

OPINION 6
NO NATIONAL MOURNING FOR MORBI VICTIMS

WORLD 9
NORTH KOREA FIRES 23 MISSILES, AIR-RAID ALERT IN SOUTH

MONEY 10
AVOIDED EARLY TIGHTENING TO PREVENT ECO PLUNGE: DAS

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MEN IN BLUE
BEAT B'DESH IN T20 WORLD CUP
12 SPORT

Delhi gas chamber: Union Min; CM unveils measures

Kejriwal urges people to work from home, declares ₹5,000 a month for construction workers; Bhupender slams AAP Govts for not utilising Central aid to fight pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As a combination of farm fires, calm local winds, dust from construction sites, and a dip in temperatures pushed Delhi into a pollution emergency, the Arvind Kejriwal Government on Wednesday appealed to people to work from home and use public transport to reduce vehicular pollution.

The Government has also announced a financial assistance of ₹5,000 per month to over 10 lakh construction workers during the time construction activities are prohibited in the national Capital.

In a related development, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and Delhi BJP have asked the Delhi Government to shut schools till air quality in the national Capital improves.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav blamed the AAP Government in Punjab for the rise in Delhi's pollution level. "Punjab has seen an over 19 per cent rise in farm fires over 2021. Haryana has seen a 30.6 per cent drop... There is no doubt over who has turned Delhi into a gas cham-

ber. Scam is where AAP is...about ₹492 crore was available but State Govt chose to sit with funds. In the last 5 years, the Central Government gave ₹1,347 crore for crop residue management machines to Punjab. The State bought 1,20,000 machines. 11,275 of those machines have gone missing. Money utilisation shows clear incompetence," Yadav alleged.

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday appealed to national Capital residents to preferably work from home or use shared transport to reduce vehicular emissions, a major contributor to air pollution in Delhi. He also said that vehicular emissions account for 51 per cent of the air pollution generated locally.

"If possible, please share a ride to work or work from home. This is how we can reduce the share of vehicular emissions in Delhi's air pollution," he said.

Rai asked people to refrain from using coal or firewood for heating purposes and to provide electric heaters to security staff to avoid open burning during winters. "We have to



A heavy traffic jam on the NH-24 in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

reduce our share of pollution. We have to do everything we can. We cannot sit idle waiting for others to act," the Minister said. He said people should avoid bursting firecrackers. "Emission from even one firecracker can cause great harm in such unfavourable meteorological conditions," he said.

Rai also asked people to take pictures if they find anyone violating the ban on construction work and upload them on "Green Delhi" application for necessary action.

Continued on Page 2

Stubble fire share in pollution rises to 32%

The share of pollution from stubble burning in Delhi rose to 32 per cent on Wednesday, the highest this year so far. The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) reported 3,634 farm fires in Punjab on Wednesday, the highest this year so far. The number stood at 1,842 on Tuesday, 2,131 on Monday, 1,761 on Sunday, 1,898 on Saturday and 2,067 on Friday.

Pilot flies at Gehlot after Modi praise, jolts Cong out of inertia

Sachin seeks CLP meet to pick new CM; Gehlot asks workers to focus on Assembly elections

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

Former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot launched a fresh offensive against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot camp on Wednesday, drawing new party chief Mallikarjun Kharge's attention towards the pending decision on notices to three loyalists of the Chief Minister and taking potshots at Gehlot himself.

Pilot also raised eyebrows over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "praise" for his political bete noire Ashok Gehlot and indicated that he expected the Congress leadership now to call a CLP meeting immediately to end the "state of indecision" over the Chief Minister's post.

Pilot pushed for action against Rajasthan leaders involved in a show of strength for Gehlot in September, boycotting a CLP meeting that might have paved the way for his own appointment as the CM.

AICC has issued notices to Rajasthan Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal Shanti Dhariwal, Congress Chief Whip Mahesh



Joshi and Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation chairman Dharmendra Rathore.

Recalling the scuttling of the CLP meeting in Jaipur, Pilot said the Chief Minister had apologised to the party and then party president Sonia Gandhi over it. "Ajay Maken and Mallikarjun Kharge who came as observers also took it seriously," Pilot added. The AICC considered it a matter of indiscipline and issued notices to three people," he reminded.

Hours after Pilot's remarks, Gehlot urged party leaders to "maintain discipline" and refrain from making "statements" and the prime focus should be on winning the next Assembly polls. "It is our objective to repeat the government. We have given good governance and brought so many schemes in the State, which has

never happened before. We have started working towards retaining the state on good governance," said Gehlot.

"Congress is an old party and equal rules and discipline are applicable to all. The observers appointed by the party in Rajasthan had already given their comments and the three MLAs received notices also. But now is the time that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge should take a decision in this matter at the earliest, which I hope he will," said Pilot.

Pilot said only 13 months are left now for the Assembly elections and the AICC would soon take any decision it needs to — like calling another CLP meet. He also suggested that the party will soon act against those who were given notices by the AICC for the indiscipline in September.

He recalled that AICC gen-

eral secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal had then said a decision will be taken soon on Rajasthan, a reference to the chief minister's post.

"The time has come to end the State of indecision in Rajasthan and action will take place soon," he added.

Pilot's remarks on the "praise" for Gehlot — which he called an "interesting development" — that should not be taken lightly — signalled the resumption of hostilities in the party's Rajasthan unit.

Pilot, who led a rebellion in 2020 against Gehlot, targeted the veteran leader by referring to Tuesday's event at Mangarh Dham in Banswara district, where Gehlot shared the dais with Prime Minister Modi.

The leaders there paid tribute to the 1,500 tribal people believed killed in an uprising against the British in 1913.

'Unqualified firm repaired Morbi bridge'

Worn-out bridge cables were not replaced: Prosecution to court

PTI ■ MORBI

The contractors who carried out repairs of the ill-fated suspension bridge at Morbi in Gujarat were not qualified to carry out such jobs, the prosecution told a court here.

While the bridge flooring was replaced, its cable was not replaced and it could not take the weight of the changed flooring, the prosecution, citing a forensic report, told the magistrate's court on Tuesday.

The collapse of the bridge on Sunday evening claimed 135 lives.

Chief Judicial Magistrate MJ Khan remanded four of the arrested accused — two managers of the OREVA Group and two sub-contractors who had repaired the bridge — in police custody till Saturday.

The court remanded five other arrested men, including security guards and ticket booking clerks, in judicial custody as police did not seek their



forensic experts believed the main cable of the bridge snapped because of the weight of the new flooring.

"Though the FSL report was presented in a sealed cover, it was mentioned during the remand plea that cables of the bridge were not replaced during the renovation and only flooring was changed...The weight of the bridge increased due to the four-layered aluminium sheets for the flooring and the cable, snapped due to that weight," Panchal told reporters.

The court was also informed that both the repairing contractors were "not qualified" to carry out such a work. "Despite that, these contractors were given the bridge repair work in 2007 and then in 2022. So the accused's custody was needed to find out what was the reason for choosing them and at whose instance they were chosen," the prosecutor said.

Citing a Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) report, Panchal told the court that

Morbi bar protests, says none will defend accused



PTI ■ MORBI

The Morbi Bar Association on Wednesday said its members won't represent the accused in the suspension bridge collapse that claimed 135 lives.

Members of the association on Wednesday held a protest march, a day after passing a resolution to not fight cases for the accused in the bridge collapse tragedy. "Morbi Bar Association and Rajkot Bar

Association have decided to not take their case and represent them. Both the bar associations have passed this resolution," senior advocate AC Prajapati said.

"All the lawyers of the association are deeply saddened by the tragedy. This is a moral call. We won't represent any accused in the bridge collapse case after the death of so many innocent people," another lawyer said.

Continued on Page 2

ED summons Soren for illegal mining quiz today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren for questioning on Thursday in a money-laundering case linked to alleged illegal mining in the State.

The ED has asked the 47-year-old JMM leader to appear before the agency's regional office in the Hinoo area of State Capital Ranchi at 11 am on Thursday, officials said.

The ED is expected to question and record the statement of Soren under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Following the summons, Soren hit out at the BJP, alleging it was resorting to "misusing" institutions as it cannot face him politically.

"We have also been called on the request of our Opposition. An attempt has been made to show how powerful the ED is. The Opposition is under the misconception that when it cannot face us politically, it can misuse insti-



Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren in Ranchi

File photo | PTI

tutions. The people will give them the answer for every conspiracy," the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader tweeted in Hindi.

The ED had earlier arrested Soren's political aide Pankaj Mishra and two others — local muselman Bachhu Yadav and Prem Prakash — in this case.

The agency has claimed it has "identified" proceeds of

crime relating to illegal mining in the State to the tune of more than ₹1,000 crore till now.

The ED probe began after the agency searched Mishra and his alleged associates on July 8, covering 19 locations in Sahibganj, Barhait, Rajmahal, Mirza Chauki, and Barharwa in Jharkhand in the case linked to alleged instances of illegal mining and extortion.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

BOUNTY ON 4 PFI MEMBERS IN NETTARU MURDER CASE

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday announced cash rewards for information on absconding four members of the banned People Front of India (PFI) who are allegedly involved in the murder of Praveen Nettaru, a BJP Yuva Morcha activist.

MINOR GIRL GANG-RAPED, MURDERED IN KARNATAKA

Bengaluru: A 15-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped and murdered in Karnataka's Kalaburagi district.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST ELA BHATT PASSES AWAY

Ahmedabad: Renowned women's rights activist and founder of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Ela Bhatt passed away due to age-related ailments on Wednesday, her associates said.

SC rejects plea against Chandrachud's pick as CJ, dubs it 'misconceived'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea challenging the appointment of Justice DY Chandrachud as the next Chief Justice of India.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India UU Lalit, Justices S Ravindra Bhat, and Bela M Trivedi said, "We see no reason to entertain this petition. The entire plea is completely misconceived. Thus dismissed."

The matter was listed at 12.45 pm after it was mentioned for urgent hearing before CJJI Lalit. The petition filed by lawyer Mursalin Asijit



Shaikh alleged that Justice Chandrachud had "on twelve occasions acted in willful disregard and deliberate defiance of binding precedents of larger benches of the Supreme Court and denied justice to deserving litigants."

Shaikh started his argument by saying that CJJI Lalit hearing the petition is in a conflict of interest as he selected Justice Chandrachud as next Chief Justice of India.

Continued on Page 2

PM inaugurates 3,024 flats for bhoomiheen

Modi hands over 575 flats in Kalkaji to beneficiaries

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday handed over the keys of 575 newly-constructed flats at Kalkaji in New Delhi to eligible beneficiaries at Bhoomiheen Camp after inaugurating a cluster of 3,024 such flats under the "In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation Project".

"Today is a big day for thousands of slum dwellers. A new beginning to life. As I handed over the keys to eligible beneficiaries, I could see their happy and joyous faces. Over 3,000 houses have been constructed in the first phase of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi hands over the symbolic key to a Bhoomiheen Camp slum-dwellers beneficiary during a ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

the Kalkaji extension," Modi said while addressing a gathering at Vigyan Bhawan.

Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and Union Housing and Urban Affairs

Minister Hardeep Singh Puri were present on the occasion. The Prime Minister said

more than 3,000 homes have already been prepared in the first phase of Kalkaji Extension alone. Very soon, other families living in the area will get the opportunity to enter their new homes.

Taking a dig at the Kejriwal Government, Modi asked, "You tell me how much money should have been spent on advertisements for all the things I have listed before you. How many newspaper pages should have been filled (with ads), with my pictures?"

Though the Prime Minister did not refer to the AAP, the BJP has often slammed it for its allegedly massive expenditure on publicity. The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has undertaken three such projects at Kalkaji Extension, Jailorwala Bagh and Kathputli Colony.

Continued on Page 2

NCR PULSE

DJB WAIVES LATE PAYMENT SURCHARGE
New Delhi: The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) issued a circular waiving the Late Payment Surcharge (LPSC) for both Domestic and Commercial consumers, on a condition basis. As per the circular, 100 per cent LPSC waiver will be applicable only for those consumers who will clear their outstanding arrears till December 31, 2022. 75 per cent LPSC waiver will be applicable for those consumers who will clear their outstanding arrears during the period January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023, it stated.

NCRTC INTENSIFIES EFFORTS TO CURB AIR POLLUTION
New Delhi: Amid deteriorating air quality in Delhi, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation has intensified efforts to curb air pollution at its construction sites, including installation of sprinklers and anti-smoke guns. Between Delhi and Meerut, the NCRTC is establishing India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RTS), which is a rail-based, high-speed, high-frequency regional commuter transit system.

RELEASE PROTESTERS ARRESTED AT GR NOIDA: AAP
New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday demanded that the protesters arrested by the police in Greater Noida during a demonstration at the NTPC Dadri be released. The Gautam Buddha Nagar unit of the AAP also urged the Uttar Pradesh government to consider the demand of increased compensation of the protesting villagers whose land was acquired in the past.

BOY WHO SUFFERED BURNS AT FACTORY FIRE SUCCUMBS
New Delhi: A 17-year-old boy, who had suffered burns in a fire at a factory in Narela area in Delhi that claimed two lives a day ago, succumbed at a hospital. The owner of the factory has been arrested in the case.

3 MEN INVOLVED IN TAXI LOOT ARRESTED
New Delhi: The police in Greater Noida have arrested three men allegedly involved in the loot of a hired taxi from Faridabad in Haryana last week, officials said on Wednesday. Two of the suspects were held after a gunfight with the police in the Dankaur area late Tuesday night, while the third was nabbed during a combing operation post the encounter. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Greater Noida) Vishal Pandey said.

CRPF appoints 2 women cadre officers as IG of RAF, Bihar sector

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, the CRPF has appointed two women officers from its cadre as Inspectors General (IG) of its specialised anti-riots unit RAF and the Bihar Sector.

The proverbial glass ceiling in the country's largest paramilitary force with 3.25 lakh personnel has broken after a long wait of 35 years as the first women officers joined the Central Reserve Police Force in 1987.

There have been women Indian Police Service (IPS) officers heading CRPF formations and at present there are at least three such officers in the force.

Officials said as part of a recent transfer/posting order issued by the force headquarters here, Annie Abraham has been appointed as the IG of the blue duangree donning Rapid Action Force (RAF) while Seema Dhundia has been posted as the IG of the Bihar Sector.

This is the first time that the RAF will be headed by a woman IG. An IG is the head of the sector in the CRPF.

Both officers joined the paramilitary force in 1987 as the first batch of women officers. They have also commanded an all-women Indian police contingent at the UN.

They have been decorated with the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, Police Medal for Meritorious Service and the 'Ati Utkrishi Sewa Padak' during their service, a CRPF spokesperson said.

Abraham told PTI that the appointment "was an hon-



our for her and she would work to take RAF to a higher position."

The 15 battalions strength RAF is deployed for anti-riots, counter-protests and sensitive law and order duties in various parts of the country and is called in to assist state police forces during important events where heavy crowds are expected and also for VIP visits.

The Bihar Sector of the CRPF commands about four battalions of the force that are deployed for anti-Naxal operations and other law and order duties apart from some small units of the RAF and the jungle warfare unit CoBRA.

The CRPF was the first Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) to induct women in combat in 1986.

It has six such battalions at present with women constables filling more than 6,000 posts in these.

Forest Dept staffer thrashed by bouncers

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

A forest department employee has alleged that he and his friends were thrashed by bouncers at a club in a mall at MG Road, police.

A complaint has been lodged regarding the matter and the file has been forwarded to the Sector 29 police station SHO, MG Road police outpost in-charge Balram said.

In his complaint, Dev Kumar, a range officer in Nuh district, said he and his friends had gone to a club at the mall on Monday night, coming out in the early hours of Tuesday.

One of his friends had forgotten his mobile phone inside the club, Kumar said. Kumar and the rest of his party waited outside while his friend went back to retrieve the phone.

Kumar alleged that they were talking among them-



selves when five bouncers standing outside another club attacked them. When his friend came back with his phone and tried to intervene, he was also beaten up, Kumar said.

The assault was finally stopped following the intervention of the bouncers and manager of another club, Kumar said.

Kumar then dialled 112 and an Emergency Rescue Vehicle reached the spot and took the injured to the Civil Hospital from where all five were discharged after first aid. Kumar then submitted a written complaint at MG Road police outpost.

Several measures taken to clean Najafgarh drain: Delhi Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Wednesday said that several measures have been taken to clean the Najafgarh Drain including the installation of a sewage network in unauthorised colonies, construction of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), De-centralized-STPs etc, as it directly falls into the Yamuna river. They said that this was very crucial to clean the drain in order to clean the



river. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia held a review

meeting with the committee of senior officials constituted to desilt and clean the Najafgarh drain.

While informing the plan of the Kejriwal government to clean the drain, Sisodia said, "The length of Najafgarh drain between Dhansa to Dwarka is about 22 km, and 31 other small and big drains flow into the drain over this distance. It also includes 3 drains coming from Haryana, which account for 36 per cent of the total pollution. Delhi Jal Board (DJB)

will construct 10 de-centralized STPs in this 22 km drain stretch."

"Over the 1.5 kms of the Najafgarh drain between Dwarka to Palam, four drains emerging from different areas meet the Najafgarh. The DJB treats water from two drains through its Dwarka STP and for the remaining two drains, the Board will soon construct a de-centralized STP," he stated.

"Sewage in the Najafgarh drain flows for about 26 km between Palam to Zakhira, and over this stretch, 39 other small and big drains come and meet the Najafgarh drain. The water of 20 drains is treated in the Nilothi STP present. The Board has a plan to connect and treat two drains through the Najafgarh and Dwarka STPs, and 13 drains of the sewer network through the Nilothi STP. The construction of de-centralized STPs is also proposed by the DDA to treat the water of the two drains present," he said.

"The total length of Najafgarh drain between Zakira to Transport Nagar is more than 8 km and over this stretch, 46 different drains come and meet the Najafgarh Drain here. Out of these, 17 drains are dry. 7 drains are treated at the Rithala STP and 3 drains at Coronation Pillar STP. Delhi Jal Board plans to upgrade its STP and treat 5 drains at Rithala STP and 13 drains at Coronation Pillar STP through sewer lines," Sisodia added.

Women's rights activist, SEWA founder Ela Bhatt passes away

Ahmedabad: Renowned women rights activist and founder of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Ela Bhatt passed away on Wednesday due to age-related ailments. She was 89.

"It is with profound grief that we announce the passing away of our beloved and respected founder, Smt. Elaben Bhatt, a pioneer in advocating for women workers' rights, we

strive to carry her legacy forward," SEWA Bharat tweeted.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also condoled her death. "Sad to know about the death of Elaben Bhatt. She will be remembered long for her work for the promotion of women empowerment, social service and education among the youth. Condolences to her family members and admirers," Modi tweeted in Gujarati.

Rehab project started by Sheila, Modi taking credit, says Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday alleged a six-year delay and 68-per cent cost escalation in the construction of 3,024 flats for Economically Weaker Sections as part of a slum rehabilitation project in Kalkaji. The project will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday evening.

Congress spokesperson

Supriya Shrinete said in a press conference that the project was planned and started by the Delhi Government headed by Sheila Dikshit. The BJP is taking credit for her work, she said.

Subhash Chopra, former urban development minister, said the project was the "brainchild" of the Congress and Sonia Gandhi.

"You can see full-page advertisements about the inauguration of the scheme with the beaming face of the prime minister. Modiji is fond of ribbon cutting but this in-situ rehabilitation project was launched by then chief minister Sheila Dikshit on September 18, 2013," Shrinete said. The first phase with 3,024 flats started in 2013 and was scheduled to be completed in 2016.

"The first phase to be inaugurated by the prime minister has been completed after a delay of six years and its cost has gone up 68 per cent. The first phase cost increased from Rs 206 crore to 345 crore due to the delay," Shrinete claimed.

Delhi gas chamber: Union Min; CM unveils...

From Page 1

He also urged the people not to burn wood or coal and also urged the residents' welfare associations to provide electric heaters to its security guards so that they are not forced to burn wood or coal to escape the cold.

Delhi's air quality was in the "very poor" category on Wednesday morning a day after the air quality index (AQI) jumped to the "severe" zone for the first time this season pushing the national Capital into a pollution emergency.

Rai said the Delhi Government will run a special drive at the 13 pollution hotspots in Delhi, including Narela, Anand Vihar, Mundka, Dwarka, Punjabi Bagh, among others. "Fire tenders will be deployed at these places to sprinkle water," he said.

NCPCR Chairperson Priyanka Kanoongo has also written to the chief secretary and strongly recommended

considering appropriate action. He has urged the Delhi Government to consider shutting schools in the interest of the children till air quality in the national Capital improves.

Taking note of the construction and demolition ban in Delhi, the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that construction workers will receive a financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per month from the Delhi Government during the time construction activities are prohibited in the national Capital.

"Construction activities have been stopped across Delhi in view of pollution. I have directed Labour Minister, Manish Sisodia, to give Rs 5,000 pm as financial support to each construction worker during this period when construction activities are not permitted," he tweeted.

Later in a statement, the Delhi Government said that it will deposit Rs 5,000 in the

Morbi bar protests, says none will defend...

From Page 1

The association's decision was opposed by lawyer Hamza Lakdawala, who said it was acting like a khap panchayat. "Bar associations exist to uphold the rule of law and to ensure that advocates can discharge their professional duties without fear of victimisation. They stand for the law and for lawyers.

Far from that, the Morbi Bar Association is acting like a lawless mob or a khap panchayat," she tweeted. Chief Judicial Magistrate M J Khan

on Tuesday remanded four of the arrested accused -- two managers of the OREVA Group and two sub-contractors who had repaired the bridge -- in police custody till Saturday.

