

OPINION 6

JAMSHEDJI TATA:
LEGACY LIVES ON

WORLD 9

MONKEYPOX DECLARED A PUBLIC
HEALTH EMERGENCY IN NY CITY

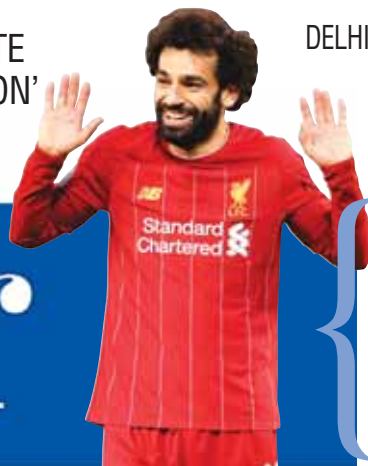
MONEY 10

'RBI MAY RAISE KEY POLICY RATE
BY 25-35 BPS TO CHECK INFLATION'

NEW DELHI, MONDAY AUGUST 1, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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SALAH, NUNEZ
IMPRESS IN
LIVERPOOL WIN
12 SPORTRaut detained by ED
in chawl land scamED raided his
house after
Sena leader
ignored two
summons

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major jolt to the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday detained its Rajya Sabha member and chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut in connection with a money laundering case registered in the ₹1,034 crore Patra Chawl redevelopment scam in Mumbai.

Raut's detention came hours after ED officials conducted raids on his residence 'Maitri' bungalow at Bhandup in north-east Mumbai and seizure of ₹11.5 lakh cash from there. The ED carried out search operations after he skipped two summons issued to him last week on the ground that he would be preoccupied till August 7 with the on-going Parliament, including the vice-presidential elections.

After grilling him for nine-long hours, the ED officials took Raut from his residence to their office at Ballard Pier in south Mumbai for further questioning. Though his formal arrest appeared to be on the cards, there was no confirmation



Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut waves at his supporters who gathered outside his residence after his premises were raided by ED officials, in Mumbai on Sunday. PTI

to that effect till late in the night. Hundreds of Shiv Sainiks converged outside Raut's residence and raised slogans against the ED over Raut's detention.

Interacting with his party workers in front of his Bandra residence "Matoshri", former Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray said that Raut's detention was part of a conspiracy to gag him.

"I won't be surprised if Raut is arrested. Raut has been speaking vociferously against the Centre and its investigating

agencies. "Even today, he has written an article in *Saamana* about how the ruling party is shamelessly misusing its investigating agencies to intimidate the MPS and MLAs," Uddhav said.

The ED's action against Raut came nearly two months after the investigating agency attached provisionally properties worth ₹11.15 crore belonging to three persons, including Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut's wife Varsha Raut, under the Prevention of Money

Laundering Act (PMLA) in a case relating to the alleged irregularities in the Patra Chawl redevelopment project in Mumbai.

Though the extent of Raut's alleged involvement in the ₹1,034 crore Patra Chawl redevelopment scam is not known, the ED had alleged in April this year that in 2010, a part of the proceeds of crime of ₹83 lakh was transferred to Raut's wife Varsha Raut from Madhuri Raut, wife of Pravin Raut.

Continued on Page 2

Jeremy gives India its 2nd
gold, creates CWG recordsWeightlifter now has
eyes set on the Paris
Olympics gold medal

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

The medal rush from the sport of weightlifting continued for India at the 2022 Commonwealth Games as Jeremy Lalrinnunga won a gold in the men's 67kg category. This is India's second gold medal of the campaign after ace lifter Mirabai Chanu kept her promise and delivered a gold on Saturday.

The 19-year-old from Aizwal wrote the Games snatch (140kg) and overall lift (300kg) records in his name but not before an injury scare as twice he grimaced in pain during the clean and jerk attempts.

However, now the teen sensation has his eyes set on the Paris Olympics gold medal. "If you want a medal just put a picture of it as your mobile phone wallpaper," that's Jeremy Lalrinnunga's simple way of manifesting his dreams into reality. The trick has a 100 per cent success record. It worked at the 2018 Youth Olympics, where Jeremy won India's first-ever gold and then again on Sunday when he claimed the yellow metal in the men's 67kg event at the CWG. The champion dominated the men's 67kg competition with a total lift of 300kg (140kg+160kg), finishing ahead of Samoa's Vaipava Nevo Ioane, who managed a total of 293kg (127kg +166kg). Nigeria's Edidiong Joseph Umoafia took bronze with an effort of 290kg (130kg+160kg).

Jeremy opened up a huge 10kg gap with the nearest rival Edidiong Joseph Umoafia when he lifted 140kg in a successful second attempt. He had begun with 136kg. Jeremy further targetted 143kg in his final attempt, but did not succeed.

(See also Page 11)



India's Jeremy Lalrinnunga atop the podium poses for photographs after winning the gold medal in the men's 67kg category weightlifting event, at the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham on Sunday. PTI

Prez, PM congratulate teen sensation

New Delhi: Even as Indians around the country erupted in elation as the country bagged a second gold in UK, President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday congratulated weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga for winning the gold medal at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games and said he has brought immense pride and glory

to the nation at a young age.

President Murmu, while wishing him more such moments of glory, tweeted: "Your self-belief despite injury during the event enabled you to create history & inspire millions. Your podium finish has filled Indians with pride."

On the same lines the Prime Minister also lauded the 19-year-old. "Our

Yuva Shakti is creating history! Congratulations to @raltejeremy, who has won a Gold in his very first CWG and has set a phenomenal CWG record as well," Modi said in a tweet.

"At a young age he's brought immense pride and glory. Best wishes to him for his future endeavours," the Prime Minister said in his greeting.

PTI

10 days' police custody for three
J'khand Cong MLAs held in BengalCash could be for
causing defection
in J'khand Govt,
says Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

A Howrah city court on Sunday remanded three Jharkhand Congress MLAs arrested on Saturday evening with ₹49 lakh in cash to 10 days of police custody.

The MLAs, who were suspended from the Congress with immediate effect, were arrested after the Bengal Police on Saturday recovered ₹49 lakh from the vehicle they were traveling in from Kolkata to Jharkhand.

The arrested politicians — Irfan Ansari, Rajesh Kachhap



The cash which was found in a vehicle in which three Jharkhand Congress MLAs were travelling, at Ranihati in Howrah district on Saturday. PTI

and Naman Bixal — claimed that they had come to Kolkata to purchase sarees from Burra Bazar for a tribal festival, but they could not provide satisfactory answers about the source of the money leading the Trinamool Congress and the

Congress Party to allege that the money had BJP links.

Alleging an Assam link, the TMC said the recovered cash could be a part of the amount meant for engineering defection in the Jharkhand Government. The TMC allegations came after the CID found that the MLAs had returned from Assam to Kolkata from where they were returning to Jharkhand. They were intercepted on Kolkata-Dhanbad Durgapur Express Way.

"Like it happened during the toppling of the Maharashtra Government with the help of Hemant Biswa Sarma ... This time it could be a similar plan ... Let the investigation take place we will know everything," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, adding even the detention of Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Rawat was scripted by the BJP. Continued on Page 2

India reports its first
Monkeypox death22-year-old youth
from Kerala
succumbs to
the infectionPIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India reported its first Monkeypox death after a 22-year-old youth succumbed to the infection in Thrissur district in Kerala on Saturday. Out of the four Monkeypox cases reported so far in India, three are from Kerala.

The man had returned from the UAE a couple of days ago and had no external symptoms commonly associated with Monkeypox. He was admitted to a hospital in the city on July 27.



Monkeypox positive," the State's Health Minister Veena George said on Sunday.

"The State Government has constituted a high-level committee with members from the medical education department. It has been asked to submit a detailed report as death due to Monkeypox is unlikely," she added.

According to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) official data published on July 22, around 16,016 Monkeypox cases were confirmed between January 1 and July 22.

However, only five deaths were reported although the cases were spread across 75 countries.

Spain and Brazil reported the first cases of deaths outside Africa on Friday. The deaths reported in Africa were from Nigeria (three) and the Central African Republic (two).

The youth was infected with the disease while he was in the UAE itself, it has been learned. He traveled by suppressing the information.

The deceased hailed from Kuranjiyur near Guruvayur in Kerala. He died on Saturday morning, according to health officials from the States.

"He had conducted tests a day before coming to India. According to the report, he was

Prince Charles' charity got
GBP1 m from bin LadensHis office says
senior royal was
not involved
in decision

AP ■ LONDON

Britain's Prince Charles is facing more questions over his charities after a newspaper reported that one of his funds accepted a GBP 1 million (\$1.2 million) donation from relatives of Osama bin Laden.

The Sunday Times reported that the Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund received the money in 2013 from Bakr bin Laden, patriarch of the large and wealthy Saudi family, and his brother Shafiq. Both are half-brothers of the former al-Qaida leader, who was killed by US Special Forces in Pakistan in 2011. According to 'The



Sunday Times', Prince Charles met with Bakr in London and allegedly agreed to accept GBP 1 million. Though the report claims that several of the senior royal's closest advisers urged Charles — heir to Britain's throne — to return the money, however, his Clarence House office has denied that the royal was personally involved in the decision. "The Prince of Wales' Charitable Fund (PWCF) has assured us that thorough due diligence was undertaken in accepting this donation," a Clarence House spokesperson told 'Sky News'.

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CAPSULE

'MONKEYPOX SPREADS ON
CONTACT WITH ANYONE'

New Delhi: Monkeypox can spread from close physical contact regardless of sexual orientation or race and scapegoating or demonising the entire LGBTQ community as 'spreaders' will be a repeat of the mistake made during the AIDS epidemic, healthcare professionals and activists said here on Sunday. P4

INDIAN AVIATION SECTOR
ABSOLUTELY SAFE: DGCA

New Delhi: Aviation watchdog DGCA's chief Arun Kumar on Sunday said technical snags faced by domestic carriers in recent weeks did not have the potential to cause havoc and that even foreign airlines that came to India reported 15 technical snags in the last 16 days. All the protocols laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation are followed, he said. P4

PM: Make 'Har ghar
Tiranga' a successModi pays
homage to
freedom
fighters ahead
of I-Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahostav" has become a "mass movement" and urged people to make 'Har ghar Tiranga' a success. The PM suggested that people may use Tiranga as a profile picture in social media accounts between August 2 and August 15.

Addressing people in his 91st radio-talk *Mann Ki Baat*, the Prime Minister also

touched on a range of issues ahead of Independence Day on August 15. Modi dwelt extensively on the sacrifices made by innumerable freedom fighters to attain the country's freedom as he paid homage to Shaheed Udhham Singh. Udhham Singh, a freedom fighter who belonged to the Gadar Party, was hanged to death on July 31, 1940, after he killed Michael O'Dwyer in London to avenge the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar.

"Friends, on the 31st of July, i.e. today, all of us countrymen salute the martyrdom of Shaheed Udhham Singh. I offer my humble tributes to all such other great revolutionaries who sacrificed their all for the country," he said.

Modi expressed satisfaction over the increasing enthusiasm of people to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the country's Independence.

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Workers stitch and pack the national flag ahead of Independence Day celebrations in Delhi on Sunday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio programme, has urged citizens to hoist the Tricolour at their homes from August 13-15 as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

S Arora is Delhi's
new police chief

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Sunday appointed Sanjay Arora, a 1988-batch Tamil Nadu cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, as the new Commissioner of Delhi Police. Arora, the current Director-General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), will take charge as Delhi Police commissioner Monday.

Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana, a Gujarat cadre IPS officer retired on Sunday, has not been given any extension. According to the MHA notification, "Police Division MHA has conveyed the approval of the competent authority for inter-cadre deputation of Sanjay Arora, JPS (TN: 1988) from Tamil Nadu cadre to AGMUT cadre. In pursuance of the said approval, Sanjay Arora, IPS (TN: 1988) is hereby appointed as Commissioner of Police, Delhi with effect from 1st August 2022



Sanjay Arora, who is currently the Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force, has been appointed as the new Delhi Police Commissioner. He will assume charge on August 1. PTI

or from the date of taking over charge whichever is later and till further orders."

This is for the third time in recent history that an officer from outside AGMUT cadre has been brought to head the national Capital's police force.

Continued on Page 2

Bridge trust deficit gap in legal aid: SC judge

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice SUU Lalit on Sunday said legal services institutions have to bridge the gap of trust deficit among the common people towards them and for this, an innovative legal aid defence counsel system is being formulated.

Justice Lalit, who is the executive chairman of the National Legal Services Authorities (NALSA), said the legal services institutions have the requisite ability since they have reached 9.5 lakh villages in the country to raise awareness to dispense legal aid services.

He said these institutions have tremendous strength, power and efforts that have to be channelised and a recent outreach programme has succeeded in reaching every soul in the country. Justice Lalit, who is next in line to become the chief justice of India, said the required awareness has been

created now and the next step is to dispense legal aid by ensuring that the quality of the legal aid services remains intact. "The trust deficit that still persists needs to be bridged.

To bridge this gap, the Legal Aid Defence Counsel System is being formulated, wherein the lawyers engaged will deal only with the matter of legal aid and thus, would be dedicated solely to this noble cause," he said, adding that for this purpose, young and talented lawyers should be pooled so that this office becomes the backbone of the system and functions as a nodal point.

Speaking at the valedictory session of the first All India District Legal Services Authorities Meet, Justice Lalit applauded the collaborative effort of the NALSA and the Ministry of Law, wherein the two will work on the Tele-Law and Nyaya Bandhu mobile applications, which will help in constant monitoring of the ser-

vices provided by the legal aid counsels and solve the problem of implementation. He suggested that every law college in the country should adopt at least three talukas and encourage the penultimate and final-year students to enrol as para-legal volunteers.

Addressing the gathering, Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul urged everyone to utilise the tools available within the system to the best of their potential. He asked the DLSA members to inculcate the spirit of thinking out of the box and said this could be achieved through active interaction among the stakeholders.

Justice Kaul said the entire judicial system needs a bypass and that there should be an endeavour to close litigation at the first stage itself. "The judges and the defence system must consciously make available the use of the plea-bargaining system," he said.

12 drown across Rajasthan, 5 in Sri Ganganagar alone

CM Gehlot announces ₹5 Lakh to next of kin of deceased

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Twelve people were reportedly drowned across Rajasthan on Sunday, including five children who died while taking a bath in an artificial pond in Sri Ganganagar district.

Of the five minors who drowned in a waterbody in Udasar village of Sri Ganganagar's Ramsinghpur, two were siblings and the rest cousins, police said. All five of them were from labour families working in the fields, SHO, Ramsinghpur, Dolaram Vishnoi said. The police said the kids had gone to take a bath in the waterbody as it was a holiday for them. Villagers later found their dead bodies floating in the water and informed the police. The

deceased were identified as Rajesh (10) and his sister Bhavna (12), Ankit (10), Ashish (10), and Nisha (13), the police said. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot expressed grief over the incident.

"The news of the five children drowning in a waterbody in the fields of Udasar village of Sri Ganganagar district is very sad. My condolences to their parents and family members. May god give them strength," he tweeted in Hindi.

In the state's Jhunjhunu district, three people drowned in the Kot Dam in Udaipurwati while taking a bath. Udaipurwati SHO Bhanwarlal said 10-11 people had gone to the dam to bathe but three of them slipped into deeper waters and drowned. They were identified as Hansraj (50), Sonilal alias Sohan Lal (32) and Vishal (25), he said. In Bhilwara's Asind police station area, two minor brothers drowned in a river. The local police said Rihan (11) and

Jihaan (14) had gone to take a bath in the Khari river. The bodies were handed over to the family members after post-mortem examination. In Jodhpur, two youngsters drowned in a pond in Bendti Kala village of Phalodi.

The police said Rahmatullah and Akram drowned after venturing into the deeper part of the pond. Expressing condolences, Gehlot tweeted, "The death of two youngsters, Rahmatullah and Akram, who drowned in a pond of Bendti Kala village of Phalodi, Jodhpur, is sad. I pray to God to give peace to the soul of the deceased and courage to the bereaved families."

He said a financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh would be given to the next of kin of the deceased under the Chiranjeevi Accident Insurance Scheme. "I again appeal to people of state to take all possible precautions during rainy season. Even a minor negligence can prove fatal," he added.

NCB destroys 30K kg drugs in Shah's virtual presence in Chd

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Under the virtual watch of the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) incinerated more than 30,000 kg of seized drugs at four locations across India.

The drugs was destroyed on Saturday when Shah was in Chandigarh on Saturday to inaugurate the Narcotics Control Bureau's (NCB) two-day national conference on drug trafficking and national security, from where he watched virtually the incineration of the seized drugs in Delhi, Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Guwahati (Assam), and Kolkata (West Bengal).

The move came after the NCB took a pledge to destroy 75,000 kg of drugs on 75 years of Independence, on the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to celebrate 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

Prince Charles'...

From Page 1

"The decision to accept was taken by the charity's trustees alone and any attempt to characterise it otherwise is false," the spokesperson said. The fund's chairman, Ian Cheshire, also said the donation was agreed "wholly" by the five trustees at the time, and "any attempt to suggest otherwise is misleading and inaccurate".

The PWCF was founded in 1979 to "transform lives and build sustainable communities", and gives grants to a wide variety of projects in Britain and around the world.

Charles, 73, has faced a series of claims about the operation of his charities. Last month the Sunday Times reported he had accepted bags of cash containing \$3 million from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani, the former Prime Minister of Qatar. London police are currently investigating a separate allegation that people associated with another of prince's charities, the Prince's Foundation, offered to help a Saudi billionaire secure honours and citizenship in return for donations.

NCR PULSE

MCD HOLDS MALBA SPOTTING WALK

New Delhi: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) organised a two day 'Malba Spotting Walk' in collaboration with the Malba Project by Najafgarh Zone of civic body to clean the C&D waste lying in the open, especially in the unauthorized colonies. Deputy Commissioner of the Najafgarh Zone, Pradeep Kumar informed that in the two-day Malba Spotting Walk, about 40 complaints were settled regarding malba lying in the open. Malba was at Junior Eengineer Store Mangalapur.

HC GRANTS TIME TO FILE STATUS REPORT ON PLEA

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has granted time to the Centre and Deputy Conservator of Forest to file their status reports responding to a plea seeking direction to the authorities to ensure that there is no transmission of vehicles on the illegal road constructed within Rajokri protected forest. Justice Yashwant Varma granted time to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Deputy Conservator of Forest (DCF), sub divisional magistrate (SDM) of Mehrauli and Commissioner of Police to comply with the court's previous direction and file their status reports.

SANJAY PANDEY MOVES DELHI COURT FOR BAIL

New Delhi: Former Mumbai police commissioner Sanjay Pandey has moved a Delhi court seeking bail in a case of alleged phone tapping of NSE employees, claiming that ED proceedings against him were the result of a political fallout. The petition is likely to come up for hearing on August 2 before special judge Sunena Sharma.



JEWAR BJP MLA HOSPITALISED

Noida: BJP leader and Jewar MLA Dhirendra Singh has been hospitalised after suffering injuries during a cycle ride in his constituency, his associates said on Sunday. Singh, 55, was out on a road on his bicycle on Saturday when the accident took place near Kishorepur village around 7.30 pm, they said. "The MLA was out for routine cycling. It was drizzling and when a vehicle he was trailing moved ahead, he suddenly encountered a water-filled pothole. His bicycle stumbled into the pothole and he hurt his elbow badly," the legislator's associate Devendra Singh said.

Rains lash several parts of Delhi, temp dips to 33°C

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Rains lashed several parts of Delhi on Sunday with the maximum temperature settling at 33 degrees Celsius, a notch below normal. The relative humidity oscillated between 71 per cent and 97 per cent. Delhi recorded 24 "satisfactory" air quality day this month on account of surplus rainfall, making it the cleanest July for the city since 2015 when the Central Pollution Control Board started maintaining AQI data.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the city received 13 mm rainfall in a 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am. Delhi base station, Safdarjung observatory in the past 24 hours received 12.9 mm of rainfall, informed the weather station. Following the rainfall in the capital city, the traffic in several areas was affected and the commuters have to face hardships due to the weather.

