

OPINION 6
NEW PANCHSHEEL
FOR INDIA @ 75**WORLD 9**
REPELLED MORE THAN DOZEN
ATTACKS: UKRAINIAN MILITARY**MONEY 10**
WPI INFLATION EASES TO 5-MONTH
LOW IN JULY, FOOD PRICES SOFTEN

BHUBANESWAR, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 17, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4



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WAWRINKA IN
CINCINNATI
11 SPORT

Chinks in Nitish armour! 5 MLAs, Kushwaha absent

7 Yadavs, 6 upper castes, 5 Muslims, and 5 Dalits take oath of office

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
PATNA/NEW DELHI

On a day when the new Mahagathabandhan Cabinet led by Nitish Kumar took oath in Patna, chinks were visible in the Janata Dal (United) with its Parliamentary Board Chairman Upendra Kushwaha “skipping” the oath ceremony. Thirty one Ministers from the alliance partners RJD, JD(U), Congress took oath of office and secrecy on Tuesday.

There are seven Yadav Ministers, five Muslims and six upper castes and five Dalits. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar kept the crucial Home Department with himself and Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav has taken charge of the Health Department in the first Cabinet expansion of the newly formed Mahagathabandhan Government.

Kushwaha, a former Union Minister in the Modi Government, had merged his RLSP party last year in March, chose to express his “disappointment” on not being given a responsibility in the new setup by flying to Maharashtra with his family. Kushwaha



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, HAM-S Chief Jitan Ram Manjhi and RJD leader Rabri Devi during the swearing-in ceremony of Bihar Cabinet Ministers at Raj Bhavan in Patna on Tuesday

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extended his congratulatory message to the new Bihar Ministers through social media, but sources said that all was not well within the JD(U).

At least five JD(U) MLAs didn't attend the swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan. They were reportedly unhappy over being denied a cabinet berth. The MLAs are: Dr Sanjeev Kumar, Pankaj Kumar Mishra, Sudarshan Kumar, Raj Kumar Singh and Shalini Mishra.

Sources said several leaders of Kuswaha caste held a meeting in a hotel in Patna on August 12 night and later conveyed to Kumar against Kushwaha's induction. However, those familiar with the functioning Kumar would vow that he is not likely to succumb to such pressure unless there is some other hidden agenda.

“Congratulations to all the new Ministers inducted under

the Kumar. But be cautious as you are not only watched in Bihar but will be by the entire nation as the job is not finished just here,” Kushwaha tweeted.

The JD(U) downplayed his absence in the ceremony and said he was outstation on an earlier scheduled programme. Sources said the party may consider giving Kushwaha some important role for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

7 jawans dead as bus plunges into 250-ft gorge in Pahalgam

9 critical; 37 ITBP jawans and 2 J&K cops were returning from Amarnath duty**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** ■
SRINAGAR

At least seven jawans of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) were killed while nine critically injured after their vehicle plunged into a 250 feet gorge near Frislan in Pahalgam early Tuesday morning. The injured were airlifted to Army's command hospital in Srinagar.

As many as 41 people, including 37 jawans of 4th and 5th battalions of ITBP, were returning from Amarnath yatra duty, along with two J&K cops and two bus staffers at the time of the accident which took place around 9.40 am.

Official sources said the bus bearing registration no JK03A 3296 of IRP 3rd Battalion skidded off the road, 6 kms short of Pahalgam, and plunged down 250 feet. The bus ended up in the Nallah. Soon after the incident was reported several rescue teams were rushed to the spot to ferry the injured to the nearby hospital.

Initially, nine critically injured jawans were airlifted to the command hospital in Srinagar while others received treatment in the GMC, Anantnag. Later, all others were shifted to the command



Rescue work underway after a bus carrying 39 personnel skidded off a road down to riverbed, near Chandanwari, in Anantnag district of J&K on Tuesday

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hospital via helicopters to provide better treatment facilities.

DG ITBP has expressed his condolences to the families of the jawans who died in the tragic accident.

All possible assistance is being provided to the injured, ITBP spokesman said.

Later, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha visited

Army Hospital Srinagar and enquired about the well-being of ITBP personnel injured in a tragic road accident near Chandanwari.

Lt General Amardeep Singh Aujla, GOC 15 Corps was also present.

The Lt Governor expressed grief over the loss of lives of the ITBP personnel in the unfortunate incident and extended

his condolences to the members of bereaved families.

“Deeply anguished by the bus accident near Chandanwari in which we have lost our brave ITBP personnel. My condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured. All possible assistance is being provided to the injured personnel,” said the Lt Governor.

Ex-Sarpanch murder: 8 get life in K'pada

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The District and Sessions Judge on Tuesday sentenced eight persons to life imprisonment and imposed Rs 10,000 fine on them for killing an ex-Sarpanch on June 8, 2016 near Chandibazar chowk of Cuttack-Chandabali road over for political rivalry.

The accused persons were identified as Sumant Das (former sarpanch of Singiri GP), Khirod Das, Pitambar Nayak, Ashis Das, Sachidananda Prusty, Basant Sathy, Sumant Padhi and Bijay Mallick.

On June 8, 2016, the then Sarpanch Chitrasen Das, along with his cousin Subhajt Das was going to Aul for panchayat work in a bike, when they were chased near

Chandibazar by Sumant and Khirod of Singiri and their associates. Later, Chitrasen was allegedly beaten to death by Sumant and Khirod and their associates.

Chitrasen's cousin brother Subhajt Das managed to flee from the spot and disclosed the matter before the family members. Later, Khirod Kumar Das, the uncle of the deceased, had lodged an FIR at Aul police station. The case was transferred to Crime branch on September 27, 2016. The Crime Branch in January 2017 had arrested Khirod, a prime accused in the murder case from Kolkata.

District Sessions Judge Gopal Chandra Behera examined 39 witnesses and other evidences before passing the order.

Chinese ‘spy ship’ docks, Lankan Prez tries to allay India’s fears

After India's concerns, some Lankan MPs too objected to Chinese ‘spy ship’ arrival at Lanka's Hambantota port

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE / AGENCIES ■
NEW DELHI/COLOMBO

Amid concerns in India, a Chinese ‘spy ship’ docked at a Sri Lankan port on Tuesday. Some Lankan Parliamentarians there objected to the arrival of the research ship, but the Chinese envoy to Colombo termed the visit as “very natural”.

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe tried to allay India's fears and said China will not be allowed to use the facil-

ity for “military purposes”.

Making this assertion, he told a foreign newspaper on Sunday, “The present ship did not come under the category of military. It came under the category of a research ship. That is how we permitted the ship to come to Hambantota.”

China on Tuesday said the activities of its high-tech research vessel will not affect the security of any country and should not be “obstructed” by any “third party,” as the ship berthed at Sri Lanka's southern port of Hambantota amid Indian and US concerns.

The ship reached the Hambantota deep water port in southern part of the country, about 250 km from Colombo, at 8.20 am local time and will leave for onward journey on August 22 after replenish-



Sri Lankan port workers hold a Chinese national flag to welcome Chinese research ship Yuan Wang 5 as it arrives in Hambantota International Port in Hambantota, Sri Lanka, on Tuesday

PTI

ments.

India is wary of the capabilities of the ship Yuan Wang 5 as it can track ballistic missiles and satellites, thereby snooping on Indian military installations.

Notwithstanding these apprehensions, India on Monday gifted a Dornier aircraft to enhance the surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities of the Sri Lankan air force and navy.

Mahanadi floods: Next 48 hours crucial

CM asks officials to ensure ‘zero casualty’

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday asked top officials of the State Government to ensure ‘zero casualty’ during a review of the prevailing flood situation.

Patnaik ordered the Collectors of 10 flood-affected districts, including Sambalpur, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Cuttack and Kendrapada, to ensure road connectivity, evacuate people from the ‘at risk’ areas and stay prepared for relief and rescue operations.

He also directed Chief Secretary and Special Relief Commissioner to constantly keep reviewing the situation.

“All lives are important to us and the State Government has always adopted the policy



of ‘zero casualty’ during disasters in the past days,” the CM stated. Due to low pressure-induced incessant rains in the upper catchment region of river Mahanadi that battered the State for last few days, floods have occurred in at least 10 districts.

NDRF, ODRAF and Fire Service personnel are to stay alert and be pressed into ser-

vice in different flood-prone areas where evacuation is essential. The Government agencies providing emergency services like healthcare, drinking water and electricity were asked to provide uninterrupted services.

Patnaik said special arrangement of drinking water and healthcare must be made in the rural areas of the concerned

districts. Adequate steps have also to be taken for safety of fish and cattle resources.

Chief Minister's 5T Secretary VK Pandian, Chief Secretary Suresh Mahapatra and several other senior bureaucrats took part in the review meeting, which was conducted in virtual mode.

Notably, SRC PK Jena stated that next 48 hours are crucial for the flood-hit regions, Total 26 sluice gates of the Hirakud Dam reservoir are open now, thereby releasing excess rainwater. Around 11.80 lakh cusecs of the rainwater was flowing in the Mundali barrage and it could reach 12 lakh cusecs by Tuesday evening.

Nine ODRAF teams have been put on alert in seven districts and nine NDRF teams in six districts along with 44 teams of fire services personnel to face any eventuality in the days ahead.

Fresh low pressure on Aug 18 predicted

Heavy rains likely for 4 days

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While already floods have wreaked havoc in several parts of the State, the news of formation of another low pressure system over the Bay of Bengal (BoB) has triggered panic among people.

As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the fresh low pressure system is likely to form over north Bay of Bengal and adjoining areas around August 18.

The IMD Regional Centre here on Tuesday said the intensity of rainfall in several parts of the State is likely to increase from August 18. Several districts would experience heavy to very heavy rains for a period of three to four days, said the IMD.

On Thursday, thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places in the

districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Khordha and Puri.

On Friday, heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in the districts of Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Balangir, Bargarh, Jharsuguda and Dhenkanal.

On Saturday, heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places in the districts of Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Kendrapada Dhenkanal, Angul, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda. Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Khordha, Puri, Ganjam, Nayagarh, Boudh, Subarnapur, Balangir, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur and Nuapada.

Odisha on transformation mode: Naveen I-Day celebrated in High Court



‘After food security, next target is nutrition security’
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said on Monday a new

era of transformation has already started in Odisha. He reeled out the State's achievements which have been guiding others. Addressing the State-level Independence Day function at the Exhibition Ground here, Patnaik said the country has achieved many milestones in the last 75 years and can now

compete with other leading nations. He urged the people of Odisha to extend their time for nation building so that a major transformation could be achieved in the next 25 years, leading to 100 years of country's Independence. "I am optimistic that Odisha will contribute significantly

towards nation building. We can bring a major change if we give some time to the country," he said. He noted that the State's major achievements include that it has turned food-surplus from being food-deficit, becoming a role model in disaster management and turning into a sports hub.

Patnaik said the school transformation programme is the State's commitment to providing quality education and it is changing the education scenario.

He said steps are being taken to fill up 70,000 posts in different departments through a regular recruitment process.

Patnaik said Odisha's next target is nutrition security as it has achieved 'food security' for which the 'Millet Mission' has been extended to 19 districts and would continue for another six years with an expenditure of Rs 2,800 crore.

The CM also flagged off an 'Ahimsa Rath' and inaugurated a photo exhibition to mark the 75 years of Independence.

"Our Independence was the victory of every Indian and the victory of truth and nonviolence. This victory has shown the way to the world," he said.



PNS ■ CUTTACK

The 76th Independence Day was celebrated at the Orissa High Court premises here with Chief Justice S Muralidhar hoisting the National Flag.

The Police Band played the tune of the National Anthem as a mark respect to the National Flag.

Justice Subhasis Talapatra, Justice BR Sarangi, Justice D Dash, Justice S Pujahari, Justice

SK Sahoo Justice KR Mohapatra, Justice BP Routray, Justice Savitri Ratho, Justice MS Sahoo, Justice R.K Pattanaik Justice A K Mohapatra, Justice V Narasingh, Justice BP Satapathy Justice SK Mishra, Justice Gourishankar Satapathy, Justice Chittaranjan Dash, Judges of the High Court attended the ceremony.

The other dignitaries viz. High Court Assistant Solicitor General Prasanna Kumar

Parhi, Government Advocate JP Patnaik, High Court Bar Association vice president Khirod Kumar Rout, secretary Alok Prasad Nanda, Secretary, joint secretary Udit Ranjan Jena, assistant joint secretary Rashmi Ranjan Mishra, assistant secretary (Library) Anita Nanda, Asst. Secretary (Library), along with executive body members of the Bar Association and officers of the Registry with staffs of the court were among others present.

255 new Covid cases in State

1 more death reported
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State registered a much-reduced daily count of 255 Covid-19 cases in 25 districts and the State pool on Tuesday. With this, the total tally rose to 13,23,307.

Among the newly-infected were 43 children in the age group of 0 to 18 years.

Notably, the State had recorded 381 Covid cases on Monday.

Out of the new cases, 149 were from quarantine and 106 local contacts.

Khordha district reported the highest 59 new cases followed by 44 in Sundargarh,

Sambalpur and Kalahandi 14 each, Cuttack 13, Nabaranpur 12, Mayurbhanj 11 and Subarnapur 10.

The districts which reported below-10 cases were Balangir and Baleswar with seven each, Gajapati and Jajpur six each, Bargarh five, Jharsuguda and Rayagada four each, Bhadrak three, Deogarh, Kendrapada and Puri two each, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur and Kandhamal one each.

The active cases numbered 3,462.

Meanwhile, one more person succumbed to the disease in Rayagada, taking the total death toll to 9,153 in the State. So far, 13,10,635 patients have recovered from the disease.

Denied leave Woman teacher attempts suicide

PNS ■ KHORDHA

A woman teacher of the Panchupalli Somnath High School at Balugaon in Khordha district on Tuesday allegedly attempted suicide by consuming mosquito repellent liquid after she failed to avail casual leave (CL).

According to sources, English teacher Santoshi Behera took the extreme step after being allegedly tortured by the Headmaster of the school. As the headmaster did

not allow her to take casual leave, Santoshi decided to end her life.

After she consumed the liquid, she lost consciousness. She was rushed to Balugaon hospital by fellow teachers and again she was shifted to a hospital in Bhubaneswar after her condition deteriorated.

However, police and the English teacher's family members were found unavailable for comments in this regard.

Activist Nirakar praised for selfless service

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Social change starts with an individual and can slowly transform the society. Everyone can make a difference in society by taking small steps in the present times when people don't even find time for their own family members.

A city-based social activist, Nirakar Sahoo has been providing selfless service for the last 20 years in Kalinga Vihar, Kalinga Nagar and adjoining areas of Tamando, Narada, Sijiput, Bijipur, Sahajpur, Shankarpur, Subudhipur, Kashipur and other areas of Bhubaneswar block by helping people in distress.

Sahoo helps in cremating dead bodies, provides free medicines and clothes to the needy people. Not only humans, he also takes care of stray dogs and cattle.

Till now he has helped in



cremating more than 200 bodies without taking a single pie. During the Covid pandemic, when the residents were afraid to venture out of their homes, he helped in shifting the patients to hospitals and provided them all sorts of assistance.

He is available 24X 7 on mobile phone even for unknown people. He has earned kudos and been awarded by different organisations for his humanitarian service. Corporator of Ward No.23 Kiranbala Majhi has praised Sahoo's for his dedication and selfless service.

Doubling farmers' income: UAIL project

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

To double the income of farmers, which is a priority in the CSR engagement of Aditya Birla Group, Hindalco's Utkal Alumina International Limited has implemented Project WADI.

This is in partnership with NABARD since 2018. It covers 17 villages in Kashipur and entails a range of activities geared towards sustainable livelihood.

Unit head and president, Utkal Alumina, Mazhar Beig informed, "The project started in 2018-19 with the aim to double the income level of beneficiaries at the end of the project period. We are quite optimistic that the project will bring about a phenomenal change in the income of famers in the coming days".

It focuses on "improving the quality of life of rural tribal households through enhancing their income in a sustainable manner in three to six years through Agro-Horti Plantation and other income generating activities. The project is implemented in a PPP mode where NABARD's contribution is 60% as grant component and Utkal Alumina's 40% of the grant component under its CSR fund. The total funding is Rs 465.75 lacs.

The project is based on



transforming the waste lands of tribal families into productive orchards. Additionally, it aims to provide gainful livelihood to the landless families through goat rearing.

The formation and strengthening of community-based institutions like "Udyan Vikash Samitee" is a major component to bring community ownership and sustainability.

Till date the project with four years of implementation has achieved many milestones that have benefitted farmers. It has formed and strengthened 17 Udyan Vikash Samitee (UVS) engaged in monitoring,

supervision of orchards and collective marketing of agri-produce. 500 tribal farmers are being trained on waste land, orchard, livestock and women development, besides institution building. Over 424 waste lands have been converted into fruit orchards (grafted mango and cashew) with a survival rate of 85% in 17 villages.

The project has promoted goat rearing by 76 landless families and the scale of production has reached to 620 goats (8 goats for every family). 130 acres of unirrigated land has been converted to irrigated land through solar river lift and diversion-based irrigation systems. More than 25,948

fruit trees and 19,801 forest trees have been transplanted, generating carbon credits to offset CO₂ emissions. It is also addressing the nutritional security of the farmer families through promotion of vegetable cultivation, Beig said.

To increase the bargaining power and to get fair prices of the produce, collective marketing through Udyan Vikash Samitee has been initiated. Financial inclusion is ensured with the beneficiaries by opening of their bank accounts and encouraging bank transactions. The average earning per farmer is Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 per month from intercropping.

Book on Integrated Legal Monitoring unveiled

A system for digital monitoring of legal cases
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Electronics & IT Department on Tuesday unveiled a book on the Integrated Legal Monitoring System (ILMS). The book chronicles the journey of implementation of the robust, seamless solution that helped the State Government cut down the backlog of legal cases with better oversight and enhanced governance, heralding a new era of transparent and efficient case administration and dispensation of justice.

The book was launched by Minister, Electronics & IT Tusharkanti Behera, who said, "This book on ILMS traces the journey of the system, talks about its visible benefits and draws a roadmap to the future. ILMS is in sync with the Odisha Government's 5T governance



paradigm which has resulted in a drastic reduction in legal caseload for the government departments. The digital solution has made legal case management easier for the departments with features like generating alerts for dates of hearing, filing of counter response, orders by the courts and timeline for compliance."

Departmental Secretary Manoj Mishra said, "This book should serve as a lighthouse on the disruptive potential of technology beyond the

delivery of public services. Odisha has been one of the pioneer States in leveraging technologies even for niche areas like legal case management. ILMS with its alerts on key milestones like scheduled date of hearing, the deadline to file a counter response, orders pronounced by court and the timeline for compliance has reset our approach to case management."

The ILMS is one of the reformist technology

interventions implemented in Odisha. Post implementation of the system, there has been a phenomenal reduction in the backlog of cases.

The outcomes have been particularly impressive for the School & Mass Education Department where the Government piloted this digital initiative. Earlier, the department was wrestling with the challenge of 10 cases on an average each day with the count surging to around 80,000 cases in 2017. By the

end of April 2022, the pendency in court cases was notably reduced to 32654, a decline of 59%.

The Judicial system in India is facing considerable inventory of cases. According to figures by the National Judicial Data Grid, 42.4 million cases are pending in different courts; and in over 40% of the accumulated cases, a Government department or office is party to litigations.

The Odisha Government has been quick to take the help

of technology which can address this challenge. ICT-enabled solutions like ILMS have the potential to transform the face of administration and enhance the image of the Government in reinforcing the confidence of citizens and investors. Since every detail pertaining to the case can be accessed online from the system, it spares human resources from attending to mundane and cumbersome tasks, orienting them to more productive functions.

Flood threat: K'pada admn on its toes



People of vulnerable places evacuated; NDRF, ODRAF teams ready

RAJESH BEHERA
■ KENDRAPADA

The district administration here was on its toes in the wake of an imminent flood situation in the Mahanadi river systems.

The flood water in the river systems of Mahanadi, such as Luna, Karandia, Paika and Chitroptala rivers was swelling with all of them already flowing over the danger level at all the places in the district.

A breach occurred near Ayetipur on gherry embankment of Karandia

river. As a result, three villages were marooned following flood water entered into the villages of Balarampur, Ayetipur and Balisingh under Marshaghai block.

100 hectares of agriculture land and vegetables were affected following flood water inundated the bank of the river. The district Collector along with the PD, Sub Collector and other officials of the line departments visited the Luna-Karandia, Paika, Chitroptala embankments and gherry villages to oversee flood preparation including night patrolling, sand bag stacking, ration stocking, evacuation efforts etc.

Meanwhile, piping occurred at the river embankment of

Chitroptala near Bhadala, Samsara, Kalabuda, Mahanga under Garadapur block. The locals and line department officials were engaged to arrest the piping in a war footing basis. The district administration evacuated 857 river side villages and started free kitchen in five places for the evacuees.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister and MLA, Mahakalapada Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, on Tuesday reviewed the flood situation. NDRF and ODRAF teams had been deployed in the district at the flood prone blocks whereas four fire brigade teams were too deployed with their mechanised boats.

Daleighai flows above danger mark

PNS ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

Panic gripped people of villages near Daleighai, a major embankment of river Devi in Jagatsinghpur district, on Tuesday as the river was flowing above the danger level at 57 feet at Daleighai. Superintending Engineer, South Divisionm Bijaya Samal accompanied by other

senior engineers visited Daleighai and embankments of other rivers like Paika, Mahanadi and Beluakhai to take stock of the situation and instructed departmental engineers to keep watch on the vulnerable embankments.

Samal said the villagers should not panic as his department has adopted

several measures for strengthening the embankment at Daleighai and there is no chance of any breach at Daleighai.

Meanwhile, 190 people were evacuated from Samal Sahi near Daleighai when floodwaters entered their hamlet. ADM Satchidananda Sahoo is in charge of the Daleighai embankment.