The court remanded five other arrested men, including security guards and ticket booking clerks, in judicial custody as police did not seek their custody.

Police had on Monday booked the nine persons under Indian Penal Code Section 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder).

PM inaugurates 3,024 flats for...

From Page 1

Under the Kalkaji Extension Project, in-situ Slum Rehabilitation of three slum clusters—Bhoomiheen Camp, Navjeevan camp, and Jawahar camp located at Kalkaji is being taken up in a phased manner.

The project has four building blocks having still and 14 storey Reinforced Concrete Cement (RCC) framed structure. The carpet area per flat is 25 square meter having two rooms, kitchen, toilet and bathroom with all civic amenities.

The flat is finished with vitrified floor tiles, ceramics tiles, Udaipur green marble counter in Kitchen etc. The authority is

allotting these flats to JJ Dwellers at a symbolic contribution of Rs 1.42 Lakh, including maintenance cost of Rs 30,000 for five years, on leasehold basis with a lock in period of 10 years. The beneficiaries are paying only 10 per cent of the cost of the construction.

Under the first phase, 3,024 EWS flats at the nearby vacant commercial center site have been constructed. The Jhuggi Jhopri site at Bhoomiheen Camp will be vacated by rehabilitating eligible households of Bhoomiheen camp to the newly constructed EWS flats.

Post vacation of Bhoomiheen campsite, in Phase II, this vacated site will be utilised for rehabilitation of Navjeevan Camp and Jawahar Camp. "Phase I of the project has been completed and 3,024 flats are ready to move in. These flats have been constructed at a cost of about Rs. 345 crore and are equipped with all civic amenities including finishing having been done with vitrified floor tiles, ceramics tiles, Udaipur green marble counter in kitchen, etc. Public amenities have also been provided. The allotment of flats will provide the people ownership title as well as a sense of security," the statement added.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I KAUSHALYA HUSSEIN QARWASH D/o NARAYAN RAM R/o WZ-1369, Second Floor, Near Transformer, Nangal Raya, Delhi -110046 have embraced HINDUISM and renounced ISLAM with effect from 13 Dec., 2015.

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Thursday, 10th November, 2022, inter-alia, to consider and approve the Un-Audited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter ended on 30th Sept. 2022.

The information contained in this notice is also available on the Company's website www.cubel90.com as also on the website of the Stock Exchange viz. BSE Limited - www.bseindia.com.

For Cubical Financial Services Limited
Sd/-
Place: New Delhi (Ashwani Kumar Gupta)
Date: 02-11-2022 Managing Director

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mohd. Iqbal S/o Nawab Ahmad R/o 360/168A Second Floor Gali No.15 Gaffar Manzil Jamia Nagar Okhla New Delhi -110025 have changed my name Mohammad Iqbal Ansari to Mohd. Iqbal For all future purposes.

PD(90186)A

I Anisha D/O Sh. Mahesh Chandra R/O 2A/20, Sector II, Peshwa Road, Gole Market, New Delhi-110001 have changed my name to ANISHA POKHRIYAL for all future purpose.

PD(90187)C

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, BHOPAL
Water Work Department
Municipal Corporation Rest House, Shyamla Hills, Bhopal
Ph. No. 0755-2701669

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

Online tenders are being invited for the following work from the appropriated firm that Registered in the office of Madhya Pradesh (Central Registration Cell). The tender documents can be obtained online on the website <http://mptenders.gov.in> as per Key Dates in the Notice published on the above website and detailed information can also be seen on website <http://mptenders.gov.in>

Corrigendum for this NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers. Corrigendum regarding correction can be seen on the website <http://mptenders.gov.in>

S. No.	NIT No./ Call No.	Tender ID.	Details of Work	Estimated Cost (INR)	Earnest Money (EMD)	Bid Submission End Date
1.	12/T.Sec./E.E/W.W.D./2022-23 First Call	2022_UAD_230363_1	PROVIDING, LAYING, JOINTING TESTING, COMMISSIONING, INTER CONNECTION and SHIFTING OF WATER SUPPLY DISTRIBUTION PIPE LINE AT KOLAR ROAD, ZONE-18	5,13,40,623.00	2,56,703.00	02.12.2022, 06:00 PM
2.	13/T.Sec./E.E/W.W.D./2022-23 First Call	2022_UAD_230364_1	PROVIDING, LAYING, JOINTING TESTING, COMMISSIONING, INTER CONNECTION and SHIFTING OF KERVA FEEDER MAIN PIPE LINE FROM BAIRAGARH CHICHLI BUS STOP TO SARVODHARAM BRIDGE AT KOLAR ROAD, ZONE-18	5,75,10,864.00	2,87,554.00	02.12.2022, 06:00 PM
3.	14/T.Sec./E.E/W.W.D./2022-23 First Call	2022_UAD_230360_1	PROVIDING, LAYING, JOINTING TESTING, COMMISSIONING, INTER CONNECTION and SHIFTING OF KERVA FEEDER MAIN PIPE LINE FROM HOLY CROSS SCHOOL TO BAIRAGARH CHICHLI, BUS STOP AT KOLAR ROAD, ZONE-18	3,21,18,215.00	1,60,591.00	02.12.2022, 06:00 PM
4.	15/T.Sec./E.E/W.W.D./2022-23 First Call	2022_UAD_230328_1	PROVIDING, LAYING, JOINTING TESTING, COMMISSIONING, INTERCONNECTION and SHIFTING OF WATER SUPPLY DISTRIBUTION PIPE LINE FROM KOLAR TIRAHA TO CANAL AT KOLAR ROAD, ZONE-07	2,69,48,738.00	1,34,744.00	02.12.2022, 06:00 PM

Executive Engineer (H)
Municipal Corporation, Bhopal
T.N. 801/022/023

ED summons Soren for illegal mining quiz...

From Page 1

"The PMLA investigation revealed that Mishra, who enjoys political clout, being the representative of the Chief Minister, MLA from Barhait, Sahibganj, Jharkhand controls the illegal mining businesses as well as inland ferry services in Sahibganj and its adjoining areas through his accomplices.

"He exercises considerable control over the mining of stone chips and boulders as well as installation and operations of several crushers, set up across various mining sites in Sahibganj," the ED had alleged after filing a prosecution complaint (charge-sheet) to A/c...in the name of Soren held with Bank of India, Sahibganj."

Among other items seized by the ED include "one yellow

colour file marked as April 2019 to June 2022 having all bank details of Soren" and his family members, the agency said in the charge sheet.

The ED has conducted as many as 47 search operations and seized cash worth Rs 5.34 crore, froze bank balances worth Rs 13.32 crore, seized an inland water vessel worth Rs 30 crore apart from five stone crushers, two trucks and two AK 47 assault rifles (these weapons were later claimed by Jharkhand police as its own) till now, the ED had said.

Some banking documents and cheques that purportedly bore the name of the Chief Minister were also recovered from the searched premises, officials had said.

The action was initiated after the ED filed a case under the PMLA against Mishra and others in March, alleging that the former "illegally grabbed or amassed huge assets in his favour"

It took cognisance of a State police FIR filed against Mishra at Barharwa police station in Sahibganj district

SC rejects plea...

From Page 1

The CJJ rejected the argument and asked the petitioner to present the case.

The plea also alleged that Justice Chandrachud took up a case related to his son's client and passed an ex-parte order without issuing notice to the respondents, including the State Government. This issue had already been highlighted by one RK Pathan by way of a complaint to the CJI and the President of India, the plea pointed out. Earlier, Pathan's allegations by publishing the letter against Justice Chandrachud were condemned by many Bar Associations.

The plea, besides seeking action of contempt of court and other criminal action against Justice Chandrachud, sought a direction to the Central Government to refrain from appointing him as the CJI. By dismissing the petition after a five-minute argument, the apex court said that judicial orders passed by a judge cannot be grounds to challenge his appointment. "You cannot argue or make such points here," Justice Bhat said.

Share of farm fires in PM2.5 pollution rises to 32%

Indian Agricultural Research Institute reported 3,634 stubble burning cases in Punjab on Nov 2, highest so far

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The share of stubble burning in Delhi PM2.5 pollution rose to 32 per cent on Wednesday, the highest this year so far, amid raging farm fires in Punjab and favourable conditions for transport of emissions to Delhi- National Capital Region (NCR).

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) reported 3,634 farm fires in Punjab on Wednesday, the highest this year so far. The number stood at 1,842 on Tuesday, 2,131 on Monday, 1,761 on Sunday, 1,898 on Saturday and 2,067 on Friday.

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), a forecasting agency under the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, said the share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution increased to 32 per cent due to favourable transport-level wind speed.

Transport-level winds blow in the lowest two layers of the atmosphere—the troposphere and stratosphere — and carry smoke from farm fires to the Delhi-NCR.

Moderately favourable surface-level wind speed (up to 8 kmph), however, did not allow rapid accumulation of pollutants, meteorology experts said.



A gardener works at the lawns of India Gate amid low visibility due to a thick layer of smog, at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI Photo

Farm fires accounted for 14 per cent of the PM2.5 pollution in the national Capital on Tuesday, 22 per cent on Monday, 26 per cent on Sunday and 21 per cent on Saturday, according to SAFAR.

PM2.5 are fine particles that are 2.5 microns or less in diameter and can travel deep into the respiratory tract, reaching the lungs and entering the bloodstream. The Commission for Air Quality Management

(CAQM) had last week said the increased incidents of stubble burning in Punjab this year "is a matter of serious concern".

Along with unfavourable meteorological conditions, paddy straw burning in adjoining States is a major reason behind the alarming spike in air pollution levels in Delhi-NCR in October and November. Farmers set their fields on fire to quickly clear off the crop residue before culti-

vating wheat and vegetables.

According to the IARI, Punjab reported 71,304 farm fires between September 15 and November 30 last year and 83,002 farm fires in the corresponding period in 2020. Last year, the share of farm fires in Delhi's PM 2.5 pollution peaked to 48 per cent on November 7.

According to an analysis by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, people in the national Capital breathe the worst air between November 1 and November 15 —the period when stubble burning peaks.

Providing incentives to farmers to stop stubble-burning

Centre didn't aid Delhi Govt's plan: Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai blamed the BJP-led Centre for air pollution in the national Capital saying the Centre did not support the State Government's plan to provide incentive to farmers for not burning crop residue.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said there should be no politics on the issue of farm fires and no FIRs against farmers for setting fire to crop residue. "Don't do politics on the issue of pollution. Pollution is not only in Delhi and Punjab, it is in the entire North India.

"Don't abuse the farmers. Don't file FIRs against them. People of Punjab and Delhi are taking all steps at their level. The Centre will have to come forward and work out a solution with all the State Governments," he tweeted.

Talking to a Twitter, Rai added, "The Central Government of the BJP should support the farmers for the solution of stubble, not abuse. BJP first increases pollution and then does politics on it, while the Delhi Government is doing everything possible to reduce pollution." "Everybody

is asking the same question — why has stubble burning not reduced despite AAP being in power in Delhi and Punjab? Stubble burning has not reduced because the Centre has denied support," Rai said.

He alleged that the BJP was blaming farmers for air pollution because they protested against the farm laws introduced by the Centre in 2020.

Farmers are forced to burn stubble in Punjab because the BJP-led Centre did not support the State Government's plan to provide a cash incentive to them for not burning the crop residue, the AAP leader said.

Rai slammed the BJP saying it opposed the ban on fire-crackers, stopped the implementation of the "Red Light on Gaadi off" campaign and is now violating the ban on polluting activities in the Capital.

"I am amazed that the BJP has stooped so low for politics. Don't they know that the GRAP has been implemented in Delhi? Don't they read newspapers?" he asked.

The Delhi and Punjab Governments jointly sent a proposal to the Centre in July to help them give cash incentives to farmers in the agrarian State for not burning stubble. According to the propos-



al, Delhi and Punjab would give Rs 500 each and the Centre would contribute Rs 1,500 per acre.

Farmers say a cash incentive can help them cover the cost of the fuel used in operating the machinery for the in-situ management of paddy straw.

According to Punjab Government officials, the Centre rejected the proposal, saying it has been providing subsidised machinery to farmers, such as happy seeders, rotavators and mulchers, for the in-situ management of paddy straw and that it does not have money to dole out cash incentives. "The Centre betrayed the farmers. I think they hate farmers because of the protests (against the farm laws)," Rai said. "The BJP is



blaming farmers for burning stubble... They want FIRs to be filed against them. They should stop abusing farmers, stop seeking revenge from them," he added.

The burning of agricultural waste in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, according to analysts, is one of the primary reasons for the rising air pollution in the region.

Cong, AAP spar over real-time pollution monitor

Unit not working, says Cong; all equipment installed, data by Nov 10, counters Delhi Govt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

The Delhi Congress on Wednesday said a facility to monitor pollutants and air quality in real time, which was supposed to become functional on October 20, is "yet to start operations", a claim the city Government termed as baseless.

The party's city president, Anil Kumar, who visited the centre, also alleged that "machines are still being procured at the supersite", despite the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaching "severe" in several parts of the national Capital.

The Delhi Government, in partnership with IIT-Kanpur,

has come up with a supersite, capable of monitoring various compounds, at Rouse Avenue to monitor air quality in real time and also make forecasts.

"The supersite that had to be made functional on October 20 to keep track on pollution is yet to start operations. It is still in the development stage and machines are still being procured," Kumar said.

Responding to the allegations, project in-charge Mukesh Sharma said equipment has been procured and installed. Real-time data will be shared with the public after November 10, he said.

The Delhi Government's Environment Department in a statement said the allegations levelled by the Congress are "baseless" and that testing of equipment at the supersite has been done.

"All equipment has been purchased for real-time source

apportionment study. It takes about two weeks for the internal validation of all data.

The process started about three to four days ago and it will take another week to complete it," Sharma said. "Data, including on pollution compounds and real-time AQI, and forecasting data will be available to the public after November 10," he said.

Environment Department officials said a meeting was also chaired by the department's Principal Secretary on November 1 at the Delhi Secretariat in which the project in-charge gave a live demonstration on real-time data being tracked through various devices procured at the supersite.

"Some of the equipment for the facility has been imported. Technical teams of all the companies have installed and tested all these tools.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

Delhi BJP on Wednesday demanded closing of schools for physical classes and conducting online teaching to protect children in view of high level of air pollution in the national Capital.

The 24-hour Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city stood at 376, improving from 424 on Tuesday, which was the worst since December 26 last year when it was 459.

Lambasting the Delhi Government, BJP leaders said that the tall claim of Kejriwal Government to solve the problem of stubble turned out to be 'shallow' and Delhi is becoming a gas chamber due to failure of Punjab Government.



The BJP further said that Kejriwal Government has avoided criticizing the Bhagwant Mann Government in Punjab who is responsible for air pollution in Delhi.

Delhi BJP president, Adesh Gupta has written to Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena and raised the

demand and claimed that every seventh adult and every second child in Delhi is troubled by pollution.

"We are all concerned about the heavy pollution in Delhi which is increasing continuously in Delhi and the Delhiites are getting sick in large number. Delhi's pollution is reaching the very severe category," Gupta claimed.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) every seventh person in Delhi is suffering from respiratory disease and every second child is currently suffering from pollution-related diseases.

Sending children in open fields or outside the house in such severe pollution is making them sick, Gupta wrote in a let-

ter. "In such a situation, I request you that children should be allowed to take online classes from home for the time being.

This arrangement should continue till the pollution subsides, so that the children could be saved from falling ill. Prominent people of the BJP Delhi had also met the Chairman of the Air Quality Management Commission, MM Kutty, regarding this matter so that measures can be taken immediately to control pollution," Gupta added.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has said that the AAP Governments of Delhi and Punjab have completely failed in dealing with the pollution.

Kejriwal, who has accused Punjab of putting Delhi in trouble by burning stubble in the last years, is now not uttering a word on the stubble even though the incidents of stubble burning in Punjab have increased by 20 per cent, said Bidhuri.

This year, Kejriwal has claimed that the issue of the stubble burning will be taken care of with a chemical solution which will convert the stubble into soil.

Instead the cases of the stubble burning increased by 20 per cent. Delhi CM should answer why the farmers are still burning the stubble and where is the chemical solution they were talking about? Bidhuri asked.

5 of 7 rescued Uzbek women go missing

DCW issues notice to cops, pvt shelter home

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Wednesday summoned a senior Delhi Police officer after five of seven Uzbek women who were allegedly trafficked and sexually exploited in India went missing from a private shelter home.

The Delhi Police said that it was a "sensitive" matter and they will submit their reply to the DCW. The DCW has sum-

moned the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), New Delhi, seeking an action taken report in the matter. It said the seven women had alleged that they were trafficked from Uzbekistan to India and forced into prostitution. The women had managed to escape and get an FIR registered at the Chanakyapuri Police Station on August 28, the DCW said. Police said the women are in the age group of 18 to 25 years and a probe is underway.

"We have received the summons issued from DCW wherein New Delhi District Police has been asked to submit a reply and appear before the Commission on November 4 at

2 PM. "We will file our reply and abide by the directions of DCW. As the matter relates to trafficking of certain women and has been classified as 'sensitive'; hence, we can't share any more information at this point of time," said Hemant Tiwari, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi).

DCW chairperson Swati Malhi has also issued a notice to the private shelter home "to understand the circumstances under which the women have gone missing".

"I have issued summons to Delhi Police. I want them to produce these five girls before the Commission, ensure arrests

of all traffickers and recover girls' passports. Strongest action should be taken against such international sex racketeers operating in capital," she said. The matter came to light after the Commission received a complaint from the seven Uzbek women about an international trafficking and prostitution racket, officials said.

According to the DCW, the Uzbek women had alleged that they were brought to India on the pretext of providing jobs, but were forced into "prostitution" and "sexual slavery". They informed some of them were brought to Delhi via Nepal and some directly to India on tourist and medical visas.

CM opens Mahila Mohalla Clinics, 100 in pipeline

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday announced that 100 special mohalla clinics for women will be opened in the national Capital.

While inaugurating four 'mahila special mohalla clinics', Kejriwal said that these Mahila Mohalla Clinics have been developed as special primary healthcare facilities exclusively for women.

Only women and children under the age 12 will be treated at Clinics. All employees in these Clinics will be females and like normal Mohalla Clinics, all the treatment will be free. "The tests and medi-

cines provided to those who visit the facility will be free of cost. Generally in a Mohalla Clinic we provide 239 tests and apart from that whatever other tests that may be required for the women patients, those will also be made available," he said.

In the next couple of days, within the first phase of this project, we will be opening as many as 100 Mahila Mohalla Clinics.

After that based on their need, more such facilities can be opened," kejriwal. On an average, each mohalla clinic handles 116 patients a day and together a total of over 60,000 patients a day. "As far as I know this is the first such



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during the inauguration of a Mahila Mohalla Clinic, in New Delhi on Wednesday. Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Mahila Mohalla Clinic facility in the world and we are very

proud to open this for the public today.

Yoga classes to resume today, I'll pay: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP and the Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Vinai Kumar Saxena have "abruptly stopped yoga classes" in the city despite the trainers helping cure diseases of many citizens, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal alleged.

Kejriwal said yoga classes would resume across the national Capital from Thursday and that he would "pay the monthly wage" of all instructors.

"I had a meeting with the teachers from Delhi's yogashala. Yoga classes will resume across Delhi from tomorrow (Thursday). I assured them instructors that I would pay their monthly wages. Yoga training classes will not stop in Delhi," he said. He added that the matter "should not be politicised".

free of cost. A day will come when 17 lakh people of Delhi will take up yoga classes here and that is our target," he said.

The Dilli Ki Yogshala programme was started in December 2021 to provide free yoga classes to Delhiites. Under the programme, the Delhi Government sends a yoga teacher to a park or a community space for free if 25 people or more people take classes together.

Taking the issue to the Twitter, Kejriwal wrote in Hindi, "Just now I had a meeting with yoga teachers from Delhi's Yogashala. Yoga classes will resume all over Delhi from tomorrow.

The Delhi Government had alleged that the L-G Saxena's approval to continue the classes was still awaited. However, sources in the L-G's office said no file regarding the scheme had been received from the Government so far.

Delhi University opens its gates for new entrants



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University (DU) campus was abuzz with activity on the first day of the academic session on Wednesday, with excitement as well as nervousness among students as they turned the page to a new chapter of their lives.

From setting up help desks to guiding the freshers through the maze of lanes and bylanes, decorating colleges to distributing chocolates, student groups have taken it upon themselves to guide the skittish first-year students through the nerve-wracking first days.

While some fresher's were thrilled to be entering college, many were nervous. Several students were also accompanied by their parents. Rangolis decked colleges such as Kirorimal College and Daulat Ram College while the main gates were decorated with flowers. Posters welcoming the freshers were also put up in every corner. At Ramjas

College and several others, volunteers of the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) assembled at the gates and showered flowers on the freshers before guiding them to their orientation rooms. Nehal, who got admission in History (Honours) at Ramjas College, was accompanied by her mother on her first day on the campus.

"Ramjas was not my first choice but I am not complaining as it is a good college. This is the first time I am visiting the DU campus. Some of my friends have also taken admission in the college. This would be a great experience," Nehal, who goes by her first name, said.

Garima Rajput from Haryana, who got admitted into the Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), was elated and full of hope about her new journey. "This is a big day for me. I will be pursuing B.Com Honours. The college is well known. The campus is beautiful," she said.

All photos by Ranjan Dimri

India successfully test-fires BMD interceptor missile

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to shoot down any incoming hostile ballistic missile, India on Wednesday successfully conducted the maiden flight test of Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) interceptor AD-1 missile.

Once inducted into service, this indigenously designed air cover will negate any threat from Pakistan and China. The US, Russia and Israel are the other countries having similar capabilities.