However, the other station of Delhi including Palam, Lodi Road, Ridge, Pusa, Sports

Complex recorded rainfall 4.4 mm, 12 mm, 12.4 mm, 24.5 mm and 22.5 mm respectively.

Overnight rains in several parts of the national capital brought the minimum temperature down to 24.6 degrees Celsius, three notches below the season's average.

The weather office has forecast a generally cloudy sky with light rain and thunder-showers for Monday. The maximum temperature is expected to hover around 32 degrees Celsius while the minimum temperature is likely to settle around 25 degrees Celsius on Monday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

According to the CPCB, average air quality index this July stood at 87. Only July 2020 was better with an average AQI of 84 — the city had recorded a significant decline in pollution levels that year due to the strict lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid. Delhi had logged 25 'satisfactory', four 'moderate' and two 'poor' air quality days in July 2020.

3 G'gram cops held for extorting ₹9L from lawyer after threatening to implicate him in false case

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

Gurugram Police has arrested its three personnel for allegedly extorting around Rs nine lakh from a local lawyer after threatening to implicate him in a false case.

The accused have been identified as Constables Sandeep Dagar and Neetu and Special Police Officer (SPO) Anand Kumar. They were deployed at sector 40 police station, police said, adding that three others who were also involved with them are currently absconding.

The accused were produced in a city court on Sunday and police have taken them on two days remand. According to the complainant, on Friday night the three called him outside a hotel and asked him to sit in a car in which they gave him death threats along with that of implicating him in a false case.

He said that he was freed only after he arranged Rs 9 lakh, adding that the next day he went to the police.

Following the complaint, an FIR has been registered against all six accused including three cops under sections 387 (extortion), 506 (criminal intimidation), and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of IPC at Sadar police station.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Sadar, Sanjeev Balhara said that preliminary investigation indicated that the police personnel were involved in the entire episode.

They were arrested soon after the FIR was lodged.

All three have been suspended and a departmental inquiry has been initiated against them, he said.

"The extortion money was taken by the other three accused who are absconding. Our special team conducted raids to arrest them and they will also be nabbed as earliest as possible," the ACP added.

S Arora is Delhi's new police...

From Page 1

Asthana, a 1984-batch IPS officer, was appointed as Delhi's police commissioner in July 2021 while Ajay Raj Sharma, a 1966-batch Uttar Pradesh-cadre IPS officer, was appointed head of the Delhi Police in 1999. Arora, a 1988-batch IPS officer, has a bachelor's degree in electrical and electronics engineering from Jaipur's Malviya National Institute of Technology.

After joining the IPS, he served in various capacities in the Tamil Nadu Police. He was the superintendent of police (SP), special task force, where he achieved significant success against the Veerappan gang, for which he was awarded the CM's Gallantry Medal for Bravery and Heroic Action.

Sanjay Arora also had a pivotal role in forming the special security group (SSG) to provide security to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu during the heydays of LTTE activity. Arora assumed the charge of DG ITBP on August 31, 2021, as the 31st chief of the force. He has served in the border patrol organisation on deputation as commandant from 1997 to 2002.

Arora has also commanded a border guarding ITBP Battalion in Matli, Uttarakhnad from 1997 to 2000. As an

instructor, he had made remarkable contributions in the field of training, serving as commandant (Combat Wing) at the ITBP Academy, Mussoorie from 2000 to 2002. He served as Coimbatore police commissioner between 2002 and 2004 and has also served in the CRPF and the BSF. He was also the deputy inspector general of police, Villupuram range, and deputy director of vigilance and anti-Corruption.

He has led the Chennai City Police as - additional commissioner - crime & headquarters and additional commissioner - traffic. On promotion, he was appointed as ADGP (Operations) and ADGP (Administration) in Tamil Nadu Police.

The new commissioner has served as IG (Special Operations) BSF, IG Chhattisgarh Sector CRPF, and IG Operations CRPF. He has served as ADG HQ & Ops CRPF and Spl DG J&K Zone CRPF before being appointed as DG, ITBP.

He has been awarded the Police Medal for Meritorious Service in 2004, President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service in 2014, Police Special Duty Medal, Antrik Suraksha Padak and UN Peacekeeping Medal among others.

Raut detained by ED in chawl land scam

From Page 1

"This amount was utilized by Varsha Raut for purchase of a flat at Dadar. It is also revealed that after initiation of ED investigation, the amount of Rs 55 lakh was transferred by Varsha Raut to Madhuri Raut," the ED had said in a statement issued after it attached properties worth Rs 11.15 crore belonging to Varsha Raut on April 5, 2022.

On his part, Raut said that he was not involved in any scam. "I am not linked to any scam. I say this after taking a pledge in the name of late Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray. Late Balasaheb has taught us to fight. I will continue to fight," Raut tweeted.

Talking to a television channel while he was being taken to ED's office, Raut said that he was "fully cooperating" with the ED and would not be cowed down by the political tactics employed to destroy the Shiv Sena.

"I am not at all scared... There's no question of non-cooperation with the law, I am ready to sacrifice myself for the Shiv Sena. The ED team came without giving any notice early this morning, no papers have been found from me on this so-called case," Raut said.

Sunil Raut, a close relative of the Sena MP, said that during their searches that began at 7 am on Sunday, the ED officials had not found any papers relating to Patra Chawl redevelopment project.

The Patra Chawl land scam case is linked to Rakesh Kumar Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan, the father-son duo promoters of crisis-hit real estate firm Housing Development and Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL), which was responsible for the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-

operative Bank (PMC) scam. In 2007, Guruashish Construction Pvt Ltd was awarded a contract for the redevelopment of Patra Chawl by the Maharashtra Housing and Development Authority (MHADA).

Incidentally, the Directors in the Guruashish Construction are Pravin Raut, Rakesh Wadhawan, and Sarang Wadhawan. Pravin Raut, who was arrested by ED on February 2, 2022, is a close aide of Sanjay Raut.

On April 5, 2022, the ED had attached immovable properties worth Rs 11,15,56,573 under PMLA in connection with the alleged irregularities in the Patra Chawl redevelopment project undertaken by Guru Ashish Construction Pvt Ltd at Goregaon in north Mumbai.

Besides Varsha Raut, the other individuals whose assets have been provisionally attached are businessman Pravin Raut, a relative of Sanjay Raut, and Swapna Patkar, wife of Sujit Patkar who is a close associate of Sanjay Raut.

"The attached assets are in form of lands held by Pravin M Raut, former director of Guru Ashish Construction Pvt Ltd, Mumbai at Palghar, a flat at Dadar of Varsha Raut and plots at Kihim beach at Alibaug jointly held by Varsha Raut wife of Shri Sanjay Raut and Swapna Patkar, wife of Sujit Patkar," the ED had said in a statement then.

The ED's action came as a follow-up of the arrest of Pravin Raut under PMLA on February 4 this year in connection with an alleged finding that Pravin had received Rs 100 crore from Housing Development and Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL) and "diverted" it to various accounts

of "his close associates, family member, his business entities" including the family of Sanjay Raut.

In its investigations conducted on the basis of an FIR registered against Guru Ashish Construction Pvt Ltd by an executive engineer of MHADA, the ED found irregularities in the redevelopment of Patra chawl redevelopment project undertaken as per a tripartite agreement signed between the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) and Guru Ashish Construction Pvt Ltd, a subsidiary of HDIL.

Under the tripartite agreement, Guru Ashish Construction Pvt Ltd was to provide flats to 672 tenants of the chawl, develop flats for MHADA and then sell the remaining area to private developers, develop flats for MHADA and thereafter remaining flats were to be sold by the developers.

However, the directors of Guru Ashish Constructions, including Pravin Raut, allegedly misled MHADA and managed to sell the floor space index (FSI) to nine developers and collected Rs 901.79 crore without constructing the rehab portion for 672 displaced tenants or the MHADA portion.

"Further, Guru Ashish Construction Pvt Ltd has also launched one project namely Meadows, and took the booking of amount (of) around Rs 138 crore from flat buyers. The total proceeds of the crime generated by directors of Guru Ashish Constructions Pvt Ltd through the illegal activities were approximately Rs 1,039.79 crore. A part of the proceeds was transferred to the close associates," the ED had said.

10 days' police custody...

From Page 1

"The BJP had said after Maharashtra they will topple Jharkhand and then the Bengal Government... This could well be a part of that," he said. In Delhi, the Congress on Sunday suspended the three MLAs and alleged that the BJP was trying to topple the JMM-led Government in Jharkhand by offering Rs 10 crore to each MLA.

The party alleged that the Chief Minister of a State had been directly contacting some of the MLAs. AICC sources said a three-member team will be sent to Jharkhand soon to meet the party MLAs. Announcing the suspension of the three MLAs, Avinash Pande, AICC member in charge of Jharkhand,

said, "Most of the MLAs are with the party, but those who are trying to weaken the legislature party... The party leadership has full information. The party will take action at the appropriate time."

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "The BJP's 'Operation Lotus' in Jharkhand stands exposed and the game plan of 'Hum Do' in Delhi is to do in Jharkhand what they did in Maharashtra by installing E-D duo." The Congress, which is a constituent of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led coalition in the State, also claimed that the Government is stable. "There is no threat to the Government. The Government is safe and stable... Leave aside some black sheep like these... the

Government is safe," Pande said. He said efforts had been on for the last two years to destabilise and weaken the Government to dislodge it from power. "Attempts were continuously made to contact the MLAs, intimidate or lure them. Some months ago, an FIR was lodged against some BJP leaders for contacting some MLAs," he said.

"Efforts are being made to contact the MLAs... and I want to tell you people who are occupying high posts... the Chief Minister of a State has been directly contacting the MLAs, and Central Ministers are trying to intimidate and scare them... Those Ministers and officials who are in charge of the law department... they are try-

ing to scare the MLAs... taking the name of the Enforcement Directorate," Pande alleged. Addressing a Press conference in Ranchi, Congress Minister in Hemant Soren Government, Alamgir Alam said the party's Bermo MLA Kumar Jaimangal has lodged a police complaint against the three legislators for allegedly luring other MLAs by offering Rs 10 crore each and a ministerial berth if the BJP forms Government in the State.

"Rajesh Kachchap and Naman Bixal Kongari were asking me to come to Kolkata and were offering money, promising Rs 10 crore per MLA. Ifran Ansari and Rajesh Kachchap wanted to take me to Guwahati from Kolkata where according to them a meeting was fixed

with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma," Jaimangal claimed.

After filing the complaint at the Argora police station in Ranchi, he claimed that he has sought action against the three MLAs under Section 7(C) of the Prevention of Corruption Act and IPC Section 120 (B), which deals with criminal conspiracy.

He said he has urged the police to check criminal activities detrimental to the health of democracy.

Meanwhile, the Assam Chief Minister said, "Even top-most persons of the Congress keep in touch with me. We don't talk about politics but being in a party for over 22 years, we keep in touch. I don't know why FIR was filed on this."

PM: Make 'Har ghar Tiranga' a success

From Page 1

"Friends, I am very happy to see that the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is taking the form of a mass movement. People from all walks of life and from every section of the society are participating in different programmes connected with it", he said.

The Prime Minister cited one such event that took place in Meghalaya earlier this month with people remembering the warrior of Meghalaya U Tirot Singh on his death anniversary.

"Tirot Singh ji fiercely opposed the British conspiracy to control the Khasi Hills and destroy the culture there. Many artists gave beautiful performances in this programme. They made history come alive", he said Similarly, Modi said a few weeks ago, in Karnataka, a "unique cam-

paign" named Amrita Bharathi Kannadathi was also launched as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav at 75 places in the State. "In these, along with remembering the great freedom fighters of Karnataka, efforts were also made to bring to the fore the local literary achievements", he said.

Prime Minister also spoke about progress in start-up sector in the country and toy industry. The PM he talked about India "becoming a powerhouse in toy export and various enterprises contributing to increased honey production in the country.

"Due to our youngsters, start-ups and entrepreneurs, what our toy industry has achieved, the successes we have achieved, no one could have imagined. Today, when it comes to Indian toys, the echo of Vocal for Local is being

heard everywhere. You will also like to know that now the number of toys coming from abroad in India is continuously decreasing", Modi said.

"Earlier, where toys worth more than Rs 3,000 crore used to come from outside, now their import has reduced by 70 per cent and it is a matter of joy that during this period, India has exported toys worth more than Rs 2,600 crore to foreign countries", he informed his listeners.

"Our start-up sector is also paying full attention to the world of toys... In Bangalore, a start-up named Shumme Toys is focusing on eco-friendly products" he said, adding, in Gujarat, Arkidzoo Company is making AR-based flash cards and AR-based storybooks. "It is a matter of joy that India has exported toys worth over Rs 2,600 crore to foreign countries.

Whereas earlier, toys worth only Rs 300-400 crore used to go out of India," the Prime Minister said in his monthly broadcast today. Talking about the transformation in domestic honey production, the PM said, "Initiatives like National Beekeeping and Honey Mission are transforming the lives of our farmers by helping them increase their income."

Modi also detailed the country's recent achievements in the area of sports.

"Friends, be it the classroom or the playground, today our youth, in every field, are making the country proud. This month, PV Sindhu won her first title in the Singapore Open. Neeraj Chopra also continued his excellent performance and won the silver medal for the country in the World Athletics Championship. At the Ireland

Para-Badminton International as well, our players have boosted the glory of the country by winning 11 medals. Indian players also performed well in the World Cadet Wrestling Championship held in Rome. Our athlete Suraj has done wonders in the Greco-Roman event.

He has won the Gold Medal of Wrestling in this event after a long gap of 32 years", Modi said. The Prime Minister said it is also a great honour for India to host the 44th Chess Olympiad in Chennai which commenced on July 28.

"I am also happy that India is going to host the FIFA Under 17 Women's World Cup as well. This tournament will be held around October, which will enhance the enthusiasm of the daughters of the country towards sports," Modi said.

Delhiites likely to face liquor shortage

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi is staring at a liquor and beer shortage as uncertainty prevailed over availability of liquor in the national Capital as the private liquor stores and vends are unlikely to place fresh bulk orders just for a month despite the Government assurances that the new excise policy will be extended for a month.

The officials are facing an uphill task to convince vendors to continue their business to avoid shortage of liquor and beer in the national Capital.

The Government's four corporations — Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC), Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC), Delhi Consumer's Cooperative



Wholesale Store (DCCWS) and Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation (DSCSC) — ran 475 liquor stores out of total 864 in the city while private stores, licences held by individuals, numbered 389, under the old excise regime were also unsure how soon they will be able to find spaces for the stores, gather staff and order

adequate liquor stock, processes that take weeks.

"Several of those rented premises are still vacant where the liquor stores can be opened. But the whole process from getting requisite licences and placing order for stocks will take 4-5 days," they said. Another Corporation DTTDC has also contacted around 40 owners of

private premises where it earlier operated liquor stores. Prior to new excise policy 2021, DTTDC ran 122 shops of liquor, officials said. The private stores licences held by individuals numbered 389. A DSI-IDC official informed that around 90 shops of liquor were run by the corporation on rent. Restaurants, hotels and

clubs in Delhi have also expressed concerns over the fate of their licences to serve liquor as there will be virtually no liquor supply from the wholesalers to the entire hospitality sector even as the Delhi Government announced late evening that the current excise policy will be extended by a month.

The shortage of liquor in Delhi would also mean that sales in neighbouring, Ghaziabad, Nodia, Faridabad, Ballabhgarh and Gurugram will pick up, as the Capital's residents will be bound to buy their bottles from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Gurugram is already an attractive destination of liquor buyers in Delhi, with stores open even after 10pm and heavy discounts on offer. The Excise Department officials on

Sunday held a meeting with stakeholders (private vends) and liquor companies to discuss the issue. "There are some issues which needs to be discussed. We have raised some points such as advance payments of security amounts, payment to liquor companies to get fresh bulk order just for a month etc. On Monday all venders will held meeting to discuss the issue again," said a private liquor store operator present in the meeting.

According to vendors, the first thing vendors will have to do is make an advance payment for the month. That itself takes a day because the Excise Department only accepts demand drafts which has to be physically submitted. "Some private store operators have finished their stock and they are reluctant to place fresh orders

just for a month," they added. Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had earlier announced on Saturday that the national Capital will revert to the old excise policy and that only Government vends will sell liquor from Monday.

However, late evening, the Government announced extension of the current policy by one month in view of the revenue loss and panic among the private vends and stores.

Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar held a meeting with the Excise Department, Deputy CM and Excise Minister Manish Sisodia and the Lieutenant Governor's office and decided to extend the 2021-22 policy by a month to stop all stores downing their shutters. The Government is expected to issue a notification by late Sunday night, allowing

liquor stores currently running in the city to remain open till August end. Under the Excise Policy, Government had issued retail licences for 849 vends across the city divided into 32 zones. Currently only 468 were running whose licences will expire on July 31 as the policy has been withdrawn by the Government.

With new policy gone, the excise licences issued to hotels, clubs and restaurants having bars, and wholesale operations will also become redundant apart from private run liquor stores in the city.

It means, there will be virtually no liquor supply from the wholesalers to the entire hospitality sector and retail vends in the city after July 31, till some alternate arrangements are made by the Government, liquor trade experts claimed.

Grand farewell parade organised for Asthana

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A farewell parade was organised on Sunday evening at Parade Ground, new Police Lines in the national Capital for the outgoing Police Commissioner, Rakesh Asthana, a 1984-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Gujarat cadre, was appointed as Police Commissioner of Delhi in July, 2021, just four days before his superannuation. Asthana, had also served as the Special Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

During his stint in the CBI, he was engaged in an unsavoury spat with the then CBI Director Alok Verma. On



his last day of service, Asthana lauded the Delhi Police force and termed it as one of the finest police forces in the whole world. Earlier, during the day, the Special Commissioner of Police, Headquarters, released an official message to all Special CPs, Joint CPs, Deputy

Commissioners of Police (DCPs), Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACPs) and all regarding the farewell parade to CP Asthana being organised at Parade Ground, New Police Lines at 4 pm on Sunday.

"All the officers have to reach Parade Ground before 3.30 pm, one inspector, two sub-inspectors, two head-constables and four constables from all the districts should also attend the parade. Dress order uniform is with a peak cap and cross belt," the message read. "All officers will be present at Adarsh Hall, Delhi Police headquarters at 5.30 pm for farewell function," it further stated.

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

In a joint operation conducted by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Haryana police, Central Agencies, Mumbai Police Crime Branch, and the STF Bihar police, six extortionists, were arrested for their alleged involvement in threatening and making extortion calls to four Haryana MLAs, the STF officials said on Sunday.

The accused were arrested from Mumbai and Muzaffarpur in Bihar, they said. During the investigation, the team found that the MLAs had received threats and extortion calls between 24-06-22 and 28-06-22 from multiple phone numbers which were registered in the Middle Eastern countries and were being oper-



ated from Pakistan.

The team also noticed that Some ex-MLAs of Punjab had also received similar threats from these numbers. Different tones and conversational styles, like Mumbaikar tone and Punjabi language, were used during these conversations with these MLAs. Following the seriousness of the matter Inspector General of Police

(IGP), STF Satish Balan formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under the leadership of Sumit Kumar STF to investigate these cases. The SIT included STF Units which were led by Sandeep Dhankhar, DSP STF and Surendra Kinha, DSP STF.

Thereafter, STF conducted a technical analysis of the mobile numbers and IP



addresses. While working on this link, two parallel teams conducted raids across Mumbai and Muzaffarpur in Bihar and apprehended six criminals.

Those arrested were identified as Dulesh Alam a resident of district Betia, Bihar and Badre Alam of district Basti, Uttar Pradesh, the duo were arrested from Mumbai.

They were found in the possession of approximately 20 Passbook/Cheque Books, 18 ATMs, 14 fake sim cards, 1 diary and 5 mobile phones. Similarly, from Muzaffarpur in Bihar, STF arrested 4 more accused Amit Yadav aka Radheshyam Yadav of district Gopalganj, Bihar, Saddiq Anwar of Motihari, Bihar, Sanoj Kumar of Muzaffarpur,

Gymkhana Club: Ministry seeks civil, criminal immunity for its directors

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has moved the National Company Law Tribunal seeking civil and criminal immunity for all six directors, appointed by it in April to manage the affairs of the Delhi Gymkhana Club (DGC).