Floods wreak havoc in Jajpur

PNS ■ JAJPUR

Floods triggered by incessant rains for the last six days have wreaked havoc in Dasarathpur and Jajpur blocks of Jajpur district with thousands of people have been seriously affected.

The loss of property and damage to the farmlands has become their plight.

River Kani created a breach at Bamacharipatana under Dasarathpur block on Tuesday. As a result, a large number of people were marooned. This has paralysed life in the low-lying areas.

The flood-hit people are facing cute shortage of food



and drinking water. The children are the worst-hit and left starving.

Jajpur Collector Chakravarti Singh Rathore, Ministers

Pramila Mallick and Pritiranjana Ghadai, MLAs Ashok Bal and Sunanda Das visited the flood-hit areas and took stock of the situation.

In Balangir Youth hacked to death in hosp premises

Mother also injured in attack

PNS ■ BALANGIR

An Idli vendor was hacked to death in front of his mother in premises of the Bhima Bhoi Medical College Hospital here on Tuesday morning. The deceased was identified as Aju Dora, a resident of Sudapada locality in the town.

According to reports, two miscreants attacked the youth and his mother Jayanti Dora on campus of medical college hospital with sharp weapons. While Aju died on the spot, his mother sustained grievous head injuries.

The injured woman was

admitted to the surgery ward of the hospital. Sources said that the mother-son duo used to sell Idli on the hospital complex.

"The incident occurred early in the morning when two unidentified youths suddenly attacked Aju and his mother with a sharp weapon on the hospital premises," said father of the deceased.

Although, the reason behind attack was yet to be ascertained, Aju's father said that "his son had argument with someone recently over opening of the stall on the hospital premises." On receiving information, police reached the spot and initiated probe into the incident.

Cheating in hosp sale case: 3 held in B'pur

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA
■ BRAHMAPUR

Police here have arrested three persons in connection with a BN Pur police station case on June 12 in a cheating case.

hence, he periodically paid EMIs and settled some loans of Specimen Holdings which owned the Apollo Hospital so that when he buys the hospital the amount will be adjusted.

But suddenly, Sangram Mohanty and Rushi Nahak decided not to sell the hospital as hospital business started reviving in the post Covid time. Since they had agreed to sell the hospital and also Dr Barata had already taken a lot of loan and spent a lot of money for clearing the loan of Ms Specimen Holdings Limited, they forced Dr Barata to agree to their terms. They also forced him to form a joint company with Nissie Priyadarshini to be able to buy the hospital, else they will not sell the hospital. With hesitation, Dr

Barata agreed without any other way hoping that, once he gets the hospital registered in his name, he will sort out all the issues.

Accordingly, on 31.03.2021, Dr Barta along with Nissie Priyadarshini together bought the Apollo Hospital from Ms Specimen Holdings through registered sale deed after giving Rs 4, 64, 00,000 to Sangram Mohanty and Rushi Nahak. They renamed it as Aum Aarogya Hospital Private Limited. Dr Barata had taken a loan of Rs 5 crore from Bank of Maharashtra with the sole hope to buy the hospital.

But immediately after the sale, the very next day, on April 1, 2021, Priyadarshini without the knowledge of Dr Barata made a lease agreement

with the same Specimen Holdings Limited and sold the hospital back for a very less amount, an amount even much less than the EMI of the loan of Aum Aarogya Hospital.

When Dr Barata visited the hospital, he was assaulted and threatened to be killed by the accused persons. Finally, finding no other alternative, he registered a case with Baidyanathpur Police station. During investigation, the police seized all related documents and arrested all three accused, namely, Priyadarshini, Sangram Mohanty and Badrinarayana Patro, husband of Priyadarshini. Further investigation was underway, Brahmapur SP Dr Sarvana Vivek M said.

Man hacks dad-in-law to death in B'swar

Mother-in-law, sis-in-law critical

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A man brutally attacked three members of his in-laws' family at Kusuda village under the Kamarda police station in Baleswar district on Tuesday, killing a person and injuring two others.

However, the exact reason behind the attack was yet to be ascertained.

Sources said one Jaga Mahuri of Patharakata village under the Bhograi police station, went to his in-laws' house at Kusuda village and all of a sudden, h attacked his mother-in-law Gouribala

Mahuri with a sharp weapon. When his father-in-law Susanta tried to come to its rescue, Jaga hacked him on his neck. He also attacked his sister-in-law Susmita.

Hearing their screams, when a few locals rushed to the spot, Jaga tried to flee from the spo. But, the villagers chased and nabbed him.

All the injured were rushed to the GK Bhattar Community Health Centre (CHC). However, Susanta was declared dead by doctors at the hospital. The condition of two others was stated to be critical.

On getting information, the Kamarda police reached the spot and launched a probe into the incident.

Har Ghar Tiranga Hundreds join BSF marathon in K'put

PNS ■ JAYPORE

The BSF, Koraput organised a mini marathon (10 km) in Koraput on August 13. The run started at 7 am from Government Women's Higher Secondary School, Koraput, and concluded at 8.30 am, under the Har Ghar Tiranga drive as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.



University Koraput, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Government Women's Higher Secondary School, Sports Hostel, SAI (HAL) Sports Club, Sunabeda, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Odisha Adrash Vidyalaya, and Vigyan

International Degree College participated.

Reddy gave away the cash prizes to the winners. Rashmi Ranjan Nayak stood first, Gashi Ram Bora stood second and Drishant Panda stood third in 10 km category and

were awarded with cash prizes of Rs 5,000, Rs 3,000 and Rs 2,000, respectively. The participants expressed their immense happiness and joy for taking part in the event along with BSF and other security forces.

Paradip to cross 120-MMT cargo handling this fiscal

To be not only mega but clean, green port: PPA Chairman

PNS ■ PARADIP

The PPA is determined to cross 120 MMT of cargo handling this fiscal, said Paradip Port Trust Authority (PPA) Chairman PL Harandh, while hoisting the National Flag on the occasion of the 76th

Independence Day here.

He also said the port destined to not only be a mega port but also a clean and green port in future.

Consecutively for the last 5 years, the PPA has been handling more than 100 MMT mark and continuously improving its productivity parameters like berth productivity, vessel turn-round time, pre-departure detection to reduce logistics costs to the customers, he said.

Mentioning about few path braking decisions by the Union Government like Major Port Authorities Act notified on November 3, 2021, he hoped that this will be a game-changer to the port sector and take the sector to world class benchmark.

With more than Rs 10,000 crore investment opportunity



lined up under the Maritime Vision India, 2030, the Paradip Port is now the main driver for economic growth in

Paradip region. Over Rs 3,500 crore worth of projects for port modernisation have been implemented, Harandh said.

INBRIEF

FLOODS: SCHOOLS IN JSPUR DIST SHUT

Jagatsinghpur: In the wake of flood alert in the Mahanadi system, the Jagatsinghpur district administration ordered closure of all schools for a day on Tuesday.

30K KISS STUDENTS CELEBRATE AMRIT MAHOTSAV

Bhubaneswar: The 30,000 students of the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) here, the largest tribal school of the world, participated in a Har Ghar Tiranga campaign on Sunday to encourage people to bring the Tiranga home and to hoist it to mark the 75th year of India's Independence. The students, dressed in the Tricolour, celebrated Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in the KISS premises, where they were joined by diplomats, sportspersons and other distinguished personalities from different spheres. The guests said the dream of Mahatma Gandhi on tribal development is realised by KISS founder Achyuta Samanta as thousands of tribal students have access to mainstream education.



CSPUR DAVIANS CELEBRATE I-DAY

Bhubaneswar: DAVians of Chandra Sekharapur, Bhubaneswar celebrated the Independence Day amid various activities. School Chairman Sarat Chandra Mishra as chief guest hoisted the Tricolour in the presence of Principal Indira Bhattacharya and others. Mishra urged all to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity in order to realise complete independence in all spheres. Earlier, a Tiranga procession and Prabhat Pheri were organised by school staffs in the Sailashree Vihar locality to commemorate the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. A parade by Civil Defence students, chorus and several patriotic and cultural programmes were also presented.



INDEPENDENCE DAY AT DAV, KALINGA NAGAR

Bhubaneswar: The DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar celebrated the Independence Day with enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. Scholl Chairman MM Panda hoisted the National Flag and advised the students to give priority to the interest of the motherland so that the dreams of the freedom fighters can be materialised. Students presented a patriotic chorus. They also staged a cultural programme comprising a spectrum of patriotic dances, yoga, aerobics, art and music. The entire programme was conducted under the supervision of Principal Bipin Kumar Sahoo.



I-DAY CELEBRATED BY ICAI BBSR

Bhubaneswar: The Institute of Cost Accountants of India, Bhubaneswar Chapter, celebrated the 76th Independence Day and commemorated the Azad Ka Amrit Mahostav. Niranjan Mishra, Council Member and Chairman, Committee on Cost Management for Public and Government Services, ICAI, unfurled the National Flag in the presence of Santanu Kumar Rout, Chairman and other Managing Committee members of the chapter.



AIIMS BBS OBSERVES INDEPENDENCE DAY

Bhubaneswar: The AIIMS Bhubaneswar observed the Independence Day with Executive Director Prof (Dr) Ashutosh Biswas attending the ceremony as chief guest and hoisting the National Flag. Dr Biswas called upon the employees of AIIMS Bhubaneswar to keep themselves fit and maintain good health and serve the society enthusiastically. Students and faculties performed patriotic cultural programmes. Dr Biswas felicitated employees from different departments for their outstanding contributions in their fields. Meritorious students who had participated in different competitions held to mark the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav were also awarded. Deputy Director (Administration) Rashmi Ranjan Sethy called upon all to work for a comprehensive development of AIIMS Bhubaneswar.



'SUMA SECURITY AGENCY' INAUGURATED

Bhubaneswar: A new security service styled as 'SUMA Security Agency' was inaugurated here on Monday. The logo of the agency was unveiled by Prof Manoranjan Nayak, founder-President of Siksha O' Anusandhan (SOA) who also took the salute at a parade.



SCRIBE DINESH DAS FELICITATED

Athagarh: On the 76th Independence Day, the Athagarh administration felicitated The Pioneer Correspondent Dinesh Das. After hoisting the Tricolour, chief guest Sub-Collector Hemanta Kumar Swain honoured some journalists and employees of the administration for their commendable contributions to the society.



HAR GHAR TIRANGA DRIVE AT CHHATRAPUR (Pix)

Chhatrapur: Naval Unit NCC Cadets organised a Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign at Chhatrapur town on Saturday. Cadets, Associate NCC Officers from Ganjam Degree College, Govt Science College and Govt High School, Nolia Nuaagon, participated in the programme held under the guidance of 1(O) NU, NCC Unit Brahmapur CO Commander Kishore Chandra Rauta. A rally was organised by Cadets starting from the Chhatrapur Mini Stadium. The cadets raised patriotic slogans and walked five km in the town ending near the gate of district Collector's residence.



JKPM HOLDS STUDENTS' ELOCUTION COMPETITION (Pix)

Rayagada: On the eve of 75th Independence Day and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the JK Paper Mills (JKPM) here organised an elocution competition for students of 54 nearby schools in which 705 students participated. The programme was inaugurated by Biswajit Deb, CGM (Accounts), JKPM.



Opp raps PM over rape convicts' release

Real face of BJP's India visible after big speech on 'Nari Shakti': Opp

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Tuesday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the release of 11 people convicted for rape and murder in the Bilkis Bano case of the 2002 Gujarat riots within hours of his praise for "Nari Shakti" in his Independence Day speech and said this is the "real face" of New India under the BJP.

The attack by the opposition parties came a day after the BJP-led Gujarat Government released the convicts, serving life imprisonment for the gang



rape of a pregnant Bilkis Bano and murder of seven of her family, under its remission policy. The convicts, who were also charged with killing the pregnant Muslim woman's three-year-old daughter, were welcomed with sweets and garlands outside the jail.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara said Prime Minister Modi should tell the country if he himself believed in his words when he spoke about the safety, respect and

empowerment of women.

"The BJP Government in Gujarat released 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano gang rape case. This decision brings out the BJP Government's mindset," he said at AICC Press briefing.

The party also referred to the Kathua and Unnao cases and said it embarrasses everyone in politics when office-bearers and supporters of a national political party are seen taking out a rally in favour of rapists on the streets.

"Yesterday, from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the Prime Minister spoke big things about women's safety, women's power, women's respect. A few hours later Gujarat government released those behind rape.

We also saw that convicts in rape who were released are being honoured. Is this Amrit Mahotsav," Khara said.

Shiv Sena leader and a Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi reminded the fact that guidelines on prisoner release stipulates that rape convicted aren't eligible for remission. "nari Shakti. Not," she tweeted while taking a swipe on Modi's Independence Day speech.

While CPI(M) also strongly condemned the release of the convicts, saying "this is the real face of New India — convicted killers and rapists released" and activist Teesta Setalvad "who fought for justice was jailed", Trinamool Congress

spokesperson Saket Gokhale said Bilkis Bano was "raped in the 2002 Gujarat pogrom and her entire family was murdered and buried in a mass grave".

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi also targeted Prime Minister Modi over their release.

In his Independence Day speech, Modi had asked Indians to take a pledge not to do anything that lowers dignity of women, Owaisi said.

"He said something about supporting 'Nari Shakti'. Gujarat BJP Govt released criminals convicted of gang rape on the same day. The message is clear," Owaisi tweeted.

Bahujan Samaj Party MP Danish Ali also parted to Prime Minister's remarks and said release of 11 convicts has exposed huge gap between words and the spirit of justice.

"The world is watching but who cares in 'New India'?" he tweeted.

Ayushman funds will be allocated based on States' performance: NHA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Health Authority (NHA) on Tuesday announced that funds will be allocated to States and Union Territories for implementation of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) based on their performance in registering healthcare professionals and health facilities.

The funds will be allocated on their performance in recording data in the Health Facility Registry (HFR) and Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR), which it said, were the key pillars of ABDM.

This performance-based fund allocation will help in structured implementation of ABDM at the state and UT level, with verified entries strengthening the key national registries being built under the scheme, an NHA statement said.

According to NHA's earlier guidelines, ₹500 crores had been demarcated for setting up of ABDM offices at state and UT level over a period of five years (FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26). Twenty percent of these funds, — ₹100 crores were earmarked as incentive-based funds, the statement said.

Taking this thought further, the NHA decided to extend the current fund allo-



cation based on the performance of respective states and UTs in terms of number of entities (healthcare professionals like doctors, nurses etc and health facilities like hospitals, clinics) that they register and verify within a stipulated period, the statement said.

The population of Health Facility Registry (HFR) and Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR), which it said, were the key pillars of ABDM.

This performance-based fund allocation will help in structured implementation of ABDM at the state and UT level, with verified entries strengthening the key national registries being built under the scheme, an NHA statement said.

In accordance, the NHA has defined parameters for fund allocation as ₹100 for each verified entries in HFR and HPR till December 31, 2022, ₹50 for each verified entries in HFR and HPR between January 1, 2023 till March 31, 2023, the statement said.

No funds will be allocated for entries verified in HFR and HPR after March 31, 2023 and states and UTs are at liberty to use these funds for deploying human resources full time or part time for ABDM, the statement said.

Also, to further promote the digital health ecosystem, the NHA will recognise the best

performing states, union territories, districts, health facilities and integrators under its flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.

Since its nationwide launch in September 2021, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) has achieved significant growth with over 23 crore ABHA numbers (earlier known as Health ID), 1.14 Lakh health facilities registered in the Health Facility Registry (HFR), an official from the NHA said.

Besides, 33 thousand healthcare professionals have been registered under the Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR), 6.6 lakh ABHA apps have been downloaded and 3.4 Lakh health records have been linked to ABHA of individuals, he said.

"With more individuals, healthcare professionals like doctors, nurses, paramedics and health facilities like hospitals, nursing homes, wellness centres, clinics, diagnostic labs, pharmacies joining ABDM, digitisation of health records at their point of creation is now possible," the official said.

SKM opposes MSP panel's Aug 22 meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella organisation of over 40 farm unions, on Tuesday, opposed the upcoming meeting of the committee on Minimum Support Price (MSP) next week, calling the panel a "farce" and said nothing conclusive will come out of the talks. The first meeting of the MSP committee's first meeting is likely to be held on August 22 to discuss future strategies.

SKM leader Hannan Mollah rejected the government's suggestion and said that the farm organisation is deciding on the future course of action. "We have already rejected the panel and we have clearly said that we will not be participating in the talks. So there is no question of participating in the upcoming meeting," Mollah said.

"The government has inducted some so-called farmer leaders in the panel who didn't have anything to do with our agitation against the three farm laws at the Delhi borders," he said. "We will decide on the further course of action and decide how we will hold demonstrations against the farm laws," he added. Darshan Pal, another farmer leader, said that the farm organisation will decide the future course of action after a 75-hour protest in UP's Lakhimpur against the 2021

violence case. "We are not lending any support to the anti-farmer panel. Our protest is going on as the Centre is reneging on its promises made last year.

"We are also demanding the withdrawal of cases registered against farmers during the anti-farm laws protest last year, compensation to the families of farmers who lost their lives during the stir," Pal said.

The committee on MSP is scheduled to hold its first meeting on August 22 to discuss future strategies. Sources in the Ministry of Agriculture said that the meeting is likely to be held at 10.30 am at the National Agriculture Science Complex (NASC) in the national capital.

In the first meeting, sources said committee will introduce members, deliberate on "future strategies" and discuss setting up sub-panels to cover wide issues mentioned in terms of reference. The government is persuading SKM to take part in proceedings of committee.

It needs to be seen if it will change its mind and nominate three representatives, as is required under the deal.

The committee, headed by former agriculture secretary Sanjay Agrawal, was constituted on July 18 to "promote zero budget based farming," to change crop patterns keeping in mind the changing needs of the country, and to make MSP more "effective and transparent."

No merit in plea alleging attacks on Christians, Centre tells SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court there is no merit in the plea alleging increasing attacks on Christians in India and the petitioner has "resorted to falsehood and self-serving documents" along with press reports which have misrepresented such incidents.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in an affidavit said that as per the inputs it has received, a majority of the incidents cited by the petitioner as attack on Christians were wrongfully projected in news reports.

The petition was filed by a Christian priest Rev. Peter Machado and others seeking to implement guidelines issued by the Supreme Court in 2018 on hate crime cases.

"The petitioners claimed to have based petition on information gathered through sources like press reports (The Wire, The Scroll, Hindustan Times, Dainik Bhaskar, etc.), "independent" online databases and from findings of various non-profit organisations. It is submitted that enquiries reveal that a majority of incidents alleged as Christian persecution in these reports were either false or wrongfully projected," the affidavit said. In some cases, incidents of purely criminal nature and arising out of personal issues, are categorised.

Why recover service charges as additional levy: HC to restaurants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday questioned why restaurants should recover service charges from consumers as an "additional" and "separate levy." A bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Subramonium Prasad remarked that a common man perceives service charge as a Government levy and restaurants can increase their food prices to absorb this charge instead of recovering it in the form of an additional charge over and above the total bill.

The High Court was hearing an appeal by the Centre against a single judge's order staying its guidelines prohibiting hotels and restaurants from levying service charges automatically on food bills. The next hearing is scheduled on August 18.

Counsel appearing for one of the restaurant associations said that the service charge was not a government levy and it was for the benefit of the restaurant employees and was not a substitute for "tips". "You increase the salary. We

will hear you," stated the court which observed that the levy of service charge was "very much connected with consumers" and not just the employees of the restaurant. "That (service charge as a Government levy) is what a common man perceives. Increase your food price. No problem. Because you are entitled to fix a rate for your food but don't levy it separately," the court told the restaurant associations.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma, appearing for the Government, said that while the service charge is in the nature of a tip, the impression given to consumers is as if it is a governmental levy or a governmental tax.

"The consumers face embarrassment when they don't pay or they are asked to pay. That is the reason hundreds of complaints were received," he said, adding that the single judge order on the ground that it was passed in violation of principles of natural justice.

In the appeal by the Centre as well as Central Consumer Protection Authority, the appellants said that the guidelines,

Rajnath hands over desi def equipment to Army

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the armed forces for opting for self-reliance in defence manufacturing, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday handed over indigenously-developed equipment and systems to the Indian Army here.

State-of-the-art high mobility Infantry Protected Vehicles and Assault Boats were virtually handed over by Rajnath enabling the troops deployed along the Ladakh border to respond to any challenge in a befitting manner.

The Landing Craft Assault (LCA) can carry 30 troopers and is now deployed at the Pangong Tso (lake) in Ladakh. The lake saw the first face-off in 2020 between India and China snowballing into

tension at several points on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). At present, the boats operating in the lake have limited capabilities. The LCA is much more versatile and has overcome the limitations of launch, speed and capacity. It has enhanced the capability to operate across the water obstacles in Eastern Ladakh. LCA has been indigenously developed by Aquarius Shipyard Limited, Goa.

The other systems handed over to the army include Future Infantry Soldier as a System (F-INSAS) like AK-203 assault rifles, new generation anti-personnel mine 'Nipun', rugged and automatic communication system with enhanced capabilities, upgraded sights system for tanks and advanced thermal imagers. The equipment and systems have been jointly developed by Indian Army in collaboration with Defence

Public Sector Undertakings, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the industry, in line with the Prime Minister vision to modernise the Armed Forces, under the 'Aatmanirbharta Bharat Abhiyan'. Rajnath exuded confidence that the equipment and systems will enhance the operational preparedness of the Indian Army and increase their efficiency.

The weapons given to the Army include modern state of art AK-203 assault rifle along with day and night holographic and reflex sights. The sights are mounted on the weapon and also on helmet to enable a 360-degree visibility and accuracy in operational conditions. In addition to the primary weapon system, the soldiers will also be kitted with multi-mode hand grenade which has

also been procured indigenously along with multi-purpose knife. The second sub-system is protection system. This gives protection through a specially designed helmet and a bullet proof jacket. The third sub system consists of communication and surveillance system. This F-INSAS system is capable of further upgradation by incorporating real time data connectivity.

