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Adhir's remark on Prez sets Parliament on fire

Cong leader in LS says it's slip of tongue; BJP MPs protest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The two Houses of Parliament on Thursday witnessed unprecedented turmoil with the BJP making a fiery attack on Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury for his "Rashtrapatni" remark against the first tribal President Droupadi Murmu.

The heated exchanges over Chowdhury's comments also escalated outside, triggering protests by the BJP MPs.

The Congress MPs were already sitting on "dharna" before the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Parliament precincts, seeking withdrawal of suspension of MPs, immediate debate in Parliament over price rise and the imposition of the GST on essential food items.

As soon as the Lok Sabha met at 11 am, BJP members were up on their feet demanding an apology from Congress president Sonia Gandhi over Chowdhury's remark.

"The Congress leader has disrespected the President. The Congress cannot tolerate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a poor tribal woman the Presidential candidate," Union Minister Smriti Irani said.

Amid the furor, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the proceedings of the House

till 12 noon and thereafter it was adjourned till 4 pm and then for the day. Similar scenes were witnessed in the Rajya Sabha, which too witnessed a ruckus on the issue.

The Lok Sabha saw Irani making a belligerent attack on Sonia and accusing her of "sanctioning humiliation" of the Constitutional head of the country, demanding her apology. In his defense, Chowdhury, who is the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, said he never intended to disrespect the President and his "Rashtrapatni" remark was a "slip of the tongue". He accused the BJP of making a "mountain out of a molehill".

"Yesterday, when we were holding a protest at Vijay Chowk, journalists asked where we wanted to go. I said 'Rashtrapatni' only once by mistake. I urged the journalists not to show my video where I committed a mistake. The BJP is creating a row over it now," he said.

"What should I do? I said it and realised I uttered the wrong word. I even looked for media persons to whom I had said this to request them to not focus on it. However, I couldn't find them," he added, a day after the remark. In a video message later, he said India's President, be it Brahmin or tribal, is respected by all.

"I am a Bengali and not fluent in Hindi. I will apologise to the President if she felt hurt. I won't apologise to these frauds. I have sought time to meet her the day after tomorrow.

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Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with other BJP MPs during a protest against Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's remarks on President Droupadi Murmu, at Parliament House, in New Delhi on Thursday

Sonia pays for Adhir's blooper

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After the simmering tension between the Treasury Benches and the Opposition for the past eight days burst out into a full-blown confrontation between the two sides over Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's "Rashtrapatni" remark, the BJP focussed its attack on the Congress president, alleging that Adhir made the calumnious comment at the behest of Sonia Gandhi.

The party demanded that Sonia must apologise to the nation.

The no-holds-barred attack on Sonia was spearheaded by Union Minister Smriti Irani and Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha respectively. No sooner than the lower House commenced its proceedings, a vociferous Irani accused Chowdhury of disrespecting Murmu by calling her "Rashtrapatni" and charged the Congress leader with doing so with the "sanction" of Sonia.

Targeting Congress president, Irani alleged that Sonia had "sanctioned humiliation" of a poor tribal woman who has occupied the highest constitutional post in the country.

"Sonia mafi mango (Sonia must tender an apology). Your male leaders are disrespecting a poor tribal woman," she said, raising her voice dramatically.

BJP MPs, particularly women members, aggressively backed Irani, inviting counter-protests from Congress members. As the turmoil continued, Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House till noon.

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Didi strips Partha of Cabinet, TMC posts

CM's move comes within hours of Arpita telling ED that all wealth belonged to Min

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In an apparent damage control exercise, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday removed Partha Chatterjee as a Minister and from all posts of Trinamool Congress five days after he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the school-level job scam.

The Chief Minister's decision comes within hours of Arpita Mukherjee — a close associate of Chatterjee from whose apartments huge cash, jewellery, bank and property instruments worth crores was recovered by the ED — telling the investigators that all the properties belonged to the Minister.

Soon after a Cabinet meeting Mamata announced the removal of Chatterjee — the number two person in the State Ministry — saying, "I have relieved Partha from all his charges," till his name is cleared from all accusations.

"The Trinamool Congress is strict about its ideology... we run the party with great hard-ship," the Chief Minister said.

A former Education Minister, Chatterjee, had been in charge of Commerce and Industries, Parliamentary Affairs and Information Technology portfolios. The Chief Minister would retain all the Departments with her for



Cash recovered from the house of Arpita Mukherjee

PTI

now. Chatterjee a former corporate top boss who left his job before the Singur movement to join the Trinamool Congress was also removed from all his party posts, TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said.

"The TMC disciplinary committee has decided to remove Chatterjee from all the party posts... he was the party secretary general, a national vice president and member of national executive as also a member of the party disciplinary committee... he has also been suspended from the party till he is exonerated by the judiciary... and the onus to prove innocence completely lies with him... and as the citizen of this country he has every right to fight his case in the court," said Abhishek at the end of a party disciplinary committee meeting.

Besides incriminating documents cash worth ₹50 crore and property deeds of 32 bungalows, apartments and lands both in Kolkata and districts have been recovered from two houses of Mukherjee, a close associate of the former Minister.

The ED also recovered about 8 kgs of gold — in the form of bars, biscuits, jewellery and statuette — from two apartments of Mukherjee apart from bank instruments and property deeds worth crores.

Officials quoting Mukherjee said she was not the owner of the property seized and that all that had been recovered by the ED belonged to the Minister.

She is known to have told his interrogators that Chatterjee often sent his men to her apartments with bags which were kept inside a particular room not to be entered by anyone. Not even Mukherjee was allowed to enter these rooms, she is known to have told the ED officials adding only the Minister would enter these rooms when

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3 more RS MPs suspended, relay sit-in protest continues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the 50-hour-long relay sit-in by the suspended MPs on Parliament premises, three more Rajya Sabha members — Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Sandeep Kumar Pathak and Sushil Kumar Gupta and Independent legislator Ajit Kumar Bhuyan — were suspended from the House for a week on Thursday.

The 20 suspended RS members are on a relay protest near the Gandhi Statue at the Parliament complex braving the night, heat and rain.

A total of five MPs, including CPI's Santosh Kumar and AAP's Sanjay Singh, spent the night near the Gandhi statue in Parliament complex, while TMC's Dola Sen and Santanu Sen were present at the site till post midnight. With authorities



AAP MP Sanjay Singh and TMC MPs protest at Parliament House on Thursday

not granting permission for a tent, the MPs slept under the sky as a protest against the suspension of 24 MPs, 20 from the Rajya Sabha and four Congress members from the Lok Sabha.

So far 27 MPs of the Opposition have been sus-

ended for "unruly behaviour".

TMC MP Mausam Noor brought tea for the MPs on Thursday morning and said that the Opposition MPs will not apologise and the protest will continue.

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39 students in Sagar given Covid-19 jab with 'single' syringe

PTI ■ SAGAR

A vaccinator allegedly used a single syringe to administer anti-coronavirus vaccine doses to 39 children at a private school in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar city, prompting the authorities to suspend the district vaccination officer, officials said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday at the Jain Higher Secondary School in the city during a mega vaccination drive, after which an FIR was registered against the vaccinator, identified as Jitendra Ahirwar, a district official said.

The 39 children, aged 15 and above, were from Classes 9 to 12, a health official said.

The parents of some of the

children on Wednesday observed the vaccinator using the same syringe to inoculate the children and raised an alarm for the gross negligence on his part, the officials said.

After the parents protested, Sagar's in-charge Collector Kshiti Singh sent district Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr D K Goswami to inquire about the incident. Those present at the spot told Goswami that the vaccinator allegedly used the same syringe to administer vaccine doses to as many as 39 children, the district official said.

After the protest by parents, Ahirwar escaped from the spot before the CMHO started to inspect the school.

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CBI seizes ₹5.50 cr paintings in DHFL bank fraud raids

2 luxury watches worth ₹5 cr seized in ₹34, 615 cr scam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has recovered paintings of Indian maestros FN Souza and SH Raza worth ₹5.50 crore besides two luxury watches of Jacob and Co and Frank Muller Geneve brands worth ₹5 crore during the searches. The DHFL promoters had acquired these expensive items using the diverted funds, the agency said in a statement.

The CBI is conducting custodial interrogation of former CMD of DHFL Kapil Wadhawan and Director Dheeraj Wadhawan for the last nine days.

oil-on-linen creation valued at ₹2 crore were among the luxurious items worth ₹12.5 crore seized by the agency during the latest round of searches against DHFL promoters Kapil Wadhawan and others, according to the CBI.

The agency has also seized two luxury watches of Jacob and Co and Frank Muller Geneve brands worth ₹5 crore during the searches. The DHFL promoters had acquired these expensive items using the diverted funds, the agency said in a statement.

The CBI is conducting custodial interrogation of former CMD of DHFL Kapil Wadhawan and Director Dheeraj Wadhawan for the last nine days.

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CAPSULE

MIG-21 FIGHTER JET CRASHES, PILOTS DEAD

Jaipur: An IAF's Mig-21 fighter aircraft on Thursday night crashed in Rajasthan's Barmer district killing both the pilots. In a statement, IAF said it deeply regrets the loss of lives and stands firmly with the bereaved families.

THERE IS A LIMIT TO TARGETING JUDGES: SC

New Delhi: There is a limit to which you target judges, the Supreme Court said on Thursday while expressing displeasure over news reports that it was delaying hearing a plea alleging increasing attacks on Christian institutions and priests across the country. Give us a break, a bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant said. "Last time the matter could not be taken because I was down with Covid. You get it published in newspapers that the SC is delaying the hearing. Look, there is a limit to which you can target the judges. Who supplies all this news?"

Elephant statue stolen from Ambedkar Park

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A small statue of an elephant installed at Dr BR Ambedkar Park in Gautampalli police station area is reported to have been stolen. Interestingly, the memorial is manned by Vishesh Parikshetra Suraksha Vahini (Special Zone Security Battalion). The place from where the elephant statue was stolen is near a fountain in the park and three security guards are deployed there even as no visitors are allowed there.

As per reports, the staff tasked with guarding the memorial count the number of elephant statues first in the morning and then in the evening on a daily basis. The counting was started after a statue of an elephant was

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Chess Olympiad kicks off in grand style

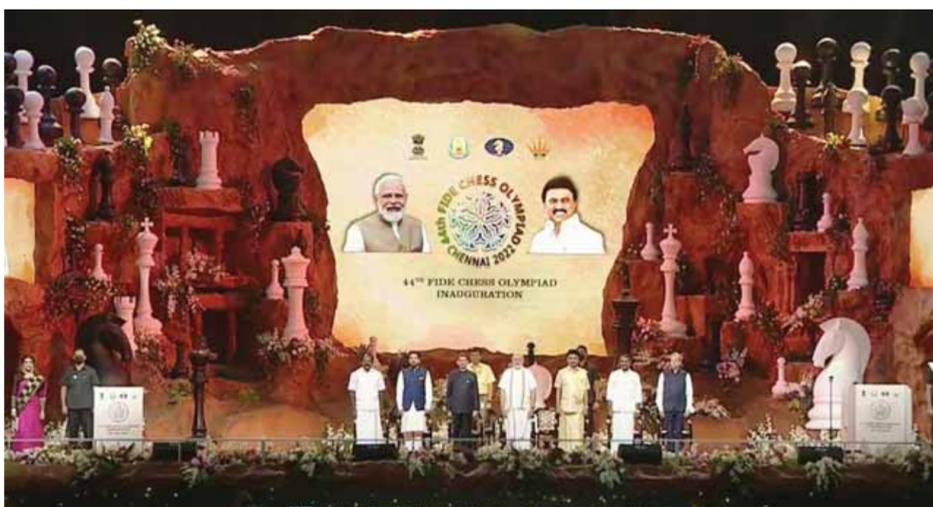
PTI ■ CHENNAI

In a glittery event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared open the FIDE 44th Chess Olympiad here on Thursday. Encouraging the players, Modi said that in sports there are no losers, but winners and future winners.

"Sports is beautiful because it has inherent power to unite. Sports brings people and societies closer. Sports nurture a spirit of teamwork," he said.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin said that the Chess Olympiad has turned the world's attention on Tamil Nadu and this grand event would enhance the State's tourism prospects. The mascot for the event was named "Thambi," which symbolises brotherhood and that all the people are one fraternity. Stalin thanked Modi and the Centre for holding the event.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin at the Opening Ceremony of the 44th Chess Olympiad in Chennai on Thursday

PTI

Pak objects to relay via Kashmir; India raps it for giving event a miss

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Hours before the inauguration of the 44th Chess Olympiad in Chennai on Thursday, Pakistan pulled out of the prestigious event protesting against the passing of the torch relay for the event through Kashmir.

Criticising Pakistan for this move, India said it is "highly unfortunate" that Islamabad has "politicised" the prestigious international event. The Pakistani team had already reached India.

Citing India's torch relay for the prestigious event through Kashmir on July 21 as a reason for withdrawal, Pakistan's for-

eign office spokesperson Asim Ifikhar said in a statement to Radio Pakistan, "India chose to politicise this prestigious international sporting event."

He also said, "Pakistan was invited by the International Chess Federation (FIDE) to participate in the Chess Olympiad. A Pakistani contingent was already training for this event."

An official statement from Islamabad described the torch relay through Kashmir as a "travesty" and called upon India to free political prisoners in the valley.

"Pakistan condemns India's mischievous attempt to mix politics with sports."

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Refiner dupes jewellers of gold, silver worth over ₹1 crore, held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A refiner took over 116 kg silver and 425 gm gold blocks worth over Rs 1 crore from five jewellers and did the moonlight flit. The victims registered five FIRs and petitioned their case to senior officers. On the instructions of Commissioner of Police DK Thakur, different teams worked on the case and arrested the accused. He had also collected gold and silver ornaments from a jeweller named Alok Gupta.

He was identified as Amit Agarwal of Bagh Mahanarayan area in Chowk. He reportedly confessed to his crime and told the police that since his business was not picking up pace, he wanted to start it anew in another city with a different identity. He was booked for criminal breach of trust and forgery. The police recovered 116.64 kg silver worth Rs 75 lakh, 425 gm gold (Rs 25 lakh), over Rs 1 lakh in cash and two luxury cars. He told the police that he suffered huge losses in business due to lack of foresightedness and could not return the silver he had taken from different jewellers for refining.

Amit said the jewellers trusted him as he had been in the business for a long time. A week ago, he took huge quantity of gold and silver from different jewellers, including one Amar Singh, and later disappeared. A couple of days later, Singh called him but Amit did not attend the calls and later



Commissioner of Police DK Thakur addressing mediapersons in Lucknow on Thursday following the arrest of refiner Amit Agarwal (right)



Pioneer

switched off his phone. Amar Singh then lodged a case in this connection.

Initially, the police treated the case as a dispute out of trust deficit and did not pay heed to Amar's pleas. Amar then petitioned the case to senior officers. It was then that the investigation of the case gained momentum. A domestic help of Amit tipped off police after which different teams worked on the case and arrested him from Jhansi.

CP, Lucknow, DK Thakur said the police interrogated Amit's domestic helps, employ-

ees and driver. It surfaced that Amit, along with his family, domestic help Vaibhav Singh and driver Ayaz, left for Khajuraho and then travelled to Gurgaon via Jhansi and Delhi. In Gurgaon, Amit got four SIM cards issued on the IDs of his staff and driver. He then moved to Jhansi again and got the cars parked in the parking slots at Jhansi railway station. He then moved to Gurgaon via cars hired by travel agencies. He again reached Jhansi where he called some of his acquaintances belonging to Datia in Madhya Pradesh

and handed them silver and gold packets.

Amit's staff who were with him during his stay in Jhansi and at other places said they suspected that he had committed some big fraud.

Thakur said the police recovered Amit's cars and also put his number on surveillance. "Amit's location was found to be in Jhansi and a team nabbed him from there. The blocks of silver and gold were also recovered. Over Rs 1 lakh in cash was also recovered from the possession of the accused," he said.

Nursing student ends life

Lucknow (PNS): A BSc (Nursing) student ended his life at his house in Para police station area on Thursday. Reports said Shubham Patel (18) of Hardoi was staying in a rented house in Yogipuram locality of Para. House owner Reshma Chaurasia found him hanging from the ceiling with a scarf tied around his neck. The police informed the family of the deceased and sent the body for autopsy. The incident was reported around 6 am on Thursday.

Meanwhile, a man ended his life in Nagam after his wife left for her parents' house following a verbal spat. Reports said Ramu of Mahuabagh locality did not wake up on Thursday morning and his mother went to his room. She found him hanging from the ceiling with a rope tied around his neck. Reports said Ramu was sad since his wife Komal left for her parents' house in Barabanki six months back. Differences cropped up between Ramu and Komal over some personal issues.

In another incident, a 45-year-old man, identified as Sartaj Hussain of Karbala Talkatora, succumbed to injuries he had suffered in a road mishap on Wednesday.

Reports said Sartaj was crossing the road when a speeding motorcyclist knocked him down and sped off. He was admitted to KGMU Trauma Centre where he died on Thursday morning.

Want to take university to global standards: Prof Rai

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor Prof AK Rai said they have a roadmap after achieving the NAAC A++ grade and they want to take the university to international standards.

"We would like to strengthen our position globally. The thrust will be on various categories — small term, medium term and long term. We are requesting the authorities for the restructuring of the Lucknow University Act dealing in certain aspects because that restricts us. For example, we cannot have a foreign faculty and our advertisements have to be from Indian citizens. But if we have to compete globally, we need to have people from outside and hence both procedural issues have to be addressed on a long-term basis," he said.

Prof Rai said that regarding the medium term plans, there has to be complete intimation to affiliated colleges and the transfer of benefits of the New Education Policy.

"Similar is the case of our ranking internationally which we need to improve but that will take us time because of all our collaborative activities. This will be a medium-term plan," he said.

He added that Lucknow University has started several initiatives like the implementation of the New Education Policy, benefits of which have to reach the students.



"The integration of the four district colleges is yet another initiative while setting up the Faculty of Agriculture since we now have a College of Agriculture will also be carried out," he said.

Regarding how the Lucknow University was able to get the desired NAAC ranking, he said, "It was a focused approach with complete cooperation from majority of the stakeholders."

"The immediate advantages that we have received after getting the ranking include a placement offer from a well-known company. We got the ranking on Tuesday and the very next day, we got a call from Amazon. Till now, we were going after companies but now they are reaching out to us. This comes as an immediate benefit and in the medium term, we are planning to have an open distance learning programme. This is one thing which we are going to start right which was otherwise not possible," he added.

Commenting on strengthening research, he said that they plan to strengthen the research infrastructure.

"We have been able to establish two interdisciplinary research centres in the last two years like the Institute of Advanced Molecular Genetics. My aim is to help research transcend beyond science like commerce, law, arts, social science etc," he said.

On whether he would ask for additional grants for the university from the state government, he said the sustainability of an institute does not depend on grants and it would not take the institute anywhere. "Self-dependence is the solution. The university has taken several measures to strengthen its finances and explore its resources. For example, centralised admissions is one and increasing numbers of foreign students is a good source of revenue. We have reinitiated several programmes which gave us good returns and with the NAAC grade improving, the number of students will increase and so will the intake of students.

Meanwhile, members of the Meritorious Students' Council met Prof Rai to congratulate him on achieving the NAAC A++ grade.

DSW Prof Poonam Tandon and Dean (Faculty of Arts) Prof Prem Suman were also present during the interaction. The council expressed joy and vowed to keep working towards the betterment of the university and students.

Monkeypox: 3 out of 6 samples from UP test negative

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Six samples of suspected monkeypox cases were sent for testing out of which three tested negative while the result of rest was awaited.

Giving this information, State Surveillance Officer Vikasendu Agarwal said that till date, a total of six samples have been sent for monkeypox testing in the state — two each from Gautam Buddha Nagar & Ghaziabad and one each from Auraiya & Firozabad. He said one sample was sent by LNJP in Delhi while another sent to NIV in Pune by DSO, Ghaziabad.

"The samples from Auraiya, Firozabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar were tested at KGMU and all turned out to be negative for monkey-

pox. The reports of Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar samples are awaited," he said.

Meanwhile, OMAG (Organized Medicine Academic Guild) president Dr Ishwar Gilada said that the mass smallpox vaccination programme in India ended around 1979. "85% of those who received the smallpox vaccine have protection from getting monkeypox while the rest will be protected against the severity of the disease. Those above 42 years of age in India and elsewhere are fairly well protected. Even all those below 42 years of age do not need the smallpox vaccine. It has to be a targeted vaccination, recommended for those already exposed or at a greater risk of getting this virus infection," he explained.

DM inspects diarrhoea-hit area in Vikas Nagar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar on Thursday carried out a surprise inspection of Gajharapurwa area in Vikas Nagar where diarrhoea cases had been reported. The district magistrate also had an interaction with locals.

He directed the managing director of Jal Kal department and project manager (sewage) to carry out inspections for detection of leakage in pipelines. The Jal Kal department informed the DM that the water supply has been stopped for the next six days and tankers have been provided in the area for the availability of drinking water.

The DM appealed to people to collect drinking water from the tankers as long as the survey was underway to detect leakage in the pipelines.

He directed Lucknow

THE DM APPEALED TO PEOPLE TO COLLECT DRINKING WATER FROM THE TANKERS AS LONG AS THE SURVEY WAS UNDERWAY TO DETECT LEAKAGE IN THE PIPELINES

Nagar Nigam officials to carry out a special cleanliness campaign in Gajharapurwa.

He said strict monitoring was being carried out by ASHA workers and medical help was being provided on priority. He added that medical monitoring would be carried out for the next ten days and separate arrangements were being made to cleaning of the sewage line.