In its petition before the tribunal, the ministry prayed that the six directors should not be subjected to any civil or criminal action while they are discharging their duty. The petition was filed on July 20. The ministry said, "The newly

appointed directors are under the threat of being exposed to past liabilities incurred by the Respondent No. 1 Company (DGC) owing to actions taken/not taken by the erstwhile management."

The six members committee was tasked with setting the exclusive in order following allegations of financial irregularities as well as violation of membership rules.

The tribunal "may be pleased to declare that the newly appointed directors should not, in discharge of their collective or individual responsibilities, be made subject to

any civil and/or criminal and/or punitive action, direct or vicarious or of any nature whatsoever, by the state or Central government agencies", the petition states.

The ministry added that the directors may become subject to disability or disqualification under law, including but not limited to Sections 164 and 167 of the Companies Act. "Moreover, various procedures under the Companies Act, 2013 or rules made there under may be required to be complied with which would invariably delay and defeat the swift action that is required to

be taken by the said directors," added the application.

The ministry urged the tribunal to declare that the newly appointed directors "should not in discharge of their collective or individual responsibilities, be made subject to any civil and/criminal and/or punitive action, direct or vicarious or of any nature whatsoever, by the state or Central government agencies whether in exercise of their statutory, quasi-judicial, or regulatory powers or otherwise without the prior leave of this tribunal or Central government." The corporate affairs

ministry first appointed M.M. Juneja, an officer on special duty at the ministry, as an administrator of the club in early 2021. Soon, Juneja was replaced by V.K. Yadav from the railways, who in turn gave way to Om Pathak in May 2021.

Last year in December, the club members alleged Pathak was changing the distinctive character of the over hundred-year-old club, and also stonewalled the objections to the policy changes made by him. On April 3 this year, Pathak was replaced by six directors. Six directors are: lawyer

and BJP spokesperson Nalin Kohli, former secretary government of India Malay Kumar Sinha, BJP member Kuljeet Singh Chahal, former secretary of the ministry of electronics and information technology Ajay Sawhney, former director general of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Kumar Rajesh Chandra, and former Indian Revenue Officer Ashish Verma.

In June, Delhi Gymkhana Club's erstwhile management members have challenged the NCLT order allowing the central government to take over the control of the prestigious club.

2 members of Mewat-based ATM robbers' gang arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two members of an interstate gang of Mewat-based ATM robbers after a brief exchange of fire near the Bhati Mines Wildlife Sanctuary in south Delhi's Chhatarpur.

Police said the accused identified as Wakil alias Shakil (35) and Abid Hussain (34) were wanted in a dozen cases of breaking and uprooting of ATMs in Delhi-National Capital Region and five other states. Police said that Wakil, who carried a Madhya Pradesh

police reward in an ATM breaking case, got injured in the right leg during the exchange of fire. According to police, both of them were planning to uproot ATMs and had identified some kiosks in South Delhi. Wakil is a "technical expert" in breaking ATMs and extracting the cash tray.

"Both were arrested on Saturday evening near the wildlife sanctuary towards Bhati mines, Chhatarpur. A police team had surrounded the duo but the accused men whipped out their pistols and threatened to fire.

2 arrested for robbing man at petrol pump in Dwarka

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two bike-borne men allegedly robbed valuables from a man who was inside his car near a petrol pump in Delhi's Dwarka area. Police said that they have arrested two accused, who are also 'Bad Characters' at the Dabri police station.

Police said that the accused identified as Shivam (30) and Ravi (28) were arrested using technical surveillance. After robbing the man, when the accused tried to flee, the victim hit their bike with his car and they fell down but still managed to escape leaving their two-wheeler behind, police

said.

Shivam was previously involved in 41 cases, including robbery, snatching and theft, while Ravi was involved in five such cases. The incident took place in Dwarka sector-23.

According to M Harsha Vardhan, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Dwarka district, the complainant stated that while going from Mangolpuri to Pochanpur in Dwarka on July 27, he reached near a petrol pump in sector 19 when two unknown men on a motorcycle forcefully took away his wallet containing Rs 8,000, Aadhaar and PAN card and driving licence.

'Delhi Metro commuters can participate in online survey'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Commuters of the Delhi Metro can participate in an online survey conducted by the urban transporter from Monday on various parameters, including availability, accessibility and security.

According to a senior Delhi Metro official, the Delhi Metro will conduct the eighth edition of the Online Customer Satisfaction Survey from August 1-28. "The main objective of the survey is to collect feedback from the commuters on various components of metro services and facilities. "Detailed feedback will be obtained from participating

commuters on individual topics with a comprehensive questionnaire. The survey will also seek suggestions for improvements if any," the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMTC) said in a statement. Commuters who wish to participate in the survey can visit the DMRC's official website and submit it online by clicking on relevant links.

The survey form will be available in both English and Hindi. Commuters will be able to give their feedback on all the important aspects of Metro functioning such as availability and accessibility, information, facilities offered to customers, quality of service, customer

service, outside the metro area, security, safety, security and comfort, the DMRC said. "The survey links for one topic will be available on the DMRC's website for four days for filling up by participants. After four days, the next topic will be made available for feedback. As survey includes seven topics, the survey will conclude in 28 days," the statement said.

The Delhi Metro is conducting this survey to find out what passengers think of its services. The results will help assess and make necessary improvements in various components of Delhi Metro facilities and services based on feedback received, officials said.



Aam Aadmi Party workers stage a protest near BJP headquarters against the increase of house tax by the BJP-ruled MCD, in New Delhi on Sunday

Vegetable, fruit prices soar in Capital due to short supply

SHREYA ARORA ■ NEW DELHI

Vegetable and fruit prices in Delhi have gone through the roof due to short supply and beginning of "sawan" month when majority of people prefer not to eat non-vegetarian food.

Except onion, potato and tomato, prices of all vegetables have touched Rs 70-80 per kg. Similarly, most fruits are being sold between Rs 80 and Rs 150 per kg. The rates of fruits and vegetables are much higher in posh colonies.

The surge in prices is giving vegetable vendors and common man a hard time to make ends meet. This inflation in prices is going to continue till next two to three months until the new crops arrive. Tomato, potato and onion are available



at Rs 20 to Rs 25 per kg in most retail markets. The price of bottle gourd has touched Rs 80 per kg as compared to Rs 30-40 in June. Capsicum prices have also reached Rs 80 per kg as compared to Rs 40 last month. Lady finger and brinjal are being sold at Rs 70 per kg.

Price of cabbage is Rs 100 per kg while drumstick price has crossed Rs 120 per kg. The price of lemon in the wholesale market is Rs. 60 per kg while they are being sold at Rs. 70-76 per kg in the retail.

Similarly, mango is available at Rs 100-120 per kg and banana is being sold at Rs 80 a dozen. Price of apple in the market is Rs 80 per kg and papaya is available at Rs 60 per kg. Pear price has also touched Rs 70-80 per kg. Vendors said that the prices of fruits and veg-

etables are always high due to short supply during monsoon. Besides, most people prefer vegetarian food during monsoon especially in the month of "Sawan", that is considered auspicious for Hindu.

"The prices of vegetables like coriander, capsicum and beans have increased as they are being brought from Bengaluru due to lack of local supply from the neighboring states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan," said Naveen, a vegetable vendor in Okhla Mandi.

A fruit seller, Sanjay echoed similar concerns of high transportation costs many fruits come from Himachal Pradesh and adjoining states. He added that as more people are consuming fruits due to fasting in monsoon, the prices are

increasing. Adding to the woes there has been a steady rise in prices of diesel, petrol and CNG which in turn is resulting in higher transportation costs of fruits and vegetables and increasing their prices in the market.

"Purchase of daily staples in our kitchen budget has declined because of soaring prices. The prices of lemons and chilies have skyrocketed, so we have limited our consumption," said Ritu Sharma, a housekeeper from Sarita Vihar, Delhi.

"The previous month we had similarly reduced our budget, when the prices of tomatoes increased. I tend to use pulses and other alternatives when there is sudden increase in prices," she added. The unfavourable weather condi-

tions, high humidity and erratic rainfall is damaging the crop harvest, making vegetables and fruits costlier. Soaring demands

and high prices of fuel and fertilizers is also affecting the availability and prices of vegetables and fruits.

VEGETABLE/FRUIT	PRICES IN APRIL, 2022	2022 PRICES IN JULY, 2022
Tomato	₹40-45 per Kg	₹20-25 per Kg
Bottle Guard	₹40 per Kg	₹80 per Kg
Potato	₹25 per Kg	₹20-25 per Kg
Lemon	₹250-300 per Kg	₹65-70 per Kg
Watermelon	₹30 perKg	₹30-35 per Kg
Capsicum	₹100 per Kg	₹90-100 per Kg
Onion	₹40 per Kg	₹25-30 per Kg
Mango	₹65-70 per Kg	₹100-120 per Kg
Banana	₹60-70 per Kg	₹80-100 per Kg

NIA raids 13 premises in 6 States over ISIS links

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday conducted searches at 13 premises of suspects in six States in the ISIS module case.

The searches were conducted at Bhopal and Raigarh districts in Madhya Pradesh, Bharuch, Surat, Navsari and Ahmedabad districts in Gujarat, Araria district in Bihar, Bhatkal and Tumkur City districts in Karnataka, Kolhapur and Nanded districts in Maharashtra and Deoband district in Uttar Pradesh, the NIA said in a statement.

The case was registered suo-moto by NIA on June 25 under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) relating to Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language and Imputations and assertions prejudicial to national integration besides relevant provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

"The searches conducted today have led to seizure of



incriminating documents/materials. Further investigations in the case are in progress," the NIA said.

Meanwhile, in a separate case, the NIA conducted searches in Trivandrum in the Mayiladuthurai ICAMA Sathik case.

This case relates to the arrest of one Sathik Batcha alias ICAMA Sathik who was inter-

cepted, along with four other accused who were driving in a black Scorpio vehicle at Nidur, Mayiladuthurai on February 21.

They were stopped by a police team tasked to secure accused in Mayiladuthurai police station case number 1601/2020 and case number 164/2022 and they attempted to run over the police party with

the said vehicle.

The case was initially registered as FIR Number 165/2022 on February 21 and re-registered by NIA on April 30 under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act besides Arms Act.

The searches led to seizure of digital devices and incriminating documents.

Cong vows to fight for farmers' issues from streets to Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday asserted it will fight from the streets to Parliament to ensure the guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for farmers and firmly oppose the "anti-people policies" of the Government.

The assertion was made by the party after a two-day meeting of the office-bearers of the All India Kisan Congress whose newly-appointed chief Sukhpal Singh Khaira said he will undertake a nationwide tour to know the problems of farmers and laborers and support them.

Khaira said he will fight the battle of farmers and labourers with promptness from the road to the parliament.

He said the government could "misuse" institutions like the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation as much as they want, but the party will not be distracted and will firmly oppose the "anti-people" policies of the Centre.

Khaira lauded the work of the outgoing chairman of Kisan



Congress Nana Patole and his team.

He said he would soon revamp the organization and anyone who has worked diligently in the last four years would definitely be promoted.

He said that a big programme would be organised by the Kisan Congress in the coming time in which top party leaders would participate.

Khaira alleged that the government had "cheated" the farmers and laborers of the country with regard to three farm laws.

To date, neither the MSP has been guaranteed nor has the aggrieved farmers been given assistance, he said.

Even the committee constituted by the Centre for MSP includes people who have been

in favour of the three farm laws, so the Samyukta Kisan Morcha has rejected this committee outright, he said.

The Kisan Congress will fight to get the guarantee of MSP for the farmers of the country on the basis of the C2 (cost to the crop) formula of the Swaminathan Commission report without delay, Khaira asserted.

RS productivity falls to 16.49% during second week of Monsoon Session

26.90% productivity recorded in first week of ongoing session of Rajya Sabha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The productivity of Rajya Sabha fell to 16.49 per cent during the second week of the Monsoon session from 26.90 per cent during the first week as the House witnessed repeated interruptions, adjournments, and suspension of 23 Opposition members.

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu has expressed disappointment saying "obstruction is the destruction of parliamentary democracy".

The cumulative productivity of the House for the first two weeks of this session has been a low of 21.58 per cent, according to RS officials.

During the 10 sittings so far, the Rajya Sabha functioned for 11 hours 8 minutes out of the scheduled 51 hours 35 minutes, losing 40 hours 45 minutes due to disruptions and forced disruptions, the RS Secretariat said.

No Bill could be passed and discussion on the Weapons of Mass Destruction Bill has still to conclude. Similarly, no Zero Hour submissions could be made and there were no Special Mentions for eight days. The question Hour could not take place on six days during the first two weeks, they added.

During the inaugural session of the Orientation program of new RS members, Naidu on Saturday stressed that a sense of mutual respect and accommodation should ensure discipline that enhances the dignity of the House. "Disruptions only hurt the interests of the parliamentarians".



The concluding day session on Sunday was chaired by Deputy Chairman Harivansh.

Noting that members rushing into the Well of the House and showing placards is not graceful to parliamentary democracy, Naidu said there were two opinions on showing the same to the people through live telecast.

Both Houses of Parliament have witnessed unruly scenes during this Monsoon session with Opposition members trying to corner the government over multiple issues including

price rise, Goods and Service Tax, the Agnipath defence recruitment scheme, and the alleged misuse of Central agencies. Over two dozen Opposition MPs were suspended from both the Houses for their alleged "misbehaviour".

Expressing concerns over the massive disruption in the proceedings of the Parliament, Harivansh stated that apart from the expenses incurred in running the house, disruption in Parliament has an adverse impact on the life of common

man.

During the second day of the orientation event, Harivansh said legislature is the most important organ and considered as the 'Light House' in a democracy.

He further added that the legislature should discharge its duties in a proper manner and the Government should be mindful of its accountability to the Parliament. Parliament can abdicate its responsibility only at its own peril. Continued interruption in Parliament can give way to lack of executive accountability and judicial overreach.

The second day of the programme began with a session on 'Parliamentary Privileges' delivered by Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi. Derek O' Brien engaged the attention of the Members through his unique interaction full of practical tips as guidance on the subject 'Raising Matters of Public Importance'.

'Indian aviation sector absolutely safe; foreign carriers that came to India reported 15 tech snags in last 16 days'

New Delhi: Aviation watchdog DGCA's chief Arun Kumar on Sunday said technical snags faced by domestic carriers in recent weeks did not have the potential to cause havoc and that even foreign airlines that came to India reported 15 technical snags in the last 16 days.

The country's civil aviation space is "absolutely safe" and all the protocols laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) are followed, he said.

Against the backdrop of a spate of technical snags suffered by Indian airlines in recent weeks and DGCA curtailing operations of SpiceJet, Kumar stressed that there is no need to panic as none of the events that have been reported/discussed had the potential to cause havoc.

"All the snags experienced are routine and happen with all airlines and all types of fleet. In the last 16 days, even for the foreign operators who come to India, we have seen 15 technical snags, which have been attended and rectified," Kumar told PTI in an interview. Specific details about snags that were faced by the overseas carriers were not disclosed.

According to Kumar, the snags faced by the foreign operators were similar to that encountered by the Indian carriers. In recent times, more than a dozen instances of Indian carriers facing technical snags have become public, especially in the case of SpiceJet, and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is keeping a close watch on the developments.

PTI

India-Oman to launch 15-day-long counter-terrorism drill from today in Raj, strengthen strategic ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Oman will further strengthen their strategic and defence ties during the fortnight-long counter-terrorism exercises between the armies of the two countries in Rajasthan starting Monday.

The Sultanate of Oman is a strategic partner of India in the Gulf and an important interlocutor at the Gulf Cooperation Council (AGCC), Arab League, and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) fora.

Giving details of the exercise, army officials said here on Sunday, the fourth Edition of the Joint Military Exercise 'AL NAJAH-IV' between will take place at the Foreign Training Node of Mahajan Field Firing Ranges near Bikaner, Rajasthan. The Royal Army of Oman contingent comprising 60 personnel from the Sultan of Oman Parachute Regiment have arrived at the exercise

location. The Indian Army is represented by troops from the 18 Mechanised Infantry battalion. The previous edition of Ex AL NAJAH IV was organised at Muscat from in March 2019.

The scope of the forthcoming exercise includes professional interaction, mutual understanding of drills and procedures, establishment of joint command and control structures and elimination of terrorist threats.

The joint exercise will focus on Counter Terrorism Operations, Regional Security Operations and Peace Keeping Operations under United Nations charter apart from organising joint physical training schedules, tactical drills, techniques and procedures, they said.

A comprehensive training programme to culminate in a 48 hours long validation exercise involving establishing of joint mobile vehicle check posts, joint cordon and search

operations followed by joint room intervention drills in a built up area has been worked out.

The joint military exercise aims to enhance the level of defence co-operation between Indian Army and Royal Army of Oman and will further manifest in enhancing the bilateral relations between the two nations. Elaborating upon the relations between the two countries, they said.

Oman accords a high priority to its ties with India. The two countries across the Arabian Sea are linked by geography, history and culture and enjoy warm and cordial relations, which are attributed to historical maritime trade linkages, intimacy of the royal family with India and the seminal role played by the Indian expatriate community in building of Oman, which is acknowledged by Omani Government. India-Oman defence cooperation has emerged as a key pillar of the

strategic partnership between the two countries. There has been regular exchange of visits by Defence Ministers of both sides. India's Defence Minister visited Oman in May 2016 during which four MOUs were signed.

Over the past few years visits, India's Defence Secretary, Navy and Army Chiefs have visited Oman with reciprocal visits to India by all three Omani Service Commanders and Secretary General of Defence.

The Ministries of Defence of both countries review their relations annually under the aegis of Joint Military Cooperation Committee meeting. Both Air Force and Navy undertake staff talks on a regular basis which has been the catalyst for new areas of cooperation.

Since 2008, Oman has been extending its support to Indian Navy's anti-piracy missions and Indian Naval Ships are regularly welcomed by Oman for Over Seas Deployments.

India records 19,673 Covid cases, 39 fatalities

New Delhi: India's Covid-19 case tally rose by 19,673 in a day to reach 4,40,19,811 while active cases reached 1,43,676, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

The death toll has climbed to 5,26,357 with 39 more fatalities, the data updated at 8 am stated. Active caseload increased by 292 in a day and comprise 0.33 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was 98.48 per cent, the ministry said. The number of people who have recuperated

from the viral disease surged to 4,33,49,778 while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.20 per cent. The daily positivity rate was 4.96 per cent and the weekly positivity rate was recorded at 4.88 per cent.

According to the Union Health Ministry, 204.25 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far. India's Covid-19 case tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16.

PTI

Monkeypox can spread from close physical contact regardless of sexual orientation, race, say experts

New Delhi: Monkeypox can spread from close physical contact regardless of sexual orientation or race and scapegoating or demonising the entire LGBTQ community as 'spreaders' will be a repeat of the mistake made during the AIDS epidemic, healthcare professionals and activists have said.

The monkeypox outbreak has raised widespread fear for the LGBTQ community amid reports of the disease being traced among men having sex with men. Indian equal rights activist Harish Iyer said monkeypox doesn't just spread in the LGBTQ community. "It happened in the community when there was pride month going on and there were more events in the community. It is just an episode of everyone going to a wedding and then getting Covid. So you need to look at them as victims and not perpetrators," Iyer told PTI. He said the monkeypox outbreak is already stigmatising the community and people who developed fever and are scared to go for a medical test.

PTI

Money recovered by ED is not mine, says Partha

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In what has sent ripples in the ruling Trinamool Congress, arrested Trinamool Congress leader and former Bengal Minister Partha Chatterjee on Sunday claimed that the money recovered by the Enforcement Directorate from the apartment of his close aide Arpita Mukherjee did not belong to him.

