

### Calcutta HC directs ED to take arrested Bengal minister to AIIMS Bhubaneswar

KOLKATA(KCN): The Calcutta High Court on Sunday directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to take West Bengal minister Partha Chatterjee, arrested in connection with the school jobs scam, to AIIMS Bhubaneswar early on Monday by air ambulance. The court directed that the minister be produced before a special ED court in Kolkata



through virtual mode at 4 PM on Monday. "The investigating agency is directed to take the accused by air ambulance to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar in the early morning on 25th July, 2022," Justice Bibek Chaudhuri directed.

After hearing pleadings in a revision application moved by the ED challenging a lower court order sending Chatterjee to state-run SSKM Hospital after his lawyers claimed he was ill, Justice Chaudhuri directed that the AIIMS, Bhubaneswar authority will medically examine the accused by a team of specialist doctors of cardiology, nephrology, respiratory medicines and endocrinology.

### Russia says strike on Ukrainian port hit military targets

KYIV(KCN): Russian defence ministry officials on Sunday insisted that an



airstrike on the port of Odesa, less than a day after Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement on resuming grain ship-

ments from there, had hit only military targets.

"In the seaport in the

### Security, youth's future in danger with this 'new experiment': Rahul Gandhi on Agnipath

NEW DELHI(KCN): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday attacked the Centre over the Agnipath military recruitment scheme, saying the country's security and the future of the youth are in danger with this "new experiment" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "laboratory."

Sixty thousand soldiers retire every year, out of which only 3,000 are getting government jobs, Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

"What will be the future of thousands of 'Agniveers' retiring after 4-year contracts," the former

Congress chief asked.

"With this new experiment of the Prime Minister's laboratory,

both the security of the country and the future of the youth are in danger," Gandhi said.

Several parts of the country had witnessed protests after the announcement of the scheme that seeks to recruit youths between the age bracket of 17-and-half years to 21 for only four years with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years.

For 2022, the upper age limit has been extended to 23 years. The Congress has been protesting against the scheme and has repeatedly demanded that a discussion be held on it in Parliament.



### PM Modi asks BJP-ruled states to boost biz environment, ensure complete coverage of welfare schemes

NEW DELHI(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday held a marathon meeting with chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of BJP-ruled states, and asked them to ensure saturation-level coverage of welfare schemes and boost the business environment in the country.

The meeting, which lasted for over four hours, was attended by chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of 18 states. BJP president J P Nadda was also present.

During the meeting, Modi emphasised on better implementation of some key schemes and initiatives of the government such as GatiShakti, Har Ghar Jal, Svamitva, DBT implementation and others, the BJP said in a statement.

"Prime Minister Modi stressed on the need to ensure saturation-level coverage of all key schemes and said that BJP-ruled states should take a lead towards this," it read.

Emphasising on the need to ensure ease of doing business, Modi spoke about several initiatives taken by his government. "He encouraged the states to take steps towards further boosting the business environment in the country," the party statement said.

Modi also asked the chief ministers to ensure that their states accord due importance to sports and ensure availability of the best facilities to encourage participation and engagement of youngsters in large numbers. Union Minister Bhupender Yadav and Vinay Sahasrabudhe, who heads the party's good

governance cell, were also present in the meeting.

The chief ministers and the deputy chief min-



isters of 18 states where the BJP is in power on its own or in alliance with other parties held deliberations on achieving a 100 per cent target of all centrally sponsored welfare schemes and flagship programmes, sources said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma are among those who attended the meeting.

Nagaland Chief Minister Nephio Rio, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, and Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha are also present.

Several deputy chief ministers including Maharashtra's Devendra Fadnis and Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi from Bihar attended the meeting.

### CM to Meet Prez

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday left for a four-day official visit to New Delhi.

The Chief Minister is likely to meet the newly elected President Droupadi Murmu, the first tribal woman from Odisha to hold the top constitutional position in the country.

He will also attend the swearing-in ceremony of Murmu on July 25 in New Delhi following

which he will return to the State on July



Shrimati Murmu has been elected as the 15th President of India in the Presidential election, the results of which was declared last Thursday.

Earlier Mr. Patnaik greeted Murmu on behalf of the people of the State on her victory in the election.

In a tweet, the CM said, "Spoke to the daughter of Odisha, President-elect Droupadi Murmu over the phone and wished her all the very best on behalf of people of Odisha. The entire family of 4.5 crore people of Odisha are proud of her achievement."

The BJD had supported Murmu and also campaigned for her support by urging Congress MLAs of the state to vote for her.

All BJD MPs are waiting for CM to come so that they will accompany him to meet new President of India.

Shrimati Murmu created history by becoming the first tribal President of India. She defeated the joint Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha.

### Country on path to make 21st century "the century of India", Prez Kovind in his farewell speech

NEW DELHI(KCN): Mother nature is in deep agony and the climate crisis can endanger the very future of this planet, outgoing President Ram Nath Kovind said in his farewell address to the nation on Sunday as he appealed to all to protect the environment for the coming generations.

Emphasising that the country is getting equipped to make the 21st century "the century of India", Kovind highlighted the importance of healthcare and education and said these, along with economic reforms, would enable citizens to pursue happiness by discovering their potential.

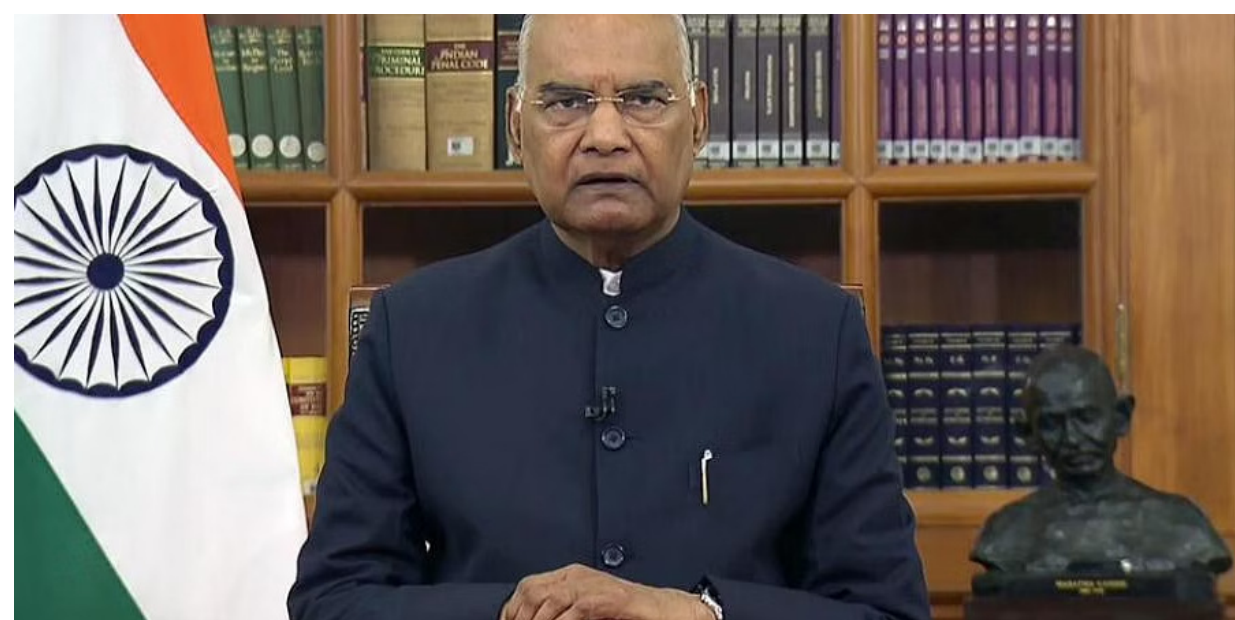
President-elect Droupadi Murmu will be sworn in as the country's 15th President on Monday.