A medical team visited the area and a medical camp was also organised at the site. An

official from the CMO office said that a medical mobile unit has been deployed in the village along with an ambulance. Medicines were distributed among the locals and eight people had been admitted to BRD College till Wednesday. "ASHA workers and ANMs are carrying out a survey of 172 houses in the area," he said.

He added that instructions have been given to people to keep washing their hands with soap throughout the day.

"People must have fresh food and avoid outside food, including cut fruits and vegetables. ORS solution should be given to all those suffering from diarrhoea and drinking boiled water is also important. Take water along if you are going out and take special care of the food for children and senior citizens. Contact Nagar Nigam if sewer lines are overflowing," the DM said.

Stress on preparedness for Harishankari plantation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Minister of State (Independent charge) for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Dr Arun Kumar Saxena chaired a virtual conference at the Forest department headquarters in Lucknow regarding the preparedness for Harishankari plantation from August 8 to 15.

"The joint planting of saplings of banyan, peepal and pakad is known as 'Harishankari'. It is considered an act of virtue in Lord Shiva temples and so devotees plant 'Harishankari', especially in the Shiva temple premises. These saplings are considered as Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma respectively," he pointed out.

"Harishankari takes the form of a tree and provides shade to people, food to differ-

ent types of birds and animals. Moreover, large-scale planting of Harishankari in the plantation drive will help in the expansion of forest and tree cover in the state. Against the target of 35 crore saplings under the mega plantation campaign, more than 30 crore saplings have been planted in the state so far," he added.

He appealed to the representatives of various organisations participating in the conference and people of the state to contribute to the establishment and protection of 'Harishankari Vatika' on a large scale.

Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Manoj Singh said: "Till now, 100 crore saplings have been planted with the coordination of the Forest department and other departments from 2017 to 2022. From 2022 to 2027, 35

crore saplings will be planted every year. Overall, a target of planting 275 crore saplings has been set in 10 years."

He added, "These trees will contribute to the environmental balance by absorbing 13 lakh tonnes of carbon. Banyan, peepal and pakad saplings will be made available from departmental nurseries and to make this campaign a success, active cooperation should be ensured from social organisations at the district level."

PCCF, UP, Mamta Sanjeev Dubey directed the officials concerned to follow the prescribed standards while planting Harishankari.

"The forest personnel will have to protect the saplings and take special care of them. Active participation of the public at large can help in increasing the forest and tree cover," he said.

CITY BRIEFS



WORLD NATURE CONSERVATION DAY

Students of City Montessori School, Rajajipuram Campus II, celebrated World Nature Conservation Day on Thursday and spread awareness about the importance of environment conservation through a cycle rally, street play and various cultural items. They also called for people's participation in the campaign. Earlier, CMS, Rajajipuram Campus II, principal Anupama Checker flagged off the cycle rally which started from the campus and covered an area of 4 km. Besides, a team of 10 stu-

dents enacted a street play titled 'Paryavaran ke Suraksha Jeevan ke Raksha' at three places.

DHARNA

A differently-abled farmer, along with his family members and villagers, staged a sit-in at the Eco Garden Park to protest the high-handedness of police and attempts by land sharks to usurp his land in Dubagga. Biknu of Begariya locality said some people backed by land sharks were attempting to grab his parental land. "When I go to the police station, I am shooed away because I am poor," he said.



St Anthony Public School students who excelled in class X and class XII exams felicitated on July 27

Over 335 mn people currently infected with Hepatitis B or C

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

World Hepatitis Day is celebrated every year on July 28, bringing the world together under a single theme to raise awareness of the global burden of viral hepatitis and to influence real change.

There are mainly five types of hepatitis viruses — A, B, C, D and E. Hepatitis B and C mainly leads to chronic hepatitis and liver cancer in some cases. More than 335 million people in the world are currently infected with Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C virus which also accounts for more than 13 million deaths per year in the world.

A patient awareness programme on the occasion of



A magic show was held at IMA Bhawan on Thursday on the occasion of World Hepatitis Day

Pioneer

World Hepatitis Day was conducted in the Medicine OPD of KGMU. Faculty members, residents and paramedical staff, along with 200 patients and their attendants, were

Interactive industry members' meet held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Chapter of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised an interactive industry members' meet at the PHD House in Lucknow on Thursday to discuss their past and future activities along with the current industry scenario of the state and issues as well as challenges faced by business owners and to create awareness primarily on energy audit, new technologies on energy efficiency and on financing EE projects.

Senior energy consultant, UPNEDA, Girish Kumar gave a detailed presentation on energy audit and new technologies on energy efficiency. He explained the

energy management system, its implementation and also the scope of energy audit. He also shared some of the effective measures with the audience for saving energy. Kumar also explained energy efficiency technologies in various SME sectors.

Director (Commercial), Green Gas Ltd, Sharat Kumar said GGL is committed to providing eco-friendly natural gas and clean fuel for several transport, domestic, commercial and industrial operations. He said GGL is also facilitating conversions of commercial and private vehicles into CNG through external agencies by making ready availability of quality gas kits and creating a network of workshops. He threw light on the

unparalleled benefits of using natural gas in various industrial operations instead of the conventional fuel.

Resident director of the UP Chapter of PHD Chamber Atul Srivastava shed light on how they have been acting as a catalyst in the promotion of industry, trade and entrepreneurship for the last 117 years. He also briefed the audience about the outstanding benefits provided by the Chamber to its members in addressing their business needs.

GM, IOCL, BB Goyal said that Indian Oil has plans to scale up its portfolio of renewable energy with solar, wind, etc for refinery operations, thereby reaffirming its commitment towards environ-

mental sustainability and reduction of carbon footprints. He added that Indian Oil is also poised to leverage India's sustainable commitments through multiple green initiatives, including increased use of natural gas in all refineries, ethanol-blended motor spirit, sale of compressed biogas (CBG) and production of biodiesel using cooking oil as feedstock.

Chief manager, SME City Centre, Bank of India, Abhinav Kumar shed light on the various schemes of the bank under the credit facilities to small and medium enterprises. He said that the Bank of India has been acting as a support system for the MSME sector by handholding them in their credit requirements.

लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण (ISO 14001 : 2004, ISO 9001 : 2008 प्रमाणित संस्था) प्राधिकरण मवन, विपिन खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ (उ०प्र०) पीओएल: 0522-2303623, 2303624, 2363133, वेबसाइट: http://www.ldaonline.co.in						
--: सार्वजनिक सूचना :-						
क्र. सं.	मूल आवंटी का नाम	भवन / भूखण्ड संख्या	योजना का नाम	मृत्यु दिनांक	मूल आवंटी के उत्तराधिकारी अथवा आवेदक का नाम	उत्तराधिकारी के पक्ष में अनापत्तिकर्ताओं के नाम
1.	श्रीमती किरन श्रीवास्तव	भू०सं० C-17	सेक्टर-सी०ए०स० अलीगंज योजना	01.06.2022	श्रीमती सोनिया श्रीवास्तव	---
2.	श्री रामरतन	भू०सं० DS-304/II	सेक्टर-सी० सीतापुर रोड योजना	17.01.2008	(1) श्री कमलेश कुमार "सुमन" (2) सुशी कशिश	---
3.	श्रीमती रेशमी वर्मा	भू०सं० एम०आई० जी०-289	सेक्टर-डी-1 कानपुर रोड योजना	05.07.2010	(1) श्री उमा शंकर वर्मा (2) श्री राजेश वर्मा (3) श्री राकेश वर्मा (4) श्री रूपेश वर्मा (5) श्री महेश वर्मा (6) श्री सतीश वर्मा (7) श्रीमती रोसा वर्मा	---
4.	श्री के०बी० मण्डलेकर, श्रीमती पद्मावती दीक्षित व सुश्री सुधा दीक्षित	भू०सं० D-4	सेक्टर-के अलीगंज योजना	06.06.2005 04.08.2004 15.10.1996	(1) श्री श्रीकांत दीक्षित (2) श्री अरविन्द दीक्षित	---

उपरोक्त नामान्तरण के आवेदन के सम्बन्ध में यदि किसी भी व्यक्ति को कोई आपत्ति हो तो वह साक्ष्य सहित प्रकाशन तिथि से 30 दिनों के अन्दर अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता के कार्यालय में प्राप्त करा दें। निश्चित तिथि तक कोई आपत्ति प्राप्त न होने पर प्राधिकरण अभिलेखों में कालम-6 पर लिखित व्यक्ति का नाम दर्ज कर लिया जायेगा तथा उसके बाद किसी आपत्ति पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

'Need to protect biodiversity from harmful land use'

PNS ■ KANPUR

World Nature Conservation Day is observed on July 28 to create awareness among people about the importance and significance of natural resources and highlighted that a healthy environment was the base for a stable and healthy society. Natural resources included air, minerals, plants, soil, water and wildlife. It encompassed preserving the diversity of species, genes and ecosystems as well as environmental services such as nutrient cycling as well.

This was stated by noted soil scientist, Dr Khaleel Khan,

Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T) while addressing the workshop on World Nature Conservation Day at Kailash Bhawan on Thursday. He said conservation and preservation were equivalents yet different. He said nature gave all what a human required. He said the prominent reason to conserve nature and its resources is to sustain life by promoting ecological balance, to ensure that future generations had access to the resources, to protect biodiversity and to safeguard the survival of the human race.

He said transition zones

between distinct ecosystems had expanded as human populations and agricultural land clearance had increased. He said this caused species from diverse environments to mingle and interact in novel ways. He said these increased conservation actions can enhance ecosystem services, encourage sustainability and help us maintain a healthier environment. Conservation can maintain natural resources for future generations to use, focusing on the well-being and longevity of our planet. Nature conservation comes in many forms with each one aiming to benefit all living organisms on earth.

DM inspects Panki thermal plant

PNS ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Visakh G Aiyer, while inspecting the Panki thermal plant on Thursday said the plant got delayed due to COVID-19 but assured that it will become functional from January 30, 2024. He directed the officials concerned to ensure that all work was accomplished on assigned dates. He said boiler light up should be completed by February 28, 2023, and coal firing should be completed by August 31 next year.

He said this plant will produce a total of 660 MW electricity and this will be the first time that operations of such a huge project will be carried out from Kanpur and the source of this thermal plant will also be the effluent of the Bingawan Sewage Treatment Plant (STP). He said this will help in water conservation, will be a zero waste water



District Magistrate Visakh G Aiyer inspecting the Panki thermal power plant.

emission and provide power to the entire state. He said this will make Uttar Pradesh self-reliant in power generation. Aiyer said this plant will

be exclusive and a strategic wastewater management system that ensured that there will be no discharge of industrial wastewater into the envi-

ronment. He said it was achieved by treating wastewater through recycling and then recovery and reuse for industrial purpose. He said

zero waste promoted a circular material flow that allowed materials to be used over and over reducing the need for landfill space. He said through zero waste the number of toxins released into the air and water will also be decreased and products examined to determine what chemicals were used in the production process.

He said once this plant became functional it would not only cater to the need of Kanpur but also the entire state. He said when Kanpur was becoming a Smart City there was emergent need for becoming self-reliant in power supply. He the face of Kanpur was changing and this plant will be of great help for giving further momentum to industrialisation and economic progress. RP Saxena along with project manager, Samrendra Saha and several other officials were present.

SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CO. LTD.
 Corporate Office : 425, Udayog Vihar Phase IV, Gurgaon-122015 (Haryana)
 Ph : 0124-4212530/31/32, E-Mail: customercare@shubham.co website : www.shubham.co

NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF SECURITISATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002 (HEREINAFTER CALLED 'ACT')

It is to bring to your notice that your loan account has been declared as NPA by secured creditor Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited having its registered office at D-305, Ground Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi - 110017 (herein after called 'SHDFCL') and you are liable to pay total outstanding against your loan to SHDFCL. You are also liable to pay future interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. Therefore, we hereby call upon you to discharge in full your liabilities to SHDFCL within 60 days from the date of this notice failing which SHDFCL will be empowered to exercise the power under Section 13(4) of the ACT. The details of borrowers and secured assets are as under:

S. No.	Loan Account No. Borrower(s) Name	Applicant Address	Demand Notice Amount & Date	Secured Asset
1.	0VFRN210100005030375, Bhare Lal Chaurasia, Sarojini Devi, Amit Kumar Chaurasia	K 47, 274, Katalupura Visheshwar Guri Near Vivekanand School Varanasi Uttar Pradesh-221001	Rs. 11,89,015/- & 23-07-2022	Arazi No. 64, Mauza-Domari, Pargana - Ralhpur Tehsil & Distt.-Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh-221001
2.	KAN190600005020779, Rajendra Pathak, Akansha	381A, Om Purna Shiv Park Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh-208007	Rs. 19,47,528/- & 23-07-2022	H.No. 136, Pardvanpur Lal Bangia Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh-208007
3.	KAN_1402_017949, Sandeep Kumar, Dipika Tripathi	Arazi No-87, Khandeypur Yodendra Vihar Near Akshay School, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh-208007	Rs. 3,95,843/- & 23-07-2022	House Situated At Part Of Arazi No. 87, Mauza Khandeypur, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh-208007
4.	KAN190900005022599, KAN190700005021433, Krishna Pratap Singh, Asha Singh	Plot No.8, Madhavpuram IT Society, IIT, Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh-208016	Rs. 5,36,148/- Rs. 7,05,867/- & 23-07-2022	Plot. Carved Out From Arazi No. 08, Situated at Kalyanpur Kaitan, Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 208001

PLACE: GURGAON, DATE: 28-07-2022 AUTHORIZED OFFICER, SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LTD.

Registered Office Address: Unit No.601, 6th Floor Piramal Amit 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 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. 0000199 of Dwarika Branch) Paras Sharma (Borrower) Anu Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 4618991 / (₹ Forty Six lakh Eighteen Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety One Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Flat No. 1235 First Floor Mahaveer Apartment Arun Vihar Sector 29 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 201301
(LC No. 0000205 of Dwarika Branch) Paras Sharma (Borrower) Anu Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 2759629 / (₹ Twenty Seven lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Nine Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Flat No. 1235 First Floor Mahaveer Apartment Arun Vihar Sector 29 Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh - 201301
(LC No. 0000185 of Raj Nagar Branch) Nitin Nanki Vaidya (Borrower) Baksho Vaidya (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 1196400 / (₹ Eleven lakh Ninety Six Thousand Four Hundred Forty Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Flat No.-f-2, Second Floor Rear Rhs Plot No-8/1 Khasra No-157Kailash Puram, Raispur, Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh :- 201002
(LC No. 0000129 of Meerut Branch) M/S Akansha Builder (Borrower) Rohit Agarwal (Co Borrower 1) Akansha Agarwal (Co Borrower 2) Chirag Agarwal (Guarantor 1) Pinki Agarwal (Guarantor 2)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 7570564 / (₹ Fifty Five lakh Seventy Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Four Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Flat No.b-304 And Flat No.b-303 3rd Floo Golden Tower & Flat No. 465/1-t-303 Mangal Pandey Nagar Meerut Uttar Pradesh :- 250001
(LC No. 0000045 of Bareilly Branch) Ravi Kumar (Borrower) Ramesh Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 3122809 / (₹ Thirty One lakh Twenty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Nine Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Khasra No.42, 123,193 Bake Giridharpur Bareilly Bareilly Uttar Pradesh :- 243001
(LC No. 0000529 of Lucknow Branch) Pooja Misra (Borrower) Chandan Misra (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 3017176 / (₹ Thirty lakh Seventeen Thousand One Hundred Seventy Six Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No 2652 Part Of Khasra No 388 Vill Bakhamaon Pargana Mahona Teh Bkt Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh :- 226020
(LC No. 0000251 of Kanpur Branch) Jasvinder Singh (Borrower) Manjeet Singh (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 2239011 / (₹ Twenty Two lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Eleven Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Part Of Plot No. 22, Part Of Arazi No. 144, Village Kheora Kachhaar, Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh :- 208001
(LC No. 0000283 of Kanpur Branch) Rahul Gupta (Borrower) Bahar Gupta (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 1534856 / (₹ Fifteen lakh Thirty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Six Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No. O-352 At Part Of Arazi No.448 Boorpur Machharia Kanpur Kanpur Rural Uttar Pradesh :- 208021
(LC No. 0000025 of Bareilly Branch) Mahesh Chandra (Borrower) Raji Rani (Co Borrower 1) Naresh Chandra Raghar (Co Borrower 2)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 1501849 / (₹ Fifteen lakh One Thousand Eight Hundred Forty Nine Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Part Of Khet No. 922 Biharman Nagla Bareilly Bareilly Uttar Pradesh :- 243001
(LC No. 0000609 of Yamunanagar Branch) Mohit (Borrower) Swati (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 1323344 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Twenty Three Thousand Three Hundred Forty Four Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Khasra No-500m , Panchayat Gar Gram Jadoda Jutt Saharanpur Saharanpur Saharanpur Uttar Pradesh :- 247001
(LC No. 0000690 of Allahabad Branch) Bhawanishankar Mishra (Borrower) Sarita Mishra (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 892658 / (₹ Eight lakh Ninety Two Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Eight Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	House On Part Of Arazi No 632, Wake Mauza Dewghat Pargana & Tehsil Sadar, Near Budh Vihar Awas Vojna Allahabad Allahabad Uttar Pradesh :- 211011
(LC No. 00001035 of Yamunanagar Branch) Raj Kumar (Borrower) Sanyogita Rani (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 852995 / (₹ Eight lakh Fifty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Five Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No-67, Khasra No-19m, Near Ashok Vatika Gram Dinarpur Saharanpur Saharanpur Saharanpur Uttar Pradesh :- 247001
(LC No. 0000620 of Lucknow Branch) Vivek Kumar Dixit (Borrower) Ruchi Dixit (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 959119 / (₹ Nine lakh Fifty Nine Thousand One Hundred Ninety One Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	House On Plot No 6a, Khasra No 262 Min Village-Jarhara Shivviti Indira Priyadarshini Lucknow Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh :- 226020
(LC No. 0000330 of Halidwani Branch) Shivam Kumar Singh (Borrower) Arti Devi (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 908208 / (₹ Nine lakh Eight Thousand Two Hundred Eight Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Part Of Khasra No 713 Kargaina Bareilly Bareilly Uttar Pradesh :- 243001
(LC No. 0000264 of Lucknow Branch) Jyoti Singh (Borrower) Rajkumar Singh (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 828299 / (₹ Eight lakh Eighty Two Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Nine Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No 651, 652, 673 Village- Mahmodpur Pargana & Tahsil Amethi Sultanpur Uttar Pradesh :- 243001
(LC No. 0000315 of Halidwani Branch) Sapna Sharma (Borrower) Nishant Singhal (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 874977 / (₹ Eight lakh Seventy Four Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Seven Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Part Of Khasra No. 79 Min Part Of Plot No. 37, Kalra Estate Naaiपुरा Khaarad Gajraula Moradabad Uttar Pradesh :- 244235
(LC No. 0000120 of Yamunanagar Branch) Rajesh Saini (Borrower) Anjana Wo Rajesh Saini (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 732730 / (₹ Seven lakh Thirty Two Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No 20 Khasra No-576, Wake Dara Shivpuri Swad Bairoun Parg Teh Distt Sre Dar Abadi Ganesh Nagar Saharanpur Saharanpur Uttar Pradesh :- 247001
(LC No. 0000051 of Moradabad Branch) Sanjeev Saxena (Borrower) Abhisheki (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 694633 / (₹ Six lakh Ninety Four Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Three Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Part Of Khasra No 646/647 Manpur Narayanpur Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh :- 226020
(LC No. 00001005 of Yamunanagar Branch) Ashwani Kumar (Borrower) Shikha Wo Sanjay Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 649111 / (₹ Six lakh Forty Nine Thousand One Hundred Eleven Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No-17, Khasra No-563 & 564 Near Gendi Mandir Tirlokpur Colony Saharanpur Saharanpur Saharanpur Uttar Pradesh :- 247001
(LC No. 0000848 of Lucknow Branch) Narendra Ram Rawat (Borrower) Girja (Co Borrower)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 646713 / (₹ Six lakh Forty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Thirteen Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Plot No. 17 Being Khasra No. 218 At Village-Lonapur, Pargana, Tehsil & District- Lucknow Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh :- 226020
(LC No. 00002371 of Kanpur Branch) Balram Singh (Borrower) Sarojini (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 632365 / (₹ Six lakh Thirty Two Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Five Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Pvt Plot 74 At Arazi No.529 Vill Singhpur Kachhar Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh :- 208001
(LC No. 00008228 of Lucknow Branch) Sant Lal (Borrower) Nilesh Kumar (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 492079 / (₹ Four lakh Ninety Two Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety Nine Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	House On Plot At Khasra No 21 Ka Minjumi Ibrahimpur, Tehsil Sarojinagar Lucknow Lucknow Lucknow Uttar Pradesh :- 226020
(LC No. 0000466 of Moradabad Branch) Manish Kumar (Borrower) Amit Kumar Singh (Co Borrower 1) Sushma Singh (Co Borrower 2) Shalini Singh (Guarantor)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 3969610 / (₹ Thirty Nine lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Six Hundred Ten Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	A Private Plot No.15, Khasra No.353 Sonapur Almarof Mohalla Puspjanjali Moradabad Moradabad Uttar Pradesh :- 244001
(LC No. 00000765 of Noida 1 Rajendra Place Branch) Mayank Mittal (Borrower) Arpan Mittal (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 2946564 / (₹ Twenty Nine lakh Forty Six Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Four Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Unit No. F-803, 8th Floor, Tower/ Block F La Galaxia, Plot No. H R A - 31 Greater Noida Greater Noida Uttar Pradesh :- 201308
(LC No. 00001670 of Raj Nagar Branch) Rupender Sharma (Borrower) Nutan Sharma (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 2297668 / (₹ Twenty Two lakh Ninety Seven Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Eight Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Flat No. B-102, First Floor Khasra No. 505 & 506, Village Sarfabad, Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301
(LC No. 0000607 of Bareilly Branch) Manoj Kumar (Borrower) Neeraj Devi (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 1381044 / (₹ Thirteen lakh Eighty One Thousand Forty Four Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Part Of Plot Gata No.95 Bate Gram Deshnagar Bahar Chungi Pilibhit Pilibhit Uttar Pradesh (12-05-2022)
(LC No. 00002076 of Kanpur Branch) Prabhakar Awasthi (Borrower) Upasana Awasthi (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 1221893 / (₹ Twelve lakh Twenty One Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Three Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Flat No. 301 On 3rd Floor, Prem No. 341 Sai Sharda Apartment, Lakhanpur Kanpur Kanpur Urban Uttar Pradesh :- 208024
(LC No. 00004393 of Gurgaon - Sohna Road Branch) Ranjeet Kumar Mishra (Borrower) Nutan Mishra (Co Borrower 1)	21-06-2022 / ₹ 1216907 / (₹ Twelve lakh Sixteen Thousand Nine Hundred Seven Only) NPA (12-05-2022)	Flat No 201, Front Side Rhs Portion, 2nd Floor, Khasra No. 73m, Plot No. A-7, Village- bhangel Begumpur Noida Gautambudh Nagar Uttar Pradesh :- 201301
(LC No. 00000786 of Jhansi Branch) Vikas Dubey (Borrower) Sapna Dubey (Co Borrower 1)	01-07-2022 / ₹ 1127524 / (₹ Eleven lakh Twenty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Four Only) NPA (09-08-2013)	A Single Storied Residence Property Arazi No. 1755 Mauza Lahargid Behind Lahar Enclave Jhansi Jhansi Uttar Pradesh :- 284001

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 : 29-07-2022
 Place: Uttarpradesh
 (Authorized Officer)
 Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited

Jewellery shop burgled

PNS ■ KANPUR

A jewellery shop was burgled in Saniga under Chakeri police station area late on Wednesday night. The incident came to light on Thursday morning when the jeweller reached there to open it. However, the exact amount of loss could not be ascertained so far. Rajneesh Soni, district vice-president of Adarsh Vyapar Mandal, owns jewellery shop on Saniga road in the name of Prakash Jewellers. On Thursday morning he found its shutters broken and jewellery missing.