The latest test with a large kill altitude bracket was carried at the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with participation of all BMD weapon system elements located at different geographical locations.

The BMD provides an air shield from any enemy missile besides aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The AD-1 is a long-range interceptor missile designed for both low



exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric interception of long-range ballistic missiles as well as aircraft. It is propelled by a two-stage solid motor and equipped with indigenously-developed advanced control system, navigation and guidance algorithm to precisely guide the vehicle to the tar-

get, officials said here. During the flight-test, all the sub-systems performed as per expectations and were validated by the data captured by a number of range sensors including Radar, Telemetry and Electro Optical Tracking stations deployed to capture the flight data. Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh congratulated the DRDO and other teams associated with the successful flight trial of AD-1.

He termed it as a unique type of interceptor with advanced technologies available with a very few nations in the world. He exuded confidence that it will further strengthen the country's BMD capability to the next level.

Chief of DRDO Samir V Kamat congratulated his team on the successful trial, stating that this interceptor will provide great operational flexibility to the users and having capability to engage many different types of targets.

The air shield is a multi-layered protection suite comprising Prithvi, Akash and Pradyumna missiles to take down any incoming missile. Part of phase-one of the BMD, these missiles are already deployed. The indigenous BMD air cover development programme was undertaken after the 1999 Kargil war in an effort to add more muscle to air defence capabilities of the country.

Ethanol price hiked to cut oil import, aid farmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday hiked the price of ethanol, used for blending in petrol, as it looked to raise the doping quantity to cut India's reliance on imported oil.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, raised the price of ethanol from all three varieties, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told reporters here.

The CCEA also approved a subsidy of ₹51,875 crore for phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilisers for the second half of 2022-23 as part of efforts to provide affordable soil nutrients to farmers.

The price of ethanol extracted from sugarcane juice was increased to ₹65.61 per litre, from the current ₹63.45 per litre for the supply year beginning December 2022.

The rate for ethanol from the C-heavy molasses route has been increased to ₹49.41 per litre, from ₹46.66 per litre currently, and that of ethanol from the B-heavy route to ₹60.73 per litre, from ₹59.08 per litre, said Puri. At present, 10 per cent ethanol is blended in petrol (10 per cent ethanol, 90 per cent petrol) and the gov-

ernment is looking to double this quantity by 2024-25. "We have saved about ₹40,000 crore in forex outgo from 10 per cent blending besides benefiting the farmers," he said, adding a pilot to start E-20 (petrol with 20 per cent ethanol) will start from April 2023 at select petrol pumps. The use of ethanol, extracted from sugarcane as well as broken rice and other agri produce, will help the world's third-largest oil consumer and importing country cut its reliance on overseas shipments.

India currently is 85 per cent dependent on imports for meeting its oil needs. As much as 452 crore litre of ethanol was blended in petrol during the

supply year ending November 30, 2022. For the next year, 540 crore litres procurement is being targeted with an eye to start larger volumes of blending. Government expects 12 per cent ethanol blending in petrol in 2023 at most places.

Puri said from 2023, the supply year will change from November to October instead of the present practice of considering the ethanol supply year from December to November.

This is to avoid sugar mills from holding ethanol stocks in anticipation of price revision. So, the 540 crore litres of ethanol procurement is the target for 11 months (December 2022 to October 2023), he said.

The CCEA approved nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) rates for P&K fertilisers for 2022-23 rabi season, an official statement said. The CCEA has approved a subsidy of ₹98.02 per kg for nitrogen (N), ₹66.93 per kg for phosphorus (P), ₹23.65 per kg for potash (K) and ₹6.12 per kg for sulphur (S), it added.

"Subsidy approved by the Cabinet for the NBS Rabi-2022 (from 01.10.2022 to 31.03.2023) will be ₹51,875 crore including support for indigenous fertiliser (SSP) through freight subsidy. This will ensure smooth availability of all P&K fertilisers to farmers during the rabi season at subsidized prices and support the agriculture sector, it said.



Nadda to release manifesto for Himachal tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda will release on Friday the party's manifesto for the Himachal Pradesh assembly polls where the ruling BJP is locked in a keen contest with the Congress.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to address at least two public meetings each on November 5 and 9. BJP and Congress have announced the list of their candidates following which both the parties are facing a crisis of 'rebel MLAs', denied tickets by the respective parties. The AAP is the third contestant in the poll fray in the hill state. According to various surveys, the victory

margin for either of the main rival parties in Himachal Pradesh would be thin and hence managing 'rebels' would be key for the BJP and the Congress. Party sources said Nadda would release the manifesto in Shimla on November 4. On Saturday, he will address rallies in Mandi and Solan, they said.

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi is also due to visit the key district of Kangra on November 3 which has 15 of the 68 assembly seats of the state. Himachal Pradesh is to go to the hustings on November 12. The counting of votes will be counted on December 8.

See how divyangs can be absorbed in civil services: SC to Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Wednesday asked the Centre to examine how people with disabilities can be put under different categories in civil services.

A Bench of Justices SA Nazeer and V Ramasubramanian said sympathy for disability is one aspect but practicality of the decision has also to be taken into account.

The top court shared an incident where a person in Chennai with 100 per cent blindness was appointed as civil judge junior division and the court interpreters got all orders signed by him and was later posted as editor of a



Tamil journal. "You please examine. They may not fit into all categories. Sympathy is one aspect, prac-

ticality is another aspect," the bench observed. At the outset, Attorney General R Venkatramani, appearing for

the Centre, submitted that the government was looking into the matter and sought time. The court said it would hear the matter after eight weeks.

The apex court had on March 25 permitted people with disabilities to apply for the Indian Police Service (IPS), DANIPS and the Indian Railway Protection Force Service (IRPFS) provisionally as their preferences in the civil services and asked them to submit their application forms in this regard to the UPSC by April 1.

It had passed the order while hearing a plea by the 'National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled' challenging the Centre's August 18, 2021 notification on the

ground that it has granted a "blanket exemption" to all categories of posts under the IPS, Delhi, Daman and Diu, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep Police Service (DANIPS) and IRPFS from the purview of reservation required to be provided thereunder.

The plea filed in the apex court has said no information is available in the public domain to be able to discern the rationale for grant of blanket exemption by the notification.

"It is submitted that the impugned notification granting blanket exemption to all posts in the IPS, DANIPS and IRPFS is unconstitutional, con-

trary to the statute, and is legally unsustainable for the following reasons: exclusion of PwDs (persons with disabilities) from occupying even administrative and other non-combat posts in the IPS, DANIPS AND IRPFS by way of the impugned notification is manifestly arbitrary," it had claimed.

The petition had sought quashing of the notification insofar as it grants a blanket exemption from grant of reservation to the PwDs in the IPS, DANIPS and IRPFS.

It had also sought a direction to the Department of Empowerment for Persons with Disabilities to reserve suitable posts for PwDs in the IPS, DANIPS and IRPFS.

ED attaches assets worth ₹10 cr of slain gangster Vikas Dubey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has provisionally attached 28 immovable properties worth Rs 10.12 crore of slain Uttar Pradesh gangster Vikas Dubey and his associates under the provisions of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The ED initiated money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by Police Station Chaubeypur under Kanpur Nagar district in Uttar Pradesh.

The ED initiated investigation with a view to identify the persons involved in the offence of money laundering and properties/assets acquired out of the illegal gains generated by the suspected persons.

During the investigation, properties worth Rs 10.12

crore purchased in the names of Vikas Dubey and his family members, Jaikant Bajpai and his family members as also his associates were identified, the ED said in a statement.

"These properties were derived from 'proceeds of crime' earned by criminal activities of Vikas Dubey. He along with his aides was involved in various kinds of offences like Organized Crime, Land Mafia, Corruption and embezzlement of the funds meant for Public Distribution System (PDS) etc.," the ED said in a statement.

The agency has also recorded statements of the accused persons. Most of the accused persons are currently undergoing judicial custody.

"The facts, evidence and records cogently prove that the above mentioned persons indulged in the commission of the offence of money laundering and have invested proceeds

of crime in immovable properties mostly. Now, on the basis of investigation under PMLA, 28 immovable properties worth Rs 10.12 crore located at Kanpur and Lucknow have been provisionally attached," the ED said, adding, further investigation in the case is in progress.

Dubey was killed in an encounter early on July 10, 2020, when an Uttar Pradesh police vehicle carrying him from Ujjain to Kanpur met with an accident and he tried to escape from the spot in the Bhauti area, the police had said. Prior to Dubey's encounter, five of his alleged associates were killed in separate police encounters.

The encounters came after eight policemen, including DSP Devendra Mishra, were ambushed in Bikru village in Chaubeypur area of Kanpur when they were going to arrest Dubey and were killed.

ICMR looks for help to reduce stillbirths

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Faced with the target to bring down stillbirths to single digit in the next eight years, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has sought research in the area to help it find ways for early identification of the risk factors and appropriate antenatal management to ensure better pregnancy outcomes.

The research body is also looking for proposals for usage of innovative technologies like artificial intelligence to ensure a better birth rate.

According to official statistics, 20 out of every 1,000 infants born in India do not survive to celebrate their first birthday. The data show that in 2020, the country's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) was 20, meaning that out of 1,000 babies born in the country, 20 die within 12 months of their birth.

IMR is number of infant deaths (under one year) per thousand live births in a given time period. It is widely

acknowledged as a measure of a country's overall health situation. However, in India, while the IMR situation has improved since 1971, when the country's IMR was an abysmal 129, it is still patchy across the country. In rural India, it is 31 while in urban areas it is 19.

"Stillbirths are a hidden tragedy that impacts millions of women and families across the globe daily. The stillbirth rate may be one of the indicators of the quality of a country's medical system. Stillbirth has mul-

tifactoral etiologies. Early identification of risk factors for stillbirth and appropriate antenatal management may reduce preventable stillbirths and improve pregnancy outcomes," said an official from the ICMR.

He pointed out that INAP now plans to bring down stillbirths to single digits by 2030. Hence, there is a need for research into causes of stillbirth and effective prevention and treatment of these causes. He said that ICMR expert group on Stillbirths has identified three key thematic areas - epi-

demiology, diagnostics and prevention and implementation research for health system strengthening.

While richer states like Kerala (IMR of 6), Mizoram (3), and Goa (5) have the lowest levels of IMR, less developed states like Uttar Pradesh (38), Madhya Pradesh (43), and Assam (36) are still scrambling to reduce infant deaths. In the northeastern states, Assam has the highest infant mortality rate of 36, followed by Meghalaya at 29, and Arunachal Pradesh at 21.



ARMY'S GO-GREEN INITIATIVE IN DELHI CANTT TATA Power to set up 16 EV charging stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army through its 'Go-Green Initiative' has collaborated with TATA Power, India's largest integrated utility, to set up 16 charging stations for electric vehicles (EV) at various locations in Delhi Cantonment.

The inauguration of charging stations was carried out on Wednesday by Lt General Dhiraj Seth, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Delhi Area in the presence of army officials and senior executives from TATA Power and TATA Motors.

All 16 charging stations set up in Delhi Cantonment can be used both for personal and official EVs in Delhi Cantonment. The Indian Army is providing suitable facilities for setting up EV charging stations along with arranging



upstream power infrastructure to energise the chargers.

Inaugurating the first EV charging station, Seth said this is a unique initial step by Indian Army and TATA Power towards implementation of Government of India's National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) and Indian Army's 'Go-Green' Initiative.

He further urged everyone to contribute towards these eco-friendly initiatives to maintain an emission free environment, a bounden duty,

mankind has towards future generations.

Virendra Goyal, Head-Business Development, TATA Power, said this is a one-of-a-kind collaboration between two of India's remarkable legacy organisations, one of which guarantees territorial security and the other is enhancing the nation's energy security with clean and green energy products and solutions.

"We are pleased to work with the Indian Army to set up convenient fast charging stations for EV users within the Delhi Cantonment.

To speed up the transition to clean mobility, we will keep working with like-minded institutions to jointly develop EV charging infrastructure in line with the Government of India's National Electric Mobility Mission Plan, he said.

To encourage consumers, TATA Power has made it easy

and user friendly to access the charging stations through its EZ charge mobile app, available on all platforms. It has a variety of features which provide a seamless EV charging experience to EV users including e-payment and location of nearest EV charging station.

The Army has decided to go in for electric vehicles, which includes sedans, buses and motorcycles, at locations designated as peace stations.

According to a new plan, few units at peace stations will see 25 per cent light vehicles (cars), 38 per cent buses and 48 per cent motorcycles switch from fossil fuel to electric mode.

Defence sources informed that various factors unique to the Indian Army - employability, remote locations and operational commitments - were considered to arrive at a definite time-bound road map.

Taiwan's 12-member delegation on green mission in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A 12-member delegation from Taiwan is in India on a green mission. Led by Lih Kuan Lee from China Productivity Center (CPC), Taipei, the delegation members comprising industry leaders, experts and service providers in green technology, climate

resiliency, energy efficiency, smart e-mobility, wastewater treatment and smart agriculture will during their eight-day tour visit various hospitals, effluent treatment plants, engineering institutions and other industries spread across Delhi, UP, Haryana and Tamil Nadu.

The aim is to provide innovative green solutions to these institutions and help them walk a clean energy path to curb carbon footprints in the wake of growing climate change threats. Lee said that based on her experience with

Indian industry, she saw numerous possibilities for Taiwanese green technologies to reduce energy consumption by 10 to 15 per cent while reducing an equal amount of Greenhouse Gas in India.

She was speaking at a meet here on Monday which was facilitated by National Productivity Council (NPC), an apex productivity promotion autonomous body under DPIIT, Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Technologies such as cloud connected e-mobility, power generating elevators, energy saving HVAC systems for buildings, Bionet and electro-dialysis for industrial waste water treatment, IoT based grain processing and storage are the focus areas identified by NPC with its Taiwan counterpart, Council's Director General Sundeep Nayak said.

The move is a part of the NPC and CPC of Taiwan's

ongoing collaboration with Taiwan under the framework of the inter-governmental Asian Productivity Organization (APO Tokyo).

The duo has been working together to give a boost to green productivity enhancement in Indian MSME through adoption of high technology products and processes in a range of sectors, explained Nayak.

The NPC India has been providing energy and environment solutions to Indian industry since the mid 1990's. Recently NPC has embarked upon a major task to help Industry meet sustainable goals, explained Nayak. The Modi Government has committed to reach its non-fossil energy capacity of 500 GW by 2030 and 50 percent of its energy requirements from renewable sources by 2030 in its journey towards Net Zero by 2070.

IN SHORTS

RUSSIAN NATIONAL GRANTED BAIL

New Delhi: A special court has granted bail to Russian national Mikhail Shargen, who was arrested by the CBI for allegedly hacking the JEE examination software which had benefitted over 800 aspirants. Shargen, 25, who was arrested on October 3, had allegedly tampered with the iLeon software, the platform on which the JEE (Main)-2021 examination was conducted and also helped other accused in hacking the computer systems of suspect candidates during the examination.

SC ISSUES NOTICES TO PNB, TWO OTHERS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notices to Punjab National Bank and two others on two separate petitions of the Serious Fraud Investigation Office in relation to a case of alleged siphoning off funds of Bhushan Steel Ltd. A bench comprising Chief Justice U U Lalit and Justices S Ravindra Bhat and Bela M Trivedi took note of the submissions of the SFO that accused were complicit in case related to fund embezzlement.

'WHY SECURITY NOT GIVEN TO MEDIAONE'

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre what the reasons were for denial of security clearance to Malayalam news channel 'MediaOne' and why those reasons cannot be disclosed to them. The top court said the essence of court proceedings was that anything relied upon by one party should be disclosed to the opposite party.

NON-REPORTING OF RAPE IS A SERIOUS CRIME: SC

New Delhi: The non-reporting of sexual assault against a minor despite knowledge is a "serious crime" and an attempt to shield the offenders, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday. The top court set aside the Bombay High Court's judgement of April last year quashing an FIR and the charge sheet regarding a medical practitioner who allegedly did not inform the authority about sexual assault against several minor girls at a hostel despite having knowledge about it.

India a bright spot in times of global crisis: PM

Building new India possible only with bold reforms, big infrastructure, says Modi at Karnataka investors' meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
Asserting that the world is "convinced about the fundamentals of Indian economy in these uncertain times", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said instead of trapping the investors in the "red tape", his Government has created "an environment of the red carpet for investment".
In the times of a "global crisis", India was being called a "bright spot" by economic experts and analysts across the globe and the world has huge expectations from the country, Modi said while

delivering the inaugural address at the three-day Global Investors' Meet, 'Invest Karnataka 2022', at Bengaluru via video conferencing.

"Building a new India is possible only with bold reforms, big infrastructure and best talent", he said.

Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Piyush Goyal, Pralhad Joshi and Rajeev Chandrasekhar were among those present at the function.

While pitching the state as the destination for investors, he said Karnataka also has the power of "double engine", with the same party in the government at both the State and Centre.

"Last year, India got about 84 billion (US) dollars of



record FDI. This is an achievement amid post COVID and war-related situations across the globe," Modi said.

Despite the impact of Covid-19 and war (in Ukraine), the whole world is looking at India with a huge expectation, he said adding that at the time of global economic uncertainty the whole world is confident that the

Indian economy's fundamentals are strong.
"This is the time of market fluctuation, but the expectation of 130 crore Indians is a guarantee of our domestic market's strength," the PM said.
India is continually working on its fundamentals, so that the economy becomes much stronger, he said. "The free trade deals that we have done

in recent times, shows the world our preparedness." 'Invest Karnataka' is said to be the first such large scale investors' meet in the country after COVID.

Claiming the country was suffering from a crisis at the policy level 9-10 years ago, Modi said, "There was a need to change our approach to bring the country out of it. Instead of pushing investors into the web of red tape, we created an atmosphere of red carpet for investment."

Rather than making new laws that may lead to more confusion, the government rationalised things, he said. "Instead of running the business ourselves, we prepared the ground for others to come forward to do business. We allowed youth to increase their capability."

Listing out the measures taken, and achievements made towards reforms, infrastructure, and talent or skill, he said only with the focus on investment and human capital, progress can be achieved.

Suggesting India's achievements in the renewable energy sector is an example for the whole world, the PM said steps taken by India in green growth and sustainable energy have attracted more investors.

Observing that Karnataka has the power of "double engine", Modi said that is one of the reasons why the state is growing at a fast pace in several areas and holds top position in ease of doing business and FDI inflow. The state also has about 400 'fortune 500 companies', and more than 40 of the 100 plus unicorns in the country, he said.

Five killed as speeding private bus hits several vehicles in Aligarh

PNS ■ ALIGARH/LUCKNOW

Five people were killed and over half a dozen were injured when a private bus hit several vehicles on a highway in Aligarh, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place on Tuesday night in an area between Jattari and Tappal townships of Aligarh, police said.

The deceased were identified as Madan Bhagat (62), Dinesh (25), Amar Singh (38), Santosh (22) and bus driver Jaiprakash (45), police said.

The private bus from Punjab suddenly lost control and hit a dozen vehicles, including cars, tempos and two-wheelers, police said.

While three people died on the spot, two succumbed to

their injuries in the hospital, they said.

The police and district officials rushed to the spot and initiated rescue operations.

According to the eyewitnesses, the accident occurred when the bus driver, who appeared to be in an inebriated state, hit a tempo parked on the road and some other vehicles.

The injured were rushed to district and private hospitals nearby, a district official said, adding they were stated to be stable.

In another mishap in Etawah, a woman was killed and several others were injured when a groom tried to take a test drive of a new car gifted to him at his tilak ceremony on Tuesday night.

'SC panel must probe bridge collapse'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday commented on the Gujarat bridge collapse demanding a Supreme Court monitored commission to inquire into the reasons of the mishap that claimed 136 lives in Morbi town of the western State.

"The Government should consider that this is an act of crime that has claimed so many lives... my condolences to the family members of those who died in the bridge collapse... but they (Gujarat government) have only arrested some ordinary people... the main culprits are clearly being spared," the Bengal Chief Minister said demanding "judicial inquiry into this incident... there should be a Supreme Court monitored commission to look into the matter so that the real culprits are brought to book... these people should be given exemplary punishment."

On whether she would say anything about Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was visit-



ing Morbi on Tuesday, the Bengal Chief Minister said she won't. "I will not say anything about the Prime Minister regarding this incident... as I am in his State... but I will definitely speak about the way the things are being handled here..."

At least 136 people died and many more went missing when a "just-repaired" cable bridge on which the victims had mounted collapsed. They had assembled at the area on the occasion of Chhath.

"There seems to be no coordination among the rescuers and no cooperation with

the people," the Chief Minister said adding "some inexperienced people have been sent there to conduct the rescue and rehabilitation work," Banerjee said adding "it is a clear case of negligence because "those in the Government were busy in election campaigns... in fact the bridge was hastily opened without verifying its fitness

Won't allow CAA in Bengal: Didi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said that she would not allow any CAA type action in Bengal. Close on the heels of the Centre deciding to grant citizenship to the non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan --- presently living in two Gujarat districts of Mehsana and Anand --- Banerjee said "we will not allow in Bengal what is happening in the name of citizenship in Gujarat."

She said that decision to provide citizenship --- to the

for electoral reasons... politics is not everything... they should keep in mind that people's life is more important than politics."

Wondering why the central agencies would not be sent to investigate the matter Banerjee said, "now I will ask why the ED and CBI will not be sent to investigate the incident?"

non-Muslim migrants in Hujarat districts taken --- by the Centre was aimed at elections. "It is nothing but an electoral ploy," Banerjee said while leaving for Tamil Nadu to attend a family function at the residence of Bengal Governor La Ganeshan.

"They are doing it for polls... we vehemently oppose this move... this is a political move to serve narrow interests and to divert attention from the real issues that the government is facing in Gujarat," Banerjee said. Gujarat is going to polls in a few months from now.