Confronted with questions from reporters at the ESI Hospital at Joka in South Kolkata where he was taken for a mandatory check up he said, "The money is not mine."

When asked to repeat



whether he really meant what he said the former number 2 in the Mamata Banerjee Cabinet iterated thrice "the cash is not mine ... It is not mine ... Not mine Not mine."

Arpita who is also in ED custody have however told the ED that she is not the owner of the money and that she was not

allowed to enter the rooms where the cash was kept. She also said that unknown people often came to her apartment with bags and left them in the rooms.

When asked whether anybody was conspiring against him, he said, "You will get to know when the time comes."

The former minister had told that decisions about him taken by the Chief Minister were correct but hinted that some of his party men were conspiring against him.

He would however not clarify the ownership of the Rs 50 crore recovered from Arpita's two apartments. Gold

jewellery worth another Rs 5 crore and deeds of at least 40 properties were also recovered by the ED.

The investigators have also found Rs 8 crore in several bank accounts of the duo. The accounts have been frozen. The ED has also alerted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to find hawala connections in Bangladesh, sources said.

Meanwhile Brngal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari said that Chatterjee was being made the scapegoat and that "the money belongs to the TMC and Kalighat --- the area where the Chief Minister's residence is situated."

Stories of freedom fighters should be taken to every household: Raj Guv

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra on Sunday said efforts should be made to take the life story of every hero of the Indian independence movement to all the households in the country.

Mishra was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of Constitution Park at Maharaja Ganga Singh University in Bikaner under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' -- a government's initiative to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Indian independence.

In a reference to the initiative, he said that for the first time, the festival of keeping the memory of freedom fighters alive and events related to the independence movement, cul-



ture and glorious history of India is being celebrated throughout the country.

The governor said that the basic objective of the construction of the Constitution Parks is to inspire the new generation to practically connect with the high ideals associated with the Constitution while getting education.

They should be aware that the same constitution which has given us rights, has also attached duties to it, Mishra said.

He also emphasised the importance to inculcate the consciousness of environmental protection among the students.

Union Minister of State for Art, Culture and Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal, who was also present at the event, said that countless freedom fighters sacrificed their lives while fighting the British for the country's independence.

On the occasion of Amrit Mahotsav, we have to take the stories of these anonymous freedom fighters and revolutionaries to the common people, he added.

AIPEF thanks PM for asking State Govts to clear power dues



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The All India Power Engineers Federation has welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for asking the State Governments to clear the power dues.

The outstanding dues on all States are over Rs 2.5 lakh crore.

AIPEF chairman Shailendra Dubey, while welcoming the views expressed by the prime minister, said that it was now clear that the public sector power distribution companies were the victims of the wrong policies of the State Governments.

Acharyas call for meeting to discuss Guruvayur Temple omens

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Lord Krishna Temple at Guruvayur, a shrine dating back to thousands of years is enmeshed in controversies and the State's leading Vedic scholars have called for convening a colloquium of Vedic, astro-

nommic and astrology scholars. Inauspicious developments that took place in the temple during the last few years, including the untimely demises of Chennas Narayanan Namboodiripad, the revered chief priest (Thanthri) of the temple and Kaimukku Raman Akkithirippadu, Vedic and Yaga scholar of repute have upset the Vedic community and devotees, according to Kakkassery Raveendranatha Panicker, lead astronomer and astrologer.

Akkithirippadu is the first scholar in India to forecast about the Covid-19 pandemic way back in 2017 itself. It was during an Ashtamangala Prasnam (a field of Vedic astrol-

ogy) at Guruvayur Temple in 2017 that Akkithirippadu prophesized the outbreak of the global pandemic anytime in 2019 and the death of millions of people.

Though it was decided in the 2017 colloquium to hold another Ashtamangala Prasnam, Akkithirippadu had told the gathering that he was unlikely to attend the event for reasons which were beyond his control. The scholar breathed his last on June 1, 2021 due to pneumonia.

"Many inauspicious incidents have taken place causing apprehension among the vedic scholars associated with the temple. There was a fire mishap in the prayer room of the chief priest, a fire at the temple premises (Thidappalli), two junior priests suffering burns by falling into the offerings meant for the presiding deity, the sacred dome atop the temple arch falling down without any reason are some of the events haunting the devotees as well as

the acharya sabha," Panicker told The Pioneer.

Vedic scholars including M P Vijesh Panickar (chairman, Kerala State Jyothisha Sabha), Moolayil Manoj Panickar (secretary), and other scholars too have come out in support of the demand by Ravindranathan Panickar, popularly known as Kakkassery Panickar.

They pointed out that 26 out of the 70 temple elephants in the Guruvayur Temple elephant estate died under mysterious conditions during the last 16 years.

"One of the temple elephants, described as the lead elephant, was electrocuted and the tree to which it was tied was completely charred," said Ravindranathan Panickar.

Other scholars like Mithun and Chandran said that the junior priests of the temple fell down from top of the elephants while they were taking part in the daily sacred procession. "These are omens or har-



bingers of untoward events that are likely to hit the State. Kerala is witnessing the worst ever phase in its history," said Mithun Panickar.

The Vedic scholars are of the view that an Ashtamangala Prasnam under the leadership of Parappanangadi Unnikrishnan Panickar should be held immediately to find out the root cause of the inauspicious developments happening in and around the temple.

Ashtamangalam is the collection of eight auspicious materials, that include flowers, grains, gold coin, fruits, betel leaves, mirror, cloth, lamp and

saffron. The chief of the Prashnam elucidates the observations to explain what was in the mind of the Lord. "It is an integration of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, nature, and behavior patterns that give out the results," said Raveendran Panickar. More than 50,000 people from all over India visit the temple on a daily basis to pay their obeisance to Lord Krishna, the presiding deity. Though the temple management remained tight lipped about the demand by the scholars, many of them agreed in private that all was not well with the temple affairs.

Axel, 2-year-old assault dog cremated with full military honours

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

One of the youngest foot soldiers of the Indian army, Axel — a two year old assault dog, was cremated with full military honours a day after he made a supreme sacrifice in the line of duty during an encounter in Wanigan Bala area of Pattan in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

A Lashkar-e Tayyeba (LeT) terrorist identified as Irshad Ahmd Bhat of Pattan, Baramulla was killed while three security personnel including two jawans of the Indian army and one J&k police jawan received injuries during the encounter. According to police, "LeT terrorist was active since May 2022 in the area. 01 AK rifle, 2 magazines & 30 rounds were recovered from the encounter

site".

On Saturday soon after the operation was launched in the area, two sniffer dogs from the 26 Army Dog unit were deployed at the encounter site to assist the soldiers.

After making preliminary assessment of the general area an obedient Axel was tasked by his trainer to track down the exact location of hiding terrorists inside one of the houses in the thickly populated area.

Following the command of his trainer Axel went inside the building. As he was conducting general searches Axel was hit by a 'barrage of bullets' fired by a hiding terrorist from inside one of the rooms.

According to initial reports, Axel was hit around the head by three bullets. He died on the spot. The dead

body of the voiceless soldier was retrieved after a long gap of about five hours. His trainer sobbed after recovering the dead body. Local reports claimed, "he spread a sheet on the roadside and kept him there. He kept patting the fellow soldier but failed to revive him". This was the second operational duty assigned to Axel ever since he was deployed with 29 Rashtriya Rifles units in the area of 10 Sector RR counter-insurgency forces. Recently, he took part in another operation in the Sopore area. Axel belonged to the Belgian Malinois breed which excels in detecting drugs, bomb, gas detection, routine search and rescue; tracking etc.

Acknowledging the supreme sacrifice of the assault canine, Army commander of

the Udhampur based Northern command headquarters in a tweet said, "Assault Dog 'Axel' made the supreme sacrifice in an operation at Pattan on 30 July 2022. The army commander labeled Axel a real hero in service to the Nation".

Another senior army officer, who led the 2016 surgical strike, Lt Gen Satish Dua (Retd) in his condolence message wrote, "Army Dog 'Axel' makes the supreme sacrifice during an operation in J&K. Axel charged into the room where terrorist hid himself; he sadly got hit, but saved the lives of soldiers who'd have gone in. Terrorist was neutralised". KJS Dhillon, former Director General Defence Intelligence Agency, who also served as GOC Chinara Corps, saluted the valour of Axel

while paying rich tributes to the voiceless warrior. "Salute Axel ... You did your duty well. Jai Hind." "Thank you for your Service Axel".

Chinara Corps also saluted the valour & sacrifice of Army Dog Axel. Large number of netizens also showered praises and feted the sacrifice of Axel in the line of duty.

In the last over three decades, trained canines have performed their duties and sacrificed their lives alongside footsoldiers of the Indian army. Their contributions have been acknowledged by the top brass of the Indian army by way of presenting them commendation cards and other awards. These canines have been performing the most crucial duty of road opening party where they are deployed with the soldiers to detect any



presence of explosives, IED's to prevent any targeted strike on security convoys. These

dogs are also deployed for other duties such as patrolling along the line of control to

keep wild animals at bay, sniffing drugs during frisking duties etc.

Yogi visits Ayodhya, pays homage to Paramhans Ramchandra

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Ram, on Sunday and offered prayers at Hanuman Garhi Temple.

In Ayodhya, Yogi Adityanath also paid homage to late Paramhans Ramchandra Das, the hero of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, on his death anniversary. During this, his affection for Ram temple along with Saketwasi Paramhans also spilled out.

The chief minister paid homage to the hero of the temple movement at his ashram, Digambar Akhara, in the afternoon on Sunday along with Paramhans' disciple and successor Mahant Sureshdas.

After reaching Ayodhya at 12 o'clock, the chief minister paid homage at the tomb of the hero of the first temple movement. After this he went to Hanuman Garhi and Ram Janmabhoomi for darshan besides visiting Digambar Akhara. After seeking blessings in Ayodhya, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also made an inspection of the on-going construction work of the grand Shree Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

UP ramps up work for construction of Ganga Expressway

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government has intensified preparations for construction of the 594-km Meerut-Prayagraj Ganga Expressway.

About 6,966 hectare land (more than 94 per cent) required for the expressway has been purchased/acquired. The Central government gave environmental clearance for the expressway on July 13. More than 56 per cent of the C&G (Clearing and Grubbing) work has also been completed so far.

Ganga Expressway is a dream project of the Yogi Adityanath government after Bundelkhand Expressway, which has already been opened for traffic. About 518 villages will be covered with the construction of the Ganga expressway. The expressway will connect Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj districts. It will be the sixth and the longest expressway in the state. A 3.5-km-long runway is also to be developed on the expressway at Shahjahanpur

for landing/take-off of Indian Air Force fighter jets in case of emergency.

Furthermore, nine public convenience centres, seven railway over bridges, 14 major bridges, 126 minor bridges and 381 underpasses will be built for the convenience of people. An interchange facility will also be provided at 17 places for entry and exit. A service road will be built for the residents of the villages around the project.

The UP Expressways Industrial Development Authority has been authorised by the government to build dedicated industrial parks on both sides of this expressway (Meerut, Hapur, Bareilly, Moradabad, Hardoi, Lucknow, Kanpur and Prayagraj). The selection of the agency for carrying out the development of industrial parks is underway. Once built, the expressway will save people's time, fuel while helping control environmental pollution. The expressway will boost agricultural and industrial income and development. It will act as a catalyst for establishment of food processing units, warehouses and mandis.

TET to be made mandatory for recruitment of madrasa teachers in UP now

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government has proposed to make Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) mandatory for the recruitment of teachers in madrasas to provide quality education to students.

A proposal is being prepared for implementing it, Minister of State for Minority Welfare, Danish Azad Ansari disclosed here on Sunday.

In its proposal, the government said that the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) syllabus had been implemented to provide quality education to students in Uttar Pradesh madrasas. He said since it was a scientifically designed course, it was imperative to have trained teachers to teach it better.

"In view of this, the government is going to make it mandatory to clear the TET for the recruitment of teachers in madrasas," Ansari said.

The minister also clarified that the requirement of TET would not apply to teachers of Urdu, Arabic, Farsi or Diniyat and it would be applicable only for the recruitment of teachers teaching NCERT syl-



labus.

Opposing the government proposal, joint general secretary of Teachers Association Madaris Arabiya, Hakim Abdul Haque, said the step would lead to discrimination against a section of madrasa teachers.

Haque also said that there would be a practical difference of merit between teachers teaching in the same madrasa and the teachers recruited on the basis of TET. He said that it was not clear whether the government would keep both teachers in the same category.

He said the new system would increase the risk of discrimination just like between permanent teachers and siksha mitras (ad hoc teachers) in primary schools.

In 2017, the Uttar Pradesh government had approved teaching from NCERT books in Tathaniya (classes 1 to 5), Faukania (classes 5 to 8) and madrasas of Aaliya or higher Aaliya level (high school and above).

UP STF arrests 27 in Lekhpal recruitment exam paper leak

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/ VARANASI/PRAYAGRAJ

The Special Task Force (STF) of Uttar Pradesh Police conducted raids in several districts and arrested 27 people after a video of paper leak in the Lekhpal recruitment exam went viral on social media on Sunday morning.

"Paper solvers and those accused of taking money from candidates for carrying out malpractices have been arrested after raids in Prayagraj, Kanpur Nagar, Moradabad, Varanasi and Gonda districts," an official communique of the STF disclosed here on Sunday afternoon.

Lekhpal is an administrative post and the selected candidates would report to revenue officers in rural areas. The exam was held between 10 am and 12 pm on Sunday at 501 examination centres in Ayodhya, Aligarh, Agra, Bareilly, Meerut, Gorakhpur, Prayagraj, Moradabad, Jhansi, Kanpur Nagar, Lucknow and Varanasi districts.

The STF statement said that apart from solvers, some accused helped candidates in writing the paper with the help of bluetooth devices.

"Today, on 31st July, UP

lekhpal recruitment tests were conducted in 12 districts and the STF received information that some gangs were using solvers to disrupt the fair conduct of the exams. Some gangs also helped candidates cheat using bluetooth devices," an official of the STF said, adding that the STF conducted a series of raids and so far it had arrested 27 persons in this connection.

The Varanasi unit of STF cracked down on the solver gang of competitive examinations on Sunday and arrested four. The STF also recovered electronic devices used to solve the questions.

The main examinations for the recruitment of lekhpal, conducted by Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Service Selection Commission (UPSSSC), were at various centres in Varanasi.

The Varanasi unit of STF got information about a gang using solvers for solving the questions in the main lekhpal recruitment examination. The STF sleuths raided three examination centres and arrested a candidate, Pushpendra of Chunar in Mirzapur from Udai Pratap Inter College, solver Rajnarayan Yadav of Rasra in Ballia from Arya Mahila PG College, candidate Krishna

Yadav of Bansdih in Ballia from Arya Mahila PG College and candidate Dilip Gupta of Raniyan in Pratapgarh from Rampyari Rastogi Inter College.

During the interrogation, the arrested candidates and solver disclosed that Vijay Kant Patel of Prayagraj was the kingpin of the solver gang. The gang had made deals of Rs 10 lakh with each candidate to help them clear the exam. The gang had fixed electronic devices in the ears and hands of the candidates and used code numbers to solve the questions.

The STF sleuths also recovered electronic devices from the possessions of candidates such as bluetooth, earbuds.

In Prayagraj, the STF arrested three persons, including the kingpin of the solver gang. The gang leader, Vijay Kant Patel and his associates, Dinesh Kumar Yadav and Sonu Kumar were arrested near a gas godown in Soraon. All three of them were going in a Brezza when the STF team nabbed them. Vijay Kumar is a resident of Atanpur village of Bahria in Prayagraj, Dinesh Kumar of Rajapur village and Sonu Kumar of Sarai Aziz village. The Prayagraj STF however denied any paper leak.

FIRST COLUMN

VIOLENT BELIEFS MUST BE REJECTED BY ALL

Popular acceptance of violent means needs social curbing



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ

Amid growing numbers of mass shooting incidents being reported from across developed countries, there is an environment of fear and anguish all across the world. This is mainly as mass shooting incidents are taking place in schools, parks, places of worship, military bases and even public transport facilities.

There may be different assessment and opinion over incidents of mass shooting. But people need to understand that these kinds of acts should be opposed by the masses in a louder voice to ring in the ears of the policy makers, who actually can stop such incidents. Just imagine the plight of parents whose children were mercilessly killed in a deadliest school shooting incident with no fault of theirs.

How would the family of a man whose throat was slit by some misguided youth deal with his death? Similarly, recent incidents of deliberate, planned bloodshed attempted on our country's jawans, lawmakers and innocent civilians, and the blowing up of government properties worth crores of rupees are a matter of serious concern as they signal the growing culture of violence.

As far as Bharat is concerned, it is very unfortunate that all this is happening in a great country, which is perhaps the only country in the world that believes in the concept of 'Ahimsa Parmo Dharma', i.e., complete non-violence. It is a very well-known fact that Bharat was once known as the golden sparrow of the world, where man, nature and animals lived in peace and harmony.

It was a glorious era when there was every kind of joy and bliss. This vision of Ram Rajya was sought to be achieved by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. But, such a world of divine bliss and happiness can only be established through a righteous value system.



We all know that religious beliefs greatly influence our perceptions and attitudes. Hence, the commonly held belief that violence is justified to obtain your rightful due, or for victory of good over evil, and its corollary that good has to be more violent than evil, needs to be re-considered.

If we as a society encourage such wrong belief, then a person or a group of persons, driven by might, would be considered to be right, and then many young people, who have seen their families suffer a life of suppression and exploitation — physical, social and economic — will look at violence to be the only way to make their voice heard.

Unfortunately, today such youth are continuously being 'misguided' by people and organisations with vested interests, alien ideologies, commercial cinema, television and internet, which justify and glorify the culture of violence.


Gandhi ji showed us that non-violence could be the basis of collective response to achieve social or political goals. He also spoke extensively on the need to imbibe non-violence at an individual level, in thought and action. This can be best achieved through early education within the family first, and then the school, and finally at the level of the society. Education must thus become the central objective in our society, as all subsequent behaviour or action by individuals, would be influenced by it.

Need of the hour is to create a mass awareness among the people to accept each other's opinion or action and live in harmony with each other. People in power should realize that value-building, especially among the youth, is the biggest call of our times. They must develop such a strong character that even grave situations do not prompt them to take up the course of violence, for violent means never create harmonious ends.

(The writer is a spiritual educator. The views expressed are personal.)

Rajasthan folk artist breaks gender stereotype

Music is passion for Mamta Sapera, and she plays many traditional instruments on stage, while breaking glass ceiling



SHEFALI MARTINS

A typical folk performance from Rajasthan took place at Jaipur's Jawahar Kala Kendra, with musicians wearing colourful Rajasthani turbans playing various instruments – harmonium, khartal, bhang, morchang, dafli and the likes. The classic vibe of a regular folk performance from the desert state – colourful, rooted, melodious and soul-stirring – filled the air.

A turbaned young face played the morchang. He wasn't a man. She was 18-year-old Mamta Sapera. Mamta, from the Kalbeliya tribe known for the performing arts, believes in taking her community's art forward but not through the regular route.

As a child, she was trained in the Kalbeliya dance, typical-

(The author is freelance journalist)

Financial discipline a must for states

The Centre has to crack the whip on growing trend of states going for excessive borrowings else it could lead to a major financial crisis

In recent years, indiscriminate borrowings by entities of the state governments, leveraging guarantees, has raised alarm bells. In June, 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lambasted banks, mostly public sector banks (PSBs), for lending to such entities based on the escrow of the states' future revenue streams or using collectorates and courts as security.

The RBI sought a review of such lending practices by the bank boards and reported compliance by September, 2022. The Union Finance ministry was more emphatic, seeking an end to the practice. The warning is a follow up to a letter from the Centre to the States last year pointing out that pledging of future tax revenues was in violation of Article 266 (1) of the Constitution, which mandates that all taxes and loans should flow into the Consolidated Fund of the State (CFS).

It is not as if the States are unaware of this provision. Yet, the states, including Andhra Pradesh (AP), Uttar Pradesh (UP), Punjab, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Himachal Pradesh (HP), have made well-orchestrated moves to ensure that their entities get the loans. For instance, in AP which cornered a major chunk of the bank loan, the State government had transferred assets to the AP State Development Corporation (APSDC) to raise funds.

