centre, Nayagarh, under the Union Ministry of National Youth and Sports. The programme was jointly conducted by the college and the NSS. The topics were poetry, traditional folk dance, drawing, photography, etc. Successful competitors were awarded certificates and they will participate at the district-level youth festival on October 11. NYC programme officer Bina Kumar Sahu, college President Purnima Das, college faculty Krishnapriya Mohanty, Fakir Mohan Swamy, national volunteers of Bhapur Block Satyabrata Maharna and Prachi Tanaya Mishra, Ramesh Chandra Barad, Kalandi Charan Naik participated in it.



In Baleswar Fisher hit by unidentified objects in sea, dies

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A fisherman died while another sustained injuries after they were hit by unidentified objects when fishing in a mechanised boat in the sea close to the Chandipur-based arms and ammunition testing range in Baleswar district on Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Kamalakanta Majhi, a resident of Sarantha Bindha under Sadar block in the district. The injured Padmolochan Mallick was admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital. The relatives of the deceased claimed that they were allegedly hit by splinters during a testing session of Proof and Experimental Establishment (PXE), a unit of the DRDO at Chandipur. However, there is no official confirmation from the PXE. The vessel entered into the prohibited zone ear marked by the PXE, during fishing. Reports said seven fishermen including Kamalakanta, the deceased and the owner of a mechanised boat, had ventured into the sea for fishing on Tuesday. The mishap occurred near Jodakuti around 11 am.

Paradip Port observes World Maritime Day



PNS ■ PARADIP

With the theme "New Technologies for Greener Shipping", the Paradip Port observed the 45th World Maritime Day on Wednesday. It reflects the need to support a green transition of the maritime sector into a sustainable future while leaving no one behind. Unlike the National Maritime Day, there is no fixed date of celebration of the World Maritime Day. But generally, it is celebrated in last week of September. It depends on the individual Governments to decide a suitable date for celebration during last week of September, and DG Shipping, Govt. of India, had decided to celebrate the day on September 28 this year. On the occasion, Paradip Port Authority (PPA) Deputy Conservator Capt AC Sahu hoisted the World Maritime Day flag at the Marine Site office in the presence of HoDs of PPA and other senior officials of the Marine Department and students of the Orissa Maritime Academy. The students also participated in an awareness rally in the port township. In the evening, a seminar was held at the Officers' Club in which Orissa Maritime Academy Principal Manas Beuria and Senior Marine Engineer Babul Sikdar deliberated on the day's topic. The first celebration of World Maritime Day was on March 17, 1978 to mark the occasion of enforcing first convention of IMO in 1958; and since then every year, the day is observed globally during the last week of September.

JSpur: Drive against sex determination

Rs 25K-reward for informer of illegal clinics
PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

The district administration has asked people to share information on clinics doing sex determination clandestinely in Jagatsinghpur and announced a reward of Rs 25,000 to the informer. It said the identity of the informer would be kept secret. According to the district Health Department sources, as many as 22 registered ultrasound clinics are operating across Jagatsinghpur district. They have been given licences under the PCPNDT Act 1994. "No other clinic and hospital in the district are authorised to conduct the test. We have circulated a list of authorized clinics and patho labs among people and asked them to inform us if they spot any other unauthorised clinics in their locality. The informer is to be rewarded with a cash prize of Rs 25,000 in three installments," said an official of the Health Department.

In Sambalpur PS gheraoed demanding arrest of fraud lover

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

Locals of Rasanpur near Maneswar on Tuesday gheraoed the Sadar police station in Sambalpur district demanding arrest of a youth who cheated a young girl for marriage that ultimately led her to commit suicide. The deceased Priyanka Naik was working in an ITI and fell in love with Sunil Hari staying near it. The boy promised to marry her but later changed his mind being instigated by his sister-in-law. This resulted in girl turning mental depressed and committed suicide couple of day back. Villagers and the family members reported the matter to the Sadar police with all details. As the police did not take any action against the accused, locals gheraoed the police station demanding the youth's immediate arrest, alleging that he was solely responsible for the suicide of the girl. When contacted, Sadar IIC Anita Patnia said, "We are in continuous efforts to nab Sunil. Due to ignorance of the villagers he successfully fled away." The IIC further said the family members exactly don't know the residence or address of the boy. They only say that he belongs to Subarnapur district. In such a case, mobile tracking is the only means to nab him. But these people have made him panicky and he has not only fled from this place, he has also kept his mobile phone switched off out of fear. "But he will be arrested soon," the IIC said.

NITR shines at Nat'l Nutri-Cereal meet

Awarded as best institute
PNS ■ ROURKELA

The NIT Rourkela has been conferred with 'Best Institute (Food Process Engineering)' under Poshak Annaj Award 2022 by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR) and Nutrihub, for promoting the research on millet processing and product development. NutriHub and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-IIMR organised the National Nutri-Cereal Convention at Hyderabad recently. Speaking on the achievement, HoD, Food Process Engineering, NITR Prof Parag Prakash Sutar said, "Millets are called the super grain because of their high nutritional value. All the



facilities, staff, and students of the food process engineering department are working with extraordinary dedication in the millet research." Director, NITR Prof K Umamaheshwar Rao said, "The food processing engineering department is committed to excelling in millet research and developing a new range of millet-based staple food so that everyone is guaranteed good health and food security. The whole team would be constantly working to achieve more." It may be noted here that the department currently has 12 faculties and more than 200 undergraduates, masters, and PhD students working on several R and D projects with a strong understanding of blending of engineering principles in food science and food nutrition. The department has successfully completed the production of millet-based milk and preparation of millet milk powder. At the convention, Odisha also received the 'Best State for Scaling Up Millet Mission' award for promoting millet cultivation and the use of millet-based products.

2024 polls All eyes on Opp BJP, Cong strategies in Odisha

As five-timer ruling BJD targets 50% rise in Assembly score

While the opposition BJP and the Congress are gearing up for the 2024 polls, the ruling BJD has declared a gigantic target of 1.50 crore votes in the next election, an almost 50% rise in its last Assembly score of 1, 04, 75, 697 (44.71%) votes. Principal opposition BJP which had bagged 76, 12,449 (32.49%) votes and the Congress that had got 37, 77, 645 (16.12%) votes in the last Assembly poll are yet to declare their vote share. The series of Assembly by-elections and local body polls that followed the 2019 general elections in the State, witnessed a surprise further increase in the vote share of the ruling BJD even to the level of 52% in local body polls while the second opposition Congress got further marginalised in these polls. BJP's vote share also dropped through marginally to 70 lakh in 2022 panchayat election from its last Assembly share of 76 lakh votes.



LALIT MOHAN MISHRA

Can the Opposition stop the BJD juggernaut in 2024 polls which is empowered by four key factors such as the Messiah like popularity of its leader and consecutive five-term Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, a pan-State grass rooted and disciplined organisation, a solid vote bank of women and poor class and a pro-Government bureaucracy? Once in power in the State for long years, the opposition Congress continued to decline endlessly after 2000, due to various organisational and electoral weaknesses. The party had the worst performance in 2019 polls as its vote share even was less than the BJP stripping the grand old party off the main opposition status. After the 2019 poll debacle,

the State Congress president resigned but his resignation was not accepted. As a result, the by-polls and local body polls that followed were conducted under an unwilling PCC chief, yielding disastrous results. After a waste of three years, a new State president was installed in May 2022 but dissent grew among the aspirants and groups as the party's high command could not develop a consensus on the selection. The new president is yet to form his team to proceed. At this juncture, the Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY) has come as a challenge for the State-unit. By conducting BJY in Odisha, the State Congress will obviously get activated. But will it be enough to enable the party to return to power in the State, considering its record of losing even deposits in 76 Assembly seats in last election? The State unit should therefore set a realistic and careful target and strategy for 2024 polls as its mistakes shall marginalise the party further and help one of its competitors, the BJD or the BJP at its own cost. What about the main opposition party, the BJP? In 2009 general election, the

party dropped to the second-opposition position after remaining in the State power between 2000 and 2009 during the coalition Government of the BJP-BJD. The 2014 election did not bring any luck. However, in 2019 polls, the party could perform meaningfully in the Lok Sabha segments and got a good jump in percentage of vote share in Assembly and Lok Sabha spheres and became the main opposition party in the State though it failed miserably in achieving its Mission-120 Assembly target due to multiple electoral weaknesses in the spheres of organisation, election management and public outreach. After the 2019 polls, the BJP surprisingly went into slumber. Leader of Opposition in Assembly and the new State BJP president were perceived by the public as very good grass root leaders but rather very mild. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who had played the general's role in 2019 polls under the leadership of BJP's No-2 leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah surprisingly became less active after the polls. The State president had to work alone. As a result,

by-elections and panchayat elections were poor and the party lost its Baleswar Assembly seat and Zilla Parishad seats. After the BJD supported the BJP's Rajya Sabha candidate Ashwini Vaishnav, an impression grew among the BJP's party cadres that the central BJP is harbouring a soft attitude towards the BJD which slowed down the lower party machinery in the State though both the State leaders of BJP and the BJD rubbished the allegation of the Congress. Public perception also grew about a leadership conflict in the State BJP. The BJP, which grew in the State on the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, could realise lately that it failed to spread the message of welfare measures of the Union Government. The party could neither create a State narrative and nor could manage media efficiently in the State. Now the BJP has tightened its belt for 2024 general and Assembly elections by appointing a new and hardliner Leader of Opposition in the Assembly in the form of Jayanarayan Mishra and by putting a poll strategist and high profile general secretary, Sunil Bansal,

in charge of the State. It will obviously follow aggressive pre-poll activities to try its luck in 2024. While the BJP follows the 272-plus approach in Lok Sabha elections to come to power at the Centre, it follows a three-pronged strategy to assume power in the States. First, it comes to the main opposition position, then it competes with the ruling party in the poll to win and third it facilitates defection in the ruling party if it fails to win the Assembly poll. What is the strategy of the BJP for Odisha? Will it prioritise on winning maximum number of seats in Lok Sabha? Will it have pan-Odisha or split or segment wise approach in 2024 poll while the BJD is moving with equidistance electoral policy? In a democracy, the Opposition has more weaknesses than strengths while the ruling party has more strengths than weaknesses. It is the skill of the Opposition to identify the weaknesses of the ruling party and strategise accordingly. The ruling BJP at the Centre or the ruling BJD in Odisha have more strengths but some Achilles heel too. Let us see how both the competitors strategise for 2024 as far as Odisha is concerned.

Blinken says no two countries, other than India-US, have a greater ability and opportunity to try to shape the future of this century

I'm very bullish about Indo-US ties, says Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

With ties between the two countries on the upswing, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said he is "very bullish" about the bilateral relationship between India and US. Making this observation, he also said, "I see today a United States very international, very much more open to engaging a country like India, which is actually thinking beyond traditional alliances, which has been very effective at finding common ground with potential or actual partners."



"So very frankly, that's a long way of saying that I'm very bullish about that relationship." He said this in reply to his overall sense of the trajectory of the relationship. "The big change that I have seen in my four decades as a diplomat was actually in the transformation of India-US relations," he said. Giving the example of the Quad combine-the informal grouping of Australia, Japan, India and the US, he said, "I mean, the fact was a Quad was something we

tried about two decades - 15 years - ago. It didn't work, and it is working very well today and it's grown remarkably in the course of the last two years." Touching upon the vast expanse of growing ties, Jaishankar said, "So I think for us today the relationship with the US opens up a whole range of possibilities." US Secretary of State Blinken said no two countries have a greater ability and opportunity and responsibility to try to shape the future of this

century than the US and India as the world's two largest democracies. "What is very gratifying to me is the fact that in all of these meetings, in all of these conversations in this ongoing dialogue we have, we are thinking together and working together in ways that we haven't before," he said. "That doesn't mean that we don't have differences. We do, and we will. But it also means that because of the depth and quality of the dialogue we have, we talk about everything and work closely together on how we can advance the agenda that we have in common, which - as you've heard, I think, from both of us - extends to virtually every issue that is confronting our own citizens and people around the world," the US Secretary of State said. Jaishankar said India and the US must not let the current global developments jeopardize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNSC permanent seat a long-standing goal for India: Blinken

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

As India has been pushing for reforms in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for many years including status of permanent member, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has underlined the need to "modernise" it by making it more inclusive and increasing the number of permanent seats in the global body. He also said it is a "long-standing" goal of India. Blinken made these remarks during a joint press conference along with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar after holding talks with him late Tuesday in the US capital. "We recognise that to meet the challenges we face, members of the UN must not only uphold the charter but also modernise the institution, including by



making the Security Council more inclusive," the US Secretary of State said. "That's why, in his address to the General Assembly, President (Joe) Biden expressed his support for increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent representatives of the Security Council, a long-standing goal of India," he said. "This includes permanent seats for those nations we have long supported, and permanent

seats for countries in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean," he said. Jaishankar said the reform of the UN is a particularly topical subject adding India appreciates the positive approach of the US to this issue reflected in the position articulated by President Biden himself. "We look forward to working with the US to take this further," he said. At present, the UNSC comprises five permanent members and 10 non-permanent member countries which are elected for a two-year term by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The five permanent members are Russia, the UK, China, France and the United States and these countries can veto any substantive resolution. There has been growing demand to increase the number of permanent members to reflect the contemporary global reality. Jaishankar said India appreciated strong cooperation from the US on the question of tackling international terrorism. "In particular, I refer to the listing of well-known and wanted terrorists by the UN sanction process. In many other formats too, our two countries collaborate to keep the world safer and more secure," he said. In New York, S Jaishankar on Sunday said terrorism should not be used as a "political tool" and the idea that something is blocked without assigning a reason challenges common sense. China, a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council, has repeatedly put holds on listing proposals by India, the US and other allies to blacklist Pakistan-based terrorists under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions regime of the Council.

Does issue survive now? SC on pleas against demonetisation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said on Wednesday it will examine if the challenge to the Centre's 2016 demonetisation decision has become a mere "academic exercise", and posted it for consideration on October 12. As the hearing commenced, a constitution bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer wondered if the matter survives for consideration at this stage. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, submitted that for all practical purposes the matter does not survive for consideration. However, the case can be examined as an academic exercise, he said. "A five-judge bench for academic exercise when we are already burdened with such a large amount of pendency?" the court wondered. "We will fix it for hearing on October 12. We will examine if it has become academic

and if it can be heard at all," the bench, also comprising Justices BR Gavai, AS Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian, and BV Nagarathna said. The top court was hearing a batch of 58 petitions challenging the Centre's November 8, 2016 decision to demonetise currency notes of denomination of Rs 500 and Rs 1000. On December 16, 2016, a bench headed by then Chief Justice TS Thakur had referred the question of the validity of the decision and other issues to a larger bench of five judges for authoritative pronouncement. It had framed various questions in the reference order to be adjudicated by the five-judge bench which included whether the notification dated November 8, 2016 is ultra vires provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and does the notification contravene the provisions of Article 300 (A) of the Constitution.

SC slams Centre for delay in deciding Rajoana's mercy plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed dissatisfaction over the Centre's failure to take a decision so far on the plea that Balwant Singh Rajoana's death penalty in the 1995 assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh be commuted to life imprisonment. The plea by Rajoana has sought commutation of his death sentence to life imprisonment on the ground of his long incarceration of 26 years. The apex court was also unhappy over the submission of the counsel for the Centre that the matter be adjourned. "The time of two months was granted on May 2 (this year). The time has expired

long back. However, as submitted by Additional Solicitor General KM Natraj, no decision has been taken by the concerned authority," a bench comprising Chief Justice UU Lalit and justices S Ravindra Bhat and JB Pardiwala said and asked the Centre to file an affidavit and listed the matter for Friday. "The moment, we pass a direction; they (the authorities) will have to consider the mercy petition (of Rajoana). Who is the responsible officer? Has the note on the issue been prepared...We cannot force you to take a particular decision. But, you have to make a decision," the CJ, speaking for the bench, said. On the submission seeking adjournment of the proceedings by the counsel for the Central government, it said,

"You know what happens with these matters once they get adjourned... This is what happens with the Registry, the moment we push up one matter, it just goes into the cycle and comes after six months." Earlier, the apex court did not consider the submission of the Centre that the death row convict has been on record in saying that "he has no faith in the Indian judiciary and the Constitution" and these are relevant factors. Rajoana, a former Punjab Police constable, was convicted for his involvement in an explosion outside the Punjab civil secretariat that killed Beant Singh and 16 others on August 31, 1995. A special court in July 2007 awarded the death sentence to Rajoana in the case.

MEA TOUGH TALK AMID UKRAINE WAR

'India exercises choice in its interest when offered weapons'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/WASHINGTON

With the Ukraine conflict on for seven months now, India has said it has faced no difficulties in terms of servicing and spare parts supply of military equipment that it received from Russia. It also asserted that New Delhi exercises a choice which it believes is in its national interest when it is offered weapons. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made these remarks during a joint press conference with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington after holding bilateral talks. "I don't think in recent months we have faced any particular problems in terms of servicing and spare parts supply of (military) equipment that we have got in the past from Russia," the External Affairs minister said. He was asked about India's plans for military hardware and equipment given the sanctions that the US and others are putting on Russian industry and whether India will look at more purchases of American or Israeli military equipment. "Where we get our military equipment and platforms from, that's not an issue, honestly, which is a new issue or an issue which has particularly changed because of geopolitical tensions," Jaishankar said. India, he noted, looks at possibilities across the world. "We look at the quality of technology, the quality of capability, the terms on which that particular equipment is offered, and we exercise a choice which we believe is in our national interest," he said. In the last 15 years, for example, India has actually procured a lot from the United States, he said. "If you maybe consider, for example, aircraft - the C-17, the C-130, the P-8, or the Apache helicopter or the Chinooks or the Howitzers, the M777 Howitzers - we have done so from France when we recently bought their Rafale aircraft. We have done so from Israel," the minister noted. "So,

we have a tradition of multi-sourcing and for us, how to get the optimal deal from a competitive situation is really what this is all about," Jaishankar said. Russia has been a major supplier of military hardware to India. The two countries have been holding discussions on what kind of payment mechanisms can work between them in view of the Western sanctions on Moscow. Earlier this month, Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov said his country has delivered its most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system S-400 to India on time despite pressure from Washington and the US-led West's sanctions. The S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system. The 'Triumf' interceptor-based missile system can destroy incoming hostile aircraft, missiles and even drones at ranges of up to 400 kms. Russia had started delivery of the first regiment of the missile in December last year. The missile system has already been deployed in such a way that it can cover parts of the border with China in the northern sector as well as the frontier with Pakistan. In October 2018, India had signed a five billion dollar deal with Russia to buy five units of the S-400 air defence missile systems, notwithstanding warning from the then Trump administration that going ahead with the contract may trigger US sanctions under CAATSA.