In his last televised address to the nation, Kovind said, "The pandemic has underlined the need to further improve the public healthcare infrastructure. I am glad that the government has accorded top priority to this task."

"Once education and healthcare are in place, economic reforms will let citizens find the best course for their lives," he said, adding that, "I firmly believe that our country is get-

ting equipped to make the 21st century, the century of India".

He said the National Education Policy will



go a long way in making it possible for young Indians to connect with their heritage and also find their feet in the twenty-first century.

The president made a special mention of the threat to the environment and asked all citizens to take care of it for future generations.

"Mother Nature is in deep agony and the climate crisis can endanger the very future of this planet. We must take care of our envi-

ronment, our land, air and water for the sake of our children. In our daily lives and routine choices, we must be more careful to protect our trees, rivers, seas and mountains as well as all other living beings. As the first citizen, if I have to give one advice to my fellow citi-

zens, it has to be this," he added.

President Kovind also hailed the trinity of ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, saying they must not be mistaken as abstractions because they "are lofty, noble and uplifting".

"Our history, not only of modern times but also from ancient times, reminds us that they are real; that they can be realised, and indeed have been realised in different eras. Our ancestors and founders of our modern nation exemplified the meaning of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity with hard work and an attitude of service. We only have to follow in their footsteps and keep walking," he said.

And what do such ideals mean for a common citizen today? Kovind asked. "I believe the chief goal is to help them discover the joy of living. For that, first of all, their basic necessities must be taken care of," the president emphasised.

During his address, the president went down memory lane to highlight the inherent power of vibrant democratic institutions.

Kovind recalled his earlier days when the country had just achieved independence and said, "There was a fresh wave of energy to rebuild the country; there



# The Heritage School students scored 99 percent in the ISC Exam 2022



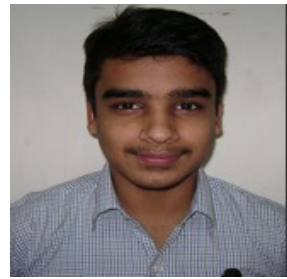
Kolkata (KCN): Proud to state that The Heritage School



Kolkata students scored 99 percent in the ISC exam 2022. The results were declared on 24th July

evening. Around 53 students scored 95 percent and above. Another 59 students scored between 90 and 94 percent. Krish Saraf and Rookpatha Roy from Science and Samridhi Sarkar from Humanities scored 99 percent each making the entire Heritage family proud. Samarth Jaiswal and Raghav

Jhunjhunwala scored 98.8 percent each in



Commerce. "I congratulate the toppers for their excellent performance. This had happened

due to their untiring efforts and the blessings of all the stakeholders." said Shri P.K.Agarwal, CEO, Heritage Group of Institutions, Kolkata. " My students have given their best. I was confident that they will make us proud this time also, said Ms. Seema Sapru, Principal, The Heritage School, Kolkata.

# Annual day of Sambad Sahitya Ghar celebrated at Barbil

Barbil (KCN): On Sunday dated 24th July, the Sambad Sahitya Ghar, Barbil unit celebrated its Annual Day Program in Munda as guest of honour. Mrs Subhshree Lenka writer and poet attended the function as chief guest. Many dignitaries and speaker Subhshree appealed to understand society and to stand unitedly to build a healthy and civilised society. She also praised the good



auditorium. On this special day, Soumya ranja Patnaik is a politician and the founder-editor of the Odiya Sambad news paper and feature film producer attended as chief guest while Padmshree Dr Tulasi organisations were also invited on this day. The program was inaugurated after lighting the lamp at the hands of Padmshree Tulashi Munda and all other dignitaries present on the stage. The cultural show began with an Sambad ghar delivered the inaugural speech while Braja Mishra, secretary read out the annual report. Soumya in his speech pointed out the role of literature in ideal social building. Chief work of Sahitya Ghar .Subodh Das ,Sanjay Naik, Basant Mohapatra, Ramu Naik, Ashok Prajapati, Parbel Allam and many other members of different organisations were also present.

# Puja Curtains go up with Khuti Puja at Bhowanipur 75 Palli

Kolkata(KCN): Bhowanipur 75 Palli heralded the autumnal ritual with the Khuti Puja today on Sun-

day to mark the start of Durga puja proceedings. Bhowanipur 75 Palli marked the heralding of the municipal Affairs and Housing, Govt. of WB; Sri. Sovandeb Chattopadhyay, Minister of Agriculture, Govt of WB; Sri. Debasish Kumar, MLA; Sri. Kartik Banerjee, Social Activist; Smt. Papiya Singh, Councillor; Sri. Sandip Ranjan Bakshi, Councillor; Sri. Ashim Basu, Councillor; Sri. Sayan Deb Chatterjee, State Secretary of West Bengal Trinamool Youth Congress; Sri. Babun Banerjee, President Bengal Olympic Association & many other eminent personalities. With Khuti Puja happening all over the city and Dhaks playing alongside,

the main focus will be celebration of UNESCO's are confident enough that people will not only ap-



day to mark the start of Durga puja proceedings

Bhowanipur 75 Palli marked the heralding of the



recognition of Kolkata's Durga Puja. We are expecting a lot of visitors from foreign countries due

to this recognition. We are awaiting instructions from the State Government about how to celebrate this recognition conferred by UNESCO and will schedule our programs accordingly. However, with Covid threat still looming large, we will be responsible enough to not allow huge gatherings and follow all

protocols recommended by the administration. We appreciate our Puja but also the discipline we will be adhering to for keeping Corona virus at bay", he added inviting everyone to come to the puja with family and friends. In the eagerness to have a grand Durga Puja, Bhowanipur 75 Palli has not forgotten their Social Responsibilities; they have always been in the fore front of social events and also to eradicate social evils. A part of the donation and subscription that they collect in the Durga Puja is utilized in social works round the year. They have been associated with the local bodies in all forms and shapes for any mass oriented awareness activity. Some of these include - Complimentary health checkups & assistance for the local habitats round the year; Awareness programme run all through the year re-



this year at 1/1C, Debendra Ghosh Road located at Bhowanipur, near Netaji Bhawan Metro station. Bhowanipur 75 Palli is one of the eye catcher puja of the city for its innovative concept and celebration style. This Puja is particularly famous for its unique style of pandals and also for the social work which the committee carries out throughout the year. Over the years senior politicians, celebrities from Tollywood, Theatre personalities, eminent litterateurs, industrialists etc. have regularly visited this Puja to make it a grand success. The occasion was glittered by the presence of various eminent personalities like: Janab Firhad Bobby Hakim, Hon'ble Mayor of Kolkata, Minister in Charge - Transport, Urban Development & Mu-

Durga Puja with the presence of these renowned personalities. Bhowanipur 75 Palli takes immense pride to celebrate the 58th year with much opulence and creativity. The Committee has always tried to create a niche amongst all contemporary pujas by bringing about uniqueness through the concept and in the thought process that goes into the festivity like pandal creation, idol, ambience, safety and communal harmony. Bhowanipur 75 Palli has been known for its state of the art presentation over the years and hopefully this year will be even grander. Speaking to the media, Mr. Subir Das, Club Secretary said, "The huge success and multiple awards which we have received over the years always charge us for doing better in present year. This time



garding socio economic hazards; Organizing Blood, Body and Eye Donation camps; Distribution of new sarees and clothes during the Durga Puja to the under-privileged ones; Giving educational kits and books to the children below poverty line; Giving blankets to needy during the winter season and many such CSR activities for welfare of the society.





