

OPINION 6
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NO PSYCHOLOGICAL
EDGE, BOTH TEAMS
WILL START AT SAME
LEVEL: LANNING P11

Sena remains with Shinde as SC won't stay EC order

Top court to take up case after 2 weeks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a setback to Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction, the Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the Election Commission of India order that has recognised the Eknath Shinde faction as the real Shiv Sena and granted it the bow and arrow symbol.

A bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala, however, granted liberty to Uddhav Thackeray faction to use the name "Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray)" and the "flaming torch" symbol for the February 26 by-elections in Chinchwad and Kasba Peth.

"The ECI order is confined to a symbol. Now we cannot pass an order to stay the Election Commission order. We are entertaining the SLP. We cannot stay the ECI order today," the court said. The SC then proceeded to issue notice in the matter and listed the case after two weeks.

"Issue notice. Pending further orders, protection granted under Para 133(4) (allowing Thackeray faction to use flaming torch symbol) under the



Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray faction) MP Anil Desai and party leader Anil Parab arrive at the Supreme Court for a hearing in the cases related Shiv Sena rift, in New Delhi on Wednesday

impugned order of the Election Commission shall continue to operate. List this after 2 weeks," the order said.

While recognising the Shinde-led faction as the real Shiv Sena, the EC relied on the strength of the legislative wing of the party to arrive at its decision rather than on the test of its organisational wing.

During the hearing, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Thackeray-led faction, questioned the EC's decision to apply the "test of the legislative wing" in determining which faction was the real Shiv Sena.

"The basis of the EC order is that in the test of majority, the organisational wing will not be taken and instead take the test of majority in the legislative wing... That's how the symbol was given to them. What will the High Court do?" he argued.

Senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, appearing for the Shinde faction, questioned the maintainability of the plea. He said that the Thackeray faction should not have approached the Supreme Court directly against an order of the ECI. "To come to the Supreme Court directly, your lordships have

time and again said that there is a judicial hierarchy..." he said. Senior advocates Mahesh Jethmalani and Maninder Singh also appeared for the Shinde-led faction.

A separate batch of petitions is also pending before the top court in relation to the Shiv Sena crisis. The apex court, in that case, is considering various legal questions, including the powers of the Governor of a State, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Speaker's role when it comes to the initiation of disqualification proceedings against MLAs.

Shelly elected Mayor as AAP sweeps polls

Aaley Mohammad of AAP wins Delhi Dy Mayor election

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After three failed attempts to elect the Mayor in the last two-and-a-half months since the MCD polls, Delhi got its new Mayor and Deputy Mayor on Wednesday as the election was held days after the Supreme Court barred Lieutenant Governor's nominated members from the voting process in the newly elected MCD house.

The result was not a surprise for Delhiites as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which had won a majority in the MCD poll, came out with flying colours. The AAP had emerged as a clear winner in the December 4 polls, bagging 134 wards and ending the BJP's 15-year rule in the civic body. The BJP won 104 wards to finish second, while the Congress won nine seats in the 250-member municipal house.

The AAP's Shelly Oberoi won the Mayoral election, receiving 150 votes as against BJP candidate Rekha Gupta's 116. AAP's Aaley Mohammad Iqbal won the Deputy Mayor election by 31 votes.

The earlier elections were



AAP's Shelly Oberoi, with party councillors, celebrates her victory in the mayoral election, at the Civic Centre in New Delhi on Wednesday

stalled amid ruckus over voting rights being given to nominated members.

While 39-year-old Oberoi's election is a significant win for the ruling AAP, the party is now faced with the far daunting task of getting an upper hand in the Standing Committee.

Former Delhi University Assistant Professor Oberoi in her electoral debut in the December MCD polls had registered victory from East Patel Nagar ward — considered to be the home turf of former Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal congratulated the people of Delhi over Oberoi's win and hit out at the BJP, saying the public won and the "goons" were defeated.

"Hooliganism has been defeated, the people of Delhi won. Congratulations to the people of Delhi on the election of Oberoi as the Mayor," Kejriwal tweeted.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also congratulated Oberoi for winning the mayoral election, saying the "goons lost, the public won."

The election of Mayor took place against the backdrop of a recent Supreme Court order ruling against voting rights of 10 aldermen appointed by the LG. The previous meetings held on January 6 and 24, and February 6 were adjourned without electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

With the election of Mayor, the office of the special officer has also come to an end. Special officer Ashwini Kumar held the powers of the deliberative wing between May 22, 2022, and February 22, 2023.

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Ensure 6 yrs as minimum age for Class I, States, UTs told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has written to States and Union Territories asking them to ensure six years as the minimum age of admissions in Class I. In a letter to State Governments, the Ministry of Education said admissions to grade I classes should be given to children at the age of six and above.

As per the NEP 2020, "foundational stage" consists of five years of learning for children between the age of three to eight years, which includes three years of pre-school education and two years of early primary grade-I and grade-II classes. "The policy thus promotes seamless learning and development of children from pre-school to Class II," a senior MoE official said.

Continued on Page 2

Install CCTVs in police stations, grilling offices within month, orders SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the Centre and State Governments to comply within a month with its directions on mandatory installation of CCTV cameras in police stations and offices of investigation agencies. A bench headed by Justice BR Gavai asked the governments to file their compliance affidavits by March 29, while warning in case of non-compliance, it will be compelled to take necessary steps against the officials concerned.

"If the directions are not complied with, we shall be compelled to take such steps as necessary against the Union Home Secretary and Chief Secretaries and Home Secretaries of respective State governments," said the bench,



also comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sanjay Karol, on February 21.

The SC had in 2020 directed installation of CCTV cameras and recording equipment at the offices of investigating agencies, including the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Enforcement Directorate and National Investigation Agency, which conduct interrogations and have the power of arrest.

Continued on Page 2

Ukraine seeks India's help for UN peace resolution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Ukraine on Wednesday reviewed the current situation in conflict zone there during telephonic talks between National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and Head of Ukrainian President's Office Andriy Yermak. He sought New Delhi's support on a draft resolution in the United Nations on peace there.

Yermak's call to Doval comes days ahead of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) voting on the draft resolution on Thursday underscoring the urgency to find lasting peace in Ukraine, a year after the Russian military action began there.

India, so far, has refrained from voting against Russia on the Ukraine issue in the UNGA and the UNSC.

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MHA OK's Sisodia prosecution in snooping case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In mounting trouble for Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has given sanction to prosecute him under the Prevention of Corruption Act in connection with the "Feedback Unit" (FBU) for political intelligence gathering through a Delhi Government Department.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs conveyed to Delhi's Lieutenant Governor's office granting of sanction to prosecute Sisodia under Section 17 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (powers to police for investigating a public servant).

Sisodia took to Twitter to hit out at the Centre's move describing it as "cowardly" act. "Filing false cases against your rivals is a sign of a weak and cowardly person. The more AAP will grow, the more cases will be filed against us," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

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Rahul slams TMC amid Opp unity bid

Cong will form Govt with Opp parties: Kharge

PNS/ PTI ■ SHILLONG/ NEW DELHI

Even as Congress president Malikarjun Kharge is making assertions about Opposition unity to form a Government at the Centre in 2024, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday attacked the TMC alleging it was fighting elections in Meghalaya to ensure the BJP comes to power in the State, drawing a sharp reaction from the Mamata Banerjee-led party.

The remarks by Rahul at his first election rally in Shillong came against the backdrop of the latest comments by Kharge that his party was in talks with other Opposition parties and would lead an



alliance for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections to come to power at the Centre.

Kharge on Wednesday said the Congress, together with friendly parties, will form the Government collectively in 2024.

Slamming the Trinamool Congress (TMC), Rahul raised the incidents of "violence and scams" in West Bengal where it is in power. He also took on the BJP alleging it was like a "class bully" that respects no one as it thinks that it knows everything.

Continued on Page 2



Cong can't digest India's rising global image under Modi Govt, says Naqvi

New Delhi: Senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Wednesday said that the Congress is unable to accept India's rising global stature under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dynamic leadership.

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Infra, welfare, women focus of UP's Budget

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna on Wednesday presented the annual budget for the financial year 2023-24 and highlighted the 16.8% growth in the state's GDP. It was the second budget for the Yogi Adityanath 2.0 government after the BJP, led by him, was re-elected in March last year.

"The state has recorded a 16.8% increase in the GDP, which is higher than the national growth rate," Khanna said in his budget speech. He said the unemployment rate, which was 14.4% before 2017, has come down to 4.2per cent.

In his speech, the finance minister made several announcements. As expected, the annual budget of Rs 6,90,242.43 was the biggest in the state's history with focus on infrastructure development, welfare schemes and empowerment of youths and women in the state. This budget assumes significance and is an opportunity for the Yogi government to

woo different sections of the society, including, youths, women, farmers and deprived classes, because of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections slated for April-May 2024. At a high-level meeting recently, Yogi Adityanath had indicated that the budget would be in accordance with the aspirations of 25 crore people of the state.

On May 26, 2022, the state government had presented the annual budget of Rs 6.15 lakh crore while a supplementary budget of Rs 33,769.55 crore was presented on December 5, 2022, taking the total size of the state budget in 2022-2023 to Rs 6.50 lakh crore.

For students, the government has allotted Rs 3,600 crore for the provision of tablets and smartphones to eligible students under the Swami Vivekananda Youth Empowerment Scheme. Additionally, there is a sum of Rs 1,050 crore under the Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Yojana, which offers financial assistance to guardians or parents of two girl children in one

family. Further, there is a sum of Rs 4,032 crore for destitute widows, Rs 600 crore for Samuhik Vivah Yojana for girls of all classes, and Rs 150 crore under the marriage grant scheme for daughters of poor people belonging to other backward classes.

An outlay of Rs 21,159 crore has been announced for the construction of roads & bridges while Rs 6,209 crore for maintenance. A sum of Rs 3,473 crore has been proposed for the work of bridges and roads for agricultural marketing facilities while Rs 1,525 crore for roads in rural areas.

Besides, a sum of Rs 1,700 crore has been proposed for the construction of railway over-head bridges and Rs 1,850 crore for other bridges. A sum of Rs 2,588 crore has also been proposed for widening/strengthening and new works of state highways. With religious tourism in mind, there are proposals of Rs 1,000 crore for the development of 'Dharmarth Marg' (roads to religious places).

Cracks force Paingadh village residents to flee in U'khand

PTI ■ PAINGADH (U'KHAND)

Like subsidence-hit Ljoshimath, villagers of Paingadh village in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand have also been forced to leave their houses due to landslides and cracks appearing in their accommodations. The hapless villagers are taking shelter in relief camps, tin sheds and even schools.

More than 40 families of the village, which is among the oldest settlements on the bank of the Pindar River near Tharali on the Karnaprayag-Almora National Highway, have become homeless and are living like refugees.

There are over 90 families in the village living there for generations. The problem of landslides began in the village in 2013 with the Kedarnath disaster, but the matter worsened in October 2021 when cracks began to appear in fields above the village.

"The cracks were small initially and in a year's time, they widened into holes," Gopal Dutt, a villager, said. On

October 21 last year, a landslide occurred at around same place where cracks had appeared and huge boulders fell on houses, killing four people.

The rubble of this landslide has affected almost half of the village and people who used to live in the zone have had to leave their homes and take shelter elsewhere, he said.

Some of the affected families have taken shelter in the houses of relatives, while others have shifted to a school building in the village. The only government primary school of the village has been turned into a relief camp, forcing authorities to hold the classes in the junior high school building about one kilometer away.

Children aged between 5-11 years have to walk to their school and also cross a stream on the way. "There is no proposal yet to resume classes in the primary school building. Something definitive about it can be said only after the district administration makes a rehabilitation policy for the village," Education Officer of

Tharali block, Adarsh Kumar told PTI. Meanwhile, Chamoli District Disaster Management Officer N K Joshi said a tin shed is being built in a secure location where affected people of the village will be shifted.

However, a villager, Surendra Lal, alleged the shed is being built near a pine forest where there is no water or electricity supply. One cannot go on foot to place which can also pose a danger to lives during summer when pine leaves easily catch fire, Lal said. Dutt said government was requested to give readymade or prefabricated houses to affected, but no progress has been made. The affected families were given Rs 5,000 as disaster relief by government four months ago.

"Geological scientists also conducted a survey of the village after the landslide, but no one knows what came out of it," Surendra Lal said. Jagmohan Singh Gadiya, who retired from Army and lives in landslide-affected zone, said, "I now regret my pledge not to migrate from my village".

SC to take call on listing plea for giving exam with hijab in K'taka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it will take a call on listing a plea for allowing Muslim girl students to sit for examinations in Karnataka Government schools while wearing the hijab.

Following the SC's split verdict on the issue of ban on wearing the Islamic headscarf in educational institutions in Karnataka, girls in hijab are not being permitted to take exams to begin from March 9, a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud was told.

"They are wearing headscarf. If they are wearing headscarf they are not allowed inside the examination hall. Only on that limited aspect, the court may consider listing it on Monday or Friday," said lawyer Shadan Farasat.

He told the bench, also comprising Justice P S Narasimha that a few girls have moved to private institutions because of the prohibition on wearing hijab but have to take their exams in



Government institutions. They risk losing another year if not permitted, he said. "I will take a call," the CJI said.

Due to the split verdict, the High Court's judgment still holds. The split verdict on October 13 last year held off a permanent resolution to the hijab row as both judges suggested placing the matter before a larger bench for adjudication.

The top court had said last month it will consider setting up a three-judge bench to adjudicate the case related to the ban on wearing the Muslim headgear in Karnataka Government schools.

Odisha Minister's murder: CM seeks FBI analysis

Bhubaneswar: Amid the BJP's raucous demands for a CBI probe into the murder of Odisha minister Naba Kishore Das, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday pulled a rabbit out of the hat, stating he has asked the Centre to get FBI's analysis of the self-confessed killer's behaviour.

The CM assured the assembly that the Odisha Crime Branch investigation into the case was being performed transparently.

The assembly was adjourned for an hour after members of the BJP and the Congress created a ruckus in the House, demanding a CBI probe into the murder of Das. They also sought a discussion on the matter, but Speaker B K Aруhka did not allow it, leading to the din in the House.

As soon as the House re-assembled at 11.30 am, Patnaik said, "We have requested the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to facilitate an evaluation of the behaviour of the accused by the Behavioral Support Unit of the FBI of the United States of America." Patnaik also said that the investigation undertaken by the Crime Branch of the Odisha Police was on track. "I want to reassure the House that no stone will be left unturned in ensuring a full, fair and open investigation in the case with the assistance of the best forensic experts in India and abroad," the CM said.

Rahul...

From Page 1

"You know the history of the TMC — the violence and scams that take place in West Bengal. You are aware of their tradition. They spent a huge amount of money in Goa (polls) and the idea was to help the BJP. That is exactly the idea in Meghalaya. The TMC's idea in Meghalaya is to ensure that the BJP is strengthened and come to power," he claimed. Assembly elections in Meghalaya are due to be held on February 27.

Senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee hit back at Rahul saying the "irrelevance and incompetence" of the Congress had put them in a state of delirium. Abhishek, who is the TMC's national general secretary, said the Gandhi scion must revisit the politics of vanity instead of attacking Bengal's ruling party.

"Congress has failed to resist BJP. Their (Congress) irrelevance, incompetence & insecurity has put them in a state of delirium. I urge Rahul Gandhi to revisit their politics of vanity instead of attacking us. Our growth isn't driven by money; it is people's love that propels us," he said in a series of tweets.

"By the same logic, when Congress contested 92 seats in Bengal Elections in 2021, was it their idea to help the BJP? Rahul Gandhi's statements against TMC is pretty rich, especially coming from a party that has lost 40 out of the last 45 Assembly Elections in India," he added. Mamata

sought the ouster of both the BJP and the Congress which have been in power in Meghalaya for many years but have also been denying people of the state of their rights to development.

"They (BJP and Congress) were in power for so many years but could not even build roads in Meghalaya. No medical colleges, no good roads, and no system for healthcare facilities were developed. There was no development but only scandals," she said, urging the huge crowd at a poll rally in western Meghalaya to vote for her party.

The BJP, meanwhile, cited differences between different opposition parties to make light of the prospect of their alliance ahead of next year's Lok Sabha polls. Addressing an election rally in Dimapur in Nagaland on Tuesday, Kharge asserted that a coalition government led by the Congress will form the next government at the Centre in 2024.

"A Congress-led alliance will come to power at the Centre. We are in talks with other parties. The BJP will not get a majority...All other parties together will. We will follow the Constitution and democracy... Let 100 Modis or Shahs come. This is India and the Constitution is very strong," he asserted.

On Wednesday, Kharge again spoke about the prospects of the Congress and other Opposition parties stitching an alliance to take on the BJP. Kharge said the Congress, together with friendly parties, will form the government collectively in 2024.

MHA OK's Sisodia...

From Page 1

On the other hand, the Delhi BJP and the Congress demanded that the CBI immediately arrest Sisodia in an alleged case of snooping, and also probe the role of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in it.

Earlier, Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena approved the CBI's request for the prosecution of Sisodia and forwarded the request to the Home Ministry.

Sisodia is already facing a CBI case for alleged favours extended to liquor traders in the formulation of now-scraped Delhi Excise policy of 2021-22. He is to appear before the probe agency on February 26.

The MHA letter sanctioning Sisodia's prosecution came on February 17. The move comes after the CBI had said it found during its preliminary inquiry that the Feedback Unit (FBU), set up by the Delhi Government to check corrup-

tion, allegedly collected "political intelligence" and the agency recommended that an FIR be registered against Sisodia.

The Kejriwal Government dispensation had proposed setting up the FBU in 2015 to gather relevant information and actionable feedback regarding the working of the various departments and autonomous bodies, institutions and entities falling under the jurisdiction of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) and also to do "trap cases," the CBI said. The unit started functioning in 2016 with a provision of Rs 1 crore for secret service expenditure, it said.

The CBI alleged that Kejriwal moved the proposal in a Cabinet meeting in 2015, but no agenda note was circulated. No sanction from the Lieutenant Governor was taken for appointments in the FBU,

Ensure 6 yrs...

From Page 1

This can only be done by ensuring accessibility to three years of quality pre-school education for all children studying in Anganwadis or Government, Government-aided, private and NGO-run preschool centers," a senior MoE official said.

"The Ministry has directed State Governments and UT administrations to align their

age to admission with the policy and provide admission to Class I at the age of six years and above," the official added. The Supreme Court had last year observed that children should not be sent to schools at a very young age keeping in mind their psychological and mental health.

The MoE officials said the most important factor at the foundational stage is the availability of qualified teachers who are especially trained in

it claimed.

"The Feedback Unit, in addition to collecting the mandated information, also collected political intelligence/intelligence qua miscellaneous issues," the CBI said in its preliminary inquiry report.

The CBI registered the preliminary inquiry on a reference from the Delhi Government's vigilance department, which had allegedly detected irregularities in the FBU. Prima facie, the CBI noted, there was deliberate violation of rules, guidelines and circulars by "delinquent public servants".

"The nature of violations committed is inherently dishonest and as such materials disclose abuse of official position with dishonest intention by concerned public servants Manish Sisodia, Dy. CM and Suresh Kumar Jain, the then Secretary (Vigilance)," the report claimed.

AAP sweeps...

From Page 1

Soon after the results were announced in the MCD House, AAP councillors offered sweets to the newly elected Mayor while women councillors were seen jostling on the dais to take a selfie with her, as other members flashed victory signs.

Obero said the AAP-led municipal corporation will carry out an inspection of landfill sites in the next three days and also work to deliver the party's 10 "guarantees" promised to people before the MCD polls.

"The 10 guarantees Kejriwal has given to people, and the dreams that he has foreseen for Delhi, we will work on them," the AAP leader said, when asked what will be her priorities as a Mayor.

The Mayor thanked Kejriwal, Sisodia, and the people of Delhi. She also thanked Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena. "My thanks are due also to the Supreme Court, because of whose order the mayor election was held today peacefully," Oberoi said. "I will give the best in my term, under the leadership of Kejriwal.

Work will officially begin in Delhi from tomorrow onwards, and inspection of landfill sites will be done in the next three months," she said.

Obero, in another interaction with mediapersons later, said, "Gundagardi" (hoorliganism) has lost, and truth has won today. People of Delhi have won. It is a victory of

democracy and of the Constitution". Iqbal defeated the BJP's Kamal Bagri. Soon after being elected, he told reporters "80 days have been lost so far" as the election couldn't be held earlier.

"In the coming days, we will strive to cover up for the loss of these 80 days. And, then we will work round-the-clock to make Delhi a better place, and help realise the dreams that Kejriwal has dreamt for the city," he said.

While the Mayor is the nominal head of the civic body, it is the Standing Committee which has executive powers. A Mayor's powers are limited to calling special meetings of the House, declaring quorum for the House to convene sittings, and disqualifying members if they do not furnish details of their assets.

Powers to grant financial approval to projects, discussions related to and the finalisation of policies to be implemented, appoint sub-committees (on issues such as education, environment, parking etc) and form regulations are under the ambit of the Standing Committee, which has 18 members.

While six members of this committee will be elected on Wednesday by Councillors, the remaining 12 will be elected by Ward Committees later.

The Committee has a chairperson and a deputy chairperson, who is elected from among its members. Having a clear majority in the Committee is crucial for any political party to have control of the policy and financial decisions of the Corporation.

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Install CCTVs in police...



CHANGE OF NAME

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PD(90277)A

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PD(90279)A

From Page 1
Senior advocate Siddhartha Dave, who has been appointed amicus curiae (friend of court) in the matter, submitted that 25 States and Union Territories were yet to file compliance reports in terms of the earlier directions which had initially set a deadline of six weeks for putting in place CCTVs in police stations across the country. The Centre informed the court that CCTVs will be installed at the CBI headquarters here as well as its branch offices by the end of next month and that all offices of the Narcotics Control Bureau, Serious Frauds Investigation Office and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence have already complied with the directive.

The Centre also said procurement of CCTVs for NIA establishments has been approved and the exercise will be concluded by the end of this year. It sought time till May for installation of the remaining CCTVs at the Enforcement Directorate. As far as police stations in Delhi are concerned, the Centre informed, there was a requirement of over 2,000 more CCTVs and currently 1,941 CCTVs needed to be upgraded.

In December 2020, a bench headed by Justice RF Nariman, while dealing with a matter related to custodial torture, had directed the Centre to install CCTV cameras and recording equipment at the offices of investigating agencies. It had directed the States and Union Territories to ensure CCTV cameras are installed at each and every police station, at all entry and exit points, main gate, lock-ups, corridors, lobby and reception as also areas outside the lock-up rooms so that no part is left uncovered.