After informing the Saniga outpost incharge about the incident, when one of the cops reached the spot till late noon, dozens of traders staged an agitation and raised anti-police slogans. They also announced to meet the City Police Commissioner to apprise him about the 'lack-adaisical' attitude of local police. Thereafter Chakeri SHO Shailendra Singh reached the spot and after taking the complaint from the victim got the matter pacified.

He said the exact amount of loss could not be ascertained so far. However, after lodging an FIR, efforts would be made to nab the thieves, he said.

Imposters posing as CB team raid into custody

PNS ■ KANPUR

A fake Crime Branch (CB) team comprising a circle officer, a sub-inspector and three constables raided the house of a block pramukh in New Azad Nagar outpost area under Vidhnu police station early on Thursday morning and demanded Rs 5 lakh bribe from him for suspending the search operation. Suspecting the identity of team members, the security guard called the police which immediately rushed to the spot and took all the imposters into custody. According to reports, the house of a block pramukh is situated near Sainik Chauraha, New Azad Nagar, Vidhnu. At 5 am on Thursday, five cops including a circle officer, a sub-inspector and three constables posing as members of the Crime Branch, raided his house and carried out search operation. During it they started mounting pressure on the block pramukh and other family members on pretext of the raid. When the block pramukh got scared on their asking for submitting details of properties, they demanded Rs 5 lakh bribe for suspending the search operation. Meanwhile, suspecting the identity of cops, the security guard of the block pramukh informed the police.



Imposters in police custody on Thursday morning.

Immediately New Azad Nagar outpost incharge Mukesh Bajpai along with force rushed to the spot and took all the imposters to police station. During search police recovered fake identity cards of a circle officer, a sub-inspector and three constables from their possession. SHO Prakash Chandra Sharma said accused were being quizzed and facts of the case will be divulged after investigation.

CLASH: Panic prevailed in Pheelkhana police area

when members of two groups clashed and indulged in a scuffle over a dispute of maintaining supremacy in the locality late on Wednesday night. They also lobbed bombs at each other. Immediately, local police rushed to the spot and arrested three persons. Both the groups had also clashed in Halsey Road in the past. According to reports, Arsh Rai alias Harsh Yadav, Ujjwal Sonkar and Aniket of a group held duel with Chetan Dubey

and his accomplice of another group near Pheelkhana police station late on Wednesday night. After a heated argument, both the groups lobbed bombs at each other in succession.

This cause panic in the locality and residents were forced to remain confined to their houses. On coming to know about the incident, DCP (West) Pramod Kumar and SHO Pheelkhana Amit Kumar Bhadana rushed to the spot and took stock of the situation. During the scuffle Arsh sustained serious head injury while Ujjwal some minor injury marks. Police took Arsh, Ujjwal and Chetan Dubey into custody and sent the seriously injured Arsh to KPM Hospital for treatment. SHO Amit Kumar Bhadana said the clash took place over a dispute over maintaining supremacy in the locality when members of both the groups lobbed bombs of very low intensity. Raids were on to nab the absconding members.

About six months ago, both the groups had also clashed on Halsey Road in a dispute over eve-teasing. If no complaint was received police would lodge an FIR and initiate action against them after investigations, he added.

Stress on consuming nutritious & fresh food

PNS ■ KANPUR

Deputy Medical Officer, Dr AK Singh while addressing presspersons at his office on Thursday said at present the weather was fluctuating between hot and cold weather. He said this weather always reduced the immunity of a person and thus it engendered the need to remain vigilant to diseases and consume nutritious and fresh food in this season. He said monsoon gave rise to food poisoning, cough, cold, diarrhoea, fever and thus special care had to be taken in the season.

He said during monsoon on account of stagnant water

there was always a rise in vector-borne diseases like malaria and dengue. He said there was a sharp rise in water-borne disease along with vector-borne disease and the hospitals were inundated with patients of the two major diseases.

He said the reason for rise in vector-borne disease was stagnant water in potholes and craters on the roads. He said the fields were inundated with water which led to rise of more vector-borne disease in rural areas.

He said in case of any health problem residents of suburban areas need to contact the nearest health centre. He

said for urban residents they can contact the nearest government hospital.

He said communicable diseases were easily spread and thus one had to wash hands frequently and use mask. He advised people to wash vegetables carefully and properly as bacteria reached homes through vegetables as well. He advised people to refrain from eating outside or roadside foods.

He said people need to keep themselves hydrated and there should be proper intake of water.

He said proper sleep was highly essential for good health as it improved immunity.

Workshop to apprise weaker section girls, women on how to make life better

PNS ■ KANPUR

General secretary of Sakhi Kendra Neelam Chaturvedi while addressing a workshop on "Think Tank" at Merchants Chamber auditorium on Thursday said it aimed at apprising teenaged girls and women of weaker sections as how to make their lives better and more comfortable. She said there were umpteen challenges and thus this workshop will work out ways to tackle such situation and prepare women to take up the challenges as well.

She said marginalised rural women make a sizeable portion of the Indian population but they were key contributors to agricultural production, food security, climate advocacy, enterprise and citizenship. She said ironically active contribution and effort of rural women were not recognised and their full potential remained untapped.

She said Sakhi Kendra was making best efforts, especially in the area of adult education and training, and added that investing and building the capacities of rural women will improve their business, social, economic and financial skills.

Chaturvedi said capacity building and adult training range from providing adult education, life and social skills training can be channelled to help rural women to be empowered. She said one of the greatest barriers to the sustainable development of women was their lack of access to quality adult education and training. She said

when women had access to quality holistic personal, emotional and entrepreneurial development training opportunities, they will be empowered to speak for themselves. She said they become confident and can speak up against every abuse and violence.

She said another area which needed lot of promotion was vocational skills and business and said that rural women were looking for different ways to be empowered through hands-on skills, entrepreneurship and micro business expansions. She said one can contribute to help rural women gain direct vocational skills training or business idea expansion opportunities. She added that currently they were eagerly looking for news to enhance their daily living activities and to become more efficient in all sectors within their community.

Chaturvedi said another area was access of financial facilities and said rural women were consistently looking for different avenues to access microloans, farming tools, business management and operational tools.

She said a woman who had committed herself to work will do more and multiply her efforts if she had access to basic tools for effectiveness and productivity. She said another area of concern was women's health. She added women were primarily vulnerable to every form of health issues in different communities and they face all forms of health challenges.

Plea to declare Varanasi as Town of Export Excellence

Varanasi (PNS): Eastern UP Exporters' Association (EUPEA) on Thursday demanded the government at Centre to declare Varanasi as Town of Export Excellence so that this commercial capital of the eastern belt of the state could be upgraded to compete with China and other competitors in the field of export. It has also shot off a letter to the Director General, Foreign Trade (DGFT) regarding its demand.

Talking to the presspersons here, the president of EUPEA Amitabh Kant, vice-president Anupam Agrawal, general secretary Anil Kumar Agrawal and treasurer Raj Kunwar informed that there is an immense possibilities of

the export in Varanasi and added that there are 15 GI products in the district which have set a new standard of the export in their respective fields during last few years.

This city has recorded the export of over Rs 565 crore previous year in which the contribution of handicraft, handloom, carpet, Banarasi saree, etc was of around Rs 120 crore, they informed.

The manufacturers of the city would get financial aid from the government and they would get better infrastructure for the export of their products, after the city would get a status of Town of Export Excellence, they informed, adding that the fairs and exhibitions would also be organised

to attract the international buyers. Moreover, the exporters, manufacturers and traders not only of the district but also of the adjoining districts would get a level playing field to compete with China and other competitors in the field of export by showing better performance.

This region has immense possibilities of overall development in the fields of hotel, tourism, agriculture and food products and the exporters, manufacturers of handloom & handicraft, weavers and artisans would get benefits if the city is declared Town of Export Excellence, they said further and hoped that the DGFT would pay serious consideration to the demand

We've started preparations for 2024 LS polls, says Akhilesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

National President of Samajwadi Party (SP) and Leader of Opposition in state legislative assembly Akhilesh Yadav said that the party has already started preparations for 2024 Lok Sabha elections. In an informal talk to the media persons at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur here on Thursday, the former Chief Minister Yadav also said that the SP would recapture Rampur and Azamgarh parliamentary seats, once again. Akhilesh came here by a private aircraft and after a brief stay at the airport he went to Jaunpur by car to attend a programme organised on the death anniversary of late Hansraj Jag Nandan Yadav at Khuaw village under Mariahu police station.



SP President Akhilesh Yadav at Babatpur Airport in Varanasi on Thursday

Pioneer

When asked about his pictures performing Rudrabhishek, Akhilesh said that he did not need to learn a lesson on religion from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "The BJP is a party which uses religion with politics," he said. Ex-CM strongly launched a scathing attack on the central government for increasing the rates of Goods and Service Tax (GST) and said that the BJP-led government had imposed tax on the milk which is offered to Baba Bholenath.

Training his gun further on the BJP, Akhilesh said that the BJP government was misusing the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to put pressure on the opposition. According to him,

during the regime of BJP, the corruption has increased alarmingly and recently inaugurated Bundelkhand Express is its example where within 10 days after its inauguration, big potholes were visible there which just hinted at prevailing corruption and not following the standard norms in the construction and development works.

In a question over the party's alliance with Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), he also blamed the BJP for mounting pressures on the alliance partners to divorce their relations with the rival

parties. He said that afraid of BJP, the SBSP president Om Prakash Rajbhar had given some statements against him. It was the first time when he was alleged of distributing tickets by taking money, he said in a satirical mood. Reacting over the statement of 'AC' given by Rajbhar, the SP president said that some other's soul has entered the body of Rajbhar who now needs treatment.

When asked about the recent acts of his uncle and president of Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party Shivpal Singh Yadav, he just said that he was not able to respect his uncle so

he left him free to serve the farmers, helpless and poor in his own way. Earlier, when Akhilesh arrived at the airport, senior party leaders including former UP Minister Surendra Patel, MLAs Ragini Sonkar (Machhalishahr), Toofani Saroj (Kerakat), and Lucky Yadav (Malhani), Manoj Rai Dhooopchandi, Varanasi city president Vishnu Sharma, women's wing chief Puja Yadav, Kishan Dixit, district president Sujit Yadav (Lakkad Pahalwan), Jubair Ahmed, Sadhu Yadav, Guddu Rajbhar and many others accorded warm welcome to the ex-CM.

Water level of Ganga, Yamuna rising four cm per hour

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The water level of Ganga and Yamuna has picked up pace since Wednesday evening. The water released from Haridwar, Narora and Kanpur dams is now reaching here. The effects of risen water level are visible in Phaphamau ghat of Ganga and Chhatnag, Naini Ghat of Yamuna. Here the water level is rising at the rate of four centimeters per hour. Also, there are signs of danger in the coastal areas due to the rise in the water level of both the rivers.

After the rainfall in hilly areas, the local rain showers are showing their impact in Prayagraj. Due to excessive rains, the water from Haridwar, Narora as well as Kanpur dams is being released into the Ganga.

According to the Irrigation Flood Control Room, the water level of Ganga in Phaphamau was at 78.09 on Thursday evening whereas on Wednesday it was 77.19. The water level in Chhatnag was measured at 71.50 meters. The water level of the Yamuna river at Naini



Ganga-Yamuna water level in Prayagraj rising by four centimeters every hour.

was recorded at 77.64 meters. It was recorded at 76.85 meters on Wednesday and 75.86 meters on Tuesday. If we look at these figures, the water in Phaphamau is increasing at a speed of more than four cm per hour.

People living in the coastal

areas are frightened by the speed of rising water level. The priests are busy in removing the checkpoints from the Sangam, the shops set up here are also being removed due to the alert.

The area of erosion has started increasing gradually

towards Ramghat, Phaphamau, Salori. In the coming week it will definitely increase the problems. The denizens are quite worried about the present situation as the water will now rapidly move towards the population after the erosion.

Rising Ganga poses flood threats in Purvanchal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The continuous rising water level of river Ganga has posed a serious threat of floods not only in Varanasi but also in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP). As the rising speed of water has been maintained, it has increased the worries of the residents of low lying areas. In this holy city, the links between one ghat to other have already been disconnected, posing a problem now to the devotees as well as Kanwaris, arriving in thousands daily during the auspicious month of Shraavan, to enter the Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham (corridor) from Lalita Ghat easily as many now are preferring to reach there through the lanes.



Water level of river continues to rise in Varanasi on Thursday.

Pioneer

The river water has already touched the feet of Sheela Mata Mandir and several low lying temples located at 84-odd internationally famous ghats have already either partially or fully inundated into the river water. Famous hanging temple near Scindia Ghat has submerged half of it into the river water. As per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of

Central Water Commission (CWC), the river has maintained its rising trend as its water level has increased by 30 mm per hour at 8 am on Thursday. The same speed was also seen between upstream Mirzapur and downstream Ballia. The water level of river Ganga was recorded at 64.58 metres, while it was flowing at

63.8 metres a day ago. During the last 24 hours, its level increased sharply by 78 cm. Right from the upstream Phaphamau and Allahabad to downstream Ballia including Mirzapur, Varanasi and Ghazipur, the river was recorded rising. The river was recorded at 53.61 metres against a warning level of 56.615 metres

in Ballia. Among the other rivers Rihand was rising at Rihand Dam while Sone at Bansagar Dam, Gomti steady both at upstream Sultanpur and downstream Jaunpur, Chhoti Sarju steady at Azamgarh but falling at Mau, Tons steady at Chakghat and Kanhar at Duddhi in Sonbhadra district.

Health employees stage demonstration

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The health employees on Thursday continued their agitation and staged a token demonstration at Pt Deen Dayal District Government Hospital and other government hospitals by being absent from the health services for two hours in protest against the high handedness by the authority for making transfer of employees against the transfer policy.

On the call given by State Employee's Joint Council, UP, the health employees launched agitation on July 20 last and worked by tying black ribbons on their hands till July 24 in protest against the transfer policy of the authority. In the continuance of their agitation, the health employees have been staging a token demonstration for two hours by being absent from the health services from July 26 which entered the third day on Thursday.

The employees of all the government hospitals joined the agitation and in this order, the health employees of Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay District Government Hospital demonstrated in the hospital premises in Orderly Bazar here and submitted a memorandum to the district administration to be forwarded to the Chief

Minister. The agitated employees said that the authority made high handedness in making transfers of employees and the employees were also transferred against the transfer policy of the government. The employees who have just two years in the retirement, were transferred to other districts and moreover, the ill employees were also transferred to other districts which is against the transfer policy of the government, they blamed, adding that such employees were also transferred to other districts who had joined in the district just one year or two years ago while contrary to this, there are number of employees, who have been working here for the last many years, were not transferred.

There is a policy that if the employees are husband and wife, they would be posted in the same district but the authority in the Health department transferred the husband and wife to different districts which is against the transfer policy.

Similarly, the authority made high handedness in changing the tables of the employees going against the policy regarding this, they blamed and demanded the withdrawal of the transfer of

such employees who were transferred against the transfer policy of the government. They submitted a memorandum of their demand to the district administration to be forwarded to the Chief Minister.

Among those who joined the token demonstration by boycotting their works for two hours included Sunil Pandey, Rakesh Kumar Singh, Mahant Yadav, Ram Badan Yadav, Rajesh Kumar Singh, Praveen Pandey, Raj Kumar, Shamsher Ali and Ashok Yadav.

A A P P R O T E S T S AGAINST RISING INFLATION: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday staged a demonstration in protest against the high inflation rate and GST levied on kitchen and other necessary items.

The activists of AAP gathered at Shastri Ghat here tried to take out a protest march to the district headquarter but the police stopped them on the way. Thereafter, they demonstrated to raise their protest against the high inflation rate and GST levied on food and other necessary items.

The people are already facing the skyrocketing price of daily use items and the decision of the central government to levy GST on kitchen items has left no option before the com-

mon people except to remain hungry.

The GST was levied even on the milk of children; they blamed and added that the government is doing nothing for the children but is taking decisions in the interest of industrialists and capitalists. Contrary to this, the government reduced the corporate tax (tax levied on capitalists) from 30 to 22 per cent, they blamed adding that the country would have to face a loss in thousands of crores.

The government has no fund for the farmers, to control the inflation rate and provide employment to unemployed youths but contrary to this, it has money to waive off the loan of some capitalists.

The value of rupees is falling against the dollar and it will benefit some capitalists but the government is taking no step to check it effectively, they blamed and threatened that the party would intensify its agitation against the faulty policy of the government if it failed in taking a concrete step to check the rising dearness.

They also submitted a memorandum to the district administration to be forwarded to the President of India. Pawan Kumar Tiwari, Rama Shankar Patel and others joined the demonstration.

UP Board seeks police help to check printing, sale of illegal textbooks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Authorities of the Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Uttar Pradesh, popularly known as UP Board, have written to the police higher-ups to check publication and circulation of textbooks of class IXth to XIIth by unauthorized publishers and printers who are selling them illegally at high prices in the markets.

Secretary, Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Divya Kant Shukla told the reporters that they have written a letter to the senior superintendent of police, Prayagraj appealing him to

take stern measures against unauthorized publishers selling textbooks on higher prices under the name of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). He said NCERT, New Delhi has sanctioned the copyright of publishing and circulation of 67 NCERT text books of 34 subjects for classes IXth to XIIth to the Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Prayagraj for the academic session 2022-23.

He added, "The Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad authorities have identified three publishers — one from Agra

and two from Jhansi — through E-tender and authorised them to print and circulate textbooks." After receiving the payment for royalty and GST from the authorised publishers, the amount was to be paid to the NCERT, New Delhi, said the official.

However, the UP Board authorities came to know that some unauthorized publishers were involved in printing and selling textbooks illegally. They were even printing NCERT on the unauthorised textbooks and minting money from gullible customers. These unauthorised publishers were

extorting money two to five times from the customers in the Sangam city alone, UP Board officials said.

The unauthorised publishers were not only cheating the children, but also denting the government exchequer.

Shukla said that teams of UP Board have carried out a series of raids on book stalls and served notices to some shopkeepers after they were caught selling unauthorised textbooks. A senior police official said that a probe has been launched into the issue and measures would be taken accordingly.

Moharram: Camels, horses, sticks and swords banned in procession

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

This time camels, horses, sticks and swords will not be used in the procession of Moharram. Action will be taken against those doing fencing and stunts during the procession. The procession can be taken out with tradition and simplicity. Tight security arrangements will be made around the old city and Karbala.

Police and administrative officials held a meeting with

Tajiyadars, members of the peace committee, civil defense and elite citizens in the Four Seasons lawn of Kareli for peace on Muharram.

During this, the Tajiyadars, including those leading the procession of Moharram, were clearly told that camels, horses, sticks, weapons, swords should not be used under any circumstances. It is also illegal to perform fencing and stunts along the way, which have been banned. By doing this, the violators will be identified and

strict action will be taken against the offenders. SSP Shailesh Kumar Pandey, SP City Dinesh Kumar Singh emphasized on observing Moharram by taking out the procession in traditional way with simplicity. Along with this, the instructions were also given to maintain the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb to maintain a peaceful environment.

It was also said in the meeting that if any person tries to disturb peace, then effective action will be taken

immediately. Any misleading message surfacing on the social media needs no attention. Strict action will be taken against anyone spreading fake news or rumours. The Tajiyadars promised full cooperation to the police-administration while observing Moharram.