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# Disney's Marvel unit files lawsuits to keep rights to 'Avengers' characters from copyright termination

WASHINGTON: Disney's Marvel unit has filed lawsuits to including Stan Lee, Steve Ditko and Gene Colan. Marvel has faced terminations from termination provisions of copyright law, authors or their



acquire full control of 'Avengers' characters including Spider-Man, Iron Man, Black Widow and others. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the complaints come against the heirs of some late comic book geniuses in-

## 'Kanyadaan' an outdated ritual or important custom? Alia Bhatt's ad sparks debate

The bride, pretty, radiant and in red, sits in front of the sacred fire, her family, the groom and his parents around her, the love flowing like a balmy breeze. And in that arguably most precious moment, she looks into the camera and asks, "why must a woman be commodified through the custom of 'kanyadaan' literally 'donating a daughter'." The ad for a lehenga brand featuring Bollywood star Alia Bhatt as the much-indulged daughter and granddaughter has fired debate on social media platforms and elsewhere on the age-old tradition of giving away the daughter.

Many term it Hindu phobic for casting aspersions on a ritual that is part of the warp and weft of society, others appreciate it for calling out the patriarchy that underscores the custom and there are those that feel it should have gone even further in its rejection. "There is a growing number of young women who are beginning to think about the issue, especially as increasing number joins the workforce, has access to ideas (via social media etc) that are critical of 'women as property' concept. This ad reflects that," sociologist Sanjay Srivastava told PTI. In the 1.41 minute ad, Bhatt, the self-assured woman of today who also does a selfie pout with her father while at the 'mandap', recalls her lifetime of 'othering' in a monologue - her fond grandmother saying she would one day go to her own home, her father not reacting when people called her "paraya dhan" (alien property) and her mother calling her a 'chidiya' which would fly away one day. The Manyawar ad ends with the grooms' parent also joining in in the ritual (though it is unclear whether they too are giving away their son) and Bhatt's bride saying it should be 'kanyamaan' (respect for the girl child) and not 'kanyadaan', and asking, "Am I a thing to be given away?" Her angst finds a wide echo. Actor Dia Mirza, who decided to do away with the rituals of both "bidai" and "kanyadaan" when she got married to businessman Vaibhav Rekhi, said they wanted the wedding to reflect their "beliefs and not outmoded ideas." "Neither of us believes that women are com-

modities to be given away or 'donated.' Women have agency, selfhood and can make decisions about their lives on their own so my wedding reflected exactly that by not including a ritual like 'kanyadaan'," the actor told PTI. She even engaged a female priest for her wedding to emphasise gender equality. "It is time for young couples to define how they want to get married and if their ceremony is truly representative of their personalities and love for each other," said the actor, who is also the United Nation's National Goodwill Ambassador from India. The ritual of giving away the bride is, of course, not just about Hindu weddings.

It is also a vital part of a Christian wedding service where the father walks down the aisle with his daughter and "hands her over" to the waiting groom. Brought up on tradition and a diet of popular culture, including movies, both Indian and western, many women have now begun to question the patriarchal traditions of wedding ceremonies across societies. Mumbai-based IT analyst Meghna Trivedi, who got married in February last year, said the ritual of 'kanyadaan' does not make sense in today's day and age but had to undergo the ritual anyway. Trivedi, a Gujarati who married a Punjabi, said she asked the priest to find another way but he maintained 'kanyadaan' is a "must". "What you mean by 'kanyadaan' is that you're giving away your daughter to somebody else and that is something you have to do in your life and it's related to your duties as a parent that now your daughter belongs to another family," she told PTI. "But I'm still my parents' daughter after I got married. 'Kanyadaan' is like you're giving me

Hollywood Reporter. Patrick Ditko, Don Larry also filed Rico and Keith termination notices to Dettwiler. The cases will focus on the creation of famous comic book characters and who should be deemed the statutory author. One of the complaints filed on Friday asserted, "Marvel had the right to exercise creative control over Lieber's contributions and paid Lieber a per-page rate for his work." If the plaintiffs win, Disney would have to share profits with the others and hold on to at least a share of character rights as co-owners. As per The Hollywood Reporter, the termination provisions of copyright law only apply in the United States, allowing Disney to continue to control and profit from foreign exploitation. Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster in an unsuccessful termination attempt against DC which saved off termination by counter-claiming against Toberoff. As per The Hollywood Reporter, Dan Petrocelli represented the publisher at that time and will be representing Disney for the new case. Petrocelli has already filed several lawsuits against Lieber, Don Heck,

away and you have nothing to do with me anymore. You're severing ties like I'm some object basically that you're giving away. My parents did understand it but the issue was 'this is how it is, has been and will be'." Actor Kangana Ranaut was among those who disagreed. Criticising the ad in an Instagram post, she said, "Humble request to all brands. Don't use religion, minority, majority politics to sell things. Stop manipulating naive consumers with shrewd divisive concepts and advertising. Please stop mocking Hindus and their rituals." One of the Twitter users echoed similar sentiments.

"Our traditions are not regressive, your mindsets surely are! Kanyadaan is a sacred tradition, where a father/parent parts with their most precious and cherished daughter, a bitter-sweet emotional moment filled with hopes, promises and dreams," the user wrote. Women's rights activist Shabnam Hashmi said the attacks on the ad "reflects the highly patriarchal mindsets of our society". "It is a very progressive advertisement and raises

important questions of women's dignity and equality," Hashmi told PTI. Sociologist Shrivastava added that people reacted negatively because there is an increasing intolerance against anything that is seen to question 'Indian traditions'. The reaction, he said, also reflects a "male anxiety" about the changes that are happening in addition to the current climate where it has become difficult to question anything Indian/Hindu. There were also those who felt the ad didn't go far enough. "The idea should not be to perpetuate the custom but to break away from it," said a young woman, who welcomed the ad and the questioning of traditions but would have preferred that it didn't end with the parents of both sides taking part in it. A radical break would have been more effective in sending out the message, she said. However, a debate reflects a churn. And in that sense, any discussion is welcome, even if it has unlikely beginnings in an ad for a bridal lehenga.





## Grievances regarding high-pitched income-tax assessments

### -Need to mitigate problems of taxpayers; Administrative action not enough

1. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had issued Revised Instruction on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2022 and constituted a committee to deal with Grievances of Taxpayer's on High-Pitched Assessments. Such a committee was also formed way back vide Instruction No, 17/2015 dated



09<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2015.

With the introduction of the Faceless Assessment Regime, many functionalities of the Committee required changes. Therefore, the CBDT has now come up with revised Instructions for the Committee's constitution and its functionality to ensure an effective and efficient approach to deal with taxpayers' grievances. In many cases Taxpayers' are having Grievances due to High-Pitched Scrutiny Assessment particularly where assessments are being carried out in a faceless manner. It is not known to the taxpayer as to who is the Assessing Officer and whether he has considered all the submissions and evidences furnished by the assessee. The Video hearings are also found to be not useful as it is just for the name sake with no actual result of consideration of the submissions made in such hearings or the documents already furnished. The very purpose of ensuring transparency in assessment proceedings and bringing a fair and honest tax regime is not achieved in many cases. The faceless assessment scheme in case of some taxpayer has become a nightmare. Once the assessment is made, the Assessing Officials insist for payment of 20 per cent of tax demand raised by him, ignoring the fact that the assessment has been made high-pitched or where there is non-observance of principles of natural justice, or non-application of mind or gross negligence of assessing officer or assessment unit. The Commissioners of Income Tax should take a liberal and justified view and grant stay of demand in such cases.

2. **Background for Revised Instruction:** The Ministry of Finance and the Central Board of Direct taxes have possibly got lot of complaints from taxpayer. Now realising the scenario and in view of

changes in organizational set-up

subsequent to launch of Faceless Assessment regime, the Central Board of Direct Taxes, in exercise of its powers under section 119 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 has issued Instructions regarding constitution and functioning of 'Local Committees to deal with Taxpayers' Grievances from High-Pitched Scrutiny Assessment' vide e-Dispute Resolution scheme, 2022. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has issued strict instructions for administrative action against officers who resort to "high-pitched tax assessments."