While passing the direction, the apex court had taken note of a 2017 case in which it had ordered installation of CCTV cameras in all the police stations to check human right abuses, videography of crime scene and setting up of a Central Oversight Committee.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of Virender Kumar S/o. Mr. Ramesh Kumar, who is owner of VCF No. 1909/3461/1, area measuring 50 Sq. Yds., Kharsa No.28/118, situated in waka mauja Gauchhi, Sanjay Colony, Tehsil Ballabgarh and District Faridabad (Haryana): vide Sale Deed dated 30.08.2004, which is registered as Doc. No. 3235, in the office of Sub-Registrar, Ballabgarh, having purchased the same from Mrs. Manorama Singh; and intend to mortgage the aforesaid property against the financial assistance from Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Limited. That, the name of my father is Mr. Ramesh Kumar and he is also known as Mr. Ram Prasad. I also confirm that both the names are one and the same persons. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/ right/ title/ interest/ creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
136, Basement Floor, Uday Park, near Mother Dairy, New Delhi-110049
Contact# 011-40046316

Ukraine seeks...

From Page 1
Also, Doval had held one-on-one talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow earlier this month. New Delhi has all along maintained that diplomacy and dialogue is the way forward to end the conflict.

As regards talks between Doval and Yermak, Ukraine also asserted that cooperation with India was very important, a Ukrainian statement said.

Yermak briefed Doval about the current situation at the front, in particular about the "extremely difficult defense" of the city of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region. "We know that Russia is preparing certain offensive actions, and we are preparing to respond."

"The Russian army is very unmotivated, while Ukrainian warriors are showing extraordinary bravery and resilience.

"We will not stop until we liberate all our territories. We only need weapons," Yermak said. Yermak said Ukraine continues to fight on the battlefield, but at the same time has proposed a peace plan — a ten-point peace formula — that provides comprehensive answers to the question of what needs to be done to end the war in a sustainable and just manner. "The draft reso-

lution on support for the principles of the UN Charter, which form the basis of the Ukrainian Peace Formula, will be considered by the UN General Assembly on February 23. The document is based on such fundamental principles as the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states within internationally recognised borders," the statement said.

Yermak said Ukraine is interested in the broadest possible support for the resolution, in particular from the countries of the Global South. "Cooperation with India is very important to us. We believe that you will support our resolution, as it contains very correct wording on the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity.

Our goals are transparent and clear: We do not claim a single centimeter of Russian territory, we just want to get ours back," he said.

The Head of the President's Office emphasised the importance of forming a new effective security system in the world to replace the ineffective one that existed until February 24, 2022, the statement said.

"This resolution is fundamental for us because it

restores respect for international law and the UN Charter in the world. It is very important to protect the territorial integrity of any state in the world in order to prevent any attempts by one country to appropriate the territory of another one in the future," he said.

Yermak said he believes these principles are shared by India and the majority of countries of the world. Ukraine welcomes any initiative that gives a chance to end the war and restore the territorial integrity of our country, but these should not be partial temporary solutions such as a ceasefire, but a complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory, the statement said.

Otherwise, peace will be unstable, and this is unacceptable for Ukraine, it added.

"We are absolutely convinced that the war can and should be ended this year so that the anniversary of the beginning of the full-scale invasion will be the first and last in our history," Yermak said.

The two sides agreed to maintain close contact on the eve of the UN General Assembly vote, the statement said.

Democracy has won, Delhi has won, says new Mayor

Will work to fulfil 10 guarantees given by CM to Delhiites, promises Oberoi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Reacting to her victory, Newly-elected Mayor Dr Shelly Oberoi on Wednesday said, "Democracy has won, Delhi has won". Minutes after taking charge, she told the House, "We have to work together to fulfil the aspirations of the people."

In a statement Dr. Oberoi expressed gratitude to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, members of the AAP and the Councillors, MLAs, MPs who supported her candidacy and Lieutenant- Governor VK Saxena.

Oberoi also acknowledged the role of the Supreme Court in ensuring a peaceful election, saying, "I am also very grateful to the Supreme Court of India and the Chief Justice of India as it is due to their order that a peaceful election could be conducted in the MCD today and I have been presented this opportunity to be elected as the Mayor of Delhi."

She went on to describe her win as a victory for the people

of Delhi and for the democratic process of the country. "Today's election result also proves that 'gundagardi' that had been prevailing in the MCD in the last few days has been defeated and it is the victory of truth," she said.

The previous meetings held on January 6 and 24, and February 6 were adjourned without electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

A former Assistant Professor at Delhi University, she is more known for her academic laurels, but she tasted success in electoral debut in the December MCD polls from East Patel Nagar ward -- considered the home turf of former Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta. Talking about her political foray and subsequent win, she added, "My family is proud of it. I am from academics and all my professors are proud of me. But expectations are also very high. Everyone is happy and there is a lot of responsibility on me." While addressing a Press conference, Oberoi fielded a few questions before moving back to the House to Chair the conduct of the election for the



Deputy Mayor of Delhi.

"The 10 guarantees that CM Arvind Kejriwal has given to people, and the dreams that he has seen for Delhi, we will work on them," the AAP leader said, when asked what her priorities would be as a Mayor.

"I will give the best in my term, under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal. Work will officially begin in Delhi from tomorrow onwards, and inspection of landfill sites will be done in the next three months," she said.

The AAP's Aaley Mohammad Iqbal who was elected the Deputy Mayor of Delhi, defeating the BJP's

Kamal Bagri by a margin of 31 votes, said he is committed to the people of Delhi and will work for their betterment. Iqbal bagged 147 votes against Bagri's 116. The voting was held at the Civic Centre.

"We know that 80 days have been wasted by BJP but we will cover this in eight days. We have a lot of work to do and fulfilling the 10 guarantees by the Delhi Chief Minister will be our priority. We are committed to the people of Delhi and will work for the betterment of people and very soon that will be visible on the ground," Iqbal said after the results were announced.

Gambhir unable to cast vote for Deputy Mayor



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a major embarrassment to Delhi BJP, East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir could not turn up in time to cast his vote for the election of Deputy Mayor in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) House on Wednesday.

An aide of the cricketer-turned-parliamentarian said that he had left the civic centre, after casting his vote for the Mayor's election, to attend a medical emergency in his family.

"He had informed the

newly-elected Mayor about the situation faced by him and sought time till 4.30 PM to turn up for voting in the Deputy Mayor's election. But, by the time he returned after visiting his relative in a hospital, the time for voting was over," said Gambhir's aide.

The elected representatives, including seven Lok Sabha and three Rajya Sabha MPs from Delhi, as well as 14 MLAs nominated by the Assembly speaker, can vote in the election for office bearers of the deliberative wing of the MCD.

Cong Councillor goes against party whip, hubby defends decision

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Husband of Congress Councillor Sheetal Chaudhary, who voted in the Delhi MCD mayoral polls against her party's directive on Wednesday, defended her decision to exercise her franchise. The Congress had announced earlier that all of its nine Councillors would abstain from voting in the polls. Declaring the poll results, presiding officer and BJP Councillor Satya Sharma announced the names of eight Councillors who were absent from the voting process. All these Councillors were from the Congress.

Asked if Sheetal supported the BJP's Mayor candidate, her husband Ved Pal said, "The Congress had decided to abstain from voting around two months ago. The party did not issue any fresh guideline on not



Anil Chaudhary

participating in voting for the polls."

He further said all Councillors and parties should participate in such voting exercises for the development of their respective wards. There was no comment from the Congress Councillor on the development.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Congress chief Anil Chaudhary said they have learnt that one party Councillor had participated in the voting, and that they were trying to identify that person.

Woman locks herself with minor son for 3 yrs out of Covid fear

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A 33-year-old woman, who had locked herself and her minor son for three years in their rented house in Chakkarpur area here to avoid Covid-19, was brought out of confinement on Tuesday by a team of officials. A team of police, health department officials and members of the child welfare department broke open the main door of the house and rescued Mummun Majhi and her 10-year-old son, they said. The mother-son duo was rushed to the civil hospital here.

"The woman has some psychological issues. Both of them are referred to PGI,

Rohtak where they are admitted to psychiatric ward for treatment," said Dr Virender Yadav, Civil Surgeon, Gurugram.

The matter came to light on February 17 when Mummun's husband Sujan Majhi, who is an engineer with a private company, approached assistant sub-inspector Praveen Kumar deployed at Chakkarpur police post.

During the three years of confinement with her son, the woman did not allow even her husband into the house after he stepped out to go to office when restrictions eased after the first lockdown in 2020, police said.

Sujan spent the first few

days with friends and relatives and after failing to persuade his wife, he started to stay in another rented accommodation in the same locality.

Sujan said that video calls were the only way to stay in touch with his wife and son. He would pay the monthly rent of the house, clear the electricity bills, deposit his son's school fees, buy groceries and vegetables and even leave the bags of ration outside the main door.

"Initially, I didn't believe Sujan's claims, but when he made me talk to his wife and son over a video call, I intervened in the matter. The house where the woman was living had accumulated so much filth and garbage that if a few more



days had passed, anything untoward could have happened," ASI Kumar said.

The woman's son had not even seen the sun in the last three years, Kumar said, adding that she did not even use cooking gas and storage water dur-

More than 500 kg cannabis from Odisha seized in Greater Noida

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 500 kilograms of cannabis brought from Odisha to be smuggled into the National Capital Region has been seized by the police in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Greater Noida) Saad Miya Khan, the consignment is pegged worth more than Rs 1 crore in black market and two persons have also been arrested in connection with the case.

Khan said the police have been continuously targeting gangs and people involved in drug trafficking and narcotics



smuggling.

"Some gangs have been busted in the past also and in one such case in which around 500 kilograms of cannabis was seized, a suspect identified as Ratan Singh, who is a native of Hapur district, was absconding and a reward also announced on his arrest," Khan said.

"Today, a consignment of the same Ratan Singh has been seized by the officials of the

Knowledge Park police station and the SWAT team. The total recovery is 539 kilograms of cannabis which was concealed in a canter truck," the DCP said.

Besides Ratan Singh, a person identified as Sadashiv Mishra, who hails from Ganjam district in Odisha, has also been arrested, the officer said.

Khan said the estimated value of the seized cannabis is worth more than Rs 1 crore, and the consignment had started from Ganjam in Odisha and was meant to be smuggled in Noida and other parts of the NCR.

BJP demands CBI arrest Sisodia, probe Kejriwal in snooping case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Wednesday demanded that the CBI immediately arrest Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in an alleged case of snooping, and also probe the role of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in it.

The people of Delhi "welcome" the sanction accorded to the CBI to prosecute Sisodia in a case related to alleged collection of "political intelligence" through a city government department, Delhi BJP working president Virendra Sachdeva said. "We demand that the CBI immediately arrest Sisodia and the real accused of the snoopgate Arvind Kejriwal should also be probed," he said.

Sachdeva said that this case is not a simple corruption



case but a serious matter related to national security. Delhi is the capital of the country and the AAP is sitting in Delhi is spying on the central government, LG House, other political parties and media houses. He demanded that the CBI register a case under serious sections and arrest Sisodia at the earliest.

Sachdeva said that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is clearly involved in this whole matter. The F.B.U. instead of presenting the related agenda in the cabinet, all the reports of

this espionage were given to Kejriwal only. He said that BJP demands that Chief Minister Kejriwal should also be investigated in this case because Arvind Kejriwal is also directly or indirectly involved in this matter.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said that both Sisodia and Kejriwal should be arrested in the case. "It is strange that both AAP leaders have not been arrested so far despite plethora of evidence and corruption cases," he said. Bidhuri said that Satyendra Jain is still holding the portfolio despite in jail. Now several cases have been lodged against Sisodia but he is still number two in the Delhi government. Kejriwal made a mockery of democracy," he added.

Delhi BJP leader Harish

Khurana said that since 2015 BJP has been raising this matter. Crores of rupees were transferred in the name of Secret Service Fund, but till date no one knows what happened to that money. CBI should also investigate this. He said that at that time over 700 people were spied on, including leaders of political parties, some officials, media houses.

The Centre has cleared the way for registering a new case against the AAP leader by giving sanction for prosecution to the CBI. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs conveyed to Delhi's Lt Governor's office granting of sanction to prosecute Sisodia under Section 17 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (powers to police for investigating a public servant).

CM, LG engage in verbal duel on law & order

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lt Governor VK Saxena once again took to social media to engage themselves into verbal duel over a meeting of the latter with Delhi Police Deputy Commissioners. While Kejriwal mentioned "it felt good to know that the LG finally held a meeting over law and order", Saxena retorted by remarking, "Hope you will also learn."

Kejriwal alleged that law and order situation in the national Capital has "deteriorated" in the past one year, maintaining the period of incumbent L-G since he took

over at the Raj Niwas. "It felt good to know that the L-G finally held a meeting over law and order. The L-G should pay attention on law and order and hold such meetings frequently," the AAP convenor said in a tweet in Hindi.

Saxena on Tuesday addressed a DCPs' conference at the Delhi Police headquarters where he said the recent Kanjhawla hit-and-drag incident and the Shraddha Walkar murder case exhibit a "glaring lacuna" in policing at the field level. The LG flagged a host of other issues, including corruption, high-handedness of police and investigation loopholes.



Replying to Kejriwal's tweet, the L-G said that a genuine mix of praise and condemnation of the police is part of his inclusive-impartial working style.

"The chief minister will be glad to know that I review law and order situation with the commissioner of

police/Special Commissioners every week. The Delhi Police is doing a praiseworthy job despite challenges.

Desired praise and condemnation of the police is a part of my inclusive-impartial working style.

Hope you will also learn," the LG tweeted in Hindi.

HC asks Delhi Waqf Board to file new plea challenging Centre's takeover of 123 assets

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Wednesday refused to stay the operation of a letter issued by the Land and Development Office, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, which "absolves" the Delhi Waqf Board from all matters pertaining to 123 properties in the national Capital. A Single-Judge Bench of Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri asked the board to file a "substantive" petition and "urge their grounds". The High Court, however, did not dismiss the stay application and kept it pending, listing it along with the main plea, listed on August 4.

"You file a fresh substantive petition to challenge the Centre's February 8 letter," the Judge told the counsel for the Board and listed the application along with the pending petition on August 4.

The Land and Development Office (L&DO) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA) recently decided to take over 123 properties of the Delhi Waqf Board, including mosques, dargah and graveyards, based on the report of a two-member committee.



Board chairman Amanatullah Khan has said the report of the committee was not shared with the board, and added that a case challenging its formation was already pending in the high court. The deputy L&DO, in a letter to Khan on February 8, had informed about the decision to absolve the Delhi Waqf Board from all matters related to the 123 properties based on the two-member committee report.

During the hearing in the high court, senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the board, contended that the Centre has no source of power to absolve the board from the properties.

He said these properties were clearly demarcated

through four surveys conducted in 1970, 1974, 1976 and 1984 and were later assented by the President that they were waqf properties.

Mehra said under the statutory scheme, there is no concept of central or state government to absolve the properties from the board.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma, representing the Centre, opposed the plea saying the challenge to the letter by way of this application was totally beyond the scope of the pending petition. The board's counsel urged the court to grant interim protection till filing of a fresh petition. The judge said, "What prevents you from filing the petition today. File it and it will be listed soon."

Will build STPs, SPSS at Narela, Hiranki to clean Yamuna, says Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will construct 22 MGD Sewer Pumping Stations (SPSs) and 15 MGD STPs at Jindpur in Narela Assembly constituency and 9 MGD SPSS at Hiranki. This project will benefit about 4.17 lakh people of 40 unauthorised colonies and 14 villages of Narela and Burari. After meeting with the Delhi Jal Board and other stakeholders, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Shri Manish Sisodia informed that a 15 MGD capacity STP will be constructed in Jindpur by the DJB.

After the commissioning of this STP equipped with modern technology, the Biological Oxidation Demand (BOD) level of the sewage water will be purified and brought up to 10. Along with this, emphasis will be laid on the reuse of treated water from this STP. The treated water coming from the STP will not only help in cleaning the Yamuna but is also useful for other activities as well. This can be used for purposes like horticulture and rejuvenation of Delhi's lakes, etc. to meet the growing demand for potable water.

Sisodia said that after the commissioning of the STP equipped with modern technology to be built in Jindpur, the Biological Oxidation Demand (BOD) of the polluted water will be purified and brought up to 10.

"Due to this, about 12.45 MGD of sewer water will get purified and fall into Yamuna. Actually, the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) of sewer water is up to 250. The sewerage water is treated and brought up to 10. After this, it is released into the drain. Two things are seen in the treated sewer water. The first is BOD and the second is COD. BOD is the amount of oxygen that is consumed by bacteria decomposing organic matter under aerobic conditions," he said.

The Delhi government has decided to construct 22 MGD SPS in Jindpur and 9 MGD SPS in Hiranki to pump sewer water to STP. Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) will play an important role in making the water reach the STP from the houses which are connected to the internal sewer line. The sewerage will be sent to STP through the motor pump in SPS.

Nikki murder accused Sahil sent to 12-day judicial custody



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A metropolitan court on Wednesday remanded Sahil Gehlot, accused of killing his wife Nikki Yadav and stuffing her body into a fridge, in 12-day judicial custody. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have invoked fresh charges against Sahil and others in the case, his lawyer said.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Archana Beniwal passed the order for sending Sahil to jail. Sahil along with five other co-accused will now be produced in court on March 6. Sahil's father, two cousins

and two friends were also arrested in the case.

DS Kumar, the counsel for Sahil, said while the FIR was initially registered under Sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offender) of the IPC, police have now invoked Sections 120 B (criminal conspiracy), 34 (common intention), 202 (intentional omission to give information of offence by person bound to inform) and 212 (harbouring offender) of the penal code.

Earlier on Monday, a court

had extended the police custody of Sahil (24) by two days, while other five co-accused were remanded in 14-day judicial custody. Sahil allegedly killed Nikki, stuffed her body inside a refrigerator at his dhaba in southwest Delhi, and went off to marry another woman. The incident had come to light on February 14, Valentine's Day, four days after the crime. During the investigation, it came to light that Sahil had secretly married Yadav in October 2020 and the victim was asking the accused to get social sanction for the marriage, according to police.

Indo-China diplomatic talks on LAC row held

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As situation continues to be tense at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, India and China on Wednesday held diplomatic-level talks to find ways to hasten the process of restoring peace there.

The two sides have held multiple rounds of talks at the military and diplomatic levels to ease tension since trouble erupted at the LAC in Eastern Ladakh in May 2020. India and China have, so far, held 17 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks since then.

Giving details of the diplomatic-level talks under the aegis of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC), the Ministry of External Affairs said here on Wednesday the 26th meeting of the WMCC was held in person in Beijing. This was the first



WMCC meeting since the 14th meeting held in July 2019, to be held in person.

Joint Secretary (East Asia) from the Ministry of External Affairs led the Indian delegation. The Chinese delegation was led by Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Affairs Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two sides reviewed the situation along the LAC in the Western Sector of India-China border areas and discussed proposals for disen-

agement in the remaining areas in an open and constructive manner, which would help in restoration of peace and tranquillity along the LAC in Western Sector and create conditions for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations.

To achieve this objective in accordance with the existing bilateral agreements and protocols, they agreed to hold the next (18th) round of the Senior Commanders meeting at an early date. The two sides agreed to continue talks through military and diplomatic channels.

Modi isolated Pak in global community, says Nadda

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda on Wednesday maintained that India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership had "isolated" Pakistan within the international community and lifted the Indian economy earlier described as "fragile five" to "top five" in the global order.

He said in last nine years Modi has been on over 100 "special journeys" and visited more than 60 countries which deepened India's relations with several countries and "we established not only formal but informal relations too", he said.

Releasing a book, 'Modi: Shaping a Global Order in Flux', Nadda said "before our Government came to power no Prime Minister had courage to visit Israel and this was only because of the vote bank politics." He said Prime Minister Modi gave preference to Indian



interests and strengthened Indian security ties with Israel and also visited Palestine."

The BJP president cited India's stand on the Russia-Ukraine war that took care of country's interest. India took a stand which may not be acceptable to all countries but is being appreciated by all that the country has taken a stand and stayed with it, he said.

"Unlike the past, India now does not shy from taking positions. For a long time, India has

been shying from taking hard positions. Under Prime Minister Modi, India on international issues would take a stand on complex issues, that too from positions of strength," he said. Nadda said India which earlier used to be called "fragile five" with corruption on a high and Indian security under threat. "In nine years India has completed a journey under Modi and bringing the country among "top five", he claimed.

Cong calls Jaishankar 'failed Min', says remarks on China demeaned armed forces

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress on Wednesday hit out at External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, calling him a "failed" Minister and alleging that his remarks on the China issue have "demeaned" the valour of India's armed forces. The party also alleged that foreign policy has been reduced to photo-ops and a chest-thumping exercise and is being used to secure contracts for a businessman.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete claimed that the Foreign Minister had said that "we are the smaller economy and China is the bigger economy and we cannot go and pick a fight with them". "What exactly does he mean by saying this? Is he telling us that we are not capable of protecting our territorial sovereignty," she said. "What he is trying to do by



saying this is essentially 'break and shake' the confidence of our Indian economy and demean the valour of our armed forces. This is one of the most blasphemous statements made by any foreign minister," she told reporters.

On Jaishankar's reported remark that he has been the longest-serving Indian Ambassador in China, the Congress said in that capacity will he tell when the status along the Line of Actual Control will be restored to the April 2020 position.

Amid eye drop, cough syrup fiascos, India gets new DGCI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission Secretary-cum-Scientific Director Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi was on Wednesday appointed the new Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), according to an official order. His appointment comes at a time when India-made eye drops and cough syrups are mired in controversy following adverse effects in various foreign countries including the US, some leading to deaths.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal for appointment of Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi, Secretary-cum-Scientific Director, Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission, to the post of Drugs Controller (India), Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)," the ACC order said.

It said the appointment will be in effect from the date he assumes charge till he



attains the age of superannuation on February 28, 2025 or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) had last month recommended his name for the post of DCGI.

He succeeds Dr VG Somani whose extended tenure ended on February 15, and Dr P B N Prasad was given the charge of the post from February 16 to 28.

Dr Somani was appointed DCGI for a term of three years on August 14, 2019 and he took charge on August 16. His tenure was extended twice — on August 16 and November 16, 2022 — for three months each.