On the eve of World Heart Day Experts call for stringent tobacco-control law in country

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Tobacco consumption not only causes cancer but also breaks hearts by causing cardiovascular diseases, experts warned on Wednesday as they called for a stringent tobacco-control law seeking to ban public designated smoking zones and advertisements at the point of sale among others. On the eve of World Heart Day which has "Use Heart for Every Heart" as a theme this year, noted interventional cardiologist Dr Sekhar Kashyap talked about the multiple heart health risks associated with tobacco like peripheral vascular disease (disease in the vessels that supply blood to the arms and legs) and abdominal aortic aneurysm. Pointing out that death numbers due to tobacco consumption are just a tip of the iceberg, the doctor said that, in fact, productivity and economic loss due to tobacco usage is enormous. Noting that



India is the second largest producer and consumer of tobacco that claims nearly 13 lakhs lives annually, BJP MP Manoj Tiwari said that aware of the tobacco burden, the Government under the Prime Minister's guidance has adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy against the hazardous product. To draw home his point, he enlisted several tobacco-control measures the government has taken in the past few years, imposing ban on e-cigarettes and big pictorial warning on tobacco products to name a few. Now, the Government has

proposed amendments in the COTPA which shows that it has intention to strictly fill the gaps to deter tobacco consumption, the Northeast Delhi BJP MP asserted. Tiwari was speaking at a webinar organized by "Tobacco Free India", a public health platform, and moderated by senior journalist and writer Arun Anand. Agreeing with Tiwari, who is ex state BJP president, Dr Uma Kumar, reputed public health expert and HoD of Rheumatology, AIIMS, highlighted the link between tobacco and cardio-

vascular diseases (CVDs). She quoted a global report that says that every year, 1.9 million people die from tobacco-induced heart disease. This equates to one in five of all deaths from heart disease, warn the report's authors, who urge all tobacco users to quit and avoid a heart attack, stressing that smokers are more likely to experience an acute cardiovascular event at a younger age than non-smokers. "If all the political parties, cutting across their ideologies, make consensus on the progressive COTPA amendments at the earliest, we will be saving millions of youth from falling into the trap of harmful tobacco products," said Kumar. "In fact, by allowing public smoking zones, we are actually promoting more smoking. It's like their existence is sending the message that it is Ok to smoke. By banning these places, we will also help smokers to curb their habits and thus save his/her heart," Dr Kashyap chipped in.

ED freezes ₹13 cr Bitcoins under PMLA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has frozen 77.62710139 Bitcoins, equivalent to \$15,73,466 (₹12.83 crore), under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), in connection with an investigation against Kolkata-based Aamir Khan and others relating to the mobile gaming application E-nuggets. The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR dated February 15, 2021 filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by Park Street Police Station, Kolkata Police, against Aamir Khan and others, based on complaint filed by Federal Bank authorities, in the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Kolkata. Aamir Khan launched a mobile gaming application E-Nuggets, which was designed for the purpose of defrauding public.

Four-day maritime drill of CMF in Seychelles concludes



New Delhi: The four-day international maritime exercise 'Operation Southern Readiness' of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) at Seychelles ended on Tuesday with the Indian Navy participating in it for the first time. The Indian ship INS Sunayna participated in the annual capacity building exercise and was welcomed to the CMF by Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, United State Naval Forces Central Command (US NAVCENT), Indian Navy officials said here on Wednesday. A live demonstration on Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations was also conducted onboard HMS Montrose led by the Seychelles Special forces with close support from the Indian Naval team. The event was coordinated as part of the Distinguished Visitor's demonstration and witnessed by Seychelles President Wavel Ramkalawan and senior officials of member countries of CMF. The participation of the Indian Navy in the joint exercise was highly appreciated. The Indian ship's participation reinforces the Indian Navy's commitment to maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region, officials had said here on Monday. The joint training exercise was attended by representative delegations from the US, Italy, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and ship participation from the UK, Spain and India.

SC acquits death-row convict of rape, murder, says can't make someone victim of injustice

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Court cannot make someone a victim of injustice to compensate for the injustice to the victim of a crime", the Supreme Court Wednesday said while acquitting a death row convict for the alleged rape and murder of a six-year-old. The top court, which pulled up the Uttar Pradesh police for faulty investigation, also said by not conducting the investigation properly, the prosecution has done injustice to the family of the victim. It said that when the offence is heinous, the Court is required to put the material evidence under higher scrutiny but the

erroneous approach on the part of the Sessions Court and the High Court has led to the "poor man" being ordained to be dispatched to the gallows. A bench of Justices S Abdul Nazeer, AS Bopanna, and V Ramasubramanian said that it cannot shy away from the fact that it is a ghastly case of rape and murder of a six-year-old child. "By not conducting the investigation properly, the prosecution has done injustice to the family of the victim. By fixing culpability upon the appellant without any shred of evidence which will stand the scrutiny, the prosecution has done injustice to the appellant. Court cannot make someone, a victim of injustice, to com-

pensate for the injustice to the victim of a crime", the bench said. The top court passed the verdict on an appeal filed by a man called Chotkai who was convicted for the offences punishable under Sections 302 (murder) and 376 (rape) of the IPC and sentenced to death by the Sessions Court, which was also confirmed by the Allahabad High Court on a reference. The bench said that this is a case where the convict is "so poor" that he could not afford to engage a lawyer even in the Sessions Court and after his repeated requests to the trial court, the service of an advocate was provided as amicus. "In cases of such nature, the

responsibility of the Court becomes more onerous. When we analyse the evidence with such a sense of responsibility, we are not convinced that the guilt of the appellant stood established beyond a reasonable doubt. Therefore, the appeals are allowed and the conviction and penalty are set aside. The appellant shall be released forthwith if not wanted in connection with any other case", the bench said. The top court was critical of the approach of the High Court and the trial court and said, "Before wrapping up, it is necessary to say something about the approach adopted by the Sessions Court and High Court.



Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region G Kishan Reddy celebrating Bathukamma flower festival at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Tuesday

Centre empowers States to take action against PFI affiliates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After banning the Popular Front of India (PFI) on Wednesday, the Centre, through another notification, empowered the State Governments to take action against groups affiliated with the PFI and the possible action against them could be seizure of places and arrest of their members. The Home Ministry said these associates or fronts have a 'hub and spoke' relationship.

PFI acts as the hub and utilises the mass outreach and fund-raising capacity of its associates or affiliates or fronts to strengthen its capability for unlawful activities and these

associates or affiliates or fronts function as "roots and capillaries through which the PFI is fed and strengthened", it said.

The PFI and its associates or affiliates or fronts operate openly as socio-economic educational and political organisations. But they have been pursuing a secret agenda to radicalise a particular section of the society, working towards undermining the concept of democracy and showing sheer disrespect towards the constitutional authority and constitutional setup of the country, it further said.

Investigations in various cases have revealed that PFI and its cadre have been repeatedly engaging in violent and subversive acts, the Ministry

said. Criminal violent acts carried out by PFI include chopping off the limbs of a college professor, killings of persons associated with organisations espousing other faiths, obtaining explosives to target prominent people and places and destruction of public property, it said.

The notification also mentioned the names of several people who were alleged victims of the PFI's "brutal" violence and most of them belong to Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The home ministry said there had been many instances of PFI's linkages with global terrorist groups and some activists of its PFI have joined ISIS and participated in terror activities in Syria, Iraq and

Afghanistan. Some of these PFI cadres were killed in these conflict theatres and some have been arrested by state police and Central agencies, the Ministry said.

The Home Ministry claimed the office bearers and cadre of PFI along with others are conspiring and raising funds from within India and abroad through banking channels, hawala and donations among others as part of a "well-crafted criminal conspiracy", and then transferring, layering and integrating these funds through multiple accounts to project them as legitimate and eventually using these for various criminal, unlawful and terrorist activities

in India. The sources of deposits on behalf of PFI with respect to its several bank accounts were not supported by the financial profiles of the account holders and the activities of PFI were not being carried out as per their declared objectives. Therefore, the Income Tax Department cancelled the registration granted to PFI under section 12A or 12AA of the Income Tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961), it said. The Income Tax Department also cancelled the registration of Rehab India Foundation.

The ban order will remain in force for five years and it can be further extended by the Government after the expiry of the present tenure of the ban.

According to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA), if any member of the banned group has the custody of any funds, securities or credits which are being used or are intended to be used for the unlawful association, the Centre may, by a written order, prohibit such person from paying, delivering, transferring or otherwise dealing in any manner whatsoever with such assets.

Any person aggrieved by a prohibitory order may, within 14 days from the date of the service of such order, make an application to the court of the district judge within the local limits of whose jurisdiction such person voluntarily resides or carries on business or per-



sonally works for gain, to establish that the assets are not being used or are not intended to be used for the unlawful association. The court of the district judge is the competent judicial authority to decide such matters. When an association is declared unlawful, the central government can seize such "place" including a house or building or part thereof, or a tent or vessel.

War of words after BJP says Didi Govt will fall this Dec

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Speculation ran high — about whether Kolkata could go the Mumbai way — after Bengal BJP president Sukanto Majumdar and Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari iterated that the Mamata Banerjee Government would fall anytime in December this year.

Soon war of words ensued between the ruling Trinamool Congress and BJP as the Bengal ruling outfit hit back during the BJP Government to go ahead with its Mumbai formula — if it so desired — and watch the consequence.

When asked to explain his statement Majumdar said that as no Government could run without a Chief Minister and as there was every possibility of Mamata Banerjee getting arrested by December the Trinamool Congress Government would not survive beyond New Year.

"There are chances that even the Chief Minister and many of her Cabinet colleagues may get arrested ... and as a government cannot continue without a Chief Minister this Government will collapse," Majumdar said adding as well that at least 21 TMC MLAs



one of his recent visits to Bengal had said that about 40 Trinamool legislators were in touch with the BJP. The State ruling outfit was prompt to hit back saying the BJP's hollow claims had already been tested in 2021 Assembly elections when its top leadership had vowed to win more than 200 Assembly seats but ended up winning barely 77. "The BJP leadership has been exposed before the people of Bengal ... their false will no longer be taken by the people of the State ... they had given a slogan of abki baar doso paar (this time 200-plus seats ... but failed to reach even three digit mark ... so their credibility is zero and in the coming elections they will be reduced to zero in Bengal," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said adding on the contrary to what they have been claiming the BJP MLAs would start joining the TMC soon.

"Before the last year's elections they said that the TMC will break and half of the party will go to BJP but after the elections it was seen that several of their leaders were joining the TMC ... the situation now is such that if we do not stop our doors then the whole BJP will

join the TMC," the leader said. The TMC Government was presently under intense pressure after the Enforcement Directorate investigating the school level recruitment scam recovered crores of rupees stashed away in the apartments of Arpita Mukherjee a close aide of former number two in the Mamata Banerjee cabinet Partha Chatterjee who is presently in jail. This was followed by the arrest of senior TMC leader and party strongman Anubrata Mondal on charges of cow smuggling.

Meanwhile, the Bengal opposition on Wednesday cried foul after a massive fire broke out inside the Bolpur branch of Axis Bank in Birbhum district. It is the same bank where the CBI made repeated raids in the recent times in search of Mondal's money trail. In a parallel development the CBI on Wednesday told the Calcutta High Court that the school level recruitment scam could go beyond Rs 150 crore and that about 1000 fake candidates had got jobs through questionable means. Further investigations were on as the candidates claim that the scam could go beyond several thousand crores.

Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have expressed grief at the loss of lives and directed officials to provide treatment to the injured. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was distressed by the accident and announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the deceased. Those injured would receive a compensation of Rs 50,000 each, his office said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, as soon as the incident was reported, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief and directed senior officers to reach the spot and provide proper care and treatment to the injured. "Chief Minister Shri @myogiadityanath Ji Maharaj has condoned the loss of lives due to road accident in the Lakhimpur Kheri district. Maharaj ji has directed the

10 killed in Lakhimpur road accident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

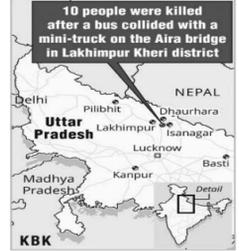
In a tragic incident, 10 people were killed and over 25 injured when a private bus collided with a truck in Lakhimpur Kheri district early on Wednesday morning.

Some of the grievously injured were referred to Lucknow for treatment, local officials who rushed to the spot confirmed.

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Meanwhile, as soon as the incident was reported, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief and directed senior officers to reach the spot and provide proper care and treatment to the injured. "Chief Minister Shri @myogiadityanath Ji Maharaj has condoned the loss of lives due to road accident in the Lakhimpur Kheri district. Maharaj ji has directed the



senior officers to immediately go to the spot and conduct relief and rescue operations and make proper arrangements for the treatment of the injured," the CMO tweeted in Hindi.

"Expressing his condolences to the bereaved family members, Maharaj ji (Yogi Adityanath) has wished for the speedy recovery of the injured," the tweet further read.

Reports said that the bus carrying about 60 passengers was heading from Daurahra in Lakhimpur Kheri district to Lucknow when the accident occurred.

All the injured were rushed to a district hospital while some others were referred to Lucknow for further treatment, said Lakhimpur Kheri's Additional District Magistrate Sanjay Kumar.

The bus was on its way to Lucknow from Daurahra when it collided with a mini truck coming from the oppo-

site direction on Aira bridge on National Highway 730, Deputy Superintendent of Police Pritam Pal Singh said.

The toll was likely to rise, he added. On receiving information, the police reached the spot and rescued the injured after cutting the bus with a gas cutter, he said.

The injured were sent to the district hospital and efforts were on to identify the deceased, the DSP added.

Meanwhile, in another incident, three persons, including an innocent girl, were killed and 34 others were injured when the tractor-trolley they were travelling in was hit by a truck on Ayodhya highway in Barabanki district on Wednesday morning, police said. Six persons with serious injuries were referred to the King George's Medical University Trauma Centre in Lucknow while the rest were

undergoing treatment at the district hospital. The accident occurred near Kotwa overbridge.

A few residents of Katka village were on their way to an event in Ram Sanehi Ghat when the speeding truck hit their tractor-trolley from behind.

Reports said that the 'mundan' ceremony of Bittu, daughter of Ramkaran, a resident of Lambauva village of Ram Sanehi station police area, was fixed for Wednesday. To attend the ceremony, Ramkaran's in-laws had come on a tractor-trolley from Katka police station Ramnagar and they all left by the same tractor-trolley for Katka on Wednesday morning.

On the way, a truck collided with the tractor-trolley near Kotwa road in Ram Sanehi Ghat police station area in Lucknow-Ayodhya highway.

CBI arrests 2 for cheating foreigners by posing as Interpol officers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested two persons who ran an illegal call centre in west Delhi from where they allegedly cheated and extorted money from foreign nationals by posing as Interpol and Europol officers.

The call centre, located in the narrow bylanes of Shadipur village here, was run by a man named Jaiveer Sharma. The perpetrators impersonated themselves as officers of Interpol and Europol to gullible foreigners, the FIR registered by the CBI said.

During the searches, the CBI found four cryptocurrency wallets having a total of Rs 1.30 crore that included Bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies in an e-wallet,

the CBI said. Vijay and Vishal were arrested in the case related to alleged cheating, extortion from foreign nationals and other offences that included running illegal call centres, they said.

"The source has also informed that most of the amounts collected from the victims through cheating by the accused are transferred in the form of Bitcoin (a cryptocurrency) in the crypto-account of accused Vijay maintained in the e-wallet of 'WazirX'," the FIR alleged.

They allegedly conned their victims by telling them that their identities had been stolen and used for crimes like money laundering and drug peddling. They then threatened the victims by claiming that arrest warrants

have been issued against them which would lead to their probable arrest, officials said.

The accused compelled their victims into transferring money in bank accounts, crypto wallets or gift card codes to clear their names with an assurance that once the case was closed, they could take their money back.

The accused also asked their victims to disclose the amount of cash they had. Once the victim disclosed the amounts, the accused asked them to prove that it was genuine and actually withdrawn from their bank account, the FIR claimed.

"The accused made the victims believe that they have to prove to the respective government authorities that they have only that much money in their bank



accounts," the FIR alleged.

In order to prove it, the accused convinced their victims that they must deposit the money to the government-approved vouchers available in the market, it said. If the victims said they will approach the local police regarding their arrest warrant, the accused would claim that

they would be arrested as soon as they reach the police station, it said.

Out of fear, the victims would purchase the gift card/voucher from the market and provide their codes to the accused who then redeemed or transferred the amount into their own accounts, it alleged.

States asked to spare more IAS, IPS, IFOs officers for Central deputation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday asked the States to spare more IAS, IPS, and IFOs officers for central deputation besides seeking their cooperation in weeding out the inefficient and corrupt employees. The request came during the annual conference of Principal Secretaries of states/Union Territories (UTs), held to deliberate on personnel, general administration, and administrative reforms related work here.

Addressing the conference, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said an all India service officer is an important interface of the gov-



ernment, both within the state as well as the Centre. He said there is already a structure laid down for cadre management of all India services and it needs to be followed in letter and spirit.