3. **Setting up of Local Committees:** The Local Committee shall consist of 3 members of Pr. CIT/CIT rank. To have a perspective of processes involved in Faceless Assessment process, Local Committees so constituted in each Pr. CCIT region and Pr. CCIT (Exemption) shall have one Pr. CIT (AU) of the region. The Local Committee constituted under the Pr. CCIT (International Taxation) need not have a Pr. CIT (AU) as a member, as the assessments under the International Taxation charges are outside the purview of Faceless Assessment regime. The Committees constituted shall not only deal with taxpayer's grievance petitions regarding High-pitched assessments completed under Faceless as well as Non-Faceless Regime but also take care of grievances in relation to Central Charges under the territorial jurisdiction.

4. **Addressing of Grievances:** This instruction also provides for the initiation of suitable administrative action against the officer concerned, in cases where assessments are found by the local committee to be high-pitched or where there is non-observance of principles of natural justice, non-application of mind or gross negligence of assessing officer or assessment unit.

5. **Taxpayers' grievances :** Taxpayers whose scrutiny assessments have been completed under the faceless assessment system can send their grievances to the email ID [samadhan.faceless-assessment@incometax.gov.in](mailto:samadhan.faceless-assessment@incometax.gov.in), while those finalized under the non-faceless regime can send their complaints through e-mail to the Principal CCIT or to his

**Narayan Jain**

office physically. The local committee would examine to

ascertain whether there is a prima-facie case of high-pitched assessment, non-observance of principles of natural justice, non-application of mind or gross negligence of assessing officer/assessment unit.

a) **Receipt of Grievances under Faceless Regime :** Grievances shall be received by the National Faceless Assessment Centre (NaFAC) at [samadhan.facelessassessment@incometax.gov.in](mailto:samadhan.facelessassessment@incometax.gov.in). Alternatively, the same shall be forwarded to the Local Committee by NaFAC.

b) **Receipt of Grievances under Non-Faceless Regime:** Grievances shall be received by the concerned Pr. CCIT either in the physical form or through email.

6. **Actions to be Taken by the Local Committee:** The committees, shall endeavor to dispose-off each grievance petition within two months from the end of the month in which such petition is received by it and their meetings should be held at least twice in a month. In brief following actions are supposed to be taken by the Committee:

a) Acknowledge the receipt of Grievance and maintain a separate record of the same;

b) Committee to examine whether the matter is fit for High-Pitched Assessments, whether there is non-consideration of principles of natural justice, non-application of mind/gross negligence, misinterpretation of facts/law by the Assessing Officer at the time of passing the order;

c) Committee may call for relevant records furnished during the course of assessment from Jurisdictional Pr. CIT, if required;

d) Committee may seek inputs from systems like ITBA, CPC-ITR, CPC-TDS, etc. to examine if grievances relate to system-related issues;

e) Committee to submit report treating the order as High-Pitched to the concerned Pr. CCIT along with reasons thereof;

f) Concerned Pr. CCIT to call for information from Assessing Officer/AU if cases identified are considered as High-Pitched assessments. Furthermore, he may advise the Pr. CIT to prevent such

cases;

g) Concerned Pr. CCIT to submit Local Committee's reports with NaFAC and/or Directorate of Income-tax (Systems) as feedback to revisit policies, if required.

7. **Broad Timelines for Action: In brief the timelines are as under:**

a) The Secretary of Committee to forward the Grievance to the Chairman and other members within 3 days of receipt;

b) The Local Committee shall make effort to dispose of each Grievance within two months from the end of the month in which it received;

c) The Secretary to ensure meetings of the Local Committees to be held at least twice a month in order to ensure timely reports are submitted to concerned Pr. CCIT

d) The concerned Pr. CCIT to review the work of the Local Committee on a monthly basis

e) Quarterly report regarding the functioning of Local Committees to be furnished to the CBDT in a prescribed format

8. **The object of the Committee:** The purpose of constitution of Local Committees is to effectively and efficiently deal with the genuine grievances of taxpayers and help in supporting an environment where assessment orders are passed in a fair and reasonable manner. It is to be noted that Local Committees cannot be treated as an alternative forum to dispute resolution/appellate proceedings.

9. **What is missing:** Though the constitution of Committee at local level is an admirable step particularly in the light of new system of faceless assessments and action may be taken against concerned erring officials, but what relief the taxpayer will get? We hope that the committee would ensure that the taxpayer's grievances are resolved satisfactorily and in a timely manner. The CBDT must also ensure prompt relief to taxpayer in the appeal of assessee, on the basis of report of such committee.

(Narayan Jain is former Secretary General of AIFTP and author of the books "How to Handle Income Tax Problems" and "Income Tax Pleading & Practice" with CA DilipLoyalka).

## Doodling her way to a stress-free life

Long meetings, sifting through dozens of files and multitasking are par for the course for T K Sreedevi. But despite the stress that goes with the territory, the Secretary, Finance Department, Government of Telanagana, is always smiling and focused.

All she needs to keep tensions at bay is a pen and some paper. Her go-to stress-busting activity is doodling. The IAS officer claims doodlers are less stressed and have less negativity than others. "Doodles can also help you remember information better," she says. The activity enables people to express their creativity while improving their mood, and also helps the brain increase psychological resilience, she explains.

Sreedevi was born in Hyderabad into a traditional Rajput family and attended Vidyodaya High School before earning a bachelor's degree from St Francis College.

"In school, I loved to paint and won prizes in every on-the-spot painting competition that I participated in," says Sreedevi, who went on to do a Masters in Psychology and English Literature from Osmania University.

Her father, TK Sivaram Singh, worked as an engineer for the APSEB, while her mother, TK Indira, looked after the home. Sreedevi is the youngest of seven siblings. While her elder brother, an IPS officer, recently retired, one of her sisters is on deputation with the

Rural Development Department in the Finance Department.

Sreedevi took a doctorate in Agricultural Development from the International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). She thoroughly enjoyed the research work, she says. It was similar to childbirth and early parenting, according to her. "Work-life balance is critical. I joined the service 22 years ago and have a knack for balancing both," says the bureaucrat.

Except when she was the District Collector of Mahabubnagar (a large district with 14 Assembly Constituencies and 2 Parliamentary Constituencies), the IAS officer never had a problem with time management. "I've always believed in using IT to improve governance and monitoring," says the 2004-batch bureaucrat. She was able to meet professional demands thanks to time management, work delivery planning, and the use of technology. As Collector, she digitised Prajavani, the grievances day, and monitored grievance resolution. As

**Swati Sharma**



she digitised 28 municipal services and provided online grievance redressal through the Citizen Buddy app and Citizen Services Centres.

Her other significant contributions include Property Mapping of 14 lakh urban properties in 73 Urban Local Bodies, and revenue improvement, which earned her a place at the

Commissioner and Director of Municipal Administration, Prime Minister's Coffee Table meet in 2018. Her initiatives won her numerous good governance awards.

Surprisingly, despite her hectic schedule, Sreedevi never hired a nanny to look after her son, Sai Madhav Singh. "I cared for my son on my own, with the assistance of my mother. During my time at ICRISAT, I travelled with my son on my back like Jhansi ki Rani," the officer laughs. (Sai Madhav, who is studying Mathematics and Computer Science in the UK, is a speed cuber who holds the National Record for 'Skewb'.) "I am waiting to learn the funda-

mentals of mathematics from my son," says the proud mother.

Sreedevi enjoys travelling. "I've travelled across Europe and the United States, as well as in Asia and Africa as a Watersheds Scientist," says the bureaucrat. She now does a lot of leisure travel, which includes nature trips and amusement and shopping trips. She also tries to find out more about the architecture and educational institutions of the places she visits.

Gita abhyas is her favourite pastime. "I identify as a nonreligious person who enjoys studying life philosophy. As a trained psychologist, I enjoy observing people and instilling mutual respect. I empathise with colleagues," she adds.