In 2020, Andhra Pradesh even enacted a special law to provide statutory status to APSDC for assignment of the identified ARET (additional retail excise tax) revenue to undertake specific social and developmental activity.

This paved the way for India Ratings - the rating agency -- to rate APSDC based on "unrestricted pledged revenue" on (ARET) levied by the AP government. Armed with an assurance that cash flowing from the levy would be used for servicing the loan, eight banks, including the State Bank of India (SBI), gave loans.

Ironically, the state government enacted the legislation despite the Centre pointing out that some of its provisions were not in sync with Article 293 (3) of the Constitution, which mandates that states cannot borrow without the Centre's permission.

A state agency or corporation whose majority ownership and control rests with the state government or a special purpose vehicle (SPV) floated by it raises loans for the purpose of implementing its welfare programs and development projects. Having raised the loan, although technically, the corporation/SPV/agency has to pay it back, the money has to come from the state government on whose behalf and directions, it has taken the loan.

This leads to an anomalous situation whereby the state government is servicing a loan which is not on its books.

But why does it allow such a situation to develop? Why does it not borrow itself and reflect the loan amount in its books?



THE UNION GOVERNMENT SPENT A RECORD ₹ 525,000 CRORE ON FOOD SUBSIDY, WHICH WAS USED TO PAY BACK ALL DUES (RS 330,000 CRORE AS ON MARCH 31, 2020) OF FCI TO THE NATIONAL SMALL SAVINGS FUND

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



Indeed, this is the logical way to go. But, it doesn't suit the mandarins in the state finance department. Instead, they prefer an arrangement whereby the loan is taken by the corporation/SPV/agency and shown in the latter's books. This way, they manage to under-report State's borrowings or its fiscal deficit (FD), thereby circumventing the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, which requires a State not to let its FD exceed three percent of its gross domestic product (SGDP).

In other words, the state can continue to borrow in excess of the three per cent cap through its entities and yet remain compliant with the discipline under FRBM. Glamorously termed as off-budget liabilities or OBLs, the States use such borrowings to hide their fiscal profligacy -- a blatant manifestation of this particularly in recent years being the 'freebies' (a euphemism for benefits distributed by political parties using public money for garnering votes) promised in elections. This has even come in for strident criticism from the Supreme Court (SC). Hearing a PIL on July 26, 2022, the SC has asked the Union Government to come up with measures to put an end to this cult.

What can the Centre do to rein in OBLs?

Being the owner of PSBs, the Centre can always issue diktat to them for not giving such loans. But it is easier said than done. Nothing prevents the state government from getting loans sanctioned citing the ability of its entities to pay back. For instance, APSDC got the money citing "unrestricted pledged revenue" on (ARET) levied by the AP

Government for which the former had full legal backing.

That the banks continued to extend loans to state corporations/agencies even after the Union Finance ministry flagged its concern last year and has to give reminders even now shows that the diktats to PSB managements is not working.

In the current session, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has told Parliament that "in future, off-budget borrowings of state governments -- made through State corporations or SPVs, where the principal and/or interest are to be serviced out of the budget or by assignment of taxes/cesses or any other state revenue -- will henceforth be considered part of the State's own borrowings".

Put simply, all borrowings of the state, including OBLs, must not exceed 3 per cent of the SGDP. This is a welcome move. It will make things transparent and help in enforcing fiscal discipline. However, to reduce the pain of States in making this transition, the Centre may consider raising the cap on borrowings to say 3.5 per cent.

On its part, the Union government has sought to address its own OBLs. During 2020-21, it spent a record Rs 525,000 crore on food subsidy, which apart from paying for the cost of giving free food to over 800 million persons under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), was used to pay back all dues (Rs 3,30,000 crore as on March 31, 2020) of Food Corporation of India (FCI) to the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). Such loans were taken by FCI from NSSF since 2016-17 to

finance the unpaid food subsidy dues from the Centre.

Likewise, the Centre spent Rs 138,000 crore on fertilizer subsidy during 2020-21, nearly 50 per cent of which was used to clear all deferred subsidy payments (DSPs) to manufacturers. During 2021-22, it made full provision in the budget to pay for all expenses on food and fertilizer subsidies. During 2022-23 also, it is making adequate allocation to leave no room for any off-budget borrowings.

It has also cleared the past borrowings of the National Highways Authority of India (NHA). For the future, the Centre is not contemplating any borrowing by NHA on its behalf. Making the state of Union's finances transparent is fine. But, this should be accompanied by fiscal discipline. Sadly, this is not the case here.

For instance, during 2020-21, the FD turned out to be 9.2 per cent of GDP, 2.5 times the budget estimate (BE) of 3.5 per cent, which itself was 0.5 per cent higher than the 3 per cent threshold required by the FRBM. During 2021-22 also, at 6.7 per cent, FD was high considering that the year was not impacted much by Covid-19 and growth in nominal GDP was pretty high at around 20 per cent.

To conclude, both the Centre and states must make their finances transparent by including off-budget borrowings in budgetary statements. While the former has already started doing it, the latter should follow suit. At the same time, both should endeavor to ensure that their FD remains well within the threshold prescribed under the FRBM.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE PERSON WHO WAS TALKING ABOUT BRINGING OUR DEAD BODIES BACK FROM GUWAHATI, IS TODAY UPSET WITH THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE ED.

—MLA SHIVSENA SANJAY SHIRSAT



I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY SCAM. I AM SAYING THIS BY TAKING THE OATH OF SHIV SENA CHIEF BALASAHEB THACKERAY..BALASAHEB TAUGHT US TO FIGHT.

—SHIV SENA LEADER SANJAY RAUT

ly associated with women of her community, by her mother. She has performed, too. But, the visit of a musician relative altered Mamta's course. "A relative was visiting my home. Since I was always intrigued by the instruments he played, I asked him to teach me something about them. He bluntly refused and told me, girls do not play instruments. This upset me no end. So, on my 15th birthday that year, I asked my father for the morchang, khartal and bhang as gifts. My father agreed to give them to me," Mamta shared.

Her father set a challenge. He asked her to perform on a stage within 15 days. "I told him I was not ready yet. But he was not convinced. I accepted the challenge. I felt very good when I was up on the stage, playing

the morchang and I received appreciation from everyone. That was my beginning!" said Mamta, who has recently completed her Class XII. She wants to be a graduate in music.

In the past three years, Mamta added many more instruments to her prowess. She learnt to play the drum, kazoo and harmonium, besides

the traditional instruments that she was practising. She also learnt to play the violin and took beatboxing lessons. While it usually takes six months of practice to play an instrument, Mamta did it in 15 days!

She comes from a family of performing artists. Her brothers sing and play instruments. Her father plays the bean and organises folk performances, and her mother

is a noted dancer herself. Everyone in her extended family is a performer as well. It is through multiple shows and performances all over the country that Mamta's family came out of living in tents and now owns a house in Jaipur.

"In the beginning, it was not that I wanted only to learn to play instruments. I was into Kathak, besides Kalbeliya dance.

But my relative's comment got into me. I decided that not one or two, I will play as many instruments as possible. I wanted to show people that girls can play whichever instrument they want! And, we can do what we want! The same people who discouraged me earlier now compliment me," said Mamta.

Mamta has performed all across the country and what she enjoys the most is jugalbandi. "It was a defining moment in my life when I played the khartal and morchang with my idol, the folk artist Ghazi Khanji. I used to learn techniques watching his shows and videos and wanted to emulate him. It was such an honour when he complimented me on my art," she said.

Her jugalbandi with Carnatic musicians is vivid in her memories. "It was a beau-

tiful communication between folk beats and Carnatic melody. After half-an-hour, we began to understand each other's music," she said.

She also recalled a performance experience when her tongue started bleeding. "I love the morchang because it is the smallest and toughest-to-play instrument. I was doing a show a few months ago and I didn't realise that my tongue had started bleeding. When we play, the entire head region goes numb. Some members of the audience came up on the stage and asked me to stop. I gestured to them that I will stop only when I complete the piece," Mamta shared.

The young torchbearer of the Kalbeliya community rues the fact that they don't sing the old-time songs anymore. "There

were songs about our life in the tents, about longing for loved ones living elsewhere... The present generation doesn't know them. Today, they mix the sound and the purity isn't preserved. People should know these stories of our collective past. I would want to revive those songs," said Mamta.

Mamta wants to create a space for girls. "I want to start a studio where girls can learn to play instruments. No one will tell them what they should not do. I am currently working with a few girls, training them to play the khartal as and when I meet them," she stated.

Mamta is also against gender stereotyping. "I don't like gender taboos. I like to wear kurta-pyjama and safas, so I wear them," said the feisty young woman.

Drone explosion hits HQ of Russia's Black Sea Fleet

AP ■ KIV

A drone-borne explosive device detonated Sunday at the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, injuring six people, officials said.

The explosion at the headquarters in the city of Sevastopol on the Crimean peninsula that Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 caused cancellation of observances of Russia's Navy Day holiday.

The Black Sea Fleet's press service said the drone appeared to be homemade. It described the explosive device as "low-power" but Sevastopol mayor Mikhail Razvozhnev said six people were injured in the blast.

There was no immediate information on where the drone began its flight; Sevastopol is about 170 kilometers south of the Ukrainian mainland and Russian forces control much of the mainland

area along the Black Sea.

Fighting continued elsewhere in Ukraine. The mayor of the major port city of Mykolaiv, Vitaliy Kim, said shelling killed one of Ukraine's richest men, Oleksiy Vadatursky, and his wife. Vadatursky headed a grain production and export business.

In the Sumy region in Ukraine's north, near the Russian border, shelling killed one person, the regional administration said.

Three people died in attacks over the past day in the Donetsk region, which is partly under the control of Russian separatist forces, said governor Pavlo Kyrylenko.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said Sunday on Twitter that images of a prison where at least 53 Ukrainian prisoners of war died in an explosion on Friday indicated



that the blast came from within the building in Olenivka, which is under Russian control.

Russian officials have claimed the building was attacked by Ukraine with the aim of silencing POWs who might be giving information about Ukrainian military operations.

Satellite photos taken before and after the attack

show that a small, squarish building in the middle of the Olenivka prison complex was demolished, its roof in splinters. Podolyak said those images and the lack of damage to adjacent structures showed that the building was not attacked from the air or by artillery and contended the evidence was consistent with a hyperbaric bomb set off inside.

Chinese research vessel to dock at Hambantota port in August: Lankan Army spokesman

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has allowed a Chinese research vessel to dock at the Hambantota port next month, the island nation's Army spokesman said on Sunday, days after India said it carefully monitors any development having a bearing on its security and economic interests.

The southern deep-sea port of Hambantota is considered strategically important for its location. The port, located in the hometown of the Rajapaksa family, has been developed largely with Chinese loans.

Asked for his comment on reports about the possible docking of the Chinese spacecraft tracking ship 'Yuan Wang 5' at the Hambantota port, the Sri Lankan Army spokesman

Colonel Nalin Herath said Sri Lanka routinely gives clearance to enter commercial and military ships from many countries to go past and also enter Sri Lankan waters.

"We have given permission and clearance to the Chinese vessel in that context," Herath told PTI.

Yuan Wang 5 is expected to dock in Sri Lanka's Hambantota port from August 11-17 for 'replenishment' and will conduct satellite control and research tracking in the north western part of the Indian Ocean region through August and September.

India has said it carefully monitors any development having a bearing on its security and economic interests. "We are aware of reports of a proposed visit by this vessel to Hambantota in August," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in New Delhi when

asked about the reports of a proposed visit by a Chinese vessel."

The government carefully monitors any development having a bearing on India's security and economic interests and takes all necessary measures to safeguard them," he

said on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's main Tamil minority party TNA on Sunday said China's military presence in the Indian Ocean would give India a legitimate defence concern and that Colombo should not accentuate that by providing space for Chinese military presence.

"Chinese spacecraft tracking ship Yuan Wang 5 entering the Hambantota Harbour on August 11 has again given rise to tensions in the region. We do not take sides with regard to power struggles between other countries," the TNA said in a statement.

BRISL (Belt & Road Initiative Sri Lanka), a Colombo-based organisation studying China's ambitious connectivity project, said "the visit of Yuan Wang-5 to Hambantota port will be an excellent opportunity for Sri Lanka and the regional developing nations to learn and develop their own space programmes."

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.

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

The proposed visit by the vessel comes when Sri Lanka is grappling with a severe economic crisis.

India has been at the forefront of extending economic assistance to Sri Lanka as it is grappling with the worst economic crisis since 1948.

As the new Sri Lankan president looks at pulling the country out of its economic crisis, India last week said that it will continue to assist the island nation and support its people in their quest for stability and prosperity.

US envoy: Russia intends to dissolve Ukraine from world map

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The US ambassador to the United Nations has said that there should no longer be any doubt that Russia intends to dismantle Ukraine "and dissolve it from the world map entirely".

Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the UN Security Council on Friday that the US is seeing growing signs that Russia is laying the groundwork to attempt to annex all of the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk and the southern Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, including by installing "illegitimate proxy officials in Russian-held areas, with the goal of holding sham referenda or decree to join Russia".

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov "has even stated that this is Russia's war aim", she said.

Lavrov told an Arab summit in Cairo on Sunday that Moscow's overarching goal in Ukraine is to free its people from its "unacceptable regime".

Apparently suggesting that Moscow's war aims extend beyond Ukraine's industrial Donbas region in the east comprising Donetsk and Luhansk, Lavrov said: "We will certainly help the Ukrainian people to get rid of the regime, which is absolutely anti-people and anti-historical."

Russia's deputy UN ambassador Dmitry Polyansky told the Security Council on Friday that "The de-Nazification and demilitarisation of Ukraine will be carried out in full".

"There must no longer be a threat from this stage to Donbas, nor to Russia, nor to the liberated Ukrainian territories where for the first time in several years people are

finally able to feel that they can live the way they want," he said.

Polyansky also warned Western nations supplying long-range artillery and MLRS surface-to-surface rockets that they were shifting "the provisional security line" further toward the west, "and in so doing clarifying even further the aims and objectives of our special military operation."

Thomas-Greenfield went after countries that say "one country's security should not come at the expense of another's", asking what they call Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She didn't name any country but this is a view China has repeated frequently, including on Friday by its deputy UN ambassador Geng Shuang.

He told the council, "Putting one's own security above that of others, attempting to strengthen military blocs,

establishing absolute superiority ... Will only lead to conflict and confrontation, divide the international community and make themselves less secure".

The US ambassador also went after nations that call for all countries to embrace diplomacy without naming Russia, saying: "Let us be clear: Russia's ongoing actions are the obstacle to a resolution to this crisis."

Again she named no countries but a significant number of nations in Africa, Asia and the Mideast take this approach.

Thomas-Greenfield cited evidence of mounting atrocities including the reported bombings of schools and hospitals, "the killing of aid workers and journalists, the targeting of civilians attempting to flee, the brutal execution-style murder of those going about their daily business in Bucha", the suburb of Ukraine's capital Kyiv where

local authorities said hundreds of people were killed during its occupation by Russian forces.

She said there is evidence Russia forces "have interrogated, detained forcibly, deported an estimated hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, including children -- tearing them from their homes and sending them to remote regions in the east".

Nearly two million Ukrainians refugees have been sent to Russia, according to both Ukrainian and Russian officials.

Ukraine portrays these journeys as forced transfers to enemy soil, which is considered a war crime. Russia calls them humanitarian evacuations of war victims who already speak Russian and are grateful for a new home.

A recent Associated Press investigation based on dozens

of interviews has found that while the situation is more nuanced that the Ukrainians suggest, many refugees are indeed forced to embark on a surreal trip into Russia, subjected along the way to human rights abuses, stripped

of documents and left confused and lost about where they are.

Those who leave go through a series of what are known as filtration points, where treatment ranges from interrogation and strip searches to being yanked aside and never seen again.

"The US has information that officials from Russia's presidential administration are overseeing and coordinating filtration operations," Thomas-Greenfield told the council.

Polyansky countered that despite Ukraine's efforts at intimidation of their citizens



"people are choosing the country that they trust" -- Russia.

He warned that heavy weapons being poured into Ukraine by the West "will spill over into Europe" because of what he claimed is "the flourishing corruption among Ukraine's political and military leadership".

Polyansky said Western

weapons are only "dragging out the agony and increasing the suffering of the Ukrainian people".

Addressing Western ambassadors, he said: "The aims of our special military operation will be achieved either way, however much fuel you pour into the fire in the form of weapons."

Sting warns during Warsaw concert of threats to democracy

AP ■ WARSAW

British musician Sting interrupted a concert in Warsaw on Saturday evening to warn his audience that democracy is under attack worldwide and to denounce the war in Ukraine as "an absurdity based upon a lie". He asked a popular Polish actor, Maciej Stuh, to come onstage to translate his warning that democracy is "in grave danger of being lost unless we defend it".

"The alternative to democracy is a prison, a prison of the mind. The alternative to democracy is violence, oppression, imprisonment and silence," Sting said and then ran his hand across his neck in a throat-cutting gesture.

The 70-year-old delivered his message in a country that borders Ukraine, where Russia launched its invasion on February 24 that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions. Poland has become the place of refuge for more Ukrainians than any other



country. "The war in the Ukraine is an absurdity based upon a lie. If we swallow that lie, the lie will eat us," Sting said.

He appeared to be referring to justifications Russia has tried to give for its invasion, including a Russian claim that it seeks to "de-Nazify" Ukraine, a democracy led by a Jewish president.

Those in the audience at Warsaw's National Stadium would have also understand a reference to their own country.

Sting drew strong applause in particular when he said that

democracy is something messy and frustrating "but it is still worth fighting for".

Poland's populist government is often accused by the European Union and human rights organisations of eroding democratic norms with its efforts to tighten control over the courts and media, reduce the reproductive rights of women and engage in anti-LGBTQ rhetoric.

After his speech he performed "Fragile", whose lyrics include the words that "nothing comes from violence and nothing ever could".

Japanese video journalist detained at Myanmar protest

AP ■ BANGKOK

A Japanese video journalist has been detained by security forces in Myanmar while covering a protest against military rule in the country's largest city, pro-democracy activists said Sunday.

Toru Kubota, a Tokyo-based documentary filmmaker, was arrested on Saturday by plainclothes police after a flash protest in Yangon, according to Typ Fone, a leader of the group Yangon Democratic Youth Strike, which organised the rally. Like many activists, he uses a pseudonym for protection against the military authorities.

Myanmar's army seized power in February last year by ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, and has since cracked down hard on dissent.

According to a detailed tally compiled by Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, at least 2,138 civilians have been killed by the security forces and 14,917 arrested since the military takeover.

Last week, the military government drew sharp inter-

national criticism after announcing that it had hanged four activists convicted of terrorism in secret trials.

Typ Fone told The Associated Press that two protesters in Saturday's march were also arrested and detained in a township police station. The arrests were also reported by several other anti-government groups.

An official from the Japanese Embassy told The Associated Press that a Japanese national was reported detained, but declined to reveal details. The man is being held for questioning at a police station in Yangon and the embassy was taking action to release him, said the official, who asked not to be identified because was not authorised to share information with the media.

The government hasn't announced Kubota's arrest, and state-run daily newspapers, which usually report on arrests of pro-democracy protesters, did not mention it either.

However, pro-military accounts on the Telegram messaging app said the Japanese was arrested not for taking pictures but for participating in the protest by holding a banner.



Typ Fone said that photos of Kubota with the banner uploaded to the Telegram channels were taken after he had been arrested, indicating they were done under duress.

During the march, about a dozen protesters chanted slogans opposing the military takeover, and shortly after, scattered into the crowds in the surrounding streets.

"He was taking a picture with his camera from a short distance from our strike yesterday," Typ Fone said of Kubota. "When we finished the strike and dispersed, he was arrested by the security forces in plainclothes and put into a

Probox car." The vehicle is typically used by taxis in Yangon, and Typ Fone said the car in question also had the markings of a taxi.