In a first, CRPF Raising Day to be held at Naxal-hit Bastar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) will hold its 84th annual Raising Day event in Naxal-infested Bastar district of Chhattisgarh.

CRPF is the lead anti-Naxal Force of the Centre and majorly deployed in States hit by ultra-Left violence like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is likely to be the chief guest of the event and he will review the ceremonial parade at the event to be held on March 19 at the CRPF establishment in Jagdalpur, the district headquarter of Bastar, officials said.

With a manpower strength of 3.25 lakh personnel, the CRPF is designated as the lead internal security Force under the Union Home Ministry operating in three key theatres Naxalism or Left Wing Extremism, counter-insurgency operations in the Northeast and counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

In 2022, the paramilitary had organised its 83rd anniversary event in Jammu following a government directive to all the paramilitary



forces to hold these events outside the national capital.

Located in the southern part of Chhattisgarh, Bastar is flanked by Sukma, Dantewada and Bijapur districts which have been the hotbed of Naxal violence. However, sustained counter-offensives by the security forces led by the CRPF have led to a marked improvement in the security situation on the ground, according to government reports.

The celebration of the raising day event will send a two-pronged message of area domination by the Forces and dwindling morale of the ultras especially when it will be held amid the Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC) by armed Naxals. The TCOC

campaigns have in the past been marked by violent incidents, the officials said.

The TCOC is undertaken in March-June, ahead of the onset of monsoon, by the Naxals to strengthen their cadres and launch major attacks on security forces as forests are devoid of green cover, enabling them to take advantage of the better visibility for carrying out attacks.

These districts in south Chhattisgarh remain the "last bastion" of Maoist dominance and the CRPF has created around 15 forward operating bases (FOBs) or remote operational camps in the state over the last three years in order to strengthen the security grid in the region, they said.

Power Min recommends enquiry against DERC member for violating Tariff Policy

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Power has recommended an inquiry against Member, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) for gross violation of the Tariff Policy of 2016 despite several circulars/advisories from the Ministry; proved misbehavior; and acting contrary to the principles of judicial and hierarchical discipline. The Ministry said that DERC continues to be violating statutory provisions and the tariff policy ignoring several reminders/circulars/advisory from the ministry.

"The DERC was reminded separately vide letters dated October 13, 2021 and November 3, 2021, to comply with the provisions of the Tariff Policy and various provisions under the Act to begin recovery of outstanding Regulatory Assets of Rs 7473 crore, which were approved by the Commission as per the Tariff Order for the year 2020-21. "The Appellate Tribunal for Electricity in a series of Orders has given its findings that the DERC is not performing its duties in accordance with the Electricity Act, 2003," the Ministry said in a note to Delhi



Lieutenant Governor.

The DERC has withdrawn its 2018 suggestion that electricity subsidy be directly credited to accounts of consumers in Delhi. This comes weeks after the state's power department wrote to Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, asking that the subsidy be transferred to people in their accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). At present, the subsidy for power bills is given to power discoms directly by the government. This, in turn, is adjusted against bills that the discoms — BSES Rajdhani Power Limited and BSES Yamuna Power Limited — owe to government agencies for purchasing electricity for distribution.

The ministry further said that the cash flow across the whole value chain of electricity sector is largely dependent on the Distribution licensees' financial health, which in turn is dependent critically on cost

reflective retail tariff to be determined by the State Commissions.

"The Electricity Act, 2003 provides that the tariff should be cost reflective. Section 61 (g) of Electricity Act 2003 mandates that Appropriate Commission while determining the Tariff shall be guided by the objective that the Tariff progressively reflects the cost of supply of electricity and also reduces cross subsidies within a specified period. The Tariff Policy 2016 also provides for a maximum of 20% variation in the retail tariff with respect to the Average Cost of Supply (ACoS). Contrary to the above statutory provisions, the DERC has allowed the Regulatory Assets to increase to Rs. 8,955 Cr. as per the Tariff Order issued for FY 2021-22 instead of liquidating the same. Till date, the Commission has not come up with a trajectory to liquidate these Regulatory Assets," it said.



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1	23/SPE/PE (PH-II)/ET/ 2022-23	Proposal for Empanelment of Agencies for Carrying Out Dog Sterilization and Immunization of Stray Dogs in NOIDA	Rs. 9000000.00
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Israel backs Adani, favours more business dealings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As the Adani Group is currently embroiled in a controversy, Israel on Wednesday backed the industrial house and described its investments in Israel as "strategic" and favoured more business dealings.

Making this assertion here, Israel's envoy to New Delhi Naor Gilon, also brushed aside Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's allegation that Adani bagged Defence contracts in Israel after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit there.

Gilon said, "We have joint ventures with 80 Indian companies which include Tata, Bell, Kalyani... To discuss one company, I don't see the issue



here. Joint Ventures are between private companies, they are not pushed by Israel." Rahul Gandhi had said in Parliament, "Adani never made drones but HAL, other companies in India do that. Despite that PM Modi goes to Israel and Adani gets the contract."

Meanwhile, enunciating Israel's position in the context of the Adani Group, the envoy said it had paid in full to acquire Haifa Port there. He

made these observations on the occasion of completion of 30 years of diplomatic relations between India and Israel.

Gilon emphasised the importance of Adani's investment as 'strategic' and looked forward to more investments by the company in other sectors of Israel.

"We have two ports in the Mediterranean. It's (Haifa) a strategic asset. The fact that we are giving it to an Indian company, from our point of view, is symbolic sign of deep trust in depositing your strategic assets in the hands of Indian companies," the Ambassador said.

The envoy said "Adani Group's bread and butter are ports. They have the potential to make Haifa port what it needs to be and to utilise it to

increase trade between India and Israel. We are very happy with this," he added.

Last month, the Adani Group acquired the strategic Israeli port of Haifa for \$1.2 billion and vowed to transform the skyline of this Mediterranean city as part of its decision to invest more in the Jewish nation, including opening an artificial intelligence laboratory in Tel Aviv.

Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani, whose business empire was rocked by allegations of fraud by US short seller Hindenburg Research, appeared alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for signing of the deal to takeover Haifa Port, and spoke of investment opportunities.

Prime Minister Netanyahu described the Haifa port deal with the Adani Group as an "enormous milestone", saying it will significantly improve connectivity between the two countries in many ways.

The Port of Haifa is the second largest port in Israel in terms of shipping containers and the biggest in shipping tourist cruise ships.

"The Adani Group paid in full for the Haifa port and there is money for development. Port infrastructure is the core business of Adani Group and they know what to do. It is a strategic asset and will be useful for India and for Israel."

He added, "Adani Group are looking for more projects in Israel and I hope they succeed in getting it... We want our

friends to be close by. We are very comfortable with India."

In the last six years, Adani group has struck many critical partnerships with companies such as Elbit Systems, Israel Weapon Systems, and Israel Innovation Authority.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd in partnership with local chemicals and logistics group Gadot in July last year won an Israel government's tender to buy the Haifa Port, a major trade hub on Israel's Mediterranean coast, for about \$1.2 billion.

"The acquisition of the Haifa port also comes with a significant amount of real estate. And I promise you that in the years to come we will transform the skyline we see around us," said Adani.

People with chronic pain conditions may report faster cognitive decline

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

People living with chronic pain in the knees, neck, and back due to ailments such as arthritis or cancer may report faster cognitive decline including memory loss and they are at high risk of developing dementia, according to a team of researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. These two diseases are a significant health burden that affects the older population, although they have also manifested in young people to a smaller extent.

The researchers showed that multisite chronic pain, where the pain is experienced in multiple anatomical locations, affects almost half of the chronic pain patients and has been found to place a greater burden on patients' overall health.

However, it was not clear whether people with multisite chronic pain suffered from aggravated neuro-cognitive abnormalities.

To understand, the new study, published online in the journal PNAS, analysed the records of 354,943 people.

It found that the risk of neuro-cognitive abnormality increased with each additional pain site. It was also mediated by atrophy in the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for memory.

"Multisite chronic pain may lead to up to eight years of accelerated hippocampal ageing, an effect that may underlie a series of cognitive burdens," said Dr. TU Yiheng from the Academy's Institute of Psychology.

Since hippocampal volume decreases with age, the researchers equated the magnitude of the effect of hippocampal atrophy in patients with multisite chronic pain to the effect of ageing in healthy people with an average age of 60.

The study provides a quantitative understanding of the impact of chronic pain on cognitive function and the risk of dementia, laying an important foundation for future research into the relationship between chronic pain and cognitive impairment.

It also highlights the excessive burden of multisite chronic pain on patients' cognition and the brain, and the need to address the overlapping nature of pain conditions in both



basic research and clinical studies.

Dementia is a collective name given to diseases and conditions that result in the deterioration of one's memory, language, problem-solving capacity, thinking skills, and ability to function normally.

Although Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the

most common form of dementia accounting for 50% of cases; other forms of dementia include Lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), syphilis, and normal pressure hydrocephalus, as per the doctors.

BJP will be driven out of power in 2024, says Didi

No outsider will be allowed to run Meghalaya: Mamata in Garo Hills

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Addressing an election rally at Rajbala in Meghalaya's Garo Hills, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that those who were trying to impose Citizenship Amendment Act(CAA) and National Register for Citizens (NRC) would not be allowed to enter the north-eastern State.

"Who will run Meghalaya? No outsider will be allowed to run Meghalaya... The Assamese will not run Meghalaya, Delhi will not run Meghalaya. We will also not run Meghalaya from Bengal," Banerjee said, stopping short of naming the national BJP leadership, particularly Assam Chief Minister Hemanta Biswa Sarma.

Saying that the BJP would be driven out of power in 2024 general elections Banerjee said that her party would gradually enter all the corners of the North East. "If you vote TMC to power then I can promise



that the BJP will be washed away in 2024 general elections," Banerjee said adding, subsequent to Meghalaya elections her party would ensure that her party entered the other parts of the North East.

"We will slowly enter every corner of the North East," Banerjee said adding as Bengal was a neighbouring State it would look after Meghalaya. "All the welfare schemes that have been implemented in Bengal will come to Meghalaya," Banerjee said reminding the populist schemes like Swasthya Saathi, Kanyashri, Sabuj Saathi,

Rupashri, Laxmir Bhandar etc. The meeting was attended by Mukul Sangma who is contesting on TMC ticket. A sizeable section of the Congress had earlier joined the TMC in the north-eastern State.

Referring to the central interventions in the non-BJP States, Banerjee, "how many central teams go to the BJP ruled states." Alleging how her government was regularly being disturbed by the central agencies like ED and CBI, Banerjee said, how "everyday, the BJP is knocking at our doors by sending the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)."

Referring to alleged religious polarization being indulged by some parties Banerjee said religions were personal but festivals belong to everyone. "We love every religion. I go to temple, mosque, church, gurdwara... The biggest religion is to live with everyone. We celebrate every festival in Bengal," she said.

Hopes of early resolution of Naga peace talks, says Neiphiu Rio

PTI ■ AONGLENDEN (NAGALAND)

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Wednesday said that there was a "hope" for an early resolution of the Naga political problem following the unconditional commitment of the NSCN-IM and Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) to collaborate on the matter.

The concerns of the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO), which has been demanding a separate state, will also be addressed after the assembly elections are over, the chief minister said.

"We have been working on it for all these years. The Framework Agreement was signed in 2015 and then, in 2017 Agreed Position was signed," Rio told PTI about the progress in resolving the deadlock over the Naga peace talks.

To find a solution to the decades-old problem, the Central government has been holding separate negotiations with NSCN-IM since 1997 and the Working Committee of NNPG, comprising at least seven groups, since 2017. The Modi government inked a Framework Agreement with NSCN-IM in 2015 and Agreed Position with NNPGs in 2017.

However, the final solution is yet to be attained with NSCN-IM remaining adamant on its demand for a separate flag and constitution for the Nagas. Rio pointed out that the different groups "were not being able to come together", which was holding back the progress. But



with the January 14 agreement, based on historical rights and to uphold and protect the identity of the Nagas, there is hope for a solution to come, the CM added.

The NSCN-IM and the NNPGs had on January 14 this year declared their unconditional commitment to collaborate for the resolution of the Naga political issue with the Government of India.

The declaration came after four months of signing the September Joint Accordant between the National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) and the NNPGs which have been engaged in separate dialogue with the Centre for a solution to the Naga Political Issue (NPI). The NDPP leader, who is

fighting the state polls in alliance with BJP to retain power, said the issues of the eastern districts of the state will also be addressed post-elections.

Refusing to "predict or comment" on the possibility of bifurcation of the state in keeping with the original demand of the ENPO, Rio said, "They definitely deserve support from the state government for addressing deficiencies in developmental activities, literacy rates, economic backwardness.

"We will give them full support to bringing them at par with the rest of the state in terms of equal development," the veteran Naga leader said. He also mentioned the Union Home Minister Amit Shah holding discussions with the ENPO leadership and said, "Amit Shah ji had spoken to them, explained the situation and also given them the options of what is possible.

"With that, they were convinced and they also called off the election boycott and a peaceful election will be conducted," he said, referring to the ENPO's initial call for boycotting the polls.

The ENPO has been demanding separate statehood for "Frontier Nagaland", comprising six districts of Mon, Tuensang, Longleng, Kiphire, Shamatore and Noklak, which sends 20 MLAs to the state Assembly. Rio also sounded optimistic about retaining power with a "thumping majority" and forming the government again.

Cops record Raut's account on supari plaint against Shinde Jr

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after he accused Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's son MP Shrikant Shinde of having hired a goon to attack him, the Thane Police on Wednesday recorded the statement of Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and MP Sanjay Raut.

A team of police officials recorded the statement of Raut, who alleged on Tuesday that he faced a threat to his life, as Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's son and MP Shrikant Shinde had given 'supari' (contract) to Raja Thakur to attack him.

Simultaneously, Raja Thakur's wife and lawyer Pooja Thakur filed a police complaint against Raut for making defamatory remarks against her husband.

Talking to media persons after lodging a complaint in Kapurbavdi Police Station, Pooja Thakur said: "Who has given him (Raut) the right to call my husband a goon? I have lodged a complaint against him under section 211 (false charge) of Indian Penal Code (IPC)". In a letter written to Mumbai Police Commission Vivek Phansalkar – copy of which he marked to Deputy Chief Minister Devendra



Fadnavis and the Thane Police Commissioner Jai Jeet Singh, Raut had said on Tuesday: "After the new Government headed by Eknath Shinde came to power in the State, my security cover was withdrawn completely. In the recent past, I have been receiving threats from rival party legislators or goons hired by them. I have often spoken about the threats received by me".

"Today, someone gave very reliable information Shrikant Shinde had given contract to Raja Thakur, a known goon from Thane, to attack me. I have been given to understand that Thakur is making preparations to attack me. I am an MP, an editor of Marathi newspaper "Saamana", Shiv Sena leader and a responsible citizen. That's why I am informing you about the threat received by me," Raut had stated in his letter.

Morbi bridge collapse: HC orders Oreva Group to pay ₹10 L 'interim' relief to kin

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court on Wednesday directed clock manufacturing firm Oreva Group, the company that maintained the Morbi suspension bridge which collapsed killing 135 people in October last year, to pay Rs 10 lakh as "interim" compensation to the kin of each deceased and Rs 2 lakh to each injured within four weeks.

A division bench of Chief Justice Sonia Gokani and Justice Sandeep Bhatt gave this direction to the company. The British-era suspension bridge on the Machchhu river in Morbi town collapsed on October 30 last year, killing 135 persons and injuring 56 others.

The court ordered the company that the kin of each deceased and every injured person be paid interim compensation of Rs 10 lakh and Rs 2 lakh, respectively, within four weeks.

On Tuesday, during a hearing of a suo motu (on its own) PIL admitted last year following the tragedy, Ajanta Manufacturing Ltd (Oreva Group) had offered to pay Rs 5 lakh compensation to the kin of those who died and Rs 1 lakh



to the injured persons. In its interim order, the court said the central and the state governments have together provided Rs 10 lakh compensation to the kin of each victim so far.

"The company had offered to give Rs 5 lakh each to the kin of those who lost their lives and Rs 1 lakh to those injured. However, this is not enough. The company has to pay Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of the victims and Rs 2 lakhs to those injured," Justice Gokani said.

Advocate K R Koshti, who represented the victims, had said that several families have lost their bread-winning members, and many children and women were left to fend for themselves.

The court also noted in its order that the company has offered to take responsibility of seven children who were orphaned in the tragedy.

Stop hate rally or face contempt in SC, Tushar Gandhi tells Maha cops

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Mahatma Gandhi Foundation (MGF) has asked the Navi Mumbai police to prevent the proposed 'hate' rally—Hindu Jan Akrosh Morcha—organised by the Sakal Hindu Samaj in Navi Mumbai on February 26 or face contempt proceedings in the Supreme Court.

"If timely action of prosecuting those indulging in inciting hate is not taken by the police Suo Moto as ordered by the Supreme Court, us law abiding citizens will be forced to appeal to the court to punish you for abdicating your duty and disregarding the court's orders. Please act. Do your duty honestly. Stop this reign of Hate," MGF president Tushar A Gandhi stated in a letter written to Navi Mumbai Police Commissioner Milind Bharambe seeking preventive action against the rally.

Tushar Gandhi, who is the great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, stated in his letter: "I write to you with concern. There have been increasing incidents of hate speeches and hate rallies in Mumbai and in many cities and towns across Maharashtra and it feels as if the police are not concerned" "Due to this apathy on

part of the law enforcement agencies concerned citizens are forced to appeal to the higher courts for redressal and for enforcement of the laws of the land and for the implementation of the several orders passed by the highest courts of the land," he said.

Alluding to a petition filed in the Supreme Court where there is a reference to a 'hate' rally organised by Sakal Hindu Samaj in Mumbai on January 29, 2023, Tushar Gandhi said: "In the hate rally held by hindu outfit in Mumbai on 29th January several provocative speeches inciting violence against minorities in general and Muslims in particular were made".

"A BJP Member of the Legislative Assembly, T. Raja Singh gave open calls to Kill Muslims, similar to those given in the various Dharma Sansads, now the hate campaign is targeting Mumbai and Maharashtra, unfortunately we do not see police action against such blatant cases of criminal nature," he said. .

"The Supreme Courts orders in the Gaurakshak Mob Lynching case have given enough power and instructions to the police to act independently, accordingly, kindly perform your duty as per your

oath to our Constitution," the Gandhian said. Referring to an observation made by Supreme Court judges at a preliminary hearing an appeal seeking the apex court' order to stop the proposed rally of the Hindu Janakrosh Morcha in Mumbai on February 5, Tushar Gandhi said: "The Justices lamented that 'no one is taking action despite our passing orders'.

This refers to the SC's orders passed against instances of Hate Speech on October 21, 2022 asking Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Governments to clamp down on hate speech and register criminal offences without waiting for complaints to be filed.

MGF chief said that the apathy and disregard displayed by law enforcement agencies to their order is what the Judges were lamenting about.

"It is shameful 75 years since independence the police prefer to serve political bosses rather than the Constitution and the law of the land. I know that this trend of unchecked hate speeches has caused a great deal of concern, anxiety and a sense of insecurity among all the minorities, yet despite previous instances of such rallies being used to amplify the hate campaign and add fuel to fire."

Maha Govt to distribute 1.63 crore food kits in Vidarbha, Amravati

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ahead of the Gudi Padva festival and 132nd anniversary of late B R Ambedkar, the Eknath Shinde Government on Wednesday announced a largesse — in form of a package containing three essential food items and oil at a subsidised price of ₹ 100 to a staggering 1.63 crore ration card holders in 14 farmer suicide-hit districts in Vidarbha and

Amravati regions. State Cabinet decided a food kit comprising one kilogram each of Rava, Channa dal and sugar and one litre of Palm oil – to 1.63 crore ration card holders – farmers below poverty line (BPL) — in 14 farmer districts in Amravati, Aurgangabad and Nagpur divisions –at a subsidised rate of ₹100 per kit under Antyodaya Food Scheme. The State Government decided to distribute food kits at subsidised

rates ahead of Gudi Padva scheduled for March 22 and in the run up Dr BR Ambedkar's 132nd birth anniversary on April 14

State Government undertook similar exercise of distributing food items at a subsidised rates ahead of Diwali festival Among other things and State decided to complete tendering process for procuring food items and oil required for distribution.

CBI arrests Horticulture Officer of G'gram for ₹5 Lakh extortion

New Delhi: The CBI on Wednesday said it has arrested a Senior Horticulture Officer, National Horticulture Board, Gurugram (Haryana) for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹5 lakh from complainant for getting the subsidy amount released as per prevalent scheme. A case was registered on complaint against a Senior Horticulture Officer, National Horticulture Board,

Gurugram, Sunil Kumar Rewar on allegations of demanding bribe of ₹5 Lakh from Complainant for getting subsidy amount released as per Government of India Scheme implemented by National Horticulture Board for horticulture activity in favour of the complainant, the CBI said in a statement. "The CBI laid a trap wherein the accused was caught red handed while

accepting a bribe of Rs 5 Lakh from the Complainant," the agency said. Searches were conducted at three locations at premises of accused in Jhunjhun (Rajasthan) and Gurugram (Haryana) which led to the recovery of incriminating documents relating to property, bank details, investment defetails and relevant file relating to complainant's matter, it said. **PNS**

‘Jaadui Pitara’ to woo students

New Delhi: Toys, puzzles, puppetry, posters, flash cards, worksheets and attractive storybooks are part of the "Jaadui Pitara" launched by the Ministry of Education for learning at the foundational stage.

Envisaged as a child-centric, innovative, toy-based learning experience that will strengthen conceptual understanding amongst the learners aged 3-8 years, the "Jaadui Pitara" has been designed on the motto of "learning through play", as envisaged in the new

National Education Policy (NEP). "Jadui Pitara comprising playbooks, toys, puzzles, posters, flash cards, storybooks, worksheets as well as reflecting the local culture, social context and languages is designed to pique curiosity and accommodate the diverse needs of learners at the foundational stage. Developed under the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), the pitara is available in 13 Indian languages," Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said at the launch. **PNS**

Air pollutants damage bones of post-menopausal women: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Increased levels of air pollutants such as nitrous oxides are associated with bone damage among post-menopausal women, according to scientists at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, US. Women are already at a higher risk for osteoporosis after menopause due to lower levels of estrogen, a female hormone that helps to maintain bone mass.

To add to their woes, it has been now found that higher pollution adverse effects were most evident on the lumbar spine, with nitrous oxides (NO) twice as damaging to the area as in normal ageing. The latest

research, published in the journal eClinicalMedicine, is the first to explore the connection between air pollution and bone mineral density specifically in postmenopausal women, and the first to explore the effects of air pollution mixtures on bone outcomes.