Governors in non-BJP States out to subvert democracy: Vijayan

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Even as he warned Governor Arif Mohammed Khan against trespassing into the powers of the elected government in the State, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in a no-holds barred attack on the Centre charged that governors in non-BJP ruled States were out to subvert the democracy and derail the elected governments.

Inaugurating the first-ever people's collective against Governor Arif Mohammed Khan at Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday, the chief minister alleged that the Governor was under an illusion that he was above the judiciary. "If he feels that he is the most powerful person in the State, let him think so. But who cares for him? Who bothers about him? It was the democratically elected government in Kerala that appointed him as the



Chancellor of the Universities in the State. By insulting the Universities, the Governor has brought down the dignity of his chair," said Vijayan in his address to the first ever collective of this kind in Kerala against a Governor.

The chief minister said that it was his government which transformed the higher education sector in the State. This has upset the Sangh Parivar which had wanted to take over the universities in the country to manipulate the thought process of the youth, said Vijayan. "The Sangh Parivar and the RSS know well that the BJP would not be able to win any election in the

future. So they want to indoctrinate the youth with their ideology. It will remain a pipe dream," said Vijayan.

The CPI(M) has unleashed a campaign against the Governor as well as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah across the State as part of the party's mission to expose the Hindu fundamentalism of the RSS and the BJP. The ongoing battle between the Governor and the chief minister over the former's directive to nine vice-chancellors in the State to tender their resignations in the backdrop of the Supreme Court ruling has annoyed the CPI(M). Though the apex court ruling was against M S Rajasree, the vice-chancellor of the Kerala Technical University, whose appointment was in violation of the UGC norms, the Governor is of the view that all other vice-chancellors in the State owned universities were handpicked and

appointed in the same pattern without following the guidelines issued by the UGC.

The SFI, the students' wing of the CPI(M) has declared that it would not allow the vice-chancellors appointed by the Governor to set foot in the campuses. Sources close to the Governor told The Pioneer that steps were underway to issue show cause notices to the eight vice-chancellors asking them to furnish replies stating why the salary and perks drawn by them during their tenure should not be forfeited. "The Governor is of the view that the appointment of all these eight vice-chancellors are void ab initio (null and void from the beginning) and hence they are not eligible to get salary or allowances," said a close aide to the Governor.

With Wednesday's turn of events, it is almost certain that the ties between the Governor and the CPI(M) would not be cordial again.

Customs clearance with fake papers: 6 convicted

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Nineteen years after the crime was committed, a Special Court on Wednesday sentenced six persons --- comprising five Customs officials and a private person --- to rigorous imprisonment for varied periods ranging from six months to seven years and imposed a fine of more than Rs 6 crore on them for clearing 38 consignments of fabrics under duty EOU duty-free scheme using forged documents.

The Special CBI Judge, Mumbai sentenced one Taufiq Hazi Gaffar to undergo seven years' Rigorous Imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs. 5.3 crore, while Vinayak M Bhende, the then Assistant Commissioner, EOU Section, Customs awarded two years' RI and fine of Rs. 20 lakh



Similarly, Vinay Kumar, the then Appraiser, EOU Section, Customs was awarded one year RI with fine of Rs. 5 lakh; while the court sentenced Maqsood Abdul Karim Bakali to undergo one year RI with fine of Rs. 25,000, Rafique Khandia to undergo six months RI with fine of Rs. 15,000 and Rouf Abdul Aziz Janoo to undergo six months RI with fine of Rs. 6,000.

The court found all the six guilty of causing huge loss to the Government exchequer.

On June 28, 2003, the CBI had registered the instant case based on a complaint from Additional Commissioner of

Customs, Special Intelligence & Investigation Branch, Mumbai against a Private Company & others including its Directors and unknown officials of Customs & Central Excise.

The Prosecution's case was that the accused were found instrumental in clearing 38 consignments of fabrics under duty free 100% EOU Scheme by submitting forged procurement certificates. The allegation was also that the accused had submitted forged procurement certificates valued at Rs. 4.15 crore on which Customs Duty exemption of Rs. 4.25 crore was availed.

The complainant had also alleged that the goods which were imported duty free, were diverted to local market, and its proceeds were misappropriated resulting in a huge loss to the state exchequer.

Rajnath urges Navy to focus on futuristic capability

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With China rapidly enhancing its naval capabilities and flexing its muscle in the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday urged the Navy to maintain focus on futuristic capability development for effectively overcoming emerging challenges in the maritime domain.

He made this assertion while interacting with the Naval top brass during the ongoing commanders' conference here and appreciated the Navy for the efforts towards indigenisation and innovation in the recent years.

The defence minister commended the Navy for maintaining a high operational tempo towards ensuring secure seas for national security and prosperity. He congratulated the Navy for successful commissioning of INS Vikrant, India's first indigenously designed and constructed aircraft carrier and adoption of a new naval ensign, shedding vestigial linkages to our colonial past, officials said.

Rajnath appreciated the Navy for evolving into a 'Combat-ready, Credible, Cohesive and Future Proof' force of the country. He also emphasized the importance of 'Whole of Nation' approach towards overcoming the nation's security challenges.

China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific and strategically important Indian Ocean is among the important issues in focus during the conference here which started on Monday.

The naval top echelon will take stock of the operational

readiness to deal with this emerging challenge from China and review the progress of warship building schedule.

The conference held twice a year serves as a platform for naval commanders to discuss important maritime matters and the military-strategic level through an institutionalised forum.

Due to the dynamic and fast-paced developments in security imperatives in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as well as in other parts of the world, the Conference has its own significance and relevance, officials said.

Amongst many issues to be discussed, the Chief of the Naval Staff, along with other Naval Commanders will review major Operational, Materiel, Logistics, Human Resource Development, Training and Administrative activities undertaken by the



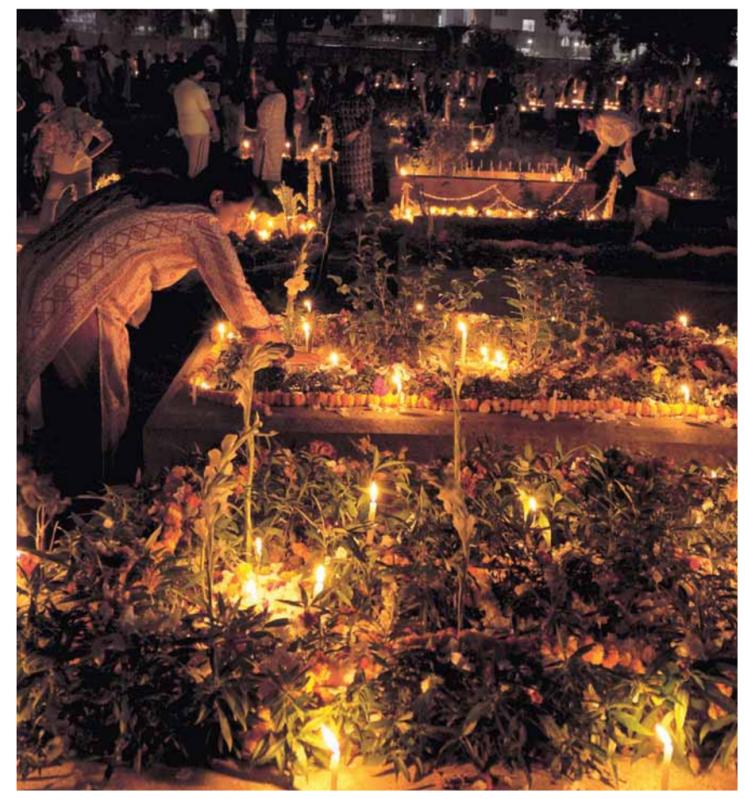
Indian Navy in the last few months and further deliberate upon future plans for important activities and initiatives, they said. The conference will also dwell upon the dynamics of the geostrategic situation of the region and the Navy's readiness to deal with the same.

The Navy has focused on being a combat ready, credible and cohesive force with a future-ready outlook and continues to assiduously execute



its mandate. The Indian Navy has witnessed significant growth in its operational tasking over the years in consonance with India's rising maritime interests.

Indian Navy's standing as the 'Preferred Security Partner' has also grown concomitantly in recent times. Indian Navy is poised to counter all maritime security challenges emerging due to uncertain geo-strategic situations in IOR and beyond.



Christians pray and visit the graves of their loved ones at a cemetery on All Souls' Day, in Kolkata on Wednesday. PTI

Chawl case: Order on Raut's bail on Nov 9

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Special Court will announce its order on November 9 on the bail application of Shiv Sena leader and MP Sanjay Raut in a money laundering case linked to alleged Rs 1,034 crore Patra Chawl redevelopment scam.

Special judge MG Deshpande reserved his order on the bail pleas of Raut and his aide Pravin Raut, who is a co-accused in the case.

Queried by the ED if the Judge would pronounce his orders on both the bail applications together, the Judge said that since it was ED's case that the money flowed from Pravin's account to Raut's, it was important that he decide the latter's bail plea first.

"It is your case that percolation of money is from there. So unless Pravin's case is decided I cannot decide Sanjay Raut's bail," the judge told the ED's counsel Ashish Chawan.

The judge went on to say that he would try to pronounce orders on both the bail pleas on November 9. Raut's arrest came nearly



two months after the investigating agency attached provisionally properties worth Rs 11.15 crore belonging to three persons, including his wife Varsha Raut, under the PMLA in a case relating to the alleged irregularities in the Patra Chawl redevelopment project in Mumbai.

PUBLIC NOTICE
ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice Sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Kiran International, Anita Chauhan, Raj Kumar Chauhan, Anita Chauhan, 832, Pocket 1, Radhika Apartment, Sector-14, Dwarka Delhi. A/c No:- 025005500902	Dda LIG Flat- 832, Third Floor Phase-II, Grp-3, Pocket-1, Radhika Apartment Sector-14, Dwarka Delhi	18-Oct-2022 Rs. 18,57,034/-	27-07-2022

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date : November 03, 2022
Place : Delhi/ NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE
ICICI Bank Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Nipun Bhardwaj/ Pure Palm Ltd/ Nidhie/ Achla Bhardwaj/ Abhishek Tubes Limited/ LBDEL00003329116	Flat No-wt-04-601, Tower-4, Sec-112, 6th Floor, Windchamt Village Chouma, Gurgaon, Haryana -122101/ October 28, 2022	March 25, 2021 Rs. 2,28,38,424/-	Delhi

The above-mentioned borrower/s (s)/ guarantor/s (s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : November 03, 2022
Place : Delhi/ NCR
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Safety abridged

PM's promise of implementing key findings of the inquiry into the Morbi mishap can bear fruit

The more we come to know about the collapse of the cable bridge in Gujarat's Morbi, the more outraged we get. Bureaucratic apathy in our country is usually matched only by administrative incompetence; in this case, however, the disregard for public safety was shocking even by the Indian standards. The contractors, Oreva Group, selected to do the repairs work were not qualified for the job, the prosecution told the court at Morbi. Instead of replacing the cable, they changed the flooring of the bridge, thus adding more weight to the bridge. By the way, it was not the first time that the contractors bagged the job; they got it earlier too, in 2007. The Oreva Group specialises in making watches and electrical and home appliances, and yet they repeatedly got to repair the 19th century cable bridge. Two Oreva managers and two sub-contractors have been remanded in police custody. There have been five more arrests, including that of security guards and ticket booking clerks. Prima facie, this seems ludicrous. Were the poorly paid guards and ticket clerks in decision-making capacity? They look more like sacrificial lambs. Meanwhile the lions and tigers haven't been touched—so far. Neither the promoters of the company nor any officials concerned have been arrested, despite the fact that their culpability is higher than that of guards and clerks.



The tragedy, in which 135 people were killed, has sent shock waves across the state. A couple of bar associations in Gujarat have pledged that they won't plead the cases for the accused. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the scene of the mishap. His office has promised a "detailed, impartial and extensive" inquiry. Also, it said that the key findings of "the inquiry must be implemented at the earliest." In our country, public safety is seldom on the agenda of politicians and thus of the administration; the approach is generally reactive. Decades ago, a school bus fell into the Yamuna; only after that, norms were formulated for the safety of vehicles carrying kids. But even today, we see school children unsafely commuting in cities. In June 1997, there was a fire, resulting in a stampede, in the Uphaar Cinema hall in Delhi, killing 59 people and injuring 103. Only after this, attention was paid to exits and other fire control measures in such situations. One can find any number of such examples. We hope that the Prime Minister's promise to have an exhaustive inquiry and execution of its key findings would result in a systemic change ensuring safety at public places, be it bridges, flyovers, roads, or parks. In this endeavour, the Central Government has to coordinate with state governments and municipal authorities. It also presupposes a meaningful engagement between all political parties. Sometimes rival politicians should also cooperate with each other. That would be the truest tribute to the people who died unfortunately at Morbi.

PICTALK



Devotees worship an Amla tree on the occasion of 'Amla Navami', at Durgiana temple in Amritsar

PTI

Netanyahu again?

Despite serious lacunas in his approach and style, Netanyahu is likely to return as Israel President

Israel's former premier Benjamin Netanyahu is all set to return to power. Likud, his right-wing party is likely to make it as exit polls predict its victory with slim majority. When it comes to choosing the leader Israel seems to be in no mood to experiment and would rather go with Netanyahu who is embroiled in numerous corruption cases and whose faulty policies led to hardships for the common man. But right now as the counting is underway and the election results will be out in a couple of days, all indications show that people have chosen political stability over good governance. This is Israel's fifth election in less than four years where Netanyahu dominated the scene as he had taken legal recourse to block Israel's political system since 2019. Exit polls showed that Benjamin Netanyahu was on course for a comeback as his block of four parties would secure 62 of the Knesset's 120 seats. Benjamin Netanyahu is on trial for corruption. He had to resign 18 months ago. Netanyahu who has a strong base among the right wing, and religious fervents has only split the country down the middle but then political stability matters. The record 12-year consecutive reign of Israel's longest-serving prime minister ended in June 2021 when centrist Yair Lapid managed to cobble an unlikely coalition government of liberals, rightists, and Arab parties. But the fragile alliance wilted in just a year.



Another big takeaway of this election has been the rise of firebrand West Bank settler Itamar Ben-Gvir and his ultra-nationalist Religious Zionism list which would be the third-largest party in parliament. Netanyahu has been counting on support from Ben-Gvir and fellow far-right leader Bezalel Smotrich. However, having Ben-Gvir, a former member of Kach, a group on Israeli and U.S. terrorist watch lists, and who was once convicted of racist incitement may make other allies uncomfortable. Netanyahu's comeback is going to be bad news for Palestinians as the chances of a political solution to the conflict are rather bleak under him. His politics is centered on crushing the Palestinians and even his campaign saw increasing violence in the occupied West Bank. "The people want security," Netanyahu said, "they want power, not weakness... they want diplomatic wisdom, but with firmness." Indeed people want all of that but they have limited choices and even fewer options when it comes to choosing the right leader.

No national mourning for Morbi victims

It is pathetic that the Government did not announce national mourning for Morbi bridge victims who died of administrative lapses



HASAN KHURSHID

In South Korea's Itaewon area of Seoul on October 29, 2022, tens of thousands of people had gathered to celebrate Halloween festivities, when a severe mishap of crowd surge took place, killing 150 people including 26 foreigners. South Korean police are investigating the cause behind the mishap. This was the country's worst disaster in years. An estimated 100,000 people had gathered in Itaewon for the country's biggest outdoor Halloween festivities since the pandemic began. The South Korean government had eased Covid-19 restrictions in recent months. South Korean President Hoon Suk Yeol declared a one-week national mourning period on October 30, 2022, and ordered flags at government buildings and public offices to fly half-mast after the horrific incident.

Just the next day after the South Korea disaster, a tragedy of similar nature occurred in Morbi city of India's Gujarat State, where on October 30, 2022, a century-old suspension bridge on the Machchhuriver collapsed around 6.30 pm; in which almost 130 people have been reported as killed. Victims were mostly women and children on the hanging bridge when it snapped, plunging them into the water below. The bridge was reopened for the public after being repaired for over six months by a private operator Oreva group on the eve of Gujarati New Year's Day is celebrated on October 26. The group entrusted with the repair work specializes in manufacturing electrical appliances, wall clocks, calculators and ceramic products, etc. Construction work however had not been its forte.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was camping in Gujarat during that time on a three-day visit to perform a variety of activities including the celebration of Sardar Patel's birth anniversary, launching the release of the Ahmedabad-Udaipur train, and addressing election rallies. Modi was a few kilometers away from the spot of the tragedy. Unlike, South Korea's declaring a week-long national mourning, the Central or State govern-



ments did not announce even one day's national mourning to mark the condolence for the victims. Instead of observing national shock, Modi celebrated Sardar Patel's birth anniversary just the next day after the great tragedies, wearing ceremonial attire.

In all cultures, mourning is observed to express the human capacity of retaining their emotional touch with the departed souls. For this purpose, concerned societies observe national days or days of mourning. Leaving aside the observance of mourning of the day/s of tragic occurrence, nations commemorated anniversaries of deaths and tragedies in memory of the victims. Flying a national flag of that country at half mast is a common symbol. During the Pulwama attack, 40 CRPF personnel had been killed in the terror attack but no national mourning was observed. In India, there has not been a history of observing mourning on the deaths of a large number of common people. However, there are numerous instances of observing the mourning of a single man labeled as a so-called VIP, even from other countries.

Recently, the government declared one day of mourning on May 14, 2022, as a mark of respect for the departed soul of



INSTEAD OF OBSERVING NATIONAL SHOCK, MODI CELEBRATED SARDAR PATEL'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY JUST THE NEXT DAY AFTER THE GREAT TRAGEDIES, WEARING CEREMONIAL ATTIRE

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of UAE. Again the government declared one-day mourning on September 11, 2022, as a mark of respect to Queen Elizabeth II, of the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland, who passed away on September 8, 2022.

This truly means that national mourning is a period of time to mourn the demise of superhuman beings like sovereigns or other members of a Royal family or a prominent power holder like the PM or President of any country. As such, any number of tragic deaths of common people write no mention on the canvas of time. Does our Constitution authorize us to make a visible distinction between Very Important Person (VIP) and Least Important Person (LIP)? After the collapse of the bridge, several videos have gone viral on social media criticizing Modi's insensitive behavior, especially with regard to his fetish of being photographed even in post-tragedy events, unmindful to what happened a few hours ago with large number of weeping and crying fellow citizens, besides those who lost their lives.

Modi is also being criticised for his hilarious video during the 2016 West Bengal

election when mocking the incident of a Calcutta bridge collapse he taunted Mamta Banerjee, "The fall of this bridge is an indication of chastisement from God to make you realize that like the fall of this bridge, one day she will destroy the entire Bengal."

Natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires or man-made disasters like transportation accidents, the collapse of buildings, bridges or stampedes, etc; are generally unexpected, sudden, and overwhelming. For many people affected by such disasters, there may not be outwardly visible signs of physical injury, but there can be nonetheless an emotional toll. Subdued by emotional disturbance, one might also become withdrawn from normal life activities, feel isolated, and disengaged from usual social activities. As such, the State's response of paying attention to the aggrieved survivors of the victims of great tragedy will act as a balm on their bruised emotions.

(The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FALSE CASES ARE CRUEL

Sir — The Punjab and Haryana High Court has held that filing false cases against the husband is cruelty. Truth and falsehood are sworn, enemies. Truth has only one face and falsehood has many. It is said courts are temples of justice. It is also said that temples are places for justice only and not sympathy. But the P & H High Court has shown in the case where justice lies and where sympathy lies. Courts have a very complex role to play. Decreeing a divorce plea filed by a man after holding that the act of the wife of filing a false and frivolous case against her husband amounted to cruelty, the court has granted permanent alimony of ₹10 lakh to the wife as a full and final settlement of all disputes between the husband and wife. The court has delivered justice to the husband and taken a sympathetic view of the wife who needed monetary support for sustenance.

Most divorce cases arise from the demand of the woman to live separately from her parents-in-law. Those who would not like to disown their parents for the sake of a wife will end up approaching the court. When the court is convinced that false cases have been filed, punishment should also be awarded to the person who has attempted to take undue advantage by filing false cases.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

ISRAELI ELECTIONS

Sir — Israel is the only country to have held a record, fifth election in four years. But will Israel get a stable government after the fifth election, for a full five years term? No one has the answer to this question. Because of this Tuesday's election, according to the exit polls, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu of the Likud party may become prime minister for the third time. But in all the surveys that have come, Benjamin Netanyahu is getting only 61 or 62 seats, including all his supporting parties, in the 120-seat Knesset (House). That is, once again only narrow margins. Which, after a bit of manipulation, can move around.

That is, it is clear that even after this

Floods a threat to Assam tea



Through your esteemed daily, I would like to bring this to notice that the rising level of Brahmaputra is a matter of serious concern to be looked over by the Assam Government. We all know that river Brahmaputra has brought many floods and destruction many a time. We all know that tea is the identity of Assam, as Assam is the only

supplier of Assam Tea in the World. So here, I would also like to bring this to notice that, nearly 15 tea gardens are situated near or around the river Brahmaputra, which was earlier used as a medium for easy transport of their Tea produce but not any more and the river is gulping tea lands in a huge mass.

The land of the tea gardens around it are reducing on a large scale. A tea garden lost almost 33% of its plantation land to the Brahmaputra. Also, flooding and water logging in the garden sections is a constant threat to the Garden Management and the workers living there as well. A few days ago our honourable chief minister had a look at the condition. We hope to see speedy action in this matter. The tea gardens of Assam are looking forward to a miracle to happen.