According to a portfolio of Kubota's work online, his primary focus was on ethnic conflicts, immigrants and refugee issues, and he has tried to highlight the conditions of "marginalised, deprived communities".It says he has worked with media companies such as Yahoo! News Japan, VICE JAPAN and Al Jazeera English.

Virtually all independent journalism in Myanmar is carried out underground or from exile.

The military government has arrested about 140 journalists, about 55 of whom remain detained awaiting charges or trial. Kubota is the fifth foreign journalist to be detained, after US citizens Nathan Maung and Danny Fenster, who worked for local publications, and freelancers Robert Bociaga of Poland and Yuki Kitazumi of Japan, all of whom were eventually expelled. Most of those still detained are being held under the charge of causing fear, spreading false news, or agitating against a government employee. The charges carry up to three years in prison.

Red Cross struggles to see prison where Ukrainian POWS died

AP ■ KIV

Ukrainian and Russian officials blamed each other for the deaths of dozens of Ukrainian prisoners of war in an attack on a prison in a separatist-controlled area. The International Red Cross asked to visit the prison to make sure the scores of wounded POWs had proper treatment, but said its request had not been granted so far.

Meanwhile, Russia kept launching attacks on several Ukrainian cities, hitting a school and a bus station.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations have a duty to react to the shelling of the prison complex in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, and he called again

for Russia to be declared a terrorist state.

"Condemnation at the level of political rhetoric is not enough for this mass murder," he said. Separatist authorities and Russian officials said the attack Friday killed 53 Ukrainian POWs and wounded another 75. Russia's Defence Ministry on Saturday issued a list naming 48 Ukrainian fighters, aged 20 to 62, who died in the attack; it was not clear if the ministry had revised its fatality count.

Satellite photos taken before and after the attack show that a small, squarish building in the middle of the Olenivka prison complex was demolished, its roof in splinters.

Both Ukraine and Russia alleged the attack on the prison was premeditated and intended to silence the Ukrainian

prisoners and destroy evidence.

The ICRC, which has organised civilian evacuations and worked to monitor the treatment of POWs held by Russia and Ukraine, said it requested access to the prison "to determine the health and condition of all the people present on-site at the time of the attack." "Our priority right now is making sure that the wounded receive lifesaving treatment and that the bodies of those who lost their lives are dealt with in a dignified manner," the Red Cross said.

But the organisation said late Saturday that its request to access the prison had not been granted yet.

"Granting ICRC access to POWs is an obligation of parties to conflict under the Geneva Conventions," the ICRC said on Twitter.

Russia claimed Ukraine's



military used US-supplied precision rocket launchers to target the prison in Olenivka, a settlement controlled by the Moscow-backed Donetsk People's Republic. The Ukrainian military accused the Russians of shelling the prison to cover up the alleged torture and execution of Ukrainians there.

The Institute for the Study

of War, a think tank based in Washington, said the competing claims and limited information prevented assigning full responsibility for the attack but the "available visual evidence appears to support the Ukrainian claim more than the Russian."

Moscow has opened a probe into the attack and the UN said it also was prepared to

send investigators. UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said "we stand ready to send a group of experts able to conduct an investigation, requiring the consent of the parties, and we fully support the initiatives" of the Red Cross. Elsewhere in eastern Ukraine, Russian rockets hit a school in Kharkiv and a bus station in Sloviansk, among other strikes. In southern Ukraine, one person was reported killed and six injured in shelling in a residential area in Mykolaiv, local officials said.

Russian and separatist forces are trying to take full control of the Donetsk region, one of two eastern provinces that Russia has recognised as sovereign states.

Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk warned Saturday that Ukrainian-controlled parts of Donetsk will face severe heating problems

this winter because of the destruction of gas mains. She called for a mandatory evacuation of residents before the cold weather sets in.

The prison attack reportedly killed Ukrainian soldiers captured in May after the fall of Mariupol, a Black Sea port city where troops and the Azov Regiment of the national guard famously held out against a months-long Russian siege.

On Saturday, an association of Azov fighters' relatives dressed in black demonstrated outside Kyiv's St. Sophia Cathedral and called for Russia to be designated a terrorist state for violating the Geneva Convention's rules for the treatment of war prisoners.

A woman wearing dark glasses who gave only her first name, Iryna, was waiting for news of her 23-year-old son.

"I don't know how is he,

where is he, if he is alive or no. I don't know. It's a horror, only horror," she said.

On the energy front, Russia's state-owned natural gas corporation said Saturday it has halted shipments to Latvia because of contract violations. Gas giant Gazprom said the shipments were stopped because Latvia broke "terms for extraction of gas."

The statement likely referred to a refusal to meet Russia's demand for gas payments in rubles rather than other currencies. Gazprom has previously suspended gas shipments to other EU countries, including the Netherlands, Poland and Bulgaria, because they would not pay in rubles.

EU nations have been scrambling to secure other energy sources, fearing that Russia will cut off more gas supplies as winter approaches.

'ISIL-K to recruit members from other terror groups'

To develop threat capability from Af: UN report

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) seeks to strengthen its capabilities by recruiting members from other terror groups and if succeeded in regaining control over the lost territory in eastern Afghanistan, the outfit may prove difficult for the Taliban to reverse such gains, a UN report has said.

The 15th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of member states in countering the threat said on Saturday that the militant group views Afghanistan as a base for expansion in the wider region for the realisation of its "great caliphate" project.

"It is unclear whether the ISIL-K can regain control over lost territory in eastern Afghanistan. Should it succeed, it may prove difficult for the Taliban to reverse such gains and, according to one member state, the ISIL-K would then be positioned to develop a global threat capability from Afghanistan," the report said. "The ISIL-K seeks to strengthen its capabilities by recruiting members from other terrorist groups, as well as to attract disaffected Taliban fighters and local ethnic minorities," the report said.

According to the report, one member state reported the defection of 50 Uighur fighters



from the eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement to ISIL-K.

Several member states reported that ISIL-K was able to recruit thanks to higher monthly payments to fighters.

In Afghanistan, Sanaullah Ghafari remains the leader of ISIL-K. Other leadership figures are reported by one member state to include Mawlawi Rajab Salahuddin (alias Mawlawi Hanas) as deputy, Sultan Aziz Azzam (spokesperson), Abu Mohsin (head of finance), Qari Shahadat (head of training), Qari Saleh (head of intelligence), and Qari Fateh (head of military operations).

The report said that it appears that attacks claimed or attributed to ISIL-K have decreased, while their geographical spread has widened.

In April and May, the ISIL-K claimed to have fired rockets into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Although both countries denied that rockets reached their territories, the risk of such attacks remains. "The aims were intend-

ed to demonstrate the inability of de facto security forces to control borders and to attract new ISIL-K recruits from the region," it said. Member states also report that the ability of Da'esh leadership to direct and maintain control over the flow of funds to global affiliates remains resilient and that such flow represents an important element of the loyalty shown by affiliated groups. According to several member states, all transactions involving affiliates are directed by Da'esh leadership.

Recipients include the Da'esh affiliate in Afghanistan, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan, through trusted cash couriers, as well as affiliates in Africa, through the Karrar "office" in Somalia, which is cited as dealing with fund transfers inside and outside of Africa. One member state highlighted the emerging importance of individuals in South Africa in facilitating the transfer of funds from Da'esh leadership to affiliates in Africa.

Maggie's legacy: Divisive Thatcher looms large over UK Tory race

PTI ■ LONDON

Two people are running to be Britain's next Prime Minister, but a third presence looms over the contest: Margaret Thatcher.

The late former Prime Minister dominated Britain in the 1980s, and has left a large and contested legacy. Critics see her as an intransigent ideologue whose free-market policies frayed social bonds and gutted the country's industrial communities. But for the governing Conservative Party, Thatcher is an icon, an inspiration and the presiding spirit who made Britain fit for the modern era.

In the race to replace Boris Johnson as Conservative leader and Prime Minister, both Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak claim to embody the values of Thatcher, who died in 2013 at 87.

Asked who was Britain's greatest Prime Minister? Both candidates unhesitatingly say Thatcher. Sunak made a key speech in the late leader's hometown of Grantham, declaring himself a proponent of "common-sense Thatcherism," while his wife and children took selfies in front of the Iron Lady's bronze statue.

Truss talks about her own modest origins, inviting comparisons to grocer's daughter Thatcher, and adopts poses and outfits — bold blue dresses, pussy-bow blouses — that echo the distinctive style of Britain's first female Prime Minister.

Historian Richard Vinen of King's College London says Truss is an "Instagram Thatcher."

Victoria Honeyman, associate professor of British politics at the University of Leeds, says Thatcher is "a talisman" for Conservatives. Robert Saunders, a historian of modern Britain at Queen Mary University of London, believes "she has become a creature of myth."

"Like Thor's hammer, Thatcher's handbag can bestow godlike powers on those deemed worthy to lift it," Saunders wrote on the Unherd website.

In one sense, the Thatcher fixation is easily explained. She led the Conservatives to three successive election victories and was never defeated at the ballot box. She was eventually brought down — like Johnson — by her own party, ousted in 1990 after 11 years in power.

"Every Conservative leader since Margaret Thatcher has failed," said Vinen, author of the book "Thatcher's Britain."

John Major lost the party power in 1997, and the three Tories after him kept the Tories in opposition. Prime Minister David Cameron gambled on a 2016 referendum that, against his wishes, took Britain out of the European Union. His successor Theresa May was defeated by Brexit infighting, and Johnson has been given the boot by Conservative lawmakers after months of ethics scandals.



Britain's former Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak arrives to speak at an event at Manor Farm, in Ropley, as part of his campaign to be leader of the Conservative Party and the next Prime Minister, near Winchester

PTI | AP

Boris Johnson loyalist retweets 'dangerous' image of Rishi

PTI ■ LONDON

One of outgoing British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's key loyalists and supporter of Foreign Secretary Liz Truss as his successor, who has been very vocal in attacks against Rishi Sunak, was on Sunday facing criticism for retweeting a "dangerous and distasteful" image of the former Chancellor.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries re-posted a tweet on her social media account showing an image of Johnson dressed as Roman leader Julius Caesar and Sunak stabbing him in the back, a reference to his killer Brutus.

Racism not a factor in British PM race, says Sunak

PTI ■ LONDON

Former Chancellor Rishi Sunak said on Sunday that racism is not a factor in the Conservative Party membership's decision to vote for the next party leader and successor of Boris Johnson as British Prime Minister.

The finalist in the race to 10 Downing Street who is trailing his opponent, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, in surveys during the leadership election campaign set to conclude on September 5, dismissed factors such as gender or ethnicity would play a part in Tory members' postal ballots from next week.

Democrats delay primary order decision until after 2022 vote

PTI/AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Democratic Party on Saturday delayed a decision on potentially reordering its primary calendar for the 2024 presidential election until after November's midterm elections.

The Democratic National Committee's rules committee had planned to decide during meetings in Washington beginning next week whether to recommend that presidential voting should continue to begin with Iowa and New Hampshire.

That's amid calls by some party leaders and activists that more diverse states, including the current No. 3 and No. 4, Nevada and South Carolina, should move up.

The committee was also mulling adding a fifth early primary contest prior to "Super Tuesday" when a large number of states traditionally vote.

But rules committee co-chairs Jim Roosevelt Jr. and Minyon Moore wrote in a

memo to members that "after speaking with many of you over the past several weeks about the last few steps of this process, it has become clear that the best way to move forward with the final stage of this process is to postpone the committee's decision on the pre-window rule until after the midterm elections".

The committee will still

meet beginning on Friday, but now doesn't plan to make a decision until after Election Day, November 8 — meaning that the primary calendar decision won't affect key congressional races.

Iowa and New Hampshire had argued that possibly losing their positions going first and second could hurt Democrats in the states' top races, espe-

cially since the Republican Party has already said Iowa will continue to lead off its 2024 primaries. "Following the midterm elections, we will reconvene to update our evaluation of the applicant pool and work towards a final decision to present to the full DNC for a vote, which DNC leadership has assured us they will make happen as soon after the

midterm elections as is possible," Roosevelt and Moore wrote, adding that "we will continue to work with applicants in the coming weeks to hammer out final details."

Sixteen states and Puerto Rico made presentations before the committee to be first — or at least in the top five, before the rules committee earlier this summer.

Biden tests +ve for Covid again, returns to isolation

Washington: President Joe Biden tested positive for Covid-19 again on Saturday, slightly more than three days after he was cleared to exit coronavirus isolation, the White House said, in a rare case of "rebound" following treatment with an anti-viral drug.

White House physician Dr. Kevin O'Connor said in a let-

ter that Biden "has experienced no reemergence of symptoms, and continues to feel quite well." O'Connor said "there is no reason to reinstate treatment at this time."

In accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, Biden will reenter isolation for at least five days. **AP**

US judge gives life term to Canadian ISIS propagandist

Falls Church: A Canadian citizen who led propaganda efforts for the Islamic State group and personally executed two Syrian soldiers in widely circulated videos was sentenced to life in prison by a US judge.

Prosecutors sought the life sentence for Mohammed Khalifa, 39, a Saudi-born Canadian who held promi-

nent roles for the Islamic State group from 2013 until his capture in 2019.

In a sentencing memorandum, prosecutors said Khalifa played a key role in the group's successful efforts to recruit tens of thousands of foreign fighters to defend its self-proclaimed caliphate in Iraq and Syria. **AP**

Pelosi confirms trip to Asia, but no mention of Taiwan

AP ■ BEIJING

The speaker of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, confirmed on Sunday she will visit four Asian countries this week but made no mention of a possible stop in Taiwan that has fuelled tension with Beijing, which claims the island democracy as its own territory.

Pelosi said in a statement she is leading a congressional delegation to Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan to discuss trade, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, security and "democratic governance".

Pelosi has yet to confirm news reports that she might visit Taiwan. Chinese President Xi Jinping warned against meddling in Beijing's dealings with the island in a phone call on Thursday with his American counterpart, Joe Biden.

Beijing sees official



American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make its decades-old de facto independence permanent, a step US leaders say they don't support.

Pelosi, head of one of three branches of the US government, would be the highest-ranking elected American official to visit Taiwan since then-

Speaker Newt Gingrich in 1997.

The Biden administration didn't explicitly urge Pelosi to avoid Taiwan but tried to assure Beijing there was no reason to "come to blows" and that if such a visit occurred, it would signal no change in US policy.

Monkeypox declared a public health emergency in New York City

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Monkeypox has been declared a public health emergency in New York City, with officials declaring that the city is currently the epicentre of the outbreak and an estimated 150,000 New Yorkers may currently be at the risk of exposure.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Commissioner Ashwin Vasan on Saturday declared a public health emergency due to the monkeypox outbreak.

"Over the past few weeks, we have moved as quickly as possible to expand outreach and access to vaccines and treatment to keep people safe," the officials said.

The declaration, effective

immediately, will allow DOHMH to issue emergency commissioner's orders under the New York City Health Code and amend provisions of the Health Code to provide for measures to help slow the spread.

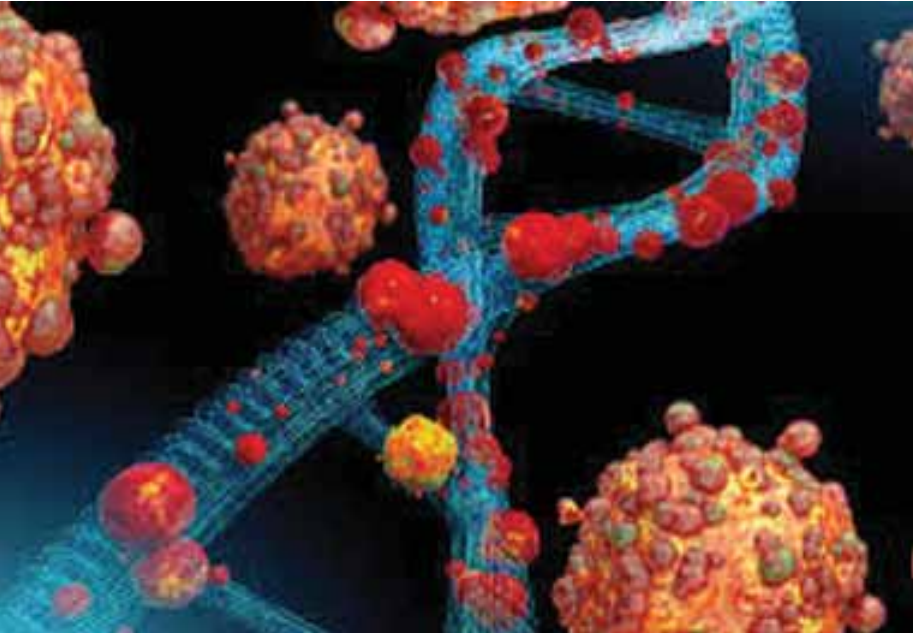
The officials said that New York City is currently the epicentre of the outbreak, and it is estimated that approximately 150,000 New Yorkers may currently be at risk for monkeypox exposure.

"We will continue to work with our federal partners to secure more doses as soon as they become available. This outbreak must be met with urgency, action, and resources, both nationally and globally, and this declaration of a public health emergency reflects the seriousness of the moment," they said.

"We are also working with partners at every level of government, to obtain as many additional doses as possible, as quickly as possible, so that we can protect New Yorkers during this growing outbreak," the authorities said.

Last week, the World Health Organisation had declared monkeypox a global public health emergency and called on nations to work closely with communities of men who have sex with men and adopt measures that protect the health, human rights, and dignity of affected communities.

"We have an outbreak that has spread around the world rapidly, through new modes of transmission, about which we understand too little, and which meets the criteria in the International Health Regulations... For all of these



China says remains of rocket booster fall to Earth

AP ■ BEIJING

Debris from a rocket that boosted part of China's new space station into orbit fell into the sea in the Philippines on Sunday, the Chinese government announced.

Most of the final stage of the Long March-5B rocket burned up after entering the atmosphere at 12:55 a.M., the China Manned Space Agency reported.

The agency said earlier the booster would be allowed to fall unguided.

The announcement gave no details of whether remaining debris fell on land or sea but said the "landing area" was at 119 degrees east longitude and 9.1 degrees north latitude.

That is in waters southeast of the Philippine city of Puerto Princesa on the island of Palawan.

There was no immediate



word from Philippine authorities about whether anyone on the ground was affected.

China has faced criticism for allowing rocket stages to fall to Earth uncontrolled twice before.

NASA accused Beijing last year of "failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris" after parts of a Chinese rocket landed in the Indian Ocean.

The country's first space

station, Tiangong-1, crashed into the Pacific Ocean in 2016 after Beijing confirmed it lost control.

An 18-tonne rocket fell uncontrolled in May 2020.

China also faced criticism after using a missile to destroy one of its defunct weather satellites in 2007, creating a field of debris that other governments said might jeopardise other satellites.

The July 24 launch of the

Long March-5B, China's most-powerful rocket, carried the Wentian laboratory into orbit.

It was attached on Monday to the Tianhe main module, where three astronauts live.

The remains of a separate cargo spacecraft that serviced the station fell into a predetermined area of the South Pacific after most of it burned up on reentry, the government announced earlier.

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CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

Letter No: 468

Date: 30/07/2022

Corrigendum

Name of Work: Major overhauling of Unit no.1
In reference to e-Tender No. 10/EE(M)/RPSK/2022-23 invited by the office of the Executive Engineer (M), Ramganga Power station, Kalagarh, it is to inform that corrigendum has been uploaded on e-procurement portal and dates of the aforesaid tender are extended as below. Please quote your bids accordingly. For further details kindly log on to <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>.
Last Date/Time for receipt of bid in the portal: 16-08-2022 up to 16.00 Hrs.
Last date of submission of original documents: 17-08-2022 up to 16.00 Hrs.
Date of opening of bid on the website: 19-08-2022 at 11.00 Hrs.
All other terms & conditions of tender shall remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer (Maint.)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

SPECTRUM AUCTION ENTERS SIXTH DAY OF BIDDING; GARNERS NEARLY ₹1.50 LAKH CRORE SO FAR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The auction of the 5G spectrum capable of offering ultra-high-speed internet entered the sixth day of bidding on Sunday after receiving bids worth 1,49,966 crore in the first five days from players like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel.