The researchers analysed data collected through the Women's Health Initiative study, an ethnically diverse group of 161,808 (over 1.6 lakh) postmenopausal women.

They estimated air pollution (PM10, NO, NO2, and SO2) exposures based on participants' home addresses. The team used dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry to measure bone mineral density (BMD) at enrollment and at follow-up at

year one, year three, and year six. The magnitude of the effects of nitrogen oxides on lumbar spine BMD would amount to 1.22 per cent annual reductions — nearly double the annual effects of age on any of the anatomical sites evaluated, the researchers said. These effects are believed to happen through bone cell death by way of oxidative damage and other mechanisms, they said.

"Our findings confirm that poor air quality may be a risk factor for bone loss, independent of socioeconomic or demographic factors," said study first author Diddier Prada, an associate research scientist at Columbia Mailman School of Public Health. "For the first time, we have evidence

that nitrogen oxides, in particular, are a major contributor to bone damage and that the lumbar spine is one of the most susceptible sites of this damage," Prada said.

Study lead author Andrea Baccarelli, from Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, noted that improvements in air pollution exposure, particularly nitrogen oxides, will reduce bone damage in postmenopausal women, prevent bone fractures, and reduce the health cost burden associated with osteoporosis among postmenopausal women "Further efforts should focus on detecting those at higher risk of air pollution-related bone damage," Baccarelli said.

Dark shadows over BJP's honeymoon with Christians

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The BJP's dreams of making an impact in Kerala through a possible alliance with the Church has come a cropper as the Christians in the State have expressed their disappointment with the Hindu party leadership cold-shouldering the interests of the community members.

Last Sunday's demonstrations held at the National Capital by bishops, priests, nuns and the laity against the attack on Churches in UP, MP, Chhattisgarh allegedly by militant Hindus is proof of the minority communities' displeasure over the policies of the BJP. It may be noted that Kerala is the State with maximum Christian population in the country and no fronts could make it to the podium sans the community's support. "It is for

the BJP leadership to understand the role of Christians in the country's educational and medical fields. Though the Christians do not have any strong presence across the nation, one should not forget the fact that the maximum number of top class educational institutions and hospitals in India are run by the Church," said Jacob Thomas, former director general of police, Kerala.

Jacob Thomas, who has a doctorate in agricultural science, belongs to the 1985 batch of the IPS. After superannuation, he joined the BJP which fielded him as a candidate in the 2021 Kerala assembly election from Thrissur district where he finished third.

An officer known for his integrity and honesty, Jacob Thomas was totally ignored by the State leaders of the party

after the polls. He said though there is a Christian in the union council of ministers, it has not made any impact among the community. "If only the community members get a feeling that they are being recognised and their services are sought, they get a sense of belonging," he pointed out.

Jacob Thomas was insulted and humiliated by both the LDF and the UDF for his uncompromising stand against corruption. It was the report by Jacob Thomas, who was the then vigilance chief of Kerala that led to the resignation of E P Jayarajan, the CPI(M) minister in the first Pinarayi Vijayan government.

The vigilance probe found that Jayarajan had misused his official position to appoint his close relations in public sector undertakings. Jayarajan was denied ticket in the 2021

assembly election and is in political wilderness now though he has been designated as the LDF convener, a namesake position.

Kevin Peter, president of Christian Association and Alliance for Social Action (CAASA), an umbrella organisation of the community members, sounded disappointed over the indifference of the BJP leadership to the recent incident burning of Bible copies in the State. "It has hurt us though we do not bother about the indifference of the CPI-M leaders.

The BJP should have condemned the incident. Similarly, though there are top intellectuals in the community, none of them have been recognised by the BJP's leadership to be considered for appointment to important positions, "said Kevin.

Man's best friend?

The killing of a four-year-old boy in Hyderabad by street dogs highlights the growing man-animal conflicts

The heartrending incident of street dogs fatally mauling a four-year-old boy at a housing society in Hyderabad has again underlined the man-animal relations. The relations, and conflicts, are as old as mankind itself. Over the centuries, however, the forms of conflict have changed. There is the issue of growing human population and the consequent expansion of human habitations, resulting in greater interaction between human beings and animals. Wild animals like leopards and snakes enter residential areas, parks, factories, etc. The problem grows by the day, and those who can solve it are unbothered. As a result, both people and animals suffer. While people are attacked by feral animals, and fear for their life and limb, several species of animals face the pressure of human population and are on the verge of extinction. Worse, the changes in geographies, lifestyles, and attitudes seem to have altered the behaviours of the animals which were generally regarded friendly to human beings. In fact, dog is said to be man's best friend. So, what's happening in India? The CCTV footage of the Hyderabad horror showed the boy walking around playfully when a pack of street dogs attacked him. The father of the child is reportedly a security guard in the housing complex where the incident took place. Unfortunately, this is not a freak incident of street dogs assaulting kids or even adults.

There have been reports from various parts of the country where stray dogs violently attacked children and grown-ups.

Still worse, it is not street dogs that are becoming a menace; monkeys have also become quite a nuisance in towns, villages, tourist spots, etc. Let alone the countryside and remote areas, they swarm the heart of the national capital—Lutyens' Delhi. It is a well-known fact that such Government buildings as North Block, South Block, Shastri Bhawan, and Krishi Bhawan are infested with these primates. And here lies the supreme irony: the powers that be of world's largest democracy, which aspires to become a great power and which heads the G20 grouping, are unable to tackle this monkey business (pun intended). At the heart of the problem lie the pigheadedness of animal activists and misplaced sympathies of animal lovers. For the former, animal protection is an article of faith, a dogma indeed, which cannot be questioned or diluted, whatever the cost; even the cost of human life doesn't matter. With relentless persistence and remarkable grit, they have ensured the continuance of the monkey menace by torpedoing all efforts aimed at solving the problem, like getting a langur to frighten away monkeys. Animal lovers, especially those who feed stray dogs but do little else, also contribute to the problem. It is time the authorities at various levels woke up to the dangers of violent animal behaviour. This will be difficult, given the might and garrulousness of the activists, but then good governance means taking tough calls.

PICTALK



The National Highway leading to Sinthan Top, in Anantnag district

PTI

Is BRICS party over?

With China GDP down to 3 percent and Russia already in red BRICS seem to have lost steam

China, which accounts for almost 70% of the BRICS' total GDP, reported a 3% growth rate in the first quarter of 2021, lower than expected, while Russia's economy shrank by 3.1% in 2020. These figures suggest that the BRICS' economic growth may be slowing down, raising concerns about their future prospects. BRICS, an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, was coined in 2001 to signify the emerging markets' growing economic power. In recent years, the BRICS countries have been seen as major drivers of global economic growth, with China leading the pack with its impressive double-digit growth rates. However, recent economic trends have raised concerns that the BRICS story may be coming to an end. One of the main reasons for this slowdown is the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has hit the global economy hard, and the BRICS countries have not been spared. The lockdowns, and a slowdown in demand have affected the growth of these economies.

Another factor contributing to the slowdown is the decline in commodity prices. Many BRICS countries rely heavily on exporting commodities such as oil, gas, and minerals. The sharp drop in prices for these commodities has had a significant impact on the economies of these countries, particularly Russia and Brazil. Moreover, geopolitical tensions have also played a role in the slowdown of the BRICS economies. Russia's involvement in the Ukraine has led to economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation, hurting its economy. China's trade war with the US and India's recent border dispute with China have also affected their respective economies. Despite these challenges, it is too soon to write off the BRICS story. The BRICS countries continue to be significant players in the global economy. India, for example, is expected to be the world's fastest-growing major economy in 2023. China remains the world's second-largest economy and is expected to continue to grow at a steady pace in the coming years. South Africa has recently emerged from a recession and is showing signs of a potential economic recovery. The BRICS countries have been working together to deepen their economic ties and strengthen their collective bargaining power. It is still premature to declare the end of the BRICS story as BRICS countries have resilience which can help them bounce back.

Warring officials lower the narrative

The government servants must realize that their mandate is to serve people; fighting amongst themselves hardly elevates their status

Inter-services turf wars and rivalries between various governmental 'services' is an old hat. Given that there is an invariable overlap of responsibilities, duties, and perceived 'fiefdoms' amongst the various services, a sense of competitiveness is invariable. There are also hierarchical issues of unsettled disparity and entitlements amongst various services that breed discontent and one-upmanship. There was a time when Indian Foreign Services (IFS) was most sought after, but today Indian Administration Services (IAS) is increasingly the preferred choice, among all. This is despite the fact that the IAS remains the most generalist as opposed to all other services which are specialists — also IAS is most prone to exposure in the hinterland and engagement by the timeserving and often difficult, provincial politicians.

The importance of these services can be gauged by the insistence of a 'steel frame' onto governance of India, as envisaged by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, widely hailed as the 'Father of Modern All India Services'. The term 'Services' was suffixed to all generic and specialist arms to imply 'Service' to the citizenry, nation, and work towards the Constitutional vision, as envisaged by the founders of India's independence and Constitution. Patel had famously goaded the first batch of IAS probationers, "Along with discipline, you must cultivate an 'esprit de corps' without which service as such has little meaning. You should regard it as a proud privilege to belong to the service., covenants of which you will sign, and to uphold throughout your service its dignity, integrity, and incorruptibility". Seventy-five years since those sagacious and stirring words, some have upheld that sacred covenant and many more have fallen short of that sense of duty, dignity, and personal integrity.

Recently, the no-holds-barred and vicious public fracas between two lady governmental officials, one from the IAS and the other from IPS, was reflective of the morass that is bound to rust the purported 'steel frame'. The



exchange of serious barbs, insinuations, and petty language had all the makings of a potboiler but certainly not of the ostensible service covenants signed. Drama hit a low with one accusing the other of sharing 'obscene' photos, reportedly picked up from social media and accompanying platforms towards scandalizing the narrative, attributed to the other. A shrill catfight led to invoking the past of each other, including serious allegations of supposed dereliction of duty during the covid pandemic that had resulted in twenty-four deaths! So severe was the diatribe that even the usually unhinged politicians were horrified as the Home Minister stated, "They both are behaving in such a bad way - not even normal people on the street like this. Let them do whatever they want on their personal issues but coming before the media and behaving that way is not right". Soon they were both transferred, While this temporary pull-back and reprieve from the shenanigans will thaw the situation - but the larger significance of the incident is loaded with implications for the citizenry.

Firstly, such a free-for-all is suggestive of the inefficacy of the existing redressal systems,

as it makes a mockery of the same in the public eyes. With both the IAS and the IPS officials resorting to uncivil means instead of escalating the matters to higher authorities, representing, or even resorting to judicial options, the messaging is implicit. Secondly, by resorting to public naming and shaming of each other, they have inadvertently acknowledged and sanctified the unchecked power of filth, yellow journalism, and scandalous imputations, as the more winning ways of disagreement. Thirdly, invoking the ostensible past of each other and with the washing of dirty laundry of antecedents - both willy-nilly alluded to the proverbial cupboard of excesses, missteps, and wrongful exercise of power, as is popularly imagined for bureaucrats. Lastly, the nature of the suggestions was so vile and despicable that to talk about words like integrity, duty, and 'service' seemed completely out of place.

Those governmental servants (often an oxymoron) who ought to be seen as modicum of propriety and sobriety as indeed captured by the so-called 'vision statement' of Karnataka Police which promises to, "uphold the Law and the Rights of all people for a

safe and secure environment, conducive to their internal and external growth and development", such a specter was hardly reassuring. Already there is a growing perception of 'disconnect', hubris, and highhandedness attributed to public servants, but such a public shame goes beyond that as it posits the abject futility of civility and mandated recourses, should one try to resolve any issue as per the laid down procedures.

This specific case of two warring women bureaucrats also regrettably diminishes the cause of women's empowerment and presence in public space as it offers fodder to the usually sexist and chauvinistic gallery that still dominates the corridors of power. Sardar Patel also suggested, "Don't misuse your valour. Remain united. March forward in all humility, but fully awake to the situation you face, demanding your rights and firmness". Clearly, this message was lost on the erring officials who didn't think twice before making a public spectacle of themselves, their 'service', and above all the portents of governance.

(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

SET PRIORITIES RIGHT

Sir — This is in response to Aanehi Mundra article, "*Let Gandhian values guide us*" (February 21). Mahatma Gandhi once remarked: "Recall the face of the weakest man you may have seen and ask yourself if your step is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? Will it lead to 'swaraj'?" It is high time the authorities concerned asked themselves whether bullet trains, public exhibition of as personal thing as yoga, erection of "world's most gigantic statue", "rediscovering" the stream of mythical Saraswati or coming up with Ramayana Museum will serve minimum utility in the wretched life of the weakest man.

Can these "nationalist" steps apply minimum balm to the burning hunger of starved stomachs plaguing billions? Had Gandhi been alive, would he have endorsed such extravagant policies bordering on catering to the lowest common denominator, playing to the gallery and bias towards the privileged class when brute majority of this "elite" country of attaining Mars orbit lead hell-like existence thanks to poverty, hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, child labour and human trafficking?

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

NONE THE WISER AFTER A YEAR

Sir — The sad fact remains that we are no more wiser after a year of war in Ukraine. Three major human follies, within a span of one decade, have severely dented the sagacity of nations to rein in both their politics and leadership. The Wall St imbroglio of 2009, much like the collapse of 1929, managed to disrupt the flow of capital in every economy. If the 1930s went under a depression, the last decade suffered a burst of asset bubbles and the folding up of innumerable finance institutions. As the painstaking recovery was in progress, a pandemic struck to practically freeze economic activity, globally.

A demand-supply mismatch had then become incipient. The ongoing Ukraine war accentuated these and more evils.

Shooting from the hip



Controversy is the hallmark of Congress. Now is the turn of party spokesperson Pawan Khera to have made undesirable comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as the latter's father which could have been avoided. Now, Rahul had made an unsubstantiated, unrealistic and unfounded statement on clashes at the Indo-China border. Even the Chief of Army Staff had clarified this to the nation even before the Foreign Minister

clarified all queries. Such undesirable statements were made previously also. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge compared Modi to Ravan, which can prove costly for the party.

The Congress had used such types of derogatory comments previously also. In 2007, Sonia Gandhi used the word 'Maut ka Saudagar' and had to lose the election. Again in 2014, another Congress leader used the word 'Neech' for Modi and had to face defeat in the election. Just a few days ago, another Congress leader used the word 'Aukaat' for Modi and will face the consequences for this uncivilised word during electioneering. In the last parliamentary election, the BJP had issued a list of various derogatory words used for Modi, with the result that the party could not get minimum required seats to get the status of leader of Opposition. Rahul was on Bharat Jodo Yatra and convassed in Gujarat only for two days though it was expected from the party to postpone the Yatra and fully participate in the Gujarat elections. Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

Besides expected disruption of supply chains, there is a huge shift of wealth to sectors dealing in armament and energy. A very high universal inflation has set in even as colossal loss of life and property are mounting. The socio-economic imbalances will debase global politics further, to set up a vicious cycle. Today we are no different from primitive cavemen, only that we carry bazookas instead of spears.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

STRICT ACTION NEEDED OF HOUR

Sir — The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), subsequent to minor and major lapses from domestic airlines over the months in fulfilling their regulatory obligations, has swung into action. It has recently fined a major domestic airline for violation of applicable civil aviation requirements. The said low-cost carrier was found to be ineffective in conducting the obligatory Pilot Proficiency Check (PPC) and Instrument Rating Check.

The DGCA's belated action has to be welcomed because nothing can be stressed more than the mandatory requirements to keep the air safe for flying.

The PPC, generally an annual test, encompasses a broad gamut of qualities necessary for a pilot to function to his maximum abilities, including steering it to safety in times of distress. PPC is like a revalidation of a pilot's skills, and there cannot be compromises on that count. Unless a pilot satisfactorily clears all re-requirement, he may be prevented from commanding a flight. The Instrument Rating Check is complementary to the PPC; pilots need to be fully aware about the ways and means to handle every gadget at their command. The civil aviation regulator has to keep an eagle's eye on the possible oversight on the part of every airline.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Think of it — this is politics by other means. Why is there suddenly a surge of reports, attention, and views?



External Affairs Minister — Jaishankar Prasad



The Church of England is considering a version of a 'gender-neutral' God. They don't know what they're doing.

Russian President — Vladimir Putin

We are people from Mumbai; we have seen the attack on our city. They are still roaming free in your country.



Lyricist — Javed Akhtar



Khawaja played all the sweeps there are in the modern game and succeeded. That success of Khawaja actually was the main reason for Australia's batting failure in the second innings. Former cricketer — Sanjay Manjrekar

For such a beloved prime minister of ours, the kind of language which has been used is something I strongly condemn.



Union Home Minister — Amit Shah

FIRST COLUMN

DOS & DON'TS OF AN ADVENTURE TRIP

Understand the activity and the safety measures needed



NIHARIKA NIGAM

The world is divided into thrill seekers and the play-it-safe kinds. And most likely, people have shades of both. Whichever side of the argument you tilt on, when it comes to adventure, thrill should never equal danger.

The fears you battle and take on should be only your own. It is essential to understand the dos and don'ts in an adventure sport.

That extraordinary shot of an adrenaline rush is an addictive love. To know it, you must have to have experienced it at least once in your lifetime. Here are a few quick tips to understand the basic requirements for a smooth ride as you go on endless adventures.

One must know about the place. There can be sudden weather changes and in terms of extreme adventure, weather plays an important role. In most adventure sports, sudden change in weather can create havoc. Be careful, especially about stormy or rainy weather for safety reasons. Check the normal temperature of the place you are visiting and avoid going in challenging weather.



Look at testimonials around an adventure operator. The more well-established a place, the higher its success rate is! Experience only makes them richer. Ask questions. Understand how the activity is done and what are the safety measures. What type of clothes should you carry and what should you eat before going for sport? A seasoned operator will welcome questions. Note them down and ask doubts without hesitation. It is for your positive experience.

Check their medical conditions. Each sport will usually have age and weight criteria. As well as some health conditions unsuited to their kind of extreme sport. Pay attention and honestly disclose any health criteria that may be nagging you or that you aren't sure of.

■ Never ever undertake an adventure under the influence of alcohol or other substances. Life on the edge is supposed to be about intense consciousness —don't cheat the system!

■ Leave videography to experts. Do not do it on your own. Do not be distracted by your own experience. All adventure experience providers will have their own videography methods, leave it to them.

Do not overeat and keep yourself light. You don't want to throw up during the activity. Do not litter. As much as the experience is about you, it is also about tuning into your environment. Being one with nature intensifies the experience; and to enjoy it fully, cherish your environment as much as you do your experience.

Refrain from haggling on terms and conditions with the management. These are high-risk activities and protocols are kept in place for the safety of everyone involved. Trust their system and respect the experts. They are operating the activities for a reason. Their staff is well trained and experienced to manage the sport for a long time.

Be mentally prepared. Fear is expected but panic can be dangerous. That can usually lead to unfortunate body posture and subsequent mishaps. Be calm, and be prepared. This is the leap of faith to face your fears in one go. People have done it before and some of them have done such extreme adventure activities multiple times. The industry would not have such a huge audience response if it was that fearful. Make your mind up and be confident about a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

(The author is Director, Business Development at Jumpin Heights)

Somnath Temple show the eco-friendly path



The Somnath Temple Trust is at the forefront of the environment conservation to deal with the challenge of global warming

Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) is India's solution to the challenges posed by climate change. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lucidly expounded the principles of LiFE as a counter to global warming. This is aimed to be a people-led mass movement. At several global forum meetings, he has called upon the world leaders to embrace the principles of LiFE to sensitise the world population to adopt lifestyle in sync with nature.

What PM Modi speaks, he truly practices also, and demonstrates by translating words into actions. He is the chairperson of the Somnath Temple Trust. The Somnath Temple is India's historical and cultural identity, which withstood several attacks by barbaric Afghan invaders. It was befitting for the nation that the temple was restored to its original grandeur soon after India gained Independence with the collective efforts of the people from across the country.

Solid and wet waste constitutes grave challenges to water bodies, including rivers and seas. The rivers on whose banks cities came up turned into gutters on account of unchecked flow of solid and wet waste. The Yamuna in Delhi stinks with the anarchy of the stakeholders who made the pristine water body into a dump yard of solid and wet waste.

LiFE principles are most relevant for the people, institutions, religious bodies and others to make changes to become climate correct. The Somnath Temple Trust, working under the direction of PM Modi, has demonstrated an actionable roadmap, which is worthy of replication by all institutions, including the religious bodies across the country, to become a net zero emission centers of solid and wet waste.

Indeed, 16 per cent of the waste flowing into the water bodies is accounted for by flowers only with origins in the religious places. The solid and wet waste from the religious bodies constitutes significant portions of the pollution in the river bodies. This makes the roadmap of the Somnath Temple Trust worthy of wider assimilation and adoption.

The Somnath Temple Trust reuses 26 lakh litres of sewage every month. The sewage is treated by the treatment plants established around the temple premises. This is part of the guidelines of the trust prepared on the direction of PM Modi for water conservation. The trust has codified parameters of conservation efforts of water with close monitoring.

Between December 2022 and January 2023, the trust not only treated a total of 52 lakh litres of polluted water but made their use in watering the plants and plantation efforts. Thus, the trust is expanding the green cover around the temple, while also ensuring that the environment protection gains strength from the sewage treatment facilities.

It's worth mentioning that on the



THE SOMNATH TEMPLE TRUST REUSES 26 LAKH LITRES OF SEWAGE EVERY MONTH. THE SEWAGE IS TREATED BY THE TREATMENT PLANTS ESTABLISHED AROUND THE TEMPLE PREMISES. THIS IS PART OF THE GUIDELINES OF THE TRUST PREPARED ON THE DIRECTION OF PM MODI

(The author is a policy analyst)



direction of and close monitoring by PM Modi the Somanth Temple Trust has established sewage treatment plants at guest houses, visitors' felicitation centres, promenades, walkways and several Bhavans. Such plants together are treating a total of 26 lakh of sewage for reuse in the orchards.

The scale is getting bigger. In the month of January, the sewage of the Maheshwari guest house was 6.78 lakh litres, which was treated for reuse. Ram Mandir accounted for 23,000 litres and Sagar Darshan Bhavan had the share of 7.84 lakh litres. Yatri Suvudha Kendra had 4.01 lakh litres, Choupati accounted for 5.08 lakh litres in the total volume of 26.05 lakh litres.

