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ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ଵାସ ୭୭ତମ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ଦିବସ

ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ସବୁଦିନେ ଆଗରେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ବି ଆଉ ଆଜି ବି ।

‘ସିପାହୀ ବିଦ୍ରୋହ’ର ୪୦ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଦେଶର ପ୍ରଥମ ସଶସ୍ତ୍ର ସଂଗ୍ରାମ

‘ପାଇକ ବିଦ୍ରୋହ’ । ୧୯୩୦ ମସିହା ‘ଲବଣ ସତ୍ୟାଗ୍ରହ’ରେ ବି ଆଗଭର ହୋଇ ଆଗକୁ ବାହାରି

ଆସିଥିଲେ ରମା ଦେବୀ ଆଉ ମାଳତୀ ଚୌଧୁରୀଙ୍କ ଭଳି ମହିଳା । ୧ ଏପ୍ରିଲ ୧୯୩୬ ମସିହାରେ ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର

ଭାଷାଭିତ୍ତିକ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଭାବରେ ମାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇବାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ହିଁ ପ୍ରଥମ ରାଜ୍ୟ ।

ଆଜି ବି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଅନେକ କଥାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରିୟ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ

ଦୁଇ ଦଶନ୍ଧିରୁ ଅଧିକ ଲୋକାଭିମୁଖୀ ଶାସନ କାଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆଜି

ମହିଳା ସଶକ୍ତିକରଣ, ଖାଦ୍ୟ ସୁରକ୍ଷା, ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ ପରିଚାଳନା

ଏମିତି ଅନେକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଆଗରେ । ‘5T’ ଅଣିଛି ବ୍ୟାପକ ଶାସନ ସଂସ୍କାର

ଆଉ ‘ମୋ ସରକାର’ ଯୋଗୁଁ ଜନସାଧାରଣ ଆଜି ସରକାରଙ୍କ ନିକଟତର

ଏବଂ ସରକାର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ନିକଟତର । ସବୁଥିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆଜି

ସମଗ୍ର ଦେଶରେ ଅଗ୍ରଣୀ ଏବଂ ଅନୁକରଣୀୟ । ସରକାରୀ ସେବା

ପାଇବାରେ ମିଳିଛି ସ୍ଵାଚ୍ଛନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ଆଉ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା । ଆମେ ବିକାଶର

ଏହି ନବପର୍ବରେ ଆଜି ସମ୍ବୋଧନ ପାଳନ କରୁଛୁ

‘ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ଵାସ’

ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ୭୫ବର୍ଷର ପୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଅବସରରେ ।

୧୫ ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ୨୦୨୨ ରୁ ୨ ଅକ୍ଟୋବର ୨୦୨୨

ପ୍ରମୁଖ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ

ସୂଚନା ଓ ଲୋକସମ୍ପର୍କ ବିଭାଗ

- ▶ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ୭୫ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ତ୍ତି ରାଜ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ସ୍ତରରେ ମହାସମାରୋହରେ ପାଳନ ।
- ▶ ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ୧୫ରୁ ଅକ୍ଟୋବର ୨ ‘ଅହିଂସା ରଥ’ର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପରିକ୍ରମା ଏବଂ ଅହିଂସାର ବାର୍ତ୍ତା ପ୍ରଚାର ।
- ▶ ଉତ୍କଳ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରିଭ୍ୟୁର ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ପ୍ରକାଶନ ।
- ▶ ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ସ୍ମୃତିପୀଠ, ତେଲେଙ୍ଗାପେଣ୍ଡରେ ରାଜ୍ୟସ୍ତରୀୟ ସ୍ମୃତି ସଭା ।

ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଓ ନଗର ଉନ୍ନୟନ ବିଭାଗ

- ▶ ସମଗ୍ର ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳ, ବସ୍ତି ତଥା ଅଣବସ୍ତି ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ସଂପର୍କିତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ।

ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଓ ଗଣଶିକ୍ଷା ଏବଂ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ

- ▶ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ସଂପର୍କିତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା, ମାରାଥନ, ସେମିନାର, ସିଂପୋଜିୟମ, ପରିସର ସଫେଇ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ମନୋଜ୍ଞ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ।

ଢ଼େଆ ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଭାଗ

- ▶ ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ସଂଗ୍ରହାଳୟରେ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ସଂପର୍କିତ ସେମିନାର, ଜଳାକୃତି ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ, କବିତା ପାଠୋତ୍ସବ ଏବଂ ଚିତ୍ରକଳା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ ।
- ▶ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଏକାଡେମୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ସଂପର୍କିତ ଭବ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ଆୟୋଜନ ।

ସୂଚନା ଓ ପ୍ରଯୁକ୍ତି ବିଭାଗ

- ▶ ସାମାଜିକ ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ମହାତ୍ମାଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କିତ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା ପ୍ରଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରସାର ।

ପଞ୍ଚାୟତିରାଜ ବିଭାଗ

- ▶ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତରେ ସଂଗ୍ରାମୀ ଓ ଶହୀଦ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଜାତୀୟ ପତାକା ଉତ୍ତୋଳନ, ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ଗ୍ରାମସଭା, ଶହୀଦ ଓ ସଂଗ୍ରାମୀ ପରିବାରଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନା, ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ପାଳନ ।

ମହିଳା ଓ ଶିଶୁ ବିକାଶ ବିଭାଗ

- ▶ ବୃକ୍ଷ ରୋପଣ, ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଉପରେ ପୋଷ୍ଟର, ଫ୍ୟାଟ୍ରିଡ୍ରେସ୍, ଦେଶାତ୍ମବୋଧକ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା, ପରିବେଶ ସଫେଇ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ।

ସୂଚନା ଓ ଲୋକସମ୍ପର୍କ ବିଭାଗ

Nation's oldest convict is in Odisha jail

The tale of **Baram Sira, 92**

ANIL DHIR ■ KORAPUT
Convict No. 7273/A in the Circle Jail in Koraput is no ordinary prisoner. At 92, Baram Sira is the oldest prisoner in Odisha, perhaps in the country. Sira, who was arrested for murder, has been admitted to the jail hospital on the premises of the 115-year-old British-era jail since the last few years.

Sira, a native of Dengapadar Village under the Borigumma police station, was arrested in March 2013 in connection with a murder following a land dispute. He was sentenced to life imprisonment under sections 302 IPC by the Additional District & Sessions Judge, Jeypore, in January 2015. As an under-trial prisoner and later as a

convicted prisoner, he has been in jail for nine and a half years.

Sira is fighting age-related ailments with no hope of stepping out alive. The Jail Superintendent, doctors and staffs have been taking good care of the nonagenarian, but he is in a poor mental and physical state.

The State Law Department, in the Guidelines of Premature Release 2022, which supersedes the earlier Resolution of 2010, has amended many of the previous rules of the State Sentence Review Board. The three considerations which are to be taken are: Whether the convict has lost his potential for committing crime considering his overall conduct; the possibility of reclaiming the convict as a useful member of society; socioeconomic condition of the convict's family.

The Categorisation of Prisoners for Premature Release further states the male convicts sentenced to life imprisonment aged more than 65 years and who have undergone an actual imprisonment of five years including remand period and a total imprisonment of seven years including remission shall be prematurely released. The rules clearly state that old and decrepit prisoners, who are incapable of committing crime, male life convicts aged 65 years and above and female convicts aged 55 years and above, were eligible for premature release after they complete 60 months of imprisonment.

Despite Sira having completed 111 months' imprisonment, his name has not been cleared by the advisory board for premature

release. Furthermore, the Odisha Jail Manual Rule 840 says that when a convicted prisoner, in the opinion of a Medical Board, is in danger of death from sickness (not due to an infectious disease) with no hope of recovery within or outside the prison, the Superintendent shall report the fact to the Inspector General of Prisons if it is considered desirable to allow such prisoner the comfort of dying at home.

I have written to the President of India and the Chief Justices of both the Supreme Court and the High Court of Orissa for Sira's release. I have gone to his village. His family says he is even older and is actually 96 years old.

According to advocate Ajit Patro of Koraput, who highlighted Sira's case, the implementation of the

criminal justice system rests with three institutions, i.e., police, courts and prisons. With a ratio of 144 police officers per 100,000 citizens, the police-to-population ratio is much lower than the United Nations' recommended 222 per 100,000 citizens. Courts in India at all levels (District, High Courts and Supreme Court) have a cumulative backlog of over 3.5 crore cases.

Activist Dr Biswajit Mohanty says Indian jails are overcrowded, housing more than 4.6 lakh prisoners at 117% occupancy. Notably, almost 70% of these prisoners are under trial, i.e., those who haven't been convicted yet. As per the data available with the National Crime Records Bureau, the central jails are operating at 121% occupancy and district jails at 132%.

Of its total population, more than 3.15 lakh prisoners

are under trial. Overcrowding is primarily attributable to the disenfranchised poor under-trials, who are languishing in jail due to their inability to pay for bail. The Government spends a considerable amount on keeping these individuals incarcerated. In this background, it may be advisable to release those who are on trial for petty crimes; and where it is apparent that there would likely be no 'real' trial.

The criminal justice system is an integral part of the democratic setup. Therefore, it is imperative that comprehensive steps are taken to make the system more effective. Otherwise, it will be a shame on our democracy to keep a mentally and physically decrepit nonagenarian in jail till his death.

CM receives handmade National Flags



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

On the eve of the 75th year of Independence Day celebrations, a delegation of Mission Shakti members met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the Naveen Niwas on Sunday and presented him with handmade National Flags.

Patnaik thanked them for

the gesture. The SHG members expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister for reposing faith in and entrusting them with the preparation of National Flags.

Notably, the State entrusted the Mission Shakti with the preparation and free distribution of 30 lakh National Flags in the State.

488 new Covid cases in State

1 more death reported

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State on Sunday recorded 488 new Covid-19 positive cases in 29 districts and the State pool, increasing the total tally to 13,22,671.

Among the newly-infected were 114 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years.

Notably, the State had reported 403 Covid cases on Saturday.

Out of the new cases, 286 were from quarantine and 202 local contacts.

Sundargarh district reported the highest 105 new cases followed by Khordha with 66, Boudh 40, Kalahandi 31, Bargarh 22, Mayurbhanj 21, Balangir and Nabarangpur 20

each, Rayagada 14, Jharsuguda 12 and Cuttack 11.

The districts which recorded below 10 cases were Subarenapur and Nayagarh nine each, Baleswar eight, Kendrapada, Nuapada and Puri seven each, Koraput six, Gajapati and Jajpur five each, Angul and Bhadrak four each, Deogarh and Dhenkanal three each, Jagatsinghpur and Ganjam two each and Malkangiri one.

Besides, 14 were reported from the State pool.

The active cases numbered 3,786. Meanwhile, a 24-year-old woman succumbed to the disease in Rayagada district, taking the total death toll to 9,153.

So far, 13, 09,677 persons have recovered from the disease in the State.

Prez medal for Police Commissioner



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Twin City Commissioner of Police Saumyendra Kumar Priyadarsi and Security Wing in-charge SP Saroj Kumar Mohapatra on being conferred with President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service.

The two police officials have been selected for the award with 87 other officials from across the country. They would be awarded with the medal at a special ceremony.

The Odisha police congratulated the duo in a tweet and said, "Congratulations to Twin City

Commissioner of Police Saumyendra Kumar Priyadarsi and Bhubaneswar Security Wing in-charge SP Saroj Kumar Mohapatra on being conferred with President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service. This is recognition by Government of India for their dedication, sincerity and leadership," said State Police.

The Police Medal for Gallantry was also awarded to commandoes Kumar Karmi and Pitabash Panda.

As many 10 personnel of the Odisha police have been awarded the Police Medal for Meritorious Service.

Cong's 'Mehengai pe Charcha' from Aug 17

'Central, State Govts hoodwinking people'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The BJP-led Central Government's anti-people policies and economic mismanagement have led to rampaging inflation and unemployment in the country, said the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) here on Saturday.

Before coming to power in 2014, the BJP had promised



to provide 2 crore jobs, deposit Rs 15 lakh in every person's bank account and control price rise and made many other promises. But they have failed to fulfil any of the assurances. This has brought immense suffering for the people, said PCC president Sarat Patnaik at a Press meet.

He alleged that the BJD-led State Government is hand-in-glove with the Union Government and supporting the latter's anti-people policies. So, both the BJP and the BJD are deceiving the people.

The Congress had gheraoed the Raj Bhavan on August 5 and held protest meetings

across the State against the anti-people policies of the Central Government. Similarly, padyatras are being throughout the State from August 9 to 14, Patnaik said.

To create awareness among people about price rise and unemployment, 'Mehengai Pe Charcha' campaign would be held from August 17 to 23 State-wide. On August 28, 'Mehengai Par Halla Bol-Delhi Chalho' would be organised.

Among others, Congress media cell chairman Ganeshwar Behera and convenor Satya Parakash Nayak were present.

Odia techie Kar to connect Odias globally

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

UK-based Odia tech entrepreneur and a military veteran, Arun Kar, who is also the cofounder of NesT Group, a diversified conglomerate, is all set to make Odisha proud with his new venture. He is coming up with a digital platform 'Global Odia Connect' to unite the Odia community of professionals across the world to enrich each and every section of the Odia society both economically and socially.

Kar said, "I believe with



everyone's support, this platform will not only bring

Odia under one roof but also be helpful for the upliftment of my people."

"Once registered, one can connect with business leaders around the world from Odia community; entrepreneurs, freelancers and service providers can register their business; service sector employees can register to find better opportunity for themselves, showcase their products and services; post and/or find job opportunities; find Skill work force within community; also students can register and find jobs posted

by community members. Kar is a Guinness World Record holder and has been featured, along with Elon Musk, on the Fortune's cover page as one of the Top 40 "Unstoppable World's Brightest Business Minds".

He will soon be honoured at the House of Lords of UK Parliament as a "World's Best Emerging Business Leader". He has been named as "Global Indian of the Year" by the Asia One Magazine and featured on CNBC and United Research (July 2021) Services.

CONTEMPORARIES

India@75: Demystifying the idea of the great nation

As India enters its 75th year of Independence, it sets the mind in motion to carve out a more democratic idea of India heavier with philosophical ruminations, which is not an irony though because it is one of the special features of the Indian idiosyncrasies. After all, we are not just the 'argumentative Indians' but also essentially the 'thinking Indians' more embedded to sentiments. Evidently, we have celebrated the most popular dialogues of 'Deewar' (1975) movie where in the iconic scene, the good cop Ravi (Shashi Kapoor) confronts his crooked brother Vijay (Amitabh Bachchan) and the conversation goes on like this; Vijay: "Aaj mere paas building hai, property hai, bank balance hai, banglahai, gaadihai... yahaitumhare pass?" Ravi: "Mere paas maa hai."

It is our simplicity and sentiment which make us distinct from the rest of the world, but we often fall prey to the 'Enemies of Promise'. We have to defeat the 'Enemies of Promise', which is here not to be confused with the Cyril Connolly's book as these



S JYOTIRANJANA

enemies are the 'self-serving politics', nepotism (dynastic politics included), crony capitalism, corruption, communalism. They are the enemies of the promises enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution, i.e., to secure to all its citizens "JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation."

By the time British arrived in India, the country's share of the

world economy was 23% and its share in world trade 27%; and by the time they left, its share in the world economy was below 4% and in world trade 2%. However, in these 75 years, we have taken a very difficult path to reach where we are today. Recently, analysts at leading multinational investment management and financial services company Morgan Stanley have predicted that India is likely to be the fastest-growing Asian economy in 2022-23 and India's gross domestic product growth will be at an average 7% during this period, which will be the strongest among the largest economies. Besides, India will contribute 28% to Asian growth and 22% to global growth.

India is a melting pot of different religions, castes, creeds, languages, races, customs, costumes and cuisines. The first-ever Linguistic Survey of India carried out by Sir George Abraham Grierson, an Indian Civil Service officer and linguist, between 1898 and 1928 reported a total of 179 languages and 544 dialects. According to 2011 Census, India has 122 major

languages and 1,599 other languages; 22 of the 122 major languages are already part of the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and 99 are termed as "Total of other languages". India's population grew from 361 million in 1951 Census to 1.2 billion in the 2011. The number of Hindus grew from 304 million in 1951 to 966 million, Muslims from 35 million to 172 million, Christians from 8 million to 28 million, Sikhs from 6.8 million to 20.8 million, Buddhists from 2.7 million to 8.4 million and Jains from 1.7 million to 4.5 million. The present population of the Indian subcontinent is divided into four racial groups, Negritos, Proto-Australoids, Proto-Australoids, Mongoloids and Mediterraneans.

The plurality of India and its singularity as a nation, the invincibility of the pluralistic singularity is best articulated by Rabindranath Tagore in 'Gitanjali' as he wrote: "Here came Aryans, Non-Aryans;

Dravids and Mongols; Tribes of Scythians and Huns Pathans and Moghuls; In one they merged; And

finally, They came to take and will stay to give; But they will never leave Bharat, the seashore of humanity."

But harmony doesn't mean there will be no inconsistencies, differences or contradictions among such a huge population of substantially distinct identities as poet Whitman puts it: "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself;

I am large, I contain multitudes." In order to build a strong edifice of harmony despite the plurality, we need to respect the differences and settle for common rules of deliberation and debate and the common ground of convergence, i.e., national interest. Besides, there should be a strong conviction for uplifting the members of the lowest strata of the society and empowering the vulnerable. With former President Ram Nath Kovind's completion of tenure and Droupadi Murmu occupying the coveted post, we have two elected sovereigns in quick succession where both belong to the weakest and lowest section of Indian

society; while the former belonged to the Scheduled Caste, the latter is a woman and of Scheduled Tribe.