A particular aspect in this regard is the deployment of the all-India service officers at the Centre, the minister added. He asked the state governments to facilitate the central deputation of IAS and other all India services officers, according to a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry.

There are three all-India services — Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS). These officers are allocated a cadre, which is either a state or a group of states, or states and Union territories.

The central government has been facing a shortage of all India services officers and has been already seeking officers for central deputation from the states, officials said. To tide over this inadequacy, the Centre had in December last year proposed changes in the service rules that give it over-riding power to decide on the central deputation of the IAS, IPS, and IFOs officers, they said.

Make efforts to make Ayodhya grand enough to fit Lord Ram's aura: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday asked citizens of Ayodhya to make concerted efforts to make their city grand enough to fit Lord Ram's aura and where people would arrive from across the globe after the Ram temple is inaugurated.

On the construction of the Ram temple, the Prime Minister said, "This is a reiteration of 'pride in heritage' also, a new chapter of development of the nation".

Addressing the gathering on the occasion of dedication of Lata Mangeshkar Chowk in Ayodhya via video message, Modi paid tributes to the late singer saying, "Lata didi's vocals will connect every particle of this country for ages to come".

"Lata Ji was one such seeker of Maa Saraswati, who stunned the whole world with her divine voice. Lata Ji did sadhana, we all got the boon!" the Prime Minister remarked. He underlined that the huge



Veena of Maa Saraswati installed at Lata Mangeshkar Chowk in Ayodhya will become a symbol of musical practice. The Prime Minister further went on to add that the 92 white lotuses made of marble in the flowing waters of the lake in the chowk complex represent the life span of Lata Ji.

The Prime Minister congratulated the Uttar Pradesh government and Ayodhya Development Authority for this innovative effort and offered his heartfelt tributes to Mangeshkar on behalf of all the countrymen. "I pray to Lord Shri Ram that the blessings we got from her life should continue to leave a mark on the coming generations

through her melodious songs", the Prime Minister added. Modi further said, "I believe that the Lata Mangeshkar Chowk of Ayodhya and all such memories associated with her will enable us to feel a sense of duty towards the nation".

Highlighting the re-establishment of Ayodhya's proud heritage and the new dawn of development in the city, the Prime Minister remarked that Lord Ram is the symbol of our civilization and is the living ideal of our morality, values, dignity and duty. "From Ayodhya to Rameshwaram, Lord Ram is absorbed in every particle of India", Modi added.

Armyman held by STF for duping jobseekers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Meerut unit of UP Special Task Force (STF) arrested an army havildar for allegedly duping aspirants on the false promises of recruitment under the Agniveer scheme by helping them in passing the strenuous medical examination, officials said on Wednesday.

The accused Naresh, a resident of village Masouta in district Ghaziabad, who happens to be a serving havildar, was arrested by the Meerut STF from Garh Road under Sadar Bazar police station area of the district following inputs by Military Intelligence on Tuesday evening. The trap was laid after tracing the location of the accused with the help of his mobile surveillance.

Brijesh Kumar Singh, Additional Superintendent of Police of STF Meerut, said that an input was received from Military Intelligence that some elements were engaged in recovering huge amounts of

money from aspirants of Agniveer recruitment in the Army. He said that the accused demanded Rs 5 lakh from the aspirants on the pretext of recruitment in the Agniveer scheme launched earlier this year by the government for short term recruitment in military services.

He added that three members of the gang were still absconding.

"After getting the inputs of the sinister activity taking place in the Agniveer recruitment process that is currently underway in Muzaffarnagar and Meerut, we started the investigation. The input was further developed and a candidate, Prashant Singh, was identified who was supposed to appear for re-medicals at Military Hospital in Meerut on Tuesday," the ASP (STF) said.

He was lured by Naresh Kumar for confirmed re-medicals in lieu of Rs 5 lakh. The UP STF was then roped in for the task and he was arrested, according to a source.



An artist gives finishing touches to an idol of Goddess Durga at Jhilmil Kalibari in New Delhi on Wednesday. RANJAN DIMRI/PIONEER

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Right move

Govt has banned PFI but it must ensure that it is not seen as an anti-Muslim decision

The Narendra Modi Government's ban on the Popular Front of India (PFI) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is not surprising. The PFI has been proscribed for five years by the Ministry of Home Affairs for alleged with terror funding links. Multiple raids were carried out in various parts of the country, leading to hundreds of arrests by the Central agencies. That the PFI is an Islamist outfit is quite evident, but the Government has to justify the ban in the court of law where the decision is likely to be challenged. In fact, the PFI is one of the Islamist organisations all of which have misleading names. The political wing, for instance, is called the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI). Then there are the Rehab India Foundation, the Campus Front of India (CFI), the National Confederation of Human Rights Organization (NCHRO), the National Women's Front, the Empower India Foundation, etc. All of which have also been banned. One exception is the All India Imams Council. In March 2015, the PFI's public relation officer Mohammed Arif Ahmed had described the body as a "neo-social movement committed to empower people to ensure justice, freedom, and security." That was very clever on its part, for such phraseology is to the liking of liberals and intellectuals. In general too, on the face of it, few would like to have a quarrel with the folks committed to justice, freedom, and security.



Behind the nice-sounding names and nicer (ostensible) objectives lay the real goals—radicalisation of all sections of Muslims by all means, including persuasion. The hijab drive is part of this radicalisation; wearing hijab is more rampant now than it was a generation ago. The CFI's role in instigating girls to insist on wearing Islamic attire in education institutions in Karnataka is well-known. In fact, radical Muslims have convinced or coerced their fellow-religionists to follow the purist version of Islam, which is especially oppressive for women. Quite apart from Talibanising Muslim society, the PFI and sister organisations have been involved in violent activities; for example, over a decade ago, they chopped off the hand of a professor in Kerala for allegedly having said something inappropriate about Prophet Muhammad. The Kerala Government has also acted against the PFI and similar outfits. In short, the Modi Government cannot be said to be called anti-Muslim just because it acted against the PFI. A couple of issues need to be raised here. First, the Government is widely accused of using the agencies like the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation for political purposes, so even when they genuinely do what they are mandated to, questions can be raised about the action. Second, while Islamic organisations involved in criminal activities must be dealt with firmly, the outfits claiming to represent other faiths should also be tackled accordingly if they are involved in unlawful activities. The Government must address these issues.

PICTALK



A woman carries her pet cats for vaccination on World Rabies Day in Jakarta, Indonesia

Durand faultlines on cricket pitch

Power politics has seeped on to the cricket ground, too, and this is not good news either for the game of cricket or for cricket-playing nations



BHOPINDER SINGH

When the former Pakistani speedster and motor-mouth Shoaib Akhtar railed against the ostensible behaviour of Afghan players and fans in the recent Asia Cup match, the subliminal sense of Pakistani clientelism was unmistakable. Shoaib's patronising tone following the heated exchange by players in the cliffhanger reeked of one-sided entitlement, "Aap hai ki hamare bhai hai, sah mulk hain, hum apse laad bhi karte hai, khyal bhi rakhte hai, and aap kya batameezi bhi karte ho. (Here you are, we consider you our brothers, you are our neighbouring nation, we love and take care of, and here you are showing your brazenness) this is not acceptable yaar." That Shoaib's view was selectively berating, condescending and mocking is one thing - but it was also layered by unsubtle societal faultlines, "Isilye allah ne apko Saza di, isilye aalah ne ek pathan ko duurse pathan se chakka mar-wake zaleel kiya, aur rote hui gayi Afghanistan team (That is why the almighty punished you, where the almighty made a Pathan (Pakistani player) hit a six against you, and you were humiliated and Afghanistan team went out crying!). The subtext of a Pakistani Pathan versus Afghan Pathan was loaded, as it militates against the sense of Pashtunistan or common homeland/identity of Pathans across both sides of the Durand Line, separating Pakistan and Afghanistan.



The visibilised animosity besetting the Pakistan-Afghanistan realm is palpable and deep, and the cricket pitch only reflects the same. It is starker and more intense as compared to the outpourings in India-Pakistan matches, today. The historically wounded sentiment along the 2670-kilometer-long border dividing Afghanistan-Pakistan or the Durand Line (vehemently unrecognised by Afghanistan), has metastasized over the years with the perception of constant Pakistani patronage of terror and mayhem in Afghanistan. Islamabad has pandered to Pan-Islamic terror groups like the

dreaded Taliban, puritanical Haqqani faction, brutal Hekmatyar faction, etc., to suppress and undercut Pashtun nationalism - all this has led to simmering hate in the minds of average Afghan on the street who justifiably blame Pakistan for decades of bloodshed and violence. Treating Afghanistan as its backyard or 'Strategic Depth' is an institutionalised aspiration in Pakistan and even the revisionist Taliban regime finds itself uncomfortable defending Pakistani interferences, beyond a point. A few months back, the Taliban Foreign Ministry was forced to call the Pakistani Ambassador in Kabul to condemn airstrikes on Afghan soil. Taliban spokesperson had warned, 'not to test that patience of Afghans' and that, 'same mistakes again...will have bad consequences! Even with its own propped Taliban regime in Kabul, the Pakistanis are getting the rough end of the stick, as the blame for the larger Afghan socio-economic misery is attributed squarely of the Pakistanis, and especially to its shadowy agency, ISI. No amount of rote Pakistani spiel of 'co-religiosity cuts ice in Afghanistan. It's not just 'Taliban Khan' or the former Pakistani Prime

SO, WHILE THE WAR-TORN AFGHANISTAN CRICKET TEAM HAS KEPT DEFYING THE ODDS WITH INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES AND HEROICS OF RESILIENCE AND HEROICS, IT HAS SADLY LOST MORE MATCHES THAN IT HAS WON

Minister Imran Khan who is the poster boy of Pakistani misadventures, but even the coalition of PPP and PML-N are similarly despised in the unforgiving memories of the Pathans. Afghan elders remember Nawaz Sharif's electoral bluster to then rivals PPP in 1993, 'You gave up Dhaka, but we took Kabul' with dismay and hate. Across the political canvass of Pakistani democracy and Military rules, the Pakistanis have sought indebtedness of the Afghans for the harbouring of Pashtun refugees - only the Afghans have found that expectation extremely humiliating, simplistic, and condescending. So, while the war-torn Afghanistan Cricket Team has kept defying the odds with individual performances and heroics of resilience, and heroics, it has sadly lost more matches than it has won. This Asia Cup was no different (win against the much higher-ranked Bangladesh notwithstanding), except that when it came to the Afghanistan-Pakistan match, a lot more was at stake and Afghan emotions were raw. Beyond the on-field fracas amongst players, after the match, the Afghan fans let their fury on Pakistani fans and had them scurrying for

safety. The pent-up frustration against the Pakistanis was a lot more than what can be attributed to a simple case of winning or losing a cricket match. The irrepressible Winston Churchill once noted about the Pathans, 'Every family cultivates its vendetta; every clan, its feud. Today the proud Pathans (who form the majority of Afghanistan) are reeling under unprecedented misery and there is no doubt as to which direction their ire is pointed. Official politics may not be on the side of the average Afghan belief, as its incumbent government is still essentially dependent on Pakistani support for legitimacy, but it is a groundswell of angst that this filling up fast and may tip over the Taliban's patience, too. It was ultimately left to the former Afghan captain, Shafiq Stanikzai, to have the last word when he coldly warned Shoaib, 'baat ko nation pe Mat lena' (do not extrapolate your comments to the nation) — implicit in the Stanikzai's warning was the larger sentiment and augury of the future.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IRAN IN TURMOIL

Sir — The republic of Iran is in turmoil over the recent tragic custodial death of the 22-year-old Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini at the altar of police brutality. She preferred to sacrifice her life rather than succumbing to police atrocities to enforce harsh hijab rules and curb their rights in the name of faith and religion. In fact, never before such extreme acts of dissent have surfaced in Iran on a grand scale. It is the women folk, be it in Iran or Afghanistan, who have borne the brunt of fundamental right-wing Islam curtailing their freedom, dreams, and aspirations.

Hundreds of women across 80 cities in Iran have taken to the streets to oppose this oppressive practice of slavery inflicted on women for centuries. They are not just removing their Head scarves, cutting their hair in public, burning hijabs in public but also burning posters of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatullah Khomeini in 1979. This assumes significance as this is the world's first political revolution totally led by women. In fact, it sends strong signals that every dictatorial regime falls when Mahsa Amini stands up or a Rosa Parks refuses to succumb to a white man. It would be a moral victory of the democratic ethos, and dignity of the human being if every nation across the globe stood by them and support their rightful cause.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

BETTER SENSE PREVAILS IN PUNJAB

Sir — Punjab Assembly Speaker Kulraj Singh Sandhwan said that the Governor has acceded to the government's request for holding the Assembly session. The ongoing face-off between Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has ended with the Governor agreeing to summon the State Assembly session on September 27. The Governor should

Congress is a mess

Indian National Congress



It is saddening to see a senior leader like Ashok Gehlot stooping so low to play politics, a dirty one indeed, particularly when he is being promoted to become President of the INC. Or is he really being cheated by his cabinet ministers? It would have been gracious for him to leave state politics and instead he leaves behind a doubt as to how he will be able to handle politics at the national level

not make his presence felt by blocking the decision of the Council of Ministers that too call for convening the session.

The Governor is only an appointed authority by the Union Government. He is not representing the will of the People. Once a highly dignified post, the governorship now has been reduced to a coercive tool to hinder the smooth working of every non-lotus state government. It is good that the face-off has ended. Otherwise, the bickering between the government and the governor would have led to an ugly situation. Better sense has prevailed.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

THE GOVT IS RIGHT IN BANNING PFI

Sir — Union Home Ministry has done the right thing by banning the Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates, numbering eight for five years, as they are terrorist-based fronts in the country with active cooperation, coordination, and financial transactions with many terrorist organisations to create

communal disturbances. Many pan India raids were conducted recently to identify the network of PFI and many arrests were made with a lot of information on their activities and other associated groups.

It is most gratifying that some Islamic organisations welcomed the ban as they feel country first and faith next. The way pro-Pakistan slogans were raised during the arrest of the PFI cadre shows how they are anti-national. All Muslim political organisations should condemn the terrorist mindset of PFI and while welcoming the ban should advise all its members to keep their distance from PFI and its associate organisations for the peaceful coexistence of all with unity in diversity and should not fall prey to such organisations.

JP Reddy | Nalgonda

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

EWS quota must wait

The SC has reserved its decision; the emotive issue must be amicably solved

The reservation is as emotive an issue as it is economic. Nevertheless, it remains unresolved to date as both parties dig their heels in the court. The Supreme Court has reserved its decision on 10 per cent quota to persons from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). The Central Government's decision to give 10 per cent reservation to economically weaker sections over and above 50 per cent already given to other backward castes, and Schedule Castes & Tribes. The petition was filed against the 103rd amendment to the Constitution, which introduced changes to Articles 15 and 16 that deal with the right to equality and provide the basis for reservations. The argument against the amendment is that the 50 per cent limit on reservation cannot be crossed as it would tantamount to violate the basic premise of Constitution, which is equality. The Centre had earlier told the Supreme Court that the EWS quota does not erode the rights of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities as they already enjoy many other benefits.



The Government contention that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been given several benefits under the Constitution, including Article 16(4)(a) (special provision for promotion) and Article 332 (reservation in State Assemblies), may be true but unfortunately despite all these benefits they still remain on the lowest rung of social hierarchy and lag behind on the economic front as well. But having said that, the economic criterion must be at least a factor while giving reservation to any section of society. The Government introduced the EWS quota for those who do not fall in the category of SC/ST and OBCs but have an annual family income of less than ₹8 lakh per annum. The intent was right but the method was not. And this is what is being contested by the petitioners. The criterion is arbitrary and impractical, to say the least. To be fair to the Government, it cannot touch the reservation to SC/ST and OBCs and so it has no choice. Last year, the Supreme Court had said that the criteria seemed arbitrary. Since the income criteria of ₹8 lakh per annum was used to exclude the 'creamy layer' from the OBC quota, the court said it was 'mechanical' and included to distinguish EWS as well. The SC observation holds water as ground realities may be very different. The decision of Supreme Court in this regard would be a landmark in the debate for reservations and could stir a hornet's nest.

SOUNDBITE

Where we get our military equipment is not a new issue or changed due to geopolitical changes. We exercise a choice that is in our national interest.



External Affairs Minister —S Jaishankar

Italy has chosen us and we will not betray it. We will govern with the aim of uniting people.



Italy's PM-elect —Giorgia Meloni

They say if you keep getting the same roles, it means you are very lucky, that people want to keep watching you. However, I feel it's the death of an actor.



Actor —Archana Puran Singh

Right from Asia Cup, every match where he (Virat) got runs, there was some improvement coming. I think the power game is back



Former cricketer —Sarjaj Manjrekar

As a group, we will invest over \$100 billion of capital in the next decade.



Businessman —Gautam Adani

FIRST COLUMN

FREE WILL IS THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE

We want to be independent, but we are bound by the constraints of the world



AJIT BISNOI

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.

We possess free will, which is defined as the power of desiring and deciding without the restraint of necessity or fate. It is the ability to desire unlimitedly and decide as we choose. But we are not so independent, because being independent will mean that we can achieve what we desire, but we are bound by the constraints of the world. For example, we can desire to be very rich. But can we manage it without following the rules of becoming rich like having the necessary abilities, opportunities, support of the system, etc? No, we are not really independent.

However, our free will does give this false impression that we are independent. Rather there is another serious drawback in doing so, if we get attached with what we desire. Lord Krishna has repeatedly warned against such attachments in the Bhagavad-Geeta. In verse # 2.62, the Lord states, "From attachment lust manifests and from lust anger results." Lord Krishna goes on in the next verse, "From anger foolishness results; from foolishness bewilderment results; from bewilderment, loss of intelligence occurs. And by the loss of intelligence a person is doomed." (2.63)



Yes, it is that serious. Don't we know that desiring is easy but to fulfill is something else. Attachments cause suffering. That is why one is strongly advised to be detached, because absence of attachment delivers one from suffering. (6.23) But if we do desire as we are likely to do, we should take shelter of God, who can fulfill all our legitimate desires. Sanjay of the Mahabharata fame goes to the extent of stating that linked with God, there will be opulence, victory, wealth and morality. (18.78)

As mentioned earlier, we can desire but fulfilling them is not that simple. Because, as stated by Lord Krishna, "We have a right only in action, not ever in predetermining its fruits." (2.47) The Lord warns that we should not try to do so, because those who try are pitiable. (2.49) It makes sense; does it not? If we were given the right to decide the fruits of action, there will be no limits on what we will all desire.