Neha Singh | Dibrugarh

election, stability in Israeli politics is not visible, far and wide. It is a matter of concern that Israel does not even have a written constitution. Instead, Israel has developed a system of basic laws and rights, which have been given quasi-constitutional status. It should be given the right to run power, not to the counting majority, but to the single largest party, so that the hassle of holding elections, again and again, can be avoided.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

CRUELTY AGAINST ANIMALS

Sir — It's terrific work by Mysuru cops that they recently filed FIR against the owner of the Great Bombay Circus for allegedly chopping off the wings of birds used in its acts. Further investigation revealed that the circus was employing animals for acts that were not approved by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), such as forcing dogs to walk sideways on their front legs on the edge of the ring and forcing birds to pull a tiny cart while another bird balances on it.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, which governs the use of animals in

performances throughout the nation, designates the AWBI as the required authority. The FIR was filed at the Nazrabad police station recently in Mysuru for the offense of maiming the birds, which is punishable under Sections of the Indian Penal Code seems to be a welcome move. Numerous AWBI inspections demonstrate that animal circuses are intrinsically cruel since the animals are kept chained or imprisoned in tiny, empty cages, refused access to veterinary care, proper food, water, and shelter, and denied everything else that is vital and natural to them. They are compelled to do perplexing, awkward, and often painful feats through physical abuse using weapons. Many exhibits stereotypical, routine behavior that indicates intense it's just not only Mysuru cops but this kind of barbarian work should be traced out by cops across the country so that cruelty against animals comes to an end.

Vijaykumar H K | Raichur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Rohith Vemula is and will remain a symbol of my struggle against social discrimination and injustice.



Congress leader

—Rahul Gandhi



We have won a huge vote of confidence from the people of Israel. We are on the brink of a very big

victory. Israel President

—Netanyahu

Rahul Gandhi has neither succumbed to communal rhetoric nor sensationalist politics. Given the situation of this country effort like Bharat Jodo is commendable!



Actor

—Swara Bhaskar



Arshdeep Singh... what a bowler. By his wrists, you can't figure out what he is going to bowl - If you

remember, Wasim Akram used to do the exact same thing. Arshdeep bowled brilliantly. Former Pakistan spinner

—Saeed Ajmal

The condition of BJP in Gujarat has become so bad that it has to take help of the biggest thug of the country. Media beware - all this drama is being done to divert media attention from Morbi.



Delhi CM

—Arvind Kejriwal

FIRST COLUMN

STROKE: TIMELY MEDCARE IS A MUST

Stroke can be treated but within first 3 hours



SHWETA TYAGI

This was just another day at our Emergency Department (ED) when we received a frantic call for an ambulance by a caller for his mother who had suddenly developed left sided weakness and slurring of speech at home while watching TV. The ambulance was soon dispatched and when we checked on the patient at home, she had symptoms suggestive of acute stroke. The son accompanied her and was devastated with our suspicion of paralysis. She could reach within one hour of having the symptoms.

After initial stabilization in the ED, brain imaging was done which confirmed the clot and stroke. Medication to break the clot, i.e., thrombolysis was initiated. She was discharged home after five days of stay in the hospital without any disability.

There are numerous other instances when the patients with suspected stroke do not get identified and don't reach the hospital in time. After the onset of stroke the clock starts ticking. Stroke is the leading cause of disability in adults and 87 per cent of all strokes are ischemic which occurs due to blockage in the blood flow of the brain by a clot.

Even though use of thrombolysis (breaking the clot) has been approved for treatment in acute stroke for over two decades yet only 11 per cent of patients are able to receive this treatment in our country. Stroke awareness is staggeringly low at 38 per cent globally and only 22 per cent as per Indian data.



Stroke can happen suddenly to anyone at any time. Hence, the call for action is for the people who are with the patient at that time to suspect stroke. Note the time of onset of symptoms and reach a stroke ready Emergency Department by the earliest. Stroke can be suspected if there is any loss of balance or sudden giddiness, sudden defects in vision, facial drooping or asymmetric smile, weakness of any arm or leg or slurring of speech.

BEFAST is a simple, easy to remember and reliable acronym to identify a stroke. Learn the warning signs and identify stroke; B for loss of balance, E for vision defects, F for facial asymmetry, A for arm or leg weakness, S for slurred speech and T for time to call for help.

An average patient loses around 1.9 million neurons with every passing minute when the stroke is untreated. Clearly, time is the brain. The window period is the first three hours after symptom onset when the medication to break the clot (thrombolysis) can be administered to stroke patients. In some cases this window period can be extended up to four and a half hours. Once the patient reaches the Emergency Department (ED) they are stabilized and shifted for brain scan. After confirmation of the clot, thrombolysis can be immediately started if there are no contraindications. This important intervention helps in reducing the disability by decreasing the progression of stroke and enhances the survival rates.

The present day dietary habits and sedentary lifestyle puts us at an increased risk and the average age for stroke here is around 15 years younger than developed countries which further makes it a huge burden. In the case of stroke considering the severity and the small window of treatment, this knowledge or the lack thereof can literally mean the difference in healthy life and disability thereafter. Being aware of symptoms facilitates early recognition and seeking emergency care promptly.

(The author is a senior consultant, Emergency Medicine, Paras Hospital, Gurugram)

Transformative MCD shows caring touch

Beyond the glare of media, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi has become a people-friendly civic body



SUMEET BHASIN

The first and the last contact of the people in their lives with a government department in the national capital is with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. At birth, the MCD makes people smile with hassle free birth certificates at a nominal cost in offices which are hygienic and manned by courteous people. The last contact for a person is also served with humane touch as the municipal corporation offices issue the death certificates. In between, the municipal corporations in the national capital are just other family members, taking care of the needs, as one grows to meet the demands of life.

Much has changed in the MCD beyond the glare of the mainstream media, while the people fixated with the social media could be unaware because people's money has not been spent on advertisements to do the marketing jobs to amplify the good works. In the last 15 years, the MCD has been retrieved from the den of corruption to which Congress had taken the local bodies to.

Delhi is a city of migrants, who run the economy of the national capital with their sweat. They work hard to chase their dreams. They live in dwelling units which may not match the luxury that they must have had in their ancestral homes. While the migrants toil hard day in day out, the MCD takes care of their children at its primary schools. In the last few years, the MCD schools have seen transformative changes, adapting to the activity-based learning to boost the educational outcome.

The MCD schools prepare the small children for life skills at their tender ages, with teachers who are highly skilled. Contractual teachers have been absorbed, and it has been ensured that all schools are provided with a good number of teachers, who are also institutionally encouraged to form bonds with the parents of the students. Some of the biggest parent-teacher meetings have been held at the MCD, which missed the attention of the mainstream media, because the children are mostly from the low-income migrants' family.

The children at tender ages see that their schools are solar-powered, and thus they are energy self-sufficient. The schools have been ensured to have smart classrooms. While the students engage in the activity-based learning with the involvement of the trained teachers, technological inputs are also employed, while utmost care is taken to ensure the nutritional needs of the children. This is the first caring intervention of the MCD in the lives of the people who build and run the national capital with their sweat.

It was also seen that the low-income and middle class of the national capital spend their spare times in the public parks. The MCD thought of their wellbeing, and also the need for their children for recreational activities. The MCD installed the



FROM THE PEAK OF 2017, WHEN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REPORTED OVER 9,000 DENGUE CASES, THE EFFORTS OF THE MCD WITH ITS GROUND WORKERS HAVE ENSURED THAT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL HAS NOT SEEN A MAJOR OUTBREAK OF THE VECTOR-BORNE DISEASE

(The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre)



open gyms in its community parks, which became hugely successful, and the Members of Parliament also came along to support the initiative. Now the open gyms in the community parks of the national capital see optimum utilization.

The Covid-19 pandemic had left devastating trails in the national capital. The hospitals were overstretched. The magnitude tested the existing capacity of the healthcare infrastructure. The challenge was also acute because the Mohalla Clinics by the Delhi government were found to have been deserted when the pandemic struck, because they were just the OPD centres. The MCD rose to the occasion, and converted its health center into Covid wards by adding beds. The exercise was done speedily, because the MCD was tuned in to meet the emergency with total response, including the provision of oxygen cylinders. The Covid wards created by the MCD took a great amount of the load when the big and small hospitals alike ran out of beds in the national capital during the second wave.

Hindu Rao Hospital of the MCD was at the forefront of meeting the challenges posed by the Covid-19. In fact, the municipal healthcare infrastructure has evolved to meet the full demand of any challenge, with all facilities ensured and maintained in best of the conditions, without any vacancies of doctors and nurses. Care has been taken to ensure that there is never a shortage of trained manpower and equipment at any of the

municipal healthcare facilities.

From the peak of 2017, when the national capital reported over 9,000 dengue cases, the efforts of the MCD with its ground workers have ensured that the national capital has not seen a major outbreak of the vector-borne disease. This was made possible with the help of the malaria inspector who was aided by a team of thousands of field workers keeping a close tabs at the premises in the national capital, while the insecticide sprayers minimised the scope of a large-scale outbreak of dengue. Besides, the municipal hospitals beefed up their fever wards with additional beds, while the healthcare personnel were on top of their jobs.

The MCD has also shown utmost sensitivity to the environmental concerns of the national capital by carrying out extensive plantations and also ensuring that the saplings which were planted grow well to serve the needs of the people. The community parks in the jurisdiction of the municipal corporation in the national capital now boast of greenery, which is playing a critical role at a time when the farm fires in Punjab have carpeted the national capital with smog and haze. The streets are well lined with trees.

The MCD is at the forefront of green energy adoption. The MCD streets are solar-powered. The municipal corporations have extensively installed the solar panels to harness the green energy. The erstwhile east municipal corporation alone had installed over 1.77 lakh LED lights on streets in

their jurisdictions. In fact the MCD in the last few years has shown much environmental sensitivity, and has significantly cut down the carbon footprints by eliminating the scope of emissions from various sources.

Crematoriums in Subhash Nagar, Green Park, Nigam Bodh Ghat have been provided with the CNG facilities, while the technology has also been utilised to ensure that the grieving people don't have to spend their valuable times in doing the paper works and other formalities, as such processes have been made online.

Yet, the MCD has much more to do and there are several challenges which must be dealt with firmly to ensure that Delhi is among the world class cities. Within the financial constraints, the MCD in the national capital has shown the leadership to meet some of the pressing civic issues.

The municipal corporations have now been unified and they will now work as a single unit. The move of the Congress government to create multiple civic bodies in the national capital was politically motivated. But the civic bodies rose to the occasion and demonstrated that they would not be distracted from their commitment to serve the needs of the people with care. In this endeavour the municipal corporations have excelled and they have several success stories which in the coming years need to be scaled up so that the good practices are institutionalized. That seems to be taking place in Delhi.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

YOUR FAILURE TO HEED LEGAL ADVICE ABOUT THE PROLONGED DETENTION OF MIGRANTS AT MANSTON HAD LED TO DANGEROUS OVERCROWDING
—SHADOW HOME SECRETARY, UK
YVETTE COOPER



ON NO OCCASION HAVE I BLOCKED THE PROCUREMENT OF HOTELS OR ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION TO EASE THE PRESSURE ON MANSTON
—UK HOME SECRETARY
SUELLA BRAVERMAN

GEAC nod to GM mustard has no scientific basis

Permissions to GM crops under pressure of foreign powers can cause huge damage to agriculture, environment, health

On October 18, 2022, a committee of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has once again recommended the introduction of DMH-11, a variety of GM Mustard. Earlier, in May 2017 also GEAC had given its green signal to the same variety.

But due to intense opposition from farmers and scientists, the government did not approve the recommendations of GEAC. It is being said that this variety has been developed by Prof Deepak Pental and is completely 'Swadeshi'. It is also being claimed that this GM Mustard will give 26 per cent



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

more yield. It is also being said that the production of edible oils in the country is extremely deficient, due to which the country is losing valuable foreign exchange in imports of edible oil. It is also being claimed that GM Mustard is safe for consumers, farmers and the environment.

But the falsehood of these claims is becoming clear from the fact that GEAC itself has imposed certain conditions while allowing GM Mustard. Thus, GEAC appears not to be convinced about the safety of this seed. There is no proof, whatsoever, about the safety of GM Mustard; and they want to avoid the responsibility of side effects by imposing conditions, that in future they can say that we allowed GM

Mustard only with certain conditions and since those conditions were not followed, they are not at fault.

There is no truth in GEAC's claim that DMH-11 is an indigenous discovery. In 2002, Proagro Seed Company (Bayer's subsidiary), applied for commercial approval for a similar construct that Prof. Pental and his team are now promoting as HT mustard DMH-11. Bayer's application at that point of time was turned down because the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) said that their field trials did not give evidence of superior yield.

As is well known the hybridisation of GM Mustard is achieved by means of the two genes barnase and barstar,

derived from a soil bacterium called *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens*. The bar-barstar-barnase gene is a patented technology of Bayer Crop Science, and Bayer is not a swadeshi company. This fact has been hidden and in future the Bayer company can demand payment in lieu of its intellectual property rights and the farmer of India will have to pay through his nose.

It is noteworthy that GEAC's claim of higher productivity about DMH-11 is not true as India's Mustard and Rapeseed Research Institute says that there are already varieties developed in the country, with at least 25 per cent higher yield than DMH-11. Need of the hour is that the government should promote these indigenous

hybrid non-GM varieties. It is worth noting that while testing the DMH-11, no test was conducted about its herbicide tolerance. When alert citizens and experts exposed this misdeed of GEAC, the committee imposed a condition that under no situation, any herbicide will be used by the farmers. Now since this variety is herbicide tolerant, naturally no government agency can stop the farmers from using herbicides, when herbicides are available in the free market. A parallel example in this regard is in front of us that although the herbicide named glyphosate can be used only in tea gardens and non-crop areas. But it is sold indiscriminately across the country and its total sales in

India are more than Rs 1,200 crore. Understandably, this act of GEAC is indeed immoral. Significantly, the world is grappling with ill-effects of different types of herbicides. Due to these herbicides, cancer is increasing like a pandemic in USA and other countries, where such varieties are being used, and the litigation against the manufacturers of these herbicides is also increasing continuously. It is worth noting that only in the USA, 1.40 lakh cases have been filed by cancer victims against Boyer, the company that makes Glyphosate / Roundup.

The worst part is that after the introduction of GM in food items in the country, there can be a huge adverse

effect on the food exports. Till now GM is not allowed in food items in our country. All the food items produced in the country are non-GM. This non-GM tag in the country's food exports enhances the acceptability of our food products in many countries including Europe.

Significantly, today India exports food items worth \$50 billion. The country cannot afford to disrupt these exports. Permissions granted to GM crops under the pressure of foreign powers can cause huge damage to agriculture, environment, health and exports. In such a situation, it is the responsibility of the government to protect the interest of the country by bypassing the recommendations of GEAC in this matter.

(The author is a Professor, Department of Economics, PGDAV College, University of Delhi)

RUSSIA CALLS VOTE ON UNFOUNDED UKRAINE BIO WEAPONS CLAIMS

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The UN Security Council scheduled a vote on Wednesday on a resolution that would establish a commission to investigate unfounded Russian claims that Ukraine and the United States are carrying out "military biological" activities that violate the convention prohibiting the use of biological weapons.

Russia circulated a 310-page document to council members last week alleging that this biological activity is taking place in Ukraine with support from the US Defense Department.

The document included an official complaint to the Security Council, allowed under Article VI of the 1972 biological weapons convention, and a draft resolution that would authorize the Security Council to set up a commission comprising the 15 council members to investigate Russia's claims.

Russia's initial allegation of secret American biological warfare labs in Ukraine, made soon after its February 24 invasion of its smaller

neighbour, has been disputed by independent scientists, Ukrainian leaders and officials at the White House and Pentagon. An Associated Press investigation in March found the claim was taking root online, uniting COVID-19 conspiracy theorists, QAnon adherents and some supporters of former President Donald Trump.

Ukraine does have a network of biological labs that have gotten funding and research support from the US. They are owned and operated by Ukraine and are part of an initiative called the Biological Threat Reduction Program that aims to reduce the likelihood of deadly outbreaks, whether natural or man-made.

The US efforts date back to work in the 1990s to dismantle the former Soviet Union's program for weapons of mass destruction.

In September, the 197 state parties to the biological weapons convention met at Russia's request on the activities at biological laboratories in Ukraine, but a final report said it wasn't possible to reach consensus.



Diplomats said it is highly unlikely that the Russian draft resolution will be adopted by the Security Council when it is put to a vote, expected late Wednesday afternoon. Approval requires a minimum nine "yes" votes and no veto by one of the five permanent members — the US, Britain, France, Russia and China.

Russia called a Security Council meeting on its claims last Thursday, which the United States and its Western allies vehemently dismissed.

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield called the meeting "a colossal waste of time" and rejecting Russia's allegation as "pure fabrications brought forth without a shred of evidence."

She said the claim is part of a Moscow "disinformation campaign" that is attempting "to distract from the atrocities Russian forces are carrying out in Ukraine and a desperate tactic to justify an unjustifiable war."

"Ukraine does not have a biological weapons program," she said. "The United States does not have a

biological weapons program. There are no Ukrainian biological weapons laboratories supported by the United States."

Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia accused the US of conducting work in Ukraine with deadly pathogens — including cholera, plague, anthrax and influenza — that couldn't be justified under the guise of public health.

He said documents and evidence recovered by Russian authorities suggested a military application.

Nebenzia told the Security Council that the Russian military during its time in Ukraine had recovered drones capable of spraying bioagents as well as documents that he said related to research on the possibility of spreading pathogens through bats and migrating birds.

Thomas-Greenfield countered that Russia's claims are "absurd for many reasons, including because such species, even if they could be weaponized, would pose as much a threat to the European continent and to Ukraine itself as they would to any other country."



Poland building wall along border with Russia's Kaliningrad

AP ■ WARSAW

Poland's defence minister said Wednesday that he has ordered the construction of a temporary barrier along the border with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.

The move comes as Warsaw suspects that Russia plans to facilitate illegal border crossings by Asian and African migrants.

Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak said the border needs to be secured in order for Poland to feel secure. He said he had authorised the construction of a temporary barrier along the 210-kilometre (130-mile) border. The work will begin on Wednesday. Poland's border with Belarus became the site of a major migration crisis last year, with large numbers of people

crossing illegally. Poland erected a steel wall on the border with Belarus that was completed in June.

Polish and other EU leaders accused the Belarusian government — which is allied with Russian President Vladimir Putin — of masterminding the migration in order to create chaos and division within the European Union.

Cambodia to send deminers to help train Ukrainians

AP ■ PHNOM PENH (CAMBODIA)

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has agreed to send deminers to help train Ukrainians in clearing land mines planted by Russian forces during their invasion, the Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday.

Hun Sen made the commitment to send trainers, in collaboration with Japan, during a telephone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday, the ministry said in a statement.

Cambodia became one of the world's most heavily mined countries during almost three decades of war that ended in 1998, causing great risk to civilians, especially in rural areas.

Since then, a large number of mines and other unexploded ordnance have been removed and destroyed, greatly reducing the number of casualties. Cambodian deminers have become among the world's most experienced, and



in the past decade several thousand have been sent under United Nations auspices to work in Africa and the Middle East.

Heng Ratana, director general of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, said in a Facebook post that after consultation with its Japanese part-

ners, his agency would send its first team to Ukraine in early December, and a second team may be sent in the first quarter of next year.

Zelenskyy welcomed the offer of deminers, and he and Hun Sen agreed to appoint ambassadors to each other's country, the ministry state-

ment said.

Several other countries, including the United States and Germany, have already provided Ukraine with assistance in demining.

In an unusual move for a nation that usually aligns itself with fellow former members of the socialist bloc, such as Russia

and China, Hun Sen has condemned Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, saying "Cambodia is always against any country that invades another country."

Cambodia was one of nearly 100 UN member countries that co-sponsored a resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Two of Cambodia's neighbours that were also in the socialist bloc, Vietnam and Laos, abstained. Hun Sen more recently condemned Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory, and according to the ministry statement, expressed concern over recent attacks on Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine.

New York-based Human Rights Watch, in a report in June, charged that Russia was using land mines "that are causing civilian casualties and suffering, as well as disrupting food production."

"Russia is the only party to the conflict known to have used banned antipersonnel mines, while both Russia and Ukraine have used anti-vehicle mines," it said.



Russia rejoins wartime deal on Ukrainian grain exports

AP ■ KYIV

Diplomatic efforts salvaged a wartime agreement that allowed Ukrainian grain and other commodities to reach world markets, with Russia saying Wednesday it would stick to the deal after Ukraine pledged not to use a designated Black Sea corridor to attack Russian forces.

The Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement that Ukraine formally committed to use the established safe shipping corridor between southern Ukraine and Turkey "exclusively in accordance with the stipulations" of the agreement.

"The Russian Federation believes that the guarantees it has received currently appear sufficient, and resumes the implementation of the agreement," the ministry said, adding that mediation by the United Nations and Turkey secured Russia's continued cooperation.

Russia suspended its participation in the grain deal over the weekend, citing allegations of a Ukrainian drone attack against its Black Sea fleet in Crimea. Ukraine did not claim responsibility for the attack, which some Ukrainian officials blamed on Russian soldiers mishandling their own weapons.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu informed Turkey's defence minister that the deal for a humanitarian grain corridor would "continue in the same way as before" as of noon Wednesday.

Erdogan said the renewed deal would prioritize shipments to African nations, including Somalia, Djibouti and Sudan, in line with Russia's concerns that most of the exported grain had ended up in richer nations since Moscow and Kyiv made separate agreements with Turkey and the

UN in July.

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said Monday that 23% of the total cargo exported from Ukraine under the grain deal went to lower or lower-middle income countries, which also received 49% of all wheat shipments.