This, undoubtedly, is symbolic of the government's strong resolve to empower the poorest among the poor. Yet, a lot needs to be done to ensure each one among the lowest of the lowest and poorest of the poorest gets education, employment, financial security and a life of dignity. For example, it is worrying that literacy rates of SCs and STs still remain far below others. In case of ST women, the literacy rate was as low as 34.8% in 2001, from where it jumped to almost 50% in 2011. The literacy rate of SC women was 42% in 2001, which increased to 56.5% in 2011 whereas the literacy rate of general women stood at 64.64% and men was 80.89% and the national literacy rate was 72.99% in 2011. This is indicative of the socioeconomic status of the Dalits and the backward classes and shows the quantum of endeavour and strength of conviction needed to catapult the situation for ensuring social justice and end the inequalities and

inherent social imbalances.

With the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, which is defined by the government's portal as "... an initiative of the Government of India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievement, it becomes essential to protect our diversity and inclusiveness and ensure that the masses benefit the most from all the endeavours that we take as a nation to build an India of tomorrow." The idea of India is inclusive of all who call it an abode with only exclusion to hatred and competitive supremacy over one another; it is the only singularity of Indianness that surpasses all plurality and makes our diversity a 'plurality of strength'. Jai Hind!

(The writer is an Addl. Central Government Standing Counsel, Central Administrative Tribunal, Cuttack and a Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Law and Media Studies, School of Mass Communication, KIIT University. Views are personal)

OPINION 6
SAVING INDIA FROM
UNRULY NEIGHBOURS

WORLD 9
FIRE AT COPTIC CHURCH IN CAIRO
KILLS 41, HURTS 14

MONEY 10
FINANCE MIN PLANS TO REVIEW
EXEMPTION-FREE TAX REGIME

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the pioneer



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'Partition Day reminds nation of suffering of Indians'

I pay homage to all those who lost their lives during the Partition: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday remembered 'Partition Horror Remembrance Day', saying the day "reminds the nation of the suffering and sacrifices of Indians".

In a tweet, the PM said, "Today, on 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day', I pay homage to all those who lost their lives during the Partition, and applaud the resilience as well as grit of all those who suffered during that tragic period of our history."

Last year, Modi declared that August 14 would be remembered as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' every



year to remind the nation of the sufferings and sacrifices of Indians during the Partition in 1947.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also paid homage to lakhs of people who he said suffered the brunt of the Partition in 1947 on the occasion of 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day'.

In a series of tweets, Shah said, "The Partition of the country in 1947 is that inhuman chapter of Indian history which can never be forgotten. The violence and hatred of the Partition claimed millions of lives and displaced innumerable people."

He added that this day will remind the young generation about the torture and pain suffered by people during the Partition and will continue to inspire countrymen to maintain peace and harmony in the nation.

The BJP targeted the Congress without naming it on the

responsibility of fighting against these divisive forces?", the BJP tweeted along with the video.

The party has been organising exhibitions on the issue at various party offices and other places from August 12 to 14.

A six-member committee was set up to ensure the implementation of the idea across the country, which consisted of national general secretary Dushyant Gautam, former Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, Narendra Rana, Anirban Ganguly, Priti Gandhi and Shakti Singh. 'Partition Day reminds nation of suffering of Indians'

The party members also met the families of those who underwent the pain of the Partition in 1947, according to Gautam.

The BJP leaders said efforts would be made to tell the new generation about the "horror of the Partition which was done on the basis of religion."

The pictures of the Partition were also shared by the BJP on social media in the process to let the new generation know about the Partition tragedies.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Monday inaugurated an exhibition on the theme 'Horrors of Partition' at the Parliament Library Building. Incidentally, this date also marks Pakistan's Independence Day.

"Where were those people at that time who had the re-

sponsibility of fighting against these divisive forces?", the BJP tweeted along with the video.

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Medium-level floods occur in Mahanadi

Incessant rains hit life in several districts

SAROJ MISHRA
BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Sunday asked the Collectors of several districts to be on alert in view of a medium-scale flood in the Mahanadi system and directed officials to carry out necessary evacuation and rehabilitation measures if required.

After reviewing the situation arising out of incessant rains in Chhattisgarh and low pressure-induced rainfall in the past two days in Odisha, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said peak floodwaters would pass through the Mundali barrage by Monday.

A medium flood of the range of the one which oc-



curred in August 2019 is expected in the Mahanadi. "Mahanadi basin will witness the peak flood when the water released from the Hirakud Dam reaches Mundali tomorrow. Around 10 lakh to 10.50 lakh cusec of floodwaters are likely to pass through Mundali," said Jena.

He informed that though it was earlier decided to open around 40 sluice gates of the Hirakud Dam, it has now been decided to go for entire management by releasing excess

water through 34 gates.

Water Resources Department engineers have been put on alert, especially in Khordha, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Nayagarh and Cuttack districts, in view of the flood situation to monitor river embankments. The SRC said that already seven teams of ODRAF, three of NDRF and 12 teams of Fire Service have been kept in readiness in these districts.

Floodwaters entered into low-lying areas of Cuttack district, especially those situated near the banks of the Mahanadi like Baramba. Thousands of farmlands in the region have been inundated. Floodwaters also submerged the famous Bhattarika Temple in Baramba.

Bargarh district also witnessed a flood situation due to backwaters from the Hirakud

Dam. Floodwaters entered into Chikhili, Antaradi, Ghughurapalli, Barangkota and Beniapalli villages in Ambabona block.

In Subarnapur district, the bridge connecting Sonepur with Sambalpur at Malatijor was submerged, disrupting communications.

In Boudh district, as many as 55 villages in Harbhanga tehsil were cut off from the rest of the world due to floodwaters. Rainwaters inundated the Sadalaganda-Bhejigora bridge.

The Pioneer wishes its readers a Happy Independence Day! August 15, Independence Day, being a holiday in the offices of The Pioneer, Bhubaneswar, the next issue of the edition will appear on August 17, 2022.

Low pressure turns into depression

Red, Orange Warnings issued in State

PNS BHUBANESWAR

The well-marked low pressure area, which had concentrated over northwest Bay of Bengal and the adjoining Odisha coast, intensified into

a depression on Sunday.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the depression is likely to move in west-north-west direction and cross the West Bengal coast near Digha and maintain its intensity for next 24 hours.

In view of the influence of the depression, the IMD issued Red Warning for 11 dis-

tricts and Orange Warning for 19 districts for next 24 hours. Issuing the Red warning, the weather office said torrential rainfall is very likely to occur in the districts of Angul, Keonjhar, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Subarnapur, Balangir, Kalahandi and

Nuapada.

Intense spells of rainfall are very likely to occur in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Puri, Khordha, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Boudh, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur.

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In Lanjigarh Here, tribals hoist Tricolour first time

BIKASH KHEMKA
BHAWANIPATNA
Prime Minister Modi's call to Indians to hoist the National Flag in their homes from August 13 to 15 to celebrate the 75 years of Indian Independence had its effect in one of the remote pockets of Lanjigarh block of Kalhandi district. Tribals of Trilochanpur, Phuldimer, Kunakadu and Palber residing around the Niyangiri Hills honoured the Tiranga with enthusiasm. Earlier, these villagers were not aware of the Independence Day. The region



is yet to be developed. Officials neglected to visit it because of Maoist fear as it is one of the safest places for Maoists' hideout. Maoist threats to development works are common here. Often, combing operation is done by police forces. Despite all this, Lanjigarh block officials went there and distributed Tricolours to the tribals on the eve of the Independence Day this year. Lanjigarh BDO Jitendra Mishra said tribals held the flag for the first time since Independence. "It will invoke the feeling of patriotism in their hearts and promote awareness about the Indian National Flag," the BDO said. Kutia Kondh Development Agency (KKDA) Project Officer Lambodhar Pradhan and Trilochanpur Panchayat Extension Officer Tapas Sahu were also present on the occasion of "Har Ghar Tiranga" campaign.

13-ft India map weighing 400 kg at B'pur ITI



PNS ■ BERHMAPUR
Azadi Ki Amrit Mahotsav-Har Ghar Tiranga was celebrated at the Government ITI here on Saturday. Padmashree Awardee and noted Surgeon Prof KM Tripathy inaugurated the fest. A 13 ft height India map weighing 400 kg was installed outside the boundary wall of the institute to mark the event. The giant map was kept open for view of the general public and to take selfie with it. People who move on the NH are quite enthusiastic to take selfie with the map and feel proud to be an Indian, said Principal of the institute Dr Rajat K Panigrahi. Prof Tripathy who joined the event as chief guest highly appreciated the hard and innovative work of the students and teachers to involve the general public in the Azadi Ki Amrit Mahotsav.

INBRIEF

20 BLOOD UNITS COLLECTED IN CITY CAMP

Bhubaneswar: The International Human Rights Protection Council (IHRPC), the Child and Women Development Society, the Orissa Association for Blind and Rotary Club, Bhubaneswar, Niladri, jointly organised a blood donation camp here. IHRPC chairman Arati Mahala, chairman CWDS Maj Dr Kalpana Das, president OAV Sanyasi Behera, president, Rotary Club Niladri Punyasloka Mohanty inaugurated the camp and motivated the Dibyang donors. The Central Red Cross Blood Centre collected 20 units of blood. Blood grouping of more than 100 visually-impaired students was also done and they were provided I-cards. Blood donation motivators Laxman Swain, Arun Das, Duryodhan Sahoo, Dr Santosh Sahoo, Rudrakant Mohapatra, among others, joined.



PARADIP PORT HOLDS TIRANGA CAMPAIGN

Paradip: The 'Har Ghar Tiranga' enthusiasm instilled patriotism in the hearts of Paradip Port Authority (PPA) employees. Senior officials led by PPA Chairman PL Haranadh held their heads high with the Tricolours in their hands. A skit was staged by local cultural organisation CANMASS. A bike rally was also held for awareness on Har Ghar Tiranga. Despite inclement weather, PPA employees participated in the programme in large numbers.



IFFCO HOLDS FARMER TRAINING IN PARADIP

Paradip: On the occasion of Har Ghar Tiranga and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a farmer training and demonstration programme was held by the Cordet organisation of Paradip IFFCO unit at its premises on Saturday. Experts explained to the farmers about the importance and use of IFFCO's Nano Urea, Nano DAP and other organic fertilisers. Farmers were informed about improved paddy cultivation and production of fertilisers. Organic fertilisers were distributed to over 70 farmers. At the beginning of the meeting, National Flags were presented to the farmers and the National Anthem was sung with hoisting of the Tricolour.



AMRIT MAHOTSAV AT JSW BPSL TOWNSHIP

Sambalpur: A Prabhat Pheri was organised in JSW BPSL township on Saturday for Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav being attended by hundreds of residents and employees. Every resident was given a National Flag to hoist in house. Patriotic songs were sung in chorus during the procession. Speaking on the occasion, Neelam Singh, the first lady of the township, congratulated all for being witnesses to the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations and suggested all to ensure that every household in the township participates in it and hoists a flag. All present sang the National Anthem and saluted the National Flag.



A'GARH YOUTH LEADER DISTRIBUTES TRICOLOURS

Athagarh: Local youth leader Abhaya Kumar Barik on Sunday distributed National Flags to passersby at Chandabali Square here under the campaign of Har Ghar Tiranga. Barik has distributed saplings to the passersby for creating more green coverage. Intelligentsia praised the Barik's endeavour.



NEW FSH JUCTION FASHION STORE AT JAJPUR RD

Jajpur: Considered as one of leading industrial hubs of the State, Jajpur Road has got a new fashion destination to enable customers to fulfil their fashion goals in style with world-class brand's latest collections. On Saturday, fashion house fSh Junction opened its first retail store at Utkal Center Point, Ground Floor, Jajpur Road. Actor and Chairman of Mo College Abhijan Akash Dasnayak inaugurated the store in the presence of fSh Junction proprietor Shnehansu Kumar Tripathy.



3,232 cases decided in JSpur Lok Adalat

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR
The 3rd National Lok Adalat was organised by the District Legal Services Authority [DLSA] in the district court complex here. District Judge cum DLSA chairman Anup Kumar Chandan inaugurated the event accompanied by senior judicial officers from several courts, besides lawyers, social activists and litigants. As many as 4,443 pending cases in different courts were

listed for hearing in the Lok Adalat out of which 3,232 cases related to criminal, cheque bounce, bank loan, motor accident, matrimonial, insurance, family dispute, revenue and civil matters were disposed of. An amount Rs 1,85,47,363 was collected from parties as compensation and loan dues. Moreover, 4,268 bank loan matters were placed before the Adalat of which 114 cases were settled while Rs 19, 55,300 was collected from the borrowers.

In Umarkote Rival villagers set maize crop on fire

PNS ■ NABARANGPUR
A violent dispute erupted on Saturday between two groups over forestlands in villages Kapsavata, Sariyavta and Laktipakhna under Burja panchayat in Umarkote block of Nabarangpur district. People of three villages under Kusumguda Bono Surokhya Committee, namely, Sariliguda, Kusumguda and Sarabhata set fire to a house in Kapsavata village and destroyed more than 100 acres of maize crop cultivated in village Kapsavata, Sariyavta and Laktipakhna. About 100 tribal families (Kandh) of Kapsavata, Sariyavta and Laktipakhna have been living and farming in the forest for more than 50 years. However, since 2005, the Kusumguda Bono Surokhya Committee has been demanding the removal of the settlements of these three villages, and this unpleasant situation is happening every year. Every year during the rainy season, hundreds of acres of maize crop of these three



villages are being destroyed by the Bono Surokhya committee, but the administration has taken no steps to solve the problem. As a result, on Saturday, hundreds of people of three villages under the Kusumguda Bono Surokhya Committee destroyed the maize crop of the rival villagers. Along with this, some houses of Kapsavata village were also set on fire. The agitators also blocked the road by keeping trees on it to stop arrival of police and civil administrative officials. However, the police administration removed the trees and reached the affected villages and warned the agitators not to destroy the crops. But the agitators didn't heed the police warning and destroyed crops. After the incident, villagers of Kapsavata, Sariyavta and Laktipakhna are worried as to how to repay the crop loan.

INBCWWF meet Sops for construction, forest workers sought



25 resolutions passed
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Former Rajya Sabha MP Dr RC Khuntia while presiding over the 27th National Convention of Indian National Building Construction, Forest and Wood Workers Federation (INBCWWF) demanded many sops for the construction and forest workers. The Government of India and all State Governments should allow construction workers facilitate registration, its renewal and compensation application in case of death offline. Dr Khuntia also demanded that the Constitution needs to be amended to make health, safety and social security as fundamental rights. Appolinar Tollentino, regional representative, Building and Wood Workers International (BWI) in his speech said Building and Wood Workers International with support of other national trade unions could make a strong lobby in ILO for making a decision to make health and safety a fundamental right of workers. Dr Khuntia also demanded proper utilisation of CAMPAA and District Mineral Foundation funds for afforestation and welfare schemes for forest workers. Among others, Jatani MLA Suresh Chandra Routray and Jeypore MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati spoke. There were 700 delegates from 220 unions from 30 districts who participated in the convention where 25 resolutions were passed.

Dalmia Cement promotes mushroom farming



In peripheral villages of R'gangpur, Cuttack units, Lanjiberna mines
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
In continuation of its women empowerment initiatives for communities surrounding its Cuttack and Rajgangpur plants and Lanjiberna Mines, Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited (DCBL) is promoting mushroom cultivation. It has promoted mushroom cultivation at Lanjiberna and its peripheral villages such as Kheramuta, Jangartoli, Rumabahal, Dhaurada, Lamloi, Bihabandh, Gyanpali, Samleimunda, Damposh, Ghoghar, Meromdega (Kukuda). At present most of the villages in Lanjiberna and Rajgangpur periphery area have mushroom cultivation units enabling women to earn up to Rs 5,000 a month. Each beneficiary has laid 30 to 40 beds for mushroom farming which yields around 3kg mushroom from each bed. Similarly, paddy straw mushroom is cultivated from July to October making women independent and plays a vital role in supporting their families. In the Cuttack area, 30 SHG members of 4 SHGs including Baba Jogeswar SHG of Amiyajhari village, Jay Trinath SHG, Matru shakti SHG and Sai Sharana SHG of Safa village are involved in mushroom cultivation as their income generation activity. Dalmia Cement provided training and seeds and enabling them to earn an average income per member of up to Rs 4,000 per month.