As regards anti-personnel mine Nipun, for a long time, the Indian Army has been using vintage NMM 14 mines. With the efforts of Armament Research and Development Establishment, Pune and the Indian industry, a new Indian mine named 'Nipun' has been developed. It will enhance the protection provided to the troops on borders. The mine is more potent and effective than existing anti-personnel mine.

Rajnath strongly pitches for reform of United Nations

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The potential geopolitical fault line in the maritime domain in East Asia could be "graver" than what is being witnessed, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday, amid escalating tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

In a virtual address at the Moscow Conference on International Security, Singh also strongly pitched for reform of the United Nations (UN), saying the global body may progressively lose its effectiveness without democratisation in its decision-making.

The defence minister said the refusal of major powers to change UN institutions in tune with time ignores the emerging geo-political realities and economic and technological progress that has happened since 1945. "Global security in the framework of multilateralism requires abiding by the UN charter and principles of international law, which act as a bulwark against anarchy, instability and higher chances of conflict," Singh said.

He observed that the UN can deliver effective solutions only if it gives a voice to the entire world rather than "zealously guarding the status quo".

"Conflicts could seriously jeopardise political and economic stability and development efforts. For example, the potential geopolitical fault line in the maritime domain — particularly in East Asia — could be graver than what we are witnessing today," Singh said.



The maritime zones in East Asia have been witnessing rising unease largely because of China's aggressive military posturing.

The Chinese military has been carrying out large-scale military drills around the Taiwan Strait following US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's recent visit to Taipei.

"As a nation central to the Indian Ocean, India is committed to a free, open, secure and inclusive Indo-Pacific region that promotes sustainable maritime trade and economic practices, resilient infrastructure and adherence to global legal order," Singh said.

He said India's resolution of maritime border issues with neighbours as per international law and its focus on regional maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean bear testimony to the value that India places on multilateralism.

"Multilaterally or through partnership with willing nations, India will continue contributing to a positive and constructive agenda that seeks to address contemporary global priorities," Singh said. The defence minister said India's active participation in the Shanghai

Cooperation Organization (SCO) is manifest of one such priority in pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity in Eurasia, of which India is an "inalienable part". "A faith in global conventions and regulations and a multilateral, dispassionate approach overcoming isolation, unilateralism and temptation of temporary gains, can usher us into an era of genuine multilateralism," he said.

The defence minister noted that the UN has given a platform for global progress in a number of areas, but clearly there is a "crisis of confidence" today in the UN system.

"While the UN has addressed most of these issues somewhat partially and intermittently, our collective effort has nonetheless fallen short in providing effective and enduring solutions, particularly due to the infirmities within the multilateral system," he said.

"Several contemporary global challenges have come to the fore such as terrorism, radicalism, climate change, disruptive role of non-state actors and the intensifying geopolitical competition, all of which call for a robust multilateral response," he added.

Singh said this "worrying shortcoming" of UN system is manifestation of its structural inadequacy. "Without comprehensive reforms of UN structure and without democratisation in decision-making, the UN might progressively lose its effectiveness and relevance," he observed.



Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's daughter Namita and her husband Ranjan Bhattacharya pay tribute to him on his death anniversary, at Sadaiv Atal in New Delhi on Tuesday

Min appeals to public to take part in NCERT survey

New Delhi: Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday appealed to the public to participate in a citizen survey being conducted by NCERT for development of a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for school education. NCF serves as a guideline for designing syllabus and textbooks and for teaching practices in the country.

There are a total 10 questions in the digital survey with each of them having five options. The queries include how to make education futuristic and skill oriented and improve the dignity of teachers in country. The minister said that "development of a vibrant, dynamic, inclusive and futuristic National Curriculum Framework is essential for integrating cultural-rootedness along with global outlook, freeing education from the colonial hangover and instilling a deeper sense of pride

in our next generations". "I appeal to all citizens to participate in Citizen Survey for NCF for developing #NayeBharatKa NayaCurriculum. A dynamic National Curriculum Framework in line with the NEP 2020 will play a major role in achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat," Pradhan said in a series of tweets.

The Digital Survey for National Curriculum (DiSaNC) is being conducted by education ministry and National Council of Education and Research Training (NCERT) as part of public consultation process for formulation of NCF.

The other questions in survey are pertaining to people's opinion on values that need to be imbibed in children in course of school education, languages they should learn from class 1 onwards and parents' envision of teachers' role in holistic development of children. PNS

IN SHORTS

₹30K CR SANCTIONED FOR CLEANING GANGA PROJ'S



New Delhi: More than Rs 30,000 crore has been sanctioned for projects aimed at cleaning Ganga and its tributaries, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said on Tuesday. Emphasizing on the importance of limited water resources, Shekhawat said the very beginning of economic development is "our water resource and energy".

SC TO CONSIDER MEDIATION PLEA OF SPICEJET-MARAN

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would consider a joint request for mediation of low-cost airline SpiceJet and media baron Kalanithi Maran and his Kal Airways for amicably settling all pending disputes between them including the row over the share-transfer issue.

SC SEEKS REPLY IN PLEA ON POST-POLL VIOLENCE PROBE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted four weeks to the Centre and the West Bengal Government to file their response on a plea seeking a court-monitored SIT probe into post-poll violence in West Bengal in 2021.

SC TO LIST NEXT WEEK UNNAO RAPE VICTIM PLEA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to list next week for hearing a plea of the Unnao rape survivor seeking transfer of a criminal case filed by the father of one of the accused in her sexual assault case from a trial court in Uttar Pradesh to Delhi.

CHARGE SHEET FILED ON ABUSE OF 3 CHILDREN

New Delhi: The CBI on Tuesday filed a charge sheet against four people, including the mastermind and a railway loco pilot posted in Rourkela, for alleged sexual abuse of three children aged 9 to 12 years over three years

APP FOCUSING COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHED

New Delhi: Union Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar on Tuesday launched a mobile application on parenting which focuses on cognitive developments of children in the first 1000 days establish a solid platform for a child's physical, mental, emotional, cognitive and social health, Pawar said.

SC SEEKS KERALA REPLY ON REGULATION OF LOTTERIES

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought a response from the Kerala Government on an appeal filed by Nagaland challenging the Kerala High Court's order which upheld State Government's power to regulate lotteries from other States.

Mumbai cops seize 513 kg party drug worth ₹1,026 cr from Guj

T N RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

In a second major drug haul in less than a fortnight, the Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) personnel of the Mumbai Police's crime branch have busted a synthetic drug factory at Ankleshwar in adjoining south Gujarat and seized 513 kg of Mephedrone worth Rs.1,026 crore and arrested one person, as part of investigations into an ongoing case.

In the development that came 12 days after they seized more than 700 kg of Mephedrone worth Rs 1,400 crore from a drug manufacturing unit at Nalasopara in Palghar district, the officials from Worli ANC unit raided a synthetic drug factory in Ankleshwar town of Gujarat and seized 513 kg of Mephedrone worth Rs.1,026 crore.

The police also seized 812 kg of white powder and 397 kgs of chemicals used to prepare the narcotic drugs from the raided factory at Ankleshwar.



The factory that the Mumbai police raided is situated in the GIDC complex at Panoli in Ankleshwar town.

The police identified as the arrested person as the owner of the drug unit, Giriraj Dixit, who holds a master's degree in Chemistry,

With the latest arrest, the total number of arrests made in the ongoing investigations into what is said to be part of an international drug trafficking racket.

Of the arrested persons, there are six men and one woman. Among them, there are a couple of qualified chemists allegedly carrying out

the mixtures of various chemicals to manufacture the final drugs.

Of the seven arrested persons, five are currently in judicial custody, while the remaining are in police custody.

Acting on a tip-off received from their counterparts at Worli in March this year following the arrest of a drug peddler from Govandi in north-east Mumbai, the ANC officials had on August 3, 2022 raided a drug manufacturing unit located at Nalasopara and recovered Mephedrone worth Rs 1,400 crore. The seized contraband was meant for distribution among drug peddlers in Mumbai and its neighbouring areas.

Mephedrone (MD), also known as M-cat, Meow Meow or White Magic, is a synthetic stimulant drug of Amphetamine class psychoactive characteristics and usually used at rave parties. This party drug is a psychotropic substance banned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

(NDPS) Act.

The latest drug haul at Ankleshwar and also the one made on August 3 are the the biggest drug hauls made by the city police in recent times. The massive drug seizures are a consequence of earlier raids during which 3.26 kg of Mephedrone worth Rs 4.51 crore from three persons arrested in two separate operations carried on March 29 this year.

Incidentally, the main accused arrested from Nalasopara on August 3 is a post-graduate in organic chemistry and used his knowledge to manufacture synthetic drugs. The modus operandi used by the main accused was to manufacture the drug in the Nalasopara unit and sell it in the open market through his agents and drug peddlers.

The main accused used to sell the drug in bulk quantities weighing more than a minimum of 20 to 25 kg of banned substance. "The accused used social media platforms, calling apps for drug peddling and supply," s senior official said.

CBI expands probe to net kin of Mondal; TMC holds rallies

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
KOLKATA

After the arrest of Trinamool Congress strongman and party national executive member Anubrata Mondal on cattle smuggling charges, the Central Bureau of Investigation is focusing on the properties owned by his daughter Sukanya Mondal and at least 15 others including police officials and politicians close to the arrested TMC leader.

According to sources Mondal has properties worth several hundred crores in Kolkata and other parts of Bengal. "Very recently the CBI has discovered at least six plots in Birbhum and three apartments at New Town in Kolkata ... This apart from petrol pumps, rice mills stone queries," said sources.

The senior leader known for spreading terror to win elections, has been named in several places in a supplementary chargesheet filed by the CBI in a designated cort



in Asansol. The CBI chargesheet was filled after the interrogation of a number of his associates including a police constable and his former security staff Saigal Hussein who too has amassed property worth tens of crores, agency sources said.

"Most of these properties were acquired between 2011 and 2020 ... Out of the cow smuggling money ... In this one Md Latif a marble trader had a big hand ... He was the link man between Saigal Hussein the security officer of Anubrata Mondal and Enamul Haq," the jailed mastermind of cattle smuggling sources said.

Call record details show

that Haq and Hussein had mobile calls as many as 16 times in a matter of a few days. Though Mondal has denied having knowledge of these calls investigators say all conversations took place between him and Haq through Hussein's phone.

Sources also said that Mondal used to get Rs 24 cr a year as protection money for managing the police administration on which he had enormous control by dint of his being the TMC district president.

While Mondal has denied all the allegations the CBI is now "trying to get him from reverse... That is he has been asked to explain the source of his fortune earned after TMC came to power ... Before this he was a small trader," sources said.

Meanwhile, after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee decided to go on the offensive saying she firmly stood by Mondal — a stance she would not take in the case of her arrested Cabinet colleague Partha Chatterjee — the TMC

on Tuesday started 'Khela Hobe' rallies through out the State protesting the BJP Government' alleged partisan ways.

The TMC workers burnt effigies of Suwendu Adhikari on Khela Hobe Diwas on Tuesday demanding his arrest for his alleged involvement in Narada and Sharada chit fund scams. "If the ED, CBI arrest TMC leaders why will they spare

Khela Hobe (game is on) first coined by Mondal allegedly suggesting physical attacks on the Opposition before last year's Assembly elections --- that saw TMC roaring back to power --- had become an instant hit in 2021.

Meanwhile, the Left leadership on Tuesday said that more ministers would come in the ED net thanks to a PIL on disproportionate asset brought in the High Court. The matter is scheduled to be heard early next month. The Court has asked the petitioners to make ED a party to the case.

Reliable dying declaration can be sole basis of conviction: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A dying declaration can be the sole basis for recording a conviction and a court is required to examine whether it is true and reliable, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday.

The top court also said that a court should also examine whether the dying declaration has been given when the deceased was physically and mentally fit to make the declaration and was not under any tutoring or duress.

In case there are multiple dying declarations and there are inconsistencies between them, the dying declaration recorded by the higher officer like a Magistrate can be relied upon, it said.

The apex court, however, said this is with the condition that there is no circumstance giving rise to any suspicion about its truthfulness.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and P S Narasimha made the observations while



acquitting a man convicted under Section 304-B (dowry death) of the Indian Penal Code.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by a man challenging an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which reduced his sentence awarded from 10 years to seven years but concurred with the judgement and order of conviction by the trial court in offence punishable under Section 304B of the IPC.

In the instant case, the deceased had given two dying declarations. In the first one, the woman had said that she consumed a poisonous medicine by mistake. While in the second dying declaration,

the deceased said that her husband, as well as his parents, administered the poisonous substance to her.

The top court said in the present case, it was faced with two dying declarations, which are totally inconsistent and contradictory to each other.

It noted that the second declaration was recorded without there being examined by a doctor concerning the fitness of the deceased to make the statement.

The apex court said the father and sister of the deceased were present in the hospital at the time of the second dying declaration.

"The possibility of the second dying declaration being given after tutoring by her relatives cannot, therefore, be ruled out," the bench said.

"We, therefore, find that in the facts and circumstances of the present case, the first dying declaration will have to be considered to be more reliable and trustworthy as against the second one.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association on Tuesday said it will discuss in detail the Delhi High Court's directive to put the country's apex sports body under a three-member Committee of Administrators before arriving at a decision to approach the Supreme Court.

The IOA officials are expected to meet on Wednesday.

The Delhi High Court directed the setting up of a three-member CoA to take over the affairs of the IOA, saying its "persistent recalcitrance" to comply with the Sports Code made it imperative that its affairs be put in the hands of the committee.

"The IOA members will discuss the High Court judgement in detail and will decide whether to go for an appeal in the Supreme Court," IOA secretary general Rejeev Mehta said.

The CoA comprises former Supreme Court judge Justice Anil R Dave, former



Chief Election Commissioner Dr S Y Quraishi, and former Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs Vikas Swarup. The court directed the executive committee of IOA to forthwith hand over the charge to the newly appointed committee and said that the members of the CoA will be assisted by three eminent sportspersons, namely, Olympic medalist shooter Abhinav Bindra, former long jumper Anju Bobby

George, and archer Bombayla Devi Laishram.

The development comes on a day when the All India Football Federation (AIFF) was banned by the sport's world body FIFA for "third party interference".

In December 2012, the IOA was suspended by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for more than a year due to the presence of tainted officials and government interference.

Following the latest development, another IOC ban looms large over the IOA.

Last month only the IOC had threatened to suspend the IOA if it fails to conduct its elections at the earliest.

The IOA elections were due in December last year but could not be held as per schedule due to amendments in the Constitution.

The IOC had urged the IOA to convene a meeting of its General Assembly and confirm the date of its elections without any delay.

DMK challenges definition of freebies in SC

AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK has filed a petition in the Supreme Court in the ongoing case about freebies, contending that the scope of a "freebie" is very wide and "there are a lot of aspects which need to be considered". The court is hearing a petition that has challenged the promise of freebies at election time, contending that this practice can bring financial ruin to a State. So far, Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party, has challenged the stance of the petition, which was filed by the BJP's Ashwini Upadhyay.

In its petition Chief Minister MK Stalin's DMK argued that only a welfare

scheme introduced by a State Government cannot be judged to be classified as a freebie. "The ruling Government at the Union giving tax holidays to foreign companies, waiver of bad loans of influential industrialists, granting crucial contracts to favoured conglomerates etc. also have to be considered and cannot be left untouched," the petition read.

"This Hon'ble Court cannot have a restrictive approach for classifying any scheme or act by the Union/State Legislature to be a 'freebie' without considering the magnitude of resultant consequences and social welfare at both micro and macro level," the DMK contended.

Earlier, the AAP told the

SC that targeting and regulating electoral speeches will amount to "nothing more than a wild-goose chase" if the concerns are over fiscal deficit due to the promises of freebies made during polls by political parties. The top court, which is mulling setting up an expert panel to brainstorm the issue of freebies announced during elections, was told by the AAP that the curb on electoral speeches, without legislative backing, would be violative of the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression and the proposed committee may not "encompass the regulation, let alone prohibition, of certain types of electoral speech."

"Such a restriction or pro-



hibition, executively or judicially imposed, would amount to a curtailment of the freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) without the backing of legislative sanction," the party has said in its additional submissions.

"Further, if concerns over fiscal deficit and responsibility are indeed the point of the

present proceedings (in the PIL), targeting and regulating electoral speech will amount to nothing more than a wild-goose chase," it said.

The AAP said the electoral promises while serving an important democratic function, are completely inappropriate proxies for regulating actual fiscal outgo.

CBI questions KC Venugopal in sexual assault case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has questioned AICC General Secretary, KC Venugopal, in a sexual assault case filed by the accused in the solar scam.

The senior Congress leader was questioned at the agency office here, sources said.

Venugopal allegedly sexually assaulted the woman at Rose House, the official residence of former Minister AP Anilkumar.

The alleged assault took place when the complainant reached Anilkumar's residence seeking favour in a tourism-related project. The complainant had reportedly hand-

ed over digital evidence to the investigators to buttress her case.

The state Crime Branch probed the case initially before the CBI took over the investigation during the previous LDF regime.

The Congress had then dubbed it a 'politically motivated' move claiming the CPM-led State government could not find anything against its leaders.

In May, a CBI team visited the Cliff House, the official residence of Kerala's Chief Minister, for gathering evidence in the allegation against former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy.



The complainant had also alleged that Chandy had harassed her at the Cliff House in September, 2012.

The Crime Branch had registered six FIRs accusing Venugopal, Chandy, Hibi Eden, Adoor Prakash and BJP leader A P Abdulla Kutty in the case.

Shah, Nadda meet Bihar BJP netas; new head likely

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■
NEW DELHI

Having lost power in Bihar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president JP Nadda on Tuesday held a meeting with the party's State unit leaders here at the party's headquarters to discuss, among other issues, the selection of a new Bihar BJP chief in place of Sanjay Jaiswal.

According to sources, the core committee meeting, the first after the split with the erstwhile ally JD(U), also deliberated on the naming the leader of Opposition in the Assembly and Legislative Council.

Nadda and Shah chaired the meeting wherein party's general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh was also present.

Union Ministers Ashwini Choubey, Giriraj Singh and Nityanand Rai, and the party's senior leaders Ravi Shankar Prasad and Sushil Modi – all of whom are from Bihar –

attended the meeting.

The current BJP's Bihar unit president Sanjay Jaiswal, former deputy chief ministers Tarkishore Prasad and Renu Devi, and former minister in the state government Shah Nawaz Hussain were present in the meeting.

The long-drawn discussion which commenced in the evening flagged the issues which the state leadership should be taking up as the main opposition party in the assembly and outside it to pin-down the RJD-JDU-led coalition in the state and play-up the themes of 'return of Jungle raj', and 'opportunism' and 'betrayal' by the JDU.

It sought the state BJP leaders to completely "redefine" its role in the run up to the Lok Sabha polls.

The party leadership also deliberated upon the BJP's future course of action and the strategy for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in Bihar which has 40 Lok Sabha seats. In

2019, the BJP-JDU combine had swept the Lok Sabha polls winning 39 of the 40 seats.

Besides considering new state chief, several new organisational changes upto the booth levels also came up for discussion in the meeting.

The huddle of the top central and state leaders comes a day Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expanded his two-member cabinet, which, till now, included Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav besides him. Thirty-one ministers took oath with the RJD getting a lion's share.

Before the meeting, the BJP's national media co-incharge Sanjay Mayukh said the meeting aims to firm up the party's strategy in the state in taking on the JDU-RJD government which he termed "disjointed". "It's Jungle Raj 2.0 in Bihar. As far as the BJP is concerned we will raise our voice and take the issues of people from the road to Assembly", he said.

AMU V-C's effigy burnt over refusal to meet BJP leaders for Tricolour presentation

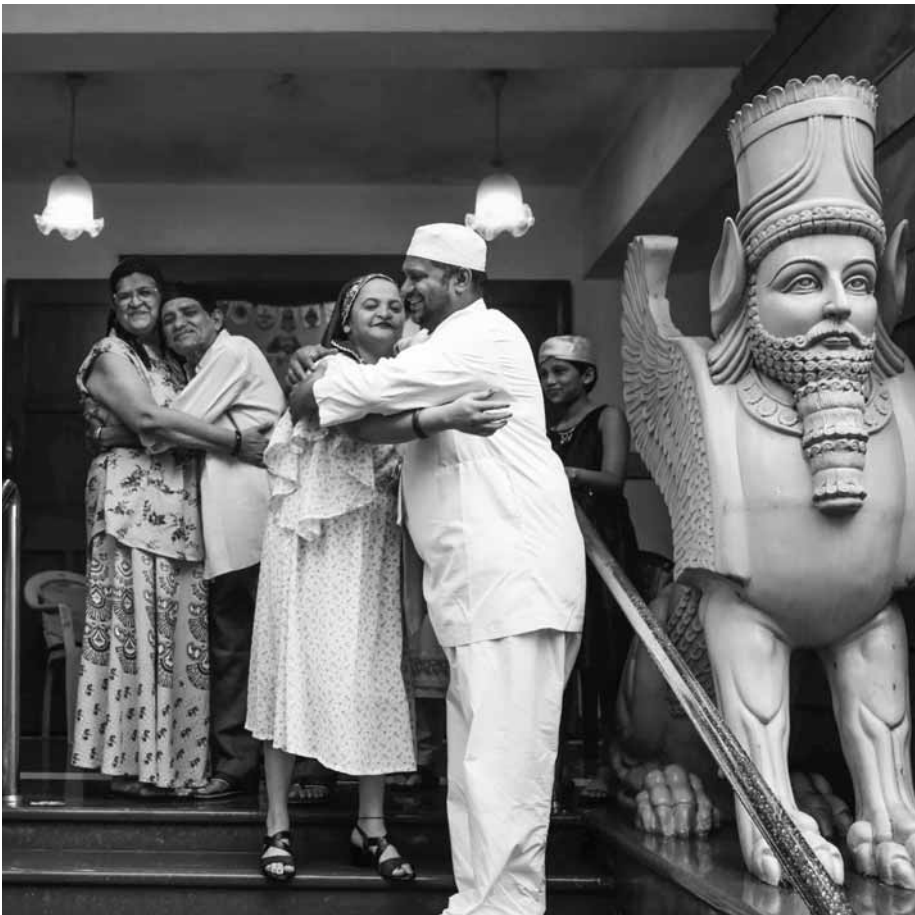
PNS ■ ALIGARH

An effigy of the Vice Chancellor of AMU was burnt when he refused to meet BJP Minority Mocha National President Jamal Siddiqui, who came to take out the Tricolour yatra in Muslim areas of the city under the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign. It is alleged that they had gone to present the Tricolour to him, but the Vice-Chancellor refused to meet. In the evening, BJP workers burnt an effigy of the Vice-Chancellor, accusing him of insulting the Tricolour, in protest against the incident which was circulated on social media.