Ships loaded with grain departed Ukraine on Tuesday despite Russia halting its support for the agreement, which aimed to ensure safe passage of critical food supplies meant for parts of the world struggling with hunger. But the United Nations, had said vessels would not move Wednesday, raising concerns about future shipments.

The United Nations and Turkey brokered separate deals with Russia and Ukraine in July to ensure Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia would receive grain and other food from the Black Sea region during Russia's eight month-old war in Ukraine.

Ukraine and Russia are key global exporters of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and other food to developing countries where many are already struggling with hunger. A loss of those supplies before the grain deal was brokered in July surged global food prices and helped throw tens of millions into poverty, along with soaring energy costs. The grain agreement brought down global food prices about 15% from their peak in March, according to the UN. Losing Ukrainian shipments would have meant poorer countries paying more to import grain in a tight global market as places like Argentina and the United States deal with dry weather, analysts say.

After the announcement of Russia's rejoining the deal, wheat futures prices erased the increases seen Monday, dropping more than 6% in Chicago.

Deeply concerned about security of Chinese people in Pakistan: Xi to Sharif

PTI ■ BEIJING

President Xi Jinping on Wednesday expressed "deep concern" over the security of Chinese nationals working in Pakistan on the CPEC projects and sought "reliable and safe environment" for them during his talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who is here on his maiden visit to bolster the all-weather friendship.

Sharif, who arrived here on Tuesday night on a two-day visit, met Xi and the two leaders held wide-ranging talks during which they agreed to strengthen the all-weather friendship and the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"I am deeply concerned about the security of Chinese people in Pakistan and hope that Pakistan will provide a reliable and safe environment for Chinese institutions and personnel going to Pakistan for cooperation," Xi told Sharif in their meeting at the ornate Great Hall of People here, according to an official statement here.

Sharif is the first Head of the State to felicitate Xi on his recent record victory as General Secretary of the once-in-a-five-year Congress of the ruling



Communist Party of China (CPC), a privilege accorded only to party founder Mao Zedong.

This is the second time in about two months Xi expressed concern over the recurring attacks on Chinese nationals working in Pakistan by the Baloch Nationalist Army and other militant groups that oppose the Chinese investments in the troubled province under the USD 60 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

India has objected to China over the CPEC as it is being laid through the Pakistan-occupied

Kashmir (PoK).

Sharif met Xi last month on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit at Samarkand in Uzbekistan.

In his Samarkand meeting with Sharif, Xi had called for providing solid protection for hundreds of Chinese working on the CPEC projects.

With recurring attacks on its workers, China is reportedly pressing Pakistan to permit the Chinese security agencies to provide security for their personnel which, according to press reports, Islamabad is resisting as it meant boots on the ground for Chinese armed forces.

In his meeting with Sharif, Xi who is expected to be in power for his life like Mao and accorded priority to China's ties Pakistan in his last 10 years with the CPEC, said China and Pakistan are good friends, good partners and good brothers" and they demonstrated "iron-clad friendship" by supporting each other in a "chaotic world".

"China has always viewed China-Pakistan relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective, and has always placed Pakistan in priority in our neighbouring diplomacy," he said.

Australia plays down US B-52 bomber plan that angers China

AP N CANBERRA

The Australian defence minister on Wednesday played down the significance of a major upgrade of B-52 facilities planned for northern Australia that has raised China's ire, saying the nuclear-capable US bombers had been visiting since the 1980s.

China this week condemned US plans to deploy up to six of the long-range bombers at Royal Australian Air Force Base Tindal in the Northern Territory, arguing the move undermined regional peace and stability.

China also warned of a potential arms race in the region. Asked if the upgrade could

prove too provocative, Defence Minister Richard Marles told reporters, "I think everyone needs to take a deep breath here."

The multi-billion-dollar U.S. Investment was part of the Enhanced Air Cooperation Program, which has built on a range of air exercises and training activities between the two countries since early 2017.

"What we're talking about is a U.S. investment in the infrastructure at Tindal, which will help make that infrastructure more capable for Australia as well," Marles said.

"In terms of U.S. Bombers, they've been coming to Australia since the 1980s. They've been training in Australia since 2005. All of this is part of an initiative which was established in 2017," he added.

Australia would be a "significant beneficiary" of the Tindal upgrade, Marles said.

Some Australian critics argue the B-52s' increased presence in northern Australia, made possible by the new facilities, would make the country a bigger target in a war between the United States and China.

Pakistan seeks explanation from Russia on senator's nuclear claim

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has sought an explanation from Russia after one of its senators claimed that Pakistan and Ukraine recently discussed the technologies for developing nuclear weapons.

Senator Igor Morozov, a member of the Federation Council's defence committee, claimed that Ukrainian experts travelled to Pakistan and met with a delegation to discuss nuclear weapons technology, Russia's state-owned news agency RIA Novosti reported.

Morozov made the allegations during a press conference that was part of the Ukrainian dossier special project.

The Foreign Office said the senator's reported statement was "without any rationale and is entirely inconsistent" with the spirit of Pakistan-Russia relations.

"We are surprised by such an unfounded and baseless statement," Foreign Office said in a statement late Tuesday night.

"We are seeking clarification on this from Moscow," the statement added.

Leaders meet in Algeria for final day of Arab League summit

AP ■ ALGIERS (ALGERIA)

Arab leaders convened on Wednesday in Algeria for the second day of the 31st summit of the largest annual Arab conference, seeking common ground on several divisive issues in the region.

The meeting comes against the backdrop of rising inflation, food and energy shortages, drought and soaring cost of living across the Middle East and Africa. The kings, emirs, presidents and prime ministers are discussing thorny issues such as the establishment of diplomatic ties between Israel and four Arab countries as former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



Netanyahu and his far-right allies appear to be heading to an election victory.

The summit's discussions are also focused on the food and energy crises aggravated by

Russia's war in Ukraine that has had devastating consequences for Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia, among other Arab countries, struggling to import enough wheat and fuel to satisfy their

populations.

Deepening the crisis is the worst drought in several decades that has ravaged swathes of Somalia, one of the Arab League's newer members, bringing some areas of the country to the brink of famine.

Russia's reinforcement of its blockade on Ukraine's Black Sea ports on Sunday threatens to further escalate the crisis, with many Arab countries near solely dependent on Ukrainian and Russian wheat exports and fertilizers.

The event provides an opportunity for Algeria — Africa's largest country by territory — to showcase its leadership in the Arab world.

Kenya deploys hundreds to regional force in eastern Congo

AP ■ GOMA (CONGO)

Kenya's president said on Wednesday that his country is sending more than 900 military personnel to eastern Congo to join a new regional force tasked with trying to calm deadly tensions fuelled by armed groups.

Kenyan President William Ruto called the mission "necessary and urgent" for regional security, and said he and Congo's president had agreed on how Kenyan forces would work with Congolese and other forces on disarming rebels and peacekeeping.

The Kenyan forces will be based in Goma, eastern Congo's largest city. The East African Community regional force, agreed upon by heads of



state in June and led by a Kenyan commander, also has two battalions from Uganda, two from Burundi and one from South Sudan.

Late on Tuesday, angry crowds set fire to United Nations vehicles in Goma as frustrations mount over the advance of M23 rebels and the deteriorating security situation in the country's east.

NORTH KOREA FIRES 23 MISSILES, PROMPTING AIR-RAID ALERT IN SOUTH

AP ■ SEOUL

Air raid sirens sounded on a South Korean island and residents there evacuated to underground shelters after North Korea fired more than 20 missiles Wednesday, at least one of them in its direction and landing near the rivals' tense sea border. South Korea quickly responded by launching its own missiles in the same border area.

The launches came hours after North Korea threatened to use nuclear weapons to get the US and South Korea to "pay the most horrible price in history" in protest of the ongoing South Korean-US military drills that it views as an invasion rehearsal.

The White House maintained that the United States has no hostile intent toward North Korea and vowed to

work with allies to curb North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

The North's barrage of missile tests also came as world attention was focused on South Korea following a weekend Halloween tragedy that saw more than 150 people killed in a crowd surge in Seoul in what was the country's largest disaster in years.

South Korea's military said North Korea launched at least 23 missiles — 17 in the morning and six in the afternoon — off its eastern and western coasts on Wednesday. It said the weapons were all short-range ballistic missiles or suspected surface-to-air missiles. Also Wednesday, North Korea fired about 100 artillery shells into an eastern maritime buffer zone the Koreans created in 2018 to reduce tensions, according to South Korea's military.



The 23 missiles launched is a record number of daily missile tests by North Korea, some experts say.

One of the ballistic missiles was flying toward South Korea's Ullung island before it eventually landed 167 km (104

miles) northwest of the island. South Korea's military subsequently issued an air raid alert on the island, according to the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

South Korean media published photos showing island residents moving to under-

ground shelters.

Hours later on Wednesday, South Korea's military said it lifted the air raid alert on the island. South Korea's transport ministry said it has closed some air routes above the country's eastern waters until Thursday morning in the wake of the North Korean launches.

That missile landed 26 km (16 miles) away from the rivals' sea border. It landed in international waters but far south of the two countries' border, off the east coast of South Korea.

South Korea's military said it was the first time a North Korean missile had landed so close to the sea border since the countries' division in 1948.

"This is very unprecedented and we will never tolerate it," South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

In 2010, North Korea shelled a frontline South Korean island off the peninsula's western coast, killing four people. But the weapons used were artillery rockets, not ballistic missiles whose launches or tests are banned by multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

Later Wednesday, South Korean fighter jets launched three air-to-surface, precision-guided missiles near the eastern sea border to show its determination to get tough on North Korean provocations. South Korea's military said the missiles landed in international waters at the same distance of 26 km (16 miles) north of the sea border as the North Korean missile fell earlier Wednesday.

It said it maintains a readiness to win "an overwhelming victory" against North Korea in potential clashes.



Biden hits campaign trail, blasts Republicans in Florida

AP ■ HALLENDALE BEACH (FL)

President Joe Biden tore into Republican proposals to undo prescription drug price caps and change Social Security and Medicare on Tuesday, campaigning hard for Democrats in Florida one week before Election Day.

In a final-week push, he will be flying to New Mexico on Thursday, California on Friday and Pennsylvania on Saturday.

In Florida, a state famously popular among retirees, he declared that the current crop of GOP candidates "ain't your father's Republican party" and said that he prayed God would deliver his opponents "some enlightenment."

After those remarks in Hallandale Beach, he was headlining a fundraiser for gubernatorial candidate Charlie Crist and a rally for the state's Democratic Party, including Senate candidate Val Demings.

He dinged Demings' Republican opponent, Senator Marco Rubio, for failing to back his Inflation Reduction Act, passed in August by the Democratic-led Congress. It includes several health care provisions popular among elderly people and the less-well-off, including a \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket medical expenses and a \$35 monthly cap per

prescription of insulin. It requires companies that raise prices faster than overall inflation to pay Medicare a rebate. "Not one single Republican voted for it in the United States Senate," Biden told a crowd at Hallandale Beach community centre. "Every single solitary Republican in Congress voted against these savings, including Sen Rubio."

Biden's appearances with Crist and Demings came after some of the Democrats' most embattled candidates, including Georgia Sen Raphael Warnock and Arizona Sen Mark Kelly, have opted not to appear with him.

Still, the president's advisers insist he can be helpful by talking about GOP policies they believe voters find objectionable.

Meanwhile, Republicans are bullish on their prospects across Florida as voter registration trends and demographic shifts suggest the state will continue shifting to the right.

Democrats are particularly concerned about the trend in Miami-Dade County, home to 1.5 million Hispanics of voting age. It has been a Democratic stronghold for the past 20 years, but the GOP made significant gains in the past presidential election.

Trump 2024 campaign for US President prepares for post-midterms launch

AP ■ NEW YORK

As he played to a crowd of supporters in Robstown, Texas, former President Donald Trump drew cheers as he talked up his first two runs for the White House — and teased a third.

"In order to make our country successful, safe and glorious again, I will probably have to do it again," he said last month.

That carefully placed "probably" may soon be gone from Trump's stump speech. Aides to the former president are making quiet preparations for a 2024 presidential campaign that could be launched soon after next week's midterm elections as Trump tries to capitalize on expected Republican wins to propel himself toward becoming the front-runner for his party's nomination.

"I'm like 95% he's going to run," said Reince Priebus, Trump's former White House chief of staff. "The real question," he added, "is are other big challengers going to run? If President Trump runs, he will be very difficult for any Republican to defeat."

Another campaign would be a remarkable turn for any former president, much less one who made history as the first to be impeached twice and remains embroiled in multiple



and intensifying criminal investigations, including probes of classified information held at his Mar-a-Lago club and his effort to pressure election officials to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Trump has a history dating back to the 1980s of publicly toying with White House bids only to back down.

But Trump, according to people close to him, is eager to be back in the political game. While he has been talking up a bid since before he left the White House, aides and allies are now eyeing the two-week stretch after the Nov. 8 midterms as a possible window for an announcement, though they caution that he hasn't made a decision and that — as always when it comes to Trump — things could change, particularly if the election results are delayed due to recounts or a possible runoff election in Georgia.

Sunak reverses decision on COP27, says will attend climate summit

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced on Wednesday that he will attend the COP27 climate summit in Egypt next week, reversing his previous decision to skip the meeting in Sharm El Sheikh to focus on domestic issues and the economic crisis in the UK.

Sunak took to Twitter to reveal his plans after criticism from climate activists and within the government from



Indian-origin COP27 President Alok Sharma, who said it was important for the prime minister to be present to show the

UK's commitment on the issue of climate action.

The pressure mounted further as his ex-boss, former prime minister Boris Johnson, confirmed that he would be attending the summit scheduled between November 6 and 18.

"There is no long-term prosperity without action on climate change," tweeted Sunak.

"There is no energy security without investing in renewables. That is why I will attend COP27 next week: to deliver on

Glasgow's legacy of building a secure and sustainable future," he said, with reference to the COP26 summit chaired by the UK in Scotland last November.

The Opposition Labour Party described the reversed decision to attend as Sunak being "dragged kicking and screaming into doing the right thing; embarrassing."

The Green Party called it a "screaming U-turn" and an "embarrassing mis-step on the world stage" to initially announce plans not to attend.

Investigators raid Seoul police over deadly crowd surge

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea's National Police Agency on Wednesday raided local police departments in the capital, Seoul, and the city's Yongsan district office as it investigates whether official ineptitude contributed to a deadly crowd surge that killed 156 people in the neighbourhood of Itaewon.

The raids came a day after the national agency acknowledged that Seoul police failed to act for hours despite receiving at least 11 emergency calls from pedestrians warning about a swelling crowd of Halloween revelers getting out of control ahead of the crush on Saturday in a narrow alley near Hamilton Hotel.

The national agency said members of its special investigation unit were retrieving documents and other materials from the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency and Yongsan's police station, district office and fire department and other offices.

Greece migrant boat sinking: 11 rescued, 1 dead, 56 missing

AP ■ ATHENS

One more person from a migrant boat shipwreck has been found alive, Greece's coast guard said Wednesday, bringing the total number of survivors to 11 from the sailboat that capsized and sank in rough seas east of Athens with reportedly about 68 people on board.

A search and rescue operation continued for a second day in the treacherous Kafireas Strait, between the islands of Evia and Andros east of the Greek capital.

A coast guard patrol boat recovered the body of a man from the area on Wednesday morning, the only confirmed fatality from the sinking — meaning that 56 people remain missing.

The coast guard said the 11th sur-

vivor was found early Wednesday on land on the southern tip of Evia. The survivors, all men, include six Egyptians, three Afghans and two Iranians, and all have been taken to the town of Karystos on Evia.

The first nine were rescued Tuesday from an uninhabited islet south of Evia in the early hours of Tuesday, and had told authorities they had been on a sailing boat that had departed from Izmir in Turkey with 68 people on board. The 10th man was plucked from the sea hours later by a cargo ship participating in the rescue operation.

A separate search and rescue operation continued for a third day in the eastern Aegean off the island of Samos, which lies near the Turkish coast, for seven people still missing after a dinghy reportedly carrying 12 people capsized on Monday.

Ex-communist rebel leader pledges stable Government in Nepal

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's governing alliance is pledging to create a stable government that will be able to complete a full five-year term in the Himalayan nation that has had 13 different governments in the past 16 years.

The alliance of four political parties is contesting November 20 parliamentary elections together in hopes of retaining power.

"Our commitment is that



Maoist communist party, a key member of the alliance, said in an interview on Wednesday. Political stability is much needed in the country, where frequent changes in government and squabbles among parties have been blamed for delays in writing the constitution and slow economic development.

No government since the abolition of the centuries-old monarchy in 2008 has completed a full term.

Hong Kong braces for Tropical Storm Nalgae



AP ■ HONG KONG

Schools and offices closed and some events were cancelled in Hong Kong on Wednesday as Tropical Storm Nalgae swept south of the city, while a finance conference meant to restore Hong Kong's image as an international business centre went ahead.

As the city braced itself, temporary shelters were opened and theme parks were closed. Afternoon trading was suspended in the stock market, and some ferry and bus services were halted. The Hong Kong Jockey Club scrapped the evening's horse races.

The Hong Kong Observatory raised a No. 8 typhoon signal, the third-highest warning under the city's weather system, as Nalgae's maximum sustained winds hit 90 kilometres (56 miles) per hour.

Residents were urged to stay away from the shoreline and avoid water sport activities, the observatory said.

Israel's Netanyahu appears to edge toward victory after vote

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared headed toward victory on Wednesday, with some 85 per cent of the ballots from national elections counted and showing that voters gave him and his far-right allies what looks like a majority in the country's parliament.

Votes were still being counted and results were not final. But if preliminary indications were correct, Israel was potentially headed to its most right-wing government, bolstered by a strong showing from the ultranationalist Religious Zionism party, whose members use inflammatory anti-Arab and anti-LGBTQ rhetoric. The initial results pointed to a continued rightward shift in the Israeli electorate, further dimming hopes for peace with the Palestinians and setting the stage for possible conflict with the Biden administration and Israel's supporters in the United States.

The early results also showed that Netanyahu had overcome his detractors, who claimed he was not fit to rule while on trial for corruption and have refused to sit with him in government. Netanyahu's partners have promised to help him evade a conviction.



"We are on the verge of a very big victory," Netanyahu, 73, told supporters at a gathering in Jerusalem early on Wednesday. "I will establish a nationalist government that will see to all Israeli citizens without any exceptions."

Netanyahu did not immediately claim an outright victory, nor did his main opponent, interim Prime Minister Yair Lapid, concede defeat. But signs of a political shift were underway.

One Netanyahu challenger, Defence Minister Benny Gantz, said his party, expected to be the fourth largest, would head to the opposition. Lapid meanwhile cancelled a diplomatic visit to a climate conference in Egypt.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

The Chief Administrative Officer/Const/Northern Railway, Kashmere Gate, Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under Two Packet System for the under noted work :-

1. Full Name of work	Selection of Consultant for providing Project Management Services to Gati Shakti Directorate Railway Board.
2. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 1303.24 Lakhs
3. Completion period of the work	36 Months
4. Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 5,00,000.00
5. Sale/availability of tender document on Rly. Website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 01.11.2022 to 07.12.2022 upto 11:30 hrs.
6. Pre Proposal Conference	11.11.2022 at 11:00 hrs at CAO/C office, N. Rly., K. Gate, Delhi
7. Last date/Time of upload of Technical Proposal	07.12.2022 upto 11:30 hours. Tender Proposal can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 01.11.2022 to 07.12.2022
8. Date and time of opening of Technical Proposal	07.12.2022 at 11:30 hours The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender Notice No. 387-WA-CSB Dated : 01.11.2022 2928/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Northern Railway, Trainset Depot, Shakurbasti; for and on behalf of President of India, invites IREPS (www.ireps.gov.in) for the under noted work.

Tender No.	258730DSLSSB
Name of work	Provision for repairing of seat/back seat rest, floor repairing, window glasses fitment, ACP system and Pety Repairs in coaches of DEMU at DEMU-Shed, Shakurbasti for period of two years (Material + Manpower)
Approximate cost	₹ 2,86,89,156.75 including GST
Earnest money	₹ 2,93,500/- (Note: It should be in the form of net banking or gateway only. Note: FDR not to be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Board letter No. 2015/CR-1/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016)
Cost of tender document	₹ 11,800/- with GST @18% (Note: It should be in the form of net banking or gateway only. Note: FDR not to be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Board letter No. 2015/CR-1/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016)
Completion period of the work	02 years
Date and time for opening of tender	Opening of Tender at 14:00 hrs. on 22.11.2022
Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen	Above tender is available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in w.e.f. 01.11.2022

No.-258730DSLSSB Dt. -02.11.2022 2926/2022

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

OK PLAY INDIA LIMITED PUBLIC NOTICE

CIN No: L28219HR1989PLC030347
Regd. Office: 17-18, Roz-Ka-Meo Industrial Estate, Tehsil Nuh, District Mewar, Haryana. - 122103
Website: www.okplayin.com Email: info@okplayin.com
Tel: +91 124 2362335-36 Fax: +91 124 2362326

NOTICE
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is being convened on Monday, the 14th day of November, 2022, to consider and approve, inter-alia, the Unaudited Financial Results (Stand-alone and Consolidated) of the Company for the quarter and half year ended on 30th September, 2022.