This right of deciding the fruit of action is with God only, as it must be. Imagine a world in which everyone is desiring unlimitedly and surely there will be conflicting desires. For example, there is one prime minister and multiple numbers desire to become one. What happens then?

Similar is the phenomenon of fate or luck as we call it. This is the fruit of our 'karmas' (deeds), and is strictly as per the 'karmaphala principle', which is: "What we sow we reap." This is administered by divine authorities under the superintendence of God. (9.10)

They do so completely in a fair fashion. Are we then stuck if we have done some wrong? The answer is yes, because we can do an act but cannot erase it. Otherwise, all of us will be busy erasing what bad acts we have done in the past. But fortunately, there is a way out, which is to take shelter from God. He can help us in crossing all impediments by His grace. (18.58) But to achieve this privilege, we must develop God consciousness, which can be done by doing spiritual acts, which are simple and easy to do.

In verse #18.65, Lord Krishna guides, "Develop My consciousness; become My devotee; make sacrifices for Me, and offer obeisance to Me."

(The author is a spiritual teacher)

Simple GST structure can check tax evasion



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

The existing GST structures, along with the prevailing income tax slabs and exemptions, need urgent revision to rid our nation's tax system of anomalies

The complicated tax system in India with six-decades-old Income Tax Act, 1961, with too many amendments in the form of a lot of confusing patchworks is in force. Likewise, ever since a reformative step of introducing the Goods & Service Tax (GST) Act has been taken with effect from July 1, 2017, there has been a regular practice of changing tax-structure in an ever-confusing GST regime with too many confusing and complicated provisions incorporated in the system.

An altogether new tax-regime should be introduced without patches of useless and largely misused exemptions. Implementation of Raja Chelliah Committee recommendations to fix the highest tax-slab at 30 per cent to be in tune with most countries in the world had largely abolished the practice of converting black money into white money. Gradually increasing this highest slab also through imposing cess and surcharges has undone the good achieved.

Highest tax slab of 30 per cent should be restored so that people may find it advantageous to bring complete income to books. Rather a permanent Voluntary Disclosure Scheme should be introduced whereby provision may be there in tax-return to declare at highest suggested tax-rate of 30 per cent, any income without disclosing source of income. This will make cash transactions in property deals accounted for if registration fees on them are also reduced to just three per cent. Names of all those disclosing incomes under the suggested highest 30 per cent slab should be on the website according to income disclosed so that status conscious persons may race to disclose more incomes.

Six tax exemption should be fixed at rupees five lakhs paving way for abolishing most tax exemptions, including on charity, donation, contribution to political parties and even agricultural income, which are largely misused. For instance, an ordinary farmer does not earn more than Rs five lakhs, and the provision is grossly misused by ultra-rich persons, including known celebrities, to declare their unaccounted income as agricultural income through some village land purchased only for the purpose without practically having any agricultural produce.

Income Tax slabs should be 10 and 20 per cent for incomes between 5-10 lakhs and 10-15 lakhs respectively and thereafter 30 per cent for rest. LK Jha committee recommendations to make calendar-year as financial-year should be implemented in line with most countries of the world, thus abolishing another British legacy of following April-March presently as Fiscal Year.

It is ridiculous to have different Depreciation-Rules for Tax and Corporate audits. Rather there should be single and unified Tax and Corporate Audit.

Rather than concentrating more on small cash-transactions like through BhimApp, etc., which results in fraud for



THE 18 PER CENT GST IN THE SERVICE SECTOR IS EXCESSIVELY HIGHER WHERE, FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE TAKING PART IN TV PANELS HAVE TO PRACTICALLY PAY ROUGHLY HALF OF THE HONORARIUM IN TAX, INCLUDING GST AND INCOME TAX

(The author is Guinness World Record Holder for writing most letters and RTI Consultant)



illiterate persons, all sale-purchases above Rs 10000 may be compulsorily through bank transactions. For this, transaction-charges on credit-cards should be slashed down to just half a per cent (GST-exempted) that too to be borne by central government with all incentives on purchases made through credit-cards abolished.

Presently, high 2 per cent transaction charges on credit cards make traders charge it separately from customers specially where trade margins are low. Such a system will fetch higher tax-revenue for the government, than through half-percent transaction charges to be borne by Government.

Banks issuing credit cards will get much more earning even with half per cent transaction charge because of manifold use of credit cards. Two sets of credit card swiping machines should be compulsory for every GST-registered dealer dealing also in cash so as to avoid payment receipt through credit cards with the usual excuse that swapping-machine is out of order.

The input tax credit system in GST-regime in manufacturing-sector is biggest corrupt practice of tax-evasion where left-out GST-invoices by ordinary customers are sold by traders to consuming manufacturers or producers to avail false Input-Tax-Credit where cash is paid back by traders to those purchasing left-out GST-invoices of actual consumers bringing more currency in circulation. This is the reason for the basic motive of currency-demonetisation being failed where currency in circulation rapidly increased rather than projected decrease.

Annual forensic audit may be made compulsory on claims made for Input-Tax-Credit by manufacturers/producers to avoid false

claims of excessive Input-Tax-Credit in these sectors. Rather study should be made if with abolition of an excessively high 18-per cent GST slab, Input-Tax-Credit can be altogether abolished from manufacturing/producing sectors, retaining it only on tradable commodities.

But such reform in Input-Tax-Credit system can be practically possible with drastic reform in GST tax-structure wherein initially only three tax slabs of 6, 12 and 30 per cent may be there abolishing all presently existing GST-rates. India is the only country which has so many GST-rates. Gradually even slabs of 6 and 12 per cent may also be replaced by a new 10-per cent tax structure.

Zero per cent GST may only be retained on totally unbranded raw materials which cannot be consumed without giving a finishing touch like agricultural-products, fish, meat, cotton-yarn, etc. All items of long term use like cars, air-conditioners, TV sets, refrigerators, etc., may attract 30 per cent GST, while their parts may uniformly attract 12 per cent GST.

Unmindful policy framers brought clutch plate and clutch bearing under different GST slabs of 18 and 28 per cent. Likewise similar items sold by confectioners like sweets, biscuits, napkins, etc., attract different GST-slabs with luxury sweets causing diabetes attracts just 5 per cent GST.

To remove confusion and abnormality, invoices for items like gold-jewellery can be drawn in two parts, one for metal and embodied items and the other for making-charges so that suggested 12 per cent GST may be payable only on making-charges. Cess on extra-luxurious items should be replaced by additional GST slabs in multiples of 60 per cent, also bringing

petroleum products under GST regime to ensure uniform pricing of petrol and diesel in all states.

Clubbing lower slabs of three and five per cent into single six per cent slabs will be more than compensated by abolishing slabs of 18 per cent. Input-Tax-Credit (ITC) system should not be applicable on non-tradable commodities and services like has been done, and rightly too, in case of car expenses for non-commercial use.

With GST slab of 18 per cent abolished and service sector attracting just 12 per cent GST, those with income of rupees ten lakhs or more (instead of present rupees 20 lakhs) can be brought under GST-regime like was the system before GST-regime. It is totally illogical to keep lawyers out of purview of the GST-regime.

The 18 per cent GST in the service sector is excessively higher where for example those participating in TV panels have to practically pay roughly half of honorarium in tax, including GST and income tax. Useless system of Tax-Deducted-At-Source for GST, which is hardly used in practice, should be altogether abolished. Or otherwise, any such deducted tax should be auto-reflected in GST-accounts of affected ones, abolishing cumbersome and additional practice of filing a new monthly return to get credit for deducted tax. Complete GST structure should be so simplified that small traders/manufacturers/professionals may be able to file their tax-returns by themselves without any need of GST-consultants.

All government payments can be considered to be exempted from GST to avoid unnecessary government-accounting by putting tax from one government pocket to another.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

IT'S A RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS NEITHER ENDED UP SERVING PAKISTAN WELL NOR SERVING THE AMERICAN INTERESTS.
—EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER S JAISHANKAR



WE DON'T VIEW OUR TIES WITH PAKISTAN, AND OUR TIES WITH INDIA, IN RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER. THESE ARE BOTH OUR PARTNERS.
—US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON NED PRICE

PM SHRI schools reimagine education in India

The Cabinet's approval to PM SHRI schools presents a rare opportunity for the country to take a quantum leap in education

The National Education Policy 2020 recognises schools as places for intellectual development and character building. Preparing students to become responsible citizens and active participants in community development is the original mandate of the policy. The policy envisages a focus on more than academics, fostering whole-child development.

Para 4.43 of the policy elaborates that fostering student agency must begin with self-regulated learning, self-assessment, peer-tutoring, and peer-to-peer assessment. It will help students care more about communicating with each other and the teacher to reflect on their learning and pursue collabora-



ASHOK PANDEY

(The author is a Delhi-based educationist)

oration goals.

Early internship possibilities, job shadowing, building cultural competencies, the spirit of volunteering, micro-credentials in life skills and school-college partnership will take the students on a lifelong learning trajectory.

A policy of the scale of NEP 2020 requires enabling legislation, curriculum framework, inter-ministerial dialogue, and preparing the ground for implementation at multiple levels. The policy is riding its course with the Prime Minister leading from the front, initiating discussions, addressing the nation, theme-based task allocation, and participative implementation strategy. The nation's response is

affirmative, and the academia is euphoric—signalling two significant indicators that the buy-in for the change is working.

Once the policy is in place, visualised outcomes recognised, and infrastructural requirements identified, we need strong institutions to foster learning and culture. In the budget speech 2021-22, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced more than 15000 schools will be qualitatively strengthened to include all components of the National Education Policy.

These schools, she added, will emerge as PM SHRI schools in their regions, hand-holding and monitoring other schools to achieve the ideals of the Policy. Consequently, the Union

Cabinet has recently approved the launch of a new centrally sponsored scheme for setting up PM SHRI schools (PM schools for Rising India). These schools will influence, inspire, and impact other schools, receive performance-based budgetary allocation and adhere to standard benchmarks.

Of the total project cost of ₹27360 Cr spread over five years, the significant contribution of ₹18128 Cr will come from the centre, and the States and UTs will raise the remaining ₹9232 Cr. UDISE+ code having schools managed by the Centre/State/UT Governments/Local self-governments would be considered for selection under the scheme. Selection of PM SHRI schools will be made

through Challenge Mode, where schools compete to become exemplary schools succeeding through a rigorous three-stage process.

The selected schools will undergo intervention, support, and quality assessment from 2022-23 to 2026-27. The entire process will be driven by an Online Challenge Portal, open once every quarter for the first two years. The policy stipulates that a maximum of two schools, one elementary and one secondary/senior secondary, would be selected per block.

The Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N) will service the scheme in geo-tagging and other related tasks. The big question is how

PM schools for rising India will differentiate themselves from the rest. The government has an ambitious target for whole-Child education through motivation to learn and succeed, while promoting the relevance of the learning experience for future lives and careers, and instilling a sense of belonging in the school environment, besides adopting a broader approach to knowledge and skill acquisition.

Furthermore, embedding technology must enable personalised and mastery-based learning. Tracking of data, educational outcomes and timely interventions can be done more frequently with the intervention of EdTech, resulting in course correction, remediation, and prompt

guidance to each student.

PM SHRI schools will manage teacher talent through a structured approach, involving teachers in decision-making and policy implementation. Treating teachers as valuable assets, intentional investment in their capacity building, career management and promotion will be hallmarks of these schools.

PM SHRI schools will endeavour to invite parents as partners in learning. Their resources, energy and local network can be leveraged to benefit learners. There is also the need for shifts in interactive, participative, experiential pedagogy and empowering learners to change their behaviour and act for sustainable development goals.

Russia prepares to annex occupied Ukraine despite outcry

AP ■ KYIV

Russia is poised to formally annex areas of Ukraine where it has military control after referendums there reportedly endorsed Moscow's rule.

But the ballots were widely discredited and earned the Kremlin no relief Wednesday from international pressure over its assault on its neighbour.

Pro-Moscow administrations of all four occupied regions of southern and eastern Ukraine said Tuesday night that their residents voted to join Russia in five days of Kremlin-orchestrated balloting.

According to Russia-installed election officials, 93% of the ballots cast in the Zaporizhzhia region supported annexation, as did 87% in the Kherson region, 98% in the Luhansk region and 99% in Donetsk.

Russian-installed officials in those occupied regions said Wednesday they would ask President Vladimir Putin to incorporate them into Russia.

It wasn't immediately clear how the administrative process would unfold.

Western countries, however, dismissed the ballots as a meaningless

pretence staged by Moscow in an attempt to legitimise its invasion of Ukraine launched on Feb. 24.

The U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said late Tuesday that Washington would propose a U.N. Security Council resolution to condemn Russia's "sham" vote.

The resolution would also urge member states not to recognise any altered status of Ukraine and demand that Russia withdraws its troops from its neighbour, she tweeted.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, also weighed in on the ballots, on Wednesday calling them "illegal" and describing the results as "falsified."

"This is another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty (and) territorial integrity, (and) systematic abuses of human rights," Borrell tweeted.

In Kyiv, Ukraine's foreign ministry blasted the ballots as a "propaganda show" and "null and worthless."

"Forcing people in these territories to fill out some papers at the barrel of a gun is yet another Russian crime in the course of its aggression against Ukraine," a foreign ministry statement said.

It asked the EU, NATO and the



Group of Seven major industrial nations to "immediately and significantly" step up pressure on Russia through new sanctions, and significantly increase their military aid to Ukraine. The Kremlin remained unmoved amid the hail of criticism, however.

ratist forces currently control about 60% of the territory.

The EU also expressed outrage over the suspected sabotage Tuesday of two underwater natural gas pipelines from Russia to Germany and warned of retaliation for any attack on Europe's energy networks.

Borrell said Wednesday that "all available information indicates those leaks are the result of a deliberate act," even though the perpetrators haven't so far been identified.

"Any deliberate disruption of European energy infrastructure is utterly unacceptable and will be met with a robust and united response," Borrell said in a statement on behalf of the EU's 27 member countries.

Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said allegations that Russia could be behind the incidents were "predictable and stupid."

He told reporters in a conference call that the damage has caused Russia huge economic losses.

The war in Ukraine has brought an energy standoff between the EU, many of whose members have for years relied heavily on Russian natural gas supplies, and Moscow.

The damage makes it unlikely the pipelines will be able to supply any gas to Europe this winter, accord-

ing to analysts.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's military and a Washington-based think tank said Wednesday that Russia is sending troops without any training to the front line.

Moscow has struggled to hold the line against Ukraine's recent counteroffensive and has ordered a partial mobilisation to replenish its ranks.

The effort is causing unrest, however, amid a reluctant public.

In a daily briefing, the Ukraine military's general staff said 1st Tank Regiment of the 2nd Motorised Rifle Division of Russia's 1st Tank Army has received untrained new troops.

The Ukrainian military also said prison convicts are arriving in Ukraine to reinforce the Russian lines.

It offered no evidence to support the claim, though the Ukrainian security services have released audio of allegedly monitored Russian phone conversations on the issue.

The Institute for the Study of War think tank cited one online video by a man who identified himself as a member of the 1st Tank Regiment, visibly upset, saying that he and his colleagues wouldn't

receive training before shipping out to the Russian-occupied region of Kherson in Ukraine.

"Mobilised men with a day or two of training are unlikely to meaningfully reinforce Russian positions affected by Ukrainian counteroffensives in the south and east," the institute said.

The U.K. Ministry of defense said Ukraine's counteroffensive, which has inflicted some humiliating defeats on Moscow's forces, is advancing slowly.

It said Russia is currently putting up a stouter defense.

In the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk, which is partially occupied by Moscow, Russian fire killed five people and wounded 10 others over the last 24 hours, said Pavlo Kyrylenko, the head of the local military authority.

Authorities in the southern Ukrainian city of Nikopol said Russian rockets and artillery pounded the city overnight.

The city, across the Dnipro River from Russian-occupied territory, saw 10 high-rises and private buildings hit, as well as a school, power lines and other areas, said Valentyn Reznichenko, the head of the local military administration, said.

Over 194,000 Russians flee call-up to neighbouring countries

AP ■ TALLINN (ESTONIA)

It took Vsevolod four days to drive from Moscow to Russia's southern border with Georgia. He had to abandon his car at one point and continue on foot.

On Tuesday, he finally finished his 1,800-kilometer (1,100-mile) journey and crossed the frontier to escape being called up to fight in Russia's war in Ukraine.

"At 26, I do not want to be carried home in a zinc-lined (coffin) or stain (my) hands with somebody's blood because of the war of one person that wants to build an empire," he told The Associated Press, asking that his last name not be used because he feared retaliation from Russia.

He was one of over 194,000 Russian nationals who have fled to neighboring Georgia, Kazakhstan and Finland — most often by car, bicycle or on foot — in the week since President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilization of reservists.

The mass exodus of men — alone or with their families or friends — began Sept. 21, shortly after Putin's address to the nation, and continued all this week. Early on, they snapped up airline tickets, which spiked in price on the few airlines still fly-



ing out of Russia. But the rest had to gas up their cars and join the long lines snaking on roads toward the borders.

According to the online service Yandex Maps, the traffic jam leading to Verkhny Lars, a border crossing into Georgia from Russia's North Ossetia region, stretched for about 15 kilometers (over 9 miles) on Tuesday. Social media showed hundreds of pedestrians lining up at the checkpoint after Russian border guards relaxed regulations and allowed people to cross on foot.