The bidding resumed on Sunday morning with the 31st round, and the subsequent round is currently underway, sources said.

The pitched battle in Uttar Pradesh East circle - where demand for 1800 MHz had peaked since Wednesday - seems to be cooling off now, indicating that the auctions may be entering the final leg, according to industry sources.

That said, much would depend on how the bidding progresses through the day, they added.

As of Saturday, the total value of bids in the telecom spectrum auction had come within the striking distance of the Rs 1.50 lakh crore mark.

"The 5G auction shows that the industry wants to expand. It has come out of problems and is getting into a growth phase. The auction results are very good, close to Rs 1,49,966 crore has been committed by the industry for buying the spectrum," Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at a briefing in Mumbai, after a telecom investors' roundtable on Saturday.

The minister observed that the auction and its "good response" underlines the industry's maturity.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio, Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and a unit of billionaire Gautam Adani's flagship



Adani Enterprises are in the race to bid for the 5G spectrum, which offers speeds about 10 times faster than 4G, lag-free connectivity and can enable billions of connected devices to share data in real-time.

Besides powering ultra-low latency connections, which allow

downloading full-length high-quality video or movie to a mobile device in a matter of seconds (even in crowded areas), the Fifth Generation or 5G would enable solutions such as e-health, connected vehicles, more-immersive augmented reality and metaverse experiences, life-

saving use cases, and advanced mobile cloud gaming, among others.

The reserve price fixed for spectrum is a "fair number" and the same is visible from the auction outcome, the minister had asserted.

Incrementally, Rs 111-112 crore came in on Saturday, the provisional proceeds rising from the Rs 1,49,855 crore received till Friday from players, such as Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel.

Notably, the demand in Uttar Pradesh East, after surpassing the available quantum for three straight days since Wednesday, fell below supply levels on Saturday.

Earlier, the demand was for 75 blocks against the supply of 54 blocks, experts said, adding that by Saturday evening, the demand was for 50 blocks, four less than the supply in the circle.

384 infra projects show cost overruns of ₹4.66 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 384 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of more than Rs 4.66 lakh crore, as per a report.

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which monitors infrastructure projects of Rs 150 crore and above, out of 1,514 projects, 384 reported cost overruns and as many as 713 projects were delayed.

"Total original cost of implementation of the 1,514 projects was Rs 21,21,471.79 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 25,87,946.13 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of Rs 4,66,474.34 crore (21.99 per cent of original cost)," the min-

istry's latest report for June 2022 said.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till June 2022 is Rs 13,30,885.21 crore, which is 51.43 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, the number of delayed projects decreases to 552, if the delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion.

Further, it showed that for 523 projects neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

Out of the 713 delayed projects, 123 have overall delays in the range of 1-12 months, 122 have been delayed for 13-24 months, 339 projects for 25-60 months and 129 projects have been delayed for 61 months and above.

Reliance Capital bidders seek extension of deadline to submit resolution plan



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The deadline for submission of resolution plan for debt-ridden Reliance Capital may be extended further as bidders have sought more time to complete the due diligence process, sources said.

Few bidders, including Piramal, Torrent, Oaktree and IndusInd Bank, have written to the administrator seeking an extension of the deadline from existing August 10 to September 15.

Reliance Capital resolution plan submission date has already been extended four times in the past. The original date for submission was May 26.

The Committee of Creditors (CoC) will be meeting in the coming week to take stock of the resolution process of Reliance Capital and consider the deadline extension.

Reliance Capital Ltd (RCL) had initially received 54 Expression of Interest (EOI), but now only 5-6 bidders are active at the due diligence stage.

Due to poor response to the Reliance Capital resolution exercise, the CoC has also waived off the condition of paying Rs 75 crore Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), in the first submission date.

Moreover, sources said, one of the bidders Piramal Group is also facing roadblock as insurance regulator IRDAI has expressed concerns over the Group's bid for the Reliance Nippon Life Insurance. As per the regulations, Piramal, which already has a promoter stake in a life insurance firm, cannot pick up a similar stake in another life insurer. Pramerica Life Insurance Limited (PLIL) is promoted by Piramal Group.

According to sources, CoC and administrator are more keen on receiving bids under Option-1 i.e. For the Reliance Capital as a CIC (Core Investment Company).

Under Option-2, bidders can bid for 8 different businesses/clusters of RCL, including general insurance, life insurance, asset reconstruction and securities business.

Chinese factory activity sinks, weighing on weak economy

AP ■ BEIJING

Chinese manufacturing's recovery from anti-virus shutdowns faltered in July as activity sank, a survey showed on Sunday, adding to pressure on the struggling economy in a politically sensitive year when President Xi Jinping is expected to try to extend his time in power.

Factory activity was depressed by weak global demand and anti-virus controls that are weighing on domestic consumer spending, according to the national statistics agency and an official industry group, the China Federation of Logistics and



Purchasing. A monthly purchasing managers' index issued by the Federation and the National Bureau of Statistics retreated to 49 from

June's 50.2 on a 100-point scale on which numbers below 50 indicate activity declining. Sub-measures of new orders, exports and employment declined.

"Downward pressure is great," said economist Zhang Liqun in a statement issued by the Federation. "The impact of the epidemic is still on the rise." The ruling Communist Party has stopped talking about this year's official economic growth target of 5.5 per cent after output shrank in the three months ending in June compared with the previous quarter. The slowdown, which raises the risk of politically volatile job

losses, adds to challenges for Beijing ahead of a ruling party meeting in October or November when Xi is expected to try to break with tradition and award himself a third five-year term as party leader.

An announcement on Thursday by party leaders promised to "strive to achieve the best results" but avoided mentioning the annual growth target announced in March.

The party has promised tax rebates and other aid to help entrepreneurs after anti-virus controls temporarily shut down Shanghai and other industrial centres starting in late March.

Insurers may not need prior Irdai nod to raise capital via pref shares, subordinate debt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to promote ease of doing business, insurance regulator Irdai has decided to do away with the prior approval requirement for raising capital through preference shares and subordinate debts by insurers.

The decision was taken in the board meeting held recently, sources said.

As per the decision, the issue of Other Forms of Capital (OFC) should not exceed 50 per cent

of the paid-up share capital or net worth of the insurance company.

The board has also done away with the prior approval requirement for exercising the call option under OFC subject to a solvency ratio not less than 180 per cent.

As per the existing norms, the insurance companies are required to take permission from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Board of India (Irdai). Other reforms approved by the board included proposals related to distribution and

management expenses. This was the first board meeting under newly appointed chairman Debashish Panda.

The board hiked the maximum investment limit of insurers in banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) companies to 30 per cent of their assets from 25 per cent.

On the distribution side, the board has provided greater flexibility. Corporate Agent permitted to tie up to 9 insurers each in life, general and health insurance companies.

Pet care industry grows after pandemic; attracts FMCG cos

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Increased pet adoption after the pandemic is driving the Indian pet care industry to touch Rs 10,000 crore by 2025, prompting FMCG majors like Nestle India and Emami to enter the sector.

The pet food market is currently around Rs 4,000 crore and expected to grow significantly over the next five years. Mars Petcare and Himalaya Wellness Company, among others, are the two major companies operating in the segment.

Mars Petcare is a division of

global confectionary major Mars Inc.

Last week, Nestle India entered into the segment by acquiring the pet foods business from its fellow subsidiary Purina Petcare India for Rs 123.5 crore, providing the FMCG major direct access to this fast-growing business in the country.

Earlier this month, another FMCG company Emami announced to invest in a pet-care startup Cannis Lupus Services India, offering Ayurvedic remedies for pets under the brand "Fur Ball Story".

According to Mars Petcare



India Managing Director Salil Murthy, India is "one of the fastest growing pet care markets" in the world. The growth is led

by factors, such as rising incomes, nuclear families, and changing attitudes toward pets and pet owners.

RBI likely to raise key policy rate by 25-35 bps to check inflation: Experts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Days after the US Fed raised the interest rate, the RBI may go in for its third consecutive policy rate hike by 25-35 basis points to check high retail inflation, experts said.

The central bank has already announced to gradually withdraw its accommodative monetary policy stance.

The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel -- Monetary Policy Committee -- will meet on August 3 for three days to deliberate on the prevailing economic situation and announce its bi-monthly review on Friday.

With retail inflation ruling above 6 per cent for six months, the RBI had raised the short-term borrowing rate (repo) twice -- by 40 basis points in May and 50 basis points in June.

The existing repo rate of 4.9 per cent is still

below the pre-Covid level of 5.15 per cent. The central bank sharply reduced the benchmark rate in 2020 to tide over the crisis created by the pandemic outbreak. Experts are of the view that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) would raise the benchmark rate to at least the pre-pandemic level this week and even further in later months.

"We now expect the RBI MPC to raise the policy repo rate by 35 bps on August 5 and change stance to calibrated tightening," BofA Global Research report said.

The possibility of an aggressive 50 bps and a measured 25 bps hike cannot be ruled out either, it added. A research report by Bank of Baroda said that while the Federal Reserve raised the rate by 225 bps in CY22, the RBI has hiked the repo rate by 90 bps. An aggressive rate hike by the Fed is feeding expectations that the RBI may also front load its rate hikes.

NCUI since inception as per guidelines of the government.

Multi-state cooperative societies contribute one per cent out of their net profits in any year to the Cooperative Education Fund, as per the 63 (1) (b) of the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act (MSCS), 2002. About Rs 25 crore is collected annually.

The cooperation ministry has proposed amendments to the MSCS Act 2002 to take control of the fund and use proceeds for

cooperative education and training through NCUI or any other agency.

Opposing this clause in the draft amendments to the MSCS Act, NCUI president said, "The maintenance of Cooperative Education Fund by the government will give a signal that the government wants to control the fund, in which it has no contribution, which is against the autonomous principles of cooperatives.

After 9 months, FPIs return to Indian equities with ₹5,000-cr investment in July

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After nine consecutive months of relentless selling, foreign investors have turned net buyers and invested nearly Rs 5,000 crore in Indian equities in July on softening dollar index and good corporate earnings.

This is in sharp contrast to a net withdrawal of Rs 50,145 crore from the stock market seen in June. This was the highest net outflow since March 2020, when foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had pulled out Rs 61,973 crore from equities, data with depositors showed.

Going forward, Hitesh Jain,



Lead Analyst - Institutional Equities, Yes Securities, believes that FPI flows to remain positive during August as the worst for the rupee seems to be over, and oil seems to be confining in a range.

Also, earnings story still remains strong where sturdy revenue growth is offsetting

contraction in profit margins," he added.

According to data with depositories, FPIs infused a net amount of Rs 4,989 crore in Indian equities in July. They were buyers for nine days in the month. The net inflow also propelled the equity markets northwards.

FPIs turned net buyers for the first time in July after nine straight months of massive net outflows, which started in October last year. Between October 2021 till June 2022, they sold a mammoth Rs 2.46 lakh crore in the Indian equity markets.

Include endorsers, influencers in policy to protect consumers from fake reviews: CAIT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traders' body CAIT on Sunday called upon the government to bring brand endorsers, social media influencers and bloggers under the proposed framework to protect online consumers from fake reviews of products and services. The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) also argued that rating of a product or service should be made a part of the policy framework for reviews.

The government is working on a standard operating procedure (SoP) to protect online consumers from fake reviews of products and

services. Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh in May held a virtual meeting with stakeholders to discuss the impact of fake and misleading reviews on online consumers and preparation of a roadmap to prevent such a situation.

The traders' body urged the government for an early roll out of a well-defined and robust policy to protect consumers from fake and deceptive reviews for products.

It said such reviews influence the choice of consumers to a great extent thereby constitute an act to cheat the consumers for depriving them from getting right value for their spendings.

8th online session of 'essential mantras for family business' held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Parampara Family Business Institute (PFBI), a non-profit research and educational institute under GMR Varalakshmi Foundation (GMRVF), the CSR arm of GMR Group, organized an online session titled "Communication and Continuity" on July 30, 2022. It was the 8th session of its series of online symposium on 'Essential Mantras for Family Business'.

The one-hour online symposium was aimed at benefiting participants with the knowledge and wisdom in managing the communication complexities of family businesses. David

Werdiger, global family business advisor and author was the speaker and Tatwamasi Dixit, founder, Family Business Research International Center was the expert moderator.

The experts discussed the vital role of "Effective Communication" in a family-run business. The types of positive and negative interactions among the family stakeholders, their impact on family relations, family wealth, business operations, and brand image were discussed at length. Werdiger emphasized that in order to become an effective business family, family members must learn to separate emotional family dynamics from how they operate at work.

IOC sold petrol at ₹10 a litre loss, diesel at ₹14

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Oil Corporation sold petrol at a loss of Rs 10 per litre and diesel at Rs 14 a litre during April-June, leading to the firm reporting its first quarterly net loss in over two years, a report said. The nation's largest oil refining and fuel retailing firm reported a net loss of Rs 1,992.53 crore in April-June compared to Rs 5,941.37 crore of net profit in the same period a year back and Rs 6,021.9 crore in the preceding January-March quarter.

"IOC reported an 88 per cent year-on-year decline in its standalone EBITDA to Rs 1,358.9 crore and a net loss of Rs 1,992.5 crore, despite record high gross refining margins (GRMs) of USD 31.8 per barrel for the quarter.

JEREMY'S NEXT TARGET: PODIUM FINISH IN PARIS 2024

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

If you want a medal just put a picture of it as your mobile phone wallpaper -- that's Jeremy Lalrinnunga's simple way of manifesting his dreams into reality.

The trick has a 100 per cent success record. It worked at the 2018 Youth Olympics, where Jeremy won India's first-ever Gold and then again on Sunday when he claimed the yellow metal in the men's 67kg event at the CWG.

"It's something I did before the Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires and I followed the same for Birmingham," the reigning youth Olympic champion, who also landed the Gold on his CWG debut, said.

So, what's next? A wallpaper of the Paris Olympic medal when it's unveiled?

Jeremy sports a broad grin, despite the currents of pain he has in his calf muscles.

"Yes, that's (Olympics medal) the target, but it will be a long and tough journey ahead," said the jovial teenager.

The 19-year-old will have to bulk up for the Paris Games as his 67kg category has been scrapped by the International Weightlifting Federation.

"The transition would not be easy, I've to move to a higher weight category -- I have to put on six kilograms to shift to the 73kg Olympic category. Keeping my fingers crossed (for Paris)," he added.

The God-fearing and highly superstitious Jeremy also sports a huge tattoo on his left forearm, one of a boxer juxtaposed with a wrestler in action one upon the other with some roman numerals below and above that



India shuttlers beat Aus in final league match of mixed team event

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Already through to the quarter-finals, defending champions India continued their rampaging run as they beat Australia in their final group A match of mixed team competition at the Commonwealth Games here.

The Indians have taken an unassailable 3-0 lead over the

Australians on Saturday.

After blanking Pakistan 5-0 on the first day, India yet again were by far the better team on display on the second day as they outclassed Sri Lanka 5-0 first and then beat Australia to top the group on way to the quarterfinals.

World championships Silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth started the proceedings for India against

Australia, beating Lin Xiang Ying 21-14, 21-13 in a lop-sided contest. Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu then trounced Chen Wendy Hsuan-Yu 21-10, 21-12 to hand India a 2-0 lead.

In the first doubles clash of the tie, Sumeeth and Chirag defeated Tran Hoang Pham and Jack Yu 21-16, 21-19 to give India an unassailable 3-0 lead.

the pattern "MOM" is clearly visible. "7-7 is my mom's (Lalmuanpuii's) date of birth, while 1988 was the year my dad started boxing," he said about his father Lalneihluanga, a junior national champion boxer who is now "living his dream through his son".

The top row has letters 11112011, which is the date November 11, 2011, when Jeremy first stepped on the weightlifting board as a nine-year-old.

"Whenever I'm down or having a tough time I just look at them (the tatoos). I'm a firm believer of God and whenever there's a difficult time I dial my mom and ask her to pray for me," he said.

"Just before coming here, I was having a tough time so my mom prayed for me on the phone and it kept me charged up. I'm sure everyone back home will be really happy for me," he said.

Jeremy has had a tough time overcoming injuries that included a knee surgery last year.

He also developed a problem near his spine on his upper back ahead of the World Championship in December.

"I'm a firm believer in God and I think everything happens for a reason, be it success, failure, or an injury. It's about accepting and keeping the process on."

His knee problem also affected his performance at the junior World Championships and Asian Championships, that cost him a place at the Tokyo Olympics.

"I've had enough experience after (not making) the Tokyo Olympics and so it's about working hard and accepting what it is. I'm injured and it's about recovery, rehab and grinding it out again," he signed off.

INDIA ROUT LOWLY GHANA 11-0 IN MEN'S HOCKEY

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

The Indian men's hockey team decimated lowly Ghana 11-0 in its opening Pool B match of the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

As expected, the Indians were relentless in their attacks and completely controlled the proceedings from start to finish.

The Indians played to their strength and scored five in the first half before pumping in four and two goals in the last two quarters.

India converted six out of 13 penalty corners they earned in the match.

Vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh (11th, 35th, 53rd) scored a hat-trick, while Abhishek (2nd minute), Shamsher Singh (14th), Akashdeep Singh (20th), Jugraj Singh (22nd, 43rd), Nilakanta Sharma (38th), Varun Kumar (39th) and Mandeep Singh (48th) were the other goal getters for India. It was a completely dominating performance from the Indians as they hardly allowed Ghana into their D.

Ghana had their occasional chances in the form of five penalty corners but the Indian defence was up to its best to deny its opponents. The Indians were straight-away on the money, securing their first penalty corner in the very first minute of the match and

Abhishek was at the right time at the right place to find the target on rebound.

The Indians kept up the pressure and secured another penalty corner in the 11th minute which was duly converted by Harmanpreet.

Shamsher extended India's lead by pushing home a brilliant move from Lalit Upadhayay and Abhishek.

Akshdeep made the scoreline 4-0 in the 20th minute with a fine reverse hit after receiving an accurate pass from Abhishek.

India were awarded a penalty corner two minutes later and Jugraj was up to the task.

Five minutes after the change of ends, Harmanpreet scored his second goal from a penalty corner.

Three minutes later, Nilakanta joined the party as he put the rebound in the back of the net after Ghana goalkeeper Offei saved a shot from Jarmanpreet.

In the very next minute, Varun Kumar converted a penalty corner to get his first goal in the tournament.

Jugraj Singh scored his second goal, this time from a penalty corner.

In the fourth and final quarter, Mandeep and Harmanpreet scored a goal each to round off the tally. India will next play Canada on August 3.

India humiliate Pak to secure 1st win

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India brought their desired 'killing attitude' to the fore under pressure as they put up a ruthless performance to beat arch-rivals Pakistan by eight wickets and boost their chances of a semifinal berth at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

Pakistan's decision to bat first backfired as Indian bowlers put the choke on the batters to bowl them out for a meagre 99 all out in the 18 overs-a-side contest after rain delayed the start of play.

Spinners Sneh Rana and Radha Yadav stood out with two wickets each.

The chase was clinical too with Smriti Mandhana (63 not out off 42 balls), arguably the most attractive batter in women's cricket, flaunting her range of strokes on way to a fine unbeaten half century. The result was India gunned down the target in just 11.4 overs.

India showed an approach that they have been trying to play with for the last couple of months and it would have most definitely pleased captain Harmanpreet Kaur.



Mandhana's special effort comprised three sixes, including a step out hit off spinner Tuba Hassan for her half-century. A seemingly effortless loft over cover of pacer Diana Baig in the third over was also of the

highest quality.

It was the second time this year that an Indo-Pak contest failed to produce a close game with India winning comfortably against their opponents even in the 50-over World Cup in New

Zealand.

However, the much-anticipated fixture of the Commonwealth Games lived up to the hype off the field with fans turning up in big numbers at Edgbaston.