Sewage is no longer flowing into water bodies and seas but used in the five parks, temple premises, and orchards developed by the trust. The reuse of the treated water is thus contributing to the greening efforts and also boosting the environment, besides spreading awareness to millions of pilgrims coming to the temple to learn the principles of LiFE.

The Somnath Temple Trust is now at the forefront of environment conservation to deal with the challenge of global warming. India is playing a lead role in efforts for climate mitigation. India has been a vocal voice at the Paris Accord, COP-27 at Sharm el-Sheikh by offering an actionable action agenda before the global community. By establishing an international solar alliance with headquarters in India,

PM Modi has showcased the Indian way of dealing with the crisis. India under the leadership of PM Modi is already making a quantum jump in tapping the renewable sources of energy.

The Katra Railway Station, which is the principal destination for the people visiting Vaishno Devi Temple is fully solar-powered. Taking its cure, other railway stations in the country are also embracing solar power to meet the needs of electricity. A village in Gujarat recently was declared fully solar powered. Roads and canals are being tapped for exploiting solar power. Temples and other religious bodies along with households are adopting solar power for their captive consumption. This was possible after PM Modi when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat showed the way by demonstrating the use of solar power.

The sewage treatment plants in addition to tapping the renewable sources of energy are clearly the ways a symbiotic bond between the people and nature could be established. This is the true manifestation of LiFE principles.

'Nirajal' of the Somnath Temple has become a carrier of multi-layered cleanliness efforts being carried out by the trust. Nirajal is being offered to the people as Sompanga. The trust is distributing the offerings used for 'abhishek' of Somnath Mahadev after being fully treated for the purity purposes of the devotees in bottles. The trust has fully banished the use of plastic in line with

the government's ban on the single use plastic. Sompanga and nine-step filtered 'Charnamrit' can be taken away by the devotees from the temple. In a short span of time, the Somnath Temple Trust has set an example which, if adopted by all, may prove a game-changer in the country. The Government is laying stress on the revival of the water bodies in the country. It has carried out deep cleaning of the seabed with the participation of the Coast Guard, which helped in retrieving tonnes of solid waste, which were lying at the base of the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal. Several Beaches have been cleaned with the participation of people and civil society.

PM Modi's call for the revival of 75 'Amrit Sarovars' in 75 districts in the country is also going to contribute in a comprehensive manner for the adoption of the LiFE principles for the healthy relationships between the people and nature. He has shared several anecdotes in his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann ki Baat' of the people-led campaigns in the rural parts of the country where the collective individual efforts have helped in reviving the water bodies and cleaning the ponds, rivers and rivulets.

The achievements of the Somnath Temple Trust complement the efforts of people all across the country in adopting the LiFE principles. It will be worthwhile if the example of the Somnath Temple Trust is studied and accepted by all the stakeholders.

POINT COUNTERPOINT


THIS (THE BBC DOCUMENTARY SERIES) IS POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS. I MEAN YOU WANT TO DO A HATCHET JOB.
— EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER
S JAISHANKAR



HE'S A FAILED FOREIGN MINISTER. DESPITE BEING THE LONGEST SERVING DIPLOMAT IN CHINA, HE HAS FAILED ON EVERY FRONT.
— CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON
SUPRIYA SHRINATE

A ministry needed to resolve bankruptcy cases

Government earlier took the bold and monumental step by bringing in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code



ATUL SEHGAL

Recent news item appeared in a leading Indian newspaper daily with the heading 'Over 94 per cent value erosion in 165 IBC liquidation cases.' It contained the disconcerting news that against Rs 6.9 lakh crore claims by bad debt burdened banks on defaulting debtors, their assets have shrunk to a value of Rs 40,000 crore.

Since the enforcement of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in 2016, there have been cases of these 165 borrowers with loans of Rs 1,000 crore or above. Many reasons have been advanced to explain this huge shrinkage of banks' claims to 0.6 per cent of their original value. These include a gross overstatement of the values of their physical, tangible assets by the borrower

companies at the time of loan application and approval, and a huge fall in the market value of the companies' equity shares.

But the most important reasons are glossed over. These are fallacies and imperfections in our working and regulatory systems. How does our banking system fail to fix a fair, realistic, and objective assessment of the companies' tangible assets at the time of borrowing? How do the management consultancy organisations operate, given the stark fact that despite big professional banners, they fail to make a realistic evaluation of the assets of borrowing companies? Why do the government's regulating agencies also fail to scan the apparently shady working of these consultancy companies?

How is the intermediate monitoring of asset values carried out? And why do no warning signals of rapid decline of asset values appear in this period? Who is responsible? Can we really pin responsibility and take timely corrective action so that common persons' savings lying in these huge banks do not suffer erosion through an evidently bad system that apparently allows misappropriation of funds? Are all not privy to and aware of stock market manipulations? Can regulatory agencies and governments abdicate their responsibility in this regard?

Once an account becomes a non-performing asset (NPA), the valuation of the corresponding assets starts deteriorating, as per the statements

made in the news item. But this applies only to equity share values which are sentiment driven and market manipulated. It does not apply to fixed and other liquid assets like cash, gold and properties. Of the 6,195 corporate insolvency cases, 1,999 are still ongoing. As regards the remaining 4,196 cases concluded, 1,901 ended up in liquidation. This statement of the news item does not indicate how much proportion of the assessed values of the assets could be liquidated. And it is a pity, if the proportion is as low as 0.6 percent as appears to be the case.

This is a dismal picture of the working of unprofessional consultancy companies, unscrupulous banking officials, and ineffective regulators

culpable in erosion of public money deposited in public sector banks which the innocent account holders naively regard as safe and secure. Our nationalistic Government, which, to its credit, had taken a bold and monumental step in promulgation of IBC, needs to also ensure that it is enforced effectively.

The bringing in of IBC, it is reiterated, was a great step by the present Government for prevention and offsetting the problem of NPAs in our banking sector which had assumed alarming proportions in the erstwhile UPA regimes. But if the recovery of loaned amounts by lending banks is hamstrung by the archaic unprofessional systems of valuations, loan approvals and ineffective monitoring of funds

utilization, then the whole exercise of bringing in discipline in the working of banks, consultants and regulators is brought to a naught.

Our country really needs financial, administrative and corporate systems of its own which will run smoothly and deliver efficiently to implement its development plans, rather than blindly adopt systems borrowed from the west and foist them on the domestic institutions which are operated by Indians who have their own sets of ideological values and cultural moorings. This is where change is required and this is where the government needs to think seriously and devise a plan to develop indigenous systems that will be in tune with native culture of Indians and will, accordingly,

deliver well. Let the Government establish a separate ministry to take up this most important task. The whole process has to start with the overhaul or replacement of some key extant laws which will make it easy to devise and install financial, administrative, corporate and regulatory systems in line with the modified, new laws. The sooner the Govt thinks in this direction and acts, the better it is going to be. If this is done as suggested, our country will jump start from the present economic growth rate of 6.2 per cent to 10 per cent, or even 15 per cent. This is a statement borne out by India's inherent potential to become the leading economic power of the world, a position it has held for thousands of years in history.

(The author is a Management Consultant based in New Delhi.)

UK Govt defends BBC in Parl over raids in India

PTI ■ LONDON

The British government has strongly defended the BBC and its editorial freedom in Parliament after the Income-Tax department's survey operations on the UK-headquartered media corporation's New Delhi and Mumbai offices over three days last week.

A Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) junior minister responded to an urgent question raised in the House of Commons on Tuesday to say that the government cannot comment on the allegations made by the I-T department over an "ongoing investigation" but stressed that media freedom and freedom of speech are essential elements of "robust democracies".

David Rutley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the FCDO, pointed to a

"broad and deep relationship" with India which meant the UK was able to discuss a wide range of issues in a "constructive manner".

"We stand up for the BBC. We fund the BBC. We think the BBC World Service is vital. We want the BBC to have that editorial freedom," said Rutley.

"It criticises us (government), it criticises the (Opposition) Labour party, and it has that freedom that we believe is so important. That freedom is key, and we want to be able to communicate its importance to our friends across the world, including the government in India," he said.

Updating the Commons on the issue, the minister said India's I-T department conducted what has been described as a survey on the BBC's offices in New Delhi and Mumbai, beginning on February 14 and finishing after three days, on February 16.

Highlighting that the BBC is "operationally and editorially independent", the minister said the public broadcaster plays an important role and the FCDO funds services in 12 languages, including four Indian languages: Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi and Telugu.

"It will continue to do so, because it is important to ensure that our voice and an independent voice, through the BBC is heard throughout the world," he said.

Pressed on by Opposition MPs on the "deeply worrying raids" and asked about discussions with the Indian government, the minister added: "It is because of our broad and deep relationship with India that we are able to discuss a wide range of issues in a constructive manner with its government. As part of those conversations, this issue has been raised and we continue to monitor the situation."

The urgent question was raised by Northern Ireland MP Jim Shannon, who branded the action a "deliberate act of intimidation following the release of an unflattering documentary about the country's leader" and sharply criticised the UK government for failing to make a statement on the issue.

"The raids happened seven days ago. Since then I say this respectfully there has been silence from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. No government statements have been issued, and it has taken an urgent question to encourage the government to condemn this blatant attack on press freedoms," said Shannon, a member of Parliament for the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

British Sikh Labour MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi expressed his concerns that "India, a nation with which we

have shared values of democracy and press freedoms, decided to conduct a raid on the BBC offices after the airing of a documentary critical of the Indian Prime Minister's actions". "These issues have absolutely been raised as part of those conversations," the minister responded.

Other Labour MPs pointed out that it was not the first time that the authorities in India had undertaken such "investigations into media organisations that are critical of the current government".

"We need to ensure that our views on media freedom are communicated clearly with other governments. We have those conversations not only with the government of India, but across the world. We think these are very important principles and, as I said, they are essential elements for robust democracies," the minister said.

"Our broad and deep relationship, guided by the comprehensive strategic partnership and the 2030 road map for India-UK future relations, allows us to discuss a wide range of issues in a constructive manner with the government of India. We continue to follow the matter closely," he added.

Conservative Party MP Bob Blackman, a vocal supporter of the Indian government, asked the minister to confirm if the I-T authorities in India have been investigating the BBC for seven years.

The minister, however, declined to comment on "an ongoing investigation that the BBC is actively engaged in".

The I-T department said in a statement following the survey that the income and profits disclosed by the organisation's units were "not commensurate with the scale of operations in India".

Ex-ISIS bride loses appeal to regain her British citizenship

PTI ■ LONDON

A Bangladeshi-origin British woman, who fled the UK as a 15-year-old schoolgirl to join the Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist network, on Wednesday lost a legal bid before a specialist tribunal to regain her British citizenship and return to the country.

Now aged 23, London-born Shamima Begum had challenged then Home Secretary Sajid Javid's decision to revoke her British citizenship on national security grounds in 2019 at the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC).

Justice Robert Jay ruled that concerns raised by her lawyers over her "sexual exploitation" and breaches of duty by certain state bodies did not trump the home secretary's legal duty to make a national security decision to strip Begum of her British nationality.

"There is some merit in the argument that those advising the secretary of state see this as a black and white issue, when many would say that there are shades of grey," said Justice Jay.

"In my mind and that of colleagues, it is not conceivable that even a 15-year-old... an intelligent, articulate and presumably critically thinking individual - would not know what (ISIS) was about. In some respects, I do believe she knew what she was doing and had agency in doing so," the judgment notes.

The British government has claimed Begum could seek a Bangladeshi passport given her heritage but her family has



argued that she is British and has never held Bangladeshi citizenship.

The specialist tribunal accepted that Javid's conclusion to revoke her British citizenship was "an integral part of the overall national security assessment carried out by the Security Service" and therefore not a matter for the court.

"If asked to evaluate all the circumstances of Begum's case, reasonable people with knowledge of all the relevant evidence will differ, in particular in relation to the issue of the extent to which her travel to Syria was voluntary and the weight to be given to that factor in the context of all others," notes Justice Jay.

"Likewise, reasonable people will differ as to the threat she posed in February 2019 to the national security of the United Kingdom, and as to how that threat should be balanced against all countervailing considerations. However, under our constitutional settlement these sensitive issues are for the secretary of state to evaluate and not for the Commission," he said.

Germany expels 2 Iranian diplomats

AP ■ BERLIN

Germany said Wednesday that it is expelling two Iranian diplomats over the death sentence imposed in Iran against one of its citizens.

Authorities in Iran announced Tuesday that Jamshid Sharmahd, a 67-year-old Iranian-German national and US resident, was sentenced to death after being convicted of terrorist activities. Iran claims Sharmahd is the leader of the armed wing of a group advocating the restoration of the monarchy that was overthrown in the 1979 Islamic Revolution, but his family say he was merely the spokesman for the opposition group and deny he was involved in any attacks. They accuse Iranian intelligence of abducting him from Dubai in

2020. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said she summoned Iran's charge d'affaires in Berlin and informed him that "we will not accept this massive breach of a German citizen's rights".

"As a consequence the German government has declared two members of the Iranian embassy unwanted persons and asked them to leave Germany at short notice," she said. "We demand that Iran revokes the death sentence against Jamshid Sharmahd and allows him to have an appeal that is fair and in line with the rule of law." Germany has said that Sharmahd, who lives in Glendora, California, did not have "even the beginning of a fair trial" and that consular access and access to the trial had been

repeatedly denied. She also said he had been arrested "under highly questionable circumstances" without elaborating.

The death sentence — which can be appealed — comes against the backdrop of months of anti-government protests in Iran and a fierce crackdown on dissent. Monarchists based outside Iran support the protests, as do other groups and individuals with different ideologies.

The official website of Iran's judiciary said Sharmahd was convicted of plotting terrorist activities. He was tried in a Revolutionary Court, where proceedings are held behind closed doors and where rights groups say defendants are unable to choose their lawyers or see the evidence against them.

10 Palestinians killed, many hurt in Israeli West Bank raid

AP ■ NABLUS

Israeli troops on Wednesday entered a major Palestinian city in the occupied West Bank in a rare, daytime arrest operation, triggering fighting that killed at least 10 Palestinians and wounded scores of others.

The raid, which reduced a building to rubble and left a series of shops riddled with bullets, was one of the bloodiest battles in nearly a year of fighting in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

A 72-year-old man was among the 10 killed and 102 people were wounded, Palestinian officials said.

The brazen raid, coupled with the high death toll, raised the prospect of further bloodshed. A similar raid last month was followed by a deadly Palestinian attack outside a Jerusalem synagogue, and the Hamas militant group warned that "its patience is running out." The Israeli military said it entered the city to arrest three wanted militants suspected in previous shooting attacks in the West Bank. It said it tracked down the men in a hideout.

The army said it surrounded the building and asked the men to surrender, but instead they opened fire. It said all three were killed in a shootout. It said

that during the raid, armed suspects "shot heavily toward the forces," which responded with live fire. It said others hurled rocks and explosives at the troops. There were no Israeli casualties. It released photos of what it said were two automatic rifles confiscated in the raid.

In the Old City of Nablus, people stared at the rubble that had been a large home in the centuries-old casbah. From one end to the other, shops were riddled with bullets. Parked cars were crushed. Blood stained the cement ruins. Furniture from the destroyed home was scattered among mounds of debris.

Seattle first US city to ban caste discrimination

AP ■ SEATTLE

The Seattle City Council has added caste to the city's anti-discrimination laws, becoming the first US city to specifically ban caste discrimination.

Calls to outlaw discrimination based on caste, a division of people based on birth or descent, have grown louder among South Asian diaspora communities in the United States. The movement is getting pushback from some Hindu Americans who argue that

such legislation maligns a specific community.

Proponents of the ordinance approved by a 6-1 vote Tuesday say caste discrimination crosses national and religious boundaries and that without such laws, those facing caste discrimination in the US will have no protections.

The ordinance is a contentious issue, especially among the nation's South Asian diaspora. Supporters argue it is needed because caste is not covered under existing civil rights protections. Groups

opposing the measure say it will malign a community that is already the target of prejudice.

Council Member Kshama Sawant, a socialist and the only Indian-American on the City Council, said the ordinance, which she proposed, does not single out one community, but it accounts for how caste discrimination crosses national and religious boundaries. The origins of the caste system in India can be traced back 3,000 years as a social hierarchy based on one's occupation and birth. It is a sys-

tem that has evolved over centuries under Muslim and British rule. The suffering of those who are at the bottom of the caste pyramid known as Dalits has continued. Caste discrimination has been prohibited in India since 1948, a year after the nation's independence from British rule.

Dalit activists from Seattle and beyond rallied at Seattle City Hall in support of the ordinance, said Thenmozhi Soundararajan, founder and executive director of California-based Equality Labs.

The US is the second most popular destination for Indians living abroad, according to the Migration Policy Institute, which estimates the US diaspora grew from about 206,000 in 1980 to about 2.7 million in 2021.

The group South Asian Americans Leading Together reports that nearly 5.4 million South Asians live in the US up from the 3.5 million counted in the 2010 census. Most trace their roots to Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

PTI ■ LAHORE

Ousted prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on Wednesday began a mass court arrest movement from Lahore over what it called the violation of fundamental rights, abuse of the Constitution and the economic meltdown.

The party shared footage of senior leaders, including former federal ministers Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar, Senator Azam Swati and former Punjab governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema, sitting inside a police

van. They asked the police present there to arrest them.

"Today 200 PTI workers and Lahore leadership including myself have presented themselves for arrest," said Qureshi, who is the vice-chairman of the party.

"This movement will continue until the imported government puts an end to the lawlessness in the country" and is held accountable for the last 10 months in the people's court, he added.

A large number of PTI workers and leaders gathered at

the Jail Road. Some of the workers had chained and kept themselves in an 'artificial jail' they made.

The government has imposed section 144 on different roads including Mall Road Lahore under which not more than five people can gather there. "We have violated section 144 to go to jail," Qureshi insisted. The Punjab government and Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, however, said that police will not arrest any PTI worker for violating section 144.

Registered Office Address: Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amiti Building, Piramal Agastya Corporate Park, Kamani Junction, Opp Fire Station, LBS Marg, Kurla (West), Mumbai- 400 070.
CIN: L65910MH1984PLC032639, **Website:** www.piramalfinance.com
Branch Address : Dhiraj Baug, Building "A" Ground & 1st Floor, Beside Axis Bank, Opp. Monalisa Building, Agra Road, Hari Niwas Circle, Naupada, Thane (West) – 400 602.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of **Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited (PCHFL)** [formerly known as **Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.(DHFL)**] Under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) to pay to PCHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to PCHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount with NPA date	Property Address
(LC No. 11900001532 of Noida Branch) Shiv Chaman (Borrower) Saroj Devi (Co Borrower 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 384636 /-(₹ Three lakh Eighty Four Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Six Only) NPA (08-11-2022)	Unit No 607 6th Floor Tower A7 Type B Srs Palm Homes Sector 7 Palwal Faridabad Haryana - 121102
(LC No. 01400004147 of New Delhi Branch) Jatinder Ralli (Borrower) Kuldeep Ralli (Co Borrower 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 1057084 /-(₹ Ten lakh Fifty Seven Thousand Eighty Four Only) NPA (09-10-2022)	Dda Janta Flats Vp - 260A Ground Floor, Near Dda Market, Pitam Pura, New Delhi New Delhi Delhi - 110034
(LC No. 1960004288 of Delhi - Safdurjung Branch) Mohd Ferdosh (Borrower) Chandani Praveen (Co Borrower 1) Manoj Bhatt (Co Borrower 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 1184625 /-(₹ Eleven lakh Eighty Four Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Five Only) NPA (08-11-2022)	Flat No. 742, Ground Floor, D D A, L I G Flat, Block-C-1 Siraspur, Delhi New Delhi Delhi - 110040
(LC No. 19600042871 of Delhi - Safdurjung Branch) Khiran Pal (Borrower) Anita Devi (Co Borrower 1) Bishan Singh (Co Borrower 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 614234 /-(₹ Six lakh Fourteen Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Four Only) NPA (24-11-2022)	Flat No. 409, 4Th Floor Tower A 2, Status Residency Alwar Bypass Road Bhiwadi Alwar Rajasthan - 301019
(LC No. 27400000272 of Bhiwadi Branch) Ratan Kumar (Borrower) Usha (Co Borrower 1) Shiv Kumar (Co Borrower 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 893366 /-(₹ Eight lakh Ninety Three Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Six Only) NPA (30-10-2022)	Plot No 07 R L F City Village Salarpur Near Kajria Tiles Tijara Rajasthan Alwar Rajasthan - 301019
(LC No. 11900002952 of Noida Branch) Krishna Kumar Lal (Borrower) Diksha Burnwal (Co Borrower 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 1010270 /-(₹ Ten lakh Ten Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Only) NPA (29-09-2022)	Property No. B-81 Block-B Part Of Kharsa No. 17/81 Matiala Extension Uttam Nagar Delhi New Delhi Delhi - 110059
(LC No. 2790000468 of Greater Noida Branch) Loveleen Khurana (Borrower) Komal Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 1078832 /-(₹ Ten lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Two Only) NPA (30-10-2022)	Flat No-FF-4,First Floor, Rear Rhs, Plot No-19, Block-F, SIF VED Vihar, Village-Sadullabad, Ghaziabad, Up Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201102
(LC No. 26600001592 of Delhi Rajouri Garden Branch) Manoj Kumar Mishra (Borrower) Simu (Co Borrower 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 980616 /-(₹ Nine lakh Eighty Thousand Six Hundred Sixteen Only) NPA (09-10-2022)	Flat No. SF - 3,Second Floor, Front Lhs Plot No.-J-30 J-Block Kh. No.1462 Balaji Enclave Raispur,Dasna Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201007
(LC No. 11900003051 of Noida Branch) Vinod Prakash (Borrower) Suneeta (Co Borrower 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 502141 /-(₹ Five lakh Two Thousand One Hundred Forty One Only) NPA (08-10-2022)	Plot No. 127 Ground Floor Front Side Rhs Vikram Enclave Bear Delhi Convent School Vill Pasonda Pargana Loni Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201102
(LC No. 200N036910 of Noida -sector 2 Branch) Priiti Rammanni (Borrower) Hari P Rammanni (Co Borrower 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 805604 /-(₹ Eight lakh Five Thousand Six Hundred Four Only) NPA (09-11-2022)	H/Fat No. Sem-15/07 , Floor No. 1St Floor , Windsor Shipra Sun City , Village , Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201014
(LC No. 13000001423 of Gurgaon Branch) Ad Services (Borrower) Vishal Gupta (Co Borrower 1) Vinita Gupta (Co Borrower 2) Jag Mohan Gupta (Guarantor 1) Recreation Printing Technologies Pvt Ltd (Guarantor 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 246036 /-(₹ Two lakh Forty Six Thousand Thirty Six Only) NPA (30-09-2021)	M_Machine_Name :- One Super Varint Offset Printing Machine Ap_Model_No :- 1986 Ap_Invoice_No :- 29
(LC No. 13000001421 of Gurgaon Branch) Chaitanya Diagnostics Pvt Ltd (Borrower) Rahul Sanan (Co Borrower 1) Dharam Pal Sanan (Co Borrower 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 269961 /-(₹ Two lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty One Only) NPA (09-10-2022)	M_Machine_Name :- Trassis Ga-68 Synthesizer Ap_Model_No :- GA-68 Ap_Invoice_No :- PU/DJ/27916
(LC No. 13000002056 of Gurgaon Branch) Mars Pet Bottles Pvt Ltd (Borrower) Vinay Kumar Goel (Co Borrower 1) Smita Goel (Co Borrower 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 487368 /-(₹ Four lakh Eighty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Eight Only) NPA (30-06-2021)	M_Machine_Name :- Injection Moulding Machine Ap_Model_No :- 150T Ap_Invoice_No :- MIPL/VT/AS/235/2017
(LC No. 13000001506 of Gurgaon Branch) D Industries (Borrower) Daya Singh Hanspal (Co Borrower 1) Samneet Kaur (Co Borrower 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 182082 /-(₹ One lakh Eighty Two Thousand Eighty Two Only) NPA (28-02-2021)	M_Machine_Name :- Cosmos Cnt Vertical Machining Center Ap_Model_No :- CVM-60 Ap_Invoice_No :- 205-REV-2
(LC No. 13000001695 of Gurgaon Branch) Pomey Plastic Works (Borrower) Yogesh Kumar Nayyar (Co Borrower 1) Samita Nayyar (Co Borrower 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 177621 /-(₹ One lakh Seventy Seven Thousand Six Hundred Twenty One Only) NPA (30-09-2021)	M_Machine_Name :- 5 Star Single Station Automatic Blow Ap_Model_No :- DOUBL HEAD Ap_Invoice_No :- 27740266000
(LC No. 13000002241 of Gurgaon Branch) Vinayak Technoplast (Borrower) Sandeep Agarwal (Co Borrower 1) Santosh Agarwal (Co Borrower 2) Arjun Kumar Agarwal (Guarantor 1) Deepthi Agarwal (Guarantor 2)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 1358219 /-(₹ Thirteen lakh Fifty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Nineteen Only) NPA (30-10-2022)	M_Machine_Name :- Injection Moulding Machine Ap_Model_No :- 350T Ap_Invoice_No :- MIPL/VT/AS/460A/2017
(LC No. 13000002751 of Gurgaon Branch) Vinayak Technoplast (Borrower) Sandeep Agarwal (Co Borrower 1) Santosh Agarwal (Co Borrower 2) Deepthi Agarwal (Guarantor 1)	30-01-2023 / ₹ 904105 /-(₹ Nine lakh Four Thousand One Hundred Five Only) NPA (30-10-2022)	M_Machine_Name :- Toshiba Injection Molding Machine Ap_Model_No :- 150-5-10-900 Ap_Invoice_No :- 1800000018103037