Taking up other problems like bad road conditions, water logging and no street lights, they demanded redressal, so that no inconvenience should be faced in taking out the procession.

SSC CGLE Tier-2 examination on Aug 8 & 10

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS):

Authorities of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) would be filling up 7,686 vacant posts in various Central government offices through the Combined Graduate Level Exam (CGLE)-2021. Besides 3,024 unreserved seats, these include 897 posts reserved for economically weaker section (EWS) candidates, 1,858 for Other Backward Class (OBC), 703 for Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 1,204 for

Scheduled Caste (SC) aspirants.

SSC had declared the result of the Tier-1 exam on July 4. As per the result, a total of 1,56,387 candidates cleared the SSC CGL Tier 1 exam. Now in the next phase for those qualifying Tier-1, the Tier-2 examination is all set to be held on August 8 and August 10 in two shifts.

"On August 8, paper-1 and paper-2 exam will be held that is mandatory for all candidates

while paper-3 will be held on August 10 for shortlisted candidates vying for the post of junior statistical officer from 10am to 12am and paper-4 from 2pm to 4pm for those vying for the posts of assistant accounts officer.

These exams will be conducted in computer-based mode," said SSC central region's regional director Rahul Sachan. A total of around 19 lakh registered candidates across the country, 4.97 lakh candidates

were from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar which comes under SSC, Prayagraj-based central zone headquarters. Admit cards of the candidates will be soon available on SSC's official website—ssc-cr.org.

"This CGL Tier-2 exam will be followed by the Combined Graduate Level (Tier 3) exam that is scheduled to be held on August 21, 2022. The CGL (Tier 3) exam is to be held in pen and paper mode," he added.

Conduct regular patrolling: DIG

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

DIG (Police) RP Singh has directed the cops to make all arrangements in advance in view of Kanwar Yatra, Moharram, Raksha Bandhan Krishna Janmashtami etc. He also directed the officials concerned to keep all the budget related records updated. Such directions were issued by him while holding the range level meeting of officials related to Radio branch and Accounts branch in his office on Wednesday.

Addressing the meeting the DIG directed to conduct regular patrolling, keep a close watch on Kanwar Yatra and solve pending disputes related to Moharram, if any, in advance

He directed the cops of Radio branch to keep all equipment operational so that compliance of orders of senior authorities could be done timely. He directed the staff to remain updated with wireless orders. The cops were directed to continue patrolling in the markets, streets, especially during festivals.

The staff related to accounts was directed to clear all allowances of the concerned timely etc.

CONCLUDES: In the series of programmes under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' a two day Cultural Talent Hunt competition concluded at the auditorium of Zila Panchayat on Wednesday. District Information Officer (DIO) Om Prakash Upadhyay said a QR code-based identity card was to be issued to participants and only registered artists in e-directory could perform in the programmes organised by the government. He said 46 cultural teams participated and performed stage show within two days. He said programme was held to promote folk art and participants exhibited their talents related to folk song, tribal dance, Ramlila and other local art. As many as 29 teams presented Kajali, 12 teams – Biraha, two teams – bhajan and two teams folk dance and one team played Sitar. Judges on the occasion were music teacher of KBPG College Namrata Mishra, music teacher of Sundar Mundar Inter College Jyoti Verma, adminis-

trative officer Collectorate Ashok Kumar Shakya, assistant regional tourism officer Naveen Kumar and DIO OP Upadhyay.

LAUNCHED: New variant of Brezza was launched by city magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh at Maruti showroom 'Star Cars' on Wednesday. Giving details of the special features of modified model GM dealership Ravi Jain said it was equipped with modern facilities like 360° camera, six airbags, wireless charging, head-up display etc. The programme was conducted by Satyam Agrawal and vote of thanks was proposed by MD Satish Agrawal. Dheer Pratap Jaiswal, Awadhesh Pandey and others were present.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Time to liberalise

The government must expedite economic reforms to boost growth and create employment

The rush for government jobs is directly proportional to the severity of the unemployment crisis. The severity has increased badly in the last eight years. As many as 22.05 crore applications were received from 2014-15 to 2021-22 for Central government jobs, but just 7.22 lakh people got them. This is one out of around 300 aspirants becoming successful. These figures have not been compiled by some think tank or private body which the government functionaries or Bharatiya Janata Party leaders can dispute; the government itself released these numbers in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Therefore, no amount of spin or sophistry would make these numbers vanish from political debate. To be sure, there is nothing surprising about these numbers; there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that the situation is pretty bad. For a handful of jobs, any government department announces, lakhs, if not millions, of applications, are received. The intensity of the agitation against the Agniveer scheme was also partly because of the lack of job opportunities for the youngsters. Since the unemployment problem is real, the solution ought to be real; and this can happen only if economic growth is accelerated. It is here where the shoe pinches. The International Monetary Fund has estimated that growth in India will be 7.4 percent for this fiscal and 6.1 percent for 2023-24. For both years, these are lower by 80 basis points from the IMF's earlier estimates. The international situation is badly hurting our economy, with higher crude prices, constrained supply chains, and general decline.



Because of these very reasons, the IMF has also lowered its global growth forecast for 2022 by 40 basis points to 3.2 percent. By 2033, it has pegged it further down, at 2.9 percent. "The outlook has darkened significantly since April. The world may soon be teetering on the edge of a global recession, only two years after the last one," top IMF economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas wrote in an article accompanying the release of an update to the IMF's World Economic Outlook report. Against this backdrop, India has to protect itself from not just external shocks but also the problems joblessness brings forth.

The only way out is the broadening and deepening of economic reforms, especially in areas, like agriculture and labor laws. Thankfully, the Narendra Modi government has shown intent to do that. It has recommended the privatisation process, and the sale of Air India is a testimony to that. It also brought three excellent laws to help the farm sector a couple of years ago but had to backtrack. Its emphasis on infrastructure will also help boost growth and development. Ditto with PM Modi's attitude against the freebie culture. Therefore, now is the time to expedite reforms and translate a prudential mindset into policy-making and implementation. All this will accelerate growth and create jobs.

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PICTALK



Moradabad: Students take part in a programme organised on the eve of the International Tiger Day, at a school. PTI

Judicial killings in Myanmar

By executing political activists, Myanmar army wants to instil a sense of fear among protestors demanding democracy

The execution of four political activists is shocking. It shows that the army generals in Myanmar have scant regard for human rights and are in no mood to restore democracy in the country. The four persons executed include highly popular Phyto Zeya Thaw, a 41-year-old lawmaker, and Kyaw Min Yu, a 53-year-old democracy. The military tribunal that gave them a death sentence did not give any scope for appeal.

The road to freedom is neither easy nor short. Myanmar which has been under the grip of the army since February when it usurped power by a coup is in turmoil. The people are on the streets to protest against the army rule and for the restoration of democracy. The judicial murders are an attempt to instill a sense of terror in the hearts of protestors. According to reports in the last year it has given a death sentence to 117 political activists that it had arrested.



The Tatmadaw, as the army of Myanmar, is called has also jailed Aung San Suu Kyi for 11 years to ensure she does not become a rallying point. Nonetheless, the democratic movement in the country is getting stronger and stronger. More than 14,000 people have courted arrests and over 2,000 civilians have lost lives protesting against the army and its generals.

Now, as the people's patience is wearing thin, the peaceful protests are now turning violent. Meanwhile, the sanctions and mismanagement of the economy have led to the economy taking a nose dive and it has shrunk by almost 20% causing widespread unemployment and a rise in inflation.

Indeed no regime can last long no matter how regressive or powerful it might be if it loses people's trust and legitimacy. Tatmadaw has lost both. The corrupt and repressive army generals are more focused on preserving their authority rather than the welfare of the country. They unleashed a reign of terror on Rohingyas to polarize the Buddhist majority but now the same majority has taken cudgels against it.

What is most disturbing is that the world powers aren't doing enough to press the army for early elections and restoration of democracy. The lip service to democracy is not enough some concrete steps must be taken to end the most regressive and ruthless army regime in Myanmar. Indeed it would have been better had India played a role in giving democracy a push in the neighborhood rather than maintaining a stoic silence.

Tipu was my saviour, sibling

Who says animals don't have emotions, in fact they are far more sensitive than maybe we humans. I have experienced it firsthand



AMIT KANWAR

Tipu, our pet, a medium-sized black Himalayan sheepdog, was my first true friend. With my brothers away to pursue their studies, Tipu was my sibling. My parents were working, and I was in the care of Amma, my grandmother. In rural Himachal, those were not the days when children were admitted to school at the earliest eligible age. Amma was in no hurry to expose me to formal education as avenues of informal education were many. I lived, experienced, and savored the simple village life.

I would roam in fields with Tipu in the toe and watch the crops sown, weeded, bloom, and harvested. In summers, we would sneak into mango orchards, tasting the best of the produce. Exploring the muddy meandering streams with paper boats was our favorite pastime during the rainy season. Misty winter mornings were spent in the greens of sprouting wheat decked up with shiny dew drops. Springs took us through sprawling yellow fields of mustards to the sugarcane plots, where I feasted on the sweetest of the cane. The beautiful balmy autumn was spent watching the leaves turn orange.

Tipu would often follow me, and he possessed a real sixth sense. Being an alert bodyguard of a five-year-old, he would overtake me if he felt the need to check the area for any danger before I venture. Whenever the hill trails grew narrow and steep, Tipu would always lead the way. He chased stray dogs and cattle away from my path and always sensed the people I did not like. One of Amma's friends regularly complained to her about my mischiefs, and I did not like her. Tipu sensed the same. Violently barking, he would chase her away.

Close to my sixth birthday, I was admitted into the neighborhood government school, an understaffed, dingy, single-story block of classrooms, crying for repairs. I wouldn't say I liked the school, but the prospect of learning was overwhelming. Tipu started accompanying me to school. He found a resting corner under a banyan tree on the school premises, where he would spend his day, waiting for the dispersal bell. My school-going excitement was somehow short-lived; the routine, punctuality, rules, and lack of independence were enough to dampen my spirits. Finally, my patience gave away, and one day I planned to bunk the school.



Collecting my bag, I managed to sneak out of the class. Tipu loved this pleasant surprise, and his hurried stretch and enthusiastic tail wagging signaled that he was happy. Tip-toeing quietly, we managed to move around fifty meters from the school periphery, undetected. Breaking the silence of the hot summer's noon, I heard the shrill voice of one of the dreaded teachers. He was calling out my name, and without looking back, I got into a sprint, with Tipu leading the way. Enraged at my audacious escape, the teacher mustered three boys to follow me, catch me, and get me back to school. Midway, the trio was able to catch up, and they asked me to return, to which I refused and continued on my way. Irritated by my indifferent

and intrepid reaction, one of them tried to pull me by the arm to force me to return to the school. Tipu, a silent spectator till now, flew into a wild rage and started barking violently. Sensing that the dog may bite, the arresting party withdrew quietly. I do not know what happened to them when they returned to school, but Tipu became the talk of the town from that day onwards. The scene was repeated on a few more occasions, and finally, the teacher had to request my grandmother to ensure that Tipu did not accompany me to the school. Poor Tipu was put on a leash during school hours. After some time, I changed school, and the chances of Tipu accompanying me diminished. Even being reserved with the display of emotions, he could not hold back his excitement on my return from school. He would vigorously wag his tail and would stay by my side for the rest of the day. Tipu was the undisputed king of the neighborhood. A guard dog breed, he was unfriendly and reserved. One day, a neighbor got a pet, a ferocious, large-sized Gaddi

and intrepid reaction, one of them tried to pull me by the arm to force me to return to the school.

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Dog, Moti. This started the war for turf between the canines. Observing that the skirmishes between Tipu and Moti grew violent, we tried to keep Tipu away from Moti. But one day, Moti ambushed Tipu. Tipu fought back bravely but got seriously injured. Timely evacuation and hospitalization saved his life.

Tipu was back to his original self within a fortnight. As the injuries were internal and had not healed well due to old age, Tipu's health deteriorated, and visits to the doctor did no good. Tipu got bedridden with failing health, and his drooping ears, limped walking, and wet eyes said it was all the pain of an ailing being. No amount of medication helped. On a sultry summer afternoon, after suffering for about a week, Tipu, my friend, my savior, my co-explorer, left us for his heavenly abode. Pained, I cried for days. Tipu is gone a long time back, but his memories linger on in my consciousness, reminding me of the meaning of true friendship, loyalty, and selfless love.

(The writer pens down stories of human interest and his travels. He also likes to click portraits.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NOW MADE IN INDIA MONKEYPOX VACCINE

Sir — Serum Institute of India is planning to develop a vaccine against monkeypox and is in talks regarding this with partners. It clearly shows how India is leading in the field of medical science and vaccination research and development. Also, the institute exports vaccines globally which will elevate India's role in the vaccine industry and will lead to a collaboration with global pharma companies. The world has already seen India's prowess in vaccine development when Serum Institute's covishield was not only used to vaccinate Indians but has been exported to other countries as well. Thus it will lead to India becoming a global leader in the field of vaccine research.

Ashwini Tomar | Ujjain

MEDICAL STUDENTS MUST BE HELPED

Sir — Refer The Pioneer (27th July, 22), Admit Medical students The government of India has fulfilled its obligation by 'Operation Ganga' - an evacuation process and brought back home Indians safely from Ukiran when Russia launched the invasion of Ukraine on February 24. Around 22,500 Indian nationals - mostly students - have returned from war-hit Ukraine to India since February.

The Centre government should come to the aid of these youngsters who are in serious distress and who already have spent large money for their admission in Ukraine and China, and had to return mid-way from their courses amid the war in Ukraine and the Pandemic in China. The government should make a special plan to admit these medical students to various government colleges and private medical colleges in the country by relaxing the rules "in the interest of the country and public at large.

India has a large medical education infrastructure with 612 medical colleges with 90695 seats for MBBS courses, more than 300 are Govt. medical colleges, 49 are deemed medical colleges and the remaining are private medical colleges.

Dravidian-Aryan debate



Tamil Nadu Governor KN Ravi has revived the Dravidian-Aryan construct with his contention that the distinction is geographical and not racial. Even though the theory that they are not distinct has been already debunked by archeological, linguistic, and genetic evidence, it is deliberately being propagated to create an entirely spurious impression that the Indo-European language speakers who called

themselves Aryans have been the original inhabitants and validating their claim of India being their pithrubhoomi (fatherland) and PunyaBhoomi (holy land).

Nevertheless, it is a vain attempt to deny the fact that the Dravidians were well-settled in India long before the arrival of the Aryans sometime between 2000 BCE and 1000 BCE. The Hindutva scholars and ideologues may try hard to equate Indian culture with 'Aryan', 'Sanskrit' or 'Vedic' culture. But they are bound to fail because a part does not make the total. No amount of falsehoods and fake histories will alter the fact that India is a multi-source civilization enriched by a variety of heredities and migration histories. Trifling with lineages to suit a particular political narrative or perpetuate domination by a section of society is not a virtue.

G David Milton | Kanyakumari

Even if the Russian-Ukraine conflict ends which looks unlikely, these students can not go back as already massive damage is done to the infrastructure of various medical colleges and institutions in Ukraine in the Russian attack.

Hence, in the interest of these youngsters, the Government can amend by ordinance the National Medical Commission (NMC) rules, which do not allow the transfer of students who are pursuing medical courses abroad and have to return home midway, in medical colleges here between academic sessions.

Even the government can add one more semester in their courses for the clinical training for these returning students so they can match Indian education standards.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bangalore

THE STORY OF WASHED BRIDGES

Sir — According to the reports, three hundred bridges, small and big, were damaged and about five hundred kilometers of roads were dilapidated this Monsoon. The

six bridges of Gwalior-Chambal were broken, and their construction has not started to date. Earlier the government was not in a position to provide funds, so the proposal got stuck.

But when the approval of the fund was received, the process got entangled. These matters cannot be ignored, because, along these roads, the public's trust in the government is also broken, like a bridge-culvert, the expectations of the common man also collapse, which he keeps from the government for development.

The government routinely suspends some officials and blacklists companies.

People are now beginning to understand that suspension is not a punishment and how will the loss of crores caused by blacklisting the company be compensated?

The government should ensure better quality and speedy delivery of infra projects.

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

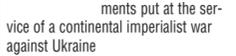
Connectivity brings opportunities, progress and prosperity. Cabinet decision on enhancing connectivity in uncovered villages is going to transform lives of people in these areas.



Prime Minister

—Narendra Modi

Russia has started a new type of hybrid world war. It decided that information, energy and food were military instruments put at the service of a continental imperialist war against Ukraine



French President

—Emmanuel Macron

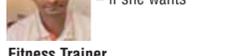
There are many facts about the Kohinoor that I didn't know & these revelations took me by surprise.



Actor

—Manoj Bajpayee

'Sindhu can play upto 40 years even - if she wants'



Fitness Trainer

—Srikanth Varma

I extend my heartfelt greetings to all on World Nature Conservation Day. Let us take pledge once again to work unflinchingly towards conservation of Mother Nature for protecting the environment and sustaining all forms of life on earth.



West Bengal CM

—Mamata Banerjee



FIRST COLUMN

UKRAINE WAR CAUGHT US ON THE WRONG FOOT

India has to walk a tightrope amid a fluid world order



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The ongoing monsoon session of Parliament has briefly halted high-level foreign visits by ministers, while uncertainty prevailing in India's neighbourhood, as well as G7 partners are equally at play. War in Ukraine has also entered six months and the world is preparing for a harsh winter! All of these have major implications for India.

What was almost unthinkable in February this year, when Russia sent its troops into Ukraine is now turning out to be a living nightmare, impacting billions of people around the globe. When Russia went into Ukraine, everyone thought it would be a matter of a few days before a complete takeover. However, what wasn't factored in was the sudden western unity and throwing in of 'all it takes' by US and Europe to win a moral war against Russia.

Western nations led by the US hardened the sanctions regime against Russia, reviving Cold War era power blocs. It also forced many powerful European countries such as Germany to reinvigorate their military programmes, thereby diverting funds from other pressing sectors such as climate change. The most significant outcome of the war is perhaps a working template for China for its future road to global dominance.

China is Russia's most powerful global ally and has not restricted any trade with Russia, thereby reiterating the stated objective of 'friendship beyond any limits'. China has even come out with statements as late as last month condemning and challenging the western alliance-led Cold War era sanctions regime against Russia. What China is closely analysing are the challenges Russia faces at present and in future, and how can China insure itself from these threats, if it decides to push for unilateral military aggression in any part of the globe.



India has been caught on the wrong foot geopolitically. It has a historic relationship with Russia, stretching more than six decades and is one of the largest buyers of Russian weapons. However, it may be noteworthy that in case of a large-scale military flare up with China, the weapons on both sides would be of Russian origin. It could also mean Russia may have to make a tough call between a powerful global ally (China) and an old trusted friend (India) on the global stage.

Chances are Russia would choose the former. Meanwhile, India and China negotiations on border related issues haven't progressed significantly in the past six months. On the contrary both sides have made the north-western border points permanent military zones developing key infrastructure in the fragile Himalayan terrain. The winters of 2022 and many more to come are most likely to be tense, given China's heightened aggression.

Meanwhile, at multilateral forums such as the BRICS summit China is aggressively trying to push for a reserve currency, which is aimed to scale down the importance of a dollar denominated trade. China is also pushing for trade transactions in Renminbi and wants to establish an alternative to current international Interbank Payment Systems, which is another dent towards Europe and US-led order. It may be mentioned that India too has allowed Rupee denominated international trade settlements, and has been working on an alternate, to cross border inter-bank settlements.

These trends could have established an alternate financial system, provided India and China could have come to the negotiating table to discuss the regulations, standards, and governing principles. India, China with their other BRICS partners, Russia and Brazil, could have persuaded many smaller economies to join the new financial system. However, that seems currently out of place due to the prevailing geopolitical canvas.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)



S KALYANASUNDARAM

Eleven people, including the manager of a Noida software firm, were arrested in February 2022 for allegedly stealing and misusing credit cards of about 100 people across the country. In October 2019, the RBI asked banks to secure their customer card data after a website reported that nearly 1.3 million debit and credit card data of Indian banks are on sale on the dark web, potentially causing losses of millions of dollars.

There are millions of people using credit and debit cards on a regular basis. As a measure to safeguard the interest of cardholders, the Reserve Bank of India proposed a process called 'tokenisation'. Credit and debit card tokenisation is the process of replacing sensitive data with a token, a randomly generated,

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one-of-a-kind placeholder, from the company's internal network.

The Reserve Bank of India on June 24 extended the timeline for tokenisation of debit and credit cards by three months till September 30, 2022 "to avoid disruption and inconvenience to cardholders". Originally, the RBI mandated that after December 31, 2021, entities other than card networks and card issuers cannot store card data. This timeline was subsequently extended to June 30, 2022.

Now after September 30, no entity in the card transaction or payment chain, other than the card issuers and card networks, should store the CoF (Card-on-File data or storage of actual card data) and any such data stored previously will be purged.

"On a review of the issues involved and after detailed dis-

cussions with all stakeholders, it is observed that considerable progress has been made in terms of token creation. Transaction processing based on these tokens has also commenced, though it is yet to gain traction across all categories of merchants," the RBI said in a circular to payment system providers.

In its press release issued on June 24, 2022, the RBI also urged credit and debit card holders to opt for tokenisation on a voluntary basis. It will be worthwhile for credit and debit card holders to try this sane advice of RBI for a smooth transition, when it is made compulsory in course of time.

Currently, many entities, including merchants, involved in an online card transaction chain store card data like card number,



expiry date, etc., [Card-on-File (CoF)] citing cardholder convenience and comfort for undertaking transactions in future. While this practice does render convenience, availability of card details with multiple entities increases the risk of card data being stolen/misused. There have been instances where such

data stored by merchants, etc., have been compromised.