It happened that Jamal Siddiqui, the national president of the Minority Front, reached Aligarh in the morning. He took out a Tricolour yatra in the Muslim areas of the old city along with BJP metropolitan president Vivek Saraswat, Minority Front President

Imran Saifi etc. Earlier, he had sought time on his behalf to meet the AMU V-C in writing. After the yatra, he reached AMU and sent information to meet Vice Chancellor Prof. Tariq Mansoor. He told that they wanted to present the tricolor under the tricolor campaign to every household. It is alleged that he did not give time to meet and due to this the national president and other local officials returned. The incident caught on social media following which the workers led by BJP Metropolitan Minister Sanju Bajaj burnt the effigy of the Vice-Chancellor at Baradwari intersection.

During this, Sanju Bajaj alleged that the Vice-Chancellor refused to meet saying that there is no time for extravagant work. This is a sign of his anti-national policy. Raising anti-VC slogans here, BJP workers asked the Vice Chancellor to apologize to the country.



People from the Parsi community greet each other celebrating 'Navroz', the Parsi New Year, at Shirinbai and Khurshedji Hormusji Doongaji Daremeher in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday.

PTI



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Complacent MEA

The arrival of a Chinese spy ship in Sri Lanka is part of its anti-India activities, but Jaishankar downplays it

Yuan Wang 5, a tracking and satellite support vessel, reaching Sri Lanka's Hambantota port should not surprise anyone. India had objected to such a ship in its proximity but if someone thought that such objections would sensitise the Chinese Communist Party to our concerns, they were living in a fool's paradise. On the face of it, there is nothing illegal about the trip, for it is to a port that the Chinese own; and it is in a country that is sovereign. It can be argued that if Sri Lanka is okay with the trip, we can't oppose it. But we can, because it is a hostile vessel with capabilities which are inimical to our interests. Expert opinion is that Yuan Wang 5 at the Hambantota port, which is strategically located in the Indian Ocean, can seriously compromise our missile and satellite programmes. That is the intention; this seems to be part of the encirclement of India. The exercise is also in tune with the multipronged action by China to emerge as a, and then the, global hegemon. It believes that the world should begin adapting itself to the emerging reality, so on Saturday it asked India to reiterate its support for the One-China Policy against the backdrop of the crisis in the Taiwan Strait which was triggered by US House of Representatives Speaker Pelosi's trip to Taiwan. That is, New Delhi should assuage Beijing's bruised sensitivities, but expect no reciprocation. Hence the arrival of Yuan Wang 5.

The arrival also underlines the incompetence of our foreign office; if we couldn't pressure Colombo even at this point of time, in the wake of billions of dollars of aid to the crisis-hit nation, to do something that suits us, then we will never be able to that in future. The Ministry of External Affairs' incompetence seems monumental when viewed against the backdrop of the resistance that Yuan Wang 5 faced from several Sri Lankan politicians. Sri Lanka's Tamil Progressive Alliance leader and Colombo's Member of Parliament Mano Ganesan said in a statement the coming of the Chinese spy vessel to Lankan waters was "simply wrong." He went on to highlight India's concerns, pointing out that India is the country which has "provided near \$4 billion to us in our time of crisis." To be fair to the Sri Lanka Government, it did request China to defer the arrival of Yuan Wang 5 at the Hambantota port "until further consultations" on the matter. In typical diplomatese, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar downplayed the incident. In an interview to a newspaper, he said, "We need to take care of our national interests but can't claim exclusivity in the region. To say that this [the permission to allow the Chinese vessel to dock at the Sri Lankan port] is a flashpoint between India and China would be inappropriate." An echo of the infamous statement by Nehru, "Not a blade of grass grows there..."?

PICTALK



People from Parsi community greet one another on 'Navroz', the Parsi New Year, in Mumbai

PTI

Pariwarvaad vs dostvaad !

The Prime Minister once again took a jibe at the Gandhis with pariwarvaad. But is there a party free from it, the BJP included

The Prime Minister once again from the ramparts of Red Fort reminded the nation to root out dynasty and colonial mindset. The 'pariwarvaad' which the Prime Minister has talked about several times in his speeches once again figured in his speech on the 76th Independence Day. It was indeed a brilliant speech that hit all the right notes; from corruption to nepotism and doing away with the colonial mindset. While other messages were loud and clear for the people, his mentioning of the dynasty in his speech was indeed a veiled attack on the Nehru-Gandhi family. The Red Fort speech conventionally has been about what the Government has done and plans to do for the betterment of the people. The political messages have not been part of it and attacking the opponents from the ramparts of Red Fort does not augur well for a healthy democracy. For attacking the Opposition, there are numerous platforms available to the Prime Minister including Parliament. But since the Prime Minister chose to speak about it the reaction also came from the Opposition, surprisingly not from the Congress (Rahul Gandhi refused to comment on it) but from Aam Aadmi Party.

Manish Sisodia was quick to retort and remind the Prime Minister about his defaulter friends. Manish Sisodia did not mince words in saying if 'pariwarvaad' is bad so is 'dostvaad'. Sisodia was categorical in pointing out how the Prime Minister waved off millions of loans his friends owed to Indian banks. 'Dostvaad' is the new word coined by him. Kejriwal

also insisted that loans and taxes to the tune of ₹10 lakh crore of corporate friends are being written off. As they say, we choose our friends while family chooses us. We don't live in a perfect world. Dynasty and nepotism is bad for democracy, it is the way things are in India and outside. The Kennedys and Bush family in America, Yadavs and Reddys in India are a case in point. Even numerous instances of 'pariwarvaad' can be cited in the BJP itself. Piyush Goel, Anurag Thakur, Parvesh Verma would have a very different take. No matter how hard you try but still you cannot win elections in India on merit; caste and religion often are a better bet in elections merit. At the end of the day, what matters is how democratic a person is and how much he cares for the people who vote for him. Despots like Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin did not have a lineage. They weren't democratic either.

New Panchsheel for India @ 75

PM Modi's thrust for five tenets is not only bold but timely as unshackling us from the colonial mindset is of utmost import

Of the five pledges that Prime Minister Modi set out for the country in his ninth Independence Day address to the nation, two stood out particularly, for their relative newness. The rest of the speech was on expected lines – his customary denunciation of corruption and the corrupt, nepotism, dynasticism and calls for development, self-reliance, pride in our legacy, unity, and cooperation, and equality for all across ethnic, regional, and religious diversities. As always, there were subtle nuances that hinted at things to come. But before that, the two standout points.

First, he alluded to the hundreds of years of servitude and dependence, Ghulami, that has distorted our mentality and emphasised forcefully that the last vestiges thereof must be removed from the recesses of our minds. India no longer needed, he said, certificates of validation from the world. It was a bold, unvarnished statement, one that no previous Indian PM had articulated, more so on such an occasion and venue. It was as if, the soul of a nation long suppressed was finding utterance, to borrow Nehru's mellifluous phrase, in Modi's compelling oratory. With the spare, somber ramparts of the Red Fort in the background and the forgettable, poignant medieval past of the country that it evokes in a majority of Indians, the moment was rich in historical irony.

It was testimony to India's newfound confidence and the Narendra Modi government's resolute will to not play to the gallery, both foreign and domestic. It is this single-minded pursuit of India's national interest, oblivious to international bouquets or internal brickbats that have enabled the revocation of article 370, as also our balanced, nonpartisan approach to the Ukraine-Russia conflict. No more is India prepared to cave into international pressure as it did in July 1972 when it signed the Shimla agreement without settling the Kashmir dispute



even when our Army had brought Pakistan to its knees and 93,000 POWs were baricaded in our cantonments.

Secondly, the PM was categorical that everyone, including Chief ministers and even the Prime Minister himself, must follow the duties of citizenship. That his focus was on politicians is borne out by his mentioning "CMs and PM" to illustrate his point. This has wide ramifications for the Indian polity. Thus, it cautions the politician to be honest and law-abiding; to keep national interests paramount instead of compromising them in the pursuit of short-term electoral gains; to avoid the Revadi or freebies culture that he had spoken of recently and that had drawn adverse comments from the Supreme Court also; to rein in the hubris that makes for a wanton disregard of propriety, probity, and ethics in public life. It was a statesman's admonition to a delinquent lot known more for financial scams, mafia links, criminal background, nativist demagoguery, casteist manipulation, nepotism, and dynastic



THE PRIME MINISTER WAS CATEGORICAL THAT EVERYONE, INCLUDING CHIEF MINISTERS AND EVEN THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF, MUST FOLLOW THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP

entitlement. The common man must have been touched to the core, tired and weary as he is of the shenanigans of the political brats.

These two pledges apart, he exhorted the states towards healthy, cooperative, and competitive federalism, a far cry from some leaders playing off one against the other. His call against nepotism included fields other than politics – sports, for instance; his stress on meritocracy was refreshing in a country long riven by caste-based reservations in education and jobs. He paid homage to the leading lights of our freedom struggle cutting across party and ideological lines including, inter alia, Nehru, JP, and Lohia. He repeatedly spoke of "my 130 crore countrymen", "unity and integration", "collective conscience", "no one mine, no one other" and India's diversity is its biggest asset. Clearly, no group is left out in Modi's scheme for India 2047. For a leader who was branded "India's Divider-in-Chief" in a hallowed international magazine not so long ago, his unifying personality and speech were telling

reminders to the audience of the actual contrary reality.

As in previous years, the PM mixed freely and joyfully with children from all regions who responded spontaneously with "pure delight on their faces" as one TV commentator put it. Folk artists, from different states, broke into their traditional dances rapturously when Modi reached them through the throng. The enthusiastic hoisting of the tricolor at Lal Chowk, Srinagar by a motley bunch of different ethnic and religious backgrounds was a welcome surprise. It was Modi's favourite slogan – sabka saath, sab ka vishwas or everyone's support, everyone's trust – writ large on the TV screen. India, it seemed, was truly on its way.

Blurb: the PM was categorical that everyone, including Chief ministers and even the Prime Minister himself, must follow the duties of citizenship

(The writer, a former banker, has turned in his mellow years to column-writing out of his love for nonviolence, social harmony and universal brotherhood.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TALIBAN FAILED TO WIN HEARTS

Sir — The occupation of Afghanistan by the Taliban with Lightning speed triggered a political and humanitarian crisis. The Taliban made soothing statements about not victimizing women so long as their lifestyle is within the purview of Sharia Law inter alia men's slaves. They regard the Sharia as Divine Law but most are unaware it's a document imposed by Khalifas for selfish reasons replacing the Holy Quran. The Quran decrees no earthly punishment for blasphemy or apostasy, nor does it anywhere command stoning for any crime, condone female circumcision, or support banning art and music. It does not endorse treating women as inferior or preventing them from going for higher education and even joining any profession. Taliban's misinterpretation of Sharia has become a synonym with a draconian and inhuman Islamic legal system. Even after one year of rule, the Taliban remains brutally subtle.

Seetharam B | Telangana

LONG ROAD TO 'DEVELOPED' INDIA

Sir — It refers to "India, a developed nation". It is good to have an ambitious target to become a developed nation in the next 25 years. But there is a huge gulf that is to be bridged in this span of time. While India's per capita income is around \$ 2000 while our neighbour China has \$ 8700. Though the Prime Minister has outlined five pledges which need to be abided by one and all in letter and spirit but for that to happen a drastic shift in mindset is required. This pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of a developed nation like the USA, so we Indians must take pride in being Indian. It is not to suggest that we should not become a developed nation but we need to be mindful of our trajectory.

Besides that, there is a huge disparity between rich and poor and men and women which needs to be bridged systematically. And gradually we will have to reduce our dependence on imported items and start manufacturing them in India.

Takeaways from PM's I-Day speech



In his third longest 83 minutes speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the ramparts of the Red Fort, clearly showed that he was not in a mood like the previous eight years to have painted castles in the air for Indian voters. Hence, he was not making any new announcements and even did not speak a word about his promises for 2022, and now next deadline is 2047... keep counting the years. Instead, PM Modi launched the political campaign for 2024 on these twin challenges of "corruption" and "nepotism" — something that he has used in the run-up to the 2014 general elections, and knows that it still has resonance among the electorate.

Is there bigger nepotism than a greenhorn like Anil Ambani, who has no prior experience

in manufacturing defence equipment or even hosted a manufacturing utility, getting priority over an experienced and reputed player in the field, namely HAL, a PSU to boot, in being co-opted as an offset partner for Rafale? Similarly, the Sri Lankan Official, Ferdinando, alleged that his country was put under tremendous pressure by PM Modi to award a 500 MW renewable energy project to industrialist Gautam Adani. These two are instances of creeping nepotism. So, this time the Modi government has to focus on 'Panchpran' (five promises)— First, to move forward with bigger resolves and resolve of developed India; second, to erase all traces of servitude; third, to be proud of our legacy; fourth, focus on our strength of unity; and fifth, fulfill the duties of citizens with honesty (talk is fine but what is the status of those who looted India and migrated to BJP like Hemant Biswa Sharma and others), which should be done by the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers as well. Depending upon this Modi in his speech gave a broad direction for the next quarter of a century, though it assumes that he will not be there.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Though we attract a lot of medical tourism, in terms of Doctor to the Patient ratio we lack far behind WHO norms, so we need to seriously overhaul our healthcare infrastructure along with the education sector.

Bal Govind | Noida

UNWORKABLE MARRIAGES

Sir — The Kerala High Court has held that the preservation of unworkable marriage causes great misery. The Court has observed that nothing is gained by trying to keep the parties tied forever to a marriage that in fact has ceased to exist. If the married couples cannot function as a cohesive unit, the dissolution of marriage becomes inevitable. Love and adjustability in married life should come from within and be spontaneous. Likewise, courts cannot make stubborn couples mentally

unite. Break-up in the marriage occurs more due to the lack of adjustability of a married girl with her in-laws, perpetration of the cruelty by in-laws and husband on the woman, greed for dowry, illicit relationships, etc. Courts must dispose of cases expeditiously when there is a unanimous decision between the husband and wife to avoid uncertainty in the future. The judgment of the Kerala High Court has come in the case 13 years after the marriage was consummated. It would have an adverse effect when both are hell-bent on securing a divorce. In any case, delayed disposal of cases is no better though it has both merits and demerits.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I offer Central Govt to use our services. Keep politics aside. Use our services-you, we & 130 or Indians will together improve all schools. All Govts (States) will do it together. And stop calling this a freebie,



Delhi CM —Arvind Kejriwal



US Secretary of State —Tony Blinken

Our India stands tall with the strength of our relentless defense forces. There's so much and more to love, be proud of and celebrate. Here's to our Independence!! Jai Hind.



Actor —Hrithik Roshan



Cricketer —Virender Sehwag

Tiranga is foremost a symbol of our independence from British rule and freedom from monarchy and feudalism. Deploable that Scindia doesn't mention the British as 'foreign aggressors'.



AIMIM leader —Asaduddin Owaisi

FIRST COLUMN

DON'T RELY ON RATINGS FOR GOOD MF RETURNS

Mutual fund ratings are dynamic; opt for basket of investments



S KALYANASUNDARAM

Mr Anand works for a company and to reduce his income tax liability, he wanted to invest in the Equity Linked Savings Scheme (ELSS). Instead of investing through a Mutual Fund advisor, he did his own ground work based on the ratings available.

During the beginning of this year he invested in Axis Long Term Equity Fund (G) and DSP Tax saver fund (G), as these had five star ratings from a reputed financial newspaper research team. But to his surprise now he has found out that the same research team has now reassigned three star rating to Axis Long Term Equity Fund (G) and four star rating to DSP Tax saver fund.

As the schemes have a lock-in period of three years, there is no way that he can change his investment. Every mutual fund comes in two versions – direct version and regular version. One of the key distinctions between them is that regular mutual funds have a distribution commission unlike direct mutual funds. This makes the expense ratio higher for regular funds. Hence, the return to the investor on direct investment may be more.



Generally, many investors go by the rating provided to different mutual fund schemes and invest under direct schemes. While making investment under direct equity, it is possible for any individual to depend on the fundamental factors of the company and also technical analysis available and one can select the company based on risk perception and return expectation. But coming to mutual fund schemes, though broad investment philosophy and benchmarking are available, there is no definite way to know the contour of investment in future.

Hence, individual investors depend on the ratings provided by different rating agencies. From the past experience, it seems that one can't decide solely based on the ratings available.

Rating organisations like CRISIL, ICRA, CARE, and Value Research generally provide ratings for mutual fund schemes in India. There are business newspapers like the Hindu Business Line, which provide their own ratings based on their in-house research.

Rating methodology Mutual funds are rated mostly on the performance of the funds over different periods. The ratings also take into account the fundamentals of the fund houses, asset allocation of a scheme, the experience and credentials of a fund manager, returns based on inflation, besides several other parameters.

For example, CRISIL considers the following in its ranking methodology: Portfolio Concentration Analysis, Liquidity Analysis, Mean Return and Volatility Active Returns (the active returns are the percentage of loss or profits made by an investment portfolio as a result of active investment decisions by the fund manager).

Scales of one to five stars are decided on the basis of percentile in which the funds are placed in the order. Generally, five-star is assigned to top 10 per cent funds and the bottom 10 per cent is given one-star rating.

Any investment should be based on one's risk bearing capacity. Higher the risk, higher will be the potential return on investment. In turn, mutual fund schemes can have different investment philosophies and different asset allocation based on the investors' risk perception and return expectation.

As the mutual fund investment spreads to different stocks and debt instruments, there is no easy way to predict future performance. Rating is not an impediment for any fund to perform and it is always possible that poor-rated funds may perform better.

However, a poor rating may disturb the mobilisation for a particular Mutual fund scheme, and indirectly affect its working, as the mutual fund scheme may not have the advantage of size of investment and diversification.

(The author is a financial analyst.)

Impart knowledge with holistic education

Re-organisation of teachers' training is a must for the success of National Education Policy 2020



BKP SINHA

Nelson Mandela has rightly said that "education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world". It is a stairway to the growth and development of humankind. The right to education must be universal so that everyone can pursue prospects of a better future. However, the right to education is not only the right to access education. It's also about receiving a quality education.

Quality education is of paramount importance in today's complex and fast-changing environment. It fosters the knowledge, skills and values required to create a fairer and more sustainable world. According to 'Education International and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, quality education "is one that focuses on the child's overall development - social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or geographic location". Its goal is to prepare students for the challenges they are likely to face later in their lives.

We now realize that education alone will not lead to a sustainable future, therefore, learning about sustainable development (SD) is necessary. Target 4.7 in the 2030 Agenda for SD emphasizes the importance of transformative education that promotes global citizenship, sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace and cultural diversity.

The Brundtland Report coined the term "Sustainable Development" and defined it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs".

It is a holistic approach and is often depicted as three overlapping circles: ecological, social and economic. It demonstrates the interplay of all parts of life and the need for their equal consideration to find lasting prosperity. But we generally have a unidirectional approach towards sustainability based on our predisposition, for example from an ecological, economic or social viewpoint, which often results in trade-offs.

The interconnected nature of the challenges the world faces today cannot be understood in isolation. For instance, every year, climate change like extreme weather events and rising sea levels force millions of people to flee their homes. This results in climate refugees and a rise in poverty. As climate change and poverty are inextricably linked, one cannot be solved without addressing the other.

To comprehend basic principles of ecology, one must think holistically about relationships, connectedness and context to realize the intricate interdependence and often unpredictable dynamics of ecological, social, and economic systems. This shift of focus from analytical thinking (parts) to contextual thinking (whole) is a prerequisite for building a more resilient world, ensuring systemic decision and policy



SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP 2020 LARGELY DEPENDS ON THE GOOD SPIRIT AND RIGHT INTENTIONS OF THE POLICY MAKERS WHICH WILL NOT ONLY DIVERSIFY INDIA'S GLOBAL IMAGE BUT ALSO MAKE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AT PAR WITH THE BEST IN THE WORLD

(The author is a retired IFS officer.)



making. It is regarded as a critical ability in education, as it enables students to untangle and work within the complexities of life on Earth.

Integration of education for sustainable development (ESD) into teaching and learning can help in the realization of quality education, which is critical to fulfilling many of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) such as breaking the cycle of poverty, reducing inequalities, achieving gender equality and improving agricultural productivity. It is also essential for addressing other key issues, including wasteful consumption, biodiversity conservation, natural resource use, climate change, energy, freshwater, health, sanitation and waste management.

ESD is an interdisciplinary field that integrates concepts from multiple disciplines to understand how natural and man-made processes interact with each other and ultimately affect the various biomes on the planet. Its goal is to discover novel and sustainable ways of living and managing natural resources to protect vital ecological systems and enhance long-term prospects for human prosperity.

Adopting a wide range of participatory methodologies in education, such as problem-based and project-based learning are essential to change the behaviours and equip the current and future generations with the knowledge and skills they need to shape a sustainable future. These methodologies will allow them to develop problem-solving, interdisciplinary and systemic thinking skills, which will help them learn 'how to think' rather than 'what to think' within the context of sustainability.

Our sustainable future requires societies and countries to work

together, hence, it advocates the use of collaborative learning at all stages of education. In collaborative learning, students in small groups work together on a common goal to seek understanding and solutions. It fulfills the primary purpose of education – nurturing responsible citizens who can work together to solve complex ecological, social and economic issues.