For OK PLAY INDIA LIMITED
Sd/-
Date: 02.11.2022 Meenu Goswami
Place: New Delhi Company Secretary

PUBLIC NOTICE

Unit No. C-1003 was allotted to Mrs. Shashi Bansal & Mr. Narendra Paul Bansal, Unit No. C-401 was allotted to Mrs. Niti Focis Private Limited, Unit No. L-106 was allotted to Mr. Akash Funi, Unit No. C-304 was allotted to Mr. Bipin Jain, Unit No. C-801 was allotted to Mr. Pralop Kumar Barik & Mrs. Gauri Barik, Unit No. C-1804 was allotted to Mr. Prasad Rao Pantulu Voleli 7 Mrs. Shobha Voleli, Unit No. A-1903 was allotted to Mrs. Sunbright Foods Private Limited, Unit No. E-1401 was allotted to M/s Better Option Propriet Private Limited, Unit No. L-1607 was allotted to Mrs. Mindula Sharma & Mr. Kishor Kumar Kaushik, Unit No. L-1707 was allotted to Mr. Rajendra Kumar Mishra & Mrs. Snehasini Mishra, Unit No. L-105 was allotted to Mr. George Verghese Madhalathu & Mrs. Resna Verghese, Unit No. H-102 was allotted to Mr. Vijay Gupta in project Blossom County (Logix Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd.) Plot No.02, Sector 137, Noida Expressway, Noida - 201305. Pursuant to repeated reminders the allottees has defaulted in making payments and taking possession of the said unit.

This to intimate that in case nothing is heard from the concerned allottees within 2 working days of this public notice, the unit's shall stand cancelled without any right or lien of the allottees and Logix shall be free to deal with the said unit's.

For Logix Infrastructure (Pvt. Ltd.)
Authorized Signatory
Contact No. -919310365040

Notice Inviting Tender

SSA-15022/2/2022-ESTABLISHMENT-SSA I64680/2022
Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites following bids through GeM portal.

- Tender No GEM/2022/B/2649458 Dated: 17-10-2022 for supply of Laptop
- Tender No GEM/2022/B/2649587 Dated: 17-10-2022 for Assessment and Supply of Hearing Aid

Interested bidder may visit GeM portal and submit their bid on GeM portal accordingly.

Sd/-Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19
Janasanyog/CF/2802/22

UJVN Limited

H.O.: "ULJWAL", Mahantari Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135-2763508, 2763898 & Fax-0135-2763508
CIN No: U40101UR200715CC025866
Website: www.ujvn.com

पत्रांक: 799 दिनांक: 01.11.2022

Office of the (Executive Engineer (Civil-II) Lakhwar Multipurpose Project, Lakhwar Bhawan, Dakpathar, Dehradun, invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender No:- 04/EE/(Civil-II)/LMP/2022-23
Name of work/supply/services etc.: Construction of Office Building for Lakhwar Multipurpose Project (300 MW) at Tons Colony, Dakpathar, Dehradun.
Estimated cost : Rs. 4,20,88,243.00 (excluding GST)
Date of availability of bid document on website: 10:30 hrs of 02.11.2022
Last date for submission of bids on website: 17:00 hrs of 23.11.2022
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in> and Nigam's website www.ujvn.com.

Executive Engineer (Civil-II)
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

Avoided early tightening to prevent plunge: Das

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Amid flak faced by the RBI for missing inflation target, Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday defended its policies saying the economy would have taken a "complete downward turn" if it had started to tighten rates earlier.

Das said the Indian economy is being looked at as a story of resilience and optimism by the world and the inflation is now expected to moderate.

Acknowledging that the central bank has missed its primary target as inflation has consistently overshoot, Das said there is a need for appreciating the counterfactual aspect as well, and think about the impact of premature tightening which would have hurt recovery.

"It (tightening earlier) would have been very costly for the economy. It would have been very costly for the citizens of this country. We would have paid a high cost," he said.

"We prevented a complete downward turn of our economy," Das said, adding that RBI did not want to upset the recovery process and was guiding the economy towards a safe landing.

During the pandemic, the RBI utilised flexibility in the monetary policy framework to tolerate a slightly higher inflation which was within the target range of 2-6 per cent, to ensure that overall economy



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das addresses during the annual banking conference organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), in Mumbai on Wednesday

remained resilient and financial stability was maintained, Das said.

He said the economy bounced back in FY22 and FY23 after contracting in the pandemic-affected FY21, and is also expected to sustain in FY24.

It can be noted that some critics have questioned the delay in rate tightening, which began in May this year with an off-cycle meeting of the rate-setting panel, saying RBI should have acted earlier in the face of high inflation.

Seeking to address the critique of RBI being behind the curve, Das said the debate on this topic is over and presented a chronology to illustrate how the Russian invasion of Ukraine which led to com-

Markets snap four-day rally

Bharti Airtel slumps 3.05% on profit-booking

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks surrendered early gains to close with losses on Wednesday, snapping their four-day winning streak as investors pared exposure to telecom, realty and tech stocks amid a mixed trend in global markets.

Investors were also cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve's meeting on interest rates, while a depreciating rupee further weighed on sentiment, traders said.

After a positive beginning, the 30-share BSE Sensex failed to hold on to the gains and ended 215.26 points or 0.35 per cent lower at 60,906.09. During the day, it slipped 326.96 points or 0.53 per cent to 60,794.39.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty fell 62.55 points or 0.34 per cent to settle at 18,082.85. Bharti Airtel was the top loser among the Sensex constituents, slipping 3.05 per cent, followed by Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, HCL Technologies, IndusInd Bank and Titan.

On the other hand, Sun Pharma, ITC, Tech Mahindra, Dr Reddy's and Reliance



Industries were among the gainers.

"With the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) outcome around the corner, profit-booking and a risk-off mood dragged the domestic market to trade with cuts. Meanwhile, strong US employment figures dented expectations for a slowdown in rate hikes.

"Since the market has already priced in a 75 bps rate hike by the Fed, market movement will be determined by their comments on its next moves," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge dipped 0.12 per cent, while the smallcap index climbed 0.23 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, telecommunication declined 1.31 per cent, realty fell 1.01 per cent, teck dipped 1 per cent, auto (0.75 per cent),

Sebi pegs dues worth ₹67,228 crore as 'difficult to recover'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has segregated dues to the tune of ₹67,228 crore under "difficult to recover" category at the end of March 2022.

Overall, the regulator has dues worth ₹96,609 crore that needs to be recovered from entities, including those that failed to pay the fine imposed on them, failed to pay fees due to markets watchdog and did not comply with its direction to refund investors' money, according to Sebi's annual report for 2021-22.

Out of ₹96,609 crore, the regulator said that ₹63,206 crore, which is 65 per cent of the total, pertains to Collective Investment Scheme (CIS) and deemed public issues of PACL Ltd and Sahara Group company -- Sahara India Commercial Corporation Ltd.

Also, ₹68,109 crore, amounting to 70 per cent of the total dues, is subject to parallel proceedings before various courts and court-appointed committees. In these cases, Sebi's recovery proceedings are subject to directions of respective courts or committees.

In its annual report, the regulator has categorised dues worth ₹67,228 crore as Difficult To Recover (DTR).

Defining DTR, Sebi said these dues are the ones which could not be recovered even after exhausting all the modes of recovery.

It clarified that segregation of such DTR dues is purely an



administrative act and this will not preclude the recovery officers from recovering the amount so segregated as DTR as and when there is a change in any of the DTR parameters from the recovery point of view.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is empowered to recover penalties imposed by the Adjudicating Officer, amount directed to be disgorged and money ordered to be refunded to the regulator.

Also, the markets watchdog took up as many as 59 new cases, pertaining to flouting securities law, for investigation during 2021-22, which is way lower than 94 cases taken up in the preceding financial year.

The cases were related to alleged violation of securities law, including market manipulation, price rigging and insider trading.

"During 2021-22, 59 new

cases were taken up for investigation and 169 cases completed in comparison to 94 new cases taken up and 140 cases completed in 2019-20," the report noted.

Of the total 59, as many as 38 cases taken up for investigation were related to market manipulation and price rigging; 17 cases for insider trading and the remaining four pertained to other violations of securities law. Sebi initiates investigation based on reference received from sources such as its integrated surveillance department, other operational departments and external government agencies.

"The purpose of the investigation is to gather evidence and to identify persons/entities behind irregularities and violations so that appropriate and suitable regulatory action can be taken, wherever required," the annual report noted.

Retail e-rupee trials will start this month itself, says RBI Guv

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The RBI will follow up on the wholesale e-rupee pilot with a similar trial on the retail side this month itself, governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday.

He termed the launch of the central bank digital currency (CBDC), which started on the wholesale front between a limited set of banks on Tuesday, as a landmark moment in the history of currencies in the country, and added that it will majorly transform the way of doing business.

"The retail part of the CBDC trial will be launched later during this month. We will announce the date separately," he said, speaking at the annual FIBAC conference of bankers here.

The broader wish of the RBI is to execute a full-fledged launch of the CBDC "in the near future", Das said, choosing not to share a timeline for the same.

"I don't want to give a target date by which time the CBDC will be launched in a full-scale manner because this is something where we have to proceed very carefully. This is the first time the world is doing it. We don't want to be in a great hurry," he said.

There will be some technological challenges, some process challenges and the RBI will want to iron out all those aspects and introduce the CBDC in a manner that is non-disruptive, he said.

Meanwhile, the governor also spoke about the experience with the pilot project on digitalisation of farm loans.

Wheat export doubles to \$1.48 bn in Apr-Sept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's wheat exports more than doubled to USD 1.48 billion during April-September 2022-23 as compared to the year-ago period, the commerce ministry said on Wednesday.

The exports stood at USD 630 million in the year-ago period.

Though the government banned wheat exports in May, some shipments are allowed to meet food security needs of the countries that request for it.

"Wheat export rose to USD 1,487 million in April-September 2022 from USD 630 million in April-September 2021," the ministry said.

The global wheat supply has been seriously disrupted because of the Russia-Ukraine war. Both nations are major



wheat producers.

The ministry also said exports of agricultural and processed food products rose 25 per cent during the six-month period of this fiscal year.

The overall export of Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority (APEDA) products increased to USD 13.77 billion in April-September 2022 from USD 11.05 billion in the same period a year ago.

For 2022-23, an export target of USD 23.56 billion has

been fixed by APEDA and export of USD 13.77 billion has already been achieved in the six-month period, it added.

Similarly, export of fresh fruits increased to USD 313 million during the period under reviews as compared to USD 301 million a year ago.

Export of lentils increased from USD 135 million to USD 330 million.

Basmati rice exports too increased to USD 2.28 billion during April-September 2022 from USD 1.66 billion a year ago.

Shipments of non-basmati rice registered a growth of 8 per cent to USD 3.20 billion.

Similarly, export of poultry products rose 83 per cent to USD 57 million, while shipments of dairy products increased 58 per cent to USD 342 million.

Rupee falls 21 paise to close at 82.80 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 21 paise to close at 82.80 against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking a muted trend in domestic equities ahead of the release of the US Fed's policy statement.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened strong at 82.64 and witnessed a high of 82.62 and a low of 82.81.

It finally settled at 82.80 against the American currency, registering a fall of 21 paise over its last close of 82.59.

"Rupee consolidated in a narrow range ahead of the important events that are lined up today and tomorrow," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. The focus will be on the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC)



policy statement on Wednesday, which is likely to trigger volatility for the greenback.

In remarks that come hours ahead of a review of monetary policy announcements in the US, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the US Fed Reserve cannot tighten endlessly and capital flows will eventually resume.

The RBI's rate-setting panel will be meeting on Thursday to discuss and formulate a response to the government for a failure to meet the inflation target.

Gold gains ₹51; silver drops ₹502

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price in the national capital gained ₹51 to ₹50,964 per 10 grams on Wednesday amid weak rupee, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the gold had touched ₹50,913 per 10 grams. Silver, however, dropped ₹502 to ₹59,265 per kilogram. The rupee depreciated 12 paise to 82.71 against the US dollar in morning trade on Wednesday amid a muted trend in domestic equities. In the international market, gold was quoting lower at Rs 1,653 per ounce while silver was down at USD 19.70 per ounce.

"COMEX gold has been steady around \$1,650 an ounce as traders focused on the US Federal Reserve meeting later tonight for clues on when the bank will start scaling back interest rate hikes," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

Dalmia Bharat Q2 profit falls 77% to ₹47 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Cement maker Dalmia Bharat Ltd on Wednesday reported a 76.84 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at ₹47 crore for the quarter ended September.

The company had posted a net profit of ₹203 crore during the July-September quarter a year ago, Dalmia Bharat said in a regulatory filing.

Its revenue from operations increased 15.11 per cent to ₹2,971 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal. In the year-ago period, the same stood at ₹2,581 crore.

Dalmia Bharat's total expenses rose nearly 29 per cent to ₹2,980 crore in the latest quarter under review.

Adani Transmission net profit falls 32% to ₹194 cr in Q2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Transmission on Wednesday reported a 32 per cent dip in its consolidated net profit at ₹194 crore in September quarter compared to year ago, mainly due to adverse forex movement adjustment.

The company explained in a statement that in the second quarter of FY23, consolidated PAT (profit after tax) or net profit of ₹194 crore was lower year on year.

The Q2 number is not comparable on account of adverse forex movement (MTM) of ₹138 crore (market-to-market adjustment on foreign currency loans) vs ₹6 crore gain in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal in the AEML (Adani



Electricity Mumbai Ltd) business, the company stated.

The consolidated net profit of the company was ₹289 crore in the quarter ended on September 30, 2021.

However, the total income increased to ₹3,376.57 crore in the reporting quarter from ₹2,675.20 crore in the same period a year ago.

The company sold 2,233 million units of electricity in the quarter, up from 1,975 million units in the same period in 2021.

Maruti Suzuki India crosses 2.5 crore production mark

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Wednesday said it has crossed 2.5 crore cumulative production mark.

MSI started production in December 1983 and crossed the 10-lakh production mark in March 1994. It crossed 1-crore mark in March 2011 and 2-crore milestone in July 2018.

Its first production facility came up in Gurugram, Haryana.

The company now has two manufacturing plants in Gurugram and Manesar in Haryana, with an installed production capacity of 15 lakh

units per annum.

The company sells 16 passenger vehicles in the domestic market and also exports to around 100 countries.

"2022 marks 40 years of Suzuki's partnership with the people of India. Crossing 25 million cumulative production milestone this year is a testimony of Suzuki's continued commitment and partnership with the people of India," MSI Managing Director and CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said in a statement.

Going forward, the automaker will continue to introduce new products in the market, he added.

20 projects OK'd under National Textiles Mission

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has cleared 20 strategic research projects worth around ₹74 crore in the areas of specialty fibre, agro-textiles, smart textiles, protective gear, sports textiles and geo textiles segment under its flagship programme National Technical Textiles Mission. The projects were cleared under the chairmanship of Piyush Goyal, Minister of Textiles, Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, on November 1.

"Industry and academia linkages are essential for the growth of research and development in the application areas of technical textiles in India," Goyal said.

Vedanta arm Balco conducts trial for use of biodiesel in smelter operations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta arm Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd (Balco) on Wednesday said it has successfully conducted a trial for using biodiesel in smelter operations.

The development assumes significance in the wake of its ambitious target to achieve net-zero carbon by 2050 or sooner.

In the pilot test, the company used biodiesel for pre-heating molten metal (aluminium) carrying vehicles called 'ladles,' which transfer the hot metal in its molten state from its potlines to cast houses.

Biodiesel is a form of fuel obtained from organic matter that, when burned, produces significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Airtel crosses 10 lakh customers on 5G network amid network build-up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it has surpassed 1 million customers on 5G network within 30 days of its commercial launch even while the network is being built.

Earlier, Airtel had announced phase wise roll-out of its 5G services in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Siliguri, Nagpur and Varanasi.

The services in these cities are getting rolled out in a phased manner as the company continues to construct its network and complete the roll-out, according to Airtel.

"Bharti Airtel...Today announced that it has crossed the 1 million unique 5G user mark on its network. The company achieved this milestone in less than 30 days of its commercial launch even as the network is being built," the company said in a statement.

Randeep Sekhon, Chief Technology Officer of Bharti Airtel, said these are early days but the response from customers have been "very encouraging". "Our network is being built every day even as all 5G devices are now capable of working on the Airtel 5G Plus network barring a few exceptions which should also be done in the coming weeks," Sekhon said.

AirAsia sells remaining stake in AirAsia India to Air India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Malaysia's AirAsia on Wednesday said it has entered into a pact with Air India to sell its remaining stake in budget carrier AirAsia India.

Tata group and the Malaysian entity-owned AirAsia India started flying in June 2014.



In a statement, AirAsia Aviation Group Ltd said it has entered into a share purchase agreement to sell the remain-

a 16.33 per cent shareholding. In June, the Competition Commission of India approved the proposed acquisition of the entire shareholding of AirAsia by Air India.

Group CEO of AirAsia Aviation Group Bo Lingam said that since 2014, "when we first commenced operation in India, AirAsia has built a great business in India, which is one of the world's biggest civil aviation markets".

BUSINESS BRIEF

SRM STUDENTS GET PLACEMENT IN USA

Chennai: It is time to celebrate for SRM College of Occupational Therapy students who have got placed as Occupational Therapists in United States of America (USA) with an attractive pay. Delighted at the success, students at a programme in Chennai today said the training and exposure they received at the college helped them taste success in the interview which involved group discussion and a one-to-one interview. A group of 15 students of Masters in Occupational Therapy course of the college were selected as Occupational Therapists and will be placed at Pleasanton in South California in USA at an attractive pay package that ranges from \$70,000-72,000 per annum which is equivalent to ₹50 lakhs per annum in Indian currency.

VIT-AP INKS MOUS TO PROMOTE BIZ ACTIVITIES

Amravati: VIT-AP University signed MoU at the 16th flagship conference, "International Knowledge Millennium Conference (IKMC) 2022", at HICC, Hyderabad. The MoU focuses on capacity building, startup promotion, Intellectual Property (IP) commercialization, and incubation funding. VIT-AP University also signed MoU with Plural Technology Private Limited (PTPL), an emerging leader in Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) and Enterprise Software Service. The MoU focuses on initiating PLM technology activities.

SPURS, FRANKFURT INTO CL LAST 16

AP ■ LONDON

Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg scored a 95th-minute winner as Tottenham Hotspur came from behind to beat Marseille 2-1 and reach the Champions League knockout stage on Tuesday, where they were joined by Eintracht Frankfurt after their victory at Sporting Lisbon.

Liverpool ended Napoli's unbeaten start to the season with a 2-0 success at Anfield, but the Italian club did enough to finish top of Group A.

Atletico Madrid crashed out of Europe altogether with a loss to Porto, while Bayern Munich made it six wins from six matches by beating Inter Milan.

At a raucous Velodrome, Tottenham knew they would progress if they could avoid defeat by Marseille, although manager Antonio Conte had to watch from the stands after being red-carded in last week's dramatic draw with Sporting.

Spurs were camped inside their own half for the majority of the first period and fell behind just before the break when Chancel Mbemba headed in Jordan Veretout's cross after a quickly-taken corner.

The Premier League side were much improved after the restart and Clement Lenglet glanced in a 54th-minute equaliser.

Former Arsenal left-back Sead Kolasinac nodded a glorious late opportunity to send Marseille through wide.

He was made to pay as Hojbjerg struck on the counter as Spurs snatched top spot in the group and denied Marseille the consolation of a Europa League place.

"I just spoke with Antonio. He's tired because to watch from the



crowd is not normal," Tottenham assistant coach Cristian Stellini told BT Sport. "He wasted a lot of energy."

That Hojbjerg goal pushed Eintracht, who also won 2-1, down into second in Group D and kept Sporting in European competition.

Like Tottenham, Sporting only needed a point to qualify and they forged ahead six minutes before half-time as Arthur Gomes volleyed

home at the back post. But Frankfurt, playing in the competition for the first time since losing the 1960 European Cup final

ATLETICO MADRID CRASHED OUT OF EUROPE ALTOGETHER WITH A LOSS TO PORTO, WHILE BAYERN MUNICH MADE IT SIX WINS FROM SIX MATCHES BY BEATING INTER MILAN

to Real Madrid, did not give up and Daichi Kamada scored a 62nd-minute penalty awarded for handball.

Randal Kolo Muani provided the winning moment, latching onto Ansgar Knauff's hooked pass and hammering the ball into the far corner.

The players celebrated wildly on the pitch after the Europa League holders' latest European exploit, with Sporting coach Ruben Amorim left looking stunned on the touchline.

"We didn't start well at the beginning of the game," said Frankfurt midfielder Sebastian Rode.

"But we are a comeback team, we gave everything in the second half and deservedly make the next

LIVERPOOL DOWN NAPOLI

Liverpool brought an end to Napoli's 21-game unbeaten run but could not win by four goals to take first place.

Both teams were already assured of a knockout-phase berth.

Liverpool put Saturday's surprise Premier League home loss to Leeds behind them, as late goals from

Mohamed Salah, scoring in a fifth straight Champions League game, and Darwin Nunez gained a measure of revenge for the 4-1 loss in Naples in September.

"I would have really enjoyed the game even without the goals," Reds manager Jurgen Klopp said.

"We showed tonight a reaction. Being compact makes all the difference."

Ajax saw off Rangers 3-1 at Ibrox to inflict a sixth straight defeat in Group A on the Scottish giants.

Earlier, Atletico failed to finish third in Group B and drop into the Europa League as a 2-1 loss at Porto saw Bayer Leverkusen take third thanks to their goalless draw at Club Brugge.

Atletico, the 2014 and 2016 runners-up, were beaten by early goals from Mehdi Taremi and Stephen Eustaquio despite Ivan Marcano's stoppage-time own goal.

Bayern finished with a 100-per cent record by seeing off Inter 2-0 at the Allianz Arena in Group C.

Benjamin Pavard headed home a corner and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting crashed in his seventh goal in six games.

Barcelona's bitterly disappointing tournament came to an end with a 4-2 victory at bottom club Viktoria Plzen.