Boxing: Zareen storms into quarters, Shiva Thapa crashes out

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

World champion Nikhat Zareen sailed into the women's 50kg quarterfinals but it was curtains for Shiva Thapa as he crashed out of the men's 63.5kg round of 16 boxing competition at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

While Zareen knocked out Helena Ismael Bagao of Mozambique to storm into the last eight round of the women's lightweight category winning by RSC (Referee stopping the contest), Thapa lost 1-4 to world championship Bronze medallist Scotland's Reese Lynch to make a disappointing exit from the Games.

The first Indian pugilist to take the ring on the day, Zareen was no match for her young opponent as she dominated the bout from start to finish.

The Indian used her rich experience to unsettle Bagao from the onset. She came out attacking and used her combinations of left and right punches to overpower her opponent. Zareen landed clean



punches on her opponent's face in the final round to completely shock her, forcing the referee to call off the tie with 48 seconds remaining.

Zareen will next face reigning Commonwealth Games Bronze medallist Troy Garton of New Zealand in the quarter-finals, where a win will secure her podium finish.

Zareen said she won't settle for anything less than a Gold from the event.

"I am feeling happy that I won my first bout and I am looking forward to performing well in the next rounds. I am just one fight away from a medal but I am looking to win Gold from here," she said after her bout.



Yogeshwar finishes 15th, Ruthuja 17th

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Indian gymnasts Yogeshwar Singh and Ruthuja Nataraj signed off at 15th and 17th spots in the men's and women's all-around finals of the artistic gymnastic event respectively at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

While Haryana's Yogeshwar, who had participated in three World Championships, finished with an overall score of 74.700, the 19-year-old Ruthuja scored 43.000 to end on the last spot. Yogeshwar was the lone Indian male gymnast to qualify for the all-around final.

In women's all-round final, Ruthuja had scores of 12.950, 10.000, 10.250 and 9.800 in vault, uneven bar, balance beam and floor respectively.



Srihari Nataraj qualifies for men's 50m backstroke semis

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Ace Indian swimmer Srihari Nataraj qualified for the semifinals of men's 50m backstroke event at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

Nataraj clocked 25.52 seconds to qualify for his second consecutive semifinals of the Games. He had also made the 100m backstroke last 16.

The seasoned Sajan Prakash, on the other hand, finished as the first reserve for the 200m butterfly event.

The 21-year-old Nataraj clocked 25.52s to emerge as the second fastest swimmer in his heat and eighth fastest overall. His timing was 0.57s behind Pieter Coetzee of South Africa, who topped the qualifiers.

He has a personal best of 24.40s in men's 50m backstroke, having achieved it at 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last year in UAE.

Nataraj had finished seventh in the men's 100m backstroke final on Saturday night.

In the men's 200m butterfly, Prakash finished fourth in his heat after clocking 1:58:99s and was put on the reserve list as he was the ninth fastest swimmer overall. The top eight move to the final.

Prakash and Kieren Pollard from Australia clocked the same time leading to a swim off.

Prakash then produced a timing of 1:58.31 to win the swim off between the two to become the first reserve.

Indian men's Table Tennis team marches into semis, women's out

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Defending champions India stormed into the semi-finals of the men's table tennis team event at the Commonwealth Games after thrashing Bangladesh 3-0 in the third last-eight tie here on Sunday.

The men's team, led by Achant Sharath Kamal, had outclassed Barbados, Singapore and Northern Ireland by identical 3-0 margin in the group stage to make the quarter-finals.

First to turn up in the quarter-finals, doubles pair of Harmeet Desai and Sathiyam Gnasekaran defeated Ramhimilian Bawm and Mohutasin Ahmed Ridoy of Bangladesh in three straight games 11-8, 11-6, 11-2 to hand India a 1-0 lead.

Veteran Sharath Kamal then trounced Md Rifat Sibbar in the men's singles 11-4, 11-7, 11-2 to extend India's lead.

In the other singles match, Gnasekaran dominated the proceedings from start to finish to notch up an easy 11-2, 11-3, 11-5 win and seal the tie.

WOMEN'S TEAM OUT

Defending champions India, led by star paddler



Manika Batra, crashed out of the women's table tennis team event after losing to Malaysia 3-2 in the quarterfinals on Saturday.

After recording an easy win in a group stage match earlier in the day, the Indian women's team lost to Malaysia in the last-eight stage. Batra won one singles match and lost the other as the Indian team made a premature exit from the tournament.

India were on the backfoot after the pair of Reeth Tennison and Sreeja Akula lost the opening doubles match 1-3 (7-11, 6-11, 11-5, 6-11) before Batra lev-

elled the tie with a 3-2 (11-8, 11-5, 8-11, 9-11, 11-3) win over Ying Ho in the singles.

Akula then made amends of the doubles loss as she thrashed Li Sian Alice Chang 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-9). But Batra failed to seal the tie for India as she lost to Karen Lyne 3-0 (6-11, 3-11, 9-11) in the crucial fourth match as Malaysia made another comeback in the tie.

Malaysia took advantage of the momentum as Ying Ho beat Tennison 3-2 (10-12, 11-8, 6-11, 11-9, 11-9) in a tight deciding match to break Indian hearts.



Weightlifter Popy finishes seventh

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Indian weightlifter Popy Hazarika finished a disappointing seventh in the women's 59kg event at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

The lifter from Assam had a total lift of 183kg (81kg+102kg).

It was the first of the six weightlifting events so far that didn't yield a medal for India.

Rafiatu Folashade Lawal of Nigeria won the gold with an effort of 206 kg (90kg+116kg).

Hazarika began with a 81kg lift in snatch but couldn't go beyond that weight as she fluffed her next two attempts in the section.

Heading to the clean and jerk, the Indian was already out of medal contention and in this also she could manage only one legal lift of 102kg.

Squash: Chinappa enters women's singles quarters

PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

Ace Indian squash player Joshna Chinappa outwitted New Zealand's Kaitlyn Watts 3-1 to progress to the women's singles quarterfinals at the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

The 18-time national champion kept her calm to recover from a mid-game slump to prevail 11-8, 9-11, 11-4, 11-6 against Watts to set up a last-eight clash with Canada's Hollie Naughton.

Naughton beat Malaysia's Aifa Azman 3-0 in another match.

Looking for an elusive CWG Gold medal, Chinappa was lagging 3-5 initially in the opening set but made it 8-8 before taking a 1-0 lead.

Watts, however, made a strong comeback in the second set as she zoomed to 5-1 and even though the Indian made it 9-9 at one stage, the Kiwi managed to gather the last two points to keep herself afloat.

Despite the reversal, Chinappa showed better nerves as she build up a 7-3 lead and quickly stepped ahead to make it 2-1.

LAWN BOWL PAIR IN QF

The Indian men's pair of Dinesh Kumar and Sunil Bahadur defeated England to

advance to the quarter-finals of the lawn bowl event in the Commonwealth Games here on Sunday.

Dinesh Kumar (skip) and Sunil Bahadur (lead) won 18-15. The duo was 10-5 ahead after the eighth end and thwarted English pair's effort to make a comeback.

The Indian pair had gone down to Malaysia 14-17 in their first game on Friday but bounced back with wins over Falkland Islands (36-4) and Cook Islands (15-8).

They will now take on Northern Ireland in the quarter-final scheduled later in the day at 10.30 pm.

Tania Choudhary defeated Shauna O'Neill of Northern Ireland 21-12 to record a consolation win in women's singles competition. She had already bowed out of competition.

The Indian men's triples team had also crashed out of the event after two losses and a tie.

MIXED RELAY TEAM 10TH

India finished 10th in the triathlon mixed team relay final.

The Indian quartet of Adarsh Muralidharan Nair Sinimol, Pragnya Mohan, Vishwanath Yadav and Sanjana Sunil Joshi clocked a total time of 1:31:43 in the three event competition.

INDIA LOOK TO CONTINUE WINNING RUN

West Indies vs India

Live from 8:00pm IST

DD SPORTS & FANCODE

PTI ■ BASSETTERRE

Rohit Sharma's buoyant India will look to continue the winning run and extend their domination over the West Indies when they clash in the second T20 International here on Monday.

The visitors are coming off a comprehensive victory in the opener of the five-match series.

What separated the two teams in the first match was not only its all-round performance but also smart captaincy by Rohit who fielded his three spinners Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravi Bishnoi.

Another victory would only boost India's confidence further as they look to gain momentum ahead of the marquee T20 World Cup later this year.

If it was Rishabh Pant who walked out an opener in the T20Is against England with Rohit, the first game against the West Indies saw Suryakumar Yadav filling that role.

Suryakumar, who has turned out to be the seventh opener for India in T20Is this year, got going quickly (24 off 16 balls) until Akeal Hosein stalled his progress.

It will be interesting to see if the team management carries on with its experimentation given that KL Rahul is not available for the time being.

EMERGENCE OF ARSHDEEP

Over the years, a quality left-arm

WHAT SEPARATED THE TWO TEAMS IN THE FIRST MATCH WAS NOT ONLY ITS ALL-ROUND PERFORMANCE BUT ALSO SMART CAPTAINCY BY ROHIT WHO FIELDLED HIS THREE SPINNERS

pacer is something the Indian team has not had, but that could change with the emergence of the promising Arshdeep Singh, who left a mark in the first game with his tight spell.

The 23-year-old Punjab pacer showed promise throughout his four-over spell, especially the manner in which he dismissed opener Kyle Myers with a premeditated short ball.

At the fag end of the game, Arshdeep bowled brilliantly as he removed all-rounder Akeal Hosein with a perfect yorker.

DESIGNATED FINISHER

After Rohit departed following a captain's knock of 64 off 44 deliveries, things had started to slow down for India.

While the visitors were on course to finish at around 170, veteran Dinesh Karthik had other ideas, helping the team set a target in excess of 190.

The 37-year-old once again aced the finisher's role (41 off 19 balls) to help the team amass 36 runs off the last two overs.



Given Karthik's prowess, he would fancy his chances of doing an encore.

"These are the small tick boxes that we need to have at this stage of the game but the ultimate goal is to do well in the T20 World Cup in Australia," Karthik told his teammate Ashwin after the first game.

ASHWIN, BISHNOI SPIN A WEB

Both Ashwin and young leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi made significant contributions in the first game.

Ashwin (2/22 from 4 overs), who was brought back into the T20 squad after quite a while, showed that he still has a lot to offer it the shortest format.

The 21-year-old Bishnoi (2/26 from 4 overs) also showed that he is out there to perform at the big stage.

It remains to be seen if the team management continues with the trio of Jadeja, Ashwin and Bishnoi, or bring in the likes of Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav.

TEAMS (FROM)

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

West Indies: Nicholas Pooran (Captain), Rovman Powell, Shamarh Brooks, Dominic Drakes, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Brandon King, Kyle Mayers, Obed McCoy, Keemo Paul, Romario Shepherd, Odean Smith, Devon Thomas, Hayden Walsh.

Nunez shines as Liverpool beat Man City 3-1 to win Community Shield

AP ■ LEICESTER

Liverpool struck first blood against Manchester City ahead of the new Premier League season as Darwin Nunez made an instant impact for Jurgen Klopp's men to win the Community Shield 3-1 on Saturday.

In a tale of two big summer signings, Nunez came off the bench to win a penalty and score his first goal since a 75-million euro move from Benfica, while Erling Haaland had a City debut to forget.

"He's good," said Klopp on Nunez, who has been criticised for his pre-season performances. "Today we played the smart passes. We saw Darwin in dangerous situations. He used the spaces and finished well too."

Trent Alexander-Arnold's blistering strike gave Liverpool a deserved half-time lead in Leicester.

But it was City's other new forward who hauled Pep Guardiola's men back into the game after the break as Julian Alvarez equalised.

Tying down Mohamed Salah to a new three-year deal was Liverpool's other major piece of summer business and the Egyptian was deadly from the penalty spot after Nunez's header was handled by Ruben Dias.

The Uruguayan then got his own glory moment by stooping to head home in stoppage time before tearing off his shirt in celebration.



BENZEMA, ASENSIO ON TARGET

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

Karim Benzema converted an early penalty and Marco Asensio added a second-half insurance goal as Real Madrid beat Juventus 2-0 in a pre-season friendly at California's Rose Bowl on Saturday.

With his eye on Real Madrid's European Super Cup clash with Eintracht Frankfurt in 10 days, coach Carlo Ancelotti started the same lineup that beat Liverpool in the Champions League final in May.

They produced the first

victory of Real Madrid's United States tour, after a 1-0 loss to La Liga rivals Barcelona in Las Vegas and a 2-2 draw against Mexico's Club America in San Francisco.

Benzema opened the scoring with a penalty in the 19th, crisply firing into the bottom left corner after Juventus' Danilo brought down fellow Brazilian Vinicius Junior with a sloppy move in the penalty area.

Pressing hard to put the match to bed after the interval, Real Madrid were thwarted by Juventus goalkeeper Mattia Perin, who denied a sharply

angled shot by Daniel Carvajal before soaring to stop a long-range left-footed blast from Benzema in the 62nd minute.

Two minutes later, Benzema was among the departing players as Ancelotti made nine substitutions.

Asensio was among the substitutes, and quickly made an impression, sweeping a cross from the left by Jesus Vallejo into the net with his left foot.

It was enough to seal the win in a match in which Juventus barely tested Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Red Bull's Verstappen wins in Hungary to extend title lead

AP ■ BUDAPEST

World champion Max Verstappen took full advantage of another Ferrari implosion on Sunday to increase his lead in this year's title race with a measured victory for Red Bull at the Hungarian Grand Prix.

Just a week after his win at the French Grand Prix, the 24-year-old Dutchman grabbed his first success at the Hungarian Grand Prix on 10th on the grid to finish 7.8 seconds clear of Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and George Russell.

His win lifted him 80 points clear in the championship as nearest rival Charles Leclerc, unexpectedly given hard compound tyres when he appeared to be the fastest driver, came home sixth behind Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz and Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull.

It was a crushing disappointment for Leclerc and Ferrari after their recent resurgence as Verstappen took his eighth win of the season and the 28th of his career.

"When we woke up this morning who would have thought we would win this race?" said Verstappen.

Lando Norris finished seventh for McLaren ahead of two-time champion Fernando Alonso and his Alpine team-mate Esteban Ocon and retirement-bound four-time champion Sebastian Vettel of Aston Martin.

Hamilton, who was bid-



ding for an unprecedented ninth victory in Hungary, praised his team for his fifth podium finish in succession.

"It's special for us today and we are clearly closing the gap. It's great to go into the summer break with this per-

formance."

Russell, who led for 30 laps from pole position, said: "I really struggled on the medium tyres and in the latter stages, but Lewis did a great job. I tried to eke it out and I'm pleased with a podium."

Mairaj, Dhillon win a Gold each in shooting meet

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympian Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Raiza Dhillon claimed Gold medals in men's and women's skeet events respectively in the inaugural Digvijay Singh Memorial Shooting Championship (Shotgun) here on Sunday.

Mairaj, who had become the first Indian to win skeet Gold at the ISSF World Cup earlier this month, shot 115 in qualification to claim sixth spot and just about made it to the semi-finals stage among the top eight shooters.

He, however, won both the semi-final and the medal match with relative ease to seal Gold.

He shot 27 to top his semi-final and then scored a solid 35 out of 40 in the final match, to leave Arjun Thakur of Madhya Pradesh way behind in Silver position with 30 hits.

Punjab's Gurjoat Singh, who topped the qualifiers with a fine 121, settled for Bronze with 24 hits at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range.

In the women's competition, Dhillon had a similar story as she qualified in the fifth spot before piping favourite Ganemat Sekhon in the medal match to emerge triumphant.

Dhillon, in fact, had a double gold on the day, winning the Junior Women's Skeet competition over Punjab's Parinaaz Dhalwal.

In the junior final, she got 33 targets to Parinaaz's 32. Darshna again settled for bronze with 24 hits.



Djoker 'preparing' to play US Open despite vax ban

AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic on Saturday said he is "preparing to compete" at the US Open even though his refusal to get vaccinated will see him barred from entering the country.

Under current rules, all visitors to the United States must be fully vaccinated against coronavirus.

The Serb star, a three-time champion in New York and fresh from securing a seventh Wimbledon title, has consistently refused to take the vaccine.

"I am preparing as if I will be allowed to compete, while I await to hear if there is any room for me to travel to US. Fingers crossed!," wrote Djokovic on

Instagram in a post accompanying a video of him training.

More than 43,000 people have signed a petition calling on the authorities to allow 21-time Slam winner Djokovic to play at the US Open which starts on August 29.

"I just wanted to take a moment and say to all of you how grateful I am to see so many messages of support and love from all around the world these days," said the 35-year-old.

"I wasn't expecting it, and that's why it feels so mindblowing. Just wanted to say THANK YOU. It feels special that people connect with my tennis career in such a loving and supportive way and wish for me to continue to compete."

B'desh win 2nd T20I by 7 wickets

AP ■ HARARE

Liton Das and Mosaddek Hossain played key roles on Sunday as Bangladesh levelled a three-match T20I series in Zimbabwe with a seven-wicket victory.

Spin-bowling all-rounder Mosaddek took five wickets for the first time in his T20I career as the tourists restricted Zimbabwe to 135-8 at Harare Sports Club.

Faced with the modest target, Bangladesh were always ahead on run rate thanks to an impressive start propelled by opener Liton, whose 56 off 33 balls included two sixes and six fours.

The tourists cruised to 136-3 with 15 balls remaining and success was particularly joyful as it was only the second T20 triumph in their last 15 internationals.

Defeat ended a six-match winning streak by Zimbabwe in the shortest format since former star batsman Dave Houghton returned in June for a second stint as national coach.

The series will be decided on Tuesday before the teams change formats and play three ODIs.

Mosaddek, who had never taken more than two wickets



for his country in a T20 match, wreaked havoc with his victims including openers Regis Chakabva and captain Craig Ervine.

Zimbabwe, who will join Bangladesh at the T20 World Cup in Australia during October, were reeling at 31-5 by the time Mosaddek completed his off-break onslaught.

Sikandar Raza and Ryan Burl then stopped the rot for

the hosts, adding 80 runs for the sixth wicket as none of five other Bangladesh bowlers could emulate Mosaddek.

Raza scored 62 off 53 deliveries, including two sixes and four fours, before being caught in the covers by Munim Shahriar.

Apart from Raza, Burl and Luke Jongwe were the only Zimbabwe batsmen to reach double figures.

Mane opens Bayern account in German Super Cup triumph

AP ■ LEIPZIG

Sadio Mane opened his competitive goal-scoring account for Bayern Munich as the Bundesliga champions defeated Leipzig 5-3 to capture the German Super Cup for a 10th time on Saturday.

The African Player of the Year, who ended a six-year stint at Liverpool to move to Bavaria in the summer, also had two goals ruled out for offside in the game played at Leipzig's Red Bull Arena.

The Senegalese star was on target on the half-hour mark for his team's second goal in the German season curtain-raiser.

Jamal Musiala played a perfect pass to unlock the Leipzig offside trap and release Serge Gnabry whose pass across the front of goal was tapped home by Mane.

Bayern, beginning a new era after the departure of star striker Robert Lewandowski to Barcelona, had taken the lead after 14 minutes thanks to Musiala getting the better of Leipzig's Hungarian goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi.

The impressive Musiala was at the heart of Bayern's third goal on the stroke of half-time when the teenager's astute pass was drilled home by French international Benjamin Pavard.

Marcel Halstenberg headed in on the hour as Leipzig cut the deficit but it only took Bayern five minutes to restore their three-goal advantage.

Thomas Mueller had a shot only half saved by Gulacsi and Gnabry was quickest to react to the loose ball to make the score 4-1.

In an end-to-end second half, Leipzig grabbed their second goal of the evening courtesy of a Christopher Nkunku penalty after Dani Olmo had been brought down in the area.

With six minutes left, Mane had a second goal



ruled out, again for offside, before Spanish international Olmo pulled another goal back for Leipzig after 89 minutes after a quick breakaway.

Bayern then had to survive a few nervy moments as Leipzig pushed for a fourth but Leroy Sane wrapped up the game with his team's fifth goal in the eighth minute of stoppage time.