Thus, working on collaborative learning projects at an early age can boost confidence and help in developing critical thinking, positive interdependence, diverse understanding along with various other social skills such as leadership, decision-making, communication, trust-building, conflict management and a sense of ownership.

Educational institutions also need to partner with multiple stakeholders and various other sectors such as economics, environment, etc., to take up co-learning. It will facilitate students to engage with real-life issues and gain the practical knowledge and skills needed to build long-term sustainable solutions.

Conventionally, ESD has been considered a separate component within the educational systems. However, over the past few years, it has been argued that it should be integrated into mainstream disciplines at all levels, settings, and types (informal, formal, non-formal) of education. This requires a systemic change in all kinds of textbooks, including science, math, social sciences, humanities, etc. It also requires significant reforms in the educational system, including strengthening curricula, cognitive and non-cognitive elements, transforming learning environments, establishing diverse part-

nerships, providing teacher training, creating local learning opportunities, and implementing innovative pedagogies.

Teaching ESD requires knowledge of several disciplines that is generally beyond teachers' expertise. Therefore, re-organisation of teacher education is crucial to re-organising the study environment. It also entails research and development to identify best practices of pedagogy. Reforms of this magnitude, however, will not be possible without effective policies, operational frameworks, political will, financial assistance and stakeholders' cooperation.

National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century, which aims to align the education system with SDGs and make education holistic, inclusive, multidisciplinary, learner-centric, inquiry-driven and experiential which can transform India into a vibrant knowledge-based society and global knowledge superpower.

Our collective responsibility to improve the quality of education is essential for achieving the ambitions of 'Agenda 2030' and ensuring continuity in the quality of human life. Governments, teachers, educational institutions and stakeholders have a vanguard role to play, along with parents and students themselves. However, we stand now where two roads diverge. But unlike the roads in Robert Frost's familiar poem, they are not equally fair. The road we have long been traveling is deceptively easy, a smooth super-highway on which we progress with great speed, but at its end lies disaster. The other fork of the road - the one less traveled by - offers the last and our only chance to reach a destination that assures the preservation of the earth.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WE FACE THE CHALLENGES OF CORRUPTION AND 'PARIWARVAAD'... WE NEED TO RAISE AWARENESS AGAINST 'PARIVARWAAD' —PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



I WON'T MAKE A COMMENT ON THESE THINGS. (CORRUPTION & PARIWARVAAD OR NEPOTISM'), TODAY. —CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

E-two wheelers can cut carbon emissions in a big way

Two-wheelers, which are prominent polluters, need to go electric to cut down on emissions substantially



PRITAM SINGH

Air pollution is harming the health of around 1.3 billion people in the vulnerable areas of India where an average particulate matter concentration was 73ug/m3, far-exceeding the WHO's standard prescribed limit of 5ug/m, catalysing the levels of carbonization. India is witnessing rapid rise of two-wheelers, representing about 76 per cent of the total, which is over 210 million. Nearly 60,000 two-wheelers per day are being registered in India, consuming 61 per cent of total sale of petrol.

The two-wheelers account for almost 20 per cent of the total carbon dioxide emissions and 30 per cent of the particulate emissions in urban areas. The worst sufferers are the vulnerable sections of society such as growing children, expectant-

mothers, elderly people and patients having lung problems.

The latest research studies of Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago observed that "at the current pollution levels about 510 million people who live in northern India, representing nearly 40 per cent of India's population, are on-track to lose 7.6 years of their lives on an average".

However, by all out efforts like two wheelers e-mobility and gradual phasing out of 'Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) based tail pipe emitters' for mitigating the pollution levels to the WHO's prescribed levels would mean that an estimated 240 million people in the north Indian state - Uttar Pradesh - would gain about 10 years in life-expectancy.

Two wheelers pollute more,

having cascading impact in urban areas to an overall particulate matter concentration, observed to be the highest in the world.

On an average, each two-wheeler enriches greenhouse gases by adding around 300 gms/km of carbon dioxide, besides (as per Bharat Stage-IV standard prescribed limits under standardized conditions) remarkable quantities of pollutants like (1.50 gm/km) carbon monoxide (known as silent killer) and (1.50 gm/km) hydrocarbons plus oxide of nitrogen, etc.

These standard limits normally exceeded because of factors like driving in frequent traffic jams, road conditions, fuel quality, local environmental conditions, etc.

Assuming broadly, around

75 million two-wheelers, having an average of about 250 km/month pacing on the road, will collectively translate around 75m tonnes/year of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, entailing emission of dreaded particulate matter.

The world's fourth largest energy hungry India (yet behind China, US and the European Union), will according to IEA's forecast will become the third largest consumer, overlapping European Union by 2030. Though indeed it is a Herculean task to achieve the set goal of IPCC by 2030, it is certainly not impossible.

Realizing impending threat to economies, India's vehicular transportation scenario is set to have a 'sea change' as the Government's think tank - National Institute for

Transforming India - NITI Aayog is chalking out a slew of progressive set targets to mitigate and eliminate pollution by pushing the ambitious plans of electrifying two-wheelers and gradually phasing out the sale of 'ICE-based tail pipe emitters'.

The government's well set delineations with full support of corporates will undergo a sea change by 2030 with e-mobility as preferred mode of transport by having an ambitious plan of electrifying around 80 per cent, say close to 54.4 million two-wheelers with eco-friendly alluring all segments of e-two wheelers and setting up gigantic chain of about 6K-charging stations in the nook and corner, will certainly enable to get rid of routinely lining-up at petrol pumps.

Currently, to fill the gasoline

tank of a bike of 11 litre, it costs about Rs 1100. So, this means that a e-two wheeler owner can get a full charge for less than that of the cost of one-litre of gasoline, with no tail-pipe emission, no tormenting exhaust noise, i.e., noise pollution, comparatively at much less maintenance cost to govern mere 20-25 moving parts in the vehicle's assembly in comparison to about 2000 parts in the ICV gasoline based two-wheelers..

In the race of new technologies, India is not lagging behind and gradually unveiling its plans on the befitting occasions for widespread application of fuel-cell technology as 'new medium of energy', replacing fossil fuels in public and private transport systems, railways, power generation, data processing stations, etc.

It is high time not to miss an opportunity to preserve the environment and warrants more initiatives with individual approach too. An earlier census had reported that mere 30 per cent of the trips to work are made on foot and 17 per cent by bicycle. Besides the government initiatives, here the powerful media must shoulder its responsibility to play its more constructive role for mitigating vehicular pollution in cities and make aware the public about the grim picture of vehicular pollution in the years to come. Spreading the mission of greenery all around and prefer trips to work on foot in urban areas on the lines of smartly populated cities like Surat and Bangalore, will bear fruits for tomorrow generations.

China sanctions seven top Taiwanese officials

After 2nd US Congressional delegation's visit to Taipei

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Tuesday announced sanctions on seven "die-hard" pro-independence Taiwanese politicians and officials, including Taipei's representative to Washington, amid concerns over the increasing visits by foreign dignitaries to the self-ruled island claimed by Beijing.

The sanctions were announced by Beijing following trips to the island by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in early August and a US Congressional delegation led by Democratic Senator Ed Markey on Monday.

Also Last week, Lithuanian Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications Agne Vaiciukeviciute visited Taiwan. Lithuania is part of the European Union.

China has already imposed sanctions against Pelosi and Agne and held high-intensity military drills in Taiwan Strait, sparking fears of an armed conflict with Taiwan, which China claims as part of its mainland.

After Pelosi's visit, China is concerned that there will be a flurry of visits by top officials from the US and allied countries to the self-ruled island.

China announced sanctions against seven Taiwanese government officials and politicians, saying they pushed a pro-independence agenda for the breakaway island.

The Taiwan Affairs Office of the ruling Communist Party of China said on Tuesday that those sanctioned and their family members would not be allowed to enter mainland China, Hong Kong or Macau.



They will not be permitted to do business with the Chinese mainland. Their affiliated companies and financial sponsors would not be allowed to gain profits from the mainland, a spokesman of the office was quoted by state-run Xinhua news agency as saying.

The Taiwan Affairs Office would take other necessary measures and those sanctioned would be held accountable for life," the spokesman said.

For a period of time, a small number of Taiwan independence die-hards have tried their best to collude with external forces to carry out independence provocations, deliberately inciting cross-strait confrontation, and wantonly undermining the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait.

They performed extremely poorly during Pelosi's trip to Taiwan, China's Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson said.

"The names of die-hard separatists announced on Tuesday are only a part of the list," the spokesperson said.

Among the seven people on the sanc-

tion list, six are members of the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Taiwan.

They include Hsiao Bi-khim, Taiwan's representative to the US and Ker Chien-ming, the DPP caucus head of the legislature.

Others included Wang Ting-yu, a legislator who sits on the foreign relations and defence committee, Wellington Koo, secretary general of the island's National Security Council, Tsai Chi-chang, vice-speaker of Taiwan's legislature, and Lin Fei-fan, deputy secretary general of the DPP.

The non-DPP member sanctioned is Chen Jiau-hua, New Power Party legislator and chairwoman, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

In December last, China announced sanctions against Taiwanese Premier Su Tseng-chang, Taiwan's legislature president You Si-kun and Taiwanese Foreign Minister Joseph Wu.

The businesses related to them, as

well as their sponsors, are prohibited from engaging in profit-making activities on the mainland. Other punitive measures will also be taken. They will be held to lifelong accountability according to law, the spokesperson said.

Sanctions are also imposed on the president of the "Taiwan Foundation for Democracy," and the secretary general of the "International Cooperation and Development Fund."

On Monday, China resorted to more high-intensity military drills around Taiwan to "safeguard national sovereignty" as Taiwan's president met with members of a new US congressional delegation visiting the self-ruled island claimed by Beijing, challenging its 'one China' policy.

The US Congressional delegation led by Massachusetts Democratic Senator Markey arrived in Taipei on an unannounced two-day visit on Sunday, close on the heels of Pelosi's visit on August 2, the highest-level visit by US official in 25 years, which riled Beijing.

Feds oppose unsealing affidavit for Trump's Mar-a-Lago warrant

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The US Justice Department on Monday rebuffed efforts to make public the affidavit supporting the search warrant for former President Donald Trump's estate in Florida, saying the investigation "implicates highly classified material" and the document contains sensitive information about witnesses.

The government's opposition came in response to court filings by several news organizations, including The Associated Press, seeking to unseal the underlying affidavit the Justice Department submitted when it asked for the warrant to search Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate earlier this month.

Trump, in a Truth Social post early on Tuesday called for the release of the un-redacted affidavit in the interest of transparency.

The court filing — from Juan Antonio Gonzalez, the US attorney in Miami, and Jay Bratt, a top Justice Department national security official — argues that making the affidavit public would "cause significant and irreparable damage to this ongoing criminal investigation."

The document, the prosecutors say, details "highly sensitive information about witnesses," including people who have been interviewed by the government, and contains confidential grand jury information.

The government told a federal magistrate judge that prosecutors believe some addition-



al records, including the cover sheet for the warrant and the government's request to seal the documents, should now be made public.

A property receipt unsealed on Friday showed the FBI seized 11 sets of classified documents, with some not only marked top secret but also "sensitive compartmented information," a special category meant to protect the nation's most important secrets that if revealed publicly could cause "exceptionally grave" damage to US interests.

The court records did not provide specific details about information the documents might contain.

The Justice Department acknowledged on Monday that its ongoing criminal investigation "implicates highly classified material."

The search warrant, also unsealed on Friday, said federal agents were investigating potential violations of three different federal laws, including one that governs gathering, transmitting or losing defence information under the Espionage

Act.

The other statutes address the concealment, mutilation or removal of records and the destruction, alteration or falsification of records in federal investigations.

The Mar-a-Lago search warrant, carried out last on Monday, was part of an ongoing Justice Department investigation into the discovery of classified White House records recovered from Trump's home earlier this year.

The National Archives had asked the department to investigate after saying 15 boxes of records it retrieved from the estate included classified records.

It remains unclear whether the Justice Department moved forward with the warrant simply as a means to retrieve the records or as part of a wider criminal investigation or an attempt to prosecute the former president.

Multiple federal laws govern the handling of classified information, with both criminal and civil penalties, as well as presidential records.

China's envoy plays down row over Chinese research ship docking in Lanka



PTI ■ COLOMBO

China's envoy in Sri Lanka on Tuesday played down the controversy surrounding the arrival of a high-tech Chinese research ship at the southern port of Hambantota, calling such visits "very natural".

Chinese ballistic missile and satellite tracking ship 'Yuan Wang 5' arrived in the southern port of Hambantota at 8.20 am local time. It will be docked there till August 22.

The ship was originally scheduled to arrive at the port on August 11 but it was delayed in absence of permission by the Sri Lankan authorities.

Sri Lanka had asked China to defer the visit amid India's concerns over it. On Saturday, Colombo granted the port access to the vessel from August 16 to 22.

Sri Lanka said the security clearance was granted from the Ministry of Defence for the visit of the vessel for replenishment purposes during the stipulated period.

Qi Zhenhong, China's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, was present at the port to welcome the ship.

Several parliamentarians from the breakaway group of the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party were also present.

"This kind of research ship visiting Sri Lanka is very natural. In 2014 a similar ship came here," Zhenhong told reporters when asked about the visit.

Asked about the Indian concerns, the Ambassador said "I don't know, you should ask the Indian friends".

The ship maintained a very strict security operation with no one being allowed on board.

The Sri Lankan decision to postpone the visit caused much

controversy in the country as the visit had been cleared in mid-July.

Commenting on the ship's arrival, the Cabinet spokesman Bandula Gunawardena said the issue was settled amicably.

"Relations with all countries are important to us," Gunawardena said.

The security and cooperation in the neighborhood are of utmost priority in handling the issue of the Chinese vessel Wang Yang 5, the Foreign Ministry here said in a statement.

India has traditionally taken a stern view of Chinese military vessels in the Indian Ocean and has protested such visits with Sri Lanka in the past. The ties between India and Sri Lanka had come under strain after Colombo permitted a Chinese nuclear-powered submarine to dock in one of its ports in 2014.

China is the main creditor of Sri Lanka with investment in infrastructure. Debt restructuring of Chinese loans would be key to the island's success in the ongoing talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout.

India on the other hand has been Sri Lanka's lifeline in the ongoing economic crisis.

India has been at the forefront of extending economic assistance of nearly USD 4 billion to Sri Lanka during the year as the island nation is grappling with the worst economic crisis since independence in 1948.

India's concerns have been focused on Hambantota port in particular. In 2017, Colombo leased the southern port to China Merchant Port Holdings for 99 years, after Sri Lanka was unable to keep its loan repayment commitments, fanning fears over the potential use of the port for military purposes.

Biden to sign massive climate, health care legislation

AP ■ KIAWAH ISLANDS (US)

President Joe Biden will sign Democrats' landmark climate change and health care bill on Tuesday, delivering what he has called the "final piece" of his pared-down domestic agenda, as he aims to boost his party's standing with voters less than three months before midterm elections.

The legislation includes the most substantial federal investment in history to fight climate change — some \$375 billion over the decade — and would cap prescription drug costs at \$2,000 out-of-pocket annually for Medicare recipients. It also would help an estimated 13 million Americans pay for health care insurance by extending subsidies provided during the coronavirus pandemic.

The measure is paid for by new taxes on large companies and stepped-up IRS enforcement of wealthy individuals and entities, with additional funds going to reduce the federal deficit.

The House on Friday approved the measure on a party-line 220-207 vote. It passed the Senate days earlier with

Vice President Kamala Harris breaking a 50-50 tie in that chamber.

Biden is set to sign the bill during a small ceremony in the State Dining Room of the White House, sandwiched between his return from a six-day beachside vacation in South Carolina and his departure for his home in Wilmington, Delaware. He plans to hold a larger "celebration" for the legislation on Sept. 6 once lawmakers return to Washington.

The signing caps a spurt of legislative productivity for Biden and Congress, who in three months have approved legislation on veterans' benefits, the semiconductor industry and gun checks for young buyers. The president and lawmakers have also responded to Ukraine's invasion by Russia and supported NATO membership for Sweden and Finland.

With Biden's approval rating lagging, Democrats are hoping that the string of successes will jump-start their chances of maintaining control in Washington in the November midterms. The 79-year-old president aims to restore his own standing with voters as he contemplates a reelection



bid.

The White House announced Monday that it was going to deploy Biden and members of his Cabinet on a "Building a Better America Tour" to promote the recent victories, though the administration has yet to announce specific travel by the president.

"In the coming weeks, the President will host a Cabinet meeting focused on implementing the Inflation Reduction

Act, will travel across the country to highlight how the bill will help the American people, and will host an event to celebrate the enactment of the bill at the White House on September 6th," the White House said in a statement.

Republicans say the legislation's new business taxes will increase prices, worsening the nation's bout with its highest inflation since 1981. Though Democrats have labeled the measure

the Inflation Reduction Act, nonpartisan analysts say it will have a barely perceptible impact on prices.

The measure is a slimmed-down version of the more ambitious plan to supercharge environment and social programs that Biden and his party unveiled early last year.

Biden's initial 10-year, \$3.5 trillion proposal also envisioned free kindergarten, paid family and medical leave, expanded Medicare benefits and eased immigration restrictions. That crashed after centrist Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said it was too costly, using the leverage every Democrat has in the evenly divided Senate.

Still, Biden and Democrats are hailing the legislation as a once-in-a-generation investment in addressing the long-term effects of climate change, as well as drought in the nation's West.

The bill will direct spending, tax credits and loans to bolster technology like solar panels, consumer efforts to improve home energy efficiency, emission-reducing equipment for coal- and gas-powered power plants, and air pollution controls for farms, ports and low-income communities.

Iran submits a 'written response' in N-deal talks



AP ■ DUBAI

Iran said Tuesday it submitted a "written response" to what has been described as a final roadmap to restore its tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency offered no details on the substance of its response, but suggested that Tehran still wouldn't take the European Union-mediated proposal, despite warnings there would be no more negotiations.

"The differences are on three issues, in which the United States has expressed its verbal flexibility in two cases, but it should be included in the text," the IRNA report said. "The third issue is related to guaranteeing the continuation of (the deal), which depends on the realism of the United States."

Tehran under hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi has repeatedly tried to blame Washington for the delay in reaching an accord. Monday was

reported to have been a deadline for Iran's response.

There was no immediate acknowledgment from the EU that Iran submitted its response. The EU has been the go-between in the indirect talks.

From Washington, State Department spokesman Ned Price said the U.S. Would share its own response to the EU.

"We do agree, however, with (the EU's) fundamental point, and that is that what could be negotiated has been negotiated," Price said.

He added that Iran had been making "unacceptable demands" going beyond the text of the 2015 nuclear deal, which saw Iran drastically limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

"If Iran wants these sanctions lifted, they will need to alter their underlying conduct," Price said. "They will need to change the dangerous activities that gave rise to these sanctions in the first place."

6 killed in fire at restaurant in Dhaka

PTI ■ DHAKA

At least six persons — all staff of a restaurant — were killed when a fire broke out at a restaurant and spread to a plastic factory in the four-storey building here in Bangladesh, officials said on Tuesday.

The firefighters on Monday recovered six bodies from the gutted building that housed a plastic factory and a restaurant in Old Dhaka's Chawkbazar area, BDNews 24 quoted Shahjahan Sikder, assistant director of the fire service, as saying.

The workers were sleeping on the first floor after finishing their night duty when the fire broke out around 12 pm in the restaurant area and later spread to the plastic factory in the building, Bazrul Rashid, deputy assistant director of the Fire Service, said.

"We found six bodies inside the building," said Anwarul Islam, a fire service official.

According to a Daily Star Bangladesh report, all those who died in the incident on Monday were staff members of Barisal Hotel and Restaurant that occupied the ground floor of the building.

Top Malaysian court orders ex-PM Najib to begin final appeal

AP ■ PUTRAJAYA

Malaysia's top court ordered former Prime Minister Najib Razak on Tuesday to begin his final appeal in two days after rejecting his request that it throw out his graft conviction and 12-year sentence over alleged judicial bias.

Najib has sought to introduce new evidence that would spark a retrial on grounds that the high court judge who convicted him may be biased due to his previous job at a bank that provided financial services to the 1Malaysia Development Berhad state fund.

1MDB was a development fund Najib set up shortly after taking power in 2009. Investigators allege at least USD 4.5 billion was stolen from the fund and laundered by Najib's associates. Najib was found guilty of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering for illegally receiving USD 9.4 million from SRC International, a former unit of 1MDB.

The five-member Federal Court bench unanimously dismissed Najib's request, agreeing with prosecutors that the background of then-High Court Judge Mohamad Nazlan Mohamad Ghazali was public knowledge. Nazlan is now a



judge in the Court of Appeals.

Chief Justice Maimun Tuan Mat said the court couldn't find any link between Nazlan's previous role at the bank and the charges against Najib that could lead to a real danger of bias.

He also said some of the proposed additional evidence the defense is seeking was already available during trial and in any case is irrelevant to the charges.

"We are not convinced that Justice Nazlan made his findings based on anything other than the evidence on record," she said.

"To our mind, there is no miscarriage of justice" since Najib can include the allegation in his final appeal to the top court, she added.

Najib said after the hearing that he was "shocked and bitterly disappointed."

Repelled more than dozen attacks: Ukrainian military

AP ■ KYIV

The Ukrainian military has said that it had repelled more than a dozen Russian attacks in the country's east and north, including attempts to advance on key cities in the eastern industrial heartland known as the Donbas.

In its regular Facebook update, the military's general staff said Russian troops had attempted to push towards Kramatorsk, one of two major cities in the eastern Donetsk province that remain under Ukrainian control, but "they failed completely and chaotically retreated to their previous positions."

In the same post, the military said Russian forces had staged an unsuccessful assault on Bakhmut, a strategic town in the Donetsk region whose capture would pave the way for Russia to take Kramatorsk and the de facto Ukrainian administrative capital, Sloviansk.