Sreedevi isn't big on cooking. "Both my mother and my son are excellent cooks. I used to cook only when I was at Duke University in North Carolina, USA, for my long-term training, to feed my then-8-year-old son," says Sreedevi, who enjoys street food, especially pani puri. She loves biryani, along with the majority of Hyderabadis. The IAS officer also regularly goes for early morning walks in KBR. "I do yoga and meditation too," says the coffee addict, who rarely watches movies or television.



## Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation mandates two dustbins for shops, houses

BHUBANESWAR: Stepping up action against public littering and open dumping of waste at random places in the State Capital, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has come up with a fresh standard operating procedure (SOP) making it mandatory for the eateries, commercial establishments as well as residential societies and individual households to keep two separate dustbins for segregation of dry and wet waste while handing them over to the sanitation staff.

The civic body will create wardwise list of shops and commercial establishments. CCTV cameras will be used to identify violators and keep record of

them. "Fine up to Rs 5,000 will be imposed on the violators found littering their premises," said Deputy Commissioner (Sanitation) Suwendu Sahoo.

The civic body came up with the new SOP as commercial establishments, especially the small vendors such as tea stalls, betel shops, tiffin centres, food carts and vegetable vendors continued to litter waste in public places, roads and drains, leading to



clogging of storm water channels.

As per the SOP, all commercial establishments, including malls, large commercial establishments, small vendors, food vendors and traders, will have to keep five metre radius of their premises garbage and litter free.

The shops and commercial establishments have been asked to purchase dustbins having two-times the capacity of their waste

generation on a day for their safe disposal every 24 hours. The civic body clarified that any garbage dumped either by the shopkeeper or by the customer will be the liability of the shop owner.

Similarly, the individual households, resident welfare associations and gated societies will also have to follow these norms and keep five metre area of their premises clean.

The SOP also mandates BMC to ensure regular collection of the segregated waste. The civic body is also required to display the details of garbage collection vehicles and contact number of their drivers and helpers at prominent places of wards.

## Not sure if we could still address Droupadi Murmu informally, say friends back home

RAIRANGPUR: With Droupadi Murmu set to take oath as the first tribal President of the country on Monday, her neighbours and friends back home are confused over how to address their amigo the next time they meet her.

Ramachandra Murmu, a farmer of Uparbeda village in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district, said everyone in the president-elect's hometown is proud of her achievements, "but I am not sure if I should use 'tu' (informal address) or 'aap' (address with respect) when we talk next". Ramachandra, who was her classmate in Government Upper Primary School in Uparbeda, recalled that the two would often shared food

the country's president," he said.

Majhi also looked back on their school days with fondness, and said, "She was among the brightest students in school. I had to drop out due to poverty. She would often invite me to her home for lunch. I remember having 'pakhal bhaat' at her place."

ALSO READ | 21 gun salute, Santali saree for swearing-in: Droupadi Murmu to take oath as President on Monday

Born to a Santhal family in 1958, Murmu studied in Government Upper Primary School in Uparbeda till Class 7 and then moved to Bhubaneswar Government Girl's High School.



from the same plate on the school campus. "We all took part in sporting activities together. All these year, I have used 'tu' to address her. Things have changed now. I am not sure if I can use 'tu' for the first citizen of India. How can a farmer be on equal terms with the President," he said, taking a break from his fieldwork.

Talking more about Murmu, he said, "Her family had landed property, which did not generate revenue. She was a simple and amicable girl who wore the same frock to school."

Another friend, Govind Majhi, said that he had last met Murmu when she was the governor of Jharkhand "She had visited my home as the governor of Jharkhand, Back then, we conversed like we always did. She is a very down-to-earth person. There was no formality involved. Now, however, I am not so sure. I don't know if I could talk informally with

She graduated from Ramadevi Women's College.

Her college mate, Suchitra Samal, said the president-elect was the same person that she was when they met the first time.

"I was pleasantly surprised when she called me two days ago. I wasn't expecting a call from her amid her busy schedule. I had wished her earlier on her success," Samal said.

Samal along with Dangi Murmu had visited Droupadi at Jharkhand Raj Bhavan some years ago.

"We had a fun time reminiscing old days. We talked a lot, teased each other and shared updates from our lives. Droupadi was her usual, cool and composed self," said Dangi.

Samal hopes to get an invitation from the Rashtrapati Bhavan soon.

"Let her settle down, we will go and meet her there," she added.

## Youth arrested on the charge of stealing money, breaking the bike's basket

Barbil (KCN):



Barbil police

arrested one youth stealing money by way of breaking bike basket. As per information, Himansu Sekhar Singh of Azad basti, Joda had come to State Bank of Barbil to apply his ATM card. After completing his work, he withdrew Rs.10,000 from bank ATM and kept his cash and document in his basket. He again came to Bharat

Bakery to buy breads keeping his bike aside. While coming back from the bakery, he found his basket broken. Having received a complain from Himansu, Barbil police investigated the matter. Based on CC tv camera footage, police identified the culprit Milu Patra of New Market, Barbil and arrested him under IPC 379.

## PoK part of India and will continue to remain so, says Rajnath

JAMMU(KCN): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said India is well-equipped to give a befitting reply to "anyone who casts an evil eye on us" and expressed confidence that the country will emerge victorious in case of any war.

Pitching for reclaiming Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Singh said that it is a part of India and will continue to remain part of this country.

"I want to tell you with confidence that if any foreign powers cast an evil eye on us and if

during 1948, 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999 wars, when enemies tried to cast an evil eye, but their plans were thwarted by the gallant Indian soldiers.

The defence minister also spoke about the brave deeds of Brigadier Usman and Major Somnath Sharma in 1948; Major Shaitan Singh's valour in 1962; India's historic victory in 1971 war and the contribution of Kargil bravehearts Captain Vikram Batra and Captain Manoj Pandey who laid down their lives to protect the unity and integrity of In-



there is a war, we will become victorious," Singh said during an event organised to commemorate 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' here.

He said that India defeated Pakistan in all the wars since 1947 and after bitter defeat, they engineered proxy wars.

"After tasting defeats in direct wars of 1965 and 1971, Pakistan adopted the path of proxy war. For over two decades, it has tried to 'bleed India with a thousand cuts'. But, time and again, our brave soldiers have shown that no one can disturb the unity, integrity and sovereignty of India," Singh said, assuring the nation that the armed forces are ready to face all future challenges.

A strong and confident new India is well-equipped to give a befitting reply to anyone who casts an evil eye, he said.

"India has become a strong and confident nation which is well-equipped to protect its people from anyone who tries to cast an evil eye on us," the defence minister said.

Singh said that during the wars with Pakistan and China, people of Jammu and Kashmir stood by their forces. "Whether one is Hindu or Muslim, all stood by their forces. We cannot forget," he said.

Paying tributes to the freedom fighters and the armed forces personnel who have laid down their lives since Independence in the service of the nation, Singh stated that it was the spirit of national pride at the core of their values that protected the unity and integrity of India.

He asserted that the sole aim of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government is to safeguard the interests of the nation and it has taken a series of steps to develop a self-reliant defence ecosystem that provides indigenous state-of-the-art weapons and equipment to the armed forces to fight all kinds of future wars.

Sharing his views on the numerous challenges faced by India post-Independence, Singh said the entire area of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh became the "main war theatre"

dia and "continue to be an inspiration to the people, especially the youth".

He also paid respects to the Indian soldiers who displayed unmatched bravery during the Galwan valley incident and ensured that the Indian tricolour continues to fly high.

Singh remembered the then Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee for his leadership and words of encouragement to the armed forces personnel during the Kargil war despite numerous challenges and international pressure.

He also made special mention of the support extended by the people of J&K to the armed forces, commending their commitment to safeguard the interests of the nation like all other states.

The defence minister stated that J&K will always be an integral part of India and the government is ensuring that the Union territory, like the rest of the country, touches newer heights of progress.

Terming Article 370 as an artificial legal barrier, he asserted that its abrogation brought a new dawn of hope to the dreams and aspirations of the people of J&K, especially the youth.