Similarly long queues were reported at some crossings into Kazakhstan.

The Interior Ministry of

a makeshift enlistment office will be set up at the Verkhny Lars crossing, and local officials confirmed to the state news agency Tass that Russian men are being served call-up summonses at crossings into Georgia.

Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has said that only about 300,000 men with prior combat or other military service would be mustered, but reports have emerged from various Russian regions that recruiters were rounding up men outside that description. That fueled fears of a much broader call-up, sending droves of men of all ages and backgrounds to airports and borders.

"There's a risk that they will announce a full mobilization," according to a resident of St. Petersburg who made it to Kazakhstan on Tuesday. The man, who refused to give his name because he feared for his safety, told AP he spent three days driving from his home to Uralsk in northwestern Kazakhstan near the border.

He said Putin's mobilization remarks differed from what his decree said, leaving room for a broader interpretation, adding: "People worry that sooner or later, a full mobilization will be announced, and no one will be able to cross the borders."



EU vows retaliation if energy network attacked

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union suspects that damage to two underwater natural gas pipelines was sabotage and is warning of retaliation for any attack on Europe's energy networks, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Wednesday.

"All available information indicates those leaks are the result of a deliberate act," Borrell said in a statement on behalf of the 27 EU member countries.

"Any deliberate disruption

of European energy infrastructure is utterly unacceptable and will be met with a robust and united response."

Seismologists reported on Tuesday that explosions rattled the Baltic Sea before unusual leaks were discovered on two underwater natural gas pipelines running from Russia to Germany. Some European leaders and experts pointed to possible sabotage given the energy standoff with Russia provoked by the war in Ukraine.

The three leaks were report-

ed on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines, which are filled with natural gas but are not delivering the fuel to Europe.

The damage means that the pipelines are unlikely to be able to carry any gas to Europe this winter even if the political will to bring them online emerged, according to analysts.

Borrell said the EU will support any investigation into the damage, and "will take further steps to increase our resilience in energy security."

Danish Prime Minister

Mette Frederiksen has said that "it is the authorities' clear assessment that these are deliberate actions — not accidents."

But she said "there is no information indicating who could be behind it." Frederiksen rejected the suggestion that the incident was an attack on Denmark, saying the leaks occurred in international waters.

Denmark's defence minister, Morten Bodskov, was meeting on Wednesday with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

APPENDIX IV A
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]
Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property

E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 17.10.2022 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 1,42,33,811/- (Rupees One Crore Forty Two Lakh Thirty Three Thousand Eight Hundred Eleven only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLNDD00290335, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 26.09.2022 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 27.09.2022 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from Mr. Ajay Grover, Mrs. Charu Grover and Mrs. Kamla Grover.

The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 1,05,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Five Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 10,50,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakh Fifty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Property bearing Municipal No. XVI/936 (New) measuring about 79 Sq. Yds. built up entire First Floor, entire Second Floor, entire Third Floor with its Terrace/Roof Rights and above upto sky, alongwith proportionate undivided share in the Land, comprised in Khalsa No. 2244/1215/1140, Gali No.-2, Block-QQ, Situated at Naiwala, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110006. The said Property is bounded as under:-

North : Gali South : Property No. XVI/939
East : Property No. XVI/934-935 West : Property No. XVI/937

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in.

Date : 26.09.2022 Authorized Officer
Place : NEW DELHI INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

Thousands rally to demand Czech Govt's resignation

AP ■ PRAGUE

Thousands of protesters rallied again in the Czech capital on Wednesday to condemn the Czech government's handling of the energy crisis and its support for Ukraine.

Despite a national holiday, the protest that united the far right with the far left was smaller than the some 70,000 people who gathered for the same reasons at Prague's central Wenceslas Square on September 3.

Waving Czech national flags, the protesters demanded the resignation of the current pro-Western coalition government led by conservative Prime Minister Petr Fiala.

"Resign, resign," they repeatedly chanted during a



demonstration held under the slogan "The Czech Republic first," a reference to former US President Donald Trump's nationalist platform which he called "America first."

They criticised the government on a number of issues,

Schwarzenegger visits Auschwitz in message against hatred



AP ■ OSWIECIM (POLAND)

Film icon Arnold Schwarzenegger visited the site of the Auschwitz Nazi death camp on Wednesday, meeting a Holocaust survivor and the son of Holocaust survivors to deliver a message against prejudice and hatred.

The "Terminator" actor and former California governor viewed the barracks, watchtowers and remains of gas chambers that endure as evidence of the German extermination of Jews and others during World War II.

He also met with a woman who as a 3-year-old child was subjected to experiments by the notorious Nazi doctor Josef Mengele.

"This is a story that has to stay alive, this is a story that we have to tell over and over again," he said after his visit to the site of the death camp, speaking in a former synagogue that now is home to the Auschwitz Jewish Centre Foundation.

He stood alongside Simon Bergson, who was born after the war to Auschwitz survivors, and mentioned his own family history.

"I was the son of a man who fought in the Nazi war and was a soldier," the 75-year-old

Schwarzenegger said.

He said he and Bergson, who are close in age, were united in their work.

"Let's fight prejudice together and let's just terminate it once and for all," Schwarzenegger said.

His visit to the site in southern Poland, which was under German occupation during WWII, was his first and came as part of his work with the Auschwitz Jewish Centre Foundation, whose mission is to fight hatred through education.

He received the foundation's inaugural "Fighting Hatred" award in June for his anti-hatred stance on social media.

He said he couldn't attend in person then because he was filming a new action series in Canada and was in a "COVID bubble."

After his visit to Auschwitz, he vowed it wouldn't be his last. "I'll be back," he said.

Schwarzenegger, who is originally from Austria, has spoken openly in the past about his father, Gustav Schwarzenegger, being a Nazi soldier during the war.

He told Russians in a video posted on social media in March that they were being lied to about the war in Ukraine and accused President Vladimir Putin of sacrificing Russian soldiers to his own ambitions.

In that video he brought up painful memories about how his own father was lied to as he fought, and how he returned to Austria a broken man, physically and emotionally, after being wounded at Leningrad.

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Certificates pertaining to Shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) for issue of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company :-

Sl. No.	Folio No.	Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant)	Cert.No.	Dist.No.	Lost Shares
1	SPP0004818	RANJEEV RAKKAR ACHARYA	6007	431763-832	70
2	SPP0007747	SUKHBIJIR CHAND JAIN	9166-68	567320-556	237
3	SPP0004481	KULJIT KAUR TEJINDER SINGH LASCHAR	5508	392139-78	40

Any person having any claim/objection in respect of the above requests should lodge such claim/objection with the company at its Corporate Office within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which the company will consider to give effect to the above requests.

Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with the aforesaid share certificates.

for KAMA HOLDINGS LIMITED
Sd/-
EKTA MAHESHWARI
WHOLE TIME DIRECTOR, CFO & COMPANY SECRETARY

Place: Gurugram
Date : 28.09.2022

Blasts precede Baltic pipeline leaks, sabotage seen likely

AP ■ WARSAW

Denmark believes "deliberate actions" caused big leaks in two natural gas pipelines running under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany, and seismologists said powerful explosions preceded the leaks.

European leaders and experts pointed to possible sabotage amid the energy standoff with Russia provoked by the war in Ukraine. Although filled with gas, neither pipeline is currently supplying it to Europe.

"It is the authorities' clear assessment that these are deliberate actions — not accidents," Danish Prime



Minister Mette Frederiksen said on Tuesday.

But she added "there is no information indicating who could be behind it." Frederiksen rejected the suggestion that the incident was an

attack on Denmark, saying the leaks occurred in international waters.

The incident overshadowed the inauguration of a long-awaited pipeline that will bring Norwegian gas to Poland to bolster the continent's energy independence from Moscow.

The first explosion was recorded early Monday southeast of the Danish island of Bornholm, said Bjorn Lund, director of the Swedish National Seismic Network. A second, stronger blast northeast of the island that night was equivalent to a magnitude-2.3 earthquake. Seismic stations in Denmark, Norway and Finland also registered the explosions.

Minister Mette Frederiksen said on Tuesday.

But she added "there is no information indicating who could be behind it." Frederiksen rejected the suggestion that the incident was an

Biden looks to win over Pacific Island leaders at summit

AP ■ WASHINGTON



President Joe Biden is set to host Pacific Island leaders for a two-day summit as the US looks to counter China's military and economic influence in the region.

Pacific Island leaders, meanwhile, see an even more pressing concern: climate change. On Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken planned to kick off the summit with a luncheon for the Pacific Island leaders and other senior officials from the region.

US Climate envoy John Kerry will hold a climate roundtable with the leaders, and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan will join them for a dinner hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Biden is set to address the leaders at the State Department on Thursday and will host them for a dinner at the White House.

The leaders also are to meet with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and U.S. Business leaders.

Leaders from Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and New Caledonia are attending.

Vanuatu and Nauru are sending representatives, and

Australia, New Zealand and the secretary-general of the Pacific Island Forum are sending observers, according to the White House.

"This is just showing our partnership with the region," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said.

She added that the talks were expected to touch on climate change, coronavirus pandemic and economic recovery, maritime security, environmental protection and the Indo-Pacific.

The first-of-its-kind summit comes as the administration has sought to demonstrate that the U.S. Remains committed to being an enduring player in the region.

While the high-level gathering is welcomed by the region's leaders as a sign of Biden's commitment to the Pacific, there's also a healthy

scepticism about whether the United States will remain engaged for the longer term in the Pacific Islands.

The area has received diminished attention from the U.S. In the aftermath of the Cold War, analysts say.

For the Biden administration, stemming the growing influence of China is a high priority.

But for many of the Pacific Island leaders, climate change is the existential crisis that demands attention above all else.

Last week at the U.N. General Assembly, Prime Minister Kaueua Natano of the tiny island of Tuvalu described how rising sea levels have impacted everything from the soil that his people rely on to plant crops, to the homes, roads and power lines that get washed away.

The cost of eking out a living, he said, eventually becomes too much to bear, causing families to leave and the nation to disappear.

"This is how our islands will cease to exist," Natano said. In June, Inia Seruiratu, Fiji's minister for defence, said at the Shangri-La Dialogue that "machine guns, fighter jets, gray ships and green battalions are not our primary security concern."

"The single greatest threat to our very existence is climate change," he said.

Plans for the summit were announced earlier this month, just days after the Solomon Islands called on the U.S. And Britain to not send naval vessels to the South Pacific nation until approval processes are overhauled.

The Solomons in April signed a new security pact with China — a moment that analysts say has created increased urgency for the Biden administration to put greater focus on the region.

The United States and Britain are among countries concerned that a new security pact with Beijing could lead to a Chinese naval base being constructed less than 2,000 kilometers off Australia's northeast coast.

Darshana Baruah, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said that Beijing has proved to be more present in the region in the last decades.

North Korea test launches missiles on eve of Harris trip to Seoul

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters on Wednesday, its neighbours said, a day before U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris is to visit South Korea.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the North Korean missiles lifted off 10 minutes apart on Wednesday afternoon from its capital region and flew toward the waters off its east coast.

Japanese Vice Defense Minister Toshiro Ino said Japan's military also detected the launches and that the weapons flew in an irregular trajectory.

Ino said that "North Korea's repeated missile firings amid (Russia's) invasion of Ukraine is impermissible."

The South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea's provocations would only deepen its international isolation while pushing South Korea and the United States to strengthen their deterrence.

The launches follow a missile test by North Korea earlier this week.

Harris is to arrive in South Korea on Thursday for talks with President Yoon Suk Yeol and other officials. She also is to visit the tense border with North Korea, in what U.S. Officials call an attempt to underscore the strength of the U.S.-South Korean alliance and the U.S. Commitment to "stand beside" South Korea in the face of any



North Korea threats.

U.S. And South Korean navy ships were also conducting drills off South Korea's east coast in a show of force against North Korea. The four-day exercise, which began Monday, involves the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. It is the first training exercise by the allies involving a U.S. Aircraft carrier near the Korean Peninsula since 2017.

South Korea-U.S. Joint military exercises often draw a furious response from North Korea, which views them as an invasion rehearsal. A short-range North Korean missile launched Sunday was seen as a response to the U.S.-South Korean training.

South Korea and Japan estimated that the North Korean missiles fired Wednesday flew 300-360 kilometers with a maximum alti-

tude of 30-50 kilometers.

The low trajectories resembled the flight of the missile fired on Sunday, which some analysts said was likely a nuclear-capable, highly maneuverable weapon modelled after Russia's Iskander missile.

In recent years, North Korea has been adding Iskander-like missiles and other solid-fuel weapons to its arsenal. Some experts say the weapons are designed to carry battlefield nuclear warheads to counter the stronger conventional forces of South Korea and the United States, which stations about 28,500 troops in the South.

North Korea has dialled up its missile testing activities to a record pace in 2022, launching more than 30 ballistic weapons, including its first intercontinental ballistic missiles since 2017.

One Chinese killed, 2 hurt by gunmen in Pak

PTI ■ KARACHI

A Chinese national was shot dead and two others injured on Wednesday when unidentified gunmen opened fire inside a dental clinic in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, police said, in what is believed to be the latest targeted attack against them.

SSP (South) Asad Raza said the attackers entered the clinic located in Karachi's Saddar area pretending to be a patient, Dawn news reported.

He said that one person was killed and two injured persons, including a woman, were shifted to a hospital for treatment.

He confirmed that the victims were Chinese people.

Later, police identified the victims as 25-year-old Ronild Raimond Chaw, 72-year-old Ramgrade and 74-year-old Richard.

The police said that the condition of both the injured foreigners was critical as they had suffered bullet wounds in their abdomen.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has ordered the immediate arrest of the attackers, saying such incidents were not tolerable, according to the official statement.

He has also sought a detailed report from the Karachi Additional IGP.

The incident is the latest in the recent spate of attacks on Chinese nationals in the country.

In April, three Chinese were killed in a suicide blast in Karachi University carried out by the separatist Baloch Liberation Army, which is opposed to China's investments in Balochistan, accusing China and Pakistan of exploitation of the resource-rich region.

Some of the other attacks were also attributed to radical Islamic militant outfits in Pakistan.

Iran's anti-veil protests draw on long history of resistance

AP ■ TEHRAN

A young woman climbs to the top of a car in the middle of Mashhad, a conservative Iranian city famed for its Islamic shrines.

She takes off her headscarf and starts chanting, "Death to the dictator!" Protesters nearby join in and cars honk in support.

For many Iranian women, it's an image that would have been unthinkable just a decade ago, said Fatemeh Shams, who grew up in Mashhad.

"When you see Mashhad women coming to the streets and burning their veils publicly, this is really a revolutionary change. Iranian women are putting an end to a veiled society and the compulsory veil," she said.

Iran has seen multiple eruptions of protests over the past years, many of them fueled by anger over economic difficulties.

But the new wave is showing fury

against something at the heart of the identity of Iran's cleric-led state: the compulsory veil.

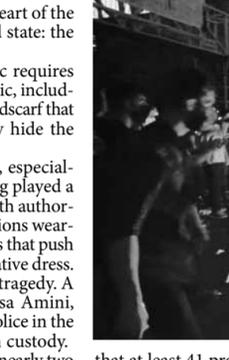
Iran's Islamic Republic requires women to cover up in public, including wearing a "hijab" or headscarf that is supposed to completely hide the hair.

Many Iranian women, especially in major cities, have long played a game of cat-and-mouse with authorities, with younger generations wearing loose scarves and outfits that push the boundaries of conservative dress.

That game can end in tragedy. A 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, was arrested by morality police in the capital Tehran and died in custody.

Her death has sparked nearly two weeks of widespread unrest that has reached across Iran's provinces and brought students, middle-class professionals and working-class men and women into the streets.

Iranian state TV has suggested



that at least 41 protesters and police have been killed. An Associated Press count of official statements by authorities tallied at least 13 dead, with more than 1,400 demonstrators arrested.

A young woman in Tehran, who



said she has continually participated in the past week's protests in the capital city, said the violent response of security forces had largely reduced the size of demonstrations.

"People still are coming to the streets to find one metre of space to

shout their rage but they are immediately and violently chased, beaten and taken into custody, so they try to mobilise in four- to five-person groups and once they find an opportunity they run together and start to demonstrate," she said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"The most important protest they (Iranian women) are doing right now is taking off their scarves and burning them," she added. "This is a women's movement first of all, and men are supporting them in the backdrop."

A writer and rights activist since her student days at Tehran University, Shams participated in the mass anti-government protests of 2009 before having to flee Iran.

But this time is different, she said. Waves of violent repression against protesters in the past 13 years "have disillusioned the traditional classes of society" that once were the

backbone of the Islamic Republic, said Shams, who now lives in the United States. The fact that there have been protests in conservative cities like Mashhad or Qom — the historic center of Iran's clergy — is unprecedented, she said.

Cuba without electricity after hurricane hammers power grid

AP ■ HAVANA

Hurricane Ian knocked out power across all of Cuba and devastated some of the country's most important tobacco farms when it slammed into the island's western tip as a major hurricane.

Cuba's Electric Union on Tuesday said in a statement that work was underway to gradually restore service to the country's 11 million people during the night. Power was initially knocked out to about 1 million people in Cuba's western provinces, but later the entire grid collapsed.

Ian hit a Cuba that has been struggling with an economic crisis and has faced frequent power outages in recent months. It made landfall as a Category 3 storm on the island's western end, devastating Pinar del Rio province, where much of the tobacco



used for Cuba's iconic cigars is grown.

Tens of thousands of people were evacuated and others fled the area ahead of the arrival of Ian, which caused flooding, damaged houses and toppled trees. Authorities were still assessing the damage, although no fatalities had been reported by Tuesday night.

Ian's winds damaged one of Cuba's most important tobacco farms in La Robaina.

"It was apocalyptic, a real disaster," said Hirochi Robaina, owner of the farm that bears his name and that his grandfather made known internationally.

Satellite images show Eritrea military buildup near Tigray

AP ■ NAIROBI

New satellite imagery of one of the world's most reclusive nations shows a military buildup inside Eritrea near the border with Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, backing up witness accounts of a new, large-scale offensive.

Eritrea has fought alongside Ethiopia against Tigray forces. It rejects allegations that its soldiers committed some of the worst atrocities in the conflict that began in late 2020. Witnesses in Eritrea this month told The Associated Press that people including students and public servants are being rounded up across the nation and sent to fight in the new offensive.

The satellite imagery provided by Maxar Technologies shows what Maxar described as battle tanks, self-propelled howitzers and a M-46 field gun battery in the Eritrean town of Serha, near the border, on Sept. 19. The town is across the border from the Tigray town of Zalambessa, one of the first communities overrun in the war. Eritrea is one of the world's most closed countries to independent journalists, and images from there related to the war in Ethiopia are rare.

Palestinians: At least 4 killed in Israeli raid in West Bank

AP ■ JENIN REFUGEE CAMP (WEST BANK)

At least four Palestinians were killed and 44 others wounded during an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank town of Jenin on Wednesday, the Palestinian Health Ministry reported, the latest in a series of deadly Israeli operations in the occupied territory.

Israeli forces said they fatally shot two Palestinians they had sent to arrest in the Jenin refugee camp over their suspected involvement in recent shooting attacks.

When soldiers surrounded a house in the camp, an explosive device detonated, a gunfight ensued and Israeli troops killed the two Palestinians, the military said.



During the raid, armed clashes broke out in the camp as militants hurled rocks and opened fire at arriving troops. The violence killed another two Palestinians and wounded at least 44 others, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party identified one of the

men killed in the clashes as a 24-year-old Palestinian intelligence officer named Ahmed Alawneh.

The party called for protests and a general strike in the West Bank over what it described as a "dangerous escalation." Jenin in the northern West Bank — long considered a bastion of Palestinian militancy and frequent flashpoint for violence — is governed by the Palestinian Authority like most other Palestinian urban centers, even though the Israeli military routinely carries out arrest raids in the area.

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Abbas, denounced the raid, saying Israel's "policy of escalation" will not deliver "legitimacy, security or stability, whether in the Islamic and Christian holy sites or in Jenin."

SRF LIMITED. Regd. Office: The Galleria, DLF Mayur Vihar, Unit No. 236 & 237, 2nd Floor, Mayur Vihar Phase, Noida Link Road, Mayur Vihar Phase I Extn, Delhi-110091

Notice is hereby given that Certificates pertaining to Shares of the Company detailed below have been reported lost and request(s) for issue of duplicate Certificates in lieu thereof have been received by the Company :-

Table with columns: Sl. No., Folio No., Name of the Share Holder / Legal Heir (Claimant), Cert-No., Dist-No., Lost Shares. Contains 9 entries of lost shares.

Any person having any claim /objection in respect of the above requests should lodge such claim/objection with the company at its Corporate Office within 15 days of the publication of this notice, failing which the company will consider to give effect to the above requests.

Place: Gurugram Date: 28-09-2022. For SRF LIMITED Sd/- RAJAT LAKHANPAL Vice President (Corporate Compliance) & Company Secretary

PUBLIC NOTICE. General public is hereby informed that Mr. Mansender Kumar & Mr. Virander Kumar both sons of Late Sh. Gyan Chand are intending to sell Flat No. S1-4, 1LG Back Side 2nd Floor

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER, CONSTRUCTION WING, UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM. E-32, JUDGE FARM, HALDWANI, DISTT.- NAINITAL(263139)

E-Tender Notice. 1. Name of the work:- Construction of remaining building work of Drgware house at Almora, District-Almora. 2. Estimated Cost: - Rs. 109.98 Lakh

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER. Name of work and its location: 30-Elect-38-T-2022-23-E3. Electrical work in connection with EI Building & 3 Nos. Relay hut i/c 'replacement of signaling gears with electronic interlocking at HN2M station'.

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE. Shri A.V.Mittal, Dy.CE/ Br./HQ, Northern Railway, New Delhi the then Sr. DEN, Central Railway was convicted to undergo RI for three years and a fine of Rs. 75,000/- by Hon'ble Spl. Judge Mumbai on 28.12.2012 in case No. RC-41(A)/03/MUM for the offence punishable under section 13(2) r/w 13 (1)(e) of Prevention of Corruption Act.

Decriminalising some GST offences: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is working on decriminalisation of certain offences under GST by raising the threshold limit for launching prosecution and also lowering charges for compounding of offence, an official said on Wednesday.

Currently, the law provides for launching prosecution against offenders in cases where the amount of Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion or misuse of input tax credit is more than Rs 5 crore.

"We are working on making the provision under GST Act for prosecution more simpler and friendly for taxpayers. We have Section 132 under CGST Act which criminalises illegal credit for GST evasion. The threshold level (for launching prosecution) are being reconsidered," finance ministry additional secretary (re-



enue) Vivek Aggarwal said at an Asocham event here.

Launching of prosecution by taxmen means commencement of legal proceedings against the offender.

The compounding charges for offences under GST would also be lowered so that taxpayers are encouraged to compound their offences instead of going into litigation.

Under GST Act, the amount payable for compounding of offences shall be 50 per cent of the tax amount involved subject to a minimum Rs 10,000. Maximum amount for compounding is 150 per cent of the tax or Rs 30,000,

whichever is higher.

"The compounding provision in GST is prohibitive. It requires 50 per cent to 150 per cent as compounding fees which is impossible to pay. That's why there is zero compounding for all cases under GST. That is being relooked at so that it becomes affordable and compounding becomes a first or better choice for taxpayer," Aggarwal said.

The revenue department official further said that the robust growth in tax collection both in direct and indirect tax collections has paved the way for bringing in more taxpayer friendly reform to ensure ease of doing business and decriminalisation of tax laws.

The changes proposed in the GST law with regard to changes in prosecution threshold and compounding is likely to be placed before the GST Council in its next meeting.

Sensex skids for sixth day to close below 57,000

Metal, banking stocks tumble

PTI ■ MUMBAI

BSE benchmark Sensex spiralled lower for the sixth consecutive session on Wednesday to finish below the 57,000-level, weighed by heavy selling in metal, banking and finance stocks amid a sell-off in global equities.

A depreciating rupee and continued foreign capital outflows also affected the market sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 509.24 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 56,598.28. During the day, it tanked 621.85 points or 1.08 per cent to 56,485.67.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty declined 148.80 points or 0.87 per cent to end at 16,858.60.

ITC was the top gagger in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.97 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, Reliance Industries, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India, and HDFC twins.

On the other hand, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's and Power Grid were among the winners.

"Domestic equity continued its downfall in sync with its global peers. Markets across the



globe are seeing extreme volatility as fear of an economic downturn weighed on investors' sentiments. Back home aggressive FIIs selling in recent sessions, the upcoming RBI MPC meeting and the monthly derivatives expiry on Thursday are keeping investors on edge.

"Nifty gave up its key support levels and drifted below 17k zones. In the near term, the market is expected to remain under pressure due to global uncertainty. However mixed trends across sectors would continue to offer stock-specific opportunities, especially in auto, consumption with the ongoing festive season," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midCap gauge declined 0.47 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.43 per cent.

RBI's rate setting panel starts deliberations; decision tomorrow

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel on Wednesday started deliberations on the keenly awaited monetary policy amidst expectation of 50 basis points hike in interest rate to check inflation and improve foreign capital inflow to arrest declining value of rupee against the US dollar.

The decision of RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced on September 30.

The government has tasked the central bank to ensure the consumer price index (CPI) remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side, but retail inflation has stubbornly stayed above the RBI's comfort zone since January.

As per the latest data, the inflation was at 7 per cent in August.

While inflation remains high, the Indian rupee is sliding sharply, the US dollar and was currently trading near 82 against the greenback. The rupee depreciation has hastened following the US Fed raising their interest rate thrice by 75 basis point each in the recent past. Other major central banks too have become aggressive in raising rates.

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.

Industry body Asocham said hike in policy interest rates by the RBI in the range of 35-50 basis points seems unavoidable, given the tightening of rates by most of the central banks including the US Federal Reserve.

"While the industry would like to see lower interest rates, the main challenge and the priority is to tackle inflation head-on so that we have a sustainable growth," said chamber's Secretary General Deepak Sood.

He said the accommodative stance by the RBI supported by several fiscal measures by the government had certainly helped the economy in a multi-pronged manner.

Ramesh Nair, CEO, India and Managing Director, Market Development, Asia, Colliers expects the repo rates to see a further rise, as the government is trying to curb infla-

tion levels.

"The current repo rates stand at 5.4 per cent with the rate hovering above pre-pandemic levels. Banks have begun raising loan interest levels as a result of higher repo rate," he said. However, the upcoming festive season will spur sales as the developers are expected to offer attractive deals to homebuyers and this could neutralise the impact of rising home loan rates to some extent, he added.

Besides inflation, the RBI is also likely to come out with steps to shore up foreign capital inflows to check the declining value of the rupee against the US dollar. Forex reserves have declined by USD 86 billion (from their highs last year).

SBI research report said the Indian markets have, however, performed much better. Specifically, the rupee has been holding remarkably well with RBI intervention supporting it in the market.

Rupee plunges 37 paise to close at all-time low of 81.90 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee plunged 37 paise to close at an all-time low of 81.90 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday as the strengthening of the American currency overseas and risk-averse sentiment among investors weighed on the local unit.

In the intra-day trade, the rupee slipped below the 82-level for the first time against the American currency, as a negative trend in domestic equities and significant foreign fund outflows sapped investor appetite.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 81.90, then fell further to close at an all-time low of 81.90 against the American currency, registering a decline of 37 paise over its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee settled 14 paise higher at 81.53 against the dollar.

The rupee has nose-dived to a fresh record low amid the risk-averse mood in the mar-



kets, said Sugandha Sachdeva, Vice President - Commodity and Currency Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

The slide in the domestic equities and a strong greenback getting close to the crucial 115 mark, almost more than a 20-year high, also dragged the local unit down, Sachdeva added.

"The greenback has surged around 19.50 per cent for the year. Most of the Asian currencies, including the local unit, are reeling under pressure amid the monetary tightening campaign in the West and concerns about a global economic slowdown," Sachdeva said.

GST revenue in September likely at ₹1.45 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue mop-up in September is expected to be around Rs 1.45 lakh crore, an official said.

The collection has been over Rs 1.4 lakh crore since March and in August it was Rs 1.43 lakh crore.

"The collection in September is likely to be little more than Rs 1.45 lakh crore. Improved business activity is expected to yield better collections in coming months," the official said.

Official revenue figures will be released on October 1.

The mop-up in September last year was Rs 1.17 lakh crore. The official further said as per estimates, the average yearly revenue from GST in 2022-23 is expected to be around Rs 1.55 lakh crore.

The collection in April was at a record high of Rs 1.68 lakh crore. In May, GST revenue was Rs 1.41 lakh crore, in June Rs 1.44 lakh crore, Rs 1.49 lakh crore (July) and Rs 1.43 lakh crore.

On 5G, Ericsson vows to aid Make-in-India prowess

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson on Wednesday pledged to deepen its commitment to India's manufacturing mettle saying the company is ready for local production of 5G infrastructure, just as it has done in the past for other technology products.

The countdown for 5G services has begun in the world's second-biggest smartphone market after China, and large Indian telcos are gearing up for the roll-out of services, supercharged by ultra-high-speeds, low latency and large data handling capabilities.

According to Ericsson, consumer 5G readiness is high in India, and a recent survey has shown that over 100 million users in India with 5G-ready smartphones want to upgrade to next generation network in 2023. Many of them are even willing to shell out up to 45 per cent premium for rich experiences and applications.

"We are considered as a trusted partner globally. We have been producing in India and we will continue to do



domestic production for 5G infrastructure as well," Nitin Bansal, Head of Ericsson India, said during a virtual briefing.

On whether the local factory will be able to meet demand coming from Indian telecom operators for 5G deployment, particularly given the global supply crunch and component shortages, Bansal observed that Ericsson started manufacturing in India a long time ago.

"Our strategy is that we should build in India, for India... That does need scaling up, and we are scaling up our production capabilities with our partner Jabil in Pune, so that work is ongoing," Bansal informed.

Renewable Energy India Expo begins

PNS ■ NOIDA

The 15th edition of the Renewable Energy India Expo 2022 was inaugurated at the India Expo Mart in Greater Noida on Wednesday. Billed as Asia's biggest RE exposition organised by Informa Markets, the expo is one of the most empowering channels of discussions about the potential of the renewable energy sector in India. Over 500 exhibitors participating in the expo.

Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Bhagwant Khuba, Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers & New and Renewable Energy, Government of India, said, "The government of India has already set its target of making India carbon emission-free in the coming years and witnessing industries take the responsibility so efficiently is definitely going to help us accomplish the aim sooner. This exhibition will generate massive investment opportunities for industries, promote foreign investments and create awareness regarding the same among consumers."

Tea exports rise in first seven months of 2022

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Tea exports during the period January to July in the calendar year 2022 have touched 116.36 million kg as compared to 103.38 million kg in the same period of 2021.

According to Tea Board data, exports to the largest importing block, the CIS countries, remained almost stagnant at 25.20 million kg as against 24.98 million kg in the first seven months of 2021.

Tea industry sources said that exports were around same level because of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine which had caused serious shipment problems for sending the beverage.

Russia had been the largest importer among the CIS block with the country lifting 18.55 million kg in the current seven months as against 19.11 million kg in the previous similar period.

Tea Board sources said the container crisis and high ocean freight had affected exports to Russia.

UAE emerged as a large importer at 19.14 million kg



during January to July 2022, up from 8.07 million kg in the similar previous period of 2021.

Exports to Iran were also almost stagnant at 13.99 million kg in the first seven months, as compared to 13.04 million kg in the same period of 2021.

According to Tea Board sources, payments problem for exporting to Iran has affected exports, adding that trade in rupee with Iran will help in mitigating the problem to a large extent.

Exports to Sri Lanka, troubled by the economic crisis, doubled to 1.65 million kg from 0.87 million kg in the first seven months of 2021.

Unit price realisation by the tea exporters also remained stagnant at Rs 271.89 per kg as compared to Rs 272.51 per kg in the first seven months of 2021.

Gold falls by ₹435; Silver tumbles ₹1,600



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price declined by ₹435 to ₹49,282 per 10 gram in the national capital on Wednesday in tandem with fall in rates of the precious metal in international market, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had settled at ₹49,717 per 10 gram.

Silver also tumbled by ₹1,600 to ₹54,765 per kg.

"Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi fell by ₹435 per 10-gram following risk-averse sentiment and the Exchange Traded Funds (ETF) cut holding in gold," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at USD 1,615.7 per ounce while silver was trading down at USD 18 per ounce.

Gold prices traded lower as spot gold prices at COMEX fell to USD 1,615 per ounce, a level last seen in April 2020, Parmar added.

Airtel Payments Bank to install 1.5 lakh micro ATMs this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Airtel Payments Bank has started rolling out 1.5 lakh micro ATMs in a phased manner across tier 2 cities and semi-urban regions to facilitate cash withdrawal for its customers, the company said on Wednesday.

The bank will gradually expand its service to cover more banking points in a phased manner.

"Micro ATMs will be rolled out in a phased manner. Initially, the bank will place 1,50,000 units in Tier II cities and semi-urban regions. These regions typically have a high demand for cash withdrawal services but limited access to ATMs," the company said in a statement.

The bank will leverage its strong network of over 5 lakh banking points across India to give users access to easy cash withdrawals through this initiative, it added.

The company has plans to finish the rollout of 1.5 lakh micro ATMs by the end of the current fiscal.

Airtel Payments Bank is now integrated with the



National Payments Corporation of India's (NPCI) - National Financial Switch (NFS) to facilitate micro ATM transactions.

"We are committed to building a financially inclusive India by making banking services accessible to all. The launch of Micro ATMs is one more step by us to empower customers residing in the rural pockets of the country.

"It is the first device launched by the Bank, and we are truly excited, as it allows us to service customers of any bank who use a debit card. Micro ATMs are an important addition to our existing bouquet of differentiated services," Airtel Payments Bank Chief Operating Officer Ganesh Ananthanarayanan said.

Local production of iPhone 14 sign of Apple's India manufacturing capabilities: Moody's

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The manufacturing of iPhone 14 in India within weeks of the global launch demonstrates the maturity of Apple's manufacturing capabilities in the country, according to Moody's Investors Service.

Increasing volumes of locally-manufactured iPhones will also accelerate Apple's expansion strategy in India, Raj Joshi, Senior Vice President, Corporate Finance Group, Moody's said.

The Indian smartphone market's large size and strong growth prospects as the country unveils its 5G network "make it an attractive long-term



market for Apple", according to a note by Moody's.

"Apple's plan to manufacture iPhone 14 products in India is credit positive because it will diversify its manufacturing base that is highly concentrated in China," Joshi said.

Moody's in its commentary on Apple's plans to manufacture iPhone 14 products in India further observed that Apple has produced iPhones in India since 2017 "...But the

manufacturing of iPhone 14 within weeks of their global launch demonstrates the maturity of the company's manufacturing capabilities in India that we expect to ramp up quickly."

Moody's said Apple had less than five per cent unit share of the smartphone market in India, the second-largest smartphone market by unit volumes, and iPhone sales in India nearly doubled in June 2022 quarter over prior year.

The commentary assumes significance given that Apple has begun manufacturing its marquee new iPhone 14 in India as the global tech giant taps into production prowess outside of China.

Hindustan Motors paid off most liabilities, reduced losses: Official

PTI ■ KOLKATA

CK Birla-owned Hindustan Motors Limited on Wednesday said the company, which stopped production in 2014, has paid off most of the liabilities other than a few employee liability and has been able to reduce accumulated losses, a company official said.

Director of HM Uttam Bose, who chaired the company's AGM here, said the com-

pany is investing its resources in future technology, which is the electric vehicle (EV).

The company's Uttarpara plant in West Bengal, which produced the iconic 'Ambassador' cars, stopped production in 2014 due to lack of demand for the product.

He told shareholders that both the financial and technology partners are completing their due diligence by next month after which technical

evaluation and JV structure will be finalised.

Bose had said earlier that both the partners, HM and the European company, will invest Rs 600 crore as initial capital for the EV project.

After cessation of production in 2014, the West Bengal government had allowed HM to sell 314 acres of land at the Uttarpara plant for alternative use. The company sold the land parcel to a real estate developer.

CBI books Amrapali Silicon City for ₹177-cr bank fraud

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Wednesday conducted searches at six locations in Delhi and Noida after registering an FIR against Amrapali Silicon City Private Limited and its promoter, Anil Kumar Sharma, for alleged bank fraud of Rs 177 crore, officials said.

The CBI has booked the company on a complaint from Bank of Baroda which was part of a consortium including Bank of Maharashtra and Punjab National Bank. The consortium was allegedly cheated by the company, they said. The company had taken over 1.76 lakh square metre land from New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (Noida) for developing a group housing complex, Amrapali Silicon City, in Sector 76 of the Delhi suburb.

HCL holds 55th AGM

PNS ■ KOLKATA/NEW DELHI

Amid predictions of a significant rise in the demand of copper on account of the thrust on low carbon economy, State-owned Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) on Wednesday held its 55th Annual General Meeting apprising shareholders of its mines expansion plans and promising to achieve production targets even while informing them of having repaid

loans worth ₹729 crore to assure them of the company's financial health.

In the fiscal 2021-22, HCL had the highest ever net turnover of ₹1812 crore while the profit before tax surged by 338% to ₹381.76 crore.

Replying to the shareholders' queries via videoconferencing, Arun Kumar Shukla, Chairman and Managing Director, HCL, apprised them about the ongoing mine expansion plans of the company. He

informed them that the production from HCL's flagship project, Malanjkhand Underground Mine, has already commenced and the company is moving forward to achieve its production targets.

Shukla said the company repaid loan of ₹729 crore in FY 2021-22 from its internal accruals and threw light on the increase in Copper LME price in the coming days on the back of soaring demand of Copper in the international market.

MORATA TAKES SPAIN TO NATIONS LEAGUE SEMIS

AP ■ BRAGA

Alvaro Morata's late goal earned Spain a 1-0 win in Portugal and the last place in the UEFA Nations League finals on Tuesday, while the Czech Republic were relegated from the top tier after losing in Switzerland.

La Roja needed to win to finish top of League A Group 2, but struggled on another difficult night for the Euro 2020 semi-finalists, until Morata's 88th minute breakthrough.

Spain have not been able to hit top form in the internationals leading up to the Qatar 2022 World Cup, but this hard-fought victory provides a welcome morale boost.

Portugal had the better of the game but Spain brightened in the final stages, with the introduction of several substitutes, including Nico Williams, who headed across goal for Morata to gleefully turn in at the back post.

Luis Enrique made wholesale changes to the side that suffered Spain's first home defeat since 2018 against Switzerland on Saturday, retaining only four starters.

Morata was brought in to lead the line, while the Asturian coach rotated his entire midfield trio.

Spain still dominated possession, as their gameplan demands, but to little effect as Portugal created the more dangerous openings in the first half.

Athletic Bilbao goalkeeper Unai Simon made a solid save to deny Ruben Neves and then a brilliant one to keep Liverpool striker Diogo Jota at bay.

Cristiano Ronaldo appealed for a penalty in a race for the ball

with Simon but the referee spotted he went to ground without any contact and awarded play on.

With Portuguese confidence increasing, Bruno Fernandes lashed an effort narrowly off-target, celebrated prematurely by swathes of the stadium as the ball appeared to settle in the net.

Just as they did against Switzerland, Spain failed to get a single shot on target in the first half, and after Simon made another good save from Ronaldo early in the second half, Luis Enrique took action.

The coach sent on Pedri, Gavi and Jeremy Pino to try and give La Roja more inspiration going forward, although it was the hosts who almost broke the deadlock when Dani Carvajal deflected a strike narrowly over his own crossbar.

At the other end Morata equalised with a tame effort which was easily collected by Diogo Costa, who also thwarted Spain substitute Williams.

The changes livened Luis Enrique's team up and Costa was required again to shovel away a far more emphatic strike from Atletico Madrid striker Morata, before the breakthrough ultimately arrived.

Dani Carvajal launched a crossfield ball into the area, with Williams' header leaving Morata with the simple task of firing into the empty net to put the runners-up of the last edition of the Nations League back into the final four.

Spain join the Netherlands, Italy and Croatia in the finals which are scheduled for June next year.

Switzerland, who beat Spain 2-1 in Zaragoza on Saturday, were indebted to goalkeeper Yann Sommer as he saved a sec-



ond-half penalty to preserve victory over the Czechs.

Remo Freuler and Brel Embolo scored within a minute of each other in the first half in St Gallen, but Patrik Schick pulled one back before the break. Schick saw his second-half penalty kept out by Sommer as the Swiss won 2-1, condemning the Czech Republic to relegation to League B.

Scotland clinched promotion to League A after a 0-0 draw against Ukraine in Krakow, having beaten the same opponents 3-0 last week in Glasgow.

Robbie Brady's stoppage-time penalty gave the Republic of Ireland a 3-2 victory over Armenia in Dublin in the other game in Group B1.

Irish captain John Egan and Michael Obafemi put the hosts two goals in front but Armenia equalised as Artak Dashyan and Eduard Spertsysan struck in quick succession.

Dashyan and Hovhannes Hambartsumyan were sent off to leave Armenia with nine players as Brady's winner saw the Irish finished third in the section.

Serbia took top spot in Group B above Norway as forward pair Dusan Vlahovic and Aleksandar Mitrovic got the goals in a 2-0 victory in Oslo.

Mitrovic's strike was his 50th at international level. He scored a hat-trick in Saturday's 4-1 win over Sweden.

Sweden will drop into League C after a 1-1 draw with Slovenia in Solna, where Emil Forsberg cancelled out Benjamin Sesko's opener for the visitors.

Greece made it five wins from six in Group C2 as they beat Northern Ireland 3-1 in Athens. Kosovo thrashed Cyprus 5-1 in Pristina.



Neymar edges closer to Pele's goal record

AP ■ PARIS

Richardson was the target of Ra banana thrown from the crowd as Brazil thrashed Tunisia 5-1 in a friendly in Paris on Tuesday, while Neymar edged closer to Pele's all-time scoring record for the five-time world champions.

The game at the Parc des Princes was also briefly paused in the first half as the crowd were twice implored not to point laser pens at Brazil players.

"Unfortunately... a banana was thrown on the pitch towards Richardson, scorer of the second Brazilian goal," the Brazilian football confederation (CBF) said on Twitter.

"The CBF reinforces its position to combat racism and repudiates any prejudiced act."

The Seleccion produced a dominant first-half display in their final outing before travelling to Qatar for the World Cup, with Raphinha netting twice and Neymar moving to within two

of Pele's record.

Richardson also found the net, while Pedro scored as a second-half substitute before responding to more boos and missiles from the crowd by bowing in front of them in celebration.

Tite's Brazil will head into their World Cup Group G opener against Serbia on November 24 on a 15-match unbeaten run, dating back to their Copa America final loss to Argentina last year.

Earlier on Tuesday, World Cup hosts Qatar survived a late penalty miss by Alexis Sanchez to hold Chile to a 2-2 draw in Vienna.

Canada, who are preparing for their first World Cup since 1986, lost 2-0 to Uruguay in Bratislava as Liverpool's Darwin Nunez scored his third international goal.

Sardar Azmoun scored as a substitute to earn Iran a 1-1 draw with African champions Senegal.

Indian U-17 team registers 3-1 win over 10-man Oman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The India U-17 boys football team converted a couple of penalties to register a comfortable 3-1 win over a 10-man Oman in a friendly match held in Muscat.

The team played against the hosts on Tuesday as part of its preparations for the AFC U-17 Asian Cup Qualifiers, which is scheduled to begin on October 3 in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Gangte (10th) converted a penalty to open the scoring for the visitors with Thokchom (18th) doubling India's lead eight minutes later.

In the second half, Lalpekhlua (69th) scored the third goal for India by converting converted another penalty.

Alhatham Alshukaili scored the solitary goal for Oman a couple of minutes before the final whistle.

The first half began with the Indians pressing hard to seize the initiative. In the seventh minute, Lalpekhlua's shot went

wide off a Danny through pass. Three minutes later, India were awarded a penalty.

Gangte stepped up and made no mistake to give India the lead. The Indian gradually found their footing as Thokchom doubled the lead from Guite's pass in the 18th minute.

The second half began on similar lines as Bibiano Fernandes' team got back into attacking mode immediately.

In the 61st minute, Korou Singh was provided with an opportunity to widen the lead off a Lalpekhlua cross from the left flank but the former failed to tap home. Nine minutes later, Tamim Alburaiqi tackled Lalpekhlua inside the box and India earned another penalty.

Lalpekhlua shot went straight into the back of the net making it 3-0 for India.

In the 88th minute, Alshukaili scored for Oman from a free kick. They were down to 10 men after Tamim Alburaiqi was handed a red card.

Messi scores brace for Argentina

AP ■ HARRISON

Lionel Messi scored twice as Argentina edged closer to Italy's world record unbeaten streak with a comfortable 3-0 victory over Jamaica in a World Cup warm-up friendly in New Jersey on Tuesday.

Paris Saint-Germain superstar Messi took his international goals tally to 90 in 164 appearances after coming on as a second-half substitute at the Red Bull Arena.

Messi's goals capped an emphatic win for the South Americans, who have now gone 35 games unbeaten in a streak stretching back to 2019 — just two shy of Italy's world record unbeaten run of 37 set between 2018 and 2022.

Messi, who also scored twice during a friendly win over Honduras in Miami on Friday, delighted the crowd with an electrifying cameo after coming on in the 56th minute for Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez.

He bagged his first of the night in the 86th minute, darting forward before caressing a shot into the bottom corner past Jamaica goalkeeper Andre Blake.

The 35-year-old seven-time



Ballon D'Or winner then produced an impish second goal, craftily curling a low shot underneath the Jamaican wall into the bottom corner from a free-kick.

Messi's presence left the crowd in a frenzy. On three different occasions spectators sprinted onto the pitch in an effort to get close to the

Argentinian icon. One shirtless fan attempted to get Messi to autograph his back before he was bundled to the floor by security staff.

Messi's late double crowned another assured performance from Lionel Scaloni's Argentina, who are rapidly emerging as one of the favourites for the World Cup in

Qatar in November.

The Argentinians had dominated throughout a one-sided first half, and took the lead on 13 minutes when Martinez jinked past Jamaica's Damion Lowe and cut back for Manchester City's Julian Alvarez, who tucked away a low finish from close range.

USA held by Saudi Arabia

AP ■ MURCIA

The United States wrapped up their World Cup preparations with a 0-0 draw against Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

A low-key friendly between the two World Cup qualified nations played in a virtually empty stadium in Murcia, southern Spain, saw Saudi Arabia carve out the better chances only to be denied by the USA's Arsenal goalkeeper Matt Turner.

United States coach Gregg Berhalter had called on his team to show "personality" after being outplayed in a comprehensive 2-0 defeat to Japan in Germany last Friday.

But once again the US struggled to build attacking momentum against the Saudis, who finished above Japan in their successful World Cup qualifying campaign.

The draw means the USA will head to the World Cup short on confidence as they prepare to face Wales, England and Iran in the first round group stage.

Saudi Arabia, who face Argentina, Poland and Mexico in the first round in Qatar, almost took the lead after just 25 seconds when Sultan Al-Ghanam shot from outside the area to force a good save from Turner.

The US were limited to a handful of half-chances during the opening 45 minutes but despite the return of Chelsea's Christian Pulisic were mostly ineffective in front of goal.

Verstappen on verge of 2nd world title as F1 returns to Singapore

AP ■ SINGAPORE

Red Bull's dominant Max Verstappen can clinch a second world championship when the Singapore Grand Prix returns this weekend after a three-year absence because of Covid.

The flying Dutchman has a mathematical chance to seal back-to-back world titles under lights around the spectacular and demanding Marina Bay street circuit.

To do so, the 24-year-old must win the race — something he has never done in Singapore — and needs his closest rivals to falter badly.

If that does not happen, the championship fight will move on to the Japanese Grand Prix a week later. It looks a case of when, not if.

"You need a bit of luck for that as well," Verstappen told Sky Sports of retaining his crown in Singapore.

"I don't think about it."

Verstappen opened up a 116-point lead in the drivers' standings over Ferrari's Charles Leclerc following his victory at the Italian Grand Prix. He is 125 clear of third-placed Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez.

He needs to extend his lead to 138 points by Sunday's chequered flag to be crowned with five races to spare — the earliest championship win since Michael Schumacher's in 2002 with six GPs remaining.

Monza was Verstappen's 11th victory in 16 races of a potentially record-breaking season.



single-season mark of 13 jointly held by Schumacher (2004) and Sebastian Vettel (2013).

"I want to go to Singapore and try to

win that race as well," Verstappen said.

"We are having a great season, so we should really try and appreciate it and enjoy the moment."

To take the title this weekend, he must win the race with Leclerc finishing no higher than eighth or ninth — depending on who claims the extra point for the fastest lap — and Perez outside the podium places.

Much will depend on Saturday night's qualifying for a grand prix that has been won from pole position seven times in its last 11 runnings.

The night race around the tight street track affords precious few overtaking opportunities and the stifling heat and humidity provide a test of stamina and reliability as much as driving ability.

Singapore's climate always carries a threat of rain-induced chaos, as happened in 2017, when Vettel and Verstappen started on the front row only to crash out before the first bend.

Red Bull also look sure to wrap up the constructors' championship — although they won't do so in Singapore — but the race for second is still alive with Mercedes banking on a late-season revival to overtake early front-runners Ferrari.

The consistent George Russell is still in mathematical contention for the drivers' crown in his first Mercedes season, though a Verstappen victory would end his hopes.

But the Silver Arrows are pushing hard and are 35 points behind Ferrari, who have suffered from a combination of reliability issues and strategic blunders.

SAN SIRO DEMOLITION ON TABLE

AP ■ MILAN

A crucial step towards the demolition of the iconic San Siro begins on Wednesday when Milan hosts the first of a series of meetings with the public necessary for the new stadium proposed by the city's two footballing giants.

AC Milan and Inter Milan both insist that they can no longer stay in the current, city-owned San Siro and have drawn up plans for a new 60,000-capacity ground flanked by sport and leisure facilities on the same site, which will be completely remodelled.

Should it go ahead the project is scheduled to be completed in 2030, with 1.3 billion euros (\$1.24 billion) being jointly invested in the development by both clubs, who say they cannot afford to build separate new grounds and need the increased revenue this project would bring.

Over three years after presenting their initial project the public will now be able to scrutinise it and have their say at 10 meetings held over a month, after which a report will be presented to the city by the meetings' independent organisers in mid-November.

The city can then decide whether to insist on further changes to a project which has had 50,000 square metres of development cut from it since it was first proposed, or proceed with approval.

Pro League tie will give us better understanding of Spain: Manpreet

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will be hosting Spain in the new season of FIH Pro League next month and captain Manpreet Singh wants to use the opportunity to get a better understanding of their rivals ahead of the 2023 men's hockey World Cup to be held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.

India will play New Zealand in the first match of Pro League on October 28 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, followed by the second game against Spain on October 30.

Placed in the same pool, India will take on Spain in their World Cup opener at the newly-built Birsu Munda International Stadium in Rourkela on January 13.

"It is great that we will get a chance to play against Spain now in the Pro League matches. It will give us an understanding of their game and what we need to improve upon before we meet them again in the first match of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup Bhubaneswar-Rourkela 2023," Manpreet said in a Hockey India release.

"In all, these are exciting times for hockey and I hope fans from all over the world will come to Rourkela and Bhubaneswar to support our campaign."

In the World Cup, Tokyo Olympics bronze medallists India, who are currently world No. 5 in the FIH rankings, are clubbed alongside England (6), Spain (8) and debutants Wales (16) in pool D.

After Spain, India will play their second match in Rourkela, against 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.



The match against Spain in the World Cup will be the Indian team's first outing at the newly-built Rourkela stadium, touted to become the world's largest hockey venue.

"We have all experienced how electrifying the atmosphere can be in Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Hockey Stadium and from what I have heard from my teammates who are from Sundergarh, the fans from this region are all looking to turn up in huge numbers for all the matches to be played in Birsu Munda Hockey Stadium in Rourkela," Manpreet said.

"I can already feel the goosebumps thinking of the turnout for the opening game. It will be quite incredible to play in the newly built Birsu Munda Hockey Stadium which will be the biggest stadium in the country with more than 20,000 seating capacity," he added.

India win low-scoring thriller



Rohit, SKY rise in ICC T20I rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India batter Suryakumar Yadav jumped a place to reach a career-best-equaling second position in the latest ICC men's T20I Player rankings issued on Wednesday.

Suryakumar now has 801 rating points after smashing a match-winning 69 off 36 deliveries in the third match against Australia in Hyderabad on Sunday that helped India clinch the series 2-1.

He had reached the second spot in T20 rankings for the first time in August this year following his exploits against the West Indies.

India captain Rohit Sharma also moved up one place to 13th position after scores of 46 not out and 17 in the second and third T20I against Australia.

Only a couple of rating points separate Suryakumar and Pakistan captain Babar Azam, who also improved a spot to grab the third position.

Babar, who had occupied the No.1 position for 1,155 days before being overtaken by teammate Mohammad Rizwan earlier this month, was named Player of the Match for an unbeaten 110 in the second T20I against England.

He followed it up with scores of eight and 36 in the

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Arshdeep Singh and Deepak Chahar hit the South Africans hard with some magical swing bowling before Suryakumar Yadav's little gem on a difficult track ensured an easy eight-wicket victory for India in the first T20 International here on Wednesday.

A target of 107 on a pitch with underlying moisture and more than waist high bounce at times was a struggle before Suryakumar (50 not out in 33 balls) released the pressure created by KL Rahul (51 not out, 56 balls) as India won the game in 16.4 overs to go 1-0 up in three-match series.

The pitch that former India head coach Ravi Shastri on air termed "not ideal for T20 cricket" had batters of both teams finding it difficult to cope with both pace and movement.

It was Arshdeep (3/32) and Chahar (2/24), who basically clinched the issue for India within first 15 deliveries of the start after skipper Rohit Sharma called it right at the toss. Once South Africa were reeling at 9/5 in 2.3 overs, the game as a contest was over and 106/8 even on a difficult track was a sub-par score.

The South Africans did bowl their heart out in defence. Kagiso Rabada bowled an ideal Test match delivery that pitched on length and reared up while moving a shade and all Rohit Sharma (0) could do was to dangle his bat at the corridor of uncertainty.

Virat Kohli (3) got an express delivery from Anrich Nortje that kept climbing as he tried to have a go away from his body and the edge was taken by Quinton de Kock.

Surya, India's best T20 batter by a distance, got a streaky six when his attempted flick turned into an outside edge that flew over third-man for a maximum



off Nortje.

The next six was a picture-perfect whip over deep square leg and then an inside out six off Keshav Maharaj indicated that he is India's in-form man.

Rahul's batting at the other end on the same strip became an ordeal as India had their lowest ever Powerplay score on board.

Just that there was no scoreboard pressure, Rahul could once play his waiting game and the only shot worth appreciating was a six off Nortje.

Earlier, Arshdeep and Chahar made the white Kookaburra talk with some incisive swing bowling after Jasprit Bumrah pulling out of the game due to his recurrent back problem which has resurfaced yet again.

The duo moved the ball both ways, making full use of the nip in the air and the bounce off

the surface. Temba Bavuma (0) was nicely set up by Chahar with

stock outswingers, which the skipper left alone before a banana inswinger had him

bowled through the gate. The deviation into the batter was as big as it could be.

Arshdeep started by taking the ball shade away from the left-hander and Quinton de Kock (1) in his bid to get a move-on dragged one back onto the stumps.

The other left-hander Rilee Rossouw (0) also chased a wide outswinger (inswinger by the bowler) to nick one to Rishabh Pant behind the stumps.

But it was the delivery by Arshdeep to David Miller (0) that will be remembered for a long time to come.

Miller was anticipating an outswinger and had committed on the front-foot only to find that the bowler had got one to bend back into him. His atrocious across-the-line shot would have resulted in only one thing and that was getting castled.

New T20 sensation Tristan Stubbs (0) didn't get enough wood to his slash over deep to a delivery from Chahar that bounced a shade more. The result was Arshdeep taking a well-judged catch diving in-front.

With five wickets gone, there was no coming back for South Africa and predictably there wasn't any change in the script.

Umesh, Iyer & Shahbaz added to India squad for SA T20s

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The trio of pacer Umesh Yadav, batter Shreyas Iyer and all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed was on Wednesday added to India's squad for the three-match T20 series against South Africa, starting here.

Senior pacer Mohammad Shami, who had missed the recently-concluded T20 series against Australia after contracting COVID-19 infection, is yet to recover completely and thus won't be a part of the T20 matches against the Proteas.

Deepak Hooda has also been ruled out of the series

owing to a back injury. The all-rounder is at the NCA for "further management of his injury."

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee has named Umesh Yadav as Shami's replacement and Shreyas Iyer as a replacement for Hooda," a BCCI release stated.

"Shahbaz Ahmed has also been added to the T20I squad," it added.

Umesh was brought in as Shami's replacement in the series against Australia. He has competed in the series-opener but did not play the

second and third T20Is.

On the other hand, left-arm spin-all-rounder Shahbaz is still uncapped. He was picked in the Indian ODI squad as Washington Sundar's replacement for the Zimbabwe series in August but did not get a game.

Rookie pacer Arshdeep Singh, who was rested for the series against Australia, has linked up with the squad for the three T20Is.

The series against South Africa will serve as a final dress rehearsal for both side ahead of the marquee event in Australia next month.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya and senior seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who have been rested for the series ahead of the T20 World Cup next month, have also reported to the NCA for "conditioning-related work."

Revised India squad: Rohit Sharma (C), KL Rahul (vc), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Dinesh Karthik (wk), R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Harshal Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav, Shreyas Iyer and Shahbaz Ahmed.

Mohammed Shami tests negative for COVID-19



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India pacer Mohammed Shami on Wednesday tested negative for COVID-19, over 10 days after he had been infected by the virus.

The 32-year-old posted his negative report on his Instagram account, hours after the BCCI named veteran pacer Umesh Yadav as his replacement for the three-match T20I

series against South Africa, beginning on Wednesday in Thiruvananthapuram.

"Negative," Shami wrote along with a picture of his COVID test report.

The senior India pacer had tested positive for the virus on September 17.

He was subsequently ruled out of the recently-concluded three-match series against Australia.

Earlier in the day, the pacer had been ruled out of the T20s against South Africa with the BCCI saying he is "yet to attain full recovery from COVID-19."

Shami, who hasn't played any cricket after England series in July, had been brought back into the T20 mix when he was picked for the games against Australia and South Africa.

He has been named as a stand-by for the T20 World Cup in Australia next month.

Warner, Marsh, Stoinis & Starc return for WI T20Is

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Veteran opener Dave Warner and three other top players will return to the Australian Twenty20 squad for a two-match series against the West Indies as the hosts continue to prepare for their defense of the T20 World Cup title.

Warner will be joined by allrounders Mitchell Marsh and Marcus Stoinis and fast bowler Mitchell Starc in the 16-man squad after missing the three-match T20 series in India which India won 2-1.

Warner was rested from that series to manage his preparation for the World Cup in Australia starting next month, while Marsh (ankle), Stoinis (side strain) and Starc (knee) have overcome injuries.

All-rounder Cameron Green, who opened the batting with captain Aaron Finch in



India, has been retained in the squad despite not being included in Australia's lineup for the World Cup which is being played from October 16 to November 13.

Cricket Australia said in a statement on Wednesday that pace bowler Kane Richardson and spin-bowling all-rounder Ashton Agar won't take part in

the West Indies series on the Gold Coast on October 5 and at the Gabba in Brisbane two days later to ensure they are in peak shape for the World Cup.

Australia plays its first World Cup match against New Zealand at the Sydney Cricket Ground on October 22.

"We have and are taking a cautious approach with the

World Cup on the near horizon," national selection panel chair George Bailey said.

"To have four key players return gives us the ability to take a conservative path with any minor issues and resolve those well in time for the World Cup."

Bailey said he expects Agar and Richardson to return for the following series against England. That three-match T20 series will be held in Perth and Canberra from October 9-14.

T20I squad: Aaron Finch (captain), Sean Abbott, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Josh Inglis, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn

Maxwell, Daniel Sams, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

Vietnam Open: Praneeth bows out; Meiraba & Ruthvika in last 16

PTI ■ HO CHI MINH

Tokyo Olympian B Sai Praneeth suffered a shock defeat at the hands of fellow Indian Ritvik Sanjeevi Satish Kumar in the men's singles second round at the Vietnam Open Super 100 badminton tournament here on Wednesday.

A former World Championships Bronze medalist, Praneeth, who has been struggling for form for the last one year, lost 21-17, 18-21, 13-21 to Satish Kumar to make another early exit from a tournament.

Satish Kumar, who had finished runner-up at Bangladesh International Challenge in December last year, will now face Malaysia's Ong Ken Yon next.

In other results in the men's singles, Meiraba Luwang Maisnam eked out a thrilling 21-16, 18-21, 21-14 win over Malaysia's Kok Jing Hong to set up a fight with Chinese Taipei's Chi Yu Jen, who beat India's eighth seed Mithun Manjunath 21-17, 21-7 in another match.

Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian also notched up an sensational win over Indonesian veteran Tommy Sugiarto 14-21, 22-20, 21-12 in the second round.

He will next meet Chinese Chia Hao, who defeated India's Raghu Mariswamy 21-16, 21-15 in a lop-sided contest.

Harshit Aggarwal defeated



Mongolia's Batdavaa Munkhbat 21-15, 21-13 to be pitted against Japan's third seed Kodai Naraoka in the third round.

Kiran Kumar Mekala saw off Myanmar's Phone Pyae Naing 16-21, 21-14, 21-19 and will face Malaysia's Cheam June Wei next.

In the women's singles, Ruthvika Shivani Gadge progressed to the pre-quarterfinals after getting a walkover from his opponent and will face Vietnam's Thi Trang (B) Vu next.

Prerana Neeluri will meet top seed Aya Ohori of Japan in the second round after she opened her campaign with a 21-16, 21-14 win over

local player Thi Ngoc Lan Nguyen. Ira Sharma and Rituparna Das also made it to the second round with straight game wins.

While Ira beat Vietnam's Thi Anh Tran 21-13, 21-14, Rituparna defeated another Vietnamese in Bich Phuong Bhi 21-12, 21-17.

Mixed doubles pair of N Sikki Reddy and Rohan Kapoor advanced to the second round after beating compatriots Hariharan Amsakarunan and SS Lakshmi Priyanka Subramanian 14-21, 21-9, 21-12.

Another Indian pair of Bokka Navaneeth and Priya Konjengbam also progressed to the second round.

Sports Ministry extends last date of submission of application for National Sports Awards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry on Wednesday extended the last date of submission of applications for this year's National Sports Awards by three days to October 1.

Earlier, the ministry had set September 27 as the last date for online submission of applications.

This year onwards, applications are being invited only in online mode through a dedicated portal.

"The last date for receipt of applications has been extended from 27th September, 2022 to 1st October 2022 (Saturday)," the ministry said in a statement.

"The applications from the eligible sportspersons/coaches/entities/universities are invited for the award. They are required to self apply online at dedicated Portal dtbysports.Gov.In.

"Indian Olympics Association/Sports Authority of India/recognised National Sports Federations/Sports Promotion Boards/State and UTs Governments etc are also intimated accordingly. Nominations received after 1st October, 2022 (Saturday) will not be considered," it added.

Sports Awards are given every year to recognise and reward excellence in sports.

Major Dhyani Chand Khel Ratna Award is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of four years, while Arjuna Award is bestowed for consistent outstanding performance for four years.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act) read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the said Rules). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said Rules, the Authorised Officer of IIFL Home Finance Ltd. (IIFL HFL) (Formerly known as India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd.) has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the Borrower(s) to pay within 60 days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest from the date(s) of Demand Notice till the date of payment. The detail of the Borrower(s), amount due as on date of Demand Notice and security offered towards repayment of loan amount are as under:-

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
Mr. Dinesh Shrivani Hole, Mrs. Nupur Hole (Prospect No. IL1009490)	23-Sep-2022 Rs. 15,84,578/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Eighty Four Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Eight Only)	All that piece and parcel of the property being: Part Of Kh No.165/3, Land area admeasuring 1000 Sq. Ft., Changanachal, Ph No.59, Rnm Raipur, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India, 492001

If the said Borrowers fail to make payment to IIFL HFL as aforesaid, IIFL HFL may proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the said Act, and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks, costs and consequences of the Borrowers. For further details please contact to Authorised Officer at Branch Office: IIFL HFL 1st Floor, Lal Ganga City Mart, Banjara Chowk, Opposite Hotel Amit Regency, Raipur, CG 492001/Corporate Office: IIFL Tower, Plot No. 29, Udyog Vihar, Ph-IV Gurgaon, Haryana.

Place: Raipur Date: 29.09.2022

Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Ltd.

KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD.

Corporate Identity No. L65110MH1985PLC0381373.

Registered office: 27BKC, C-27, G Block, Bandra Kuria Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400 051

Corporate Office: Kotak Infinity, Zone-11, 4th Floor, Bldg. No.21, Infinity Park, Off. W.E. Highway, Goregaon, Mumbai - 400 097

Branch/Regional Office: Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd., 3rd floor Pujari chamber panchpedi naka Raipur (C.G.) 492001

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION CUM SALE

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor that the below described immovable property mortgaged to the Authorized Officer of Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd., the Physical Possession/Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd., will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis, offers are invited to submit online through the Web Portal of our e-Auction Service Partner, M/s. C1 India Pvt Ltd. i.e. www.c1india.com by the undersigned for sale of the immovable property of which particulars are given below:-

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) / Mortgagee(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable properties
Loan No. LAP17789840/ LAP OD 5412703976 and common CRN No. both accounts 254669961 1. M/s Ahmed ji Bhai And Sons (Diesel) (Borrower), 2. Mr. Quraishi Khalil (Co-borrower /Guarantor), 3. Mr. Riyaz Husain (Mortgagor/Co-Borrower/Guarantor), 4. Mrs. Tasneem Khalil (Co-Borrower/Guarantor) All are having address at: Tatibandh bhilal road Raipur-492001. Also at: HIG -25, Near Suman Medical store tatibandh Raipur 492099, C.G.	Demand Notice Date: 23/03/2022 Loan A/c No. LAP17789840 and CRN No. 254669961 ₹ 49, 00,984.20/- (Rupees forty nine lakhs nine hundred eighty four and twenty paise only) loan aggregating to Loan A/c No. LAP OD 5412703976 and CRN No. 254669961 ₹. 62, 83,022.26/- (Rupees sixty two lakhs eighty three thousand twenty two and twenty six paise only) total aggregating to both account ₹ 1,11,84,006.46 (Rupees one crore eleven lakhs eighty four thousand six hundred forty six paise only) as on 23-03-2022	Mortgage over following properties: Property No-1-HIG-25, CG Grit Niman Mandal Awas Yojana, Part of Kh no 240/17-19-20-21-22-23 (Colony) Wake Mauja Housing Board Colony, Taluka Maunja, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Ward no 13, Ph no 103, Raipur, (C.G.) 492001. Bounded by: North-HIG 24, South-HIG 26, East : Other's, West: South

Bid Increase Amount	₹ 50,000/- Rs Fifty thousand only	
Reserve Price	₹ 2,68,68,000/- Rs. 26,86,800/- (Two Crore Sixty Eight Lakhs Sixty Eight Thousand Only) (Rupees Twenty Six Lakhs Eighty Six Thousand Eight Hundred Only)	
Date of Inspection of Immovable properties	Date/Time of Auction	Last Date for Submission of Offers / EMD
28/10/2022, 11:00 hrs - 12:00 hrs	04/11/2022 from 11:00 hrs to 12:00 hrs	03/11/2022 till 5.00 pm

Important Terms & Conditions of Sale: (1) The Auction is conducted as per the further Terms and Conditions of the Bid document and as per the procedure set out therein. Bidders may go through the website of our E-Auction Service Provider, M/s C1 India Pvt Ltd i.e. https://www.bankauctions.com for bid documents, the details of the secured asset put up for e-Auction and the Bid Form which will be submitted online. (2) All the intending purchasers/bidders are required to register their name in the Web Portal mentioned above as https://www.bankauctions.com and generate their User ID and Password in free of cost of their own to participate in the e-Auction on the date and time aforesaid; (3) For any enquiry, information, support, procedure and online training on e-Auction, the prospective bidders may contact the M/s C1 India Pvt Ltd department of our e-Auction Service Partner Danish Ullha Khan, through Mobile No: 9825804343 & E-mail ID: mpcg@c1india.com & support@bankauctions.com; (4) To the best of knowledge and information of the authorised officer, there is no encumbrance in the properties. However, the intending bidders may inspect the property and its documents as mentioned above or any other date & time with prior appointment and they should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrance, title of property/ies put on e-Auction and claims/rights/dues/affecting the property prior to submitting their bid. The e-Auction advertisement does not constitute any commitment or any representation of KMBL. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to KMBL. The Authorised Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues; (5) For participating in the e-Auction, intending purchasers/bidders will have to submit/upload in the Web Portal (https://www.bankauctions.com) the details of payment of interest-free refundable Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of the secured asset as mentioned above by way of Demand Draft in favour of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited payable at Delhi along with self-attested copies of the PAN Card, Aadhaar Card, Residence Address Proof, Board Resolutions in case of company and Address Proof as specified above.

The Borrower (s) / Mortgagee(s) / Guarantor(s) are hereby given STATUTORY 30 DAYS NOTICE UNDER RULE 6(2), 6(6) & (1) OF THE SARFAESI ACT to discharge the liability in full and pay the dues as mentioned above along with upto date interest and expenses within 15 days from the date of this notice failing which the Secured Asset will be sold as per the terms and conditions mentioned above. In case there is any discrepancy between the publications of sale notice in English and Vernacular newspaper, then in such case the English newspaper will supersede the vernacular newspaper and it shall be considered as the final copy, thus removing the ambiguity. If the borrower/guarantor/mortgagor pays the amount due to Bank, in full before the date of sale, auction is liable to be stopped. For detailed terms and conditions of sale, contact the Authorized Officer Ravindra Divedi @ 728051081 and Mr. Ashok Motwani @ 9873737351 at above mentioned regional office of Bank.

Special Instruction: e-Auction shall be conducted by our Service Provider, M/s. C1 India Pvt Ltd on behalf of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL), on pre-specified date, while the bidders shall be quoting from their own home/offices/place of their bid as per their choice above the Reserve Price. Internet connectivity and other paraphernalia requirements shall have to be ensured by bidders themselves. Please note that failure of Internet connectivity (due to any reason whatsoever it may be) shall be sole responsibility of bidders and neither KMBL nor C1 India Pvt Ltd shall be responsible for these unforeseen circumstances. In order to ward-off such contingent situation, bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements/alternatives wherever required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and still be able to participate in the e-Auction successfully. However, it is requested to the Bidder(s) not to wait till the last moment to quote/improve his/ her Bid to avoid any such complex situations.

Place:- Raipur, C.G Date: 29-09-2022

Sd/- Authorised Officer, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.