The Donetsk region is one of two provinces that make up the Donbas, where the fighting has largely been focused in recent months, since Kremlin forces retreated from around the capital, Kyiv.

Russian officials announced the full capture of the Luhansk region, the second of the two, early last month, though its Ukrainian governor has repeatedly claimed that Kyiv's forces are holding out in a small area near the regional boundary.

In the same update, the military claimed that Russia had tried and failed to break through Ukrainian defense lines in the northern Kharkiv region, home to Ukraine's second-largest city, but were "met harshly and thrown back."

Meanwhile, the Russian FSB, the KGB's main successor agency, said that it had thwarted a "sabotage and terrorist attack" on an oil pipeline in Russia's southern Volgograd region, which it blamed on two Russian citizens colluding with Ukrainian security forces.

The claims could not be immediately verified.

Elsewhere, Russian and Ukrainian officials traded more accusations Monday about renewed shelling of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, with each side alleging that the other was responsible for the attacks that have raised fears of a catastrophe.



The press office of the Kremlin-backed administration in Enerhodar, the Russian-controlled city where the plant is located, told the Interfax agency that Ukrainian forces were carrying out "massive shelling" of the facility, as well as Enerhodar's residential and industrial areas.

According to the statement, the shelling came from nearby Nikopol, a Ukrainian-held city which faces the plant across the Dnieper River.

The mayor of Nikopol later said that Russians were shelling Enerhodar themselves.

Mayor Yevhen Yevtushenko and other municipal authorities in Nikopol have repeatedly accused Russian troops stationed at the plant of shelling the city, knowing that Ukrainian forces there were unlikely to fire back.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy renewed his call for fresh sanctions against Moscow and its nuclear industry in response to the situation. He described Russian forces' actions there as "nuclear blackmail" that may embolden malign actors worldwide.

As Russian forces kept up their artillery barrages around Ukraine, at least three Ukrainian civilians were killed and 20 others wounded, Ukrainian officials said.

The deaths and 13 of the wounded were

blamed on Russian shelling that hit towns and villages in the Donetsk region, regional officials said.

In the country's second-largest city of Kharkiv, seven civilians were wounded by Russian shelling that hit residential buildings and an area near a bus stop. Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Synyehubov said the wounded included a 80-year-old woman.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Lt. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said Monday that Russian warplanes have struck Ukrainian army positions in the southern Kherson region and in the Donetsk region. He added that the Russian air force also hit a facility in the Kharkiv region, killing at least 100 and wounding 50 "mercenaries" from Poland and Germany. His claims could not be independently verified.

Speaking at the opening of an arms show outside Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed the military, which he said was "liberating the Donbas step by step."

He also vowed to expand arms sales to Russian allies, whom he praised for continuing to offer firm support to Moscow in the face of Western pressure.

For its part, the Ukrainian military claimed to have destroyed more than 10 Russian warehouses with ammunition and military.

Former UN chief Ban urges world to remember Bucha victims

AP ■ BUCHA (UKRAINE)

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on the world Tuesday to honour civilians who were killed when Russian ground forces tried to invade Ukraine's capital and eventually retreated from the area surrounding Kyiv.

Ban, a former South Korean diplomat who served as secretary-general between 2007 and 2016, visited Bucha, a city northwest of the Ukrainian capital where hundreds of civilians were found dead after the Russian withdrawal in late March.

"It's hard to express my feelings. It's a horrendous atrocity. It's a crime against humanity and (those responsible) should be held accountable," Ban told The Associated Press after visiting the Church of St. Andrew the Apostle.

Authorities said 116 bodies were found in a mass grave near the church after Russian soldiers pulled out.

"All the people killed here without any reason should be fully honored and remembered in the history of humankind," Ban said.



He traveled to Ukraine as part of an international peace initiative known as The Elders, which former South African President Nelson Mandela founded in 2007.

Ban was joined by former Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, who is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate like the late Mandela. Santos also described the massacre of Ukrainian

civilians as a crime against humanity.

"The whole world should be very much aware of what is happening and be in a position to support the Ukrainian people in their effort to gain their peace and freedom," Santos told the AP.

The two former leaders visited the site of the mass grave behind the church and visited a display of photographs inside the building with scenes from the aftermath of the intense fighting in Bucha in late February and March.

The civilian killings at Bucha have become a symbol of brutality of the war. They were carried out as Russia launched a failed effort to capture the Ukrainian capital after it invaded the country on Feb. 24.

Satellite images show first ship out of Ukraine in Syria

AP ■ DUBAI

The first shipment of grain to leave Ukraine under a wartime deal appears to have ended up in Syria — even as Damascus remains a close ally of Moscow, satellite images analysed on Tuesday by The Associated Press show.

The arrival of the cargo ship Razoni in Syria comes after the government in Kyiv praised the ship's initial departure from the port of Odessa as a sign that Ukraine could safely ship out its barley, corn, sunflower oil and wheat to a hungry world where global food prices have spiked in part due to the war.

But its arrival in Syria's port of Tartus shows how complicated and murky international



trade and shipping can be.

Syria has already received Ukrainian grain taken from Russian-occupied territory amid Moscow's war on Kyiv.

Images from Planet Labs PBC analysed by the AP showed the Sierra Leone-flagged Razoni at port just before 11 am on Monday.

The vessel was just next to the port's grain silos, key to supplying wheat to the nation. Data from the Razoni's

Automatic Identification System tracker shows it had been turned off since Friday, when it was just off the coast of Cyprus, according to ship-tracking website Marine Traffic.Com.

Ships are supposed to keep their AIS trackers on, but vessels wanting to hide their movements often turn theirs off. Those heading to Syrian ports routinely do so.

The Razoni could be identified in the satellite image by its colour, length and width, as well as the four large white cranes on its deck.

Samir Madani, co-founder of the oil-shipment website TankerTrackers.Com and an expert on following ships via satellite images, similarly identified the vessel from the image.

Ukraine's Black Sea deal also helps Russian farmers, economy

AP ■ KYIV

With much fanfare, ship after ship loaded with grain has sailed from Ukraine after being stuck in the country's Black Sea ports for nearly six months. More quietly, a parallel wartime deal met Moscow's demands to clear the way for its wheat to get to the world, too, boosting an industry vital to Russia's economy that had been ensnared in wider sanctions.

While the US and its European allies work to crush Russia's finances with a web of penalties for invading Ukraine, they have avoided sanctioning its grains and other goods that feed people worldwide.

Putin blasts US 'hegemony,' predicts end to 'unipolar' world

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the United States of trying to encourage extended hostilities in Ukraine as part of what he described Tuesday as Washington's alleged efforts to maintain its global hegemony.

Addressing a security conference attended by military officials from Africa, Asia and Latin America, Putin reaffirmed his long-held claim that he sent troops into Ukraine in response to Washington turning the country into an "anti-Russia" bulwark.

"They need conflicts to retain their hegemony," Putin charged. "That's why they have turned the Ukrainian people into cannon fodder. The situation in Ukraine shows that the United States is trying to drag the conflict out, and it acts in exactly the same way trying to fuel conflicts in Asia, Africa and Latin America."

The speech represented the latest attempt by the Russian leader to rally support amid bruising Western sanctions that targeted the Russian economy and finance along



with its government structures, top officials and businesses for Moscow's action in Ukraine.

Putin also drew parallels between the U.S. Backing Ukraine and a recent visit to Taiwan by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, charging that both were part of an alleged American attempt to foment global instability.

"The American adventure in Taiwan wasn't just a trip by an irresponsible politician. It was part of a deliberate and conscious U.S. Strategy intended to destabilize the situation and create chaos in the region and the entire world, a blatant demonstration of disrespect for another country's sovereignty," Putin said.

He dismissed allegations that Russia could potentially use nuclear or chemical weapons in the conflict as an "absolute lie."

eighty and its own international obligations," Putin said.

The Russian leader claimed that "Western globalist elites" were trying "to shift the blame for their own failures to Russia and China," adding that "no matter how hard the beneficiaries of the current globalist model try to cling to it, it's doomed."

"The era of the unipolar world order is nearing its end," he added.

Speaking at the same conference, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu charged that along with supplies of weapons to Ukraine, Western allies also have provided detailed intelligence information and deployed instructors to help the Ukrainian military operate the weapons systems.

"Western intelligence agencies not only have provided target coordinates for launching strikes, but Western specialists also have overseen the input of those data into weapons systems," Shoigu said.

He dismissed allegations that Russia could potentially use nuclear or chemical weapons in the conflict as an "absolute lie."



Estonia removes Soviet monument, citing public order

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Estonia's government said Tuesday it has decided to remove a Soviet monument in a border town sitting in the Baltic country's Russian-speaking part, with the prime minister saying the reason for the dismantling is that it represents a risk for public order.

"No one wants to see our militant and hostile neighbor foment tensions in our home," Prime Minister Kaja Kallas said, adding the move came following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "We will not afford Russia the opportunity to use the past to disturb the peace in Estonia."

Outside Narva — Estonia's third largest town with a large Russian speaking population — a replica of a T-34 tank with a

red Soviet star sits atop a monument commemorating the Soviet soldiers who died freeing Estonia from Germany during World War II.

The whole monument was being dismantled Tuesday and "the operation will be carried out in a dignified manner, for example, the flowers and the candles placed at the monuments will be taken to a cemetery, not thrown in the trash," Interior Minister Lauri Laanemets said Tuesday, according to the Baltic News Service.

Estonian broadcaster ERR said the dismantling was underway. Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu said in a government statement that Russia "wanted to use the memorials commemorating the criminal occupation regime to fuel tensions in Estonian society."

Blasts, fire hit military depot in Russian-annexed Crimea

AP ■ KYIV

Massive explosions and fires hit a military depot in Russia-annexed Crimea on Tuesday, forcing the evacuation of more than 3,000 people, the second time in recent days that the Ukraine war's focus has turned to the contested peninsula.

Russia blamed the blasts at an ammunition storage facility in Mayskoye on an "act of sabotage" without naming the perpetrators.

As with last week's explosions, they led to speculation that Ukrainian forces may have staged an attack on the peninsula, which Russia has controlled since 2014.

Separately, the Russian business newspaper Kommersant quoted local residents as saying that plumes of black smoke also rose over an air base in Crimea's Gvardeyskoye.



of publicly claiming responsibility for any of the fires or explosions, including last week's at another air base that destroyed nine Russian planes.

If Ukrainian forces were, in fact, responsible for any of the explosions, they would represent a significant escalation in the war.

Videos posted on social media showed thick plumes of smoke rising over raging flames in Mayskoye, and a series of

explosions could be heard in the background.

The Russian Defence Ministry said the fires at the depot caused damage to a power plant, power lines, rail tracks and some apartment buildings. It said in a statement that "there were no serious injuries."

Earlier, Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti reported a fire a transformer substation after "a loud thump sound" in what appeared to be a result of

the blasts at the depot.

Crimea holds huge strategic and symbolic significance for Russia and Ukraine. The Kremlin's demand that Kyiv recognise the peninsula as part of Russia has been one of its key conditions for ending the fighting, while Ukraine has vowed to drive the Russians from the peninsula and all other occupied territories.

The district where the blasts happened, Dzhankoi, is in the north of the peninsula, about 50 kilometres from the Russian-controlled region of Kherson in southern Ukraine.

Kyiv has recently mounted a series of attacks on various sites in the region, targeting supply routes for the Russian military there and ammunition depots.

Last week's explosions at Saki air base sent sunbathers on nearby beaches fleeing as huge flames and pillars of smoke rose over the horizon.

Ukrainian officials empha-

sised on Tuesday that Crimea — which is a popular destination for Russian tourists — would not be spared the ravages of war experienced throughout Ukraine.

Rather than a travel destination, "Crimea occupied by Russians is about warehouses explosions and high risk of death for invaders and thieves", Ukraine presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter, though he did not claim any Ukraine responsibility for the blasts.

Crimea's regional leader, Sergei Aksyonov, said that two people were injured and more than 3,000 evacuated from the villages of Mayskoye and Azovskoye near Dzhankoi following the munitions depot explosions. Who can we attribute the injured to?

Because the explosions damaged rail tracks, some trains in northern Crimea were diverted to other lines.

Public Notice
Be it known to all that we Partners
(1) Sh. P.R. Bagga (2) Sh. S. P. Bagga
(3) Virender Bagga (4) Sumit Bagga involved
in partnership firm M/s Bagga Bros having
its registered office at B-132 Mayapuri Ph-1,
New Delhi. now we have decided to close
down all business activities and dissolved
the firm as on 31 day of March 2022.
Further all taxes and Government dues have
been paid up to date and nothing is due
towards creditors also. It is further resolved
that the name BAGGA BROS shall not be
used by any one for any purposes.
For Bagga Bros S.P. Bagga M. 9811137411.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed that my clients Mr.
Girish Chandra Pandey and his wife
Mrs. Rashmi Pandey both R/o South
East Delhi 110014 have served their
relations with their Son Mr. Akshat
Pandey because of his bad habits and
have also disowned /debarred their son
from all the movable & immovable
properties and assets. Anyone dealing
with him will be at their own risk and
responsibilities, my clients will not be
responsible for any act/dealing done by
or with Mr.Akshat Pandey.
Sd/-
Neeta Batra Advocate
(Advocate) Enrl. No. DI686/02
OFF-58, PC-10, SEC-24, Rohini Delhi-85

SC AGROTECH LIMITED					
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS SHEEL INTERNATIONAL LIMITED)					
CIN: L01122DL1990PLC042207					
Regd Address: RZ-1484/28, Ground Floor, Tughlakabad Ext. New Delhi-110019					
Email: sheel102@gmail.com, Web: www.scagrotech.com Ph: 8010562986					
EXTRACT FROM THE STANDALONE UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED ON 30.06.2022					
S. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended On 30.06.2022	Quarter Ended On 30.06.2021	Amt In lakhs For the year ended on 31.03.2022	
1.	Total Income From Operation	98.96	18.53	72.75	
2.	Total Expenses	30.86	17.11	71.07	
3.	Net profit/(loss) for the period (before tax, Exceptional and /or Extraordinary items	68.10	01.42	01.18	
4.	Net profit/(loss) for the period (before tax, after Exceptional and /or Extraordinary items	68.10	01.42	01.18	
5.	Net profit/(loss) for the period after tax and Exceptional and /or Extraordinary items	68.10	01.42	01.18	
6.	Total comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising profit/loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive (after tax)	68.10	01.42	01.18	
7.	Paid up equity Share capital(face value of Rs 10/- each)	599.50	599.50	599.50	
8.	Earning per share (of Rs 10/-Each)				
BASIC and Diluted Earning per share (in Rs)					
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI LODR 2015. The full format of the Financial result are available on the Stock Exchange website (www.bseindia.com) and on the Company website (www.scagrotech.com).					
2. The result of the Quarter ended on 30th June 2022 were reviewed by the audit committee and approved by the Board of Director at its meeting held on 13th August 2022					
By order of the Board FOR SC AGROTECH Limited					
Place: New Delhi				Sd/-	
Date : 13.08.2022				NETRAPAL (Director)	
				Din: 09259717	

RATHI STEEL AND POWER LTD.					
Regd. Office: 24/1-A, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Estate, Mathura Road Vihar, New Delhi-110044					
CIN-L27109DL1971PLC005905					
web: www.rathisteelndpower.com e-mail:investors@rathisteelndpower.com Tel: 011- 40512426					
Extract of Unaudited Statement of Financial Results for the quarter ended 30th June 2022					
(In Lacs)					
S. No	Particulars	Quarter ended		Year ended	
		30/06/2022	31.03.2022	30/06/2021	31.03.2021
		(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1	Total income from operations (net)	19,192.90	9,921.64	8,483.16	54,577.56
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax, exceptional and / or extraordinary item.	227.72	517.53	(171.72)	462.49
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (before Extraordinary items)	227.72	517.53	(171.72)	462.49
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	227.72	(3,593.82)	(171.72)	(3,648.86)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	264.65	(3,552.50)	150.01	(3,607.54)
6	Equity Share Capital	3,130.81	3,130.81	3,130.81	3,130.81
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of previous year)	--	--	--	--
8	Earnings Per Share (after extraordinary items) (of Rs. 10/- each)				
a) Basic :		0.73	(11.48)	(0.55)	(11.65)
b) Diluted:		0.73	(11.48)	(0.55)	(11.65)
The above is an extract of the detailed format of Statement of Audited Financial Results for the quarter ended on 30th June 2022 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Statement Financial Results are available on the websites of the BSE Limited (www.bseindia.com).					
The above financial results were reviewed by the audit committee and approved by Board of Directors of the Company at their meeting held on 13-08-2022					
Date:-13-08-2022					
Place: New Delhi				For and on behalf of Board	
				Sd/- (PREM NARAIN VARSHNEY) MANAGING DIRECTOR, DIN: 00012709	

Sensex rises 379 pts, Nifty closes above 17,800

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex rose by over 379 points while Nifty closed above the 17,800 level following gains in oil & gas, banking and auto shares on easing inflation concerns.

The 30-share BSE benchmark index advanced 379.43 points or 0.64 per cent to settle at 59,842.21, logging its third straight day of gains. During the day, it jumped 460.25 points or 0.77 per cent to 59,923.03.

Extending its gaining streak to a sixth session in a row, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 127.10 points or 0.72 per cent to close at 17,825.25 as 42 of its constituents advanced.

Easing inflation concerns after the wholesale price-based inflation slowed down to a five-month low of 13.93 per cent in July and buying in index majors Reliance Industries and HDFC twins added to the momentum.

"The easing of inflationary pressures has encouraged domestic investors to remain optimistic about the pace of economic recovery. Better-than-expected CPI numbers, aided by slower increase in food



and fuel prices, may limit the pace of rate hikes by the RBI," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra rose the most by 2.28 per cent. Mahindra Group on Monday announced that it would it will launch five new electric sports utility vehicles for both domestic and international markets, with the first four expected to hit the road between 2024 and 2026.

Maruti gained 2.19 per cent, Asian Paints by 2.09 per cent, and Hindustan Unilever by 1.9 per cent. UltraTech Cement, HDFC and HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra and Reliance Industries were among the lead gainers.

On the other hand, State Bank of India fell the most by 0.9 per cent. Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Tata Consultancy Services and NTPC were the laggards.

"Markets maintained their upward bias through the trading session aided by positive global cues and few domestic factors that triggered a rally in realty, automobile and banking stocks.

"Moderating domestic inflation level has raised expectations that interest rate

hike by the central bank may slow down going ahead. While strong FII fund infusion has certainly bolstered the sentiment of investors," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

In the broader market, the BSE mid-cap and smallcap indices both climbed 1.03 per cent each.

Sectorally, BSE auto jumped 2.57 per cent, followed by realty (2.03 per cent), oil & gas (1.76 per cent), consumer discretionary goods & services (1.58 per cent) and power (1.48 per cent).

Telecom and metal were the laggards.

In Asia, Seoul and Shanghai ended higher, while Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower.

Equities in Europe were trading higher in mid-session deals. Markets on the Wall Street had ended higher on Monday.

Stock markets were closed on Monday on account of Independence Day.

Meanwhile, the international oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.86 per cent to USD 94.28 per barrel.

Forex and money markets were closed on account of 'Parsi New Year'.

‘Inflation: Things might get better towards Sept-end’

PTI ■ BENGALURU

State Bank of India's (SBI) Chairman Dinesh Khara on Tuesday said that things might get "better" on the inflation front towards the end of September.

He said the supply side constraints getting addressed and crude oil prices trending low will help ease the situation.

"Inflation...The recent numbers which came out was 6.7. Going forward the way things are - the supply side constraints which are there are getting addressed, so the situation should be improving going forward," he said in response to a question.

Speaking to reporters here, he said one of the important factors of inflation is crude oil prices, and with them also trending lower, it will also support the inflation to be further tapered down. "...Overall expectation is that, maybe towards the end of September things might look to be even better as compared to what you are seeing (now)," he added.

The SBI Chairman was speaking to reporters after announcing the launch of the bank's state-of-the-art dedicated branch for start-ups in Bengaluru. Further pointing out that policy rates by RBI is a very key component for inflation, Khara in response to a question said, the policy rates are the outcome of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, which assesses multiple data points before they arrive at any decision.

"So I think we will have to wait and watch till the next MPC meeting happens, but I think till such time in the intermediary phase, I feel that the supply side constraints are getting addressed," he added.

WPI inflation eases to 5-month low in July, food prices soften

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The wholesale price-based inflation eased to a five-month low of 13.93 per cent in July on easing prices of food articles and manufactured products.

The WPI-based inflation softened for the second consecutive month in July, raising hopes of further decline in wholesale prices in the months to come.

The Wholesale Price Index-based inflation, after scaling a record high of 15.88 per cent in May, declined to 15.18 per cent in June. It was 13.43 per cent in February.

It was 11.57 per cent in July last year.

The WPI inflation continued its declining trend for the second month in July but remained in double-digits for the 16th consecutive month beginning April last year.

Inflation in food articles in July eased to 10.77 per cent from 14.39 per cent in June.

The rate of price rise in vegetables declined substantially to 18.25 per cent in



July against 56.75 per cent in the previous month.

In the fuel and power basket, inflation was 43.75 per cent in July compared to 40.38 per cent in the last month.

Inflation in manufactured products and oil seeds was 8.16 per cent and (-) 4.06 per

cent, respectively.

CRCL LLP CEO and Managing Partner DRE Reddy said higher crude oil prices and input costs still weigh on the producers and pass-through has resulted in pushing the retail inflation higher.

"The global economy is recovering as we witness an increase in demand for metals, oils, crude and fertilisers. Moving forward, as the crude prices soften in the summer season and supply issues getting resolved will help ease WPI inflation in the next few months," Reddy added.

The Reserve Bank of India mainly looks at retail inflation to frame monetary policy. Retail inflation remained above the Reserve Bank's comfort level for the seventh month in a row and was 6.71 per cent in July.

To tame stubbornly high inflation, the RBI has hiked the key interest rate three times this year to 5.40 per cent.

The central bank had projected retail inflation to average 6.7 per cent in 2022-23.