Barca will have to settle with being one of the favourites to win the Europa League.

"We're one of the candidates, the Europa League is looking like a good competition, the objective is to reach the end and win it, compete for it," said coach Xavi Hernandez.

Ferran Torres scored a brace, with Marcos Alonso and teenage midfielder Pablo Torre also on target.



Swiatek cruises to win over Kasatkina

AP ■ FORT WORTH

World number one Iga Swiatek opened her season-ending WTA Finals campaign Tuesday with a straight sets victory over Russia's eighth-ranked Daria Kasatkina.

Polish star Swiatek, who has enjoyed a stellar year that included Grand Slam singles titles at the French and US Opens, eased to a 6-2, 6-3 victory in 1hr 22min at Fort Worth's Dickies Arena in Texas.

The 21-year-old is the heavy favourite to add to her tally of eight tournament victories at this week's eight-player tournament.

Against Kasatkina on Tuesday, the three-time Grand Slam champion was quickly into her stride, racing to a 3-0 lead after an early break of serve.

Swiatek wrapped up the

first set in just 37 minutes after securing another break of serve in the eighth game.

The second set followed a similar pattern, as she grabbed an early break to take control for a 3-0 lead before closing out the set.

Swiatek is aiming to atone for her disappointing display at last year's finals, held in Guadalajara, when she failed to qualify for the semi-finals.

The tournament features two groups of four players who play in a round-robin format, with the top two in each group advancing to the semi-finals.

This year's tournament was moved to Texas amid ongoing pandemic-related issues with the Chinese city of Shenzhen, which was initially due to be the host of the event, as well as the WTA's dispute with China over the status of player Peng Shuai.

I'll retire at Real Madrid: Kroos

AP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos says he will retire at the Spanish club, although it might not be when his contract expires in June 2023.

The German, who turns 33 in January, is considering an early retirement from club football at the end of the season, according to some Spanish reports.

Kroos retired from international duty with Germany in June last year after a last 16 elimination by England in Euro 2020, but said the reports were "funny" as even he had not decided his future yet.

"I feel very good physically, things are going well on the pitch, I'm very happy," Kroos told a press conference on Tuesday ahead of Real Madrid's



Champions League clash with Celtic.

"Sometimes it's funny to read things, when not even I know what is going to happen. Next year I will think about it, or in the (World Cup) break, I

will think a bit about what could happen, bit by bit I will decide.

"What I have always said and is something that has not changed, is that I will not move clubs. I will always stay

here, I will retire here, the only thing I don't know is when."

Kroos, who was sent off for the first time in his career in Madrid's 1-1 draw with Girona on Sunday, joined Real Madrid in 2014 from Bayern Munich.

He has won the Champions League four times with Los Blancos, as well as once with the German giants, along with three Spanish and three German league titles, as well as the World Cup with his national team in 2014.

The midfielder is happy to wait for potential renewal talks with Madrid until even as late as March next season.

"The club are very calm, like me. I've been here nearly eight and a half years," added Kroos. "We will talk calmly in January, February, or even March."



United on a 'mission' as Europa League group phase concludes

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United and Arsenal go into the last round of the Europa League group stage dice seeking wins to ensure fast track entry to the last 16.

United will avoid the play-offs if they emerge from their trip to Real Sociedad the winners by two goals or more.

Cristiano Ronaldo and Marcus Rashford were among the scorers in United's 3-0 win against Sheriff Tiraspol last week which left manager Erik ten Hag feeling upbeat.

"That's a good signal, a good message, and we can build on that," said the Dutchman whose rejuvenated side moved up to fifth in the Premier League with a 1-0 win over West Ham on Sunday, Rashford rejoicing in his 100th goal for the club.

"We need to go there and win by two goals to top the group so we're going to try and do that," said Rashford. "It was our mission, our objective when we started the campaign, to top the group and that still stands."

Premier League leaders Arsenal top their group and are on more solid ground than Ten Hag's side, requiring a home win against Zurich or for PSV Eindhoven to stumble at Norwegian club Bodo/Glimt.

Mikel Arteta's table toppers dished out a five-goal thrashing to Nottingham Forest at the weekend, but the rout came at the cost of injury to winger Bukayo Saka.

Arteta is keen to seal the deal as group leaders on Thursday to avoid the post World Cup burden of a two-legged play-off in February.

"For sure it is important because we have never played this many games after the World Cup," the manager said. "Any games you can skip it's a big bonus. We have discussed that. For two reasons. One because you skip two matches and also because you

miss some of the top teams."

Only group winners gain direct entry to the last 16. Runners-up face a knock-out round play-off against one of the eight teams, including Barcelona, parachuting into the competition from the Champions League.

Four sides -- Real Betis, Union Saint-Gilloise, Freiburg and Ferencvaros -- go into the concluding round of group matches for the continent's second-tier competition assured of their seat at the last 16 table.

Nowhere are the stakes on Thursday higher than at Jose Mourinho's Roma who under the Portuguese coach claimed the inaugural Europa Conference League title last season, the club's first European honour.

But Mourinho needs to conjure up a home win from his Serie A outfit against Ludogorets to reach the play-offs as Group C runners-up. Otherwise it's back to the Conference League for the only manager to have enjoyed success in all current UEFA competitions.

They came away defeated 2-1 by Thursday's opponents in the away fixture in Bulgaria and Roma forward Stephan El Shaarawy is only too aware of the task ahead.

"To pass the round, we still have to beat Ludogorets," said the Italy international.

"It's a one-on-one battle for second place. We will do our best in Rome," ventured Ludogorets' coach Ante Simundza.

Roma's city neighbours Lazio face Feyenoord looking to avoid defeat to bag a top-two finish in Group F. Elsewhere surprise early season Bundesliga leaders Union Berlin kept alive their hopes of a place in the knock-out round thanks to a 1-0 win over Braga last week.

That left them chasing a play-off berth as runners-up if they beat Union St-Gilloise or Braga fall to Malmo.

AP ■ PARIS

Djokovic hits the ground running in Paris

Novak Djokovic began the defence of his Paris Masters title with a clinical 7-6 (7/1), 6-4 second round win against American Maxime Cressy on Tuesday.

Arriving in the French capital after back-to-back indoor titles in Tel Aviv and Astana in October, the Serbian stretched his winning run to 10 matches following his summer hiatus.

The number six seed is targeting his fifth title from just 11 events after a season heavily curtailed by his opposition to being vaccinated against Covid.

That stance saw him ejected from Australia before hitting a ball in anger at the Australian Open in January.

And aside from competing in Roger Federer's farewell to the sport at the Laver Cup he effectively did not play for three months after Wimbledon, the US Open among the tournaments he was forced to sit out.

But he has said he is "super pumped" to finish 2022 in style, and his one hour, 42 minute beating of



Cressy also took his winning streak in Paris to 10 matches after claiming the title here in 2019 and 2021, having missed the 2020 edition.

The big-serving Paris-born Cressy proved tough to crack in the opening set, saving three set points before being undone by two double faults in

the tie-break. Djokovic though weathered Cressy's aggressive but not altogether reliable delivery -- he hit 15 aces and 10 double faults -- and he got his break on return to lead 5-4 in the second set, to go on to serve out for the match.

"It was very intense, just a lot of pressure," said the 35-year-old Djokovic, whose winning start was celebrated by the Bercy crowd. "When you play someone that

Tsitsipas sees off Evans

AP ■ PARIS

World number five Stefanos Tsitsipas booked his place in the third round of the Paris Masters on Wednesday with a comfortable 6-3 6-4 win over Britain's Dan Evans.

The 24-year-old Greek, whose best performance at Bercy came in 2019 when he lost to Novak Djokovic in the quarter-finals, will face either Cameron Norrie, another Briton, or Frenchman Corentin Moutet in the last 16.

Tsitsipas had the edge over Evans from the start and completed his victory in one hour 20 minutes.

With Evans struggling to get into the match and committing a number of unforced errors, Tsitsipas took the initiative by breaking his opponent's opening service game in both sets.

The Greek, winner this year of the Masters 1000 in Monte Carlo in April and finalist in Cincinnati in August, is guaranteed to play the end-of-season ATP Finals in Turin later this month regardless of his performance in Paris.

Italy's Lorenzo Musetti beat Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 6-4, 6-2 to set up a last-16 meeting with third seed Casper Ruud.

Italy's Lorenzo Musetti beat Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 6-4, 6-2 to set up a last-16 meeting with third seed Casper Ruud.

Italy's Lorenzo Musetti beat Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 6-4, 6-2 to set up a last-16 meeting with third seed Casper Ruud.

serves this well -- first and second serve -- you don't have much room to relax and maybe play kind of a softer few games.

RAHUL & RAIN WIN IT FOR INDIA



Was grinning from ear to ear when I learned of T20 WC in Aus: Kohli

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Virat Kohli says he was "grinning from ear to ear" when Australia was awarded the hosting rights of the ongoing T20 World Cup as his records Down Under speak volumes.

Entering the showpiece with an aim to rediscover his glory days, the Indian batting maestro, who started the campaign with a magnificent 82 against arch-rivals Pakistan, stretched his excellent run with a 44-ball 64 against Bangladesh here on Wednesday. "As soon as I knew the World Cup was in Australia, I was grinning from ear to ear. I knew good cricketing shots would be the key. I knew the kind of experience and game awareness of having played in Australia will come in handy for the team," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Kohli top-scored in the rain-curtailed game which ended in a tense, five-run win for India.

"Pretty close game, not as close as we would've liked it to be. It was another good day

with the bat I guess, was trying to play myself into the innings. "When I went in there was pressure, was watching the ball well. I'm just in a happy space, I don't want to compare anything. What's in the past is in the past."

Kohli hit his first Test in 2012 in Adelaide. Then, on his Test captaincy debut two years later, he hit hundreds in each innings at the same venue and nearly led India to a famous victory.

"I absolutely love playing in this ground. Right from the nets at the back, as soon as I enter, it makes me feel at home. That knock at MCG was meant to be, but when I come here, it's like I'm meant to come to Adelaide and enjoy my batting," he said.

Kohli hit eight fours and a six during his stay in the middle, which also saw him form a 67-run partnership for the second wicket with KL Rahul (50 off 32 balls) after the departure of skipper Rohit Sharma.

Needing 151 in 16 overs as per the revised target after a brief spell of rain, Bangladesh managed 145 for six in the end.

Kohli becomes leading run-getter in T20 WC history

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Virat Kohli on Wednesday overtook former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene to become the all-time leading run-scorer in T20 World Cup history.

Kohli, who boasts of an average of more than 80 and a strike rate of over 130 in T20 World Cups, reached the milestone during India's Super 12 match against

Bangladesh.

The 33-year-old, playing his fifth T20 World Cup, went past Jayawardene's 1016 runs in the seventh over of the Indian innings.

Kohli has 13 half-centuries to his credit across all editions of the T20 World Cup, including three in the ongoing edition.

He is also the highest run-getter in all T20 internationals ahead of compatriot Rohit Sharma (3811).



cession, the moist outfield due to rain made it difficult to grip the ball as Shakib Al Hasan launched into Ravichandran Ashwin for a couple of boundaries.

But Arshdeep (2/38 in 4 overs) coming for his post-rain spell got the dangerous Afif Hossain caught by Surya and then skipper Shakib was caught by substitute fielder Deepak Hooda at deep mid-wicket to change the complexion of the match.

Hardik (2/28 in 3 overs) then removed Yasir Ali and Mosaddek Hossain Saikat in one over to seal the match.

Earlier, Kohli's eternal love affair with the Adelaide Oval continued as he powered India to a strong total.

There were eight fours and a six in his 44-ball innings as none of the Bangladesh bowlers had any answer for his exquisite stroke-play.

The pitch was way slower compared to Perth and the Bangladesh bowling attack fizzled out under extreme pressure in the post-Powerplay overs as Rahul (50 off 31 ball) also returned to form with his first fifty of the tournament.

Kohli, en route to his third half-century of the competition, had couple of useful stands - 67 for second wicket with Rahul and 38 for the third wicket with Suryakumar Yadav (30 off 15 balls).

Shakib Al Hasan (2/33 in 4 overs) picked wickets of Rahul and Surya but Taskin undoubtedly was the best bowler

on view.

Having copped a lot of criticism over the past three games, Rahul got into his element. He played his customary 'pick-up pull-shot', which is a whip off the wrists behind square for a six.

With skipper Rohit dismissed cheaply, Kohli eased the initial pressure put by Taskin with some fleet-footed running between the wickets.

Rahul took 20 balls to score his first 21 runs but once the Powerplay was done away with, he suddenly upped the ante as in one over from Shoriful, he hit a short-arm pull over deep mid-wicket and a slash over backward point for two maximums.

That ninth over from Shoriful yielded 24 runs and the pressure was completely released on the Indian batters.

Rahul's next 29 runs came off 10 balls before his 31-ball-50 ended when an attempted lap-shot found the top-edge and Mustafizur took a well-judged catch off skipper Shakib's bowling. Kohli at the other end hit a flurry of boundaries - couple off Taskin, one from Mustafizur and the best of the lot - a copybook off-drive that one can watch on the loop as many times one wishes to.

The stage was set for Suryakumar and he responded in style with a quickfire cameo before Shakib's arm-ball breached his defense.

However, Kohli continued to attack from one end to take India to an above-par score.

the infield. It was one of the finest T20I fifties for Bangladesh, coming only in 21 balls.

Litton played cover drives, pulls and hit sixes behind square guiding the pace of the deliveries, making Rohit Sharma look clueless during the Powerplay overs which yielded 60 runs.

By the time it started drizzling, Bangladesh were 66 for no loss in seven overs with a 17-run advantage on DLS

par score.

Once the target was reduced, Rahul's inspirational fielding from the deep found Litton short of his ground at the non-striker's end.

Shanto (21 off 25 balls) struggled for timing for the better part before a mistimed pull off Shami's bowling found Suryakumar Yadav at wide long-on.

While two wickets fell in quick suc-

Suryakumar becomes world's No.1 T20I batter

PTI ■ DUBAI

The swashbuckling Suryakumar Yadav on Wednesday became the world's number one batter in T20 Internationals, rising to the top on the back of his incredible form in recent times.

Yadav overtook Pakistan opener Mohammad Rizwan on the back of his unbeaten 51 off 25 balls against the Netherlands in Sydney last week, to become just the second Indian player to hold the top T20I batter ranking after Virat Kohli, who spent 1,013 days at the top in different periods from September 2014 to December 2017.

Yadav's tally of 863 rating points is also the second best by an Indian, the highest being Kohli's tally of 897 in September 2014.

Since beginning his T20I journey for India in March last year, Yadav has quickly established himself as one of the best batters in the shortest format of the game, scoring one century and 11 fifties from 37 appearances for his country.

The 32-year-old Yadav has also played 13 ODIs for India.

Yadav has accumulated 863 points with Rizwan at 842 points. New Zealand's Devon Conway completes the top three with 792 points.

New Zealand's Glenn Phillips has moved up five slots to reach a career-best seventh position after scores of 104 against Sri Lanka and 62 against England, while South Africa's Rilee Rossouw is another one to enter the top 10 after scoring 109



against Bangladesh, moving up 17 slots to a career-best eighth position.

England captain Jos Buttler's knock of 73 against New Zealand has lifted him three places to the 14th position while Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz (up four places to joint-17th), South Africa's David Miller (up two places to 28th), Sri Lanka's Bhanuka Rajapaksa

(up eight places to 29th), Bangladesh's Liton Das (up two places to 36th) and the Australia pair of Mitchell Marsh (up two places to 31st) and Marcus Stoinis (up two places to 39th) are among others to move up the list. The latest weekly update, that considers performances in matches completed by Tuesday, sees Sri Lanka spinner Wanindu Hasaranga advance four places

to second position among bowlers. Hasaranga, who had become No.1 during the T20 World Cup last year, has moved back towards the top position after taking one wicket against Afghanistan. Hasaranga has only three points less than Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan.

NETHERLANDS BEAT ZIMBABWE BY 5 WICKETS

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

In-form opener Max O'Dowd slammed a fine half century after a clinical show by the pace bowlers as Netherlands beat Zimbabwe by five wickets for their first win of the ongoing T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

The Netherlands chased down the small target of 118 with two overs to spare with O'Dowd hitting 52 from 47 balls, reaching 120 for 5 to collect their first points -- two -- though they are already out of the

tournament.

Zimbabwe are also virtually out of the tournament after Wednesday's loss.

Paul van Meekeren (3/29) led the Dutch's disciplined pace bowling show after Zimbabwe opted to bat, while Brandon Glover, Logan van Beek and Bas de Leede also returned with two wickets apiece to skittle out the African side for 117 in 19.2 overs.

In their must-win match, Sikandar Raza was the lone bright spot for Zimbabwe in an otherwise sloppy batting display by the team as the star all-rounder smashed a 24-

ball 40 (3x4, 3x6) to take them past the 100-run mark.

But the target of 118 proved way below par as the Dutch cantered home in 18 overs en route to their first win of the Super-12 stage.

The 'Orange Army' will face South Africa in their last match on Sunday.

Zimbabwe, who had a stunning win over Pakistan earlier in the tournament, next face tournament favourites India in their last match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday.

'We've prepared Arshdeep for death'

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

India captain Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said the team has prepared young Arshdeep Singh for death overs, something that worked for them in the absence of injured Jasprit Bumrah.

According to the skipper, the choice was between Arshdeep and his senior pace colleague Mohammed Shami.

The 23-year-old left-arm seamer delivered for India in the five-run win over Bangladesh in the T20 World Cup here.

Needing 20 off the last over, Arshdeep showed ice-cool temperament despite Nurul Hasan hitting him for a six and a four and bowled a couple of perfect yorker length deliveries to seal the tie for India.

"Arshdeep, when he came into the scene, we asked him to do the death overs for us. With Bumrah not there, it was a tough job for someone to take up. For a young guy to come and do that kind of a job is not easy, we've prepared him," Rohit said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"He's been doing it for 8-9 months. I had to back someone who had been doing it regularly, it was a choice between Shami and Arshdeep."



Injury concerns mount on Australia

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Defending champions Australia are grappling with injury concerns to three key players, including captain Aaron Finch who is uncertain to lead the side in their crucial T20 World Cup match against Afghanistan on Friday.

Finch, Tim David and Marcus Stoinis suffered hamstring injuries during Australia's 42-run win over Ireland at Brisbane on Monday.

Finch batted for all but 19 balls of Australia's innings for his 63 and then took the field for the Irish innings, before coming off in discomfort after a sprint. While all-rounders David and Stoinis did not take the field during Ireland's innings.

Finch underwent a fitness Test here on Wednesday, doing a series of run-throughs and stretches of his hamstring, watched by team fitness staff and selection chair George Bailey.

Finch's injury was of the most concern for Australia given the 35-year-old's history of hamstring injuries.

"Little hammy twinge I think," Finch said after the win on Monday. "I'll get a scan tomorrow (Tuesday). Unfortunately, I've had a

history with them so we'll see how it goes. It doesn't feel too bad at the moment but generally overnight they can stiffen up.

"We'll get a scan and get the full results, but I am very hopeful (of playing against Afghanistan) but we'll know more (Tuesday)."

If Finch is ruled out of the game, wicketkeeper Matthew Wade will captain Australia against Afghanistan. Wade had carried out captaincy duties after Finch came off the field against Ireland. Young all-rounder Cameron Green could replace Finch as opener if the captain is ruled out.

Green, who was a late inclusion to the squad in place of injured Josh Inglis, had centre wicket practice at Karen Rolton Oval, hitting a series of massive sixes in the background. Australia need to beat Afghanistan on Friday to have a shot at qualifying for the semifinals.

The all-important Net Run Rate (NRR), that could decide whether they qualify for the semifinals, lifted to -0.304 after the win against Ireland, but is still below England (0.239) and New Zealand (2.233). All the three teams are currently on five points after four matches.

SA target fragile Pakistan confidence at T20 WC

AP ■ SYDNEY

South Africa's David Miller swarmed on Wednesday they will look to "exploit" Pakistan's fragile confidence as they strive to seal a T20 World Cup semi-final spot and send their opponents packing.

The Proteas were touted as dark horses in the lead-up to the showpiece in Australia and have showed why with a fearsome pace attack and batsmen in form.

Pakistan's much-vaunted opening pair of Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan have failed to fire in three matches at the World Cup and are under pressure to find form, and fast.

"I think it is an area to exploit," said middle-order batsman Miller.

"This game is all about confidence and they haven't probably performed the way they've wanted to.



"But they're world-class players and we're expecting them to come out and bring their A-game and be up for the challenge."

Pakistan bowler Naseem Shah denied that his side are still dwelling on their agonising opening defeat to India.

Pakistan were beaten on the last ball by their arch-rivals and followed that up with a shock defeat to Zimbabwe, before thrashing the Netherlands.

Put to him by reporters that Pakistan have failed to recover mentally from the India defeat, fast bowler Naseem replied: "No, I don't think so because everyone is professional and everyone knows about oneself."

"We lost against India, but I don't think anyone is thinking about the India game because as a professional you can't think about the past when you lose, then especially, you can't be thinking that." Miller hit an unbeaten half-century in a nervy five-wicket win over India which underlined South Africa's title credentials -- and their resilience.

"I suppose we are finding lots of ways to win," he said.

Maketa named interim head coach of SA

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Malibongwe Maketa was named interim head coach of the South Africa cricket team on Wednesday and will take charge of the Proteas for a three-test tour of Australia starting next month.

Maketa will replace Mark Boucher, who will step down as head coach after the ongoing T20 World Cup in Australia.

The 42-year-old Maketa is currently the South Africa "A" team coach and head of the national academy, and has been part of the senior team's coaching group before. He was an assistant coach with the Proteas from 2017-19.