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to PCHFL as aforesaid, PCHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of PCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date : 23-02-2023
Place : Delhi

(Authorised Officer)
Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR
(Established by the State Legislature Act No 21 of 1969)
(Only University with Category-I Status in the states of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh)
Accredited with CGPA 3.85 on four point scale at "A++" grade (highest level as per modified criteria notified on 27.07.2017) by NAAC and Conferred "University with Potential for Excellence" Status by UGC
ADMISSION NOTICE FOR FEB-MARCH 2023 BATCH
UGC-DEB ENTITLED COURSES UNDER DIRECTORATE OF ONLINE STUDIES
Admissions are open for following courses under Directorate of Online Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The candidates may visit the Directorate's website (<http://gndu-online.in/>) for filling online application form and further details.
Under Graduate Degree BA (Punjab), BCA Post Graduate Degree MA (Punjab), M.Com
Online Registration is Open for February-March 2023.
For any enquiry, please contact the Directorate office via email contact-us@gnduonline.in via phone @ +91-7347300816/ 7740063405, 0183-2823520
DEAN ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Director
Directorate of Online Studies
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
NA/12/14631/2022/21489 Dt. 22-02-2023

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED
(A State Government Undertaking)
Corrigendum-IV (E-Tendering Mode Only)
The date of submission and opening of tender for "Providing Tungsten Carbide hard coating by HP-HVOF coating method on runner buckets from inside of 'W' portion of bucket (inclusive of major repair and surface finishing by means of grinding and grit blasting before the Tungsten Carbide coating) of the existing Coated Forged Fabricated Pelton runner (with coating) having 21 buckets including stress relieving, balancing and testing of runner as per relevant standards after HP-HVOF Coating for the 3x40 MW Bhaba HEP" having tender specification No. **HPSEBL/CEG/WP-122/2023-23-02** is here by extended as per the following schedule:-
Last date and time of online bid submission **Up to 01.03.2023 (17.00 Hrs.)**
Date of opening of Techno-commercial bid (Part-1) **03.03.2023 (11.30 Hrs.)**
The detailed tender notification can be viewed/downloaded from website **<http://www.hptenders.gov.in>**. Any clarification/amendment shall be uploaded on the above website.
All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.
Sd/-
(Yashwant Singh Thakur)
Chief Engineer (Generation),
HPSEB Ltd., Sunder Nagar.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Sub:- **NIT No. 02-DyCEE-GSU-NDLs-22-23**
The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Gati Shakti/Northern Railway, DRM Office, New Delhi-110001 has invited e-tender for the under noted work. It has been uploaded to IREPS website on date 22.02.2023.
1 Name of work and location : Electrical work in connection with construction of end to end public FOB across Railway line in connection with Qutab road and Shardaahandan marg for crossing of New Delhi Yard at Ballimaran Delhi.
2 Tender Notice no. :- 02-DyCEE-GSU-NDLs-22-23
3 Earnest Money amount :- Rs. 84,300/- (Rs. Sixty four thousand three hundred only)
4 Approximate cost :- Rs. 32,15,568.00 (Rs. Thirty two lacs fifteen thousand five hundred sixty eight only)
5 Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender : Tenders uploaded on date 22.02.2023 on IREPS website i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in**. The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11:30 hrs. on 17.03.2023
6 Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document : The detailed e-tender notice and tender document is available on **www.ireps.gov.in**. Above tender document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS website i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in** from 03.03.2023 to 17.03.2023. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Russia, China showcase ties amid Ukraine crisis

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia and China showcased their deepening ties Wednesday in a series of meetings in Moscow closely watched for signs that Beijing might offer stronger support to the Kremlin for its war in Ukraine.

The visit by Wang Yi, the Chinese Communist Party's most senior foreign policy official, comes as the conflict in Ukraine continues to upend the global diplomatic order.

Relations between Russia and the West are at their lowest point since the Cold War, and ties between China and the US are also under serious strain. Moscow suspended its participation in the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty with Washington this week. And the US expressed concern in recent days that China could provide arms and ammunition to Russia.

Wang held talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and met with President Vladimir Putin.

Speaking at the start of their talks, Lavrov noted that "our ties have continued to develop dynamically, and despite high turbulence in the global arena we have shown the readiness to speak in defence of



Russian President Vladimir Putin greets Chinese Communist Party's foreign policy chief Wang Yi during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow on Wednesday

AP

each other's interests."

Wang responded in kind, underlining Beijing's focus on deepening ties with Russia — a relationship it says has "no limits."

China has pointedly refused to criticise the invasion of Ukraine — echoing Moscow's claim that the US and NATO are to blame for provoking the Kremlin while blasting the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia. Russia, in turn, has staunchly supported China amid tensions with the US over

Taiwan.

The two nations have held a series of military drills that showcased their increasingly close defence ties.

The rapprochement has worried the West, leading US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to warn that any Chinese involvement in the Kremlin's war effort would be a "serious problem."

Wang's talks with Lavrov followed his meeting Tuesday with Nikolai Patrushev, the powerful secretary of Russia's National Security Council, who

called for closer cooperation with Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to maintain dominance by thwarting an alliance between China and Russia.

The visit took place against a backdrop of grinding battles in Ukraine as neither side appeared to gain momentum, following weeks of virtual stalemate during the winter.

Ukraine's presidential office said Wednesday that at least seven civilians were killed over the previous 24 hours. Fight remained most intense in eastern areas, Ukrainian officials said.

In the partially occupied Donetsk region, the Ukrainian governor of the region, Pavlo Kyrylenko, accused the Kremlin's forces of adopting "scorched-earth tactics" as they pummeled cities, towns and villages. In the neighbouring Luhansk region, also largely occupied, the Russian army tried to break through Ukrainian defences near the city of Kreminna, but after a "very heavy battle" the attack subsided, Luhansk Gov. Serhii Haidai said.

The growing relationship between China and Russia is another example of the ways the war has spread into perilous new terrain.

China blasts Pentagon official's Taiwan visit, military relations

AP ■ BEIJING

China on Wednesday sharply criticised a visit to Taiwan by a senior Pentagon official and reaffirmed it has sanctioned Lockheed Martin and a unit of Raytheon for supplying military equipment to the self-governing island democracy.

The comments from the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office underscore the dramatic deterioration in relations between Beijing and Washington over Taiwan, technology, spying allegations, and, increasingly, Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Asked about the reported visit by Michael Chase, deputy assistant secretary of defence for China, office spokesperson Zhu Fenglian said China "resolutely opposes any official interaction and military collaboration" between the US and Taiwan.

Efforts by Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party to cement the island's inde-

pendence with foreign assistance are "doomed to failure," Zhu told reporters.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary, and has been stepping up its military and diplomatic harassment. The sides split amid civil war in 1949, and China's authoritarian Communist Party has never held sway over the island.

A Pentagon spokesperson did not comment directly on Chase's visit, repeating that "our commitment to Taiwan is rock-solid and contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and within the region." Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said it had no information about any such visit.

Tensions between the US and China again ratcheted up last month after Washington accused Beijing of sending a spy balloon that was shot down over the American East Coast.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a trip to Beijing in the wake of the incident and said over the weekend that the United States was concerned China would provide weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine.

China, which has declared a "no limits" friendship with Russia, has pointedly refused to criticize Moscow's actions, blaming the US and NATO for provoking the Kremlin, and has blasted the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia. Russia, in turn, has strongly backed China over Taiwan.

On a visit to Moscow Tuesday, the Communist Party's top diplomat Wang Yi said relations between Moscow and Beijing are "solid as a rock" and will "stand the test of the volatile international situation."

Russia and China have an "excellent opportunity to continue close strategic cooperation and contacts to protect our shared strategic interests,"

Wang said.

Also this week, a delegation of US lawmakers visiting Taiwan met on Tuesday with President Tsai Ing-wen, who said she looked for increased cooperation on issues from security to climate change.

On Monday, the delegation met with the head of the legislature as part of their five-day visit. They include Reps. Ro Khanna of California, Tony Gonzales of Texas, Jake Auchincloss of Massachusetts and Jonathan Jackson of Illinois.

The congressional team held talks with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company's founder Morris Chang, considered the father of the island's world-leading microchip industry that is now investing heavily in US production.

Khanna and Auchincloss are both members of the new House select committee focused on competition with China.

Suspension of arms treaty big mistake: Biden

AP ■ WARSAW

President Joe Biden said Wednesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin made a "big mistake" by suspending his country's participation in the last remaining US-Russia nuclear arms control treaty. The U.S. president was in Poland to reassure eastern flank NATO allies that the US will remain by their sides amid the grinding Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In his first comments since Putin's announcement Tuesday, Biden condemned the Russian decision to pull back from the treaty, known as New START. The decision to suspend Russian cooperation with the treaty's nuclear warhead and missile inspections follows Moscow's cancellation late last year of talks that had been intended to salvage an agreement that both sides

have accused the other of violating.

Biden's comments came as he was wrapping up a whirlwind, four-day visit to Poland and Ukraine with talks with leaders from the Bucharest Nine, a collection of nations in the most eastern parts of the NATO alliance that came together in response to Putin's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

As the war in Ukraine drags on, the Bucharest Nine countries' anxieties have remained heightened. Many worry Putin could move to take military action against them next if he's successful in Ukraine. The alliance includes Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

"When Russia invaded, it wasn't just Ukraine being tested. The whole world faced a

test for the ages," Biden said in an address from the foot of Warsaw's Royal Castle on Tuesday to mark the somber milestone of the year-old Russian invasion. "Europe was being tested. America was being tested. NATO was being tested. All democracies were being tested."

Addressing concerns of the NATO members that they could be next, Biden on Tuesday pledged America's ironclad commitment to the mutual-defense treaty and Ukraine's defense.

"Appetites of the autocrat cannot be appeased," he said. "They must be opposed."

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, the right-wing populist leader who argued last week that the European Union is partly to blame for prolonging Russia's war in Ukraine, has balked at sanctions on Moscow and arming

Kyiv. Orban was skipping the meeting with Biden, and President Katalin Novák was attending in his stead.

Still, Klaus Iohannis, the president of Romania, insisted that "The B9 is stronger than ever."

Putin on Tuesday delivered his own address, in which he lashed out against Ukraine and its Western allies. The Russian president also announced Moscow would suspend its participation in the U.S.-Russia arms control treaty. The move is expected to have an immediate impact on US visibility into Russian nuclear activities, but the pact was already on life support.

Biden met Tuesday in Warsaw with Moldovan President Maia Sandu, who last week claimed Moscow was behind a plot to overthrow her country's government using external saboteurs.

CPC heads for revamp next week

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's ruling Communist Party as well as the state institutions will undergo a major revamp at a key meeting of the party to be held here next week, it was announced here on Wednesday.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) headed by President Xi Jinping will hold its second plenary session from February 26 to 28, an official press release after the political bureau meeting of the Party held here on Tuesday

said. The Political Bureau discussed the draft plan on the reforms of Party and state institutions, which will be submitted to the second plenary session of the Central Committee for review, it said without disclosing the details of the planned reforms.

The Central Committee which is the top policy of the party was elected at the once in five-year Congress of the party held in October last year and consisted of 203 members and 168 alternate members.

Xi, 69, was re-elected for an unprecedented third five-year term by

the Congress. The Central Committee plenary session will be held ahead of the annual session of China's Parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC) and the top advisory body the China People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

The two bodies were scheduled to meet in the first week of next month.

After the NPC annual session, China will unveil a new leadership, including a new Premier to succeed the incumbent Li Keqiang who is retiring.

Barring Xi, almost all officials at the top are expected to be replaced.

Indian-American entrepreneur Vivek announces 2024 US presidential bid

PTI ■ WASHINGTON



Indian-American tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy has launched his 2024 presidential bid with a promise to "put merit back" and end dependence on China, becoming the second community member to enter the Republican Party's presidential primary after Nikki Haley.

Ramaswamy, 37, whose parents migrated to the United States from Kerala and worked at a General Electric plant in Ohio, made the announcement during a live interview on Fox News's prime time show of Tucker Carlson, a conservative political commentator.

He is the second Indian-American to enter the Republican presidential primary.

Earlier this month, two-term former governor of South Carolina and former US

Ambassador to the United Nations, Haley announced her presidential campaign. She announced that she will contest against her former boss and ex-US President Donald Trump for the Republican Party's nomination.

"We are in the middle of this national identity crisis, Tucker, where we have celebrated our differences for so long that we forgot all the ways we are really just the same as Americans bound by a common set of ideals

that set this nation into motion 250 years ago," Ramaswamy said. He calls "wokeism" a national threat "That's why I am proud to say tonight that I am running for United States president to revive those ideals in this country," he announced.

"I think we need to put merit back into America" in every spirit of our lives," he said, adding that he will end affirmative action in "every sphere of American life."

A second-generation Indian American, Ramaswamy founded Roivant Sciences in 2014 and led the largest biotech IPOs of 2015 and 2016, eventually culminating in successful clinical trials in multiple disease areas that led to FDA-approved products, according to his bio.

He has founded other successful healthcare and technology companies, and in 2022, he launched Strive Asset

Management, a new firm focused on restoring the voices of everyday citizens in the American economy by leading companies to focus on excellence over politics.

"I'm all for putting America first, but in order to put America first, we have to first rediscover what America is. And to me, those are these basic rules of the road that set this nation into motion from meritocracy to free speech, to self-governance over aristocracy."

"The people who we elect actually make them run the government rather than this cancerous federal bureaucracy. That's gonna be the heart of my message," Ramaswamy told Fox News in an interview.

He said the US faces external threats like the rise of China.

It "has got to be our top foreign policy threat that we've gotta respond to, not pointless wars somewhere else."

Woman among 5 held for break-in at Indian visa centre in Lanka

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Five people, including a 63-year-old woman office aide, have been arrested for breaking into the visa processing centre of the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka, police said on Wednesday.



The suspects were arrested on Tuesday, police said, a day after the visa application centre resumed work after being closed on February 15 due to a security incident.

The woman, working as a janitor at the centre, allegedly tipped off her 54-year-old accomplice that usually cash worth Rs 3-4 million is kept in the office. The accomplice,

along with the three aides, broke into the centre, located at a distance from the High Commission's high-security area, in the early hours of February 14. Two of the suspects entered the building through a window, the police said in a statement.

The group searched for the cash but fled with a laptop and a CCTV camera monitor.

The functions in the office were suspended on February 15, owing to a security incident, according to the Indian High Commission. All visa applicants were notified to reschedule their appointments, however, the centre resumed work on Monday.

US SC weighs tech giants' liability in ISIS terror case

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Supreme Court is weighing Wednesday whether Facebook, Twitter and YouTube can be sued over a 2017 Islamic State attack on a Turkish nightclub based on the argument the platforms assisted in fuelling the growth of the terrorist group.

What the justices decide to do in this case and a related one it heard Tuesday is important particularly because the companies have so far been shielded from liability on the internet, allowing them to grow into the giants they are today.

On the first day of arguments, the justices suggested they had little appetite for a far-reaching ruling that would upend the internet. Wednesday's case about the nightclub attack in which 39 people died could provide an off-ramp for the justices if they want to limit the impact of what they do.

At the heart of the cases before the justices are two federal laws. The first is Section 230 of the federal Communications Decency Act, which protects tech companies from being sued over material put on their sites by users. The second is the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, which allows Americans injured by a terrorist attack abroad to sue for money damages in federal court.

In Wednesday's case, the family of a man killed in the Reina nightclub attack in Istanbul sued Twitter, Facebook and YouTube parent Google under the terrorism law. Nawras Alassaf's family members, who are US citizens, say the companies aided and abetted the attack because they assisted in the growth of the Islamic State group, which claimed responsibility for the attack. A lower court let the lawsuit go forward.

The platforms argue that

they can't be sued because they did not knowingly or substantially assist in the Reina attack. If the justices agree, they don't have to reach bigger questions about Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act and whether it protects platforms when they recommend content.

The broader questions about Section 230 were at the center of the case the justices heard Tuesday. In that case, the family of an American college student who was one of 130 people murdered in the Paris attacks sued under the terrorism law.

Noheми Gonzalez's family argued that the Islamic State used YouTube to spread its message and recruit people to its cause. They said YouTube's algorithm, which recommends videos to users based on their viewing habits, was critical to the Islamic State's growth. Lower courts ruled Section 230 barred the lawsuit.

China OK's \$700 million loan to Pak, says FM Dar

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's all-weather ally China has approved a loan of USD 700 million to the cash-strapped country, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar announced on Wednesday.

The announcement by Dar on the loan by the Board of China Development Bank came a day after Pakistan's National Assembly unanimously passed a money bill aimed at raising tax revenues to fulfil the demands set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for seeking a USD 1.1 billion loan facility to avoid an economic meltdown.

Formalities have been completed and the Board of China Development Bank has approved the facility of USD 700 million for Pakistan. This amount is expected to be received this week by the State Bank of

Pakistan which will shore up its forex reserves!" Dar tweeted.

Pakistan has a chronic balance of payments problem which was exacerbated in the last year, with the country's forex reserves declining to critical levels.

As of February 10, the central bank had only USD 3.2 billion in reserves, enough to cover barely three weeks of imports.

To stem dollar outflows, the government has imposed restrictions, allowing imports of only essential food items and medicines until a bailout is agreed upon with the IMF, which is seen as essential for the country to stave off default.

The government headed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to implement measures to cut down on its expenditures by increasing taxes on the public and bringing down gov-

ernment expenses.

The government has also ordered the Foreign Ministry to slash the number of missions abroad and reduce their offices, and staff and initiate other measures to cut down expenditures of the debt-ridden nation by 15 per cent.

In November, finance minister Dar said that Pakistan has secured a USD 13 billion bailout from China and Saudi Arabia with USD 5.7 billion in fresh loans. Dar was confident that the cash would come before the IMF programme revival.

However, it became clear with time that Islamabad's old allies refused to dole out more cash without the country first agreeing to the IMF's conditions.

That was when Pakistan had to invite the IMF mission to negotiate the deal, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that My Client Ashok Kumar S/o Bachan Lal R/o H.No. 127-A, Gali No. 4, Friends Enclave, Sultanpuri, Delhi-110086, has disowned their brother Anil Kumar & his wife Anju from all their movable/ immovable properties and severed all their relations both legal & social with them due to disrespectful behavior. Any person dealing with Anil Kumar & his wife Anju shall be doing so at his/her own risk, and my clients shall not be responsible for the same.

SANJEEV DWIVEDI (ADVOCATE)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that ORIGINAL SHARE CERTIFICATE of Flat No. 1082, Rajni Gandhi C.G.H.S. Ltd. Plot-4, Secto-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 held in the name and owned by Shri Akash Bartha Shri Jilender Kumar Bartha, is lost and whereas an FIR No. 1082/2022 has already been registered on the online portal of Delhi Police vide LR No.177593 dated 22/02/2023 for information to this effect. The recipient/finder may kindly inform the undersigned at the address given below within 15 days from the present day, thereafter the userholder of the lost document shall be responsible for its use.

PREM PRAKASH (Advocate)

Legalpath Competent Lawyers LLP
207, Plot-1, MLCU Sector-10, Dwarka, N.D-75
Phone:9871268399

INDIAN RAILWAYS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

(RAILWAY BOARD)

E-TENDER No. 2023RS/1741TC

Executive Director, Railways Store (S), Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, Government of India invites e-tender for procurement of **5000 Sets** Bogie Mounted Brake System (BMSB) for wagons to RDSO Specification No. WD-23-BMSB-08 (Rev. 1) with amendment No. 1 of Sep., 2016 or latest.