Under the present system as an additional factor of authentication is not mandatory, there is always a possibility of fraudsters using the stolen data and the cardholders may be put to monetary loss. It is possible that social engineering techniques can be employed to perpetrate frauds using such data.

The RBI has issued a framework for CoF Tokenisation (CoFT) services. Under this framework, cardholders can create "tokens" (a unique alternate code) in lieu of card details; these tokens can then be stored by the merchants for processing transactions in future. Thus, CoFT obviates the need to store card details with merchants and provides the same level of convenience to cardholders.

To create a token under the CoFT framework, the cardholder has to undergo a one-time registration process for each card at every online/e-commerce merchant's website/mobile application, by entering the card details and giving consent for creating a token. This consent is validated by way of authentication through an Additional Factor of Authentication.

Thereafter, a token is created which is specific to the card and online / e-commerce merchant, i.e., the token cannot be used for payment at any other merchant. For future transactions performed at the same merchant website/mobile application, the cardholder can identify the card with the last four digits during the checkout process. Thus, the cardholder is

not required to remember or enter the token for future transactions. A card can be tokenised at any number of online/e-commerce merchants. For every online/e-commerce merchant where the card is tokenised, a specific token will be created.

The RBI has also said that 19.5 crore tokens have been so far created. Opting for CoFT (i.e., creating tokens) is voluntary for the cardholders. Those who do not wish to create a token can continue to transact as before by entering card details manually at the time of undertaking the transaction.

The Reserve Bank of India encourages cardholders to tokenise their cards for their own safety. Cardholders' payment experience will be enhanced through an added layer of security by way of tokenisation.

Need babus for knowledge based India

At a time when India aspires to be a \$5-trillion economy, existing bureaucracy needs a radical transformation



SUMEET BHASIN

India is aspiring to be a \$5-trillion economy in a short span of time. By 2030, the target of the government is to hit the \$10-trillion economy size, and take off from thereon for qualitative and quantum jump in the socio-economic space of the country. The government may have a robust action plan to execute the economic aspirations.

But the plans are executed by the men and women in various domains who are the faces of the government on the ground. If the administrators prove to be enablers, India will reach the target economic size within the time frame. But if they prove not to be adequately equipped with the skillsets, India may falter, and that calls for urgent steps for the much needed administrative reforms in the country.

The Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre is taking various measures to equip the administrative officials with the skills that are required to build 'New India'. The exercise at the various levels seeks to address the issues concerning the capacity-building challenges. The National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building is one such exercise which is addressing the skill set challenges at the individual and institution levels. There are other digital modes of interventions to reorient the civil servants to the required knowledge sets. The State governments are also embarking on the path of administrative reforms.

The focus as of now is clearly seen to be on bridging the gap between the government and the citizens for various services. But the pace with which technology is evolving may herald a stage where the citizens can self-source such services with the digital eco-system as has been the case mostly in getting passports made, which in the previous years and decades used to be arduous tasks.

If the current thrust to reorient the bureaucracy for timely and speedy delivery of the services to the citizens are met with the interplay of technology, India may have a huge army of civil servants who would be least productive and also liability to the national exchequer and also the hard-earned money of the tax-payers.

If we look back, it's hard to find thought leaders from among the bureaucracy, who by their innovations would have changed the face of the socio-economic domains of the country. This must be on account of the Indian bureaucracy not yet shedding its British era outlook. The civil servants just need to crack one examination, and afterwards they can lord over their subjects.

'New India' cannot have any space for such bureaucratic resources. Administrative reforms in the country have been attempted for several decades, and the first such commission was headed by none other than Morarji Desai in 1966, who later became Prime Minister of the coun-



A FEW EXPERIMENTS TO REFORM THE BUREAUCRACY INCLUDED LATERAL ENTRY AND WEEDING OUT NONPERFORMERS BUT RADICAL CHANGES NEED TO BE ADOPTED IF INDIA INDEED WANTS TO REACH THE GOAL OF A \$10-TRILLION ECONOMY BY 2030.

(The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre.)



try. Later, Veerappa Moily also headed one such commission in 2006.

But the outcome has just been incremental, with focus on downsizing of the bureaucracy to save the expenses. The recent report of the Reserve Bank of India on the indebtedness of the States has shown an alarming scenario. Many of the States are reeling under the burden of salary and pension to its employees. This is despite the fact that the States have been downsizing their bureaucracies since the 1990s. That means that India is still stuck in the cobweb of the old age bureaucracy, which is essentially seen as a measure to offer jobs at the expense of the state exchequer.

The Modi government has done a few experiments to reform the bureaucracy, which included lateral entry, weeding out nonperformers by giving them compulsory retirements, and so on. But it appears that radical changes need to be adopted if India indeed wants to reach the goal of a \$ 10 trillion economy by 2030 and triple the size by 2050.

India will need people at key positions, at policy formulation stage, and in fields to execute them, with speed that would be unseen, and scale that would be the best in the world. The interventions would essentially be at the entry levels, and the time may have come to write an obituary for generalists.

That an IAS officer can be at one time a revenue secretary, and another time he could be handling the affairs of road and transport is

just an idea of the time that has lost its relevance. India must say a goodbye to the culture that generalists can do all roles, as if they are blessed with some divine skills to acquire the know-how of the new tasks with the change of the departments.

The basis of the biggest reforms in the Modi government is the use of data with the digital interplay, which essentially banked on the skills of data mining and data analysis. That saved India several thousands of crores of rupees. This makes it clear that we need to create a manpower powerhouse of specialists, who can man areas of their expertise. A specialist will be better equipped to innovate, and innovations will accelerate India in scaling up its socio-economic depth.

We are no more in the 20th century that the people will be patient with incremental progress of the bureaucracy. Technology is making things irrelevant which were in vogue previously. Indeed, such specialists cannot appear on the horizon on their own. We get the skill sets only from our institutions, and the time has just come to overhaul our education system, and make them tuned to the needs of specialized skills in diverse spheres — economy, commerce, technology, social and political sciences, bio-technology, cutting edge management and so on.

Besides, it's also worth debating why bureaucrats should have career spans of 30 years and more. Why cannot they come in for

about 10-15 years, and take up assignments in other spheres, including the private sector. The Agniveer scheme in this aspect is a harbinger of a change that may have spillover effects in the other domains. Let the government avail of the best of the time of the professionals working in its ranks, and when the fire in their belly gets extinguished they should be respectfully retired, which can be institutionalized with a career span of about 10-15 years.

Such an ecosystem will also make available a trained talent base for the private companies, who in the end have to expand their capacities to take India to the \$ 30 trillion economy by 2050. The best of the talent shouldn't be just with the government, and an easy flow with the private sector can help bring in better convergence of the ideas for 'New India'.

Indeed, India is essentially a welfare state, and the time has come for the private sector to share the burden of the government to care for the poor of the country. This again can be achieved if there is a flow of the talent pool from the government to the private sector. Corporate social responsibility and its various other modes in diverse areas will also require new age managers, who cannot bank on the graduates of the managerial institutions, as their hands-on training would only be possible with stints in the government services. That calls for urgent administrative reforms, and time is ticking.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

TO ADDRESS THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA IN THIS WAY NOT ONLY DEMEANS HER POST BUT ALSO THE RICH TRIBAL LEGACY THAT SHE REPRESENTS.
—BJP LEADER SMRITI IRANI



JUST ONCE, I SAID "RASHTRAPATNI". THEY (BJP) ARE CREATING A FUROR BECAUSE OF THIS. I MADE A MISTAKE, JUST ONCE AND IN ONE WORD.
—CONGRESS LEADER ADHIRANJAN CHOWDHURY

Tokenisation in interest of plastic money users

At a time when data theft is on rise, it's worthwhile to follow advice of RBI to opt for tokenisation in card usages

Eleven people, including the manager of a Noida software firm, were arrested in February 2022 for allegedly stealing and misusing credit cards of about 100 people across the country. In October 2019, the RBI asked banks to secure their customer card data after a website reported that nearly 1.3 million debit and credit card data of Indian banks are on sale on the dark web, potentially causing losses of millions of dollars.

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Media reports on delay in hearing of plea against attacks on Christians

SC says there's a limit to targetting judges

Rebukes lawyer seeking to speed up the case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI



Expressing displeasure over news reports that it was delaying hearing a plea alleging increasing attacks on Christian institutions and priests across the country, the Supreme Court on Thursday said there is a limit to which you target judges even as it admonished an advocate who sought to speed up the case.

Give us a break, a bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Surya Kant said. "Last time the matter could not be taken because I was down with Covid. You get it published in newspapers that the Supreme

Court is delaying the hearing. Look, there is a limit to which you can target the judges. Who supplies all this news?"

"The news I saw online was that judges are delaying the hearing. Give us a break. One of the judges is down with Covid and this is the reason we could not take the matter. Anyway, we will list it otherwise there will be another news item," the bench observed orally. The observations came after the petitioner's counsel sought hearing of the case.

Senior advocate Colin

Gonsalves had mentioned the matter before a vacation bench in June and said 45 to 50 violent attacks on an average take place against Christian institutions and priests across the country every month.

The relief sought in the plea filed by Peter Machado and others includes the implementation of guidelines issued by the apex court in the Tehseen Poonawala judgment under which nodal officers were to be appointed to take note of hate crimes and register FIRs.

In 2018, the apex court had come out with a slew of guidelines for the Centre and the states. These included fast-tracked trials, victim compensation, deterrent punishment and disciplinary action against lax law-enforcing officials. The court has said offences such as hate crimes, cow vigilantism and lynching incidents should be nipped in the bud.

Countdown begins! Vikrant may be commissioned next month

With the delivery of Vikrant, India has joined a select group of nations with capability to indigenously design and build an Aircraft Carrier

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In a major milestone, the Indian Navy on Thursday took delivery of the first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) Vikrant from the builder Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi. The ship has undergone all the mandatory trials and is likely to be commissioned into service by Prime Minister Narendra Modi next month.

With the delivery of Vikrant, India has joined a select group of nations having the niche capability to indigenously design and build an Aircraft Carrier. The other countries are the US, United Kingdom, France, Russia and China.

Designed by Indian Navy's inhouse Directorate of Naval Design (DND) and built by the public sector CSL, the aircraft carrier costing about Rs 20,000 crores is christened after her illustrious predecessor, India's first Aircraft Carrier which played a vital role in the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Coinciding with the celebrations to commemorate 75th anniversary of

India's independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the reincarnation of Vikrant is a true testimony to the country's zeal and fervour in pursuing capability build up towards enhanced maritime security, navy officials said here.

The 262 metre long carrier weighs 45,000 tonnes which is much larger and advanced than her predecessor. The ship is powered by four gas turbines totalling 88 MW power and has a maximum speed of 28 Knots.

The project progressed in three phases of contract between the defence ministry and the CSL, concluded in May 2007, Dec 2014 and Oct 2019 respectively.

The ship's keel was laid in February 2009, followed by launching in Aug 2013. With an overall indigenous content of 76 per cent, the IAC is a perfect example of the nation's quest for "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat" and provides thrust to the 'Make in India' initiative.

Vikrant has been built with high degree of automation for machinery operation, ship navigation and survivability, and has been designed to accommodate an assortment of fixed



The indigenously-designed aircraft carrier Vikrant

PNS

wing and rotary aircraft. The ship will be capable of operating air wing consisting of 30 aircraft comprising of MIG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31, MH-60R multi-role helicopters, in addition to indigenously manufactured Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) and Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) (Navy).

Using a novel aircraft-operation mode known as STOBAR (Short Take- Off but Arrested Landing), the IAC is equipped with a ski-jump for launching aircraft, and a set of arrester

wires' for their recovery onboard. The ship has large number of indigenous equipment and machinery, involving major industrial houses in the country like Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Garden Reach Ship and Engineers (GRSE), Keltron, Kirloskar, Larsen and Toubro and Wartsila as well as over 100 MSMEs. The indigenisation efforts has also led to development of ancillary industries, besides generation of employment opportunities and bol-

stering plough back effect on economy, both locally as well as pan-India. A major spin-off of this is the development and production of indigenous warship grade steel for the ship through a partnership between Navy, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Steel Authority of India (SAIL), which has enabled the country to become self-sufficient with respect to warship steel. Today all the warships being built in the country are being manufactured using indigenous steel.

Defence production key to safeguarding national interests: Army chief



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Manoj Pande said here on Thursday Defence manufacturing has shifted from buyer-seller relationship with foreign countries and collaboration with them now focused on co-development and co-production. Enunciating this factor, he also said collaboration

with foreign companies is intrinsic to India's ambition of becoming self-reliant in Defence production.

The geostrategic security environment has witnessed significant changes in recent times, leading to recalibration of established world order, he said at an event organised by the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). "India's security concerns emanate from the geopolitical dynamics at both—global as well as the regional level. These include the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as the instability and the political uncertainty that we see in our immediate neighbourhood," he said.

The contemporary security environment and the changing character of war requires

that the Indian armed forces must be prepared to handle wide spectrum of challenges in conventional and sub-conventional domains, the Army Chief noted. Underlining this, he said our interests are best served by being *atmanirbhar*, especially in Defence production. Self-reliance is one of the key factors on which the military capability of any nation rests, he said.

There are new opportunities for "our foreign partners" and *Atmanirbharta* (self-reliance) is not only about isolating ourselves from the world, he noted. It is about self-sustaining and pursuing policies that promote efficiency, quality and resilience, Pande added. The ongoing reforms in the defence sector offer opportunities to the foreign Original

Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) to partner with Indian companies and work towards our shared objectives, he said. There is huge potential for export which can also contribute to the vision of our Prime Minister to become USD 5 trillion economy in the foreseeable future, Pande said.

He also stressed that a holistic, all-encompassing, well-calibrated, multi-pronged, and futuristic approach in defence production is fundamental in safeguarding our national interests. A pragmatic and actionable indigenous defence production strategy would ensure a secure and sustained supply of armaments and ammunitions to cater for our national security needs, the Army Chief said.

Indian Navy receives 2 MH-60 'Romeo' helicopters



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In an effort to boost its combat capabilities, the Indian Navy on Thursday received

two of the 24 MH-60 'Romeo' multi-mission helicopters from the US. All 24 all-weather helicopters will be armed with Hellfire missiles and lethal rocket systems. Navy officials

said the two helicopters were delivered at Cochin airport while another helicopter is scheduled to be delivered next month. India and US inked a Rs 15,000 crore deal for the helicopters through the Foreign Military Sale (FMS) route. It means the US government stands guarantee for all the obligations of the contract. Lockheed Martin manufactures these helicopters. The first three MH 60

'Romeo' helicopters were delivered in the US in 2021 and are being used for training of the Indian Navy crew, they said.

The delivery of all 24 MH 60R helicopters will be completed by 2025. The induction

of state-of-the-art mission capable platforms will significantly boost the integral anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy.

With Thursday's delivery, the total number of helicopters handed over to the Indian Navy has gone up to five. MH-60R helicopter is an all-weather helicopter designed to support multiple missions with state-of-the-art avionics and sensors.

The Navy said it will be able to deploy the helicopters in a range of roles including in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship strike, specialised maritime operations as well as search and rescue operations.

IN SHORTS

SC TO HEAR PLEA ON ED HEAD'S EXTENSION

New Delhi: The Supreme Court agreed to hear on Friday a plea challenging amended law allowing extension of tenure of the director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) up to five years, and the Centre's decision to grant one year extension to Sanjay Kumar Mishra as head of the probe agency.

RENUKA KUMAR REPATRIATED TO PARENT CADRE IN UP

New Delhi: Minority Affairs Secretary Renuka Kumar was on Thursday repatriated to her parent Uttar Pradesh cadre with immediate effect. The 1987-batch IAS officer had been working on the post since July 1, 2021.

'CASES AGAINST TRIPLE TALAQ PENDING IN SC'

New Delhi: As many as 35 cases challenging central legislations and Constitutional Amendment Acts, including one questioning law penalising practice of instant triple talaq, are pending in the SC.

MOTHER HAS RIGHT TO DECIDE SURNAME: SC

New Delhi: The mother being the natural guardian of child after the demise of father has right to decide surname, said SC on Tuesday while setting aside an order of AP High Court which directed a woman to include name of her second husband in records as a stepfather.

56 LAKH FISH SEEDS RELEASED IN GANGA

New Delhi: More than 56 lakh fish seeds have been released in the Ganga river for conservation and restoration, the Jal Shakti Ministry said Thursday.

SC TO HEAR PLEA AGAINST TREE CUTTING IN AAREY CASE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear a plea challenging the cutting of trees in Mumbai's Aarey colony for a Metro car shed.

SC REJECTS K'TAKA HC ORDER

New Delhi: The SC set aside Karnataka High Court order declaring a provision of Karnataka Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1973, which deals with amount payable in respect of land acquired, as ultra vires.

Maldives Prez to visit India on Aug 1

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih will pay a four-day visit to India from August 1 with an aim to further bolster bilateral ties. It will also provide an opportunity to review the relations and take the cooperation forward. Solih is scheduled to meet President Droupadi Murmu and hold extensive talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visiting dignitary will also visit Mumbai.

Meanwhile, Army Chief General Manoj Pande on Thursday held extensive talks here with the chief of Maldivian defence forces Major General Abdulla Shamaal, focusing on ways to further strengthen bilateral defence and security cooperation. Shamaal also called on Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar.

Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean Region and the bilateral defence and security ties have been on an upward trajectory in the last few years. "Gen Manoj Pande #COAS extended a warm welcome to Maj Gen Abdulla Shamaal, Chief of Defence Force,

@MNDF_Official and discussed ways to strengthen the #DefenceCooperation between the two countries," the Army tweeted. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, during a visit to Male in March handed over a coastal radar system to Shamaal. India and Maldives share common perspectives on maritime security issues in the Indian Ocean and have been working together to expand defence cooperation. In April, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar visited Maldives and met Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and other senior leaders of the island nation to further boost maritime security cooperation.

Development cooperation has been a key pillar of the India-Maldives relationship with New Delhi providing Lines of Credit of over \$1.2 billion (one billion=100 crores) for infrastructure and grants for community development projects to the island nation.

In August last year, the island nation sealed a contract for the implementation of an India-funded connectivity project, billed as the largest infrastructure initiative being rolled out in the island nation.

Youths above 17 can apply to be enrolled in voters list

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday announced that youngsters above 17 years of age will now be able to apply in advance for having their names enrolled in the voters' list.

With this, the youngsters will now not necessarily have to await the pre-requisite criterion of attaining the age of 18 years on January 1 to get enrolled in the voters' list. The newly modified forms, which are simpler and more user friendly, will come into force on August 1, 2022.

"17+ year old youngsters can now apply in advance for having their names enrolled in Voters' list and not necessarily have to await the pre-requisite criterion of attaining age of 18 years on 1st January of a year," the Election Commission said in a statement.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey have directed Chief Electoral



Officers/Electoral Registration Officers and Assistant Electoral Returning Officers of all states to work out tech-enabled solutions such that the youth are facilitated to file their advance applications with reference to three subsequent qualifying dates - 1 April 1, July 1 and October 1 and not just January 1.

The Electoral Roll will be updated every quarter and eligible youngsters can be registered in the next quarter of the year in which he/she has attained the qualifying age of 18 years," the EC said.

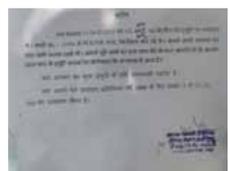
The poll body said that the current round of annual revision of electoral roll, 2023, any citizen attaining the age of 18 years by 1 April, 1 July and 1 October of 2023 can also submit an advance application for registration as a voter from the date of draft publication of electoral roll. "The statement added.

Rly gateman chargesheeted over reporting on duty in car

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA
NEW DELHI

Notwithstanding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pitch for enabling even a common man in "hawai chappals" (slippers) to use air travel services and "sabka saath, sabka vikas", a Grade-IV employee of Railways has been chargesheeted with an explanation sought for breaching protocols by using his private family car to report to office.

The matter relates to a Gateman (name withheld) posted near the Hapur Railway Station (Ghaziabad), a few kilometers from the national Capital. The employee uses his private car to report to his place of work during late evenings or nights. But the poor Gateman has been con-



duty 23/24 July and the Principal Engineer arrived on inspection at the P-Way Hapur. When the officers belonging to the Northern Railway noticed a Maruti car parked a few meters away they were inquisitive about the owners. Upon their on-spot inquiry the Gateman himself conveyed that the reporting on duty in a car is totally against protocols laid down by Indian Railways and hence, this relates to 'dereliction' of duty as per railway employment conduct. The Gateman earned ire of his seniors after they were on an inspection and ostensibly took offence as their junior was using a car on duty and termed it a case of 'insubordination'. All efforts to contact gateman and officials for their response and comments till late evening proved futile. "You were on

duty 23/24 July and the Principal Engineer arrived on inspection at the P-Way Hapur.

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CBI seeks urgent hearing in plea against trial court order in 2G scam

New Delhi: The CBI on Thursday sought an urgent hearing of the appeal filed against the trial court judgment in the 2G scam case following which the Delhi High Court posted the matter for hearing before the Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma-headed bench on Friday.

The agency, which filed the appeal along with Enforcement Directorate on March 18, on Wednesday sought urgent hearing of the appeal in all 2G cases against acquittal of former Telecom Minister A Raja and many Corporates including Anil Ambani headed Reliance Group, Unitech and Essar Group.

ASG Sanjay Jain sought immediate hearing of the appeal of CBI's appeals, citing that the appeal filed more than four years ago is still at the stage

for granting leave for appeal. Justice Asha Menon, who is retiring in September said her court had certain time constraints.