Gender Gap Report Disturbing trends in health, survival of women in India

The Gender Gap Index Report is being brought out since 2006 by the World Economic Forum to highlight gender discrepancy in terms of economic participation, education, health, survival and political empowerment between men and women. India has been placed at 135th position out of 146 countries with a minuscule improvement of 0.3% over last year's overall performance. The good news is that India has done well in terms of political empowerment with 48th position whereas countries like China are in the 120th place. This is largely due to the fact that 33% is reserved for women in the State Legislature and some States like Odisha earmark 50% reservation for women. The report shows a contradiction between improved social empowerment of women and their abysmal health status in India. This is also corroborated by the latest NFHSV survey (2019-21) which brings out that around 57% of adolescent girls/women in the age group of 15-49 are highly vulnerable to anemia contributing further to high percentage of low birth weight



SATYA NARAYAN MISRA

babies, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR). As India launches into celebration of its 75th anniversary of independence, the NFHS report brings out how the percentage of anemia on an all India basis has increased from 53% (2015-16) to 57% in 2019-21. The situation is particularly disconcerting in poor States like Bihar (63.5%) and Odisha (64.3%) and 65% in an economically developed State like Gujarat. On the other hand, Kerala shows anemia percentage of 36.3%. This has a cascading impact on IMR, MMR and low birth weight babies. In Bihar, Odisha and Gujarat, the IMR is as high as 46.8%, 36.3% and

31.2% respectively, whereas in Kerala it's 4.4% only. The NITI Aayog's latest report on multi-dimensional poverty shows that the deprivation of maternal health is around 45.6% in Bihar as against 1.7% in Kerala. But the most disconcerting evidence of such health vulnerabilities is due to poor nutrition where Bihar shows a deprivation of 51.6%, Odisha 37.2% and Kerala 15.2%. This is despite the fact that the Government of India has launched several initiatives since 1975 to contain the problem of anemia amongst children and pregnant and nursing mothers. The ICDS programme unveiled in 1975 created 14 lakh Anganwadi centers with 22 lakh workers to provide supplementary nutrition like protein, vitamin A, IFA and deworming medicines in periodic intervals, so that these vulnerable section of society will become demographic dividend later to the country. However, there has been no containment in the proliferation of anemia barring States like Kerala. The National Iron + initiative was launched in 2013 which set a target of reducing anemia percentage by 18% by 2020. However, the

reduction between 2005 and 2015 has been only 2%. In fact, after 2015 it has increased by 4% in an all India basis, with practically no State reducing the anemia percentage including the State of Kerala. The Poshan Abhiyan was therefore launched by the PM in 2018 to reduce anemia amongst adolescent girls by 3% per year as against no decrease in the past. The NFHS V report shows that none of the States has been able to achieve the target. While there is a lot of rhetoric like using technology to connect all stakeholders, promoting awareness through Jan Andolan, the nagging problem is poor supply chain management. As per the NFHS report the deprivation in Vitamin A, IFA, and deworming for females is as high as 54%, 86% and 72% respectively. The deprivation is particularly high for poor girl children where the deficiency intake of vitamin A, IFA and deworming is as high as 62%, 92% and 76% respectively. This leads to a question as to why the existing supply chain management is not able to meet the timely provision of the supplements to the adolescent girls and women. In an interesting study in UP,

project UMANG was launched in 2003 amongst school children and it was found that between 2003 and 2006 anemia went down from 73% to 25%. Interestingly, 80% of the beneficiaries regularly consumed the supplement and the additional per head cost was found to be only \$ 0.36 dollar. This experiment very clearly shows that a vigilant programme with empathetic stakeholders can significantly reduce anemia in a time bound manner. Technology can play a very important role connecting different stakeholders and providing timely information so that the supply chain is monitored regularly and the supplements are availed of by the intended beneficiaries regularly. The World Bank has assessed that the cost of less developing countries due to deficiency of Vitamin A, Iodine and Iron is about 5% of the GDP. It also causes disability, premature death and reduced productivity. In adolescent girls' iron requirement increases by two fold to meet the loss of iron from the body with the onset of menstruation. Traditional diet is not able to make good the loss of blood. Therefore, IFA supplementation is critical to reduce anemia amongst

girl in the reproductive age group. The intervention required is three fold. India has 20-30% under nutrition in first 6 months of a child when exclusive breast feed is the only nourishment required. The evidence from the Centre for Technology Alternatives for Rural Area (CTARA), IIT Mumbai indicates that a well planned breast feeding council given to pregnant women during prenatal checkup and in follow-up home visits makes a significant difference. The study brings out that through such intervention, the under nourishment prevalence rate was reduced by 66%. Complementary feeding practices from 6 months onwards also shows that even 20% in higher socio-economic groups are stunted because of poor knowledge in food selection and feeding practices. Creating awareness at the right time regarding special care to be taken in the first 1,000 days, be it poor, middle class or richer sections of the society, deserves highest priority. There is also a necessity to revisit the nodal system for providing nutrition through the Anganwadi system which has been existing since 1975. Quite clearly 7 crore children

who are provided supplementary nutrition as well as 1 crore pregnant and nursing mother who get the benefit of vitamins, IFA are not being provided the critical nutrition requirement at critical stage up to the age of 3 years for a child and prenatal and postnatal period for women. Famous economist Partha Dasgupta, in his seminal book "An enquiry into well being and destitution" has brought out how most of the growth in the brain happens during the first 3 years of their life. Unless they are provided with minimum vitamin, IFA and deworming medicines in time, the damage to their brain is irreversible. The Constitution mandates that "the State shall regard the raising the level of nutrition as amongst its primary duties." The Gender gap report and the NFHS V report very clearly show that in our quest for high growth through free market mechanism, we have put the challenge of containing anemia amongst children, adolescent girls and mothers to the backburner. This trend can be reversed through political will and community led approach. (The writer is a Professor Emeritus)

JeM affiliate PAFF takes responsibility for attack on Army camp

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The People's Anti-Fascist Force (PAFF), believed to be an affiliate of Pakistani terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), has taken responsibility for the attack on an army camp in Rajouri in Jammu early on Thursday in which four soldiers lost their lives and two terrorists were liquidated in the operation.

The PAFF has issued two separate video messages claiming responsibility for the attack and warned of more such attacks to achieve its objective of internationalizing the Kashmir issue.

In one of the videos, a man with his face blurred warns to escalate attacks against the security forces which he dubbed as "Hindutva Forces".

"With Rajouri attack, we began such an operation. We will gradually calibrate to such a level that the international community knows that Kashmir is still a war zone," the man in the video warned.

The outfit further warned that it is determined to not allow India to conduct any G-20 meeting in Kashmir and that it will do anything and everything to stop this.

Besides hard military attacks, the outfit has exhorted the Kashmiri diaspora to raise the issue diplomatically and engage as many foreign governments as possible to highlight the issue.

Four Army jawans were killed in the terrorist attack on an Army camp in the Rajouri district of Jammu early on Thursday, just four days ahead of Independence Day. Both the terrorists involved in the attack were gunned down in the four-hour gunfight that ensued.

Nitish Govt to have panel for coordinating with its allies in Bihar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

To prevent any dissatisfaction within its allies in the new Mahagathbandhan Government led by Nitish Kumar, a formula has been worked out for allotting Ministerial berths.

A coordination committee will also be formed to take up issues raised by the alliance partners and ensure that differences do not come into the public domain and are sorted out internally.

Sources said the formula worked upon is one Ministerial berth to a party per every 4 MLAs. This means that the major partner RJD led by Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav will have a greater share with 18 ministers followed by Nitish's JD(U) with 12 berths.

The Congress will end up with four Minister berths. The Grand Alliance at present comprises seven parties — JD(U), RJD, Congress, CPIM(L), CPI, CPI(M) and

HAM, which together have more than 160 MLAs in the 243-member Assembly.

Congress state in-charge Bhakta Charan Das said the party as now will get three Ministers, with 2 taking oath on August 16 and others to be inducted in the next exercise. If the above formula worked, then Congress may get an additional berth later.

The Left parties will not join the Government and extend outside support. The Left block has 16 members in the Assembly. The Nitish-led Mahagathbandhan Government will go on for a floor test on August 24.

Das said the Congress MLAs who will become the Ministers are yet to be decided. "We will finalise the names of our legislators who will be part of the Nitish Kumar Cabinet on Monday," he said.

While Nitish is in touch with Tejashwi, JD(U) president Lalan Singh reached Delhi to meet RJD patriarch Lalu Yadav.

Army awarded 1 Kirti Chakra, 8 Shaurya Chakra on occasion of I-Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Army was awarded one Kirti Chakra, the second highest peacetime gallantry medal, besides eight Shaurya Chakra (third highest) on the occasion of Independence Day.

Two of the Shaurya Chakras out of eight were awarded the medal posthumously. All nine medals were given for the gallant actions of the soldiers in Jammu and Kashmir.

Giving details here on Saturday, officials said the Kirti Chakra was awarded to Naik Devendra Pratap Singh. The Shaurya Chakra awardees include MAJOR NITIN DHAANIA, MAJOR AMIT DAHYA, SENA MEDAL MAJOR SANDEEP KUMAR, MAJOR ABHISHEK SINGH, HAVILDAR GHANSHYAM and LANCE NAIK RAGH VENDRA SINGH. The posthumous awardees are SEPOY KARN VEER SINGH and GUNNER JASBIR SINGH.

108: J&K Police personnel get maximum medals for gallantry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of Independence Day, police personnel from Jammu and Kashmir bagged 108 police medals for gallantry (PMG), the most among States and Union Territories of the total 347 gallantry awards.

The CRPF personnel bagged the maximum number of medals with 109 gallantry awards in serving regions like Jammu and Kashmir and Maoist-affected areas. As many 87 personnel and officers won President's Police Medals for Distinguished Service.

Various categories of service medals, including for gallant action, have been awarded to 1,082 police personnel from CAPFs and state forces, said the Ministry of Home Affairs in a statement said Sunday.

"Among the majority of the 347 Gallantry Awards, 204 personnel are being awarded for their gallant action in Jammu & Kashmir, 80 personnel for their gallant action in Left Wing Extremism affected areas, and 14 personnel for their gallant action in North-East Region.

Among the personnel receiving Gallantry Awards, 109 are from CRPF, 108 are from J&K Police, 19 are from BSF, 42 are from Maharashtra, 15 are from Chhattisgarh, and the remaining from the other States/UTs and CAPFs," said MHA.

Among them, 347 have been awarded police medal for gallantry (PMG), 87 President's police medal for distinguished service, and 648 given police medals for meritorious service.

Out of the 347 gallantry awards, 204 personnel are being awarded for their gallant action in Jammu and Kashmir, 80 for displaying bravery in Left Wing Extremism or Naxal violence-affected areas, and 14 personnel for showing bravery in North-East Region, the Union

Home Ministry said. CRPF IGs Padmakar Santu Ranpise, Rajesh Kumar, CISF IG Hem Raj Gupta, SSB IGs Pankaj Kumar Darad, Pradeep Kumar Gupta, BSF IG Bhupendra Kumar Mehta, and DIGs Indraj Singh, Kamaljit Singh Banyal, Binay Kumar Jha were among the 87 persons won the President's Police Medals for Distinguished Service.

Intelligence Bureau's Joint Directors Rajiv Ahir, Sunita Kakran and Balbir Singh also got the President's Medal. Delhi Police's Assistant Commissioners Pancham Chand and Shivaji Chauhan also won the prestigious President's Police Medals for Distinguished Service.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has received the maximum gallantry medals at 109, followed by 108 to the J&K Police, 19 to the Border Security Force (BSF), and six each to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). Within the state police forces, 42 gallantry medals have been given to Maharashtra, 15 to Chhattisgarh for the anti-Maoist operations.

Ghulam Rasool Bhat, Jatinder Singh, Faiz Mohd, and Allah Din Khatana of the Jammu and Kashmir Police have been awarded the Police Medal for Gallantry for their counter-terrorism operation on March 23, 2021, in the Shopian district that saw protests from locals.

"The terrorist was neutralized in an hours-long complex operation. During the operation, a huge number of miscreants had gathered from nearby villages and started pelting stones on security forces followed by sloganeering against them," reads the citation.

"These teams displayed utmost tolerance and kept the miscreants at bay. In this process, a few men of the law & order team got minor injuries. After a thorough search, bodies of 04 terrorists of LeT out-



Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Mehta, IG (Med), Shri Indraj Singh, DIG (Now IG), Shri Kamaljit Singh Banyal, DIG (Now IG), Shri Binay Kumar Jha, DIG, (Now IG), IAS (Min) Varghese VK

fit and their arms/ammunition were recovered from the site and the operation was called-off," said the citation.

Twenty Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force personnel have been awarded various service medals, including for bravery, on the occasion of Independence Day.

The decorations include six police gallantry medals, three President's police medals for distinguished service, and 11 police medals for meritorious service, ITBP spokesperson Vivek Kumar Pandey said. Sashastra Seema Bal's (SSB) personnel got 20 awards including six medals for President's Police Medals for Distinguished Service.

Those awarded the bravery medals include Assistant Commandants (ACs) Prabhat Mukul Martin Minz and Amit Kumar, Assistant Sub Inspector Kuldip Raj, Head Constable Hamesh Kumar and Constables Brahm Chandra and Shakti Kumar. They have been awarded for undertaking two separate operations against Naxals in Chhattisgarh, the spokesperson said.

Seventy BSF personnel have been conferred with Police Medals which includes 19 Police Medals for Gallantry, 05 President's Police Medals for Distinguished Service, and 46 Police Medals for Meritorious Service. "Constable Kishan Kumar Dubey of 119 Bn BSF

made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty while defending an FDL in Distt - Kupwara (J&K) on July 9, 2015, during unprovoked firing by Pak troops. For meticulous operational planning, exemplary courage, and operational acumen, Ct Kishan Kumar Dubey has been awarded Police Medal for Gallantry (Posthumously).

"During the intervening night of 7/8th August 2016, troops of 156 Battalion BSF while deployed in FDL Bhuriwala in Jammu Kashmir, noticed the movement of heavily armed militants trying to infiltrate into own side.

Party challenged the militants which further lead to an encounter in which SI Mahendra Yadav, HC Chandra Pal Singh, CT (Cook) BananSaha made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. Own party also neutralized one militant and recovered a huge quantity of Arms and Ammunition from the encounter site.

For the meticulous operational planning, exemplary combat audacity, operational acumen, and flawless conduct of operation, SI Mahendra Yadav, HC Chandra Pal Singh, CT (Cook) BananSaha have been awarded Police Medal for Gallantry (Posthumously) and Ct Harikesh Meena awarded with Police Medal for Gallantry," said BSF quoting the citation.

ICMR receives 31 bids to develop Monkeypox vax

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has received 31 bids from manufacturers showing interest in developing vaccines against the monkeypox virus after the medical body floated the Expression of Interest (EOI) for the development of vaccine and diagnostic kits.

According to the source, of the total 31 bids, eight companies have submitted the EOI for the vaccine development while 23 firms showed interest towards the development of kits. The ICMR had invited the EOI last month after its lab

National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune isolated the monkeypox virus strain. However, no company has been awarded the tender yet and it is currently under evaluation, the source added. The manufacturers would develop the vaccine through a public-private partnership.

The EOI was invited by experienced vaccine manufacturers and in-vitro diagnostic (IVD) kit manufacturers for joint collaboration in developing vaccine candidates against monkeypox. The last date for submission of EOI was August 10. "ICMR-NIV Pune has successfully isolated and cultured the Monkeypox virus strain

from the samples of infected Indian patients. Genomic sequence of the Indian strains has 99.85% match with the West African strain circulating globally," said the official.

There are two known types (clades) of monkeypox virus — one that originated in Central Africa and one that originated in West Africa. The current world outbreak (2022) is caused by the less severe West African clade. As per the EOI, the ICMR reserves all the Intellectual Property Rights and Commercialisation Rights on the Monkeypox virus isolates and its method/protocols for purification, propagation and characterization.



From Delhi to Kashmir — heavy security blanket for I-Day celebrations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has not only been decked in tricolour hues in the lead up to the 76th Independence Day celebrations, but also put under a heavy security blanket, right from Delhi, the epicentre of the mega celebrations, to Jammu and Kashmir. The police machinery across states has been put on vigil to ensure that the celebrations are not hampered in any way.

In Delhi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be addressing the nation from the ramparts of the historic Red Fort, security has been stepped up with Delhi Police deploying more than 10,000 personnel to guard the Mughal-era monument.

From facial recognition system (FRS) cameras installed at the entry point of the Red Fort to multi-layered security cover and deployment of over 400 kite catchers and fliers on rooftops and other sensitive locations in the fort area to counter any threats from sub-conventional aerial platforms - the area is under hawk-eye vigil.

With nearly 7,000 invitees expected to attend the event at the Red Fort, a five-kilometre area around the monument has been marked as "no kite flying zone" till the tricolour is hoisted. Dendra Pathak, Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order), had said provisions of Section 144 have already been instituted in Delhi.

Anti-drone systems from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and other security agencies have also been installed, police said. In the

financial capital of the country, Mumbai, several law-enforcing units have been deployed to man the streets of the metropolis along with anti-drone systems, an official said.

According to the official, while there was no specific input in view of Independence Day, as a matter of routine, security of vital installations had been increased and officials have been asked to conduct spot visits. "We are conducting anti-sabotage checks. Since Wednesday, operation all out is underway comprising checking of hotels, vehicles and road barricading. Action is being taken against history-sheeters and those externed," the official added.

The official also anticipated crowding as the country is celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to mark 75 years of Independence.

In Kashmir, where the main function will be held at the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha presiding over it, drones, snipers and policemen in plain clothes have been deployed for surveillance.

Vehicle checking has been intensified, according to officials, while police and paramilitary forces have been deployed in strength at many places in the city and elsewhere in the Valley to thwart any attempts by militants to disrupt the celebrations.

Random search of vehicles and frisking of people is also being carried out at several places in the Valley, they said. Sharp shooters have been deployed at all high-rise buildings around the stadium to prevent any untoward incidents.

I-Day occasion to remember freedom fighters, builders of modern India: V-P Dhankhar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Independence Day is an occasion to remember the valiant freedom fighters whose courage and sacrifice brought us freedom and the builders of modern India, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Sunday.

As India celebrates "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", it is time to recall and retell the inspiring stories of the great revolutionaries and freedom fighters to encourage the younger generation to imbibe the virtues of patriotism, sacrifice and service, he said.

In his message on the eve of 76th Independence Day, the vice president said as we celebrate the immense progress made over the last 75 years, "let us not forget how hard-won our freedom is."

"Independence Day is an occasion to remember and pay tribute to those valiant freedom fighters whose courage and sacrifice brought us freedom from the oppressive colonial



rule," he said. Dhankhar said this day is also an occasion to pay our gratitude to the builders of modern India whose hard work and dedication laid the foundation of a sovereign, stable and strong republic.

"Today, India is a country brimming with potential, surging ahead on the path of all round development... On this Independence Day, let us renew our pledge to uphold the civilisational ethos of 'Bharat' and constitutional values and rededicate ourselves to further gallop towards building an inclusive, progressive and prosperous India," he said.

Seven decades after Partition, 94-yr-old woman recalls carnage, rebuilding life from scratch

PTI ■ AMBALA

There was bloodshed everywhere... Every other person on the train was mourning the loss of a loved one," says 94-year-old Kailash Rani, recalling the day she and her family were forced to flee their home in Pakistan's Rawalpindi during Partition.

"Some of our close relatives accompanying us were killed in cold blood by some youths," Rani said here on Sunday. The independence of India from British colonial rule in 1947 coincided with Partition that triggered widespread communal violence and resulted in an insurmountable refugee crisis.

Rani said her husband, Suraj Prakash, a businessman, faced communal violence and mindless hate before the family decided to leave Rawalpindi for somewhere safe.

"We were well settled and our family was very prosperous living in a posh colony there. Suddenly, riots erupted and we were forced to leave," the nonagenarian said. She said the sit-

uation was so bad at that time that they could not take any valuables with them.

"We buried all our gold ornaments in the corner of our house hoping to collect them after a few years once the situation would return to normal. Unfortunately, we have not been able to visit our ancestral house in 75 years. We don't even know if our house in Rawalpindi still exists," she said.

Rani said she and her family managed to reach the railway station and boarded a train headed to India. "There was chaos, fear and looting on the train. The train was overloaded with refugees. Thank God we reached Ambala safely," she said.

Like millions of others who were displaced during Partition, Rani and her family members had to rebuild their lives from scratch.

Initially, they lived in tents along with other families at Baldev Nagar Camp in Ambala city. "Later, we were shifted to mud houses.

Nadda takes part in silent procession to mark Partition Horrors Remembrance Day

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

BJP national president J P Nadda on Sunday participated in a silent procession here in remembrance of India's Partition in 1947 and the tragedy associated with it.

The procession from Jantar Mantar to Connaught Place also saw the participation of Union ministers Piyush Goel and Anurag Thakur, BJP vice president Vijayanti Panda, the party's Delhi unit president Adesh Gupta and ex-Union minister Harsh Vardhan, among others.

Holding the national flag, the participants marched silently to mark the Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, paying homage to people who died during Partition. Pakistan was carved out as a Muslim country after the division of



India by the British colonial rule in 1947. Millions of people were displaced and lakhs of them lost their lives in the communal violence that followed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced last year that August 14 will be observed as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' in memory of the struggles and sacrifices of people. India will celebrate its Independence Day on Monday.



Schoolchildren participate in a Har Ghar Tiranga campaign under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in New Delhi on Sunday



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PAPER WITH PASSION

India survives

India has proved the doomsayers wrong; it has progressed a lot in the last 75 years, but it has to do a lot more

The Narendra Modi Government is celebrating the 75th anniversary of Independence with massive fanfare, calling it Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Patriotism is in the air—quite literally—as competing with the Prime Minister in the display of tiranga is Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Then there are intellectuals, most of them Left-liberal, who are sullenly watching the march of Modi's nationalism which they intensely dislike. But if one objectively looks at the three quarters of a century of India as an independent nation, one has to recognise that, despite all the failings and shortcomings, it has been a successful journey. The very fact that our nation still has the same boundaries and the same Constitution is itself a very comforting fact. When India became Independent, not many people in the world gave much of a chance to it to survive for too long as a democratic republic; and the fears and misgivings were real, not the results of conspiracy theories. It was a poor country, beset with all kinds of problems; it was even struggling to feed its teeming millions—a situation that continued for more than two decades after Independence. From the net per capita availability of food-grains ranging from 127 to 145 kg in 1946, it was 180.3 kg in 2018. Life expectancy was just 31 years, which has now crossed 70 years. The infant mortality and maternal mortality rates were very high, while education levels were very low.



Besides, there were mind-boggling diversity and divisive forces; apart from the eternal bane of caste, there were Hindu-Muslim communal tensions, militant regional/sub-nationalist movements, and other disruptive elements. But India survived in the early years, which was attributed to the towering personality of Jawaharlal Nehru, so people asked 'who after

Nehru.' He died 58 years ago, the years in which the country faced humungous problems, from the Malthusian prospects in the 1960s to a brush with dictatorship (the Emergency, 1975-77) to militancy in Punjab and jihadist separatism in Kashmir to economic crisis in 1991. But India has not perished, neither as a nation nor as a democratic republic. This is not to say that all is well with our democracy and our republic. Our democracy has been weakened by several insidious mechanisms, the prominent among them being the anti-defection law. The republic has been undermined by all governments by way of introducing illiberal changes in the Constitution itself, beginning with the First Amendment in 1951, which curtailed the Fundamental Rights to Freedom of Expression and Property; the later eventually ceased to be a Fundamental Right, getting reduced to a legal right. Similarly, while a lot of economic development has taken place in the last 75 years, India remains a poor country; with its per capita income around \$2,300, its rank in the world is 144. India has progressed a lot in the last 75 years, but it has to do a lot more.

PICTALK

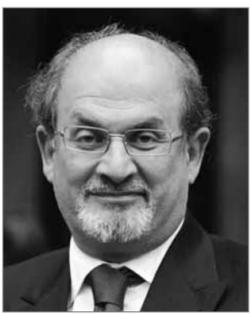


A 75-ft National Flag being unfurled at the southern tip of India, ahead of Independence Day, in Kanyakumari

A cowardly attack

Attack on Salman Rushdie opens up the debate on banning books in a democratic society

In a shocking incident, author Salman Rushdie was stabbed 10 times at an event in New York and was seriously injured. The attacker Hadi Matar follows Shia extremists on social media and is an admirer of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC). He has pleaded not guilty. Rushdie's book 'The Satanic Verses', published in 1988 was considered by Muslim clerics as disrespectful of Islam and the Prophet Mohammad. The novel led to a fatwa, a religious decree, by Iran's leader Ayatollah Khomeini. The threat forced him into hiding for several years. The author is likely to survive but may lose one eye. He was stabbed 10 times at Chautauqua Institution, where Rushdie was about to speak at the event. The suspect rushed onstage and stabbed him before being wrestled to the ground by staff and other people in the audience. Many world leaders condemned the attack and called it vicious and cowardly.



Back home, the Congress is drawing flak for banning the book. Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress Government was quick to ban the book on the pretext of disturbing law and order. Indeed banning a book or for that matter any work of art is tantamount to negating the very premise of democracy, to give everyone space to speak and express himself without any fear. However, certain reasonable restrictions apply. For instance, no sane society would allow books promoting child pornography or violent actions or drug abuse. Being blasphemous is a little different. It is debatable and should be debated within the boundaries of blasphemy. Satanic Verses is not the only book banned in free India. 'Rama Retold' or 'Ramayana', a spoof of the Ramayana by Aubrey Menen, was banned in 1955. 'The land of Lingam' 1937 Arthur Miles is still banned for being critical of Hinduism and phallic worship. 'Rangila Rasul', 1924, which dealt with Prophet Mohammad's relationships is banned to date. 'The Jewel in the Lotus', 1968 by Allen Edwardes for being oriental erotica The list is long; it even includes 'The Da Vinci Code', banned in Nagaland for its uncharitable comments on Jesus, and 'An Area of Darkness' by Nobel prize winner VS Naipaul, and even classic DH Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lovers. The books are frozen thoughts and when they melt in the reader's mind, they trigger a thought process. Needless to say, it depends upon the maturity of the individual or society if it can handle it. We can judge for ourselves how mature we are. We cannot be selective in banning books. Let there be a debate about it.

Saving India from unruly neighbours



PRAFULL GORADIA

India has two not-so-friendly neighbours in China and Pakistan; though India has moved on, they haven't

Pakistani rulers suffer from several obsessions; the Olympic torch passing through Srinagar before eventually reaching Chennai is one of many. How unfortunate that so many of their aspiring chess players were denied the opportunity to play on this world platform at the recent Olympiad at Chennai. This was a fleeting whim but now to trade with India is a chronic denial of so many needed items. Why? Presumably to teach India a lesson. Just because India and Pakistan were born simultaneously, in August 1947, Islamabad has taken it for granted that the two countries are comparable if not equal. How presumptuous to believe that a country and its rulers are, more or less, equal to a neighbour seven times larger. What is more remarkable is that India, at least until 2014 when the BJP came to power, also played along with the Pakistani mania of comparability, if not equality. Irritated by this mania, an Indian writer wrote that when a lion treats a rat as an equal, what else do you expect the world to feel? Perhaps take the lion to be a cat! The damage done to India's image over the years was far greater.

An expert on Strategy: Edward Luttwak years ago innovated the concept of Armed Suation which, if pursued, would make one's country appear stronger than it was. His favourite example was pre-World War II Italy which was then widely believed to be the most powerful air power in Europe. Foreign affairs become easier to conduct with Armed Suation than without it. The most recent example was that of China which appeared too powerful to be challenged in Taiwan. But when Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives decided to visit Taipei, against Chinese wishes, and did visit, the Chinese government could not do anything to prevent her. But until her airplane landed in Taipei, she attended the required official functions in the city and flew



out, there was tension. India, as brought up by the Nehru government, was the opposite. India and Pakistan were bracketed together.

When war came, as in 1947, 1965, and 1999 with Pakistan, the question on most lips was: who would win? Why should there have been any questions? For a Pakistan chess team to indicate to the world in Chennai that Islamabad does not still accept that Kashmir is an integral part of India is a show of defiance. It is the result of 74 years of inaction or weak action. To offer only one blunder of inaction as an example was the Simla Conference of 1972 between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Bhutto following the 1971 war. It was settled between the two leaders that the Line Control, that divides Kashmir and its part that Pakistan had gobbled up in 1947/48, would be the international border. There was to be no dispute in Kashmir left after India returned the 93,000 prisoners of war taken in Bangladesh the previous year.



THE LOGIC OF THIS SITUATION WAS TO THINK ANY ENEMY WHO WISHES TO CONQUER AND KEEP TERRITORY WOULD NORMALLY LAUNCH HIS ATTACK IN SPRING AND NOT AUTUMN

We promptly returned the prisoners but let the LOC be until Bhutto could consolidate his position in his country. He had become prime minister only after the 1971 war ended. If this is how we run foreign affairs, instead of Armed Suation, India would be known for its Disarmed Suation and be pushed about by any of its neighbours and adversaries; not to say that the current government in Delhi is pursuing such a weak-kneed policy. To this day not a single POW has remained in India. The LOC is as it was.

How our government mishandled the China policy from the beginning until 1962 is well known but there was a way out even after all the mishandling. Our officers knew in the first few days that the Indian forces had not been prepared or equipped to be able to cope with either the enemy or the terrain or the cold weather. Moreover, any additional troops that the Army could send up to the mountains were going to be wearing their flimsy woolen pullovers, thin socks, and no

gloves and many of the soldiers had no better than canvas shoes. How on earth could such ill-equipped troops fight?

The logic of this situation was to think. Any enemy who wishes to conquer and keep territory would normally launch his attack in spring and not autumn. The Chinese invasion commenced on the 20th of October 1962. The opportunity for India was to withdraw to the plains of Assam where the terrain, the weather, and the clothes would be congenial. The Chinese would have had to occupy the Arunachal or NEFA then hillside through the bitter cold. Meanwhile, our Army would have gained time and got more ready and capable for a spring battle in conditions more of our choosing. But we did not do any of this and were slaughtered flat-footed or were caught frostbitten.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Sir — What an excellent way to start the 75th platinum jubilee independence year (from 15th August 2022 onwards). Around 1 crore students in Rajasthan set a world record by singing patriotic songs (in the presence of world records officials from London, England) by singing songs such as "Sare jahan se accha..." "Vande maataram..." national anthem "jana gana mana..." for 25 minutes, (at Sawai Mansingh stadium in Rajasthan).

This must be declared the 1st wonder of this excellent world. Because of harmony, inspirational acts, and good words of peace and unity. However, this should be followed by good deeds and good implementation. Congratulations to all the 1 crore participants and the entire India too. Let every nation emulate other nations only in good things. Not just words, but speedy implementation too.

Sahasra Nivritti Vislesha | Secunderabad

IMPACT OF FREEBIES ON THE ECONOMY

Sir — The Supreme Court made it clear that political parties cannot be banned on the pretext that they distribute freebies. Though it maintained that it is a financial strain on the country's economy.

The BJP and our PM are now talking about Freebies and now say that the freebies are akin to 'revdi culture'. They have forgotten that BJP has promised 15 lakhs to give freely to every person and afterward they said that it is an election jumla. The party which tried to fool the public with promises which were not fulfilled is now talking against the freebies. What about BJP boasting that it is giving free ration to 80crores people with their fund, is it not freebies?

The freebies situation has now escalated into a full-fledged political crisis. According to AAP MP Sanjay Singh, the central Government committed bank frauds of around 12,40,000 crores and waived off loans of Rs crores of rupees to corporate friends. He further said that if the government would not waive off

THE BIG BULL IS NO MORE

The demise of an ace stock market investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala often referred to as India's Warren Buffett is a huge loss to the Indian financial markets. He began investing with Rs 5,000 in 1985 when the Bombay Stock Exchange's benchmark index Sensex was at 150; it now trades at over 59,000. How the son of a civil servant came to the market in 1985 with almost nothing and turned it into a fortune, while he made a killing by investing in Titan. Going forward, it is the authenticity of his success story that makes it so powerful. Investors lapped up every word he said on markets and the economy. Company management regularly pitched to him in the hope that he invests with them. They know only too well the value of having him as an investor.

While investor appetite has waxed and waned over the years, the Big Bull has always been an incorrigible India optimist. Over the



years, he's been out there talking about what makes him so bullish—the skillset of its population and its favourable demographics being the two main reasons - more than any time in the past, he believes India's time has come. While he had plans to give away a large portion of his wealth to charity, the country, too, has lost a wealth creator.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

loans to corporate persons then there would have been no necessity in increasing the GST on essential commodities. Is waiving loans of corporates, not a freebie and Revdi culture?

We have to make a distinction. If offering free education, free healthcare, or free power is a freebie?

These political parties should seek the trust of voters only on those promises which are possible to be fulfilled. The Supreme court's stand on this issue is thus laudable.

Zeeshaan | Kazipet

A SALUTE TO MARTYRS

Sir — At his funeral, the pathetic sight of his inconsolable mother and the relatives of our soldier Lakshman killed by the terrorists must have moved the hearts of even strong-willed persons.

It is unfortunate that invariably every day we are losing our valiant soldiers in our army camps in Jammu and Kashmir to terrorist attacks. If we count the number of precious lives of our army men lost right

from the Pulwama massacre to date, the figure will be nothing but alarming.

While abrogating Article 370 to do away with the special status given to Jammu and Kashmir and dividing Jammu and Kashmir into three states, the ruling dispensation assured that this move would bring the curtain down on any more terrorist attacks. Alas! The subsequent terrorist attacks that are frequent now and the death of our soldiers regularly have disproved this assurance given by the Government. The government might have taken such a move with good intentions but the results appear unproductive.

One wonders how the government is going to stall the gruesome death of our poor soldiers at the hands of the terrorists. It is time some serious action is initiated by the government to stall the sacrifice of our soldiers at the altar of those hard-core terrorists.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

SOUNDBITE

You keep yourself busy in kite-flying, we will allocate the portfolios and it will be done soon.



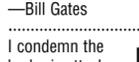
Maharashtra Deputy CM —Devendra Fadnis



The Inflation Reduction Act's passage through Congress is nothing short of extraordinary. The United States is

taking a historic step towards the clean energy economy we need to meet our climate goals.

Founder Microsoft —Bill Gates



I condemn the barbaric attack on Salman Rushdie by some fanatic. I hope that NY police and the court will take the strongest action possible against the attacker.

Writer —Javed Akhtar



A podium finish at the SeoulEPriz. Well done Team India. What a jubilant way to mark 75 years of Independence of India. Mega job chaps!

Cricketer —Virat Kohli

I'm not standing in Islamabad. We don't need to take any permission for the Tiranga yatra. there's no need to be scared.

BJP leader W Bengal —Suwendu Adhikari

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

METHOD OF WORK IS KEY TO ORGANISATIONS

Internal leadership shapes judgement and processes



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Any institution needs a framework of reference to grow. Institutions have their own typologies, like anything else. Institutional typologies can be classified according to their size—large, medium, and small. They can be institutional types by their form of ownership.

They can be proprietary, partnerships, or limited to certain types of people. They can be constituted by people who have invested money in them, and the list can go on.

Besides the types of categories listed in the preceding paragraphs, there can be other types of institutions. The purpose of this text is not to focus on the types of institutions that exist or can exist. The purpose is to highlight how the institutions work. Conventionally this role is performed by a statutory body or a federating body, which decides the method of work. A statutory body determining how institutions work would have a legal status duly enshrined by the process of approval of the statutory body itself, in a legislative system. This legislative system can be an Assembly or a Parliament. Somewhere, a legal framework would come in. The important thing is to understand how it would all work. It is a method of work which will ultimately decide the probity, or indeed, the effectiveness, of the system.



There is a moral dimension also, because in the ultimate analysis, unless it is a private single proprietary ownership, every contributing stream of people who provide money and resources to the organization has a right to know how the institution they have provided money to, is functioning. There is a need to think about corrective measures. There is also a need to ensure that a basic commonsensical fair play is at the root of the institution. It is the system of monitoring which is at the core of organizational and institutional effectiveness. It is here where empirical data on orderly and deviant institutions becomes necessary. So far, it has been the responsibility of the consensus of the social segment where this institution is embedded to determine this. Thus, it is that the general public opinion becomes determinant of ultimate efficacy of the functioning of the institutions. In this the media plays an important role, because it has the responsibility of spreading facts and contributing to a healthy and fair opinion system. Internal leadership of the institution plays a crucial role, because between a flagrant violation of institutional probity and a very rigid form of framework of the institution lies the space for judgment and processes. When it comes to process, there are several indicators of assessing how well or not so well the institution is working. These process issues can be listed, enumerated, and explained. There can be several of them, including size of the institutional bodies, the focus of their sub-objective within the overall objective; how the central figure in that unit is identified, and the list can go on. For purposes of illustration, one could just focus on defining the objectives of the sub-body or indeed, the number of times it meets.

To begin at the top, just the number of times the board of an organization meets is a good example. In streams of organization, say, in education where the statutory systems are not equally rigorously articulated aberration can take place. There have been cases of several educational institutions where the Governing Body neither meets regularly nor for a given span of time. There have been examples in national chains where a newly set up institution in that chain did not meet for as much as nine months. It did not bother anyone particularly. To put it more simply, for the healthy running of institutions, there is a need to establish, observable, actionable, and cognizable method of work.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal.)

India@75: Unshackle political bondages

Indian democracy must become attractive to skilled people such as those who have domain expertise



SUMET BHASIN

Last month, the YSR Congress elected Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy as its chief for lifetime. In China, Xi Jinping has such credentials. India is a democracy. China is a one party nation and a totalitarian state. What kind of democracy the YSR Congress fosters is not just the business of Jagan Mohan Reddy, but also of those who have stakes in the Indian democracy.

The president of the Rashtriya Janata Dal has invariably been from within the Lalu Prasad Yadav family. Same is the case with the Samajwadi Party. Similar is the story of the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Shiv Sena, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, and some others. On a closer look, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam also fits in the same slot. Even the Congress presents no different story in the last few decades.

The Representation of the People's Act has failed to stop some political parties becoming family-owned enterprises. India abolished the practice of Zamindari in 1951. Yet, their political avatars have mushroomed in many states, carving out territories by cashing in on identity politics, to imprison democracy to a few families.

At a time when India celebrates 75 years of Independence, while the world applauds the depth and diversity of democracy, lawmakers must introspect that under their watch the political zamindari has taken a large space, which should have otherwise been with the genuine leaders, who would have come from the political grinding to command leadership of a large base of the population.

That makes it incumbent for radical reforms to be carried out immediately by holding discussions with stakeholders in a time-bound manner to blank out any prospect of any family usurping a political party.

To put this to effect, the RPA Act can be suitably amended to prohibit a person from holding more than two terms of the post of the president of a political party. It should also be ensured that when that person leaves the post, it cannot be held by anyone who has family relations with him for not less than 10 years.

There is no denying the fact that politics in the country has become more caste-centric. This calls for a review of the reserved seats for the Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, Zila Panchayat and Local Bodies. Why should only a scheduled caste or tribe politician represent a reserved seat, and what stops a general category politician from working for such constituencies who have been disadvantaged for decades.

The Directive Principle of the Constitution and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi call for social amity, and politics is the foremost means of achieving such aims. The aims for Samajik Samrasta (social inclusiveness) make it incumbent to shuffle reserved seats without attaching them to demographic profile, while also not impacting on the number of such seats. This will bring true inclusiveness. This will make the



MORE THAN 90 PER CENT OF THE POLITICAL WORKERS ARE NOT KNOWN TO HAVE ANY MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD. STILL, THEY AREN'T SEEN BEGGING ANYWHERE; RATHER THEY MOVE AROUND IN SPORTS VEHICLES

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



candidates from the reserved constituencies win from the general seats, which will boost their political profiles, and also make them take up more meaningful roles in the socio-economic progress of the nation than just being stereotyped as an SC or ST leader.

The reforms should also aim for provisions which will ensure that there is a larger participation of the political workers from the disadvantaged sections of the society in the Indian democracy to genuinely address aspirations of all the sections.

The Election Commission can be mandated to shuffle the reserved seats in each election so that there is a larger pool of leaders available to serve the nation in the true spirit of social democracy.

In this context, reforms should also take a closer look at the participation of women, scheduled caste and tribe leaders in all wings of democracy, and statutorily ensure that anomalies are addressed.

More than 90 per cent of the political workers are not known to have any means of livelihood. Still, they aren't seen begging anywhere, and rather they move around in sports vehicles. This is the story from Gram Panchayat to State capitals and the national capital. People don't pay much attention to their means of income, taking for granted that they must be hailing from well-off family backgrounds.

This brings to the attention of the backgrounds of the likes of Akhi-

lesh Yadav or Aditya Thackeray, for there's no public records to show their sources of incomes to justify their lavish lifestyles. They are prominent names of Indian politics, but there would be millions of political workers who never had enough education to find jobs and so they found it convenient to join politics.

This is indeed India's paradox that we aspire for the country to be free from corruption but the life and breath of democracy are ensured by an army of workers who have no known sources of incomes. They may engage in ways which may not be appropriate for their livelihoods, while also incurring necessary expenditure on behalf of their political parties.

This again calls for deep reforms in electoral politics, and we should not be apologetic to admit that we need to pay a respectable salary to a political worker who is working full time. This salary has to be paid by political parties, but they have to be bound under the suitable law, which should be auditable by a government agency, with the oversight to be vested with the Election Commission. That will be the serious attempt to get rid of political corruption, as it will also pave the way for a close monitoring of the assets of the political leaders.

Additionally, the Election Commission must breathe fresh air and admit that there is no rationality in the expenditure ceilings in the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elec-

tions, and also on the grounds of the geography, as well as the size of the constituencies. There must be rationalization of expenditure ceilings, for this again is a ground for massive electoral corruption, as dummy candidates are put up to cover additional expenses of candidates, besides also being the reasons for more vices in the election system in the country.

In the 1990s, the political leaders brainstormed about India of the 21st century. We have been two decades old in the 21st century and our electoral democracy remains rugged and outdated, not rising to the challenges of the new era, where the people are educated, besides being aspirational, along with India aiming to take a prominent position on the high table in the international arena.

Until we shake off the dust that the electoral democracy has gathered over several decades, no genuine gains can go to the deserving people. India at 75 must ensure that anyone with fire in his or her belly to serve the nation can join politics without worrying for his or her livelihood and progress in politics.

Indian democracy must become attractive to skilled people such as those who have domain expertise of law, international relations, economy, social science, arts, informational and technology and so on. India at 75 must also be of skilled and honest politicians, and zero tolerance for the new-age zamindars.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

'JUNGLE RAJ' HAS RETURNED TO BIHAR WITH THE RJD-JD(U) GOVERNMENT ASSUMING POWER IN THE STATE. —BJP SPOKESPERSON SAMBIT PATRA



HOW MANY PEOPLE FROM BIHAR DID THEY (BJP) MAKE A MINISTER AT CENTRE? I ASKED FOR FOUR MINISTERS FROM OUR PARTY. THEY DID NOT GIVE. —BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER NITISH KUMAR

Indian pharmaceutical industry poised to take off

Ever since the economic reforms of 1991, the domestic pharma industry has grown by leaps and bounds

The 75th Independence Day holds a lot of significance for the pharmaceutical industry in India. Over the past few decades since India's Independence, the industry has witnessed immense growth and emerged as one of the leading providers of drugs/medicines to countries worldwide.

From being non-existent in the 1970s to supplying crucial drugs to more than 200 countries in the fight against the pandemic, the Indian pharmaceutical industry has shown its prowess in its commitment to better health of people across the globe. With the government's strong push towards an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', several initiatives both at the business and policy levels have been implemented to propel the pharmaceutical industry towards



NIKKHIL K MASURKAR

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further heights.

Presently, the Indian pharma industry caters to more than 60 per cent of the global demand for different vaccines as well as ARV drug supplies, 30 per cent of UNICEF's annual supply worldwide and almost 60-80 per cent of UN purchases of medicines come from India.

Additionally, India also contributes nearly 57 per cent of APIs and 69 per cent of FPP (Finished Pharma Products) to the WHO's Pre-Qualified list. Furthermore, about 40 per cent of generics drug requirements in the US are met by India. All this is possible due to various initiatives that were taken to boost the domestic pharmaceutical industry. Here's a look at the significant ones that aided in the strong growth of the industry:

The Patent Act, 1970

This was the first patent act introduced after India became independent. It made the way for process patents and restricted patenting of end-products, which enabled manufacturers to develop alternative processes for proprietary products that were already there in the market.

The Drug Policy, 1978

The introduction of this policy along with the Price Control Order of 1979 turned out to be landmark events for the pharmaceutical industry in India. It not only enabled the setting up of a National Drug Authority but also provided a 'directional push' to the sector. The policy aimed at increasing the local production of bulk drugs, providing leadership to the PSUs,

reducing imports of bulk drugs, encouraging the growth of the local industry and reducing the selling prices of important drugs along with their formulations.

Hatch-Waxman Act 1984

Even though this Act was passed in the US, it helped in the proliferation of generic drugs and assisted a lot in the growth of the Indian generic industry. The Act established the economic and legal foundation for the present-day generic pharmaceutical industry.

The 1991 economic reforms

The Indian government in 1991 launched some major economic reforms and entered the world of globalisation. The economic reforms helped in market liberalisation, linking the Indian

pharmaceutical industry with the world economy. It also ensured the end of the 'License-Raj', which allowed the pharma industry to enjoy more freedom in the market. This created more leverage for domestic players and allowed market competition to produce better products. By liberalising the economy, the government increased business opportunities in the country. As a result, a number of entrepreneurs seized the opportunities and grew their pharma business from a small firm to a big company. Ever since the inception of these reforms, the domestic pharma industry has grown by leaps and bounds and currently exports medicines and drugs worth \$19 billion throughout the world.

Recently, the Cabinet also approved two schemes, namely

the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and the scheme on Promotion of Bulk Drug Parks, to promote domestic manufacturing of critical key starting materials/drug intermediates and APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) in India.

The government has plans to develop three mega bulk drug parks in India in partnership with states. A sum of Rs 3,000 crore has been approved for this scheme for the next five years. Under the PLI scheme, financial incentives will be provided to eligible producers of identified 53 critical bulk drugs on their incremental sales over the base year (2019-20) for a period of six years.

The scheme will reduce the country's import dependence for critical KSMs/Drug Intermediates and APIs.

Conclusion

In the recent past, digitisation has also emerged as a key driver for the pharmaceutical industry, helping to deliver top-quality and hyper-personalized customer experiences and also improving business resilience and performance. Without any doubt, digitisation will play an active role in driving agility across the pharmaceutical value chain by bringing the sector closer to patients and doctors.

Most importantly, the pharma industry must work towards further innovation, by manufacturing effective new medicines/ drugs for emerging and unmet healthcare needs. Steps like these will enable the industry to transform into an innovation hub for the future.

SHELLING KILLS 1 IN UKRAINE; RUSSIA SEEKS N-PLANT SECURITY ASSURANCE



AP ■ KYIV
 Russian forces on Sunday fired rockets on the Mykolaiv region in southern Ukraine, killing at least one person, and a Russian diplomat called on Ukraine to offer security assurances so that international inspectors could visit a nuclear power station that has come under fire.
 The Mykolaiv region is just to the

north of the Russian-occupied city of Kherson, which Ukrainian forces have vowed to retake.
 The Ukrainian emergency service said one person was killed in shelling early Sunday of the Mykolaiv region settlement of Berezhneuvate.
 As fighting steps up in southern Ukraine as Russia's war closes in on six months, concern has grown sharply about the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power

plant, which is held by Russian forces and has been hit by sporadic shelling. Both Ukraine and Russia blame each other for the shelling, which officials say has damaged monitoring equipment and could lead to a nuclear catastrophe.
 The Zaporizhzhia facility is Europe's largest nuclear power plant.
 Russia's envoy to international organizations based in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, called on Ukraine to stop

attacking the plant in order to allow an inspection mission from the International Atomic Energy Agency.
 "It is important that the Ukrainians stop their shelling of the station and provide security guarantees to members of the mission. An international team cannot be sent to work under continuous artillery shelling," he was quoted as saying Sunday by Russian state news agency Tass.

In Ukraine, rebuilding starts with neighbours' help

AP ■ NOVOSSELIVKA (UKRAINE)

As battles raged around Kyiv, one Russian advance was stopped in front of Maria Metla's home. Artillery gutted most of the house, while the rest was pulverized by tank fire.

Metla, 66, is now counting on her neighbours to have somewhere to live this winter.

Crews of volunteers turn up on most mornings to prize away anything that can be reused, setting up neat piles of bricks, destroyed kitchen appliances for scrap metal, and chunks of insulation panels.

The salvaged material is reused to help rebuild homes destroyed along the perimeter of Russia's failed attempt during the initial stages of the war to surround and capture Ukraine's capital.

The village of Novoselivka, 140 km (nearly 90 miles) north of Kyiv, was a scene of intense fighting during the 36-day attack on the capital. Metal doors are buckled by bullet holes from heavy machine-gun fire and houses like Metla's were smashed by ground and aerial bombardment.

"We dragged what we could to the basement. Five bombs, one, two, three, four, five, exploded in the field behind us," Metla said while standing in what used to be the living room of her destroyed home. She keeps a burned exercise bike and a religious icon of St Nicholas as reminders of life before the war.

Ukraine's authorities said last month that the country had suffered more than \$100 billion, equivalent to two-thirds of its 2020 gross domestic product, in infrastructure damage alone



but estimate that the reconstruction effort could cost more than seven times that amount.
 Officials are appealing to Western countries to tap frozen Russian assets on top of what they are willing to donate to help pay for the bill.

Container homes from Poland are being set up near Novoselivka, a village filled with orchards, sunflower patches, and back gardens with chickens, outside the historic northern city of Chernihiv. But the scale of the damage has prompted scores of local initiatives.

"In many other countries, if your home is destroyed, you might put up a For Sale sign and move to another town. It's not like that here," said Andriy Galyuga, a local volunteer organizer. "People are very attached to where they are from and they don't want to leave."

Galyuga's organisation, Bomozhemo, is in contact with similar initiatives that have sprung up all around the Ukrainian capital.

At one smashed home, Galyuga bounds up a broken stairwell to direct a 25-member

crew of volunteers loading salvaged cinder blocks onto a slide and determinedly prying off construction material with pickaxes and crowbars.

Children and retired women help the effort watched by the worried home owner, Zhanna Dynaeva, who makes food for the workers, many of whom have also lost their homes.

The gaunt-looking Dynaeva, is staying with a friend, but visits her home daily to maintain an immaculate garden. She carries trays of drinks and sandwiches on the day the volunteers came to visit.

"I am so grateful to them. People around me have helped so much," she said. As she gives an account of her escape from the bombardment, Dynaeva bursts into tears and is hugged by her homeless neighbour, Metla.

"I'm hoping I can stay on my property, maybe in a makeshift home to start," Dynaeva says. "I don't know what will happen to us. Winter will be here soon. I just worry all the time."



Lankan Navy rejects reports of conducting war games with Pak

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan Navy on Sunday rejected as "fallacious" media reports that it will hold war games with a Pakistani warship docked at the Colombo port but confirmed that it will hold a "Passage Exercise" in the western seas with PNS Taimur as it leaves the island nation.

The docking of Pakistan's newly-commissioned Chinese-built frigate at the Colombo port on Friday came amid Sri Lankan government allowing a high-tech Chinese research ship to visit the southern port of Hambantota from August 16 till 22 for "replenishment purposes," despite India's concern over the vessel's presence in its neighbourhood.

Sri Lanka allowed PNS Taimur to make a port call in Colombo while on its way to join the Pakistan Navy fleet after the Bangladesh government denied it permission to dock at Chattogram Port.

The Sri Lankan Navy in a statement on Sunday said the Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Taimur, which arrived in Sri Lanka on Friday on a formal visit, is scheduled to conduct a Passage Exercise with SLNS Sindurala in seas off Colombo as she departs the island nation on August 15 upon completion of her visit.

"In this backdrop, certain media reports circulating about a 'War Game' between Sri Lanka Navy and Pakistan Navy

are fallacious," the release said.

It said that the Sri Lanka Navy, with the concurrence of foreign navies, conducts Passage Exercises as a routine engagement when their visiting naval ships departing the island after making official port calls.

"The prime motive of these efforts is to enhance interoperability, partnerships and goodwill as well as exchange best practices with foreign navies," it said.

It said the Sri Lankan Navy had conducted similar Passage Exercises with the navies of countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan, Germany, UK, Russia and Australia on a number of previous occasions.

"Conducting similar naval exercises with regional and extra-regional navies will enable each partner to overcome common maritime challenges in the future, through enhanced cooperation. In addition, such engagements will also be vital for its own maritime operations of the Sri Lanka Navy," the statement said.

PNS Taimur is the second of four powerful Type 054A/P frigates built by China. It was delivered to the Pakistan Navy in Shanghai on June 23. The first ship in the Type 054A/P-class, the PNS Tughril, joined the Pakistan Navy Fleet in January. Two more frigates of the same class are currently under construction in China. PNS Taimur took part in

exercises in Malaysia and Cambodia along its journey to Karachi. The 134m-long ship is a technologically advanced and highly capable sea asset having hi-tech weapons and sensors, the latest combat management and electronic warfare system to fight under multi-threat environments.

The Sri Lankan government on Saturday said that it has allowed Chinese ballistic missile and satellite tracking ship, 'Yuan Wang 5', to dock at the southern port of Hambantota from August 16 till 22 for "replenishment purposes," days after Colombo asked Beijing to defer the port-call amidst India's concern over the vessel's presence in its neighbourhood.

The Chinese research ship was earlier scheduled to arrive on Thursday and remain at the port until August 17 for replenishment. However, the Sri Lankan foreign ministry requested the Chinese embassy here to postpone the vessel's visit following security concerns raised by India. Subsequently, the vessel did not dock at the Hambantota port on Thursday as planned.

The southern deep-sea port of Hambantota is considered strategically important for its location. The port has been developed largely with Chinese loans. India has said it carefully monitors any development having a bearing on its security and economic interests.

River torrent kills 7 in China amid widespread heavy rain

AP ■ BEIJING

Seven people were killed by a torrent of water that came rushing down a river in a popular recreational spot following mountain rains in southwestern China, authorities said Sunday.

Workers and volunteers mobilized to urge people to leave the area after receiving an imminent heavy rain warning at about 2:40 p.m. Saturday, the emergency management bureau in Pengzhou city said.

People could be seen scrambling to flee in videos posted on social media, but some were caught when the torrent hit less than an hour later at 3:30 p.m.

One man at the scene said several people were washed



away, including some children, when the waterflow in the lower reaches of the river suddenly increased in just 10 to 20 seconds, the state-owned China National Radio reported.

The Chengdu city government said Sunday that seven people died and three others were hospitalized with minor injuries.

Pengzhou is a tourist spot about 70 kilometers (45 miles) north of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province.

A video showed a helicopter rescuing a person stranded on a small outcropping by descending to just above the water and opening a door so the person could climb in.

Elsewhere in China, heavy rain flooded streets in the

northwestern city of Xining on Saturday night. Heavy to torrential rain was forecast for the northeast from Sunday to Monday afternoon with 10 to 18 centimeters (4 to 7 inches) of rainfall expected in parts of Liaoning and Jilin provinces.

A heat wave was hovering over a wide swath of southern China, with highs Sunday forecast at 35 to 39 degrees Celsius (95 to 102 degrees Fahrenheit) and possibly surpassing 40 degrees (104 Fahrenheit) in some places including Shanghai.

Jiangsu province warned that road surface temperatures could rise to 72 degrees (162 Fahrenheit), raising the risk of flat tires, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

'Uneasy peace in Indo-Pacific due to recent Chinese actions'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

There is an "uneasy peace" in the Indo-Pacific due to China's recent aggressive actions, an influential US Congressman has said, underlining that India and the US should work together with countries such as Japan, South Korea and Australia for maintaining stability in the strategically vital region.

Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, who has just returned from a historic trip to the region, including Taiwan, as part of a US Congressional delegation led by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in an interview with PTI said one of the interesting topics of conversation during their travels was the rise of India and the importance of the country playing a greater role.

The Congressional delegation led by Pelosi travelled to Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. In Taipei, much to the anger of China, thousands of Taiwanese turned out in the middle of the night to welcome their American guests.

"I think there is an uneasy peace (in the region). In all the countries we visited, whether it was Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Korea or Taiwan, there is a real concern about aggression from the People's Republic of China (PRC)," the 49-year-old Democratic Party leader said. China's military launched



a week-long military exercises around Taiwan in retaliation for Pelosi's high-profile visit to the self-ruled island, which Beijing views as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland, even by force.

China's provocative military drills around Taiwan raised global concerns that Beijing may be preparing to annex the self-ruled island.

In the Indo-Pacific region, where India can exert influence, especially through initiatives such as the Quad in providing stability and security, "I think that partnership with India is extremely important for maintaining an international rules-based order," Krishnamoorthi said.

In November 2017, the US, India, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the four-nation Quad grouping to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence,

amid China's growing military presence in the strategic region.

"And so, when the PRC throws itself militarily at its neighbours, whether it is in the South China Sea, or Taiwan, or even against India on the western border of China, then the neighbours...Get very concerned...They definitely want an increased security presence from the United States, among others," Krishnamoorthi said.

He said India and the US working together with countries such as Japan, South Korea, Australia and other Indo-Pacific nations is indispensable for maintaining stability in the region.

He described the challenge from China as "very serious".

The Congressman said the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) has unfortunately botched its response to COVID-19, causing tremendous economic uncertainty and a slowdown in China's economy, the world's second largest.



Official: Over 50 deaths from seasonal floods in Sudan

AP ■ CAIRO

Floods triggered by seasonal torrential rains in Sudan have killed more than 50 people and inundated over 8,170 homes since the rainy season started, a senior police official said on Saturday.

Nineteen fatalities have been recorded in North Kordofan province, followed by Nile River province, which reported seven deaths, said Brig. Gen. Abdul-Jalil Abdul-Rahim, spokesman for Sudan's National Council for Civil Defence. The western Darfur region, which has five provinces, reported 16 deaths, he added.

He did not say when the first causality occurred. Sudan's rainy season usually starts in June and lasts until September, with floods peaking in August and September.

Abdul-Rahim said at least 25 people were also injured so far this year, according to the

country's state-run SUNA news agency.

The flooding and heavy rainfall inundated 16 government facilities and around 40 stores, and damaged at least 540 feddans (acres) of agricultural land across the country, Abdul-Rahim said.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has said an estimated 38,000 people have been affected by heavy rainfall across the East African country since May.

Last year, flooding and heavy rains killed more than 80 people and swamped tens of thousands of houses across the country. In 2020, authorities declared Sudan a natural disaster area and imposed a three-month state of emergency across the country after flooding and heavy rain killed around 100 people and inundated over 100,000 (one lakh) houses.

More US lawmakers visiting Taiwan twelve days after Pelosi trip



AP ■ TAIPEI

A delegation of American lawmakers is visiting Taiwan just 12 days after a visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that angered China. The five-member delegation, led by Democratic Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts, will meet senior leaders to discuss US-Taiwan relations, regional security, trade, investment and other issues, the American Institute in Taiwan said. The institute represents the U.S. Government, which does not have official ties with Taiwan. China, which claims self-ruled Taiwan as its territory, responded to Pelosi's Aug. 2 visit by sending missiles, war-

ships and warplanes into the seas and skies around Taiwan for several days afterward. The Chinese government objects to Taiwan having any official contact with foreign governments, particularly with a high-ranking congressional leader like Pelosi. A Taiwanese broadcaster showed video of a U.S. Government plane landing about 7 p.m. Sunday at Songshan Airport in Taipei, the Taiwanese capital. While it wasn't confirmed who was on board, the American Institute issued a brief statement soon after announcing the delegation would be in Taiwan on Sunday and Monday as part of a trip to Asia.

The other members of the delegation are Republican Rep. Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen, a delegate from American Samoa, and Democratic House members John Garamendi and Alan Lowenthal from California and Don Beyer from Virginia. Chinese warplanes have been crossing the midpoint of the Taiwan Strait on a daily basis even after the conclusion of the military exercises, with at least 10 doing so on Sunday, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said. The 10 fighter jets were among 22 Chinese military aircraft and six naval ships detected in the area around Taiwan by 5 pm on Sunday, the ministry said on its Twitter account.

Officials: Fire at Coptic church in Cairo kills 41, injures 14

AP ■ CAIRO

A fire ripped through a packed church during morning services in Egypt's capital on Sunday, killing at least 41 worshippers and injuring 14. The church quickly filled with thick black smoke, and witnesses said several trapped congregants jumped from upper floors to escape. "Suffocation, suffocation, all of them dead," said a distraught witness, who only gave a partial name, Abu Bishoy. The cause of the blaze in the Abu Sefein church in the working-class neighbourhood of Imbaba was not immediately known. An initial investigation pointed to an electrical short-circuit, according to a police statement. Footage from the scene circulated online showed burned furniture, including wooden tables and chairs. Firefighters were seen putting out the blaze while others carried victims to ambulances. Families waited for word on relatives who were inside the church. Witnesses said there were many children inside the building when the fire broke out. "There are children we didn't know how to get to them," said Abu Bishoy. "And we don't know whose son this is, or whose daughter that is. Is this possible?"

The country's health minister blamed the smoke and a stampede as people attempted to flee the fire for causing the fatalities. It was one of the worst fire tragedies in Egypt in recent years. Witness Emad Hanna said the church includes two places used as a daycare for children, and that a church worker managed to get many children out. "We went upstairs and found people dead. And we started to see from outside that the smoke was getting bigger, and people want to jump from the upper floor. ... We found the children." Egypt's Coptic Church and the country's health ministry reported the casualty toll. The church said the fire broke out while



a service was underway. The church is located in a narrow street in one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in Cairo. Fifteen firefighting vehicles were dispatched to the scene to put out the flames while ambulances ferried casualties to nearby hospitals, officials said. President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi spoke by phone with the Coptic Christian Pope Tawadros II to offer his condolences, the president's office said. Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, Al-Azhar's Grand Imam, also offered his condolences to the head of the Coptic church. "I am closely following the developments of the tragic accident," el-Sissi wrote on Facebook. "I directed all concerned state agencies and institutions to take all necessary measures, and immediately to deal with this accident and its effects." Health Minister Khaled Abdel-Ghafar said in a statement that two of the injured were discharged from a hospital while 12 others were still being treated. The Interior Ministry said it received a report on the fire at 9 a.m. Local time, and

that they found that the blaze broke out in an air conditioner in the building's second floor. The ministry, which oversees police and firefighters, blamed an electrical short-circuit for the fire, which produced huge amounts of smoke. Meanwhile, the country's chief prosecutor, Hamada el-Sawy, ordered an investigation and a team of prosecutors were dispatched to the church. Later on Sunday, emergency services said they managed to put out the blaze and the prime minister and other senior government officials arrived to inspect the site. Egypt's Christians account for some 10% of the nation's more than 103 million people and have long complained of discrimination by the nation's Muslim majority. Sunday's blaze was one of the worst fire tragedies in recent years in Egypt, where safety standards and fire regulations are poorly enforced. In March last year, a fire at a garment factory near Cairo killed at least 20 people and injured 24 more.



Despite public resentment, no progress in Iraq political deadlock

AP ■ BAGHDAD

Weeks after followers of an influential cleric stormed parliament, Iraq's political crisis shows no signs of abating, despite rising public anger over a debilitating gridlock that has further weakened the country's caretaker government and its ability to provide basic services. Iraq's two rival Shiite political camps remain locked in a zero-sum competition, and the lone voice potentially able to end the rift - the revered Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani - has been conspicuously silent. For now, hundreds of supporters of Muqtada al-Sadr, a firebrand Shiite cleric, are still camped outside the legislative building in Baghdad, ready to escalate if their demands are not met. Al-Sadr has called for early elections, the dissolution of parliament and constitutional amendments. He has given the judiciary an end-of-the-week deadline to dissolve the legislature. His Shiite rivals in the Iran-backed camp have conditions of their own. They accused him of violating the constitution, prompting counter-protests that have spurred fears of bloodshed.

Gunman wounds 8 in late-night Jerusalem shooting



AP ■ JERUSALEM

A gunman opened fire at a bus near Jerusalem's Old City early Sunday, wounding eight Israelis in a suspected Palestinian attack that came a week after violence flared up between Israel and militants in Gaza, police and medics said. Two of the victims were in serious condition, including a pregnant woman with abdominal injuries and a man with gunshot wounds to the head and neck, according to Israeli hospitals treating them. The shooting happened as the bus waited in a parking lot near the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray. Israeli police said forces were dispatched to the scene to investigate. Israeli security forces also pushed into the nearby Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan pursuing the suspected attacker. Later on Sunday, police said the suspected attacker turned himself in. Police did not immediately disclose details about the suspected attacker's identity. The attack in Jerusalem followed a tense week between

Israel and Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Last weekend, Israeli aircraft unleashed an offensive in the Gaza Strip targeting the militant group Islamic Jihad and setting off three days of fierce cross-border fighting. Islamic Jihad fired hundreds of rockets during the flare-up to avenge the airstrikes, which killed two of its commanders and other militants. Israel said the attack was meant to thwart threats from the group to respond to the arrest of one of its officials in the occupied West Bank. Forty-nine Palestinians, including 17 children and 14 militants, were killed, and several hundred were injured in the fighting, which ended with an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire. No Israeli was killed or seriously injured. The Islamic militant group Hamas, which controls Gaza, stayed on the sidelines. A day after the cease-fire halted the worst round of Gaza fighting in more than a year, Israeli troops killed three Palestinian militants and wounded dozens in a shootout that erupted during an arrest raid in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Rushdie off ventilator and able to talk

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Salman Rushdie has been taken off a ventilator and was able to talk, a day after the Mumbai-born author was stabbed, in what US authorities said was a "targeted, unprovoked, preplanned" attack. Rushdie, who faced Islamist death threats for years after writing "The Satanic Verses", was stabbed by a 24-year-old New Jersey resident identified as Hadi Matar, a US national of Lebanese origin, on stage on Friday while he was being introduced at a literary event of the Chautauqua Institution in Western New York. "@SalmanRushdie off ventilator and talking! Continued prayers from all @chq, Chautauqua Institution president Michael Hill said in a tweet on Saturday night. Rushdie's agent, Andrew Wylie, also confirmed the news to the US media. Rushdie, 75, was put on a ventilator after he was stabbed by Matar. Earlier on Saturday, Matar pleaded not guilty to charges of attempted murder and assault at a brief court appearance

where he was denied bail. Matar was charged with attempted murder and assault in the stabbing of Rushdie and he pleaded not guilty. He made his appearance in court, wearing a black-and-white striped jumpsuit and handcuffed. Chautauqua County District Attorney Jason Schmidt provided the details of Rushdie's injuries in court during Matar's arraignment Saturday afternoon. The author's injuries include three stab wounds to the right side of the front of his neck, four stab wounds to his stomach, a puncture wound to his right eye and chest, and a laceration on his right thigh, according to the county prosecutor. "This was a targeted, unprovoked, preplanned attack on Mr Rushdie," Schmidt alleged. Matar faces up to 32 years if convicted of both charges, Schmidt said. The attack on Rushdie drew shock and condemnation from world leaders and literary stalwarts. US President Joe Biden said in a statement on Saturday that he and First Lady Jill Biden



were "shocked and saddened" to learn of the "vicious" attack on the author. "Salman Rushdie -- with his insight into humanity, with his unmatched sense for story, with his refusal to be intimidated or silenced -- stands for essential, universal ideals. Truth. Courage. Resilience. The ability to share ideas without fear. These are the building blocks of any free and open society. And today, we reaffirm our com-

mitment to those deeply American values in solidarity with Rushdie and all those who stand for freedom of expression," Biden said. "We, together with all Americans and people around the world, are praying for his health and recovery. I am grateful to the first responders and the brave individuals who jumped into action to render aid to Rushdie and subdue the attacker," he added.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he is "appalled" to learn about the attack on Rushdie. "The Secretary-General was appalled to learn of the attack on renowned novelist Salman Rushdie," a statement issued on Friday by his spokesperson said. "In no case is violence a response to words spoken or written by others in their exercise of the freedoms of opinion

and expression," Guterres said, conveying his wishes for Rushdie's early recovery. European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell "strongly" condemned the attack on Saturday night. "International rejection of such criminal actions, which violate fundamental rights and freedoms, is the only path towards a better and more peaceful world", Borrell tweeted. Rushdie lived in hiding and under police protection for years after late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini put out a fatwa in 1989 calling for his death in retribution for his book "The Satanic Verses". A report in The New York Times said according to prosecutors, Rushdie was stabbed roughly 10 times in the premeditated attack. "In court, prosecutors said that the attack on the author was premeditated and targeted," the report said, adding that Matar travelled by bus to the "intellectual retreat in western New York and purchased a pass that allowed him to attend" the talk "Rushdie was to give on Friday morning".

Rushdie attack should be wake-up call to sanction Iran, says Sunak

PTI ■ LONDON

The brutal attack on noted author Salman Rushdie should be a wake-up call for the West to impose tougher sanctions against Iran and proscribe the country's elite military unit as a terrorist organisation, British prime ministerial hopeful Rishi Sunak said on Sunday. The former Chancellor told "The Daily Telegraph" that attempts to revive the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of



Action (JCPOA), may be futile and therefore it was important to assess action against Iran's

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). He spoke as the suspect in the attack on Rushdie, Hadi Matar, was on Saturday charged with attempted murder and assault and remanded without bail. Preliminary investigations suggest his sympathies with the Shia extremism and IRGC. "The situation in Iran is extremely serious and in standing up to [Vladimir] Putin we can't take our eye off the ball elsewhere," Sunak told the newspaper.

Truss in commanding lead over Sunak in UK PM race

PTI ■ LONDON

The UK prime ministerial race frontrunner, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, continues to hold on to a commanding 22-point lead over former Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the Conservative Party leadership contest, according to a new survey of Tory members on Sunday. In an Opinion poll for "The Observer" newspaper of 570 Conservative members with a vote in the election, Truss is on 61 per cent and the British Indian former minister is on 39 per cent. With under three weeks to go before the September 2 deadline for postal and online votes to be cast by the membership to elect a successor to outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Sunak seems to have closed the gap only slightly in recent days. "From the moment we knew the final two candidates, it has been clear that Truss has had all the momentum, and our latest poll sets out just how large her lead among the party members has become," Chris Curtis of Opinion told the newspaper. "With many members having already returned their ballot papers, it is now very unlikely Truss won't become Prime Minister in September. It's clear that Sunak's biggest problem is



trust. While some members respect his economic arguments, this hasn't been enough to overcome the view among members that he isn't honest or trustworthy enough for the top job, particularly after he called for Johnson to go," he said. Opinion's detailed questioning also uncovers a striking lack of enthusiasm for either candidate when members are asked whether they would prefer one of them to Johnson to run the party and country. When offered the choice of Johnson still being in No. 10 Downing Street, or Truss taking over, around 63 per cent of Tory members polled said they would prefer Johnson to be still in charge against 22 per cent who wanted Truss. On the other side, 68 per cent said they would prefer to still have Johnson than see him replaced by Sunak, who was preferred by just 19 per

cent. The poll also found that almost three in 10 of the Tory electorate (29 per cent) had already voted. Some 47 per cent said they would definitely be voting for the candidate they had opted for. Just 19 per cent said they had yet to make up their mind. Opinion said that while these findings meant it may still be possible for Sunak to pull off a "stunning comeback" to enter 10 Downing Street, but to do so he would have to win over almost all the undecideds and convert a sizeable chunk of those not fully behind Truss. The Foreign Secretary's support is particularly strong among older Conservative members, while Sunak's is far higher among younger ones. For Sunak the most cited reason was that he would be better at managing the economy (22 per cent), while 10 per cent said they regarded him as the most competent or intelligent. A main reason mentioned by people who backed Truss was dislike of Sunak (14 per cent). The same proportion (14 per cent) said the Cabinet minister was more honest and trustworthy, while 10 per cent chose the fact that she had remained loyal to Johnson and not called on him to resign.