Global standard warning label to boost packaged food export

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With consumption of ultra-processed packaged foods soaring to unprecedented levels, India is prioritising the adoption of a science backed Front of Pack Labelling (FOPL).

At an event, leading industry representatives and food manufacturers said a global best practice FOPL would be a major boost for increasing exports of packaged food products especially those produced by MSME units in the global market.

Haryana CM launches IKEA Retail construction project

Gurugram: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the construction work of the first Swedish furniture retailer IKEA 'Mixed Use Commercial Project' in north India at Ingka Centers in Gurugram by performing Bhoomi Pujan on Tuesday.

This mixed-use IKEA project is to be built with an investment of about Rs 3,500 crore which will be constructed in Sector 47 of Gurugram.

Ingka Group, parent of IKEA Retail, in a statement, said that the project, which will be completed by 2025, will create about 2,500 jobs. The estimated investment for the project is around ₹3,500 crore.

The IKEA project will come up in Sector 47 where the company purchased 10 acres of land from the Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran in 2017. The company had said that the proposed IKEA store will come up to over 4 lakh square feet.

The total building area of the Gurugram new meeting place will be around 1,700,000 sq. ft over nine floors.

Shares of firms having Jhunjhunwala's investments settle on mixed note

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of companies having investments of late billionaire investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala ended on a mixed note on Tuesday. The 62-year-old investor, who was known as the Big Bull and Warren Buffett of India for his investment acumen, passed away on Sunday.

Jhunjhunwala had investments in more than three dozen companies, the most valuable being watch and

jewellery maker Titan, part of the Tata group.

Titan ended 0.88 per cent higher at Rs 2,493.65. During the day, it gained 1.09 per cent to Rs 2,499.

Among the firms in his portfolio, Aptech shares dipped 0.04 per cent to settle at Rs 232.65 on BSE after falling 5.92 per cent to Rs 218.95 during the day.

Shares of Metro Brands declined 1.36 per cent to Rs 842.70. During the day, it dropped 3.13 per cent to

Rs 827.50 on BSE. Agro Tech Foods fell 0.62 per cent.

Among the gainers, Star Health climbed 1.62 per cent to Rs 707.40 after falling 4.79 per cent to Rs 662.75 in intra-day trade.

Tata Motors went up 2.55 per cent, Nazara Technologies jumped 2.44 per cent, NCC Limited gained 2.09 per cent, Indian Hotels went higher by 1.32 per cent, Crisil advanced 1.02 per cent and Titan Company climbed 0.88 per cent.

Among other companies, Canara Bank advanced 0.54 per cent and Lalliss India climbed 0.13 per cent.

According to trendlyne data, Jhunjhunwala and associates publicly held 32 stocks with a net worth of over Rs 31,905 crore at the end of June 2022 quarter.

On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE benchmark index advanced 379.43 points or 0.64 per cent to settle at 59,842.21 points.

General Motors recalls 484K big SUVs to fix problem third-row seat belts

AP ■ DETROIT (US)

General Motors is recalling more than 484,000 large SUVs in the US to fix a problem that can cause the third-row seat belts to malfunction. The recall covers Chevrolet Suburbans and Tahoes, Cadillac Escalades and GMC Yukons from the 2021 and 2022 model years.

The automaker says in documents posted on Tuesday by US safety regulators that rivets that hold the buckle to the mounting bracket on



the left- and right side third-row seats may have been formed improperly.

The belts may not properly restrain a passenger in a crash, increasing the risk of injury.

The company says it's not aware of any crashes or injuries caused by the problem. Dealers will inspect the rivet heads and replace buckle assemblies if needed.

INBRIEF

AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV: 100 FEET TIRANGA HOISTED
Gurugram: KR Mangalam University, Gurugram celebrated Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav by hoisting 100 feet Indian Flag on the campus under Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign. Addressing the gathering during the celebrations of 75th Independence Day, university Chancellor Prof Dinesh Singh, a former Vice Chancellor of the University of Delhi, said, "India is a forerunner in science and technology, we have fought many battles and have emerged winners at all levels. KR Mangalam University is nurturing creative and innovative minds thus contributing successfully to Atma Nirbhar Bharat."

AAIA FELLOW BESTOWED ON IIIT-NR DIRECTOR
New Delhi: The Asia-Pacific Artificial Intelligence Association (AAIA) has conferred its highest honour, the Fellow of the Association, on Dr Pradeep K Sinha, the Director of IIIT-NR. Considering Dr Sinha's contributions to the advancement of Science & Technology and Technical Education, the Executive Board of the AAIA decided to bestow this honour upon him after recognising him among the top scientists of the world with outstanding achievements in the area of Distributed Computing.

'GOAL NOT ACHIEVED TILL POVERTY EXISTS'
Chennai: "As long as there are tears and sufferings, our work is not over. There is a need to eradicate poverty, improve literacy and make use of opportunities," said Dr K Radhakrishnan, former Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu, and presently the Member of Police Commission, Tamil Nadu, who hoisted the national flag at VIT Chennai.

Adani Logistics to acquire ICD Tumb from Navkar Corp for ₹835 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Logistics, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd, on Tuesday said it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire ICD Tumb (Vapi) from Navkar Corporation for Rs 835 crore.

Adani Logistics Ltd (ALL) in a statement said the deal comprises the acquisition of the operational ICD (inland container depot) with a capacity to handle

0.5 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit).

Associated 129 acres of land provides an additional expansion path to increase capacity and cargo in near future, as additional industrial corridors and logistic parks get added along these DFC (Dedicated Freight Corridor) routes, it noted.

The company said the acquisition is in line with its strategy to build integrated transport utility and pan India logistics infrastructure, and Tumb adds to the existing seven multi-modal logistics parks in the Adani Logistics portfolio.

According to the statement, ICD Tumb has a private freight



terminal with four rail handling lines connected with Western DFC, custom notified land and bonded warehouse facilities.

Strategically located, Tumb serves both Hazira port and Nhava Sheva port along the Western DFC surrounded by industrial units of Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) and Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC).

APSEZ CEO and Whole-Time Director Karan Adani said, "This acquisition fits well with our transformation strategy towards becoming a transport utility as well as move us closer to our objective of providing economical door-to-door services to our customers".

The turnover of ICD situated at Tumb village of Valsad district in Gujarat as on last financial year ended March 31, 2022 was Rs 403.28 crore.

SAIL producing special rails used in high-speed freight corridors on trial basis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned steel maker SAIL will produce some quantity of special rails used in high-speed freight corridors and metro rail projects this year, according to a company official. SAIL has set up a facility for the production of head hardened (HH) rails at the new Universal Rail Mill (URM) at its Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) in Chhattisgarh.

"...We will be of course producing some quantity in this year," Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) Director Finance Anil Kumar Tulsiani said.

The head hardened rail is still under trial and once the trial is successful the company will be in a position to finalise the quantity to be produced, he spoke during the Q1 Earnings Conference Call. Such rails are manufactured using head hardening technology to bear about 50 per cent higher pressure compared to normal rails. Replying to another query, Tulsiani said it is too early to give SAIL's capex guidance for the entire year adding that there were a lot of projects in the pipeline for which already the board has given its go-ahead.

"....The orders will fructify in this year only but yes our endeavour is to do as much as possible because these schemes whatever are there they are basically some debottlenecking schemes so the more we finish them off in a faster time, it will be better for the plants also," he explained.

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India's fuel demand continues to fall in Aug as monsoon sets in

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Diesel demand in India fell for the second month in a row as the onset of monsoon chipped away consumption in key sectors like agriculture, preliminary industry data showed Tuesday.

Petrol and diesel demand had fallen month-on-month in July. While petrol consumption is almost flat in the first half of August, diesel - the most widely used fuel in the country - saw demand drop 11.2 per cent during August 1-15 to 2.82 million tonnes from 3.17 million tonnes in the same period of the previous month.

The arrival and intensity of monsoon weigh heavily on diesel



demand in the country and consumption traditionally is lower in July-September than in April-June. Monsoon restricts mobility and demand from the farm sector, which uses diesel in irrigation pumps and trucking, also drops with the onset of rains.

Diesel demand was, however, 32.8 per cent higher year-on-year, supported by strong economic growth and a relatively low base-

line for the same period in 2021 when the second wave of COVID-19 had impacted the economy.

Consumption of diesel was 58.2 per cent higher than the 1.78 million tonnes demand during August 1-15 in 2020. It was 23 per cent more than pre-COVID August 2019, the data showed.

Petrol sales inched up 0.8 per cent to 1.29 million tonnes in the first half of August when compared to 1.28 million tonnes of consumption in the same period of the previous month.

The consumption was 30.6 per cent higher than August 2021 and 43.4 per cent more than the first fortnight of August 2020. It was 36 per cent more than pre-COVID August 2019.

Govt approves startup loan to firm for commercialising 'compostable' plastic

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government Tuesday approved a startup loan of Rs 1.15 crore to a bioplastics firm for commercialising "compostable" plastic and mitigating the usage of Single Use Plastics (SUP).

In a statement, the Science and Technology ministry said an MoU was signed between the Technology Development Board, a statutory body under Department of Science &

Technology, and TGP Bioplastics Private Limited, Satara, Maharashtra, for manufacturing and commercialisation of compostable plastic.

Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh was apprised that the StartUp has come up with an alternative solution of Single Use Plastic (SUP) with the prototype of a compostable plastic material which breaks down as a compost in soil without affecting the environment.

‘Gold jewellery demand likely to contract in 2nd, 3rd quarters of FY23’



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Gold jewellery demand in India is likely to decline in the second and third quarters of this fiscal due to hike in import duty, high volatility in prices and inflationary pressure, according to a report.

While demand is likely to contract by 8 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of FY23, the decline is expected to be higher at 15 per cent in the third quarter due to the exceptionally high base in the same period of FY22, Icara said in a report. According to the report, the exceptional third quarter performance in FY22 was due to the post-Covid reopening of the economy and the substantially high demand in the wedding and festive seasons.

Nonetheless, overall industry is expected to grow by a moderate 10 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) in FY23 on the back of strong performance in the first quarter of FY23 and steady demand in wedding and festive season in the current fiscal.

The organised jewellery retail industry's revenue is likely to grow at a higher pace of 14 per cent y-o-y in FY23, driven by continued store expansions, the report added.

"In addition, an increase in other discretionary spending on things like travel due to lower restrictions and a likely reduction in the share of jewellery purchases in overall wedding expenditure, which was higher last year due to restrictions around gatherings, are also factors that can affect demand. Rural demand for gold is also likely to be impacted by uncertain monsoons in the current year and higher interest rates on agricultural loans which could dent disposable incomes," Icara Senior Vice President and Group Head Jayanta Roy said.

Companies in India expected to give 10% hike in 2023, says report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Companies in India are expected to give a salary hike of 10 per cent in 2023 as they struggle with rising attrition in the tight labour market, according to a report.

Global advisory, broking and solutions company Willis Towers Watson's Salary Budget Planning report found that companies in India are budgeting an overall increase of 10 per cent for 2022-23, compared with the actual 9.5 per

cent growth in the previous year.

According to the report, more than half (58 per cent) of the employers in India have budgeted for higher salary increases for the ongoing fiscal year compared to last year, while a quarter of them (24.4 per cent) made no change in the budget.

Only 5.4 per cent have reduced the budget as compared to 2021-22, it added. The report revealed that at 10 per cent, salary increases in India continue to be the highest in

the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.

China is projected to see an increase of 6 per cent, Hong Kong at 4 per cent and Singapore at 4 per cent for next year, it added.

The report was based on a survey across 168 countries in April and May 2022, which includes 590 organisations in India.

It further said around 42 per cent of companies in India have also projected a positive business revenue outlook for the next 12 months, while only 7.2 per cent

have projected a negative outlook.

In addition, Information Technology (65.5 per cent), engineering (52.9 per cent), sales (35.4 per cent), technically skilled trades (32.5 per cent) and finance (17.5 per cent) are expected to be the most sought-after functions for recruitment in the next 12 months.

Voluntary attrition rates in India continue to be amongst the highest in the region at 15.1 per cent, only second to Hong Kong, it observed.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a massive setback for the country, world football governing body FIFA on Tuesday suspended India for "undue influence from third parties" and said the U-17 Women's World Cup "cannot currently be held in India as planned."

The country is scheduled to host the FIFA tournament from October 11-30.

This is the first time the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has been banned by FIFA in its 85-year history, with the apex body saying there have been "flagrant violations of the FIFA Statutes".

"The Bureau of the FIFA Council has unanimously decided to suspend the All India Football Federation (AIFF) with immediate effect due to undue influence from third parties, which constitutes a serious violation of the FIFA Statutes," the FIFA said in a statement.

The Bureau of the FIFA Council said the lifting of the suspension will be subject to repealing of the Committee of Administrators' (CoA) mandate in full. In a statement, FIFA also said it wants the AIFF administration to "be fully in charge of the AIFF's daily affairs".

"The suspension will be lifted once an order to set up a committee of administrators to assume the powers of the AIFF Executive Committee has been repealed and the AIFF administration regains full control of the AIFF's daily affairs."

"The suspension means that the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022, scheduled to take place in India on 11-30 October 2022, cannot currently be held in India as planned. FIFA is assessing the next steps with regard to the tournament and will refer the matter to the Bureau of the Council if and when necessary."

In the wake of the latest development, the Centre sought an urgent hearing in the Supreme Court on the AIFF matter.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and A S Bopanna was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, that "important development" has taken place and FIFA has sent a letter suspending India which is in public

FOOTBALL'S TOP GOVERNING BODY BANS INDIA FOR THIRD PARTY INFLUENCE; WOMEN'S U17 WORLD CUP NOT TO BE HELD IN INDIA



domain and needs to be brought on record.

This was after a four-member FIFA delegation held a meeting with senior sports ministry officials and the CoA on Friday and Monday, respectively.

"Till last evening it seemed consensus has been reached between all the parties but last night FIFA just informed us that they will have to ban AIFF as per its internal committee decision," an official in the sports ministry said.

"FIFA is against CoA's interference but it is open to dialogue and wants the AIFF executive board to be in place at the earliest, and if that happens, they will lift the ban."

"The government is committed to solving the matter as soon as possible as it wants the U-17 Women's Junior World Cup to be hosted by India," he added.

A ban on India has been on the cards since the Supreme Court removed Praful Patel as AIFF president on May 18 for not holding elec-

tions, due in December 2020.

The court had appointed a three-member Committee of Administrators (CoA), headed by former apex court judge AR Dave, to manage the affairs of the national federation.

The CoA, which has former Chief Commissioner of India SY Quraishi and ex India captain Bhaskar Ganguly as other members, also had to frame its constitution in line with the National Sports Code and model guidelines.

The Bureau of the FIFA Council decided that upon lifting of the suspension, the AIFF constitution will have to be revised in accordance with the requirements of the FIFA and the AFC and to be approved by the AIFF general assembly without interference from any third party.

The FIFA, "concurrently", wants an "independent electoral committee to be elected by the AIFF general assembly to run the elections of a new executive committee".

It also said the AIFF must "carry

out the upcoming electoral process as per the statutory requirements and to hold its elections based on the pre-existing membership of the AIFF (i.e state associations only).

As per the FIFA move and with the AIFF losing all membership rights until further notice, the Indian clubs and representatives (players, referees, officials) are no longer entitled to take part in international suspension until the suspension is lifted.

"This also means neither the

AIFF nor any of its members or officials may benefit from any development programmes, courses or training from FIFA and/or the AFC," the world body said in its detailed statement.

The FIFA has never allowed third party interference in the affairs of its member units whether by the court or the government. It has set up normalisation committees in various countries in cases similar to India.

FIFA, though, has kept a window open for India, saying it is in touch with the sports ministry on the issue.

"FIFA is in constant constructive contact with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in India and is hopeful that a positive outcome to the case may still be achieved," it said.

Following the ban, the fate of the AIFF elections, to be held on August 28 on the orders of the Supreme is not yet known.

The poll process began on August 13 as the top court approved the time-line prepared by the Committee of Administrators (CoA).

The CoA has already appointed a returning officers and has published the electoral college for the elections, including 36 eminent players in the list. The filing of nominations is to start from Wednesday till Friday.

India's football fraternity is hoping that a last-minute solution will salvage the FIFA under-17 women's world cup when the Supreme Court hears the matter on Wednesday.

The sports ministry had filed an application in the Supreme Court, seeking a modification to its August 5 order that allowed 36 eminent players to vote in the AIFF elections on the grounds that the world body was not in favour of 'individual membership' in the AIFF.

According to sources, FIFA reiterated its stand to the sports ministry on Monday and issued the statement to ban India after that (around 10pm Swiss local time; wee hours on Tuesday in India).

The Supreme Court on August 3 directed the executive committee of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) to expeditiously hold elections as per the schedule proposed by the CoA.

Murray downs Wawrinka in Cincinnati

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Andy Murray won his first hard-court match of the summer on Monday, defeating Stan Wawrinka 7-6 (7/3), 5-7, 7-5 in the opening round of the ATP/WT A Cincinnati Masters.

The 35-year-old Scot was facing his 37-year-old Swiss rival for the 22nd time with both treble Grand Slam champions still coming back to full form after long-term injuries over the past few seasons.

Murray lost in the first round at Washington and last week in Montreal while Wawrinka's last win came on grass two months ago at Queen's Club, London; he has not won on cement since the Australian Open last year.

Murray needed four match points to advance at a tournament he has won twice, in 2008 and 2011.

The veteran was competing here for the 17th time.

Compatriot Cameron Norrie joined Murray in the second round with his 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-4 defeat of Dane Holger Rune.



Other winners on opening day included 2016 champion Marin Cilic, who defeated Spain's Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-3, and American John Isner, the 2013 finalist against Rafael Nadal, who advanced past France's

Benjamin Bonzi 7-6 (13/11), 3-6, 7-6 (7/4).

In the WTA draw, Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina defeated Egyptian Mayar Sherif 6-3, 6-2.

The world number 25 set up a

second-round clash with eighth seed Garbine Muguruza, title-winner here in 2017.

American Amanda Anisimova beat ninth seed Daria Kasatkina 6-4, 6-4.

'FITNESS KEY'

Andy Murray said match fitness will be the key to the remainder of his season after reaching the second round of the ATP/WT A Cincinnati Masters.

After half a decade of injury problems including a pair of hip surgeries, the Scot knows the remainder of his season, and career, will depend on his physical state.

"Physically I felt pretty good for the last few months, but in a lot of the tournaments I've lost in the second round," he said.

"I've not had that opportunity to have a really good tournament and then maybe take a break and rest."

"I hope I can get to that level again where I'm consistently getting to the latter stages of events, and therefore, we will be able to plan and schedule my tournaments better."

Kyrgios 'unavailable' for Aus at Davis Cup

AP ■ SYDNEY

Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios will skip the Davis Cup next month, Tennis Australia said on Tuesday, scotching speculation about his return to the team competition.

The 27-year-old has not appeared at the Davis Cup since 2019 but would have been an obvious choice given his strong run of form since his Wimbledon final appearance in July.

Kyrgios, ranked 28 in the world, won the Washington Open earlier this month and reached the quarter-finals of the Canadian Open.

"It would have been great to have Nick in the team but unfortunately he was unavailable for this tie," Australia's Davis Cup captain Lleyton Hewitt said in a statement.

The team will be led by Alex de Minaur and Thanasi Kokkinakis and also include Wimbledon men's doubles champions Matt Ebden and Max Purcell.

Australia will compete in Hamburg on September 13-18 in Pool C alongside Germany, France and Belgium in the group stage.

Morata returns with brace

AP ■ MADRID

Alvaro Morata struck twice to secure Atletico Madrid a 3-0 victory at Getafe in their opening game of the La Liga season on Monday.

Morata, who has returned to Atletico after two years on loan with Juventus, scored a goal in each half before Antoine Griezmann wrapped up the points.

Joao Felix played a key role by setting up all three goals, the first of which Morata swept home from the edge of the box on 15 minutes.

Borja Mayoral grazed the crossbar for Getafe late in the first half, but Morata eased Atletico nerves with a clinical finish on the hour following an error by Stefan Mitrovic.

Felix then threaded the ball through for Griezmann, who cut inside and drove low into the corner to ensure Atletico made a winning start following the departure of Luis Suarez.



The Uruguayan rejoined his boyhood club Nacional on a short-term deal in July after his contract expired at Atletico.

Athletic Bilbao drew 0-0 at home to Mallorca, while Real Betis host Elche later on Monday to round out the opening round of fixtures in Spain.

Vlahovic's double sinks Sassuolo



AP ■ TURIN

Dusan Vlahovic fired Juventus to a comfortable 3-0 win over Sassuolo with a brace in Monday's Serie A opener while Victor Osimhen was racially abused by Verona fans in a thumping 5-2 win for Napoli.

Serbia forward Vlahovic put Juve two ahead just before the break from the penalty spot after being fouled by Gian Marco Ferrari, and ended the match as a contest following a smart Angel Di Maria pass six minutes after the restart.

Di Maria had set Juve on the road for a low-key win with his first Serie A goal, a miscued volley in the 26th minute of his debut after arriving as a free agent this summer.

Massimiliano Allegri's side were missing returning hero Paul Pogba, out with a knee

injury until next month, and injured starting goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny.

However Allegri gave Filip Kostic his Juve debut off the bench, a new face who along with the excellent Di Maria could rejuvenate a sluggish team who came up against the weakest of resistance at the Allianz Stadium.

Osimhen was among the scorers for Napoli who before kick-off honoured their former goalkeeper Claudio Garella, a Serie A title winner in the 1980s with both southern Italy's biggest club and Verona.

A reporter at the game heard a section of the home support launch monkey chants at the Nigeria forward midway through the first half, before he stretched to jab home Giovanni Di Lorenzo's knockdown in stoppage time to put the away side 2-1 ahead at half-time.