Sanjay Jain, ASG for the CBI, has submitted that "the matters require urgent hearing. In fact, two applications seeking early hearing are stated to be pending, but in effect what is sought thereby is the drawing up of a schedule for arguments on the merits of the leave to appeal petitions, so that the matters can be heard at the earliest." "While appreciating the need for urgent hearing, this Court will not be in a position to draw-up such a schedule due to certain time constraints. In these circumstances, the matters be placed before Hon'ble the Chief Justice on 29th July, 2022 for appropriate orders," said the Order.

Maha local bodies' polls: SC warns of contempt if elections renotified to include OBC quota

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday warned the Maharashtra State Election Commission (SEC) of contempt action if it renotifies the election process to 367 local bodies, where it has already commenced, in order to provide reservation to OBCs.

The SEC, it said, "cannot and shall not renotify the election programme, voicing displeasure over the 'misreading' of its July 20 order. Any breach of its directives will invite contempt for the SEC and others concerned, the court said.

The Supreme Court had on July 20 accepted the recommendations of the Banthia

commission providing 27 per cent OBC reservations in local body elections and directed that election for local bodies in the state be notified in the next two weeks.

It had, however, made clear the same day that the new reservation policy will not apply to the 367 local bodies where the election process had already begun.

The court had noted in its July 20 order that the counsel for the SEC had said the election programme in respect of 367 local bodies has already started and will be taken to its logical end. The apex court had quashed the SEC notification providing for 27 per cent quotas for OBCs in local bodies in early 2021.

Gujarat hooch tragedy: 2 SPs transferred, 6 cops suspended

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat Home Department on Thursday transferred the Superintendents of Police of Botad and Ahmedabad and suspended six other cops following the death of 42 people after consumption of spurious liquor, an official said.

Primary investigations by police have revealed that some small-time bootleggers of different villages in Botad district had made the spurious liquor by mixing water with methyl alcohol or Methanol, a highly poisonous industrial solvent, and sold it to villagers for Rs 20 per pouch.

According to police, forensic analysis established that the victims consumed methyl alcohol.

"We have transferred Botad SP Karanraj Vaghela and Ahmedabad SP Virendrasingh



Yadav. Six other police officials, including two Deputy SPs, have been placed under suspension," Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Raj Kumar told PTI.

Those suspended are Ahmedabad's Dholka division DySP N V Patel, Botad DySP S K Trivedi, Ahmedabad's Dhandhuka police station inspector K P Jadeja, Dhandhuka division's circle police inspector S B Chaudhari and Botad sub-inspectors B G Vala and Shailendrasinh Rana.

These officials were suspended for "dereliction of duty and lack of commitment as they failed to stop the trans-

portation, sale and consumption of liquor laced with poisonous chemicals in their respective areas," say the suspension letters issued by the state Home Department.

Forty two people from Botad and neighbouring Ahmedabad district have died so far after consuming the spurious liquor on July 25, while 97 people are still admitted to hospitals in Bhavnagar, Botad and Ahmedabad, Gujarat Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi said on Wednesday.

He said police will file a charge sheet in 10 days to ensure quick justice and the government will also appoint a Special Public Prosecutor to fight the case.

Fifteen key accused, including the one who acquired the chemical and those who sold the liquor to people, were already arrested, he had said.

The Botad and Ahmedabad police on Tuesday registered three First Information Reports (FIRs) against nearly 20 culprits under Indian Penal Code Sections 302 (murder), 328 (causing hurt by poison) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy).

Police investigation has revealed that a person named Jayesh aka Raju, who has been arrested, had stolen 600 litres of methyl alcohol from a godown in Ahmedabad where he worked as a manager and then sold it to his Botad-based cousin Sanjay for Rs 40,000 on July 25.

Despite knowing that it was an industrial solvent, Sanjay sold the chemical to local bootleggers of different villages of Botad.

These bootleggers mixed water in the chemical and sold it to people as country-made liquor, police had said.

SUSPICIOUS BURGLARY AT PARTHA'S FARMHOUSE

TMC slams Modi, ED for targetting Opp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Soon after sacking its scam-tainted Minister Partha Chatterjee, the Trinamool Congress on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Enforcement Directorate and its handlers in Delhi wondering why only Opposition leaders were singled out in cases of corruption and the BJP politicians were spared by the Enforcement Directorate.

"We are not defending Partha Chatterjee as the party has already removed him from all the posts and the Chief Minister has sacked him from the Cabinet ... because the Trinamool Congress tolerates no corruption ... but it has to be clarified by the BJP as to why only the TMC leaders are singled out and when they join the BJP they are spared," party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said.

When asked to comment on BJP seeking Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's the TMC leader who is also her nephew said "they are referring to a photograph where the Chief Minister was seen with Arpita Mukherjee ... as the Chief Minister she has to attend a number of programmes and it is possible to find out everyone's credentials," wondering "why do not they first ask for the resignation of the Prime Minister who was seen with Mehul Chowksi ... why don't they ask for the resignation of Nirmala Sitaraman during whose time Nirav Modi fled with some many crores ... and why don't they arrest or ask for the resignation of Shivraj Singh Chauhan during whose reign the Vyapam scam took place."

Speaking about Partha Chatterjee he said "though it seems that it is another case of vendetta ... because ED would not have touched him had he



joined the BJP like some other leaders --- like the Opposition Leader (Suwendu Adhikari) ... it seems that for the BJP when you are in any other party you are a thief but when you are in the BJP you are as pure as rose water."

Referring to the school level recruitment scam he said "there are other leaders who are in the BJP today whose names are coming in the scam for abetting illegal appointments in districts like Purulia and Bankura but they have not been touched by the

ED." Meanwhile, in a suspicious development a farmhouse reportedly owned by Sohini the daughter of the minister --- located at Baruipur some 35 km south off Kolkata --- was burgled in the wee hours of Thursday, sources said.

Locals said that three persons wearing black robes came in a vehicle, jumped over the high boundary wall broke the locks and entered the building which has a sprawling courtyard. Later they came out with a number of bags and fled away in the vehicle in which they had come. When the locals questioned their credentials they were threatened by the intruders, sources said.

The burglary took place in the night when Rs 28 crore was recovered from an apartment owned by Arpita and Partha. The police were investigating the case.

Bombay HC CJ recuses from hearing plea challenging appointment of CBI Director Jaiswal

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A Bombay High Court bench led by Chief Justice Dipankar Datta on Thursday recused from hearing a petition challenging the appointment of Subodh Jaiswal as the Central Bureau of Investigation director, following a letter of complaint against CJ Datta.

Former Maharashtra Assistant Commissioner of Police Rajendra Trivedi had filed the PIL challenging Jaiswal's appointment.

CJ Datta said it had come to his notice that on March 22 this year, Trivedi wrote a letter to Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, "complaining" against him.

Jaiswal, who had earlier held the post of Maharashtra's Director General of Police (DGP), was appointed as the CBI director in May last year.

Trivedi had on November 11, 2021 filed the plea through advocate S B Talekar against Jaiswal's appointment.

A bench led by CJ Datta was hearing it since then. The bench had also passed several directions on the plea, including asking for affidavits from the Union government and Jaiswal.

Earlier this month, Jaiswal filed an affidavit before the bench saying Trivedi's PIL had been filed out of "personal vendetta."

The Union government on



Wednesday submitted an affidavit, saying Jaiswal had been appointed the CBI director following due process and he had adequate requisite qualifications for the appointment.

On Thursday, Additional Solicitor General S V Raju appeared along with ASG Anil

Singh on behalf of the Union government.

They mentioned the matter for urgent hearing and sought that a specific date be fixed for next hearing.

CJ Datta then said it will not be proper for him to hear the matter.

"It won't be proper for us to hear this matter because a complaint has been against this court," CJ Datta said.

"Mr Talekar, you might not be knowing this but your client, the petitioner, wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of India complaining against me, he said.

Talekar said he did not know of the letter and that his client was claiming he had not written it. Both Raju and Singh urged the bench to continue hearing the matter, saying on behalf of the Union of India that they had "full confidence in the bench."

"It has nowadays become a trend for people to make random allegations if they want

their matter to be heard by a different bench. If a court recuses, they feel they are successful," ASG Singh said.

Talekar also said his client was "very happy" with the way the hearing was going on, and urged the bench to not recuse itself from hearing the plea.

However, CJ Datta said even if he were to continue the hearing and in case he passed an adverse order, the petitioner might not be satisfied with the hearing.

"It is very easy to write a letter and tarnish someone's image. It will be appropriate if this matter is heard by some other bench. Justice must be seen to have been done," CJ Datta said.

BJP leader's murder: Two with suspected links to PFI held in Karnataka

PTI ■ MANGALURU/BENGALURU

Two persons with suspected links to the Popular Front of India (PFI) were arrested by Karnataka police in connection with the murder of a BJP youth wing leader in Dakshina Kannada district which had sparked outrage. The arrested accused have been identified as Zakir (29) and Mohammed Shafiq (27), both from Bellare in Sullia taluk, where the 32-year-old zilla Bharatiya Yuva Morcha committee member

Praveen Nettar was hacked to death by unidentified motor bike-borne assailants on Tuesday night, police said.

"Both are from Bellare, they have got suspected links with PFI - that we have to verify. We had taken them into custody last evening and after inquiry we have arrested them. We will produce them before court and ask for police custody and do further investigation," the Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Alok Kumar said.

FROM PAGE 1

ADHIR'S REMARK ON PREZ SETS PARLIAMENT ON FIRE

"When I am called, I will tell you and go," he said. On a persistent asking by a newscaster, whether Chowdhury would apologise, Sonia made a terse remark "he has already apologised".

Leading the offensive both inside and outside Parliament, Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Irani said Chowdhury used the term knowing well that it demeans Murmu and her office and is against India's values. Both Houses witnessed frequent adjournments due to protests by BJP members. Accusing Chowdhury of hurling a "deliberate sexist insult", Sitharaman demanded an apology from the Congress president, saying Sonia appointed Chowdhury as the leader in the Lok Sabha to speak and he had insulted the President. "Chowdhury's comments were not a slip of tongue. It was a deliberate sexist insult against the President," Sitharaman said, making a brief statement in the Rajya Sabha.

She said at a time the entire country is rejoicing at the selection of a self-made woman from a tribal background as the President," for the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha to call her 'Rashtrapatni' in a 'Pati-Patni' (husband-wife) kind of a level, has insulted the President of India." "Sonia should come before the nation and apologise to the Rashtrapati and also to the entire country for the insult by her own leader in Lok Sabha."

Alleging that the Congress has been targeting Murmu "maliciously" ever since the BJP-led NDA named her its Presidential candidate, Irani said she was called a "puppet" and a "symbol of evil" by its leaders. "A tribal woman from a poor family who created history is being continuously demeaned by the Congress," she told reporters. The attacks don't seem to stop even after her election to the highest constitutional office of the country, the BJP leader said.

Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal accused the Congress of insulting the President of India by using derogatory words and alleged that the Opposition party now wants to view the President's office through the prism of caste and religion. He said the Congress party has not only insulted our President and all women of the country but also tribals as well as the entire Upper House. "Today the entire country is seriously concerned that the President has been insulted and it will not tolerate this," he told the house amid uproar by ruling party members and demanded that the Congress president apologise to the President and the entire country. Goyal said Chowdhury repeated this insult again today by saying the president can be a Brahmin or Adivasi. According to Chowdhury, the BJP does not have anything on the party and is finding "masala" against it. "The issue is being blown out of proportion... I do not have the remotest intention of humiliating the highest chair of our country," Chowdhury said. Women BJP MPs, including Union Ministers, also held a protest in the Parliament complex against Chowdhury. Holding placards near gate number one of Parliament House, the MPs, including Sitharaman and Minister of State for Agriculture Shobha Karandlaje, raised slogans seeking an apology from the Leader of the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha.

Several of Union Ministers spoke against the comment of "Rashtrapatni" and claimed that it is Sonia who should be apologising.

SONIA PAYS FOR ADHIR'S BLOOPER

Opposition leaders said Sonia was heckled in wolf-pack style by BJP women MPs. The face-off did not stop even after the adjournment. After the session was adjourned, Sonia crossed the floor and spoke to Rama Devi. Congress leaders later Sonia reportedly told Rama Devi that Chowdhury has apologised and wanted to know what was her fault. They further claimed that was when Irani intervened and reportedly said, "Madam, may I help you? I took your name". Sources said Sonia then shot back, "Don't talk to me". Sever BJP MPs then spoke in one voice and took on Sonia. It was Sonia's angry tone that started it all," Devi said. Sonia had moved to the BJP benches alone but after heated exchanges were made a few Congress and other Opposition members reached across to escort her back.

Irani was seen gesturing toward the Congress president and protesting against Chowdhury's remark. Sonia at first tried to

ignore Irani's protestations, but soon was seen gesturing towards the Minister and speaking angrily. TMC member Mahua Moitra, who was present in the Lok Sabha, later tweeted that the 75-year-old Congress leader was "encircled and heckled pack-wolf style". Disgusted to read BJP lies and false version in the Press, said Moitra. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh later described Irani's behaviour in the Lok Sabha as "atrocious and outrageous". "Atrocious and outrageous behaviour by Irani in the Lok Sabha today! But will she be pulled up by the Speaker? Are rules only meant for the Opposition," AICC general secretary Ramesh said on Twitter. Former Union Minister Milind Deora said he had never seen Sonia being rude or impolite, even when provoked. "This is not the first time that she has been targeted personally and of late, unjustly, both inside & outside Parliament. She has and will always endure," Deora said on Twitter.

NCP member Supriya Sule and Trinamool member Aparupa Poddar were seen escorting the Congress president away from the Treasury benches as BJP members flocked around Devi and Sonia. BJP women members were seated in the front rows in the Lok Sabha as they led the protests in the House against Chowdhury's remarks.

Later, Devi told the media that Sonia sought to know why her name was dragged into the issue. "What is my fault," she asked Devi, the BJP member from Sheohar in Bihar. Devi said she told Sonia that her fault was that she had selected Chowdhury as the Congress leader in the Lok Sabha. In the Rajya Sabha too finance Minister Sitharaman claimed that the Congress president told a BJP member not to talk to her. However, the Union Minister did not name any BJP leader. Later, addressing reporters on Parliament premises, Sitharaman accused Sonia of speaking in a "threatening tone" with BJP members.

DIDI STRIPS PARTHA OF CABINET, TMC POSTS

he came to the apartments. Meanwhile, soon after sacking its scam-tainted Chatterjee, the Trinamool Congress on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Enforcement Directorate and its handlers in Delhi wondering why only Opposition leaders were singled out in cases of corruption and the BJP politicians were spared by the Enforcement Directorate. "We are not defending Chatterjee as the party has already removed him from all the posts and the Chief Minister has sacked him from the Cabinet ... because the Trinamool Congress tolerates no corruption ... but it has to be clarified by the BJP as to why only the TMC leaders are singled out and when they join the BJP they are spared," party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said. "They are referring to a photograph where the Chief Minister was seen with Mukherjee. As the Chief Minister she has to attend a number of programmes and is it possible to find out everyone's credentials," wondering "why do not they first ask for the resignation of the Prime Minister who was seen with Mehul Chowksi? Why don't they ask for the resignation of Nirmala Sitaraman during whose time Nirav Modi fled? Why don't they arrest or ask for the resignation of Shivraj Singh Chauhan during whose reign the Vyapam scam took place."

CBI SEIZES ₹5.50 CR PAINTINGS IN DHFL BANK FRAUD RAIDS

Sources said they purchased these paintings from a noted art auction house at Fort in Mumbai, officials said. After coming to know where these items were kept, the CBI conducted searches and seized the assets, they said. The CBI also recovered gold and diamond jewellery, including bangles and necklaces worth Rs 2 crore, the agency said. About 20 days back, the CBI had recovered Tyeb Mehta's painting 'Bull' worth over Rs 27 crore and an untitled piece by Manjit Bawa estimated to

be valued at over Rs 7.7 crore. Mehta and Bawa's pieces were among a large number of paintings and sculptures, altogether valued at Rs 40 crore, cash and incriminating documents seized, the CBI had said in a statement.

"During the investigation, it was found the promoters had allegedly diverted the funds and made investments in various entities. It was also alleged that the promoters had acquired expensive paintings and sculptures using the diverted funds," it had said.

The federal probe agency had booked Dewan Housing Finance Ltd. (DHFL), the Wadhawan brothers , and others on June 20 in a bank fraud case worth Rs 34,615 crore, making it the biggest such under probe by the agency, officials said. They had allegedly cheated a consortium of 17 banks led by Union Bank of India by siphoning off Rs 34,615 crore bank loans by diverting them using falsified account books of DHFL. They allegedly used shell companies and a parallel accounting system known as 'Bandra Books' to siphon off public funds in DHFL by disbursing money to fictitious entities as retail loans.

The CBI acted on a complaint from Union Bank of India, the leading bank of the consortium which had extended credit facilities to the tune of Rs 42,871 crore to DHFL between 2010 and 2018. The bank has alleged that the Wadhawans in criminal conspiracy with others misrepresented and concealed facts, and committed a criminal breach of trust to cheat the consortium by defaulting on loan repayments from May 2019 onwards.

The audit of DHFL account books showed that the company allegedly committed financial irregularities, diverted funds, fabricated books, and round-tripped funds to "create assets for Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan" using public money. It was further alleged that separate audits conducted by other private audit accounting organisations had identified multiple instances of diversion of funds by the accused for personal benefits and falsification of books of accounts to camouflage and conceal dubious transactions. The audits also identified several instances where large value loans were provided to such fictitious entities without due diligence and without securities. Instances of sanction and disbursement of loans, merely by e-mail communications were allegedly found for which no loan files were maintained in DHFL. Earlier, searches were conducted at various locations in Mumbai at the premises of the accused which led to recovery of incriminating documents.

3 MORE RS MPS SUSPENDED, RELAY SIT-IN PROTEST CONTINUES

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh named the three members for holding placards and shouting slogans in the well. Soon Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs V Muraleedharan moved a motion to suspend the three members from the House for the remainder of the week. The motion was passed by a voice vote. As some Opposition members demanded division of votes, Harivansh then asked the members to go to their seats to allow a division of votes. But the opposition members continued to raise uproar.

39 STUDENTS IN SAGAR GIVEN COVID-19 JAB WITH 'SINGLE' SYRINGE

The accused had also switched-off his mobile phone, Goswami said. Taking serious cognisance of the incident, Sagar divisional commissioner Mukesh Shukla on Thursday suspended district vaccination officer Dr Shobharam Roshan on the basis of the CMHO's report, another official said. The suspension order was issued by the divisional commissioner, who also directed the collector to appoint another official in place of Dr Roshan, he said. An official from Gopal Ganj police station said they have registered an FIR against Ahirwar under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 336 (rash or negligent act endangering human life or personal safety of others). On the basis of a report of the CMHO, the collector recommended to the divisional commissioner a departmental probe and action against district vaccination officer Dr Roshan, Singhal said. Meanwhile, health officials examined all the 39 children. The reports of 19 of them were found to be normal and the reports of the remaining children were await-

ed, Goswami said.

ELEPHANT STATUE STOLEN FROM AMBEDKAR PARK

reported missing several years back. The officials had beefed up security arrangements thereafter and installed CCTV cameras for surveillance. The one-and-a-half feet elephant statue weighing around 2 kg was amongst the smallest ones. ADCP, Central, Raghvendra Mishra said the area from where the statue was stolen remains under surveillance 24x7. "The record of the statues, including their numbers and condition, is maintained on a daily basis by officials of the security wing. Gardeners and other staff visit the park for maintenance and cleaning work everyday. The police teams are interrogating them. We hope the elephant statue will be recovered soon," Mishra said.

The park was built when BSP supremo Mayawati was the chief minister of UP. A statue of an elephant was also stolen several years back. The ACP, Hazratganj, said the police talked to the manager of the park who said was told that the then manager had not lodged any FIR in that case. "An FIR is being lodged for the first time in connection with the theft of the elephant statue," he added.

CHESS OLYMPIAD KICKS OFF IN GRAND STYLE

The Nehru Indoor Stadium here sparkled with classy lighting, and a sense of excitement was palpable during the inaugural event. The sprawling arena in downtown Chennai was buzzing with fresh ideas represented in the form of elegant decor with the undercurrent being the nerve-wracking game of chess. The stadium's dais was decked with king-sized brightly coloured chess pieces of king, bishop, rook, queen, knight and the pawns. Modi said the Chess Olympiad, the most prestigious tournament, is being hosted by India, the home of chess at a special time in its history, which marks 75 years of freedom from colonial rule. This is the first time the Chess Olympiad is being held in the place of origin of chess, India, he said.

It is coming to Asia for the first time in 3 decades. In his address during the inaugural at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium, Modi said it is an honour to have international chess players at such a special time. "In sports there are no losers, there are winners and there are future winners," he said.

"May the 44th Chess Olympiad in Chennai be an enriching experience for everyone. Best wishes to all the participants."

On his arrival here, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was accorded a warm welcome with performances by musicians and percussionists all along the route he took to reach the venue, the Nehru stadium. Modi sported a shawl and dhoti with a chessboard design border. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin wore a silk like yellow shirt, dhoti and an 'Angavastra' (shawl). The FIDE 44th Chess Olympiad commences on July 28 and ends on August 10. This is the first time, India is hosting the event.

PAK OBJECTS TO RELAY VIA KASHMIR; INDIA RAPS IT FOR GIVING EVENT A MISS

"As a protest, Pakistan has decided not to participate in the 44th Chess Olympiad and will also raise the matter with the international Chess Federation at the highest level," said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the statement. The torch relay passed through Kashmir's capital Srinagar on June 21. Reacting to Pakistan's decision, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said it was surprising that Pakistan has suddenly taken the decision not to participate in the event.

It is highly unfortunate that Pakistan has politicised the prestigious international event by making such statements and withdrawing its participation after its team has already reached India, he said. Bagchi was responding to questions on Pakistan's decision to pull out from the Olympiad, citing the torch relay of the event passing through Jammu and Kashmir. On this, Bagchi asserted that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh "have been, are and will remain an integral part of India."

Russia steps up strikes on Ukraine amid counterattacks

AP ■ KYIV

Russian forces on Thursday launched massive missile strikes on Ukraine's Kyiv and Chernihiv regions, areas that haven't been targeted in weeks, while Ukrainian officials announced an operation to liberate an occupied region in the country's south.

Kyiv regional governor Oleksiy Kuleba said on Telegram that a settlement in the Vyshgorod district of the region was targeted early on Thursday morning; an "infrastructure object" was hit. It wasn't immediately clear if there were any casualties.

Vyshgorod is located 20 kilometers north of downtown Kyiv. Kuleba linked the strikes with the Day of Statehood, which Ukraine was marking for the first time on Thursday.

"Russia, with the help of missiles, is mounting revenge for the widespread popular resistance, which the Ukrainians were able to organize precisely because of their statehood," Kuleba told Ukrainian television. "Ukraine has already broken Russia's plans and will continue to defend itself." Chernihiv governor Vyacheslav Chaus reported that multiple missiles were fired from the territory of Belarus at the village of Honcharivskva.

Russian troops withdrew



from the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions months ago after failing to capture either. The renewed strikes on the areas come a day after the leader of pro-Kremlin separatists in the east, Denis Pushilin, publicly called on the Russian forces to "liberate Russian cities founded by the Russian people — Kyiv, Chernihiv, Poltava, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Lutsk". Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, also came under a

barrage of shelling overnight, its mayor Ihor Terekhov said. The southern city of Mykolaiv was fired at as well, with one person sustaining injuries.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian military continued to counter-attack in the occupied southern region of Kherson, striking a key bridge over the Dnieper River on Wednesday.

Ukrainian media on Thursday quoted Ukraine's presidential adviser, Oleksiy Arestovich, as saying that the

operation to liberate Kherson "has already begun".

Arestovich said Kyiv's forces were planning to isolate Russian troops there and leave them with three options — to "retreat, if possible, surrender or be destroyed".

Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, in televised remarks on Wednesday said he was "cautious" in assessing the timeline of the possible counteroffen-

sive. "I would really like it to be much faster," he said, adding that "the enemy is now concentrating the maximum number (of forces) precisely in the Kherson direction."

"A very large-scale movement of their troops has begun, they are gathering additional forces," Danilov warned.

The British military estimated on Thursday that Ukraine's counteroffensive in Kherson is "gathering momentum".

"Their forces have highly likely established a bridgehead south of the Ingulets River, which forms the northern boundary of Russian-occupied Kherson," the British Defense Ministry said on Thursday.

It added that Ukraine has used its new long-range artillery to damage at least three of the bridges across the Dnieper River, "which Russia relies upon to supply the areas under its control".

The 1,000-metre-long Antonivskyi bridge, which Ukrainian forces struck on Wednesday, is likely to be "unusable," the British Defence Ministry concluded.

Ukraine's presidential office said on Thursday morning that Russian shelling of cities and villages over the past 24 hours killed at least five civilians, all of them in the eastern Donetsk region, and wounded nine more.

New Cold War: Russia, West vie for influence in Africa

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Russian, French and American leaders are crisscrossing Africa to win support for their positions on the war in Ukraine, waging what some say is the most intense competition for influence on the continent since the Cold War.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and French President Emmanuel Macron are each visiting several African countries this week.

Samantha Power, head of the US Agency for International Development, went to Kenya and Somalia last week. The US ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, will go to Ghana and Uganda next week. "It's like a new Cold War is playing out in Africa, where the rival sides are trying to gain influence," said William Gumede, director of Democracy Works, a foundation promoting good governance.

Lavrov, in his travels across the drought- and hunger-stricken continent, has sought to portray the West as the villain, blaming it for rising food prices, while the Western leaders have accused the Kremlin of cynically using food as a weapon and waging an imperial-style war of conquest — words calculated to appeal to



listeners in post-colonial Africa. Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has been working to win support in Africa for several years, reinvigorating friendships that date back a half-century, when the Soviet Union backed many African movements fighting to end colonial rule. "Now that campaign has gone into high gear," Gumede said. Moscow's influence in Africa was on display in March during the UN vote to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While 28 African nations voted in favour of the resolution, a significant minority of countries on the continent — 25 — either voted to abstain or did not vote at all.

Russia's top diplomat this week visited Egypt, Congo, Uganda and Ethiopia, pledging friendship and charging the US and European countries with

driving up food prices by pursuing "reckless" environmental policies.

He also accused them of hoarding food during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The situation in Ukraine did additionally negatively affect food markets, but not due to the Russian special operation, rather due to the absolutely inadequate reaction of the West, which announced sanctions," Lavrov said in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital.

Lavrov was warmly received in Uganda by President Yoweri Museveni, who for years has been a US ally but has refused to criticise Russia over the invasion.

Museveni even suggested at the outbreak of the war that Putin's actions might be understandable because Ukraine is in Russia's sphere of influence.

In rare contact, US offers Russia deal for Griner, Whelan

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US has offered a deal to Russia aimed at bringing home WNBA star Brittney Griner and another jailed American, Paul Whelan, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday. In a sharp reversal of previous policy, Blinken also said he expects to speak with his Kremlin counterpart for the first time since before Russia invaded Ukraine.

The statement marked the first time the US government has publicly revealed any concrete action it has taken to secure the release of Griner, who was arrested on drug-related charges at a Moscow airport in February and testified Wednesday at her trial.

Blinken did not offer details on the proposed deal, which was offered weeks ago, and it is unclear if it will be enough for Russia to release the Americans. But the public acknowledgment

of the offer at a time when the U.S. has otherwise shunned Russia, reflects the mounting pressure on the administration over Griner and Whelan and its determination to get them home.

Blinken said Washington would like a response from Moscow. Russia has for years expressed interest in the release of Viktor Bout, a Russian arms dealer once labeled the "Merchant of Death," who was sentenced to 25 years in prison in 2012 on charges that he schemed to illegally sell millions of dollars in weapons. Blinken said he had requested a call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. U.S. Officials said the desire for an answer on the prisoner offer was the primary, but not only, reason that the U.S. on Wednesday requested the call with Lavrov.

Should the call take place, it would be the first conversation that Blinken and Lavrov have



held since Feb. 15, about a week before Russia invaded Ukraine. Blinken said he would also be speaking to Lavrov about the importance of Russia complying with a UN-brokered deal to free multiple tons of Ukrainian grain from storage and warning him about the dangers of possible Russian attempts to annex portions of eastern and southern Ukraine.

Whelan, a corporate security executive from Michigan, was sentenced in 2020 to 16

years in prison on espionage charges. He and his family have vigorously asserted his innocence. The U.S. Government has denounced the charges as false. He and his family have vigorously asserted his innocence. The U.S. Government has denounced the charges as false.

Griner, in Russian custody for the last month, acknowledged in court this month that she had vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her luggage when she arrived in

Moscow in February but contends she had no criminal intent and packed the cartridges inadvertently.

At her trial Wednesday, Griner said she did not know how the cannabis oil ended up in her bag but explained she had a doctor's recommendation for it and had packed in haste. She said she was pulled aside at the airport after inspectors found the cartridges, but that a language interpreter translated only a fraction of what was said during her questioning and that officials instructed her to sign documents without providing an explanation.

Griner faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted of transporting drugs. The U.S. Government has long resisted prisoner swaps out of concern that it could encourage additional hostage-taking and promote false equivalency between a wrongfully detained American and a foreign national regarded

as justly convicted. But an earlier deal in April, in which Marine veteran Trevor Reed was traded for jailed Russian pilot, Konstantin Yaroshenko, appeared to open the door to similar resolutions in the future and the Biden administration has been hounded with political pressure to bring home Griner and other Americans designated as unjustly detained.

There was no indication that Blinken and Lavrov had communicated to secure Reed's release.

Their last publicly recognized contact was Feb. 22, when Blinken wrote to Lavrov to cancel a meeting they had planned as a last-ditch effort to avert the Russian invasion, saying Moscow had shown no interest in serious diplomacy on the matter.

The State Department said later that Russia's diplomacy was "Kabuki Theater" — all show and no substance.

Govt will focus on fixing economy, ending fuel shortage, says Ranil

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President

Ranil Wickremesinghe has said his government's main priorities are to fix the country's ailing economy and end the severe fuel shortage that has exacerbated after the last shipment under the Indian credit line arrived here in June. Addressing a gathering at his party headquarters on Wednesday, the newly-elected president said his government was not against peaceful protest and would allow them all the time if the protesters did not break the law. "I became the president at a most difficult time for the country. We have to set the economy right," he said. Wickremesinghe said his government's main task was to first reduce the length of fuel queues and then eliminate them completely. Since June 27, the government has stopped fuel supplies and restricted

essential services. Minister of Power and Energy Kanchara Wijesekera said on Monday that Sri Lanka will restrict fuel imports for the next 12 months as it is facing a severe shortage of foreign exchange and announcing a rationing system for the distribution of fuel across the crisis-hit island nation. "QR system was introduced since the daily fuel demand cannot be fulfilled. Due to Forex issues, Fuel imports have to be restricted in the next 12 months," he said.

Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million people, is under the grip of an unprecedented economic turmoil, leaving millions struggling to buy food, medicine, fuel and other essentials. The severe foreign exchange shortage has hampered the import of fuel and other essentials in the country reeling under the worst economic crisis in seven decades.

Africa's alone in monkeypox deaths but has no vaccine doses

AP ■ NAIROBI (KENYA)

Africa still does not have a single dose of the monkeypox vaccine even though it's the only continent to have documented deaths from the disease that's newly declared a global emergency, its public health agency announced on Thursday.

"Let us get vaccines onto the continent," the acting head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Ahmed Ogwell, said in a weekly media briefing. He described a situation where the African continent of 1.3 billion people is again being left behind in access to doses in an uncomfortable echo of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Less than a week ago, the World Health Organisation declared monkeypox an "extraordinary" situation that qualifies as a global health emergency.

To date, more than 20,000 cases have been reported in 77 countries. More than 2,100

monkeypox cases have been recorded in 11 African countries and 75 people have died, the Africa CDC director said.

Although monkeypox has been established in parts of central and west Africa for decades, it was not known to spark large outbreaks beyond the continent or to spread widely among people until May, when authorities detected dozens of epidemics in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

Now the global race is on to obtain monkeypox vaccine doses. The European Commission, the European Union's executive arm, has secured the purchase of 160,000 doses of vaccines for the disease.

On Wednesday, US health regulators said nearly 800,000 doses of the monkeypox vaccine will soon be available for distribution after what they described as weeks of delays.

Such delays are far more pronounced on the African continent, where the painful dis-



ease has been endemic in some countries for years.

Ogwell said the Africa CDC has engaged with international partners in attempts to obtain vaccines, and while he said "good news" is expected in the coming days, "we cannot be able to give you a timeline".

Even doses of the smallpox vaccine, which has shown effectiveness against monkeypox, are not available in Africa, Ogwell said.

"The solutions need to be global in nature," he said, in a warning to the international community. "If we're not safe, the rest of the world is not safe." The COVID-19 pandemic

cinces with the WHO.

WHO officials have emphasised that monkeypox can infect anyone in close contact with a patient or their contaminated clothing or bedsheets.

Researchers are still exploring how it spreads but believe it's mainly through close, skin-to-skin contact and through contact with bedding and clothing that touched an infected person's rash or body fluids.

In Africa, monkeypox mainly spreads to people by infected wild animals like rodents in limited outbreaks that typically have not crossed borders.

In Europe, North America and elsewhere, however, monkeypox is spreading among people with no links to animals or recent travel to Africa. In the US and Europe, the vast majority of infections have happened in men who have sex with men, though health officials have stressed that anyone can contract the virus.

China warns Pelosi not to visit Taiwan

AP ■ BEIJING

Beijing grumbled but swallowed its irritation in 1997 when then-Speaker Newt Gingrich of the US House of Representatives visited Taiwan, the island democracy claimed by the mainland's ruling Communist Party as its own territory. China had other priorities. President Jiang Zemin's government was preparing to celebrate Hong Kong's return and wanted to lock in Beijing's emergence from diplomatic isolation after its 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. Gingrich, a booster of closer US-Chinese ties, had just helped that campaign by meeting Jiang in Beijing. China avoided a disruptive clash with Washington. A quarter-century later, conditions

have changed drastically. Chinese President Xi Jinping's government is richer, more heavily armed and less willing to compromise over Taiwan following news reports the current speaker, Nancy Pelosi, might become the most senior US official since Gingrich to visit the island. Beijing sees any official contact with Taiwan as recognition of its democratically elected government, which the mainland says has no right to conduct foreign relations.

The timing adds to political pressure. Xi is widely expected to try to award himself a third five-year term as party leader at a meeting in the autumn. That could be undercut if rivals can accuse Xi of failing to be tough enough in the face of what they consider American provocation.

Kim threatens to use nukes amid tensions with US, S Korea

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned he's ready to use his nuclear weapons in potential military conflicts with the United States and South Korea, state media said Thursday, as he unleashed fiery rhetoric against rivals he says are pushing the Korean Peninsula to the brink of war.

Kim's speech to war vet-

erans on the 69th anniversary of the end of the 1950-53 Korean War was apparently meant to boost internal unity in the impoverished country amid pandemic-related economic difficulties. While Kim has increasingly threatened his rivals with nuclear weapons, it's unlikely that he would use them first against the superior militaries of the US. And its allies, observers say.

Sunak less unpopular with swing voters in UK PM race, survey finds

PTI ■ LONDON

Former Chancellor Rishi Sunak has an edge over his rival, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, in the race to be elected the next Conservative Party leader and British Prime Minister among swing voters, a new survey revealed on Thursday. The British Indian ex-minister, who has been trailing Truss among the hardcore Tory members who will vote for their favourite in postal ballots from next week, is favoured among voters who had voted Conservative for the first time in the 2019 general election.

"While there is little to separate the two leadership candidates among for example those who currently intend to vote [Opposition] Labour (minus 59 for Sunak, minus 62 for Truss) or those who voted Conservative in 2019 (0 and +3 respectively), the crucial difference between Truss and Sunak comes among swing voters," YouGov said in a statement. "Net favourability among those who voted Conservative in 2019 but now tell us they plan to vote Labour stands at minus 25 for Sunak and minus 45 for Truss. Equally, scores among those who voted Labour in 2017 but Conservative in 2019 register at minus 6 for Sunak and minus 19 for Truss," it said.

1971 Liberation War: Six members of 'Razakar Bahini' get death in Bangladesh

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on Thursday sentenced six members of the infamous paramilitary force 'Razakar Bahini' to death for collaborating with the Pakistani Army for "crimes against humanity" during the 1971 Liberation War.

The three-member tribunal headed by Justice Mohammad Shahinur Islam delivered the verdict.

"They shall be hanged by neck until their death," Islam pronounced, with five of the convicts faced the trial in person, while one convict was tried in absentia. The six accused include Amjad Hossain Howladar, Sahar Ali Sardar, Atiyar Rahman, Motachim Billah, Kamal Uddin Goldar, and Nazrul Islam. Of them, Nazrul Islam is absconding.

The convicts were present on the dock as the judgment was delivered after which they were brought to Dhaka Central Jail.

"All the six convicts were charged on four counts of crimes against humanity," prosecution lawyer Mokhesur Rahman told reporters.

Biden, Xi talk more than 2 hrs at time of US-China tension

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping held the fifth conversation of their presidencies on Thursday, speaking for more than two hours as they chart the future of their complicated relationship at a time of simmering economic and geopolitical tensions.

The call began at 8:33 am EDT and ended at 10:50 am EDT, according to the White House. It took place as Biden aims to find new ways to work

with the rising global power as well as strategies to contain China's influence around the world. Differing perspectives on global health, economic policy and human rights have long tested the relationship — with China's refusal to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine adding further strain. "The two heads of state had in-depth communication and exchanges on China-US relations and issues of mutual concern," China

Central Television reported on its website. The latest pressure point has been House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's potential visit to Taiwan, the island that governs itself democratically and receives informal defensive support from the US, but which China considers part of its territory. Beijing has said it would view such a trip as a provocation, a threat US officials are taking with heightened seriousness in light of Russia's incursion into Ukraine.

INDIAN WOMEN LOOK TO BURY WC GHOSTS

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Apodiam finish on its mind, the Indian women's hockey team would look to bury the ghosts of a disastrous World Cup campaign by steam-rolling minnows Ghana in the Commonwealth Games opener on Thursday.

The Indian women are clubbed in Pool A alongside hosts England, Canada, Wales and Ghana, while Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Scotland and Kenya complete Pool B. Just like their male counterparts, the Indian women returned empty-handed from the last edition of the Games in Gold Coast, finishing fourth after being routed 0-6 by England in the bronze medal play-off match.

Going into Games, the Indian women must have been haunted by their below-par effort in the recently concluded World Cup in Spain and the Netherlands, where the Savita Punia-led side finished a disappointing ninth.

And the Janneke Schopman-coached side would be desperate to prove that it is a far better side than what the recent results indicate. They would be itching to prove their detractors wrong about the perception that a historic fourth place finish in last year's Tokyo Olympics was a mere fluke.

The Indian women would also be hoping to break their 16-year medal drought brought in the silver here. The India's last medal -- a silver -- in CWG came in 2006 Melbourne.

The only other medal that Indian women bagged in the Games since hockey introduction in 1998 was a gold in the 2002 edition in Manchester.

Besides the brilliant Olympic campaign, the Indians would also be boosted by their creditable third place finish in their maiden Pro League outing this season.

But to finish on the podium, the ninth ranked Indians will have to get the better of world No.3 Australia, fifth



ranked England and world No.8 New Zealand, who are also strong medal contenders.

In the last edition of the Games, New Zealand won the gold ahead of Australia and the Trans-Tasman rivals would fancy their chances in this Games too.

Australia have dominated women's hockey in CWG, bagging as many as four gold medals, one silver

and a bronze. While it is expected to be a cake-walk for India in their opening two pool games against world No. 30 Ghana, and world No. 24 Wales (on Saturday), the Savita's side will face its first real challenge against England on August 2 before finishing their pool campaign against No.15 Canada.

With the top two teams from each pool progressing into the semifinals, India and England are clear favourites from Pool A unless something drastic happens.

But the recent World Cup has brought to light some chinks in India's armour, which they need to address quickly. For Indian women, while penalty corner conversions remain a major concern, the forward line too needs to pull up its socks.

In the recent World Cup, the Indians created plenty of scoring chances from open play as well as penalty corners but squandered most of the opportunities.

Coach Schopman would be expecting a much-improved show from her forwards and drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur.

In the other Pool A match of the day, Canada will take on Wales.

Harmanpreet, who began her all-format captaincy stint with the Sri Lanka series, feels a ruthless approach is needed even when the chips are down. "During the Sri Lanka tour, we had a meeting with the players. I asked the girls how they want the team to play. Pooja gave a good answer about the killing attitude."

"Right now we are working on that whether we are training or playing. Everyone is talking about that in the team. All players have bought into this and Pooja is someone who comes up with funny ideas all the time," said Harmanpreet on the eve of

the opener against Australia at the Birmingham Games. Pooja however is not part of the team yet as she was forced to stay back in India after returning a positive COVID-19 test a day before the squad's departure for Birmingham. "She has been doing well for the past one year. Normally senior players give a lot of ideas but she came up with this and spoke about it and I really liked it."



Harman talks about need to develop 'killing attitude'

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Indian women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur wants her players to develop the "killing attitude" that champion teams of the past possessed.

India are still some distance away from becoming world beaters but all the players who are here for the Commonwealth Games have bought into an idea suggested by all-rounder Pooja Vastrakar during the Sri Lanka tour last month.

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India had an optional training session on Thursday with six players travelling to Edgbaston. "The team will be looking to form the right balance in the T20 format. "We have a balanced side and we need to shuffle our batting and bowling here and there for the right combination." The Australia clash will be followed by the big game against Pakistan on July 31.

"We know the stakes are high but when you are playing you just think about doing well on the day. When we were kids we have seen the men's Indo-Pak games. We used to get excited as kids but as players these things don't matter," she added.

CGF CEO hopeful of shooting's reintegration before 2026 Games

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Providing some relief to the Indian shooting fraternity, Commonwealth Games Federation's (CGF) CEO Katie Sadleir on Thursday expressed optimism about reintegrating the sport into its programme before the 2026 edition in Victoria.

Shooting, along with wrestling, disciplines in which India normally win the bulk of its medals at the Games, didn't make it to the initial list of the 16 sports picked for the Games in the Australian state of Victoria.

However, hours before the 2022 Birmingham Games were to begin, Sadleir said the disciplines would come up for discussion in September, before the final list is announced.

"We have recently announced an initial programme with 16 sports, with the definite ambition to grow that programme," Sadleir said.

"There currently is an expression of interest out there with the international federations that are currently not in the programme have been invited to



put forward their proposals for considerations, and shooting is definitely on the case," she added. Shooting, which accounted for 16 of the 66 medals India bagged at the Gold Coast Games four years ago, was omitted from the ongoing Games at Birmingham, leading to a strong protest by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

There was more setback for India when the sport again did not find itself in the list of events for the 2026 Games along

with wrestling where the nation had topped the medals tally in 2018.

A former CWG medallist and an Olympian, Sadleir said there's a strong wave of interest for the two disciplines' inclusion.