Mexico President to bypass Congress to keep army in streets

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

Mexico's president has begun exploring plans to sidestep congress to hand formal control of the National Guard to the army, a move that could extend the military's control over policing in a country with high levels of violence. That has raised concerns because President Andrés Manuel López Obrador won approval for creating the force in 2019 by changing the constitution that it would be under nominal civilian control and that the army would be off the streets by 2024. Neither the National Guard nor the military have been able to lower the insecurity in the country, however. This past week, drug cartels staged



widespread arson and shooting attacks, terrifying civilians in three main north-west cities in a bold challenge to the state. Still, López Obrador wants to keep soldiers involved in policing, and remove civilian control over the National Guard, whose officers and commanders are mostly soldiers, with military training and pay grades. But the president no longer has the

votes in congress to amend the constitution and has suggested he may try to do it as a regulatory change with a simple majority in congress or by an executive order and see if the courts will uphold that. López Obrador warned Friday against politicising the issue, saying the military is needed to fight Mexico's violent drug cartels. But then he immediately politicised it himself. "A constitutional reform would be ideal, but we have to look for ways, because they (the opposition) instead of helping us, are blocking us, there is an intent to prevent us from doing anything," López Obrador said. The two main opposition parties also had a different positions when they were

in power. They supported the army in public safety roles during their respective administrations beginning in 2006 and 2012. When López Obrador was running for president, he called for taking the army off the streets. But being in power -- and seeing homicides running at their highest sustained levels ever -- apparently changed his mind. He has relied heavily on the military not just for crime-fighting. He sees the army and navy as heroic, patriotic and less corruptible, and has entrusted them with building major infrastructure projects, running airports and trains, stopping migrants and overseeing customs.

Finance Min plans to review exemption-free tax regime

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry is proposing to soon review the exemption-free tax regime with a view to making it more attractive for individual income taxpayers, sources said.

Eventually, sources said, the Government aims to establish a system where there are no exemptions and the complex old tax regime with exemptions and deductions is terminated.

The Union Budget 2020-21 introduced a new tax regime. Taxpayers were given the option to choose between the old regime with various deductions and exemptions and the new tax regime that offered lower tax rates without exemptions and deductions.

The intention behind the move was to provide significant relief to the individual taxpayers and to simplify the income-tax law. Asked about the experience of the new tax regime, sources said, there are clear signs that people who have finished their home and education loans are willing to shift to the



new tax regime as they have no exemptions to claim.

Sources further said that lowering of taxes in the new regime would make the new tax regime more attractive.

A similar tax regime for corporate taxpayers was introduced in September 2019 by significantly lowering rates and removing exemptions.

The Government had announced a cut in base corporate tax for then existing companies to 22 per cent from

30 per cent; and for new manufacturing firms, incorporated after October 1, 2019, and starting operations before March 31, 2024, to 15 per cent from 25 per cent. Companies opting for these new tax rates will have to forego all exemptions and incentives.

Under the new tax regime for individual taxpayers announced on February 1, 2020, people with an annual income of up to ₹2.5 lakh do not pay any tax.

PTI

Commerce Min proposes host of incentives to revamp SEZs

New Delhi: The commerce ministry is proposing a host of direct and indirect incentives such as deferral of import duties and exemption from export taxes to revamp Special Economic Zones through a new legislation, an official said.

In the Union Budget this year, the government proposed to replace the existing law governing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) with a new legislation to enable states to become partners in 'Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs' (DESH).

The official said the commerce ministry has sought views of different ministries, including finance, on the new bill. After collating the feedback, the ministry would seek approval of the Cabinet and then introduce the new bill in Parliament.

The proposals seek to provide incentives such as retention of zero-rating of IGST (integrated goods and services tax) on domestic procurement by a unit in an SEZ; continuation of indirect tax benefits to developers of these zones; and allowing depreciation on sale of



used capital goods cleared to domestic tariff areas.

There is also a plan to extend the corporate tax rate to 15 per cent without any exemptions for units undertaking authorised operations in these development hubs.

States can also provide support measures to these zones to boost manufacturing and job creation. The existing SEZ Act was enacted in 2006 with an aim to create export hubs and boost manufacturing in the country. However, these zones started losing their sheen

after imposition of minimum alternate tax and introduction of sunset clause for removal of tax incentives. These zones are treated as foreign entities in terms of provisions related to customs. Industry has time and again demanded continuation of tax benefits provided under the law. Units in SEZs used to enjoy 100 per cent income tax exemption on export income for the first five years, 50 per cent for the next five years and 50 per cent of the ploughed back export profit for another five years. PTI

States should not give freebies beyond fiscal capabilities: Kumar

New Delhi: State Governments should not dole out "non-merit freebies" such as gifts and consumer durables beyond their fiscal capabilities, according to former Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar.

Kumar noted that there is a difference between merit transfer payment and non-merit freebies, especially those which are done beyond the fiscal capability of any government. "Non-merit freebies which are the nature of giving out gifts, consumer durables... Those are to be looked at carefully and in any case should not be undertaken by the governments who have fiscal constraints," he told PTI in an interview.

Noting that in a democracy, transfer payments via the government through the instrument of taxation and distribution is always necessary, he said, "any transfer payments whose social rate of return is higher than any private rate of

return, in other words which has positive externalities, is worth doing."

On some politicians comparing the current economic situation of Sri Lanka with India, Kumar said, "any such comparison is simply unwarranted and mischievous to different levels."

Sri Lanka is grappling with a severe economic crisis and India has been at the forefront of extending economic assistance to Sri Lanka.

According to Kumar, in the Nordic countries, the tax to GDP ratio is nearly 50 per cent because they spend lots of public money in providing public goods and services to the common person.

"I think that is not something we should discuss or debate. It is important to increase the quality and access of public goods and services for the common person, especially for those at the bottom of the pyramid," he said. PTI

Greaves Cotton exploring export opportunities for electric two-wheeler

Mumbai: Greaves Cotton is exploring export opportunities for its Ampere brand of electric two-wheelers bolstered by the recent investment from global investor Abdul Latif Jameel in the e-mobility arm.

In an interaction with PTI, Greaves Cotton Managing Director and Group CEO Nagesh Basavanhalli said that Greaves Electric Mobility is working on new products, both in two and three-wheeler segments, including on high-speed electric scooters, and may launch a few of them by the fiscal-end.

The Saudi Arabia-based family-owned diversified business Abdul Latif Jameel, which has presence across 30-odd countries, announced in June this year its commitment to invest USD 220-million in the Cotton Greaves' subsidiary.

As part of the deal, it has

initially invested USD 150-million (₹1,171-crore) for a 35.80 per cent stake in Greaves Electric Mobility.

The city-based diversified engineering company has presence in five businesses—engine manufacturing, electric mobility, retail, financing as well as technology.

Greaves Electric Mobility manufactures two-wheelers under the Ampere brand while three-wheelers, e-auto and e-rickshaws, are produced under the Ele and the Teja brands.

"We are exploring export opportunities for our two-wheeler (Ampere) brand. We are still discussing it internally but exports definitely are on our mind," Basavanhalli told PTI. "Our partner (Abdul Latif) has presence across 32 countries and strong partnership globally with certain other global marquee companies," he said. PTI

LIC keen to re-enter mediclaim segment, awaiting regulatory clarity: Chairman

Mumbai: Insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is keen to re-enter the mediclaim segment as and when the regulator provides clarity on the issue, its chairman has said.

"We are already doing a lot of long-term health protection and guaranteed health products. And we are evaluating the suggestion that the regulator Irdai made recently," LIC Chairman M R Kumar told PTI when asked about the same during its earnings call over the weekend.

The chairman further said, "I don't think it will be difficult for us as we already offer some of the health products."

Mediclaim policies, which are indemnity-based health plans, are the best-selling health insurance products in the country. However, in 2016, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) had asked life insurers to withdraw indem-



nity-based health plans from the market. Life insurers since then have been allowed to offer only fixed benefit health plans.

Under indemnity-based health insurance plans, the insurer provides reimbursement for the money spent on medical treatment up to the sum insured. For fixed benefit health insurance plans, a fixed amount is paid out of the sum insured for pre-determined illnesses or medical conditions.

However, Panda later clarified that the regulator was only evaluating the pros and cons of allowing life insurers to sell health insurance policies and that no decision has been taken yet. PTI

Jhunjhunwala will be remembered for his acute understanding of markets, says Ratan Tata

Mumbai: Ratan Tata, Chairman Emeritus of the Tata Group, on Sunday said ace investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala will always be remembered for his acute understanding of the markets as well as for his jovial personality, kindness, and foresightedness.

Jhunjhunwala, often referred to as 'India's Warren Buffett', passed away here Sunday morning due to a cardiac arrest. He was 62.

Jhunjhunwala had investments in more than three dozen companies, the most valuable being watch and jewellery maker Titan, part of the Tata conglomerate. His portfolio includes companies like Star Health, Rallis India, Escorts, Canara Bank, Indian Hotels Company, Agro Tech Foods, Nazara Technologies and Tata Motors.

"Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, who sadly passed away this morning, will always be

remembered for his acute understanding of the stock exchanges of India. He will also be remembered for his jovial personality, his kindness, and his foresightedness," Ratan Tata said in his condolence message.

"My heartfelt condolences go out to his family which has to share the burden of this great loss," he added.

Jhunjhunwala was brought dead to the Breach Candy hospital early on Sunday morning. Suffering from kidney disease and ischemic heart disease, the hospital certified that cardiac arrest was the cause of his death.

A self-made trader, investor and businessman, he was also known as the 'Big Bull' of Dalal Street. With an estimated net worth of around USD 5.8 billion (about Rs 46,000 crore), Jhunjhunwala was the 36th richest billionaire in India, according to Forbes' 2021 listing. PTI

Shareholders approve Ashish Kumar Chauhan as NSE MD, CEO

New Delhi: Leading bourse National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Sunday said that shareholders have approved the appointment of Ashish Kumar Chauhan as its managing director and chief executive.

The Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EOGM) of NSE was held on August 11, according to a statement.

Shareholders approved the appointment of Chauhan, who was the MD and CEO of rival bourse BSE, with 99.99 per cent votes. He assumed charge as NSE chief on July 26. His appointment at the top post of the NSE was cleared by the capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on July 18.

He took over the helm of NSE from Vikram Limaye, whose five-year term ended on July 16. Limaye did not seek another tenure at the National Stock Exchange (NSE) despite being eligible for it. PTI

Indian toy manufacturers scale up amid rise in demand; eye global markets

New Delhi: Government policies such as increasing customs duties on imported toys and mandating BIS certification requirement for imports not only boosted domestic manufacturing but also helped the industry to explore global markets and enhance exports.

The demand for toys based on Indian mythological characters, desi movie characters and superheroes such as Chota Bheem are on the rise as the domestic players break away from the dominance of China and some other countries, according to industry experts.

Now the 'made-in-India' toys have a very clear edge in the domestic markets and the manufacturers are scaling up their production capacity to meet the growing local as well as international demand.

The import of toys into India has declined sharply from USD 304 million in 2018-19 to



USD 36 million in 2021-22, said a data from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

On the other hand, exports have increased from USD 109 million in 2018-19 to USD 177 million in 2021-22, it added.

According to the industry, the sector is also going global, as manufacturers are scouting new markets and increasing exports to the Middle East and African countries.

The Indian toy industry is growing as the government has mandated the domestic players to have BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) certification

for import and also increased customs duty, said Toy Association Of India president Ajay Agarwal.

"These are the two reasons as import of toys has declined," Agarwal told PTI.

Encouraged by these supporting initiatives, the Indian manufacturers are now scaling up their production and investing to augment their capacity, he added.

"Now several makers are manufacturing toys based on Indian ethos and culture. Icons like Chota Bheem are very popular and several manufacturers have the licence to manufacture them," he said, adding that more manufacturers are entering this category of toys.

According to a joint report by industry body FICCI and KPMG, the Indian toy market was estimated to be around USD 1 billion in 2019-20 and is expected to double to USD 2 billion by 2024-25. PTI

Bank of India sees 10-12% growth in advances in current fiscal

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of India expects advances to grow by 10-12 per cent in the current fiscal year with corporate loans yet to pick-up, top official said in an analysts call.

The bank's year-to-date (YTD) loan growth stood at about 5 per cent mainly driven by Retail sector advances, Agricultural and MSME loans (RAM).

"Advances growth guidance will be in the range of 10 to 12 per cent for the full year. So far up to June, we had YTD growth of about 5 per cent, but that is mostly on the back of good RAM growth. Corporate is yet to pick up. We believe that from this quarter onwards, there could be some movement in the corporate book," A K Das, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD&CEO), told analysts in post Q1FY23 earnings conference call.

The bank's gross advances



(global and domestic) stood at Rs 4,77,746 crore at end-June 2022.

In the first quarter ended in June of the current fiscal year, the lender registered a decline of 22 per cent in net profit at Rs 561 crore as against Rs 720 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Exuding confidence that it won't be difficult to achieve the loan growth target for 2022-23, Das said the bank expects Net Interest Margin (NIM) of 2.90 per cent domestically and global NIM of 2.75 per cent. In Q1FY23, bank's domestic and global NIMs stood at 2.88 per

cent and 2.55 per cent, respectively.

Das said a lot of repricing in loan book is happening in both sides and it would be good if the bank could maintain the guidances on its NIMs. In terms of asset quality, the bank said it has set a target of ₹ 2,500 crore reduction in bad loans every quarter.

Of this, ₹1,700 crore will come from upgradation and cash recoveries and the rest will be through various OTS (One Time Settlement) programmes which the lender has lined-up already, M Karthikeyan, Executive Director, said.

"We are sure that during this year, about ₹3,000 crore will come through resolutions through NCLT, that's what our guidance is," he added. At end of June 2022, bank's gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) improved to 9.30 per cent of the gross advances, translating to ₹44,415 crore. PTI

Kotak's maiden FoF to make first make close by mid-Sept with ₹500 cr commitment

Mumbai: Kotak Investment Advisors, which launched its maiden ₹1,500-crore fund of funds (FoF) earlier this month, hopes to make the first close by the middle of September, garnering around ₹500 crore.

Established in 2005, Kotak Investment Advisors is the largest homegrown alternate asset fund, managing USD 5.7 billion (around ₹45,000 crore) across, real estate funds, infrastructure funds, special situations fund, listed strategies (stocks), and pre-IPO investments.

Its stressed assets fund is the largest in Asia with assets under management worth over USD 1 billion (about ₹7,900 crore).

According to a Crisil report, as of March 2022, the total investment commitments in the alternate investment funds (AIF) industry stood at ₹4.41 lakh crore between category I, II and III funds. PTI



Of the total ₹2.33 lakh crore of incremental fund inflows between FY21 and FY22, ₹31,988 crore were into 93 category I funds, which are mostly early-stage venture capital and social impact funds; ₹1,47,654 crore into 240 category II funds (listed and unlisted equity funds, realty and debt funds) and ₹53,413 crore into 170 category III funds, which are long-only and short-only equity funds.

The Kotak India Alternate Allocation Fund, which was launched on August 3, is the maiden fund of funds (FoF) from the company. PTI

Six of top 10 companies add ₹1,56,247.35 cr to market cap

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of six of the 10 most valued companies surged by ₹1,56,247.35 crore last week, with Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) emerging as the biggest gainer.

While RIL, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC and Bajaj Finance saw gains in their market capitalisation (m-cap) in the holiday-shortened week, Infosys, HUL and LIC suffered losses.

Stock markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Muharram.

The RIL's valuation zoomed ₹66,772.08 crore to ₹17,81,028.47 crore. The m-cap of TCS jumped ₹12,642.03 crore to ₹12,44,004.29 crore

and that of HDFC Bank advanced by ₹32,346.90 crore to ₹8,25,207.35 crore.

The mcap of ICICI Bank went up by ₹25,467.37 crore to ₹339.04 crore and that of HDFC rose by ₹18,679.93 crore to ₹4,45,759.90 crore.

The market valuation of Bajaj Finance increased by ₹339.04 crore to ₹4,42,496.12 crore.

In contrast, the mcap of Infosys declined by ₹9,262.29 crore to ₹6,70,920.64 crore. HUL lost ₹11,454.26 crore to ₹6,09,765.92 crore in its valuation and LIC saw an erosion of ₹3,289.00 crore to ₹4,31,459.72 crore. The mcap of SBI was unchanged at ₹4,73,584.52 crore. PTI

FPIs invest ₹22,452-cr in Indian equities in Aug on softening inflation concerns

New Delhi: After turning net buyers last month, foreign investors have become aggressive shoppers of Indian equities and have invested ₹22,452 crore in the first two weeks of August amid softening inflation concerns.