2.0 The interested tenderers are advised to visit the website <http://ireps.gov.in> for details of the tender and submission of their e-bids.

3.0 No manual offers will be accepted against e-tender.

4.0 Tender will be closed at 15.00 hours on 20.03.2023.

Director, Railway Stores (W),
Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi,
for and on behalf of the President of India.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Public Notice

This is to inform to all concern that Rupvati W/o Shri Lila R/o Village Shadnoida, Noida Gautam Budh Nagar U.P. who is the original allottee of Property No.SH-038, Sector-144, Noida U.P. whose expired on dated 10.05.2011 WILL was executed on in favour of Girraj Sharma S/o Late Shri Shiv Charan Sharma R/o Village Shadnoida Gautam Budh Nagar U.P. which is registered on dated 15.12.2005. So it is informed to all concern that the said Property No SH-038, Sector-144, Noida U.P. is going to be transferred in favour of Girraj Sharma S/o Late Shri Shiv Charan Sharma R/o Village Shadnoida Noida Gautam Budh Nagar UP through registered WILL. If any one has have objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Residential Plot Development of Noida Authority within 30 days from the day of publication of this notice.

Girraj Sharma

PUBLIC NOTICE

"It is to inform the public at large that: Mr. Avinindra Batra, S/o Sh. M. K. Batra, R/o House No. B-247A, II Floor, Greater Kailash-I, South Delhi, Delhi- 110048 (Aadhar No. 98091488620), is the owner of the said property i.e. Entire Second Floor, along with one Servant Quarter, of Property bearing No. B-247-A, Land area measuring 335 sq. yds., situated at Greater Kailash Part-I, in the area of Village Yaqutpur, New Delhi, hereinafter referred to as "the said property", having acquired the same by virtue of Releingishment Deed dated 22.09.2021 executed by (1) M.K. Batra (2) Mrs. Rohini Batra through SPA Mr. M.K. Batra (3) Mrs. Vinita Batra Sarup through SPA Mr. M.K. Batra (Doc No. 7238 dated 23.09.2021), read with two Sale Deeds both dated 27.05.2005 (Doc No. 8210 & 8225). The said Property has been mortgaged by the owner with **RBL Bank**. It is hereby declared that title of the said Property, is absolutely valid, clear and marketable and there is no dispute / Litigation pending in any court of law, in respect of said Property. Any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 10 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances,lien etc.

VIPUL KR. RAHEJA - Advocate
Chamber no. 55, Civil Side, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi Mob-9873150663

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

RSANo. 2309 OF 2004.....(O&M)

Mohan SinghPetitioner(s)

Versus

Channan Singh and orsRespondent(s)

RSANo. 2515 OF 2004.....(O&M)

Mohan SinghPetitioner(s)

Versus

Channan Singh and orsRespondent(s)

RSANo. 2516 OF 2004.....(O&M)

Mohan SinghPetitioner(s)

Versus

Channan Singh and orsRespondent(s)

To

1. Harpal Singh son of Pritam: Singh son of Mela Singh, resident of Qtr. No. 4, sector 4, R.K.Puram, New Delhi (respondent no. 3 in RSA 2309 of 2004 & RSA 2515 of 2004 & respondent no. 6 in RSA 2515 of 2004, respondent no. 5 in RSA 2516 of 2004.

2. Sukhwinder Singh son of Pritam Singh son of Mela Singh, resident of Qtr. No. 4, sector 4, R.K.Puram, New Delhi (respondent no. 4 in RSA 2309 & 2515 of 2004 & respondent no. 7 in RSA 2515 of 2004 respondent no. 5 in RSA 2516 of 2004)

3. Mohinder Kaur wd/o Pritam Singh son of Mela Singh, resident of Qtr. No. 4, sector 4, R.K.Puram, New Delhi (respondent no. 5 in RSA 2309 & 2515 of 2004 & respondent no. 5 in RSA 2516 of 2004 respondent no. 6 in RSA 2516 of 2004)

4. Sunita Kaur daughter of Pritam Singh resident of Qtr. No. 4, sector 4, R.K.Puram, New Delhi (respondent no. 6 in RSA 2516 of 2004)

Whereas, it is proved to the satisfaction of this court that: the above named respondent: cannot be served in the ordinary manner, notice is hereby issued against him to appear in this court on the 10th day of March, 2023 personally or through some one authorized by law to act for him or an Advocate of this court to defend the above noted case failing which it will be heard and decided in his absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Court this 23rd day of January, 2022.

Supdt.GJII (Civil-II)
High Court of Punjab & Haryana, Chandigarh

‘India to contribute 15% of global growth in 2023’

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

India continues to remain a relative “bright spot” in the world economy, and will alone contribute 15 per cent of the global growth in 2023, International Monetary Fund (IMF) managing director Kristalina Georgieva said.

While digitisation pulled out the world’s fifth-largest economy from pandemic lows, prudent fiscal policy and significant financing for capital investments provided in the next year’s budget will help sustain the growth momentum.

“India’s performance has been quite impressive. For this year, we expect India to retain a high growth rate, 6.8 per cent for the year that ends in March. For FY 2023/24 (April 2023 to March 2024) we project 6.1 per cent, a bit of slow down like the rest of the world economy, but way above the global average. And in that way, India is providing about 15 per cent of global growth in 2023,” Georgieva told PTI in an inter-



view.

That is the fastest growth rate among major economies.

India remains a bright spot at a time when the IMF is projecting 2023 to be difficult with global growth slowing down from 3.4 per cent last year to 2.9 per cent in 2023, she observed.

“Why is India a bright spot? Because one, the country has done really well to turn the digitalization that has been already moving quite well into a major driver of overcoming the impact of the pandemic and creating opportunities for

growth and jobs,” the Managing Director noted.

“Second, because India’s fiscal policy has been responsive to economic conditions. We have seen the new budget presented, and it signals the commitment to fiscal consolidation, while at the same time provides significant financing for capital investments. And three, because India didn’t shy away to learn the lessons from the pandemic and to implement very strong policies to overcome what has been really a difficult time for a number of months,” she said.

Inflation top concern for majority of MPC members

Two voted against rate hike

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Majority of members of the high-powered Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank were concerned about heightened inflation even as two panellists raised objections against an increase in the benchmark interest rate, according to the minutes of the meeting released on Wednesday.

Following the recommendations of the MPC, the RBI increased the rate by 25 basis points on February 8, taking the repo rate to 6.5 per cent. It was the sixth straight hike since May 2022.

“The fight against inflation is complicated by the global outlook. There is some consensus growing around a milder slowdown than earlier feared, although geographical

disparities complicate the prognosis. Be that as it may, the outlook for global inflation is turning more uncertain than before,” Patra opined as per minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das, who heads the six-member MPC, also said overall, there is considerable uncertainty at this stage on the evolving inflation trajectory.

‘Global uncertainty complicates fight against inflation’

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The continuing global uncertainty has complicated the fight against inflation, opined Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra during the Monetary Policy Committee meeting held on February 8.

Sensex tanks 927 pts to close at 3-week low, Nifty ends near 17,500

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex tanked 927 points while the broader Nifty settled at a four-month low on Wednesday due to an intense selling in heavyweight stocks triggered by geopolitical and inflation concerns.

Losses in global equities and across-the-board selling ahead of the monthly expiry of derivatives also hit the investor sentiment, dragging down the key indices for a fourth straight day. The BSE Sensex tumbled 927.74 points or 1.53 per cent to settle at 59,744.98, the lowest closing level since February 1. As many as 29 of the Sensex stocks declined. During the day, it tanked 991.17 points or 1.63 per cent to 59,681.55.

The 50-issue NSE Nifty declined 272.40 points or 1.53 per cent to end at a four-month low of 17,554.30 with 47 of its constituents ending in the red.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined by 1.16 per cent and smallcap index fell by 1.09 per cent.

As many as 266 stocks hit



their 52-week low levels on BSE. Investors’ wealth eroded by ₹6.97 lakh crore (₹6,97,102.05 crore) in four days of decline. The total market valuation stands at ₹2,61,33,883.55 crore.

“Resurgence of the cold war between US & Russia has brought apprehension in the market. Although it should be a short-term effect, the fear of sanctions against Russia and its degree of implication on the economy, especially on food and oil exports, is adding to the anxiety. The market is just recovering from the pandemic, and high interest & inflation

are the headwinds in the back-ground.

“It is presumed that this war will be fought on an economic front, limiting its effect on strong economies like the US & India. Awaiting the release of Fed and RBI minutes are the other major elements that kept investors on the sidelines,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

From the Sensex pack, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries, Wipro, HDFC Bank, HDFC, ICICI Bank and Tata Steel were the major laggards.

Adani Group firms fall; Adani Ent tumbles 10%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Adani Group firms fell sharply on Wednesday, with all the listed firms ending in the negative territory, in line with an overall weak trend in the equity market.

The ten listed firms suffered a combined erosion of Rs 51,294.04 crore in their market valuation on Wednesday.

Adani Enterprises stock tumbled 10.43 per cent to settle at Rs 1,404.85 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 11.94 per cent to Rs 1,381.05.

Shares of Adani Ports declined 6.25 per cent, Adani Power slumped 5 per cent, Adani Transmission (5 per cent), Adani Total Gas (5 per cent), Adani Green Energy (4.99 per cent), Adani Wilmar (4.99 per cent) and Ambuja Cements (4.92 per cent).

NDTV dropped 4.13 per cent and ACC fell 3.97 per cent. Many of the group firms also hit their lower circuit limits in the morning trade.

Adani firm repays ₹1,500 cr to SBI Mutual Fund, Aditya Birla Sun Life

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone has repaid ₹1,500 crore loan and will repay another ₹1,000 crore in commercial papers due in March. The Adani Group firm paid ₹1,000 crore to SBI Mutual Fund and ₹500 crore to Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund.

No cause of concern for wheat if temp prevails below 35 degrees C in mid-March: IARI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns over the impact of rising temperature on wheat yields, government-research body IARI on Wednesday said the situation is not alarming right now even as it advised farmers to be ready to take contingent measures like light irrigation in case of temperature soars beyond 35-degree celsius in mid-March.

Wheat, a major rabi (winter) crop, would be ready for harvest next month. As the Met office has forecast rising temperatures in parts of the country, farmers are worried about a repeat of last year when the heatwave hit the crop yields.

Speaking with PTI, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) Director A K Singh said: “The IMD (India Meteorological Department) has forecast that temperature would remain 2-degree celsius above normal but below 35-



degree celsius till the first fortnight of March. A below 35-degree celsius temperature is not a concern for the wheat crop.”

IARI’s agriculture and weather scientists explained heat is a major concern during the crop maturity stage in mid-March. The impact on the crop is likely only if temperatures remain above 35 degrees celsius continuously for four days.

Suppose the temperature rises by 2 degrees celsius above normal and then comes down the next day, then there is not much impact because the wheat plant has the ability to cope with it, they added.

FCI sells 5.08 L tn wheat to bulk consumers in 3rd round of e-auction

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) sold 5.08 lakh tonnes of wheat to bulk consumers like flour millers in the third round of e-auction held on Wednesday.

In the first two rounds, nearly 13 lakh tonnes of wheat have been sold under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) to bulk users as part of steps to cool down retail prices of the foodgrain and wheat flour.

The next weekly e-auction will be held on March 1.

“About 5.08 lakh tonne of wheat has been sold to bulk consumers under the OMSS today,” FCI Chairman and Managing Director Ashok K Meena told PTI.

Rupee falls 10 paise to close at 82.89 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated by 10 paise to settle at 82.89 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, as intense selling pressure in domestic equities and a strong greenback overseas dented the sentiment.

However, a sharp decline in crude oil prices in the international market restricted the rupee’s fall, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened flat at 82.79, and it moved in a tight range of 82.89 to 82.79 during the session.

It finally closed at 82.89 against the US dollar, registering a fall of 10 paise over its previous close of 82.79.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading



0.12 per cent higher at 104.23 ahead of the release of the Federal Open Market Committee meeting minutes later in the day.

Bond yields in the US have shot higher this month on anticipation of a firmer action by the Federal Reserve in its efforts to stamp out inflation.

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities said, “Rupee traded weak below 82.85 amid increasing bond prices in the US which have spiked above November 2022 rates.

Gold gains ₹90; silver jumps ₹113

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price rose ₹90 to ₹56,350 per 10 gram in the national capital on Wednesday amid gains in prices of the precious metal overseas, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had ended at ₹56,260 per 10 gram.

Silver also jumped ₹113 to ₹66,083 per kg.

“Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹56,350 per 10 gram, up ₹90 per 10 gram,” Saamil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the overseas market, gold was trading higher at \$1,841 per ounce while silver was marginally up at \$21.84 per ounce.



Sebi proposes to introduce five new categories under ESG funds

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has proposed allowing mutual funds to introduce five new categories under ESG (environmental, social and governance) scheme.

The five new categories should be exclusions, integration, best-in-class and positive screening, impact investing and sustainable objectives.

Presently, mutual funds can launch only one ESG scheme under the thematic category of equity schemes.

Considering that AMCs may want to launch multiple diversified ESG schemes under the ESG category, Sebi has proposed that each asset management company should be permitted to launch one ESG scheme each under the five subcategories.

ESG schemes under the proposed new category should



be permitted with a minimum 80 per cent investment of total assets in equity or debt stocks of a particular theme as per the sub-categories. However, the residual portion of the investment should not be starkly in contrast to the philosophy of the scheme.

“AMCs should endeavour to have a higher proportion of the assets under the ESG theme and make suitable disclosures,” the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its consultation paper issued on Monday.

For the ESG exclusions scheme -- the regulator has

suggested that mutual funds should exclude securities based on certain ESG-related activities, business practices, or business segments and the ESG integration scheme should explicitly consider ESG-related factors that are material to the risk and return of the investment, along with traditional financial factors.

ESG best-in-class and positive screening scheme should invest in companies that perform better than peers in ESG parameters.

ESG impact investing scheme should seek a non-financial (real world) impact and evaluate if that impact is being measured and monitored; and ESG sustainable objectives scheme should aim to invest in sectors, industries, or companies that are expected to benefit from a long-term macro or structural ESG related trends.

FDI equity inflows decline 15% to \$36.75 bn in Apr-Dec FY23



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India declined by 15 per cent to \$36.75 billion during the April-December this fiscal, according to the latest Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade data.

The FDI inflows stood at \$43.17 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year.

The total FDI inflows, which includes equity inflows, re-invested earnings and other

capital, declined to \$55.27 billion during the nine months of the current fiscal year as against \$60.4 billion in the year-ago period.

During April-December 2022-23, Singapore emerged as the top investor with \$13 billion FDI. It was followed by Mauritius (\$4.7 billion), the US (about \$5 billion), the UAE (\$3.1 billion), the Netherlands (\$2.15 billion), Japan (\$1.4 billion), and Cyprus (\$1.15 billion), the data showed.

The computer software and hardware sector attracted the highest inflows of \$8 billion during the nine-month period of this fiscal.

It was followed by services (\$6.6 billion), trading (\$4.14 billion), chemicals (\$1.5 billion), automobile industry (\$1.27 billion) and construction (infrastructure) activities (\$1.22 billion).

SBI allows Bhim-based real-time payment with Singapore

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A day after a real-time payments system linkage was established between India and Singapore using the UPI platform, State Bank of India on Wednesday announced a partnership with PayNow, the online payment system of the city state, for cross-border payments.

The facility is offered through SBI’s Bhim SBIPay mobile application and the linkage will allow fund transfers from India to Singapore through registered mobile numbers, and from Singapore to India using the UPI ID, the bank said in a statement.

The UPI-PayNow linkage



is a significant milestone towards developing an infrastructure for cross-border payments between the two countries and the initiative closely aligns with the G20’s priorities of driving faster, cheaper, and more transparent cross-border payments.

The inward bilateral remittance between the two countries was around \$949 million in 2021 according to the World Bank bilateral remittances matrix, the bank said.

BUSINESS BRIEF

CULTURAL FEST ‘VITOPIA 2023’ LAUNCHED

Vijayawada/Amaravati/Guntur: Vitopia 2023 an annual sports and cultural festival launched on a grand note in the VIT-AP University campus Amaravati, AP today. Vitopia is the 4th edition of this extravaganza of culture and sports.



The devotion and urge towards this event among the student population across the country is the distinguishing factor of vitopia from other cultural fests. Vitopia 2023 brings eminent personalities including one of India’s most successful sportsperson P.V. Sindhu, renowned music director Devisri Prasad, Bollywood actors and stand-up comedians among others to the university G. Viswanathan, the founder-chancellor of VIT University unveiled the Vitopia 2023 amid huge claps of thousands of students.

HDFC Bank, Lulu Exchange deal to enhance cross-border payments

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

HDFC Bank, a major private sector bank, and UAE-based Lulu Exchange have signed an MoU to strengthen cross-border payments between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.

In the first phase of the partnership, Lulu Exchange’s expertise and regulatory framework would be utilised to launch a digital inward remittance service titled ‘RemitNow2India’.

That will allow resident individuals of UAE to send money to any bank account in India via IMPS and NEFT through HDFC’s digital banking channels, a release issued by the bank on Tuesday said.

“The partnership will also look to strengthen the existing relationship between the two entities in India, where LuLu Financial Group operates LuLu Forex and the NBFC division LuLu Finserv,” it said.

Arvind Vohra, Group Head of Retail Branch Banking in HDFC Bank, said the partnership will build on each other’s strengths.

NHAI to explore use of phosphor-gypsum in NH construction

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NHAI on Wednesday said it is exploring the use of phosphor-gypsum waste material, a by-product of fertilizer production, in the construction of national highway.

NHAI, along with the Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, is going to take up field trials on projects for use of phosphor-gypsum in the construction of national highway to achieve a circular economy in the use of gypsum.

An Indian fertilizer company has constructed a road using phosphor-gypsum, which was evaluated by the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI). Based on their report, the Indian Road Congress (IRC) has accredited neutralised phosphor-gypsum waste material for road construction for three years, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) said in a statement.

The fertilizer company and CRRI have been asked to take up field trials on an NHAI project to evaluate performance of phosphor-gypsum on a national highway.

Kotak Bank arm invests ₹1,070 cr in Biocon for Vaitris acquisition

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A Kotak Mahindra Bank arm on Wednesday announced a ₹1,070 crore investment in Biocon to help a subsidiary of the Bengaluru-based company in an acquisition.

The Kotak Special Situations Fund (KSSF) investment will help Biocon Biologics’ acquisition of the biosimilars business of its partner Viatris, according to an official statement.

In November 2022, Biocon Biologics had announced that it has completed acquisition of Viatris’ global biosimilars busi-



ness in a multi-billion dollar deal.

A Kotak Bank statement said Biocon Biologics is a fully integrated biosimilars company that has commercialised eight biosimilars in key emerging and advanced markets such as the US and Europe.

With this deal, KSSF said it has fully deployed its \$1 billion corpus.

Horticulture sector gradually turning into organised industry: Tomar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Horticulture sector is being considered as a driver of economic growth and is gradually turning into an organised industry linked to seed trading, value addition and exports, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on Wednesday.

Inaugurating virtually a four-day National Horticulture Fair being held in Bengaluru, Tomar said horticulture plays an important role in doubling the income of farmers and providing essential nutritional security.

“Rapid increase in production and availability of hor-



ticulture crops will help in bridging the gap between nutritional security of the country,” Tomar said.

According to an official statement, he said the country’s horticulture production has increased 13 times from 25 million tonnes in 1950-51 to 331 million tonnes during 2020-21, which is more than foodgrain production.

PATCHY INDIA WILL HAVE TO LIFT THEIR GAME AGAINST OZ

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

Having put up a patchy performance in the Women's T20 World Cup thus far, India will have to lift their game drastically against nemesis Australia in the first semifinal here on Thursday.

India, who have been among the top teams over the last five years but unable to win a major trophy, have expectedly made the semifinals of another ICC event.

However, they have been guilty of self-destructing in the past especially in a knock-out game against England or Australia.

Australia beat India in the previous T20 World Cup final at home and more recently at Commonwealth Games gold medal match in Birmingham last year.

Women's cricket in India has grown massively since the final appearance at the ODI World Cup in 2017 and now it is high time the team converts its promise into performance by stepping up in a do-or-die game like the one on Thursday.

Though the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side won three of its four games in the group stage, not one performance could be called convincing including the game against Ireland. Their sole

WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP



loss came against England.

Considering the way India have played so far, one can only hope that somehow they are able to fix all their issues for the big game, whether it is the inconsistent top-order, the inability to hit sixes barring Richa Ghosh or the high dot ball percentage.

Opener Shafali Verma made her international debut more than three years ago and though still a teenager, she has not been able to learn from her mistakes, mainly her inability to

rotate the strike and her susceptibility against the short ball.

Skipper Harmanpreet herself will be under tremendous pressure to perform having not done anything of note so far in the World Cup. She is one of the few batters who can hit the ball long but has been inconsistent for far too long.

Another loss in a World Cup knock-out game could end her captaincy tenure.

Jemimah Rodrigues has done alright in the tournament

but needs to do more to help the team's cause.

Star batter Smriti Mandhana has been among the consistent performers and once again she will be critical to the team's chances against Australia, who are known to raise their game in a big game to 'invincible levels'.

The Meg Lanning-led side would be carrying a 22-match T20 winning streak into the semifinal.

Australia have lost just two official matches in any format

since dropping a T20 game to New Zealand in March 2021, but notably, both of those defeats have come against India. In December, they outplayed India 4-1 in the series played in Mumbai.

In the bowling department, pacer Renuka Thakur has been India's best bowler in the event with seven wickets so far, including a five for 15 against England.

Deepti Sharma went for runs in her one over against Ireland, but she has been the most consistent in the spin department. The likes of Pooja Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad and Radha Yadav will have to be much more accurate against the rampaging Aussies.

Australia opener Beth Mooney is wary of India's challenge though going by past results, they should win comfortably.

"I'm expecting it to be a huge contest, they've pushed us significantly in the last few years, and they have a bunch of match winners in that line-up as well," Mooney told reporters here on Tuesday.

"We're not expecting it to be easy by any means, whether it's with a bat or the ball, but we certainly know the style of play they've come at us with in the past and they know ours pretty well, too."

Harmanpreet said though her team lost the home series, the players got a lot of confidence out of the high scoring five games.

"I think that series gave us a lot of confidence, you know, the brand of cricket we played in that particular series was something which gave us a lot of confidence."

"And now we know them very well. We played five games back-to-back and then one practice game, we know, their strength, their weakness."

Although wicket-keeper Alyssa Healy missed Australia's final group game against South Africa with quad soreness, the opener is fit for Thursday's match.

TEAMS (FROM):

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Yastika Bhatia, Richa Ghosh, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Devika Vaidya, Radha Yadav, Renuka Thakur, Anjali Sarvani, Pooja Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad and Shikha Pandey.
Australia squad: Meg Lanning (c), Alyssa Healy, Darcie Brown, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Heather Graham, Grace Harris, Jess Jonassen, Alana King, Tahlia McGrath, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Wareham.



South Africa reach Women's T20 World Cup semifinals after beating Bangladesh

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

Laura Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits struck unbeaten half centuries during their unconquered 117-run opening partnership as South Africa thrashed Bangladesh by 10 wickets to reach the semifinals of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup here.

The Proteas finished second in Group 1, behind defending champions Australia who won all their four matches.

South Africa, New Zealand and Sri Lanka ended their group engagements on four points each. But the hosts made it to the semifinals as they have the best net run rate of +0.738 among the three teams.

New Zealand and Sri Lanka have NRR of +0.138 and - 1.460 respectively.

The Sune Luus-led side, thus, became the first South African team — male or female, junior or senior — to reach the final four of a major ICC event staged on their soil.

South Africa play Group 2 toppers England — who are unbeaten so far — in the second semifinal here on Friday.

Wolvaardt (66 not out off 56 balls) and Brits (50 not out off 51 balls) struck their team's first half-centuries of the tournament as South Africa overhaul Bangladesh's 114-run target with 13 balls to spare, reaching 117 for no loss in 17.5 overs on Tuesday.

Bangladesh opted to bat and the Proteas struck twice in the powerplay, with Murshida Khatun chipping Marizanne Kapp to mid-on for a six-ball duck and Shamima then skyking Shabnim Ismail to midwicket.

From 22 for two, skipper Nigar Sultana Joty and Sobhana Mostary carefully rebuilt the

innings and rotated strike nicely without peppering the boundary.

Sobhana was dropped by Brits on 25 but the third-wicket stand was snapped at 33 when she missed a slog sweep across the line and Nonkululeko Mlaba hit the stumps.

The 16-year-old Shorna Akter showcased her talent by lofting Mlaba over mid-off but soon departed when she was yorked by Ayabonga Khaka at 81 for four.

Kapp came back and showed her class with a slower ball that got the big wicket of Nigar Sultana, comprehensively bowled for 30.

Khaka repeated the yorker trick to get rid of Fargana Hoque but as the Proteas began to tire in the field, Bangladesh inched their way up to 113 for six.

South Africa's reply was a fraught affair from the very start.

Nine runs came from the first four overs, Brits was dropped by Sobhana and Wolvaardt somehow survived a mix-up in the middle.

Wolvaardt hit a towering six over mid-on but Brits only survived thanks to Shamima missing two stumping chances off the spinners as they crawled to 43 for no loss from 10 overs.

The pressure gradually eased and the much-needed big overs eventually came.

Brits peeled back-to-back boundaries off Shorna's leg-spin and Wolvaardt brought up her half-century from 48 balls by flaying Nahida Akter twice through the off-side.

Brits brought up her sixth T20 International half-century and two balls later, Wolvaardt struck successive boundaries to put her side in the final four.

‘No psychological edge, both teams will start at same level’

Lanning on semifinal against India

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

Australia skipper Meg Lanning believes her side will not go into the Women's T20 World Cup semi-final against India with a psychological edge, saying past results don't matter against a strong team.

Australia will take on India for a place in the World Cup final, after defeating Harmanpreet Kaur's side 4-1 in the five-match T20I series last December and also the 2022 Commonwealth Games final in Birmingham, besides triumphing in the 2020 T20 World Cup final at MCCG.

"I don't think so (Australia will have a psychological advantage)," said Lanning on the eve of the semi-final here.

"Both teams start at the same level tomorrow when we come out and play. What's happened in the past doesn't make a difference. We need to come



out and play our best cricket and play the way that we want to.

"And in India, we look to do the same. So, as I said, it's going to be an incredible game, two world-class teams going at it. And it's about putting out your best performance on the day," added Lanning.

The captain also said beating India in the five-match series last December in Mumbai doesn't make Australia firm favourites, given that the opponents are an "incredible side" and are not relying on just a couple of players to win them games.

"I'm not sure (Australia are favourites), to be honest. We obviously both know each other very well. They're (India) an incredible side. They've got some match winners and world-class players and it's going to be a cracking game."

"Obviously, we came here to

be part of a game like this and we're expecting to have to play at our best to win. And that's something that I know this group is up for and we're certainly very much looking forward to it."

She also added that India now have a strong group which bats deep and is able to deliver in big-ticket events.

"I think that they've shown that they're not relying on one or two players. They've got some great depth as well. So, for us as a team, we've had to prepare for all their players to do well."

"And I think when you get to that point as a squad, you know you're going to be in most games because T20 cricket, some things work out, some things don't. And sometimes it's not going to be your day. "But as long as someone steps up, then that's the most important thing. And that's what they've shown to be able to do."

"They've really created that real strong group of players who have played a lot of cricket together now. And they're able to deliver. So, we know they're strong. And that sort of just makes the challenge even greater and something we look forward to."

Will leave IPL early to prepare for Ireland Test, Ashes series: Stokes

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

England Test skipper Ben Stokes is set to leave IPL early to lead his side in the one-off Ireland Test and prepare for the Ashes series.

The IPL final is set to be played on May 28, four days before the one-off Ireland Test at Lord's on June 1, while the marquee Ashes series against Australia will begin on June 16.

Stokes, who missed the last two editions of the cash-rich league due to various reasons, was bought by four-time champions Chennai Super Kings for a whopping Rs 16.25 crore in IPL auction in December.

Stokes said he will be back in England to prepare for the busy English summer even if CSK reach the final stages of the IPL.

When asked if he'll play the Ireland Test, Stokes said "Yes, I'll play."

"I'll be making sure that I give myself enough time to get back and play that (Ireland) game," Stokes said ahead of England's second Test with New Zealand.

The all-rounder said he will consult the other England Test players competing in the IPL, what they want to do to prepare for the Ashes.

The likes of Joe Root, Mark



Wood, Jonny Bairstow, Liam Livingstone, Jofra Archer, Sam Curran and Harry Brook are set to play the IPL.

"I'll probably get round the individuals and ask them what they want to be ready for in the Ashes, because those five games are obviously the big ones of the summer, and you've got to think about what lads want."

"But what if something was

to happen in that game (Ireland) and we lose someone for the Ashes ... It's just one of those where you have to weigh up the options of what the individual person actually wants out of that week, versus do we really need to play that one."

"Because, obviously, I'm right in saying that series is bigger than that game against Ireland," he added.

TEST RANKINGS Ashwin rises to 2nd, Jadeja enters top-10 among bowlers



PTI ■ DUBAI

India's Ravichandran Ashwin rose a place to second, while his compatriot Ravindra Jadeja jumped seven rungs to be among the top-10 bowlers in the latest ICC Men's Test Player Rankings issued here on Wednesday.

Jadeja has progressed to the ninth position after his 10-wicket match haul in the second Test against Australia in New Delhi, the first time that he had broken in the top-10 since September 2019. Injured pacer Jasprit Bumrah is the other Indian bowler in top-10, as he occupies the fifth spot.

Veteran England seamer James Anderson leads the list but Australia captain Pat Cummins has dropped two places to third.

Axar Patel's late-order heroics have pushed him into the top

five in all-rounders' list, which is being headed by Jadeja and Ashwin.

Australia's Marnus Labuschagne continues to top the Test batters list, followed by Steve Smith and Pakistan skipper Babar Azam.

India's Rishabh Pant, who is out of action for an indefinite period following a horrific car crash, is static at sixth, while skipper Rohit Sharma continues to be seventh. England batters Ollie Pope (up six places to 23rd), Harry Brook (up 12 places to 31st) and Ben Duckett (up 13 places to 38th) have achieved career-best rankings, as have New Zealand's Tom Blundell and Devon Conway.

Blundell's first innings knock of 138 has lifted him four places to 11th while Conway's 77 has helped him move up five places to 17th.

UP Warriorz name Alyssa captain for inaugural WPL

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

UP Warriorz have named star Australian wicketkeeper-batter Alyssa Healy as their captain for the inaugural Women's Premier League, scheduled to be held next month in Mumbai.

The UP Warriorz, owned by Capri Global Holdings Private Limited, have put together a dynamic and well-balanced squad for the franchise based league.

Healy, one of the most recognised faces in women's cricket, is a highly experienced and seasoned campaigner, having played 139 T20Is for Australia, scoring close to 2,500 runs, with one century and 14 fifties.

She is also considered to be one of the best wicket-keeper batters in the sport, with 110 dismissals in T20Is.

One of the senior-most members of the dominant Australian side, Healy has been a vital cog in the wheel, and is known to reserve her best performances for the biggest stages, such as the 2020 Women's T20 World Cup final in Melbourne.

"I am delighted to have the chance to captain the UP Warriorz in the inaugural edition of the historic WPL that will be played in Mumbai. The WPL is a tournament we have all been keenly waiting on, and the UP Warriorz have a fantastic squad, waiting to making a splash once things get going," said Healy.

"We have a good mix of experience and youth along with ability and look forward to putting on a show for our fans. We are here to win and be ruthless in our brand of cricket."

The UP Warriorz side, which is coached by England's Jon Lewis, has



Anju Jain as assistant coach, while former Australian cricketers Ashley Noffke is the bowling coach and four-time world champion Lisa Sthalekar is the team's mentor.

The WPL is set to be played in Mumbai from March 4 to 26.

A total of 22 matches will be played at the Brabourne Stadium and DY Patil Stadium.

The UP Warriorz will open their campaign against Gujarat Giants at the DY Patil Stadium on March 5.

UP Warriorz squad: Alyssa Healy (Captain), Sophie Ecclestone, Deepti Sharma, Tahlia McGrath, Shabnim Ismail, Anjali Sarvani, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Parshvi Chopra, Shweta Sehrawat, S Yashasri, Kiran Navgire, Grace Harris, Devika Vaidya, Lauren Bell, Laxmi Yadav and Simran Shaikh.

Spinner Agar released from Australian Test squad

Flown back home to play domestic cricket

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australia spinner Ashton Agar has flown home after he was released from the Test squad touring India to play domestic cricket, national selector Tony Dodemaide said on Wednesday.

Agar will play for Western Australia in the closing stages of the domestic season. The 29-year-old left-arm spinner is the latest Australian to return home midway into the tour, with the visitors having lost the first two Tests of the four-match series.

"(Agar) has worked incredibly

hard, he's done his absolute best to support the team. We acknowledge all work he's done, he's worked his backside off," Dodemaide said.

"In the first Test (in Nagpur) it was a very close call (between Murphy, Agar and Swepson) as to what spin structure we went with. The question mark of whether the two off-spinners could go together," said the selector on tour.

"We had Matthew Kuhnemann coming in for the second Test — again a very close call with that. We just decided that Matthew's style would be suited to the conditions there."

Agar has returned home without playing any match as off-spinner Todd Murphy was selected ahead of him for the first Test in Nagpur. In the second Test, even though Australia opted for



three spinners, Agar was again left out, with fellow left-arm spinner Matthew Kuhnemann making his debut.

The third Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy begins in Indore on March 1. The final match will be played in Ahmedabad from March 9.

Opening batter David Warner and fast bowler Josh Hazlewood have already returned home after being ruled out with injuries.

Agar is set to play in WA's next Sheffield Shield game on March 2 and the 50-over Marsh Cup final on March 8.

Leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson, who went back home prior to the second Test in Delhi for the birth of his child, and skipper Pat Cummins, who returned home for family reasons, are scheduled to join the touring squad ahead of the Indore game.

Agar has played just five Tests since making his debut in 2013 and he has become a top international limited-overs bowler in recent years.

"That's for others to judge but it

seems to be going that way," the selector said when asked about increasing difficulty for players to switch between formats. "Ronnie (coach Andrew McDonald) has talked about the difficulty of remaining an all-format player in any discipline, spinning equally so. There are very few who can adjust really quickly and who are suited to all three formats."

"To be fair to Ash he doesn't play a lot of first-class cricket either and that's the nature of the modern game."

"He's continuing to work on that, he's worked really hard on that with the coaches, particularly (assistant coach and former left-arm spinner) Dan Vettori. But right now (returning home) is a logical and constructive way forward for Ash and the team."



YUNNAN DAILY PRESS GROUP

ECONOMY

China's economic recovery adds momentum to world economy

- UN report predicts that China's economic growth will reach 4.8 % in 2023.
- The World Bank predicts that China's economic growth will rise to 4.3 % in 2023.
- The International Monetary Fund has raised its forecast for China's economic growth this year to 5.2%, up 0.8 percentage point from its previous projection.

Since China optimized and adjusted its epidemic prevention and control policies at the beginning of this year, Chinese companies are seen again attracting foreign capital on global trade fairs, the governments and tourism authorities of many countries are embracing the return of Chinese tourists in various ways, and international institutes have raised their expectations for China's economic growth. Having undergone the "stress test" of COVID-19, the rapidly recovering Chinese economy is showing great resilience and vitality and adding momentum to the

world's economic recovery.

At the global headquarters of BYD Group in Shenzhen, Guangdong, a new energy vehicle rolls off the production line every 60 seconds. In January, BYD sold 10,409 new energy passenger vehicles to other countries. It was the third consecutive month that the company has achieved overseas sales of more than 10,000.

According to Leslie Maasdorp, vice president of the BRICS New Development Bank, China has half of the world's new energy vehicles, which can play a signif-

icant role in promoting the world's low-carbon economic growth.

As China-made new energy vehicles hit the road in more countries and regions, the world economy is feeling increasing impetus from the "Chinese engine". Daniel Leigh, head of the World Economic Studies division in the IMF's Research Department, said, China's economy is a big contributor to the world economy, and every percentage point increase in China's economic growth means 0.3 percentage point increase in the world's economic growth.

"We've been in China for nearly 40 years, and China is Volkswagen's most important market. We hope to work together with our partners and joint ventures for common development," said Oliver Blume, chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG. Right after the Chinese New Year holiday, which lasted from January 21 to 27, Oliver Blume visited Changchun, Shanghai, Hefei and other Chinese cities.

China is providing the world with a broader market, more valuable opportunities for cooperation and greater room

for development. On January 1, China officially released the new catalogue of encouraged foreign investment industries, imposing provisional import tariff rates lower than the most-favored-nation tariff rates on 1,020 items of commodities. From July 1, 2023, China will cut the most-favored-nation tariff rates for 62 items of information technology products for the eighth time.

In Hainan, the 3rd China International Consumer Products Expo now in preparation is expected to assemble leading companies and brands from

the world's key countries and regions. The Expo's international exhibition area will account for 80 percent of the total exhibition area. In Shanghai, the 6th China International Import Expo is scheduled to be held in 9 months, and more than 500 companies have signed up for the enterprise and business exhibition, which will cover an area of more than 200,000 square meters.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that China has become "an indispensable, trustworthy force for promoting world peace and development". (Xinhua)

FOCUS

Chinese-style modernization offers new opportunities for cooperation to the world

The global impact of Chinese-style modernization is currently an issue of much concern to the world. From the historical perspective, China's pursuit of modernization has been full of hardships. In modern times, China has suffered from wars and turmoil and encountered many difficulties in its political, economic and social development. This history has profoundly influenced China's thinking and exploration of modernization.

China has actively applied its practical experience to its modernization process. For example, as demonstrated in the development practices of many countries, increasing investment in education and science and technology can provide strong support for economic and social development. Thanks to its long-term high-quality investment in education, China has pooled a large number of scientists and technicians. In terms of scientific and technological development, China's research and development spending has exceeded 2.5 percent of its GDP, and many research results are being transformed into scientific and technological innovations.

China has expanded its global influence in the process of modernization. Whether in history or in the present-day world, it is easily seen that China's pursuit of modernization has gone

hand in hand with its efforts to integrate into economic globalization. Today, China is closely connected to the world whether in developing manufacturing, trade in goods and trade in services or in promoting scientific and technological progress.

China has accumulated unique experience in green development, which is of great significance to global ecological conservation. With climate change posing increasingly severe risks, China is striving for sustainable development. As the world's second largest economy, China has sent a clear signal to the world of its determination to promote greener economic and social development in all aspects. China's constantly increasing investment in renewable energy is crucial to enhancing global capacity to address climate change.

From the perspective of the global development process, the value of China's cooperation programs lies not only in promoting all those specific cooperation projects, but also in providing new options for many developing countries seeking to improve their economic situation and advance their own modernization.

(This article, authored by Rana Mitter, director of University of Oxford China Center, was originally published in People's Daily.)

IN-PICS



When dusk falls, the Gaozhuangxishuangjing Starlight Night Market in Jinghong City, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province attracts a large number of visitors. Since the Chinese New Year holiday (January 21 to 27), tourism has been booming in Xishuangbanna. (Xinhua)

BUSINESS

"Asia's flower capital" picking up momentum

At the Dounan Flower Market in Chenggong District of Kunming, in southwest China's Yunnan province, a sea of beautiful flowers and potted plants, we saw a second-generation flower grower named Hua Ren conducting live broadcasts of the flowers in the market while doing business with foreign merchants on his cell phone.

The Dounan Flower Market, located on the east bank of Dianchi Lake, is Asia's largest fresh-cut flower market, hence the nickname "Asia's flower capital". The flowers cultivated here are sold to more than 40 countries and regions such as Japan, Thailand and Vietnam by air or through cold chain logistics.

"Southeast Asia has a large demand for flowers and potted plants, and we are capable of providing a stable supply," said Hua Ren. In 2022, Hua imported about 1 million orchid seedlings. Now that the flower market is picking up, he has begun to sell these orchids.

In the hall of Kunming International Flower Auction Center, buyers from all over China were staring at the flower va-

rieties, grades and prices on the screen and quickly deciding whether to bid or not. When the auction was over, the flowers would be packaged, loaded on trucks, and transported to different places. According to Li Xi, an auctioneer, the Center has maintained an average daily trading volume of more than 3 million bouquets since it was opened on January 24, with a close-ratio of 94 percent and an average price of 2.4 yuan (US\$ 0.35) per bouquet, indicating that the market is stable and improving. When domestic flower consumption grows, Southeast Asia also has a strong demand for flowers and potted plants.

In the Center's "flowers waiting area", table trolleys loaded with flowers were moving in an orderly manner. Apart from local flower lovers, tourists dragging suitcases also were seen at the flower market. Before the Spring Festival, a florist named Zhang Kuaping was still worried that the flowers might not sell well. Now, seeing that half of his stock has been sold before 4 p.m., he became full of confidence.

The Dounan Flower Market's logistics system

is also getting increasingly efficient, shifting from road transport to other ways such as air and high-speed rail transport. Based on big data prediction and customer research, Yunnan SF Express Co.Ltd. has also launched flower booking and delivery services.

"I sell a quarter of my flowers online," said Zhang. Some of his frequent customers in Shanghai, Nanjing and Guangzhou now buy flowers from him by paying a monthly subscription fee of 100 to 200 yuan (US\$14.56 to 29.12).

(Xinhua)



During this year's Spring Festival holiday, which lasted from January 21 to 27, the Dounan Flower Market in Kunming sold 77.56 million bouquets of fresh-cut flowers, with a trading volume worth more than 100 million yuan (US\$14.56 million) and an average daily footfall of over 20,000.

OPENING-UP

Hekou port in Yunnan handles 107,000 entries and exits in first month after reopening

According to Hekou Frontier Inspection Station, in the first month since its resumption of customs clearance on January 8, Hekou port in Hekou County, Yunnan Province has cumulatively handled 107,000

people and 182,300 tons of goods entering and exiting the country.

Hekou port is the largest port in Yunnan section of the China-Vietnam border. Since it resumed passenger customs clearance, the num-

ber of passengers it handles every day has increased from a little more than 600 to over 5,000. The amount of goods entering and exiting the country through the port is also on the rise. (Yunnan Daily)

CULTURE

Craftsman instills new life in Jianshui purple pottery

Adding water, mixing, kneading... The colorful clay, sourced from the Wucui Mountain in Jianshui County, Honghe Prefecture, Yunnan Province, began to take shape in the potter's hands.

Jianshui purple pottery, a traditional folk craft in Jianshui County, is one of "four most famous types of Chinese pottery" and an item of State-level intangible cultural heritage.

In the workshop of Jianshui Chenglin Purple Pottery Culture and Art Co Ltd, our reporters interviewed Jiang Jiakai, a province-level arts and crafts master and the company's art director, who was creating his new works collectively named "Impression of the Yi People".

Jiang was born into a pottery-maker's family. In 1991, he began to learn pottery making from his uncle Ma Chenglin, a master of

Chinese ceramic art and a master of Chinese industrial arts and crafts.

Having mastered all the skills that his uncle had to teach him, Jiang decided to build a kiln of his own. However, his first attempts at pottery making ended up in failure. "I lost about 100,000 yuan, which was almost all my savings," Jiang said.

Being a passionate purple pottery maker, Jiang did not

lose heart but spent years searching for solutions to the technical problems. Finally, he invented a shuttle-type kiln that can flexibly control the firing temperature and significantly improve the rate of firing success.

With meticulous craftsmanship, Jiang has developed his unique insights on modeling design, decorative style, greenware throwing and fettling, engraving and firing. By diligently stud-

ying pottery making skills and making innovations on the basis of his predecessors' works, Jiang has advanced the purple pottery making process. His works feature perfectly curvy lines and combine bas-relief and hollowing techniques to achieve a novel yet traditional ornamental effect, instilling new life in Jianshui purple pottery.

Jiang has found inspiration for many of his pottery

works from his childhood memories, such as those of the barn lantern, dirt roads, narrow lanes, fields, mountains and waters. His works often bring back the past scenes of life and are rich in ethnic characteristics.

To date, as an arts and crafts master and a ceramic art master of Yunnan Province, Jiang has won more than 30 awards for his pottery works. (Yunnan Daily)

NEWS

China's outbound direct investment rises to 985.37 billion yuan in 2022

In 2022, China's outbound direct investment (ODI) rose to 985.37 billion yuan (US\$146.5 billion)

Grow by 5.2% year-on-year

In 2022, the country's non-financial ODI rose to 785.94 billion yuan (US\$114.43 billion)

Grow by 7.2% year-on-year

(People's Daily)