"I know there's a significant amount of social media going on in Australia, plus the international federation, has made it clear that they are going to put forward a very strong case for consideration," the Scotland-born New Zealander said.

Nikhat, Lovlina get easy opening draws

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

World champion Nikhat Zareen and reigning Olympic Bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain have been handed a relatively easy opening round draws in the women's boxing competition of the Commonwealth Games which begins here with the opening ceremony on Thursday.

Nikhat will open her campaign in the women's 48-50kg light flyweight category against Helena Ismael Bagao of Mozambique on Sunday. A victory would see her pitted against another easy opponent in Helen Jones of Wales in the quarterfinals.

Lovlina will also be up against the lesser-known Ariane Nicholson of New Zealand in her opening light middle weight (66-70kg) bout on Saturday, and a win will pit her against Gold Coast silver medallist Rosie Eccles of Wales in the quarterfinals.

The Welsh boxer, who won a silver medal in 2016 and a bronze in 2019 European Championships, got a bye in the first round.

In the lightweight (57-60kg) division, Jasmine will feature



straight in the quarterfinals after getting a first round bye.

But a tricky quarterfinal final awaits Jasmine as she will be up against 2018 Gold Coast bronze medallist Troy Garton of New Zealand on August 4.

In the women's minimum weight (45-48kg) category, Nitu

silver medallist Amit Panghal will kick-off his campaign against Vanuatu's Namri Berri in the flyweight (48-51kg) category on August 1.

On the other hand, Mohammad Hussamuddin, who won bronze medallist in the last CWG, will play Amzolele Dyei of South Africa in his opening featherweight (54-5kg) bout on July 30.

Former Asian and World Championships medallist Shiva Thapa will take on Pakistan's Suleman Baloch in the first round of light welterweight (60 to 63.5kg) category on Friday, while welterweight (63.5 to 67kg) pugilist Rohit Tokas got a first round bye and will take on Alfred Kotey of Ghana in his second bout on August 2.

Sumit too got a first round bye in the middleweight (71-75kg) division and will face Callum Peters of Australia in the second round on Sunday.

In the men's light heavyweight (75 to 80kg) event, Ashish Kumar too got a bye in the opening round and will face Travis Tapatuetoa of Niue on August 1, while Sanjeet will take on Ato Leau Plodzicki-Faogali of SAM in the heavyweight first round on Saturday.

Among men, Asian Games gold medallist and 2018 CWG

Daruvala sets sights on 7th podium finish

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian racer Jehan Daruvala will be looking to secure his seventh top-three finish as he heads to his next event in Hungary's Hungaroring race track this Sunday.

The 23-year-old chalked up his sixth podium of the season in France when he finished second last week.

It was also the fifth time this year he finished in the runner-up spot.

"The Hungaroring is a track that I really enjoy. While it is a purpose-built circuit, its tight, twisting corners have a street-race feel to them, making it very similar to Monaco," Jehan said.

"Of course that means overtaking is always difficult here and qualifying will be absolutely crucial this weekend. We know that's an area we need to improve on but we're working hard to make that step up so we can fight at the front in the Feature race on Sunday," he added.

Jehan has raced at the 4.3-km long track on the outskirts of Budapest several times in his career.



It's Germany vs England in Euro 2022 final

AP ■ MILTON KEYNES

Germany will face England in Sunday's Euro 2022 final after Alexandra Popp struck twice to beat France 2-1 in Milton Keynes on Wednesday.

The German captain's opener was quickly cancelled out by Merle Frohms' own goal, but Popp's towering header 14 minutes from time sent the eight-time winners into another final at Wembley. Popp had been at risk of missing the European Championship for a third time due to injury, but the Wolfsburg striker proved her fitness in time after two knee surgeries and has gone on to be the star performer of the tournament. The 31-year-old's double

took her level with England's Beth Mead on six goals in the battle for the Golden Boot, matching the record for a single women's European Championship held by Inka Grings from Euro 2009.

That tournament ended in a German rout over England in the final and Die Nationalelf will be hoping for a repeat as they aim to upset the hosts in front of a sell-out crowd of 87,000.

In contrast to Germany's pedigree at the women's Euro, France were in the last four for the first time. Les Bleues were left to regret a series of missed chances early in the second half as they lacked a clinical goalscorer without the injured Marie-Antoinette Katoto.

5 Indian athletes to watch out for in Birmingham CWG 2022

DRITI ATRI ■ NEW DELHI

The 2022 edition of the Commonwealth Games kicked off in Birmingham on Thursday. This year, as many as 215 Indian athletes will take part in 19 different sports. In the last edition of the games, India won 66 medals, but this time it will get a bit tough to match that tally, particularly in the absence of shooting. India won 16 medals in shooting last time, but this year the sport has been dropped.

Apart from that, a few superstars like Tokyo Olympics Gold medallist Neeraj Chopra, six-time world champion and defending Gold medallist MC Mary Kom and two-time Gold medallist Saina Nehwal will miss the event because of injury and other related issues. But then too, there are a few players who will start as favourites for the top position. Here's a look at the top five Indian athletes competing in the 2022 games.

PV SINDHU (BADMINTON)

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu will hope to win her maiden Gold medal in women's singles this year. In the 2018 edition, she lost to Saina Nehwal in the Gold medal match. But this time, in Saina's absence, she will be India's biggest medal hope in women's badminton. She has recently won the Singapore Open tournament and is in the seventh position in the world rankings.



MIRABAI CHANU (WEIGHTLIFTING)



Star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu will hope to win another Gold medal in the CWG this year. She won Silver at the 2014 Glasgow Games and Gold at the 2018 Gold Coast Games. The 27-year-old Manipuri athlete created history in Tokyo last year when she became the first Indian weightlifter to win a Silver medal in the Olympics. There will be high hopes from the ace weightlifter, and she'll look to maintain her numero uno status.

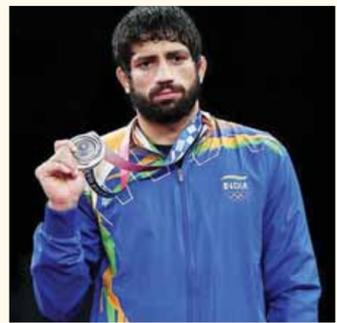
LOVLINA BORGHAIN (BOXING)

Like Sindhu and Mirabai, Lovlina also won a medal at the Tokyo Olympics last year. The 24-year-old from Assam won a Bronze medal in the women's 69kg category. In the previous edition of the CWG, Lovlina lost in the quarterfinals to eventual Gold winner Sandy Ryan of England, but this year, she will start as one of the favourites for the top place finish.



RAVI DAHIYA (WRESTLING)

Freestyle wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya surprised one and all when he defied all odds to win the Silver medal at the Olympics last year. He lost the Gold medal match in the 57kg category against ROC wrestler Zaur Uguev to settle for a second-place finish. In his maiden



CWG this year, he will start as the favourite for the Gold medal. The 24-year-old is one of the best wrestlers in the country and there will be high hopes from him after his spectacular display in Tokyo.

MANIKA BATRA (TABLE TENNIS)

Manika Batra won a total of four medals in the 2018 Commonwealth Games. She won the top prize in women's singles and women's team events apart from winning a Bronze in



mixed doubles and settling for Silver in women's doubles. The 27-year-old from Delhi defeated world number 4 Feng Tianwei as well as Zhou Yihan in India's 3-1 win in the women's team event final against Singapore and also became the first Indian female paddler to win an individual Gold medal in the CWG. This year, she will again be the favourite to retain her title.

INDIA AIM FOR WINDIES DOUBLE



PTI ■ TAROUBA

A full-strength Indian team in all its might will be looking to overwhelm West Indies in its bid to record a second successive clean sweep in the three-match T20 series starting Friday.

With less than three months left for the T20 World Cup, skipper Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid will get around 16 games (5 vs WI, 5 in Asia Cup (if India play final), 3 vs Australia, 3 vs South Africa) to firm up their core team that will then play unchanged going into mega event.

The mere thought of a first eleven comprising Rohit, Rishabh Pant, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya and Dinesh Karthik as the five specialists batters in the top six can have an intimidating as well as

debilitating effect on the opposition.

And that too at a time when a player of Virat Kohli's stature has been failing miserably in shortest format and doubts are being cast about his place in the playing XI.

The preceding England series has shown that India's white ball players have that imposing alpha-male like presence out there in the middle even if their best player Kohli is on the wane.

CAN HOODA CHALLENGE KOHLI'S POSITION?

Thus the five-match series against West Indies, technically being played in three different countries (Trinidad & Tobago, St Kitts & Nevis and USA) will also give us a clear picture whether Kohli's days of invincibility are over or not.

Deepak Hooda, whatever little amount of T20s that he has played, has shown that belongs to this level. He has a hundred opening the innings against Ireland and in the only T20 that he played against England, he looked the part before being forced to relinquish his place to Kohli.

With his tight off-breaks adding to his skill-set, at least three to four good matches in this series will certainly increase Rohit's headache and also put Kohli under pressure when he returns for Asia Cup in the UAE.

Number three will be the only position that will be a bone of contention as far as India's batting order is concerned going into the T20 World Cup.

The other factor will be regular vice-captain KL Rahul's return to

the squad and where does one fit this prolific IPL performer although his way of constructing a T20 innings could be debated.

ROHIT-PANT PAIR COULD BE WAY FORWARD

In terms of sheer numbers, the Pant-Rohit opening pair didn't set the stage on fire against England but statistics often do not provide the bigger picture.

The left-right combination has shown intent to dominate and with their kind of range could prove to be a nightmare for any opposition on a given day.

On tacky West Indies tracks where spinners could operate in Powerplay, the duo could be even doubly dangerous and as far as Australian wickets are concerned, their ability to effortlessly play hor-

izontal bat shots would keep them in a good stead.

WILL ASHWIN GET A LOOK-IN FOR T20 WC?

With Jadeja's fitness being an issue and also his growing focus on being a batting all-rounder, Ravichandran Ashwin is still India's best slow bowler in Powerplay overs with his variations that include the lethal carrom ball.

There is Kuldeep Yadav also in the squad and Ravi Bishnoi, who has been more of a glorified traveller since Chahal found his mojo.

Yuzvendra Chahal's place is non-negotiable in first XI and Washington Sundar will be back in the set-up any day which effectively makes it last chance for Ashwin to stake his claim for a place in playing XI.

CHOICE OF 3RD PACER

If they remain injury-free, Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar are sure-shot starters in the playing XI on October 23 when India meet arch-rivals Pakistan.

With Hardik Pandya also bowling full tilt, India would be looking to finalise their third specialist pacer and if Harshal Patel does well in this series, there will be lot of pressure on Deepak Chahar, who is likely to be back for Asia Cup.

SQUADS

India: Rohit Sharma (C), Ishan Kishan, Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Hooda, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul, Dinesh Karthik, Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Avesh Khan, Harshal Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh

West Indies (Probable): Nicholas Pooran (C), Shamar Brooks, Brandon King, Román Powell, Keacy Carty, Kyle Mayers, Jason Holder, Gudakesh Motie, Keemo Paul, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Jayden Seales.

India complete clean sweep



PTI ■ PORT OF SPAIN

Shubman Gill was unlucky to miss out on a maiden century but India rode on his sublime 98 to outclass West Indies by 119 runs and complete a 3-0 rout in the ODI series here.

In a rain-affected final ODI, India scored 225 for 3 in 36 overs, courtesy Gill's career-best knock and another half-century from skipper Shikhar Dhawan (58 off 74 balls).

The revised DLS target of 257 from 35 overs was a tricky one and Mohammed Siraj's (2/14 in 3 overs) near-perfect first over with the new ball set the tone as West Indies could finally manage only 137 in 26 overs.

Spinners Yuzvendra Chahal (4/17 in 4 overs), Axar Patel (1/38 in 6 overs) and seamer Shardul Thakur (2/17 in 5 overs) also performed their role admirably on a slowish surface as Brandon King (42 off 37 balls) and Nicholas Pooran (42 off 32 balls)'s counter-attacking resistance was never going to be good enough.

While all the three ODIs were played at the same venue, Dhawan and his men deserve full credit for

In a rain-affected final ODI, India scored 225 for 3 in 36 overs, courtesy Gill's career-best knock and another half-century from skipper Shikhar Dhawan (58 off 74 balls)

making most of the opportunities, showing good game awareness in crunch situations throughout the series.

If they defended well under pressure in the first game, the second one saw the lower middle-order accomplish a tricky chase after a not-so-great show from top-order.

The third game posed a different challenge as rain-break could have caused a decisive shift in momentum but the stylish Gill and the talented Shreyas Iyer (44 off 34 balls) changed the complexion of the game post rain-break.

Jayasuriya stars again as SL thrash Pak to level series



AP ■ GALLE

Spinner Prabath Jayasuriya grabbed another five-wicket haul as Sri Lanka thumped Pakistan by 246 runs in the second Test to end the series 1-1 on Thursday.

Chasing a mammoth 508 for victory, tourists Pakistan were bowled out for 261 in the second session on day five in Galle with skipper Babar Azam hitting a valiant 81.

The 30-year-old Jayasuriya, a left-arm spinner, claimed his fourth five-wicket haul in just his third Test since making his debut against Australia earlier this month. Fellow spinner Ramesh Mendis took four wickets.

Sri Lanka were racing to wrap up the match ahead of forecast rain after Pakistan resumed with nine wickets remaining and gamely fought on through the morning.

But Jayasuriya kept hitting back with regular strikes and got Agha Salman out for

four at the stroke of lunch, then trapped talisman Azam lbw to end Pakistan's resistance.

"When Babar was dismissed we knew that we could pull this off. Babar is their anchor," Jayasuriya, who has bagged 29 wickets in three Tests, told reporters.

"That was crucial and once he was out we knew we could pull it off."

Ramesh, who took five wickets with his off-spin in Pakistan's first innings, wiped off the tail to trigger Sri Lankan celebrations in former captain Angelo Mathews' 100th Test.

Pakistan won the opener with a Galle record chase of 342 and fought hard to outdo themselves, with the in-form Azam scoring his 23rd Test fifty and putting on brave stands with overnight partner Imam-ul-Haq (49) and Mohammad Rizwan (37).

"We were definitely in the game but Dhananjaya's innings changed the game," said Azam.

BCCI should allow Indians to participate in foreign T20 leagues: Gilchrist

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Wicket-keeping legend Adam Gilchrist on Thursday said he wants the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to allow the Indian cricketers to take part in T20 leagues outside the country.

The BCCI, presently, does not allow the Indian players to participate in overseas T20 leagues like Australia's Big Bash League to maintain exclusivity of IPL.

"It will be wonderful (if the Indian players are allowed to play in overseas T20 leagues), I personally feel that it won't diminish the IPL, it will only grow them as a brand. If they (Indian players) can play in Australia or South Africa," Gilchrist told reporters.



"But the challenge is we are all playing our domestic seasons at the same time, so that is a hard thing, isn't it?," he added.

Gilchrist's suggestion came after a day he questioned the growing dominance of the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises in world cricket.

However, the three-time World Cup winner maintained he was not against the most world's most popular T20 league.

"I'm not criticising the IPL, but why won't Indian players come and play in the Big Bash league? I've never had an open and honest answer: Why are some leagues accessing every player in

the world? No Indian player plays in any other T20 league. I am not saying in a provocative sense, but is that a fair question?" he asked.

"I really want to highlight (that the) six seasons (I played in the IPL) I loved it. It was a great experience. It is the premier T20 competition in the world, but it is important to allow other boards and countries to prosper as well," he added.

NEED TO BE PATIENT WITH PANT

Gilchrist once again praised India's swashbuckling wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant and urged the Indian board to be patient with him when things go awry.

"He (Pant) is one of the most exciting cricketers to watch, I think he just lights up a stage, and makes an electric atmosphere when he is playing, that is wonderful," Gilchrist said.

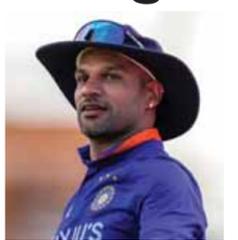
India maintain 3rd spot in ODI team rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India maintained their third position in the latest men's ODI Team Rankings following the 3-0 series whitewash of the West Indies in their own backyard.

Despite missing a slew of first-choice players, the Shikhar Dhawan-led India showed they have plenty of depth waiting in the wings as they completed a sweep over the Caribbean side on Wednesday with an emphatic 119-run victory in the third and final match.

The triumph was India's third ODI series victory on the trot and saw them boost their rating to a total of 110 and some four rating points clear of



arch-rival Pakistan (106), who is in the fourth place.

New Zealand sit alone at the top of the team ODI rankings with a rating of 128, while England (119) remain in second place despite their recent series loss to India and drawn series against South Africa.

Bairstow leads England to victory over SA in 1st T20I

AP ■ BRISTOL

Jonny Bairstow's excellent season continued as he made 90 in England's 41-run win over South Africa in the 1st T20I at Bristol on Wednesday.

Moeen Ali compiled England's quickest T20 fifty, off just 16 balls, in the hosts' 234-6 -- their second highest total at this level behind the 241-3 they posted against New Zealand at Napier in 2019.

"It was a great performance, what we've been looking for, a brilliant total, we were under threat for a while but delighted with the win," England T20 captain Jos Buttler told Sky Sports.

Moeen, the pacer of the

match, added: "Generally I back myself, try to see it and hit it. Jonny is so powerful, I try to remind him of the good things he does."

But amid the 20 sixes in England's innings, Proteas quick Lungi Ngidi took an excellent 5-39, his career best T20I figures.

England's Reece Topley then struck twice in the second over to reduce South Africa to 7-2, the in-form left-arm quick removing dangerman Quinton de Kock and Rilee Rossouw.

South Africa were 86-4 in the 10th over, with Reeza Hendricks having made 57 off 33 balls, when Tristan Stubbs hauled them back into the game with a brilliant maiden T20I fifty



off just 19 balls, including six soaring sixes.

Even allowing for a good pitch and a relatively small ground, it was a superb display of ball-striking by the 21-year-old Stubbs.

But with South Africa needing 54 off 18 balls, paceman Chris Jordan conceded just three runs, with Andile Phehlukwayo defeated by several yorkers.

It was a decisive over, with South Africa also paying dearly for several fielding errors earlier in the match.

"CJ (Jordan) changed the momentum of the game, a brilliant over," said Buttler.

Stubbs launched Richard Gleeson to long-off as a brilliant innings of 72 off just 28 balls came to an end, with South Africa finishing on 193-8.

"They demolished us in the last 10 (overs) but we dropped four or five catches which cost us massively in the field," said South Africa T20 captain David Miller.

"It was a phenomenal knock by Stubbs, an extremely disappointing result but there's another two (matches) to get it right."

Pooja joins Brisbane Heat

PTI ■ BRISBANE

All-rounder Pooja Vastrakar became the latest Indian cricketer to sign for Brisbane Heat for the upcoming edition of the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL).

The 22-year-old will become the third Indian woman cricketer to play for Brisbane Heat. Smriti Mandhana and Poonam Yadav had previously played for the side. "Pooja is an outstanding athlete. She bowls with sharp pace, can find the boundary with the bat down the order and is an absolute jet in the field," Heat coach Ashley Noffke said.

4-time world champion Vettel to retire from F1

AP ■ HUNGARORING

Four-time Formula One world champion Sebastian Vettel will retire at the end of the 2022 season, he announced on Thursday.

"The decision to retire has been a difficult one for me to take, and I have spent a lot of time thinking about it," Vettel, 35, said in an Aston Martin team statement.

"At the end of the year I want to take some more time to reflect on what I will focus on next; it is very clear to me that, being a father, I want to spend more time with my family. But today is not about saying goodbye.

"Rather, it is about saying thank you — to everyone — not least to the fans, without whose passionate sup-

port Formula One could not exist."

Vettel won four successive championships with Red Bull from 2010 to 2013, but struggled to reproduce his best results after moving to Ferrari before joining Aston Martin last year.

His 53 Grand Prix victories place him third on the all-time list behind Lewis Hamilton (103) and Michael Schumacher (91). Vettel last won a race in Singapore in 2019.

"He is one of the all-time greats of Formula One, and it has been a privilege to have been able to work with him," said Aston Martin executive chairman Lawrence Stroll, whose son Lance is the team's other driver. "He will continue to race for us up to and including the 2022 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, which will be his



300th Grand Prix entry. We will give him a fabulous send-off."

The German made his F1 debut with BMW Sauber at the United States Grand Prix in 2007. He joined Toro Rosso that same year and raced the final seven races of the season.

YOUNGEST CHAMPION

He then spent a full season with Toro Rosso before making the step up to Red Bull in 2009.

Vettel's first title in 2010, aged 23 years and 134 days, saw him become the youngest world champion in history. He moved to Aston Martin last season after six years at Ferrari, with whom he twice finished runner-up for the world title to Hamilton in 2017 and 2018.

Allen, Sodhi star as NZ rout Scotland in 1st T20I

AP ■ EDINBURGH

Finn Allen and Ish Sodhi both produced format-best displays as New Zealand overwhelmed Scotland by 68 runs in the 1st T20I at Edinburgh on Wednesday.

Allen's 101, his maiden T20I hundred, was the cornerstone of New Zealand's 225-5, the opener sharing a first-wicket stand of 85 with the experienced Martin Guptill (40).

Scotland were rarely in the hunt in reply, with leg-break bowler Sodhi taking a career-best 4-28 from his four overs, while fellow spinner Mitchell Santner, the New Zealand captain, weighed in with 2-23 as the hosts were held to 157-8 in their 20 overs.

Calum MacLeod top-scored for Scotland with 33 as New Zealand went 1-0 up in this two-match series.