This was way higher than a net investment of nearly ₹5,000 crore by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in the entire month of July, data with depositories showed.

FPIs had turned net buyers for the first time in July, after nine straight months of massive net outflows, which started in October last year.

Between October 2021 till June 2022, FPIs sold ₹2.46 lakh crore in the India equity markets. Going forward, foreign fund inflow is expected to

improve in the emerging markets on account of fading concerns of rising inflation and tightening of monetary policy by central banks, Shrikant Chouhan, Head - Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities, said.

According to official figures, India's retail inflation softened to 6.71 per cent in July due to moderation in food prices but remained above the Reserve Bank's comfort level of 6 per cent for the seventh consecutive month.

US inflation slowed down from a 40-year high in June to 8.5 per cent in July on lower gasoline prices, indicating that the US Fed might be less aggressive in hiking interest rates. "As long as energy prices remain low and there are no

surprises from the war zone, foreign flow is likely to continue," Vijay Singhania, chairman at TradeSmart, said.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, is hovering around USD 98 per barrel.

According to data with depositories, FPIs infused a net amount of ₹22,452 crore in Indian equities during August 1-12. The sentiments in the equity market have turned bullish due to sustained buying by FPIs. "Depreciation in dollar (dollar index declined from above 109 during late July to around 105.26 on August 12th) is the primary driver of capital flows to emerging markets," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said. PTI

PFC Projects likely to rope in investor partners for stressed power projects

New Delhi: PFC Projects Ltd, an equal joint venture of Power Finance Corporation and REC Ltd, is likely to rope in technical or strategic investor partners to operate and maintain acquired stressed or non-performing assets next year.

PFC Projects Ltd (PPL) will rope in strategic investor partners through competitive bidding and the first such bid is likely to be floated next year, a source told PTI.

The joint venture has been set up for taking over stressed assets or NPA (non performing assets) in the power sector. Earlier this month, the boards of PFC and REC approved a subscription of 50 per cent equity each not exceeding ₹50

crore each in the PPL.

"The PPL will explore both options of technical as well as strategic partners for running the acquired stressed power plants. It will select a technical or strategic partner for each acquired stressed project through competitive bidding. First such bid is likely next year." At present, the company has bid for two stressed projects—3600 MW KSK Mahanadi Power project and 1920 MW Lanco Amarkantak Power project. The company filed a joint bid with state-run power giant NTPC for the 3600 MW KSK Mahanadi Power project.

The company will require a technical or strategic investor partner for the 1920 MW Lanco Amarkantak Power project. The source said that the company is likely to invite bids for a technical or strategic investor partner next year as the stressed project is undergoing insolvency proceedings which may conclude in 2023. The company will choose an investor partner for each acquired project. The PFC is a non-banking finance company under the administrative control of the Ministry of Power for financing projects in the sector. The PFC Board on August 12, 2022 accorded approval for creation of Power Asset Management Company (PAMC) for taking over the stressed/NPA power assets. PTI

NEYMAR NETS 2 AS PSG BEATS MONTPELLIER 5-2 IN FRENCH LEAGUE

AP ■ PARIS

Neymar and Paris Saint-Germain's high-powered attack put on another impressive display in a 5-2 win over Montpellier in the French league as Kylian Mbappe opened his account but missed a penalty in his return from a groin injury.

Neymar scored twice on Saturday to take his tally to three goals in two league games for the defending champion on a night when Lionel Messi was held scoreless. The Brazil striker was also PSG's best player in preseason friendlies as he looks to find his peak form for the World Cup in Qatar, which starts in November.

PSG also netted five goals in its league opener and Montpellier opted for a low defensive block to deny space for the hosts. But the pressure was too much for center back Falaye Sacko, who diverted Mbappe's off-target shot into his own net in the 39th minute.

Sacko then handled the ball in the 42nd when Lionel Messi juggled the ball on a dribbling run. Neymar wrong-footed Jonas Omlin to convert the subsequent penalty for a 2-0 lead.

PSG capitalized on another blunder to add a third goal in the 51st. Mbappe blocked



Omlin's pass and found Achraf Hakimi, whose deflected cross was headed home by Neymar. Far from his best level, Mbappe still found the net with a flick from a corner in the 69th.

(Mbappe) is a competitor, he wants to be good, and he wants to be good quickly," PSG coach Christophe Galtier

told Canal Plus. "He needs a bit of time to be 100 percent fit. He will make even more difference when he will be 100 percent fit." In his PSG debut, Portugal midfielder Renato Sanches rounded off the scoring with a first-time effort in the 88th.

Omlin pulled off some outstanding saves to frustrate

PSG for more than 30 minutes. The Swiss goalkeeper saved a penalty from Mbappe in the 23rd after Jordan Ferri had handled the ball. He then turned around the post a curling free kick from Messi in the 26th.

Montpellier scored with a close-range effort from Wahbi Khazri in the 58th and a half-

volley from Enzo Tchato in stoppage time.

Earlier, Rennes' defensive issues were exposed as it squandered the lead to draw 1-1 with 10-man Monaco.

In a clash between two contenders for European spots, Monaco forward Brel Embolo pounced on a heavy touch from goalkeeper Dogan

Alemdar to equalize with a sliding effort in the 73rd.

Rennes striker Gaetan Laborde opened the scoring by converting a rebound in the 59th.

Monaco was down to 10 men in the 15th when midfielder Youssouf Fofana was red-carded for a stamp on Martin Terrier's ankle.

"We are extremely disappointed," Laborde said.

"When you play with 11 men against 10 almost the entire game, you must come away with three points. It was tense in the dressing room."

Despite its numerical superiority, Rennes looked shaky at the back.

Embolo proved a magnet for fouls and Joe Rodon and Arthur Theate were booked for holding the forward in the 21st and the 23rd, respectively.

Steve Mandanda also received a yellow card in the 31st for catching Embolo in the face while attempting to punch the ball away.

The Rennes goalkeeper made amends by stopping the subsequent penalty taken by Axel Disasi before denying Krepin Diatta in the 36th.

However, Mandanda picked up a knock and was replaced by Alemdar at half-time.



Nikhat gifts PM Modi boxing gloves, Hima gives traditional gamocha

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian athletes expressed their elation at being honoured by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their superlative showing at Birmingham Commonwealth Games with Nikhat Zareen gifting him her boxing gloves and sprinter Hima Das giving the traditional Assamese gamocha.

Modi, on Saturday, hosted the Indian contingent at his residence to felicitate the players.

The Indian athletes produced a sensational show in Birmingham, claiming 61 medals, including 22 gold, 16 silver and 23 bronze.

"Honoured to gift the boxing gloves signed by all the pugilists to our honourable Prime Minister @narendramodi sir. Thank

you for this amazing opportunity. A great day spent with my fellow athletes who have made the country proud," Nikhat tweeted.

The star boxer, world championship gold medalist, won the yellow metal in her weight category at the Games.

Hima wrote on her Twitter handle, "Elated to receive blessings from our honourable Prime Minister - Shri @narendramodi ji, by virtue of Commonwealth Games 2022. Fortunate to have presented him with our traditional gamcha, wrapped with immense gratitude from all of Assam."

Champion weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, who won the gold medal without breaking a sweat, a year after her historic silver at the Tokyo Olympics, thanked the PM for his words of encouragement.



AIFF Electoral list: Legends of '70s and '80s set to 'return' on different turf

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

They mesmerized all and sundry with their skills and 'surefootedness' during those heady Indian club football days of 1970's and '80's but former national captains like Shabbir Ali, Manoranjan Bhattacharya will have a far bigger task at hand in coming days.

Their prudence will decide the course that Indian football system charts, after more than a decade long 'One-Man show' at the helm of affairs, which has done more harm than good for the game in the country.

These two and 34 other prominent internationals of their times are now part of an exclusive voter's list to elect the next governing body of All India Football Federation (AIFF) with an imminent FIFA ban looming large.

There are 24 male and 12 female former India footballers, who have been included in the initial voters' list of 67 for the elections dated on August 28 on the orders of the Supreme Court. It features some of the biggest names, including former India captains like Bhaichung Bhutia, IM Vijayan, Mauricio Alphonso, Climax Lawrence, Prasun Banerjee, Biswajit Bhattacharya, Bruno Coutinho, Oinam Bembem Devi, the lone Padma Shree awardee among women footballers in India.

As per rule, an 'eminent player' must have played at least two matches for India and must have retired two years before the date of election. The publication of the electoral college also ruled out a big politician running for the AIFF president's post. Former sports minister and current union minister Sarbananda Sonowal's name was doing the rounds as presidential candidate.

Assam Football Association President Naba Kumar Doley, who is also a BJP MLA in the state, is in the electoral college so also Football Delhi chief Shaji Prabhakaran. Any person who is a mem-

ber of the electoral college and an Indian citizen can fight for the AIFF president's post.

These elections to the All India Football Federation are being in the backdrop of world governing body FIFA's threat to ban India and take away hosting rights of Under-17 Women's World Cup on the ground of "third party interference".

FIFA has also expressed its unhappiness on the inclusion of 36 players in the electoral list -- the same as the number of representatives from state associations, terming the move as "not prudent".

The three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA), which is running football in the country, is, however, going ahead with the elections. It has appointed a returning officer who prepared the electoral college.

Nomination papers can be filed from August 17 to 19 by the candidates and delivered to the returning officer in person or by post.

Sports ministry, CoA and Fifa are holding discussions on the decisive shape of the AIFF constitution.

Shabbir Ali and Manoranjan Bhattacharya, offensive and defensive bulwark of the Indian team of the 70s and 80s, began their careers four and eight years after India's last medal in the Asian Games -- a bronze in 1970 in Bangkok.

Midfielder Prasanta Banerjee, said to be the first Indian player to have earned Rs 1 lakh in a season, and nimble-footed Babu Mani made the electoral college as also their former team-mates Biswajit Bhattacharya, who scored India's lone goal scorer in the 1984 Nehru Cup against Poland. Former national team captain and goalkeeper Atanu Bhattacharya, who made it to the Asian All-Star team, is another big name in the list. Others include Alok Mukherjee, Brahmanand, Tarun Dey and Parminder Singh.

New-look Barcelona held 0-0 by Rayo in Lewandowski's debut

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona mortgaged its financial future to give Xavi Hernandez the talent he wanted.

But Rayo Vallecano showed Xavi he still has work to do to forge a winning team after his new-look Barcelona was held to a 0-0 draw on Saturday in their Spanish league opener.

The modest club from Madrid frustrated Robert Lewandowski and his fellow Barcelona newcomers by defending well and producing the most dangerous scoring threats.

As the minutes ticked by, the energy drained from the 81,000-strong Camp Nou crowd that had turned out to cheer the team that was only made possible by the controversial decision by club president Joan Laporta to sell off television rights and other assets in exchange for some much needed cash.



The biggest applause Lewandowski heard from the crowd was to show their appreciation for his hustle on

defense late in the match with Barcelona stymied in attack. The closest former Bayern Munich star went to scoring

was a header flicked well over the bar in the first half.

Fittingly, given its poor finish to the match, Barcelona ended with 10 men after Sergio Busquets got a second booking in stoppage time when he swung his arm into the face of Rayo substitute Radamel Falcao.

Busquets' explosion will rule him out of Barcelona's visit to Real Sociedad. Falcao then had what looked to be a winner waived away for offside as Rayo went close to claiming a third straight win over Barcelona after it stunned the Catalan club twice last season.

"It is too bad because we wanted to show our fans that we are on the right path," Xavi said. "We had generated a lot of expectations, but this is just the beginning. Today is disappointing for every Barcelona supporter, but we have to keep our faith in this way of playing as being the right one to win titles."

2-time champ Simona Halep advances to Toronto final

AP ■ TORONTO

Two-time champion Simona Halep of Romania advanced to the National Bank Open's final, beating Jessica Pegula of the United States 2-6 6-3 6-4.

Halep will face Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia, a 6-4 7-6 (7) winner over 14th-seeded Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic in the night semifinal.

Halep smashed a racket on the hard court at Sobey's Stadium after she missed a return late in the third set.

"The fire is back," Halep said. "It's a good sign if I do that. It looks like I'm fighting. It helps me sometimes. I don't know if it's always good or not, but it helps me."

The 15th-seeded Halep won the tournament in Montreal in 2016 and 2018. Pegula was seeded seventh.

Haddad Maia reached her first WTA Masters event final. In June, she won consecutive grass-court events in Nottingham and Birmingham in England for her first two tour titles.

"I just try to breathe a little bit more. I try to calm down and think about what I need to do



and not what I'm experiencing," Haddad Maia said.

"I try to play every point and think about the next shot. She beat top-ranked Iga Swiatek in the round of 16.

"I don't think about No. 1 in the world in a big stage in a 1000 WTA," because otherwise I wouldn't be able to play," Haddad Maia said.

Halep won the Melbourne Summer Set 1 to open the season for her 23rd title, and first since 2020. She began working with coach Patrick Mouratoglou in April and said he has rekindled her passion for tennis, pointing to training sessions at his tennis school in the French Riviera.

Independence Day Greetings to All Fellow Citizens on Completion of 75 Years of Freedom

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- Narendra Modi

Watch live telecast of the Independence Day ceremony from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Doordarshan from 6:25 a.m. onwards

#HarGharTiranga



WITH RAHUL BACK AS OPENER, GILL MIGHT HAVE TO COME IN AT NO. 3

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The ODI series against Zimbabwe will be KL Rahul's dress rehearsal before the Asia Cup and hence he is all set to replace Shubman Gill at the top-of the order alongside Shikhar Dhawan for the upcoming games.

With T20 World Cup being paramount and Gill not exactly in the scheme of things as far as shortest format is concerned, he might be handed a number 3 slot in order to ensure that his captain gets enough game-time before the continental championship in the UAE, starting August 27.

This provided all three are fit and available for all the games in the series.

While there will be no Rahul Dravid heading the team of support staff for the short three-match series, starting August 18 in Harare, NCA head VVS Laxman is almost certain to follow the blueprint set by the head coach.

Rahul's comeback also creates problems for young Gill, who has had a stellar 50-over series in the West Indies, where he scored 64, 43 and 98 not out in three games to win the 'Player of the Series' award.

So will Rahul allow Gill to continue his good form at the top of the order or perch himself out there at the onset with one eye on the Asia Cup?

"I think Shubman is being groomed in the right way by the Indian team management. While he has done exceedingly well in the Caribbean ODIs, what I can gauge from this team's philosophy is prepare players for multiple slots. Hence



I feel for this particular series, Shubman might have to come in at No. 3," former national selector and Test opener Devang Gandhi gave his viewpoint on the issue.

Agreed Deep Dasgupta, another former India player and now a commentator.

"I agree it is difficult after you have had such a good series. But currently, the aim would be to prepare Rahul for the Asia Cup T20's opening slot. He needs to get a lot of batting time and that's a priority. I think it will be a short-term arrangement as Shubman I feel is being groomed as an opener for the ODI World Cup," Dasgupta, currently commentating in 'The Hundred', said.

In the 50-over set-up since the home series against England in 2021, Rahul was being seen as a middle-order anchor rather than an opener but once he was the skipper in the ODI series in South Africa, he had promoted himself as an opener.

But the last ODI that he

played was against West Indies in Ahmedabad, where with both Rohit Sharma and Dhawan present, Rahul was back in the middle-order.

So won't it be unfair to Gill if he isn't opening the innings? Gandhi feels otherwise.

"Look, No.3 is a proper top-order slot. He might have to come in as early as second ball of the innings and that is as good as opening the batting. Also my hunch is that once Rahul has enough game time under his belt, he will again bat middle-order with Gill being prepared for 2023 event," Gandhi said.

Happy Independence Day
On this special day here's wishing our dreams of a new tomorrow come true! may your independence day be filled with patriotic spirit.

Smt. Sanghamitra Dalai
Mayor, BeMC
Brahmapur

JSW BPSL

May the tricolors fill with peace prosperity and purity in the life of the people of our nation

Happy Independence Day

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India is not going to be easy; we need to be on top of our game: Ryan Burl

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

The last 30 days have been eventful for the Zimbabwe men's cricket team. Defeating Papua New Guinea by 27 runs in the first semifinal of the T20 World Cup Qualifiers at home saw them book their place in the mega event for the sixth time. But most importantly, the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia will mark Zimbabwe's first appearance in a mega event since 2016.

That's not all. The Chevrons, as they are called, defeated Bangladesh 2-1 to win their first-ever bilateral T20I series over a higher-ranked side. Subsequently, they clinched the ODI series against them 2-1, cheered on by a full house of home supporters.

Left-handed middle-order batter Ryan Burl was one of the main architects in Zimbabwe's T20I series win over Bangladesh at Harare. From 76/6, Burl slammed 34 runs off Nasum Ahmed in the 15th over, equalling the record for the second-most runs hit in an over in T20I cricket. He eventually made 54 and shared a crucial stand of 79 with Luke Jongwe to set the base for a memorable Zimbabwe victory.

Burl, who had missed the 2016 series against India due to a tear in his ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) in the left knee, is excited about the prospect of playing against the KL Rahul-led side. He spoke to IANS about the upcoming ODI series against India, influence of head coach Dave Houghton on Zimbabwe's turnaround and what qualifying for the T20 World Cup means for the side.

On being asked how he looks at upcoming ODI series against India after T20 World Cup qualification, and winning the T20I and ODI series against Bangladesh, the batsman said, "We would like to try and win the series. How we do that, I don't mind that as long as we get the wins. But it's India and one of the best teams in the world. They are not going to put up an easy fight; it's going to be difficult. Hopefully, with our home ground advantage, we can try and pull out a cat out of the hat and put out something special."

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