The decision opened new avenues for the welfare of the people and the UT is now progressing at a much faster rate, he said.

On PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan, the defence minister stated that these areas are illegally occupied by Pakistan and a resolution to free them has been unanimously passed in the Parliament of India.

"PoK is a part of Indian territory and will continue to do so. How is it possible that Baba Amarnath (Lord Shiva's form) is in India and Maa Sharda Shakti is across the Line of Control," he said. Referring to the Sharda Peeth which has the ruins of a temple to Hindu goddess Saraswati, also known as Sharda, Singh said how can Shiv Saroop (Amarnath) be on this side of J&K and Shakti Saroop (Sharda) in PoK side. "God should give better sense to Pakistan. I cannot say beyond that," he said.



# Murmu boosts Modi image

Bhubaneswar: India has witnessed at least 14 Presidential elections in the past, but not the one in which Odisha's daughter Droupadi Murmu has been elected to Raisina Hills. While the Presidential elections were mostly confined among the elected MPs and MLAs, this is for the first time when people in villages also become part of the process. The people in large numbers celebrated Murmu's election victory and it had its political impact giving a rich dividend to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose 'Master Stroke' left many surprised including his strong critics. The politicians like TMC Supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had to respect Shrimati Murmu's candidature while BJD President and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced his party's support to NDA candidate even before anyone seeking it. Shrimati Murmu will take the oath of office as the President on Monday. She is the first from the tribal community to become the first citizen of India. Thanks Mr.Modi for his selection though he has rich political ambitions from the Presidential elections. The impact of Shrimati Murmu's selection was visible in the nook and corner of the State of Odisha, particularly in the tribal hinterland of Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, neighbor-

ing Jharkhand and West Bengal. Even its impact has spread to other states also. But the immediate effect was felt in Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal. This is because Droupadi is daughter of Odisha and she was Governor of Jharkhand. Since a good number of Santhal community also live in West Bengal, it was obvious that her becoming President will certainly encourage the Bengali adivasis. The Prime Minister's acceptance among the tribals has certainly increased, if the words of Chakara Hansda, a Santhali of Uperbeda village is to be believed. Hansda lives in the same village where Droupadi was born. "It is Modi who has given status to adivasis. No other party or leader in the past had ever given such honour to a tribal as Mr.Modi has done. We are indebted to him," Mr.Majhi said, which is considered as the voice of 22.8 percent of Odisha's population and 9 percent of people in India. He said the tribal community since ages survives on its self pride though they are poor and poverty stricken. Many innocent and gullible tribal women also do not know who Mr.Modi is. They, however, know Indira Gandhi. "Yes Indira Maa was a protector of tribals. After her, none has come to the rescue of tribals even as her son has become Prime Minister. Mr.Modi is someone who follows Indira," said

Nitika Hansda of Rairangpur. "He gave us respect", said Jamuna, a 70 years old Santhal lady.

Odisha are elated over Modi's selection and giving due importance to an Odia which remained

Padma awards. All these added to Mr.Modi's popularity in the state even though there is bit-

ness towards the Union Government over the escalating price rise of essential commodities. The GST on "Mudhi", a popular food among the people of Mayurbhanj tribals, has however, could

not affect Mr.Modi's popularity in the face of Shrimati Murmu's elevation. In fact, Droupadi Sabha and Assembly seats in other states. While Odisha houses 22.8 percent tribals, the Scheduled Tribes constitute 14.8 per cent and 5.7 per cent of the population in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh respectively, states that will go to polls this year. Of the nine states that go to polls next year, four are in the northeast where tribals play a decisive role — Nagaland (86.5 per cent), Meghalaya (86.1 per cent) and Tripura (31.8 per cent) in February and Mizoram (94.4 per cent) in November. Tribals also constitute seven per cent of the population in Karnataka that will go to polls in May next year. Of the four states that will go to polls in November, tribals constitute 30.6 per cent of the population in Chhattisgarh, 21.1 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 13.5 per cent in Rajasthan and 9 per cent in

Telangana. Jharkhand, which will go to polls on November 2024, constitutes 26 per cent tribal population. Maharashtra, which is slated to go to polls in October 2024, has over nine per cent tribal population while Haryana will go to polls along with Maharashtra. Anyway, the Presidential elections and NDA's candidate selection has certainly boosted the image of Mr.Modi across the country and also in Odisha. The coming days, particularly, the 2024 general elections will determine whether the saffron party could benefit from Mr.Modi's enhanced image. The next Assembly elections will also prove whether Narendra Modi has eaten into Naveen Patnaik's popularity bases in some parts of Odisha, both including tribal and non-tribal belts.



Mr.Modi's BJP is known to the people of tribal districts of Odisha and their feeling towards Mr.Modi has been further cemented after making Murmu as the President of India. However, general impression on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik remained unchanged. "Naveen Babu has done his duty by supporting Murmu keeping in view the sentiments of Odia people. Shrimati Murmu's elevation may add to Mr.Modi's image, but it will not reduce people's liking for Naveen," said a political analyst working in the tribal districts. There should be no doubt that Mr.Modi's enhanced image will boost the electoral prospects of BJP in the tribal hinterland and also in the entire state. This is because, 4.5 crore people of

neglected since seven-and-half-a decades. This action has also reestablished the BJP leader's claim that Mr.Modi has a soft corner for Odisha for which so many people from the state have been installed in top posts of Indian bureaucracy as well as in the Union Council of Ministers. Apart from Dharmendra Pradhan, two others — Ashwini Vaishnav and Bishweswar Tudu, another tribal have got berths in the Union Ministry. Many Odia officers including Girish Chandra Murmu of Mayurbhanj have also become Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG), while Shaktikanta Das is now Reserve Bank of India Governor. A number of talented persons from the state who remained ignored for decades, also got

terness towards the Union Government over the escalating price rise of essential commodities. The GST on "Mudhi", a popular food among the people of Mayurbhanj tribals, has however, could

Murmu, a tribal face as India's President, is expected to work wonderfully for the BJP in the 2024 general elections for Lok Sabha and Odisha Legislative Assembly. This may also impact many Lok

## CITU party, Barbil agitate against GST levied on daily commodities

Barbil(KCN):The CITU party agitated against the ruling government on price rise and the increase in Goods and

present rates on them to criticise the sharp increase in prices and higher GST rates. They also held aloft placards which read

Mogul regime is now converting with a new name GST by Modi Government. The hike in GST on Rice, wheat flours

over Rupee value against dollar, he told the economic conditions of the country is going to crash and the present



Services Tax rates of different daily use commodities. Apart from this, the protesters today also displayed cut-outs of gas cylinders with slogans and past and

"Gabbar Singh Tax strikes again" — a take on the GST acronym. Senior leader Indramani Behera compared Modi with Aurangzeb saying "Jiziya Tax" during

will break the back bone of common man further who are already suffering with the extreme hike of different house hold goods. Expressing his panic

generation is going to experience the same condition like Srilanka. Hundreds of party work picketed around the city with slogans and placards.



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## GST on essential items after states sought levy, aimed to check evasion: Official

NEW DELHI: GST on pre-packaged goods/ food packets was levied after some states gave feedback of losing revenues they previously earned from levy of VAT on food items, a top government official said.

The decision to levy the tax, which came into effect from July 18, is not that of the Union government but of the GST Council. It was considered by the Fitment Committee which has officers of some states and the centre.

It was also recommended by a group of ministers (GOM) consisting of minister representatives of some states and finally by the GST council, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj told PTI here.

In all, the GST Council, the new constitutional mechanism in the country for taking decisions on GST, took a consensus view on levy of the tax, he said.

The panel, which is headed by the Union Finance Minister and comprises representatives of all states and union territories, takes decisions when everyone is on board, he said.

However, pulses, wheat, rye, oats, maize, rice, flour, suji, besan, puffed rice and curd/lassi when sold loose and not pre-packed or pre-labelled will not attract any GST.

The comments come against the backdrop of opposition parties led by the Congress stalling functioning of Parliament in the first week of the monsoon session over levying of GST on daily use items and other issues.

While states ruled by non-BJP parties were party to the decision taken on the levy of the tax at the Council's meeting in Chandigarh last month, vociferous protests against the levy came just as the monsoon session of Parliament was to start.

"Before GST came into place (on July 1, 2017) during the VAT regime, this (tax on essentials) was there in many states. States were getting revenue (from levying VAT on food items). Once in 2017, this new goods and services tax (GST) regime came, it was envisaged that this would continue but it was levied only on branded products when rules and circulars came out," Bajaj said.

The rules provided that the GST will not

be levied on pre-packed goods if the brands gave up actionable claims on the brand. This led to some of the well renowned brands beginning to sell these items in packets that carried their brand but no actionable claim on it and so did not attract the 5 per cent GST.

"I don't want to take names but very renowned brands in the country were not paying taxes using this particular loophole. And this was creating an arbitrage because in a FMCG product like pulses or rice which is indistinguishable, 5 per cent is a huge margin," he said. Naturally, the companies selling products under brands complained.

"States also gave us feedback that we used to get a lot of money before GST came in and that we should do something," he said. He, however, did not name the states.

Eliminating the distinction between branded and non-branded products was also an exercise to simplify the tax regime and create a level playing field with minimal possibility of legal challenges. It gives parity to all brands and companies by removing any disparity, he said.

"So, people were misusing it. Secondly, states gave us feedback that they were losing revenues on it and not getting revenues they used to get in pre-GST regime," he said.

"So the Fitment Committee (composed of central and state officials) sat down, got feedback. Then the Group of Ministers (from different states) sat down, got feedback. Then the Council discussed it. So it was a conscious decision taken. It was a unanimous consensus decision," he noted.

Bajaj said the GST Council has been working with a complete understanding of issues and taking decisions addressing concerns of even one dissenting state.

"I have seen so many decisions that we did not take it forward in a meeting because one state had concerns. The approach is that either we will address the concern or not take it forward," he said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 19 stated that states levied sales tax or VAT on foodgrains in the pre-Goods and

Services Tax (GST) regime and the present levy on cereals, pulses, flour,



curd and lassi is an exercise to curb tax leakage. The Fitment Committee, which first examined the issue, Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Haryana and Gujarat. Its recommendations were examined by a Group of Ministers

## Russia says strike on Ukrainian port hit military targets

Continued from page-1

dress Saturday evening that the attack on Odesa "destroyed the very possibility" of dialogue with Russia.

The Ukrainian military said on Saturday that Moscow had attacked Odesa's sea port with four cruise missiles, two of which had been shot down by Ukrainian air defence.

Command spokeswoman Nataliya Humenyuk said that no grain storage facilities were hit. Turkey's defence minister, however, said he had had reports from Ukrainian authorities that one missile struck a grain silo while another landed nearby, although neither affected loading at Odesa's docks.

It was not immediately clear how the airstrike would affect plans to resume shipping Ukrainian grain by the sea in safe corridors out of three Ukrainian Black Sea ports: Odesa, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny.

Russia and Ukraine on Friday signed identical agreements with the UN and Turkey in Istanbul aimed at clearing the way for the shipment of millions of tons of desperately needed Ukrainian grain, as well as the export of Russian grain and fertilizer. Senior UN officials voiced hopes that the deal would end a months-long standoff brought about by the war in Ukraine that threatened food security around the globe.

The agreement committed both Kyiv and Moscow to refraining from strikes on the three Black Sea ports.

Elsewhere on Sunday, Ukrainian authorities reported that Russian shelling continued to kill and injure civilians in Ukraine's south and east.

The governor of the eastern Donetsk region, one of two which make up Ukraine's industrial heartland of the Donbas and a key focus of Russia's offensive, said that two civilians had been killed and two more had been injured over the previous 24 hours. The UK military on Sunday morning reported in its daily intelligence update that Russia was making "minimal progress" in its ongoing Donbas offensive, which it said remained small-scale and focused on the city of Bakhmut in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

The Ukrainian General Staff confirmed in its regular update that Russia was "conducting military operations to create conditions" for an assault on Bakhmut while firing on surrounding settlements and battling Ukrainian defenders for control of a nearby thermal plant.

In Ukraine's south, regional officials said that at least five ci-

vilians were wounded by Russian shells in the Black Sea port of Mykolaiv on Saturday night and Sunday morning.

"Also, as a result of the scattering of munitions and their fragments, fires occurred in open areas in the city," said Vitaly Kim, governor of the Mykolaiv region. In other developments

— A Washington-based think tank says Ukrainian forces are likely preparing to launch or have launched a counteroffensive in the Kherson region.

The Institute for the Study of War quoted Kherson Oblast Administration Adviser Serhiy Khlan as saying Ukrainian forces have seized unspecified settlements in the region but had called on Ukrainian civilians to remain silent on the progress of the counteroffensive until Ukrainian authorities release official statements.

The ISW notes that open-source information on any progress by Ukrainian troops "will likely be limited and lag behind events."

— Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is in Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials as his country seeks to break diplomatic isolation and sanctions by the West over its invasion of Ukraine.

Lavrov landed in Cairo late Saturday, the first leg of his Africa trip that will also include stops in Ethiopia, Uganda and Congo, according to Russia's state-run RT television network.

Speaking at a news conference following bilateral talks with his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shukri, on Sunday, Lavrov said that he had "reaffirmed the commitment of Russian grain exporters to fulfil all their obligations" in the wake of the UN-backed deal to unblock grain shipments.

— Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said in a speech in Romania that Western sanctions against Russia have failed and that the war in Ukraine will not end "until there is a Russian-US peace negotiation."

Orban said Saturday in a speech in Baile Tusnad in central Romania that "a new strategy is needed which should focus on peace talks ... instead of winning the war."

"The situation is that today we are sitting in a car with flat tires on all four wheels," he said. "It is quite obvious that the war cannot be won this way. Ukrainians will never win a war against Russia with American training officers and weapons." The far-right leader went on to say that had Donald Trump and Germany's Angela Merkel still been in charge in their countries, "then this war would never have broken out."

## Country on path to make 21st century "the century of India", Prez Kovind in his farewell speech

Continued from page-1

were new dreams. I too had a dream, that one day I would be able to participate in a meaningful way in this nation-building exercise."

"A young boy living in a mud house could not have any idea about the highest Constitutional office of the Republic. But it is a testament to the strength of India's democracy that it has created pathways to let each citizen take part in the shaping of our collective destiny. If that Ram Nath Kovind from village Paraunkh is addressing you today, it is solely thanks to the inherent power of our vibrant democratic institutions," he said.

In his farewell speech on the eve of his completing five-year tenure as the president, Kovind said the founders of our modern nation exemplified the meaning of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity with hard work and an attitude of service, and "we only have to follow in their footsteps and keep walking".

The president said the nation is working with the objective of providing better housing, and access to drinking water and electricity for every family. "This change has been made possible by the momentum of development and good governance which knows no discrimination," he said.

Kovind said the formal map for the democratic path "we all have been navigating was drafted by the Constituent Assembly" and the Constitution they prepared, with invaluable contributions from each of them, has been our guiding beacon.

"Values enshrined in it have been part of the Indian ethos since time immemorial," the outgoing president said and quoted Dr Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar's concluding remarks in the Constituent Assembly where he had pointed out the distinction between political and social democracy.

"What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy," Kovind quoted Ambedkar as having said.

President Kovind said in modern times, the glorious journey of the country commenced with the awakening of nationalist feelings during colonial rule and the launch of the freedom struggle.

"There were many uprisings across the country in the nineteenth century. The names of many of the heroes who brought hopes of new dawn have long been forgotten. Contributions of some of them have come to be appreciated only in recent times. Around the turn of the century, the various struggles were coming together, creating a new consciousness," he said.

When Gandhiji returned to the motherland in 1915, the nationalist fervour was gaining momentum, Kovind said, mentioning Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar,

Jawaharlal Nehru and Syama Prasad Mookerjee among others. "From Tilak and Gokhale to Bhagat Singh and Netaji, from Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee to Sarojini Naidu and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, nowhere in the history of humankind have so many great minds come together for a common cause," he said.

Expressing deep gratitude to all fellow citizens and elected representatives, Kovind said he has been inspired and energised by interactions with farmers and workers from small villages, teachers shaping young minds, artists enriching our legacy, scholars investigating various facets of our country and business people creating wealth for the nation.

He also mentioned doctors and nurses serving the people, scientists and engineers engaged in nation-building, judges and advocates contributing to the justice delivery system of the country and civil servants who run the administration smoothly "Our social workers actively connecting every social segment with development, preachers and masters of all sects who maintain the flow of spirituality in Indian society "you all have continuously helped me discharge my duties," he said.

"In short, I received full cooperation, support and blessings from all sections of society. I will especially cherish the occasions when I had an opportunity to meet our brave jawans of the armed forces, para-military forces and the police. Their patriotic zeal is as amazing, as it is inspiring," the president said.

Referring to his interaction with the Indian diaspora during his visits abroad, Kovind said he found their love and concern for the homeland very touching.

"All these re-affirm the belief that the nation is after all composed of its citizens; and with each of you striving to make India better and better, the nation's great future is secure," he said.

Kovind said that among the most memorable moments of his life has been visiting his home during his term and touching the feet of his teachers at Kanpur to seek their blessings.

"This year, the prime minister also honoured my village Paraunkh with his visit. This connection with our roots has been the essence of India. I would request the younger generation to continue this tradition of staying connected with their village or town, their schools and teachers," the president said.

Asserting that he has discharged his responsibilities to the best of his ability and has been conscious of being a successor to great icons like Dr Rajendra Prasad, Dr S Radhakrishnan and Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Kovind said, "Still, whenever I was in doubt, I turned to Gandhiji and his famous talisman". "His advice of recalling the face of the poorest man and asking myself if the step I am about to take will be of any use to him. At the risk of repeating myself, I will urge you to contemplate Gandhiji's life and teachings at least for a few minutes every day," he said.



## Neymar says he wants to stay at PSG

SAITAMA: Neymar said Saturday that he wants to stay with Paris Saint-Germain and does not "need to prove" himself to anyone after five years with the French club. The 30-year-old Brazilian said no one from PSG had spoken to him regarding his

said Galtier.

"We announce he's leaving, we announce he's staying -- I haven't spoken to Ney about this. But he doesn't seem to be bothered about what is said about him and his situation at the club."



future but he wants to continue playing in the French capital alongside Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe.

"I still want to stay here with the club," Neymar said after PSG's 3-0 win over J-League side Urawa Reds on the club's tour of Japan.

"So far the club hasn't said anything to me so I don't know what their plans are for me.

"I don't need to prove myself to anyone -- I just need to play my football and I have to be happy playing football," he added.

Neymar said he was feeling "fit" after coming on as a substitute with Messi to play the last 30 minutes of Saturday's game.

He said it was "too early to speak about" his impression of new coach Christophe Galtier, who arrived at PSG from Nice at the end of last season.

Galtier said Neymar "has been working well" in pre-season and "seems happy and very fit".

"What will happen in the near future when the transfer window closes, I don't know,"

## KiiT-IS Shines in CBSE Class X Exam

Bhubaneswar(KCN): KiiT International School (KiiT-IS) has achieved cent percent result in the Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) Class X board examina-



tions, the results of which were declared on July 22. Most of the students passed the examination with 90 percent and above marks. Soumi Biswas became the School topper by securing 99 percent marks.

Congratulating all students for their success, Dr. Achyuta Samanta, Founder, KIIT & KISS said, it has been possible only because of proper care and modern teaching methodology. He thanked Chairperson Dr. Monalisa Bal, Principal Dr. Sanjay Suar and other staff for their effort towards this success.

Mbappe scored as PSG made it two wins out of two on their Japanese tour against Urawa in front of a crowd of 61,000 in Saitama.

Mbappe was the only PSG player retained in the starting line-up after Wednesday's 2-1 win over Kawasaki Frontale and he fired home a well-taken goal from a tight angle in the 35th minute.

"Kylian Mbappe seems very happy to me, very fulfilled," said Galtier.

"He is very dynamic in his training sessions."

Pablo Sarabia and Arnaud Kalimuendo got the other two goals for PSG, who play Gamba Osaka on Monday in Osaka in the final game of their tour.

Galtier handed a start to Warren Zaire-Emery -- just 16 years and four months old -- alongside Marco Verratti in midfield.

"We had trouble getting into the game because the opposition was pressing us," said Galtier.

"As soon as we got into the game we saw some interesting things, even if we still have a lot to improve when it comes to conceding chances."

## India vs West Indies second ODI: Windies win toss, opt to bat

PORT OF SPAIN: West Indies skipper Nicholas Pooran won the toss and elected to bat against India in the second ODI here on Sunday.

For India, Avesh Khan will make his

Teams: West Indies: Shai Hope (w), Brandon King, Shamarh Brooks, Kyle Mayers, Nicholas Pooran(c), Rovman Powell, Akeal Hosein, Romario Shepherd, Alzarri



ODI debut after he was brought in place of Prasidh Krishna.

WI replaced Gudakesh Motie with Hayden Walsh Jr in the playing XI after the former suffered a fractured thumb on Friday.

India won the opening ODI by three runs.

Joseph, Jayden Seales, Hayden Walsh

India: Shikhar Dhawan (c), Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, Sanju Samson (w), Deepak Hooda, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Siraj, Yuzvendra Chahal, Avesh Khan.

## Stakhovsky 'disappointed' by Russian players silent on war

Ukraine's Sergiy Stakhovsky on Saturday said he was "disappointed" by Russian tennis players who out of fear of retribution have not spoken out against their country's invasion of his homeland.

"They are all scared for their fate. They don't want to go to jail... but they are okay that the kids and women are dying," the retired player told reporters in the Polish city of Krakow.

"I would rather trade and go to jail for a couple of weeks or even a month if I can save a life by doing that," he added.

The 36-year-old was in Poland to play at a charity tennis event organised by world number one Iga Swiatek whose proceeds will go to youths affected by the war in Ukraine.

Other special guests in attendance included former world number two Agnieszka Radwanska, Ukraine's

top female player Elina Svitolina and Ukrainian Champions League-winning football legend Andriy Shevchenko. Before playing in a couple of exhibition matches at the Krakow event, Swiatek told reporters she felt the Ukraine war had lately been forgotten around



the world.

"In a sense, memory of it has faded and also many players have removed the (Ukraine) ribbons that they wore at the beginning of February for, say, a couple of matches," the Polish star said.

"I find that a bit inconsistent but above all I'm focusing on what I can do to help," the 21-year-old added.

"I also know that many

players don't entirely want to speak out... We can each decide whether to share our thoughts or keep them to ourselves and I respect that."

Stakhovsky, who retired from tennis earlier this year and joined Ukraine's reserve forces after the invasion,

saw their careers grow. And I'm disappointed to say the least."

Stakhovsky singled out Russian players Andrey Rublev and Daria Kasatkina as the sole exceptions, praising them for stating their feelings about the conflict.

"Rublev was maybe the only player who came out publicly and said stop to the war in the first week," Stakhovsky said.

He was referring to the Dubai ATP event where Rublev signed the camera lens on court with the message "No war, please".

Meanwhile, Kasatkina, Russia's highest-ranked female player, called the war a "nightmare" in a recent YouTube interview and also criticised Russia's attitude towards homosexuality after revealing she was gay.

"I have great admiration for Daria... She is a hero in her own way," Stakhovsky said.

"If there would be more Russians like this, this war would have never started."

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