Denker, Arnold Sheldon - Botvinnik, Mikhail

This month, in our series 'Champion born this month', I would like to present a game by the most remarkable World Chess Champion — someone who always showed courage to experiment, someone who was the pioneer of artificial intelligence and someone who is considered to be the greatest Chess visionary who influenced the Chess world most. Surely the reader has guessed that I am speaking about five times world Chess champion Mikhail Botvinnik of USSR.

Mikhail Moiseyevich Botvinnik (17th August, 1911-- 5th May 1995) was born at Kuokkala, (now in Repino district, Saint Petersburg) to a Jewish dentist couple. Though it was the most trying time for the Jewish community then, Botvinnik always found a way to survive and excel due to his intelligence, adaptability and wisdom.

Botvinnik turned an atheist very young and always described himself as "a Jew by blood, a Russian by culture and a Soviet by upbringing". At the tender age of 20, Botvinnik won the Soviet Chess Championship, thereby getting opportunity to participate in important Chess tournaments in Western Europe. His victories over former World Champions Capablanca and Alekhine — two masterpieces displaying exactly opposite playing styles — reveal the depth of Botvinnik's mastery over Chess strategy, tactics and technique at a young age. When World Champion Alexander Alekhine passed away in 1946, leaving the Chess throne empty, the International Chess Federation FIDE conducted the 'World Championship Tournament' at Groningen (1946) in which Botvinnik emerged the winner, to be crowned as



the World Champion for the first time.

Botvinnik always believed in propagating and promoting the game on all fronts at the same time and was the main force behind the government support and the broad player base in Soviet Union. He wrote several Chess books and composed some very illustrative Chess puzzles. Botvinnik's greatest contribution to Chess is his study of artificial intelligence and computer science. Even when he was the World Champion, Botvinnik dedicated a lot of time in designing and making Chess playing computers. Even at the risk of becoming ridiculed by fellow Chess masters, Botvinnik always expressed that computers would eventually defeat humans some day. His words have indeed come true, though, sadly, it was not to happen during his lifetime.

After retiring from active participation in world championship cycles,

Botvinnik started training talented youngsters from Soviet Union. World Champions Garry Kasparov and Vladimir Kramnik are the most prominent among his students. Botvinnik promptly acknowledged the contribution of others to his own work as well as to Chess theory. He attributed his concept of 'acclimatisation', practiced by all Soviet sportspersons for decades, to invaluable inputs and suggestions by World Chess Champion Dr Emanuel Lasker. Due to his innovativeness, objectivity and clarity of thoughts, Botvinnik was always able to lead the Chess world in new directions and dimensions till the last day of his life. The Chess world will always miss this legendary personality.

Today let me take you through a game played by Botvinnik in the system named after him and annotated by none other than his most successful pupil, Garry Kasparov.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c6 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bg5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 This sharp continuation, defending the 'c4' Pawn at the cost of allowing White to attack the pinned Black Knight with a Pawn, is now known as the Botvinnik variation of the Slav Defence.

7.e5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Nxg5! hxg5 10.Bxg5 Nbd7 11.exf6 White has recovered the sacrificed piece and seems to be in an advantageous position. However, Botvinnik soon demonstrated that this is only an illusion and Black has enough dynamic resources to create adequate counterplay.

11...Bb7 12.Be2? This natural developing move turns out to be a serious mistake. "

12.g3! must go without thinking - writes my hand 51 years later." — Garry Kasparov in 1996.

12...Qb6 13.0-0 0-0-0

"Both kings are castled; however, the White monarch will soon feel quite uncomfortable, especially after the imminent c6-c5." — Garry Kasparov.

14.a4! Looks natural, but while trying to open the opponent's Kingside White soon finds himself well behind in the creation of any real threats." — Garry Kasparov.

14.Bf3 protecting the crucial diagonal, could have partially repaired the damage done by the 12th move, although a bishop on g2 with the pawn on g3 is a much more healthy construction for the castled King. For example, 14...Ne5! leads to a double-edged position after the queen sacrifice: 15.dxe5 Rxd1 16.Rfxd1 " Garry Kasparov.

"In one training game Ragozin, Botvinnik's long-time coach and sparring partner, played the optimistic 14.h4 and after 14...Bh6! 15.a4 Bxg5 16.hxg5 b4 17.Ne4 c5 White didn't survive for long in this open position." — Garry Kasparov.

14...b4! 15.Ne4 c5! 16.Qb1? "Too far from the action. 16.Qc2 wouldn't have changed much after 16...b3! 17.Qb1 Qc7 etc. Another proposition 16.Qc2,c3!? 17.bxc3 Qc7 looks extremely exciting, e.g. 18.f4 cxd4 19.c4 d3! 20.Bxd3 Nc5 21.Nxc5 Bxc5+ 22.Kh1 Rdg8 (threatening 23...Rxxg5) 23.Bh7 (what else?) 23...b3! 24.Qb1, Qc6! 25.Rf3 Qxf3! and the crazed elephants (Chess Bishops are called elephants in Russian - Pravin Thipsay) will trample all over White's king. Remember 26.gxf3 Bxf3# is mate!" Garry Kasparov.

The only reasonable alternative was 16.Nd2! with hopes of staying in the game after 16...c3 17.bxc3 bxc3 18.Nc4 Qc7 19.h4 etc.

16...Qc7!

As you have probably noticed, Black has gained a valuable tempo for manoeuvring his queen, because the square h2 is also vulnerable from the diagonal h2-b8.

17.Ng3? "The final mistake. This knight had to stay on e4.

The alternative 17.h4 wouldn't stop Black's attack after 17...Bh6!; 17.g3! was relatively the best and could have prevented immediate disaster." — Garry Kasparov.

17...cxd4 18.Bxc4! Qc6!

But not 18...Qxc4?? due to 19.Rc1.

19.f3 d3!

"In amazing harmony Black's pieces are using all open lines and diagonals to satisfy their "basic instincts": to get at the White king!" — Kasparov. Black opens up the 'g1-a7' diagonal for his King Bishop.

20.Qc1

Bad is 20.Ne4? Qc7! 21.g3 Bxe4! 22.fxe4 Qxc4 23.Rc1 Bc5+ 24.Kf1 Qxe4 with a rapid mate. Or if 20.Be3 then 20...Bc5 21.Qe1 Ne5 22.Bb3 Ng4! and White wins.

20...Bc5+ 21.Kh1 Qd6! 22.Qf4

This allowed Black to win with a pretty combination but there was no defence anyway

22...Rxxh2+! 23.Kxx2 Rh8+ 24.Qh4

24.Nh5 fails to 24...Rxxh5+ 25.Kg3 Rxx5+!

24...Rxxh4+ 25.Bxx4 Qf4!

White resigned. 0-1

Pravin Thipsay, Arjuna Awardee and International Chess Grandmaster.

Dhawan always ready to help youngsters

PTI ■ HARARE

He might have been relegated to vice-captaincy after KL Rahul's late inclusion but team's senior-most player is always ready to lend a helping hand to the youngsters who seek out for him.

Dhawan was all set to lead the team in a three-match ODI series here but now that he will be performing the duties of a deputy, he is ready to put his best foot forward.

"I quite enjoy sharing my experience with the youngsters in the team. I first came here in 2014 (actually 2013), when Duncan Fletcher was the Indian coach. If they (youngsters) reach out to me for any suggestions, I am (always) there to answer them," Dhawan told reporters at a media conference here.

The 36-year-old southpaw is rather happy that skipper Rahul will get the much-needed game time ahead of the all-important Asia Cup.

"It is a very good news that KL (Rahul) is back and will be leading the side as well. He is one of the main players of this Indian team. It will be a good outing for him before the Asia Cup gets underway. I am sure he will gain a lot from this tour," Dhawan said.

All-rounder Washington Sundar who was a sure-shot starter against Zimbabwe was ruled out after he injured his left shoulder in the Royal London One Day Cup.

The 22-year-old Chennai lad last donned the Indian colours during the West Indies series in February 2021.

"It's sad that Washington is out. He is quite an important player for the side. But it's part and parcel...Injuries happen. Hope, he will recover soon. He will be missed him as a spinner but we have got a good back-up through Kuldeep Yadav and Deepak Hooda, who also bowls off-spin," the Indian vice captain said.

While India is back in the southern African nation for the first time since 2016 and haven't played much against them in the last few years, Dhawan was of the opinion that should not take Zimbabwe, especially after their recent series win against Bangladesh.

"They have won against Bangladesh. They are playing good cricket. It's good for us and we cannot take anything for granted. It's about the process.

"Regardless of the team we are facing, we always make sure we do things right so that we end up getting the right results. That will once again be our focus



Shahbaz Ahmed gets maiden India call-up

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

All-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed on Tuesday received his maiden India call-up as he replaced an injured Washington Sundar for the three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe starting this week.

The 27-year-old Shahbaz has been rewarded for his stellar performance in the 2022 IPL season,

where he turned out for Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The Bengal left-arm spinner collected 219 runs and four wickets in 16 matches, leaving a mark.

The Southpaw has a batting average of 41.64 and a bowling average of 19.47 from 18 first class games.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee named Shahbaz Ahmed

as the replacement for Washington Sundar for the three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe," the BCCI said in a statement.

Washington had injured his shoulder while playing a County game in England, ruling him out of the Zimbabwe tour.

India are scheduled to play three ODIs starting in Harare on Thursday.

as a team," Dhawan said.

Dhawan praised senior Zimbabwean batter Sikandar Raza and said that the Indian bowlers will have to bowl smart against the latter to contain him in the right time.

"He is a very good player. He has been playing for Zimbabwe for a long time. He is a quality player. I am sure our bowlers will come up with nice plans against him," he said.

Dhawan went on to add that the series against Zimbabwe will be

crucial for a number of youngsters in the squad like Shubman Gill, Avesh Khan, Ishan Kishan, and the exposure they are getting will be extremely beneficial to them in the coming days.

"The youngsters, these days,

New Zealand A to tour India in August & Sept, Oz likely in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The India 'A' side is set to get its first assignment in over eight months with New Zealand and, in all likelihood, Australia touring the country.

The India A program will be "helmed by VVS Laxman and his NCA support staff group of Sairaj Bahutule and Sitanshu Kotak," according to a report in 'ESPNCricinfo'.

India A was previously in action in November-December last year, when it played three unofficial Tests in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

The New Zealand 'A' side is slated to arrive in India by the end of this month. It will play three four-day games and as many List A matches with all fixtures expected to be held in Bengaluru.

A pink-ball fixture is also being mulled upon by the BCCI, but final approval is pending.

Even in their previous tour in 2017-18, the New Zealand 'A' side had played a pink-ball match at Vijayawada, although it was a day game.

The tour of New Zealand is likely to coincide with the Duleep Trophy, scheduled from September 8 to 25. The BCCI is also in talks with Cricket Australia for a possible tour.

"The BCCI is also understood to be in negotiations with Cricket Australia for a tour towards the end of the year - most likely in November - prior to the start of the Ranji Trophy and India's next Test assignment, which will be in Bangladesh," the report said.

have got more exposure. They are confident and they have got good technique. Their confidence level is quite high because of domestic and IPL. We feel that we have got so many options. It is a healthy sign for the team," Dhawan said.



India Women's to play 2 Tests in next 3 years

Women's in Blue to play 2 Tests, 27 ODIs and 36 T20Is in FTP 2022-2025

PTI ■ DUBAI

The Indian women's team will play as many as 65 international games in the inaugural Future Tours & Programmes (FTP) set by the ICC during the three-year-cycle between May, 2022 to April, 2025.

The ICC on Tuesday announced the the structured calendar that includes a total of 301 matches (seven Tests, 135 ODIs and 159 T20Is) over a period of three years.

India's share of matches will be two Tests against England and Australia along with 27 ODIs and 36 T20 Internationals during the said duration.

Since the FTP has started from May, 2022, India have already played 3 WODIs and 3 WT20Is against Sri Lanka.

As per the list, India hosts New Zealand, South Africa, West Indies and Ireland at home, the away series are against Australia, England, Sri Lanka (already played) and Bangladesh.

One of the marquee events in this phase will be India's five-match T20I series against the 'Southern Stars' later this year.

While the Australians will be visiting India once again during the summer of 2023-24

for a multi-format series (one Test, three ODIs, and three T20Is), the Indians will return the favour when they tour Down Under in the winter of 2025-26 (one Test, three ODIs, and three T20Is).

Of the seven Tests inked during the phase, England will play the most Tests - five, followed by Australia (four), South Africa (three) and India (two).

"This is a huge moment for the women's game," ICC general manager of cricket, Wasim Khan, said in a statement.

"This FTP not only lends certainty to future cricket tours but also sets the base for a structure that is sure to grow in the coming years," Khan added.

According to ICC, the 2022-25 Women's Championship, teams will generally play three-match bilateral ODI series before the 2025 World Cup.

Many of these series will also be accompanied by T20 international matches, with some teams also giving its consent for five-match WT20I series.

"All bilateral T20I matches count towards respective team rankings, which in turn serves as a primary mechanism for determining the teams that qualify for ICC global events," ICC said in its statement.

Praggnanandhaa beats Firouzja in FTX Crypto Cup chess

PTI ■ MIAMI

Teenage Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa on Tuesday opened his campaign in the FTX Crypto Cup, the American finale of Champions Chess Tour, with a 2.5-1.5 win over the world's top junior player Alireza Firouzja.

The 17-year old, who was part of the Bronze medal-winning India 'B' team at the recent chess Olympiad in Mamallapuram near Chennai, opened with a win in the first of the four-game match.

He lost the second game before winning the third and drawing the fourth to beat Firouzja in the first round match on Tuesday.

The Indian GM picked up three points for beating the highly-rated Firouzja and faces Dutch No.1 Anish Giri in the second round.

Meanwhile, world No.1 Magnus Carlsen of Norway stormed to a 3-1 win over Giri.

In other matches in the first round, Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda beat Hans Nieman 3-0 while Lev Aronian defeated China's Le Liem 2.5-1.5.

The eight-player all-play-all tournament is the American finale of Champions Chess Tour. There is \$7,500 at stake for each match win at the event.

Ireland great Kevin O'Brien bids goodbye to int'l cricket



AP ■ DUBLIN

Ireland all-rounder Kevin O'Brien on Tuesday announced his retirement from international cricket after falling out of contention for this year's T20 World Cup in Australia.

O'Brien played three Tests, 153 ODIs and 110 T20Is during a 16-year international career and had spells with a number of English county clubs and T20 franchise sides around the world.

The 38-year-old famously blasted the Irish to victory over England in a 2011 World Cup group match in India with a 50-ball century — still the tournament's quickest.

The Dubliner scored 9,048 runs in total for Ireland, including the country's first Test

hundred, a second-innings knock of 118 against Pakistan in 2018, and took 276 wickets.

In a statement on Twitter, O'Brien, who for many years played alongside older brother Niall, said: "Today I announce my retirement from international cricket after 16 years and 389 caps for my country.

"I had hoped to finish my career at the T20 World Cup in Australia, but having not been picked for the Irish squad since last year's World Cup, I feel the selectors and management are looking elsewhere.

"I have enjoyed every minute playing for Ireland, have made many friends off the pitch and I have so many happy memories to remember from my time playing for the national side." Ireland captain Andrew Balbirnie said he was "lucky" to

Ex- BCCI secretary Amitabh no more

RANCHI: Amitabh Chaudhary, the former BCCI secretary and president of Jharkhand State Cricket Association (JSCA) died of heart attack on Tuesday morning. He was 62. An IIT Kharagpur alumnus, Chaudhary was instrumental in getting the first-class status for Jharkhand after BCCI disbanded the Bihar Cricket Association during the late Jagmohan Dalmiya's tenure in the early part of the new millennium.

Chaudhary also played a major role in building one of the finest cricket stadiums in Ranchi and should be considered instrumental in bringing international cricket and IPL to the industrial town.

He had also served as a BCCI joint secretary and was an administrative manager with the Indian team on a few occasions. PTI

have played with O'Brien.

"Cricket in this country owes a lot to what Kev achieved on and off the field and he has left the game in a better place," he said.



Sultan Azlan Shah Cup to return after two years in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, an annual invitational international men's hockey tournament, is set to make a comeback after a two-year break in November this year.

The prestigious tournament didn't take place in the last two years due to COVID-19. The last time it was held in 2019, South Korea had emerged champions by beating India in the summit clash.

"We are all set to host the Premier Azlan Shah Cup in November this year. We have invited six teams including India and Australia and we hope our invitation will be accepted," an AHF official said.

India has been invited alongside Australia, Germany and England for the tournament scheduled to be held from November 16 to 25 in Ipoh, Malaysia.

While Australia are the most successful team in the tournament with 10 titles, India have won it five times.

Suryakumar is a bit like ABD, No. 4 is his best spot: Ponting

PTI ■ DUBAI

Suryakumar Yadav has received high praise from the great Ricky Ponting, who compared the batter with AB de Villiers, saying the Indian possesses a 360 degree game like the South African genius.

Ponting suggested that Yadav should bat at number four in the Indian line-up.

"Surya (Yadav) scores 360 degrees around the ground, a bit like an AB de Villiers did when he was in his actual prime. The lap shots, the late cuts, you know, the ramps over the keeper's head. He can hit down the ground," Ponting said on the latest episode of The ICC Review.

"He hits really well over the leg side, flicks to deep backward square particularly well, and he's a good player of fast bowling and is a good player of spin bowling."

Yadav, 31, has scored 672 runs at an average of 37.33 and a strike rate of 175.45 in 23 T20 matches and now sits at No.2 in the ICC T20 Batter Ranking.

"He's a very, very exciting player and I'm sure someone that's going to find himself in their team, not just their squad," Ponting, who has seen Yadav up close in his early years at Mumbai Indians, said.

"I think you'd find him in



their team for the T20 World Cup. And if he's in that team, then I think all the fans in Australia are going to see a very, very good player.

"He's quite a confident person. He backs himself and he's never going to step down from a challenge or any situation that arises in a game. I feel he thinks he can win that situation and therefore go on and win the game for his team."

Asked whether Yadav would make India's best XI, the former Australian skipper said he has "played better than anybody else in the Indian team for the last couple of series" and should be slotted at the top order.

"It's got to be in the top

four, I think. I said stick with him (Virat Kohli) in his traditional spot, which has been number three," Ponting, a two-time World Cup-winning captain, said.

"For Surya, it's one, two or four. I think he can open, but I think he's probably, you know, if you could probably just keep him away from the new ball, let him control the middle part of the game outside the Powerplay, through in the middle, and if he's in at the end, you know what can happen."

Ponting said: "I think in the top four is, well, actually I'll go out on a limb: I don't want him to open. I think number four is his best spot."

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2022-08, Dt.11.08.2022
Name of Work : COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING SYSTEMS OF MEDIA MAKE AT RAHENABATA, MURIBAHAL, GODBHAGA, HIRAKUD, ATTABIRA, DEOBHAHAL, BARPALI, BOINDA, HANDAPA & DUNGRI PALI STATIONS OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR THREE YEARS.
Tender Value (₹) : 1,79,90,610/-, EMD (₹): 2,40,000/-, Cost of Tender Document (₹): 5,900/-
Date and time of closing of tender : At 11:00 hrs of 02.09.2022.
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
NOTE: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.
Complete information including e-tender documents is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.
Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom) PR-387/N/22-23 Sambalpur

South Africa keen to wreck England's 'Bazball' party

AP ■ LONDON

South Africa captain Dean Elgar says he does not fear "Bazball" as the Proteas seek to inflict England's first Test defeat of their swashbuckling new era under the leadership of Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum.

After a dismal run of just one victory in 17 Tests, England have won four from four under new skipper Stokes and coach McCullum heading into their series opener against South Africa at Lord's on Wednesday.

That includes a 3-0 series win over world champions New Zealand, with England hunting down challenging targets on each occasion.

Stokes's men then made light of a seemingly stiff target of 378 in the Covid-delayed fifth Test against India at Edgbaston,



romping to victory by seven wickets.

"Bazball" -- a reference to McCullum's nickname -- has revitalised England's red-ball

fortunes at a time of renewed debate about the future of the five-day game.

But there are questions over whether the ultra-aggressive

approach can work in all circumstances, particularly against a strong South Africa pace attack.

"I've got absolutely no inter-

est in the style that they've played," Elgar told the Guardian. "I think it can go one of two ways for them and it can go south very quickly...I'd like to see them do it against our seamers."

But England bowling great James Anderson, speaking at Lord's on Monday, is confident that sticking with a positive mindset will prove the right thing for the team.

"I don't think it has to come unstuck at all," he said. "We now know we've got the ability to chase anything down and we've got the ability to take wickets in any conditions.

"If we keep playing with that entertaining sort of mindset and also be smart with it as well... there may be times when we can't go hell for leather with the bat and maybe we have to soak up a bit of pressure at times and

just be smart about when we put pressure back on the opposition.

Both teams appear to be stronger in bowling rather than batting although, with resilient opener Elgar leading from the front, the Proteas have won seven out of nine Tests under his captaincy, while the form of Keegan Petersen has helped compensate for the red-ball retirement of gifted shotmaker Quinton de Kock.

England will hope in-form batsmen Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow maintain their eye-catching form of earlier in the season.

South Africa spearhead bowler Kagiso Rabada is doubtful for the first game of the three-Test series with an ankle injury.

"I'm hoping that he pulls

through," said Proteas coach Mark Boucher. "Rabada is a massive player for us as we all know so for him to be part of the final XI would be very special for us."

BHUBANESWAR DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
C-999 E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
E-Mail Id-ee2@bmc.gov.in
1. Bid reference No : BMC-EED-II-04/2022-23 Dt.10.08.2022
2. Tender Call notice No : No. 38800 Dt. 10.08.2022
3. No of work : 3 Nos
4. Bid Value : Rs.2,42,282.00 to Rs. 4,87,623
5. Period of completion : 30 Days
Date and time schedule

Start	End	Opening
11.00 A.M of 17.08.2022	5 P.M of 23.08.2022	11.00 A.M 24.08.2022

6. Tender details : Can be seen for the procurement portal: <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>. BMC website <https://www.bmc.gov.in>
OIPR-13002/11/0074/2223 Executive Engineer, Div-II Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation